



RHONDDA CYNON TAF COUNCIL CORPORATE PARENTING BOARD

Minutes of the meeting of the Corporate Parenting Board held on Monday, 18 November 2019 at 10.00 am at the Block F, The Pavilions, Cambrian Park. Clydach Vale, Tonypany, CF40 2XX.

County Borough Councillors - Corporate Parenting Board Members in attendance:-

Councillor G Hopkins (Chair)

Councillor J Rosser Councillor R Yeo

Officers in attendance

Mr G Isingrini, Group Director Community & Children's Services
Ms C Miles, Childcare Solicitor
Ms A Browning, Head of Children's Looked After Service
Ms A Batley, Director of Children's Services
Ms C Jones, Head of Access & Inclusion
Ms J Thomas, Complaints & QA Manager, Social Services
Mrs J Clark, Head of Safeguarding
Ms S Longhurst, Team Development And Performance Manager
Mr M Free, Service Manager
Ms M Davies - TGP

21 Apologies for Absence

Apologies for Absence were received from County Borough Councillors C. Leyshon, S. Rees –Owen, J. James

22 Declaration of Interest

In accordance with the Council's Code of Conduct, there were no declarations made pertaining to the agenda.

23 Minutes

It was **RESOLVED** to approve the minutes of the Corporate Parenting Board meeting held on the 18th November 2019.

24 Tros Gynnal Plant (TGP) Cymru

Ms M Davies from Tros Gynnal Plant (TGP) Cymru introduced herself to the Members of the Committee and explained that the report before them is the first report since taking up the position within TGP Cymru.

Members were presented with an overview of the service and what contribution it provides to the young people and vulnerable adult within Rhondda Cynon Taf.

Members were pleased to see that RCT referrals for both Active Offers and Issue Based Advocacy have doubled when compared to the previous quarter.

The Chair thanked the Officer for a very comprehensive report and Members **RESOLVED** to acknowledge its content and the work carried out.

25 Miskin Annual Report

The Service Manger along with the Team Development and Performance Manger presented Members of the Corporate Parenting Board with an update in respect of the work undertaken by Miskin between April 2018 to end March 2019.

The Officers highlighted that Miskin contributed to the following Local Authority Performance Indicators;

- The percentage of children supported to remain living with their family;
- The percentage of Children Looked After returned home from care during the year.
- The percentage of Children Looked After on 31st March who have had 3 or more placements during the year
- Number of children and young people requiring intervention from statutory services. And
- The length of time that children and young people remain in the Looked After Children System.

Members were presented with data from the draft annual report along with some very informative cases studies for Members to consider.

The Officer explained that in the past 12 months members of the team have been integrated in to the Miskin older teams which has enabled them to further maximise their capacity and support offered to children and families.

The officers continued by explaining that that Members should note that the statistics actually cover the period of 23rd May 2018 to 31st March 2019 as a consequence of Miskin along with the rest of Adults and Children's Services in RCT.

Members were provided with a summary of referrals and complemented the staff for their hard work as the service plays a vital role in prevent children coming into care.

After further consideration of the report Members **RESOLVED** to acknowledge its content

26 Independent Reviewing Officer (IRO) Report

The Head of Service for Safeguarding provided Members of the Corporate Parenting Board with information regarding the activity of the IRO Service.

Members were informed that the Service currently comprises of 11 IRO full time posts 3 of which are filled by 6 part time staff, and a Team Manager who is line managed by the Service Manager for Safeguarding.

The Officer highlighted that during this reporting period the average number of children looked after by RCT was 677, which is 11 less than in the last reporting period. It was also highlighted that there was a continuing pattern of more boys than girls are becoming looked after with the majority being under 12.

The Officer continued by explaining that 61 reviews were held outside the required timescale; which represents 6.87% of the total number due. This is a reduction on the last reporting period and falls short of the target of 98.5%, however it was explained that this target was set before the number of Looked After Children rose significantly and there has not been an increase in the number of IRO posts.

