



**RHONDDA CYNON TAF COUNTY BOROUGH COUNCIL  
CYNGOR BWRDEIS TREF SIROL RHONDDA CYNON TAF**

A virtual meeting of the **Corporate Parenting Board** will be held  
on

**21 July 2022 at 10.00 am**

**Contact:** Hannah Williams - Council Business Unit, Democratic Services (07385401954)

**ITEMS FOR DISCUSSION**

**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 approve, as an accurate record, the minutes of the meeting of the last meeting of the Corporate Parenting Board held on 14<sup>th</sup> March 2022.

**(Pages 5 - 10)**

**3. CORPORATE PARENTING BOARD WORK PROGRAMME**

To receive the report of the Service Director of Democratic Services & Communication, providing Members with details of the Corporate Parenting Board Work Programme for the 2022/23 Municipal Year.

**(Pages 11 - 16)**

**4. CORPORATE PARENTING BOARD ANNUAL REPORT 2021-22**

To receive the report of the Service Director of Democratic Services & Communication, providing Members with the Corporate Parenting Board Annual Report for the 2021/22 Municipal Year.

**(Pages 17 - 46)**

**5. CHILDREN LOOKED AFTER PREVENTION STRATEGY**

To receive the report of the Group Director, Community & Children's Services, which provides the Corporate Parenting Board with an update on the Children Looked After Prevention Strategy.

**(Pages 47 - 54)**

**6. CHARTER FOR PARENTS IN CARE AND LEAVING CARE**

To receive the report of the Group Director, Community & Children's Services, which provides the Corporate Parenting Board with information respect of the Charter for Parents in Care and Leaving Care.

**(Pages 55 - 60)**

**7. TROS GYNNAL PLANT (TGP) CYMRU**

To receive the Tros Gynnal Plant (TGP) Cymru quarterly progress report.

**(Pages 61 - 72)**

**8. TO CONSIDER PASSING THE FOLLOWING UNDER-MENTIONED RESOLUTION:**

“That the press and public be excluded from the meeting under Section 100A(4) of the Local Government Act, 1972 (as amended) for the next item of business on the grounds that it involves the likely disclosure of exempt information as defined in paragraph 13 of Part 4 of Schedule 12A of the Act.”

**9. SOCIAL SERVICES QUARTERLY COMPLAINTS AND COMPLIMENTS**

To receive the report of the Group Director, Community & Children's Services providing the Corporate Parenting Board with an overview of the operation and effectiveness of the statutory Social Services complaints procedure.

**(Pages 73 - 92)**

**10. QUALITY OF CARE REVIEW REPORT (REGULATION 80)**

To receive the report of the Group Director, Community & Children's Services, updating members on Quality of Care Regulation 80 Review.

**(Pages 93 - 152)**

**11. URGENT BUSINESS**

To consider any urgent business as the Chair feels appropriate.

**Circulation:**

**County Borough Councillors:**

Councillor G Caple (Chair)  
Councillor R Lewis (Vice-Chair)  
Councillor C Leyshon  
Councillor J Bonetto  
Councillor S Rees  
Councillor T Burnell  
Councillor S Trask  
Councillor S Evans

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

Minutes of the virtual meeting of the Corporate Parenting Board held on Monday, 14 March 2022 at 10.00 am.

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

Councillor C Leyshon (Chair)  
Councillor G Caple (Vice-Chair)  
Councillor S Rees-Owen  
Councillor J Bonetto  
Councillor S Rees

### **Officers in attendance**

Ms M Ropstad, Service Manager- Carers, Engagement and Direct Payments  
Ms C Williams, Head of Family support & Accommodation  
Mr P Mee, Group Director, Community & Children Services  
Ms A Lloyd, Service Director, Children's Services  
Ms C Jones, Head of Access & Inclusion  
Ms C Miles, Childcare Solicitor

### **Others in attendance**

Annabel Galt at Vfvv/Blueprint Forum – Development Officer  
A W- Young person Representative

## **1 WELCOME AND APOLOGIES**

The Chair welcomed Members and Officer to the Corporate Parenting Board Committee.

Apologies were received from County Borough Councillors L Hooper, and Councillor E Griffiths.

## **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 31<sup>st</sup> January 2022.

#### 4 RCT FORUM QUARTERLY REPORT

The Development Officer presented a report to the Corporate Parenting Board Committee which provided Members with a summary of the achievements made by VfCC towards the outreach of Young People and an overview of Care Day 2022.

The Development Officer introduced a young person representative to the Board and presented a written response from the young person representative based on a key theme of Care Day 2022 surrounding '*What Makes You Thrive*'. The young person representative advised the Board that what makes her thrive was knowing that there are numerous services and supporting networks which can assist in any queries or concerns she may have. She acknowledged the support service channels available, which provide her with confidence in everyday life.

The Chair thanked the young representative for her response and acknowledged the support and guidance which she provides to others.

The Development Officer began by advising Members of the importance of engagement within the group. It was advised that during the quarter, engagement had been encouraged through promotions on social media by maintaining connections with regular contact and information sharing directly with members of the group, and professionals within the Local Authority. The engagement was focused on bringing members of the group together in order to seek innovative approaches to engage with younger children aged 14-22; through collaboration with Actif Woods. The Development Officer confirmed to Members that their next collaboration with Actif Woods is scheduled for April 11<sup>th</sup>. The Development Officer acknowledged the low participation figures which were a result of the Pandemic and Storm Franklin. This led to the cancellation of face-to-face groups, Workshops, and outdoor activities; However, as a resolution, services were provided through online activities.

The Development Officer advised Members of Care Day 2022; throughout this time, the team supported care experienced young people within Rhonda Cynon Taff (RCT) to link with care experienced people from across the 5 Nations (Wales, Scotland, Ireland, Northern Ireland and England); This permitted young people to share their thoughts and feelings about the support provided. The Development Officer advised Members on the feedback received from young people surrounding what they needed as care experienced children or young people to thrive.

The feedback provided focused on the following: -

- More Counselling and Mental Health Services
- Further emotional Support (as young people felt that there was not enough understanding of their feelings and trauma/behavioural responses.)
- Wanting consistent and positive relationships with Social Workers who could inform them of their rights.
- Continued support for post 25 from the LA through an outreach model; and
- Continued support to manage longer term aspirations i.e., buying a car, insurance, job opportunities etc.

The Development Officer continued by advising Members on project successes surrounding care experienced parents within RCT. The Officer advised of the support provided to local group members and other care experienced parents from RCT to contribute to several consultation opportunities throughout the last quarter. The Officer confirmed the contribution of care experienced parents to the Welsh Government's *'Childcare and Parental Employment Report called Minding the Future, the Childcare Barrier facing Working Parents'*. These individuals have also contributed to the Children in Wales Period Dignity Consultation which was aimed at providing views and experiences regarding the impact of being a looked after child.

The Development Officer acknowledged the success of engagements with care experienced parents; however, in order to progress the project, VfCC will be involved in further opportunities in the next quarter for care experienced parents within RCT. The Development Officer confirmed plans in place to meet with RCT Council in order to discuss matters relating to *'Supporting Parents in and Leaving Care'* charter.

The Development Officer informed Members of the Basic Income Pilot; this project was undertaken during the last quarter whereabout VfCC worked with care experienced young people within RCT to support and provide feedback to Ministers regarding recent plans for the Basic Income Pilot for Care Experienced Young People.

The Chair was pleased with the report and the work currently being undertaken by VfCC. The Chair noted the work being undertaken by RCT in regard to Looked After Young Parents and inquired whether RCT has got the appropriate links in place with VfCC in order to further support young parents within RCT. The Service Director, Children Services advised Members of a new prevention strategy for Looked After Children called MAGI. MAGI will aim to tackle issues surrounding the increased number of care experienced parents. The Service Director, Children Services advised Members that the Corporate Parenting Board will be invited to sign up to the charter; She advised of the fairness and reasonability of the charter to parents who are in care or leaving care. The Service Director, Children Services advised Members of collaborations between VfCC with the Service Development Manager, Children Services from RCT regarding a revised contract to ensure frequent and current contact is maintained.

A query was raised from a Member surrounding the Basic income Pilot; the Member inquired about the information that was provided to the Minister concerning the project and how the scheme has been accepted by young carers.

The Development Officer advised that further information would be provided regarding the information given to the Minister during the next Corporate Parenting Board Committee. The Development Officer advised that feedback received from young carers was positive however they were aware of the negativity on social media about the pilot. The Development Officer acknowledged the support that will need to be provided in regards to this area.

Following discussions, the Corporate Parenting Board **RESOLVED:**

- To note content of the report

## 5 YOUNG CARERS ANNUAL REPORT 2021-22

The Service Manager, Carers, Engagement and Direct Payments presented a report which updated Members on the work with young carers in RCT during 2021/2022.

To begin, the Service Manager, Carers, Engagement and Direct payments informed Members of the difficulties and impacts faced during the Pandemic which resulted to higher rates of referrals for young carers assessments. Due to the changes in restrictions, young carers support services were provided in smaller group sessions and individual sessions by Action for Children. The Service Manager, Carers, Engagement and Direct Payments advised Members of the Pandemic's negative impact towards the mental health and wellbeing of young carers as they felt more isolation and anxiety.

In relation to support provided to sibling carers, the Service Manager, Carers, Engagement and Direct Payments advised Members of funding which has been allocated by the Welsh Government to provide tailored support for the group.

The Service Manager, Carers, Engagement and Direct Payments noted the importance of sibling support as it provides opportunities for sibling carers to spend quality time with a parent/ carer, something they often miss out on due to care needs of their brothers/sisters. As part of Carers Respite Grants and funds from an additional Winter of Wellbeing Grant, sibling carers and parents were given the opportunity to attend cooking activities, Winter Wonderland and Zip World.

The Service Manager, Carers, Engagement and Direct Payments informed Members of Young Adult Carers Service (YAC) for those aged 18-25. The Service Manager, Carers, Engagement and Direct Payments recognised the limited support that was provided to the group due to staffing issues; however, a new YAC worker had been appointed in January to fill the post. Similarity to young carers, mental health and wellbeing have impacted the group due to the Pandemic.

The Service Manager, Carers, Engagement and Direct Payments highlighted to Members some of the services delivered to young carers; these include the Young Carers Card, Carers Covid Film and Young Carers School award.

The Young Carers Card is a Welsh Government initiative which is primarily used for identification of young carers in schools, health and other settings as young carers have repeatedly indicated this as a need. The Service Manager, Carers, Engagement and Direct Payments informed Members that RCT was the first adopter of the scheme and thus far has had positive feedback. As part of the Carers Card improvements, the aim is to increase the benefits such as discounts in local cinemas and national retail shops.

Members were informed of the Carers Covid Film; the film featured young carers, young adult carers and adult carers. The film aimed to highlight the experience of unpaid carers of all ages during the Pandemic.

The Service Manager, Carers, Engagement and Direct Payments advised Members of the Young Carers School Award; the Award has had slow progress compared to previous years due to the impact of the Pandemic. The aim as highlighted by the Service Manager, Carers, Engagement and Direct Payments is to increase the awareness of the Award across schools in RCT.

The Service Director, Children Services added by commending young carers as inspirational young people. The Chair echoed this and is looking forward to resuming the face-to-face service and meeting young carers. The Chair was pleased with the Sibling Care pilot as an important project and will require further



reports on the progress. As part of the Young Carers School Award the Chair advised Members to involve Governors in order to promote this within the schools.

One Member raised a query surrounding the care groups and requested further information on what sibling cares and adult cares do in order to understand the pressures that they face. Concerns were also raised surrounding bullying of these groups and how widespread this matter is.

The Service Manager, Carers, Engagement and Direct Payments advised Members that young carers and sibling carers face higher rates of bullying due to association. Support and prevention are being implemented to tackle this matter.

The Head of access and Inclusion requested collaboration with the Service Manager, Carers, Engagement and Direct Payments in order to aid in the engagement of schools towards the Young Carers School Award.

Following discussion, the Corporate Parenting Board Committee **RESOLVED:**

- To acknowledge the information contained within the report

**6 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.

**7 REGULATION 73 REPORTS**

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

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

- To note the contents of the report

**This meeting closed at 10.49 am**

**Cllr C Leyshon  
Chair.**

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## RHONDDA CYNON TAF COUNTY BOROUGH COUNCIL

### CORPORATE PARENTING BOARD

21<sup>ST</sup> JULY 2022

#### CORPORATE PARENTING BOARD WORK PROGRAMME 2022/23

#### REPORT OF THE SERVICE DIRECTOR, DEMOCRATIC SERVICES & COMMUNICATION

**Author:** Hannah Williams, Council Business Unit

#### **1. PURPOSE OF THE REPORT**

- 1.1 The purpose of the report is to provide the Board with a draft Work Programme for the Corporate Parenting Board for the Municipal Year 2022/23.

#### **2. RECOMMENDATIONS**

It is recommended that:

- 2.1 Members provide comment as appropriate on the draft work programme (which is attached as Appendix 1 to the report)
- 2.2 Subject to any amendments, Members approve the draft work programme as a basis, which can be amended to reflect any changing priorities throughout the year.

#### **3. REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATIONS**

- 3.1 Following the Corporate Parenting Board's production of its Annual Report, the need to ensure that the areas identified as 'Going Forward' are considered by the Board.

#### **4. BACKGROUND**

- 4.1 In April 2016, the Board published its first Annual Report of the Corporate Parenting Board, which provided a summary of the role and work of the Board undertaken during the 2015/16 Municipal Year. As part of the report, the Board also outlined areas that it wished to consider over the 2016/17 Municipal Year, along with the usual updates that are presented to the Board in a timely manner.

4.2 At the meeting of the Board on the 20<sup>th</sup> July, 2016 (Minute 11) the Board agreed to the production of a work programme to assist Members with the Committees workload, although it was noted that this was to be a fluid document to be amended with changing priorities.

4.3 Following the successful introduction of the work programme, the Board felt it was necessary to continue the practice, to enhance transparency. Members will also have the opportunity to raise any matters that they would like to add to the programme during the year.

