

A Review of Resolutions Fostering Service

June - September 2013

Resolutions Fostering Service: Service Review 2013.

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Introduction:

1.1 The Resolutions Management Board in June 2013 commissioned an independent Service Review of the Resolutions Fostering Project. This decision was made in light of the resignation of the Team Manager, who had been in post for the last ten years, the project not increasing the numbers of carers approved as projected and the developments across the SEWIC region in the delivery of in-house fostering services and those externally commissioned.

A Service Review Brief was agreed by the Board. See Appendix 1.

1.2 All Resolutions Staff, Resolutions Carers, staff from Bridgend, as the host authority, and staff from the partner authorities have contributed fully to this review. They have done this in an open and honest manner which has been greatly appreciated.

2. Background:

2.1 In 1993 Mid Glamorgan County Council set up a Remand Fostering Scheme. Following Local Government re-organisation in 1996 the scheme was retained by Bridgend, Caerphilly, Merthyr and Rhondda-Cynon-Taff. The Vale of Glamorgan joined some years later and Rhondda-Cynon-Taff withdrew from the partnership. As the scheme was physically based in Bridgend, Bridgend County Council agreed to host the scheme. During 2001/02 the demand for remand placements fell whilst at the same time the demand for child care placements for young people with challenging behaviours rose. In November 2002 the scheme was re-named Resolutions Adolescent Fostering Team and a Team Manager for the Project appointed. In 2009 the scheme was re-named again to Resolutions Fostering Service.

2.2 Until 2008/09 the governance arrangements for the scheme were carried out by a Management Board and a Steering Committee. In 2009 the Steering Committee ceased to function. The Management Board has since consisted of the Heads of Service of the four partner authorities, a representative of the Youth Offending Service, the Accountant for Bridgend and the Manager of Resolutions. A

Draft Joint Commissioning Agreement was drawn up in 2010 but a final version was never presented to the Board for approval.

- 2.3** The Management Board in early 2007 commissioned independent consultants to work with the Manager of Resolutions and the Board to achieve a clearer strategic direction for Resolutions, to set targets for the number of carers to be approved by 2009, and to establish a clear recruitment action plan. The Consultants worked with the Manager for a period of 6 months and a detailed report was produced in October 2007. The Report included a detailed recruitment strategy. There were 11 sets of approved carers in October and the aim of the strategy was to recruit sufficient carers to provide 35 placements by 2009.

3. Review methodology:

Range of data gathered, read and analysed.

Meeting with Group Manager and Family Placement Team Manager, Bridgend.

Meeting with Resolutions Senior Practitioner and Administrative Assistant.

Meeting with 2 Social Workers from Resolutions, including the Social Worker on long term sick.

Meeting with 11 Resolutions Carers.

Meeting with 5 placement/fostering managers from the four partner authorities.

Meeting with YOS Managers from the partner authorities.

Meeting with Accountant, Bridgend County Council.

Telephone conversation with the Temporary Team Manager for the Scheme.

All carers were given the option of an individual meeting or giving their views in writing. A full written response was received from the carers. This very clearly set out their views.

Resolutions staff were also given the option of an individual meeting or giving their views in writing. None has been received.

4 Staffing.

4.1 The current staffing establishment is

One Team Manager
One Senior Practitioner
Two Supervising Social Workers
One Administrative Assistant

4.2 The Team Manager post has been vacant since the end of May. As an interim arrangement, the Fostering Team Manager in Bridgend has been managing the team and service. One of the Supervising Social Worker's post is vacant and is being covered on a temporary basis by a Social Worker from Bridgend's Fostering Team. The Senior Practitioner and the Administrative Assistant have both been in post for approximately 10 years. The Team Manager for Resolutions is paid on SCP 43-46 (£46,754-£50,220). Team Managers in the host authority are normally paid on SCP 41-44 (£44,445- £47,923).

