



RHONDDA CYNON TAF COUNCIL CORPORATE PARENTING BOARD

Minutes of the virtual meeting of the Corporate Parenting Board held on Thursday, 30 July 2020 at 10.00 am.

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

Councillor C Leyshon (Chair)

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

Officers in attendance

Mr G Isingrini, Group Director Community & Children's Services
Ms C Miles, Childcare Solicitor
Ms C Jones, Head of Access & Inclusion
Ms J Thomas, Complaints & QA Manager, Social Services
Ms A Lloyd, Service Director, Children's Services
Mrs J Clark, Head of Safeguarding
Mr L Lewis, Acting Head of the Youth Offending Service
Mr C Mann, Reviewing Team Manager
Ms M Meredith, Residential Services Manager
Ms K Webster, Deputy Principal Educational Psychologist

43 Welcome and Apologies

The Chair welcomed attendees to the first virtual meeting of the Corporate Parenting Board and apologies for absence were received from County Borough Councillor J Rosser and Tros Gynnal Plant Cymru.

44 Declaration of Interest

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

45 Minutes

It was **RESOLVED** to approve the minutes of the 27th January 2020 as an accurate reflection of the meeting.

46 Change to the order of the Agenda

The Committee agreed that the agenda would be considered out of sequence as detailed in the minutes set out hereunder.

47 Corporate Parenting Board Annual Report 2019/20

The Chair of the Corporate Parenting Board provided the Board with the Draft Annual Report of the Corporate Parenting Board for the Municipal Year 2019/20.

The Chair advised that a number of reports had been considered in the year, which had resulted in challenging debate. It was explained that due to the

COVID-19 outbreak, the last two meetings of the Corporate Parenting Board were cancelled and as such, a number of the reports detailed within the work programme would be considered in the following Municipal Year.

The Chair took the opportunity to thank Members and officers of the Corporate Parenting Board for their contribution during the year.

One Member suggested that the Corporate Parenting Board and the Children and Young People Scrutiny Committee focus on intervention and prevention in the 2020/21 Municipal Year.

One Member commented that it would be beneficial for a training session to be organised for all County Borough Councillors to ensure they are fully aware of their responsibilities as corporate parents.

Members agreed that the attendance of young people from Voices From Care was essential and provides the Corporate Parenting Board with a first-hand insight into their experiences.

Subject to a minor formatting amendment, the Corporate Parenting Board **RESOLVED:**

1. To provide comment as appropriate on the draft Annual Report before its presentation to the Children and Young People Scrutiny Committee, and finally Cabinet; and
2. To forward the final version of the report to the CIW for information.

48 Cwm Taf Youth Offending Service Annual Report

The Head of the Cwm Taf Youth Offending Service provided the Corporate Parenting Board with an annual review of the work of the Youth Offending Service (YOS) for 2019/20 and information in respect of future strategic change and the impact upon future service delivery.

Members attention was drawn to Section 4 of the report, which detailed the vast amount of work undertaken within the service during the year, despite financial pressures.

The officer spoke of the 'Blueprint for Youth Justice Wales' programme, which had been developed to improve and develop prevention across youth offending services. The document sets out advice for a recommended vision for youth Justice in Wales, with a trauma informed, child focussed method of working.

Members were informed that prevention and diversionary activity accounted for over half of YOS business and sought to address the needs of young people where the risk of offending can impact negatively upon the community and upon future welfare of young people/adults. Therefore, due to the increased volume of cases, Members learned that there was need for a restructure of the service for a more coordinated approach to prevention activity alongside partner agencies.

The officer went on to speak of PPEYP (Promoting Positive Engagement with Young People) Welsh Government funding, which ensures key prevention work can be undertaken. The officer advised that there were concerns across Wales that the funding should be ring-fenced to continue developing, delivering and coordinating preventative interventions and services.

Prior to concluding, the officer took the opportunity to update the Corporate Parenting Board on the work undertaken during the Covid-19 national pandemic. Members were pleased to learn that despite the circumstances, officers had continued to support young people on the cusp of custody through extensive work, accompanied young people to court and the police station and carried out mediation work at the children's homes.

The Chair took thanked the officer for the detailed update and commented that the renegotiation with health to maintain the mental health provision via a CAMHS/YOS Pathway was vital.

The Vice-Chair spoke positive of the report and praised the officer for the remarkable work undertaken given the resources available to the service, following cuts in funding. The Member emphasised the need to focus on the three Nation Performance Indicators and was pleased to note that the number of young people entering the youth justice system in Cwm Taf remained low.

