

RHONDDA CYNON TAF COUNTY BOROUGH COUNCIL

CORPORATE PARENTING BOARD

Minutes of the meeting of the Corporate Parenting Board held at the County Borough Council Offices, The Pavilions, Clydach Vale on Tuesday, 18 March 2014 at 10 a.m.

PRESENT

County Borough Councillor (Mrs) A.Davies – in the Chair

County Borough Councillors

(Mrs) E.Hanagan, (Mrs) C.Leyshon, S.Rees-Owen, R.K.Turner and L.G.Walker

Officers in Attendance

Mr.P.J.Lucas – Director, Legal & Democratic Services

Mr.A.Gwynn – Service Director, Children's Services

Mrs.G.Davies, Acting Service Director, Access, Engagement & Inclusion

Mrs.P.Lonergan – Head of Looked After Children

Ms.J.Thomas – Complaints & QA Manager, Social Services

38 APOLOGY FOR ABSENCE

An apology for absence was received from County Borough Councillor (Mrs) M.E.Davies.

39 DECLARATION OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of personal interests in matters pertaining to the agenda.

40 MINUTES

RESOLVED to approve as an accurate record, the minutes of the meeting of the Corporate Parenting Board held on 22 January 2014.

**41 PRESENTATION
PROVISION OF ADVOCACY TO ELIGIBLE CHILDREN IN RHONDDA CYNON TAF**

The Board received a presentation from Ms.Jayne Thomas, Complaints & QA Manager, Social Services in respect of the Provision of Advocacy to Eligible Children in Rhondda Cynon Taf.

Ms.Thomas explained to the Board Members that “advocacy” was about helping young people to:

- Have their say
- Understand their rights
- Access information and services
- Get something stopped, started or changed

and she outlined the duties of the Council in relation thereto.

Members noted that there were statutory requirements for Local Authorities to provide independent advocacy services to children in need, looked after children and young people, Care leavers, young people known to YOS, young people in Education in relation to SEN appeals and young people in the care of the NHS, i.e. hospital or primary care and that these responsibilities might be extended as part of the Social Services and Well-being Bill.

The Council’s Children’s Services Department currently commission Tros Gynnal, a well established charitable organisation in Wales, to provide an independent advocacy service. Tros Gynnal also provide the service to young people in Health and to specific young people in Education. Advocacy services would be re-commissioned jointly with Merthyr Tydfil County Borough Council in June 2014.

Members were informed that during 2012-2013 there were 140 referrals to the Advocacy Service and 86 young people received the service. The take up of the service was increasing year on year which required greater financial commitment.

Members were further informed that it was also necessary to engage partner agencies, i.e. Health and Education, as there were currently no financial arrangements in place for the provision of advocacy.

Following the presentation, it was **RESOLVED** –

- (1) That the Corporate Parenting Board receive quarterly reports on the provision of advocacy.
- (2) That all Members of the Council receive training on advocacy and meet the Advocacy Provider.
- (3) To note that annual reports on the provision of advocacy will be considered by the Community & Children’s Services Scrutiny Committee.

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

42 SOCIAL SERVICES QUARTERLY COMPLAINTS REPORT 1ST SEPTEMBER 2013 – 31ST DECEMBER 2013

The Board was provided with an overview of the operation and effectiveness of the statutory Social Services complaints procedure for the period 1st September 2013 – 31st December 2013.

The Board was informed that complaints regulations and guidance was due to change in June 2014 as a result of the new Health and Well-being Bill which would result in the Stage 3 complaints process being dealt with by the Public Service Ombudsman for Wales instead of Welsh Government.

Following consideration of the report, it was **RESOLVED** –

- (1) To note the contents of the report and the work undertaken by the Complaints Unit.
- (2) To receive further information at the next meeting in relation to whether an formal investigation was held into the complaint relating to alleged inappropriate behaviour by a taxi driver responsible for transporting children (page 14 refers).

43 CONFLICT OF INTEREST DRAFT POLICY

The Board Members were invited to consider the process outlined in the Draft Policy that allowed consideration of expressions of interest from Rhondda Cynon Taf Council employees and Councillors who wish to be approved as foster carers for the Authority.

Members noted that currently, there was no Council Policy which detailed a process to safeguard children and young people from possible conflict of interest and the Draft Policy provided a transparent and common sense approach which would aid the Fostering Service to make appropriate decisions in order to provide the best placement for children and young people looked after by the Council.

Following consideration of the report, it was **RESOLVED** to note and agree the Draft Policy for submission to the Cabinet for consideration prior to formal approval being requested from the Council.

44 EXCLUSION OF THE PRESS AND PUBLIC

RESOLVED that the press and public be excluded from the meeting under Section 100A(4) of the Local Government Act, 1972 (as amended) for the following item of business on the grounds that it involves the likely disclosure of exempt information as defined in paragraph 13 of Part 4 of Schedule 12A of the Act, namely, information relating to a particular individual. Transparency

in the conduct and capabilities of individuals will be discussed and considered. Consequently, it is considered, the public interest in maintaining the exemption outweighs the public interest in disclosing information by virtue of which the meeting is likely not to be open to the public during its consideration.

REPORT OF THE GROUP DIRECTOR, COMMUNITY & CHILDREN'S SERVICES CONTAINING EXEMPT INFORMATION

45 REGULATION 32 REPORTS – RESIDENTIAL CHILDREN'S HOMES

In his report, the Group Director, Community & Children's Services updated the Board on the Regulation 32 Visits undertaken at the four Children's Homes – Bryndar, Nantgwyn, Beddau and Treherbert during January 2014 and following consideration thereof, it was **RESOLVED** to note the positive reports received in respect of the four Children's Homes within Rhondda Cynon Taf.

**A.DAVIES
CHAIRMAN**

The meeting terminated at 11 a.m.