

Subject to approval at the next meeting of the Corporate Parenting Board

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 3rd July, 2017 at 1pm.

Present

County Borough Councillor G E Hopkins – In the Chair

County Borough Councillors:-

C Leyshon, J Rosser, R Yeo, M Weaver, J James, S Rees-Owen

Officers in Attendance:-

Mr C Jones – Director, Legal & Democratic Services

Ms A Batley – Service Director, Children's Services

Ms G Davies – Service Director, Access, Engagement & Inclusion

Ms S Edwards – Service Manager, Community & Children's Services

Ms J Thomas - Service Improvement, Engagement & Complaints Manager

Ms H Bevan – Education Co-ordinator for Children Looked After

Ms H Jeans – Principal Educational Psychologist

Mr J O'Brien – Head of Youth Offending Service

Ms E Phipps-Magill – NYAS Cymru

Ms H Williams – Cabinet Business Officer

1. WELCOME & INTRODUCTIONS

The Chair took the opportunity to welcome new Members to their first meeting of the Corporate Parenting Board and introductions were made.

It was **RESOLVED**:

- a) That, for the benefit of new Members, an external Welsh Government representative would be invited to the next Board meeting to outline the functions and regulations of the Corporate Parenting Board.

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2. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

In accordance with the Code of Conduct, there were no declarations of interest declared pertaining to the agenda.

3. MINUTES

It was **RESOLVED**:

- a) To approve as an accurate record, the minutes of the meeting of the Corporate Parenting Board held on the 23rd January, 2017.

4. CHILDREN LOOKED AFTER FRIENDLY SCHOOLS RESOURCE

The Education Co-ordinator for Children Looked After provided the Corporate Parenting Board with a verbal presentation in respect of a new and informative Children Looked After (CLA) Friendly Schools resource.

The officer explained that the new resource was a joint piece of work produced by RCT and Merthyr Tydfil Councils which was funded by PDG LAC in 2015-16 and was commissioned by the Educational Psychologist.

The resource was produced to be an informative and easily understandable tool for schools, capturing the voice and needs of the children, along with strategies from the Welsh Government and the Social Services and Wellbeing Act.

The officer guided the Board through the chapters of the resource, describing the benefits of each:-

Chapter 1

The first chapter of the resource provides clarity in respect of frequently used terminology and acronyms.

Chapter 2

The second chapter of the resource provides users with practical information and strategies to build relationships with Children Looked After, along with clear details of the attachment theory.

Chapter 3

The third chapter of the resource considers all elements that are needed to ensure a school is 'CLA Friendly', including training information for staff, preventative approaches to building the resilience, improving the emotional stability, positivity and friendships of the CLA.

Chapter 4

Chapter four recognises that children who are part of the care system have complex networks of support built around them and that to meet their needs, regular dialogue must occur with carers and other professionals. The officer emphasised the

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importance of establishing the views of foster carers and other professionals, who often feel their voice is unheard.

The officer explained that Dynamix were commissioned to establish the voice of the child in education and referred Members to page 54 of the resource where the views and opinions of those in question were outlined.

The officer concluded the presentation by explaining that the launch of the resource was due to take place on 12th September, 2017 where Children Services colleagues and schools would be invited to utilise the tool.

The Chair thanked the officer and the team for the substantial piece of work before them, commenting that it would build upon the joint work undertaken by the Council's Education & Lifelong Learning Scrutiny Committee and Children & Young People Scrutiny Committee which undertook a piece of work on Children Looked After in Education in 2015.

Board Members expressed their gratitude that the children and surrounding network had been given the opportunity to be heard, adding that the resource was easily understandable and would provide information to a number of people.

The representative from NYAS Cymru also praised the resource, questioning whether it would be shared with other Local Authorities. It was agreed that the tool would eventually be shared with all relevant organisations, with the Central South Consortium already declaring their interest.

Following further discussions, it was **RESOLVED:**

- a) To note the contents of the report
- b) That the Cabinet Business Officer would ensure all Elected Members of the Board would receive a hard copy of the resource.

5. ACCOMMODATION OF HOMELESS 16 AND 17 YEAR OLD CHILDREN WORKING WITH YOUTH OFFENDING TEAMS

The Head of the Youth Offending Service provided the Board with an update on a 2016 Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Probation (HMIP) thematic inspection which focussed on the provision of accommodation for 16 and 17 year olds, who were involved within the criminal justice system.

The officer explained that the Cwm Taf Youth Offending Service were not inclusive of the inspection but had since been subject to a full joint inspection in respect of the broad expanse of YOS provision which included the accommodation needs of young people.