## **5. DRAFT WORK PROGRAMME**

5.1 Corporate Parenting Board 'Going Forward'. - The areas identified in the annual report by Members for consideration over the Municipal Year were:-

- The review of performance data
- Elected Member Training opportunities
- Education, Employment and Training Opportunities for CLA
- The Mental Health and Wellbeing of Young People who are Looked After and Care Leavers
- Further Interaction with young people
- Children Looked After Prevention Strategy
- Monitoring of Independent Sector Placements

5.2 The Corporate Parenting Board will receive annual updates from the following services to continue to monitor the progress, achievements, and future aspirations:

- Miskin and Therapeutic Families Team
- Resilient Families Service
- Youth Offending Service
- Vale, Valleys & Cardiff Regional Adoption Service
- Fostering Services Quality of Care
- Registered Childcare Provision
- Young Carers
- Youth Offending Service

5.3 It is proposed that each of the items are put forward against a scheduled Corporate Parenting Board meeting date, although depending on changing priorities the reporting dates may be subject to change.

5.4 Statutory reports which will regularly be presented to Members and are not included within the Work Programme include:-

- Regulation 73 Reports
- Social Services Compliments & Complaints Reports

- Tros Gynnal Plant Cymru Advocacy Updates
- Child Practice Review
- CIW Inspection Reports

5.5 During the Year, the Board will continue to invite representatives from the RCT Forum to attend meetings. The Board have identified the need to strengthen their relationship with the young people whose contribution has been invaluable.

5.6 Members will undertake frontline visits to the various Children Services teams at the end of the Municipal Year. A timeline will be circulated at a later date.

## **6. CONCLUSION**

6.1 The proposed draft work programme is a fluid document, allowing the programme to be amended with changing priorities. The programme is based on factors highlighted within the Board's Annual Report and does not include the statutory updates presented to the Board.

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# CORPORATE PARENTING BOARD WORK PROGRAMME 2022-2023

Agreed work programme of the Corporate Parenting Board is set out below. This is a fluid document, allowing the programme to be amended with changing priorities. The programme is based on factors highlighted within the Boards Annual Report and does not include the usual updates presented to the Board, or other items Officers deem appropriate to bring forward to the Corporate Parenting Board.

REPORT	RESPONSIBLE OFFICER	STATUS / COMMENTS
<b>JULY 2022</b>		
Corporate Parenting Board Work Programme 2022-23	Hannah Williams	
Corporate Parenting Board Annual Report 2021-22	Yula Kampouropoulou	
Children Looked After Prevention Strategy Update	Annabel Lloyd	
Charter for Parents in Care and Leaving Care	Annabel Lloyd	
<b>SEPTEMBER 2022</b>		
Youth Offending Service Annual Report 2021-22 & Reducing the criminalisation of care experienced children and young adults	Lyndon Lewis	
Registered Childcare Provision Annual Update 2021-22	Jessica Allen	
RCT Forum	Annabel Galt & Nicole Katchi	Young person to be invited
Pupil Deprivation Grant - Update	Hannah Bevan Siriol Burford – Central South Consortium	
<b>NOVEMBER 2022</b>		

Young Carers Annual Report 2021-22	Rachel Spry/ Claire Williams & Young Person Representative	
Miskin Annual Report and Therapeutic Families Team Annual Report 2021-22	Matthew Free / Jay Goulding / Sarah Longhurst	
Vale, Valley & Cardiff Regional Adoption annual report 2021-22	Annabel Lloyd	
Housing Offer to Care Leavers	Cheryl Emery	
Independent Sector Placements	Annabel Lloyd	
<b>JANUARY 2023</b>		
Children Looked After Website Advancement Update	Ceri Mann	
Fostering Quality of Care Annual Report	Annabel Lloyd	
RCT Forum	Annabel Galt	Young person to be invited
Children Looked After Education Data and Improvement Strategy Update	Ceri Jones	
<b>MARCH 2023</b>		
Employment, Education and Training Programmes for Children Looked After	Emma Brabon	
CLA Mental Health Support	Annabel Lloyd	
Virtual School Model pilot – Interim Evaluation of Year 1	Ceri Jones / Kerry Webster	
Young Carers Annual Report 2022-23	Rachel Spry/Claire Williams	Young person to be invited
Frontline Visits	Members	





## RHONDDA CYNON TAF COUNTY BOROUGH COUNCIL

### CORPORATE PARENTING BOARD

21ST JULY 2022

#### CORPORATE PARENTING BOARD – ANNUAL REPORT 2021/22

#### REPORT OF THE SERVICE DIRECTOR, DEMOCRATIC SERVICES & COMMUNICATION

**Author:** Yula Kampouropoulou – Committee Support Officer- Democratic Services – 07747 485569

#### **1. PURPOSE OF THE REPORT**

- 1.1 The purpose of the report is to provide the Board with the Draft Annual Report of the Corporate Parenting Board for the Municipal Year 2021/22.

#### **2. RECOMMENDATIONS**

It is recommended that the Corporate Parenting Board:

- 2.1 Provide comment as appropriate on the draft Annual Report (which is attached as Appendix 1 to the report) before its presentation to the Community Services Scrutiny Committee, and finally to Cabinet.

#### **3. REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATIONS**

- 3.1 Under the Leader's Scheme of Delegation (the 3A) the Corporate Parenting Board, comprising of a cross party membership was formed to take the lead in ensuring that the Council fulfils its responsibilities as corporate parent's to children who are looked after and formulate Council policy in respect of children who are looked after and children in need.
- 3.2 As part of the Board's Terms of reference, the Board must report its work to the Cabinet and it has been agreed that this will take the form of an Annual Report.

#### **4. BACKGROUND**

- 4.1 The first Annual Report for the Corporate Parenting Board was produced for the 2015/16 Municipal Year.

4.2 The contents of the report acted as a useful basis for a number of upcoming topics which the Members felt needed particular attention in the 2016/17 Municipal Year.

4.3 This is the seventh Annual Report of the Corporate Parenting Board, which seeks to provide a summary of the role and work of the Board undertaken during the 2021/22 Municipal Year and its ambitions going forward. The report is attached as Appendix 1.

## **5. THE WORK OF THE CORPORATE PARENTING BOARD 2021-22**

5.1 During the 2021-22 Municipal Year, the Corporate Parenting Board considered the following range of reports, which led to challenging discussions:

- Regulation 73 Reports
- Complaints & Compliments
- Advocacy
- Employment, Education and Training Programmes for CLA
- Independent Reviewing Officer Report
- RCT Forum
- Overview of the Community Wellbeing and Resilience Service
- CLA Educational Outcomes Improvement Strategy
- Cwm Taf Regional Fostering Front Door Update
- Miskin Annual Report
- Therapeutic Families Team Annual Report
- Vale, Valleys & Cardiff Regional Adoption Annual Report
- Fostering Service Quality of Care Report
- Housing Offer for Care Leavers
- One Child Practice Review

5.3 The Corporate Parenting Board has developed a robust and varied Work Programme for the 2022-23 Municipal Year, to continue good practice and to enhance transparency. Members can also raise any matters that they would like to add to the programme during the year.

5.4 The following key elements of focus have been identified by the Corporate Parenting Board for the 2022-23 Municipal Year:

- The review of performance data
- Elected Member Training opportunities
- Education, Employment and Training Opportunities for CLA
- The Mental Health and Wellbeing of Young People who are Looked After and Care Leavers
- Further Interaction with young people
- Children Looked After Prevention Strategy

- Monitoring of Independent Sector Placements

## **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 There is no consultation required for this report.

## **7. FINANCIAL IMPLICATION(S)**

- 7.1 There are no financial implications aligned to this report.

## **8. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS OR LEGISLATION CONSIDERED**

- 8.1 The report has been prepared in accordance with Rhondda Cynon Taf County Borough Council's constitution.

## **9. LINKS TO THE COUNCILS CORPORATE PLAN / OTHER CORPORATE PRIORITIES/ FUTURE GENERATIONS – SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT.**

- 9.1 The work of the Corporate Parenting Board links directly to the Council's Corporate Plan priority – 'Rhondda Cynon Taf's Children will receive a great start in life...'

- 9.2 In respect of the Well-being of Future Generations Act, the work of the Corporate Parenting Board meets the Five Ways of Working:

### **1. Working together with other partners to deliver objectives**

The Corporate Parenting Board considers reports and presentations from various service areas of the Council. Members are aware that a number of partners and areas must contribute to tackle the range of different issues, which young people may experience, such as mental health, education and budgeting.

### **2. Involving those with an interest and seeking their views**

The Corporate Parenting Board provide looked after young people and care leavers in RCT with the opportunity to attend meetings and have their voice heard. It allows them to promote their life experiences at a strategic, policy and legislative level and provides Members with the chance to hear first-hand experiences.

## **10. CONCLUSION**

- 10.1 The Corporate Parenting Board Annual report outlines the work undertaken in the 2021/22 Municipal Year and features the priority areas to consider moving forward, which will ensure that the Council provides continuous improvement to the services that it delivers for its children and young people within the Looked After System.

RHONDDA CYNON TAF  
**CORPORATE PARENTING BOARD**  
ANNUAL REPORT  
2021/2022

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**RHONDDA CYNON TAF**



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# FOREWORD

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**Councillor Christina Leyshon**  
**Cabinet Member for Children's Services**  
**Chair of the Corporate Parenting Board**

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It is with great pleasure, that I present to you the Corporate Parenting Board Annual Report which provides a summary of the role and work undertaken by the Board in the 2021/22 Municipal Year.

The Corporate Parenting Board is comprised of elected Members, and Officers who meet regularly as critical friends to support, challenges and strive for stronger collaborative working. The Board creates a non-judgemental environment where Officers and Members can freely voice their opinions to ensure the best possible outcomes for the children and young people who are looked after in RCT.

As a Board we have sought to understand the lived experiences of children growing up in the care of the Council and of care experienced young people to ensure they are safe, healthy, and leading happy and fulfilling lives. Feedback from Children and young people we receive from various means plays an integral part in RCT's improvement journey. Our children and young people's voices help us to keep focused at ground level and influence the development of services the right way.

As a Council it is vital that we take steps to be the best corporate parent and corporate family that we can be. I am committed to doing everything I can to support children and care leavers so they can benefit from the many opportunities our Borough has to offer.

During the 2021/22 Municipal Year, the Corporate Parenting Board have, considered a plethora of reports, which were inclusive of various stories of success. Regular updates were more important than ever as the Corporate Parenting Board sought assurance that both staff and young people were provided with support. The continued concerns in relation to the Pandemic and emerging concerns linked to its persistence means that the emotional and physical welfare of all young people has been a key

priority for the Council. We have endeavoured to ensure the pandemic has not prevented the continuation of key services and we remain committed to ensuring that the children and young people of Rhondda Cynon Taf are safe from harm and given the care and support that they deserve, regardless of numbers.

As such, I would like to take this opportunity to extend my thanks to all Members of the Corporate Parenting Board, both new and longstanding; and, of course, to the Officers for their ongoing support.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "L. Leysha". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large initial 'L' and a trailing flourish.



# WHAT IS THE CORPORATE PARENTING BOARD?

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The concept of Corporate Parenting was introduced in 1998 by the then Secretary of State for Health, Frank Dobson, who outlined the duties of members towards Children who are Looked After: *“For children who are looked after, your council has a legal and moral duty to try to provide the kind of loyal support that any good parents would give to their children...you should do your utmost to make sure that those children in public care get a good start in life...”*

## LEGISLATION

- Chapter 6 of the [WLGA’s Corporate Parenting Workbook](#) states:

You can make sure there is a dedicated group of Councillors who focus specially on these corporate parenting responsibilities. It might be called a Panel, or a Scrutiny subcommittee. Whatever it is called, it should:

- meet regularly and often enough to carry out the three central functions we identify here effectively
- bring all those who contribute to Corporate Parenting together and draw on their experience and wisdom
- talk with and listen to groups of our children, who are encouraged and helped to speak out - theirs are the most important voices
- interrogate all relevant performance and management information
- where possible, compare the Council’s performance with other similar authorities, and look at trends over time
- identify where things are not good enough, and ask for remedial action from officers, partner agencies, or the Council itself
- track that the action is taken and is effective, and escalate if not
- focus special attention on the most vulnerable children and young people, and seek to ensure their safety and well-being

- **The goals set out in the [Well-being of Future Generations \(Wales\) Act 2015](#): -**

1. A more Equal Wales - A society that enables people to fulfil their potential no matter what their background or circumstances (including their socio-economic circumstances);

2. 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; and
  3. A Wales of Cohesive Communities - Attractive, safe, viable and well-connected.
- **The Council's Corporate Plan 'Making a Difference' 2020-2024, which is guided by the Vision of making Rhondda Cynon Taf "the best place in Wales to live, work and play, where people and businesses are independent, healthy and prosperous.**
1. PRIORITY: Ensuring **PEOPLE:** are independent, healthy, and successful - *Improving services for children and young people and ensuring the needs of children are considered in everything we do.*

## MEET THE CORPORATE PARENTING BOARD



*Councillor C Leyshon  
(Chair)*



*Councillor G Caple  
(Vice-Chair)*



*Councillor E Griffiths*



*Councillor S Rees-Owen*



*Councillor J Bonetto*



*Councillor L Hooper*



*Councillor J Bonetto*



*Councillor Geraint Hopkins*

*\*Following the departure of Councillor J Rosser and Councillor Geraint Hopkins from Cabinet in 2021, Councillor G Caple and Councillor J Bonetto were appointed to the Corporate Parenting Board for remainder of the Municipal Year.*

**“Councillors as Corporate Parents have an important role to play in ensuring that every child in their Council’s care receives the best care possible. They should be striving to provide the level of care they would be happy for their own children to receive.” (Sally Holland, Children’s Commissioner for Wales.)**

## **TERMS OF REFERENCE**

- To take the lead in ensuring that the Council fulfils its responsibilities as corporate parent to children who are looked after and formulate Council policy in respect of children who are looked after and children in need.
- To ensure that all Groups and divisions within the Council work together in order to promote best outcomes for children who are looked after and children in need.
- To promote effective relationships with key partner agencies in the best interests of children who are looked after and children in need.
- To monitor the implementation of the Action Plan arising from the Best Value Review of Services to children looked after, in addition to monitoring outcomes for children looked after and children in need.
- To consider the outcomes and promote positive learning practices following consideration of Child Practice Reviews.
- In accordance with HMIP to routinely review the offending rates of CLA by gender to ensure that the Corporate Parenting Board understand patterns of offending by girls and are able to take actions to address where necessary.
- To consider the impact of relevant other systems/agencies (e.g., health, courts, schools) and see how these could be improved.
- To seek the views of children looked after - the advocacy service will be asked to facilitate.
- To invite representatives from other agencies to attend as appropriate.
- To report directly to Cabinet through an Annual report of the Board.

