



## **RHONDDA CYNON TAF COUNCIL CORPORATE PARENTING BOARD**

Minutes of the meeting of the Corporate Parenting Board held on Monday, 21 September 2020 at 10.00 am at the Virtual.

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

Councillor C Leyshon (Chair)

Councillor J Rosser Councillor E Griffiths

### **Officers in attendance**

Mr G Isingrini, Group Director Community & Children's Services  
Ms C Miles, Childcare Solicitor  
Ms A Lloyd, Service Director, Children's Services  
Ms C Jones, Head of Access & Inclusion  
Ms J Thomas, Complaints & QA Manager, Social Services  
Ms E Brabon, Senior EET Coordinator  
Ms Z Lancelott, Head of Community Wellbeing & Resilience  
Mr A Bowden, Senior EET Co-Ordinator

### **Others in attendance**

Mr C Dunn (RCT Forum)  
Ms S Power (RCT Forum)

#### **1 Welcome and Apologies**

The Chair welcomed the attendees to the virtual meeting and apologies were received from County Borough Councillors G. Hopkins, R. Yeo, S. Rees-Owen and J. James.

#### **2 Declaration of Interest**

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

#### **3 Minutes**

It was **RESOLVED** to approve the minutes of the Corporate Parenting Board meeting held on the 30<sup>th</sup> July 2020, subject to the following amendment:

- Minute No. 50 – point 3 of the Resolution should read '*To receive further information on the strategy to improve the outcome data for vulnerable young people.*'

#### **4 Corporate Parenting Board Work Programme 2020-2021**

The Senior Executive & Regulatory Business Officer provided the Corporate Parenting Board with the report outlining the draft work programme for the

2020/2021 Municipal Year. The officer explained that the programme acts as a useful method of managing the Board's work load and is a fluid document, which can be amended throughout the year to reflect any changing priorities the Board may have.

Members noted that due to Covid-19 and social distancing measures, the annual Frontline Visits would not be going forward during the year, and it was **RESOLVED** to acknowledge the update.

## **5 Employment, Education and Training Programmes for Children Looked After**

The Senior Employment, Education and Training Co-ordinator provided the Corporate Parenting Board with an update in respect of the Council's dedicated programmes to support Children Looked After, Care Leavers and those with care and support needs into employment, education and training and support the transition into independent living.

The Corporate Parenting Board were provided were a breakdown of outcomes from April 2019 – March 2020 in respect of the Step in the Right Direction, Care2Work and Cater2Work programmes.

The officer continued, speaking of the challenging months faced by the service as a result of the Covid-19 pandemic. Members were pleased to note that there had been many success stories, despite the difficult times and that officers had engaged with young people via social media and virtual job clubs. Members were played a video link of a young person speaking of his first-hand experience of the virtual job club.

The officer concluded by informing the Board that following her attendance at a previous meeting of the Board, the Council's Senior Leadership Team to corporately fund an extra 3 trainees to access the programme.

The Chair thanked the officer for the report and commended the young person for the video.

Members echoed the Chair's comments in respect of the young person, agreeing that hearing the young people's personal stories is invaluable.

One Member questioned why there was more placements than trainees and it was explained that sometimes, young people change their minds and decide that a certain course is no longer for them but they have the opportunity to try an array of different placements.

Another Member noted that of the 58 referrals received for the Care2Work Programme, 19 did not enrol and questioned the process. It was explained that the young people were not in a position to fully engage at the time of enrolment but Members were assured that the officers continue to pursue them.

The Corporate Parenting Board **RESOLVED** to acknowledge the update.

## **6 RCT Forum**

The RCT Forum provided the Corporate Parenting Board with a summary of activity during April 2019 – March 2020.

Members learned that during the Financial Year, the Forum engaged with 32 care experienced children and young people in RCT.

The Corporate Parenting Board were informed that the RCT forum's monthly sessions focused on three main areas:

- Developing information resources from care experienced young people;
- Undertaking a training to become peer mentors who deliver wellbeing and self-care training to their peers; and
- A creative writing project focusing on mental health.

Members were delighted to speak to the Group Development Officer, who had undertaken the Blueprint traineeship and was now a fulltime member of staff, which provided the young people with a first-hand success story of one of their peers. In addition, Members heard from a young person from the RCT Forum, who provided the Board with her experience in participating in the projects, which gave her the opportunity to speak with other care experienced young people.

