



RHONDDA CYNON TAF COUNCIL CORPORATE PARENTING BOARD

Minutes of the meeting of the Corporate Parenting Board held on Monday, 12 July 2021 at 10.00 am

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

Councillor C Leyshon (Chair)

Councillor G Hopkins Councillor E Griffiths
Councillor S Rees

Officers in attendance

Ms C Miles, Childcare Solicitor
Ms A Browning, Head of Children's Looked After Service
Ms A Lloyd, Service Director, Children's Services
Ms C Jones, Head of Access & Inclusion
Mrs. J Allen, Children and Young People's Service Manager
Ms J Thomas, Complaints & QA Manager, Social Services
Ms R Ceshion – Childcare Delivery Team Manager, Children and Young People Services.

1 Welcome and Apologies

The Chair welcomed Members and Officer to the first Meeting of the Corporate Parenting Board for the Municipal Year 2021/2022.

Apologies were received from County Borough Councillors J Rosser, Lhooper and S Rees- Owen.

2 Declaration of Interest

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

3 Minutes

To approve as an accurate record, the minutes of the meeting of the Corporate Parenting Board held on the 22nd March 2021

4 Corporate Parenting Board -Draft Work Programme for the 2021 - 2022 Municipal Year

Members of the Corporate Parenting Board received the Draft Work programme for the 2021/ 2022 Municipal Year. Officers explained that the programme acts as a useful method of managing the Board's work load and is a fluid document which can be amended throughout the year to reflect any changing priorities the Board may have or wish to consider.

Members **RESOLVED** to acknowledge the topic for consideration and agree with

the suggested topics for future meetings.

5 Corporate Parenting Board - Annual Report

The Chair provided Members with the Corporate Parenting Board Annual Report for the 2020/2021 Municipal Year. The Annual Report highlighted the vast amount of work considered by the Corporate Parenting Board over what has been an exceptionally challenging year as a result of the Covid 19 Pandemic.

The Chair took the opportunity to thank the staff across the service for all their hard work adjusting to the fast changing situation the pandemic had caused and commended them all for all their hard work keeping our service users safe.

It was explained that should Members approve the draft report, it would be presented to Scrutiny for information and to Cabinet for final consideration.

Members of the Board echoed the Chair acknowledgement of the work that had been carried out and asked for their thanks to be recorded.

The Director of Children's Services highlighted that the work that had been achieved over the year was remarkable and the service adapted quickly to the ever changing situation caused by Covid -19. The Director continued and explained that we need to build on the work that has been done.

The Director continued and explained to the Board that there is new legislation coming forward from Welsh Government, which indicates that Corporate Parenting Boards will need to consider the voice of the young person more and this may need to be included within the Terms of Reference in the future.

After further discussion Members **RESOLVED** to:

- Approve the Corporate Parenting Annual Report: and
- Thank Staff across the Service for all the hard work during the Covid 19 – pandemic.

6 Young Carers Annual Report 2020/ 2021

The Service Manager – Carers, Engagement and Direct Payment welcomed the opportunity to present the Board with an update on the work that had been carried out with young carers in Rhondda, Cynon, Taf. The Service Manager also highlighted the vast amount of work that had been carried out during the pandemic.

Members of the Board were reminded of the reviews that had been carried out since 2018 in relation to the care support services in RCT and the Service Manger highlighted some key point below which the Board were asked to acknowledge:

- The young carers support service changed their support during the pandemic to provide more one-to-one session instead of group support. The most vulnerable were prioritised. At times when restrictions were eased, they were able to bring young carers together in smaller groups. Online support has worked well for the older young carers (aged 11+) but is not a substitute for face-to-face support.

- Referral rates for assessment of young carers dropped during the lockdowns and were closely linked to whether or not the schools were open. During Q1 2021/2022 the referral rate was above average.
- Securing online access for young carers was a priority during the pandemic and was achieved in many ways, including liaising with schools, delivering Chromebooks with mobile Wi-Fi and facilitating grant schemes for purchase of digital equipment.
- Efforts are being made to secure ongoing funding and resources to deliver specific support to sibling carers, who often have different needs to young carers. During 2021/2022 a pilot project will be funded to deliver outcome-focussed support over an intensive 6-week period. The course will concentrate on emotional wellbeing.
- RCT launched the Young Carer Card in March 2021. The card is a Wales-wide initiative led by Welsh Government and RCT were one of the early adopters of the scheme. A promotional video was launched during Carers Week 2021. The card allows young carers to highlight their role to education and health professionals without needing to tell their full story, and in time it is envisaged the card could be used to receive discounts and other benefits.

The Service Manger concluded her report by explaining that young carers were significantly affected by the pandemic and support services going forward will need to focus on dealing with ongoing consequences. The service will aim to adopt an all age cohesive service approach to unpaid carers. The Service Manger highlighted the commissioned young carer service due to co-locate with the Cares Support Project from September along with the new National Plan for unpaid carers will inform regional and local carers strategies and priorities. The Chair thank the Officer for her comprehensive report and open up the meeting for Members questions and observations.

Members requested clarity on the numbers of referrals during the first stage of the pandemic and asked if going forward there would be a return to face to face support. In reply the officer explained that going forward there would be a hybrid approach which seems to work more effectively with older young carers. If a young carer needed a more one to one approach then this would be put in place to accommodate their needs.

Members praised the ID cards for young carers and complemented the National Scheme. Officers again highlighted the promotional film of Young Carers and welcome the opportunity to watch and share it with a wider audience.