## **Vision of the Corporate Parenting Board**

The role of the corporate parent is to seek for children in public care the outcomes every good parent would want for their own children. The local authority has a legal and moral duty to provide support to the children it is responsible for looking after.

All Elected Members must be confident that the children who are looked after within RCT:

- Are safe and healthy;
- Have good homes in a secure and caring environment;
- Are placed within the local authority area, close to their homes and communities, as far as is possible;
- Have good experiences of education and can fulfill their potential;
- Are not being drawn into antisocial behavior;
- Are developing socially and emotionally;
- Are provided with help to cope with the problems they have in growing up;
- Are prepared for their transition to adulthood;
- Have ambitions for themselves and are supported to access leisure and hobbies;
- Are helped to achieve to the maximum of their ability;
- Have high aspirations and can show pride in their achievements; and
- Are provided with support when they need it.

# CHILDREN LOOKED AFTER IN RHONDDA CYNON TAF

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Children Looked After remains a key priority and the Council continues to strive for a safe reduction in Children Looked After numbers and to deliver the best possible outcomes for the children and young people.

As at the 31<sup>st</sup> March 2022, there were a total of 655 children and young people within the Local Authority's care. The demographic has been broken down and compared to that of the previous year in the tables below.

## Children Looked After by Age Group

Age Band	Total as at 31/03/2022	Total as at 31/03/2021
0-3	99	124
4-7	111	121
8-11	166	170
12-14	130	144
15	49	41
16	46	47
17	54	47
Total	655	<u>694</u>

Figures show that the highest age band remains at 8 - 11 years.

## Children Looked After by Gender

Gender	Total as at 31/ 03/ 2022	Total as at 31/03/21
Female	284	297
Male	371	397
Total	<u>655</u>	<u>694</u>

The Gender figures show that as at 31<sup>st</sup> March 2022, 86 more males than females remain within the Local Authority's care, which is less than the figures from March 2021, where there were 100 more males than females.

### **Children Looked After by Placement Type**

CLA Placement Type	Total as at 31/03/2022	Total as at 31/03/2021
Independent Sector Foster Placement	119	139
RCT Foster Carers	153	167
RCT Relative Foster Carers	229	234
Placed for Adoption	17	16
Placed with Parents	66	73
Education Placement	2	2
Other Lodgings	6	1
Independent Sector Residential Sector	52	50
RCT Residential Care	10	11
Secure	1	1
<b>Total</b>	<b><u>655</u></b>	<b><u>694</u></b>

It is recognised that each young person's needs are unique and that the most suitable placement type is unique to the individual bearing in mind their background, wishes and circumstances .

The data shows that most children and young people within Rhondda Cynon Taf are placed in foster placements, and in particular, with Relative Foster Carers.

Where safe and possible to do so, children and young people are placed with their parents.

It is noted that a key priority of the Regional Adoption Collaboration is to increase its supply of adopters.

# UPDATES TO THE CORPORATE PARENTING BOARD

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## REGULATION 73 REPORTS

Regular updates are presented to the Corporate Parenting Board in respect of the current position of the residential Children's Homes and respite service. The reports are exempt from the public to ensure that the Board receive a detailed picture of the goings on at each home, and are inclusive of case studies, which inform us of the everyday challenges faced by our hardworking staff, any areas of concern and, of course, the wellbeing of the children who occupy the homes.

Each of the reports received during the Municipal Year, provided the Corporate Parenting Board with honest and reliable feedback from the young people who occupy the homes and further insight into the challenges associated with looking after and trying to develop young people who have been disadvantaged.

## SOCIAL SERVICES COMPLAINTS AND COMPLIMENTS

The Corporate Parenting Board receives quarterly updates in respect of the operation and effectiveness of the statutory Social Services complaints and compliments procedure. At each meeting, Members monitor the number of complaints received, the nature of the complaints and any lessons learnt, along with noting those enquiries received from Elected Members, A.M's and M.P's.

The importance of feedback from those who use the services is invaluable to the Corporate Parenting Board. During the year, Members were provided with detailed and honest feedback in response to questions around the updates. It was pleasing to note that the service had been used by Elected Members and A.M and M.P colleagues, which builds upon the already strong relationship with officers.

## ADVOCACY

Following the appointment of Tros Gynnal Plant (TGP) Cymru as the Local Authority's advocacy service, the Corporate Parenting Board have received regular and informative updates at its meetings. The Board are provided with a detailed breakdown of issues by age, gender, referral source and type, along with information on the take up of the active offer. This information enables both TGP Cymru and Children Services to discuss issues that affect service delivery in the community on a strategic level and to work in partnership to provide improved and better outcomes.



The Board Members were assured to hear during the November 2021 update, that a more streamlined approach to risk assessments were now being taken forward to reduce delays in accessing the advocacy service in the future. Members also heard of the complexities of the role of an advocate representing young people and officers reassured that the communication between the Authority and the advocacy service will continue to be built upon.

[More information on the services provided by Tros Gynnal Plant \(TGP\) Cymru can be found here.](#)

## INDEPENDENT REVIEWING OFFICER UPDATES

The Social Services and Well-being (Wales) Act 2014 (referred to as the SSWB Act) and the Care Planning, Placement and Case Review (Wales) Regulations 2015 and 16 (referred to as the CPPCR Regulations) provide legislation and guidance pertaining to the role and functions of an Independent Reviewing Officer (IRO). The Adoption and Children Act 2002 requires the Local Authority to appoint Independent Reviewing Officers to conduct reviews for Children who are Looked After and monitor the Local Authority's performance in relation to implementing the care plans for individual children. As such, regular reports are presented to the Board to monitor the activities of the IRO service.

## RCT FORUM

The RCT Forum provides looked after young people and care leavers in RCT with opportunities to have their voice heard and to enable their life experiences to contribute at a strategic, policy and legislative level both locally and nationally.

During the 2021/22 Municipal Year, the RCT Forum attended meetings of the Corporate Parenting Board to provide a summary of activities being undertaken. The Forum ran sessions to engage with new Members of the group; in addition to networking with several external organisations working with care leavers throughout the Local Authority. Key themes were identified which were impacting individuals within the RCT area. These included difficulties in maintaining healthy relationships, independent living, and overall feelings of isolation. During the next quarter the Forum the Board would like to receive further information.

The Board were reassured of the effectiveness of the services offered by RCT Forum through a young person representative who highlighted the positive experiences they have had as part of the group and the impact on their life. The young person spoke positively of the activities undertaken as part of the forum which provided access to community networks, independence, and the attainment of new skills. The young person also spoke of the positive role of the forum through the pandemic,

with the continued support to young people across RCT.

Receiving such feedback on the services provided by the Council for Children who are Looked After and care leavers to the Board is fundamental in helping the Board ensure that the provisions and support provided by the Council are adding benefit to the people that require them, and to ensure that the young people within the service are treated as equal to those young people outside of the service.

## OVERVIEW OF THE COMMUNITY WELLBEING AND RESILLIENCE SERVICE

In November 2017, the Cwm Taf Public Services Board (PSB) agreed to work with the Welsh Government to undertake a joint collaborative approach to redesigning Early Years arrangements across Cwm Taf. The aim of the work was to reconstruct the Early Years and Flying Start service, to create an integrated delivery model.

Receiving updates allows the Corporate Parenting Board to compare the annual data and to monitor the progress and impact of the service.

[More information on the Resilient Families Service can be accessed here.](#)

## CWM TAF REGIONAL FOSTERING FRONT DOOR

The Corporate Parenting Board were informed of two significant developments which were made during the 2021/22 Municipal year. Due to challenges with the recruitment of mainstream foster carers, it was confirmed that Bridgend County Borough Council has joined the Regional Front Door to further expand on the collaboration and share resources and good practice. As of now 3 Local Authorities, RCT CBC, Merthyr Tydful CBC and Bridgend CBC have all confirmed dedication towards foster carer recruitment. The primary objective of the team is to achieve a net gain in approved mainstream foster carers.

The launch of Foster Wales was a huge accomplishment which was achieved through the collaboration of all 22 Local Authorities within Wales. The aim of the project is targeted towards attracting younger generation to become foster carers.

In order to monitor the progress of the service, the Corporate Parenting Board receive an analysis of key performance data and details on the future developments of the service.

[More information on the Cwm Taf Regional Fostering Front Door service can be accessed here.](#)

## CHILDREN LOOKED AFTER ACADEMIC DATA 2021-2022 DATA

It is noted that RCT has many Children Looked After, in comparison to other Local Authorities and that there are various risk factors which can adversely impact the educational outcomes of Children Looked After. Notwithstanding that, improving the educational attainment of Children Looked After remains a key focus of the Corporate Parenting Board and each year, Members receive performance data for the previous academic year.

### Summary of Data for the academic year 2020-2021\*

#### **1. Incidents of Fixed Term (FT) Exclusions in Autumn and Spring term 2020/2021 involving RCT Children who are Looked After:**

Cohort	Number of FT exclusions	% of students who received a FT exclusion	Cohort of pupils of statutory school age	% of statutory school aged pupils excluded
CLA	28	15	455	3.20%
Non CLA	887	614	33220	1.85%

*Source: Plasc Jan 21 (33,708)*

#### **2. Attendance Levels of Children who are Looked between 02/09/2020 and 20/07/2021 compared with Non CLA:**

Overall attendance in RCT schools	
CLA pupils	Non CLA pupils
89.9%	87%
Primary school attendance	
93.1%	91.1%
Secondary school attendance	
86.1%	85.4%

#### **3. In response to the disrupted educational experience due to COVID -19, PDG LAC money provided an offer of online tuition in Maths or English for all Key Stage 4 pupils taking exams. Pupils who engaged with tuition in Years 10 and 11:**

Year group	No of pupils participating
10	23 OUT OF 31 eligible pupils
11	16 out of 25 eligible pupils

*\*Note: Any overall data for the academic year 2020 – 2021 needs to be viewed with caution due to the impact of school closures in Summer Term 2021 in response to the COVID-19 pandemic which means that direct comparisons with previous academic years are not possible.*

## CHILDREN LOOKED AFTER WEBSITE ADVANCMENTS

the Corporate Parenting Board received an update on the advancements made on the Children Looked after 2Side Website. The website is now hosted by the Wicid.TV and has become more interactive and has been developed to be more targeted to children and young people's needs within RCT. A range of services have been introduced such as an online Consultation document which allows young people to post their reviews on aspects they are enjoying and areas for improvement. Receiving such feedback permits the team to make review services and attract more children and young people to the website.

[More information on the Children Looked After Website can be accessed here](#)

## MISKIN

Miskin delivers intensive family focused evidence-based interventions, which aim to improve parenting capacity to enable families to care for their children with the minimum statutory intervention. Services are delivered through individual, family, group work and holiday programmes.

The focus of the Service includes:

- High level of need, and if intensive supports are not provided the child/children are at risk of being accommodated;
- Family need an intensive period of support for child/children to return to their care;
- High level of assessed need for a child looked after, risk of placement breakdown without intensive support; and
- Child looked after requires support to return from an out of county placement to either home or a more local placement.

The Corporate Parenting Board receive annual updates in respect of the Miskin service, to monitor the effectiveness of the service, particularly at a time when demand exceeds capacity.

## THERAPEUTIC FAMILIES TEAM

The Therapeutic Families Team (TFT) is a multidisciplinary team, created to offer consultation, therapeutic assessments and interventions to children and families in Rhondda Cynon Taf.

The Team works with:

- Families assessed as high need where support from the Families Therapeutic Team would add value to the Resilient Families Service intervention;
- Family receiving a service from statutory Children's Services and child/ren assessed as being at risk of becoming Children Looked After (CLA); Children Looked After whose placement has been assessed as being at risk of breakdown where therapeutic support could promote placement stability;
- Children Looked After who require therapeutic support to assist in a return home to live with parents/family/friends or live independently;
- Children Looked After placed out of county who require therapeutic support to assist in moving to local placements; and
- Families assessed as high need where support from the Families Therapeutic Team would add value to the statutory Children's Services intervention.

The Corporate Parenting Board received the second annual report of the Therapeutic Families Team which provided a detail breakdown of the services provided to families such as consultations, therapeutic assessments and interventions for children and families in RCT. The Board was reassured of the Therapeutic Families Team improvements since its inaugural year by supporting and engaging with families and producing positive outcomes.

## VALE, VALLEYS & CARDIFF REGIONAL ADOPTION ANNUAL REPORT 2020-21

Vale, Valleys and Cardiff Adoption Collaborative (VVC) provides a regional adoption service to the Vale of Glamorgan Council, Merthyr Tydfil County Borough Council, Cardiff Council and Rhondda Cynon Taff County Borough Council. VVC is one of the five regional Collaboratives which form part of the National Adoption Service in Wales (NAS). All adoption services are required to provide an annual review of their service as set out in Regulation 22 of the Local Authority Adoption Service (Wales) Regulations 2007.

The Board were supplied with the sixth VCC annual report which covers the periods 1<sup>st</sup> April 2020 to 31 March 2021.

The supply of adopters remains a challenge for Local Authorities and as such, receiving the annual data and strategies for improvement of the Regional Adoption Service is vital to the Corporate Parenting Board.

The report was also considered in depth by the Council's [Children and Young People Scrutiny Committee](#).