5 Resolution Foster Carers

5.1 There were as of June 21st 2013 18 carers and 3 Respite carers.

Approval dates of carers are as follows:

Year Carer Approved	Numbers of Carers Approved
2004	3
2005	0
2006	1
2007	1 respite
2008	2
2009	1
2010	2 plus 1 respite
2011	4
2012	1 plus 1 respite
2013	2 to date

One carer was approved in 1998 and one in 2000

Since March 2010 five carers have been de-registered - all for personal reasons.

5.2 The geographical location of carers is as follows:

Location	Number of Carers
Bridgend	6
Merthyr Tydfil	4 plus 2 respite carers
Vale of Glamorgan	5
Rhondda-Cynon-Taff	1
Newport	1
Torfaen	1 plus 1 respite carer

5.3 Carers Fees and Allowances

Fee to Carer	Young Person's Allowance
£224.53 per week, per child	£170.70 per week per child.
Other Payments	Amount
Travel	48.5p per mile
Birthday	1 week's child allowance £170.70
Festival Allowance	1 week's child allowance £170.70
Holiday Allowance	2 week's child allowance £341.40
NVQ	£23.32 per week for carers approved prior to 1 st November 2011
QCF	£250 one off payment for carers approved post 1 st November 2011

6. Placements

6.1 The 18 fulltime carers can provide placements for 31 young people. As of June 21st there were 26 young people in placement. The three respite carers have no young people in placement.

6.2 Placements by Authority:

Authority	Numbers of Young People in Placement
Bridgend	13
Caerphilly	6
Merthyr	3
Vale of Glamorgan	4

6.3 Length of time of young people in placement:

Length of Placement	Numbers of Young People
3 years plus	1
2 years plus	2
1-2 years	5
6 months -1 year	12
Under 6 months	6

6.4 Referrals to the Scheme: 1st April 2012-31st March 2013

Authority	Referrals to the Scheme	Placements Offered	Placements Made
Bridgend	73	26	18
Caerphilly	68	13	10
Merthyr	20	6	4
Vale of Glamorgan	47	10	7
YOS	11	3	2

7. Marketing & Recruitment Information:

7.1 Marketing/Recruitment Spend Analysis:

Year	Budget £	Actual Spend £	Underspend £
2009/10	7,500	3,189	4,311
2010/11	7,600	6,673	927
2011/12	7,600	3,181	4,419
2012/13	7,600	2,678	4,922

7.2 Enquiries to Foster:

Year	Numbers of Enquiries Received
2009/10	24
2010/11	25
2011/12	31
2012/13	8

7.3 Carers Approved:

Year	Numbers of Carers Approved
2009/10	1
2010/11	3
2011/12	4
2012/13	2
2013-	1

There have been no new enquiries to foster from April '13 to end of June '13 and there are no new fostering assessments being undertaken.

8. Comparative Financial Data:

8.1 Average Costs of placements in the independent sector. March 2013

Authority	Average Standard IFA Placement £	Average non-Standard Placement £
Bridgend	702	989
Caerphilly	763	1,356
Merthyr	709	1,200
Vale of Glamorgan	736	1,082
Average	727	1,156

8.2 Average Weekly Cost per Resolutions placement per Authority:

Authority	09/10 £	10/11 £	11/12 £	12/13 £
Bridgend	702.71	785.74	696.50	674.59
Caerphilly	1,163.18	777.42	701.40	677.61
Merthyr	1,104.97	860.50	792.61	702.54
Vale of Glamorgan	947.75	781.18	700.43	670.55
Average for year	979.65	801.21	722.74	681.32

To achieve a unit cost of £600 per placement there would need to be 34 young people in placement. There are currently 26 young people in placement.

