

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 27th July, 2015 at 11am.

Present

County Borough Councillor G E Hopkins – In the Chair

County Borough Councillors:-

(Mrs) E Hanagan, (Mrs) M E Davies and M Weaver.

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 and Inclusion

Ms L Pearce – Head of Safeguarding and Standards

Ms M Meredith –Residential Service Manager

Ms K Lelliott – Graduate Officer

Mrs S Edwards – Reviewing Team Manager

Mr K Mitchell – Children’s Complaints Officer

Ms R Spry – Young Carers Assessment & Development Worker

Others in Attendance:-

E Phipps-Magill - NYAS

1 **APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

Apologies for absence were received from County Borough Councillors M Norris and L Walker

2 **DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST.**

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

3 **WELCOME & INTRODUCTIONS**

The Chairman welcomed Cllr M Weaver as a new Member to the Board and both officer and Members introductions were made.

4 **MINUTES**

RESOLVED to approve as an accurate record, the minutes of the meeting of the Corporate Parenting Board held on the 11th May, 2015.

5 **'IMPROVING ENGAGEMENT & PARTICIPATORY OPPORTUNITIES FOR YOUNG PEOPLE WITHIN THE REVIEW PROCESS.**

Ms K Lelliott, a Graduate Officer from within the Council provided the Board with a PowerPoint presentation which provided an overview of the project she had taken forward with the reviewing team around developing a web based resource for Looked After Children to access, and work undertaken in respect of updating the LAC review consultation documents.

The Graduate Officer advised Members that the aim of the project undertaken was to enable children and young people who are looked after and accommodated by RCT Council to access a range of resources that allows them to actively participate in their reviews so that informed decisions are made regarding their future care. Details of the project were provided to Members with the officer detailing the outcomes of the young people consultation, the resulting modifications of the consultation booklets following the consultation and the LAC website design. The Officer advised that the website should be complete and live by the end of November 2015, although this depended on whether the web development team had the capacity to build and take forward the website development.

The PowerPoint presentation was concluded with a synopsis on the benefits of the project and key recommendations needed to be taken forward to further ensure the benefits of the project. The Chairman thanked the Graduate Officer for the presentation and the detailed work undertaken with the project and asked Officers within the service to comment on the Key Recommendations that had been highlighted, to which the Head of Safeguarding and Standards and Service Director, Children's Services responded.

Members of the Board commented on the project and the positive engagement with the Children and young people in assisting to take the project forward with their own comments and ideas and creativity. Members highlighted their concerns in respect of the timescales

for the launch of the new website, commenting on the importance of the website as a tool for engagement with the targeted audience.

Following discussions on the project the Board **RESOLVED:-**

- a. To note the contents of the presentation
- b. That the Group Director, Community & Children's Services make representation to the Director ICT, advising of the Corporate Parenting Boards concerns into the timescales provided by ICT in respect of the website development and that the development timescales of the website is reviewed and seen as a priority, for the interests of the Looked After Children and young people of the Authority.
- c. That an update on the Recommendations listed within the PowerPoint presentation be provided at the next meeting of the Board.
- d. That the Corporate Parenting Board be invited along to the launch of the website once complete.

6 INDEPENDENT REVIEWING OFFICER (IRO) REPORT.

The Reviewing Team Manager and Head of Safeguarding and Standards referred Members to the report before them and provided the Board with information about the activity of the IRO service from the 1st October, 2014 to the 31st March, 2015. The Head of Safeguarding and Standards apologised in advance that some of the information within the report, namely the statistics within the graphs had not come through within the report, and agreed that a complete version be resent to Members for information.

The Chairman commented upon the Adoption Panel meeting that he recently attended and also spoke of the Vale, Valleys and Cardiff Regional Adoption Collaborative in respect of Governance arrangements. The Chairman commented on the proposed intention of inviting the Regional Manager to attend a future meeting of the Corporate Parenting Board, and officers suggested that this invite be posed following publication of the Collaborations first 6monthly performance report, due in the New Year.