## FOSTERING SERVICE QUALITY OF CARE ANNUAL REPORT

The Fostering Service Quality of Care Annual Report is compiled as required under the Regulation and Inspection of Social Care (Wales) Act 2016. Regulation 52 of the Local Authority Fostering Services (Wales) Regulations 2018 also requires the Local Authority Manager to put suitable arrangements in place to establish and maintain a system for monitoring, reviewing and improving the quality of service.

The Corporate Parenting Board monitored the progress in relation to carer support and consultation, education, establishing the Regional Front Door Service and the priorities for the year ahead.

[More information on the Fostering Service Quality of Care Annual Report can be found here](#)

## YOUNG CARERS ANNUAL REPORT 2021-22

The Young Carers Service now sits within the wider all-age Carers Support Project following a review and restructure carried out towards the end of 2018/2019. The review identified a need for a strategic lead for carers within the authority and the Service Manager for Carers now has responsibility for all carer issues, including young carers, young adult carers and adult carers. The restructure resulted in changes to the support provided to young carers. The service still has a dedicated Young Carer Assessor who now sits within the wider Information, Advice and Assistance function of Children's Services. This is to ensure that statutory obligations are met in terms of assessment and monitoring of young carers.

The support services for young carers (aged 5-17) continues to be provided on a commissioned basis by Action for Children. Specific support is available via an externally funded post for Young Adult Carers (aged 18-25). Sibling carers (Children whose sibling has additional needs) receive limited support via the Carers Support Project.

The Young Carers Annual Report summarises the support provided to young carers (aged 0-17) and young adults (aged 18-25) during a turbulent year and recognises the key developments achieved despite extreme challenging circumstances, specifically from the impact of the Covid-19 Pandemic.

## REGISTERED CHILDCARE PROVISION 2020-21

The Corporate Parenting Board received updates on the Care Inspectorate Wales (CIW) registered childcare provision settings overseen by the Community, Wellbeing and Resilience Service (CWRS).

Since updates received during May 2019, significant service developments have taken place in respect of childcare provision across Rhondda Cynon Taf. During this Municipal Year, a new purpose-built Flying Start childcare setting has been established on the Llwynypia campus of Coleg Y Cymoedd. This has replaced the historical Flying Start provision in the previous Ynsycynon Primary School site.

## HOUSING OFFER FOR CARE LEAVERS

The Housing Offer for Care leavers report is compiled based on Section 78 of the Social Services and Wellbeing (Wales) Act 2014 which imposes a duty upon the Local Authority to safeguard and promote the well-being of each child it looks after. Under section 104-118, a Local Authority has similar duties to promote the well-being of care leavers. During this Municipal year, the Corporate Parenting Board were provided with information about how 16+ looked after young people and care leavers are provided with move on accommodation and support.

The Corporate Parenting Board was reassured on the duty of care of the team to ensure young people are housed in accommodation fit for purpose where they feel safe and supported.

## CHILD PRACTICE REVIEW

A Child Practice Review is conducted in line with the Cwm Taf Morgannwg Safeguarding Children Board's duties under Working Together to Safeguard People Volume 3) which is issued under the Social Services and Well-being (Wales) Act 2014.

The process is focussed on positive outcomes for children and young people through learning lessons to improve multi agency safeguarding practice. It includes different types of reviews; concise and extended as well as multi agency practitioner forums.

The report was exempt from the public to ensure that the Board receive a detailed overview of the recommendations of 2 Concise Child Practice Reviews (CPR's) conducted by Cwm Taf Morgannwg Safeguarding Children Board (CTMSB) and the measures Children Services had taken to embed and evaluate review learning in response.

# THE CORPORATE PARENTING BOARD – MOVING FORWARD

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In the 2022/23 Municipal Year, key areas of focus of the Corporate Parenting Board will include:

## REGULAR PERFORMANCE DATA

It is essential that the Corporate Parenting Board regularly receive the qualitative data and statutory updates. The monitoring of regular performance data allows the Corporate Parenting Board to effectively analyse key areas and determine ways to further improve and enhance the services the Council provides. The updates will include:

- Regulation 73 Reports
- Social Services Complaints & Compliments
- Advocacy Updates
- CIW Inspections reports of the Children's Homes
- Child Practice Review
- Performance (IRO)
- Accommodation
- Care to Work
- Adoption
- Education

The Corporate Parenting Board will receive annual updates from the following services to continue to monitor the progress, achievements, and future aspirations:

- Miskin
- Therapeutic Families Team
- Resilient Families Service
- Youth Offending Service
- Vale, Valleys & Cardiff Regional Adoption Service
- Fostering Services Quality of Care
- Registered Childcare Provision
- Young Carers
- RCT Forum



## INTERACTION WITH YOUNG PEOPLE

The Corporate Parenting Board welcome the attendance of looked after young people and care leavers at its meetings and recognise that their voice must be at the centre of all discussions. The Board receive reports containing data and statistics, but the opportunity to hearing the first-hand experiences of the young person is invaluable. Encouraging their participation will be key moving forward as it provides Members with further insight into the areas where improvements need to be made.

During the Municipal Year, it was reported that the RCT Forum would aim to establish a cohort of group members to develop and further understand the issues Children and young people face in order to create a clear implementation plan. The Corporate Parenting Board welcome an update on this going forward.

In 2018, RCT Children Services supported children who were looked after to complete the Your Life, Your Care Survey. The survey had been developed through the Bright Spots Programme to measure the well-being of children looked after.

Following the survey, the following areas of improvement were identified:

*‘Social workers need to:*

- *Ensure that children and young people understand who they are.*
- *Work with children and young people to involve them in decisions.*
- *Explain to every child why they are in care and regularly review this with them to establish if they would like more information.*
- *Continue to communicate with schools to identify and help children who feel bullied at school and those who feel that they do not have a good friend.*
- *Give carers further training in therapeutic parenting.*
- *Consider not just organised activities but contact with nature when reviewing opportunities to have fun/hobbies*
- *Regularly review contact plans taking into account children and young people’s wishes and feelings*
- *Be aware of gender difference and give opportunities to young people (11-18 years) to build self-esteem and a positive self-image.’*

The Corporate Parenting Board wishes to continue to monitor the implementation of the areas identified to ensure that they have been incorporated into improvement plans; and welcome further updates from future surveys, which would be conducted on a two-year basis.

## INDEPENDENT SECTOR PLACEMENTS

The Corporate Parenting Board recognise the importance of effective placements and continual support for children and young people in RCT.

During the 2021/22 Municipal Year, the Board did not receive any updates in respect of the independent sector placements and therefore, feel it is necessary that an update is provided in the next Municipal Year. This will allow new Board Members to have a greater understanding of the supporting services and channels offered to looked after young people.

## EDUCATION, EMPLOYMENT AND TRAINING OPPORTUNITIES

The Corporate Parenting Board recognise the educational disadvantages often experienced by young people who are looked after, which can have an adverse effect on opportunities moving into higher education and into adulthood.

The Corporate Parenting Board wishes to receive further updates in respect of Post-16 employment, education and training programmes offered by the Council and its uptake by the young people.

During the next Municipal Year, the Board wishes to extend an invitation to the Central South Consortium to update Members on the Pupil Deprivation Grant and the Cluster Based Model.

The Board would also like to receive an interim update in respect of the Virtual Schools Model, following the paper commissioned by Welsh Government - An integrated approach to improving educational outcomes for looked after children in Wales written by Sir Alasdair Macdonald. The paper looked at integrated local authority approaches to supporting Children Looked After, with a particular focus upon how the Virtual School model in England and Scotland could be used as a basis for local authorities in Wales to promote the educational achievement of CLA.

The Board will continue to receive education attainment data.

## CHILDREN LOOKED AFTER PREVENTION STRATEGY

The Corporate Parenting Board wish to review the Looked After Children Prevention Strategy which will outline the services being developed to enhance the offer to families and resources. As part of the role of the Corporate Parenting Board it's to continue the work of safely supporting families to stay together.

## ELECTED MEMBER TRAINING OPPORTUNITIES

It is recognised that the role of the Corporate Parent is a collective duty of the Council as a whole and as such, refresher training is welcomed to Board Members and to all Elected Members of the Council to further enhance knowledge and to strengthen the Council's commitment to the children and young people within our care. This will be particularly beneficial for new Members.

## THE WORK OF WELSH GOVERNMENT TO STRENGTHEN AND EXTEND CORPORATE PARENTING

The Programme for Government, [Taking Wales Forward](#), commits to “examine ways of ensuring looked after children enjoy the same life chances as other children and if necessary reform the way they are looked after”. As part of its focus, Welsh Government policy intent is to strengthen corporate parenting across all departments within the local authority, which will enable better partnership between services to enhance the outcomes for Children Looked After.

The Corporate Parenting Board welcome future updates in relation to the work and the opportunity to consider any amendments to its Terms of Reference.

## MENTAL HEALTH & WELLBEING OF CHILDREN & YOUNG PEOPLE WHO ARE LOOKED AFTER AND YOUNG CARERS

As a result of the Covid-19 pandemic, the Corporate Parenting Board appreciate that issues with mental health and wellbeing are likely to have risen and therefore, would like to receive an update on what support is available to young people.

## FRONTLINE MEETINGS

During the 2021/22 Municipal year, the Corporate Parenting Board had the opportunity to meet virtually with staff working in Children Services in order to better understand the work undertaken to safeguard the health and wellbeing of children in Rhondda Cynon Taf, particularly those in corporate care, their various needs and the means of understanding the needs of staff.

The Board aimed to understand the challenges faced by staff, particularly during the Pandemic relating to staff turnover, retention, and wellbeing.

The feedback received from the meetings was invaluable for the Corporate Parenting Board as it strengthens service strategy implementation for the overall support for staff and the children, and young people who are looked after in RCT.

# CORPORATE PARENTING BOARD WORK PROGRAMME 2022-2023

A 2022-23 work programme for the Corporate Parenting Board is set out below. The work programme is a fluid document, which can be amended by Members at any given point to accommodate a change in priorities. The programme is based on factors highlighted within the Board's Annual Report and does not include the statutory updates presented to the Board.

REPORT	DATE
Corporate Parenting Board Work Programme	July, 2022
Corporate Parenting Board Annual Report 2022-23	July 2022
Charter for Parents in Care and Leaving Care	July 2022
Scrutiny Healthy Lives Report	July 2022
Children Looked After Prevention Strategy Update	July 2022
Registered Childcare Provision Annual Update 2021-22	September 2022
Youth Offending Service Annual Report 2021-22 & reducing the criminalisation of care experienced children and young adults	September 2022
RCT Forum	September 2022
Pupil Deprivation Grant - Update	September 2022
Children Looked After Website Advancement Update	September 2022
Young Carers Annual Report 2021-22	November 2022
Miskin Annual Report and Therapeutic Families Team Annual Report 2021-22	November 2022
Vale, Valley & Cardiff Regional Adoption annual report 2021-22	November 2022
Housing Offer to Care Leavers	November 2022
Fostering Quality of Care Annual Report	January 2023
RCT Forum	January 2023
Children Looked After Education Data and Improvement Strategy Update	January 2023

Young Carers Annual Report 2022-23

March 2023

Employment, Education and Training Programmes for Children  
Looked After

March 2023

Virtual School Model pilot – Interim Evaluation of Year 1

March 2023

Frontline Visits

March 2023

## CONCLUSION

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Thank you for taking the time to read the Corporate Parenting Board Annual Report for the 2021/22 Municipal Year. The report seeks to highlight the scope of work undertaken during the past year and the Council's ongoing commitment to improving the outcomes for the children and young people who are looked after in Rhondda Cynon Taf.

In the 2022/23 Municipal Year, the Corporate Parenting Board will ensure that a full and varied work programme is set, which will focus on the above-mentioned reports, as well as any other topical or urgent business which may arise.

In summary, the Corporate Parenting Board will continue to benefit from strong membership with positive relationships between Councillors and Officers who will meet regularly throughout the year.

We will continue to seek the best possible outcomes for the children and young people in our care. Despite uncertain times and the national rise in the number of children who are becoming looked after, the Corporate Parenting Board and the Council as a whole are committed to its safeguarding duties.



## RHONDDA CYNON TAF COUNTY BOROUGH COUNCIL

### CORPORATE PARENTING BOARD

21<sup>st</sup> JULY 2022

### CHILDREN LOOKED AFTER PREVENTION STRATEGY

#### REPORT OF THE GROUP DIRECTOR, COMMUNITY AND CHILDREN'S SERVICES IN DISCUSSION WITH THE RELEVANT PORTFOLIO HOLDER, COUNCILLOR G CAPLE

**Author:** Annabel Lloyd, Director Children's Services

#### **1. PURPOSE OF THE REPORT**

- 1.1 This report supplies information to Corporate Parenting Board about Children's Services' progress with the looked After Prevention Strategy

#### **2. RECOMMENDATIONS**

It is recommended that the Corporate Parenting Board:

- 2.1 Note the information
- 2.2 Ask questions in pursuit of continuous improvement of outcomes for vulnerable children and their families.

#### **3. REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATIONS**

- 3.1 Under the Social Services and Well-Being Act (Wales) 2014, the Council has a duty to provide preventative family support services that promote family resilience and prevent family breakdown. In January 2022, Cabinet endorsed the updated Looked After Prevention Strategy, and the funding proposal that accompanies that and in February Scrutiny Committee received the report for scrutiny. The relevant links for those reports are added in here:

**Cabinet Report 27.01.2022, Link:**

<https://rctcbc.moderngov.co.uk/documents/s33221/LAC%20Prevention%20Strategy%202021-24.pdf?LLL=0>

**Scrutiny Report 16.02.2022, Link :**

<https://rctcbc.moderngov.co.uk/documents/s33751/CLA%20Prevention%20Strategy.pdf?LLL=0>

**4. BACKGROUND**

**4.1** In line with our statutory duties, Children’s Services identify the right to a family life as chief amongst our principles and values. Notwithstanding our important safeguarding duty, Children’s services are seeking to keep under review the services, processes, policy and practice that optimises our potential to safely avoid parent-child separation and enhance our family support meanwhile.