8.3 Payments to In-House and Resolutions Foster Carers:

Total Payments (fees & allowances) to carers:

Authority	Payments to Carers looking after 11-15 yr olds £	Payments to Carers looking after 16+ £
Bridgend	326.26 - 366.99	373.25
Caerphilly	312.73	346.73
Merthyr	306.00	346.60
Vale of Glamorgan	291.40	325.40
Resolutions	395.23	395.23

The average payment to carers in the independent sector is £352.00

The terms and conditions and additional allowances of Resolutions Carers are more 'generous' than those to authorities in-house carers.

9 Youth Offending Service.

9.1 Referrals Received from YOS and Placements made:

Authority	Referrals Received 2009/10	YP Placed 2009/10	Referrals Received 2010/11	YP Placed 2010/11	Referrals Received 2011/12	YP Placed 2011/12	Referrals Received 2012/13	YP Placed 2012/13
Bridgend	15	5	15	5	5	0	4	0
Caerphilly	6	3	3	1	4	1	1	1
Merthyr	2	1	4	1	5	0	1	0
Vale	5	2	4	0	4	2	5	1
Other	2	0	0	0	2	0	0	0
Total	30	11	26	7	20	3	11	2

There have been no referrals made since April 1st '13 until the end of June.

10. Consultation with Resolutions Staff:

10.1 An initial meeting was held with the Group Manager, Bridgend and the Team Manager for Fostering, Bridgend. A meeting was also held with the Education and Safeguarding Accountant, Bridgend. Two separate meetings were held with Resolutions staff. This was to accommodate staff commitments and the member of staff who is on long-term sick. Staff were also given the opportunity to see me individually or submit views in writing. No staff took up this opportunity. All staff approached the review positively and were very open and honest in their approach. The administrative assistant was particularly helpful in providing a range of data to assist with the Review. Staff were asked to identify the positives about Resolutions from their perspectives, areas that they could identify that needed development and what they wanted to see as the outcome of the Review.

10.2 Positives Identified:

10.2.1 Staff considered Resolutions to be a unique service in South Wales, solely providing placements for young people with complex needs and challenging behaviour. As a staff group they consider they have considerable skill and experience in supporting carers well to maintain placement stability for young people who are exhibiting some difficult behaviours. As a small team they can support one another and the carers to a high standard. The team have detailed knowledge of all the carers and young people in placement. Remand placements are also part of the service.

10.2.2 As smaller caseloads are held by the team than would be considered average by most Local Authorities, the team consider that this allows very intensive support to be provided to carers, both in and outside of office hours. The team reported that it would not be uncommon for them to be undertaking tasks that would normally be the responsibility of Children's Social Workers.

10.2.3 The Team reported the excellent administrative support available to them. The administrative assistant has been in post for over 10 years and has extensive knowledge of every aspect of the service. She was frequently referred to as 'wonder woman'. The administrative assistant used to be line managed by the Manager of Resolutions but a couple of years ago, staff were unsure as to the

exact date, this changed. The member of staff is now managed by the Business Support Section. The Team reported several differences since this change. The member of staff no longer attends team meetings and is frequently required to provide support within the Business Support Section, sometimes for one or two days per week. Staff report there is no regular pattern to this.

10.3 Aspects of the Service that Require Development:

10.3.1 Staff consistently reported the need for strong and competent management of the scheme. Staff identified the need for a manager with a good professional understanding of fostering services and the ability to manage the service as a business operating in a competitive environment.

10.3.2 The ownership and sense of responsibility for developing and implementing a clear marketing and recruitment strategy was identified as a key factor in moving the scheme forward. There was also identification of the need for sound financial management of the scheme. Staff reported that the responsibility for both the recruitment strategy and the financial aspects of the scheme were, in large part, delegated to other staff in the Council. Staff considered the scheme has a poor reputation which has developed over a number of years. Staff consider the Board had not been provided with a comprehensive view of the scheme.

10.4 Staff Views on the Outcome of the Review:

10.4.1 Staff were unanimous in their view that the scheme had lived 'under a cloud' for years; they were worried about their future job security and wished the outcome of the Review to be brought to a swift conclusion.

