

CYNGOR BWRDEISTREF SIROL
RHONDDA CYNON TAF
COUNTY BOROUGH COUNCIL

A meeting of the CABINET will be held at the Council Chamber, The Pavilions, Cambrian Park, Clydach Vale, Tonypany, CF40 2XX
Thursday, 25th January, 2018 at 10.30 am

Contact: Emma Wilkins - Principal Executive & Regulatory Business Officer (Tel No. 01443 424110)

Councillors and members of the public wishing to request the facility to address the Cabinet on any of the business as listed below, must request to do so by 5pm on the Tuesday, 23 January 2018 Councillors and Members of the public have the right to address the Cabinet in the medium of English or Welsh.

It must be noted that the facility to address the Cabinet is at the discretion of the Chair and each request will be considered based on the agenda items being considered, the public interest/interest of the member in each matter and the demands of the business on that day. To make such a request please email:- ExecutiveandRegulatoryBusinessUnit@rctcbc.gov.uk

ITEMS FOR CONSIDERATION

1. DECLARATION OF INTEREST

To receive disclosures of personal interest from Members in accordance with the Code of Conduct.

Note:

1. Members are requested to identify the item number and subject matter that their interest relates to and signify the nature of the personal interest; and
2. Where Members withdraw from a meeting as a consequence of the disclosure of a prejudicial interest they **must** notify the Chairman when they leave.

2. MINUTES

To receive the minutes of the Cabinet meeting held on the 19th December, 2017 as an accurate record.

3. INCREASING RECYCLING PERFORMANCE - PRE SCRUTINY

To receive the report of the Secretary to the Cabinet advising Members of the scrutiny arrangements in place in respect of the 'Increasing Recycling Performance' report.

(Pages 11 - 20)

4. INCREASE OF THE FIXED PENALTY NOTICE

To receive the report of the Director, Highways & Streetcare services seeking authority from Members to align current Fixed Penalty Notices within the service area to the same as the recently introduced PSPO (to introduce dog controls in Rhondda Cynon Taf) to provide a consistent approach across the County Borough.

(Pages 21 - 24)

5. KEY STAGE 4 AND 5 EXAMINATION RESULTS AND PRIMARY AND SECONDARY SCHOOL CATEGORISATION FOR 2018

To receive the report of the Director, Education & Lifelong Learning providing Members with the final confirmation of the Key Stage 4 and Key Stage 5 examination results for 2016-17 and the Welsh Government Primary and Secondary School Categorisation for 2017-2018.

(Pages 25 - 34)

6. CWM TAF YOUTH OFFENDING SERVICE

To receive the report of the Group Director, Community & Children's Services informing Cabinet of the findings and outcomes of the full Joint Inspection of Cwm Taf Youth Offending Service (YOS), which took place in March 2017, the findings of which were published in July 2017, and to highlight the work being done to address areas for improvement.

(Pages 35 - 88)

7. NATIONAL ADOPTION ANNUAL REPORT

To receive the report of the Group Director, Community & Children's Services presenting Members with the National Adoption Service Wales Annual Report 2016-2017.

(Pages 89 - 116)

8. OPERATIONAL CHANGES TO THE COMMUNITY MEALS SERVICE AND PROPOSAL TO CLOSE ST GEORGE'S DAY CENTRE AND TRANSFER THE OPEN ACCESS DAY CENTRE PROVISION TO GILFACH GOCH DAY CENTRE

To receive the report of the Chief Executive providing Members with details of the proposed operational changes to the Community Meals Service and seeking authority to undertake a consultation on a proposal to close St George's Day Centre and transfer open access day service to Gilfach Goch Day Centre.

(Pages 117 - 126)

9. DELIVERING THE CORPORATE PLAN - "THE WAY AHEAD" - INVESTING FOR THE FUTURE

To receive the report of the Chief Executive setting out the strategic capital investment priorities that this Council will commit to over the next three to five years to deliver its Corporate Plan – “the Way Ahead”.

(Pages 127 - 134)

10. TO CONSIDER PASSING THE FOLLOWING RESOLUTION:

“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”.

11. SUPPORTED LIVING ACCOMMODATION DEVELOPMENT FOR INDIVIDUALS WITH A LEARNING DISABILITY - PENLLEW COURT, ABERDARE

To receive the report of the Group Director, Community & Children’s Services containing exempt information, which seeks Cabinet approval to contribute capital funding to convert Penllew Court, sheltered housing scheme for older people in Aberdare, owned by Cynon Taf Housing Association, into new supported living accommodation for people with a learning disability.

(Pages 135 - 142)

12. URGENT ITEMS

To consider any urgent business as the Chairman feels appropriate.

N.B FOR INFORMATION

13. UPDATED LEADERS SCHEME OF DELEGATION TO REFLECT THE RECENT CHANGES TO SLT.

[LEADERS SCHEME OF DELEGATION](#)



Service Director and Secretary to the Cabinet

Circulation:-

Councillors: Councillor A Morgan (Chair)
Councillor M Webber (Vice-Chair)
Councillor R Bevan
Councillor A Crimmings
Councillor G Hopkins
Councillor M Norris
Councillor J Rosser
Councillor R Lewis
Councillor C Leyshon

Officers: Chris Bradshaw, Chief Executive
Chris Jones, Director, Legal & Democratic Services
Christian Hanagan, Service Director of Cabinet & Public Relations
Chris Lee, Group Director Corporate & Frontline Services
Gio Isingrini, Group Director Community & Children's Services
Colin Atyeo, Director of Corporate Estates & Procurement
Esther Thomas, Director of Education & Lifelong Learning
Jane Cook, Director of Regeneration & Planning
Nigel Wheeler, Director of Highways & Streetcare Services
Paul Mee, Director, Public Health, Protection & Community Services
Richard Evans, Director of Human Resources

RHONDDA CYNON TAF COUNCIL CABINET

Minutes of the meeting of the Cabinet meeting held on Tuesday, 19 December 2017 at 10.30 am at the Council Chamber, The Pavilions, Cambrian Park, Clydach Vale, Tonypany, CF40 2XX.

County Borough Councillors - Cabinet Members in attendance:-

A Morgan (Chair)

M Webber
M Norris

R Bevan
(Mrs) J. Rosser

A Crimmings
R. Lewis

G. Hopkins
(Mrs) C. Leyshon

Officers in attendance

Mr C Bradshaw, Chief Executive
Mr C Hanagan, Service Director of Cabinet & Public Relations
Mr C Lee, Group Director Corporate & Frontline Services
Mr G Isingrini, Group Director Community & Children's Services
Mr C Jones, Director, Legal & Democratic Services
Ms E Thomas, Director of Education & Lifelong Learning
Ms J Cook, Director of Regeneration & Planning
Mr P Mee, Director, Public Health, Protection & Community Services
Mr B Davies, Director of Financial Services
Mr. R. Evans, Director of Human Resources
Ms. L. Davies, Head Of Environmental Health, Trading Standards & Community Safety
Mr. M. Phillips, Revenues Services Manager

County Borough Councillors in attendance

None

87 DECLARATION OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of Interest made pertaining to the agenda.

88 MINUTES

The Cabinet **RESOLVED** to approve the minutes of the 21st November 2017 as an accurate reflection of the meeting.

89 CABINET WORK PROGRAMME

The Secretary to the Cabinet provided Cabinet Members with an update on the proposed list of matters requiring consideration by Cabinet over the 2017 – 18 Municipal Year, commenting that utilising the programme assists with openness and transparency of the decision making process within the Council and gives greater opportunity for Pre-Scrutiny.

Members were referred to Appendix 1 of the report and were advised that the programme is a live document to allow for any additional / deletion of reports throughout the year.

The Deputy Leader spoke positively of the benefits of producing the work programme to assist Cabinet and scrutiny going forward and also re-emphasised that the work programme is a 'live' document and is subject to change if necessary.

It was **RESOLVED**:

- a) To approve the Work Programme for the 2017-18 Municipal Year and to receive a further update on a 3 monthly basis.

90 PUBLIC SPACE PROTECTION ORDER (INTOXICATING SUBSTANCES INCLUDING ALCOHOL)

The Director Public Health, Protection & Community Services provided Members with an overview of the report before them which sought Members authority to consult on a proposal to retain the Public Space Protection Order to control alcohol related anti social behaviour in Rhondda Cynon Taf and to extend the Order to include two defined exclusion zones to control intoxicating substance use in Pontypridd and Aberdare Town Centres.

Members were provided with the reasons for the proposal which identified a need for the PSPO and the reasonable grounds identified to extend to include two specific grounds to prohibit people in public places from taking intoxicating substances in order to reduce the incidence and public perception of related anti social behaviour and crime in Pontypridd (including the lower Graig) and Aberdare Town Centres only, following evaluation of the previous DPPO.

The Deputy Cabinet Member for Prosperity & Well-being commented on the proposal and welcomed the consultation and added that the PSPO had demonstrated that it was a versatile tool for public safety issues.

The Deputy Leader queried those identified as consultees within the report and spoke of the importance of the Local Members. The Deputy Leader also welcomed the proposed consultation with the trustees of the Ynysangharad War Memorial Park.

Following discussions, the Cabinet **RESOLVED**:

1. To undertake an 8 week public consultation exercise on the proposal to retain the Public Space Protection Order (PSPO) to control alcohol related anti social behaviour in Rhondda Cynon Taf and to extend the Order to include two defined exclusion zones to control intoxicating substance use in Pontypridd and Aberdare Town Centres, specifically to:
 - i. Retain the PSPO designating the whole County Borough as a Controlled Drinking Zone with the power for police constables and authorised officers to require any person to stop drinking and surrender alcohol or any alcohol containers if they are causing or likely to cause anti-social behaviour (ASB).
 - ii. Vary the PSPO to include Intoxicating Substance Exclusion Zones in the Pontypridd (including the lower Graig) and Aberdare Town Centres only which will prohibit people in public places from the

taking of intoxicating substances, including alcohol and other substances capable of stimulating or depressing the central nervous system.

- iii. Authorise consumption of intoxicating substances in the Exclusion Zones only where that activity is undertaken at a premises or within the curtilage of a premises which is authorised to be used for the supply of alcohol by licence or club premises certificate or permission granted under section 115E of the Highways Act 1980.
2. To receive a further report detailing the responses to the public consultation and any recommendations for amendments to the proposed PSPO for alcohol and intoxicating substance controls.

91 SUPPLEMENTARY PLANNING GUIDANCE - HOUSES IN MULTIPLE OCCUPATION

The Service Director, Planning referred Members to his report which sought Cabinet approval to undertake a public consultation on draft supplementary planning guidance for Houses in Multiple Occupation (HMOs).

The Service Director advised the Cabinet that evidence collected by officers had indicated that there was an over concentration of HMOs in some parts of Treforest which in turn leads to a range of issues that can undermine the social cohesion of the community in that area. He continued by adding that evidence also illustrates that landlords are continuing to propose the creation of new HMOs in the area and at present the Council has been unsuccessful in resisting these proposals through the planning process and has lost a number of recent appeals to the Planning Inspectorate. Members were advised that supplementary planning guidance is one tool that can be used to assist in the consideration of planning applications both in terms of resisting applications for inappropriate HMOs or HMOs in areas that have already got high concentrations and also assist in raising the standard of new HMOs and guiding any future HMOs to the most appropriate locations.

The Service Director referred Members to the Draft supplementary Guidance that had been produced and advised that in order for this Guidance to be adopted by the Council it was necessary for further comprehensive, formal consultation to be undertaken.

The Deputy Leader thanked the officers for the Draft Supplementary Planning Guidance, which she added was welcomed by her and the local member for the area.

The Cabinet Member for Enterprise, Development & Housing spoke of the problems experienced previously in respect of HMOs due to no HMO policy being in place within the Councils Local Development Plan. The Cabinet Member welcomed the consultation on the draft guidance and added that the guidance would also assist with preventing the problem transferring to other local areas across the County Borough.

The Leader of the Council queried the consultation period and the Service Director confirmed that the consultation would run for an 8 week period.

Following discussions the Cabinet **RESOLVED**:

1. To agree the Draft Supplementary Planning Guidance '*Houses in Multiple Occupation HMOs*' (as attached as Appendix 1 of the report), for the purposes of an 8 week consultation.

92 COUNCIL TAX BASE 2018/19

The Director, Finance presented Members with his report which looked to set the Council Tax base for the financial year 2018/19. Members were reminded of the statutory requirement to agree and set the Council Tax Base for the forthcoming financial year prior to 31st December each year.

The Director provided details to Members in respect of the calculations advising the gross Council Tax Base calculated for 2018/19 was £77,608.22 and further added that it was proposed that the collection rate continues to be estimated at 97.5%, which would produce a net Council Tax Base of £75,668.01. It was explained that for every £1 levied in Council Tax next year, a sum of £75,668 would be generated to meet the budget requirement of the Council.

Following consideration of the Council Tax Base analyses as outlined within Appendix 1 of the report, the Cabinet **RESOLVED**:

1. That in accordance with the Local Authorities (Calculation of Council Tax Base) (Wales) Regulations 1995 as amended, the amount calculated by the Council as its net tax base for the financial year 2018/19, shall be £75,668.01.
2. That for each area of the County Borough, the 2018/19 tax base for Council Tax setting purposes, shall be as set out at Appendix 1 of the report.

(N.B. Following the decision, the Secretary to the Cabinet advised that as the deadline for setting the Council Tax Base was the 31st December, 2017, the decision would need to be taken as an urgent decision and therefore not subject to Call In.)

93 COUNCIL TAX DISCRETIONARY RELIEF - CARE LEAVERS

The Director, Finance provided Members with an overview of the report before them which provided Members with information on an opportunity for consideration in respect of Council Tax Discretionary Relief for Care Leavers, as part of proactively discharging its duty as a Corporate Parent in effecting and supporting Care Leavers (aged 18 – 25).

The Director referenced recent campaigns, including recent lobbying to the Welsh Government in respect of the vulnerability of care leavers in relation to Council Tax debt and further advised that under Section 13A of the Local Government Finance Act 1992, the Council has a general discretionary power to reduce liability for Council Tax in relation to individual cases or class(es) of cases that it may determine where national discounts and exemptions cannot be applied. The Director added that the Council has adopted a policy with regards to its powers under Section 13A of the Local Government Finance Act 1992 known as the 'Council Tax Discretionary Relief Policy'.

Members were advised of the principles of the proposed Care Leavers Relief scheme as follows:

- The young person is a 'care leaver' and is between the ages of 18 and 25 and is not exempt on any other basis;
- Where a RCT 'care leaver' moves out of the Council's area the discount can be reclaimed should they return before their 25th birthday

The Director concluded his overview by advising that if taken forward the "Care Leavers Council Tax Relief" would be available from the start of the 2018/19 financial year and he also highlighted that the Council would not be reimbursed by Welsh Government for the income foregone.

Members of the Cabinet welcomed the opportunity to take forward the discretionary Care leavers Council Tax relief scheme and it was highlighted that Rhondda Cynon Taf was the first Council in Wales to introduce such a relief scheme for young care leavers up to the age of 25years.

Following the positive discussions on the discretionary relief the Cabinet **RESOLVED:**

1. That as part of the ongoing support to care leavers in its role as Corporate Parent, to exercise its discretionary powers to award a 100% Discretionary Council Tax Relief to Care Leavers aged 18-25, residing in the County Borough, based on the principles set out in within the report, from the 1st April 2018.
2. To give delegated authority to the Council's S151 Officer to amend the Council's Council Tax Discretionary Relief Policy, to include the above, as appropriate.

94 CHRISTMAS WISHES

The Leader of the Council took the opportunity to wish all those in attendance at the meeting a Merry Christmas.

This meeting closed at 10.55 am

**Cllr A Morgan
Chairman.**

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RHONDDA CYNON TAF COUNTY BOROUGH COUNCIL

CABINET

25th JANUARY, 2018

INCREASING RECYCLING PERFORMANCE - PRE SCRUTINY ARRANGEMENTS.

REPORT OF THE SECRETARY TO THE CABINET IN DISCUSSIONS WITH THE RELEVANT PORTFOLIO HOLDERS COUNCILLOR M WEBBER AND A CRIMMINGS

Author: Mrs E Wilkins, Executive and Regulatory Business Unit

1. PURPOSE OF THE REPORT

The purpose of the report is to advise Members of the scrutiny arrangements in place in respect of the 'Increasing Recycling Performance' report.

2. RECOMMENDATIONS

It is recommended that:

- 2.1 Members note the arrangements in place in respect of Pre-scrutiny of the 'Increasing Recycling Performance' report (as attached at Appendix 1)
- 2.2 Members consider the report at a future meeting following pre scrutiny by the Public Service Delivery, Communities & Prosperity Scrutiny Committee.

3 REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATIONS

- 3.1 The need for Members to be aware of the work to be undertaken by scrutiny to assist the Cabinet in this area.

4. BACKGROUND

- 4.1 Following consideration of the Cabinet work programme at a recent meeting between the Cabinet Member for Environment and Leisure and the Chair & Vice Chair of the Public Service Delivery, Communities

and Prosperity Scrutiny Committee, Members discussed pre-scrutiny of the 'Increasing Recycling Performance' report, listed within the Cabinet Work Programme.

- 4.2 Following the meeting the Leader of the Council formally wrote to the Chair of the Public Service Delivery, Communities and Prosperity Scrutiny Committee asking that his Committee undertake pre scrutiny in respect of the 'Increasing Recycling Performance' at the next meeting of the Committee.
- 4.3 Pre scrutiny will allow non executive members to examine proposals, objectives and draft programmes in order to inform their development before they are enacted.
- 4.4 The report identified for pre scrutiny is attached as appendix 1 for Cabinets information.
- 4.5 It is proposed that following pre-scrutiny the report is presented back to a future meeting of the Cabinet.

5 EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY IMPLICATIONS

- 5.1 An Equality Impact Assessment is not needed because the contents of the report are for information purposes only.

6 CONSULTATION

- 6.1 The report contained within appendix 1 will be presented to the Public Service Delivery, Communities & Prosperity Scrutiny Committee for pre scrutiny before the item is considered by Cabinet.

7 FINANCIAL IMPLICATION(S)

- 7.1 Any financial implications outlined within Appendix 1 of the report will be identified following pre scrutiny of the report.

8 LEGAL IMPLICATIONS OR LEGISLATION CONSIDERED

- 8.1 Non applicable – the report is identifying the scrutiny arrangements in place.

9 LINKS TO THE COUNCILS CORPORATE PLAN / OTHER CORPORATE PRIORITIES

- 9.1 Making Best Use of Our Budget – Pre scrutiny can improve cost effectiveness.

10 CONCLUSION

- 10.1 It is recognised that scrutiny is a vital component of good governance and improves Councils' decision making, service provision and cost effectiveness.
- 10.2 The undertaking of pre-scrutiny by the Public Service Delivery, Communities & Prosperity Scrutiny Committee in this area will strength accountability and assist Cabinet Members in taking any future decisions on these matters.

Other Information:-

Relevant Scrutiny Committee

Public Service Delivery, Communities & Prosperity Scrutiny Committee

Contact Officer

Emma Wilkins – 01443 424110

LOCAL GOVERNMENT ACT 1972

AS AMENDED BY

THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT (ACCESS TO INFORMATION) ACT 1985

RHONDDA CYNON TAF COUNTY BOROUGH COUNCIL

CABINET

25th JANUARY, 2018

**REPORT OF THE SECRETARY TO THE CABINET IN DISCUSSIONS WITH
THE RELEVANT PORTFOLIO HOLDERS COUNCILLOR M WEBBER AND
A CRIMMINGS.**

**Item: INCREASING RECYCLING PERFORMANCE - PRE SCRUTINY
ARRANGEMENTS.**

Background Papers

Cabinet – 19.12.18 (Cabinet Work Programme)

Officer to contact:

Emma Wilkins – 01443 424110

RHONDDA CYNON TAF COUNTY BOROUGH COUNCIL

CABINET

IMPROVING RECYCLING PERFORMANCE

REPORT OF THE DIRECTOR OF HIGHWAYS AND STREETCARE SERVICES IN DISCUSSION WITH THE RELEVANT PORTFOLIO HOLDERS, COUNCILLOR A CRIMMINGS

Author: Nigel Wheeler, Director Highways & Streetcare Services

1. PURPOSE OF THE REPORT

- 1.1 The purpose of the report is to seek Cabinet approval to make changes within the Refuse and Recycling Collection service in order to improve the recycling rate and improve service delivery

2. RECOMMENDATIONS

It is recommended that Cabinet:

- 2.1 Approve the changes to the Council's residual side waste policy from 1 April 2018 as follows: -
- The residents that have their waste collected in black bags, primarily the Rhondda – the current four black bags allowance per fortnight is reduced to two bags;
 - The residents that have a bin waste collection, primarily in the Cynon and Taf - no side waste per household per fortnight irrespective of the bin size will be permitted;
 - Over the Christmas period there would be a relaxation of the restriction, as explained in paragraph 4.10 of the report.
- 2.2 Approve that between 1st November and the 1st March the Council's green waste collection service is a fortnightly collection which reverts back to a weekly service over the remainder of the year, each year.
- 2.3 Approve that the Council by way of a notice, inform residents that they cannot place recyclable material within their residual bin/bag and if the Notice is breached, and after a warning has been given, then a Fixed Penalty Notice could be issued.

- 2.4 Run an awareness campaign at least two months prior to the implementation of the changes and continue to support the awareness campaign once the changes have started.

3. REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATIONS

- 3.1 The Council, like all other Councils in Wales, has statutory targets to meet on recycling. Failure to meet these targets will result in significant fines for every percentage not achieved.
- 3.2 The Council has made various changes over the past few years in order to improve the recycling rate and these changes have been fundamental in the Council's recycling rate improving year on year to the extent that we achieved over 64% in 2016/17.
- 3.3 In order to achieve the next significant target set at 70% by 2024/2025, the Council needs to implement some further changes as the Council has seen the recycling percentage plateau in 2017/18 despite continued awareness campaigns on both food and dry recycling and no change to our collection system.
- 3.4 In 2016/17 the Council disposed of 35,636 tonnes of residual waste which meant that 36% of waste produced in the County Borough went to either landfill or Energy from Waste.
- 3.5 A WRAP compositional analysis in 2015, highlighted that over 70% of that residual waste is recyclable/compostable therefore if we could capture just 25% of that material, it would give us a recycling percentage of just over 71% whilst 50% would give us a figure of just under 80% which is Welsh Government's proposed new recycling target

4. BACKGROUND

- 4.1 The Council at present, provides a weekly twin streamed/co-mingled recycling service, food waste service, green waste collection service, an opt in AHP (Nappy) collection service and a fortnightly residual waste collection service via either a bag system (former Rhondda) or a bin system (former Cynon & Taf).
- 4.2 This service is available to all residents and through various consultation exercises over recent years, it is clear our residents like the system and hold it in high regard due to its simplicity.
- 4.3 Despite this, there are still residents who do not take part in the scheme at all or on a very limited basis and due to this we still are disposing of over 35,000t in 2016/17 through either landfill or Energy from Waste.

- 4.4 A WRAP composition analysis in 2015 highlighted that over 70% of that waste is recyclable/compostable therefore if we could capture 25% of that material, it would give us a recycling percentage of just over 71% whilst 50% would give us a figure of just under 80% which is Welsh Government's proposed new recycling target.
- 4.5 A number of Welsh Councils have already or are looking to reduce the residual waste collection frequency to three or four weekly collections, as there is clear evidence that by reducing residual collection frequency the recycling percentage increases. There is also clear evidence that by reducing the number of bags a resident can put out or by introducing a 'no side waste' policy recycling performance also increases.
- 4.6 The Cabinet of the Council have always been clear that they will not reduce the frequency of residual collection less than fortnightly for two main reasons
- it penalises residents who are recycling fully; and
 - it is a clear reduction in service provision.
- 4.7 Due to the above, it is proposed that we change the current residual collection levels within the County Borough to:-
- Rhondda - the current **4 bag** allowance per fortnight be **reduced to 2 bags**;
 - Cynon & Taf - a '**no side waste**' policy is brought in regardless of bin size, with the provision that the bin lid has to be closed.
- 4.8 In Cynon and Taf, there are mainly two bin sizes, that is 240 litre or 120 litre bin. In lieu of removing all 240l bins and replacing with new 120l bins, it is proposed that the Council continues with its policy of when a bin is requested, to only provide a 120l bin. This policy has been in place for 30 months and we anticipate that well over 65% of bins in use are now the 120l bins and in time the amount of 240l will gradually reduce further. The Council will continue to provide support to households who for various reasons may struggle with these proposals e.g. households with ash waste and large families.
- 4.9 The reason for this approach is rather than a change in collection frequency which affects all residents, the change recommended ensures that there will be no adverse affect on our many residents who currently fully engage in the service, as this change is aimed at engaging with residents who either take no part in the recycling scheme or take part on a limited basis.
- 4.10 Over the Christmas period, there would be a relaxation of the restriction, whereby in the Rhondda there would be a **4 bag limit** whilst in Cynon and Taf, any resident with a 120l bin could have **one bag of side waste** whilst there will be no change to the policy for any resident with a 240l bin for the Christmas period.

- 4.11 In past years, the Council has had no powers to tackle residents not prepared to engage in the recycling scheme but in conjunction with Welsh Government and all Welsh Councils, we are now in a position under the Environmental Protection Act (EPA) and Clean Neighbourhoods Act (CNA) to tackle this issue.
- 4.12 The EPA Sec.46 allows a Waste Authority to specify what may/may not be placed in any specified container, by way of a notice. It is recommended that by way of a notice we inform residents that they cannot place recyclable material within their residual bin/bag.
- 4.13 If the Notice is breached, and following a warning, then a Fixed Penalty Notice (FPN) of £100 can be issued under Sec.47ZA of the EPA as inserted in the Clean Neighbourhoods Act.
- 4.14 The Council has since its inception always stated that enforcement is a last resort, and it would be the same in this case, with the team initially raising awareness with residents on this matter and only issuing a FPN if and when all other avenues have been exhausted
- 4.15 The Council currently collects green waste on a **weekly** basis all the year round, even in the winter months when the growing season has ended. In order to improve the efficiency of the service, it is recommended that between 1st November and the 1st March the service reverts to a **fortnightly** service and revert back to a **weekly** service thereafter, whilst there will be no real term financial saving, it will reduce wasted travelling time.
- 4.16 In order to raise awareness with our residents, if Cabinet approve the recommendations, it will be important to run an awareness campaign at least two months prior to the implementation of the changes and to continue the awareness campaign once the changes have started.
- 4.17 The awareness raising would be similar to previous successful campaigns in recycling where we look to engage with residents on the reasons behind the change and what the outcomes will be, with the use of various marketing tools such as social media, council website, town centre awareness events, cinema, information leaflets, etc.
- 4.18 It is proposed that the changes set out above will be implemented from 1st June 2018.