**4.2** In the prior Cabinet and Scrutiny reports, we have set out the detail of the mixed – method review that took place during 2021-2 leading to the development of our existing 3 year strategy. An update in relation to the 4 change areas can be found at xx

**4.2** Performance is being monitored, and RCT has moved from previously being the Council with the second highest rate of looked after children in Wales to being in 4<sup>th</sup> position from where we hope to see further progress. This is a difficult and sometimes unpredictable area of business for the Council, and we face the uncertainty of the post pandemic and cost of living impact for vulnerable families, however, it has been promising to see steady decline in the rate at which children become looked after in RCT. Staff have worked hard to embrace, implement and embed the public law reforms that see us working differently with families in the pre-public law phase of our work.

**4.3 RCT – Children Looked After Numbers**

Insert graph here

**4.4 Strategy progress update:**

Four Improvement and Development Areas	Progress / next steps
<p><b>1. <u>Model of Practice</u></b></p> <p>Development of a clear RCT practice model for social workers and allied staff working with families referred to Children’s Social Care for support, including to generate better engagement of families who are in ‘pre-contemplation’ (who have not yet come to the view that they need or want to change). This is a significant development and will require a step-change throughout</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• The post that will lead this work is out to advert</li></ul> <p><b><u>Next Steps:</u></b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Once the post holder is inducted, we will work with the staff participation group that has already been identified in order to review our library of evidence and build on the good practice that exists to document the RCT model of practice</li></ul>



<p>the service.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Identify a skill development partner</li> </ul>
<p><b>2. <u>Better Pre-birth Services</u></b></p> <p>Development of a Magu – including specific pathway and set of supports for families referred to Children’s Social Care during a pregnancy to enable earlier intervention with parents considered to be very vulnerable before the child is born.</p> <p>Linked with this, improvements to the support available to parents who have had a child removed from their care are also important.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A manager has been appointed who is finalising the team structure and operational processes ahead of recruitment</li> </ul> <p><b><u>Next Steps :</u></b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Commence operational delivery of pilot in Autumn A Regional Integrated Fund proposal has been submitted in relation to parental support</li> </ul>
<p><b>3. <u>Developing reunification</u></b></p> <p>Development of a more coherent and consistent approach to reunifying children home who have spent some time being looked after by the local authority.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Staff vacancies and increasing demand has meant that we need to pace the work whilst prioritising those areas where we can viable make progress</li> </ul> <p><b><u>Next Steps:</u></b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• By 30.12.22 we will have revised our arrangements</li> </ul>
<p><b>4. <u>Improve support for kinship carers and special guardians</u></b></p> <p>Strengthening of the support to be offered to children living with extended family - in kinship care and / or with a Special Guardian, including to their carers</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• We have established a contract with Kinship Cymru in order to extend support</li> <li>• Therapeutic Service called MAPPS is now operational</li> <li>• We have increased the staffing establishment that is available to support Special Guardians</li> </ul> <p><b><u>Next Steps</u></b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• We are reviewing the financial support for Special Guardians</li> </ul>

## **5 EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY IMPLICATIONS / SOCIO-ECONOMIC DUTY**

- 5.1 An Equality Impact Assessment has been carried out and the initial screening test has not identified any negative impacts. A fuller assessment will be carried out. All of the services identified here are

available to all families on a basis of risk and need irrespective of any protected characteristics.

- 5.2 The service and staff skill set will be attuned to reach families who most need the service and will do so in a way that over comes any socio - economic barrier. Supporting families to overcome barriers to improving well-being, accessing services and, where appropriate the workplace will be central to this work. Specifically, the service will seek to address and reverse any discrimination and stigmatisation experienced by parents who are in care and leaving care.

## **6 WELSH LANGUAGE IMPLICATIONS**

- 6.1 A Welsh Language Impact Assessment has been carried out and submitted for review. Recruitment will be carried out in compliance with the Welsh Language Standards, including seeking to appoint bi-lingual staff.

## **7 CONSULTATION / INVOLVEMENT**

- 7.1 Staff and parents with experience of the services took part in a focus group to inform the overall evaluation of the former looked after strategy.

## **8. FINANCIAL IMPLICATION(S)**

- 8.1 Financial modelling of the costs has been carried out, and the relationship between better outcomes for vulnerable children, safely reducing looked after populations and improved cost control is well established.
- 8.2 The proposals set out should provide a cost benefit (or cost avoidance) alongside improving the outcomes for young people. Financial modelling in this regard however is difficult and it is important that we evaluate the impact as the proposals are implemented given time to deliver intended outcomes. Nonetheless, the gap in service provision cannot be closed within existing resources without standing down other essential services, therefore additional investment has been supported.
- 8.3 Whilst the overall cost of the Magu proposal would amount to £418k, it is proposed that the team be incrementally stepped up, alongside ongoing prioritisation and evaluation to ensure that the identified outcomes are being realised and to provide some flexibility of approach. In this way, we can fund from existing one-off resources and pending evaluation of outcomes, can then transition and mainstream into the Councils base budget on a fully informed basis. Some parts of

the new service would need to be implemented in full immediately, such as the new model of practice and kinship carer/SGO support arrangements. The MAGU team can be introduced incrementally, and this approach may also be driven by constraints on available resources, particularly availability of qualified social workers.

- 8.4 Resources and flexibility provided by the Social Care Recovery Fund are available to supplement existing one-off resources to fund this in line with the aforementioned principles.

**9. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS OR LEGISLATION CONSIDERED**

The proposed development will see the Council enhance its potential to deliver against its prevention duty to families. There are no legal implications arising from this report.

**10. LINKS TO THE CORPORATE AND NATIONAL PRIORITIES AND THE WELL-BEING OF FUTURE GENERATIONS ACT.**

10.1 The implementation of the proposed changes to foster carer allowance allowances will make a positive contribution towards the Council's Corporate Plan Vision of *'a County Borough that has high aspirations, is confident and promotes opportunity for all'*; as it will deliver against the specific priorities of *'People - Promoting independence and positive lives for everyone and 'Place - Creating neighbourhoods where people are proud to live and work'*.

- 10.2 It will also help the Council to meet three of the seven wellbeing goals that The Well Being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015' puts in place as follows:

- A more equal Wales
- A healthier Wales
- A Wales of cohesive communities

- 10.3 The proposed changes are also consistent with the sustainable approach promoted by the Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act through the five ways of working:

- Long-term – the proposals seek to make a long-term difference to people's lives, the way we work with families and the Council's resources.
- Prevention – the proposal is fundamentally focused upon strengthening our prevention offer
- Integration – Partner organisations have been invited to join the steering group and will continue to be involved. Particularly

important in terms of integrating a seamless offer to vulnerable families with the Resilient Families Service, and Midwifery

- Collaboration – Families, and staff have been involved in the evaluation and proposal
- Involvement – Families, and staff have been involved in the evaluation and proposal

## **11. CONCLUSION**

- 11.1 An evaluation of the previous looked after children strategy has taken place leading to a new one with 4 improvement areas.
- 11.2 By implementing the Children Looked After Prevention Strategy, the Council is providing families with the strongest possible service model for reducing the risk of family breakdown and preventing avoidable entries to the looked after system.
- 11.3 Due to a combination of financial and capacity reasons we are phasing implementation.
- 11.4 Performance is promising and we will need to keep this under review.

**LOCAL GOVERNMENT ACT 1972**

**AS AMENDED BY**

**THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT (ACCESS TO INFORMATION) ACT 1985**

**RHONDDA CYNON TAF COUNTY BOROUGH COUNCIL**

**CORPORATE PARENTING BOARD**

**21<sup>st</sup> JULY 2022**

**REPORT OF GROUP DIRECTOR, COMMUNITY & CHILDREN'S  
SERVICES, IN DISCUSSION WITH THE RELEVANT PORTFOLIO  
HOLDER, COUNCILLOR G CAPLE**

**Officer to contact:** Annabel Lloyd

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## RHONDDA CYNON TAF COUNTY BOROUGH COUNCIL

### CORPORATE PARENTING BOARD

21<sup>st</sup> JULY 2022

### CHARTER FOR PARENTS IN CARE AND LEAVING CARE

#### REPORT OF THE GROUP DIRECTOR, COMMUNITY AND CHILDREN'S SERVICES IN DISCUSSION WITH THE RELEVANT PORTFOLIO HOLDER, COUNCILLOR G CAPLE

**Author:** Annabel Lloyd, Director Children's Services

#### 1. PURPOSE OF THE REPORT

- 1.1 This report supplies information to Corporate Parenting Board about the Charter for Parents in Care and Leaving Care.

#### 2. RECOMMENDATIONS

It is recommended that the Corporate Parenting Board:


- 2.1 Note the information
- 2.2 Decide that Rhondda Cynon Taf County Borough Council should sign up the Charter for Parents in Care and Leaving Care.

#### 3. REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATIONS

- 3.1 Under the Part 6 of the Social Services and Well-Being Act (Wales) 2014, the Council has a duty to continue to provide supportive services to looked after young people and care leavers, this includes supporting young people when they become a parent. Recent research has highlighted the experiences of care experienced young people and care leavers when they become parents and provided opportunities to improve services and approaches. This has given rise to the development of a charter by young people that outlines young people's expectations, in light of the learning from research, and the Council's duties.

#### 4. **BACKGROUND**

- 4.1 Cascade (Children's Social Care Research and development Centre at Cardiff University) has published research into the experiences of parents in care and leaving care. (The study can be found at: <https://cascadewales.org/first-signatories-for-innovative-charter-announced>.) The study found evidence highlighting the potential for stigma and discrimination, showing concerning levels of statutory intervention and separation, as well as variable support services. It concluded that urgent policy and practice attention was needed at national, local and individual levels to improve corporate parent support responses to parents in and leaving care.
- 4.2 The charter itself documents a promise of a fair and attuned supportive approach to parents who are in care or leaving care, and can be found below:

Charter for Parents in Care and Leaving Care	 Best-Practice-Charter.pdf
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- 4.3 A workshop took place on 4.7.22, the purpose of which was to assess the Council and stakeholder's readiness to deliver under the Charter's 4 areas. The workshop was attended by representatives from:
- An RCT care experienced young person supported by Voices from Care Cymru
  - Corporate Parenting Board
  - Children's Services
  - Education
  - Care2Work
  - Resilient Families Services
  - University Health Board
  - Project Unity
  - Cascade
- 4.4 At the workshop presentations were received from stake holders ahead of reflective group discussions that made recommendations about our next steps in achieving better compliance to the Charter. Some case studies had been prepared which demonstrate positive outcomes for parents and children. However, the most poignant section of the workshop was the contribution from an RCT care experienced parent who gave a breakdown of the strengths and weaknesses of her recent experience of our services which is summarised below and provides focus for our next steps:



- A referral was made when the parent became pregnant. She had been a 'partying teenager' until she became pregnant when she said that stopped;
- The parent's experience was that her Midwife informed her that the referral about her baby was made because she was a care leaver;
- The professionals assessing the needs of the baby and the subsequent Child Protection Conference considered information about the parent's own parent that she felt was not relevant to her as a parent. The parent's experience was that not enough weight was afforded to the information shared by professionals who knew her well, and who she felt trusted her commitment to the baby and being a good parent;
- The decision was made to add the baby's name to the Child Protection Register at birth. The parent explained why this was intensely anxiety provoking, and the subsequent visiting by professionals, made an already stressful time more difficult.
- The baby's name came off the Child Protection Register at the first Review (3months) and mother and baby are doing well. The parent is committed to taking part in changes that improve others' experiences
- The parent explained that positive and consistent support from 16+ staff throughout made a real difference

4.5 Overall, participants agreed that the Council and partners were well placed to deliver on the commitments in the workshop with the following developments as necessary to enhance delivery:

Charter Commitment	Next Steps
1. Before You Become a Parent	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A further workshop will take place similar to that of 4.7.22 involving practitioners and IROs as an opportunity to share the learning from the research, refresh awareness about the services that are available and develop a 12 minute guide for practice under the Charter</li> </ul>
2. When You are Expecting a Child or Become a Parent	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Workshop as above</li> <li>• Full implementation of Magu ( a new intensive service that will support families expecting a child with a view to safely preventing child-parent separation)</li> <li>• Practitioners should support young people to get a break</li> </ul>
3. Challenging Stigma and Discrimination	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Workshop as above</li> </ul>

<p>4. If you are Living Apart from Children</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Workshop as above</li> <li>• Develop a support role as part of Magu for parents who are separated from their children. A Regional Integration Fund proposal is in place with a view to enhancing support for parents who are at risk of parent-child separation</li> </ul>
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## **5.0 QUALITY AND DIVERSITY IMPLICATIONS / SOCIO-ECONOMIC DUTY**

5.1 An Equality Impact Assessment has not been carried out so far.

## **6 WELSH LANGUAGE IMPLICATIONS**

6.1 A Welsh Language Impact Assessment has not been carried out.

## **7 CONSULTATION / INVOLVEMENT**

7.1 Staff and parents with experience of the services took part in the research and the workshop on 4.7.22.

## **8. FINANCIAL IMPLICATION(S)**

8.1 There are no additional costs with signing up to the charter. one-off resources to fund this in line with the aforementioned principles.

## **9. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS OR LEGISLATION CONSIDERED**

The proposed development will see the Council enhance its potential to deliver against its prevention duty to families. There are no legal implications arising from this report.

## **10. LINKS TO THE CORPORATE AND NATIONAL PRIORITIES AND THE WELL-BEING OF FUTURE GENERATIONS ACT.**

10.1 The implementation of the proposed changes to foster carer allowance allowances will make a positive contribution towards the Council's Corporate Plan Vision of *'a County Borough that has high aspirations, is confident and promotes opportunity for all'*; as it will deliver against the specific priorities of *'People - Promoting*

*independence and positive lives for everyone and 'Place - Creating neighbourhoods where people are proud to live and work'.*

10.2 It will also help the Council to meet three of the seven wellbeing goals that The Well Being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015' puts in place as follows:

- A more equal Wales
- A healthier Wales
- A Wales of cohesive communities

10.3 The proposed changes are also consistent with the sustainable approach promoted by the Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act through the five ways of working:

- Long-term – the proposals seek to make a long-term difference to people's lives, the way we work with families and the Council's resources.
- Prevention – the proposal is fundamentally focused upon strengthening our prevention offer
- Integration – Partner organisations have been invited to join the steering group and will continue to be involved. Particularly important in terms of integrating a seamless offer to vulnerable families with the Resilient Families Service, and Midwifery
- Collaboration – Families, and staff have been involved in the evaluation and proposal
- Involvement – Families, and staff have been involved in the evaluation and proposal

## **11. CONCLUSION**

11.1 Research has found a need to develop practice and services for parents who are in care or leaving care, and a best practice charter has been developed as a result.