Members were warmed to hear of the exciting projects undertaken by the young people and were particularly interested in the Listen to Thrive project, which saw young people presenting on continuous mental health issues. It was explained that work had been undertaken with Welsh Government in respect of the mental health implications of coming out of lockdown and that VFCC continued to lobby this with the Regional Partnership Board.

The Board learned that the care experienced young people had helped design the Voices from Care Cymru's Strategic Plan 19-23, which included the following priority areas for change:

- Mental Health – this was the key request of the young people, who believed mental health support would be pivotal at a time when individuals were feeling particularly isolated due to Covid-19;
- Sibling relationships;
- Importance of stability;
- Importance of being loved; and
- Breaking the stigma.

Speaking of their experience through lockdown and Covid-19, the Board were informed that, like many other services, RCT Forum had digitalised their services. It was pleasing to hear that in addition to virtual social meetings, the groups held a variety of engaging meetings, such as quizzes and yoga for wellbeing to keep everyone connected during the difficult time.

Moving forward, Members learned that the Forum would continue to connect and were looking forward to a Halloween social with fancy dress and a quiz. In addition, a Covid-19 questionnaire had been prepared to ensure the young people had the support they needed. It was explained that a key area moving forward would be to connecting with children looked after in schools and utilising the technology available.

The Chair thanked the officers and young person for the informative presentation and congratulated the Group Development Officer on her position. All Members recognised the importance of issue based work on mental health, particularly during the difficult time.

Members praised the creative writing and poetry sessions held to promote positive mental health and welcomed the chance of reading the work and thought it would be a great opportunity to include it within the leaflet.

The Corporate Parenting Board **RESOLVED** to acknowledge the update.

## **7 Resilient Families Services**

The Head of Community Wellbeing and Resilience provided the Corporate Parenting Board with a detailed presentation in respect of the 2018-2019 performance data for the Resilient Families Service.

The presentation included information in relation to the number of referrals received, the outcomes, appraisals and the areas of need. In addition, the officer provided the Board with a case study, which outlined the initial goals for the family and a breakdown of the successful outcomes.

The officer went on to provide Members with an update following the Covid-19 pandemic. Members learned that the service had taken on an additional 300 cases in the initial stages and that although many families were happy to continue virtually, others struggled and decided to put the service on hold. Members learned that the service had continued to engage via social media, with parenting support videos on YouTube, receiving over 18,000 hits. The officer advised that since July, meetings had been held in a hybrid format and that since August, there were no cases on hold.

The Chair thanked the officer for the detailed presentation and the Corporate Parenting Board **RESOLVED** to acknowledge the update.

## **8 Tros Gynnal Plant (TGP) Cymru**

Ms M. Davies, Tros Gynnal Plant Cymru provided the Board with a quarterly update of progress made by Tros Gynnal Plant (TGP) Cymru.

Members were informed that during the quarter, 29 young people accessed Issue Based Advocacy, presenting with 46 issues; and a further 19 young people were referred for the Active Offer. In addition, during the quarter, young people requested advocacy support at meetings 36 times.

Members were pleased to note that all 29 of the young people who accessed Issue Based Advocacy had contact with their advocate within five working days of the referral being accepted.

The Board were informed of the challenges arisen as a result of the Covid-19 pandemic and were pleased to note that despite its difficulties, the advocates and young people had effectively adapted to virtual meetings to maintain their relationships. Members learned that the young people had provided positive feedback about the new arrangements but there were concerns of the advocates that the young people were not always alone during their conversations.

Speaking of the improvements moving forward, Tros Gynnal Plant Cymru advised that there were slight changes to the reporting templates to include case studies and that gathering feedback of the young people at the end of the service had always been an issue, but that it would be built into the service.

Members thanked Tros Gynnal Plant Cymru for the comprehensive report and were particularly pleased with how the young people had engaged with the service during the current circumstances.

Referring to the graphs within the report, one Member queried how the protected characteristics were recorded. It was explained that some questions were asked at the point of referral but that more information may be noted at a later date, subject to the young person's consent.

The Member sought further information in respect of the breakdown of demographic with the graphs and how it compares with the cohort. Tros Gynnal Plant Cymru advised that the data would need to be compared with the number of young people in RCT who are eligible for the active offer.

Members **RESOLVED** to acknowledge the update provided.

**9 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.

**10 Social Services Customer Feedback, Engagement and Complaints**

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 1<sup>st</sup> April 2020 – 31<sup>st</sup> June 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.

**This meeting closed at 11.20 am**

**Cllr C Leyshon  
Chairman.**