5 CONSULTATION

5.1 No consultation is required

6 EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY IMPLICATIONS

6.1 An Equalities Impact Assessment scoping exercise has been undertaken that indicates that there would be no such implications. There are no equality or diversity implications aligned to the recommendations in the report.

7. FINANCIAL IMPLICATION(S)

7.1 There will be no significant budget implications and any funding needed can come from within existing budgets

7.2 If the changes implemented produce a significant swing from residual waste to recycling there will be a cost saving although this is difficult to quantify at present.

7.3 Funding to support the awareness campaign is available from within existing budgets.

7.4 If the Council does not improve its recycling rates by 6% from the current recycling rate of 64% to 70% by 2025, Welsh Government will levy significant penalties on the Council. These penalties are significant, and if no further progress is made in terms of improving the recycling rates, the cost to the Council could be in excess of £xm.

8. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS AND LEGISLATION CONSIDERED

8.1 Clean Neighbourhood and Environment Act 2005
Environmental Protection Act 1990

9. LINKS TO THE COUNCILS CORPORATE PLAN AND FUTURE GENERATIONS – SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

9.1 The proposals in this report are consistent with the priorities of the Council's Corporate Plan, in particular *“Place – creating neighbourhoods where people are proud to live and work”*:

- *Rhondda Cynon Taf's local environment will be clean and attractive...*
- *Rhondda Cynon Taf's parks and green spaces will continue to be valued by residents...*

9.2 These proposals are also consistent with the Well-being Goals under the Wellbeing of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015:

- *A healthier Wales – a society in which people’s physical and mental well-being is maximised and in which choices and behaviours that benefit future health are understood.*
- *A Wales of cohesive communities – attractive, viable, safe and well connected communities.*

10. CONCLUSION

- 10.1 The Council has to meet its statutory recycling targets to avoid financial penalties. The fines are significant, and without some change to the current service provision, it could struggle to achieve the recycling targets. Therefore doing nothing is not really an option and as in previous changes the recommendations outlined in this report look to allow the Council to achieve those targets whilst not adversely affecting the residents already fully engaged with the service.

Relevant Scrutiny Committee

Public Service Delivery, Communities & Prosperity Scrutiny Committee

RHONDDA CYNON TAF COUNTY BOROUGH COUNCIL

CABINET

25th JANUARY 2018

INCREASE OF THE FIXED PENALTY NOTICE

REPORT OF DIRECTOR OF HIGHWAYS AND STREETCARE SERVICES IN DISCUSSION WITH THE RELEVANT PORTFOLIO HOLDER COUNCILLOR A CRIMMINGS.

Author: Nigel Wheeler, Director Highways & Streetcare Services

1. PURPOSE OF THE REPORT

- 1.1 The purpose of the report is to seek authority to increase the current Fixed Penalty Notice of £75 to £100 in order to align it to the recently established Public Spaces Protection Order ('PSPO'), which strengthened dog controls in Rhondda Cynon Taf

2. RECOMMENDATIONS

It is recommended that Cabinet:

- 2.1 Notes the overwhelming public support given to the introduction of the Public Spaces Protection Order and to the prohibitions and requirements in relation to the control of dogs introduced there in.
- 2.2 Approves the increase of the current Fixed Penalty Notice of £75 to £100 (in doing so generating additional annual income estimated to be £20,000 in 2018/19) from April 1st 2018 in order to align it to the PSPO and avoid any confusion to the general public, for the following issues:-
- Littering
 - Contamination of Recycling
 - Fly Tipping
 - Fly Posting
 - Graffiti
 - Bins on the Highway

3. REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATIONS

- 3.1 Littering and Fly Tipping remain a significant concern for the Council. Despite considerable efforts to raise awareness and educate the general public on the damage these acts do to our environment, there remains a minority who continue to dispose of their waste in this manner.
- 3.2 The current Fixed Penalty Notice (FPN) has been in place since the introduction of the Enforcement Unit in Streetcare during 2005 and this change would bring it in line with the recently introduced FPN under the PSPO for the control of dogs. It would also enable the Council to show it will not tolerate environmental crime and help us meet the needs and aspirations of local people.

4. BACKGROUND

- 4.1 In 2005, the Council set up the Enforcement Unit in Streetcare, primarily to tackle 6 key areas with a dedicated team:-
- Littering
 - Dog Fouling
 - Fly Tipping
 - Fly Posting
 - Graffiti
 - Bins on the Highway
- 4.2 The aim was to raise awareness and educate the general public on the damage these actions have on our environment and the FPN was to be used as a last resort.
- 4.3 Despite the unit being extremely successful in delivering key environmental messages to schools and the general public, and after issuing numerous FPN's and undertaking numerous prosecutions for fly tipping, these issues still remain a problem for the Council. In addition, the Council recently introduced a PSPO to tackle control of dogs and raised the FPN to £100.
- 4.4 This report seeks Cabinet approval to align the FPN of £75 to the newly introduced PSPO across the County Borough (i.e. increase to £100) from April 1st 2018 and to include it for the Contamination of Recycling.

5 CONSULTATION

- 5.1 No consultation is required on this matter.

6 EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY IMPLICATIONS

- 6.1 An Equalities Impact Assessment scoping exercise has been undertaken that indicates that there would be no such implications. There are no equality or diversity implications aligned to the recommendations in the report.

7. FINANCIAL IMPLICATION(S)

- 7.1 It is anticipated that an additional £20,000 income will be generated as a result of increasing the level of fine.
- 7.2 In order to implement the change, there will be a need for new signage to all areas, thus ensuring that the public are aware of the change. Funding is available from existing resources to support these requirements.
- 7.3 It should also be noted that there will not be a need to increase the number of enforcement officers within the service as this can be undertaken within the current staffing structure.

8. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS AND LEGISLATION CONSIDERED

- 8.1 The following Legislation has been considered:-
- Clean Neighbourhood and Environment Act 2005
 - Environmental Protection Act 1990

9. LINKS TO THE COUNCILS CORPORATE PLAN AND FUTURE GENERATIONS – SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

- 9.1 The proposals in this report are consistent with the priorities of the Council's Corporate Plan, in particular "*Place – creating neighbourhoods where people are proud to live and work*":
- *Rhondda Cynon Taf's local environment will be clean and attractive...*
 - *Rhondda Cynon Taf's parks and green spaces will continue to be valued by residents...*
- 9.2 These proposals are also consistent with the Well-being Goals under the Wellbeing of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015:
- *A healthier Wales – a society in which people's physical and mental well-being is maximised and in which choices and behaviours that benefit future health are understood.*
 - *A Wales of cohesive communities – attractive, viable, safe and well connected communities.*

10. CONCLUSION

- 10.1 The Council continues to face pressure from the general public for the local environment to be clean and attractive, the proposed change would align the original FPN of £75 to the recently introduced PSPO FPN of £100. It will also be a further deterrent to the few who continue to fail to dispose of their waste in the correct manner across Rhondda Cynon Taf.

Relevant Scrutiny Committee

Public Service Delivery, Communities & Prosperity Scrutiny Committee

RHONDDA CYNON TAF COUNTY BOROUGH COUNCIL

CABINET

25TH JANUARY 2018

KEY STAGE 4 AND KEY STAGE 5 EXAMINATION RESULTS AND PRIMARY AND SECONDARY SCHOOL CATEGORISATION FOR 2018

REPORT OF THE DIRECTOR OF EDUCATION AND LIFELONG LEARNING IN DISCUSSIONS WITH THE CABINET MEMBER FOR EDUCATION & LIFELONG LEARNING, CLLR. ROSSER.

Author: Esther Thomas: 01443 744001

1. PURPOSE OF THE REPORT

- 1.1 The purpose of the report is to provide Members with the final confirmation of the Key Stage 4 and Key Stage 5 examination results for 2016-17 and the Welsh Government Primary and Secondary School Categorisation for 2017 - 2018.

2. RECOMMENDATIONS

It is recommended that the Cabinet:

- 2.1 Note the information contained within this report.
- 2.2 Note the action taken to date and the action planned to be taken by the Director of Education and Lifelong Learning in partnership with the Central South Consortium to support those primary and secondary schools in Categories Amber and Red.

3. REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATIONS

- 3.1 The progress made by schools in improving standards and outcomes for children and young people in Rhondda Cynon Taf is a priority for the Council.

4. BACKGROUND

- 4.1 The outcomes for young people at the end of Key Stage 4 is externally verified via GCSE examinations and at the end of Key Stage 5 via GCE Advanced Level examinations.
- 4.2 Schools have individual subject results to enable senior leaders to challenge underperforming departments.
- 4.3 The Local Authority can analyse the performance of each school compared to the other secondary schools in the County Borough and

across secondary schools in the Central South Consortium. When the data is finalised the results of each Local Authority is benchmarked to indicate the comparative performance across Wales.

- 4.4 In reviewing the comparative position of the Council it is important for Members to recognise that social deprivation has a significant impact on educational performance. Rhondda Cynon Taf is the second most deprived local authority yet the performance of our pupils exceeds the expected level. Deprivation is not an excuse for underperformance but a well researched reason.

5. KEY STAGE 4

- 5.1 This year substantial changes have been introduced to the KS4 curriculum and to how individual pupil and school performance is assessed in Wales, Northern Ireland and England. In the past the three countries have been aligned and the education standards had been set and maintained by one qualification regulator. There are now three separate regulators for the GCSE qualification across the three countries. Scotland has historically had alternative qualifications.

- 5.2 As a result the GCSE qualifications are developed to meet the different requirements of each regulator, and are awarded independently of each other. This means that the grades awarded within a subject will no longer be benchmarked across each country. Clearly, this could create problems in the future in terms of comparisons between qualifications for employers and further and higher education institutions. The three regulators are committed to working together, as they keep their respective approaches to maintaining standards under review.

- 5.3 In Wales, 2017 has seen:

- The introduction of new GCSE's for English Language, Welsh (first) Language, GCSE Mathematics and a new examination GCSE Mathematics – Numeracy;
- The new GCSEs are now linear with the assessment being undertaken through examination at the end of the course. Previous GCSEs were available in a modular option, which included a controlled assessment unit for the language qualifications and examinations which could be taken in stages over a two year period;
- Significant changes to the key performance measures:
 - A maximum of two vocational qualifications (40%) will count towards the Level 1, Level 2 and Level 2 inclusive. In 2016 five vocational qualifications could have counted for the Level 1 and Level 2 thresholds and three for the Level 2 inclusive;
 - Only the new GCSE's for English Language, Welsh (first) Language, and one of GCSE Mathematics or GCSE

Mathematics – Numeracy will count towards the literacy and maths elements of the Level 2 inclusive performance measure. English Literature no longer is counted towards the literacy and maths elements;

- The capped points score performance measure is the “best” nine qualifications, rather than the previous eight, which must include English Language or Welsh (first) Language, GCSE Mathematics, GCSE Mathematics – Numeracy, two Science qualifications (two Science GCSE’s from 2018), and no more than four vocational qualifications.
- 5.4 In Wales GCSEs are graded A*-G, whilst In England, the GCSEs that are designed to meet the requirements of the English regulator (Ofqual) are now graded 9 to 1, with 9 being the highest grade. Where the WJEC, the examination board for Qualifications Wales, does not offer specific subjects such as Latin, Community Languages such as Polish, Film Studies etc, schools can access the qualifications through the English examination boards and the pupils will be graded under the 9 to 1 mechanism.
- 5.5 As this is the first year the new examinations are being undertaken by Welsh pupils, the WJEC, the body that sets the examinations, wrote to all schools in November 2016 to highlight some of the outcomes they expect to see on respect of the changes. These include:
- Increased variability for schools and colleges as they adapt to the demands of the new qualifications;
 - The proportion of students awarded grade C or above in both new GCSE Mathematics qualifications will be lower than the percentage of pupils awarded a grade C or above in each of these qualifications individually. The two new Mathematics qualifications and the English Language/Welsh (first) Language are significantly different to the previous GCSE qualifications, assessing different content and skills.
- 5.6 The new examinations test different skill sets and knowledge bases than the previous examinations, and this year’s results cannot be meaningfully compared to last year’s results. It will take a further two years to establish meaningful comparative trend data.
- 5.7 The table below sets out the outcomes for Rhondda Cynon Taf’s Key Stage 4 for 2017. The provisional Central South Consortium data is also shown to provide some form of comparative and the 2016 data to illustrate the significant change in how the performance measures are calculated.

KS4	2016 Legacy GCSE's %	2017 New GCSE's %
Level 1 threshold (5 A*-G at GCSE or equivalent)		
RCT	96.7	94.7
CSC	94.3	94.2
Wales	95.3	94.4
Level 2 threshold (5 A*-C at GCSE or equivalent – minimum of three GCSEs)		
RCT	90.3	63.2
CSC	87.1	67.5
Wales	84.0	67.0
Level 2 threshold (5 A*-C at GCSE or equivalent) including English/Welsh and mathematics		
RCT	56.6	49.8
CSC	60.9	54.4
Wales	60.3	54.6
A* - C in English		
RCT	68.6	56.4
CSC	70.6	63.5
Wales	69.3	63.7
A* - C in Welsh		
RCT	75.3	74.7
CSC	78.0	79.0
Wales	75.1	74.2
A* - C in Mathematics (best of the 2 GCSEs)		
RCT	61.3	59.3
CSC	66.1	62.4
Wales	66.9	62.5
A* - C or equivalent in science		
RCT	85.4	78.6
CSC	85.5	80.2
Wales	82.4	75.6

5.8 The table illustrates that the new GCSE's and the new method of calculating the key performance indicators suggests a significant decrease in educational performance in RCT and Central South Consortium in 2017. As explained earlier, educational performance in some schools has increased between 2016 and 2017 if the 2016 method of calculating the key performance measures had been applied. Therefore it is difficult to form an informed opinion on the performance of all our 17 secondary schools. Nevertheless, there are some schools that have performed significantly better than others, and a few schools where the results do provide some cause for concern.

Over the rest of this academic year, Council officers, working with headteachers and the Central South Consortium will continue with bespoke improvement work to promote more of what has gone well, and address what needs to improve, on a school by school level, and

within each school, on a subject by subject area. We understand that schools must support pupils to demonstrate a readiness to learn (wellbeing) and also have in place increasingly excellent learning opportunities for these learners to make outstanding progress in their studies.

6. PROGRESS AT KEY STAGE 5

6.1 Over the last three years, there have been substantial changes in the post 16 environment with the removal of some courses, the introduction of new syllabi, the reorganisation of some sixth forms and the restriction in the choice of examination boards. This makes comparison across the years very difficult as you are not comparing like with like. Nevertheless, RCT has held its own against the National Level 3 threshold indicator being within a percentage point for each of the last three years. Last year the national indicator dropped by 0.9 of a percentage point whilst RCT dropped by only 0.7. It is to be hoped that we will now enter a period of stability that will allow our schools to flourish and to better the national averages.

Year		All	All	Boys	Girls
		Number of pupils aged 17 who entered a volume equivalent to 2 A levels	Entered a volume equivalent to 2 A levels who achieved the level 3 threshold %	Entered a volume equivalent to 2 A levels who achieved the level 3 threshold %	Entered a volume equivalent to 2 A levels who achieved the level 3 threshold %
2016/17	RCT	1004	96.3	95.7	96.7
	Central South	3589	97.4	96.7	98.0
	Wales	10152	97.1	96.2	97.9
2015/16	RCT	1079	97.0	95.3	98.3
	Central South	3751	97.7	96.9	98.3
	Wales	10804	98.0	97.1	98.6
2014/15	RCT	1180	97.0	96.0	97.8
	Central South	3813	97.0	96.8	97.9
	Wales	11838	97.1	95.9	97.8

6.2 In line with national averages, girls continue to outperform boys in the wider points score. There has been a significant drop in the average points score this year as a number of qualifications were replaced or discontinued. The Essential Skills suite has been replaced with the Welsh Baccalaureate which has reduced six qualifications into one.

RCT is well in advance with the roll out of the Welsh BaccaLaureate and this measure will be reported upon in future years.

Year		All		Boys	Girls
		Number of pupils aged 17	Average wider points score for pupils aged 17	Average wider points score for pupils aged 17	Average wider points score for pupils aged 17
2016/17	RCT	1175	677.6	615.9	723.5
	Central South	4096	736.1	694.1	774.0
	Wales	11434	730.6	681.2	773.2
2015/16	RCT	1278	765.7	705.8	812.7
	Central South	4286	830.2	780.6	874.0
	Wales	12066	823.2	768.00	869.9
2014/15	RCT	1398	730.2	669.9	777.8
	Central South	4416	808.7	764.1	847.9
	Wales	13473	799.7	746.5	845.9

6.3 This year, the Welsh Government published the number of learners who achieved 3A*-A grades and also the number of who achieved 3A* to C. This will form part of the new suite of indicators which will replace the level 3 threshold. In line with national averages, girls outperform boys at A*to C but, against trend, boys outperform the girls at A*-A.

Year		All		Boys		Girls	
		Percentage of Pupils entering a volume equivalent of 2 A levels who achieved 3 A*-A grades	Percentage of Pupils entering a volume equivalent of 2 A levels who achieved 3 A*-C grades	Percentage of Pupils entering a volume equivalent of 2 A levels who achieved 3 A*-A grades	Percentage of Pupils entering a volume equivalent of 2 A levels who achieved 3 A*-C grades	Percentage of Pupils entering a volume equivalent of 2 A levels who achieved 3 A*-A grades	Percentage of Pupils entering a volume equivalent of 2 A levels who achieved 3 A*-C grades
2016/17	RCT	5.5	45.1	6.4	33.5	4.8	53.5
	Central South	11.8	56.6	12.6	49.7	11.0	62.5
	Wales	10.5	54.7	10.3	47.6	10.6	60.5

- 6.4 It has long been felt that the current suite of performance indicators do not provide an adequate overview of the quality of provision at post 16. There are many factors that can be used to measure success at post 16 and this has influenced the Welsh Government to introduce a new suite of performance indicators from next year. Apart from the addition of the Welsh Baccalaureate and the 3A*-A and 3A*-C measures, the Welsh Government will introduce a value added measure as well as a report on the destinations of the learners. This information will be published alongside data from the Further Education sector to enable our learners to make more informed decisions at 16.

7. PRIMARY AND SECONDARY SCHOOL CATEGORISATION

- 7.1 The current school categorisation model has changed significantly since 2016.
- 7.2 **Step One:** consisting of data in relation to standards and performance has been removed.
- 7.3 **Step Two:** This judgment based on the school's ability and capacity to self-improve is now central in coming to a view on a school support category. The process begins with the school's own self-evaluation. The judgement on capacity to improve is to do with the school's ability to drive its own improvement for the future and has a strong focus on leadership, learning and teaching.
- 7.4 Following consideration of the self-evaluation report and relevant evidence relating to school leadership, the performance of all learners and groups of learners and the quality of teaching and learning within the school, the governing body, together with the challenge advisor, will agree the judgement for the school's capacity to improve.
- 7.5 **Step Three:** this judgement will lead to a colour categorisation of the school which will trigger a bespoke programme of support, challenge and intervention.
- 7.6 The categories of support are:
- **Green - these are our best schools who:**
 - know themselves well and identify and implement their own priorities for improvement;
 - are rewarded by greater autonomy with limited, if any, interaction with challenge advisors; and
 - have the capacity to lead others effectively (school to school support).
 - **Yellow – these are our good schools who:**
 - will know and understand most of the areas in need of improvement;

- have many aspects of the schools performance which are self-improving; and
 - will receive limited challenge and support meetings deployed according to need.
- **Amber – these are our schools in need of improvement who:**
 - do not know and understand all the areas in need of improvement;
 - have many aspects of the schools performance which are not improving quickly enough; and
 - will receive time limited, focused challenge and intervention to support improvement; and
 - be subject to termly progress meetings with senior challenge advisor.
 - **Red – these are our schools in need of greatest improvement who:**
 - will receive critical intervention;
 - receive an automatic warning letter from LA and subsequent use of statutory powers where necessary;
 - trigger intensive and effective collaboration between LA and consortium;
 - will receive time limited, focused challenge and intervention to support improvement; and
 - be subject to half-termly progress meetings with the senior challenge advisor.

7.7 What are the results of the School Categorisation in Rhondda Cynon Taf?

A summary of the provisional categorisation of the Council's schools subject to National Moderation is shown below:

Category	Primary Schools						Secondary Schools					
	No of schools			%			No of schools			%		
	2015	2016	2017	2015	2016	2017	2015	2016	2017	2015	2016	2017
Green	19	22	37	18.1	21.6	36.0	1	5	4	5.9	29.4	23.5
Yellow	66	66	59	62.9	64.7	58.0	9	7	10	53.0	41.2	59.0
Amber	16	13	5	15.2	12.8	5.0	6	5	1	35.2	29.4	6.0
Red	4	1	1	3.8	0.9	1.0	1	0	2	5.9	0	11.5

7.8 The Central South Consortium's Framework for Challenge and Support sets out the response from the School Improvement Service to schools in each of the four categories, with the greatest support and challenge targeted at the amber and red schools.

7.9 For the amber and red schools, the diagnosis of need for improvement undertaken by the challenge advisor with the school will drive the work within the school. The challenge advisor will provide the core allocation of contact according to the school's category and will broker the

required additional support through the commissioning function of the school improvement service working closely with the strategic advisors as necessary.

7.10 The nature and amount of support will be determined by the identified need and may be derived from a number of sources, which could include one or a combination of:

- Support from other schools in the region;
- Support from other school improvement organisations and/or individuals from across the UK;
- Specific leadership and/or teaching development.

7.11 For schools requiring amber or red support the challenge advisor will need to keep the school's progress and the appropriateness and impact of the support under review so as to make changes where required in good time. The focus will be on the impact of the work to secure improvement rather than the number of days delivered.

7.12 To date, sufficient progress is being made by the vast majority of amber and red schools. Over the next few years, the Council and the schools will work together to strive to ensure all our schools are good schools and no school is in the Red category.

8. EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY IMPLICATIONS

An Equality Impact Assessment is not needed because the contents of the report are for information purposes only.

9. FINANCIAL IMPLICATION(S)

There are no financial implications aligned to this report.

10. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS OR LEGISLATION CONSIDERED

The Council has duties under the School Standards and Framework Act 1998 (amended) under Section 13A 'to promote high standards in primary and secondary education'.

11. LINKS TO THE COUNCILS CORPORATE PLAN/OTHER CORPORATE PRIORITIES

This has a clear link to the priorities set out in the in the Rhondda Cynon Taf Single Integrated Plan. In order to prosper people must have the education and essential skills to secure employment.

12. CONCLUSION

12.1 Across the Foundation Phase, Key Stage 2 & 3, the performance of our pupils and schools has been relatively consistent, showing, in general, incremental improvement, as there has been over the past five years.

Welsh Government is planning curriculum changes for these key stages in the future, as it implements the vision and principles of the Donaldson Review.

- 12.2 However, KS4 has seen significant changes in 2017 in terms of the KS4 curriculum and the way in which school performance is assessed. In 2018, further changes will be introduced with the new Welsh Baccalaureate attainment measures at Foundation and National levels replacing the current Level 1, Level 2 and Level 2 inclusive threshold measures.
- 12.3 Schools across Wales have sought to introduce these changes with minimum disruption to pupils and ensuring that this year's pupils are not disadvantaged by being the first year group being assessed under the new curriculum and performance measures. The new approach introduced by Welsh Government is certainly more robust and challenging to pupils and schools.
- 12.4 Given this is the first year of the new KS4 curriculum and performance measures it is difficult to form a balanced judgement on the performance of each school, however, it is evident that some similar schools in the County Borough have out-performed others. It is important that the schools working with the Consortium understand their respective performance and take steps to ensure that action is taken to improve future KS4 results.

Other Information

Relevant Scrutiny Committee: Children & Young People

Background Papers: None

RHONDDA CYNON TAF COUNTY BOROUGH COUNCIL

CABINET

25TH JANUARY 2018

CWM TAF YOUTH OFFENDING SERVICE

REPORT OF GROUP DIRECTOR OF COMMUNITY & CHILDREN'S SERVICES IN DISCUSSIONS WITH THE RELEVANT PORTFOLIO HOLDER, COUNCILLOR LEYSHON

Author: Jason O'Brien, Head of Cwm Taf Youth Offending Services
 Tel: 01443 827300

1. PURPOSE OF REPORT

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to inform Cabinet of the findings and outcomes of the full Joint Inspection of Cwm Taf Youth Offending Service (YOS), which took place in March 2017, the findings of which were published in July 2017, and to highlight the work being done to address areas for improvement.

2. RECOMMENDATIONS

It is recommended that the Cabinet:

- 2.1 Acknowledge the findings and outcomes of the full Joint Inspection of Cwm Taf YOS;
- 2.2 Note the information contained within this report and the actions being taken to address areas of further improvement.

3. REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATIONS

- 3.1 To provide Cabinet with details of the actions being undertaken to address the areas for improvement highlighted in the Full Joint Inspection of Cwm Taf Offending Service in March 2017.

4. BACKGROUND

- 4.1 This report and Action Plan was scrutinised at the meeting of the Children and Young People Scrutiny on 8th November 2017 and was endorsed by Members.
- 4.2 Cwm Taf Youth Offending Service is a statutory partnership legislated by the Crime and Disorder Act 1998 and provides services across two local authority areas, namely Rhondda Cynon Taf and Merthyr Tydfil. The local authority YOS areas merged to form Cwm Taf YOS in August 2014. The simple aim of the service is to prevent the offending and re-offending of children and young people. The statutory partners are: South Wales Police; Cwm Taf University Health Board; HM

Prison and Probation Service; and the local authority areas of Rhondda Cynon Taf and Merthyr Tydfil. These partners provide financial and staffing contributions to the Youth Offending Service. The Youth Offending Service also attracts external grant funding from the Youth Justice Board, Welsh Government and the Office of the Police and Crime Commissioner.

