



**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

18 October 2022 at 2.30 pm

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 14th 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 - 62)

7. TROS GYNNAL PLANT (TGP) CYMRU

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

(Pages 63 - 86)

8. PARTICIPATION UPDATE FOR CARE EXPERIENCED CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE AND VOICES FROM CARE CYMRU UPDATE

To receive the report of the Group Director of Community and Children's Services, which provides an update about RCT Children's Services engagement activities and an update from Voices from Care Cymru.

(Pages 87 - 170)

9. PUPIL DEPRIVATION GRANT

To receive the joint report of the Central South Consortium and the Education Coordinator for Children Looked After, which seeks to provide the Corporate Parenting Board with an update in respect of the Pupil Deprivation Grant.

(Pages 171 - 236)

10. 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."

11. 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 237 - 270)

12. 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 271 - 330)

13. 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 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 31st 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 11th. 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 carers and adult carers 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

18TH OCTOBER 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 20th 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 |
|---|--|-------------------|
| OCTOBER 2022 | | |
| 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 | |
| Pupil Deprivation Grant - Update | Hannah Bevan Siriol Burford – Central South Consortium | |
| Participation Update For Care Experienced Children and Young People and Voices from Care Cymru Update | Cath Tyler, Nicole Katchi and Annabel Galt | |
| NOVEMBER 2022 | | |
| 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 | |
| Registered Childcare Provision Annual Update 2021-22 | Jessica Allen | |
| Fostering Wales - Fostering Friendly Employer /Charter | Amy McArdle | |
| JANUARY 2023 | | |
| Children Looked After Website Advancement Update | Ceri Mann | |
| Fostering Quality of Care Annual Report | Annabel Lloyd | |
| Youth Offending Service Annual Report 2021-22 & Reducing the criminalisation of care experienced children and young adults | Lyndon Lewis | |
| RCT Forum | Annabel Galt | Young person to be invited |
| Implementation of the new ALNET Act for CLA learners | Ceri Jones | |
| MARCH 2023 | | |
| 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 | |
| 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

18TH OCTOBER 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 In addition to its standard items, 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
- Strengthening the link with young people – invitations to meetings to be sent when appropriate
- Children Looked After Prevention Strategy
- Monitoring of Independent Sector Placements
- Frontline Visits/Virtual meetings for Members

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



RHONDDA CYNON TAF



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FOREWORD



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

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".

WHAT IS THE CORPORATE PARENTING BOARD?

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



Councillor Sharon Rees

**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

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 31st 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 31st 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 |
| Total | <u>655</u> | <u>694</u> |

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

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 1st 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

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

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

18TH OCTOBER 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 4th 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>1. <u>Model of Practice</u></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</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The post that will lead this work is out to advert <p><u>Next Steps:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 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 |

| | |
|--|---|
| <p>significant development and will require a step-change throughout the service.</p> | <p>that exists to document the RCT model of practice</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Identify a skill development partner |
| <p>2. <u>Better Pre-birth Services</u></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"> • A manager has been appointed who is finalising the team structure and operational processes ahead of recruitment <p><u>Next Steps :</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Commence operational delivery of pilot in Autumn A Regional Integrated Fund proposal has been submitted in relation to parental support |
| <p>3. <u>Developing reunification</u></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"> • Staff vacancies and increasing demand has meant that we need to pace the work whilst prioritising those areas where we can viable make progress <p><u>Next Steps:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • By 30.12.22 we will have revised our arrangements |
| <p>4. <u>Improve support for kinship carers and special guardians</u></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"> • We have established a contract with Kinship Cymru in order to extend support • Therapeutic Service called MAPPS is now operational • We have increased the staffing establishment that is available to support Special Guardians <p><u>Next Steps</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • We are reviewing the financial support for Special Guardians |

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

18TH OCTOBER 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

18TH OCTOBER 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 |
|--|---|

- 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"> • 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 |
| 2. When You are Expecting a Child or Become a Parent | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Workshop as above • Full implementation of Magu (a new intensive service that will support families expecting a child with a view to safely preventing child-parent separation) |

| | |
|--|---|
| | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Practitioners should support young people to get a break |
| 3. Challenging Stigma and Discrimination | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Workshop as above |
| 4. If you are Living Apart from Children | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Workshop as above 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 |

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

18TH OCTOBER 2022

**REPORT OF GROUP DIRECTOR, COMMUNITY & CHILDREN'S
SERVICES, IN DISCUSSION WITH THE RELEVANT PORTFOLIO
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Officer to contact: Annabel Lloyd

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RHONDDA CYNON TAF COUNTY BOROUGH COUNCIL

CORPORATE PARENTING BOARD

18TH OCTOBER 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 31st 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 28th the TGP Cymru quarter three progress report was presented at the RCT Children Looked After Quality Assurance Panel (CLAQAP) meeting.

On March 16th 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.

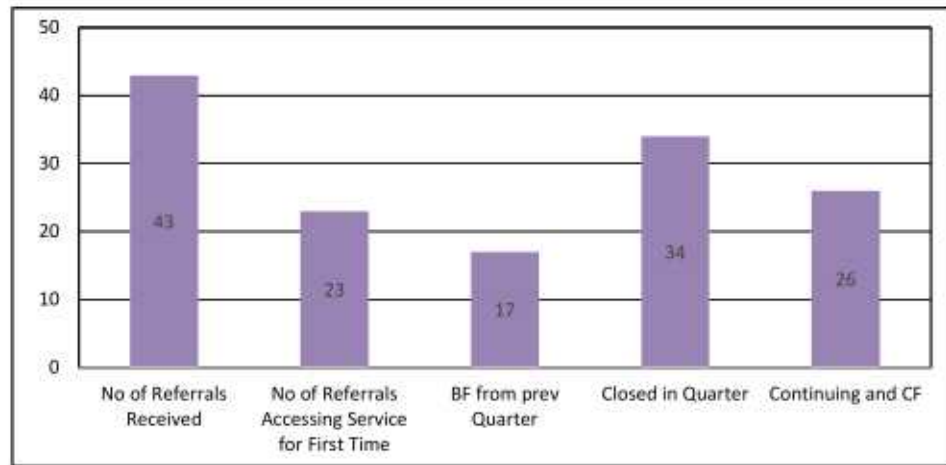
Case Example (names have been changed to maintain anonymity)

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.

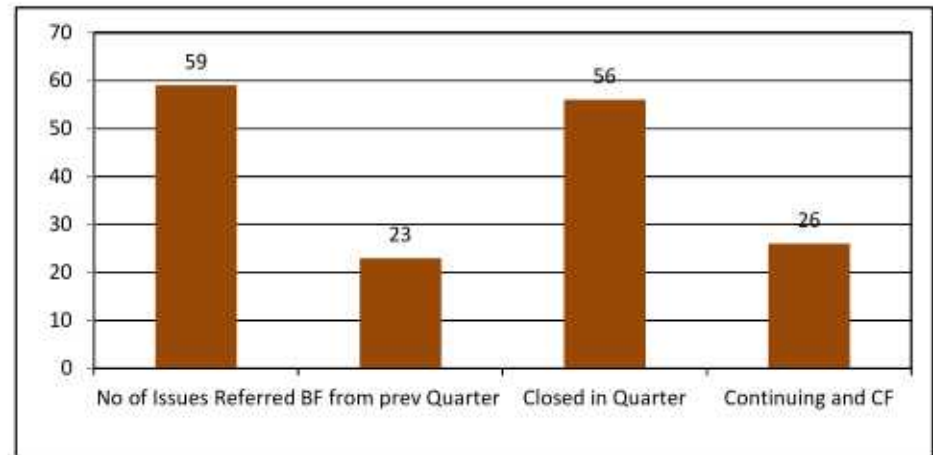
Action: Despite the short notice, the advocate was able to visit Joe the day after the referral was made. When the advocate arrived, he had Joe discussed what he would like to share at his CLA Review. Joe played on his games console as he chatted to the advocate, and the advocate remembered from previous 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.

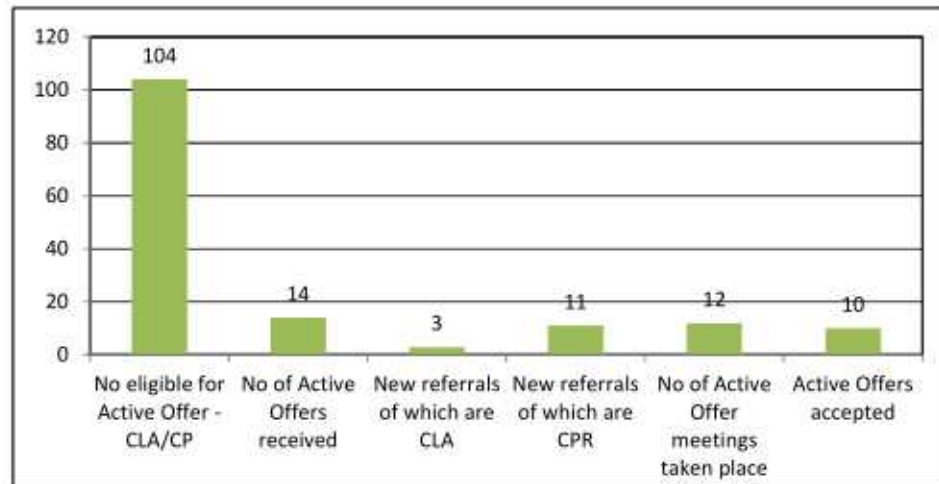
1a. Advocacy Cases - Young People - Issue Based Advocacy



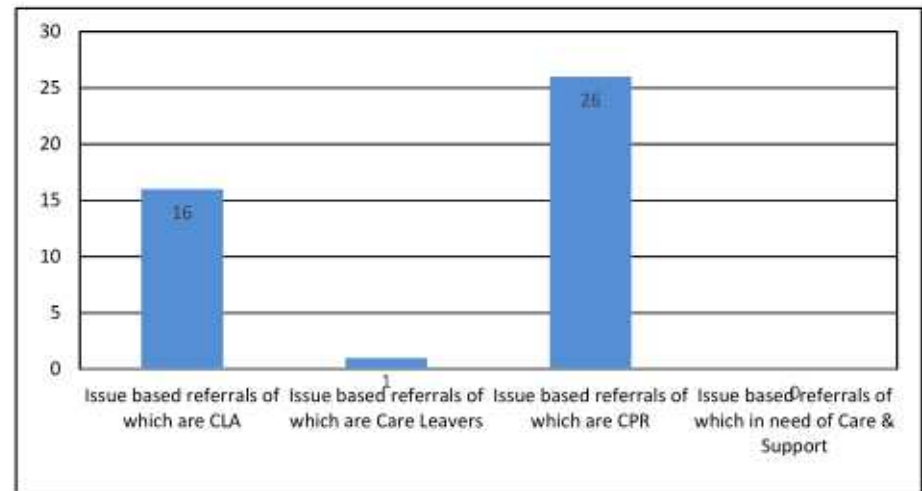
1b. Advocacy Cases - Interventions - Issue Based Advocacy



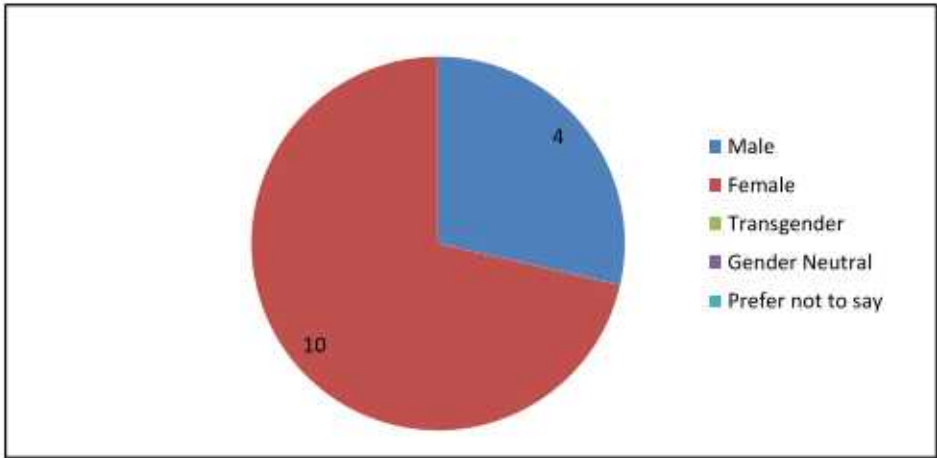
2a. Eligibility Criteria: Active Offer



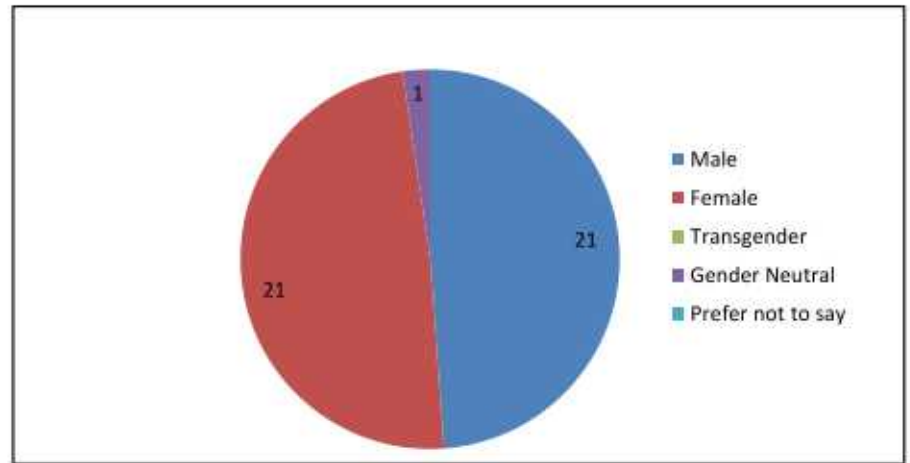
2b. Eligibility Criteria: Issue Based



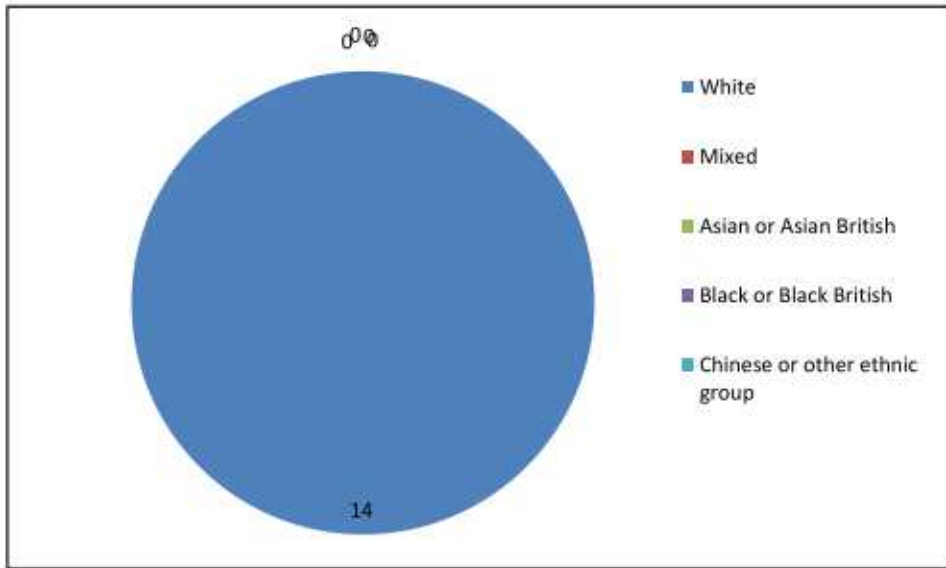
3a. Demographics: Gender - Active Offer



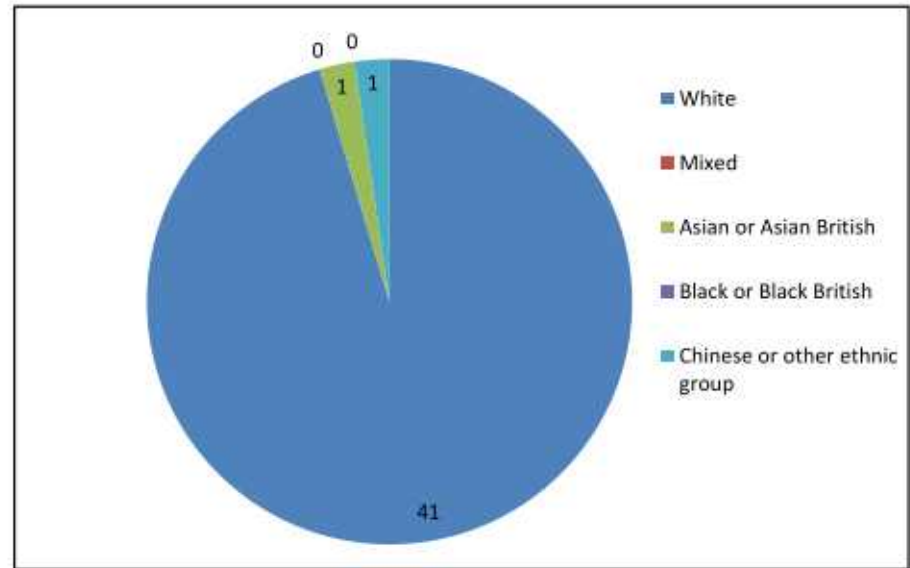
3b. Demographics: Gender - Issue Based



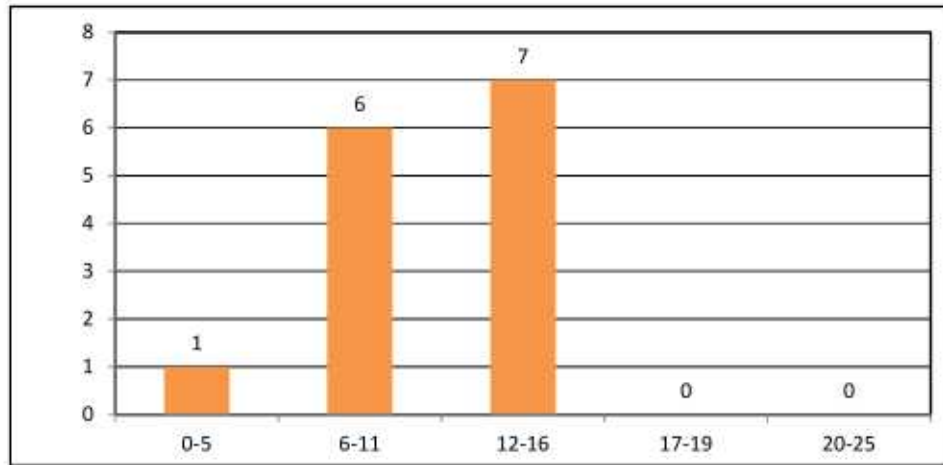
3c. Demographics: Ethnicity - Active Offer



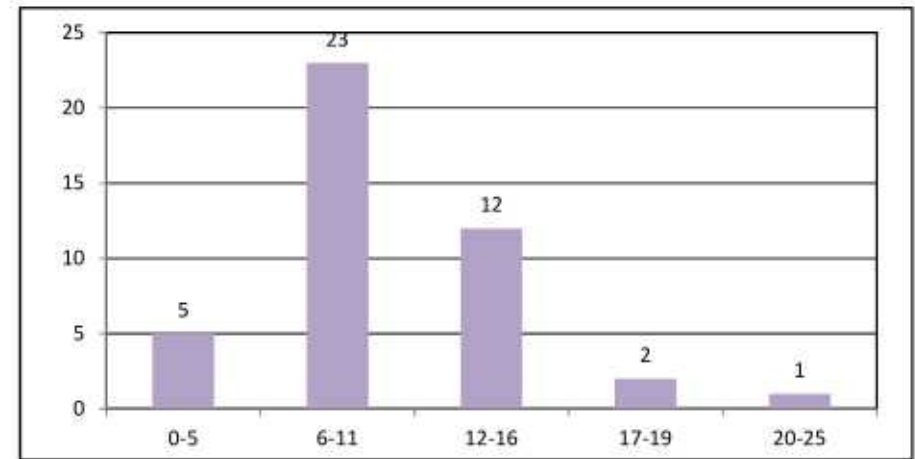
3d. Demographics: Ethnicity - Issue Based



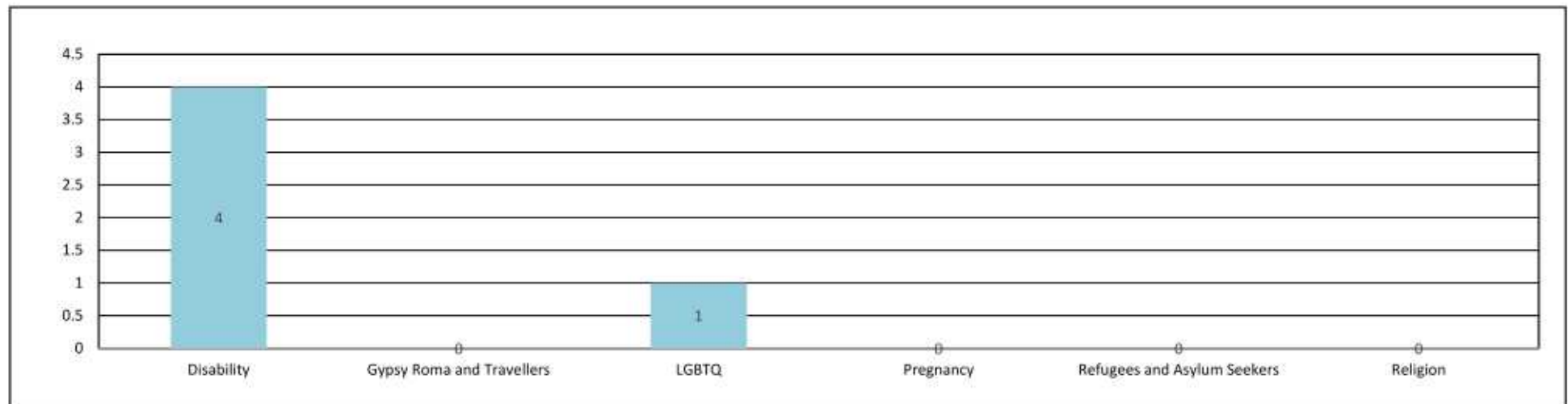
3e. Demographics: Age - Active Offer



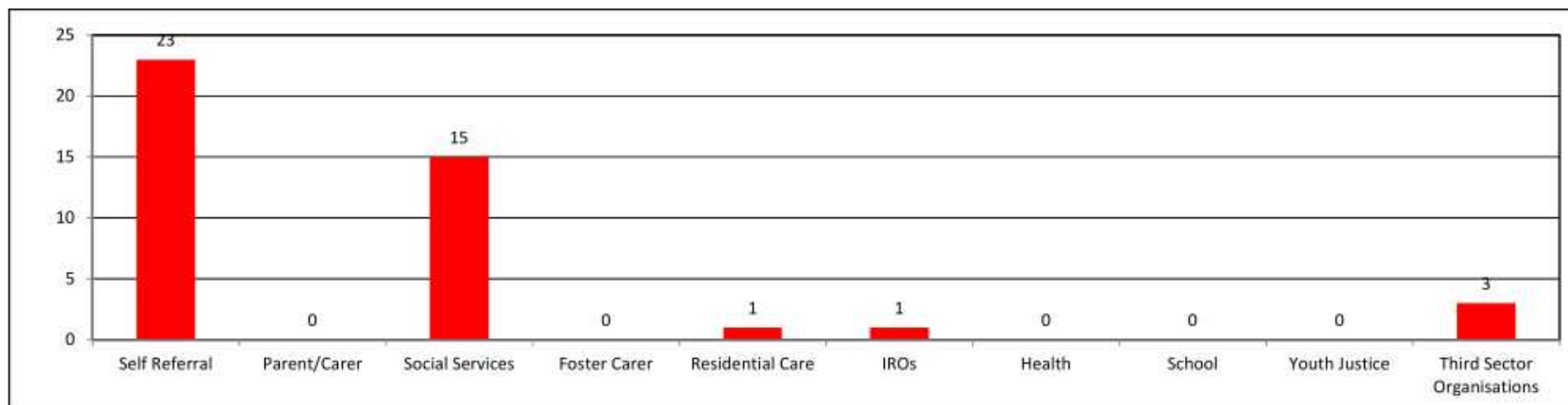
3f. Demographics: Age - Issue Based



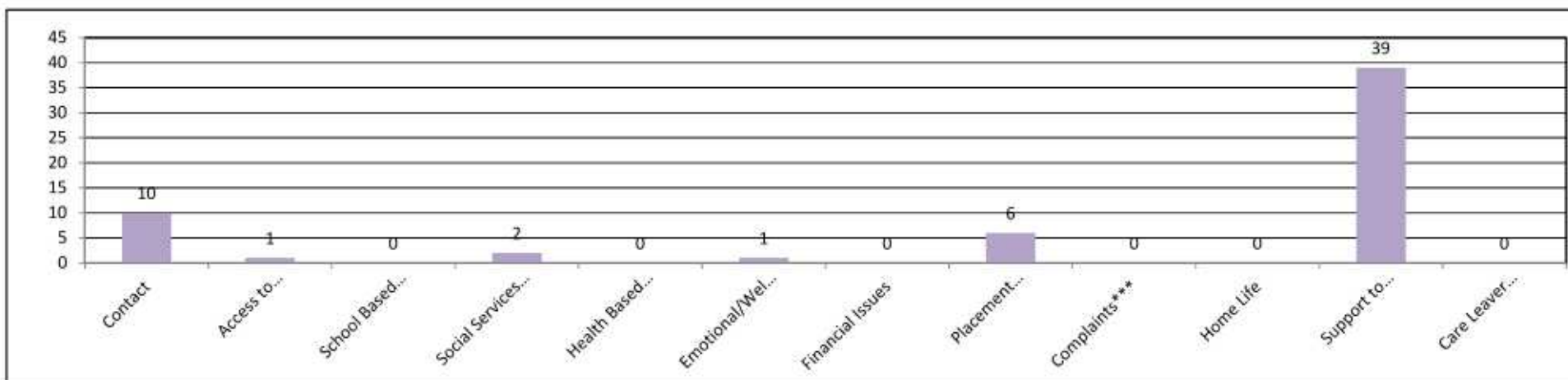
4. Protected Characteristics



5. Referral Source per young person - Issue Based only



6. Issues Presented

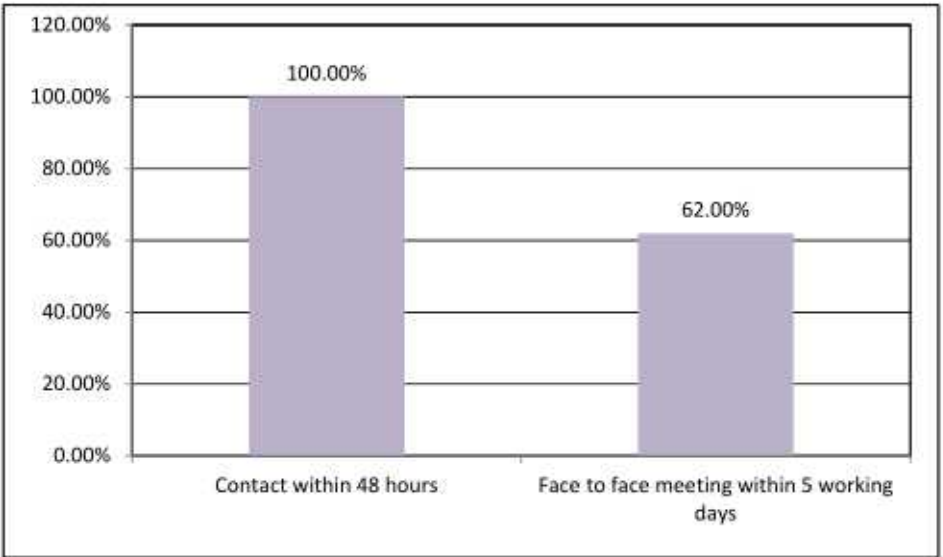


* School based issues including: SEN/ALN, exclusions, bullying, transport.