10.4.2 Their view was that if a good competent manager was appointed, a clear recruitment strategy was put in place then the future for the scheme could be very positive. An increase in carer numbers would bring down unit costs and the scheme would provide a larger number of good quality placements for the young people that the partner authorities have most difficulty in placing.

11. Consultation with Resolutions Foster Carers:

11.1 All Resolutions Carers were invited to a meeting. Eleven Resolutions Carers attended the meeting. All carers present at the meeting were given the opportunity to meet with me individually following the meeting. No carer took up this opportunity. All carers were offered the opportunity of expressing their views in writing. A detailed written response was received from carers.

11.2 Positives Identified:

11.2.1 Carers expressed a clear view that as they are a relatively small group of carers they know one another very well and support one another extremely well. They consider this contributes significantly to placement stability for young people. Carers who have previously encountered a difficulty with a young person often support other carers who may be experiencing the same difficulty for the first time.

11.2.2 The carers consider the quality of the support they receive from Resolutions staff to be 'remarkable'. As they are a small staff group and there is low staff turnover, the carers know the staff very well and, as a result, staff offer carers appropriate support, day or night. Some Resolutions Carers have previously worked for local authorities and expressed the view that the support offered to Resolutions Carers was of a far higher standard than that provided to local authority foster carers.

11.2.3 Resolutions Carers indicated that they offer, not only, a high level of formal and informal support to one another but also to young people in placement. Respite placements are provided between carers, and young people will often know the carers and the other young people they have in placement. Often young people will consider other Resolution Carers as 'extended family'.

11.2.4 Several of the Resolutions Carers have been involved in fostering at a national level. One carer is the Welsh Regional Adviser for Fostering Network and has also undertaken work with the Children's Commissioner's Office.

11.2.5 Resolutions Carers have very much appreciated meeting directly with the Resolutions Management Board. They have welcomed the

opportunity to express their views directly to Board Members and to receive direct feedback.

11.3 Carers Views on Aspects of the Service that require Development:

11.3.1 Carers consider that partner authorities have a very poor understanding and awareness of the Resolutions as a whole. Carers cited a number of examples of social work staff not being aware that Resolutions is a fostering service that is provided by a partnership arrangement with four local authorities.

Carers were concerned about the strain on existing staff due to staff vacancies. They felt that vacancy levels are likely to rise as there are so few staff available to receive and process referrals.

11.3.2 Carers clearly identified the recruitment of carers as a priority for the scheme. They were critical of the fact that there is no business plan for how the recruitment of carers can be improved. A number of carers indicated that their ideas for recruitment had been thwarted.

11.4 Carers Views on the Outcome of the Review:

11.4.1 Carers expressed with a passion and real commitment that the scheme should continue, that they provide a service which delivers high quality placements to young people with particularly complex needs, and that the young people would otherwise be placed in the independent sector or residential care.

Cares were unanimous that with the appointment of a manager with strong leadership qualities and the development of a clear business plan for the scheme then the future was very positive.

12 Consultations with Partner Authorities:

12.1 The Service is currently being managed on an interim basis by the Team Manager of Bridgend's Fostering Service pending the outcome of this Review. A telephone conversation was held with the interim-manager. She indicated that the management of the service had not made excessive demands on her time as a Manager. She indicated that Reports to the Board were prepared by the Administrative Assistant. The Senior Practitioner responded to new referrals and there were no initial enquiries or assessments currently being undertaken. She has, however, identified a culture of co-dependency between the staff and carers, evidencing this by comparing the needs of mainstream foster carers with Resolution Carers. In her view, the needs of young people in Resolutions placements are no more complex than those placed with mainstream carers in Bridgend.

12.2 A meeting was held with five staff from the four partner authorities. All authorities were represented. Information was gathered on their experience of requesting and making placements with Resolutions Fostering Service.