The Group Director, Community & Children's Services took the opportunity to thank the IRO team for their continued hard work in this area and the positive performances displayed by the team, under the current challenges in respect of staffing shortages.

Members of the Board queried the officers in respect of cancellation policies, foster carer assessments and placement stability with officers duly responding.

The Board **RESOLVED:-**

- a. To note the contents of the report
- b. To receive a complete version of the report by email
- c. That the Regional Manager of the Vale, Valleys and Cardiff Regional Adoption Collaboration be invited to attend a future meeting of the Board.

7 YOUNG CARERS ANNUAL REPORT

The Young Carers and Assessment Development Worker provided Members of the Board with an overview of the RCT Young Carer's Service and Annual Report 2014-2015, highlighting the positive work being undertaken within the service, which was evidenced within the report.

The Officer provided Members with an oversight of each of the 5 key aims, namely:-

- Identify and recognise Carers of all ages
- Provide information and training to carers of all ages
- Ensure Carers of all ages have a voice
- Ensure access to Carers Assessments
- Deliver quality services for Carers of all ages.

The report was concluded with reference to the plans for the 2015-16 Municipal Year.

The Chairman thanked the officer for the detailed report and opened up the item for Members questions. Members queried 'Carers Allowance's' and whether this was recognised for young carers, in respect of impact on school and homework. The officer advised that this was recognised in the form of support for Children and young people and not through the welfare system, which was only obtainable from 20years of age.

Members also commented on the aspirations for young carers and the need to ensure that no young person is disadvantaged from being a young carer. The officer commented on the vulnerability profiling undertaken within schools to ensure that young carers are not disadvantaged and the measuring of education outcomes.

The Group Director, Community & Children's Services spoke positively of the work of the service, which was echoed by the Board, and Members stressed the continuation of resources into the service to the Group Director, Community & Children's Services.

The Corporate Parenting Board **RESOLVED:**

- a. To note the contents of the Young Carers Annual Report and the work undertaken by the Young Carers Service
- b. To note the commitment provided by the Group Director, Community & Children's Services that the Young Carers Service continues to receive suitable funding, even if funding of the service comes under pressure.

8 SOCIAL SERVICES QUARTERLY COMPLAINTS AND COMPLIMENTS REPORT

The Children's Complaints Officer provided the Board with an overview of the operation and effectiveness of the statutory social services complaints procedure between 1st January 2015 to 31st March, 2015.

Members were advised that the report contained information on the number of complaints received, the nature of the complaints and the lessons learnt, as well as detailing Councillor, AM and MP enquiries and the number of compliments received. It was advised that the

report also provided a summary of the Welsh Governments Independent complaints secretariat of comparative figures from each Local Authority in Wales.

Following consideration of the report, Members commented on the improvement noted with Councillors contacting the service through the correct channels, following the awareness raised on this issue at the recent training sessions and through the correspondence sent from the Chairman.

The Corporate Parenting Board **RESOLVED** to note the contents of the report and the work undertaken by the Complaints Unit.

9 EXCLUSION OF THE PRESS AND PUBLIC

RESOLVED that the press and public be excluded from the meeting under Section 100A9§) of the Local Government Act, 1972 (as amended) for the next 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.

10 REGULATION 32 REPORTS – RESIDENTIAL CHILDREN’S HOMES

The Board were provided with an update on the regulation 32 visits undertaken at the four children’s homes – Beddau, Treherbert, Bryndar and Nant Gwyn for March, April and May 2015.

The Residential Services Manager outlined a summary of the inspection outcomes and it was **RESOLVED** to note the report.

11 ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The Chairman took the opportunity to advise Members of the invite he had extended to representatives of the CSSIW to attend future meetings of the Corporate Parenting Board, which had been accepted.

Members were also advised that Ms Ann Batley, the Head of Prevention Services was currently working from home due to a broken Collar bone and that she would need to undergo surgery. It was **RESOLVED** that a letter be sent on behalf of the Board, conveying the Boards Best Wishes to Ms Batley.

G E Hopkins

Chairman

The meeting terminated at 13.25pm