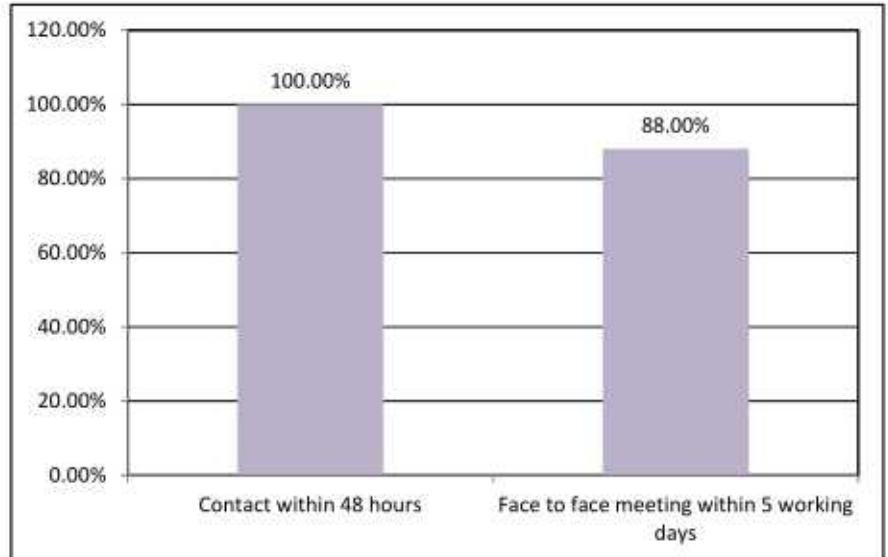
** Social Services based issues including: relationship with worker, care plan, service provided.

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

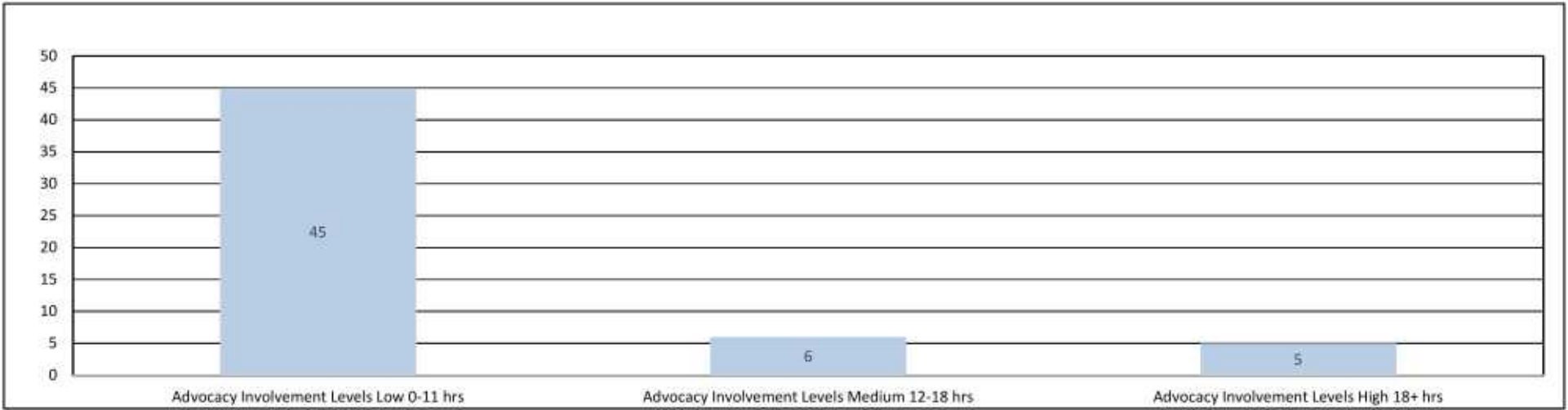
7. Service Performance - Active Offer



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 | Children and young people find good quality independent advocacy easily available and accessible. | <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 | Children and young people have their privacy and confidences respected and their wellbeing safeguarded and protected. | <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 | Children and young people are valued for their diversity, treated with respect and all forms of discrimination against them are challenged. | <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 | Children and young people are empowered to take the lead in relation to advocacy services and their rights, wishes and feelings and championed. | <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>Outcome 5</p> | <p>Children and young people participate in the design, planning, delivery, monitoring and evaluation of advocacy services.</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> |
|-------------------------|--|---|

National Approach to Statutory Advocacy
Local Authority Report RCT 2022 - 2023
Collated Quarterly Report
Quarter 1: April - June 2022

Headline Report

During quarter one, 48 young people accessed the Issue Based Advocacy (IBA) service, presenting with 61 issues. This represents a small increase in young people accessing issue-based advocacy when compared to the previous quarter. Active Offer (AO) referrals also increased with 19 young people referred in this quarter, five more than in quarter four. Some 18 young people went on to receive issue-based advocacy following their successful AO meeting. Of those young people accessing the issue-based service, 58% were doing so for the first time. It is possible that some of this number is made up of young people who did not access the AO service when they first became eligible.

Active Offer

According to information received from RCT, 87 children and young people became eligible for the Active Offer during the quarter:

| | | | |
|------|--------------|------------------|-------------|
| CP: | 5-9 yrs x 35 | 10 - 15 yrs x 36 | 16+ yrs x 3 |
| CLA: | 5-9 yrs x 3 | 10 - 15 yrs x 9 | 16+ yrs x 1 |

A total of 57 children and young people rejected the offer of an Active Offer meeting when it was suggested by their social worker, and 15 accepted. Six young people didn't have the AO conversation as their social worker deemed it inappropriate.

The reasons for rejecting the AO meeting were as follows:

| | |
|--|----|
| Didn't want an advocate/no reason given | 17 |
| Didn't understand Advocacy | 5 |
| Have too many people involved/identified someone else to talk to | 23 |
| Advocacy not needed/feel able to speak for themselves | 6 |
| Social worker deemed referral inappropriate (anxiety, lots going on) | 5 |
| Social worker deemed referral inappropriate (child young and non-verbal) | 1 |

It is unclear how the remaining 15 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 June report, indicating this information will be available at a later date.

Of the 15 young people who were recorded as accepting the AO on the spreadsheet, five were referred. One young person was referred for IBA instead of AO, and another will be included in the next quarterly report as she was referred in July. The remaining eight young people who are recorded as accepting the AO but not referred will be sent to RCT for investigation. TGP Cymru received a total of 19 AO referrals in quarter one. Five of these became eligible in quarter one and 11 became eligible in the previous quarter. The three remaining referrals could be for young people who became eligible for AO before the previous quarter.

Of the 19 AO referrals received, young people in the Child Protection (CP) arena made up 79%; the same percentage as the previous quarter. Only four Children Looked After (CLA) were referred for AO, one more than the three referred in the previous quarter.

The majority of young people referred for AO were aged between 6-11. Twice as many young people of this age were referred than the next most popular age group of 12-16. This has been the usual age pattern with the exception of the previous quarter when slightly more 12-16-year-olds were referred than 6-11-year-olds. During this period, we also received three AO referrals for children aged under six years old. Females made up 58% of young people referred for AO, a decrease on the previous quarter when females made up 71%. Referrals for males increased from four in quarter four, to seven in quarter one.

A total of 61% of young people received their Active Offer within five working days of referral. One AO meeting did not take place as when the advocate tried to arrange the visit they found the young person had not given consent. The main reason for a delayed AO visit was either the referrer or the young person requested a school visit and the advocate had to wait for the school term to resume following the Easter or half term holiday. Some 89% of young people referred received the AO within ten working days of the referral being made.

Issue Based Advocacy

Advocates worked with six young people living outside of RCT in areas such as Merthyr Tydfil, Swansea, Powys and the West Midlands.

Of the 48 referred, 22 young people were CLA, 24 young people were in the CP arena, and two were care leavers. This represents a more even split compared to previous quarters when a much larger proportion of young people receiving issue based advocacy were in the CP arena. The gender split saw 28 girls, 19 boys and one transgender young person accessing the issue-based service. This represents a return to the trend of more females accessing the issue-based service than males but only a slight decrease in males compared to the previous quarter.

The age category with the highest referral rate continues to be the 6-11 group with 30, three times the number of referrals from the 12-16 age group with 10. This gap widened during quarter one, with an increase in referrals for those aged 6-11, and a slight decrease in referrals for those aged 12-16. Four young people over the age of 16 also received issue-based advocacy, one more than in the previous quarter.

Referral source for IBA referrals continues to follow a similar pattern to previous quarters, with the majority of referrals made by young people themselves, followed by social services. Social services made issue-based advocacy referrals for 14 young people during this quarter, one less than in the previous quarter. Most issue-based referrals (27) 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. IRO's and residential staff made three IBA referrals and two were made by TGP Cymru's Restorative Approaches and Family Group Meeting Service.

We have recently implemented a change to the way we record how children and young people are supported at meetings in order to capture more data about what young people are sharing. For example, when a young person requests advocacy support at a meeting, instead of recording the issue as 'support at meetings' the advocate will record the issue as the main issue the young person would like to present at the meeting, such as contact, home life or access to services. We are still able to record advocacy attendance at meetings but will do this separately. This will result in a reduction of 'support at meetings' issues but will tell us more about what issues young people want to discuss both in and out of meetings.

During quarter one, 'support at meetings' was the main issue 22 times, however, advocates supported children and young people to share wishes and feelings at 24 meetings, 19 of which they attended all or part of in person. This included 9 Family Group Meetings, 8 Core Group Meetings and 5 CLA Reviews. When an advocate cannot, or it is inappropriate for the advocate to attend a meeting, they will usually email a wishes and feelings report to the social worker or whoever is chairing the meeting, and request the wishes and feelings be read out. The advocate will also ask for feedback relating to the young person's wishes and feelings which they will then share with the young person.

Meetings continue to be the largest issue advocates support young people with, with support at meetings making up 36% of issues referred. This is however a reduction compared to the previous quarter, when support at meetings made up a significantly higher percentage of issues referred at 66%. In the same period, contact issues rose to 17 from ten, and home life was the issue for eight more young people in quarter one compared to quarter four.

A total of 94% of young people referred for issue-based advocacy had contact with their advocate within five working days of the referral being made.

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. The remaining three homes, Carn Ingli, Nantygwyn and Ty Brynna have advised monthly visits are not appropriate and have requested the advocate visits every two months, and keeps in touch via telephone contact instead.

Service Information

On April the 6th, the advocacy team manager attended the RCT fostering team meeting, and also attended the foster carer virtual meeting on the 28th. This was a good opportunity to promote the AO and the IBA service to foster carers and answer any questions about the referral process.

In May, the TGP Cymru quarter four progress report was shared at the quarterly Advocacy Strategic Steering Group Meeting and the advocacy team manager also met with the Feedback, Engagement, and Improvement manager to discuss strategies for promoting advocacy within social work teams.

The advocacy team manager attended the June CSMT where there was an emphasis on children's rights and participation and on the 27th of June the advocacy team manager presented the quarter four progress report at the RCT Children Looked After Quality Assurance Panel (CLAQAP) meeting.

Two advocacy presentations with audio have now been completed and shared with relevant partners in RCT. The first presentation aims to raise awareness of TGP Cymru services in general. The second focuses 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.

One new recruit joined the CTM advocacy team in June. She will be working full time and mainly in the RCT area, with some covering work in Merthyr Tydfil and Bridgend.

TGP Cymru's quality assurance officer is continuing 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 have not been successful in increasing the number of young people providing feedback during this quarter but will continue to amend the system to allow as many young people as possible to independently evaluate the service. It is possible that a problem with the Freepost envelopes which has now been resolved, and the change of head office address may have contributed to the lower than usual response from young people during quarter one.

In quarter one, four young people either posted a feedback form or gave feedback to the quality assurance officer over the phone. Four stated they found the service helpful, four felt the service made a difference to their situation, four felt more confident since receiving support, four felt more included in decisions and four felt their views were fully considered and their views represented. Three of the four young people providing feedback stated they would use the service again.

Case Example

Please find below an example of advocacy work undertaken during the quarter from within RCT. The name has been changed to protect the young person's identity.

Situation: Kristian is a Child Looked After and asked for advocacy support to enable him to secure appropriate accommodation when he turned 18.

Action: The advocate made arrangements to meet with Kristian at his home. He wanted to meet there as he felt comfortable and could talk privately but also have the support of his foster carer if needed.

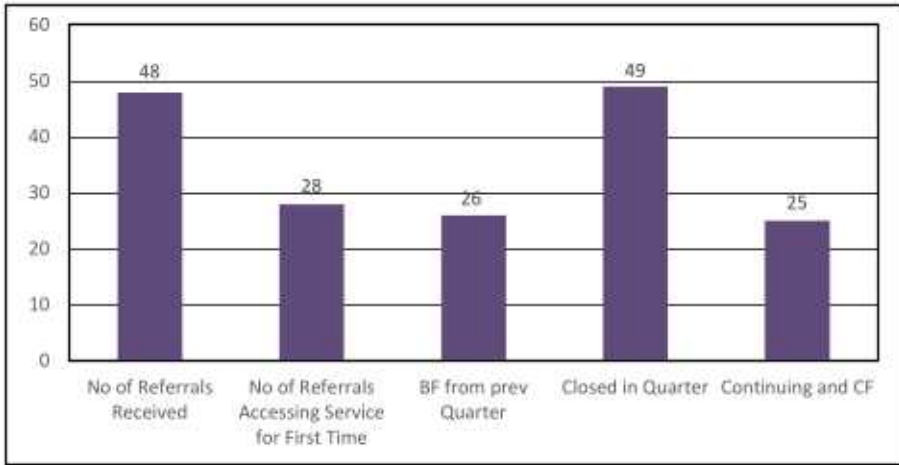
Kristian explained he was going to be 18 in August and could not remain in his current home. Kristian had bid on a rental property via Homefinders. If successful, he wanted help in securing the property. Kristian was anxious about what would happen if he wasn't successful in securing the property, and also shared that his social worker was on long term sick

leave and he didn't get on very well with his new worker. Because of this, Kristian wanted to find out if he was able to work with a YPA instead but unfortunately he was on sick leave too. Kristian told the advocate he had been accepted into the Basic Income Pilot Scheme for Care Leavers and asked the advocate for help in communicating with the housing officer.

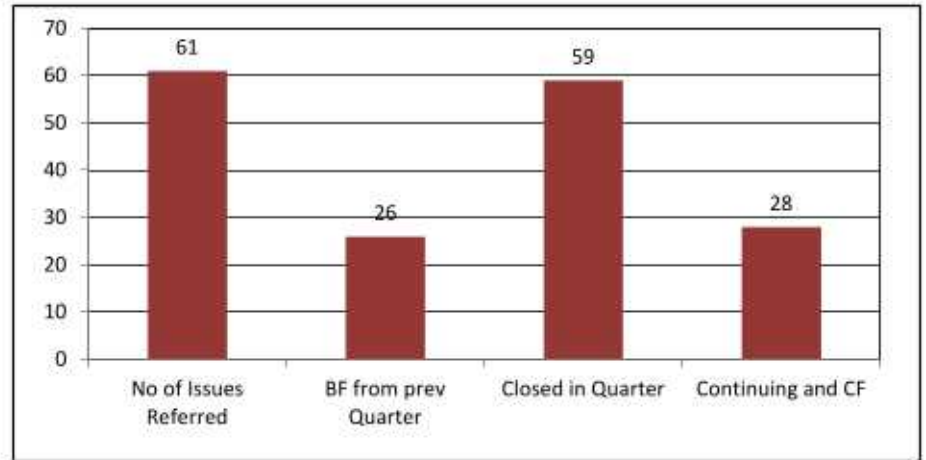
The advocate helped Kristian keep updated with the process by liaising with the Housing Officer and the Social Worker, and also help Kristian to reassure the Housing Officer he was able to afford the rent and bills on the new flat by helping him explain the Basic Income Pilot. The advocate was also able to arrange meetings between Kristian and the professionals involved which helped him to feel more confident about sharing his concerns and asking any questions. This also helped to speed up the process.

Outcome: Kristian feels more confident about communicating with different professionals with the support of his advocate. His original social worker is back in work and Kristian is pleased to be working with her again. He now has the keys to his own flat and will be moving into it just in time for his 18th birthday. Kristian phoned his advocate on the day he got the keys describing the flat and was very happy he had a home for the future. Kristian has asked his advocate to do a closure visit to the flat once he has moved in and his advocate is looking forward to visiting him then.

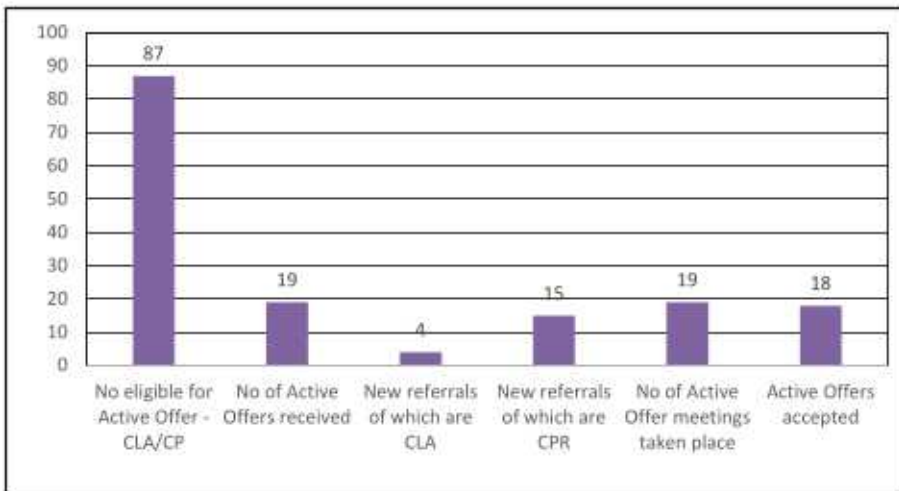
1a. Advocacy Cases - Young People - Issue Based Advocacy



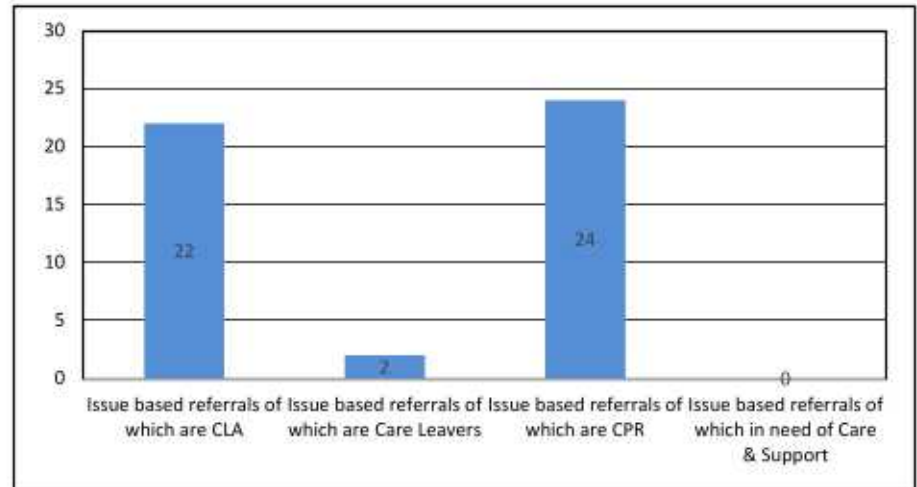
1b. Advocacy Cases - Interventions - Issue Based Advocacy



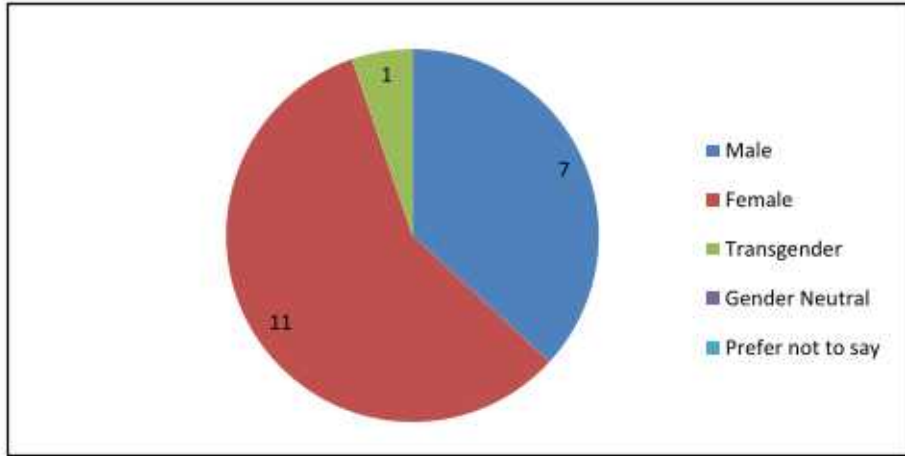
2a. Eligibility Criteria: Active Offer



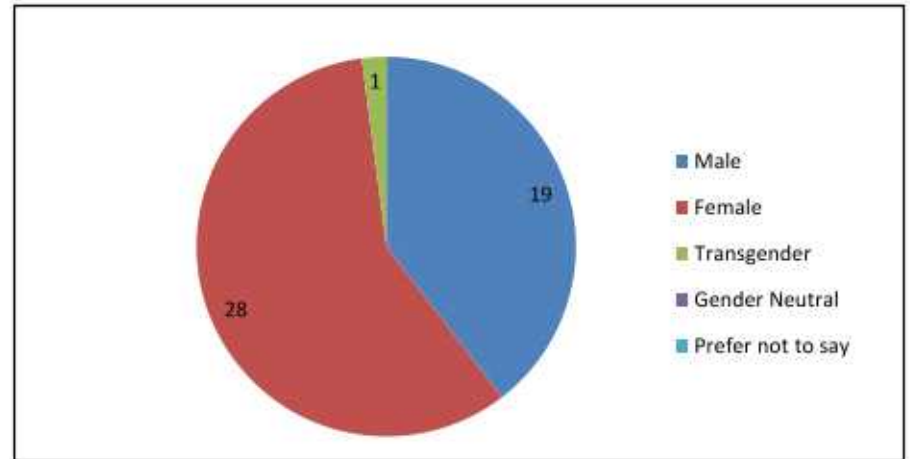
2b. Eligibility Criteria: Issue Based



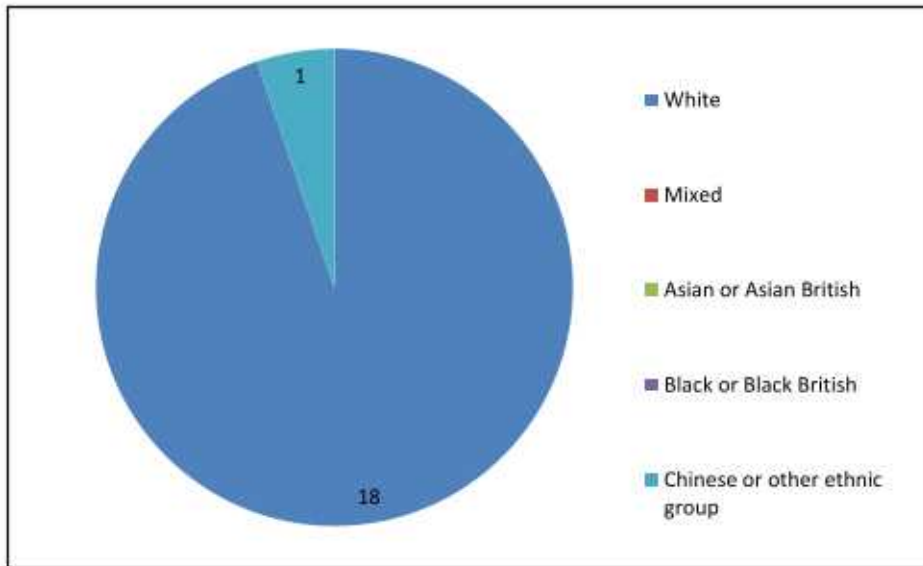
3a. Demographics: Gender - Active Offer



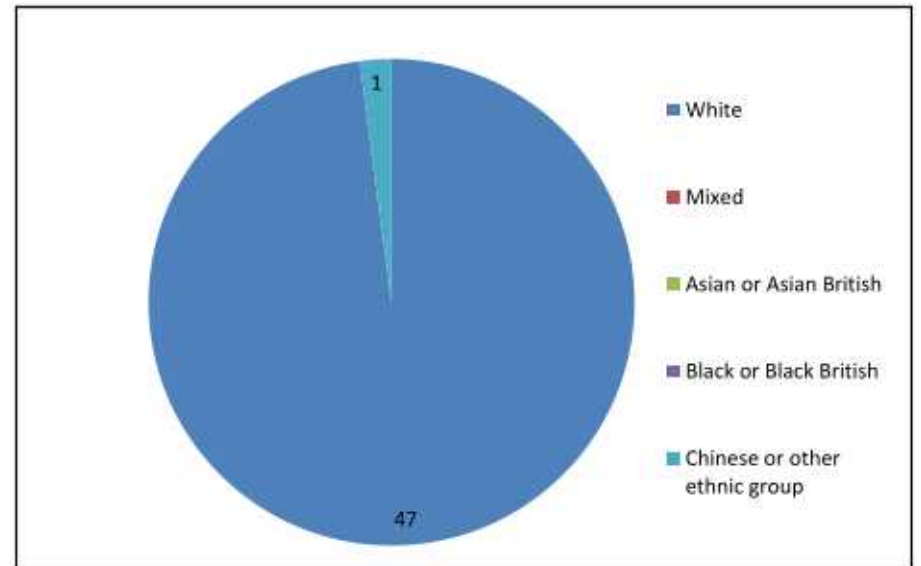
3b. Demographics: Gender - Issue Based



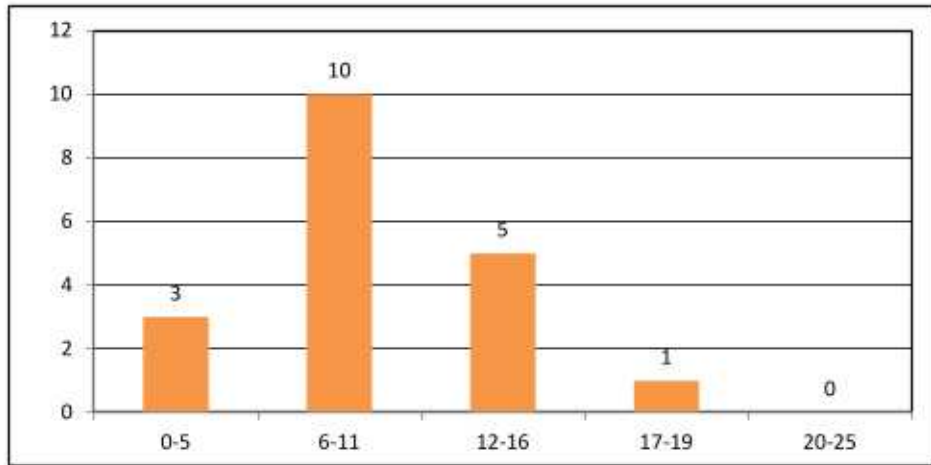
3c. Demographics: Ethnicity - Active Offer



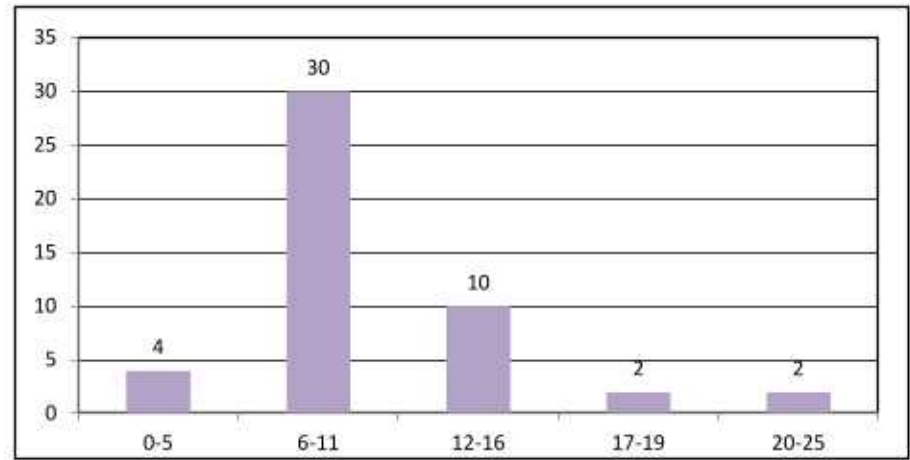
3d. Demographics: Ethnicity - Issue Based