Further discussion to place and Members **RESOLVED** to:

- Acknowledge the information within the report; and
- Receive the link to the film around Young Carers and the Young Carer Project.

7 Registered Childcare Provision - Quality Update Report

Members were presented with the report by the Childcare Delivery Team

Manager, Children and Young People's Services. The officer explained that the purpose of the report is to update Members of the Board on the Care Inspectorate Wales (CIW) registered childcare settings overseen by the Community, wellbeing and resilience Service (CWRS).

The Team Manager explained that the Covid 19- pandemic has had a significant impact on the delivery of the childcare to ensure that those most in need of childcare had access to it. Below are some of the changes that have been made during this time:

- Children aged 0- 5 years (as opposed to 2- 3 years under normal circumstances);
- Full days between 07:30 – 18:00 (rather than sessional care of 2.5 hours daily);
- Available to children of critical workers and the children of the most vulnerable families (not only Flying Start eligible children)

The Team Manager continued explained the key changes since the report was presented to the Corporate Parenting Board in May 2019, it was highlighted that significant service developments have taken place in respect of childcare provision across RCT and during this period a new purpose – built Flying Start childcare setting has been established on the Llwynypia campus of Coleg Y Cymoedd. This has replaced the Flying Start provision in the previous Ynyscynon Primary School Site. It was also highlighted that Flying Start Tonyrefail was transferred to an external provider to deliver the service.

The Officer continued and brought to Members attention that in 2019 a consultation exercise was held with internal setting staff, commissioned setting staff and Flying Start Families regarding the 42 week offer and whether it was favourable to reduce to 39 weeks and offer 15 family fun days during the school holiday. The Officer explained that the overwhelming response was to reduce to 39 and after further discussion with Scrutiny, Cabinet and trade unions the 39 week offer was introduced in September 2019.

Members of the Board also received an overview of the quality reports for the Local Authority Childcare Settings and the work carried out against the Action Plan, along with areas of strength and areas for development.

After concluding her the Team Manager opened the meeting up for Members questions

The Chair thanked the Officer and also complimented staff for all their hard work during the pandemic and adapting to change in what was a fast changing situation.

Members echoed the Chairs thanks and the Board Members were pleased to see that work was being carried out on a wellbeing strategy to support the Children and Young People of the County Borough as a result of the pandemic. After further discussion Members **RESOLVED** to note the report and agreed to receive further updates when appropriate.

8 Pupil Development Grant - Evaluation of Cluster based Model.

The Regional Lead PDG LAC Central South Consortium presented Members

with an update on the evaluation of the school cluster model for the Pupil Development Grant for Looked After Children during the financial year 2019/20 in Rhondda Cynon Taf.

The Officer reminded Members that the Children Looked After Education Team (CLAET) works in collaboration with the Central South Consortium (CSC) to ensure that there is a consistent approach, based on good practice, to support children who are looked after in our schools.

Member of the Board were also reminded that the grant continues to be managed by the CSC. The Directors of Education from each local authority have agreed key priorities to enhance the education opportunities for Children Looked After;

- Raising attainment/achievement
- Improving attendance
- Reducing exclusions
- Enhancing the capacity of schools to improve the outcomes for pupils through training and support, through school to school working and the sharing of good practice (through a cluster-based model) and
- Ensuring that partnerships across the region continue to develop within CSC, schools, Social Care and other agencies.

The Officer explained the current position in relation to allocation of funding. The cluster plan grant allocation for RCT in 2018/19 was £366,686, £357,893 in 2019/20 and £395.026 for 2020/21 and highlighted that schools have continued to make application for funding on a cluster basis in line with expectations from Welsh Government to regionalise PDG LAC funding throughout the four education consortia.

Members were pleased to see that as part of the PDG LAC the Consortium also has a bursary fund to ensure Local Authority Looked After Children in Education teams can respond to additional needs that arise due to moves in placement and school and complex emotional /social difficulties. Members also acknowledge the approach RCT has focused on.

The Board considered the evaluation of the PDG LAC cluster Model Approach and welcomed the increase in the number of RCT schools which are undertaking the CLA Friendly Schools training and found it pleasing school cluster have been very proactive with their cluster planning for the financial year 2019/20 and acknowledged that a more rigours and comprehensive evaluation process will need to be established in order to evaluate the fully effectiveness of a cluster based approach to allocating PDG LAC to our schools in light of the Coivd -19 pandemic and as a result of the wider impact on all learners in RCT schools.

Members thanked the Officer for the report and put forward many observations, Members commented that there is a lot content to the report but would requested that future reports have a more outcome focus this would in turn show the Board Members any schools that are finding pupils with a whole host of needs.

Discussion ensued and Members of the Board **RESOLVED** to note the contents of the report.

9 Tros Gynnal Plant (TGP) Cymru

With the Agreement of the Chair and the Board this item was deferred to a future meeting.

10 To consider passing the following under-mentioned Resolution:

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

11 Social Services Quarterly Complaints and Compliments

The Service Improvement, Engagement & Complaints Manager provided the Corporate Parenting Board with an overview of the operation of effectiveness of the statutory Social Services complaints procedure between 1st January 2021 – 31st March 2021.

The report contained information on the number of complaints received, the nature of the complaints and any lessons learnt, as well as detailing Councillor, A.M and M.P enquiries and the number of complaints received.

12 Regulation 73 Reports

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

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

- a) To note the contents of the report

13 Any Other Business

The Board took the opportunity of thanking Ms Anne-Marie Browning for all her hard work throughout her service to the Authority and wished her well in her new working adventure.

This meeting closed at 11.50 am

**Cllr C Leyshon
Chairman.**