



**RHONDDA CYNON TAF COUNTY BOROUGH COUNCIL**

**MUNICIPAL YEAR 2019-20**

**CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE'S  
SCRUTINY COMMITTEE**

**DATE 12<sup>TH</sup> FEBRUARY 2020**

**REPORT OF THE GROUP DIRECTOR,  
COMMUNITY AND CHILDREN'S  
SERVICES**

**Agenda Item No. 5**

**COMMUNITY WELLBEING AND  
RESILIENCE SERVICE AND THE  
DELIVERY OF EARLY YEARS  
SERVICES IN RCT**

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**1. PURPOSE OF THE REPORT**

- 1.1 To brief Members on the recent changes to the Council's Community Wellbeing and Resilience Service and the progress made to date in transforming the delivery of Early Years services in RCT.

**2. RECOMMENDATIONS**

It is recommended that Members:

- 2.1 Scrutinise and comment on the information contained in this report.
- 2.2 Consider whether they wish to scrutinise in further depth any matters contained in this report.

**3. BACKGROUND**

- 3.1 Over the last three years RCT has been involved in a number of regional initiatives with Welsh Government that have been overseen by the Cwm Taf Public Service Board. In November 2017 the Cwm Taf Public Service Board agreed to work with the Welsh Government to undertake a joint collaborative approach to redesigning Early Years arrangements across RCT and Merthyr. The Early Years Co-construction Board was established in December 2017 and was tasked to:
- Explore how early years services might be re-configured within existing budgets
  - Explore what it will take to create an Early Years system locally (0-7 years)
  - Work together to deliver services in a co-ordinated, integrated and timely way, including effective transition between services
  - Focus on improving the co-ordination of services, planning, commissioning and identifying and addressing needs
  - Identify barriers to integration and remove them
- 3.2 A paper was presented to the Public Service Board on 17<sup>th</sup> July 2018 outlining a proposal to align the work of the Early Years Co-construction Project with the Children's First initiative (the development of Community Zones) and the Funding Flexibilities Pathfinder (the development of a single funding stream that included Flying Start and Families First alongside another eight grants) under the regional vision of '**Providing the right support, to the right people, at the right time, in the right place**'.
- 3.3 The Public Service Board unanimously agreed the proposals within the paper and instructed Officers to begin implementing the following developments:
- A **single integrated approach** to early intervention is developed across Cwm Taf that focuses on the principles of building of resilience; applies vulnerability profiling data to support the targeting of services; delivers an integrated Early Years system through improved collaboration on approaches to TAF.
  - An **Early Years Vulnerability Profile** (0-7 years) is developed to identify the level of need of families and piloted in RCT as an alternative to the geographically based eligibility criteria of Flying Start.
  - A **Single Outcomes Framework** is developed and subsequently adopted and implemented across all partner organisations.
  - That the new model is **accessible by service users through the Community Zones** being developed in the Gurnos and Rhondda Fach.
  - That any future approach is sufficiently resourced and maximises budgets within **Funding Flexibilities** and challenges the use and alignment of core budgets.
  - That the integrated approach is supported by a **shared approach to workforce development** across Cwm Taf.
- 3.4 In order to implement these developments as instructed by the Public Service Board, the reorganisation of the RCT Early Years and Family Support Service as part of the wider Community Wellbeing and Resilience Service was required to deliver an integrated Early Years system for 0-7 year olds across RCT that is fully aligned with the Resilient Families Service to deliver the right support at the right time.
- 3.5 Following a comprehensive management of change process, the new structure was implemented in April 2019 and provides the means to deliver an open access / universal

offer to children and families that can deliver targeted enhanced and specialist support to those who need it most.

