



RHONDDA CYNON TAF COUNCIL CORPORATE PARENTING BOARD

Minutes of the meeting of the Corporate Parenting Board held on Tuesday, 18 October 2022 at 2.30 pm at the Virtual.

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

Councillor G Caple (Chair)

Councillor R Lewis Councillor C Leyshon
Councillor S Rees

Officers in attendance

Mr P Mee, Group Director Community & Children's Services
Ms A Lloyd, Service Director, Children's Services
Ms C Miles, Childcare Solicitor
Ms J Thomas, Complaints & QA Manager, Social Services
Ms H Bevan, Education Co-ordinator for Looked After Children
Ms M Meredith, Residential Services Manager
Ms N Katchi - Graduate Officer
Ms M Davies - TGP

Others in attendance

Ms S Burford – Regional Lead, PDG CLA
Ms L Harper – Voices from Care Cymru
Young Person – Voices from Care Cymru

1 Welcome and Apologies

The Chair welcomed Members and Officers to the meeting of the Corporate Parenting Board and took the opportunity to pay his condolences to the late Councillor Burnell.

Apologies for absence were received from County Borough Councillors J. Bonetto, S. Evans and S. Trask.

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 14th March 2022.

4 Participation Update For Care Experienced Children and Young People and Voices from Care Cymru Update

The Graduate Officer for Participation provided Corporate Parenting Board with an update in respect of RCT Children's Services' engagement activities.

The update included information in respect of:

- a recent participation event held on the 1st September 2022 with children looked after at Pontypridd Museum;
- a Children's Services survey of care experienced children and young people which would be running to mid October 2022; and
- a care experienced summit on Saturday 10th September with Welsh Ministers to work with children and young people across local authorities in Wales to develop radical reform for children looked after.

In addition to the update, an officer and young person from Voices from Care Cymru were in attendance and provided Members with an update on the work undertaken to support care-experienced young people in Rhondda Cynon Taf. The young person provided the Board with details of recent projects undertaken with VFCC, which included a mental health and wellbeing initiative, a mini sports day and a consultation meeting on the ambitions for 16+. The Young Person informed Members of an upcoming Wales Wide summit meeting, which would allow care-experienced young people to have conversations with Ministers about improvements to services.

One Member spoke positive of the Engagement event and commented that the slides used were colourful and engaging for the young people. The Member thanked the young person for sharing her experiences and emphasised the importance of the views of young people shaping decisions which influence them.

Another Member echoed previous comments and took the opportunity to thank the young person for attending the meeting and extended her gratitude to the 16+ officer for supporting the young people.

The Chair thanked the participants for their presentation and praised the young person for her contribution. The Chair added that it was pleased to note how such services can improve the confidence of young people.

The Corporate Parenting Board **RESOLVED:**

1. To note the information in the report; and
2. That Rhondda Cynon Taf County Borough Council should sign up the Charter for Parents in Care and Leaving Care.

5 Corporate Parenting Board Work Programme

The Senior Executive and Regulatory Business Officer provided the Corporate Parenting Board with a summary of the draft work programme for the 2022-2023 Municipal Year. Alongside the regular annual updates, many of the topics for consideration within the Programme had been identified by Members at previous meetings.

The officer explained that the Work Programme was a fluid document that could be amended to reflect any changes to business needs throughout the year.

The Corporate Parenting Board **RESOLVED:**

1. To provide comment as appropriate on the draft Work Programme; and
2. To approve the draft work programme as a basis, which can be amended to reflect any changing priorities throughout the year.

6 Corporate Parenting Board Annual Report 2021-22

The Senior Executive and Regulatory Business Officer provided the Corporate Parenting Board with the Corporate Parenting Board Annual Report for the 2021-2022 Municipal Year. The report covered the breadth of work considered by the Board during the year; and put forward the items identified for future consideration.

The officer reminded Members that if approved, the report would be presented to Cabinet.

The Chair thanked the officer for the report and the Corporate Parenting Board

RESOLVED:

1. To provide comment as appropriate on the draft Annual Report before its presentation to Cabinet.

7 Children Looked After Prevention Strategy

The Service Director of Children's Services provided the Corporate Parenting Board with information in respect of the Children's Services' progress with the looked After Prevention Strategy; a report which had previously been considered by Scrutiny and approved by Cabinet in January 2022.

The Director provided information on the four significant areas of improvement identified within the report and ensured Members that officers were already working on implementing them. The Director spoke of the ambition to increase the evidence based family support and to work towards keeping families safely together, when appropriate.

The Corporate Parenting Board **RESOLVED:**

1. To note the information in the report.

8 Charter for Parents in Care and Leaving Care

The Service Director of Children's Services provided the Corporate Parenting Board with information in respect of the Charter for Parents in Care and Leaving Care.