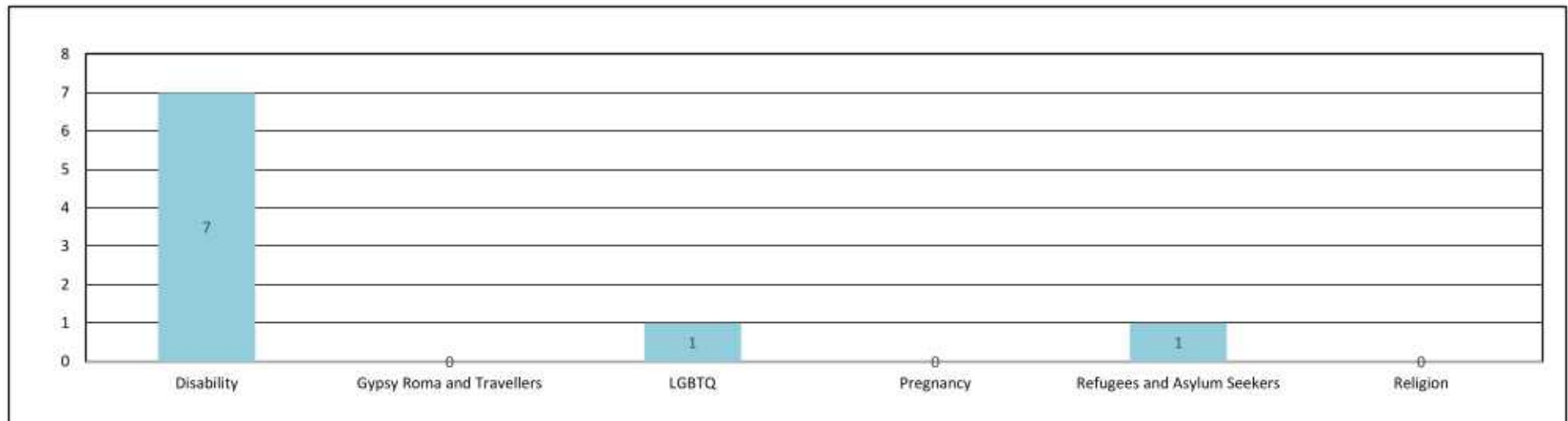
3e. Demographics: Age - Active Offer



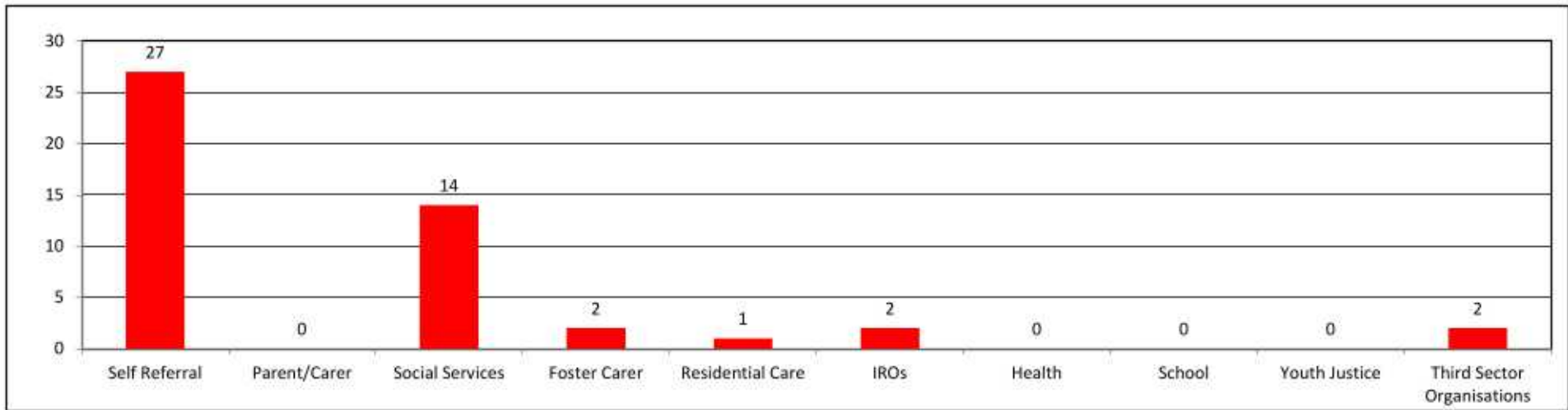
3f. Demographics: Age - Issue Based



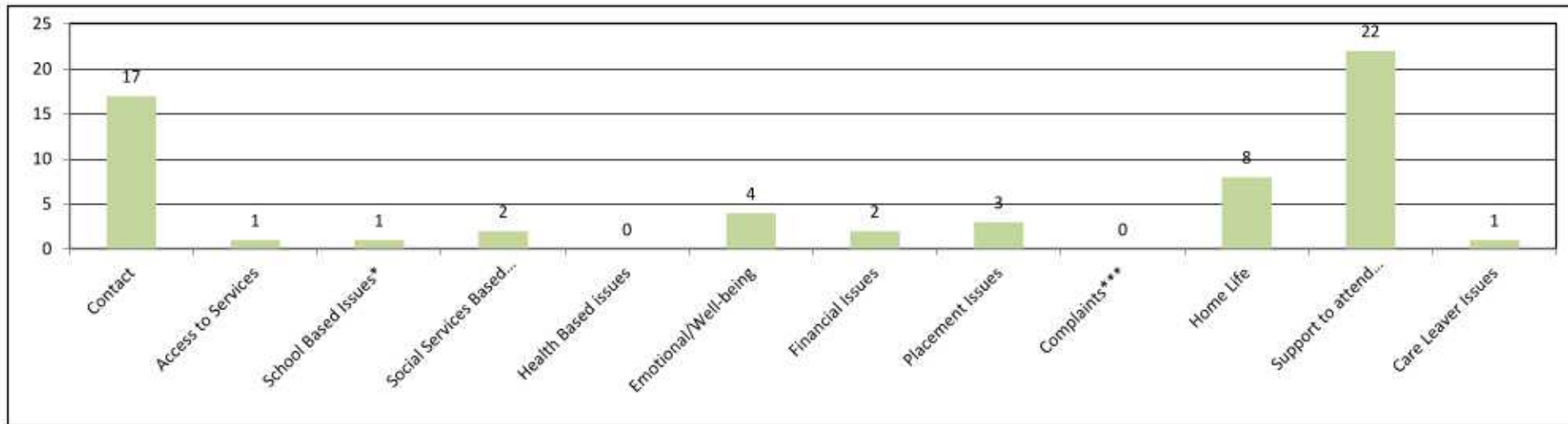
4. Protected Characteristics



5. Referral Source per young person - Issue Based only



6. Issues Presented

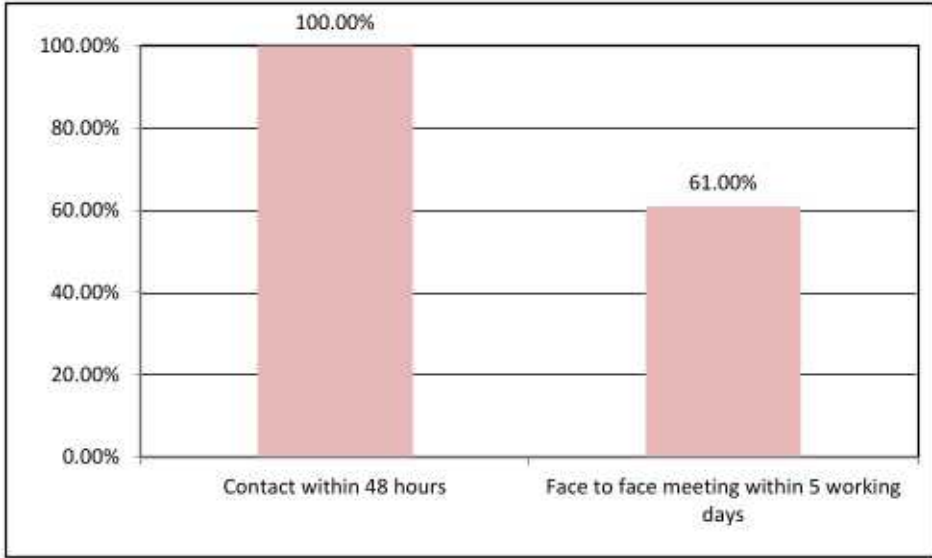


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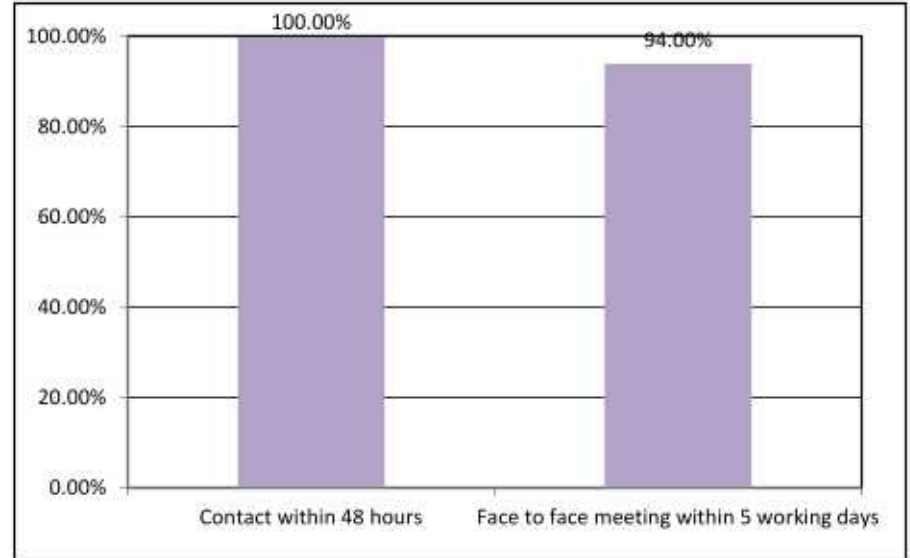
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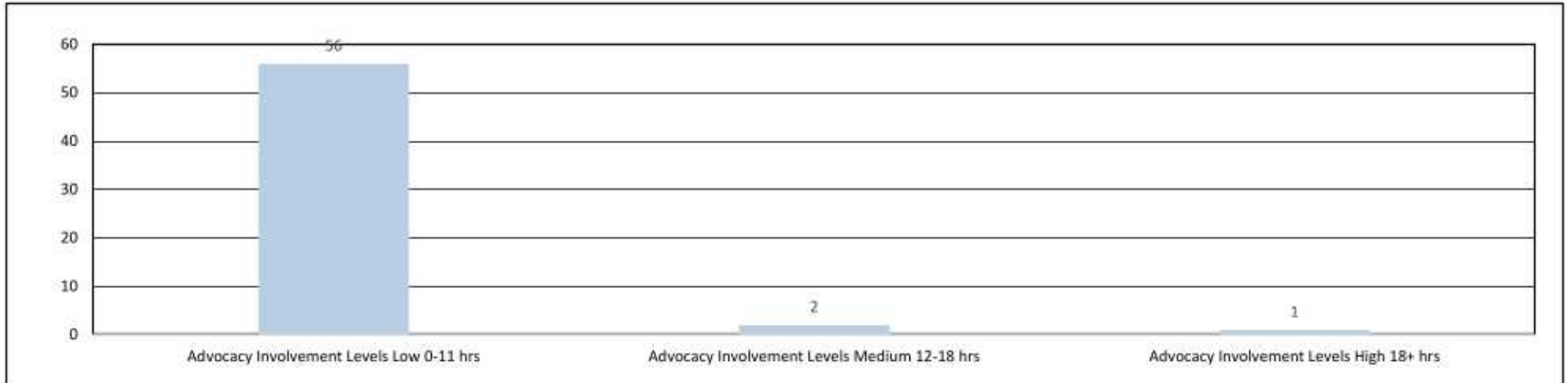
7. Service Performance - Active Offer



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 | Children and young people find good quality independent advocacy easily available and accessible. | <p>Across the two service areas 78% 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. Advocates worked with six young people living outside of RCT in areas such as include Merthyr Tydfil, Swansea, Powys and the West Midlands.</p> <p>As detailed above, the advocacy service was promoted in two meetings during quarter one and two presentations about advocacy have been shared with relevant partners.</p> |
| Outcome 2 | Children and young people have their privacy and confidences respected and their wellbeing safeguarded and protected. | <p>The vast majority of direct work with young people continues to take place during face-to-face visits. We also offer virtual contact and although advocates report most young people prefer face-to-face visits, some older young people prefer to engage via phone and email, especially if they have work or education commitments.</p> <p>Advocates always endeavour to provide privacy when arranging to meet with a young person but will remain flexible and allow the young person to choose how, when and where they would like to meet. Young people's homes are risk assessed and the assessment allows the advocate to anticipate any confidentiality issues that may arise.</p> |
| Outcome 3 | Children and young people are valued for their diversity, treated with respect and all forms of discrimination against them are challenged. | <p>During this quarter, seven disabled young people received issue-based advocacy. Four had additional learning needs, one had ASD, one had ADHD, one had a stammer.</p> <p>One unaccompanied asylum seeking young person received issue-based advocacy in quarter one.</p> <p>One young person accessed a Pashto interpreter via his advocate during quarter one.</p> |
| Outcome 4 | Children and young people are empowered to take the lead in relation to advocacy services and their rights, wishes and feelings and championed. | <p>Young people consistently tell us, via their advocates and feedback forms that they feel empowered following advocacy intervention. When describing how advocacy made a difference to her situation, one RCT young person described how she is now <i>"more confident"</i>, and another said they <i>"felt a lot happier"</i> after having advocacy support.</p> <p>Two young people expressed how advocacy had been helpful, left them feeling they were more included in decisions and more knowledgeable about their rights by making them feel heard. They wrote <i>"I have a voice"</i> and <i>"it made my voice heard."</i></p> |

| | | |
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| <p>Outcome 5</p> | <p>Children and young people participate in the design, planning, delivery, monitoring and evaluation of advocacy services.</p> | <p>The CTM Advocacy Service Participation Lead will continue to 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 participate in a summit where they will be supported to share their experience of local authority care, and how they feel it can be improved.</p> <p>Several young people from the CTM region took part in a Welsh Government consultation regarding the transition from CAHMS to AMHS, facilitated by TGP Cymru. The final report will be available shortly.</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.</p> |
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RHONDDA CYNON TAF COUNTY BOROUGH COUNCIL

CORPORATE PARENTING BOARD

18th OCTOBER 2022

PARTICIPATION UPDATE FOR CARE EXPERIENCED CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE

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

**Author: Nicole Katchi- Graduate Officer- Participation (Children's
Services)**

1. PURPOSE OF THE REPORT

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to provide an update about RCT Children's Services engagement activities and recent participation event held on the 1st September 2022 with our children looked after at Pontypridd Museum.
- 1.2 The Children's Services survey of care experienced children and young people will be running from October to mid October 2022.
- 1.3 The 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.
- 1.4 Voices from Care Cymru have submitted their report (see appendix 6)

2. RECOMMENDATIONS

It is recommended that Members:

- 2.1 Acknowledge the information contained within the report.

2.2 Scrutinise and comment on the information provided.

3. BACKGROUND/ PROGRESS TO DATE

- 3.1 Nicole Katchi- Graduate Officer (Participation) joined Children's Services on 7th June 2022.
- 3.2 22/06/22- Participation workshop about rights-based approaches for Children's Services staff led by Kath O'Kane (Participation Officer) and Elizabeth Flowers (Policy lead) for the Children's Commissioner for Wales.
- 3.3 Local Development Officer- Laura Harper for RCT (Voices from Care Cymru) recently joined to re-establish RCT local groups aged 14-22.
- 3.4 Meetings with the Voices RCT Local group and Parent Group to discuss survey questions including content and lay out.
- 3.5 Creating a Children's Services 'All about me' profile and engagement posters for the event on 1st September 2022 to distribute to care experienced children and young people via CS staff, YEPS and the WICID website (see appendix 1 and 1.1).
- 3.6 Attended the Foster carers children's party in July 2022 and the Children's picnic in August 2022 to promote the participation event on 1st September 2022 and linking via the closed Facebook group and through the pioneer foster carers.

4. CURRENT POSITION

- 4.1 Care experienced Participation event supported by Mike Church on 1st September 2022 to gather qualitative responses of views through engagement activities.
- 4.2 The outcome was to find out what has helped young people to grow (positives), what could help them to grow (what could be better) and engagement activities to support outcomes through display work.
- 4.3 5 young people signed up with their foster carer for the 10 and under session and 14 young people signed up for the 11–18-year-old session for the event at Pontypridd Museum on 1st September.
- 4.4 2 young people turned up for the 10 and under session. 7 young people turned up for the 11–18-year-old session.
- 4.5 The participation questionnaire will be from October 2022 to mid-October 2022 that builds from the recommendations of the Bright Spots Survey by Bristol University back in 2018 (see appendix 3).

- 4.6 Three young people from RCT have applied to attend the Care experienced Summit with Voices from Care on Saturday 10th September 2022.

5. EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY IMPLICATIONS / SOCIO ECONOMIC DUTY

- 5.1 This is an information report. Rights impact assessment tools will be used for capturing the voice of Children and young people and feedback, 'You said, we did' mechanisms (see appendix 4).
- 5.2 An Equality Impact Assessment will be undertaken as part of the future implementation process.

6. CONSULTATION / INVOLVEMENT

- 6.1 This is an information report.
- 6.2 Further consultation will however be undertaken as part of the work of the participation strategy.

7. FINANCIAL IMPLICATION(S)

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

8. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS OR LEGISLATION CONSIDERED

- 8.1 The legal requirements for children and young people are set down within the Social Services and Well-being (Wales) Act 2014.

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

- 9.1 This links to the Children's Services Delivery plan 2022-2023 that, 'Children's voices are Heard: To improve engagement with children and young people, to ensure co-production and that the voice of the child is heard in service development and delivery.'
- 9.2 It also contributes to 'The Children's Commissioner for Wales' that champion the development of a Children's Rights Approach grounded in the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC- see appendix 2).

10. NEXT STEPS

- 10.1 Progress has been made to engage with care experienced children and young people and the questionnaire responses will highlight themes to

support Voices from Care with an 11-18 age group as part of the RCT local group and to develop engagement for children looked after that are 10 and under (see appendix 3).

- 10.2 Developing a participation strategy for children and young people's voice and co-production (on-going). Linking in key staff from Children's Services with Voices from Care Cymru to develop a thematic approach for participation with key ideas from the questionnaire feedback that children and young people provide. This will be reported back to children and young people through a 'You said, we did' mechanism for engagement and participation.
- 10.3 Develop impact assessment tools for capturing the voice of Children and young people and feedback, 'You said, we did' mechanisms through 'The Right Way Agenda.' (See appendix 4).
- 10.4 Link to the Community, Wellbeing and Resilience website team for promoting the participation strategy.
- 10.5 Further engagement with CLA for 8- to 18-year-olds to capture the voices of children and young people through Voices from Care Cymru.
- 10.6 Embedding structures to collate the voice of children and young people and providing evaluative feedback for 'You said, we did.'
- 10.7 An accessible digital platform for children and young people to keep up to date with participation events and the outcomes of these events.
- 10.8 Waiting for graphic evidence from the Participation event from the artist (see draft in appendix 5).

Appendix

1. Amdana i / All about me



AMDANA I -
NICOLE.pdf



All about me poster-
Nicole.pdf

1.1 Achlysur cyfranogiad / Participation event



Gwasanaethau i Blant
RhCT Cymraeg.pdf



RCT Participation
event 1.9.22 poster up

2. United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC)



uncrc-summary-post
er.pdf

3. Draft questions for questionnaire for October 2022



Get involved- Survey
updated 10.10.22.doc

4. The Right Way Agenda document and proposed Impact Assessment Tools.



RightWaySocialCare_
Final-Amendments.pc



The-Right-Way-Simp
le-FINAL-1-002.pdf

5. Draft collection of zines from the Participation event- 1.9.22



A collection of zines-
The journey 1.9.22 up

6. Voices from Care Cymru report.



Corporate Parenting
Board VFCC Sep 2022

LOCAL GOVERNMENT ACT 1972

AS AMENDED BY

THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT (ACCESS TO INFORMATION) ACT 1985

RHONDDA CYNON TAF COUNTY BOROUGH COUNCIL

CORPORATE PARENTING BOARD

DATE: 18th OCTOBER 2022

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

Officer to contact: Nicole Katchi

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Rwy'n mwynhau teithio, mynd i Aberhonddu yn fy ngharafan a cherdded fy nghi, Marley.



Mae hefyd gen i grwban o'r enw Shelley. Achubais i Shelley gan berchnogion nad oedd yn gofalu amdani.



Y daith orau i fi fod arni erioed â phobl ifainc oedd mynd â chriw o ddisgyblion i Ynys Wyth pan roeddwn i'n athrawes. Aethon ni i wersylla a rhostio malws melys ar dân wrth edrych ar y sêr!



Amdana i

Fy enw i yw Nicole Katchi
Swyddog Cyfranogiad
(Gwasanaethau i Blant) RhCT

Roeddwn i'n arfer bod yn athrawes gynradd ac rydw i'n mwynhau cwrdd â phobl ifainc a chael cyfle i weithio gyda nhw.

Ers dros 11 mlynedd, rydw i wedi bod yn weithiwr cymorth ar gyfer pobl ifainc sydd wedi bod mewn gofal.

Rydw i yma i gefnogi pobl ifainc sydd â phrofiad o fod mewn gofal. Rydw i'n awyddus i gefnogi pobl ifainc i ddweud eu dweud ac i wella eu dealltwriaeth o hawliau i blant.

Rwy'n cefnogi pobl ifainc i leisio'u barn am faterion sy'n bwysig iddyn nhw ac yn eu cefnogi nhw wrth iddyn nhw wneud penderfyniadau am eu bywydau.



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All about me

My name is Nicole Katchi
Participation Officer
(Children's Services) RCT

I really enjoy travelling, going to my caravan in Brecon and walking my rescue dog Marley.



I also have a pet tortoise called Shelley. I rescued Shelley from people that didn't look after her very well.



The best trip I have been on with young people was taking a group of young people as a teacher to the Isle of Wight. We went camping and toasted marshmallows on a campfire whilst looking at the stars!

I used to be a primary school teacher and I enjoy meeting and working with young people.

I am also a support worker for care experienced young people and I have been doing this role for over 11 years!

My role is to support young people that are care experienced including carers to ensure your voice is heard and that you understand your rights.

Young people will be supported to have a say on what matters to them most and be involved in decisions about their lives.



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Gwasanaethau i Blant RhCT
Achlysur i bobl ifainc sydd â phrofiad o dderbyn gofal

Rydyn ni eisiau clywed dy lais

Adroddwr

Awdur

Actor



Dyma fi!

Dere draw i gwrdd â Mike Church am hwyl, gemau, digonedd o chwerthin ac i gael trafodaeth am yr hyn sy'n bwysig i ti gan dy fod di'n berson ifanc sydd â phrofiad o derbyn gofal.

Bydd pobl ifainc yn derbyn taleb am fod yn rhan o'r achlysur.

Amdana i

Fy enw i yw Nicole Katchi

Swyddog Cyfranogiad

Gwasanaethau i Blant RhCT

E-bost: nicole.katchi@rctcbc.gov.uk



I gofrestru e-bostia Nicole gan nodi pa grŵp oedran rwyf ti'n rhan ohoni erbyn 24 Awst 2022

Achlysur: Dydd Iau 1 Medi 2022

Amgueddfa Pontypridd, Stryd y Bont,
Pontypridd, CF37 4PE

Plant sy'n iau na 10 oed: 10:30am – 12:30pm

11 - 18 oed: 13:30pm – 15:30pm

Bydd lluniaeth ysgafn ar gael ar y diwrnod. E-bostia i roi gwybod i mi am unrhyw alergeddau neu anghenion dietegol erbyn 24/08/2022.

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RCT Children's Services
**Participation event for care
experienced young people**

**We want to hear your
voice!**

Storyteller

Writer

Actor



This is me!

Come along and meet
Mike Church for fun,
games, laughter and to
discuss what is important
to you as care
experienced young
people.

**Young people will
receive a voucher
for attending.**

All about me

My name is Nicole Katchi
Participation Officer
(Children's Services) RCT



Email: nicole.katchi@rctcbc.gov.uk

**Please email Nicole to register for the event
and the age group you are attending by
Wednesday 24th August 2022**

Event: Thursday 1st September 2022

Pontypridd Museum, Bridge Street,
Pontypridd, CF37 4PE

10 years old and under= 10:30am – 12:30pm

11-18 years old = 13:30pm – 15:30pm

Light snacks will be provided for on the day. Let me know of any allergies or dietary requirements via email by 24/08/2022

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A Summary of The United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child



Llywodraeth Cymru
Welsh Government

The United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC) is an international agreement that protects the human rights of children up to the age of 18. It recognises not only their basic human rights but gives them additional rights to protect them from harm as one of the most vulnerable groups in society.

In 2011 the Welsh Government made the UNCRC law in Wales, with the Rights of Children and Young Persons (Wales) Measure 2011. The Measure places a duty on Welsh Ministers to have a due regard to the UNCRC and its Optional Protocols when making their decisions.

Altogether there are 54 articles in the convention. Articles 43-54 are about how adults and governments should work together to make sure all children are entitled to their rights. The information contained here is about articles 1-42 which set out how children should be treated.

To read the full text of the UN Convention go to:

http://www.unicef.org.uk/Documents/Publication-pdfs/UNCRC_PRESS200910web.pdf

For further information on the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child please visit:

The Welsh Government's UNCRC website
gov.wales/childrens-rights

The Welsh Government's UNCRC e-mail
childrensrights@gov.wales

Young Wales
www.youngwales.wales

Children's Commissioner for Wales
www.childcomwales.org.uk

The 'Rights of Children and Young Persons (Wales) Measure' 2011 documents can be found at:
<http://www.legislation.gov.uk/mwa/2011/2/contents>



@C_R_Wales @ChildrensRightsWales

Article 1

Everyone under 18 years of age has all the rights in this Convention.

Article 2

The Convention applies to everyone whatever their race, religion, abilities, whatever they think or say and whatever type of family they come from.

Article 3

All organisations concerned with children should work towards what is best for each child.

Article 4

Governments should make these rights available to children.

Article 5

Governments should respect the rights and responsibilities of families to direct and guide their children so that, as they grow, they learn to use their rights properly.

Article 6

All children have the right of life. Governments should ensure that children survive and develop healthily.

Article 7

All children have the right to a legally registered name, the right to a nationality and the right to know and, as far as possible, to be cared for by their parents.

Article 8

Governments should respect children's right to a name, a nationality and family ties.

Article 9

Children should not be separated from their parents unless it is for their own good, for example if a parent is mistreating or neglecting a child. Children whose parents have separated have the right to stay in contact with both parents, unless this might hurt the child.

Article 10

Families who live in different countries should be allowed to move between those countries so that parents and children can stay in contact or get back together as a family.

Article 11

Governments should take steps to stop children being taken out of their own country illegally.

Article 12

Children have the right to say what they think should happen, when adults are making decisions that affect them, and to have their opinions taken into account.

Article 13

Children have the right to get and to share information as long as the information is not damaging to them or to others.

Article 14

Children have the right to think and believe what they want and to practise their religion, as long as they are not stopping other people from enjoying their rights. Parents should guide their children on these matters.

Article 15

Children have the right to meet together and to join groups and organisations, as long as this does not stop other people from enjoying their rights.

Article 16

Children have a right to privacy. The law should protect them from attacks against their way of life, their good name, their families and their homes.

Article 17

Children have the right to reliable information from the mass media. Television, radio and newspapers should provide information that children can understand, and should not promote materials that could harm children.

Article 18

Both parents share responsibility for bringing up their children, and should always consider what is best for each child. Governments should help parents by providing services to support them, especially if both parents work.

Article 19

Governments should ensure that children are properly cared for, and protect them from violence, abuse and neglect by their parents or anyone else who looks after them.

Article 20

Children who cannot be looked after by their own family must be looked after properly, by people who respect their religion, culture and language.

Article 21

When children are adopted the first concern must be what is best for them. The same rules should apply whether the children are adopted in the country where they were born or taken to live in another country.

Article 22

Children who come into a country as refugees should have the same rights as children born in that country.

Article 23

Children who have any kind of disability should have special care and support so that they can lead full and independent lives.

Article 24

Children have the right to good quality health care and to clean water, nutritious food and a clean environment so that they will stay healthy. Rich countries should help poorer countries achieve this.

Article 25

Children who are looked after by their local authority rather than their parents should have their situation reviewed regularly.

Article 26

The Government should provide extra money for the children of families in need.

Article 27

Children have a right to a standard of living that is good enough to meet their physical and mental needs. The Government should help families who cannot afford to provide this.

Article 28

Children have a right to an education. Discipline in schools should respect children's human dignity. Primary education should be free. Wealthy countries should help poorer countries achieve this.

Article 29

Education should develop each child's personality and talents to the full. It should encourage children to respect their parents, their own and other cultures and the environment.

Article 30

Children have a right to learn and use the language and customs of their families, whether these are shared by the majority of people in the country or not.