- 4.3 Overall governance is facilitated by a Cwm Taf Regional Management Board which consists of all statutory partner agencies and other agencies/organisations as deemed appropriate by the board (e.g. housing, substance misuse agencies). The board meets quarterly to hold the service to account, examine performance, development and to set the priorities of the service.
- 4.4 In addition to the scrutiny provided via the Regional Management Board, the Youth Offending Service also reports its performance on a quarterly basis to the Youth Justice Board and is also subject to an inspection regime carried out by Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Probation (HMIP) The YOS was a part of a thematic inspection on the topic of "Desistance" in February 2015 and more recently subject a rigorous Full Joint Inspection in March 2017;, it is this latter inspection that forms the basis of this report.
- 4.5 The Youth Offending Service consists of two levels of provision; voluntary services, aimed at delivering services focussing on preventing young people from entering the criminal justice system and statutory services for young people once in the criminal justice system and in doing so, aims to positively impact upon overall performance and outcomes for young people, their families and their communities. As the preventative function of the YOS are not legislated or regulated the Full Joint Inspection focussed on the statutory provision of the service.

5. THE FULL JOINT INSPECTION PROCESS

- 5.1 The Full Joint Inspection (FJI) examines Youth Offending work in a small number of local authorities each year. Despite part of the criteria being based on YOS areas deemed to have poor performance based on re-offending rates, it should be noted that Cwm Taf YOS was the last YOS to be inspected as part of the FJI inspection regime, which commenced in 2012.
- 5.2 The FJI of Cwm Taf YOS was announced in February 2017 and commenced on 13th March 2017, the notice period providing enough time for inspection arrangements to be made, while ensuring that the YOS was inspected 'as is' without the opportunity for undue preparation.
- 5.3 HMI Probation led the FJI programme with partner inspectorates covering health, children's social care, education and training, and police being full members of the inspection team contributing to inspection judgements.
- 5.4 At the time of the inspection announcement the published reoffending rate for Cwm Taf was 43.4% (average number of offences per offender of 1.40) and 45.9% for South Wales (average number of offences per offender 1.61) and 42.2% for all of Wales.

- 5.5 Prior to the commencement of the FJI, the YOS had commenced the implementation of ASSETplus; a compulsory national assessment framework that required significant investment in terms of training, development and delivery. Implementation and transition of this new framework commenced in May 2016, a time that overlapped with the sample caseload chosen via HMIP for the purposes of the inspection. Therefore, a number of cases chosen within the sample (as outlined below) were assessed or had interventions that overlapped this transitional period.
- 5.6 During the first week a team of inspectors from HMI Probation assessed the quality of practice in a representative sample of statutory cases (35) that had been running for six to nine months and for the second week the team was joined by inspectors from partner inspectorates, to explore and further understand the findings from the first week and to assess the quality of partnership work. During week one, a member of the inspection team devoted their time to meeting service users to assess their experience of working with the YOS.
- 5.7 The sample of cases included a number of those who are were high risk of harm to others, were particularly vulnerable, were young women, or were black and minority ethnic children and young people. Cases were assessed by a team of inspection staff. They examined these wherever possible with case managers, who were invited to discuss their work in depth, explain their thinking and identify supporting evidence in the record.
- 5.8 During the second fieldwork week HMI Probation was joined by colleague inspectors from police, health, social care and education. They explored the lines of enquiry which emerged from the case inspections. The leadership, management and partnership elements of the inspection were assessed, with a particular focus on reducing offending.
- 5.9 The FJI formed judgements and subsequently scored against the effectiveness of the YOS in the following six key areas:
- Reducing re-offending
 - Protecting the public
 - Protecting children and young people
 - Making sure the sentence is served
 - Governance and partnerships
 - Interventions to reduce reoffending

Each area was marked within a scale of one to four stars corresponding to:

- poor
- unsatisfactory
- satisfactory
- good

6. FINDINGS OF THE FULL JOINT INSPECTION

- 6.1 The FJI report (attached as Appendix one) (<https://www.justiceinspectors.gov.uk/hmiprobation/wp-content/uploads/sites/5/2017/07/Cwm-Taf-FJI-report.pdf>) was published on 5th July 2017 where the following judgements against the key areas were made:



- 6.2 Furthermore the following key recommendations were made:

“Post-inspection improvement work should focus particularly on achieving the following outcomes within 12 months following publication of this report:

- 1. strategic planning should be informed by the commissioning, and effective evaluation of, a needs analysis to identify the needs of the cohort, the staff and the business needs of the YOS as a whole (YOS Management Board)*
- 2. work should be undertaken to secure suitable and sustainable accommodation for children and young people (YOS Management Board)*
- 3. routine intelligence sharing between the police and the YOS should make sure that case managers receive timely information about all children and young people who are arrested (South Wales Constabulary and YOS manager)*
- 4. joint working with children’s services and information sharing at case level should be consistent (YOS manager and Directors of Children’s Services)*
- 5. case management practice should be of good quality, driven by thorough investigation by case managers and fully utilising the AssetPlus assessment and planning system (YOS manager)*
- 6. there should be a structured and consistent approach, based on good practice, to the provision and use of interventions intended to reduce offending (YOS manager).”*

- 6.3 As well as the key recommendations that were made, the report also highlighted areas of good practice that existed within the Youth Offending Service, which are evidenced throughout the report with particular reference being made to the level

of engagement between the YOS and service users, restorative justice and the work carried out with victims and young people.

- 6.4 Overall judgements presented a balanced picture of the service with clear indicators of areas across the service that required developing or further attention.

7. EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY IMPLICATIONS

- 7.1 This is an information report and therefore no Equality and Diversity screening is required.

8. CONSULTATION

- 8.1 Consultation was as undertaken with service users as part of the Full Joint Inspection. The Improvement Plan was developed and is monitored through the Multi Agency YOS Management Board.

9. FINANCIAL IMPLICATION(S)

- 9.1 There are no adverse financial implications associated with this report.

10. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS OR LEGISLATION CONSIDERED

- 10.1 The Cwm Taf Youth Offending Service provides services legislated through the Crime and Disorder Act 1998.

11. LINKS TO THE COUNCIL'S CORPORATE PLAN/OTHER CORPORATE PRIORITIES

- 11.1 The provision of effective responses to the needs of children and young people is a key priority for the Council and is supported by the contents of the actions undertaken within the Improvement Plan.

12. CONCLUSION

- 12.1 The YOS seeks to improve on the findings and recommendations made within the FJI report, and following its publication was tasked with completion of a post inspection improvement plan aimed at addressing the areas identified for improvement and development. To this end the YOS completed, submitted and had approved by HMI Probation, an improvement plan (**Appendix two**). This plan was submitted on 26th July 2017 with defined timescales for review and oversight being provided via the regional management board and Youth Justice Board Wales. The improvement plan was last reviewed in September 2017 with all areas being on target for completion / achievement.

- 12.2 The YOS has commenced the implementation of the improvement action plan and has carried out its first formal review of achievement against the objectives set as identified within the "RAG" section of the improvement plan (**Appendix two**). The YOS has established defined dates on which to complete formal reviews and working parties set up within the service report back to the YOS Management team and in turn to the YOS management board and Youth Justice Board Wales.

LOCAL GOVERNMENT ACT 1972

AS AMENDED BY

THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT (ACCESS TO INFORMATION) ACT 1985

RHONDDA CYNON TAF COUNTY BOROUGH COUNCIL

CABINET

25th JANUARY 2018

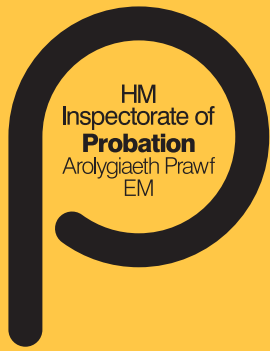
**REPORT OF GROUP DIRECTOR OF COMMUNITY & CHILDREN'S SERVICES IN
DISCUSSIONS WITH THE RELEVANT PORTFOLIO HOLDER, COUNCILLOR
LEYSHON**

CWM TAF YOUTH OFFENDING SERVICE

Background Papers

Children and Young People Scrutiny – 8th November 2017

**Officer to contact: Jason O'Brien, Head of Cwm Taf Youth Offending Services
Tel: 01443 827300**



Full Joint Inspection of Youth Offending Work in Cwm Taf

An inspection led by HMI Probation



Foreword

This inspection of youth offending work in Cwm Taf is one of a small number of full joint inspections that we are undertaking annually with colleagues from the criminal justice, social care, health and learning and skills inspectorates.

We chose to inspect in Cwm Taf primarily because its component areas had appeared consistently among the poorest performing youth offending services in Wales on a number of national indicators, and because inspectorates wanted to test the effectiveness of its creation through the amalgamation of two previous youth offending services.

Cwm Taf Youth Offending Service (YOS) worked with children and young people with complex needs, where safeguarding and risk of harm issues were common. The YOS engaged well with children and young people and their parents/carers, and was delivering some satisfactory operational work. Restorative justice was well embedded and provided tangible benefits to the local community.

The YOS Management Board did not consistently commission, evaluate and utilise data to identify the needs of children and young people who had offended. This meant that it could not plan and deliver its services effectively enough. Careful attention should be paid to intelligence that is shared from other agencies, particularly around missing children and child sexual exploitation in order to improve outcomes.

The recommendations made in this report are intended to assist Cwm Taf YOS in its continuing improvement by focusing on specific key areas.



Dame Glenys Stacey

*HM Chief Inspector of Probation
July 2017*

Key judgements



Summary

Reducing reoffending

Overall work to reduce reoffending was satisfactory. There were clear and thorough assessments of children and young people, to identify the work needed to reduce reoffending. Planning and the review of work did not always reflect this. The YOS's understanding and use of restorative justice was good. Case managers needed to be more investigative, to make sure they had all relevant information about the case. Interventions to reduce reoffending needed to be mapped and successful outcomes evaluated.

Protecting the public

Overall work to protect the public and actual or potential victims was satisfactory. Assessment of the risk of harm to others was good, but planning and review did not always consider the assessment sufficiently. The YOS was not yet making effective use of the new AssetPlus assessment tool to support its work. Multi-Agency Public Protection Arrangements worked well, but the plethora of other multi-agency meetings and protocols needed improvement so that intelligence sharing could be more focused. Oversight by managers was not always effective. Children and young people were able to describe the work undertaken with them to reduce their risk of harm to others.

Protecting children and young people

Overall work to protect children and young people and reduce their vulnerability was satisfactory. There was some good safeguarding work undertaken by case managers. Assessments usually included a coherent analysis of the risk of harm to the child or young person, but planning and review were not consistently good enough and the YOS was not yet making effective use of AssetPlus to support its case management.

The immediate sharing of information between other agencies and the YOS about missing children and young people did not always reach the right case managers.

Making sure the sentence is served

Overall work to make sure the sentence was served was good. The YOS made consistently good efforts to understand and respond to the individual needs of children and young people. Staff built positive relationships to make sure that engagement with children and young people and their parents/carers was good throughout. This meant that compliance work was effective; making sure the sentence was served.

Governance and partnerships

Overall work relating to governance was ineffective. The YOS Management Board provided a good arena for sharing information and supporting the work of the YOS in meeting its priorities. It could not, however, direct strategic planning sufficiently, due to an absence of wider and more sophisticated data. There was no overarching strategy to determine the range and content of provision and to fully understand the needs of the YOS caseload. There was some good partnership working, but the provision of services by Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services was poor. There was insufficient access to suitable and sustainable accommodation for children and young people.

Interventions to reduce reoffending

Overall work on interventions to reduce reoffending was satisfactory. The YOS was unable to assure itself that a suitable range of interventions was available. Interventions had not been mapped and evaluated and, therefore, their impact could not be demonstrated. Assessments were good, but delivery was not always consistent with assessed need. Restorative justice work and work to engage with children and young people was good.

This inspection was led by HM Inspector Caroline Nicklin, supported by a team of inspectors, as well as staff from our operations and research teams. The Assistant Chief Inspector responsible for this inspection programme is Helen Mercer. We would like to thank all those who helped plan and took part in the inspection; without their help and cooperation, the inspection would not have been possible.

Recommendations

Post-inspection improvement work should focus particularly on achieving the following outcomes within 12 months following publication of this report:

1. strategic planning should be informed by the commissioning, and effective evaluation of, a needs analysis to identify the needs of the cohort, the staff and the business needs of the YOS as a whole (YOS Management Board)
2. work should be undertaken to secure suitable and sustainable accommodation for children and young people (YOS Management Board)
3. routine intelligence sharing between the police and the YOS should make sure that case managers receive timely information about all children and young people who are arrested (South Wales Constabulary and YOS manager)
4. joint working with children's services and information sharing at case level should be consistent (YOS manager and Directors of Children's Services)
5. case management practice should be of good quality, driven by thorough investigation by case managers and fully utilising the AssetPlus assessment and planning system (YOS manager)
6. there should be a structured and consistent approach, based on good practice, to the provision and use of interventions intended to reduce offending (YOS manager).

Please note – throughout this report all names referred to in the practice examples have been amended to protect the individual's identity.

Contents

Foreword	1
Key judgements	2
Summary	2
Recommendations	4
Theme 1: Reducing reoffending	7
Theme 2: Protecting the public	13
Theme 3: Protecting the child or young person	18
Theme 4: Making sure the sentence is served	23
Theme 5: Governance and partnerships	27
Theme 6: Interventions to reduce reoffending	35
Appendix 1 - Background to the inspection	38

Reducing reoffending

1

Theme 1: Reducing reoffending

What we expect to see

As the purpose of the youth justice system is to prevent offending by children and young people we expect youth justice partners to increase the likelihood of successful outcomes by undertaking good quality assessment and planning, deliver appropriate interventions and demonstrate both positive leadership and effective management.

Case assessment score

Within the case assessment, overall 67% of work to reduce reoffending was done well enough.

Key Findings

1. Work with the courts was good. Pre-sentence reports (PSRs) were of good quality and presented robust and credible proposals which sentencers had confidence in.
2. Assessment for work to reduce offending was good. Staff understood the complexity of their cases and had a clear focus on understanding the perspective of the child or young person.
3. Priority was given to cases with the highest likelihood of reoffending.
4. Sufficient work was done during the custodial phase of sentences to reduce offending.
5. The menu of recommended interventions available to case managers for work to reduce offending needed to be mapped and successful outcomes evaluated.
6. Understanding and use of restorative justice was good, with examples of positive outcomes.
7. Police made an assured contribution to the work of the YOS, particularly in cases requiring the most intensive input, but information sharing needed to be more accurately directed and pursued.
8. Effective relationships were developed with children and young people and their parents/ carers, which were important to effective work to reduce offending.

Explanation of findings

1. We consider it essential, in order to plan for successful outcomes, that case managers understand from the start of the sentence, why the child or young person offended and what may help reduce that. This was done well enough, with clear explanations of why children and young people had offended, in all except eight of the inspected cases.
2. Case managers worked hard to understand situations from the perspective of the child or young person. Not enough effort was always made, however, to gather information from partners, such as children's social care services and the National Probation Service.

Comments from parents/carers

Parents described Cwm Taf YOS as providing a "brilliant service" where staff "have a real understanding of these young people".

3. When inspecting in Wales, we expect to see evidence of active and timely screening of the Welsh/English language preference of the child or young person. In the cases we inspected, none of the children or young people had Welsh recorded as their first language, or any preference expressed for use of the Welsh language. We did note that staff answered telephone calls with a Welsh language greeting, before switching to English. Staff were aware of those colleagues who could speak Welsh, to whom relevant enquiries could be passed. There were sufficient Welsh speakers among the staff to enable the YOS to deliver services through the medium of Welsh, if children or young people requested it. This offer could be made more routinely.
4. Some initial documents provided to children and young people were available in Welsh, but the new participation strategy and action plan had no mention of the Welsh language. No members of the YOS management team were Welsh speakers. Staff were not proactive in promoting the value of the Welsh language as an employment skill, or in encouraging children or young people who had been taught Welsh in school to further develop their skill. Assessments did not take full account of children or young people's skills in the Welsh language in order to identify which children and young people could benefit from support to increase their use of the language or to raise their awareness of its value.
5. The new AssetPlus assessment and planning tool had recently been introduced. Despite being trained, not all YOS case managers had developed a full understanding of how to use the tool to support assessment. Further work was being undertaken to make sure that records were comprehensive and that the system's full potential was realised.
6. The initial assessment of the preferred learning styles of children and young people helped case managers to support engagement. Case managers were usually clear about how to use this assessment information to tailor individual activities and to adjust the personal support offered to enable children and young people to engage in activities.
7. PSRs were the main method by which the court was informed about offending and other factors to assist in sentencing. The quality of PSRs and the appropriateness of recommendations is particularly important when considering cases on the threshold of custody and we were concerned to note that six of such inspected PSRs were not good enough. Problems included insufficient analysis, excessive length, insufficient assessment of risk of harm to others and vulnerability.
8. Almost all of the referral order reports were good, providing valuable information to inform discussions at youth offender panels.
9. Planning for work to reduce offending was good enough in just under three-quarters of cases, generally providing a strong basis for future work. Work to address education, training or employment, thinking and behaviour, and attitudes to offending was identified in almost all plans where this was required. More attention needed to be given to planning to address family and personal relationships, emotional or mental health, living arrangements and lifestyle. The role of partner agencies sometimes needed to be clearer. All but one of the children and young people that we interviewed knew that they had some sort of plan, either a referral order contract or an individual sentence plan.

Comments from a child or young person

"I got given my contract straight away, after the panel meeting; it covers things like education, and anger and stuff."

"Yeh, I've got a plan, I keep it in the kitchen, I've got to keep my appointments and stay out of trouble."

10. For children and young people in custody, their sentence planning should be delivered in an integrated way. It was encouraging that the custodial phase of sentences included planning for work to reduce offending in almost all relevant cases and that the planned work during the custodial period to address reoffending was delivered. Two parents/carers with children in custody reported good support from the YOS staff including help to attend a sentence planning meeting, by collecting them and travelling with them to the secure establishment. Parents/carers confirmed that sentence planning meetings took their child or young person's needs into consideration and the plan met the identified needs.

Comments from parents/carers

"The YOS has been brilliant, they take me to the meetings and give me feedback on how [my son] is getting on..... I am confident he is getting the help he needs."

"[YOS officer] is doing one-to-one work with him in prison when he visits him because the prison does not have the course, he tells me how he is getting on, but not the details of the work because that is between [my son] and [YOS officer]."

11. Inspectors form judgements about the priorities that should have applied in each case, and whether sufficient work had been undertaken to address these. We found that where work; living arrangements; education, training and employment; thinking and behaviour; and substance misuse were priorities, sufficient work had been completed in most cases. Where family and personal relationships; lifestyle, emotional and mental health; attitudes to offending; and motivation to change were factors, the work was insufficient in some cases.
12. Case managers sometimes described a reliance on internet searches to find suitable intervention work, rather than them having a coherent set of recommended options available. There was, however, an internal system (the YOS Online Data Archive), which was a useful source of information for staff. The YOS also benefited from being selected as a location for the DRIVE programme (a domestic violence programme from Safer Merthyr Tydfil. This was a research project so not yet available to all, but was the only one in Wales). Staff should be applauded for their creativity in seeking to identify appropriate work to match the individual cases, but this should be grounded in a core set of evidence-based interventions. We found that case managers understood the broad principles of effective practice with children and young people, but they did not always have a good understanding of what interventions would work best, nor how to evaluate their effectiveness.
13. Sufficient attention was given to reinforcing positive factors in work to reduce offending in almost all cases. Such work is important and we found that attention was given to make sure that positive outcomes were sustainable in almost all cases that were close enough to the end of their sentence to be assessed.
14. There was a good understanding of restorative justice in almost all relevant cases and we saw strong examples of this work, although a little more attention could be given to making sure that referral order panels heard and understood the voice of the victim. Children and young people wrote letters of apology and undertook a wide variety of useful reparation activities, which added value in their local community.

Example of notable practice: Illustration of effective restorative work

A large supermarket in one of the town centres was a repeat victim of shop theft. The YOS had an ongoing relationship with this store, and the store facilitated meetings with the children and young people who had offended there. The security manager met with the children and young people and explained the impact of the theft on the store. She explained that children and young people often think it is more acceptable to steal from a large store and she was able to explain to them the effect on staff, profits and costs to the community.

15. The frequency of reoffending since the start of the sentence had reduced in 75% of those cases where there was sufficient evidence to assess this. The seriousness of reoffending had reduced in 69% of relevant cases. Inspectors judged that almost half of the children and young people were less likely to reoffend than they had been at the start of their sentence.
16. We spoke to 11 children and young people from the cases that we inspected.
17. The quality of engagement between case managers and both children and young people and their parents/carers was good. Children and young people valued their relationships with case managers and the interest shown by them. All of the parents/carers we interviewed felt that sentence plans were comprehensive, knew what was in them and had contributed to them.

Comments from children and young people

"[YOS worker] is proper legend, at first I hated her and I wanted to blow her car up, and I was going to, but now I think she is proper sick, I tell you, I would take a bullet for her."

"My worker was tidy with me, he said, you do what you do, but I will give you advice about what you can do and what will happen, you use your head, he gave me advice, he told me about the consequences."

"He was tidy with me, so I was tidy to him, there's no point in kicking off, you just have to be there longer."

18. We saw some effective operational partnerships, in particular those addressing substance misuse. There were strong links with locality services that could provide continuing support when the court order ended.

Comments from parents/carers

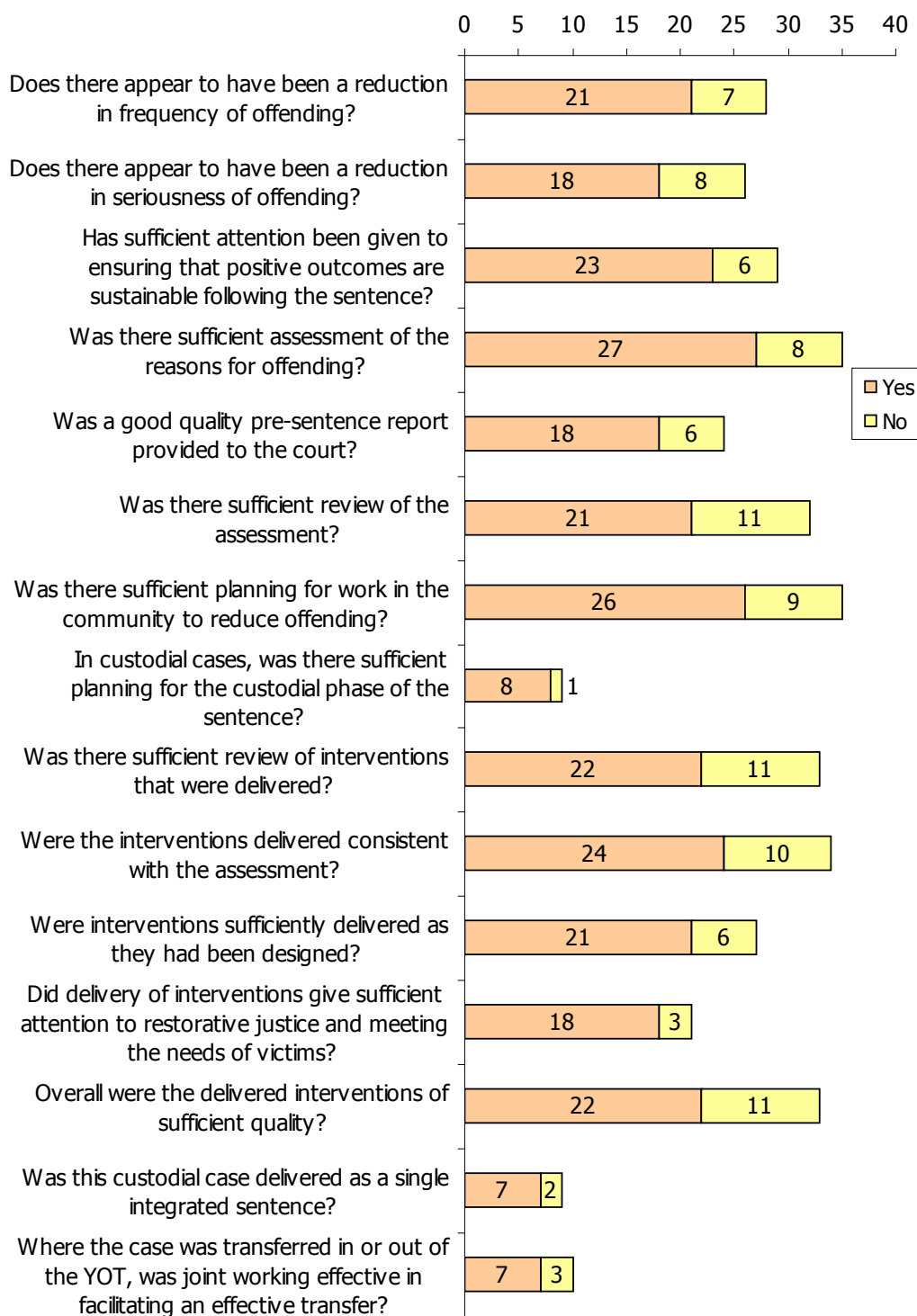
"His grandmother wanted me to tell you that [case manager] is the best thing that has ever happened to this family, he has been fantastic."

"The [YOS worker] plays football with my son because he struggles to concentrate and finds it hard to talk, when he clams up [YOS worker] goes outside for a kick about, it's been really good."

Data Summary

The following chart summarises data from some of the key questions assessed during the inspection of cases. [NB: 35 cases were inspected. The total answers, however, may not equal this, since some questions may not have been applicable to every case]

Reducing Reoffending



Protecting the public

2

Theme 2: Protecting the public

What we expect to see

Victims, and potential victims, of crime have the right to expect that everything reasonable is done to manage the risk of harm posed by children and young people who have offended. We expect to see good quality assessment and planning with the delivery of appropriate interventions, and positive leadership, effective management and partnership work which reduces the risk of harm to others.

Case assessment score

Within the case assessment, overall 76% of work to protect the public was done well enough.

Key Findings

1. Assessment of risk of harm to others was not always sufficient; staff needed to be more investigative.
2. Planning for work to manage or reduce risk of harm required some improvement.
3. Multi-Agency Public Protection Arrangements (MAPPA) were understood and worked well.
4. Other risk management meetings were not always effective. The relationship with and sharing of intelligence by the police was good, but the YOS's system did not make sure that information was consistently shared with case managers, or that actions were followed up effectively.
5. Local protocols around missing children were not clearly communicated or understood.
6. Oversight by managers was not effective in enough cases.
7. Good attention was given to the needs of victims.
8. Children and young people understood and described work being undertaken with them that was intended to reduce their risk of harm to others.

