

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 12th September 2018 at 5 p.m.

PRESENT

County Borough Councillor W. Lewis – in the Chair

County Borough Councillors

H. Boggis	H. Fychan	G. Jones
A. Calvert	M. Griffiths	M. Powell
J. Davies	L. Hopper	S. Powell

Non – Committee Members in attendance

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

Co-opted Members

Mr J. Fish – Voting Elected Parent/ Governor Representative
Mr S. Emanuel - Voting Elected Parent/ Governor Representative
D. Price – Representing UNISON

Officers in Attendance

Ms C. Prosser – Head of Service
Ms C. Tyler – Service Development Officer
Mr P Nicholls – Head of Legal – Litigation, Planning & Environment,
Community and Children’s Services
Ms E. Rees - Service User, Engagement and Complaints Officer
Ms N. Kingham - Business Manager Cwm Taf Safeguarding Board

13. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from: County Borough Councillor J. Brencher, S. Evans, J. Harries, S. Rees- Owen and G. Stacey

14. 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.

15. MINUTES

RESOLVED to approve as an accurate record the minutes of the Children and Young People Scrutiny Committee held on the 11th July 2018.

16. CWM TAF ANNUAL SAFEGUARDING BOARD ANNUAL REPORT 2017/18

The Business Manager Cwm Taf Safeguarding Board presented the Annual Report 2017/18 for the Cwm Taf Safeguarding Board (Children, Adults and the Multi Agency Safeguarding Hub (MASH) to the Committee.

It was explained to Members that safeguarding involves both the protection and prevention of children and adults at risk from abuse, neglect or other kinds of harm.

The Business Manager Cwm Taf Safeguarding Board highlighted the work that the Safeguarding Board undertook during 2017/18. Members were informed that a review of the adult and children safeguarding processes and the thresholds for decision making within the MASH was carried out. This has provided the Board with a better understanding of where there are perceived differences between the two local authorities and how partner agencies can work together to overcome barriers that may cause delays in decision making.

Members were presented with the key points in the report relating to Children and Young People. Members scrutinised the report in great detail and put forward their questions.

A Member asked what work is being done with regards to the transition from Children's Service in to Adult Services as previously it has been an area that has been problematic. Officers explained that there have been lessons learned from two

published Child/ Adult Practice Reviews which identified a need to ensure that the transition to adulthood for young people is managed more effectively to reduce the risk of harm. It was explained that a multi agency task and finish group was set up to consider the development of a Cwm Taf transition policy , however it was felt that a set of principles would be more appropriate for agency to adopt. Officers agreed to report back to Members when the work is completed.

A Member raised concerns over vast difference in the figures of children on the Child Protection Register compared to Merthyr; another Member commented does the figure reflect population, difference between the boroughs. Officers explained they would come back to the committee with the information.

Members asked in relation to the CLA out of county placements how we are monitoring this, and do you have any inform form Welsh Government. It was reported that any child that is placed out of County is monitored by the Placement Panel on a weekly basis to ensure that the placement is right for the child.

Members were informed of the increase in the advocacy services with the Borough for people who need support. It was explained that there is advocacy support available for both adult and children which enables them to participate in the safeguarding process. Members asked for more information relating to the advocacy services available for the children and young people within the Authority. Members asked for figures separating children and adults receiving advocacy services. Offices will provide this information at a later meeting of the Committee.

After greater consideration of the report Members **RESOLVED** to:

- Acknowledge the content of the report
- To receive figures relating to the comparisons between Rhondda, Cynon Taf and Merthyr for children on the Child Protection Register.
- To receive a report in relation to Advocacy Services, along with figures for both Children and Adult Services and costings.
- Receive case studies of children and young people receiving Advocacy Services.
- To receive future report outlining key points relating to Children's Services.

17. REPRESENTATIONS AND COMPLAINTS PROCEDURES ANNUAL REPORT.

The Service User, Engagement and Complaints Officer explained the purpose of the report to the Committee. Members were informed that the report contains information on the background of the Social Services statutory complaints procedure, information on lessons learnt from complaints and performance data for

Adult and Children's Services, together with achievements for 2017/18 and future developments.

It was explained that when analysing complaints, it is important to remember that an increase or decrease in the number of complaints does not necessarily reflect a change in the standard of service provided.

Members considered the report in great detail and put forward their observations and questions. Members were pleased to see that there is a designated children's complaints officer along with the introduction of the advocacy service for children.

A member asked if officers could enlighten the committee on the main reasons behind the children and young people using the service. Officers agreed to come back with more detail at a future meeting.

Members commented that it was good to see within the report the compliments the service had received and congratulated staff for their excellent work.

After considering the report Members **RESOLVED** to:

- Agree the content of the Social Services Annual Complaints Report
- Acknowledge the work undertaken by the Social Services Complaints Team.

18. RESULTS OF THE TWO SURVEYS UNDERTAKEN WITHIN CHILDREN'S SERVICES WITH CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE AND CARERS

The Service Development Officer and Head of Service presented Members with the results of the Bright Spots Survey undertaken with children and young people in care and also the survey undertaken with children and young people subject to care and support plan as part of the Welsh Government's performance framework.

The Service Development Officer explained to the Committee that earlier this year Children's Services undertook two surveys with children, young people and their carers.

The Officer explained the background of both surveys, along with the results. Members were informed of the key findings relating to what had worked well and what could be improved on.

It was explained that the two surveys were undertaken with different cohorts of children and young people and executed differently. However the overall findings in both give a consistent message.

Members scrutinised the report robustly and thanked officers for a fascinating and well done piece of work. Members put forward many questions to the officers regarding all aspects of the survey.

A Member was seeking clarity in relation to the percentage rate of 4 – 7 year children who felt settled where they were. Officers responded by explaining it was 100% of the 36% that had completed the survey.

A Member found it concerning that 36% of those age 11 to 18 year old had very little understanding of why they were in care and asked officers if they could explain what is being done to rectify this situation. Officers explained that there is a lot of work being done with regards to life story work and staffs are being trained at present to deliver a better service.

A Member commented on what a fantastic piece of work that had been done and asked whether it would be a continuing on a yearly basis. It was explained that the work had been carried out by outside agencies (Bristol University & Coram Voice), we may come back to this every few years, but nothing had been decided. The Annual Survey carried out under the social services performance measures might provided an opportunity to take this forward.

A Member suggested that the Committee could revisit the information on an annual basis. It was agreed that the committee would have a report annual to compare findings and make any improvement.

Members asked for information around the number of siblings of adoptive children that have remained in Local Authority Care. Officer responded that they would provide the information before the next meeting.

Members scrutinised the report in great detail and **RESOLVED** to:

- Acknowledge the findings and Outcomes of the Surveys
- Acknowledge the responses made to the findings.
- Receive an updating report in 12months
- Acknowledge the highly detailed survey
- Provide Information relating to the number of siblings of adoptive children that are still in care.

Meeting Closed at 6:55pm

Cllr S. Rees Owen
(Chair)

Cllr S Rees- Owen
(Chair)