



RHONDDA CYNON TAF COUNCIL CORPORATE PARENTING BOARD

Minutes of the meeting of the Corporate Parenting Board held on Monday, 23 September 2019 at 10.00 am at the Committee Room 1, The Pavilions, Cambrian Park, Clydach Vale, Tonypany, CF40 2XX.

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

Councillor C Leyshon (Chair)

Councillor G Hopkins Councillor S. Rees-Owen
Councillor R Yeo Councillor E Griffiths

Officers in attendance

Mr G Isingrini, Group Director Community & Children's Services
Mr C Hanagan, Service Director of Democratic Services & Communication
Ms C Miles, Childcare Solicitor
Ms C Jones, Head of Access & Inclusion
Ms J Thomas, Complaints & QA Manager, Social Services
Mr A Cope, Development Officer - Regional Fostering Services

13 Welcome and Apologies

The Chair took the opportunity to welcome new Member, County Borough Councillor E. Griffiths to her first meeting of the Corporate Parenting Board.

Apologies for absence were received from County Borough Councillors J. Rosser and J. James and Tros Gynnal Plant (TGP) Cymru.

14 Declaration of Interest

In accordance with the Council's Code of Conduct, County Borough Councillor G. Hopkins declared a personal interest in Item 4 – Regional Fostering Service. "I am a Foster Carer for Bridgend Council".

15 Minutes

It was **RESOLVED** to approve the minutes of the Corporate Parenting Board meeting held on the 16th July 2019.

16 Tros Gynnal Plant (TGP) Cymru

As detailed in Minute No. 13, a representative from Tros Gynnal Plant (TGP) Cymru was not present at the meeting to provide introductions to Members.

Members took the opportunity to comment on the report before them and were content with the positive progress captured. One Member praised the service performance figures shown in respect of both the Active Offer and Issue Based, commenting on the importance of making contact within 48 hours and engaging face to face within 5 working days.

Following a query, the Complaints Manager sought to explain to Members the

difference between Active Offer referrals and Issue Based referrals. Members were informed that it is a statutory requirement for all young people within the service to receive an active offer, which is a conversation with an Advocate about the support available to them. If a young person seeks further advocacy following the conversation, the referral becomes Issue Based.

The Chair thanked Members for their contribution and emphasised the importance of TGP Cymru attending the next meeting of the Corporate Parenting Board.

17 Regional Fostering Service

With the aid of a PowerPoint presentation, the Development Officer for Regional Fostering Services provided the Corporate Parenting Board with information on the recruitment and retention of foster carers and the changes to the operational delivery within fostering recruitment.

Following the work of the National Fostering Framework in respect of the challenges facing Local Authorities, Members were pleased to learn of the 'Regional Front Door' collaborative project launched in April 2019, between Rhondda Cynon Taff County Borough Council and Merthyr Tydfil County Borough Council to enhance the service provided to the public.

Members were provided with a demonstration of the new regional fostering website and were pleased with the addition of a modern point of contact for members of the public wishing to enquire about fostering services within the two Local Authorities. Furthermore, it was pleasing to learn of a dedicated recruitment telephone line, hosted by RCT customer care centre, which allows for numerous points of contact for potential applicants.

The officer then provided the Board with information gathered from the Quarter 1 performance report, which outlined positive progress in comparison to the data produced in the previous year. It was explained that there were 35 enquiries reported in Quarter 1, which was fewer than the figure reported in the previous year due to marketing recruitment.

The officer outlined the three key messages of the service, which were promoted by the increase of paid social media, fostering events and content generation, i.e. videos and stories:

- Availability of placements, better matched to you;
- Links to Child's Social Worker/ Team around the Child; and
- Not for profit

The officer concluded his presentation by outlining the next steps for the service and advised that a core offer for Local Authority foster carers was in the process of being developed and would include:

- Promoting the benefits of fostering for the local authority; and
- Developing RCTCBC as a fostering friendly organisation.

The Chair thanked the officer for the informative and positive update on a professional and responsive service.

Members were particularly pleased to learn of the significant improvements evidenced in respect of response times from initial enquiry to both follow up

recruitment calls and initial visits.

Referring to a recent news article, one Member queried whether the amount of foster carers from the LGBTQ are recorded within RCT. The officer advised that the service records all foster carers, but that they are not currently sub-categorised. Members were assured that all areas of marketing for the service would not discriminate against sex, gender or faith and would of course, be open to all of the community.

One Member commented on the importance of a strong link between the foster carer and the young person's Social Worker and suggested that the Social Worker's mobile phone number should be provided to the foster carer for emergencies during working hours, especially during the promotion of agile working, where the Social Worker may not be at their office desk.

Discussions ensued around the daily recordings of significant events for the young person, which a foster carer must submit as part of their duty. Members agreed that it would be beneficial to modernise the service to allow the foster carer to submit this electronically. The Fostering Service Manager acknowledged that communication preferences differ between Foster Carers and that an update is required.

Members **RESOLVED** to acknowledge the update.

18 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.

19 Social Services Quarterly Complaints & 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.

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.

During discussion, the Complaints Manager advised that there were changes due to take place within the Ombudsman's office, which would affect the data detailed within future reports to the Board. Members were informed that the Ombudsman were in the process of creating a Complaints Standards Authority, which was due to be embedded in the coming Autumn for all aspects of the Local Authority, not just Children's Services. As a result of the change, future reports would highlight an increase in Stage 2 complaints.

Following consideration, Members **RESOLVED** to acknowledge the update.

20 Regulation 73 Reports

The Residential Services Manager provided the Board with an update on the Regulation 73 visits undertaken at the three children's homes – Beddau, Bryndar

and Nantgwyn.

The officer outlined a summary of the inspection outcomes and took the opportunity to extend an invitation to the Board to the Open House Coffee Morning being held at the new Short Term Residential Provision/Home Carn Ingli in Abernant on Thursday 10th October 2019.

It was **RESOLVED** to acknowledge the content of the report.

This meeting closed at 11.15 am

**Cllr C Leyshon
Chair.**