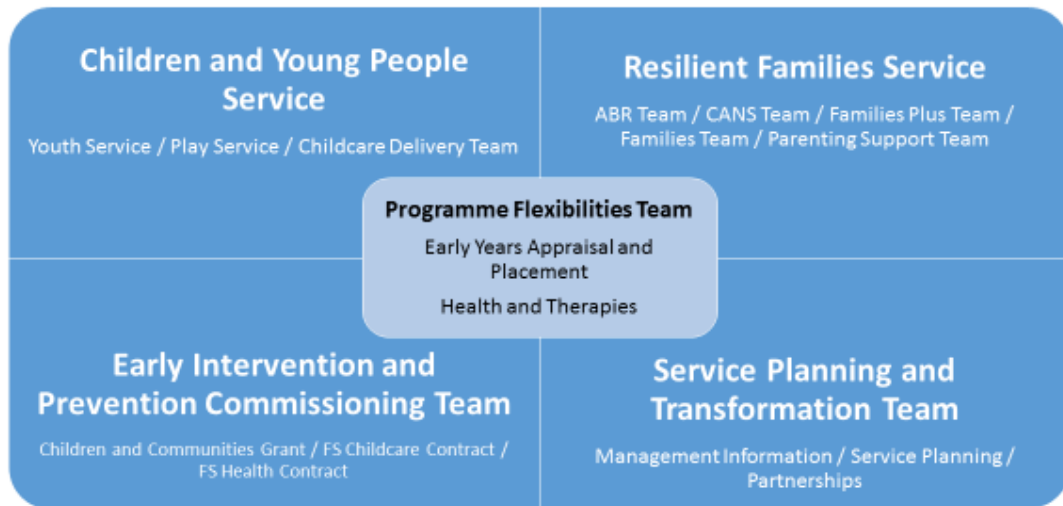
3.6 In addition to the internal reorganisation of Early Years and Family Support Services, following approval from the Council's Cabinet in July 2019, a proposal has been submitted to Welsh Government to make changes to the way in which Flying Start Services are delivered in RCT. Further details are presented in Section 5 of this report.

#### 4. **FUNCTIONS OF THE COMMUNITY WELLBEING AND RESILIENCE SERVICE**

4.1 To facilitate a single integrated early intervention approach, the structure of the Community Wellbeing and Resilience Service integrates the main functions of Early Years within existing models of delivery of both universal and enhanced services to children, young people and families. This ensures a level of continuity and services delivered more equitably across RCT whilst at the same time ensuring front line service delivery is supported by robust service planning, business support and commissioning processes enabling the Community Wellbeing and Resilience Service to be a fully data driven service.

4.2 The Community Wellbeing and Resilience Service sits within the Community and Children's Services Group and comprises of five service areas / teams from both Children's Services and Public Health, Protection and Community Services, as set out in the diagram below:

### Community Wellbeing and Resilience Service Structure



4.3 The **Children and Young People Service** sits within Children's Services and seeks to provide support and opportunities for children and young people aged 0-25 years to meet their developmental milestones, build their resilience and exercise their rights. It is made up of three teams:

4.3.1 **Youth Engagement and Participation Service** is the Council's Youth Service that supports young people aged 11-25 to improve their resilience to deal with current and future challenges, supporting their wellbeing and their positive engagement in and contribution to the communities in which they live.

4.3.2 The **Play Service** team works alongside a range of partner organisations to provide play opportunities for children and young people aged 5-14 across RCT and also support children and young people who face barriers, to access play opportunities in their local communities. They also oversee the delivery of the Play Sufficiency Assessment (PSA) Action Plan working alongside partner organisations.

4.3.3 The **Childcare Delivery Team** provides childcare across the Council's five Nursery settings (Pontypridd, Penrhys, Aman, Tylorstown and Ynyscynon), manages the three Children and Family Centres (Rhydfelin, Penrhys and Aman), monitors the quality of childcare across all Flying Start settings and provides training and development to these settings.

4.4 The **Resilient Families Service** sits within Children's Services and seeks to provide early intervention support to build the resilience of families and prevent them from requiring statutory intervention. Social Worker led, his service delivers enhanced Team Around the Family (TAF) arrangements in RCT and is made up of five teams:

4.4.1 The **Assessment Brokerage and Review Team** undertakes assessments with all families referred to the Service, creates an individual plan for every family plan and reviews the plan to ensure the work has been done. Roles in this team include Engagement and Assessment Officers who are responsible for engaging families and undertaking assessments on behalf of the whole service and Brokerage and Review Officers who are responsible for building and reviewing family plans and managing professionals and services delivering elements of these plans.

4.4.2 The **Families Plus Team** works with families that are close to the Children's Service threshold for intervention and require intensive support to reduce the level of risk within the family. Intervention Workers provide intensive support to families to focus on relationships within the family and networks within their community.

