

RHONDDA CYNON TAF COUNTY BOROUGH COUNCIL

CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

Minutes of the meeting of the Children and Young People Scrutiny Committee held at the County Borough Council Offices, The Pavilions, Cambrian Park, Clydach Vale. on Wednesday 10th January 2018 at 5 p.m.

PRESENT

County Borough Councillor S. Rees- Owen – in the Chair

County Borough Councillors

J. Brencher	S. Powell
A. Calvert	S. Rees
S. Evans	W. Lewis

Non – Committee Member in Attendance

County Borough Councillor L. M Adams – Chair of
Overview and Scrutiny

Co-opted Members

Mr S. Jones – Voting Elected Parent/ Governor Representative

Officers in Attendance

Ms A. Batley – Service Director Children’s Services
Mr P Nicholls – Head of Legal – Litigation, Planning & Environment, Community and
Children’s Services
Mr J. O’Brien – Head of Cwm Taf Youth Offending Service
Ms C. Williams – Service Manager Intensive Intervention (Disabled Children’s
Service, Contract, Young Carers)
Ms R Spry – Young Carers Assessment & Development Worker

47. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from: County Borough Councillors J. Harries, M Powell and R. Smith

48. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

RESOLVED - In accordance with the Code of Conduct, there were no personal declarations of interests made, pertaining to the agenda.

49. MINUTES

RESOLVED – to approve as an accurate record the minutes of the meeting of the Children and Young People Scrutiny Committee held on the 8th November 2017.

50. REPORT IN RESPECT OF HOMELESS 16 AND 17 YEAR OLD CHILDREN WORKING WITH YOUTH OFFENDING TEAMS

The Head of Cwm Taf Youth Offending Service informed Members in 2016 Her Majesty's Inspectorate of probation carried out a thematic inspection on the provision of accommodation for 16 and 17 year olds who were involved within the criminal justice system with particular focus on procedures and pathways that existed for homeless 16 and 17 year olds and the effectiveness of such in ensuring or supporting young people into suitable accommodation.

Members were notified that the report discovered that of the cohort of young people examined for the inspection, one in three were deemed to be in unsuitable accommodation with there being further concerns that some were placed in hostel or bed and breakfast accommodation.

It was explained to Members that since publication of the report, Cwm Taf Youth Offending Service has been subject to a full joint inspection in March 2017. Whilst this did not focus on accommodation in isolation, it examined the broad expanse of YOS provision which included the accommodation needs for young people.

The Head of Cwm Taf Youth Offending Service provided Members with some of the key recommendations that have been/ are being addressed, although it is acknowledged that limited housing/ accommodation stock and complexity as well as the wishes and feeling of the young people will have an impact upon the recommendations.

After presenting his Report in detail the Head of Cwm Taf Youth Offending Service responded to Members questions in relation to the report and its findings. A Member asked what type of processes are there to ensure the needs of homeless 16 and 17 year olds are assessed. In response to the question Officers explained that each young person in receipt of a service from YOS undergoes an ASSET plus assessment which includes accommodation needs along with the views, wishes and feelings of the young persons.

In respect of Children Looked After within RCT Members asked what was being done to support the young people. It was explained to Members that YOS is embedded within children's services functioning and the development of the 16+ service within RCT which has served to promote the development of a joint assessment.

It was brought to Members attention that the Children Looked After Quality Assurance Group in RCT looks how the young people move on in the CLA system. Members were informed that this group also looks at any young people within B and B accommodation. Members were pleased to see that at present there are no young people in B and B at present in RCT.

After scrutinising in depth Members **RESOLVED** to:

- To approve the recommendations and actions set out in the report
- To review and assess progress against the actions at a future Meeting of the Children and Young People.
- To receive the Placement Strategy Report when complete.

51. OVERVIEW OF THE CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE WHO HAVE BEEN MISSING FROM CARE FOR THE YEARS 2015/16 AND 2016/ 17

The Children and Young People Scrutiny Committee received an overview of the children and young people who go missing from care and the processes that are followed when this occurs.

The Service Director Children's Services explained to Members that research undertaken in July by the Church of Wales (The Knowledge Gap: Safeguarding

Missing Children in Wales: Tom Davies) highlighted that in 2015/16 almost 4500 children in Wales went missing from home or care.

Members were informed of the number of children and young people in RCT who have absconded or gone missing in the years 2015/16 and 2016/17. It was explained that the majority of these children and young people go missing for short periods of time and although recorded as missing actually fall within the unauthorised absence category, a number have gone missing for more than one occasion. The majority of the young people are over 8 year of age. Officers explained that the younger children who are classed as missing are with their parents and are missing due to parents not returning them to their placement when expected.

It was explained to Members the processes which are followed when children go missing. After considering the information before them Members put questions to the Service Director Children's Services. Members asked in respect of the numbers of children that have gone missing how many of these young people go missing on more than one occasion. In response officers explained that they didn't have the information to hand however would come back to them in a future meeting.

In relation to the young children who are classed a missing with parents Members queried what work was being done to address the situation. It was explained that a lot work is being done in educating parents and foster cares to consider the wellbeing of the child.

After further consideration of the report Member **RESOLVED:-**

1. To receive further data on the number of children missing in RCT
2. To receive an updating report on an Annual Basis.

52. RCT YOUNG CARER'S SERVICE ANNUAL REPORT 2016/17

The Service Manager Intensive Intervention (Disabled Children's Service, Contact, Young Carer Service) presented the report along with the Young Carers Assessment & Development Worker.

Members were informed that the Young Carer Service sits within the wider Carer Support Project that focuses on adult carers and are increasingly working together to support carers of all ages.

Members of the Children and Young People Committee were informed of the launch of the Cwm Taf Carers Strategy creating a more collaborative responsive to the needs of Carers across two Local Authorities.

The Officers explained that the Young Carers Service works to the five key aims of the strategy.

- Identifying Carers of all ages and recognising their contribution
- Providing up to date, relevant timely information, advise & assistance to Carers of all ages
- Providing support services & training to meet the needs of all carers.
- Giving Carers of all ages a voice, with more choice and control over their lives
- Working together to make the most of our resources for the benefit of Carers of all ages.

Members were informed of the current position of the Service, it was explained that the Service is currently staffed with 3 posts an in addition commissions Action For Children to provide direct support. It was brought to Members attention that there are currently 293 young carers known to the service and receiving information and support. It was also explained that 2016/17 saw an increase in referrals during the first 6 months, and a number of the referrals are for the newly developed sibling support for brothers and sisters of disabled children. Members found it pleasing to see that links with Schools and Colleges across RCT have continued to develop with successful roll out of the School Awards .

Members scrutinised the report in depth and put their questions and view forward to the Officers. Members congratulated the service for the good work it provides.

Members asked in respect of the identifying and assessing young carers what Work is being done to ensure that the young carers are receiving all the support they need. It was explained that that the service works with schools colleges and families to inform them and encourage them to use the service along with working with the wider carers support project to promote awareness.

Members welcomed the development of the new siblings service and was pleased to see this will be developed further over the next year. It was also pleasing to see that the Carers Champion Scheme within schools giving support young carers along with the successful roll out of the school awards.

Members thanked the Officers for their report and RESOLVED to:

- Acknowledge the work undertaken by the Young Carers Service
- To receive a progress report in respect the ongoing support for siblings carers within RCT.
- That Members receive an invitation to the Young Carer's Recognition Evening at the end of January to acknowledge the work of the young carers
- To receive an updating report in a 12 month

S. Rees- Owen (Chair)

Meeting closed at 19:15

