

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 Monday, 22 September 2014 at 10.00 a.m.

PRESENT

County Borough Councillor G.E.Hopkins – in the Chair

County Borough Councillors

(Mrs) E.Hanagan, (Mrs) M.E.Davies, (Mrs) C.Leyshon, S.Rees-Owen and
L.G.Walker

Officers in Attendance

Mr.G.Isingrini – Group Director, Community & Children’s Services
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
Ms.J.Thomas – Complaints & QA Manager, Social Services
Mrs.M.Meredith – Residential Services Manager

14 APOLOGY FOR ABSENCE

An apology for absence was received from County Borough Councillor R.K.Turner.

15 CHAIR’S REMARKS

The Chair welcomed Mr.Giovanni Isingrini, the newly appointed Group Director of Community & Children’s Services, to his first meeting of the Corporate Parenting Board and Members noted that Mr.Isinigrini would be attending future meetings of the Board.

The Chair then referred to a letter he had sent to Mr.Isingrini, in his role as Chair of the Cwm Taf Local Safeguarding Children Board, requesting that the Safeguarding Board formally consider the Report on the Independent Inquiry into Child Sexual Exploitation in Rotherham along with its recommendations. Mr.Isingrini had responded to the Chair’s request stating that the matter would be considered at the next meeting of the Board to be held on 26 September 2014 and following that meeting, he would be able to respond to the issues raised. Copies of the correspondence between the Chairmen had been circulated to all Corporate Parenting Board Members for their information.

16 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

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

17 MINUTES

RESOLVED to approve as an accurate record, the minutes of the meeting of the Corporate Parenting Board held on 18 July 2014.

18 PRESENTATION ON ADVOCACY AND THE ROLE OF THE INDEPENDENT ADVOCACY PROVIDER AS A “CRITICAL FRIEND” TO THE CORPORATE PARENTING BOARD

The Board received a presentation from Ms.Emma Phipps Magill of the National Youth Advocacy Service (NYAS) – the new Advocacy Provider for Rhondda Cynon Taf from 1 September 2014.

During her presentation, Ms.Phipps Magill informed Members that NYAS has over thirty years experience of advocacy and children’s rights, providing advocacy, Independent visitors and legal services and was the leading advocacy provider in both England and Wales.

Ms.Phipps Magill gave an overview of how NYAS will deliver an Advocacy Service that would ensure that children and young people were helped and supported in taking part in decisions that affect their lives and their privacy and confidences would be respected and kept safe at all times. She outlined ways that a child/young person could contact or be referred to NYAS, i.e. online, via Facebook, Chat or Twitter, through partnership working by free post or phone, and stated that NYAS also provided an ‘Independent Visiting’ service to support a child/young person especially those placed outside of the county borough. Members were also informed as to how NYAS was resourced.

Following a question and answer session, the Chairman thanked Ms.Phipps Magill for her presentation and invited the Service Director, Children’s services to provide the Board with detail of the recommendation of the Children’s Commissioner for Wales that a representative from NYAS should become a co-opted member of the Corporate Parenting Board.

The Service Director, Children’s Services reported that in 2012, the Children’s Commissioner for Wales undertook a review of Advocacy provision across Wales and produced a report “Missing Voices” which highlighted that many vulnerable children with whom local authorities work do not have their voices heard and were unable to access advocacy. This report also identified that service provision across Wales was inconsistently funded and resourced and made a number of recommendations to improve practice and commissioning arrangements. A further report was produced this year by the Children’s Commissioner recommending that local authorities have a senior

representative from their commissioned advocacy service as a member of the Corporate Parenting Panel.

The Chairman invited the Board to consider the above-mentioned recommendation and following a discussion, it was **AGREED** that a senior representative from NYAS be invited to attend future Board meetings, as appropriate, as a “critical friend and advisor”.

REPORT OF THE GROUP DIRECTOR, COMMUNITY & CHILDREN’S SERVICES

19 DIRECTORS’ AND ELECTED MEMBERS’ VISITS TO FRONT-LINE TEAMS IN CHILDREN’S SERVICES

The Board Members were informed of the key messages arising from Directors’ and Members’ Visits to Front-line Teams between October 2013 and May 2014 and were asked to nominate the Elected Members to undertake the quarterly visits during the next twelve months.

A discussion ensued and it was **AGREED** –

- (1) To note the report.
- (2) That in future, quarterly visits to the Front-line Teams are undertaken by the Chair and two other Board Members thereby ensuring that all Members of the Board will attend at least one visit during the next twelve months.
- (3) That the Chair and Members attending the visits, prepare a report back to the Board on their findings.

20 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

21 REGULATION 32 REPORT – RESIDENTIAL CHILDREN'S HOMES

The Board was updated on the Regulation 32 Visits undertaken at the four Children's Homes – Bryndar, Nantgwyn, Beddau and Treherbert during June and July 2014.

The Board was also provided with CSSIW reports on inspections undertaken at Nantgwyn, Treherbert and Beddau between May and August 2014 - the focus of these inspections was based on the 'Quality of Life' theme.

The Residential Services Manager responded to Members' questions on the reports and a discussion ensued on Members' requirement for a new more summarised reporting back system following inspections, as opposed to the current reporting mechanism used.

The Service Director, Children's Services then referred to the decision at the last meeting to look at options for engagement of Board Members with young people residing at the Children's Homes and reported that a visit had now been arranged for himself and the Chair of the Corporate Parenting Board to the Blue Print Forum on 30 October 2014 which would provide a useful opportunity to discuss with young people, options for future contact.

It was **RESOLVED** –

- (1) To note the report.
- (2) That future inspection reports back to the Board provide a summary of the inspector's judgments and any recommendations he may wish to make on the residential homes he visits along with the Director's comments thereon.
- (3) That the Inspector be invited to attend future meetings of the Board to present his reports.

22 URGENT ITEMS

(a) Member Referrals to the Social Services

It was **AGREED** that at the 'Corporate Parenting' training session for all elected Members to be held in November 2014, Members be reminded of the process they should follow in referring issues to Social Services.

(b) Update on the Regionalisation of Adoption Services

The Board was informed that it was expected that the National Adoption Service would be delivered through four Regional Hubs and Rhondda

Cynon Taf would be joining Merthyr Tydfil, Cardiff and the Vale of Glamorgan in one of those Hubs.

The Board was also informed that the next meeting of the Steering Group would take place on 29 September 2014 and at that meeting, decisions would be made on where services would be based and located. The outcome of this meeting would be reported back to the Cabinet for consideration.

**G.E.HOPKINS
CHAIRMAN**

The meeting terminated at 11.45 a.m.