4.4.3 The **Children with Additional Needs Service (CANS)** works with any family where the learning, physical or neuro-developmental needs of a child within the family is impacting on family life. Intervention Workers provide intensive support to families to focus on relationships within the family and networks within their community.

4.4.4 The **Parenting Support Team** focuses on working with parents and children to develop early language and communication skills through play as well as supporting families to develop their parenting skills to manage their children's needs in a productive and positive way. Previously both parenting support and early language and communication services were only available for a small percentage of children and families living in particular geographical areas in RCT, via the Flying Start Programme. Now these services are universally available to any children and families in RCT who require it, via the Resilient Families Service.

4.4.5 The **Families Team East and West** works with families that require support to improve the quality of family life. Intervention Workers employed by Barnardos provide intensive support to families to focus on relationships within the family and networks within their community.

4.5 The **Programme Flexibilities Team** sits within Children's Services and provides specialist support to both the Resilient Families Service and the Children and Young People's Service. This specialist support includes providing childcare places as part of the package of support for families referred to the Resilient Families Service and providing specialist appraisal, assessment and therapeutic intervention. The specialism within this Team was previously only available to a small percentage of children and families living in particular geographical areas in RCT, as part of the Flying Start Programme. Now this specialism is available to any children and families in RCT who require it, via the Resilient Families Service and the Children and Young People's Service. The Programme Flexibilities Team comprises:

- Early Years System Appraiser
- Placement Advisory Officer
- RFS Specialist Health Visitors
- RFS Community Nursery Nurses
- Educational Psychologist
- Assistant Educational Psychologist
- Speech and Language Therapist
- Occupational Therapist

4.6 The **Early Intervention and Prevention Commissioning Team** sits within Public Health, Protection and Community Services and has responsibility for the commissioning of both internal and external early intervention and prevention services using the new £13.5M Children and Communities Grant and ensuring that these services comply with their contracts and deliver the agreed outcomes. The team is also responsible for managing the contracts of the Flying Start childcare providers and has begun the process of joint commissioning across services and rationalising contracts for providers.

4.7 The **Service Planning and Transformation Team** sits within Public Health, Protection and Community Services and manages the statutory functions of the Community Wellbeing and Resilience Service, the collection analysis and dissemination of all performance and outcome data, the business planning and the management of private public and third sector partners involved in the delivery of the Resilient Families Programme. It also manages the development of Vulnerability Profiling on behalf of the whole Council and the use of the Capita One System across the wider Service. This Team is leading on the creation of an Early Years Vulnerability Profile on behalf of Welsh Government to facilitate the early identification of children aged 0-7 who are at risk of not meeting the developmental milestones necessary to progress effectively through the early years as a result of the socio-economic and health factors they and or their families face. This Profile will provide the means to identify the level of need of families as a potential alternative to geographically based Flying Start criteria in the delivery of an integrated Early Years system for 0-7 year olds.

## **5. DELIVERING A TRANSFORMED EARLY YEARS SYSTEM IN RCT**

5.1 Flying Start was launched by the Welsh Government in 2007 aiming to make a decisive difference to the life chances of children aged under 4 in the most deprived areas of Wales. Flying Start eligible areas are identified using the Lower Super Output Area (LSOA) data as set out in the Wales Index of Multiple Deprivation. Traditionally in RCT

this has meant that communities are divided between streets eligible for this enhanced support and those that are not. The Flying Start programme comprises four core elements that have been traditionally delivered in RCT in the following ways:

**Parenting** - formal parenting programmes for parents with children aged 0-4 years living in Flying Start postcode areas

**Early Language and Communication** – support for children in childcare settings and support for parents to encourage early language development of children aged 0-4 years living in Flying Start postcode areas

**Health Visiting** – enhanced and specialist Health Visiting interventions for children aged 0-4 years and their families living in Flying Start postcode areas only

**Childcare** - Children living within eligible postcode areas are entitled to receive free childcare for 12.5 hours per week for up to 42 weeks of the year from the term following their second birthday until the end of the term following their third birthday.

