

RHONDDA CYNON TAF COUNTY BOROUGH COUNCIL

CORPORATE PARENTING BOARD

MUNICIPAL YEAR 2014 - 2015

CORPORATE PARENTING BOARD

22ND SEPTEMBER 2014

Agenda Item No: 3

**Directors' and Elected Members'
Visits to Front-Line Teams in
Children's Services 2013-14**

Author: Andrew Gwynn, Service Director for Children's Services
Community and Children's Services
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1. PURPOSE OF THE REPORT

- 1.1 To consider the reports of visits to front-line teams by the Group Director, Community and Children's Services, the Service Director, Children and Families and by Elected Members.

2. RECOMMENDATIONS

- 2.1 That members note the content of the report.
- 2.2 That the Corporate Parenting Board identify the Elected Members who will undertake quarterly visits to front-line teams over the next twelve months.

3. BACKGROUND

- 3.1.1 The Corporate Parenting Board has established a systematic process for ensuring that the Director of Social Services, the Service Director and members, undertake regular visits to front-line teams in children's services and report on their findings to the Corporate Parenting Board. This is consistent both with recommendation 41 of the Victoria Climbié Report and with a previous CSSIW safeguarding inspection report recommendation.

4. KEY ISSUES

- 4.1 A number of visits have taken place since the previous report to members on 18th July 2013. These visits were undertaken as relatively open meetings to enable informal dialogue with staff. It is noted that this list is not an exhaustive

account of meetings with front line staff but that it does set out those undertaken under the auspices of the policy.

Teams visited date	Visited by
Taff Ely Principal Office, 12.010.2013	Councillor Annette Davies
Taff Ely Principal Office, 15.10.2013	Councillor Margaret Davies
Cynon Principal Office, 20.01.2014	Andrew Gwynn
Taff Ely Principal Office, 29.01.2014	Andrew Gwynn
Rhondda Principal Office, 11.03.2014	Councillor Annette Davies
Rhondda Principal Office, 11.03.2014	Councillor Margaret Davies
Cynon Principal Office, 09.04.2014	Councillor Annette Davies
Rhondda Principal Office .06.05.2014	Andrew Gwynn

The full reports of these visits are attached at Appendix I.

As can be seen from the list and from the reports themselves, the visits took place in a number of settings across the three principal areas of the borough and included good staff representation. Among the key messages that the reports highlight are the following:-

Increases in demand and workloads – the concerns of staff and managers in relation to this issue are recognised and acknowledged; referrals between April 2011-March 2012 and April 2013-March 2014 increased by 24%. (From - 2767 - 3441) and this has been separately reported to members.

The Rhondda Office visit identified concerns arising out of changes to the Family Justice System and the more robust approach being taken in the Cardiff and Valleys courts with tighter deadlines for completing complex court related work. Some staff reported that greater access to laptops would assist them in managing the workloads. A number of laptops have now been purchased for each Principal Office.

- **Staff vacancies and absences** – were a concern in some teams and offices. A number of new senior practitioners and social workers have recently been appointed and a workforce task and finish group is currently meeting and is developing a workforce strategy for Children's Services.
- **Commitment of staff** – despite the pressures, staff remained committed to their work with children and were positive about doing their best for the children and young people they work with and improving services.

The Corporate Parenting Board is invited to identify the Elected Members who will undertake quarterly visits to front-line teams over the next twelve months.

**Report of Director or Elected Member Visit to Front-line Service within
Children's Services (VCR Recommendation 41)**

Matters to be considered	Visit details and outcomes	Additional Comments including any follow up action required or taken
Individual(s) visiting setting	Councillors Mrs Annette Davies Councillor Margaret Davies	
Author of report	Councillor Annette Davies	
Date of Visit	15.10.2013	
Date of Report		
Date reported to CPB		
Setting Visited	Taff Ely District Office	
General description of visit – e.g. number of staff (approx) involved in meeting visitor; number spoken to and engaged in discussion; whether the visit involved service users and/or carers	I seen approximately twenty two staff	
Positive messages gathered from visit		
Concerning messages gathered from visit	Increasing workload	
Were there any safeguarding concerns and if so what were they?	None	
Were there any concerns regarding the level of service being provided and if so what?	Social Workers thought laptops could help in situation	
Were there any other concerns?	None	
Have all visitors to the setting agreed this report and are there any differences of opinion to record.		