11.2 A workshop has taken place to assess the potential to deliver against the commitments and further development work is planned to address those areas.

11.3 A recommendation has been made that the Council sign up to the Charter and keep this area of business under review with a view to continuous improvement.

**LOCAL GOVERNMENT ACT 1972**

**AS AMENDED BY**

**THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT (ACCESS TO INFORMATION) ACT 1985**

**RHONDDA CYNON TAF COUNTY BOROUGH COUNCIL**

**CORPORATE PARENTING BOARD**

**21<sup>ST</sup> JULY 2022**

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**Officer to contact: Annabel Lloyd**

## RHONDDA CYNON TAF COUNTY BOROUGH COUNCIL

### CORPORATE PARENTING BOARD

21<sup>ST</sup> JULY 2022

#### TROS GYNNAL PLANT (TGP) CYMRU UPDATE

#### 1. **PURPOSE OF THE REPORT**

- 1.1 The purpose of the report is to provide the Board with an update of progress made by Tros Gynnal Plant (TGP) Cymru.

#### 2. **RECOMMENDATIONS**

It is recommended that the Corporate Parenting Board:

- 2.1 Acknowledge the work undertaken by TGP Cymru, the content of which is attached at Appendix 1.

#### 3. **REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATIONS**

- 3.1 It is important for Members to note the progress, themes and issues highlighted by the TGP Cymru, in order to work in partnership to ensure the best possible outcomes are reached for those in our care system.

#### 4. **BACKGROUND**

- 4.1 As part of the Board's Terms of reference, TGP Cymru are invited to attend meetings to enable both the TGP Cymru and Children Services to discuss issues that affect service delivery in the community on a strategic level and to work in partnership to provide improved and better outcomes.

#### 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 There is no consultation required for this report.

## **7. FINANCIAL IMPLICATION(S)**

7.1 There are no financial implications aligned to this report.

## **8. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS OR LEGISLATION CONSIDERED**

8.1 There are no legal implications aligned to this report.

## **9. LINKS TO THE COUNCILS CORPORATE PLAN / OTHER CORPORATE PRIORITIES/ FUTURE GENERATIONS – SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT.**

9.1 The work of the Corporate Parenting Board links directly to the Council's Corporate Plan priority – 'Rhondda Cynon Taf's Children will receive a great start in life...'

9.2 The work of TGP Cymru links to the Future Generations Well-Being Goal of a more equal Wales, by ensuring that children and young people are supported when decisions are being made about them. This ensures that young people have access to a range of information in order to fulfil their potential.

9.3 In addition to the duty to listen to young people and involve them in decisions, the Part 10 Code of Practice (Advocacy) of the Social Services and Well-being (Wales) Act 2014 sets out the duties to consider the provision of independent professional advocacy in certain circumstances for:

- Children who are looked after (who should benefit from an active offer of professional independent advocacy) or have previously been looked after
- Children who are subject to an assessment of need or a care and support plan or child protection enquiries

## **10. CONCLUSION**

10.1 TGP Cymru are invited to attend meetings of the Corporate Parenting Board, to provide a broader understanding and contribution into the services available to young people and vulnerable adults.

## National Approach to Statutory Advocacy

### Local Authority Report - RCT - 2021 - 2022

#### Collated Quarterly Report

#### Quarter 4: Jan - Mar 2022

#### Headline Report

During quarter four, 43 young people accessed the Issue Based Advocacy (IBA) service, presenting with 59 issues. This is a 34% percent increase when compared to quarter three. Active Offer (AO) referrals also increased slightly with 14 young people referred in this quarter, two more than in the previous quarter. 10 young people went on to receive issue-based advocacy following their AO meeting. Of those young people accessing the issue based service, 53% were accessing advocacy for the first time. It is possible that some of this number is made up by young people who did not access the AO service when they became eligible.

#### Active Offer

According to information received from RCT, 104 children and young people became eligible for the Active Offer during the quarter:

CP:	5-9 yrs x 55	10 - 15 yrs x 32	16+ yrs x 7
CLA:	5-9 yrs x 5	10 - 15 yrs x 1	16+ yrs x 4

A total of 62 children and young people rejected the offer of an Active Offer meeting when it was suggested by their social worker, and 19 accepted.

Four young people were recorded as rejecting the AO without a reason. Either there was no information recorded in the reason column, or the reason recorded was 'child refused' or something similar.

Some 58 young people rejected the offer to meet with an advocate with a recorded reason. The most common reasons were:

27 said they would prefer to speak to a family member, social worker or other professional.

14 young people felt they can express themselves or don't have a need for advocacy.

Six said they didn't want to speak to anyone.

Five said they would prefer to speak to their social worker.

Three young people's social worker felt they didn't understand.

Two young people were already working with allocated advocates.

One young person wasn't offered the AO as he was only looked after for three nights.

It is unclear how the remaining 23 young people responded to the discussion with their social worker, although again we note that the majority of these young people are included in the most recent report, indicating information about how most of the 23 young people responded to the discussion with their social worker will be available at a later date.

Of the 19 young people who accepted the AO on the spreadsheet, ten were referred. Three young people became eligible in the previous quarter and were referred in quarter four, and one young person was referred for AO in quarter four but did not feature on the spreadsheets provided for either quarter three or four.

**Headline Report Cont'd**

A further eight young people are recorded as accepting the offer of an Active Offer meeting when discussed with their social worker but to date we have not had referrals for these young people.

One young person who accepted the offer was referred in April and will be counted in the next quarterly report. This results in 14 AO referrals in quarter four.

Of the 14 AO referrals received, young people in the Child Protection (CP) arena made up 79%. Only three Children Looked After (CLA) were referred for AO compared to six in the previous quarter when young people in the CP area and CLA were referred in equal numbers. For the first time this year, the majority of young people referred for AO were aged between 12-16 while there was a slight decrease in referrals for those aged between six and eleven. Females made up 71% of young people referred for AO, an increase on the previous quarter when males and females were referred in equal numbers.

64% of Active Offer meetings took place within five working days of the referral being made. One young person changed their mind before meeting with an advocate. The referral forms for two young people contained incorrect contact details which meant the AO meeting took place later than planned. One young person had to wait for their Covid-19 isolation to end before receiving their preferred face-to-face visit. Another initial visit was delayed because carers had requested a home visit rather than a school visit for a young person with limited verbal communication but were unable to accommodate the advocate for several weeks following the referral.

**Issue Based Advocacy**

Advocates worked with six young people living outside of RCT. Areas include Hereford, Pontypool, Swansea, Caerphilly and Cardiff.

Of the 43 referred, 16 young people were CLA, 26 young people were CP, and one was a care leaver. This represents a continuation of most young people receiving issue based advocacy being in the CP arena. The gender split saw 21 girls, 21 boys and one gender neutral young person accessing the issue based service, this is the first time this year that girls haven't made up the majority of young people referred and represents a 62% increase in males accessing the issue-based service compared to quarter three.

The age category with the highest referral rate continues to be the 06-11 group with 23, followed by the 12-16 age group with 12. Both age groups saw an increase in referrals during quarter four. Three young people over the age of 16 also received issue-based advocacy.

Social services made issue-based advocacy referrals for 15 young people during this quarter, four more than in the previous quarter. Most issue-based referrals (23) were made by young people directly. This is usually a result of young people accepting the Active Offer, or young people who have previously used the service contacting their advocate directly to access the advocacy service for a new issue. Three young people were referred by third sector organisations, including two referrals made by TGP Cymru's Restorative Approaches and Family Group Meeting Service.

Meetings continue to be the largest issue advocates support young people with, with support at meetings making up 39 of the 59 issues referred. The most popular meeting young people wanted help to share wishes and feelings at was a Core Group meeting. Young people were also referred for support with CLA reviews, case conference, and family group conferences.

In quarter four, Advocates attended all or part of 40 meetings either with or on behalf of young people in RCT. This includes 14 Core Group Meetings, 13 CLA Reviews and eight Case Conferences.

88% of young people accessing the issue based service met with their advocate within five working days of the referral being made.

Two young people asked the advocate to postpone the visit until just before an upcoming meeting, one young person was in an exam when the advocate arrived to conduct the visit at school and another changed their mind about advocacy support before the visit took place. Another visit has been delayed because the advocate has been unable to reach the young person with the contact details provided and is seeking the support of the referrer to make contact.



**Visiting Advocacy**

Visiting Advocacy continues in five Local Authority community homes across RCT. Face-to-face visits have continued on a monthly basis in Bryndar and Beddau and started in Ty Brynna. The remaining two homes, Carn Ingli and Nantygwyn have advised monthly visits may not be appropriate following the break due to the pandemic and requested the advocate visits every two months instead.

**Service Information**

On January 31<sup>st</sup> the TGP Cymru quarter three progress report was presented at the RCT Corporate Parenting Board meeting. In mid-February, 450 TGP Cymru Advocacy leaflets were sent out along with a survey for Children Looked After in RCT. On February the 28<sup>th</sup> the TGP Cymru quarter three progress report was presented at the RCT Children Looked After Quality Assurance Panel (CLAQAP) meeting.

On March 16<sup>th</sup> the team manager attended a Basic Income Pilot stakeholder meeting and will continue to be involved in future consultation. This will ensure TGP Cymru advocates are able appropriately support young people involved in the pilot.

Plans are in place for the team manager to attend the fostering team meeting at the beginning of April and will offer to visit more RCT team meetings throughout quarter one.

We are also in the process of developing two presentations. The first aims to raise awareness of TGP Cymru services in general. The second will focus on the Active Offer, and aims to support front line practitioners, specifically social workers to promote the Active Offer to eligible young people and their carers.

We have continued to implement and adapt a new consultation process. The process has recently been expanded to allow the quality assurance officer to contact some young people by phone at the end of the quarter in order to give them the opportunity to provide feedback with a degree of separation from their advocate but without the effort of having to fill in and post the feedback form themselves. We will continue to amend the system to allow as many young people as possible to independently evaluate the service.

In quarter four, six young people either posted a feedback form or gave feedback to the quality assurance officer over the phone.

Five stated they found the service helpful, three felt the service made a difference to their situation, three felt more confident since receiving support, five felt more included in decisions and five felt their views were fully considered. All six young people providing feedback stated they would use the service again.

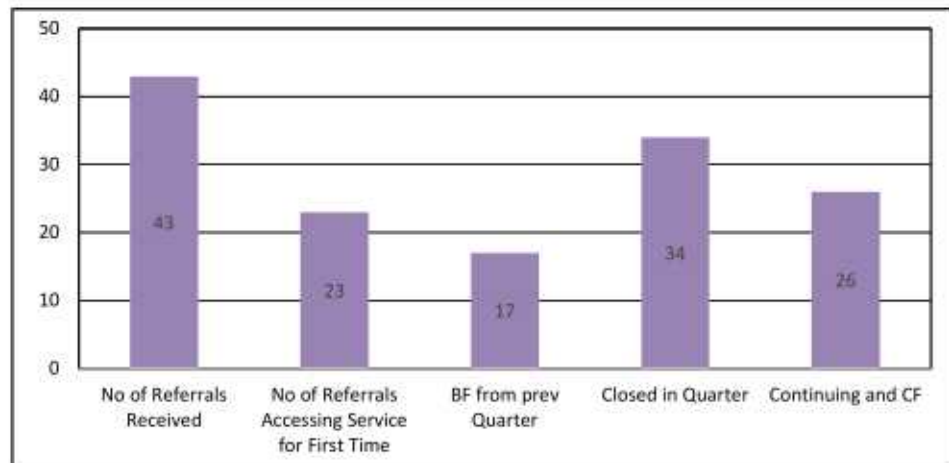
**Case Example** (names have been changed to maintain anonymity)

**Situation:** Joe is a 12 year old boy who lives in a private out of county residential placement. Joe had accessed advocacy several times before, and had requested a visit from his previous advocate, with whom he has worked with on and off for the past three years. Joe asked for the visit just a few days before his CLA Review took place. Joe is described by his social worker as having complex needs based on his low cognitive ability.

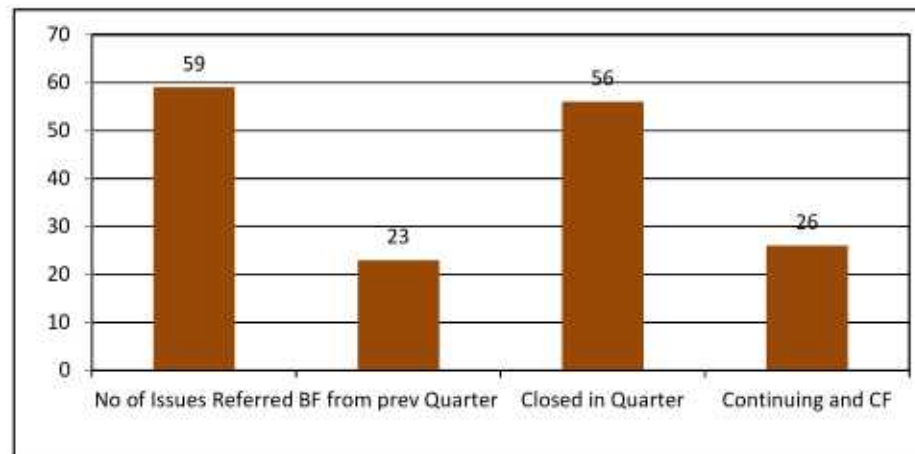
**Action:** Despite the short notice, the advocate was able to visit Joe the day after the referral was made. When the advocate arrived, he had Joe discussed what he would like to share at his CLA Review. Joe played on his games console as he chatted to the advocate, and the advocate remembered from previous visits that this helped Joe to feel comfortable and made it easier for him to share his thoughts. Joe asked the advocate to share that he was feeling stressed and upset every few days in placement. Joe said he wasn't sure why, but there was one particular staff member that helped him to feel better. Joe also told the advocate that he gets really excited when a new young person arrives at placement but can act mean without meaning to. The advocate wrote up Joe's wishes and feelings and emailed them to the IRO to be shared at the meeting.

