



RHONDDA CYNON TAF COUNCIL CORPORATE PARENTING BOARD

Minutes of the meeting of the Corporate Parenting Board meeting held on Tuesday, 8 May 2018 at 10.00 am at the Block F, The Pavilions, Cambrian Park. Clydach Vale, Tonypany, CF40 2XX.

County Borough Councillors - Corporate Parenting Board Members in attendance:-

Councillor G Hopkins (Chair)

Councillor C Leyshon Councillor M Weaver
Councillor S. Rees-Owen Councillor R Yeo

Officers in attendance

Mr G Isingrini, Group Director Community & Children's Services
Ms A Batley, Service Director, Children's Services
Ms G Davies, Service Director, Access, Engagement & Inclusion
Mr P Nicholls, Head Of Legal - Litigation, Planning & Environment, Community & Children's Services
Ms J Thomas, Complaints & QA Manager, Social Services
Ms M Meredith, Residential Services Manager
Ms E Phipps-Magill, NYAS
Ms D Jones, Flying Start Childcare Manager
Ms S Longhurst, Team Development And Performance Manager
Ms T Prosser, Head of Service
Ms R Spry, Young Carer's Assessment & Development Worker
Ms C Williams, Service Manager - Disabled Children
Ms L Woolrich, Senior Practitioner, Social Worker

50 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from County Borough Councillors J. Rosser and J. James.

Introductions were made around the table.

51 DECLARATION OF INTEREST

In accordance with the Council's Code of Conduct, there were no declarations made pertaining to the agenda.

52 MINUTES

Members **RESOLVED** to approve as an accurate record, the minutes of the meeting of the Corporate Parenting Board held on the 29th January, 2018.

The Chair queried whether there had been an update in respect of Minute 42 – Midway Transitional Care. The Service Director, Children's Services advised that following the last meeting, officers were in the process of reviewing accommodation and improving accommodation opportunities for 16+ but it was yet to be finalised.

53 YOUNG CARERS ANNUAL REPORT

A video, 'Behind Closed Doors', created by the RCT Young Carers Project was played to the Board, highlighting various issues faced by young carers.

The officers presented the report to the Board, which outlined the work undertaken within the Young Carers service over the past year. Members learned that although there were currently 293 young carers known to the service, there were only 3 members of staff and that, although there had been a 23% increase in referrals, the Team had successfully worked to stretch resources as far as possible. The officers spoke of exciting initiatives such as funding from Welsh Government which helped to support family breaks and activities as well as trips for the carers themselves.

Members praised the video and spoke positively of events that had recently taken place such as the Young Carers Conference, which were non-judgemental and had a prolific effect in highlighting the demands which young carers face on a daily basis.

Members praised the team and were pleased to see that there had been a positive uptake of the service but raised concerns in respect of staff numbers. The Group Director, Community & Children's Services assured the Board that, if, following the Cwm Taf review outlined within the report, colleagues felt that more resources were needed to sustain the service, it would be considered. The main focus would be to improve upon what was already considered to be a vital service.

Members queried whether the young carers were receiving sufficient support from an education perspective. It was explained that young people strongly felt that there was room for improvement and as a result, an award system had been implemented within Comprehensive Schools. The aim of this was for each school to nominate a Champion who could progress to bronze, silver and gold status, meaning their knowledge and support would eventually reach a whole school policy level. It was explained that the successful approach was being adapted by colleges and piloted by six primary schools. The Members were pleased to hear that the award system meant that young carers were supported in school by a care figure that recognises the demands in which they face. The Vice-Chair added that this would also alleviate guilt experienced by parents.

The Group Director took the opportunity to thank the staff within the Young Carers Service, commenting that the success of the area had been echoed by the powerful testimonies of the young people at the Social Care Awards.

The Board **RESOLVED:**

- a) To note the content of the report;
- b) That the Cwm Taf Regional Model be presented to the Corporate Parenting Board in September 2018.

54 REGISTERED CHILDCARE PROVISION UPDATE

The Flying Start Childcare Manager presented the report, updating Members on the Care Inspectorate Wales (CIW) registered childcare settings overseen by the Early Years and Family Support Service.

The officer explained that there were 6 CIW registered childcare settings that were run by the Local Authority which aimed to be the flagships of RCT, adding that four of the provisions were due to be inspected within the next 12 months. Members learned that much like the checks carried out by CIW, internal quality monitoring checks were carried out within the settings, where officers turned up unexpectedly.

Members were pleased to learn that although each childcare setting had much strength, action plans had been developed to meet the recommendations and further improve the service to meet the children's needs in areas such as planning based on children's interests and the implementation of a robust reviewing process.

Discussions ensued around the use of the Welsh Language within each childcare setting, with Members recognising the need for such a vital service in all provisions. The officer acknowledged concerns, advising that an officer within the Welsh Language department had undertaken a review of each setting and had offered to train staff in the basic sentences needed for the role.

The Chair thanked the officer for the positive update and it was **RESOLVED** to note the content of the report.

55 MISKIN ANNUAL REPORT

The Team Development and Performance Manager presented the Corporate Parenting Board with an update in respect of the work undertaken by Miskin in 2016-17 following the integration of the Miskin Project and the Rapid Intervention Response Team in April to form a single provision.

