

**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 Tuesday 12<sup>th</sup> January, 2017 at 5 p.m.

**PRESENT**

County Borough Councillor C. Leyshon – in the Chair

**County Borough Councillors**

H. Boggis  
(Mrs) J Cass

P Jarman  
B. Stephens

L. Walker

**Co-opted Members**

Mr.J.Fish – Voting Elected Parent/Governor Representative

**Officers in Attendance**

Mr.G.Isingrini – Group Director, Community & Children’s Services  
Mr J. O’Brien – Head of Cwm Taf Youth Offending Services

**46. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

Apologies for absence were received from: County Borough Councillors (Mrs) J Bunnage, S. Evans- Fear, M.Griffiths, (Mrs) S.Jones, B. Morgan, G.Thomas, R. Turner

**47. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

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

#### **48. MINUTES**

**RESOLVED** – to approve as an accurate record the minutes of the meeting of the Children and Young People Scrutiny Committee held on the 8<sup>th</sup> November 2016.

### **REPORTS OF THE GROUP DIRECTOR, COMMUNITY & CHILDREN'S SERVICES**

#### **49. REPORT OF HEAD OF CWM TAF YOUTH OFFENDING SERVICE**

The Chair welcomed the Head of Cwm Taf Youth Offending Service and thanked him for his attendance.

The Head of Service took Members through his in depth report. He explained that the Cwm Taf Youth Offending Service is a statutory partnership legislated by the Crime and Disorder Act 1998 and provides services across two local authority areas, namely Rhondda Cynon Taf and Merthyr Tydfil. It was explained that the aim of the service is to prevent the offending and re-offending of children and young people.

The Head of Service explained that the National Standards for the Youth Justice Service are set by the Secretary of State for Justice on the advice from the Youth Justice Board for England and Wales (YJB). He explained that the standards apply to those organisations that provide a statutory youth justice service.

The Youth Justice Board has the responsibility to monitor adherence to National Standards on behalf of the Secretary of State and this is currently facilitated by each Y.O.S completing its own audit and self evaluation and random follow up visits by the YJB. He went on to explain that National Standards comprise of 10 key standards with secondary standards within each.

Members were informed that over the last three years the Youth Justice Board have requested that the service carry out a self audit of adherence to select standards, and for 2015 the service was required to carry out self audit on Preventing Offending, Out of Court Disposals and Work with Victims of Crime. It was explained at the Committee that more recently, the YOS has completed a full audit review (December 2016) which is shown in appendix 1 of the report which shows the evidence of progress between the initial audit of 2015 and most recent audit of December 2016.

The Head of Service explained that the YOS is currently carrying out a further audit of National Standards which is due for submission by 30<sup>th</sup> March 2017 and the findings of this audit will be reported in as soon as they become available.

In concluding his report the Head of Cwm Taf Youth Offending Service explained to Members that despite there being clear evidence of improvement, National Standards are the backbone of the Youth Justice practice, and so standards will continue to be monitored in line with the youth justice board expectations. The Youth Offending Service quality assurance group will continue to monitor adherence to each National Standard and report by exception to the YOS Management Board.

The Chair thanked the Officer for his report and handed over to members to put their questions forward.

A Member asked in regards to funding being on an annual basis and what effect does this have on the service as a whole. The Head of Service explained that funding is made available annually, however cuts have previously come midway through the year from the Youth Justice Board which only serves to increase challenging times and medium to longer term planning. There are numerous grants each year. He also explained funding the prevention service has been more secure for the last three to four years and this is generated from Welsh Government.

In respect of the YOS being notified of cases in police custody within 24 Hours a Member queried as what procedures were put in place over the weekend to protect the vulnerable young persons. The Officer explained that the Emergency Duty Team would be informed by the police and this is a 24 – 7 service and the first working day the process will be put in to practice by the YOS.

A Member commented that it was pleasing to see the positive outcomes however was concerned about the closing remarks relating to the loss of an operational manager which was a result of funding cuts within 2016. The Member also asked as to why the Youth Offending Service has not invested formally in the RJ council standards, Members were informed that it wouldn't actually improve the service but would give us recognition, the officer explained the cost would be in the region of £7000 which could be used in a more beneficial way to the service. In any event the YOS had tested itself against that standards and was able to evidence compliance and achievement.

A Member of the Committee commented that he was pleased to see a timely report. The Committee asked where on the rankings table does Cwm Taf sit in respects of performance. The Head of Cwm Taf Youth Offending Service explained that there isn't one made available at present but looking at the standards at this time we would be around at the top.

In respect of Restorative Justice Members asked what type of work is being done for the victims of crime. The Head of Cwm Taf Youth Offending Service explained to the Members of the Children and Young People Scrutiny Committee that a lot of work has been done with young people and the victims. He explained that all young people plans now contain a restorative element as part of their content. This has helped to significantly increase the amount of direct restorative interventions taking place across the service.

It was explained to Members that since October 2014 there have been several new reparation community projects set up to assist young people's engagement in restorative interventions and build community reassurance to victims. An update in December 2016 shows that the YOS continues to invest in the overall principle and values of restorative justice and there is evidence of a restorative approach within every intervention.

Members were informed that all victim work continues to be delivered in compliance with the Victim Code of Practice. The Head of Cwm Taf Youth Offending Service explained to Members that as an action from last year's National Standards Audit, the YOS has devised a formalised written agreement that provides evidence of direct restorative actions agreed between the young person and their victims.

In respect of funding for the future a Member questioned what percentage of the Public Service Budget will be invested in young offenders. Members felt that it would be an injustice to the service if cuts were to be made and would undo all the good work that has been done. Members agreed that a letter should be sent to the Minister for Justice on behalf of the Children and Young People Scrutiny Committee expressing their view.

Following discussion Committee **RESOLVED**:

- that the Chair and Group Director, Community & Children's Services meet to formalise a letter to send to the Minister for Justice and report back to Committee at a future date the response.
- to receive further reports following the completion of subsequent National Standards Audits.

These minutes are subject to approval at the next meeting