It was explained to the Board that following the 2016 HMIP inspection, it was discovered that one in three young people examined, were considered to be in unsuitable accommodation and that all cases reviewed had suffered some form of

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trauma in their lives with most being previously or currently known to children's services.

The officer explained that there was a level of complexity involved with young people, and in particular their high expectations of the accommodation provided to them, along with availability. Members were assured that work was being undertaken with Trivallis to give a broader understanding of the accommodation available to the young people, which would result in a fewer expectations.

Members of the Board were referred to the recommendations outlined in section 2 of the report for their comments.

The Chair thanked the officer for the report and questioned whether appropriate actions were being taken to address and resolve each recommendation. The officer clarified that the detail below each bullet provided a solution to the recommendations. An example of this was the information on the ASSETplus assessment which ensures each young person undergoes a vulnerability assessment to prevent them being placed in Bed & Breakfast accommodation. The officer added that the number of young people placed in Bed & Breakfast accommodation would continue to be monitored with planning and support provided.

The Chair queried the outcomes of the recent joint inspection taken of the Cwm Taf YOS and whether the actions had been noted, to which the officer confirmed they had.

The Service Director, Children's Services commented that the report was overall, positive at an operational level and that due to it being thematic, there was always room for improvement.

The Chair of the Children & Young People Scrutiny Committee commented that the report was useful and whether it could be referred to the committee for further comments. The Group Director, Community & Children's Services agreed that it would be beneficial for the RCT Children & Young People Committee to scrutinise the report separately to the Committee at Merthyr CBC, and for any comments to be brought back to the Executive for action.

It was **RESOLVED**:

- a) To note the contents of the report
- b) That the report be presented to the RCT Children and Young People Scrutiny Committee, with any further specific comments to be actioned by the Executive.

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6. **SOCIAL SERVICES COMPLIMENTS & COMPLAINTS – 1ST OCTOBER 2016 – 31ST DECEMBER 2016**

The Service Improvement, Engagement & Complaints Manager provided the Corporate Parenting Board with an overview of the operation of effectiveness of the statutory Social Services complaints procedure between 1st October 2016 – 31st December 2016.

The report contained information on the number of complaints received, the nature of the complaints and any lessons learnt, as well as detailing Councillor, A.M and M.P enquiries and the number of complaints received.

The officer advised Members of the Board that the 3rd quarterly Complaints report for adult services had been included and that the relevant information in respect of Children's Services could be found on page 159 of the papers before them.

The officer explained that there were 13 compliments received during the 3rd Quarter, compared to the 19 received in the previous Quarter, but that more compliments had been received which had not been recorded.

The officer explained that staff issues remained the highest reason for informal complaints made by adults and parents, due to timescale issues but that the issue would continue to be worked on.

The Board were advised that there had been a small increase in the number of complaints received at stage 2 and questioned the reason for this. It was explained that there was no singular reason for the increase and that there were a number of factors this could be attributed to, including families making direct contact with the Ombudsman, who were then advised to exhaust the formal process.

The Group Director, Community & Children's Services took the opportunity to thank the officer and the team for the approach they take when dealing with compliments and complaints, commenting that it was professional. The officer added that the inclusion of both the adult and children's services compliments and complaints was a useful method to identify trends and differences between the two areas.

It was **RESOLVED**:

- a) To note the contents of the report

4. **EXCLUSION OF PRESS & PUBLIC**

It was **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

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disclosing information by virtue of which the meeting is likely not to be open to the public during its consideration.

5. NYAS - QUARTER 2 COMPLAINTS

Ms E Phipps-Magill presented the Board with a quarterly narrative report on behalf of NYAS for the period 1st December 2016 – 28th February 2017.

Following discussions, it was **RESOLVED:**

- a) To note the contents of the report.

6. REGULATION 32 REPORTS

The Residential Services Manager provided the Board with an update on the Regulation 32 visits undertaken at the three children's homes – Beddau, Bryndar and Nantgwyn.

The officer outlined a summary of the inspection outcomes and it was **RESOLVED:**

- a) To note the contents of the report
- b) That future visits be undertaken to the three children's homes at a time which is not considered to be disruptive to the children.

7. ANY OTHER BUSINESS

The Chair declared that the next meeting of the Corporate Parenting Board would take place on Monday 25th September, 2017.

The Chair reminded Elected Members that dates were in the process of being circulated, in respect of frontline visits to the various Children's Services areas of the Council. The Chair stressed the importance of the visits, particularly for the new Members as a more substantial knowledge of the services would be gained.

The meeting terminated at 14:15pm

**Councillor G Hopkins
Chair**