12.3 Views on Referring to and Making Placements with Resolutions:

12.3.1 Staff reported that as Resolutions is not on the Commissioning Framework the Individual Tendering Process (ITP) cannot be used. This requires additional work for authorities as referrals need to be made by e-mail and then followed up by telephone calls. Staff reported that sometimes the response is prompt but it is not uncommon for administrative staff to respond indicating that no Social Work staff are available. In addition to all the paper work required by IFAs, Resolutions also require a risk assessment. Some Managers reported an additional difficulty in not knowing at the time of placement how much a placement was going to cost.

12.3.2 As Resolutions is not on the Commissioning Framework and therefore not on CCSR it is not possible to see electronically whether the referral has been received and is being considered. Follow up telephone calls are required.

12.3.3 Staff indicated that if a member of Resolutions staff is available then the response can be positive but if no one is available then the referral can be difficult and time consuming to chase up. Staff reported there appears to be little sharing of information between Resolutions staff from one day to the next and information from the referring authority often has to be repeated.

No suitable match is the most common reason given for why a placement cannot be offered. Staff all reported having more success in placing young people with challenging behaviour with the independent sector.

12.4 Views on Resolutions Placements and Carers:

12.4.1 Some Resolutions Carers provide very good quality placements for young people and have provided long term stability for some of those young people. However staff reported that some carers are very 'needy' and are sometimes on the phone to Children Social Workers every day requesting support for young people who local authority staff do not consider to be particularly complex. Staff indicated that some Resolutions Carers require the young person's Social Worker to undertake more activities than would be normally expected from either local authority carers or carers in the independent sector. Particular problems often arise when a young person is not in full-time education.

12.4.2 Staff considered that placements often end prematurely and that the reasons given are ones that would not normally be considered as being sufficient.

Staff said that many in-house foster carers approved to look after the more complex children/young people (typically level/band 3&4) are often more flexible and open to compromise over the day to day details of a young person's plan. Staff indicated that in their opinion Level/Band 3/4 carers are more skilled than Resolutions Carers and offer greater placement stability.

12.5 Consultation with YOS Managers.

12.5.1 A meeting was held with two YOS Managers and a third manager submitted written information. There was a consistency in the views expressed by the YOS Managers.

12.5.2 All described a change in the Service over recent years. In their view the scheme used to provide specialist remand placements

and the carers had particular skills in caring for young people on remand. In more recent years , when there has been a move away from carers providing single placements the scheme is not perceived as being specialist any longer.

12.5.3 The majority of current carers are considered to be 'mainstream'. The scheme is now far more concerned with the past behaviour of young people and is far more risk-averse than previously.

12.5.4 Managers identified a downward trend in the use of Resolutions placements, due to changes in the Youth Justice System and changes in the type of placements Resolutions offer. Changes to the Remand criteria have resulted in less young people being placed on remand and if they are they are likely to be placed in YOIs.

13. Data Analysis:

- 13.1** Despite a significant amount of work being undertaken in 2010/11 the draft governance arrangements and partnership arrangement do not appear to have been presented to the Board for consideration.
- 13.2** A significant investment, over several years, by four Heads of Service as Board Members, staff and by the engagement of external consultants for a period of 6 months has not resulted in the growth of the scheme as intended.
- 13.3** The Board have been successful in bringing down the unit costs of placements by increasing the number of placements within the scheme and reviewing the terms and conditions of the carers. This has made Resolutions placements financially competitive with placements in the independent sector but not with in-house provision. The average cost of a Resolutions Placement has fallen to £681 in 2012/13. To maintain this, with no increase in the numbers of carers approved, will require vacancy levels to remain low. To bring the unit down to £600 will require 34 young people to be in placement.
- 13.4** The Resolutions Team Manager post is graded at a higher spinal point than other team managers. This was in recognition of the responsibility for the strategic development of the scheme.
- 13.5** Since 2004 the maximum number of carers recruited in any one year has been 4. There is no indication this is likely to improve in the near future. There are currently no fostering assessments being undertaken.
- 13.6** The recruitment budget has been significantly underspent in the last 4 years. The reasons for this are unclear, particularly in light of recruitment being a priority for the Scheme.
- 13.7** Payments to Resolutions Carers compared to those paid to in-house foster carers are higher. The difference is a minimum of £28.24 per week per young person to a maximum of £103.83 per week per young person. This does not take into account a

more generous additional allowance package for Resolution Carers.