The Service Director spoke of the rationale for the Charter and the focus group, which took place in July 2022 with both professionals and care experienced young people in attendance. The Service Director also took the opportunity to thank County Borough Councillor S. Rees for her involvement in the group.

The Service Director provided information on the four areas of the Charter and the next steps to ensure compliance goes beyond just signing up and has meaningful impact on vulnerable young people.

One Member was pleased to note that in addition to reaching out to parents, the Charter was pro-active in targeting young people expecting to be parents.

Another Member spoke positive of the focus group in June and questioned how officers intend to measure the effectiveness of the Charter going forward. The Service Director advised that data was already indicating small improvements and as such, there had been an improvement in the rate at which children become looked after under three years and under one year. The Service Director also spoke of positive progress of the Magu Team, which was a specific targeted service to support the most vulnerable of parents and those parents most at risk of child separation. The Service Director advised that, subject to the view of the Chair, future reports would be brought to the Corporate Parenting Board in terms of performance data and the progress of the Magu Service.

The Corporate Parenting Board **RESOLVED:**

1. To note the information in the report;
2. That Rhondda Cynon Taf County Borough Council should sign up the Charter for Parents in Care and Leaving Care; and
3. A future reports would be brought to the Corporate Parenting Board in terms of performance data and the progress of the Magu Service.

9 Tros Gynnal Plant (TGP) Cymru

Tros Gynnal Plant Cymru provided the Corporate Parenting Board with the progress made by the service from January-June 2022.

Members were informed that during quarter one (April-June 2022), 48 young people accessed the issue-based service with 61 issues and 19 referred for the active offer. In terms of Children Looked After, 13 young people were eligible and 4 were referred, all of which accepted the offer. The officer advised that 75% were met within 5 working days of the initial referral and explained that the delay in one case was the need to organise interpreters.

The officer went onto speak of the systems in place to monitor how the active offer is received by the young people. It was explained that data was available to monitor the young people receiving the offer and why some were choosing to reject it.

In respect of issue-based referrals, 22 young people had been referred with 26 issues, along with two care leavers with 3 issues. Members were informed that a lot of work had been undertaken in improving the recording systems to find out more about what is being said within the meetings.

The officer noted that the report contained a lot of information on child protection data and suggested that, moving forward, smaller reports would be produced specifically around the Children Looked After, to which Members agreed.

The Chair thanked Tros Gynnal Plant Cymru for the informative report and emphasised the importance of the advocacy service for young people.

The Corporate Parenting Board **RESOLVED:**

1. To note the content of the report.

10 Pupil Deprivation Grant

The Education Co-ordinator for Children Looked After and the Regional Lead for the Pupil Development Grant for Looked After Children (PDG CLA) provided the Corporate Parenting Board with an update on the evaluation of the school cluster model for the PDG CLA funding during the financial year 2020/21 and 2021/22 in Rhondda Cynon Taf.

The Chair thanked the officers for the comprehensive report and commented that it was testament to the work undertaken post-covid to help young people to thrive.

In respect of the Virtual School Model, one Member noted the positive progress being made and questioned how good practice was shared amongst schools, particularly in primary schools. The Regional Lead advised that although the project was a pilot, officers were working closely together and enthusiastic to monitor its progress but advised that the officer within Welsh Government who introduced the model had recently left post, which had delayed matters. The Regional Lead spoke of plans to work in two schools within the County Borough, where the impact of Covid had been a detriment to exclusion numbers. Members were informed that the intention was to undertake the project and evaluate its success. In addition, the Regional Lead spoke of implementing peer lead initiatives which would see the older children working with younger children through the PSE provision or the health and wellbeing curriculum.

The Chair thanked the officers for the update and requested that an update report is presented to a future meeting of the Board.

The Corporate Parenting Board **RESOLVED:**

1. To consider the information contained with the report;
2. To comment on the information provided; and
3. To receive a further report to evaluate the PDG LAC cluster model for 2022/23.

11 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 13 of Part 4 of the Schedule 12A of the Act.

12 Social Services Quarterly Complaints and Compliments

The Service Improvement, Engagement & Complaints Manager provided the Corporate Parenting Board with an overview of the operation of effectiveness of the statutory Social Services complaints procedure between 1st January 2022 and 30th June 2022.

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

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

1. To note the content of the report.

13 Quality of Care Review Report (Regulation 80)

The Residential Services Manager provided the Board with an update on the monitoring carried out under the Regulation and Inspection of Social Care (Wales) Act 2016 and the current position within four children's residential homes within RCT.

One Member spoke of the positive comments from the community in respect of Bryndar and asked that it be passed onto the home.

Following discussion, it was **RESOLVED:**

1. To note the content of the report.

This meeting closed at 3.30 pm

**Cllr G Caple
Chairman.**