

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 Wednesday 20th July, 2016 at 2pm

Present

County Borough Councillor G E Hopkins – In the Chair

County Borough Councillors:-

E Hanagan, M Davies, C Leyshon, L Walker, J Watts and M Weaver.

Officers in Attendance:-

Mr G Isingrini - Group Director, Community & Children's Services

Mr P Lucas – Director, Legal & Democratic Services

Ms A Batley –Service Director, Children's Services

Ms L Pearce – Head of Safeguarding & Support

Ms C Jones – Acting Head of Access & Inclusion

Ms E Rees – Service User, Engagement & Complaints Officer

Ms M Meredith - Residential Services Manager

Ms J Davies –Service Manager for Safeguarding and support

Ms H Williams – Cabinet Business Officer

Mrs E Wilkins – Cabinet Business Officer

Mr C Dunn – Voices From Care -Blue Print Forum

2 young people representatives – Blue Print Forum

1. WELCOME & INTRODUCTIONS.

The Chairman welcomed Members to the inaugural meeting of the CORPORATE parenting Board for the 2016/17 Municipal Year and welcomed Cllr J Watts as a new Member. For the benefit of both officers and Members introductions around the table were made.

2 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST.

In accordance with the Code of Conduct there were no Declarations of Interest pertaining to the agenda received at this point in the meeting.

3 MINUTES

RESOLVED to approve as an accurate record, the minutes of the meeting of the Corporate Parenting Board held on the 11th April, 2016.

4 CHANGE TO THE AGENDA.

The Chairman advised Members that he had recently agreed for representatives from the Blueprint Forum to attend the meeting of the Board to present their quarterly update and that the running order of the agenda would be amended to reflect this update.

5 CORPORATE PARENTING BOARD – STAFF GUIDE

The Cabinet Business officer referred Members to Minute 52b of the April's Board meeting, when Members discussed the potential of utilising the current staff Guide to 'Communicating with Councillors, AMs and MPs' and adapting the guide to suit Elected Members needs for reporting compliments and complaints. The Cabinet Business officer advised that an adapted guide would assist Members and officers and could also be utilised as part of the Corporate Parenting Induction Programme, previously agreed by the Board for new Members, in light of the forthcoming elections.

Members of the Board commented on the usefulness of such a document and following discussions it was **RESOLVED:-**

- a. To note the current staff Guide
- b. To instruct officers to amend the current guide to form an 'Elected Member Guide ' for reporting Compliments and Complaints and for this to form part of the Corporate Parenting Induction programme going forward.

6 CHILDREN'S COMMISSIONER WALES REPORT – 'THE RIGHT CARE: CHILDREN'S RIGHTS IN RESIDENTIAL CARE IN WALES'

The Head of Safeguarding and Support provided Members with an overview of the Children's Commissioner Report which was published on the 29th June 2016 and advised of how the Council would take forward the recognised good practices within the report to continue to improve the service delivered.

Members were advised of the 4 main outcomes of the report in respect of Participation, Provision, Protection and Relationships as well as the 4 recommendations and added that many of the good practices considered within the report were already in place within RCT.

The Chairman thanked the officer for the report and commented on the positive practices within RCT, which reflected the findings of the Commissioner. The Chairman queried further the outcome in relation to participation and the officer explained the broad range of opportunities the service uses to participate further with Children Looked After, including the duty of advocacy as part of the SSWB Act and the role of Nyas, which also assists in this area. The Chairman commented on the need for further participation by the Board to engage with young people, through avenues such as the Blueprint Forums and other similar groups to assist the Board in ensuring that the decisions being made are right for the young people and Children Looked After.

Members were advised of the revised terminology to be taken forward in respect of Looked After Children, following consultation with young people and the officer also referred to the statement of intent and the Looked After strategy and corresponding DVD which would be presented to Members at the next Board Meeting.

Members commented on the Commissioners Recommendations and added that although they agreed in principle to the extension of the 'When I'm Ready' scheme, enquires were made as to whether any financial support would be available to Local Authorities to pursue this recommendation. Officers advised that no funding opportunities had been advised upon.

Further discussions by Members revolved around the work of the Authority with Bernardos in respect of Care Leavers and Foster Carers.

Following discussions the Board **RESOLVED:**

- a. To note the contents of the report
- b. To cease using the term LAC and champion the term 'Children Looked After' in the future.
- c. That the Children Looked After Strategy and DVD are presented to Members at the next meeting of the Board.

(N.B At this juncture in the meeting, County Borough Councillor C Leyshon declared the following interest 'I am employed by Bernardos'.

7 **VOICES FROM CARE – BLUE PRINT FORUM.**

The Chairman welcomed Mr C Dunn, Voices from Care – Blue Print Forum and the 2 young people in attendance to the meeting and Mr Dunn thanked the Board for allowing them to attend the days meeting.

With the aid of a PowerPoint presentation the 2 young people representatives provided the Board with an overview of the current activities that the Blue Print Forum had been

undertaking and the opportunities made available to Children Looked After through the Forum, advising of the research undertaken through the 'Cascade' project into 'Wellbeing'. Members were also provided with information in relation to upcoming events.

