

AGENDA ITEM 2

RHONDDA CYNON TAF COUNTY BOROUGH COUNCIL

CABINET

18TH FEBRUARY 2016

CHILDRENS COMMISSIONING CONSORTIUM (4CS)

REPORT OF GROUP DIRECTOR OF COMMUNITY, CHILDREN'S SERVICES & WELLBEING IN DISCUSSIONS WITH THE RELEVANT PORTFOLIO HOLDER, COUNCILLOR HOPKINS

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1. PURPOSE OF THE REPORT

- 1.1 The purpose of the report is to update Cabinet on the work of the Childrens Commissioning Consortium (4Cs)

2. RECOMMENDATIONS

- 2.1 It is recommended that the Cabinet note the contents of the report.

3. BACKGROUND

- 3.1 Originally formed by the 10 South East Wales Improvement Consortium (SEWIC) authorities, 4Cs was renamed and expanded in 2012 to include five Mid and West Wales authorities. A Board which includes Heads of Childrens Services and three Directors govern the 4Cs work programme. In 2012, 4Cs launched the first collaborative social care Frameworks in Wales for Fostering and Residential LAC placement services. These will be renewed in May 2016.
- 3.2 Significant progress has been made by the Children's Commissioning Consortium Cymru (4Cs) to improve the way local authorities commission looked after children (LAC) placement services. As well as significant cost savings, benefits include improved management information, consistent and secure collaborative tools and processes across authorities to facilitate individual placement matching, contract award and contract monitoring, collaborative risk management, and quality assurance of providers; sustained reduction in prices; and an environment of partnership with the independent sector to commission new sustainable care models. 4Cs has won two national awards (one Welsh, one UK wide) and been shortlisted for a third.

3.3 The Consortium's commissioning work has been commended by the Childrens Commissioner for Wales. Participation and Co-Production with young people with care experience is well embedded in all 4Cs developmental work. Year on year significant cost savings have been achieved as a result of the collaborative approach taken by 4Cs to placement commissioning. Participation in the 4Cs Consortium presents collaborative opportunities for children's social care within an acknowledged environment in which development and delivery of social care services is both complex and challenging.

3.4 **Key Facts**

The key facts are outlined below:

- £79 million per annum spent on independent sector LAC placements by 4Cs authorities
- Over the life of the current Placement Frameworks projected savings are £6.18 Million in actual cost avoidance, with potential cost avoidance being £10.68 Million.
- Non-framework placements are more expensive than Framework placements.
- When making placements in the independent sector, authorities increasingly place with Framework assured providers.
- 97% of independent foster care placements with framework providers.
- Overall in the 2014 Quality Performance Assessment the Foster Framework providers have 97% green and amber categories and Residential Framework Providers 98%.
- Over 91% of young people who responded to the 2014 Framework 360 Outcomes Survey felt their outcomes were being met by their placement most or all of the time.
- Significantly higher rates of concerns are reported by local authorities to the 4Cs regional commissioning unit in relation to non-framework providers leading to higher costs and higher rates of disruption.

3.5 **What is the 4Cs Framework?**

The Foster and Residential Frameworks provide a strategic procurement solution for independent sector Looked After Children (LAC) placement needs. For the life of the contract provider quality, cost per placement, terms conditions and specifications are determined and agreed. This has eliminated the need for a full procurement process for each and every placement and removed options of 'opportunistic' pricing which previously existed for some urgent requirements. It also rationalised processes for all participant authority ensuring a consistent placement process fit for purpose by focusing on the needs of the child. Local authorities have been able through the

Frameworks to match placement needs with providers at predetermined or improved prices through the individual placement matching process

3.6 **Commissioning New Solutions**

In preparation for the new collaborative Frameworks 4Cs has completed a regional needs and market analysis and agreed a regional Commissioning Strategy which sets out an ambitious joint agenda over the next few years for placement commissioning. Key objectives are to ensure:

- Outcomes and life chances of looked after children and young people are good
- A range of services which improve outcomes and meet the needs of vulnerable children and their families
- Value for money

3.7 The new Regional Commissioning Strategy, through the two new Frameworks will meet our anticipated placement requirements. Furthermore it will encourage new provision into Wales where gaps currently exist and facilitate strategic partnership with placement providers to develop new models of care which offer new solutions to placement issues, whilst delivering better outcomes and value for money. A new Commission based funding model will be applied to the new Frameworks generated by a small percentage of providers placement income to fund Framework contract management and quality assurance. The new Frameworks will have the option to run until 2022.

4. **EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY IMPLICATIONS**

4.1 An Equality Impact Assessment is not needed because the content of the report is for information purposes only.

5. **CONSULTATION**

5.1 Although the contents of this report have not been consulted on participation and co-production with young people with care experience is well embedded in all 4Cs developmental work.

6. **FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

6.1 There are no financial implications.

7. **LEGAL IMPLICATIONS OR LEGISLATION CONSIDERED**

7.1 The placement of children and young people that are looked after are regulated under the Fostering Services (Wales) Regulations 2003

8. LINKS TO THE COUNCIL'S CORPORATE PLAN/OTHER CORPORATE PRIORITIES/SIP

8.1 This has clear links to the priorities set out in the Rhondda Cynon Taf Single Integrated Plan. Children and Adult at risk are protected from harm.

9. CONCLUSION

9.1 The Framework in Wales Fostering and Residential LAC Placement Service has developed a consistent and efficient improvement in how placements are commissioned within the consortium authorities. The new Regional Commissioning Strategy will build on this work and further enhance this work, the result of which will be improved outcome focused placements for children and young people who are looked after.

Other Information:-

Relevant Scrutiny Committee – Children and Young People Scrutiny

LOCAL GOVERNMENT ACT 1972

AS AMENDED BY

THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT (ACCESS TO INFORMATION) ACT 1985

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Background Papers – none.

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