Article 31

All children have a right to relax and play, and to join in a wide range of activities.

Article 32

The Government should protect children from work that is dangerous or might harm their health or their education.

Article 33

The Government should provide ways of protecting children from dangerous drugs.

Article 34

The Government should protect children from sexual abuse.

Article 35

The Government should make sure that children are not abducted or sold.

Article 36

Children should be protected from any activities that could harm their development.

Article 37

Children who break the law should not be treated cruelly. They should not be put in prison with adults and should be able to keep in contact with their families.

Article 38

Governments should not allow children under 15 to join the army. Children in war zones should receive special protection.

Article 39

Children who have been neglected or abused should receive special help to restore their self-respect.

Article 40

Children who are accused of breaking the law should receive legal help. Prison sentences for children should only be used for the most serious offences.

Article 41

If the laws of a particular country protect children better than the articles of the Convention, then those laws should stay.

Article 42

The Government should make the Convention known to all parents and children.

Hawliau Plant
Cymru

Children's Rights
Wales

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‘Get involved’- Participation survey for care experienced children and young people

Purpose of the Survey:

- Before you begin, please read through the information. A trusted adult can help you read the survey.
- The survey asks questions about how you want to be involved with decisions about your care. For example:

1. What are the positives (what is good)?
2. What could be better (ideas to improve)?
3. Would you like to take part in activities to help Children’s Services staff listen to children and young people?
4. Do you prefer communicating in person or via social media?

This Survey is **anonymous**. Anonymous means we cannot tell who you are or who gives what answers to the questions in the survey.

Your information will be stored securely by Children’s Services. We will use the answers and aim to make changes based on the things you say.

You can use a phone, computer, tablet, or paper to complete the survey.

If you want help or support, speak to your social worker or the person who is helping you with the survey.

You can also call ChildLine on 0800 1111 or visit www.childline.org.uk They have a free telephone and online chat service open 24 hours a day, 7 days a week.

(Gender/Sexual orientation questions differ below depending on the age group).

4-10

Q. What is your favourite colour?

- Blue
- Green
- Orange
- Pink
- Purple
- Red
- Yellow

11- 15

Please feel free to answer the question below or respond in the comment box

Q. Are you:

- Female
- Male
- Prefer not to say
- Prefer my own term

16- 24

Please feel free to answer the question below or respond in the comment box

Q. Are you:

- Female
- Male
- Prefer not to say
- Prefer my own term

Q. Do you identify as:

(You can skip this question if this does not apply to you)

(Trans is an umbrella term to describe people whose gender is not the same as, or does not sit comfortably with, the sex they were assigned at birth)

- Bisexual

- Gay man
- Gay woman/lesbian
- Heterosexual/ Straight
- Prefer not to say

16-24

Please feel free to answer the question below or respond in the comment box

Q. Are you:

- Female
- Male
- Prefer not to say
- Prefer my own term

Q. Do you identify as:

(You can skip this question if this does not apply to you)

(Trans is an umbrella term to describe people whose gender is not the same as, or does not sit comfortably with, the sex they were assigned at birth)

- Bisexual
- Gay man
- Gay woman/lesbian
- Heterosexual/ Straight
- Prefer not to say

25+

Please feel free to answer the question below or respond in the comment box

Q. Are you:

- Female
- Male
- Prefer not to say
- Prefer my own term

Q. Do you identify as:

(You can skip this question if this does not apply to you)

(Trans is an umbrella term to describe people whose gender is not the same as, or does not sit comfortably with, the sex they were assigned at birth)

- Bisexual
- Gay man
- Gay woman/lesbian
- Heterosexual/ Straight
- Prefer not to say

Q. Which of the statements best describe you?

- I am in full time education (school, college, home-school)
- I am attending a training course/provider
- I am not in any education, training or employment
- I am volunteering
- I am in paid employment

Q Do you feel safe where you currently live?



Please comment in the box below

Q Do you have friends you trust to talk with?

- Yes
- No

Is there anything else you would like to tell us about?

Q Do you get to spend time with your family?

- Yes
- No

Q Is there anything else you would like to change or improve when it comes to spending time with your family?

Please make a note if you have ideas:

Q. Young people have children's rights and human rights.

Do you know what rights you have?

- Yes
- No

Q. Would you like to know more about your children's rights/ human rights?

If yes, what would you like to know? **(Comment in the box below)**

Q. Do you get asked your views about things that affect you?



Q. Who asks your views about things that affect you?

(Tick all that apply)

- Family member
- Foster carer
- Support worker
- Teachers/ school staff
- Social worker
- Personal adviser
- Other young people
- Other

Q. What is positive (going well) for you now?

Please comment in the box below:

Q. List **three things that you think could be improved (made better) for care experienced children and young people?**

Please write them down below

Q. Would you like to attend activities with other care experienced young people?

- Yes
- No

If yes, how would you like to take part? (Please tick all that apply)

- In person activities (meet up events)
- Arts and crafts
- Sports
- Music/Drama
- Outdoor activities
- Online social media
- Questionnaires (like this one).
- Online meet up events
- Other

Please comment in the box if you ticked 'Other'.

Thank you for taking the time to complete the survey.

We will let you know about the results for children and young people.

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THE RIGHT WAY

A Children's Rights Approach for Social Care in Wales

A Children's Rights Approach is a principled and practical framework for working with children, grounded in the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child



Making rights
a reality

THE RIGHT WAY

Contents

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WHY A CHILDREN'S RIGHTS APPROACH?

Foreword by Professor Sally Holland, the Children's Commissioner for Wales

As Wales' children's champion I aspire to a Wales where all children and young people have an equal chance to be the best that they can be. Whilst many children live safe and happy lives, in 2020-21 we all experienced huge changes in the way we live our lives with the Coronavirus Pandemic, requiring us to adapt very quickly to new ways of doing things.

Children across Wales had many of their rights directly impacted by this, in terms of how they play, see family and friends, go to school, clubs and access support, if they need it. Children's experiences will have varied enormously throughout the year, and our [Coronavirus and Me Surveys](#) with young people in Wales sought to explore this. Some have adapted well to the new ways of doing things, however for some children, they have felt isolated and unsettled with many families facing new pressures and uncertainty. Those working in social services will be acutely aware of the pressures children and families may be facing at this time. Never before have we needed to be so mindful of children's rights and how to protect these in the face of change.

Social services have worked hard to adapt to new ways of supporting children and families and this guide has been developed during the Coronavirus Pandemic. My team and I heard of many excellent examples of how services have worked hard to engage and listen to children, keep them involved in the delivery of their services, hear their experiences and adapt their support in a way that best suits children. We also heard how some groups of children faced greater pressures during this time, such as young carers who have taken on more responsibilities, care-experienced young people who have been unable to see their birth families as regularly and care-leavers who have found themselves isolated. We also heard of the powerful commitments of those supporting vulnerable children to keep engaging with children and to protect their wellbeing in this difficult time.

The Right Way:

Social Care has been developed with children and professionals across Wales who have experience of the social care sector. Following a number of virtual workshops with professionals and children (including one virtual sock puppet workshop!) we heard many examples of how services are implementing a children's rights approach, both in the delivery of services and in individual practice, as well as some challenges. The guide aims to share the common approaches used by services when implementing the principles of a children rights approach. It also includes advice and guidance from young people on what is important to them when developing relationships with those working to support them. This document has been developed to give Social Workers, Independent Reviewing Officers, Service Managers, Participation Workers, Children's Guardians and the many other professionals working to support children in a social care context, practical, real-life examples of how children's rights can be further promoted in everyday practice.

As a registered social worker I am proud that in Wales all those carrying out the functions of the Social Services and Well-being (Wales) Act 2014 bear the duty to pay due regard to children's rights. This guide aims to further strengthen this responsibility by bringing to the fore examples of how services are promoting rights for children in a bid to share inspiring case examples of how this duty is carried out in everyday practice.

The examples in this guide are a culmination of established good practice and some new ways of working. Children's rights have remained in place throughout the pandemic - but the ways in which they have been supported to access them have had to change. These examples demonstrate how a children's rights approach, when placed at the centre of our ways of working, can provide stability even when society is rapidly changing.

INTRODUCTION

A Children's Rights Approach is a coherent, politically neutral and practical framework for working with children, grounded in the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC). It is a durable approach that withstands social change.

It is about placing the UNCRC at the core of a child's experience when receiving care and support from children's services and it puts their rights at the centre of how those services implement decisions about a child's life. A children's rights approach can also be applied to how services include children in the planning, policies and practices of an organisation. This guide provide ideas for individual practice with children and young people as well as tips for developing organisational practices.

A children's rights approach can help to deliver better outcomes for children and their families as well as giving a supportive and coherent framework to practitioners in what can be a challenging area of work.

The framework of a children's rights approach helps organisations consider what they are already doing to support and promote children's rights, and also identify gaps and areas for development.

Policy and legislation on children in Wales is underpinned by the UNCRC. The Rights of Children and Young Persons (Wales) Measure 2011 and the Social Services and Well-being (Wales) Act 2014 all establish duties on public authorities that contribute toward the realisation of children's rights. The participation and involvement duties of the Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015 also serve to further underpin this. A Children's Rights Approach is consistent with the duties placed upon those working in the social care sector, and will help those professionals meet their statutory duties. All professionals working with children should consider ourselves 'duty-bearers' in relation to the UNCRC. In other words we have a duty to support children to access their rights.

Social services staff at all levels work tirelessly to keep children safe and promote positive outcomes for some of the most vulnerable children in society. The work of children's social services takes many forms for children; from brief interventions with families to child protection work, supporting children with particular needs to becoming corporate parents for some. At

the core of this work is the need to work in a child's best interests, to support children to live safely and have their needs met. However, we know that social care professionals make difficult decisions each day for children and their families. This often means that a range of rights have to be weighed up and balanced, including rights to be listened to, to a family life, to safety from harm and for children to be supported to achieve their potential.

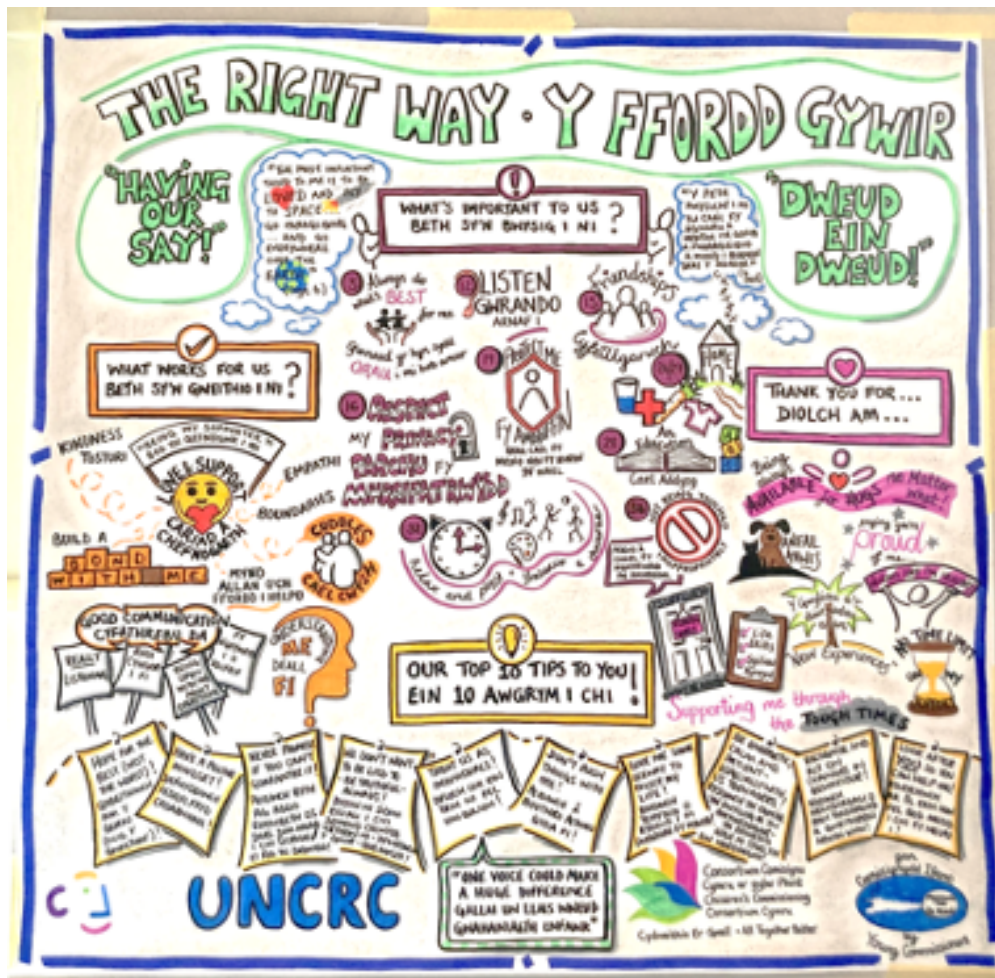
Often, rights work is taking place in services and in individuals' practice, even when not labelled as such. The driver of social work is to support children and keep them safe, which is linked strongly to Article 3 of the UNCRC – to always do what is best for a child. However, children have many other rights too. In our discussions with children and professionals when preparing this guide, it seemed harder to demonstrate how all the rights of children were being promoted and proactively considered in reaching decisions. Whilst professionals aim to make decisions which support rights and which support a child's best interests, children don't always feel this is clearly explained to them. Children informed us that at times it doesn't feel that their other rights are given the same regard and consideration, such as rights to have their say and be listened to (Article 12), to have information (Article 13) and rights to privacy (Article 16). This guide aims to support practitioners to build children's rights thinking throughout their everyday practice and to support young people in receipt of social care services to be aware of and access all of their rights under the UNCRC.

What did children and young people tell us was important to them?

Throughout The Right Way Social Care Project, we engaged with children who were receiving support from their local social services. Some were care-experienced, some had been adopted and some attended young carers' support groups. They shared with us what were important qualities in an adult working to support them and how they would like to be treated when interacting with supporting adults;

Children shared with us their experiences of relationships with professionals and had common experiences of wanting honesty from professionals, and to be seen as an individual, listened to and understood.

- "Keep our confidentiality (to an extent) and help us build a good relationship with you."
- "A child may not understand the situation as well as much as an adult would"
- "Don't treat young children (7 or 8) as babies and just as normal"
- "Don't speak to me like a baby."
- "Be patient"
- "Put us first and listen to us before another adult speaks"
- "Be my advocate. Help put our voices across and be supportive in times of need."
- To speak freely: Freedom of speech is important.
- "Don't pressure someone, be very caring and take into consideration that some people have been through a lot and may need some extra support. Be kind and you shouldn't assume before you know everything."
- "Being an education advocate: Listened to my opinion. I sometimes need a break as some teachers in the past have said I don't do enough to have one."
- "Speak to me with respect to be spoken to with respect"
- "Speak like they want to be spoken to"
- "Just be honest, I just want to know"
- "It can't be the same for everybody, has to be treated as an individual case."



For children, communication and confidentiality were important to them. Children did not want too many adults involved in their care and support, as building trusting relationships was very important to them. Trusting and respectful relationships helped develop accountability for children on an individual level. Trust can be built by honesty, including being told when something hasn't been able to happen. Children told us:

- “Too many people are involved in my case on times – Universal credit – I had everyone in one office calling me!”
- “Communicate between each other! I had a long term social worker and a generic one and they didn't know they both existed!”
- “Even if you can't get something done- explain that to me”
- “Always keeps in contact, be there for us not only when we need them”
- “They explain even if they can't do what I've been asked. I like to know they have tried and failed rather than thinking they don't care about me”

For many children and young people, their main messages were about forming trusting relationships, getting good quality information, getting feedback on what has been done with their views and having a broad range of rights upheld, including privacy, information, right to family life.

A 'CHILDREN'S RIGHTS APPROACH'

The model set out in this guide has been developed with professionals and children from across Wales, working in a variety of social care settings. It is designed to be applicable to both statutory and non-statutory provision involved in the delivery of children's social care. Our case studies illustrate practice that can be adapted to suit different services and can be modified to support children of different needs and ages.

Many services will already have procedures and practices in place which are consistent with a **Children's Rights Approach**. In the development of **The Right Way; Social Care**, we held workshops with professionals from across the sector who shared the approaches present in their services, as well as discussing the shared challenges they faced in adopting a children's rights approach. These discussions have been central in shaping this guide. We recommend that this guide is used in the following ways:

- To help services and individual practitioners map the ways in which they are already implementing a children's rights approach;
- To identify gaps or areas for further development;
- To be inspired by our case studies and stimulate innovation.

A Children's Rights Approach is a framework for supporting children's 42 rights under the [UNCRC](#).

The five principles of a Children's Rights Approach are:

- **Embedding children's rights**
- **Equality and Non-discrimination**
- **Empowering children**
- **Participation**
- **Accountability**

Embedding children's rights

Embedding children's rights means deliberately and systematically using children's rights in the language an organisation uses, ensuring that staff understand children's rights through training and development, and integrating rights thinking into service development.

Embedding rights in these ways mean that staff understand that they are duty-bearers; in other words they have a professional duty to uphold and promote children's rights. It also means that children and their families hear the clear message that they receive services they need because they have a right to the support they need to achieve their potential. This avoids a deficit approach and sends an important signal to children of their inherent worth no matter what life's thrown at them.

What did professionals tell us?

In our discussions with professionals, some explained how rights training for all levels of staff had helped to embed an understanding of **rights across** the service. Others had found that providing training of rights such as during induction or under-graduate/post-graduate training, helps embed rights awareness at the earliest opportunity. Others noted how **explicit links to rights in policies** helped support rights-aware practice across the organisation.

Some felt that rights work is very often taking place within their organisation on a strategic level, but it was more challenging to link rights work to everyday practice – this often depended on individuals' awareness of rights. Some professionals noted that as formal or statutory assessment templates are not always designed to demonstrate clear consideration of rights to be evidenced in decision making, practitioners are not always encouraged to make direct links between the rights of children (and how they promote these) in decision making, despite considering them in practice. Compounding this were concerns that constraints on practitioners' time and resources were seen as barriers to thorough application. Ways of combating these barriers can include having **links to rights made in documents or tools** used in everyday practice, in office displays such as posters. Some organisation use **Charters for Children** to display in children friendly language how children can expect their rights to be respected when using the service.

The most effective embedding of rights will happen when all agencies who work together to support families share the same values and understanding of rights. Practitioners shared with us that a partnership approach is hugely important for children to enjoy consistent recognition of their rights, and that different agencies should work together to meet the holistic needs of children.

Quotes from Professionals;

'We have embedded a children's rights training session into inductions for new staff'.

'Getting rights at a senior level is essential'

'We can often face challenges in terms of processes to follow and having funding approved by the group manager, where the social worker has to 'make a case' and justify why they think a child needs a particular service or short break in order for their needs to be met.'

Wrexham – Embedding The Right Way, The Adoption of a Children’s Rights Approach by Wrexham Council

Following work with Wrexham Public Service Board (PSB), Wrexham Council agreed to pilot The Right Way. This work was supported by the Children’s Commissioner’s Office and a pilot developed in four Wrexham County Borough Council departments; Children’s Social Care, Adults Social Care, Housing and Economy and Education.

Wrexham’s project team and staff worked hard to complete the self-assessment with most of the team managers in Children’s Social Care and in Adult Social Care, as well as with the Departmental Management Team amongst other services; workshops were held with senior management and an intention to embed Children’s Rights in strategic plans and the development and trial of a new Children’s Rights Impact Assessment Tool were made. The pilot has raised awareness of Children’s Rights and the need to adopt and implement The Right Way and there is a real willingness to engage with this agenda in Wrexham, with high-level support.

A number of external challenges including internal inspections, changes in leadership and the global pandemic affected the pilot’s aims. Despite this the PSB has prioritised a sustained focus on children and young people, inequality and the environment as being critical to Wrexham’s recovery post-COVID-19, so there is an opportunity and a commitment on partners to really do things differently.

Post-COVID-19 may bring unknown opportunities for a focus on Children’s Rights in Wrexham Council and an increasing focus on continuous learning could lead to the development of a UNCRC action learning set to develop easy, quick actions to make small steps in the right direction on a regular basis.

By involving senior leaders and winning the hearts and minds of senior leaders, the commitment to a Children’s Rights Approach has been able to embed across the Service

Practical ways to embed children's rights in a social care setting;

- Ensure all policies and internal documents are underpinned by and explicitly mention the UNCRC. Reference to rights should be explicit and incorporate standards such as the National Participation Standards for Young People.
- Ensure that staff, senior leadership and council are aware of children's rights and how they can be upheld in everyday practice, individual roles and the delivery of the service.
- Secure executive leadership support for embedding rights language, and consider developing a Children's Charter or other form of organisational commitment to children.
- Adopt a whole service approach to accountability to create a culture that understands and respects children's rights. Senior managers should ensure training programmes on rights and rights issues should be prioritised; this includes regular and consistent refresher training, and incorporating data and research into training.
- Explore how consideration of rights can be routinely embedded into the questions or approach for statutory assessment planning and review procedures to reinforce consideration of rights at every stage of a child's experience. This can help make links between embedding rights strategically and within individual practice.
- Identify key individuals and/or a team with responsibility to act as champions or designated lead on children's rights, who are able to support other staff to develop their practice.
- Carry out an initial and then regular audit of all policies to assess compliance with the values of the UNCRC, as well on-going evaluation of practitioners' demonstration of their knowledge and understanding of children's rights across the service.
- Allocate sufficient human and financial resources to support the setting to implement a children's rights approach.
- When decisions are made to change policies or services conduct a children's rights impact assessment (CRIA) on the proposals.
- In commissioning contracts, ensure providers and services commit to upholding children's rights and ensure this is embedded into service agreements.

Some practical ways to embed children's rights into everyday practice;

- Use rights language in your everyday practice with children and their families. For example, 'You have a right to be listened to and taken seriously. That's why I want to meet up and hear more about.....'
- Use rights language to advocate on behalf of the children and young people you are working with. For example, 'She has a right to the support as she needs to recover from the abuse she experienced (article 39, UNCRC) therefore there is a strong case for providing this psychological support.'
- Encourage consideration of children's rights in team discussions and supervision sessions.

Embedding rights directly into policies and practice in ways like the examples set out above will contribute towards the delivery and realisation of the following articles of the UNCRC:

- Article 3; Everyone who works with children should always do what is best for each child.
- Article 13; Children's right to have information.
- Article 42; The government must let children and families know about children's rights

Equality and Non-Discrimination

Equality is about ensuring that every child has an equal opportunity to make the most of their abilities. It is about ensuring children can develop to their fullest potential, and that no child has to endure poor life chances because of discrimination. Much of the work social services do for children is to help level the playing field for children who experience disadvantages. Services should be designed with the support needs of children at the centre. However, not all children will access this support in the same way and some will experience additional barriers due to poverty, racial prejudice, being disabled and other forms of inequality and marginalisation.

What did practitioners say?

Practitioners will be familiar with the Equality Act 2010 protected characteristics. However, from our discussions it was not always clear how services were strategically embedding the principle of equality and non-discrimination.

In the workshops we held with children and professionals with social care experience, the principles of equality and non-discrimination were discussed at length. Professionals raised how they felt some groups of children were less likely to enjoy their rights than others. For example, children with disabilities were a key group that professionals recognised did not always get the chance to take up all their rights and may require additional support in accessing them.

Others recognised that care-experienced children who are placed out of county face additional barriers when seeking entitlements or support, perhaps with accessing school, seeing family or engaging with participation networks. Others discussed the needs of children of Black, Asian and minority ethnic backgrounds and how services may need to adapt to ensure they are fully inclusive of these groups of children.

Openly acknowledging barriers can feel exposing to some at first, but the important step is to then work to address or overcome those barriers rather than just stating that they are there.

For children, discussion about equality and non-discrimination was about being seen as an individual, and being supported in a way which was respectful and free from assumptions and prejudices.

Embedding the principle of equality and non-discrimination is about acknowledging this and that for some children, a universal offer of support may in itself not be equally accessible. In order to fully embed this principle, services must engage with the children they support, understand their varying needs and ask questions about representation and inclusion. They should also critically scrutinise their data on accessing their services and outcomes to look for any trends or patterns. Following this, it is about putting in practical steps to overcome any challenges that may be present.

Quotes from Professionals;

'Some children face digital disadvantages'

'It can be challenge to engage with care-experienced children who may have a disability'

'Do an internal audit. What position are you in? If you don't know how can you make sure there is no inequality and discrimination?'

'How can we recruit so that officers have a good understanding of engaging marginalised groups?'

'Children are sometimes discriminated against - access to education, access to schools, a lack of aspiration. How do we set a baseline? How do we adapt and tailor services so ALL children are able to access and enjoy their rights?'

Practical ways for services to put the principle of equality and non-discrimination into practice

- Include a clear commitment to promoting equality and tackling direct and indirect discrimination against specific groups of children in all significant policies, and share this as a clear and consistent message across the service.
- Undertake [Children's Rights Impact Assessments](#), which incorporate analysis of equality issues, to consider how decisions at service level may impact different groups of children and what steps will be needed to mitigate this.
- Provide space for practitioners to understand and discuss challenges of equality and non-discrimination. For example, this can take the form of reflective opportunities to discuss cognitive bias and the use of oppressive language. Provide opportunities for training to help staff better understand the needs of specific groups.
- Gather relevant data, including disaggregated data, to enable identification of discrimination or inequalities to identify children who may be discriminated against in policies and practice.
- Develop trusting and reciprocal relationships with specific interest groups for children and parents, particularly those who are often marginalised, to help understand the barriers or challenges they face when accessing support. Build on their experiences to promote more inclusive practice and targeted support.
- Ensure a variety of media and approaches are used to engage children and that information is tailored accessibly in a way that best meets their needs.
- Recognise that it may take time to find a way to work effectively with a child experiencing barriers; build this in to caseload expectations.

Some practical ways for individual practitioners to put the principle of equality and non-discrimination into practice

- Be aware of power differentials in meetings and assessments and consider ways to assist children and their families to be able to fully participate.
- Ask about communication preferences, including preferred language and style of communication.
- Consider literacy and cognitive levels when communicating in writing or speech and adjust accordingly. Avoid jargon or acronyms.
- Avoid hetero-normative assumptions and gender stereotypes when talking with or about children and young people. For example asking if they have a boyfriend/girlfriend or talking about 'typical' girls or boys.
- Understand that Black, Asian and other minority ethnic children and their families will have experienced racism, whether direct or indirect, and hear and where necessary act on those experiences.
- Acknowledge that some groups and communities have a history of poor experiences with public bodies and that this will impact on their ability to trust your intentions to support their rights. This includes Gypsy, Traveller and Roma communities and some refugee families who have fled war or oppression.
- Poverty is an overwhelming experience for many families receiving social care. Make income maximisation a goal by providing or arranging debt counselling and benefits take up.

Implementing these practical tips will directly contribute to breaking down equality and discrimination barriers, and towards the delivery and realisation of the following articles of the UNCRC:

- Article 1: Everyone under 18 has these rights.
- Article 2: All children have these rights no matter what.
- Article 5: Governments should help parents to help children to know about and use children's rights as they grow up.
- Article 8: The government should respect children's right to a name, identity, nationality and family.
- Article 22: Refugee children have the same rights as children born in Wales.
- Article 23: Children have a right to special care and support if they have a disability so they can lead a full and independent life.
- Article 27: All children have a right to a good standard of living.
- Article 29: All children have a right to become the best they can be.

Case study: Empowerment, equality and non-discrimination; Jig-So, Swansea Social Services and the Swansea Bay Midwifery unit Partnership

Jig-So is a team of midwives, nursery nurses (health), family facilitators and early language development workers (Local Authority). This partnership project has been developed to support young parents with their parenting journeys, many of whom are 18 or younger. They provide ante-natal and post-natal support to parents, and provide spaces for parents to support each other as peers. Young parents often feel that they face discrimination due to stereotypes and assumptions about their backgrounds, behaviours and capabilities.

We met with parents receiving support from Jig-So. They shared how the project had empowered them through their personal support, such as helping to advocate for the parents and child when required and giving time and practical tips to parenting. This joint project is a positive example of how services can work together to empower young parents through targeted support. It also demonstrates how services have worked to promote equality and non-discrimination by supporting families to reach their potential.

Empowering Children and Young People

Human rights should empower children. Empowerment means enhancing children's capabilities as individuals so they are better able to take advantage of rights, and to engage with, influence and hold accountable the people and organisations that affect their lives.

Children need to understand that they have rights and to have positive experiences of receiving them to help them feel empowered.

