

**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 18th July 2018 at 5 p.m.

**PRESENT**

County Borough Councillor S Rees - Owen – in the Chair

**County Borough Councillors**

H. Boggis	J. Davies	G. Jones
J. Brencher	H. Fychan	W. Lewis
A. Calvert	M. Griffiths	M. Powell

**Others in Attendance**

County Borough Councillor S. Evans – Vice Chair of Overview & Scrutiny

**Co-opted Members**

Mr J. Fish – Voting Elected Parent/ Governor Representative

**Officers in Attendance**

Mrs G. Davies – Service Director for Access, Engagement and Inclusion  
Ms H Jeans – Principal Educational Psychologist  
Ms K Webster – Deputy Principal Educational Psychologist  
Mr A Wilkins - Head of Legal Corporate and Democratic Services

**7. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

Apologies for absence were received from: County Borough Councillors  
S.M Evans, J Harries, S. Powell, G. Stacey and Co- Opted Member Mr S. Emanuel

## **8. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

**RESOLVED** – that in accordance with Members Code of Conduct, there were no personal interests made at the meeting pertaining to the agenda.

## **9. MINUTES**

**RESOLVED** - To approve as an accurate record the Minutes of the Children and Young People Scrutiny Committee held on the 1<sup>st</sup> May 2018.

## **10. MATTERS ARISING**

A Member felt that the minutes did not capture all that was agreed in term of the WESP Report. It was agreed for this to be amended within the meeting in September.

## **11. OUTCOMES OF CHILDREN LOOKED AFTER (CLA) IN RCT DURING THE ACADEMIC YEAR 2016/17**

The Children and Young People Scrutiny Committee considered the report in respect of the Outcomes of Children Looked After (CLA) in RCT during 2016/17 which was presented to them by the Head of the Educational Psychology Service. Members were informed that the report provides Members with an update on the educational outcomes for Children Looked After in RCT during 2016-17. She explained that the Children Looked After Team within Access and Inclusion Service works in collaboration with schools, foster carers, Children's Services and other agencies to promote the educational outcomes, life chances and social inclusion of children who are looked after.

Members were provided with the current position for both national and local data. It was explained that there are different reporting mechanisms for these sets of data. It was brought to Members' attention that national data considers all looked after children regardless of where they are placed in their respective care placements. However local data reports relate to the children and young people who are looked

after and educated in Rhondda Cynon Taf only. The scope for making direct comparisons between local and national data sets is therefore restricted.

Members were presented with various graphs outlining both sets of data. The Head of the Educational Psychology Service explained the national data on the Welsh Government Stats Wales website, suggest that on 31<sup>st</sup> March 2017 there were 690 looked after children and young people within Rhondda Cynon Taf which suggests that the Local Authority has the second highest total number of children and young people and the highest number of statutory school aged children in Wales.

When concluding her report the Head of Educational Psychology Service along with the Deputy Head of the Service explained that the Local Authority will continue to monitor the outcome data for this vulnerable group of learners and will continue to focus on narrowing the attainment gap between these children and young people and their peer group so as to ensure that they achieve academic and personal success.

Members scrutinised the data within the report extensively and put forward their views and questions. In respect of the psychological and emotional changes which can adversely impact on the health and wellbeing of the children and young people, it was queried what the time scales were in relation to accessing appropriate intervention and support. Officers explained that the Welsh Adverse Childhood Experience Study (ACE) highlights that many of the children who are looked after have significant emotional and psychological challenges which can have a direct and immediate impact on their development. As a Local Authority we seek to respond to referrals as quickly as possible and to intervene early. It was agreed that further detail relating to responsiveness to referrals would be provided at a future meeting.

In respect of referrals, one Member asked if the committee could receive data on the number of referral made to the team from schools and social workers. It was agreed that Officers would provide this information at the next appropriate meeting.

Members asked for further information relating to the additional support provided by the CLA team and the generic support provided by the various Access and Inclusion Services. We have the figures for 2016/17 spend, what is the spend for 2018/19 in respect of outcomes for PDGLAG. It was agreed that Offices will come back with the data.

Members felt very passionate about the subject matter and questioned the officers in respect of outcomes PDG for CLA and the effect the Additional Learning Needs and Educational Tribunal (ALNET) Act will have on CLA. It was explained that the PDG for CLA model has changed significantly and that there was a designated officer within Central South Consortium (CSC) leading on this across the region. In addition, there is also an ALN Transformational Lead in CSC who will be invited to a future meeting to present on the planned reforms.

A Member raised concerns in respect of out of County placements and felt that the Committee would benefit from a more detailed breakdown of costs, including Social Worker's time etc to the Local Authority along with Social Workers time etc. It was highlighted that we would only place children out of county if a young person had specific needs that could not be met locally or in the event of an emergency. It was considered that this data would be presented by Children's Services as opposed to Education colleagues. . Members felt that when considering the report for 2018/19 it would be beneficial for Officers from Children's Services to also attend to answer any specific queries.

A Member asked for information regarding provision for Welsh speaking placements for Children Looked After. It was explained that every effort is made to find the right placement for the child and continuity in educational placement was paramount, including the medium of instruction. .

Members continued to scrutinise the report in depth and **RESOLVED:**

- Acknowledge the information contained within the report
- To receive a further data report on 2017/18 outcomes in June 2019 and invite officers from Children's Service to the meeting to answer any service related questions.
- To receive an overview from the lead officer regarding the ALNET Act at a future meeting

## **12. URGENT ITEMS**

The Chair explained to Members that the concerns raised by Members in respect of the School Attendance Review will be brought to Committee in September for discussion.

Meeting Closed at 6:15pm

Cllr S. Rees Owen

(Chair)