Explanation of findings

1. To protect victims and the public, it is important that planned work is informed by good assessment including the situations the child or young person may become involved in, how that may occur and how that behaviour may begin. This was not done well enough in almost one-third of cases.
2. Case managers should create a clear plan designed to prevent the risky circumstances happening. Plans should also explain what actions need to be taken if any harm does occur. One-third of cases did not have a sufficient plan in place at or near the start of the sentence to manage risk of harm posed to others. Usually this was because the case manager had not recognised the need to plan to manage risk of harm. Case managers did not yet understand how to produce risk management plans in AssetPlus with the clarity, comprehensiveness and precision that was needed. In all of the custodial cases that we examined, a comprehensive risk management plan was in place.
3. All the children and young people that we spoke to were aware that an assessment had been completed which assessed their risk of offending and their risk of harm to the public. Some children and young people were also aware that they had been assessed as presenting a high risk of harm to the public and that they had additional requirements in their intervention plan. 4. YOS case managers had a clear understanding of MAPPA and about how and when to engage with them. MAPPA involvement in the initial assessment and planning met the needs of the relevant cases.

Comments from children and young people

"They have put in a thing with me not to bother anyone under the age of 16, there has to be either my parents there or their parents there, I can't be alone with anyone under 16, I have had two child abduction warning notices given to me. I've had three girlfriends, one of them was 13, and two of them were 14, in the past I have spent more time at the police station than the police officers themselves, and I know if I breach my order I can go to prison."

"I've got a CBO [criminal behaviour order], I can't go into Ponty [Pontypridd], it's because I used to get into loads of trouble there."

4. YOS case managers had a clear understanding of MAPPA and about how and when to engage with them. MAPPA involvement in the initial assessment and planning met the needs of the relevant cases.
5. In joint working with local children's services, the assessment and management of risk of harm to others was given an appropriately high priority. The involvement of children and young people was given active consideration as appropriate. Sound judgment and decision-making was evident in relation to Child Protection during discussions with social workers and YOS representatives.
6. Other multi-agency arrangements, protocols and meetings to manage risk of harm to others were not as effective. YOS staff themselves were concerned that they did not always receive clear actions from the Cwm Taf Multi-Agency High Risk Panels and Cwm Taf YOS Multi-Agency Risk Panel (MARP) meetings; there was little evidence produced that actions were consistently followed up and challenged, where necessary, in subsequent meetings. A recent Critical Learning Review also stated that the "*Young person is also managed under the Risky Behaviour Protocol, although it is not clear from the recordings how this is coordinated or disseminated to all involved in the case*".
7. We observed some of these meetings and considered that, while the sharing of information and perspectives that occurred was positive and valuable, not enough structure or focus was given to make sure that the risks of harm children and young people posed to others were clearly identified, agreed and recorded. Actions were not SMART (specific, measurable, achievable, relevant and timely) or consistently communicated to the relevant case manager. Insufficient attention was given to putting in place robust but proportionate plans to address these risks and to contingency planning.
8. Reviews of assessments and plans for work to manage risk of harm to others were not always undertaken or done well enough. Sometimes this was because the progress made, or any changes, had not been included. The YOS had clear and appropriate local standards for reviews, which staff did not always follow.
9. In order to reduce the risk of harm to others, interventions delivered with children and young people must be consistent with both the assessed need and the plan. This was not achieved in only a very small number of cases. The main issue was that required interventions had sometimes not been delivered to meet identified needs, and it was unclear why that had been the case.
10. In about one-third of cases the right balance had not been struck between a reduction in offending, managing risk of harm to others and addressing vulnerability. The most common reason was insufficient attention being given to interventions to manage vulnerability or risk of harm.
11. Sufficient attention was given to managing the risk of harm to known or potential victims in the majority of relevant cases. Where this had not been the case, the main cause was gaps in planning related to known victims and case managers were not focused on the needs of known victims. All victims we spoke to felt supported by the YOS, were kept informed and, where appropriate, were able to make a contribution to the consideration of licence conditions.

Example of notable practice: Positive victim contact

There was evidence of good restorative work being used and services being offered to victims. In one case the victim of the offence was a family member and the offence had severely damaged family relationships. The parents of the victim took part in a restorative conference. The victim's mother reported that she wanted to participate, because she wanted the offender to know the significant damage his offending had caused the family, but she also wanted him to know that, as extended family, they still wanted to support him. The conference took place at the weekend, so that the father of the victim could attend as he worked full-time. The victim's family felt prepared for the meeting and there had been ongoing support for them since the conference.

12. Oversight by case managers of risk of harm work had been effective in 59% of the relevant cases. Where oversight was ineffective, this was because no action had been taken where assessments and reviews were not updated after new information was found.
13. An important function of a police officer in a YOS is intelligence sharing. There was a system in place for the police officers to identify when children or young people known to the YOS came to police attention. The YOS police officers had access to the appropriate IT systems at both YOS offices. Intelligence sharing could be formal (via email) or merely verbal.
14. The Youth Engagement Project was a project working with children and young people across Cwm Taf, using a restorative approach to tackle local issues. The multi-agency team conducted outreach work on a weekday evening in crime and antisocial behaviour hot spots. Children and young people at risk of harm to themselves from their activities were identified and invited to work with the YOS, including voluntary participation in educational sessions focusing on alcohol and substance misuse, self-care, victim awareness and health. Information gathered from those evenings was shared via email, inter-agency. This project was delivering effectively.
15. Many of the children and young people we met did not specifically recognise elements of their intervention as relating to protection of the public. When they described the work that had been undertaken, however, it was apparent that this was often intended to address their risk of harm to others. Other children and young people were aware of plans in place to protect the public. They understood them and explained how they were complying with restrictions.

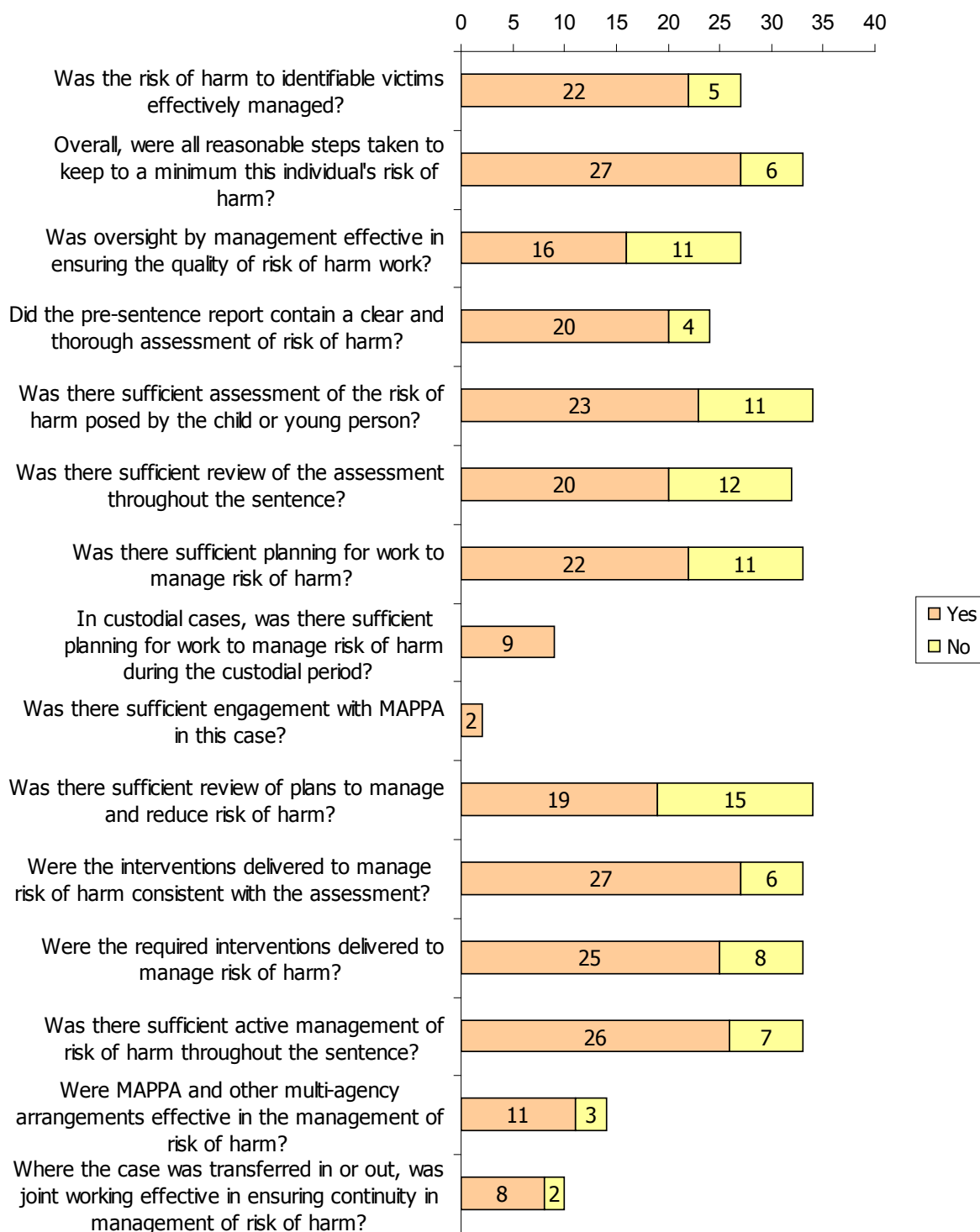
Example of notable practice: Illustration of effective risk management

One young person we met reported that he was visited monthly by the police and they undertook a search of his property to check he had no guns or knives. He stated that they did this because he had Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder and could not be trusted not to hurt anyone if he did have a weapon. He had been persuaded that these checks were for his own safety and he willingly consented to them.

Data Summary

The following chart summarises data from some of the key questions assessed during the inspection of cases. [NB: 35 cases were inspected. The total answers, however, may not equal this, since some questions may not have been applicable to every case]

Protecting the Public



Protecting the child or young person

3

Theme 3: Protecting the child or young person

What we expect to see

Whether the vulnerability of children and young people is due to the consequences of their own behaviour or the behaviour of others, we expect to see that they are kept safe and their vulnerability is reduced. This should be through good quality assessment and planning with the delivery of appropriate interventions, positive leadership and management, and an effective contribution to multi-agency child protection arrangements.

Case assessment score

Within the case assessment, overall 71% of work to protect children and young people and reduce their vulnerability was done well enough.

Key Findings

1. Good work was often carried out by the YOS to safeguard children and young people.
2. Staff developed positive relationships with children and young people, which were valuable in helping keep children and young people safe.
3. Planning required improvement, although planning in custodial cases was good.
4. There was insufficient review of safeguarding and vulnerability factors.
5. There were examples of good joint work with children's social care to keep children and young people safe.
6. Information sharing and communication between the YOS and other agencies was not sufficiently consistent.

Explanation of findings

1. We saw some good work carried out intended to safeguard or reduce the vulnerability of children and young people. Sufficient effort had been made to understand, analyse and explain the safeguarding and vulnerability needs that applied in just over three-quarters of cases. Assessments normally gave sufficient attention to all areas (apart from care arrangements), in so far as these related to the vulnerability of the child or young person.

Comments from children and young people

*"I used to go missing loads when I was in a children's home, and there used to be meetings about me with loads of people there, I didn't go, because I didn't want to sit there and listen to people talking s**t about me, but I like it where I am now, so I stay here all the time."*

"The school have a plan that if I am off the premises for more than 20 minutes I am reported missing, but I think its stupid, because I am just going off and getting sweets and things, I'm not doing anything."

2. There were good arrangements in place for gathering information from local authorities about children and young people's school attendance, behaviour and attainment when they first became involved with the YOS. Some assessment outcomes, however, were not recent enough or detailed enough to be useful in planning children or young people's progression. One member of staff did have access to local authority management information systems that enabled her to gather assessment outcomes. While staff were thorough in trying to gain information about children and young people from schools, a small number of schools, who dealt with the most vulnerable learners, did not respond effectively to requests for information. In a few cases, the information was incomplete.
3. In other cases, gaps in information sharing required case managers to be more investigative in requests for information. Children's social care services were not sufficiently aware of the importance of the YOS having relevant information, and did not share this routinely. For example, where a child or young person was either at risk of or vulnerable to child sexual exploitation the exact nature of that risk was not always known to case managers. Consequently, assessments and plans were sometimes limited.
4. There was a lack of clarity about the use of child sexual exploitation screening, for example when offending may have been an indicator of child sexual exploitation. YOS staff had not realised their responsibilities with regard to the All Wales Protocol - Missing Children, regarding children and young people who go missing. YOS staff and managers acknowledged that there was no automatic system in place to make sure that they received details from all return-home interviews. Good information was brought to the MARP from the police, who took responsibility for completing return-home interviews and collecting information from children and young people. The YOS accepted that circulation of the information and actions shared in the MARP should be directed at specific case managers, to be utilised as part of the assessments and reviews.
5. Almost all PSRs included a clear and sufficient explanation of the safeguarding and vulnerability needs that applied in the case. We observed good work in the local youth court.

Example of notable practice:

A 16 year old male was facing an expected custodial sentence following his guilty plea to a charge of burglary of a non-dwelling. The case manager was present in court and had provided a comprehensive PSR, which clearly outlined the factors contributing to the young person's continued offending but also explained the positive steps towards change that he had taken since he had committed the offence. These included reducing his substance misuse and securing a place on a local training course. The report also conveyed a detailed proposal for sentence to a youth rehabilitation order (YRO) with Intensive Supervision and Surveillance (ISS). The proposal clearly outlined the rigorous requirements of this order, how the proposed activities would specifically reduce the likelihood of his reoffending and how closely he would be monitored throughout the order. As a result, the court was positively influenced to give the young person "a chance" and imposed the YRO and ISS. The work of the YOS was influential in helping make sure that the young person had the opportunity to continue his change in the community.

6. There was insufficient review of safeguarding and vulnerability. Some reviews were a copy of a previous assessment, even though relevant additional information was known. The need for review following a significant change was not always recognised. The YOS had produced helpful guidance about the additional circumstances in which reviews would be required. It was disappointing to find that this was not always followed.
7. Planning for work in the community to address safeguarding and vulnerability needs was poor, with almost half of plans being inadequate. Case managers did not understand how to use the new AssetPlus tools effectively when planning. More positively, eight of the nine cases in custody included sufficient planning to address safeguarding and vulnerability.

8. Once the required intervention to address safeguarding or vulnerability needs had been identified, it was then delivered in three-quarters of cases. Overall, the YOS had done enough to keep the child or young person safe in two-thirds of the cases. While there were deficits in assessment and planning, no child or young person had been left unsafe as a direct result of these.
9. Management oversight of safeguarding and vulnerability work was sufficient in just over half of the relevant cases. This was primarily due to deficiencies in assessment and planning, of which the supervising manager should have been aware, not being addressed. Sometimes assessments and plans had been countersigned without sufficient consideration given to their quality. This was in spite of a clear policy being in place for management oversight.
10. When a child or young person reaches the age of 18 years old, it is for the YOS to decide whether the case should be transferred to the management of one of the adult probation services. This transfer should be prepared for carefully, with robust information sharing between the case manager and adult probation services to make sure the well-being of the child or young person is maintained. Joint working of this kind was found to be effective in 80% of relevant cases.
11. YOS staff understood the importance of children and young people having someone they could trust and speak to. The quality of those relationships helped children and young people understand how they would be helped and kept safe. There was universal positive feedback from the children and young people on the engagement and support provided by their YOS case manager. All clearly related well to their case manager, even when they had to be breached on their orders. Children and young people we spoke to were aware of work being undertaken to help address risk of harm to others.

Comment from a child or young person

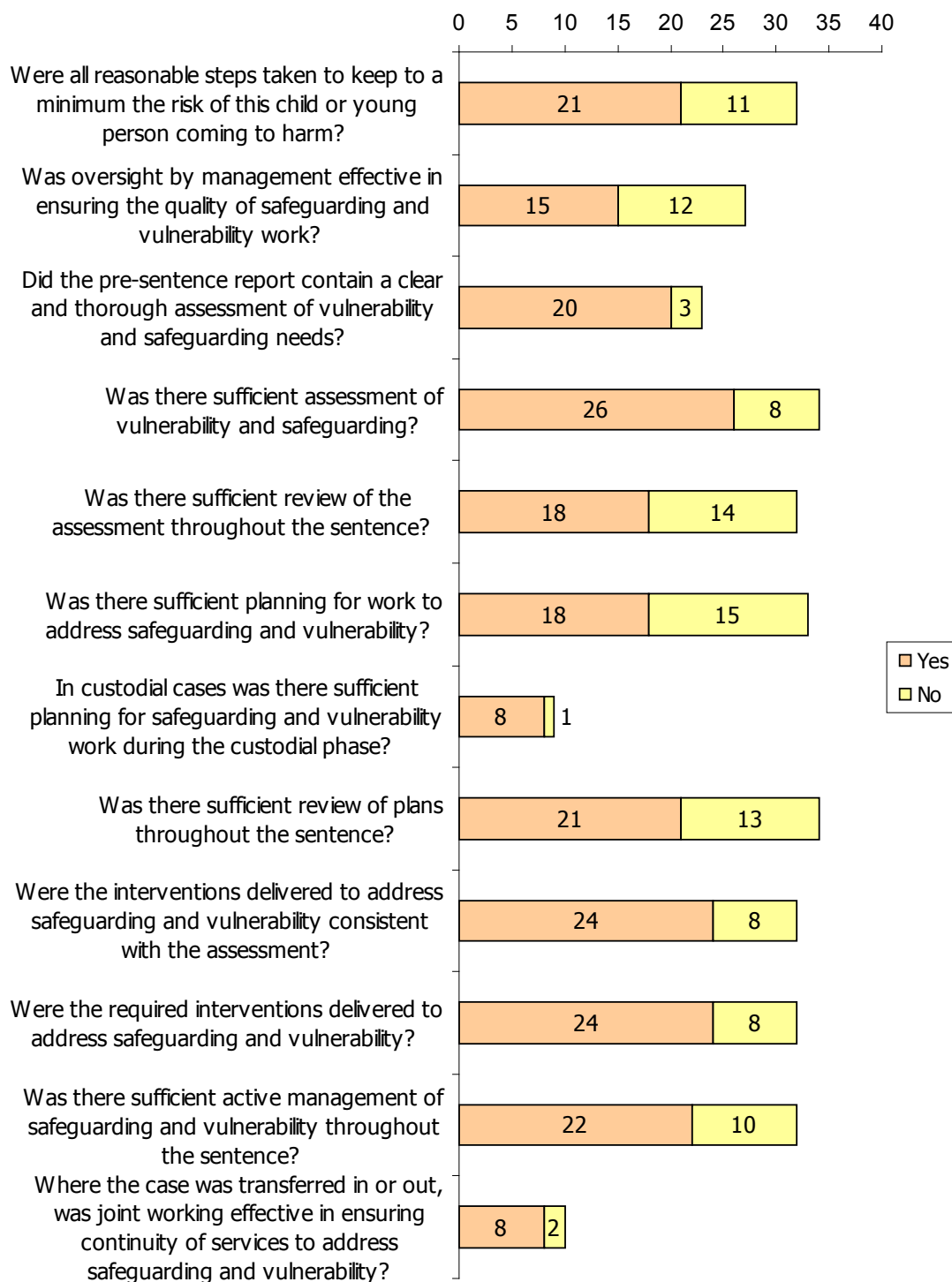
"She did breach me, yeh, but that just doing the job, you've got to get on with it haven't you?"

12. Staff understood the negative impact of custody and took action to try and lessen this. They planned well for work in custody to address safeguarding and vulnerability in almost all custodial cases.
13. YOS staff attended Looked After Children reviews and shared information appropriately. Relationships between the YOS and staff in children's services were generally described as good, and there were clear examples where the positive working relationships between individuals in these teams had resulted in beneficial outcomes for children and young people. Recent examples of this included joint visits to a Looked After Child while in custody, and an in-house residential placement being kept open while the young person was in custody.

Data Summary

The following chart summarises data from some of the key questions assessed during the inspection of cases. [NB: 35 cases were inspected. The total answers, however, may not equal this, since some questions may not have been applicable to every case]

Protecting the Child or Young Person



**Making sure
the sentence
is served**

4

Theme 4: Making sure the sentence is served

What we expect to see

Children and young people should serve their sentences as the court intends. We expect that the YOS will maximise the likelihood of successful outcomes by effective engagement with them and their families, responding to relevant diversity factors including paying attention to their health and well-being, and taking appropriate action if they do not comply.

Case assessment score

Within the case assessment, overall 85% of work to make sure the sentence was served was done well enough.

Key Findings

1. Good attention was given to diversity factors and to responding to the individual needs of children and young people throughout the work of the YOS.
2. Children and young people and their parents/carers were involved in the development of both assessments and PSRs.
3. Staff built positive relationships with children and young people.
4. Attention was given to making sure children and young people met the requirements of their sentence.
5. When children and young people did not comply with their sentence, the response of the YOS was appropriate.

Explanation of findings

1. Considering and responding to the individual needs of children and young people was a considerable strength of Cwm Taf YOS. The individual needs and circumstances of children and young people and their families, including diversity factors and other barriers to engagement, were usually assessed and understood well. All the children and young people we met told us that any diversity needs that they had were met.
2. Children and young people, and their parents/carers were usually well engaged in the development of assessments. This meant that assessments reflected their experiences, as these had been presented to the case manager.
3. It is particularly important that children or young people and their parents/carers understand what will be said about them in PSRs, since this can have an impact on the progress of the sentence, once it is underway. In Cwm Taf, the child or young person and their parents/carers had been sufficiently involved in the preparation of the PSR in almost every relevant case that we inspected.
4. Almost all PSRs gave sufficient attention to diversity factors and potential barriers to engagement. Attention to this during planning was also good enough in the great majority of cases. The child or young person and their parents/carers or significant others had been sufficiently involved in the planning in 82% of cases.
5. Staff were tenacious and skilled in building positive relationships with children and young people, and recognised that sometimes this took time. Their actions gave clear messages to children and young people that they mattered. We saw numerous positive examples of how case managers showed their understanding of children and young people's circumstances.

Comments from children and young people

"We have talked about the consequences and stuff, the main person I think that I've affected is my Mum, my Mum is the reason why I want to stay out of trouble."

"We talk about the consequences of my behaviour, I really like [YOS manager] he explains things in a way I can really understand."

6. We noted as good practice the YOS's commitment to maintaining ownership of cases where the child or young person had gone to live in a different area, perhaps through being moved to another Looked After Child placement. Good work by case managers made sure that all relevant parties continued to be involved and informed and the child or young person was not lost or forgotten.
7. Sufficient attention was given to making sure that the child or young person engaged with the YOS and that the requirements of the sentence were met in almost all cases. Parents/carers explained how the YOS kept them informed about meetings, which helped them to support the work of the YOS. All the children and young people and parents/carers we spoke to reported that the YOS was flexible in their approach to arranging appointments; they would make appointments outside school or employment hours, and be responsive to the needs of children and young people. For example, one young person liked a fixed time and date for his appointments and this was arranged, while another said he responded better in the afternoons and, therefore, he was not given morning appointments.
8. The geography and limited public transport links in Cwm Taf meant that case managers completed regular home visits. Visiting the family home helped their understanding of children and young people's circumstances and how those may change over time. It is also important, however, that children and young people take responsibility for their own compliance, where appropriate. This is particularly the case with older children and young people, for whom this can be used as an opportunity to help develop the self-discipline they will need when starting work or engaging with adult services. Case managers did not always strike the right balance. This view was also expressed by some parents/carers who considered their children and young people should be encouraged by the YOS to take greater responsibility.
9. There were seven cases in our sample where the child or young person had not complied fully with the requirements of their sentence. The response of the YOS to this was appropriate in the great majority of these. The YOS operated a compliance panel process, which focused on understanding and putting actions into place. This meant that problems could be addressed to enable work to reduce offending and protect the public to continue, rather than immediately returning cases to court. Case managers understood the YOS approach to supporting effective engagement and responding to non-compliance.

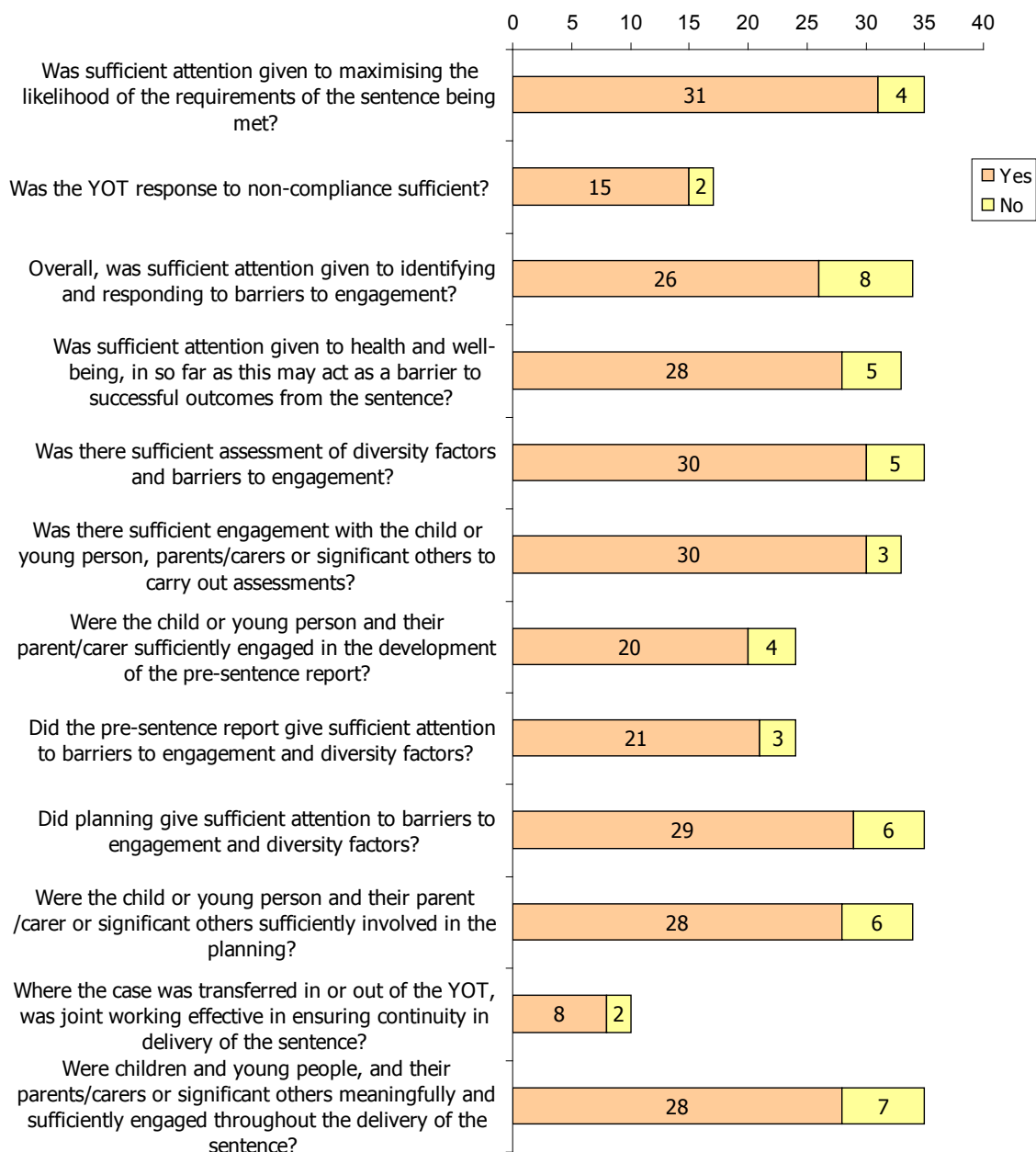
Comments from a child or young person

"I've had a couple of warnings, it was at the beginning, because of my attitude, I know them better now, so I don't kick off any more."