Copy to team, establishment, manager, worker, etc

Date

Position *Cabinet Member
Children's Social Services*

Signature *A. Davies*

Date: *15/10/2013*

**Report of Director or Elected Member Visit to Front-line Service within
Children's Services (VOT Recommendation 41)**

Matters to be considered	Visit details and outcomes	Additional Comments including any follow up action required or taken
Individual(s) visiting setting	Councillors Mrs Annette Davies Councillor Margaret Davies	
Author of report	Councillor Margaret Davies	
Date of Visit	15.10.2013	
Date of Report	15.10.2013	
Date reported to CPB	n/a	
Setting Visited	Pontypridd S/s Offices	
General description of visit – e.g. number of staff (approx) involved in meeting visitor; number spoken to and engaged in discussion; whether the visit involved service users and/or carers	Approximately twenty two members of staff, all spoken to. Staff were very busy but very pleasant to us.	
Positive messages gathered from visit	All positive	
Concerning messages gathered from visit	None	
Were there any safeguarding concerns and if so what were they?	No	
Were there any concerns regarding the level of service being provided and if so what?	No	
Were there any other concerns?	No	
Have all visitors to the setting agreed this report and are there any differences of opinion to record.	Yes	

Copy to team, establishment, manager, worker, etc

Date

Position *COUNCILOR OF PONTYPRIDD
CHILDREN'S SERVICES*

Signature

M. E. James

Date: 15.10.2013

**Report of Director or Elected Member Visit to Front-line Service within
Children's Services (VCI Recommendation 41)**

Matters to be considered	Visit details and outcomes	Additional Comments including any follow up action required or taken
Individual(s) visiting setting	Service Director	
Author of report	A Gwynn	
Date of Visit	20.01.2014	
Date of Report		
Date reported to CPB		
Setting Visited	Cynon Principal Office	
General description of visit – e.g. number of staff (approx) involved in meeting visitor; number spoken to and engaged in discussion; whether the visit involved service users and/or carers	Met with the Service Manager, then with each Team and Team Manager and Business Support staff.	
Positive messages gathered from visit	Committed and positive staff doing their best for the children and young people they work with.	
Concerning messages gathered from visit	Some concern expressed about the difficulties being experienced in filling vacant posts and the accommodation.	
Were there any safeguarding concerns and if so what were they?	No	
Were there any concerns regarding the level of service being provided and if so what?	No	
Were there any other concerns?	None	
Have all visitors to the setting agreed this report and are there any differences of opinion to record.		


Copy to team, establishment, manager, worker, etc

Date

Position Service Director

Signature
Date:

ARF
27/14



**Report of Director or Elected Member Visit to Front-line Service within
Children's Services (VCI Recommendation 41)**

Matters to be considered	Visit details and outcomes	Additional Comments including any follow up action required or taken
Individual(s) visiting setting	Service Director	
Author of report	A Gwynn	
Date of Visit	29.01.2014	
Date of Report		
Date reported to CPB	22.9.2014	
Setting Visited	Taff Ely Principal Office	
General description of visit – e.g. number of staff (approx) involved in meeting visitor; number spoken to and engaged in discussion; whether the visit involved service users and/or carers	General introductory visit. Met with Service Manager then visited each team in turn. All ACP Teams, Aftercare and RIRT.	
Positive messages gathered from visit	All staff committed to, and spoke positively about their work and wishing to do their best for the young people and families they work with.	
Concerning messages gathered from visit	A number of vacancies and absences were noted.	
Were there any safeguarding concerns and if so what were they?	None	
Were there any concerns regarding the level of service being provided and if so what?		
Were there any other concerns?	None	
Have all visitors to the setting agreed this report and are there any differences of opinion to record.		

Copy to team, establishment, manager, worker, etc

Date

Position Service Director
Date:

Signature

A.V. G...
5/9/14.

**Report of Director or Elected Member Visit to Front-line Service within
Children's Services (VCI Recommendation 41)**

Corporate Parenting Board Agenda - 22 September 2014

Matters to be considered	Visit details and outcomes	Additional Comments including any follow up action required or taken
Individual(s) visiting setting	Councillors Mrs Annette Davies Councillor Margaret Davies	
Author of report	Councillor Annette Davies	
Date of Visit	11.03.2014	
Date of Report		
Date reported to CPB		
Setting Visited	Rhondda S/S	
General description of visit – e.g. number of staff (approx) involved in meeting visitor; number spoken to and engaged in discussion; whether the visit involved service users and/or carers	We saw approximately twenty five staff and had a conversation with eleven	
Positive messages gathered from visit	Staff committed to their work	
Concerning messages gathered from visit		
Were there any safeguarding concerns and if so what were they?	The Police response is the same, not good at times	
Were there any concerns regarding the level of service being provided and if so what?	There are concerns regarding amount of paper work and the amount of time it takes	
Were there any other concerns?	None	
Have all visitors to the setting agreed this report and are there any differences of opinion to record.	The report has been seen by Councillors before submitting	