- 13.8** Payments to Resolutions Carers are higher than those paid on average to IFA carers. The average payment to an IFA carer is £352, the payment to a Resolutions carer is £395. Resolutions carers, in addition receive generous supplementary allowances compared to carers with IFAs. Resolutions Carers receive a fee, even when there is no young person in placement. This is not the case in most IFAs.
- 13.9** These financial comparisons are important, particularly in light of the views from partner agencies that level/band 3/4 in-house carers care for young people with similar needs to those of Resolutions Carers.
- 13.10** The largest proportion of carers are geographically located in Bridgend, 6 out of a total of 18 and Bridgend have the largest number of placements with the scheme, 13 out of a total of 26. The reasons for this would require greater examination.
- 13.11** The vast majority of current young people have been in placement for under 1 year, 18 young people out of a total of 26.

14 Analysis of Staff and Carer Consultation:

- 14.1** Resolutions staff and carers consider they provide a unique, specialised service. All Resolutions carers and staff consider the scheme provides consistently good quality placements for challenging adolescents.
- 14.2** Resolutions staff and carers expressed concerns about the poor management of the scheme in the past and how this has contributed to the Scheme not growing as intended and to the Scheme's perceived poor reputation.
- 14.3** Resolutions staff and carers wish for the Scheme to continue with the appointment of a new Manager. They believe that the future could be very positive, with the number of carers recruited increasing and unit costs decreasing. The carers' views are expressed very well within their written submission.
- 14.4** Resolutions staff and carers believe that the young people they look after would otherwise be looked after by carers in the independent sector or in residential care.
- 14.5** The views of staff from Partner Authorities are diametrically opposed to those of Resolution carers and staff. Partner authority staff consider that there are a few Resolution Carers who provide good quality placements for challenging adolescents. However the majority of Resolution Carers are not as skilled to care for young people with complex needs as either in-house carers or carers with IFAs. There is a very considerable discrepancy between how Resolutions staff and carers view the service they provide and the views of the partner authorities who access the service.

15.The Wider Fostering Context.

15.1 Collaboration

15.1.1 “We expect to see positive examples of the planning of services on a regional, or where more appropriate, national basis” **Sustainable Social Services, Welsh Government.** There is a clear mandate from Welsh Government for local authorities to explore collaborative opportunities in the delivery of services.

15.1.2 In South East Wales, Directors of Social Services of ten local authorities came together a few years ago to establish the South East Wales Improvement Collaborative (SEWIC)

15.1.3 The Board of Directors are exploring a number a number of services that may be appropriate to deliver on a regional basis in both adult and children’s services. A project to explore whether a business case existed to deliver in-house fostering services on a regional basis was established in January 2012.

15.1.4 A business case was established to further explore the possibility of marketing and recruiting foster carers on a regional basis. Detailed work is currently underway to develop a regional marketing strategy to recruit foster carers. One logo/creative brand/image would be used across the region. Further reports will be presented to the SEWIC Board before any final decision is made. Work is also underway to explore the possibility of moving to a harmonised payment structure for foster cares across the region.

15.1 5 The Children’s Commissioning Consortium Cymru (4C’s) was established in 2009. The 4C’s are procurement and commissioning hub for purchasing external placements in the fostering and residential sectors for children and young people.