Members noted that the data for the two teams had been presented separately within the report and they were assured that as the teams were now fully integrated, the data for 2017/18 would be combined.

Outlined within the report were case studies and questionnaires for the young people involved in the services which provided the Corporate Parenting Board with invaluable first hand opinions and information.

Members were pleased to see that following intervention by the Miskin Project, 98% of children remained out of the Looked After system in 2016/17. The average cost avoidance of the children not entering the care system was £1,799,944. It was also pleasing to note the figures outlined within the RIRT intervention. Data showed that the cost avoidance for each year, if the children remained out of care until they reached 18, was an annual saving of £1,437,000.32 in RIRT West and an additional £1,008,111.00 in RIRT East.

The Vice-Chair praised the report, commenting that although the savings were, of course, impressive, the number of children remaining at home due to intervention was invaluable.

Following queries in respect of the criteria for referrals and it was advised that this was broad, including-

- Families in crisis;
- Young people on the cusp of care;

- Those on the child protection register and;
- Those at risk of PLO

The Group Director spoke positive of early intervention, explaining that he had been witness of young people's success following use of the service.

The Chair, Children & Young People Scrutiny Committee referred to page 59 of the report, querying whether 28 weeks was enough time for officers to be involved with the family. It was explained that the period was based on research which concluded that this was sufficient for families due to the intensity of the programme. However, Members were assured that the service was needs based and was tailored to suit each family, meaning some periods of involvement were much shorter, and some longer.

The Service Director, Access, Engagement & Inclusion questioned how the service ensured continuity in education. The officer explained that education was inclusive within the plan, with strong communication links between officers. The officer spoke of the 'Positive Futures' programme which seeks to ensure young people spend one day a week outside for a number of hours to build their confidence. The Service Director also advised of the 'Fair Access Programme' which had been established to reintegrate children back into school at a fast pace.

The Chair thanked the officer for the report, commenting that the Board would welcome the further singular provision update in the future.

The Board **RESOLVED** to note the content of the report.

56 SOCIAL SERVICES QUARTERLY COMPLAINTS AND COMPLIMENTS

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, 2017 – 31st December, 2017.

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. The officer advised Members that although no compliments were outlined within the report, there had, in fact, been a low amount due to staff failing to record them.

Members noted that, in order to be more transparent, the report format had changed slightly to reflect the number of contacts made by the teams. The report showed that 50% of contacts were resolved at an early stage which prevented them being recorded as complaints.

The officer acknowledged that there had been a rise in staff complaints, but explained that this was the case across all Local Authorities, with many complainants blaming the individual social worker for standard procedures. The officer added that since the publication of the report, the 5 outstanding complaints had been dealt with.

Members were pleased with the new report format and its further transparency into the complaints process. The Chair was pleased to see that there had been an increase in MP/AM requests, commenting that they were using the correct

avenue for the complaints process, meaning they would receive a quicker and more efficient service.

The Board **RESOLVED** to note the content of the report.

57 NYAS

Ms E Phipps-Magill presented the Board with a quarterly narrative report on behalf of NYAS for the period 1st January, 2018 to 31st March, 2018.

The Board learned that the report format had been amended to reflect the change at National level but that this was likely to be altered again in the near future to include more comparative data.

The officer explained that during the period, 38 new referrals had been received which included 9 Active Offers of Advocacy referrals and 29 issue based referrals, with the majority of young people aged between 12 – 16.

Members were pleased to learn that RCT were leading the way in terms of the Active Offer, due to the robust reporting system within the Local Authority. It was explained that as of 1st April, all children would be told that they *will* be given an informal Active Offer meeting, instead of the current method where they can decline the offer. The Board Members were assured that awareness and drop in sessions would be put in place with Social Workers and at Service Manager meetings to ensure all staff are on board with the new changes.

Discussions ensued around the new reporting system, with Members agreeing there was a need to further capture the importance of Advocacy. Ms Phipps-Magill reassured the Board that Welsh Government were looking to improve the format to ensure is not entirely data based, but that summary reports could be devised in the interim.

The Service Director, Children's Services added that the Regional Task Group were in the process of considering a method to measure advocacy outcomes on a National level. This could include smaller outcomes, such as the young people feeling included or having their confidence raised; or at a larger scale, such as reintegration into education.

Both Members and officers provided a number of examples of services which include more personal data:

- Eye to Eye Service which allows the young person to evaluate the sessions;
- Families First which includes case studies and;
- Star charts to plot the journey through integration

The Chair thanked NYAS for the informative update and it was **RESOLVED:**

- a) To note the contents of the report

58 TO CONSIDER PASSING THE FOLLOWING UNDER-MENTIONED RESOLUTION:

It was **RESOLVED** that the press and public be excluded from the meeting under Section 100A(4) of the Local Government Act (as amended) for the following items of business on the grounds that it involves the likely disclosure of the exempt information as defined in paragraph 14 of Part 4 of the Schedule 12A of the Act.

59 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** to note the contents of the report.

60 FRONTLINE VISITS 2017-18

It was **RESOLVED** to note the visits made to Frontline teams by Board Members in 2017-18.

This meeting closed at 11.25 am

**Cllr G Hopkins
Chairman.**