



## **RHONDDA CYNON TAF COUNTY BOROUGH COUNCIL**

### **CORPORATE PARENTING BOARD**

**29TH JANUARY 2018**

#### **UPDATE ON RHONDDA CYNON TAF'S CHILDREN LOOKED AFTER WEBSITE & MONITORING ADVANCEMENTS**

#### **REPORT OF THE GROUP DIRECTOR, COMMUNITY AND CHILDREN'S SERVICES IN DISCUSSION WITH THE RELEVANT PORTFOLIO HOLDER, COUNCILLOR C LEYSHON**

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#### **1. PURPOSE OF THE REPORT**

- 1.1 The purpose of the report is to update the Corporate Parenting Board on the progress of Rhondda Cynon Taf Children Looked After website, known as Two Sides.

#### **2. BACKGROUND**

- 2.2 In 2015 the Reviewing Team made a successful bid for a graduate to undertake a piece of work to improve the consultation documents that children complete for their Children Looked After (CLA) Review meetings. Consultation documents provide an opportunity for children and young people to share their views with their Independent Reviewing Officer so that issues can be raised sensitively in the CLA review meeting.

The work not only created consultation documents for two different age ranges but also identified the value in Rhondda Cynon Taf having a bespoke website where any Children Looked After could access information in respect of being looked after as well as providing a resource for the on-line completion for consultation documents.

The website was designed by a group of young people from Rhondda Cynon Taf. The logo 'Two Sides' was chosen by the young people to reflect the fact that there are often two sides to everyone's story and it is important that both sides of the story are heard. The site provides child-friendly information about many aspects of what it means to be 'looked after' and provides an opportunity for children and young people to provide their own feedback about their experiences.

On 24<sup>th</sup> April 2016 Rhondda Cynon Taf's Two Sides website was launched in the CLA Awards evening with Sally Holland (Children's Commissioner for Wales), and members of the Corporate Parenting Board and Senior Managers in attendance.

The website provides an opportunity for all young people and children looked after by Rhondda Cynon Taf to access the same basic information regardless of whether their placement is within Rhondda Cynon Taf or out of county. Care is taken with the content to use straight-forward, jargon-free language and the website is also available in Welsh

There is a link to the website on the Cwm Taf Safeguarding Board Website.

### **3. CURRENT POSITION**

- 3.1 A desktop review of the use of the website highlighted the poor take-up of the online consultation documents. It also identified that the way it was set up did not allow for general usage to be monitored

In order to address this, the following actions are planned

- Corporate colleagues are to be approached to help develop the web site so that usage can be monitored.
- A further workshop is to be organised with children and young people to look at how the publicity and use of the website can be improved. There will be active involvement from Independent Reviewing Officers, Media Department and Advocacy Service in this workshop as well as support from the Editorial Group.
- Discussions with Voices from Care and Blueprint to facilitate a session with a group of looked after children to review and develop the content of the website.
- Set up a editorial group of children and young people to contribute to keeping the site up to date and ensuring it reflects the most common issues faced by children and young people.
- The Team Managers 16+ teams will review and be responsible for updating the contents on the website relating to employment and training.

Rhondda Cynon Taf is also currently participating in the Bright Spots Programme, The *Your Life, Your Care* survey which was developed through a partnership between Coram Voice and the University of Bristol. The programme aims to improve the care experience and well-being of looked after children and care leavers by identifying and promoting 'bright spots'.

The dissemination of the "You're Life, Your Care" survey will be undertaken by a child with a trusted adult who is neither their carer nor their social worker. The learning from this method of getting children and young people to complete the survey will be incorporated into any developments concerning the website.

#### **4. EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY IMPLICATIONS**

- 4.1 This is an information report therefore there are no Equality and Diversity Implications.

#### **5. CONSULTATION**

- 5.1 The development of the web site was undertaken by a group of young people therefore young people were fully consulted.

#### **6. FINANCIAL IMPLICATION(S)**

- 6.1 None at present.

#### **7. CONCLUSION**

- 7.1 Two Sides website is a valuable resource for our children looked after but to ensure its value, there needs to be a continual mechanism to publish its existence and its use.



**LOCAL GOVERNMENT ACT 1972**

**AS AMENDED BY**

**THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT (ACCESS TO INFORMATION) ACT 1985**

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