Data Summary

The following chart summarises data from some of the key questions assessed during the inspection of cases. [NB: 35 cases were inspected. The total answers, however, may not equal this, since some questions may not have been applicable to every case]

Making Sure the Sentence is Served



Governance and partnerships

5

Theme 5: Governance and partnerships

What we expect to see

Effective governance, partnership and management arrangements are in place. These enable the YOS to meet national and local criminal justice and related objectives, and to deliver and maintain good quality services.

Key Findings

1. There was good commitment to the work of the YOS within the local authority and there were some strong partnership arrangements.
2. Roles and responsibilities within the YOS management team were not clear enough, across both delivery areas.
3. The YOS and employment, training and education (ETE) partners had not been effective in meeting targets for the involvement of children and young people in ETE.
4. The YOS Management Board lacked sophisticated data to inform strategy and planning. There was not a sufficient analysis of the needs of children and young people.
5. YOS staff and managers worked well together operationally.
6. There was a significant lack of Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services (CAMHS) provision.

Explanation of findings

1. Leadership and governance – offending is reduced and other criminal justice and related objectives are met

- 1.1. In Cwm Taf, reoffending and the use of custody have all reduced over the last two years¹.
- 1.2. The YOS had a high degree of visibility and attracted a commitment from the local authority, including at Lead Member and Chief Executive level. Cwm Taf YOS and the YOS Management Board had high expectations for the services they provided, and were ambitious to further improve these. There was a clear overall purpose for the YOS expressed by the Board, along with good partnership working. The local authority had a focus on prevention and diversion and this had been reflected in the YOS, which had developed a strong and innovative approach to preventative work. This reflected the policy of the Welsh Government that children and young people should be seen as children first and as offenders second. Its success had led in part to a reduced, but proportionately more serious, caseload of statutory work in the YOS.
- 1.3. The YOS had been focused on the creation of a single service from two previous delivery areas; seeking to draw the two offices together into a single YOS, and considerable work had been undertaken. While the range and nature of interventions provided by or available to the YOS appeared to be broadly appropriate, there was no clear strategic approach to the development and delivery of interventions to reduce offending. Instead, it was largely practitioner led, in response to the presenting needs and issues of case managers' caseloads, rather than as part of an informed plan.

¹ Latest 12 month data published January 2017 is: Binary [43.4%] with the April 2014–March 2015 cohort, against an England and Wales average of 37.9%; Frequency 1.40, against an England and Wales average of 1.25. Use of custody in the year to June 2016 was 0.34 episodes per 1000 in 10-17 population, compared to the England & Wales average of 0.36 per 1000. First time entrants rates were also better than average. Source: Ministry of Justice.

- 1.4. The Board received a range of performance information, but this was not sufficiently sophisticated, and was unable to support the Board to make decisions and drive change. The Board did not regularly commission and utilise in depth qualitative data to support the area-wide commissioning, evaluation and delivery of services. The Board had not conducted regular in-depth analysis of, for instance, the impact of training or education on specific groups or the needs of the YOS as a whole. We did see two examples where the YOS had sought additional information, but oversight of this critical area had not been consistently effective and the Board had not influenced other partners to widen provision where needed. Strategic planning was, therefore, weakened.
- 1.5. Without this information, the Board and the YOS were identifying development priorities, for example in the latest youth justice plan; but they did not sufficiently understand changing local needs and risks to the service. There was no joint strategic needs assessment or analysis in place. Actions from meetings were not SMART (specific, measurable, achievable, realistic and timely) and we saw little evidence that they were followed up sufficiently every time.
- 1.6. There was no strategy to measure the impact of interventions and no evaluation of the effectiveness of the service.
- 1.7. There was good attendance at Board meetings and a strong commitment to the partnership by South Wales Police. There was also evidence of good Health Board (this was the wider Cwm Taf organisation that provided the health provision for all the members of the general public that live in the locality) and YOS collaborative working, such as the new development service². This initiative had a positive impact in terms of reducing waiting times for children and young people to access health services.
- 1.8. The Health Management Board was an internal forum that considered the specific health care needs of children and young people within the YOS. A number of reports were presented to the YOS Health Management Board, but it was unclear how these meetings added value. For example, information provided to the inspection indicated that between 01 April 2016-31 December 2016 a total of 326 children and young people were in the YOS system, but not enough of these had an internal YOS health referral and subsequent assessment. It had been recognised that a number of the children and young people may have had contact with other community health professionals, but this could not be evidenced. This level of detailed information had not been provided to the Health Board, and a significant majority of children and young people had not had a healthcare assessment.
- 1.9. Other information provided to the Health Management Board was of value and an example of this was the 'health quarterly report' for quarter three, which reflected a significant number of children and young people had 'emotional health' needs. The Health Management Board, however, did not have a clear strategy in place to address this.
- 1.10. We found that case managers gave children and young people good support if they identified that their basic skills were poor. The YOS, however, did not have a clear strategy for improving children and young people's literacy or numeracy skills. Not enough attention was given to systematically assessing children and young people's skills at the start of their order to inform the planning, delivery or evaluation of support.

2. Partnerships – effective partnerships make a positive difference

- 2.1. The YOS were highly regarded by partners, and some effective partnerships were in place.

² The initiative was announced in 2015 and was funded by the Welsh Government to reduce waiting times in specialist CAMHS.

- 2.2. The police representative on the Board was a Superintendent, with responsibility for partnerships, Multi-Agency Safeguarding Hub, Public Protection Unit, Integrated Offender Management (IOM), Youth Justice and Community Safety. Youth Justice Data and Police Crime data from the police national computer was shared at Board level; however, there was recognition that this data could be too historic and could distort local data and current understanding. We heard about the commissioning of some work to spot anomalies in the data and seek greater granularity to provide a more up to date picture.
- 2.3. There were two police officers seconded into the YOS who were managed by a Detective Inspector who had a portfolio covering the YOS, IOM, the Wales Integrated Serious and Dangerous Offender Management Project, and dangerous and sexual offenders. These line management arrangements demonstrated a comprehensive understanding of offender management and a clear steer towards partnership working and risk management.
- 2.4. The YOS police officers were co-located in each of the YOS offices and we saw effective working relationships between the two officers. Co-location was seen as good practice, as the value and skills that the police officers could bring, extended further than just the supply of intelligence. The YOS officers were enthusiastic, committed and well regarded by the case managers.
- 2.5. The YOS police officers completed a number of core functions. They completed joint home visits and visits to secure establishments with case managers, and also attended the youth court. The officers had delivered various briefings, talks and presentations with neighbourhood policing teams, particularly around preventative activity such as street disposals. The officers had also spoken in schools about sexting, bullying and antisocial behaviour. We recognised all of this work as good practice and evidence of proactive work to reduce risk of harm and vulnerability.
- 2.6. An important function of a police officer in any YOS is intelligence sharing. The police invested considerable time in preparing intelligence records for Bureau³ meetings in particular, and we were satisfied that they were regularly accessing custody records every morning and sharing intelligence about arrests with case managers. This was not, however, a consistent process and there was no obvious flagging system in place for the police officer to identify when a child or young person on the YOS caseload came to the attention of the police.
- 2.7. We also found evidence of disparity between the level of information provided by Gwent Police when children and young people had moved to the Gwent area but were still being managed by Cwm Taf YOS. Both police forces were using the same police systems, but application of the system was varied and could make accessing information more difficult.
- 2.8. South Wales Police had invested considerable resources to safeguard children and young people, including missing person teams within each basic command unit, a Multi-Agency Safeguarding Hub, and a proactive public protection team, all of which were seen as key players in protecting children and young people and the public.
- 2.9. Police officers had a good knowledge of the warning signs of child sexual exploitation and had attended a number of training courses. Both officers regularly attend High Risk Panel meetings and MARP meetings. While it was recognised that these risk meetings were valuable, the level of intelligence being shared outside of these meetings was insufficient.
- 2.10. Similarly, while there was a clear process in place for police officers from the missing person's team to complete return-home interviews, the level to which this information was shared with case officers was on an as and when it was requested basis. There needed to be a more consistent communications channel from the police to the case managers.

³ The Bureau is a local multi-agency project that works with children and young people who have been arrested, to divert them from antisocial or criminal behaviour before their activities lead them to receive a criminal conviction.

- 2.11. We found that there were positive and constructive working relationships between the IOM⁴ and the YOS, with a particular emphasis on the transition of cases from child to adult and a multi-agency approach towards these individuals. There was a referral process for 17 ½ year olds by case managers. These individuals went to a 'Multi-Agency Selection Panel' and were co-managed for a six month period, after which time they were IOM scored.
- 2.12. Children and young people who fitted the MAPPA criteria were, by their very nature, likely to pose significant risk of harm to both themselves and others. From the cases we inspected, there appeared to be appropriate referrals into MAPPA and case managers had received the four pillar training. Police officers working in the YOS, however, should also have received MAPPA training.
- 2.13. The health staff within the YOS consisted of two health visitors. A number of cases had mental health issues, but there was no psychiatric expertise within the YOS to address these.
- 2.14. Separate sets of children and young people's notes were being maintained by the health visitors and substance misuse workers based within the YOS. The health visitors completed two sets of notes, one paper and one electronic and, along with the AssetPlus notes, this meant that each child or young person had three sets of notes.
- 2.15. There was a lack of documented involvement of a number of key individuals including the health visitors and substance misuse workers. Health and substance misuse workers were not inputting information into the AssetPlus assessment and, therefore, were not included in making the assessment. YOS staff were, therefore, often inappropriately left undertaking assessments of health care needs.
- 2.16. The initiative of a Speech and Language Therapist being available within the YOS was a positive one. This resource, however, was limited to one day a month, which was taken up with assessment, meaning that there was no time to deliver any therapeutic input.

Comments from a parent/carer

One young person's parent identified that their child had mental health problems and she reported that the YOS advocated for the family to receive mental health support, which was something they had been asking for over some time, but was only put in place following intervention from the YOS.

"They contacted CAMHS for us, the psychiatrist had cancelled lots of appointments, because she was ill or on holiday, it was only when [YOS officer] got involved that we were seen."

- 2.17. The lack of access to CAMHS was a significant issue despite the tenacious efforts of YOS staff. The transition of children and young people from youth to adult services was problematic and we saw limited involvement from CAMHS. YOS staff did report that the service was better for children and young people known to the YOS who had a dual diagnosis.
- 2.18. All of the children and young people we interviewed aged 16 years old and under were in some kind of educational provision, which was a mixture of mainstream education, college placements or 'Educated Other Attending School' (EOTAS), the main alternative provision. Some of these children and young people were on reduced timetables, and some were not attending as required, but there was provision available for most of them.
- 2.19. This provision was supported by the work that the YOS did for EOTAS. The YOS police officer attended the EOTAS team meetings and the YOS had provided training to EOTAS staff on the

⁴ IOM brings a cross-agency response to the crime and reoffending threats faced by local communities. The most persistent and problematic offenders are identified and managed jointly by partner agencies working together.

principles and use of restorative justice. YOS staff often had their meetings with children and young people at the premises. This provider felt that they had good support from the YOS.

- 2.20. Most children and young people who engaged with the YOS improved their levels of engagement with ETE. Those children and young people supervised by the YOS who were of statutory school age improved their engagement by 57% and those above school age improved their engagement by 38%⁵. Despite this improvement, too many children and young people of statutory school age did not receive their entitlement to full-time education. For those attending pupil referral unit provision, there was insufficient monitoring of and reporting on the number of hours of education they received. This limited the YOS's ability to influence education provision.
- 2.21. There was one probation officer seconded from the National Probation Service, who had a good understanding of her role. She lacked, however, appropriate three-way supervision and did not have access to adult services' IT systems and recording. There was a need to clarify the YOS probation officer role to make sure that the transition process was focused on the needs of the child or young person. We saw little evidence of YOS liaison with the Wales Community Rehabilitation Company to which some of the YOS's children and young people would eventually be transferred.
- 2.22. There is a lack of appropriate housing available to vulnerable children and young people in Cwm Taf. This has resulted in inappropriate placements being made in bed and breakfast accommodation, particularly in the Rhondda Cynon Taf area. Senior managers were aware of this and were planning an accommodation strategy with accompanying additional resources, but the YOS Board could not satisfy itself that it had sufficiently rigorous measures in place to prevent the inappropriate placement of children and young people. The YOS did not have an accommodation worker.
- 2.23. Restorative justice was a strength of the YOS. We saw some excellent restorative justice interventions, which were appropriate, well developed, meaningful and valued by victims. The good work supporting this activity was informed by a Monthly Restorative Justice Action Group meeting, which was aimed at sharing updates on victim work, victim focus referrals, police work, reparation, volunteers and prevention activity. Updates were received in relation to planned restorative justice conferences, Bureau interventions, reparation work, police restorative justice card disposals and volunteer activity. This was a significant area of expertise that the YOS had developed and for which it should be commended.

Comments from children and young people

"I have done 36 hours reparation, this was in a local school, and it was helping me, I learnt practical things, and it helped me not lose my temper, because I couldn't lose my temper there."

"I did community work because I had broken the law, the workers were tidy, we talked about all sorts of things, and I learnt practical stuff, like painting and stuff, it was good."

- 2.24. Links with schools were good. YOS staff worked well with teaching staff and school pastoral staff to make sure that the support children and young people received complemented the school's support. In one case, the school commented on the marked difference in a young person's behaviour after YOS case managers had undertaken an intervention to improve his emotional literacy.
- 2.25. Case managers gave children and young people careers advice and helped them to make informed choices about their progression. The YOS had actively supported 50 children and young people in the last two years to work towards gaining a Construction Skills Certificate Scheme (CSCS) to improve their employability.

⁵ Data provided by Estyn.

Comments from children and young people

"YOS referred me to the YFF [Young Fire Fighters] course, I really liked it, I got loads of certificates, I liked how they talked to you, I got my CSCS card, which would have cost me hundreds of pounds if I had to pay for it, it will help me get a job soon."

"I got my CSCS card, which was really good, I'm doing cleaning now, but I'll use it when I'm 18 and it will help me get a better paid job."

- 2.26. Links with Careers Wales were variable. There was no Careers Wales representative on the YOS Management Board. One local authority had created very good, close partnership working. Through this, a multi-disciplinary panel, including a Careers Wales representative, provided tailored progression support to enable partners to respond quickly to emerging crises, and improving children and young people's ability to succeed in their chosen career plans. In Rhondda Cynon Taf, links with Careers Wales were less strong and did not make sure that children and young people had access to appropriate advice, guidance and progression support. In this area, the local authority had developed transition workers to support children and young people, but YOS case managers were not aware of this support or how to help children and young people to access it.

3. Workforce management – effective workforce management supports quality service delivery

- 3.1. The YOS had procedures in place, including local standards for practice delivery and processes to support quality assurance and oversight. The cases that we inspected did not always meet the local standards. The YOS's current quality assurance systems were largely process driven. While this provided a level of reassurance to senior managers, it was not effective in improving practice in planning and review.
- 3.2. Case managers spoke positively about their senior managers. It was apparent that YOS staff and managers worked together well. Staff considered that managers were skilled at assessing their work; supporting them and helping them improve. All YOS staff said that they received effective and appropriate supervision.
- 3.3. Regular supervision took place between health visitors and their managers and between substance misuse workers and their managers. Both the health visitors and substance misuse workers felt well supported and trained on a number of key areas that were relevant to their role.
- 3.4. The ability of the YOS to work effectively was heavily dependent upon reliable IT systems. Effective use of the new AssetPlus system for assessment, planning and recording is key to making sure that YOS staff know the risks and needs in individual cases. It is also vital for effective communication with other agencies, for example to help keep victims or children and young people safe. The YOS had arranged training according to national guidelines, and the YOS should continue with the ongoing refresher training so valued by staff.
- 3.5. IT systems were entirely desktop-based. This meant that time was often wasted between remote appointments and staff had difficulty accessing information when they were away from the office. A more efficient solution may be for staff to have access to laptops, to facilitate remote working.
- 3.6. Rurality led to challenges around staff safety. The YOS had a lone working and buddy system, and the YOS police staff would check address markers on request and undertake joint visits, but most visits were undertaken by single members of staff. The system did not make sure that the marker check was completed automatically whenever a new case was created. Staff expressed concern that due to the rural nature of the area, it would be difficult for them to access support quickly.

4. Learning organisation – learning and improvement leads to positive outcomes

- 4.1. There were good training links with the Cwm Taf Safeguarding Children Board, promoting opportunities for effective joint learning. Case managers mostly considered that their immediate development needs were met by the YOS, although they would welcome more training to meet their future development. In order to achieve this, the YOS management team first need to identify their future business priorities.
- 4.2. Volunteers on referral order panels understood their roles well. They valued the support and training available to them. Further work to support them in engaging well with children and young people would be helpful. Referral order panel meetings were always held on a Tuesday at the YOS office and sometimes in working hours which meant that some parents/carers were unable to attend. There was no evidence of the use of community venues for panel meetings. Referral orders were designed to reintegrate children and young people back into their community by the use of community volunteers, and should take place in community venues.
- 4.3. We were pleased to find that a Participation Group had been implemented to develop new and interesting ways to engage with children and young people to help improve services. We encourage the development of this work.
- 4.4. We observed a mutually beneficial partnership between the YOS and the University of South Wales. The partnership examined 15 cases of children and young people with complex needs who were at a higher risk of harm or offending. This allowed the YOS to identify commonalities and lessons to inform future practice.
- 4.5. The YOS had recently asked the researchers to explore how AssetPlus was being used, to help the YOS better understand its role in helping children and young people to change, and to help understand the links to reducing offending. This work was underway and was due to report initially in summer 2017. This has the potential to drive a number of significant developments for the YOS and demonstrated the YOS's commitment to learning.

Interventions to reduce reoffending

6

Theme 6: Interventions to reduce reoffending

What we expect to see

There should be a broad range of quality interventions being delivered well and as their design intended. We expect to see that these are based on assessed needs with appropriate planning to maximise the likelihood of sustainable outcomes being achieved. Where children and young people are working with more than one agency, partnership working should be integrated.

Case assessment score

Within the case assessment, overall 71% of work on interventions to reduce reoffending was done well enough.

Key Findings

1. Assessments of the suitability of children and young people for specific interventions had been considered well enough in most cases.
2. Restorative justice was particularly good.
3. The delivery of interventions by case managers within the YOS or between the YOS and partner agencies was not always joined-up or consistent with assessed needs.
4. The effectiveness of interventions was not evaluated.

Explanation of findings

1. The YOS did not know the interventions available to children and young people and had, therefore, commissioned a senior manager to identify these, prior to our inspection. We observed some excellent interventions, delivered either by YOS staff or partner agencies. These included one-to-one supervision; work in the youth court; reparation; a Family Group Conference DVD; the Youth Engagement Programme Briefing; the Girl's Group; referral order panels; the Restorative Justice Action Group and the Parent's Drop-In. Most were delivered by YOS case managers, not all of whom had received training on delivery. Case managers selected aspects of interventions to deliver on a one-to-one basis with children and young people, to suit their needs. There were a limited, but well-targeted range of accredited learning programmes that staff supported children and young people to undertake. In a minority of cases, children and young people's work was not accredited.

Comment from a child or young person

"Because I set fire to the children's home I had to do work with the Fire Brigade, I had to talk to them and watch some videos, it helped me understand the risk of fires."

2. Sometimes a court can impose a YRO with ISS when it is dealing with an offence which is punishable with imprisonment, but wishes to use an alternative to custody. A YRO with ISS should include an extended rehabilitation activity requirement for which the court may specify the number of days in the order, with a supervision requirement, a curfew requirement and, where appropriate, an electronic monitoring requirement. It can include a range of activities including reparative activities, restoring

the costs of crime and reintegrating children and young people back into the community. Such orders are usually delivered jointly with YOS police officers. Three of the children and young people we interviewed were either currently, or had previously been subject to ISS. None of these children and young people appeared to be aware of the role of the police in the surveillance element of their ISS, and none reported regular meetings with either the YOS police officers, IOM police officers, or the neighbourhood teams.

Comment from a child or young person

"The ISS is nothing to do with the police, I just see the YOS team, and I have to keep YOS appointments."

3. Staff paid good attention to developing children and young people's 'soft skills' but this was not measured well. There was no systematic monitoring of progress made by children and young people while in ETE. Records about this were sometimes limited. Neither was there a mechanism to analyse the impact of specific ETE activities on reoffending rates.
4. Activities to help children and young people develop creative writing skills and deliver powerful pieces of drama achieved valuable therapeutic outcomes. YOS staff gave good attention to developing soft skills including confidence, self-esteem and ability to form relationships with others. There were, however, no effective systems in place to assess progress in developing these.
5. Assessments of the suitability of children and young people for specific interventions had been considered well enough in just over half of the cases and planning to reduce reoffending was sufficient in three-quarters of cases. There were gaps in reviews and in the delivery of interventions and there was no clear link between planning and the delivery of interventions.
6. In sessions, children and young people engaged well with YOS staff and responded well to the trust that staff built up.
7. There was little evidence of interventions being quality assured. It was not clear how the YOS evaluated the quality of delivery or effectiveness of interventions. When we spoke to children and young people and their parents/carers, however, they were very clear on the value of the work of the YOS.

Comment from a parent/carer

One mother had experienced long-term difficulties in parenting her son and had attended the Parent Drop In to receive support for the past five years. She described her decision to attend as *"the best thing I ever did"* and said that the YOS staff were *"appropriate and professional and go above and beyond their jobs. You can pick up the phone anytime you have a problem and coming to this group has literally changed my life"*.

Appendices

Appendix 1 - Background to the inspection

Inspection arrangements

The Full Joint Inspection (FJI) programme inspects youth offending work, predominantly in statutory community and custodial cases, in a small number of local authority areas each year.

The majority of the Youth Offending Teams selected for these inspections are those whose performance – based on reoffending rates, National Youth Justice Outcome Indicators and supported by other information, such as recent inspections – is of significant concern. Periodically, we also include high performing areas to establish a benchmark of good practice.

The published reoffending rate for Cwm Taf was 43.4% (with an average number of previous offences per offender of 1.40), and 37.9% for all England and Wales (average number of previous offences of 1.25).

The primary purpose of the youth justice system is to reduce offending. This is the main theme of the inspection. The other core themes are protecting the public, protecting the child or young person, making sure the sentence is served and governance and partnerships.

Criteria

A copy of the inspection criteria is available on the HMI Probation website:

<http://www.justiceinspectorates.gov.uk/hmiprobation/about-our-inspections/youth-inspection-programmes/inspecting-youth-offending-work/full-joint-inspection/>

Methodology

YOTs are informed approximately 11 working days prior to the inspection taking place.

Fieldwork for this inspection was undertaken on the weeks commencing:

13 March 2017 and 27 March 2017.

In the first fieldwork week we looked at a representative sample of 35 individual cases up to 12 months old, some current, others terminated. The sample included a number of those who are a high risk of harm to others, are particularly vulnerable, are young women, or are black and minority ethnic children and young people. Cases were assessed by a team of inspection staff. They examined these wherever possible with case managers, who were invited to discuss their work in depth, explain their thinking and identify supporting evidence in the record.

We also received copies of relevant local documents.

During the week in between, the data from the case inspections was collated and a picture about the quality of the work of the YOS developed.

The second fieldwork week is the joint element of the inspection. HMI Probation was joined by colleague inspectors from police, health, social care and education. We explored the lines of enquiry which emerged from the case inspections. The leadership, management and partnership elements of the inspection were assessed, with a particular focus on reducing offending.

We also gathered the views of others, including strategic managers, staff and service users, children and young people, parents/carers and victims, and observed work taking place.

At the end of the second fieldwork week we presented our findings to local strategic managers, the YOS Management Team, YOS staff and other interested parties.

Scoring Approach

Details of how our inspection judgements are made can be found on our website.

<http://www.justiceinspectorates.gov.uk/hmiprobation/about-our-inspections/youth-inspection-programmes/inspecting-youth-offending-work/full-joint-inspection/>

Publication arrangements

A draft report is sent to the YOS for comment three weeks after the inspection, with publication approximately six weeks later. In addition, a copy goes to the relevant Ministers, other inspectorates, the Ministry of Justice Policy Group and the YJB. Copies are made available to the press and placed on our website.

FJI reports in Wales are published in both Welsh and English.