Members thanked the young people and discussed how the Forum benefits them individually, with the young people commenting on opportunities available to them through the Forum, meeting new people and the opportunity for their voices to be heard.

Members queried how further interaction could be made with young people to ensure that their voices were being heard and the young people commented on the potential 'Suggestion Box' where ideas could be posted by Forum members and then forwarded to the Board.

Mr Dunn concluded the update by advising of the showcase event being taken forward by the Forum in September / October time to which Members of the Board would be invited to attend.

On behalf of the Board the Chairman thanked the Blue Print Forum officer and representatives for their attendance and the professional manner in which they conducted their presentation to the Board, and the newsletter which had been circulated for Members information.

The Board **RESOLVED:-**

- a. To note the content of the Update
- b. That the Chairman and the Service Director, Children Services attend a future meeting of the Blueprint Forum
- c. To receive further information in respect of the invite to the Blue Print Forum Showcase Event when further details were available.

8 **INDEPENDENT REVIEWING OFFICER (IRO) REPORT.**

The service Manager for Safeguarding and support referred Member to the report before them which provided the Board with information relating to the activity of the Independent reviewing officers service for the period 1st October, 2015 to 31st March 2016.

The officer referred Members to section 5 of the report which highlighted the key themes coming forward which included:

- Maintained good performance in relation to reviews being held within timescales
- 2Sides website
- Increased participation in the reviewing process
- Use of the resolution process, alongside caseload size and the IRO quality assurance role
- Strengthening links with Advocacy providers

Members of the Board commented on the positive report and the good performance in relation to timescales of reviews and increased participation in the reviewing process.

Members referred to the placements details within the report which had previously been a concern and were advised that RCTs placement was significantly lower than anywhere else in Wales. The Service Director, Children's Services spoke positively of the hard work of the service in achieving the positive performance illustrated and Members thanked officers for their hard work and the good practices that were coming forward in the area.

Members also highlighted the data presented within the report in respect of Children Looked after by age and the officer advised that there had been a reduction in respect of young babies, although the age profile for 13-15 had fluctuated and increased over the time period, advising of the difficulties often experienced with this age range.

Officers advised the Board that a review was still ongoing by the Welsh Government which addressed the role of IROs as well as Foster Carers and advocacy for Children and young people and it was agreed that once the review was published it would be brought forward to the Board.

The Board **RESOLVED** to note the contents of the Report.

9 SOCIAL SERVICES QUARTERLY COMPLIMENTS AND COMPLAINTS REPORT.

The Service User, Engagement & Complaints Officer presented her report to the Board which provided an overview of the operation and effectiveness of the statutory social services complaints procedure between 1st January 2016– 31st March, 2016.

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.

The officer spoke of the positive performance witnessed in this area which was attributed to better communication strategies being taken forward. Members were advised of a new process that was to be trailed by the service to see if this further impacted on timescales.

Members of the Board commented on the positive number of compliments and queried whether Officers looked at any recurring patterns in respect of complaints received. The Service Director, Children's Services advised that work needed to be undertaken to assess whether there were any recurring themes with the complaints received to try to prevent any future complaints received.

It was **RESOLVED** to Note the Contents of the Report.

10 NYAS – QUARTERLY COMPLAINTS REPORT.

The chairman referred Members to the report's provided to the Board in respect of the Quarterly performance report of Nyas for the period 1st December – 29th February, and 31st March – 31st May, 2016. The report provided Members with details in respect of number of referrals, advocacy and the outcomes of such intervention provided by the service.

Members **RESOLVED** to note the contents of the report.

11 CORPORATE PARENTING BOARD – WORK PROGRAMME.

The Chairman highlighted to Members a proposed Work Programme for the Board, based on factors highlighted within the Boards Annual report. Members were advised that it was the intention for the programme to be a fluid document to be amended with changing priorities, and did not include the usual updates presented to the Board, which would continue to be presented when deemed appropriate by Officers.

The Chairman also referred Members to the proposed frontline visits that had been scheduled within the work programme for the Municipal Year and Members suggested that the Social Workers team be included in the visits.

It was **RESOLVED**:-

- a. To note the contents of the report
- b. To approve the work programme outlined in appendix 1 of the report as a basis, which can be amended to reflect any changing priorities throughout the year
- c. That Members provide the Cabinet Business Officer with their availability in respect of the proposed schedule of Frontline Visits.

12 EXCLUSION OF THE PRESS AND PUBLIC

RESOLVED that the press and public be excluded from the meeting under Section 100(4) 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.

13 REGULATION 32 REPORTS – RESIDENTIAL CHILDREN'S HOMES

The Residential Services Manager provided the Board with an update on the Regulation 32 visits undertaken at the four children's homes – Beddau, Treherbert, Bryndar and Nant Gwyn for January 2016.

The officer outlined a summary of the Inspection outcomes and it was **RESOLVED** to note the report. The Chairman also took the opportunity to thank the Residential Services Manager for her commitment over the past few weeks in managing the Beddau residence.

G E Hopkins

Chairman

The meeting terminated at 3.30pm.