A Member wanted clarification on whether there was sufficient business support to help with the work. It was explained that at present the service is doing well however there is still a concern regarding venue space and the service is struggling to find suitable space for these confidential meetings to take place.

In relation to the communication with A Member questioned what was being done to enhance the process. Officers explained that the service is looking at new applications and trying to find a better way of communication and engaging going forward.

After further consideration of the report Members **RESOLVED** to acknowledge the content of the report

27 RCT Placement Commissioning Strategy May 2019 - April 2022

The Head of Children Looked After Service presented Members with the RCT Placement Commissioning Strategy from May 2019 to April 2022.

It was explained that Rhondda Cynon Taf placement commissioning strategy outlines the priorities for the development within the placement service and our external commissioning up to 2022. The strategy provides insight into our current services and through analysis of management information of our existing commissioning patterns identifies our priority areas. The strategy pulls together in one document the identified strands of placement commissioning, to ensure there is a clear vision, which underpins our approach to commissioning and ensure this vision aligns with our corporate plan.

Members were presented with the priority areas:

- Recruit more foster carers able to meet the more complex needs of children and young people.
- Provide more in house residential placements within the local area to meet needs,
- Provide better support packages to carers to encourage them to apply for Special Guardianship Orders rather than be kinship foster carers
- Provide a range of accommodation for 16+ and care leavers,
- Improve our commissioning processes for external placements including integrated commissioning with key partners.
- Develop a reunification model to return young people safely to their family members.

In respect of the next steps the officer informed Members that going forward the

strategy will inform, the shaping of internal placements and partnership working approach to placement commissioning with stakeholders and a range of public and private sector partner and that in order to achieve this we will produce a Market Position Statement that will be published.

Members thanked Officers for the report and put forward their questions and observations.

A Member highlighted the media attention regarding the independent residential homes and the situation of these homes being unregulated and wanted some clarity as to where the Local Authority stood.

It was explained that as an authority we need more placements for our children going forward and strategic planning for the future, we work with providers to develop what is required for our young people. The 4C's has a flexible frame work.

Members continued to scrutinise the report and **RESOLVED** to acknowledge and endorse the content of the report and priority areas identified within the placement commissioning strategy.

28 To consider passing the following under-mentioned Resolution:

It was **RESOLVED** that the press and public be excluded from the meeting under Section 100A (4) of the Local Government Act (as amended) for the following items of business on the grounds that it involves the likely disclosure of exempt information as defined in paragraph 14 of Part 4 of the Schedule 12A of the Act.

29 Social Services Quarterly Complaints & Compliments

The Service Improvement, Engagement and Complaints Manger provided the Corporate Parenting Board with an overview of the operation and effectiveness of the statutory Social Services complaints procedure between 1st July 2019 and 30th September 2019.

The report contained information on the number of complaints received, the nature of the complaint and any lessons learnt as well as detailing Councillor, A.M and M.P enquires and the number of complements received.

Following consideration of the Report Members **RESOLVED** to acknowledge the content of the report and suggested that Members would benefit from having sight of case studies for both complaints and complements going forward.

30 Regulation 73 Reports

The Head of Children Looked After Services provided Members with an update on the monitoring carried out under Regulation 73 of the Regulation and Inspection (Wales) Act and the current position within our Residential Children's Homes and Short Break Services for disabled children for the period of August 2019 to October 2019.

After consideration Members **RESOLVED** to acknowledge the report and its content.

31 Carn Ingli - RCT's newly registered Children's Home

Members of the Corporate Parenting Board were provided with an update in relation to Rhondda Cynon Taf's newly registered Children's Home.

Following discussion Members congratulated the hard work of all involved and **RESOLVED** to acknowledge the content of the report.

This meeting closed at 12.05 pm

**Cllr G Hopkins
Chair.**