The Corporate Parenting Board **RESOLVED:**

1. To acknowledge the proposed strategic changes within the Youth Justice System and potential impact upon YOS business;
2. To receive further reports in due course in order to be satisfied of the progress and improvements being made as a result of a proposed service change.

49 Tros Gynnal Plant (TGP) Cymru

Following the apology received from Tros Gynnal Plant Cymru, the Board agreed to defer the consideration of the report until the next appropriate meeting of the Corporate Parenting Board.

50 Children Looked After: Educational Outcomes

The Deputy Principal Educational Psychologist provided the Corporate Parenting Board with an update on the educational outcomes of Children Looked After (CLA) in Rhondda Cynon Taf in 2018 /19.

One Member was pleased to note that the CLA Team had supported 14 schools to achieve the CLA Friendly Schools Quality Mark, and questioned whether all schools could be encouraged to undertake the qualification going forward. The officer advised that the Quality Mark was self-selective and involved a complex and timely three staged process over a year. Whilst the Members acknowledged that the process would take commitment, they agreed that it would be beneficial for Members to take it forward to their school governors meetings.

One Member questioned how young people had coped in terms of education attainment during the lockdown period. The officer advised that the majority of the Children Looked After had coped well throughout the period and that the team had provided support virtually or attended the hubs for those with specific needs.

Discussions ensued around section 11.2 of the report, which noted that outcome data suggests that the Council needed to do things differently. Whilst Members acknowledged that a holistic approach needed to be undertaken and that the attainment data did not take into consideration softer outcomes in terms of a young person's social and emotional skills, they felt it would be beneficial for a

detailed planned approach to be brought back to a future meeting of the Corporate Parenting Board.

The Corporate Parenting Board **RESOLVED:**

1. To consider the information contained within the report;
2. To comment on the information contained within the report; and
3. To receive a further information on the strategy to approve the outcome data for vulnerable young people.

51 Independent Reviewing Officer (IRO) Report

The Head of Service for Safeguarding provided the Corporate Parenting Board with information about the activity of the IRO Service during the periods 1st July 2019 – 31st December 2019 and 1st January 2020 – 31st March 2020. Members noted that the 1st July 2019 – 31st December 2019 report was initially due to be considered prior to the lockdown period, but the meeting had been cancelled.

The officer focussed on the most recent quarter and Members were informed that during the period 1st January 2020 – 31st March 2020, there were 717 children looked after by RCT, which was an increase compared to the previous reporting quarter. Since the last period, Members learned that there had been a slight increase in the number of children looked after placed out of county due to the increase in numbers, but the officer emphasised that out of county placements does include placements with family members.

The officer stated that during the 1st January 2020 – 31st March 2020 period, there had been 447 CLA review meetings and that IROs chaired 11 combined CLA Reviews and Review Conferences to remove the names of children looked after under Care Orders from the Child Protection Register.

Members learned that the Reviewing Service comprised of 11 IRO full-time posts and were pleased to learn that a permanent Service Manager had been successfully appointed.

In respect of the implications of the Covid-19 pandemic, the officer assured Members that despite the pressures, officers had continued to prioritise and engage with young people and their families virtually. Although there had been no face to face meetings during the period, which made it more difficult to engage, there had been 13 resolutions raised. The officer added that there had been a delay with the 2Sides website due to the pandemic and the changes to posts, but that this would be developed in the near future along with Life Journey Work.

One Member questioned whether the young people preferred remote meetings and it was explained that most of the meetings had been held via telephone, which meant it was difficult to engage with the young people, but that many of the young people had suggested the use of Microsoft Teams/Zoom as a preference to formal meetings. Members were interested in receiving the feedback of the young people, following the roll out of Microsoft Teams.

The Corporate Parenting Board wished to place on record their thanks to the IRO's, who had worked tirelessly through the pandemic.

The Corporate Parenting Board **RESOLVED:**

1. To acknowledge the content of the report.

52 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.

53 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 2019 and 31st March 2020.

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.

Following consideration of the Report Members **RESOLVED** to acknowledge the content of the report and suggested that it would be beneficial for an email to be circulated to all Councillors reminding them of the protocol when reporting complaints and compliments.

54 Regulation 73 Reports

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

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

1. To note the content of the report.

This meeting closed at 12.15 pm

**Cllr C Leyshon
Chair.**