Those working with children in a social care context have a duty to help ensure children know that they have rights, have real opportunities to take them up and feel empowered by their rights. This takes many different forms for children; from using rights language with children, to making sure they can see their rights reflected in their interactions with professionals and the support they receive, to having their rights protected when they are faced with barriers to accessing them. This element of a children's rights approach is about making rights a reality for children.

Children who receive support from social services may not always feel empowered if they believe decisions are made about them, as opposed to being made with them. This was clear from the conversations we had with children – they wanted to know why decisions were made and to be fully included in the decision making. Children told us that at times, they will not always receive the outcome they wanted, but they want to know how that decision was made.

Empowerment changes the relationship between children and adults in social care settings. This is because it means adults handing over or sharing decision making with children. This principle applies equally to younger children and should be seen as an important contribution to the development of the child (guaranteed by Article 6 of the UNCRC). Whilst many practitioners will make difficult and sensitive decisions regarding children and their families, the use of age-appropriate, inclusive and terminology free language can help break down barriers to communicating why decisions have been made.

For children, empowerment was about being supported to participate, understand rights and be supported to exercise these rights.

- “Adults can help by taking steps to help improve our situation, and being patient”
- “They make me feel safe. When we were little we couldn't live with our mum we had to be safe with someone else. They helped me feel safe.”

What did professionals tell us about empowerment?

- “Empowering children doesn't always have to be technical. Empowerment can be the things you do as an adult to provide opportunities and experiences for children to grow and make decisions, and doesn't always have to be rooted in technical rights language.”
- “The importance of trusted relationships cannot be underestimated”.
- “Facilitating platforms for children means taking opportunities to where they are. Children have been more comfortable, and available, during lockdown via remote platforms such as whatsapp/zoom. This has removed barriers for some and increased contact with some children who have been harder to reach in the past.”
- ‘Explore with children prior to their reviews what they feel their priorities are... they can tell us how they want their review to be conducted and who they want present’.
- ‘A lack of understanding in some services can be a real barrier to children thriving and having opportunities’
- “Use of advocacy is fairly well managed and fairly widely accessed, though the impact of children's views and rights upon their care planning can be hard to evidence.”
- “[Some] practitioners frequently are risk centred and this prevents children and families developing their own solutions to the difficulties they present with.”

Practical ways for services to put the principle of empowerment into practice

- Provide children with accessible information and education to develop their understanding of their human rights. There are many resources available to support this: www.childcomwales.org.uk/resources/
- Provide children with opportunities and the skills to engage with and influence services' policies and processes. Offer training and information accessible to children and establish clear guidelines for how children will influence decisions.
- Make data gathered about children available to them in an appropriate way so that they can share decision making about the services' priorities and strategies.
- [Provide children and young people with opportunities to act collectively to develop ideas and proposals, to take action and to influence decisions.](#)
- Consider how all children can take part, for example, ensure that there are mechanisms by which children who use the service can be genuinely representative of views held by other children, for example by enabling groups to discuss agenda items prior to meetings.
- It is equally important that children on an individual level feel empowered to challenge decisions made by a service. This is more than just about making complaints; children need to be routinely involved in the decisions made about their lives (more on this is discussed in the accountability principle below).
- [Proactively identify opportunities for children to take decisions according to age and maturity, including opportunities to make significant choices which transform their lives, and inform children of these opportunities. This is about presenting options to children and helping them be empowered to determine their own actions.](#)
- Provide children with accessible information about local and national services and the Children's Commissioner. Our Ambassador schemes will support this: www.childcomwales.org.uk/our-schemes

Practical ways for individual practitioners to put the principle of empowerment into practice;

- Children (and adults) feel disempowered when they don't think they will be listened to, when they don't trust those they are working with and when they don't have faith that positive change will happen. When children are feeling disempowered they may not feel motivated to take up their rights to say what they want and need, to take part in decision-making and to engage with services on offer.
- Empowerment is based on developing trusting relationships. Trust is developed by being seen to be fair, honest, reliable and caring. Being back in touch when you say you will be, even if it's to explain that a decision has not yet been taken, is important to young people.
- Work with children and young people to identify what information they are missing and what information they would like to receive. Work could be done with young people to produce information for others.

When children are supported and empowered, the following Articles of the UNCRC will be engaged and delivered:

- Article 2; All children have these rights no matter what.
- Article 13; Children have a right to have information.
- Article 19; Children should not be harmed and should be looked after and kept safe.
- Article 20; Children should be looked after properly if they can't live with their family.
- Article 25; Children who are not living with their families should be checked on regularly to make sure they are okay.
- Article 36; Children should be protected from doing things that could harm them;
- Article 39; Children should get special help if they have been abused or experienced trauma.

Empowerment; supporting children to take up their rights

Safe Stars, TGP Cymru, Ceredigion

The Ceredigion Safe Stars are a Junior Local Safeguarding Children's Board representing children and young people across Ceredigion. The young people range between the ages of 11-18 and meet on Zoom fortnightly. They aim to promote and raise awareness of keeping children and young people safe, ensuring they are supported and that their rights are upheld. They also work to ensure that children and young people's voices are heard, that they are being listened to and are included in decision-making processes that affect them at a local level.

Safe Stars feed into the Mid and West Wales Senior Safeguarding Board (CYSUR) and meet with other Junior Safeguarding Board's across Mid and West Wales (CADW) to ensure that young people are supported and are safe and healthy.

The Safe Stars have helped contribute to many important projects such as making a film about Advocacy with TGP Cymru. They have also created many resources such as a Safeguarding Rap, a 'Stay home, Stay Safe and Drink Tea' video during the COVID-19 Pandemic and also during their time at home, organised 'Safe Stars vs the Professional' online sessions. The group took part in several Question & Answer sessions with a variety of professionals whose role is to safeguard children and young people across Wales including a Police Officer, Nurse, Head Teacher and The Children's Commissioner, Sally Holland.

Participation

Participation means listening to children and taking their views meaningfully into account. All children should be supported to freely express their opinion; they should be both heard and listened to. Their views should be taken seriously when decisions or actions are taken that affect their lives directly or indirectly (as guaranteed by Article 12 of the UNCRC).

Participation can take place in different forms, appropriate to different circumstances. Children should be supported to take part in decisions that contribute to their lives, shape the services they use and the communities in which they live. Children should be encouraged to openly share their views, wishes and feelings and receive appropriate information and support on how to achieve this.

What did professionals say?

We heard of many positive examples where services had developed groups for children to participate in the delivery of the services they use and positive examples of how children are being empowered to participate in decisions regarding their own lives. Many services had participation champions. Not all, however, were sure as to how their services demonstrated how participation had led to tangible changes in the service, and how they were able to feedback to children how their contributions had been taken in to account and helped deliver change.

For many children who receive support from their Social Services, the Active Offer of Advocacy has been an important step in the systematic inclusion of children's wishes and feelings in the decisions that impact their lives. Many professionals in our workshops welcomed this entitlement for children, but recognised that more was needed in addition to this to be sure that children were encouraged to be actively involved in their care and support. Reporting back to children and informing of the changes they have invoked was an area that few services have robustly developed.

Children's views will need to be taken into account and given due weight in light of their age and maturity, but young age or relative immaturity is no reason for discounting children's opinions or for giving them less attention in decision-making processes. Children reinforced this message in our workshops. Children should be fully informed and given opportunities to be involved in decision making. It should be clear how children have influenced decisions and how their views have been taken into account, with feedback always given to the children who are involved in the process. Participation should not be understood as an end in itself, but as a process, which is safe, enabling and inclusive, and which supports dialogue between children and professionals.

The [National Participation Standards](#) which are supported by Welsh Government can help organisations to deliver effective participation.

Quotes from professionals;

'Participation is not just about setting up groups - it is about children participating in their own care with social worker or key worker'.

'Plans, assessments and statements should be written to reflect the voice of the child and be addressed to the child.'

'When working with families we use a framework that involves the children and young people. We gather the thoughts and views of children and young people and ensure that these are incorporated within and used to create the agreed action plan.'

'Accessing advocacy for children who are non-verbal or have disabilities is a challenge. We often have to reply on parents or carers to advocate on behalf of the child.'

Empowerment; supporting children' right to information

YoVo and Lleisiau Bach/Little Voices, Neath Port Talbot Children's Services;

YoVo is a youth council of care-experienced young people in Neath Port Talbot. The group collaborated with Lleisiau Bach/Little Voices to undertake research with care-experienced young people to ask about the information they received before meeting and living with new foster carers. The young people's research found that 30% of children were not given prior information about foster care. Before meeting foster carers less than 25% of children had information on things like, siblings living with them, location or where they would go to school. Children wanted more information BEFORE they go in to foster care.

YoVo presented their research to Neath Port Talbot Corporate Parenting. As a result, foster carers are now asked to update information booklets. These are given to children and young people before placement. Social Workers make sure booklets are kept up to date.

Practical ways for services to put the principle of participation into practice

- Recognise that there are different levels of participation, relevant to different circumstances. A participation model can help clarify the degree of ownership that young people will experience in each process. A participation strategy supported by a robust children's rights impact assessment will help guide the service on embedding of this principle.
- Include a clear commitment to participation of children in all significant policies, proposals and service developments;
- Provide a platform for children's voices to be reflected in all areas of practice that affect the child's life. This can include development panels and forums. Examples were shared where involvement was evident in a range of areas including recruitment and policy development.
- Through the use of templates and forms, such as for statutory meetings and reviews ensure that children receive information on how they can be involved in the development of their own plan and assessments. Ensure this is an integral part of the process and monitor its take-up. Ensure this is taken up meaningfully by children in an age appropriate way.
- Explore how reviews and assessments can be delivered in an age appropriate way and share best practice. Ask children about their experiences of reviews and assessments and develop them in ways that will help children feel comfortable to contribute to them.
- Provide feedback to children and staff on the outcomes of children's involvement, highlighting any changes brought about by their participation.
- Ensure that resources (human / financial) are identified to support meaningful participation.

Practical ways for individual practitioners to put the principle of participation into practice;

- Provide opportunities for children and young people to be listened to. Tools and exercises can help structure this but so can spending time doing an activity with a child or young person, or simply going for a walk together.
- If a child or young person is finding it difficult to express their views as part of your assessment or routine contact with them, ask them how they'd like to be heard. Some might prefer to write down or video/audio record their views, perhaps with the help of a foster carer, parent or teacher. Remember to offer an advocate too.
- As discussed under the 'accountability' principle below, it is vital to provide a feedback loop, so that children and young people know what you have done after listening to their views.

When children are encouraged and enabled to participate, at a service development and individual level, the following Articles of the UNCRC will be engaged;

- Article 12; Children have a right to say what they think should happen and be listened to.
- Article 13; Children have a right to have information.
- Article 15; Children have a right to meet with friends and join groups and clubs.
- Article 29; Children have a right to become the best that they can be.
- Article 30; Children have a right to use their own language.

Accountability

All staff working to support children in a social care context will have responsibilities and take decisions and actions that impact children. As corporate parents, these are statutory duties, and decisions must be made in a child's best interest. Without clear lines of accountability and adequate information provided to children on why these decisions have been made, some children and their families can be left feeling disempowered.

Children should be provided with information and given access to procedures which enable them to question and challenge decisions that have been taken, should they wish to. For this to be effective, services need to be transparent and provide reasons for their decisions and actions. Wherever possible these should be linked to children's rights. To obtain any right a child must know they are entitled to it and be able to actively claim it, including when making a complaint or challenging decisions and actions. Accountability means holding decision-makers to account, which requires information and data on performance against children's rights standards.

What did professionals say about accountability?

In our workshops with professionals, many talked about how their services had processes in place which enabled children to provide feedback, which was used for service development. However, few shared examples of how children on an individual level could hold the service/professional accountable for the decision made. Professionals talked about how there are collective duties and collective input into decision making, creating challenges in accountability on an individual practice level. This might include reinforcing or explaining a decision which they did not make. Many practitioners associated accountability with being 'open and transparent' with young people, recognising the complexity of involving/not involving children in receipt of social care, in decisions that affect them. This was particularly relevant for those in receipt of statutory social care, where often decisions are made to protect children's safety.

Quotes from Professionals;

'Create minimum expectations with children and young people'

'Do children know where to go? Do we inform children about how they can complain?'

'Complaints aren't a scary thing they are part of an accountability framework'.

Practical ways for services to put the principle of accountability into practice

- Provide opportunities for senior management and, in local authorities, cabinet members to be scrutinised by children.
- Ensure clear lines of accountability are in place in regards to decision making. Ensure this can be communicated to children if required;
- Develop good feedback loops with children and build these into service-wide expectations. Children should understand what decisions have been made in relation to their support and care and how their views have been taken into account. The same principles apply when children and young people have been involved as a group in service development.
- Review policies regarding confidentiality and information sharing and involve children in this process to develop a robust, children's rights informed approach to sharing sensitive information which protects children's rights to privacy.
- Include a clear commitment to accountability in all significant policy statements or other documents such as forms and templates, setting out the vision or key objectives.
- Staff supervision should reinforce individuals' duties to uphold children's rights, so this should be an active part of the regular supervision conversations.
- [Ensure that the service has in place a robust and accessible complaints and feedback process, which children can utilise. Encourage children to use this and promote its existence.](#)

Practical ways for individual practitioners to put the principle of accountability into practice

- Make sure children and young people have all the information they need in a format they can understand, including websites, leaflets, letters written to them or a visual map of the process of decision making and the people involved in their care
- Inform children and young people regularly what is happening with decisions they are waiting for, even if there is no concrete news yet. Offering a video call or phone call is important if you have to cancel a visit or meeting.
- Inform children and young people how their views and preferences have been taken into account
- Take children's complaints seriously. Respond to them as best you can and if they remain dis-satisfied arrange for them to speak to your manager (or whatever the next stage of your complaints process is).
- Don't take for granted that children will understand or know about decisions that have taken place in the past. As well as being of therapeutic importance, life-story work can also be seen as an exercise in accountability. Write your records knowing that children may wish to read these later in their life and understand why and how decisions were taken.

Accountability – Wrexham Social Services

Wrexham Social Services and The Young People’s Care Council and Senedd Yr Ifanc

In the course of work on the Children’s Social Care Engagement Strategy, it was noted that the Authority did not have a child friendly version of the complaints procedure for children and young people. In order to progress this, they worked with an example from Monmouthshire and young people in Wrexham to develop their own version.

Young people were involved in the content, design and launch. The document demonstrates the Accountability principle of The Right Way approach by providing children with accessible information on the process for making complaints. It makes express reference to the UNCRC as a framework for the process ensuring that both children and adults are aware of children’s rights.

When services and individuals are accountable to the children and families they work with, this will enhance or supplement the delivery of the following UNCRC articles:

- Article 3; Everyone who works with children should always do what is best for each child;
- Article 4; The government should make sure that all these rights are available to all children.
- Article 5; Governments should help parents to help you to know about and use children’s rights as you grow up.

GETTING STARTED

There is a lot of information in this guide which should be used to inspire new ideas in your own area of practice, service or individual role. However, implementing a children's rights approach is a journey of continual improvement. The guide should sit alongside service delivery and review, with practitioners and managers returning to it periodically to remind themselves and consider what they might change or adapt in their work.

Implementing a children's rights approach is not a case of overhauling everything in one go, and many of the principles may be part of your work already without you even knowing. Starting off with the [children's rights matrix](#) can help map what your service is already doing to involve and support children, and this can act as your road map forward, identifying what works, what can be strengthened and what gaps can be filled if any, to really bring children's rights to each element of your service.

What is important is to actively realise and work towards the implementation of these principles in a systematic way, but every step in doing so is achieving our duties under the UNCRC and bringing children's rights to life along the way.

We keep our case studies and resources up to date and would love to hear how it is going – from practitioners who've implemented a new way of working or from families who have experienced this for themselves, and what it meant or what outcome it was able to achieve. We want to help services to continue to shape and define what a children's rights approach looks like in all corners of our services, and how they are working to make rights a reality in Wales.

Step one: reflect on what your service, organisation or team already has in place to promote children's rights. Our Children's Rights Matrix is available [here](#) and can help you consider how organisations are already upholding the principles of a children's rights approach, and can help you think about what more could be done to strengthen these principles.

Some key questions to consider are below. It is also helpful to think about setting SMART Goals (Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Realistic, Time-Based), to help you strengthen what is already in place;

- **Embedding:** Do we clearly state our commitment to the UNCRC and Children's Rights? Are all staff and children and families aware of this? Could we enhance this with training? Are we allocating enough resource to support our commitment?
- **Equality and Non-Discrimination:** Be explicit in wanting to tackle inequality and potential discriminations. Consider how are we supporting the needs of different groups of children? Are we providing information to children in a language or format appropriate to their age, maturity, culture or disability? Commit to using [Children's Rights Impact Assessment](#) to consider how decisions can affect groups of children differently.
- **Empowering:** How are we informing children about their rights? How can we give them more opportunities to develop their experience, confidence and skills to take up their rights?
- **Participation;** How are we involving children in the services and decisions that affect them? How do we listen to them and hear their views?
- **Accountability;** How do we communicate change to children? How can children hold us to account? How do we inform children about decisions and how their views have been taken into account?

Step two: reflect on the existing opportunities and consider any proposals to strengthen your approach in line with a [Children's Rights Impact Assessment](#). This can be adapted to fit policy decisions or decisions about your own practice. Utilise the practice recommendations in the guide and explore The Right Way Hub for inspiration on how other services are implementing approaches that could work for you. Feel free to contact us with any new developments or approaches which could be shared to help other organisations.

Step three; Adapt, revisit when needed and evolve.

Implementing a children's rights approach is an active process and things will change over time. From a service perspective, you are likely to adapt more as you embark on your journey and learn more about the young people who utilise your services. On an individual perspective, your approach can strengthen with your learning. As we have seen in 2020-21 with the Coronavirus Pandemic, we all must adapt with our approaches to engaging with children. However, if your organisation has a strong structure in place that commits to children's rights and upholds the principles of a children's approach, these principles and the understanding of the needs of children captured through CRIs and effective participation work, can help guide your adaptations. Ultimately, the considerations of children's needs and your commitment to promote equality and non-discrimination in your approach will provide a solid foundation.

Children's Commissioner for Wales

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SA7 9FS

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[@childcomwales](https://twitter.com/childcomwales) (Twitter)

YouTube: [commissionerwales](https://www.youtube.com/channel/UC...)

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The Right Way - A Children's Rights Approach - Matrix for professionals working with children and young people

| Principle 1 | Embedding children's rights - putting children's rights at the core of planning and service delivery. You can do the following to embed children's rights: | | | | |
|---|--|--|---|--|--|
| <p>Aims</p> <p>Page 141</p> | <p>Go through your current work/strategic plan. Does the plan explicitly link parts of your work to the UNCRC? If not, how could it?</p> | <p>Make sure that leaders and staff have a good knowledge of children's rights (UNCRC), and help them understand how it can benefit your organisation's work.</p> <p>Our Right Way guide can help you.</p> | <p>Use our resources to deliver training to your colleagues on children's rights.</p> | <p>Nominate a person or establish a team with responsibility to promote children's rights within your service, and to make sure that you stick to the targets you make after completing this matrix.</p> | <p>Make sure your organisation has allocated the human/financial resources to support and promote children's rights.</p> |
| <p>Initial Red/ Amber/Green rating</p> | | | | | |
| <p>Set SMART goal(Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Realistic, time-based)</p> | | | | | |
| <p>Who leads?</p> | | | | | |

| Principle 2 | | Equality and Non-discrimination - ensuring that every child has an equal opportunity to be the best they can be. | | | |
|---|--|---|---|---|---|
| <p>Aims</p> <p>Page 142</p> | <p>Include a clear commitment to promoting equality and tackling discrimination against children and specific groups of children in your policies or plans.</p> | <p>Make sure staff have up-to-date knowledge of the Equality Act and receive regular training to increase their awareness of different groups of children and young people's needs.</p> | <p>Use a Children's Rights Impact Assessment (CRIA) to consider how individual decisions (e.g. projects/services) could impact different groups of children and young people. Send us a quick email to receive a CRIA template.</p> | <p>Use any information you have about your service users to consider whether it reaches all groups of young people. Do you need to be collecting any more data to make this exercise easier?</p> | <p>Provide information to children to support their involvement in any of the above procedures, in a language or format appropriate to their age and maturity, culture, or disability.</p> |
| <p>Initial Red/Amber/Green rating</p> | | | | | |
| <p>Set SMART goal (Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Realistic, time-based)</p> | | | | | |
| <p>Who leads?</p> | | | | | |

| Principle 3 | | Empowering children - giving children the knowledge and confidence to use their rights and hold organisations to account | | |
|---|--|--|---|--|
| Aims | Give children accessible information about how to use their rights when using your service - Have a look at this charter for inspiration. | Give children the information they need to influence decisions that affect them (e.g. simple language reports). Here's a report we made with simple language and symbols. | Give children the opportunities they need to influence decisions that affect them(e.g. opportunities to scrutinise decision-makers e.g. giving a group of young people the chance to ask questions directly to a key decision-maker) | Establish relationships with groups of young people to allow them to consistently scrutinise your work. E.g. youth groups/forums, or you could consider forming your own youth board. Give them the training or information they need to do this properly. Our resources could help you. |
| Initial Red/ Amber/Green rating | | | | |
| Set SMART goal (Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Realistic, Time-based) | | | | |
| Who leads? | | | | |

| Principle 4 | | Participation - listen to children and take their views seriously (as guaranteed by Article 12 of the UNCRC). Do the following so children can participate. | | | |
|--|--|--|---|---|---|
| Aims | How do you currently listen to children and young people and use the information they give you? Identify gaps and opportunities. | Involve children directly in the design, monitoring and evaluation of services they receive. Learn about how other organisations are doing this. | Develop clear targets to listen to young people from marginalised groups. | Involve children in the recruitment of staff who have responsibilities that impact on children. | Adopt the National Participation Standards. |
| Initial Red/Amber/Green rating | | | | | |
| Set SMART goal (Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Realistic, time-based) | | | | | |
| Who leads? | | | | | |

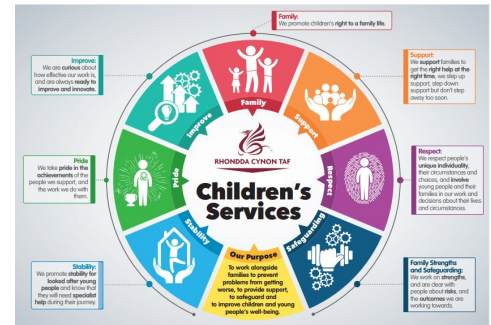
| Principle 5 | Accountability - organisations and individual members of staff who work with children are 'duty bearers' (LINK) and should be held to account for how well they support children to access their rights. Do the following to be accountable to children. | | | |
|--|--|---|---|--|
| Aims | <p>Ensure that staff understand their responsibilities and obligations to children, including by making this explicit in job descriptions and policies governing the conduct of staff, and monitoring this through supervision.</p> | <p>Publish an annual update showing how you've worked towards The Right Way and share it widely with children and young people in an accessible format.</p> | <p>Feedback regularly to children in a suitable format. You could use the 'You Said, We did' model: listing young people's comments and suggestions in one column and saying clearly how the information was used in the next column.</p> | <p>Provide children with accessible information about how to make complaints or hold staff to account.</p> |
| Initial Red/Amber/Green Rating | | | | |
| Set SMART goal (Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Realistic, time-based) | | | | |
| Who leads? | | | | |

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Participation event for care experienced young people– 1.9.22

Nine young people took part in the Children's Services Participation event.

- Two– 10 and under.
- Seven– 11-18 year olds.
- 9 out of 21 arrived on the day. That is 43% attendance.



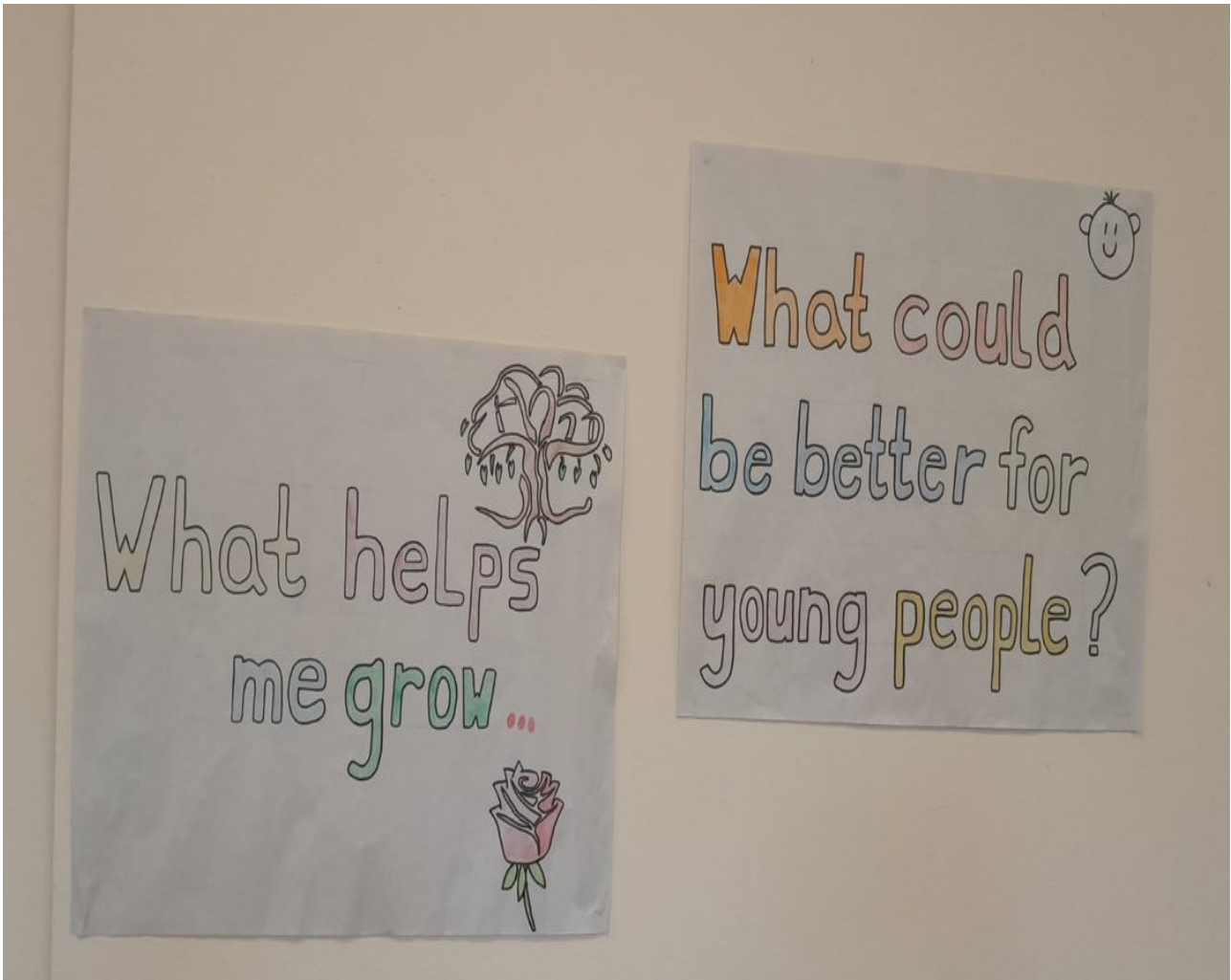
We wanted to find out the following:

1. What helps young people to grow (the positives)
2. What could be better for young people? (changes to be made)
3. Discuss Article 12– 'You have the right to be listened to and taken seriously.'
4. Find out what engagement activities young people would like to be a part of.