**Outcome:** Joe's wishes and feelings were shared at the meeting, at which staff felt it was very positive that Joe recognised he was feeling stressed and upset, and had identified a staff member he who was able to help him. As a result of Joe sharing his wishes and feelings, staff at the home are able to put support mechanisms in place when Joe needs it most, such as when a new young person arrives and also provide more one-to-one sessions with the staff member Joe identified as being helpful.

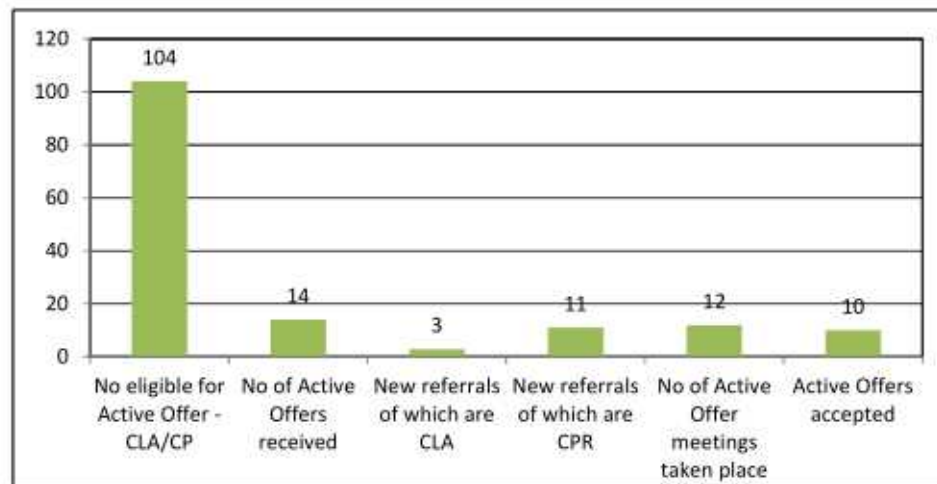
**1a. Advocacy Cases - Young People - Issue Based Advocacy**



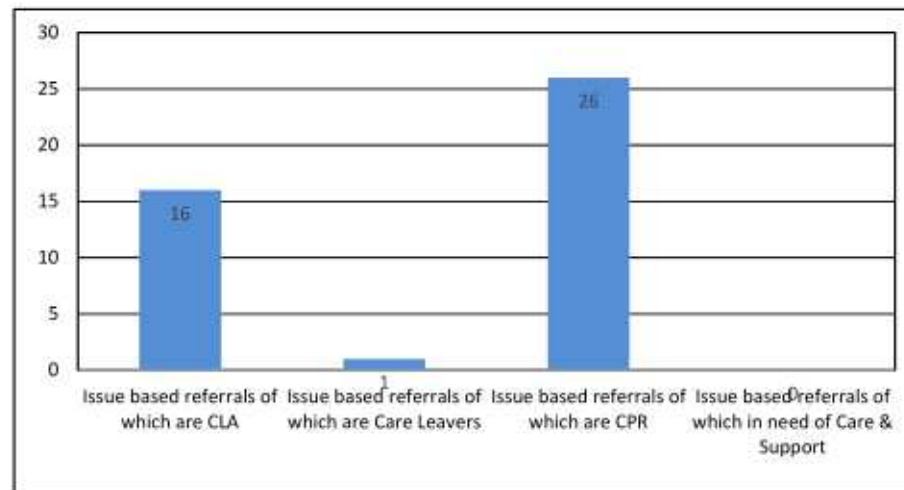
**1b. Advocacy Cases - Interventions - Issue Based Advocacy**



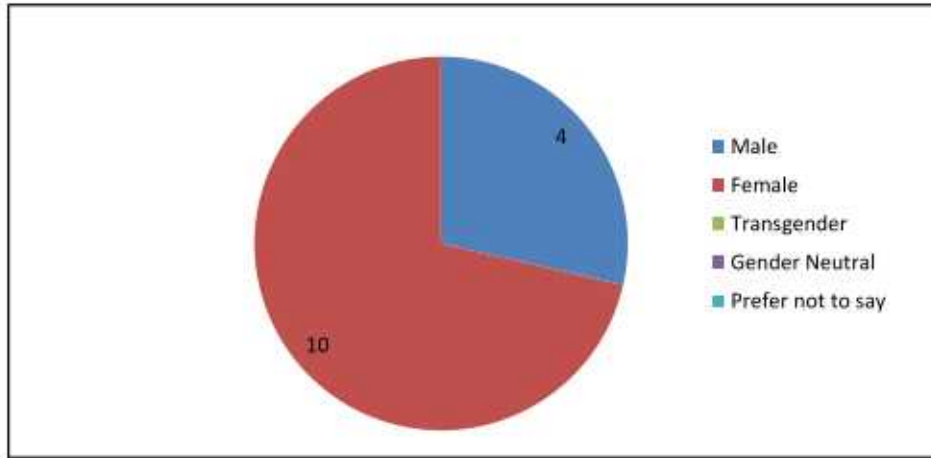
**2a. Eligibility Criteria: Active Offer**



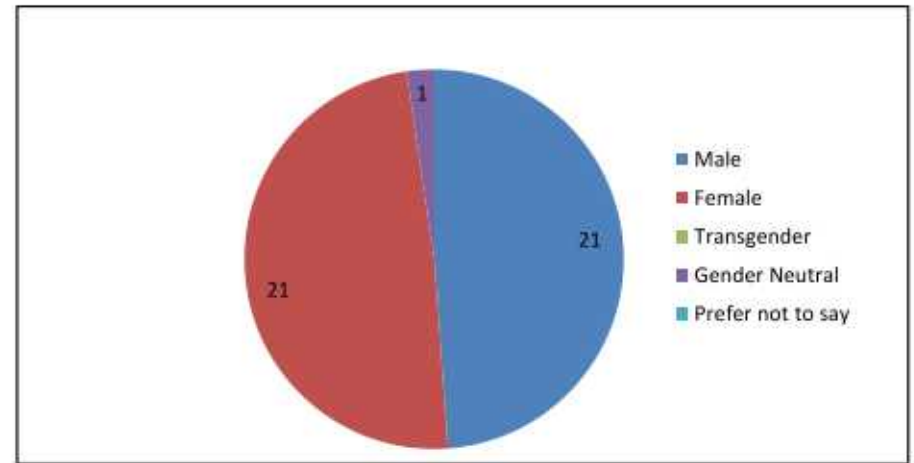
**2b. Eligibility Criteria: Issue Based**



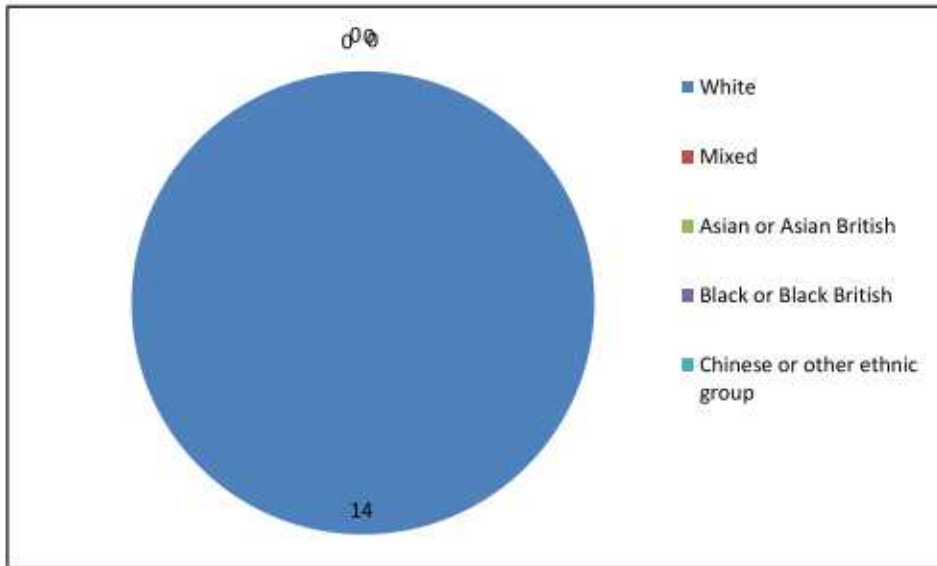
3a. Demographics: Gender - Active Offer



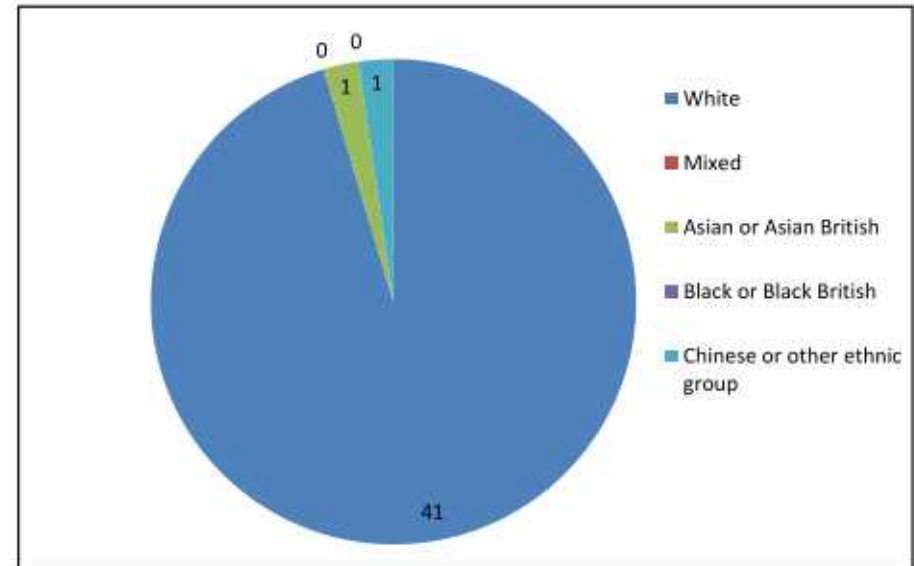
3b. Demographics: Gender - Issue Based



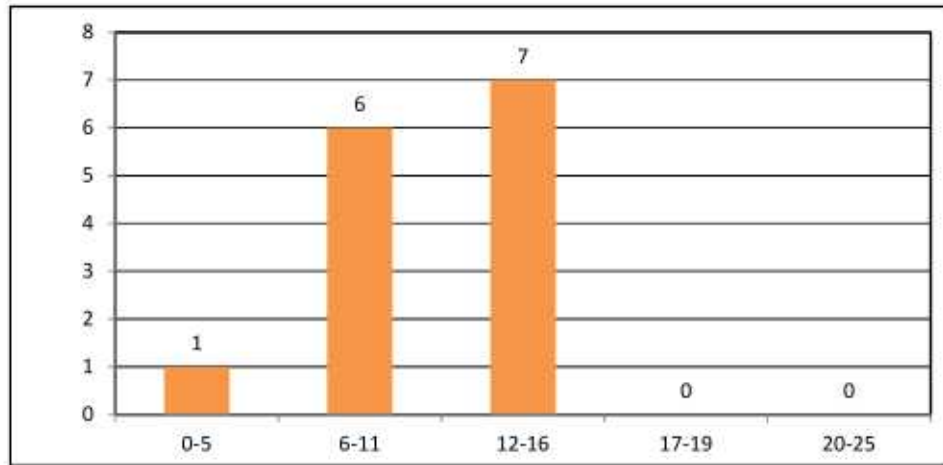
3c. Demographics: Ethnicity - Active Offer



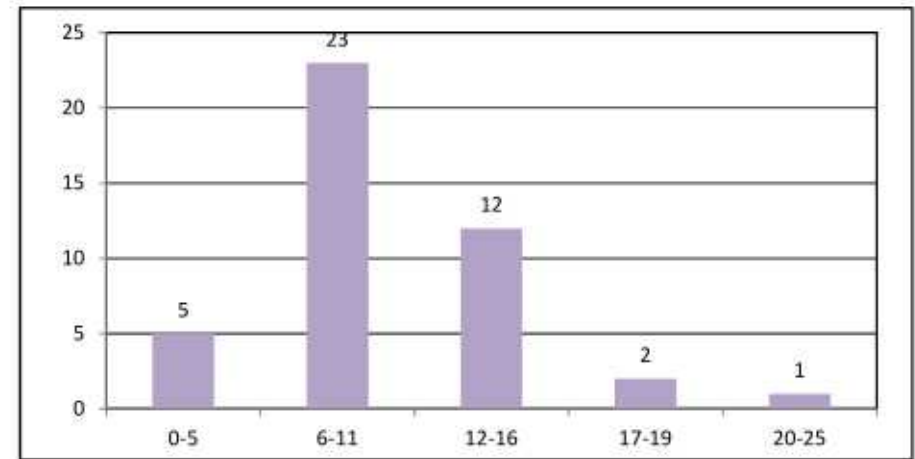
3d. Demographics: Ethnicity - Issue Based