5.2 Collaborative working with Welsh Government, Merthyr Tydfil CBC and Cwm Taf Morgannwg University Health Board, through the Cwm Taf Early Years Co-construction Board, resulted in RCT realising that in order to transform the Early Years system in RCT changes needed to be made to the way in which we delivered the Flying Start programme to extend the reach of specialist Flying Start services to any family in RCT who needed it. Set out below are the changes required to each strand of Flying Start in order to deliver a needs based model that is not confined to geographical boundaries and the progress made in implementing these changes.

5.2.1 **Parenting** – A universal Parenting Offer was implemented in April 2018, making support available for any parents in RCT with a child up to the age of 18 years and specialist support for parents with children with additional needs. Any family in need of parenting support can engage in open access provision, informal parenting support or formal parenting programmes, all delivered from community venues. This has recently been improved further by establishing the Parenting Support Team as part of the Resilient Families Service, offering parenting support as part of a comprehensive package of family support.

5.2.2 **Early Language and Communication** - This support has been revised and is now universally available and delivered as a targeted early intervention for children identified as experiencing language delay following a Wellcomm assessment. The Wellcomm assessments will be undertaken with all children aged 21 months in RCT as part of the proposed revised Health Visiting model. Aligning the delivery of this strand to the Resilient Families Service, as part of the Parenting Support Team, has resulted in early language and communication support being available for children up to the age of 7 years.

5.2.3 **Health Visiting** – It is proposed that the RCT Family Health Visiting Programme is implemented to ensure all families across RCT, with children aged 0-5 years, will be given the opportunity to access an appropriate level of Health Visiting interventions regardless of geographical location. This new Programme has been developed with Health colleagues, which if approved, will pilot the delivery of a needs based Health Visiting service across RCT. The interventions offered by

this programme will feed into the other three pillars of Flying Start, offering additional assessments that will identify additional support needs in a timely manner and will offer access to wider early years and family support, regardless of the geographical location of the family. Supporting the ongoing delivery of the national Health Child Wales Programme, the RCT Family Health Visiting Programme will provide an enhanced and intensive support to all children and families who need it across RCT. This proposed pilot has been presented to and authorised by the Executive Board within Cwm Taf Morgannwg UHB.

5.2.4 **Childcare** – It is proposed that over the next three years RCT moves to a needs based model of providing funded childcare for 2-3 year olds as part of a co-ordinated package of support to families via the Resilient Families Service. It would need to take a phased approach to ensure the existing childcare offer to families within Flying Start geographical areas is honoured.

5.3 To support the move to a needs based model of delivery it is necessary to ensure we are able to be proactive in identifying the potential needs of families at the earliest opportunity. Based on the successful development of Vulnerability Profiling in RCT we are currently leading on the creation of an Early Years Vulnerability Profile on behalf of Welsh Government to facilitate the early identification of children aged 0-7 who are at risk of not meeting the developmental milestones necessary to progress effectively through the early years as a result of the socio-economic and health factors they and or their families face. This Profile will provide the means to identify the level of need of families as a potential alternative to geographically based Flying Start criteria in the delivery of an integrated Early Years system for 0-7 year olds.

5.4 The Council's Cabinet endorsed the proposals to transform the Early Years System in RCT in July 2019 including approving the plan to adopt a phased approach to providing funded childcare based on assessed need that is not limited to existing Flying Start postcode areas. Cabinet Members also approved the submission of a formal proposal to Welsh Government seeking Ministerial support to pilot further changes to the Early Years system in relation to the introduction of a needs based approach for childcare and changes to health visiting.

5.5 Following requests from Welsh Government for additional information, the formal request for Ministerial approval was submitted in December 2019.

## **6. EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY IMPLICATIONS**

6.1 An Equality Impact Assessment Screening Form has been prepared in respect of the transformation of the Early Years System in RCT. The screening has identified that due to the phased approach the changes to the delivery model have limited impact on children and families therefore a full Equality Impact Assessment would not be required at this time.

## **7. CONSULTATION**

7.1 Consultation with parents and families was undertaken prior to the implementation of a universal parenting offer across RCT in April 2018. At this time parents reported wanting to see more informal support tailored to their needs that they could access in their local communities. They also requested support for specific elements of parenting such as

managing behaviour and supporting the educational needs of their children. Further consultation is ongoing on an informal basis with those families who have received parenting support as part of the Resilient Families Service.