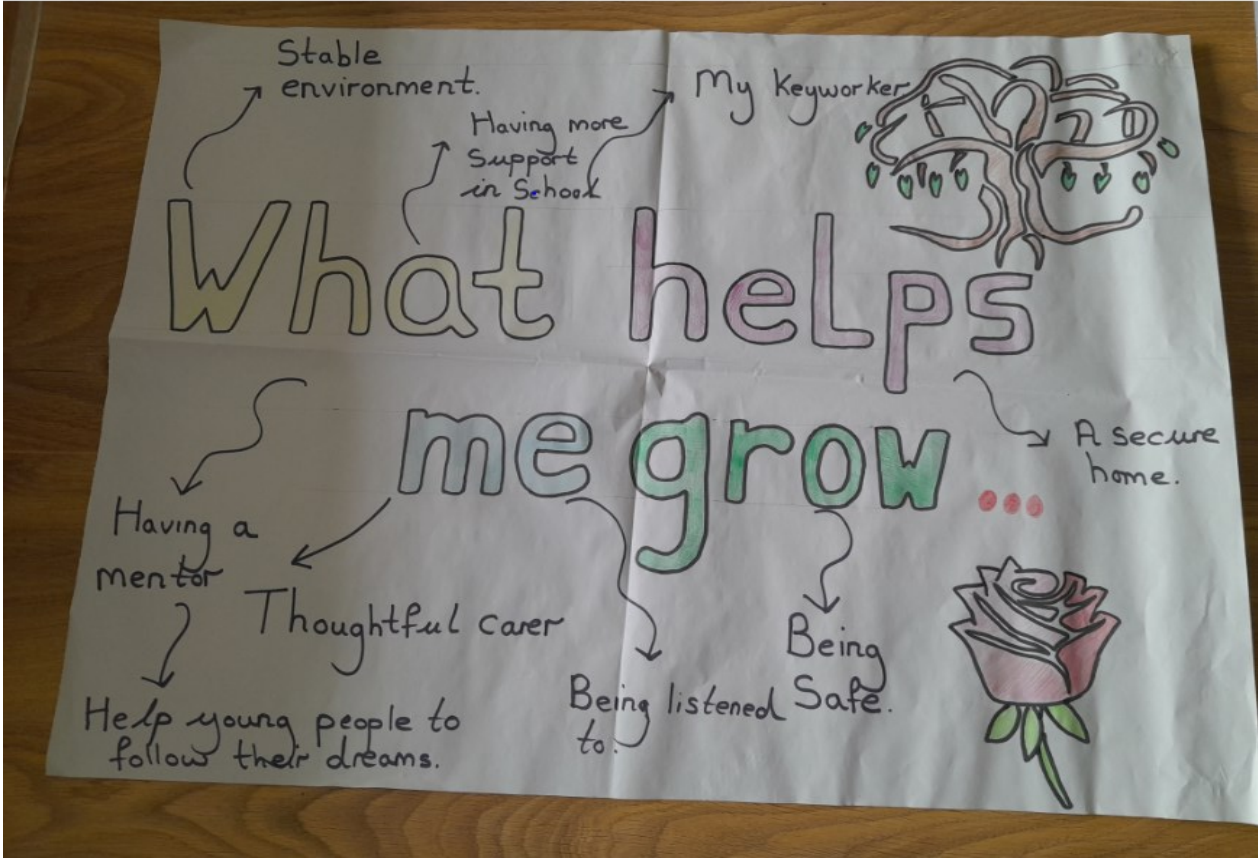
The young people took part through icebreaker activities and games before we discussed their rights to be listened to and taken seriously (Article 12).

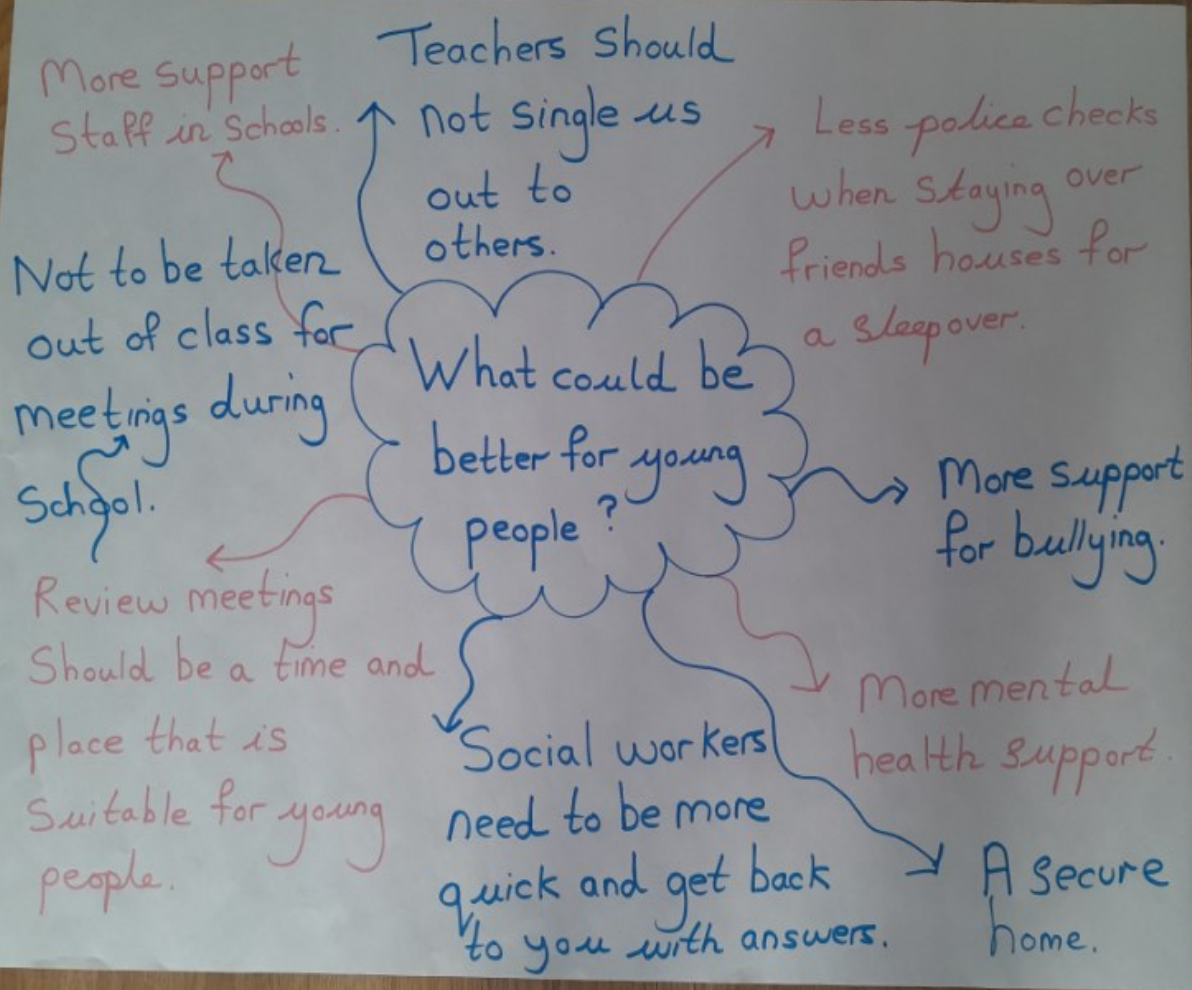
As part of engagement, young people worked in pairs to talk about what makes them grow and what could be better for young people.

Young people created zines, a mini piece about experiences or a journey that an animal or human might undertake. Zines are often used to present groups with an opportunity to voice their opinion with members of their own and larger audiences.



Visual prompts



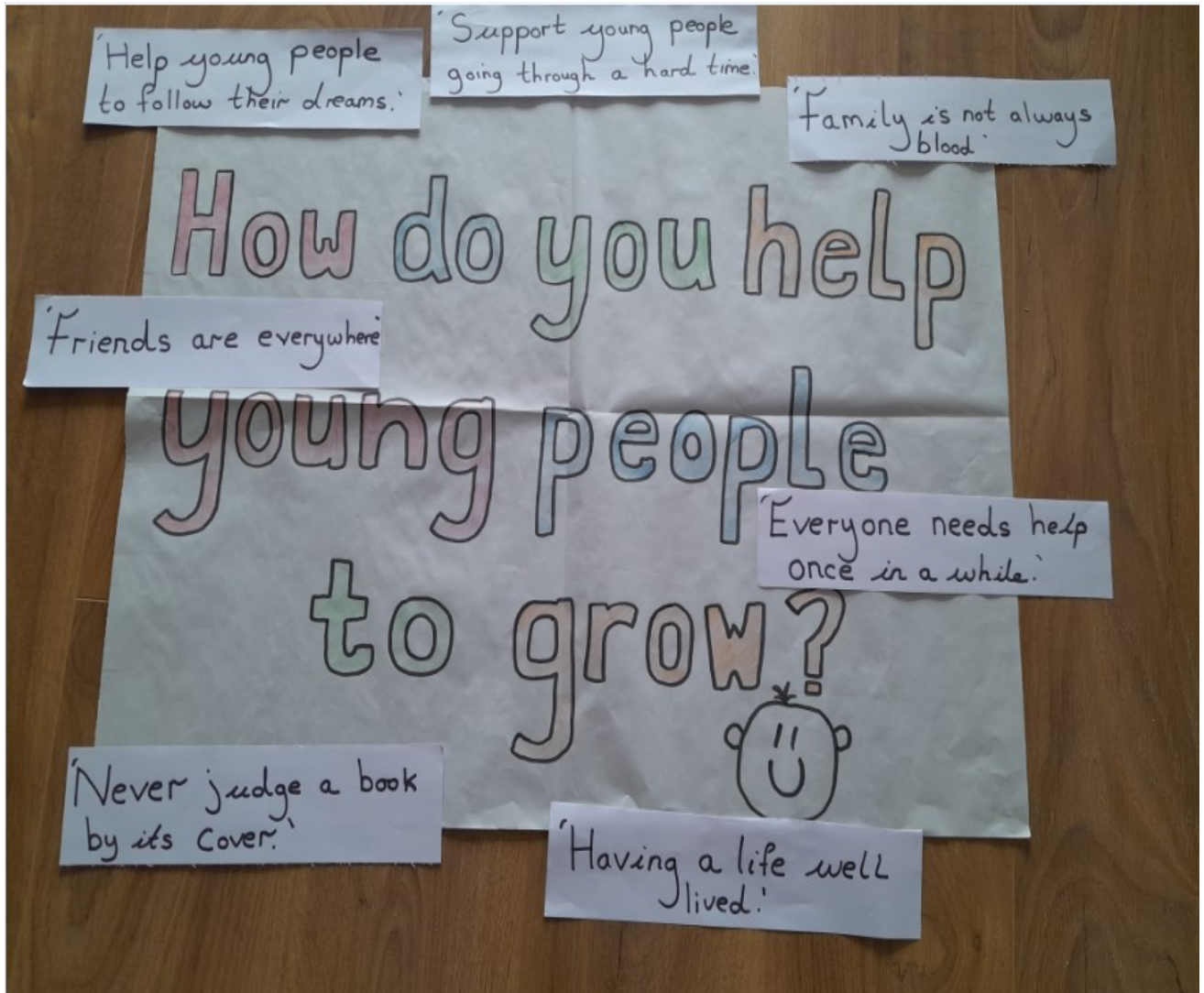


Article

12



I have the right to
be listened to, and
taken seriously.



Information transcribed from young people.

1 WHAT HELPS YOU GROW?

2 WHAT STOPS YOU GROWING?

NAME 4 THINGS

NAME 4 THINGS

Food / Water / Good diet

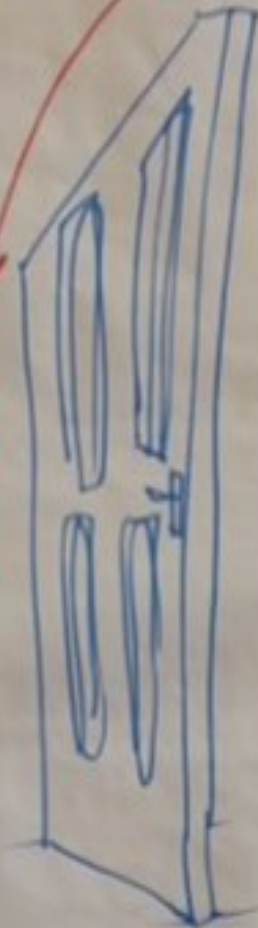
Education
School / books

Friends

Attention

Personal Space

Safe adults



Addiction
Unkind people
No attention
Bad diet
Abusive adults

The journey

Thoughtful carer

Being safe

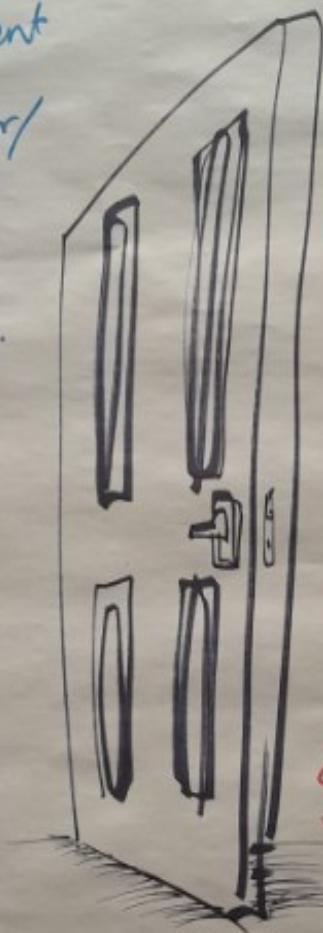
Stable environment

Keyworker/mentor/
role model

More support
Staff in school.



Right placement
for right child



Police checks

Ignorance in
schools.

Bullying

No placements
available
Airbnb

Lack of CAMHS!!

Standing out as
different

SW takes weeks to
get back to you
- you have to be ready.

Listening to voice
of YP

Don't point us out.

Carers who favour their
own children

Zine 1

'The attic'

Theme: Safe space.

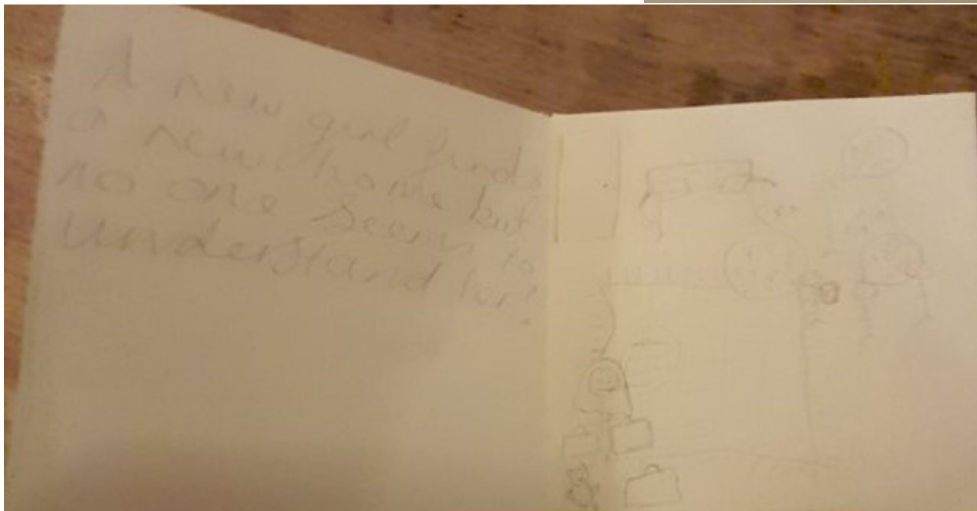
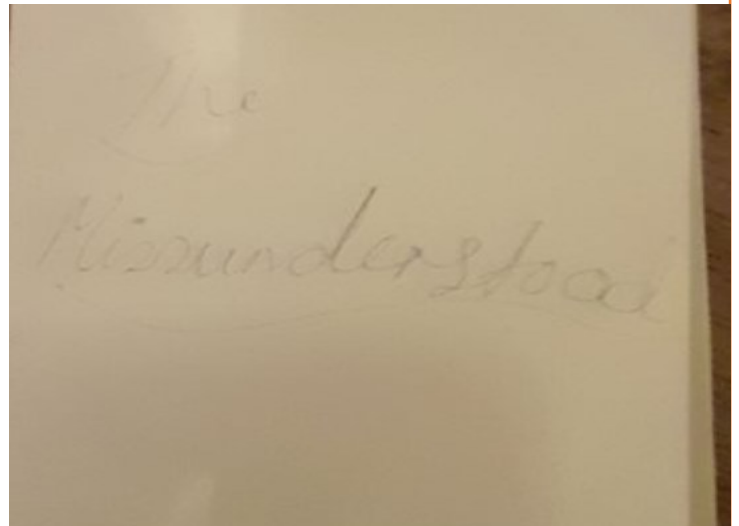


This young person discussed their zine with the artist and said that it's important to have a safe space to help with regulating their temper.

Zine 2

'The Misunderstood'

Theme: Moving from place to place



'A new girl finds a new home but no one seems to understand her.'

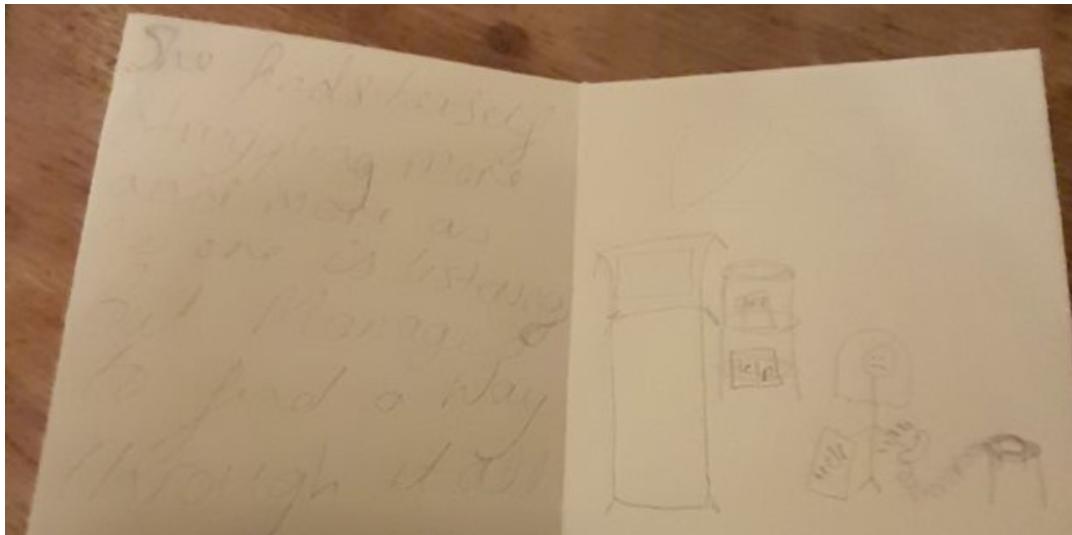
The picture caption was described as a young girl putting down her belongings and everyone laughing at her as she arrived at this new place.

The young person explained the zine and said it can be difficult moving from foster care to residential or from residential to foster care because often new young people arriving do not get their ideas listened to.

Zine 2– continued.

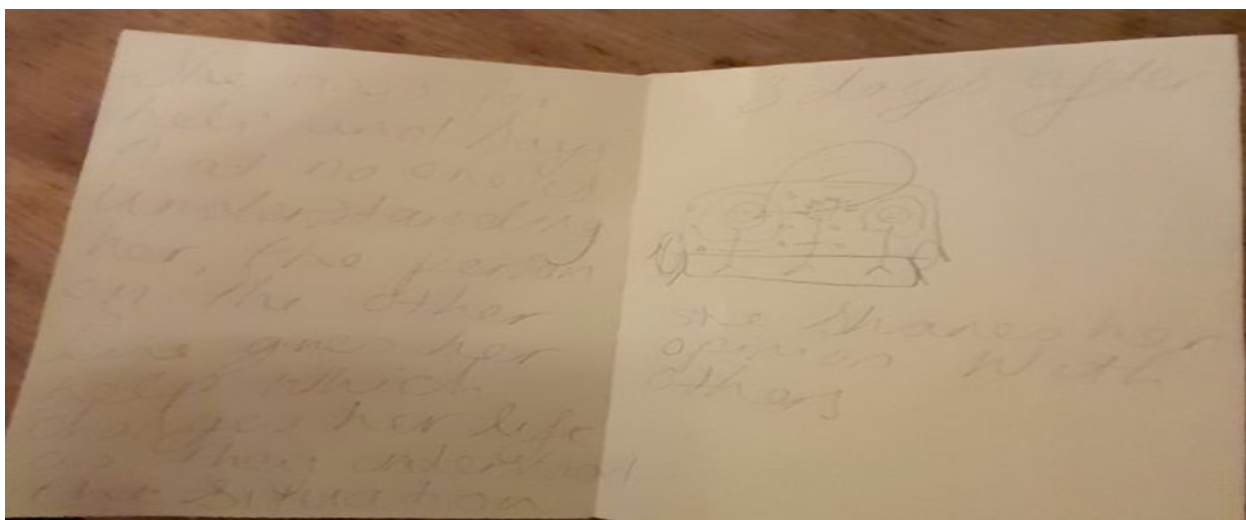
'The Misunderstood'

Theme: Moving from place to place



'She finds herself struggling more and more as no one is listening to her. But manages to find a way through it all.'

(The picture above shows the girl unpacking her belongings all alone).



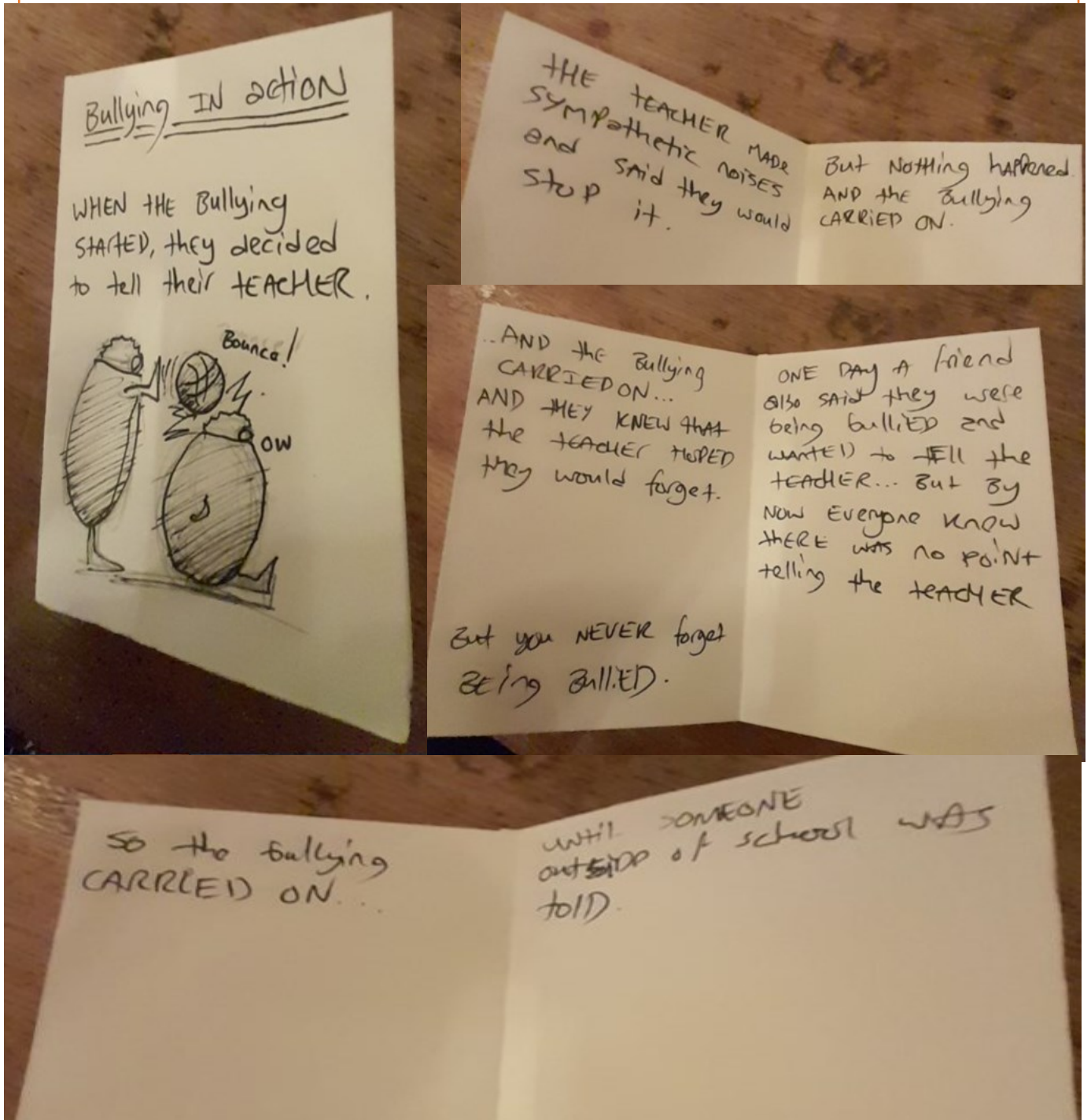
'She rings for help and says no one is understanding her. The person on the other line gives her help which changes her life as they understand the situation. 3 days after, she shares her opinion with others.'

This zine was created by two young people that had experienced difficulties with moving and being misunderstood as a new arrival.

Zine three-

'Bullying in Action'

Theme: Bullying

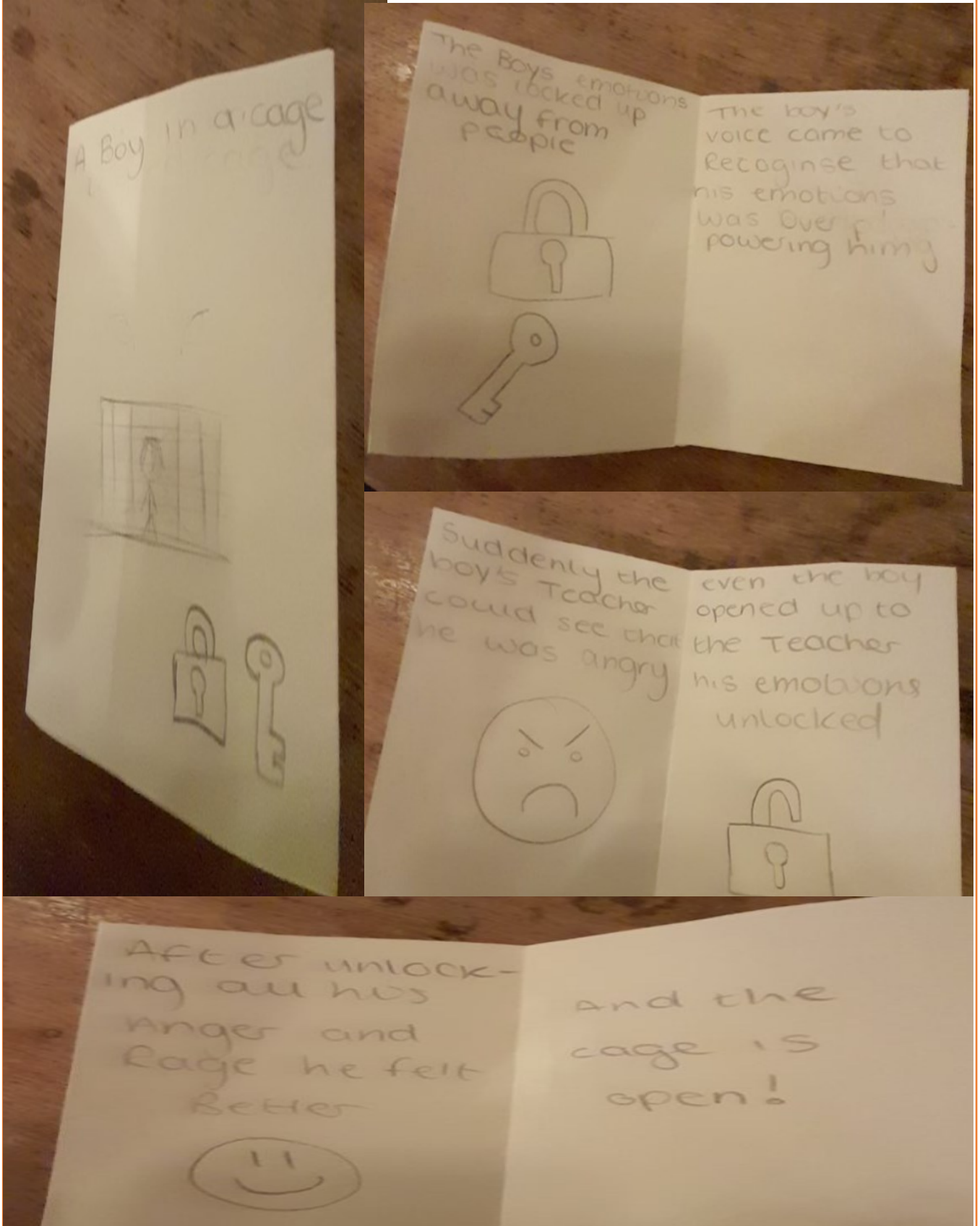


This young person discussed the theme of bullying and how a trusted foster carer supported them with bullying that they experienced in school.

Zine four

'Boy in a cage'

Theme: Emotions locked up.