Copy to team, establishment, manager, worker, etc

Date

Position *Cabinet Member*
Children's Social Services

Signature *A. Davies*

Date: *11.3.2014*

**Report of Director or Elected Member Visit to Front-line Service within
Children's Services (VCI Recommendation 41)**

Matters to be considered	Visit details and outcomes	Additional Comments including any follow up action required or taken
Individual(s) visiting setting	Councillors Mrs Annette Davies Councillor Margaret Davies	
Author of report	Councillor Margaret Davies	
Date of Visit	11.03.2014	
Date of Report	11.03.2014	
Date reported to CPB		
Setting Visited	Children Services Tonypanyd	
General description of visit – e.g. number of staff (approx) involved in meeting visitor; number spoken to and engaged in discussion; whether the visit involved service users and/or carers	Visit to Children services offices in Tonypanyd. We met about ten staff and two members on university placement. All staff were happy in their environment, but many had heavy workloads	
Positive messages gathered from visit	Staff were relatively happy in their work	
Concerning messages gathered from visit	There were no concerned messages apart from some staff had heavy workloads	
Were there any safeguarding concerns and if so what were they?	No Safe guarding concerns	
Were there any concerns regarding the level of service being provided and if so what?	No concerns regarding level of service	
Were there any other concerns?	None	
Have all visitors to the setting agreed this report and are there any differences of opinion to record.		

Copy to team, establishment, manager, worker, etc

Date

CHIEF OF SECRETARY
Position *CHILDREN SERVICES*

Signature

M/E Small

Date: *11.3.2014*

**Report of Director or Elected Member Visit to Front-line Service within
Children's Services (V&I Recommendation 41)**

Corporate Reporting Board Agenda 22 September 2014

Matters to be considered	Visit details and outcomes	Additional Comments including any follow up action required or taken
Individual(s) visiting setting	Councillors Mrs Annette Davies	
Author of report	Councillor Annette Davies	
Date of Visit	09.04.2014	
Date of Report		
Date reported to CPB		
Setting Visited	Ty Caradog, Aberaman S/S	
General description of visit – e.g. number of staff (approx) involved in meeting visitor; number spoken to and engaged in discussion; whether the visit involved service users and/or carers	I seen about twenty staff and engaged in conversation	
Positive messages gathered from visit	Safe guarding Children was paramount	
Concerning messages gathered from visit	Limited staff	
Were there any safeguarding concerns and if so what were they?		
Were there any concerns regarding the level of service being provided and if so what?	A few things were brought up relating to the building and room space	
Were there any other concerns?	None	
Have all visitors to the setting agreed this report and are there any differences of opinion to record.		

Copy to team, establishment, manager, worker, etc

Date

Position *Cabinet Member*
Children's Social Services

Signature *A. Davies*

Date: *9/4/2014*

**Report of Director or Elected Member Visit to Front-line Service within
Children's Services (VCI Recommendation 41)**

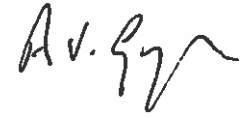
Matters to be considered	Visit details and outcomes	Additional Comments including any follow up action required or taken
Individual(s) visiting setting	Service Director	
Author of report	A Gwynn	
Date of Visit	06.05.2014	
Date of Report		
Date reported to CPB	22.9.2014	
Setting Visited	Rhondda Principal Office	
General description of visit – e.g. number of staff (approx) involved in meeting visitor; number spoken to and engaged in discussion; whether the visit involved service users and/or carers	Met with Service Manager and Team Managers. Then visited each Team in turn speaking to front line staff and business support. Approximately 25 – 30 staff	
Positive messages gathered from visit	Enthusiastic staff committed to improving services to young people and their families.	
Concerning messages gathered from visit	Concern expressed about the increasing volume of work and the impact of the new PLO.	
Were there any safeguarding concerns and if so what were they?	No	
Were there any concerns regarding the level of service being provided and if so what?	As above	
Were there any other concerns?	None	
Have all visitors to the setting agreed this report and are there any differences of opinion to record.		

Copy to team, establishment, manager, worker, etc

Date

Position Service Director

Signature



Date:

5/9/14.

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