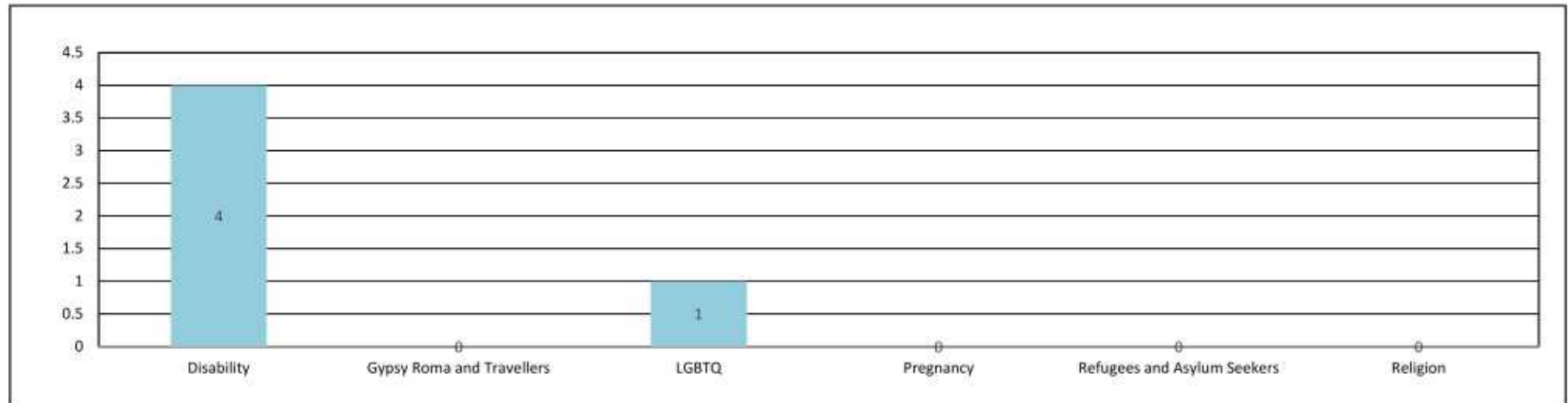
### 3e. Demographics: Age - Active Offer



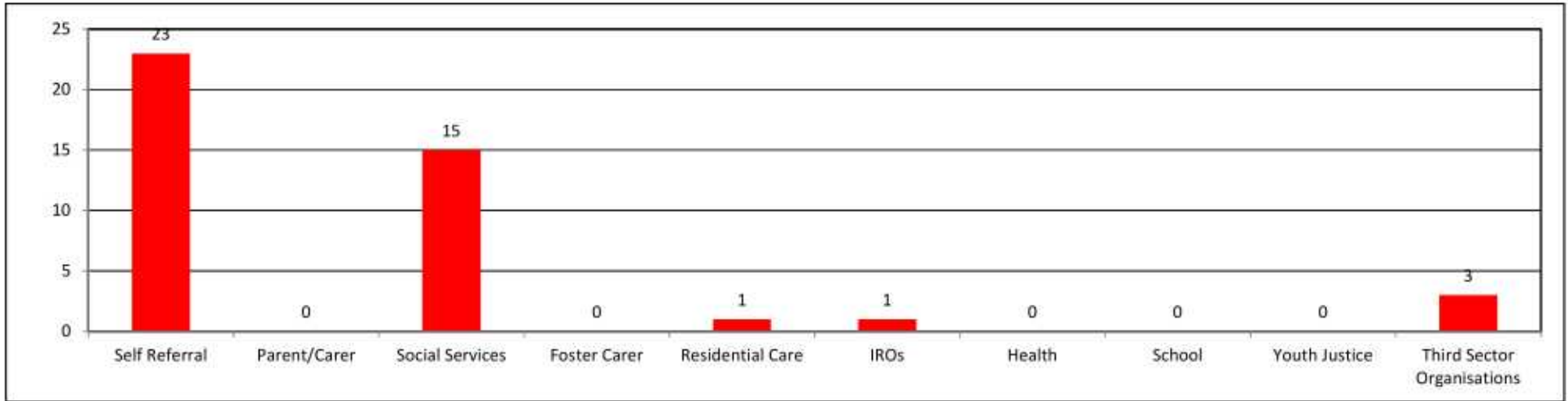
### 3f. Demographics: Age - Issue Based



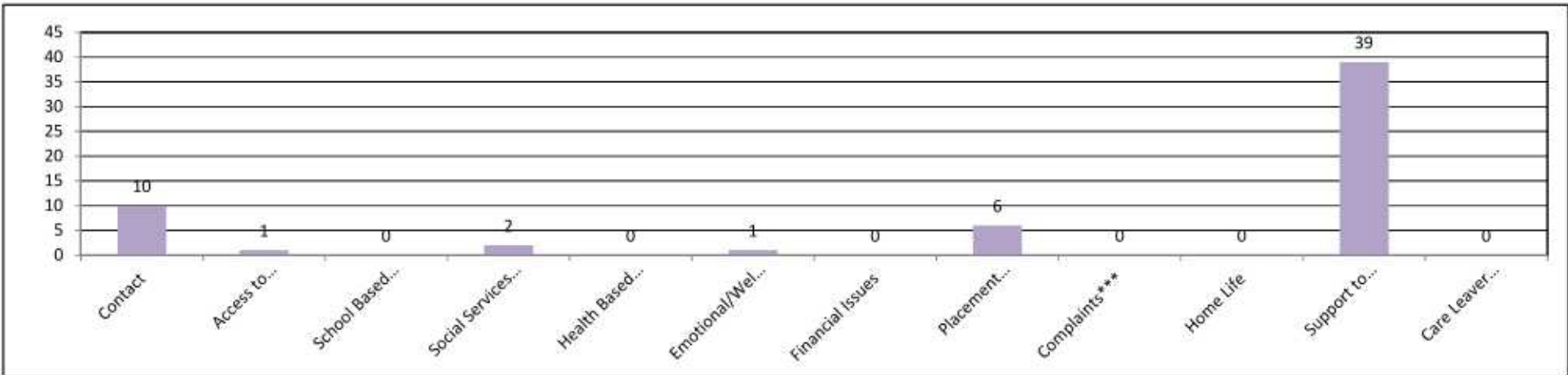
### 4. Protected Characteristics



**5. Referral Source per young person - Issue Based only**



**6. Issues Presented**

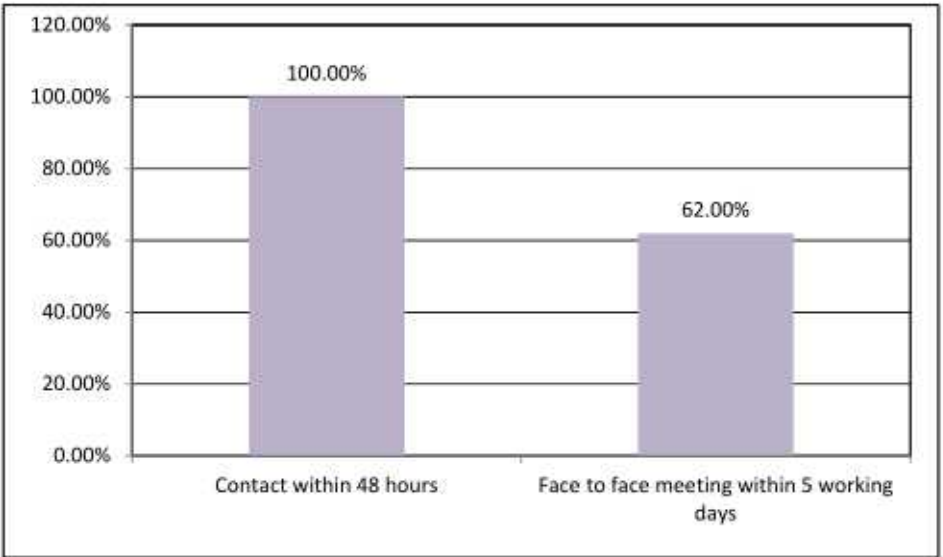


\* School based issues including: SEN/ALN, exclusions, bullying, transport.

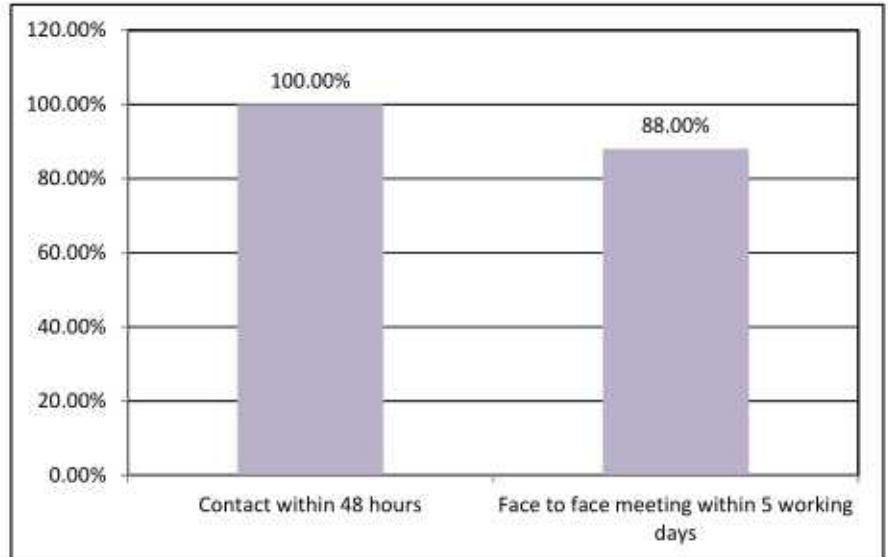
\*\* Social Services based issues including: relationship with worker, care plan, service provided.

\*\*\* Complaints refer to any complaints made against statutory services, including Social Service, Police, Health, YJS

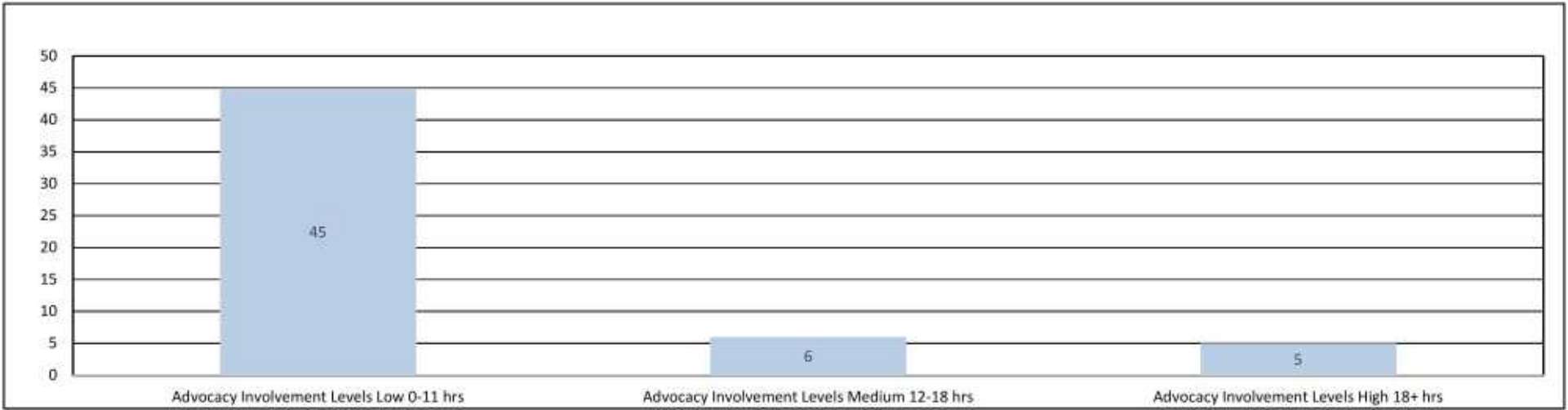
### 7. Service Performance - Active Offer



### Service Performance - Issue Based



### 8. Level of Advocacy Intervention at point of Issue Closure



## 9.Outcomes: linked to The National Advocacy Standards & Outcomes Framework

		Comments
Outcome 1	<b>Children and young people find good quality independent advocacy easily available and accessible.</b>	<p>The increase in Covid-19 did affect the ability of the advocates to visit some young people referred for AO at the beginning of January. Across the two service areas 75% of young people had contact with their advocate within five working days of referral.</p> <p>Advocates continue to support young people placed out of county, both virtually and in person if requested.</p> <p>The advocacy service was promoted in an IRO team meeting on the 2nd of February, following a meeting with the IRO team manager the previous week. A short film about advocacy made by young people was also shared.</p>
Outcome 2	<b>Children and young people have their privacy and confidences respected and their wellbeing safeguarded and protected.</b>	<p>In quarter four, the majority of direct work with young people took place during face-to-face visits, and we anticipate this will continue despite also offering virtual contact to those young people who prefer to engage over the phone or via a video call.</p> <p>Advocates remain flexible and led by young people when arranging face-to-face or virtual contact. Advocates always endeavour to provide privacy when arranging to meet with a young person but will remain flexible if the young person is insisting on someone they know being present.</p>
Outcome 3	<b>Children and young people are valued for their diversity, treated with respect and all forms of discrimination against them are challenged.</b>	<p>During this quarter, four disabled young people received issue-based advocacy. Three young people have ADHD, two have additional learning needs, and one is dyslexic. Two of the four are also currently going through the assessment process for ASD.</p> <p>One young person defining as LGBTQ was referred for issue-based advocacy in this quarter.</p> <p>Advocates always endeavour to allow young people to lead in terms of how they engage with the advocacy service.</p>
Outcome 4	<b>Children and young people are empowered to take the lead in relation to advocacy services and their rights, wishes and feelings and championed.</b>	<p>Young people consistently tell us they feel empowered to speak up for themselves following advocacy intervention and advocates always encourage young people to speak for themselves when they feel able to do so.</p> <p>When explaining why they found the service helpful on their feedback form, one young person wrote <i>"Because I know she is going to help me, to get all my feelings and worries from me."</i> They also said they felt more included in decisions <i>"because I have an extra person to help me"</i>.</p>

<p><b>Outcome 5</b></p>	<p><b>Children and young people participate in the design, planning, delivery, monitoring and evaluation of advocacy services.</b></p>	<p>CTM Advocacy service has now identified a 'participation lead' who will be responsible for keeping up to date with participation and consultation opportunities and support young people to share views about how the service is delivered. Currently, young people across CTM are being offered the opportunity to be consulted on mental health services, specifically transitions from children to adult services. One young person has already agreed to take part.</p> <p>All young people who have received advocacy will continue to be asked for feedback in order for TGP Cymru to monitor the services provided and make improvements where needed. One young person advised they were unhappy about not being invited to a meeting. As a result, all advocates will now discuss young people's expectations about attending meetings at the beginning of the advocacy relationship.</p>
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