Zine five

'Looking for a new owner'

Theme: Family

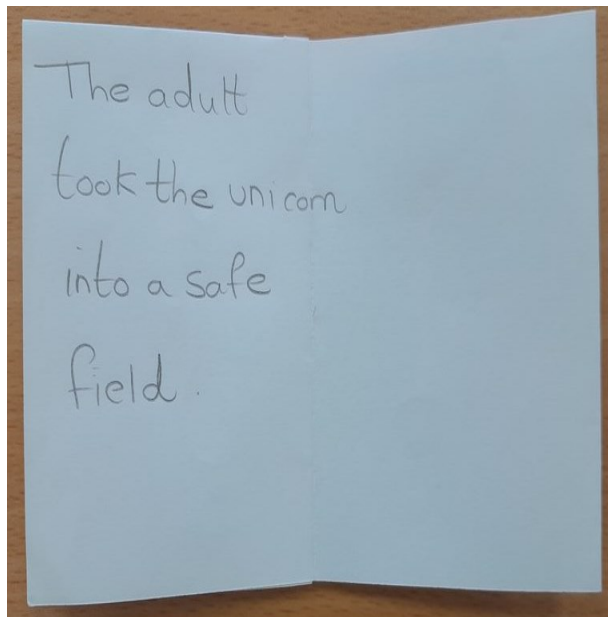
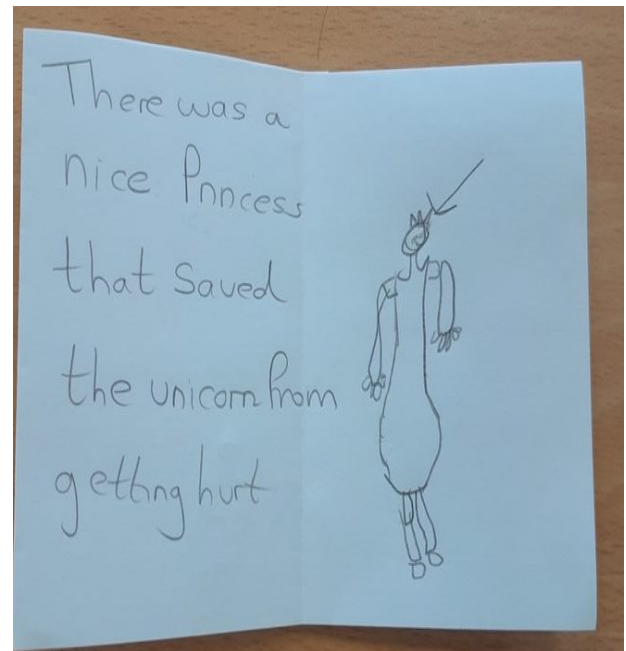
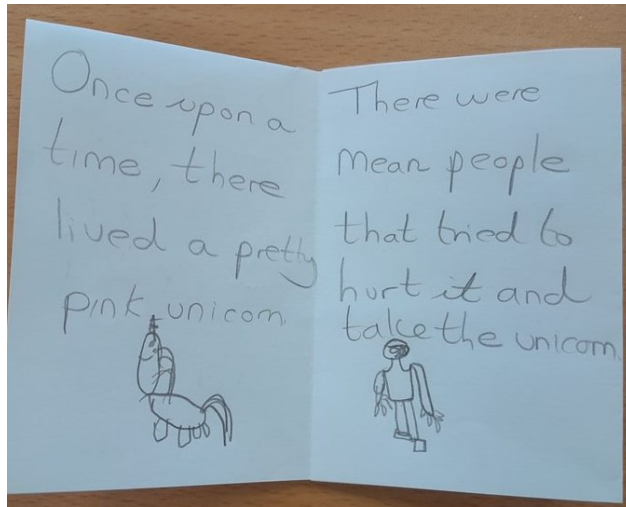


This zine is about an animal that has found his forever loving home.

Zine five

' Looking for a new owner'

Theme: Safe adult



Zine six

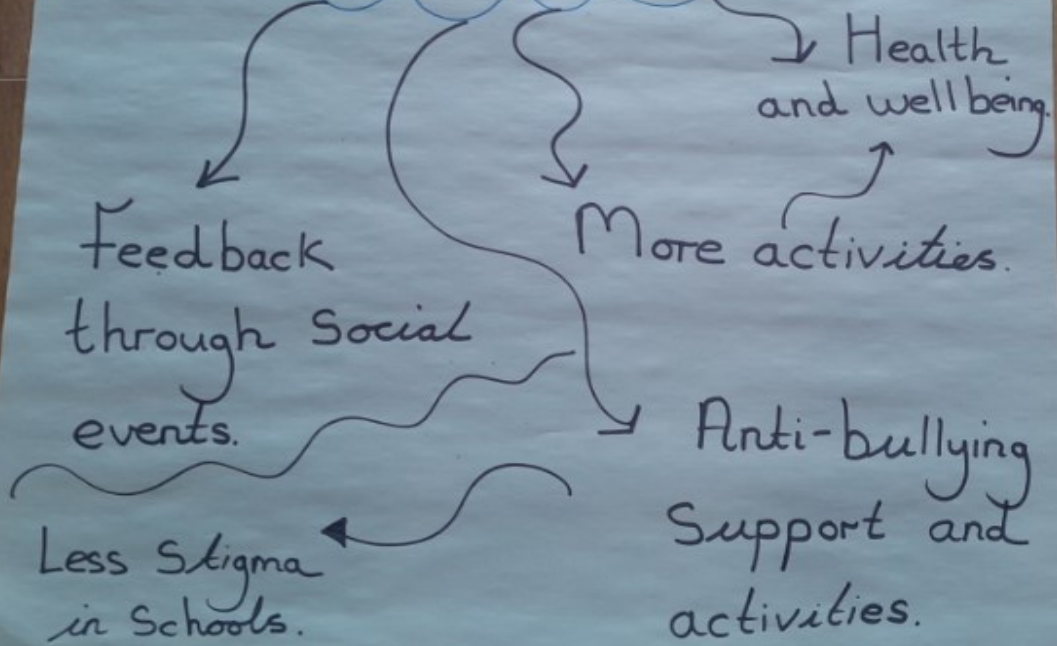
' The rat'

Theme: Finding a family

Zine six has been misplaced but the young person described the zine.

A mouse gets washed down the sewers and meets a rat family. The mouse does not feel like it belongs and decides to run away and find its own family. The mouse finds its own mouse family.

Engagement ideas
for future events



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RCT Corporate Parenting Summary Report

Name of Organisation: Voices From Care Cymru

Name of Project: RCT Local Group

Funder: RCT Local Authority

Team Member: Laura Harper

Date: 22nd August 2022

1. PURPOSE OF THE REPORT

The purpose of this report is:

- To demonstrate the work that Voices From Care Cymru (VFCC) is undertaking to support care-experienced young people in Rhondda Cynon Taf (RCT);
- To assure that the voice of care-experienced children and young people in RCT are at the core of work surrounding policy changes, service development, and delivery;
- To highlight the range of resources made available by VFCC to consult and engage with care-experienced children and young people in RCT.

2. PROJECT SUMMARY

Connecting with Care-Experienced Young People:

Firstly, there were a series of meetings between VFCC and RCT local authority to agree on the model of approach and the implementation of the Local Groups in the region. The meetings allowed open discussion on the scope of delivery and provided clarity of the information to be included in the contract. The contract was subsequently written up and signed in July 2022.

The new proposed model took into account the present issue of reaching a stable and consistent number of care-experienced young people in the Local Group. One of the main changes was prioritising outreach activities and detached opportunities to engage with the care community in RCT. There was also a three-tiered approach outlined to deliver the project and widen participation, which is stipulated as follows: 1) consultation work (open access activities and events), 2) social action projects (targeted social change work), and 3) Peer Representatives (members representing feedback from young people). It was agreed that this work would take place as per the role of the Local Group Development Officer, which Laura Harper took over at the end of June 2022.

Since the new model of work was introduced, the Local Group project engaged a total of 9 care-experienced young people throughout the RCT area over a total of 3 sessions. These sessions will be discussed in detail in the section entitled 'Engagement'. Of these young people that engaged in the sessions, 3 were under the age of 14, 4 were aged

between 14 and 22, and 2 were over the age of 22. Of the 9 young people that engaged in the activities over the last 2 months, all 9 expressed an interest in maintaining their engagement with activities and events in RCT.

Peer Representative training is something that will be prioritised in the upcoming months. Once Peer Representatives are identified and trained, they will provide an excellent opportunity for the Local Groups to expand by prioritising user-led projects and a holistic approach. There have been initial posters shared in regard to this role, and introductory discussions have taken place with the 2 young people that have noted their interest. This is something that we appreciate will support us to connect with the young people currently in the group, but also to outreach and support other care-experienced young people.

Engagement:

Throughout the summer, VFCC ran many fun activities and sessions which were promoted to RCT members as a means of outreach and engagement. A full list of summer activities is seen below:

JULY

WEEK COMMENCING JULY 18TH

- 19TH 3 - 4PM LGBTQIA+ PEER SUPPORT GROUP - VIRTUAL - (AGES 16 - 25)
- 20TH 1 - 3PM LOCAL GROUPS - WELSH GOV CONSULTATION- VFCC OFFICE - (AGES 12+ MERTHYR , RCT AND CARMATHENSHIRE)
- 21ST 2 - 4PM RCT LOCAL GROUP COFFEE MEET UP - GATTO LOUNGE- (AGES UP TO 25)

WEEK COMMENCING JULY 25TH

- 25TH 1 - 3PM RCT/MERTHYR LOCAL GROUPS - ACTIFWOODS SESSION - CYFARTHA PARK (AGES 12+)
- 26TH 1 - 3PM WELLBEING WALK - (FLINTSHIRE) - VENUE TBC- (AGES 16 - 25)
- 26TH 10.30- 12PM SKY'S THE LIMIT PROJECT LAUNCH - VIRTUAL - (PROFESSIONALS AND FOSTER CARERS)
- 27TH 11AM - 5PM PEER PARENT GROUP - CONSULTATION CASCADE AND TEDDY BEAR HUNT - VFCC OFFICE
- 28TH 12 - 2 PM SKY'S THE LIMIT PICNIC - BUTE PARK - (8-14 YEAR OLDS)
- 28TH 3 - 5PM MENTAL HEALTH AND WELLBEING PEER SUPPORT GROUP OFFICE - VFCC OFFICE - (16-25)
- 30TH 11AM -3PM CASCADE VOICES - VFCC OFFICE - (14 - 22 YEAR OLDS).

#YOUNGPERSONINSPIRED #YOUNGPERSONLED

AUGUST




WEEK COMMENCING AUGUST 2ND

1ST 2 - 4PM CV WRITING - INTERVIEW SKILLS

3RD 12 - 5PM RUNNING RINGS SUMMER EVENT- ROYAL WELSH SHOWGROUND - SIGN UP EVENTBRITE

5TH 1 - 4PM MERTHYR LOCAL GROUP - SUMMER PICNIC AND TENNIS - CYFARTHFA CASTLE (UP TO 25)

5TH TBC NORTH WALES RESIDENTIAL - GLAN LLYN ACTIVITY CENTRE- (AGES 14-22)

WEEK COMMENCING AUGUST 8TH

9TH 2 - 4PM SHELTER CYMRU CONSULTATION ON CARE LEAVERS ACCOMMODATION FRAMEWORK (14 +)

10TH 11 - 1.30PM PEER PARENT SUPPORT GROUP - PICNIC - YNYSANGHARAD PARK

10TH 2 - 4PM RCT LOCAL GROUP PICNIC - YNYSANGHARAD PARK (AGES UP TO 25)

11TH 4 - 6PM CHATTERBOX (VIRTUAL) - HEALTHY HABITS SLEEPING

WEEK COMMENCING AUGUST 15TH

16TH 3 - 4 PM LGBTQIA+ PEER SUPPORT GROUP VIRTUAL (16 - 25)

17TH 11 - 2PM PEER PARENT SUPPORT GROUP - SELF CARE/PAMPERING SESSION



17TH 2 - 5PM WELLBEING PAMPERING SESSION - (AGES 16+)

19TH 2 - 4PM ECHO LOCAL GROUP - BURRY PORT - (14 - 25)




#YOUNGPERSONINSPIRED #YOUNGPERSONLED

AUGUST / SEPTEMBER

WEEK COMMENCING AUGUST 22ND

22ND 10 - 4PM SHELTER CYMRU - ACCREDITATION SESSIONS - VFCC OFFICE

24TH 11 - 5PM BARRY ISLAND TRIP (SUMMER CELEBRATION) - ALL MEMBERS

25TH 1 - 3 PM MANAGING UTILITIES - CHILDREN IN WALES (15 - 25) - VFCC OFFICE

25TH 3 - 5PM MENTAL HEALTH AND WELLBEING PEER SUPPORT GROUP - VFCC OFFICE - (16-25)

26TH TBC CHATTERBOX - HEALTHY HABITS - SELF - CARE - VIRTUAL

WEEK COMMENCING AUGUST 28TH

31ST 2 - 4 PM CHATTERBOX - MEETING NEW PEOPLE -VIRTUAL

SEPT 1ST 2 - 5PM MERTHYR LOCAL GROUP - HIGH ST BAPTIST - (14 - 25)



SEPT 2ND TBC WELLBEING GARDENING SESSION - NORTH WALES - VENUE TBC

SEPT 2ND TBC WELLBEING GARDENING SESSION - SOUTH WALES - VENUE TBC

WEEK COMMENCING SEPTEMBER 5TH

5TH 2 - 4 PM MANAGING UTILITIES - CHILDREN IN WALES (15 - 25)

10TH TBC NATIONAL SUMMIT - CLOSED EVENT (MORE DETAILS TO FOLLOW)

#YOUNGPERSONINSPIRED #YOUNGPERSONLED

Engagement in these events has been encouraged through the promotion of internal and public social media pages, with individual posters or posts uploaded for almost every event for members and partners to see. A group chat for VFCC members in RCT eligible for the Local Group has been created, and all opportunities are posted there, also. Any members from RCT outside the Local Group have had these events shared individually.

Of the above, some of the most notable events in terms of RCT engagement are as follows:

- Running Rings Around You, Builth Wells: Our old-school sports day event was run with the intention of bringing together the care community from all across Wales. This event was promoted to all local authorities in Wales, including RCT, and was distributed to RCT's key local authority leads with the intention of being shared amongst those that work with care-experienced children and young people. Of the 16 members that attended the event as 'Team Voices', 3 were from RCT. All 3 members were pre-existing VFCC members and, of the 3, 1 contributed to volunteering efforts to run the races, 1 ran in the races, and all 3 helped with team morale by cheering on the team.
- Coffee Catch Up in Gatto Lounge, Pontypridd: This session was attended by 2 care-experienced young people from RCT. The purpose of this session was for the young people to share their views of the proposed questions in the questionnaire being developed in partnership between VFCC and RCT.
- Actif Woods, Cyfarthfa Park: This was attended by 4 care-experienced young people from RCT. The purpose of this session was to promote woodland health and well-being activities. This also served as an outreach activity, with 3 of the 4 attendees being new to VFCC.
- Park Picnic, Pontypridd: This event encompassed both the Peer Parent Cafe and RCT Local Group, with half the day being allocated to each group. This was attended by 5 care-experienced young people from RCT. The purpose of this group was to promote outdoor activity and group work through a range of games.

It is also important to note that outside of the activities listed above, 2 care-experienced young people from RCT have also participated in 1-2-1 sessions to discuss their re-engagement into Local Groups and have helped develop the questionnaire.

Additionally, Nicole Katchi, the Participation Officer for RCT, has attended 2 of the above events: the Coffee Catch Up and the Park Picnic. This has been a great opportunity for Nicole to engage with the care-experienced young people from RCT and to build a rapport for future work.

Connecting with Care-Experienced Children:

VFCC has launched a new project entitled 'Sky's The Limit' which is a programme supporting care-experienced children aged 8-14. This brand-new project is one that will be rolled out in RCT amongst other local authorities. The purpose of 'Sky's The Limit' is to support children in care with their emerging mental health and family issues. In RCT as with other regions, this will be done through community events, preventative support, and signposting to suited services. 'Sky's The Limit' is still in its early stages, and so connections are being made and events are being planned for the near future.

RCT Questionnaire:

The VFCC RCT Local Group has been working closely with Nicole Katchi at RCT to develop a questionnaire for children and young people in the region. The purpose of the questionnaire is to get feedback about children's services, and will help shape consultation work for the Local Group moving forward. 5 care-experienced young people from the Local Group contributed to drafting and revising questions for the questionnaire. At the time of writing, the questionnaire is not yet live, but once complete VFCC will promote the questionnaire to the Local Group, and other members from RCT, to get their feedback. Laura Harper will then use the results of the questionnaire to shape the Local Group work moving forward, identifying key issues and themes that arise. The questionnaire will also help support the direction of the group, outlining where there may be a need for VFCC to focus their consultation work (i.e: housing, education, healthcare, etc).

Care-Experienced Summit:

VFCC has been arranging and promoting the Summit for care-experienced young people in Wales. The First Minister wants to highlight the voices of the care community and work together to create lasting change and radical reform. Each local authority has been invited to put forward young people for the Young Ambassador role which means they will attend the Summit on behalf of their authority and share their views. This is something that RCT have been promoting to their young people, with the leaflet being shared with service leads and children's teams. The Summit is due to take place on September 10th 2022.

Care-Experienced Parent Charter:

VFCC prepared and supported a young person at a staff development day to share their story with professionals about being a care experienced parent. The young person discussed how this process impacted her, how she thought things should change, and how stigma from the past should be rid of in order to best support care-experienced parents. Her narrative was welcomed by professionals, and it created a basis for why the parent charter needed to be implemented by RCT. The charters' key principals assured that all care-experienced parents were given the support and intervention needed to keep their child. Annabel Lloyd wrote up a report following the development day with a recommendation to the Corporate Parenting Board that the charter should be signed and accepted in RCT. Although the initial meeting was cancelled, VFCC hopes that this will be discussed at the next Corporate Parenting Board.

3. WHAT'S NEXT?

We recognise that the Local Group must be representative of the whole care community in RCT to provide a holistic delivery. As such, it is important in the upcoming months that outreach work is prioritised and promoted.

Laura Harper is ensuring that VFCC creates and continues strong links with partner organisations and service leads. This includes, but is not limited to, TGP Cymru and the RCT Children's Services Teams. Although initial discussions are currently underway, it will be a main goal for the next few months to build rapport and communication in regard to the Local Group consultations. Furthermore, Laura will be arranging drop-ins at various locations (such as residential homes) to encompass the views of the whole care community in the Local Group work.

Firstly, there will be two upcoming outreach events in October and December, Halloween and Christmas themed respectively. The purpose of these events will be to bring together the care community, provide entertainment and promote event engagement. Although no details can be confirmed yet, it is planned that these events will be an opportunity for fun and learning new skills. These outreach activities will have the aim of promoting positive experiences for the young people in RCT, whilst also promoting what VFCC has to offer.

Additionally, a calendar of events will be created and circulated to service leads, partners, and young people in RCT. This will include events arranged by other organisations such as Actif Woods or Artis Community that VFCC will support young people to attend.



RHONDDA CYNON TAF COUNTY BOROUGH COUNCIL

CORPORATE PARENTING BOARD

18TH OCTOBER 2022

PUPIL DEVELOPMENT GRANT (PDG) LOOKED AFTER CHILDREN (LAC) EVALUATION OF THE SCHOOL CLUSTER MODEL DURING THE FINANCIAL YEARS 2020/21 and 2021/22.

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

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Education Coordinator for Children Looked After (CLA) RCT.

1. PURPOSE OF THE REPORT

- 1.1 The purpose of the report is to provide Elected members with an update on the evaluation of the school cluster model for the Pupil Development Grant for Looked After Children (PDG LAC) funding during the financial year 2020/21 and 2021/22 in Rhondda Cynon Taf.

2. RECOMMENDATIONS

It is recommended that the Corporate Parenting Board:

- 2.1 Consider the information contained with this report.
- 2.2 Scrutinise and comment on the information provided.
- 2.3 Consider whether they wish to receive a further report to evaluate the PDG LAC cluster model for 2022/23.

3. REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATIONS

- 3.1 To ensure that the Corporate Parenting Board is kept informed on the ongoing cluster – based funding mechanism for distributing PDG LAC grant funding and the processes in place to evaluate its impact on the provision made for Children Looked After (CLA) in schools across Rhondda Cynon Taf (RCT).

4. BACKGROUND

- 4.1 The RCT Children Looked After Education Team works in collaboration with the Central South Consortium (CSC) to ensure that there is a consistent approach based on good practice to support children who are looked after in our schools. The CSC believes that every looked after and formerly looked after pupil has the right to appropriate provision and support that enables them to fulfil their potential and that

high expectations for all pupils will lead to achievement for learners in the academic, personal and social aspects of their lives irrespective of their circumstances.

- 4.2 Welsh Government provides additional resources through the Pupil Development Grant for Children Looked After (PDG LAC) in order to enhance the provision made by Local Authorities for pupils who are CLA and those who are formerly CLA with the overarching aim of raising educational attainment and closing the attainment gap with that of their peers.
- 4.3 The grant continues to be managed centrally by the Central South Consortium (CSC). The Regional Lead for PDG LAC is line managed by the Lead for Equity and Well-being within the CSC. Directors of Education from each local authority have set key priorities to enhance the educational opportunities for Children Looked After:
- Raising attainment/achievement;
 - Improving attendance;
 - Reducing exclusions;
 - Enhancing the capacity of schools to improve the outcomes for pupils through training and support, through school to school working and the sharing of good practice (through a cluster-based model); and
 - Ensuring that partnerships across the region continue to develop within CSC, schools, Social Care and other agencies.
- 4.4 Across the CSC region, schools are required to submit cluster bids to access the PDG LAC funding. Bids are assessed on whether they could enhance curriculum opportunities to support social and emotional development, which would subsequently have an impact on the agreed key priorities. Schools are expected to include the PDG LAC funding within School Improvement Plans (SIP) and identify outcome measures. Clusters are required to evaluate the effectiveness of their PDG LAC strategic plans at the end of each financial year.
- 4.5 School clusters are encouraged to consider evidence-based interventions and approaches that are particularly effective for pupils who are currently CLA or were formerly CLA. Specific consideration must be given to evidencing arrangements for collaborative and partnership working to ensure that priorities are met jointly. These priorities are aligned with the CLA Friendly Schools Quality Mark performance indicators which was devised in partnership with CLA Education Teams in both RCT and MT in 2017.
- 4.6 The CLA Quality Mark supports the underpinning principles and key priorities identified for the effective use of PDG LAC funding. It provides documented evidence based good practice for schools to target funding bids and to prioritise the development of better practice within their settings. It is a key component in achieving consistent good practice that can be shared from school to school and within clusters. To date, 40 RCT schools have achieved the CLA Friendly Schools Quality Mark.

5. CURRENT POSITION - FUNDING ALLOCATION

- 5.1 The overall PDG LAC allocation for the consortium is allocated as follows:
- Salary for Regional Lead based in Central South Consortium;
 - Support for CLA pupils placed outside of Wales;
 - Local Authority delegated Bursary Grant;
 - Training calendar provided to school staff (see Appendix 6); and

- School to school working through the cluster plans.

- 5.2 The cluster plan grant allocation for RCT in 2018/19 was £366,686, £357,893 in 2019/20, £395,026 for 2020/21 and £496,630 for 2021/22 (see Appendix 1 and 2).
- 5.3 Schools have continued to make applications for funding on a cluster basis in line with expectations from the Welsh Government to regionalise PDG LAC funding throughout the four Welsh education consortia.
- 5.4 Appendix 1 highlights the total PDG LAC expenditure for 2018/19 through to 2021/22 for each RCT school cluster. Allocation of funding was provided to school clusters based on Local Authority Central data. PDG LAC Cluster Leads within each cluster are required to provide comprehensive strategic plans outlining the intended spend.
- 5.5 Appendix 2 details the funding allocations for RCT based on each financial year highlighting the total PDG LAC funding for RCT, LA bursary funding allocation along with allocation of funding for those children placed outside of Wales in English authorities.
- 5.6 All strategic plans are shared with the respective LACE/ CLA Education Coordinator/ CLA Education teams within each LA to provide comment and feedback. Discussion is then held with the Regional Lead for PDG LAC in order to provide scrutiny and quality assurance. Appendix 4 details an example of a cluster bid application form (2020/21) which demonstrates the innovative ways in which our schools are working with CLA and previously CLA pupils. Appendix 5 provides an example of an evaluation of a completed cluster plan for 2020/21 and 2021/22.
- 5.7 All LA's within the Consortium also have a bursary fund to ensure Local Authority Children Looked After in Education teams can respond to additional needs that arise specific to the demands of each LA. The bursary fund is discussed with the wider CLA Education Team to discuss the priorities for the coming year. In 2020/21 RCT was allocated £70,983 and in 2021/22 the allocation was £74,490. The key priorities within the LA bursary were to offer training and development for adults who support vulnerable pupils. We continue to ensure that the skills and training of the team are developing and we are able to offer additional support to schools and families who support children and young people in care using evidence based approaches to meet the needs of children and young people who have experienced relational and developmental trauma (see Appendix 3).
- 5.8 There is a training programme available (see Appendix 6) provided by the CSC which continues to be well received by RCT schools. The training has been planned to support the agreed regional key priorities to enhance the educational outcomes for CLA pupils.

6 EVALUATION OF THE PDG LAC CLUSTER MODEL APPROACH

- 6.1 The cluster model approach for the allocation of PDG LAC distribution has been in place since April 2018. As clusters, schools are required to submit thorough applications for PDG LAC funding. These are subject to approval and scrutiny by the LACE/ CLA Education Coordinator and the CLA Education Team alongside the PDG LAC Regional Lead.

- 6.2 School clusters have been extremely proactive with their cluster planning for the financial years 2020/21 and 2021/22 under exceptional circumstances (COVID-19) and have been able to implement worthwhile resources, strategies and interventions. Overall, the cluster evaluations received from schools are positive and it is evident that schools have considered the needs and priorities for vulnerable learners within their settings in response to the pandemic situation. The submission of robust evaluations has been challenging due to the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic.
- 6.3 Thrive training, ongoing licencing and continued Thrive CPD has continued to be prevalent for the cluster applications for the financial year 2020/21 with a prevalence for Trauma Informed School UK for many of our RCT schools in 2021/22. The school clusters have also continued to invest in ongoing ELSA training which is fully embedded in RCT schools and supported by the RCT Educational Psychology Service.
- 6.4 Schools show growing interest in the Trauma Informed Schools UK Diploma and training for key staff for this financial year as well as restorative approaches training. RCT schools continue to see the value in achieving the CLA Friendly Schools Quality Mark status. The Advisory Teacher within the CLA Education Team has provided rigorous support to those schools in order to allow them to achieve the Quality Mark status at either Gold or Platinum level. This work has been invaluable in raising the awareness of CLA within RCT schools.
- 6.5 The CSC training calendar (Appendix 6) has allowed schools to access a wide range of training opportunities relevant to support the needs of vulnerable learners including the Level 2 and 3 CLA Friendly Schools Training. During the year 2020/21, 287 of the delegates who attended the CSC training were from RCT schools/ Local Authority based staff. And in 2021/22, 135 delegates attended the CSC training provided. Due to staff shortages in schools and prioritisation of meeting the demands within the school settings, it appears that the training has been less well attended during 2021/22 as a result of the pandemic. Training has been delivered via Teams due to the pandemic situation.
- 6.6 Many schools have placed great emphasis on purchasing resources and intervention to address the wellbeing needs of vulnerable learners in light of the COVID-19 pandemic and to improve the transition support for learners moving from Key Stage 2 (year 6) into Key Stage 3 (year 7). PERMA training continues to be highly utilised to support the wellbeing needs of RCT pupils.
- 6.7 Post 16 destinations for RCT CLA learners continues to be a priority for the CLA Education Team with links maintained with the Care 2 Work Team, the Youth Engagement and Participation Service, colleges and training providers. This joint working has ensured that pupils who are nearing the end of their statutory schooling have planned destinations for further education, employment and training.
- 6.8 An evaluation of the CLA Friendly Schools Quality Mark 2020/21 is available (see appendix 7). In summary, the small-scale evaluation drew largely positive responses from both pupils and teachers. Whilst the validity of the data needs to be strengthened the clear trends should not be ignored. The surveys show that since receiving the quality mark, positive relationships with pupils and teachers have been maintained with pupils feeling engaged with teaching. Pupils feel safe and welcome in school with the vast majority (81.25%) reporting positively to their enjoyment of school.