15.2 Recruitment of Foster Carers

15.2.1 The challenges in recruiting foster carers, particularly for older children are well documented across the UK. The position in South Wales is no different.

15.2.2 In Authorities with strong management, dedicated marketing resource and clear marketing strategies the numbers of carers being recruited is still not sufficient to meet the demand for placements. There is no indication that the demand for placements will decrease.

15.2.3 The appointment of managers with the necessary skills and abilities to manage and lead a fostering service also presents authorities with challenges. Good quality managers are in short supply.

.16. Consideration of Options:

- 16.1 The Scheme continues. A new Team manager is appointed and a clear business plan for the scheme is developed. The governance arrangements and a partnership agreement are agreed by the board. The Scheme could continue to be hosted by Bridgend or one of the other partner authorities.
- 16.2 The Scheme is brought to an end. Resolutions staff would be offered re-deployment opportunities. Carers could be given a number of options:
- All carers remain approved by Bridgend, and protection on carers' current payment structure is offered until the end of March 2015.
 - Individual carers could apply to transfer to another partner authority. The same level of protection is offered.
 - Carers could apply to transfer to any other local authority
 - Carers could apply to transfer to an Independent Fostering Agency
 - Carers could cease to foster.
- 16.3 The Scheme is sold on the open market. This would require agreement by the Carers, without the carers there will be little to sell. Implications for Resolutions staff would also need to be considered.
- 16.4 The Scheme is maintained in its current state with the existing interim arrangements continuing. There is no action taken, however, to recruit more Resolution Carers and gradually the scheme will cease to function. Current Resolutions Carers to be offered protection on their present payment structure until the end of March 2015. This protection to be offered to the

carers if they remain approved by Bridgend or if they applied to be approved by one of the other partner authorities.

17 Options Appraisal.

17.1 **Option One:** The Scheme continues and a new Team Manager appointed.

SWOT Analysis

Strengths	Weaknesses
<p>Builds on existing strengths in the scheme</p> <p>Resolutions Staff & Carers support this option.</p>	<p>The likelihood of achieving, a significant increase in the number of carers approved within the next few years is very low. The maximum number of carers approved in any one year is 4 and there are currently no assessments being undertaken.</p> <p>Does not recognise the views of partner authorities using the service.</p> <p>No enquiries to the scheme received from April '13 and no recruitment strategy in place.</p> <p>Appointment of a new Manager with the necessary skills may not be possible.</p> <p>Does not recognise the reality that the Scheme has not met the needs of the partner authorities.</p> <p>Continued investment in a Scheme which has failed to achieve recruitment targets, despite considerable investment.</p> <p>Even if a new Team Manager was appointed with the necessary skill set, to achieve the level of change required would be at least a 3 year project.</p> <p>It does not recognise the reality of the wider SEWIC developments and the move to regional approach to recruit foster carers and a harmonised payment structure.</p>
Opportunities	Threats
<p>Vacant posts create opportunities for positive new appointments to be made.</p> <p>There is still a demand for high quality placements caring for young people with complex needs.</p>	<p>The commissioning of placements in the independent sector is driving down costs. This will make Resolutions placements less financially competitive.</p> <p>SEWIC developments will increase the number of in-house placements available, thereby decreasing the need for Resolutions placements.</p>

17.2 Option Two: The Scheme is brought to a close. Staff are offered re-deployment opportunities and Carers are provided with options including 3 years protection on current payment structure.

SWOT Analysis.