- 7.2 A strategy will be put in place to support communication of the changes to the Early Years System in RCT to parents and families once Ministerial approval is received. As well as the usual mechanisms for the dissemination of information via leaflets, website and social media platforms, all families with children under the age of 5 will receive information via Health Visitors.
- 7.3 Consultation with partners including; health, education, housing providers, childcare and play providers, and third sector organisations takes place on a termly basis via the Resilient Families Service Provider Network Meetings, and also on a one to one basis during contract monitoring visits. All commissioned partners are signed up to providing universal access to family support services as set out in the Council's Resilient Families Programme.
- 7.4 Full consultation on both the new Community Wellbeing and Resilience Service structure and the transformation proposals for the delivery of future Early Years Services was undertaken with staff in January 2019 as part of the Council's Management of Change process.

## **8. FINANCIAL IMPLICATION(S)**

- 8.1 The cost of all transformation activity is being met from existing grant funding as part of the new Children and Communities Grant. The creation of the Children and Communities Grant is providing far more flexibility than the Council has previously had to resource current provision and future initiatives to meet identified gaps.
- 8.2 As with any transitional period there will be budget pressures until the new Early Years system is fully implemented. However financial re-profiling of the existing Flying Start grant has facilitated the reallocation of money within the grant to support the needs based delivery of Flying Start interventions.

## **9. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS OR LEGISLATION CONSIDERED**

- 9.1 There are no legal implications arising from these proposals; however consultation with Welsh Government is ongoing via both the Cwm Taf Early Years Co-construction Board and the Funding Flexibilities Pathfinder Programme to ensure transformation proposals do not contravene grant funding conditions.
- 9.2 The following legislation has been considered in relation to the development of these proposals:

### **The Social Services and Wellbeing (Wales) Act 2014:**

- Putting an individual and their needs, at the centre of their care, and giving them a voice in, and control over reaching the outcomes that help them achieve well-being
- Supporting people to achieve their own well-being and measuring the success of this care and support
- Increasing preventative services within the community to minimise the escalation of critical need



- Strong partnership working between all agencies and organisations.

**The Well Being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015:**

- A more equal Wales
- A resilient Wales
- A healthier Wales

**10. LINKS TO THE CORPORATE AND NATIONAL PRIORITIES AND THE WELL-BEING OF FUTURE GENERATIONS ACT**

10.1 The implementation of the new Early Years System for RCT will contribute to the Council's corporate priority to 'promote independence and positive lives for everyone' in the following ways;

- Redesigned local services - integrated and efficient
- Rhondda Cynon Taf's children and young people will receive a great start in life

10.2 The Early Years System has been developed in full consideration of the sustainable development principles. The proposal will also support the Council to contribute to all of the seven well-being goals:-

- **A prosperous Wales:** children who receive support at the earliest opportunity are more prepared for adulthood and achieving prosperous futures.
- **A resilient Wales:** children who are given every opportunity to meet their developmental milestones and overcome barriers to developing skills are prepared with the space to grow and the tools to build resilience throughout life.
- **A healthier Wales:** access to enhanced support that is not restricted by geographical boundaries supports all children who need it to meet their developmental milestones and develop social skills, enhancing their emotional wellbeing.
- **A more equal Wales:** by delivering services based on an assessment of need as opposed to being limited by geographically based eligibility criteria ensures that those children and families most in need of support have access to it irrespective of where they live.
- **A Wales of cohesive Communities:** access to services that are not restricted to particular communities promotes equality and harmony across communities and the means to share community resources in order to be responsive to need and build resilience.
- **A Wales of vibrant culture and thriving Welsh language:** children who are given the freedom to progress through the early years in the language of their choice learn to be tolerant and accepting, preparing them for a multi-racial, globalised adult world.
- **A globally responsible Wales:** children who have access to effective early years opportunities are afforded experiences that prepare them to be globally responsible adults.

## 11. **CONCLUSION**

- 11.1 This report has provided Members with details of the recent changes to the Council's Community Wellbeing and Resilience Service and the progress made to date in transforming the delivery of Early Years services in RCT to deliver the right support to the right people at the right time.