Further details about how these inspections are conducted can be found on our website in the document '*Framework for FJI Inspection Programme*' at:

<http://www.justiceinspectorates.gov.uk/hmiprobation/about-our-inspections/youth-inspection-programmes/inspecting-youth-offending-work/full-joint-inspection/>

Role of HMI Probation and Code of Practice

Information on the role of HMI Probation and our Code of Practice can be found on our website:

www.justiceinspectorates.gov.uk/hmiprobation

The Inspectorate is a public body. Anyone wishing to comment on an inspection, a report or any other matter falling within its remit should write to:

HM Chief Inspector of Probation
1st Floor, Manchester Civil Justice Centre
1 Bridge Street West
Manchester
M3 3FX



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Cwm Taf Youth Offending Service Post inspection Improvement Plan

Over Arching Theme	Specific actions	Owner	Monitoring process	Date of Completion	RAG Status
Strategic planning should be informed by the commissioning, and effective evaluation, of a needs analysis to identify the needs of the cohort, the staff and the business needs of the YOS as a whole. (YOS Management Board)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Provide greater analysis to management board of YOS data set, relating particularly to WDIs (ETE, Accommodation, CAMHS provision, Substance misuse). 	JOB	Quarterly YOS Management Board meetings (schedule established to June 2018). Oversight from YJB.	December 2017	Yellow
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Develop quarterly report with an outcome focus and specific case examples for YOS MB. 	JOB, PW		December 2017	Yellow
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Align and develop the functions of the YOS MB and local IOM board so as to have greater focus on longer term re-offending. 	GI, GC		September 2017	Yellow
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Utilise YJB to support development of Management Board. 	JOB		March 2018	Yellow
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Advocate for greater provision / access to services from identified agencies, based upon needs analysis of data. (CAMHS, SALT) 	JOB, GI, GC		March 2018 (Ongoing)	Yellow
Work should be undertaken to secure suitable and sustainable accommodation for children and young	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> YOS to contribute to practice solutions review taking place across RCT. 	JOB	Fortnightly YOS Management Team	Within CS timescales.	Yellow
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> YOS, children's services and housing providers to review working protocol. 	EW		October 2017	Green
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> YOS Ops Manager to be given specific responsibility 	EW		July 2017	Green

Over Arching Theme	Specific actions	Owner	Monitoring process	Date of Completion	RAG Status
people (YOS Management Board)	for monitoring of accommodation in line with Welsh Devolved Indicators.		meetings.		
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> B and B accommodation for individuals to be discussed and quality assured as a standing item within LAC QA meetings in RCT. 	JOB	WDI Quarterly returns.	May 2017	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Thematic inspection on accommodation needs of 16/17 year olds to be report to Corporate parenting board. 	JOB		June 2017	
Routine intelligence sharing between the police and the YOS should make sure that case managers receive timely information about all children and young people who are arrested (South Wales Constabulary and YOS Manager)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> YOS to review internal Risk management policy and streamline risk management processes within the service. 	JOB, LL	Fortnightly YOS Management team meetings.	November 2017	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> YOS to continue to utilise seconded police officers to share relevant information and to access information relating to missing YPs. 	CM, AI	All YOS development sessions.	Complete	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> YOS to continue to utilise police officers, on a daily basis, to access relevant police systems 	CM, AI		Complete	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Complete an awareness raising session for staff re the Missing Persons Protocol so all are aware of their responsibilities for mispers (SW) 	JOB, SW		October 2017	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> All Case Managers / Ops Managers and YOS Police Officers to undertake the 4 pillar MAPPA Training in Sept 2017. 	JOB, SW		September 2017	
Joint working with children's services and information sharing at case level should be	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Review the working protocol, ensuring that there is a focus group with practitioners who are involved in regular information exchange with the YOS. 	JOB, AL, AB, EW.	YOS Management team meetings	November 2017	

Over Arching Theme	Specific actions	Owner	Monitoring process	Date of Completion	RAG Status
consistent (YOS Manager and Children's Social Care Directors)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ensure that YOS items are a standing agenda item for each authorities' staff meetings and management meetings. 	JOB, AL, AB	CSMT	September 2017	Green
Case management practice should be of good quality, driven by thorough investigation by case managers and fully utilising the Assetplus assessment and planning system (YOS Manager)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Utilise external assetplus training provider for ongoing development and training within the service. 	JOB, SW	YOS Management team meetings	September 2017	Green
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ops Manager to lead on continuation of specific workshops and refresher training for Assetplus within the YOS. (timetable of sessions established for 12 months). 	SW		June 2018	Yellow
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> pilot the contributor function of AssetPlus (for ETE / Subs Misuse) to ensure that specialists are able to contribute to the assessment. 	Ops Managers	Asset+ review meetings	November 2017	Green
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Assetplus effectiveness and impact being reviewed by the University of South Wales. 	AI		June 2018	Yellow
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> YOS to review the Codes of Practice document in order to ensure consistent practice across the service. 	Ops Managers		October 2017	Yellow
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Referral order panel member training in ECM and planning using PCP approach? 	CM, EW	Referral Order training calendar	October 2017	Green
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> YOS Health Visitors to screen all young people from Referral Order upwards to ensure that all statutory young people in need of a health assessment receive one. 	JOB, SW	Local Health board meetings	September 2017	Green

Over Arching Theme	Specific actions	Owner	Monitoring process	Date of Completion	RAG Status
<u>Other</u> Interventions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Establish working group to review and compile resource directory and guidance. 	LL	YOS Management team meetings	February 2018	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Develop and review viewpoint questionnaires in order to effectively gauge and score service user and contribute to evaluation and effectiveness of programmes. 	LL	Viewpoint review meetings	April 2018	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Review, develop and re-launch the modular programme within the service. 	Ops Managers	YOS Management team meetings	February 2018	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> YOS to develop Enhanced Case Management model of intervention in conjunction with YJB. 	JOB	YOS Management team meetings. YJB oversight.	April 2018	
Quality Assurance	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Review QA format for Pre Sentence reports (and other report formats) 	LL	YOS Management Team meetings.	October 2017	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Raise awareness of YJB Case Management Guidance amongst staff via supervision and team meetings. 	JOB, Ops managers		August 2017	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Develop scrutiny panel for Out of Court Disposal reports and outcomes. 	JOB	Quality Assurance group meeting	October 2017	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Review supervision (1:1) agenda to ensure greater focus on QA. 	LL		September 2017	

Complied on 26th July 2017

Formal review scheduled for:

6th September 2017 – completed on 5th September 2017 (additional review completed on 30th October 2017)

6th December 2017

7th March 2018

13th June 2018

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RHONDDA CYNON TAF COUNTY BOROUGH COUNCIL

CABINET

25TH JANUARY 2018

NATIONAL ADOPTION SERVICE WALES ANNUAL REPORT 2016-2017

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

Author: Ann Batley, Service Director Children's Services Tel. No: 01443 744044

1. PURPOSE OF THE REPORT

- 1.1 The purpose of the report is to share with the Cabinet the National Adoption Service Wales Annual Report 2016-2017

2. RECOMMENDATIONS

It is recommended that the Cabinet:

- 2.1 Note the contents of the report.

3. REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATIONS

- 3.1 The report attached at Appendix 1 is the National Adoption Service for Wales Annual Report that as part of Regulation 22 of the Local Authority Adoption Service (Wales) Regulations 2007 and Section 15(c) of the Adoption and Children Act 2002 (Joint Adoption Regulations)(Wales) Directions 2015, that is required to be brought before Cabinet.

4. BACKGROUND

- 4.1 The National Adoption Service for Wales (NAS) was launched in November 2014 bringing all local authorities in Wales together into a unique collaboration for the delivery of adoption services. The legal basis underpinning the service is the Social Services and Well-being Act (Wales) which gave Welsh Ministers the power to direct how local authorities in Wales deliver their adoption functions. This was enforced through a set of regulations, The Adoption and Children Act 2002 (Joint Adoption Arrangements) (Wales) Directions 2015 [generally referred

to as the 'Directions Powers'] which require local authorities to collaborate on a set foot print to create Regional Adoption Collaborative.

4.2 The National Service establishes governance arrangements provide national direction and co-ordination. Its broad aim is to improve and make consistent the arrangements for timely placements of children, training and assessment of adopters, adoption support and collaborative working

4.3 The attached Annual Plan sets out the work undertaken by the National Adoption Service Wales in 2016-2017.

5. EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY IMPLICATIONS

5.1 This is an information report and therefore no Equality and Diversity screening is required.

6. CONSULTATION

6.1 Consultation was undertaken by the National Adoption Service Wales in the preparation of the Annual Plan with children, young people, families, a variety of partner agencies and staff from the Regional Services.

7. FINANCIAL IMPLICATION(S)

7.1 There are no adverse financial implications associated with this report.

8. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS OR LEGISLATION CONSIDERED

8.1 The Social Services and Wellbeing Act (2014) requires very significant changes to the way social services are planned, designed, commissioned and delivered. The primary duties of this Act that impact on the future commissioning arrangements for children looked after include:

- promoting the upbringing of children within their family whenever it is safe to do so;
- consideration of the most appropriate placement where it has not been possible to place a looked after child either with a parent or connected person which will include: foster care; adoption; residential provision; alternative arrangements (for example, supporting young people aged 16 or over to live independently in rented accommodation or in supported lodgings).

9. LINKS TO THE COUNCIL'S CORPORATE PLAN/OTHER CORPORATE PRIORITIES

9.1 The provision of effective responses to the needs of children and young people is a key priority for the Council and is supported by the contents of this Annual Plan.

10. CONCLUSION

- 10.1 Overall fewer children were placed for adoption in Wales during 2016-2017 but those who needed adoptive placements faced fewer delays in being placed.
- 10.2 The number of children where the plan was for adoption had started to rise during 2016-2017 with the trend continuing into the current year. This highlighted the gap between the level of adopters being recruited and the number of children becoming available for adoption, thus emphasising the need to increase recruitment.

Other Information:-

Relevant Scrutiny Committee: Children and Young People

LOCAL GOVERNMENT ACT 1972

AS AMENDED BY

THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT (ACCESS TO INFORMATION) ACT 1985

RHONDDA CYNON TAF COUNTY BOROUGH COUNCIL

CABINET

25th JANUARY 2018

NATIONAL ADOPTION SERVICE ANNUAL REPORT 2016-2017

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

Background Papers

None

**Officer to contact: Ann Batley, Service Director Children Services.
Tel. No: 01443 744044**



Gwasanaeth
Mabwysiadu
Cenedlaethol

National
Adoption
Service

Achieving More Together /
Cyflawni Mwy Gyda'n Gilydd



Western Bay
ADOPTION SERVICE
GWASANAETH MABWYSIADU
Bae'r Gorrlewin

adoptionuk
ar gyfer pob teulu sy'n mabwysiadu
for every adoptive family



AFA CYMRU
association for fostering and adoption
syndelithas ar gyfer maethu a mabwysiadu



Vale, Valleys
and Cardiff
Adoption | **Mabwysiadu**
yn y Ffio, y Cymoedd
a Chaerdydd



Mabwysiadu
Canolbarth a Gorllewin Cymru
Adoption
Mid & West Wales



after
adoption



Credwch
mewn plant
Believe in
children
Barnardo's
Cymru



South East Wales Adoption Service
Achieving More Together
Gwasanaeth Mabwysiadu Deddfyrain Cymru
Cyflawni Mwy Gyda'n Gilydd!



Gwasanaeth
Mabwysiadu
Gogledd Cymru | **North Wales**
Adoption
Service

Cymdeithas Plant Dewi Sant



St David's Children Society

Independent Chair Foreword

The Annual Report provides a welcome opportunity to reflect on another successful year and review our achievements as well as looking forward to future challenges. The progress made by the National Adoption Service continues to deliver a positive response to the needs of children, young people and adopters. The report reflects well on all those involved in adoption across Wales whilst acknowledging there is more to be done.

Understanding the adoption business in Wales is supported by a system of performance monitoring and management. This remains a crucial priority and provides a context of what is being completed well and where further focus is required.

The combination of legislative requirements, local government and voluntary adoption agencies working collaboratively and collectively continues to be a force for change. Collaboration is undoubtedly complex and requires commitment to change by everyone who has responsibility to deliver relevant and dynamic adoption services. Achieving consistent high performing delivery can be challenging and rewarding.

Engagement and listening to adopters, adopted children and young people has reinforced key messages from research. Dynamic support through universal, targeted and specialist intervention remains an important priority. This year has delivered The Adoption Support Framework which provides an opportunity to make a real difference to the lives of children and parents. The task in 2017–18 is to secure resources and intervention across services that is dynamic and responds positively and proactively to the needs of adopters, children and young people.

I would like to take this opportunity to thank staff across all agencies involved in their respective roles and responsibilities to improve the adoption experience whilst acknowledging the significant and important contribution adopters and children have made in providing clarity about their experiences and how services could and should continue the journey of change.

Philip T. Hodgson

Phil Hodgson

Independent Chair, National Adoption Service
Advisory Group



Director of Operations

Introduction

I'm very pleased to provide this report which outlines the further progress and successes for the National Adoption Service (NAS) in 2016–17. We can rightly be proud of having achieved an enormous amount and doing many things well.

I am particularly proud of the work we have done with adopted children, young people and their parents to ensure the changes we make are what they want and need. Additionally we have made significant improvements to performance albeit that these are beginning to prove challenging to extend.

There is, however, still some way to travel to meet the aspirations of those involved in the early design of NAS and the duties set out in legislation. The significant development agenda that we have, reflecting the original National Assembly for Wales's Inquiry and research findings, is going to take a number of years to achieve; it is just 2.5 years since NAS was established.

The National Assembly for Wales Fourth Assembly Legacy report 2016 notes that the Children, Young People and Education Committee follow-up inquiry into adoption report outlined that.

"whilst much progress had been made by the National Adoption Service, especially in respect of the earlier stages of the adoption process, there was still much work to be done to make sure that families got the help they needed once the adoption had taken place".

This is a fair analysis.

We have made good impact on the strategic and policy agenda which has been essential to put NAS in a position to meet the aims and aspirations. Making changes to how services are provided is a major task with many strands to it; staff and agencies across Wales are working hard to do this.

We have identified a number of challenges linked to collaborative working, the changing context within which we work and the inability to direct resources. Alongside being realistic about timeframes and the challenging context, these need to be tackled as we continue to focus on improving services which is, of course, the most important thing.



Suzanne Griffiths
Director of Operations



Background

This is the 3rd annual report of the National Adoption Service for Wales.

The National Adoption Service was launched in November 2014. It is an umbrella that brings together local, regional and national organisations and activities:

Locally, each local authority:

- continues to provide services to all looked after children.
- identifies and works with children for whom adoption is an appropriate plan.

Local authorities still provide post-adoption support themselves in two regions.

Regionally, local authorities work together in five collaboratives. Every region:

- places children for adoption.
- recruits and assesses adopters.
- offers counselling to birth parents.
- offers advice to adopted adults.
- Links with voluntary adoption agencies, health and education.
- has a Regional Board to oversee its work.

All five regions provide some post adoption support services. Three regions undertake the assessments for requests for support.

Nationally, we have:

- the Central Team led by a Director of Operations. The team is hosted by the City of Cardiff Council on behalf of all local authorities. The central team provides national direction, development and co-ordination.
- the Wales Adoption Register (managed by the Central Team).
- the Strategic Voluntary Adoption Partnership set up by:
 - Barnardo's Cymru
 - St David's Children's Society
 - Association for Fostering and Adoption in Wales
 - Adoption UK
 - After Adoption
- a Governance Board and an Advisory Group to oversee the work of the National Adoption Service.

Together, our role is to work towards the National Adoption Service vision:

- Increase the range of adoptive homes available to meet the needs of children for whom adoption is the plan.
- Make sure placements are made in a timely way, including placements for children with additional needs and siblings who are being placed together.



- Make sure prospective and approved adopters receive good quality, timely assessment and support.
- Implement our Framework for Adoption Support which aims to provide:
 - better access to advice, information and some services to all
 - better access to more targeted and specialist support for children and families who need ongoing support
- Improve adoption services overall across Wales.

Key Facts 2016–17

Total adoptions in Wales

About 4,500: adopted children are living in Wales (under the age of 18)

About 3,000: adoptive families

Adoption Activity this Year

Over 900: worked with children who had a plan for adoption or where a plan was being considered

Over 300: children joined adoptive families

86% matches arranged through Regional Services

Over 230: adopters approved

Support this Year

Over 500: children and families getting adoption support services

Over 3,100: letterbox contact arrangements

Over 989: birth parents offered counselling

Over 380: birth parents accepting counselling



The Wales Adoption Register

The Wales Adoption Register was launched in 2014. It became part of the National Adoption Service during 2015.

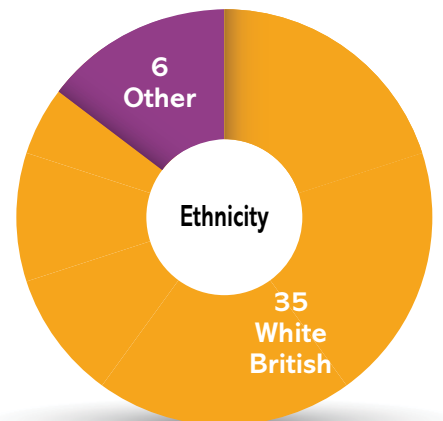
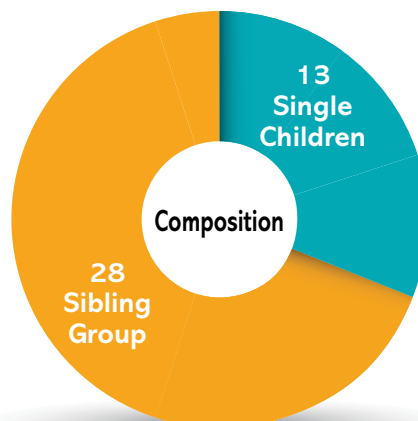
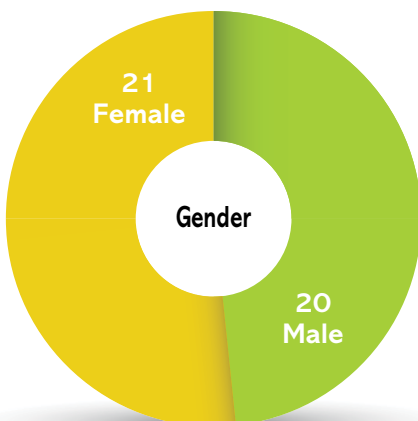
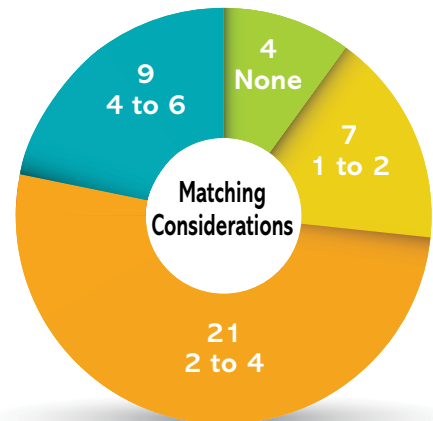
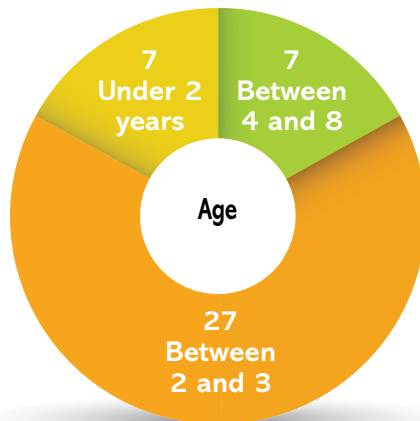
Key facts:

- The Register helps match children with adopters throughout Wales.
- All Regions and Voluntary Adoption Agencies use the Register.
- If a child or adopter has not been matched within three months, they must be referred to the Register.

We also use the Register to:

- bring professionals together to make matches between children and adopters.
- hold days for adopters to find out about children on the Register. In November, 50 adopters attended an exchange day, and eight children were matched because of the event.
- hold Adoption Activity Days where adopters and children waiting for adoption can meet each other in a supported, safe, fun environment. The first day was in March 2017, supported by colleagues from Coram BAAF.

In 2016–17, the Wales Adoption Register was involved in 41 (14%) of adoption matches.



Have we achieved what we put in our 2016-17 plan?

Our 2016-17 plan had two main priorities:

- **Priority 1.** Improve adoption support
- **Priority 2.** Develop a new database to keep in touch with adopters and be the new Wales Adoption Register

We also gave ourselves three challenges:

- **Challenge 1.** Place children more effectively.
- **Challenge 2.** Increase the range of adoptive homes available to meet the needs of children for whom adoption is the plan
- **Challenge 3.** Make sure the National Adoption Service is well run



PRIORITY 1

Improve adoption support

What we said	What we did
<p>Draw up a plan with children, young people and adopters to develop adoption support services across Wales.</p>	<p>The Adoption Support Framework has been agreed by the National Adoption Service's Advisory Group and Governance Board. It has gone to all the Regional Management Boards.</p> <p>In October 2016, the Welsh Government gave us a grant to agree a business plan for the Framework. We asked the Institute of Public Care to develop the plan for us. Since January 2017, members of the advisory group, our voluntary adoption agency partners and adopters have all been involved in this project.</p> <p>We have started collecting data about adoption support. Now we have a baseline, so next year we can know if adoption support has improved.</p>

What we said	What we did
<p>Make it easier for adopters to get the support and services they need by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • making sure each local authority Information Advice and Assistance, Service gives useful information about adoption support, and directs people to the right service if they need specialist adoption advice or an assessment for support. • developing a plan for the Regions to do adoption support assessments. • making other services 'adoption aware'. 	<p>We have put more advice and more about support and training on our website. Some Regions have done this on their websites too.</p> <p>DEWIS is an all-Wales online source of information about social care. We have added our own information to DEWIS. Our central team advised DEWIS about online information for children.</p> <p>South East Wales Region is piloting doing adoption support assessments rather than each local authority doing their own. We want all regions to do this in the future.</p> <p>We are working with the Welsh Local Government Association to get Education more involved.</p> <p>We have made links with the Welsh Government 'Positive Parenting' strategy. Regions and Voluntary Adoption Agencies will be able to use 'Positive Parenting' resources to support adopters.</p> <p>All Regions and the Voluntary Adoption Agencies are working to improve adoption support, for example:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mid and West Wales and Western Bay worked together to offer adoptive parents 'Parenting Our Children' training. Adoption UK used their grant to run the training. • South East Wales is doing even more with the Health Board's psychology service. All staff get four days training and are part of a reflective practice group. • The new TalkAdoption group for Western Bay has been very successful. The monthly meetings have helped young people to speak about their adoption stories and be heard by us and others. • North Wales has a new support group, and continues its contract with After Adoption for some services and training.
<p>Lobby to make sure Wales has the right laws and policies for developing adoption support.</p>	<p>Section 8 and 9 of the Adoption and Children Bill in England are going to be extended to Wales. This means courts will have to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • think about the lifelong needs of adopted children. • consider adoptive parents as their children's primary attachment figure in contested adoption hearings. <p>We are represented on the Welsh Government Ministerial Advisory Group for Improving Outcomes for Children. Adoption support is now a priority in its plan.</p> <p>We have talked with the Welsh Government about its Additional Learning Needs (ALN) Bill. We have helped adopters and adopted children and young people to take part in the consultation.</p> <p>We have advised the Welsh Government about:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • making the Adoption Support regulations fit with the Social Services and Well-being (Wales) Act 2014. • changes to regulations so the process for approving adopters can be streamlined.

What we said	What we did
<p>Use feedback from children, young people and adopters to help make education services more 'adoption aware'.</p> <p>Develop a detailed plan to go alongside the Welsh Government strategy 'Raising the ambitions and educational attainment of children who are looked after in Wales'.</p>	<p>The Welsh Government has a group looking at the education for looked after children and adopted children. We are part of this group, and have written an adoption plan to go alongside their 'Raising the ambitions' strategy.</p> <p>Adoption UK take the lead on working with education services for us.</p> <p>We regularly meet with Welsh Government Looked After Children Education staff.</p> <p>We publicise 'Getting it right for every child: a schools' guide to working with adopted children and their families'. The guide was written for Welsh Government by Adoption UK.</p> <p>Each local authority area has a Looked After Children Education co-ordinator. Regions have good links with them.</p> <p>North Wales Region and Mid & West Wales education consortia developed attachment training in schools. This training is increasingly used across Wales.</p> <p>The North Wales Region training officer has run training for head teachers.</p> <p>A member of Vale, Valleys and Cardiff Region has delivered similar training to schools.</p> <p>Adoption UK have delivered INSET training to more than 400 education participants across Wales this year.</p>
<p>Use feedback from children, young people and adopters to influence how CAMHS improve access to services for adopted children and their families, including neuro-developmental services.</p>	<p>The Regions and CAMHS have talked about formalising links. The aim is to make advice and access to services clearer for adoptive families.</p> <p>We had hoped to develop a joint leaflet, but CAMHS is already developing a leaflet. We will promote the leaflet when it is completed.</p> <p>In the future, adoptive parents, children and young people will be able to take part in CAMHS service user consultations.</p>
<p>Implement a common policy for the payment of financial support.</p>	<p>We are still working on this. It should happen from 1 April 2018.</p>

What we said	What we did
<p>Work with children, young people and adopters to develop a strategy to improve life story work for adopted children in Wales.</p>	<p>This work is funded by our Welsh Government grant. It is progressing well.</p> <p>The group running the project includes adopters, regional adoption staff, voluntary agencies and childcare social workers. The group gets advice from children and young people via 'TalkAdoption'.</p> <p>We have:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • held a workshop of adopted children and young people led by 'TalkAdoption'. • finalised a framework for life journey work and a toolkit. • identified children with whom to try out the new toolkit. • collected good practice examples. For example: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - in Mid & West Wales Region, life journey materials are required before a child goes to the matching panel. Adoption staff are working with childcare teams across the region to help this to happen well. Western Bay is working towards this too. - in North Wales Region, a pilot group is ready to test the framework. Their Training Officer is developing a local training framework for it.

Other work to improve adoption support

Adopter's guide to adoption:

This is something adopters wanted. We developed the guide with the AFA Cymru lawyer and Cardiff University Law School.

Knowledge Transfer Partnership:

St David's Children Society and Cardiff University secured funding to take research knowledge and try to put it into practice. This could help transform how services are delivered.