Strengths	Weaknesses
<p>Recognises the reality that the Scheme has failed to increase the number of carers recruited as projected.</p> <p>Recognises the reality of partner authorities views that the majority of young people placed have no more complex needs than those placed with in-house carers.</p> <p>Recognises partner authority view that Resolution does not provide a 'unique' service.</p> <p>Brings to a clear conclusion Scheme which has had a 'cloud hanging over it' for a number of years.</p> <p>Allows opportunity for investment in Resolutions to be re-directed to investment in in-house provision.</p> <p>Recognises the reality of the regional developments in the marketing & recruitment of carers. It would be difficult for Resolutions to continue to recruit carers against this background.</p> <p>Provides opportunities for staff to be offered alternative opportunities.</p> <p>Provides carers with financial security in the same way staff would be..</p> <p>Allows carers to remain all approved by Bridgend or another partner authority of their choosing. Continued support for Resolutions carers as a group could be possible.</p>	<p>Some carers may cease to foster, this may cause some placement instability for young people.</p> <p>Some carers may apply to transfer to an independent agency.</p>
Opportunities	Threats
<p>Staff would be provided with different employment opportunities.</p> <p>Carers would have a number of different options.</p> <p>Allow the investment of partner authorities to be re-directed.</p>	<p>Carers resign, causing placement disruption for young people.</p>

18.3 Option Three: The Scheme is 'sold' on the open market.

SWOT Analysis.

Strengths	Weaknesses
Carers would remain approved by one Fostering Agency	It would require agreement by all Resolutions Carers, this would be unlikely.
Partner Authorities could re-coup some of their financial investment.	Carers would probably not be offered financial protection.
Opportunities	Threats
May retain placement stability	Improve the market position of an Independent Fostering Agency.

18.4 Option Four: The Scheme is maintained in its current state, the interim arrangements to continue. No recruitment activity takes place and the Scheme gradually ceases to exist.

SWOT Analysis.

Strengths	Weaknesses
Builds on existing arrangements.	The Scheme would 'wither' with no clear decision being made.
Minimising any disruption for young people currently in placement.	Fails to recognise the reality of partner authorities' views of the Scheme.
No disruption for current staff	Fails to recognise the reality of the move towards a regional marketing approach to recruit carers.
Carers more likely to remain with the Scheme	Fails to recognise the move towards a harmonised payment structure for carers across the region.
Recognises the move to regional marketing approach to recruit carers over the next couple of years.	Confusion for partner authorities as to whether the Scheme still exists or not.
Recognises the move towards a harmonised payment structure for carers across the region.	Difficulty in making placements as the number of carers gradually reduces.
Reduces the current management costs of running the Scheme, reducing the unit for all four partner authorities.	Difficulty in maintaining the governance arrangements as the Scheme becomes smaller.
Carers offered the same level of protection as would be offered to staff	
Opportunities	Threats
Carers could still be supported as a group.	Some carers may choose to apply to another fostering agency, some may remain. The Scheme would become very fragmented very quickly.
Carers could continue to receive their present terms and conditions.	Some staff may seek alternative opportunities, so carers would be supported by staff with whom they would have no previous

Appendix One: Resolutions Review Brief.

Purpose & Principles

- To ascertain whether the current service is appropriate, effective, affordable and meets the strategic priorities of the partners and their councils
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- To ensure all key stakeholders are engaged with during the review. Key stakeholders include partner authorities, staff and carers.
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- To ensure there is a clear evidence base for the review outcome.
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- To ensure there will be no disruption to any young people in placement.
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Preparation & Information gathering phase

- (1) Review of current contract / service
 - Utilise current monitoring and evaluation information to identify how well the services is delivering desired outcomes as expressed in SLA / current contract or equivalent document.
- (2) To identify the met and unmet need the partner authorities have for this service.
- (3) Meet with and gather the views of staff and carers.
- (4) Meet with and gather the views of partner authorities
- (5) Undertake a financial analysis including current and future costs.

Decision and action phase

- (1)...To analyse the quantitative and qualitative information gathered.
- (2) To present to the Board and partner authorities a number of options for consideration.

Timescale for Review:

- (1) Preparation and information gathering phase, interviews with staff, carers and the partner authorities June/July/August
- (2) -Analysis of information gathered July/August
- (3)Preparation of options and presentation to the Board and partner authorities for consideration August/September