Stats on adoption support

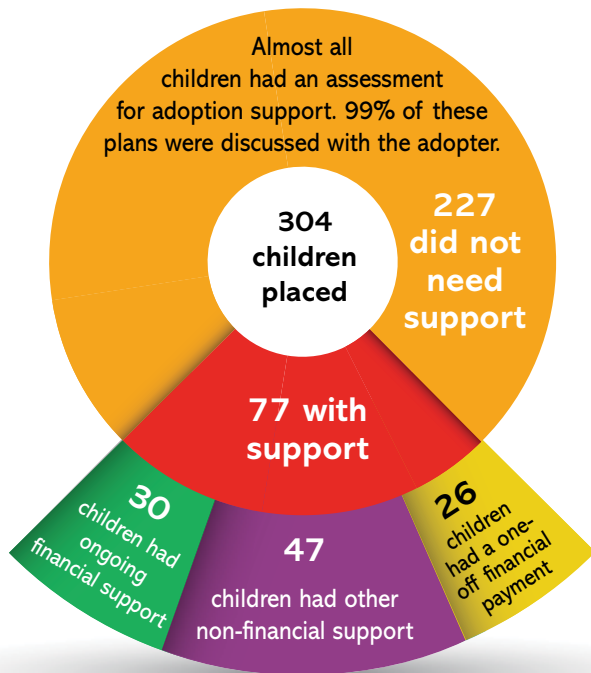
Adoption support for children placed during 2016–17

More than 500 children received adoption support services this year and there were more than 3,100 letterbox contact arrangements in place. We know support can mean many things, including financial support, practical or therapeutic services; some children will need support to help them understand why they have been adopted, and some parents need help to manage some difficult emotions and behaviours. Our data now tells us the level of support being made available to children who were newly placed this year, as well as other new requests for help that were received.



This is the picture for children placed this year

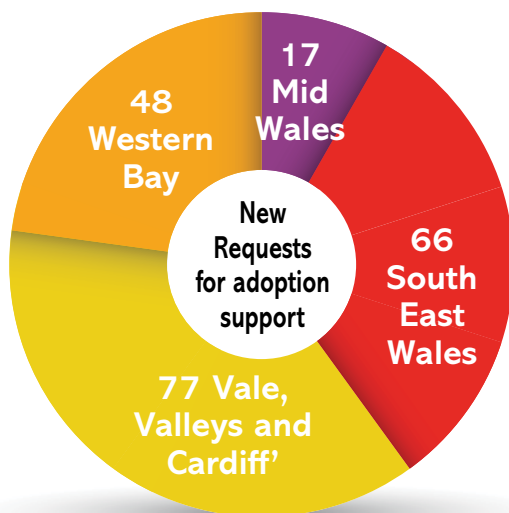
Percentage of children getting support ranged from 10% to 38% across the Regions.



This adds up to more than 77 because some children received more than one type of support.

208 new requests for adoption support for children placed before April 2016

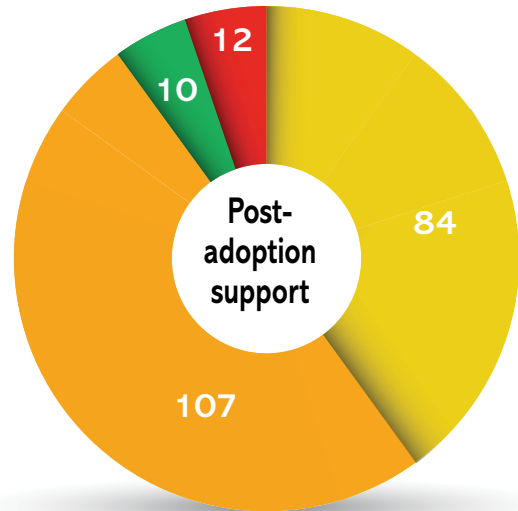
As well as the above, this is new demand this year.



We do not have information about North Wales.

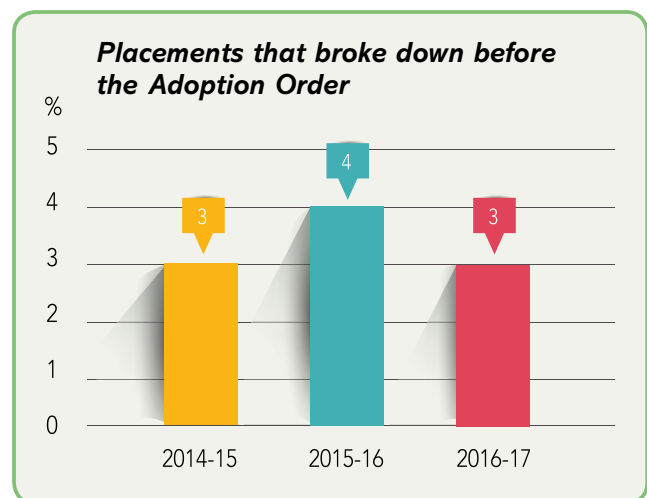
All 208 children had an assessment for post-adoption support.

84 of the requests are still in progress, as only 124 have been completed. The outcomes of the 124 totals 129 as some children will have more than one service.



- 84 assessment in progress at end of year.
- 107 had non-financial support (eg access to therapy and practical help)
- 10 had one-off financial support
- 12 had ongoing financial support

Placement breakdowns



Timely support is critical for keeping this low.

Timely support also makes sure the adoption works well for the child and the whole family.

Our voluntary adoption agency partners provide valuable support.

Cymdeithas Plant Dewi Sant



St David's Children Society

Credwch
mewn plant
Believe in
children
Barnardo's
Cymru



Helplines and Training

adoptionuk

ar gyfer pob teulu sy'n mabwysiadu
for every adoptive family



357
enquiries by phone
and email, from
professionals and
members of the
public

450+
professionals and
adoptive parents given
training, including in
non-violent resistance

Other Support

adoptionuk

ar gyfer pob teulu sy'n mabwysiadu
for every adoptive family



TalkAdoption
groups – 90 adopted
children and young
people in SE and SW
Wales meeting in four
groups

Adoption
support groups –
243 attendances in
31 meetings

1:1 support
from a non-violent
resistance
practitioner for 55
adoptive parents of
70 children

1:1 support
for 200 adults
who had been
adopted, birth
parents or other
birth relatives
supported

Research about adoption support

The Wales Adoption Study aims to understand more about the support needs of adoptive families in the first three years of an adoptive placement. The research will provide the evidence we need to improve adoption support.

The research team is led by Dr Katherine Shelton, School of Psychology, Cardiff University. Links to publications are on her university webpage and include:

- Doughty, J., Meakings, S. and Shelton, K.H. (in press, 2017). The legal and administrative processes in adoption: Views and experiences of newly formed adoptive families. *Journal of Social Welfare and Family Law*.
- Anthony, R., Meakings, S., Doughty, J., Ottaway, H., Holland, S., & Shelton, K.H. (2016). Factors affecting adoption in Wales: Predictors of variation in time between entry to care and adoptive placement. *Children and Youth Services Review*, 67, 184-190.
- Meakings, S., Coffey, A. J. and Shelton, K.H. (2016). A study examining the concerns, support needs and experiences of newly formed adoptive families. *Journal of Health Visiting*, 4(11), 2-9.
- Meakings, S., Coffey, A. and Shelton, K.H. (in review, 2017). The influence of adoption on sibling relationships: experiences and support needs of newly formed adoptive families. *British Journal of Social Work*.

We will use the evidence already available from the study to plan and improve adoption support. For example, the evidence tells us:

- Nearly half (47%) of the children in the Wales Adoption Study had experienced four or more Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACE) before they were placed for adoption. We know these early experiences have serious implications for later life.
- Adoption support should become the norm, whatever the age of the child or background of the adopters.
- Adoptive parents need to know they are entitled to extra help in the first few months.
- Adoptive parents need to know they are welcome to ask for help later.
- Everyone needs support to manage the changing relationships when a child joins a family, including:
 - siblings who are placed together
 - siblings placed apart
 - children joining the family
 - children already part of the family
 - previous foster carers
- Some children have adjustment problems. They and their families may need specialised support.
- Everyone needs to understand the legal processes involved in adoption, and many will need support for this.

PRIORITY 2

Develop a new database for the Wales Adoption Register

This database will have two functions:

- to keep in touch with adopters
- to become the Wales Adoption Register

What we said	What we did
Look at the review of the Wales Adoption Register and database project. Do what the review recommended.	<p>We have worked with the Welsh Government to make sure any new system will meet our needs.</p> <p>We will continue to work with the Welsh Government to procure this system during 2017-2018.</p>

CHALLENGE 1

Place children more effectively

What we said	What we did
Pilot 'Foster to Adopt'.	<p>We worked with AFA Cymru to develop practice guidance for local authorities.</p> <p>Use of the scheme was too low for a pilot. We were told this was due to legal difficulties. The Welsh Government is looking at changing the laws and guidance to make it easier.</p>
Make sure our best practice guide for family finding is being used.	<p>We ran workshops in all five Regions. Staff from Regions and local authorities came to the workshops.</p> <p>Some Regions focused on improving systems for tracking and monitoring family finding.</p> <p>Vale, Valleys and Cardiff now produce a monthly report of placements made and children still waiting. This helps family finding work for children still waiting.</p> <p>This year we used an Adoption Activity day to support matching for the first time. This has been very successful. The event identified many potential links that are being explored.</p>
Find opportunities to participate in discussions with the courts/ judiciary about the role of adoption within the family courts.	<p>The Central team keeps the Lead Judges informed about developments in Wales. At the request of the Lead Welsh Language Judge, we promoted the use of bilingual applications.</p>

Other work to place children more effectively

Western Bay developed a Transition/Moving on programme. The programme aims to improve how practitioners and foster carers work with children who are being placed for adoption. The Region has 'transition champions'. Their approach is being rolled out across the local authorities, in that area. We are encouraging other regions to take a similar approach.

Western Bay re-looked at how they make adoption order applications. The aim is to have a process that does not allow adoption decisions to drift.

Stats on placing children more effectively

Fewer children (304) were placed for adoption in Wales during 2016–17.

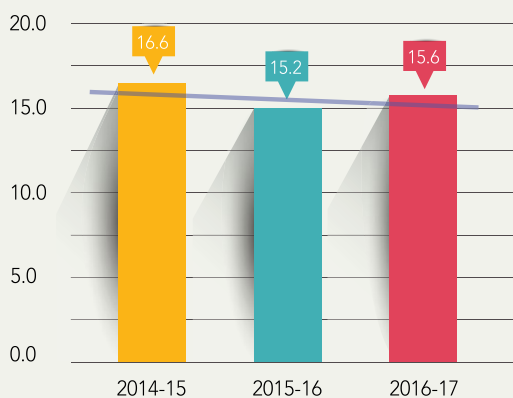
This is because the number of placement orders dropped by 38% between 2013 and 2015.

The number of placement orders has started to rise (up by 15% in 2016–17) so we expect more children will be placed for adoption next year.

Children are facing fewer delays now than they were before the National Adoption Service was formed. However, we still have not achieved the timescales we want:

- Average time for a child from going into the care system to being placed for adoption is now 15.6 months (still above the 13 months we want to achieve).
- Average time from a placement order to being placed for adoption is 8.2 months.

Average in months it has taken from the date of most recently looked after to date of placement for adoption



Our Regions are doing better at placing sibling groups and children with complex needs. It still takes longer than average for these children to be placed for adoption. Reasons for this include:

- complexity of the child's needs.
- difficulty of finding adopters to take siblings.
- links that do not proceed.
- legal challenges, sometimes after the placement order has been granted.

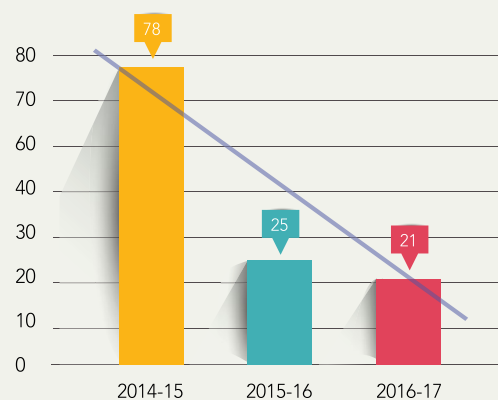
Fewer children have their plan changed from adoption to an alternative way to provide them with a permanent home. This has dropped from 78 children in 2014–15 to only 21 in 2016–17. This means we have met the target we set ourselves.

However, at the end of the year:

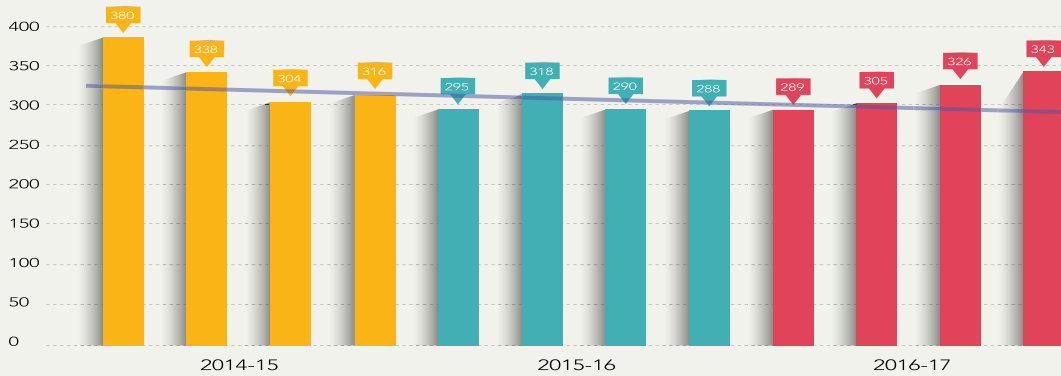
- the number of children where the plan is for adoption had risen.
- 80% of these have a placement order.
- there are more children on the Wales Adoption register unlikely to be matched with the adopters who are currently available.

This is still better than the position before the National Adoption Service was created, but we hoped to see the numbers reducing further.

Number of children with a placement order who have a permanence plan changed from adoption at a LAC review

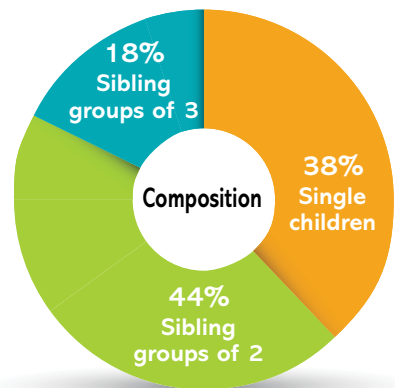
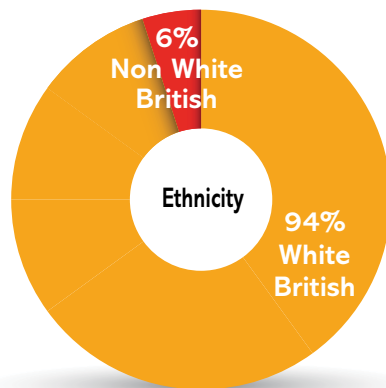
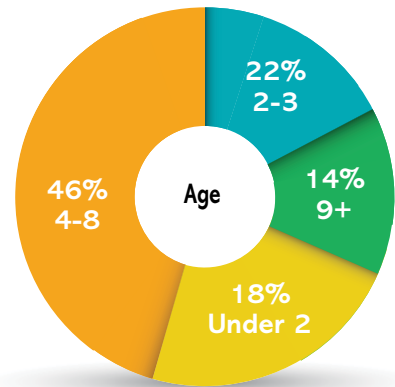
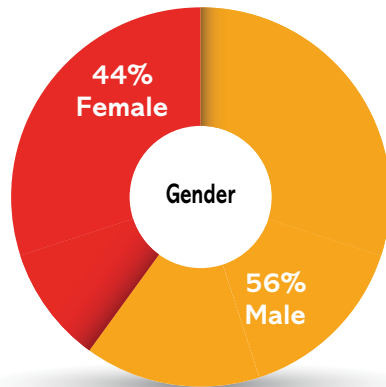


Number of children with an agency SBP for adoption decision who have not yet been placed for adoption



Children waiting on the Wales Adoption Register at 31 March 2017

This has been accompanied by a rise in the number of children on the Wales Adoption Register at the end of the year.



- About half of the children could not be matched with what adopters could offer.
- There were more sibling groups of three.
- There were fewer sibling groups of two.
- More children with additional needs were waiting, whatever their age, except for children aged between two and four.

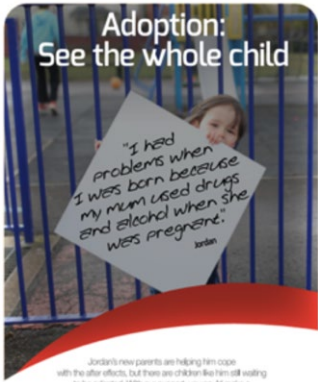
There were 68 adopters available, but unable to be matched with these children.

The needs of these children will continue to drive our recruitment strategy.

We are piloting Link-maker for children who cannot be matched in their region or through the Wales Adoption Register.

CHALLENGE 2

Recruit the adopters who can meet the needs of the children available

What we said	What we did
<p>Roll out the revised strategy for targeted recruitment.</p>  <p>Adoption: See the whole child</p> <p>"I had problems when I was born because my mum used drugs and alcohol when she was pregnant." Jordan</p> <p>Jordan's new parents are helping him cope with the after effects, but there are others like him still waiting to be adopted. With our support, you could make a difference to a child like Jordan. Contact us.</p> <p>Welsh Adoption Service www.adoptcymru.com #SeeTheWholeChild</p>	<p>We used information about children waiting to be matched to target recruitment towards suitable adopters.</p> <p>We launched a campaign with a suite of marketing materials, '#SeeTheWholeChild', in July 2016.</p> <p>There is an all Wales 'script', so prospective adopters get a realistic picture of the needs of children waiting for adoption from the start.</p> <p>Enquiries from prospective adopters for harder to place children are dealt with first.</p> <p>Two Regions said prospective adopters are better informed.</p> <p>We reviewed the campaign and planned more recruitment activities for 2017–18.</p> <p>Our Voluntary Adoption Agency partners worked on a specialist recruitment scheme. This is being developed further after discussions with the Regions.</p>
<p>Finalise and use a two-stage recruitment model for prospective adopters in Wales.</p>	<p>The Welsh Government has advised our proposals will require a change of law.</p>
<p>Consider how we support and work with adopters who are waiting placements.</p>	<p>Fewer adopters are waiting for placements.</p> <p>There is still a mismatch between adopters who are waiting and children who need to be adopted.</p> <p>The Regions and Voluntary Adoption Agencies actively supported waiting adopters to understand the needs of children who need or are likely to need to be adopted.</p>

Stats on recruiting the right adopters

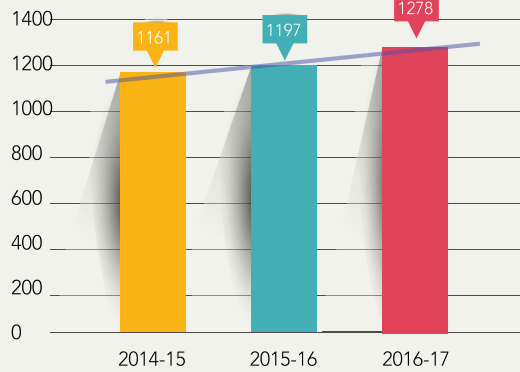
Initial enquiries

The number of initial enquiries is still going up. This year there were 1,278 initial enquiries.

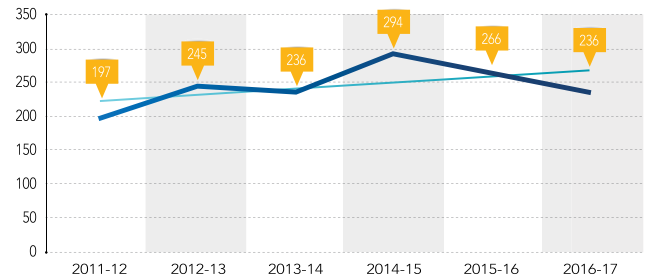
99% of initial enquiries get a response within five working days.

A high proportion of enquiries are from people wanting to adopt very young children and/or single children but these children are a lower proportion of those waiting for placements.

Number of initial enquiries

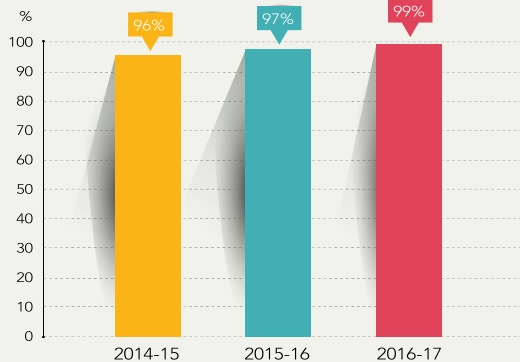


Adopters approved



Adjusted from the number previously published

% of initial enquiries which received a response within five working days

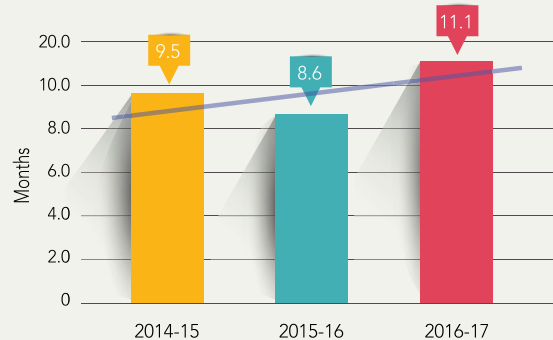


Time frame

The time from initial enquiry to approval has lengthened to 11.1 months (was 8.6 months in 2015-16). This was more about adopters' preferences than the process itself.

On average, adopters took five months from their initial enquiry before making a formal application to adopt.

Average time for adopters to progress from initial enquiry to agency decision to approve



Approvals

Fewer adopters were approved in 2016-17. This was because we were targeting recruitment to children's needs and aiming to reduce the number of adopters waiting.

At the end of the year:

- 68 adopters were available on the Wales Adoption Register
- only 26% of adopters would consider sibling groups
- more adopters were willing to consider older children. However most older children are part of a sibling group.

Available adopters 31/03/17 in %




CHALLENGE 3

Make sure the National Adoption Service is well run

What we said	What we did
<p>Continue to collect data about adoption and the work of the National Adoption Service.</p> <p>Work towards targets we have set ourselves.</p>	<p>We produced a booklet explaining how to collect the data we need, to make sure it is collected the same way across Wales.</p> <p>Every three months, we produced a Wales report from the data.</p> <p>Twice a year, we produced Regional reports.</p> <p>The reports were used nationally and regionally to check how we are doing.</p> <p>We asked people to start collecting data about adoption support services. This annual report is the first to have data about adoption support.</p> <p>Regions are improving their own systems to collect data. Some regions could not give us all the data we ask for.</p> <p>We worked with Voluntary Adoption Agencies on ways to collect data about their adoption support work.</p>
<p>Develop a National Adoption Services workforce strategy for 2017–18 onwards. We will do this with the Regions and training managers.</p>	<p>We consulted with the Regions, and have written an initial paper.</p> <p>This makes it clear what training and development is needed for all staff involved in adoption-related work, whatever organisation they work for.</p> <p>We held a really successful conference in March, 'Improving Outcomes in Adoption – Moving on and managing relationships'. There were over 120 delegates. It was funded from our Welsh Government grant aid. We talked with professionals and adopters about supporting children during transitions, especially from foster care to adoption.</p> <p>Presentations included:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • an adoptive father speaking of his experiences • Lynne Cudmore on 'keeping the child in mind' during transitions • Dr Ruth Sellers on the influence of family relationships <p>A birth parent was involved in a workshop. The feedback was overwhelmingly positive.</p> <p>The Mid & West Wales Region held a very successful and well attended conference in January 2017, 'Permanency planning – Achieving the best outcomes for adopted children and their families'. It was aimed at adopters and professionals. The conference included perspectives from an adopter, children and young people as well as workshops on topics such as positive play, life story work, attachment and adoption support.</p>

What we said	What we did
<p>Continue to work with Welsh Government and Social Care Wales to influence the development of a workforce that are 'permanence/adoption aware'.</p>	<p>We established links with the Chief Executive of Social Care Wales and their Director of Workforce and Improvement.</p> <p>We are part of the Ministerial 'Improving Outcomes' group.</p> <p>These give us a chance to influence workforce development and engage with the review of social work training.</p>
<p>Work with Welsh Government to develop a positive response to the recent National Assembly for Wales 'Follow-up Inquiry into Adoption Services in Wales'.</p>	<p>Our Governance Board agreed our response in September.</p> <p>With the Welsh Government we will work through the recommendations.</p>
<p>Secure a suitable Central Team budget.</p>	<p>This was secured for 2017–18 onwards. Our core costs will be met.</p> <p>'Budgets in all Regions' are under pressure. Some have been frozen or reduced. This will have implications for the National Adoption Service's work.</p>
<p>Update and use the strategy for engaging with adopters, children and young people and other adults who use adoption services.</p> 	<p>We developed an engagement strategy to fit with our workplan for 2016–17.</p> <p>North Wales Region and South East Wales Region set up family fun days with opportunities during the day to consult adopters on national and regional issues.</p> <p>Over 100 families attended, and both we and adopters found the days useful and fun.</p> <p>This was the first time the North Wales Region has organised an event like this, and they plan to hold a similar event in 2017–18.</p> <p>The family fun days gave positive feedback:</p> <p><i>'our social worker 'excellent'- we know we can pick up the phone any time. Training preparation sessions were excellent.</i></p> <p><i>Training and preparation was excellent</i></p> <p><i>Adoption support group – excellent friendship and advice forum for both parents and children'.</i></p> 

What we said	What we did
	<p>The family fun days also gave us challenges to focus on for 2017–18:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <i>'The quality of life story work</i> <i>Talking to adopted children about their siblings</i> <i>More support at court stages</i> <i>Better post adoption support</i> <i>Need to sort out Fostering for Adoption so subsequent children can be placed more quickly</i> <i>Education – raising awareness of needs of adopted children'.</i> <p>We began to work with children, young people and adopters using 'co-production'. We used this for the life journey work and in developing a response to the Additional Learning Needs Bill.</p> <p>This approach was well supported. The views of children and young people have been fed in via TalkAdoption.</p> <p>We used some of our grant funding to develop young people's web pages and a young person's app. We aim to 'go live' in 2017–18.</p> <p>We are encouraged that engagement is becoming the norm in the Regions. Western Bay and Mid & West Wales started focus groups to develop services.</p> 

Compliments and Complaints

Compliments

Four Regions told us about compliments. They reported 77 compliments from:

- professionals.
- birth relatives.
- adopters.

Compliments included:

- the quality of support through the application process.
- good experiences with the adoption panel.
- courts praising the quality of work.

The South East Wales Region report compliments about their new arrangements for assessing post adoption support.

Complaints

People applying to adopt are given information about how to complain. Other people who use adoption services also have information about how to complain.

In 2016–17, ten complaints were reported to Regions. The Central team helped respond to a few of these. Nine complaints were dealt with at the informal or stage one level. One complaint went to the Independent Review Mechanism.

Issues included:

- decisions about whether an application could continue.
- disagreeing with decisions.
- delays.
- adoption support services.

Finance

Budgets for the Regions and the Central team

This is the first year we have information about the Regional and Central team budgets.

Regional and central team budgets for 2016–17

Mid Wales	North Wales	South East Wales	Vale, Valleys and Cardiff	Western Bay	Central Team	Totals
£915,495	£1,494,042	£1,345,940	£1,270,330	£2,847,800	£272,000	£8,145,607

Some of the difference between Regions can be explained by:

- Not all Regions provide the same functions. For example:
 - Western Bay's budget is higher because they manage the staffing, adoption support and interagency fee budgets for the local authorities.

- Vale, Valleys and Cardiff, South East Wales and Western Bay assess adoption support needs and provide more services directly.

- Not all Regions have the same workload. The workload is higher in Vale Valleys and Cardiff, Western Bay and South East Wales.

Across Wales, budgets are under pressure. Some Regions are having their services reviewed and all may have less budget in the future.

Voluntary Adoption Agency budgets

Three of the Voluntary Adoption Agencies shared two Welsh Government Third Sector grants, totalling £350,000.

AFA Cymru (Association for Fostering and Adoption) has funding to support the whole sector.

Most of the adoption grant aid is for:

- recruiting and assessing adopters.
- matching and placing children.
- adoption support.

We work with the Voluntary Adoption Agencies to make sure grants they get help achieve the National Adoption Service priorities.

Welsh Government development grant

We explained to Welsh Government why we needed extra money for the Framework for Adoption Support. The Welsh Government gave a grant of £90,000.

The following pieces of work were supported from that £90,000 grant. Without the grant, none of this work would have been possible.

Development grant spending



Our priorities for 2017-18

Our core work is to:

- Increase the range of adoptive homes available to meet the needs of children for whom adoption is the plan.
- support both children and adults who are affected by the lifelong implications of adoption.

We will continue with our core work.

We will continue to do most of our work through the National Adoption Service regions and Voluntary Adoption Agencies.

Our vision for the future is outlined in the introduction.

It will take time and commitment from everyone to achieve this vision.

We have two priorities for 2017-18.

Priority 1: Keep improving adoption support

We will:

- make the case for extra money to fund improvements to adoption support.
- use the new framework for life journey work.
- keep working with health and education so adopted children and their families get the right support.

Priority 2: Place children well

We will:

- concentrate on recruiting adopters for the children who are likely to need to be adopted.
- aim to improve all the processes.

Making this happen

To make this happen, we will need to:

- work to change laws and policies, where that is needed.
- continue to use coproduction as one of our ways for working with service users, and develop how their views inform our governance arrangements.
- make sure we have the right arrangements in place to oversee the National Adoption Service.
- encourage everyone whose work affects adoptive families, potential adopters and looked after children to know more and have more skills about permanence and adoption.
- aim for ongoing improvement overall.



RHONDDA CYNON TAF COUNTY BOROUGH COUNCIL

CABINET

25th JANUARY 2018

OPERATIONAL CHANGES TO THE COMMUNITY MEALS SERVICE AND PROPOSAL TO CLOSE ST GEORGE'S DAY CENTRE AND TRANSFER THE OPEN ACCESS DAY CENTRE PROVISION TO GILFACH GOCH DAY CENTRE

REPORT OF THE CHIEF EXECUTIVE IN DISCUSSIONS WITH THE RELEVANT PORTFOLIO HOLDERS, COUNCILLORS J ROSSER AND G HOPKINS

Authors: Chris Bradshaw, Chief Executive (01443 424026); Andrea Richards, Head of 21st Century Schools (01443 744001)

1. PURPOSE OF THE REPORT

1.1 The purpose of the report is to set out a proposal to:

- Maintain the existing Community Meals Service but change the operational arrangements to improve the efficiency of this service; and
- Initiate a consultation to close St. George's Day Centre, Tonyrefail and transfer open access day services to Gilfach Goch Day Centre.

2. RECOMMENDATIONS

It is recommended that the Cabinet:-

- 2.1 Consider the contents of this report;
- 2.2 Agree to maintain the existing levels of service provided by the Community Meals Service;
- 2.3 Agree to change the method of preserving weekend meals from a "blast chilled" method to a "frozen" method;
- 2.4 Agree to reduce the number of Community Meals production kitchens from three to one (retaining the Ynyshir kitchen), and to reconfigure the staffing and delivery rounds, saving £258,000 per annum, for a one-off capital cost of £180,000, the capital funding for which will be secured from existing resources;

- 2.5 Agree that the Council undertakes an eight week public consultation in respect of the proposal to close St George’s Day Centre, Tonyrefail, and transfer the open access day service to Gilfach Goch Day Centre; and
- 2.6 Subject to 2.5 above, agrees to receive a further report summarising the results and feedback from the consultation process prior to any decision being made in relation to the proposal to close St George’s Day Centre.

3. REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATIONS

- 3.1 Increasing financial cutbacks nationally are leading to pressures locally but despite that, the Council is determined to deliver the best services and opportunities for everyone in the County Borough. This proposal seeks to continue to offer a community based service that is efficient and effective and represents good value for money.

4. BACKGROUND

- 4.1 The Community Meals Service has provided a good service to adults in Rhondda Cynon Taf over many years, not only providing a good quality meal but also ensuring that the clients of the service have daily contact with others.
- 4.2 Clients can access the Service in a number of ways, the majority of whom are referred from social services or health professionals, the client’s relative or friend or a self referral to support the individual to remain independent in their own home. The age profile of clients of the service illustrates that the Service is focused on those that most probably require some support to live independently as they age, with nearly two thirds of the clients at least of 80 years of age.

Age Range	% of Total Clients
40 – 49	1.0%
50 – 59	2.9%
60 – 69	8.8%
70 – 79	21.7%
80 – 89	44.4%
90 – 99	20.7%
> 100	0.5%

- 4.3 Whilst, the Service has a role to play in the community, the demand for the Service has fallen. This is due to a number of factors that include more choice from a range of providers, and the availability of supermarkets free delivery service. The table below illustrated that the weekday service has reduced its numbers by 29% and weekend service by 66% during the last 5 years.

Annual Meal Numbers	2013/14	2014/15	2015/16	2016/17	2017/18 Estimated
Weekdays	214,837	191,814	172,750	161,336	152,234
Sat/Sun	69,507	49,921	32,948	26,960	23,731
Total	284,344	241,735	205,698	188,296	175,965

4.4 The Service was subject to review in January 2014 and Cabinet approved the reduction of 6 production kitchens to 3 and to convert the weekend service to a chilled meal (blast chilled) provision (to be delivered on a Friday). It delivers meals to 725 clients across the County Borough using 18 delivery vehicles.

4.5 Despite the changes in 2014, the Service has high production costs, overheads, staff costs, packaging and delivery costs. Whilst the current daily fee to the clients for a delivered meal is £3.45, the Council has to provide a further subsidy to cover the food and staffing costs of the Service. The levels of subsidy per meal per kitchen are set out below:

Community Meal Subsidy per Meal	2015/16	2016/17	2017/18 Estimated
Community Meal – Kitchen	£'s	£'s	£'s
St Mair's	3.15	4.14	5.02
St George's	2.45	3.58	4.23
Ynyshir	2.73	4.67	4.94

4.6 The increase in the level of subsidy is due to the introduction of the National Living Wage, the increase in food prices and rising energy costs.

4.7 With the reduction in the volume of meals being produced there is significant capacity in all three kitchens, which increases the costs of producing the meals. Furthermore, St George's, Tonyrefail is a former chapel that is in a poor condition, and has outstanding backlog and essential maintenance of approximately £578,000.

4.8 In September 2017, Cabinet also considered a proposal from Age Connect to transfer St Mair's Day Centre to the voluntary organisation, subject to National Lottery Funding, as part of an asset transfer. A decision on this funding application is due shortly.

4.9 The Community Meals Service also provides the meals in the day centres at:

- St Mair's – Aberdare;
- St George's – Tonyrefail; and
- Mountain Ash.

4.10 The other 5 day centres catering staff are managed by Community Services.

4.11 A summary of the budget for 2017/18 is set out below:

Budget	£'000
Employees	1,153
Supplies & services	354
Premises	35
Transport	33
Capital Financing	71
Total costs	1,646
Income	(913)
Net cost of the Service	733

5. PROPOSED WAY FORWARD

5.1 The Community Meals Management Team has reviewed the Service and there are opportunities to remodel the operational delivery of the Service, whilst still providing the same service levels to the Community Meals clients and reduce the cost of delivering the Service by £258,000 per annum.

5.2 The proposal is to:

- Continue to deliver freshly cooked meals on weekdays;
- Deliver frozen meals on the weekend rather than blast chilled meals;
- Reduce the number of production kitchens from 3 to 1;
- Have one production kitchen, in Ynyshir;
- Retain the open access service to clients;
- Transfer the management of St Mair's and Mountain Ash Day Centres to Community Services;
- Close St George's Day Centre and transfer the open access day service to Gilfach Goch Day Centre.

5.3 This proposal if approved would result in a reduction in the number of staff within the Service. However a number of staff have previously expressed an interest in retiring early, and of the staffing compliment, 21 staff are aged over 55 so could retire and have access to their pensions where appropriate. Furthermore, there are also a number of kitchen staff in schools that would like to take early retirement, and so any staff displaced from the Community Meals Service could find redeployment in another part of the Council.

5.4 Producing blast chilled food for the weekend has proved to be difficult in the kitchens and has resulted in a high reject rate in order to maintain food hygiene. On a number of weekends, frozen meals have had to be delivered and the Service has had no complaints from clients. The Food Safety Team within Public Health and Protection consider that the frozen production approach is significantly safer than blast chilled production and they

recommend that we consider this option to ensure we minimise any potential food safety issues.

- 5.5 With some improvements and relocating equipment from existing kitchens at a cost of £180,000, the Service is confident that there is sufficient space and capacity in Ynyshir Kitchen to manage the production of Community Meals for the whole of the County Borough. Using the computerised routing system used by the Waste Service, the Service is confident that meals can be delivered to a high standard and at the right temperature across the County to all communities. Of the three kitchens officers consider Ynyshir is best placed to serve the County Borough.
- 5.6 In the event of a power cut or some other emergency at Ynyshir Kitchen, or a significant snow fall etc, contingency plans, using other kitchens and a stock of frozen meals, are already in place to ensure a meal will continue to be delivered to those that require one.
- 5.7 If the Cabinet decide to proceed with the changes to the operational arrangements of the Community Meals Service, it should also consider the long term future of St George's Day Centre, Tonyrefail, which will no longer house the Community Meals kitchen and its catering staff.
- 5.8 St George's Day Centre is one of the poorest quality buildings in the Council's property portfolio with a maintenance backlog of £578,000. Whilst the kitchen is in a good condition, the remainder of the building that houses the restaurant area and the meeting rooms is very poor with structural defects crumbling plaster due to the water ingress and damp. A maintenance and structural survey has recently been undertaken and £553k of essential works has been identified, together with an additional £25k for further intrusive surveys and statutory costs. It is a former chapel and the building has few alternative uses.
- 5.9 Furthermore, the number of meals sold by the Day Centre average less than 15 per day, and many of the users of the Day Centre travel to St George's by car. Gilfach Goch Day Centre is a very popular centre at lunchtime and is only 3 miles away. Feedback received suggests a significant number of the users of Gilfach Goch Day Centre live in Tonyrefail but prefer to travel to Gilfach for the better environment and greater opportunities to undertake social activities.
- 5.10 Currently, St George's Day Centre is staffed and run by the Community Meals kitchen staff. If the decision is made by Cabinet to centralise the kitchen arrangements of the Community Meals Service, additional catering and staffing arrangements would have to be introduced at St George's Day Centre to maintain the day service, which would be at an additional cost to the Service.

- 5.11 Given the current condition of the building and extent of the maintenance backlog together with low usage of the facility it is considered by officers that the financial viability of the Day Centre should be questioned. It is therefore recommended that Cabinet initiates an eight week consultation with the local community that has access to St George's Day Centre and other relevant stakeholders, on the closure of St George's Day Centre and the transfer of the open access Day Centre provision to Gilfach Goch Day Centre.
- 5.12 Should Cabinet initiate such a consultation it is recommended that Cabinet agrees to receive a further report summarising the results and feedback from the consultation process prior to any decision being made in relation to the proposal.

6. EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY IMPLICATIONS

- 6.1 Cabinet Members will be fully aware and mindful of the general equality duty introduced by the Equality Act 2010 and the specific public sector equality duties applicable to the Council as a local Council in Wales.
- 6.2 Section 149 of the Equality Act 2010 (Public Sector Single Equality Duty) requires public authorities to demonstrate in decision making that they have paid 'due regard' to the need to:
- eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation;
 - advance equality of opportunity between people who share a protected characteristic and people who do not share it;
 - foster good relations between people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not;
 - The relevant protected characteristics are age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion and belief, sex and sexual orientation.
- 6.3 The Council must have due regard to the impact of any of the proposals on those with a protected characteristic. The Council has a specific duty to publish information to demonstrate how it has paid due regard to the aims above as part of its decision making. Undertaking an Equality Impact Assessment (EqIA) screening exercise (and if necessary full EqIA) would be evidence that the Council has considered its legal obligations in making the decision on the recommendations in this report.
- 6.4 In respect of the proposed changes to the Community Meals Service an EqIA Screening Form has been prepared for the purposes of this report. The screening has not identified any negative or adverse impact on vulnerable groups, as there is no change to the Service provided. The screening form can be accessed by contacting the author of the report or the Cabinet Business officer.

- 6.5 An EqIA Screening Form has been prepared in respect of the proposed transfer of open access day centre provision from St George's Day Centre to Gilfach Goch Day Centre. The screening has identified a potential adverse impact on some vulnerable groups with protected characteristics (specifically older people) due to the proposal. Consequently a full EqIA would be undertaken to be informed by the consultation feedback and included in a subsequent report to Cabinet prior to any decision being made on the proposal. The screening form can be accessed by contacting the author of the report or the Cabinet Business Officer.

7. CONSULTATION

- 7.1 It is proposed the changes to the Community Meals Service not be subject to a public consultation as they are deemed to be operational changes which would maintain existing service levels. Appropriate consultation would however be undertaken with all staff (and their trade union representatives) potentially impacted by the proposal in accordance with the Council's Managing Change Policy should Cabinet agree the proposals.
- 7.2 It is proposed the closure of St George's Day Centre and the transfer of open access day centre provision to Gilfach Goch Day Centre be subject to an eight week consultation with the local community and other relevant stakeholders.

8. FINANCIAL IMPLICATION(S)

- 8.1 It has been calculated that the proposed changes to the Community Meals Service would reduce the cost of providing the Service by £258,000 per annum, with the cost of relocating the production kitchen equipment to Ynyshir of £180,000. It is proposed that the capital costs will be met from within existing resources.

9. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

- 9.1 Whilst there is no statutory duty on the Council to consult on the proposal to close St George's Day Centre and transfer the open access day centre provision to Gilfach Goch Day Centre, it is recommended that a consultation be initiated prior to any decision being made, given the impact of the decision and expectation of service users/stakeholders.
- 9.2 Where consultation is undertaken it should be done when proposals are at a formative stage; give sufficient reasons for any proposal to permit intelligent consideration and allow adequate time for consideration and response. Cabinet would then be required to give conscientious consideration to the outcome of the consultation process prior to any decision(s) being made on the proposal.

10. LINKS TO THE COUNCILS CORPORATE PLAN & OTHER CORPORATE PRIORITIES

The Report is focused on the delivery of the Community Plan, and in particular the objective of “promoting independence and positive lives for everyone”.

Other Information:-

Relevant Scrutiny Committee – Health & Wellbeing Scrutiny Committee

Background Papers - None

Contact Officers - Chris Bradshaw 01443 424026 & Andrea Richards 01443 744001

LOCAL GOVERNMENT ACT 1972

AS AMENDED BY

THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT (ACCESS TO INFORMATION) ACT 1985

RHONDDA CYNON TAF COUNTY BOROUGH COUNCIL

CABINET

25th JANUARY 2018

**REPORT OF THE CHIEF EXECUTIVE IN DISCUSSIONS WITH THE RELEVANT
PORTFOLIO HOLDERS (COUNCLLORS J ROSSER & G HOPKINS)**

**Item: OPERATIONAL CHANGES TO THE COMMUNITY MEALS SERVICE AND
PROPOSAL TO CLOSE ST GEORGE'S DAY CENTRE AND TRANSFER THE
OPEN ACCESS DAY CENTRE PROVISION TO GILFACH GOCH DAY CENTRE**

Background Papers

None

Officers to contact : Chris Bradshaw, Chief Executive (01443 424026) & Andrea Richards,
Head of 21st Century Schools (01443 744001)

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RHONDDA CYNON TAF COUNTY BOROUGH COUNCIL

CABINET

25th JANUARY 2018

DELIVERING THE CORPORATE PLAN – “THE WAY AHEAD” – INVESTING FOR THE FUTURE

REPORT OF THE CHIEF EXECUTIVE IN DISCUSSIONS WITH THE LEADER OF THE COUNCIL, COUNCILLOR A MORGAN

Author: Chris Bradshaw, Chief Executive (01443 424026)

1. PURPOSE OF THE REPORT

- 1.1 The purpose of the report is to set out the strategic capital investment priorities that this Council will commit to over the next three to five years, over and above its recurring annual capital programme, to deliver its Corporate Plan – “the Way Ahead”.

2. RECOMMENDATIONS

It is recommended that the Cabinet:-

- 2.1 Consider the contents of this report.
- 2.2 Agree in principle to a strategic outline capital investment programme of in excess of £300m over the next 5 years over and above its recurring annual capital programme, recognising the Council’s ambition and that additional funding will be required from the Council, Welsh Government and public and private sector partners over the life of the programme.
- 2.3 Request that regular reports are presented to Cabinet and full Council (as appropriate) bringing forward business plans and funding requirements, for the respective projects, in order to deliver the ambition of the Corporate Plan.

3 REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATIONS

- 3.1 Increasing financial cutbacks nationally are leading to pressures locally but despite that, the Council is determined to deliver the best services and opportunities for everyone in the County Borough. Be that in education, securing well paid employment, being healthy and independent or benefitting from a range of good quality housing, clean streets, well maintained highways and an effective transport network that stimulates economic development.

3.2 Different times require different thinking and solutions. We are being creative and ambitious in our delivery of services and in the way we secure new sources of investment to ensure we have the community infrastructure that enables the delivery of good public services and attracts and retains residents and businesses to thrive in the County Borough.

4. **BACKGROUND**

4.1 In February 2016, the Council approved its Corporate Plan for 2016-2020, which set out its significant ambitions for the County Borough as set out in the **Corporate Plan - The Way Ahead 2016 – 2020**.
<http://www.rctcbc.gov.uk/EN/Council/PerformanceBudgetsandSpending/Councilperformance/RelatedDocuments/CorporatePlan201620/CorporatePlan201620.pdf>

4.2 The focus of the Corporate Plan is on three priorities:

- **ECONOMY** - Building a strong economy;
- **PEOPLE** - Promoting independence and positive lives for everyone;
- **PLACE** - Creating neighbourhoods where people are proud to live and work.

4.3 The Corporate Plan recognises that to deliver these priorities, the Council will have to respond to a range of challenges and opportunities by:

- Redesigning local services that are integrated and efficient;
- More involved and resilient communities;
- Health and Social Care services being personalised and integrated, with more people supported to live longer in their own homes;
- Our schools being amongst the best in the country, and with all children achieving the best they can;
- Our children and young people receiving a great start in life;
- Ensuring there will be a broad offer of skills and employment programmes for all ages;
- Our local environment being clean and attractive, with well maintained roads, pavements, flowing traffic, increased recycling and less waste sent to landfill;
- Our parks and green spaces continuing to be valued by residents;
- Being amongst the safest places in Wales, with high levels of community cohesion and residents feeling safe;
- Taking a responsible approach to regeneration, with new homes being built and job opportunities created;

- Ensuing customer services will be intuitive and flexible, with increased user satisfaction;
 - Working in a way that makes the best and most sustainable use of our limited and decreasing resources, always looking at alternative ways of doing things, to limit the impact on the Council taxpayer.
- 4.4 The Annual Corporate Performance Report, presented to Council on 19th July 2017 set out the good progress made in: responding to the challenges we face; and capitalising on the opportunities to invest in our communities - <http://www.rctcbc.gov.uk/EN/Council/CouncillorsCommitteesandMeetings/Meetings/Council/2017/07/19/Reports/AgendaItem7.DraftCouncilPerformanceReport.pdf>
- 4.5 The Corporate Plan is ambitious for the County Borough. Through strong financial management, working in partnership with Welsh Government and other private and public sector bodies the Council proposes a comprehensive strategic investment programme that focuses on delivering the ambitions of the Corporate Plan.
- 4.6 The next stage of this report sets out a number of significant strategic investments, some of which are fully funded, whilst others have yet to secure all of the funding required and as such will be the subject of future reports.

5 PROPOSED WAY FORWARD

- 5.1 To deliver the vision and objectives of the Corporate Plan, it is proposed that Cabinet supports a major programme of strategic capital investment in the following services:
- **Highways and Transportation Infrastructure – £65m;** investing in:
 - A4119 Corridor enhancements including the dualling of the Ely Valley Road (Stinkpot Hill);
 - Llanharan By-Pass road;
 - A4058/A4061 Corridor enhancements in the Upper Rhondda Fawr, Treorchy area;
 - Direct access from A465, via a new A4059 route, to Aberdare;
 - New Metro park and ride facilities;
 - New and upgraded footpaths, pavements and cycle paths.
 - Replacing/upgrading key strategic bridges and roads;
 - **21st Century Schools - £160m** - Investing in 10 new build schools and refurbishing 9 existing schools. In December 2017, Welsh Government confirmed that the Council had secured a £160m funding envelope to deliver a range of new schools and school refurbishments over the period

2019 – 2026, subject to the approval of individual business plans. This investment builds on the £160m of funding already delivered by the Council over the period 2014 - 2019;

- **New Housing - £450m+ (£11m of Council funding)** - investing in:
 - **Independent Living - £45m (£9.5m of Council funding)** - Five new Extra Care facilities for elderly people and for those with disabilities enabling individuals and their partners to live independently as possible within an environment that can offer a range of care as and when required. The Council will seek to commit £9.5m to develop these Extra Care facilities in partnership with Linc Cymru Housing Association, who are building the first of the **five** new Extra Care facilities in Aberdare. Further Extra Care facilities will be built in Pontypridd, Porth, Treorchy and Mountain Ash to complement the existing Extra Care facility operated by Hafod Care in Pontyclun;
 - **Bringing Empty Properties back into use - £1.5m** – the Council will continue to invest to encourage owners' of empty properties to refurbish the properties and bring them back into use, building on the success of the new grant introduced in 2017/18 (Council approval on the 17th of January 2018 to allocate a further £1.5M to the Council's Empty Property Grant);
 - **New Homes on Council land - £70m of Housing Association funding** - A range of social and private housing across the County Borough on Council owned sites in partnership with a number of housing associations and housing developers. The first example of this investment is the new housing development to be built in Mountain Ash by Persimmon plc, adjacent to the new Cynon Cross Valley Gateway Road. It is estimated that across these sites 750 homes will be built, a significant number of which will be social housing. The capital investment to be committed by the developers is estimated to be in excess of £70m;
 - **New housing developments - £340m of public and private sector developer funding** - Supporting social housing and private sector housing developers to build 3,000 homes across the County Borough using CIL, S106 and other available funding to ensure the right community infrastructure is in place to facilitate the development of a wider range of good quality housing. The capital investment to be committed by the developers is estimated to be in excess of £340m;
- **Community Assets – £4m** - investing in:
 - Parks and playgrounds;
 - Community hubs that provide a range of community based services in one or a number of closely located buildings, which best serve the community. These community hubs will include a range of

service providers including key council services, voluntary sector, local businesses and other public sector providers;

- Leisure centres and recreational facilities, continuing to improve the facilities available to individuals and sports clubs, which includes further new 3G pitches;
- Improved library facilities in a number of communities.

- **Town Centre and Economic Regeneration – £70m;** investing in:

- Taf Vale Development – Pontypridd - £50m has been secured;
- Ynysangharad War Memorial Park – the refurbishment and renovation of the Victorian Park – Heritage Lottery Funding has been sought;
- Tonypany Town Centre – improved car and pedestrian access, with an investment in the street scene – the Council has set aside £1.5m to facilitate this project;
- Aberdare, Mountain Ash, Porth, Tonypany – exploring opportunities to invest in vacant buildings and land to create a mix of commercial, retail and housing solutions for these key towns.
- Investing £9m in building new high quality industrial units in Coed Ely, Tonyrefail and Robertstown, Aberdare, to encourage local businesses to grow or encourage businesses to relocate.

5.4 Further large investment projects at a number of Rhondda Cynon Taf strategic sites are being developed, under the auspices of the Cardiff Capital Region City Deal, which will have a major impact in the County Borough. Over the coming months a number of reports will be presented to Cabinet bringing forward the business cases for the infrastructure projects listed above.

6. EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY IMPLICATIONS

None at present. As individual projects are developed and reports considered by Members, equality impact assessments will be prepared as required.

7. CONSULTATION

As individual projects are developed and reports considered by Members, the Council will be consulting and engaging with residents, service users, businesses, local authority members and the wider community as appropriate.

8. FINANCIAL IMPLICATION(S)

None at present. Financial implications will be considered as and when individual reports are considered by Members.

9. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS OR LEGISLATION CONSIDERED

None at present. Any legal implications will be considered as and when individual reports are considered.

10. LINKS TO THE COUNCILS CORPORATE PLAN/OTHER CORPORATE PRIORITIES

This Report is focused on the delivery of the Community Plan.

Other Information:-

Relevant Scrutiny Committee - Overview & Scrutiny Committee

Background Papers - None

Contact Officer - Chris Bradshaw 01443 424026

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25th JANUARY 2018

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Item: DELIVERING THE CORPORATE PLAN – “THE WAY AHEAD” – INVESTING FOR THE FUTURE

Background Papers

None

Officer to contact: Chris Bradshaw, Chief Executive (01443 424026)

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