- 6.9 There was also a majority of pupils reporting positively on Personal Education Plan (PEP) involvement although further work needs to be completed to ensure all pupils know what a PEP is and that all pupils are engaged in the PEP process. The teacher responses are positive, although the CLA governor role needs to be promoted amongst staff in school. The main drawback of the survey is the lack of foster carer engagement and this needs to be improved in future surveys.
- 6.10 Strengths of the PDG LAC cluster applications have been as follows:
- There is increasing consistency with applications between each cluster;
 - Schools remain highly motivated to gain CLA Friendly Schools status;
 - Common approaches are seen to be developing across the clusters and each school cluster seem to be working effectively;
 - There is acknowledgement between clusters that investing in vulnerable pupils and providing effective strategies to support the well-being needs of these pupils will assist schools to developing positive outcomes for all;
 - Schools value the opportunity to share good practice within the cluster groups and meet termly in most cases to share positive outcomes. Good practice is also shared between local authorities.
 - School clusters continue to benefit from the professional learning opportunities in place which have continued to be made available through virtual platforms.
- 6.11 Areas of focus for development identified by RCT and CSC include:
- Promote the PDG LAC Cluster meetings and encourage schools to attend and participate in the PDG LAC Cluster meetings;
 - Schools to meet earlier in the Summer term to ensure a rigorous and timely planning process for PDG LAC expenditure;
 - Ensure that each school cluster submit robust evaluations and that they are considered to be a pivotal part of the PDG LAC planning process;
 - To develop a more effective system of ensuring that the PDG LAC funding available to our CLA pupils placed in English authorities is closely monitored;
 - Schools will need to be involved in identifying training needs;
- The CSC and RCT LA would like funding to focus on supporting the well-being needs of our vulnerable learners in light of the COVID-19 pandemic.
- 6.12 The bursary element of the PDG LAC has continued to enable the RCT CLA Education team to respond to identified local needs. All aspects of the bursary workstream are evaluated (refer to Appendix 8) and inform future priorities for subsequent bursary bids. There remains to be a growing need to provide targeted literacy/ numeracy support to CLA learners. This continues to be very well received by those CLA learners identified and has been in increasing demand since the pandemic. The RCT CLA Education Team continue to evaluate the effectiveness of this aspect of the bursary and will remain an ongoing priority in the coming years.

7. EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY IMPLICATIONS

- 7.1 The PDG LAC grant is a Welsh Government priority and therefore the terms and conditions of the grant are adhered to fully.
- 7.2 The purpose of the grant is to ensure that our most vulnerable pupils are given opportunities to develop well in schools and to ensure good achievement and Educational attainment.

7.3 The training that is organised focuses greatly on the importance of equity and equality in the classroom and on whole school approaches.

8. **CONSULTATION**

8.1 There is no consultation required for this report.

9. **FINANCIAL IMPLICATION(S)**

9.1 School clusters are allocated funding from the PDG LAC grant available from the Welsh Government.

9.2 A lump sum of £3000 is also given to each cluster for the needs of formerly children looked after which is part of the terms and conditions of the grant. We are currently in the ninth year of this grant and updates are awaited from the Welsh Government regarding the allocation of this grant for future years.

10. **LEGAL IMPLICATIONS OR LEGISLATION CONSIDERED**

10.1 PDG LAC is administered according to Welsh Government guidance. There is a robust monitoring system in place to ensure effective use of the grant in line with the terms and conditions of the grant.

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

11.1 The underpinning principles of the PDG LAC support the Council's Corporate Priorities to build a strong economy and to promote independence and positive lives for everyone and ensures that the Sustainable Development principle and the Wellbeing Goals of the Wellbeing for Future Generations Act (Wales) underpin the vision and working practices of the service.

12. **CONCLUSION**

12.1 It is evident that RCT schools are fully committed towards broadening their skills and expertise to support vulnerable pupils, this can be seen in their strategic planning and cluster applications to enhance the learning outcomes and opportunities for vulnerable learners.

12.2 Schools continue to see the importance of the CLA Friendly Schools training and the CLA Friendly Schools Quality Mark. By the end of the academic year 2021/22, 40 RCT have achieved the quality mark status. The CLA Education Team remain fully committed in ensuring that RCT Schools continue to meet the educational and emotional well-being needs of our CLA learners.

12.3 The CLA Education Team provides a termly programme of training for Designated Persons for CLA in schools and Governors. The training supports the principles of the PDG LAC by facilitating networking and developing awareness and providing information on:

- Particular challenges for Children Looked After (CLA) within educational settings and meeting the needs of pupils who have experienced developmental trauma.
- The local context of CLA in RCT, the support that is available and how it can be accessed.

- The role and responsibilities of the Designated Person for CLA and the CLA Link Governor.
 - The importance of a Personal Education Plan (PEP), and the school's role and responsibility in developing and maintaining this statutory document.
 - Relevant guidance and policies and help to plan for any future changes/updates.
 - Support and guidance to ensure effective multi-agency working.
- 12.4 School clusters have been proactive with their cluster planning for the financial years 2020/21 and 2021/22 and have been able to implement innovative and creative resources, strategies and interventions. Overall, the cluster evaluations received from schools (to date for 2020/21) are positive and it is evident that schools have considered the needs and priorities for vulnerable learners within their settings. Evaluations indicate improved emotional wellbeing, improved attendance, improved attitude to learning and improved attainment for our learners. Schools have been required to plan effectively and implement intervention and support during unprecedented times particularly in light of the COVID-19 pandemic. The wider impact that this will have on all learners in RCT schools is still yet to be seen.
- 12.5 Developments within the RCT CLA Education Team are to be seen with the appointment of a Virtual School Head Teacher who will be in post from September 2022.

RCT PDGLAC funding per cluster 2018/19, 2019/20, 2020/21 and 2021/22.

| RCT PDG LAC Funding per Cluster | 18/19 | 19/20 | 20/21 | 21/22 |
|--|-----------------|-----------------|-----------------|-----------------|
| Aberdare Community School | £38,291 | £34,721 | £38,597 | £47,620 |
| Bryncelynog Comprehensive School | £28,045 | £25,714 | £28,489 | £36,019 |
| Cardinal Newman R.C. Comprehensive | £9,072 | £11,616 | £12,668 | £16,386 |
| Ferndale Community School | £31,081 | £22,581 | £24,973 | £33,342 |
| Hawthorn High School | £18,558 | £23,364 | £25,852 | £27,541 |
| Mountain Ash Comprehensive School | £21,974 | £21,797 | £24,094 | £25,310 |
| Pontypridd High School | £29,943 | £30,805 | £34,202 | £39,589 |
| Porth County Community School | £13,625 | £16,315 | £17,942 | £35,126 |
| Special Schools RCT | £29,563 | £28,063 | £31,126 | £32,449 |
| St John Baptist C.I.W. High School | £11,348 | £12,399 | £13,547 | £21,740 |
| Ysgol Nantgwyn | £21,974 | £19,839 | £21,897 | £30,218 |
| Tonyrefail Comprehensive School | £34,117 | £30,021 | £33,323 | £40,481 |
| Treorchy Comprehensive School | £26,527 | £20,231 | £22,337 | £36,465 |
| Y Pant Comprehensive School | £23,492 | £24,930 | £27,610 | £22,633 |
| Ysgol Gyfun Cwm Rhondda | £8,313 | £10,049 | £10,910 | £19,063 |
| Ysgol Gyfun Garth Olwg | £8,313 | £10,441 | £11,350 | £9,693 |
| Ysgol Gyfun Rhydywaun | £7,933 | £10,441 | £11,350 | £18,171 |
| Ysgol Llanhari | £4,518 | £4,566 | £4,758 | £4,784 |
| Total funding per cluster | £366,686 | £357,893 | £395,026 | £496,630 |

Funding allocations for RCT based on financial year 2018/19, 2019/20, 2020/21 and 2021/22 (as highlighted in paragraph 5.2)

| Funding allocations for RCT CBC based on financial year | 18/19 | 19/20 | 20/21 | 21/22 |
|--|--------------|--------------|--------------|--------------|
| PDG LAC Funding for RCT | £366,687 | £357,893 | £395,026 | £496,630 |
| LA Bursary | £42,592 | £42,654 | £70,983 | £74,490 |
| Outside of Wales (£1,150 per pupil) | £10,350 | £6,900 | £5,750 | £13,800 |

PDG LAC RCT Bursary - Period of Agreement: April 2020 - March 2021

CYTUNDEB GWASANAETH LEFEL / SERVICE LEVEL AGREEMENT

PDG LAC

**1. Ffocws yr Hyfforddiant/Cefnogaeth
Focus for Training/Support**

Training and development for adults who support pupils is a priority of the CLA education team. We continue to ensure that the skills and training of the team are developing and we are able to offer additional support to schools and families who support children and young people in care using evidence based approaches to meet the needs of children and young people who have experienced relational and developmental trauma.

In order to achieve this we will continue to offer :-

ELSA for Foster Carers – A five day course which focuses on loss and bereavement, social skills, managing emotions, friendships and self-esteem. This has been offered twice this year and evaluated positively with supervision groups set up to meet termly. We will continue to offer ELSA twice each year and supervision three times.

A new one day training will be available 3 times a year for Foster carers and the focus will be to support Foster carers role in education.

There are members of the team trained to deliver Emotion Coaching based on the principle that nurturing and emotionally supportive relationships provide optimal contexts for the promotion of children's outcomes and resilience.

Target audience - This will be offered to foster carers, schools and residential homes. Evidence suggests that Emotion Coached children and young people achieve more academically in school, are more popular, have fewer behavioural problems, have fewer infectious illnesses.

We will continue to focus on Transitions as this can be challenging for children with care experience –We will continue to share good practice and school to school learning. We will support those working with young person to prepare them for the upcoming changes as well as working with individual pupils and seeking pupil voice using personal construct psychology and the ideal school.

We will continue to build on our resources to support CLA Friendly Schools and to provide recognition to schools who achieve gold and silver awards- Looking to develop a lending library for schools.

We have members of our team trained and supervised in Video Interaction Guidance (VIG) is an intervention that focuses on promoting positive relationships. We will continue to offer this by engaging clients actively in a process of change by affirming the positive interactions that are reflected through video footage. This is often focused at

carers but can be used in residential settings and schools. VIG is recommended as an evidence-based intervention for health visitors and midwives in the NICE guidelines 'Social and Emotional Wellbeing - Early Years' published October (2012), and in several other NICE guidelines (e.g. Autism 2013, Attachment 2015).

We have members of the team trained and supervised in Dyadic Developmental Psychotherapy (DDP)- an attachment-focused approach in which a therapist supports the caregiver and child's relationship and the development of secure attachment by encouraging the reflective function of the caregiver, enabling attunement, regulating emotion and co creating meaning. The therapist interactions are characterised by PACE (playfulness, acceptance, curiosity and empathy). This approach has been well evaluated with foster carers and adoptive parents and recently elements of this model have been successfully introduced within residential child care (Becker-Weidman and Hughes, 2008).

We will continue to offer Give us a break groups building on the successful pilot- This groups work supports young people who have experienced loss and bereavement in schools, often a need for many of our CLA pupils.

We would like to train 6 adults (ELSAs) in SandStory Skills. Designed for those in supportive roles (such as Teachers, SENCOs, ELSAs, TAs, Nurture Group Leaders, Early Years Practitioners, Behaviour Support workers and anyone else supporting the wellbeing and emotional development of children) Help pupils manage emotional responses and tell their story. SandStory Skills is not a therapy but provides a session structure which ensures practitioners are working safely and respectfully within the remit of their role. These skills harness the child's natural instinct to engage in playful storytelling and gives practitioners confidence to understand and support the storytelling process.

Short term LSA intervention – We would like funds available to be able to provide additional support to those individuals who are finding a particular time of their life/education difficult. We envisage this intervention to be time-limited. This would be to support engagement and avoid exclusions.

As a response to school closures we are providing additional tutoring – for 20 weeks for year 10 and Yr 11 in Maths, English or Welsh. Virtual tutors will deliver an hour each week.

We would like to offer schools the opportunity to provide established programs that work directly with young people to support their self-esteem. Example of this would be Empire fighting chance who offer weekly training and Jamie's farm which offers experiences working on a farm and focusing on developing relationships and self-identity.

Some primary school pupils will be able to benefit from a 6 week package of additional support, such as enhanced ELSA or Enhanced interventions. A sum of money will be provided to schools where pupils are struggling so they can provide access to additional interventions from familiar adults.

2. Gorolwg o'r buddiannau/Deilliannau Overview of Expected Benefits/ Outcomes

The training and resources provided by the bursary fund will develop an understanding of the often complex needs of our CLA and the ability to meet these needs in a more focused and successful way. As a team we seek to promote and advocate for CLA pupils and work to ensure they receive good educational experiences and opportunities.

We recognise the importance of the care given to our vulnerable learners and value the role of foster carers and we hope to support them in their work to provide positive change.

We want to be able to provide sustainable training to develop skills and knowledge in our schools that enable staff to meet the emotional needs of pupils in order to facilitate future learning. These skills will benefit CLA and other vulnerable children in the future and the additional resources will also be available to children for years to come. We also want to provide additional access to quality learning experiences through tutor support, to support individuals to remain engaged through LSA support and through targeted projects.

**3. Niferoedd plant mewn gofal mewn ysgolion/Clwstwr (os yn gymwys)
School/Clusters involved and CLA numbers (if applicable)**

56 year 10 and 11 pupils will receive additional tutoring

Up to 20 foster carers can access ELSA training

4/5 families will be able to benefit from DDP approaches or VIG intense work

We anticipate that around 15 schools will be supported through enhanced interventions, specific projects to support groups of young people. Schools will also be supported through transition work and with targeted additional LSA support when a child is at risk of exclusion.

Cofiwch bod angen gwario'r cyllid erbyn y 31ain o Fawrth 2021 70,983
Please note, all funding must be spent by the 31st March 2021

| <p>Rhaglen / Blaenoriaeth Programme / Priority Area</p> <p>Prif Weithgareddau Key Actions</p> | <p>Cyllid Funding</p> <p>Staffio ac adnoddau Staffing & Resources Cost (£)</p> | <p>Cynlluniau i fonitro'r gweithgareddau</p> <p>Planned monitoring activities</p> | <p>Gwerthuso diwedd y flwyddyn 31ain o Fawrth 2021</p> <p>Evaluation Year End Update 31st March 2021</p> | <p>Gwariant gwirioneddol 31ain o Fawrth 2021</p> <p>Actual Expenditure 31st March 2021</p> |
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| <p>Virtual tuition for Year 10 and Year 11 in maths or English. 1 hour a week for 20 weeks.</p> | <p>Yr 10 and 11 For the provision of 20 sessions (one hour of maths and 1 hour of English weekly) for 56 students at a cost of £30ph would be a total of £33,600. Using Cardiff and the Vale tutors 2 EOTAS pupils 1 hour additional tuition in maths or English for 20 weeks £1,294 Using New directions</p> | <p>All sessions are evaluated and progress monitored with regular reports.</p> | | |

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| <p>Packages to support wellbeing and catch up in Primary school.</p> <p>6 weekly sessions with targeted program such as ELSA, maths, literacy etc</p> | <p>Each package for 6 weeks would be £180 and we anticipate that 40 packages could provided £ 7200</p> | <p>Schools to provide details of additional support and these to be evaluated.</p> | | |
| <p>Short term LSA intervention to support engagement either 5 – 10 or 15 hours a week.</p> <p>ASAP after funds are delegated to LA.</p> <p>Autumn and Spring term.</p> | <p>£20000</p> | <p>Feedback and close monitoring by CLA ed team.</p> | | |
| <p>Sand story skills training for 6 Elsas working with CLA pupils</p> | <p>£1800</p> | | | |

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| <p>The SandStory Skills® training is a 2 day in person training. The training offers a complete package of support for participants including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Theoretical and experiential training modules delivered over 2 days (14 hours) including a light lunch. Friday and Monday, 9am-5pm. PLUS 1:1 online follow up sessions (2x30mins) Monthly group supervision and coaching (for 1 year after qualifying) Access to peer support in an exclusive Facebook group Assessment and certification as SandStory Skills® Practitioner <p>The investment for the SandStory Skills® training package is £300 per person.</p> | | | | |
| <p>Empire fighting chance – to support positive self-image and engagement in school. To promote a sense of belonging. The programme will consist of non-contact boxing, mentoring and personal development</p> | <p>2 hours per week at £37.50 per hour totalling £75.00 20 week duration = £1,500</p> | <p>Companies to provide evaluations and to share engagement of pupils</p> | | |

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| <p>sessions devised to address pre-agreed outcomes on the referral form.</p> <p>A typical session would involve 15 x 3 minute rounds of boxing technique, circuit training, pad work (Covid regulations permitting). Between each round there would be a 1 minute rest period during which the coach would introduce personal development messages around building confidence, resilience and self-esteem.</p> | | | | |
| <p>Training, supervision and resources to develop a lending library. To support the CLA friendly schools with a further 10 – 12 schools. To deliver ELSA, emotion coaching and continue with transition and GUAB projects. Venue costs for training and supervision (Covid permitting)</p> | <p>£5500</p> | <p>Evaluations of training / projects to be provided.</p> | | |
| <p>Additional Printing Costs Mike Church Project</p> | <p>£89</p> | | | |

PDG LAC Cluster Strategic Plan Example 2020/21

| Objective | | Outcome / Intended Impact | | | |
|--|--|--|--|--|--|
| <ol style="list-style-type: none"> To raise achievement and attainment of all CLA pupils. To improve attendance. To support social and emotional wellbeing. To reduce exclusions. High aspirations for all CLA pupils reducing low achievement. | | <p>Outcome/Intended Impact</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> CLA pupils to achieve their target grades. All CLA pupils to aim for 100% attendance. All CLA pupils to feel supported socially and emotionally. A safe environment/room established for CLA pupils to use during anxious/emotional periods. Vast amount of resources available to support CLA pupil's academic and social wellbeing. Trained and well knowledgeable key workers to support all CLA pupils. | | | |
| Activities/Actions | Success Criteria | Staff / School | Target Date AI activities to be completed and funding to be spent by 31 st March 2022 | Monitoring and Evaluation | Cost/Resources Breakdown required for each actions. Please base supply costs for a teacher on £165 per day and teaching assistant on £80 per day |
| 1. To raise achievement and attainment of all CLA pupils. | | | | | |
| Data shows overview of CLA progress and achievement over time with identified support when needed. These indicators can include national tests (English, mathematics and welsh where applicable), attendance, wellbeing, exclusions. Interventions to be put in | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Track pupil performance in mathematics Up skill pupils with basic mathematics to build confidence Mymaths (Variety of resources to fit all | All cluster schools | Ongoing assessment with a baseline test in Sept 2021 | Teaching Assistants / Designated teacher of CLA / ALNCo / teachers | <p>Mymaths = £355</p> <p>Numicon resources = £225</p> |

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| <p>place to help boost basic numeracy and literacy skills and raise the attainment of all CLA pupils.</p> | <p>needs and abilities of CLA pupils). Package to be used at home as well as in class</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Numicon resources for CLA pupils to understand the basic number skills. • Literacy Launchpad training for a member of staff to have the knowledge of basic phonics to help CLA pupils improve reading and spelling skills. (School A) • Literacy and Numeracy resources produced for pupils from Twinkle • Spelling Attack resources to help pupils become more confident accurate spellers. • ELIP – Refresher training with school support visits. Revisit of Early Literacy Intervention Programme training for all primary schools focusing on CLA pupils in Years 1 and 2 with resources. (All Primary | | | | <p>Literacy Launchpad training = £340</p> <p>Lit/Num Twinkle Resources = £120</p> <p>Spelling Attack = £590</p> <p>ELI (Early Literacy = £2940 (Primary schools within the cluster)</p> <p>Reading intervention books for all schools = £420 x 8 = £3360</p> <p>Gigglets for all primary schools within the cluster. School B - £1200 School C and D = £2800 School E = £1800</p> |
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| | <p>schools within the cluster)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reading interventions/resources to support the ELIP. Schools have requested books within the programmes of Project X, Rigby Star, Dockside, Story World, Rapid Reading. • Gilets online literacy Resource to help CLA pupils improve development in literacy. | | | | <p>School F = £1800 School G = £1200 School H = £1200</p> |
| 2. To improve attendance | | | | | |
| <p>Data is used effectively to monitor progress and intervene where sufficient progress is not being made and to ascertain why. Data to provide evidence to monitor improvement in social and emotional wellbeing and attendance and to reduce the risk of exclusion.</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Strategic plan is put in place for data collection • Identified data has been agreed by CLA workers to share and disseminate (GDPR discussed) • Pupils show progress in at (attendance, wellbeing, academic, engagement, Safeguarding etc.) This can be monitored through class charts, Boxall and PERMA. • One Page Pupil Profiles are in place | <p>All cluster schools.</p> | <p>Ongoing</p> | <p>Teaching Assistants / Designated teacher of CLA / ALNCo / teachers</p> | <p>Class Charts = £4449.52 (School A)</p> <p>Boxall Profile = Primary Schools £30 x 7 = £210 School A £100 x 1 = £100</p> |

and have been agreed with the child and home.
Pupils transitioning from Year 6 take their One Page Profile

3. To support social and emotional wellbeing.

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| <p>To Develop pupils social and emotional difficulties through practical experiences both within and outside the classroom (intervention and or class)</p> <p>Lego therapy is carried out with CLA pupils at least once a week</p> <p>All CLA pupils to have ELSA sessions and drop in ELSA available when required.</p> <p>Mindfulness sessions and interventions developed to reduce CLA pupils stress and anxiety and to help the CLA pupils manage this more effectively and work through their worries more quickly</p> <p>Boost There is much discussion taking place on the impact of COVID-19 on pupils' wellbeing, as well as their literacy skills. The question is how are we going to address the challenge and help pupils to recover? We have developed a targeted, strategic solution that we call 'Boost'. Boost has improving pupils' literacy levels at its heart, as well as improving our pupils'</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pupils attended LEGO therapy at least once a week. • Cluster staff member attends LEGO therapy training held in house. • Lego resources are purchased and audited to the effectiveness of these resources. • ELSA resources to support transition from primary to secondary. Lets talk cards, Blob tree books and cards, transition games. • Pupils show improvements in in at least 1 area (attendance, wellbeing, academic, engagement etc.) • As we lost out on transition between primary and secondary this year due to Covid and we aim as a | <p>All cluster schools</p> | <p>Pupil voice</p> <p>CLA Leaders in Cluster schools</p> <p>Data improvement recorded from Boxall, PERMA, Class charts</p> | <p>Teaching Assistants / Designated teacher of CLA / ALNCo / teachers</p> | <p>Cost of Lego resources = £300</p> <p>ELSA Resources = £247.50</p> <p>Sensory resources to help with anxieties and stress = 8 x £100 = £800</p> |
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| <p>wellbeing, including self-image and confidence. Boost is a resource that:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> · Provides a comprehensive set of guidance materials and reading based resources that can be used at whole class, group and individual pupil level. · Is based on contexts relating to wellbeing issues that particularly affect pupils at these times. · Focuses on developing each reader's voice as well as the important skills of self-monitoring and checking. It has a clear emphasis on the importance of talking after reading. · Supports teachers with a clear Boost structure that can also be used by teaching support staff. · Focuses on how we can improve reading skills using texts that can contain issues relating to well-being, empathy and personal growth. | <p>cluster to increase the transition sessions between schools and make a closer link with CLA pupils throughout the year rather than at the end of the year. We aim to work with pupils from Years 5 onwards and to share skills and resources between schools. Our plan is for an ELSA trained TA from School A to visit the primary schools to work with their Cla pupils and for them to also come to School A for periods of time over the year to work on our site to get familiarise themselves with the environment.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Boost training to help support wellbeing as well as literacy skills. (One Primary school have already had initial training so the cost for this school is £100. All other primary schools £495 each) | | | | <p>Boost training = $£495 \times 6 = £2970$ + $£100 \times 1 = £3070$</p> |
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| <p>Cluster CLA group has been established and training is identified to access as a group.</p> <p>Virtual training (Half day)</p> <p>CLA Friendly schools Level 1, 2 and 3 training.</p> <p>Children Looked After Friendly School Level 2</p> <p>Children Looked After Friendly School Level 3</p> <p>(Awaiting on further training courses to be confirmed)</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • CLA group to meet three times a year to discuss and monitor progress of the CLA interventions and programmes. • The majority of the schools in the cluster have completed the CLA Friendly schools Level 1, 2 and 3 training. Remaining schools will train this academic year. CLA group discuss transitions between primary and secondary schools. • To ensure PEP's are up to date and accurate for transition and ready to be used as a working document. • Secondary school DT of CLA to attend CLA Review meetings of Year 6 pupils. • CLA Cluster group to attend training as a cluster from CSC to ensure all schools have the same training and knowledge to help | <p>All cluster schools</p> | | <p>Designated person for CLA</p> | <p>School E supply cover £82.50 x 3 = £247.50</p> <p>School to cover other costs for staff to attend courses.</p> |
|--|---|----------------------------|--|----------------------------------|--|

- pupils with transitions between schools.
- Cluster CLA Passport has been devised and is used as a working document.
- CLA workers have agreed the PCP and One Page Profile formats.

5. High aspirations for all CLA pupils, reducing low achievement.

At Key Stage 3, 4 and 5 there is evidence CLA pupils are targeted for examination revision opportunities. That access arrangements are in place for any CLA pupil with additional learning needs.

Testing and tracking of all CLA pupils. This can be see from Incerts.

Data for wellbeing measures accurately identifies CLA interventions needed and there is evidence of implementation and support.

School data is available to CLA learners and carers as part of the PEP process and individual target setting. This is data from testing the pupils on the Sandwell Early Numeracy test, Lucid tests (reading single words, spelling, reading comprehension accuracy, reding comprehension

- Testing for Access Arrangements to be put in place. Lucid Exact and Rapid.
- Sandwell Early numeracy test to assess all CLA pupils ability in numeracy.
- Incerts online to monitor and track progress of all CLA pupils.
- Dyslexia screening profile

School A

All cluster primary school's

3 Primary schools (School B ,F and G)

School E

Twice a year

Termly

Designated person of CLA / ALNCo

Lucid Exact **£500**

Lucid Rapid = **£400**

Sandwell Early Numeracy test = $£395 \times 6 =$ **£2370**

Incerts =
School B = **£850**
School G = **£850**
School F = **£1500**

Screening profile **£70**



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|--|--|--|--|-------------|------------|
| speed, handwriting speed, typing speed). | | | | | |
| | | | | Total Spend | £33,894.52 |

Evaluation Pupil Development Grant for Looked After Children 2020/2021

1. Cluster

School Cluster A

2. Local Authority

Rhondda Cynon Taf CBC

3. Areas of Focus

Trauma Informed UK (TISUK); CLA Friendly Schools Quality Mark; THRIVE;

4. Summary of plan 2020-2021

Schools to continue to work towards CLA Friendly Status

Embed and develop Thrive as a wellbeing support tool

Develop Trauma Informed schools provision

Schools to engage with Perma model as a way of tracking pupil wellbeing

5. Student Voice Quote

"The rugby is great and they are easy to talk to"

"I like school, I really like being outdoors and learning"

"I enjoyed going to do play with Kelly"

6. Staff Quote

"It's amazing achieving the platinum award for CLA schools. I believe we now know how to help CLA pupils achieve better outcomes"

"It has been the best course done in a long time and it really made me think"

"The wellbeing tracking for our CLA pupils has been a great addition to Provision Mapping. We will continue to build on this and roll it out whole school. It is interesting to see trends in wellbeing and is a key tool for investigating the trends."

7. Have there been any opportunities for partnership working (e.g. school to school, external agencies). Please detail below.

Working with external agencies through MDT meetings weekly through lockdown. Special school heads met with heads of services to ensure pupils weren't impacted, the hubs worked together to ensure all vulnerable pupils had needs met, including services such as physio, OT, going to children's homes to provide services. During the hub up to 92% of pupils had some time in school per week.

CLA pupils have benefited from working with the CLA team, creating a Graphic Novel .

Very close support for parents this year through lockdown and blended learning



8. Please show impact of work on CLA pupils during 2020-2021.

All pupils shown improvement on assessment data in line with their peers e.g., B squared. Pupils improved in literacy, and numeracy. Learner engagement has been high due to interventions. Attendance has been good despite lockdowns. Hubwork and blended learning was vitally important, and the new wellbeing areas having a positive impact on pupil wellbeing, enabling them to develop self-regulation skills. This helped ensure that the majority of care placements continued positively throughout the year.

One of pupils was elected the Sports Champion in their annual awards and was recognised for his attitude and progress.

The use of Trauma Informed Approaches has led to improved behaviour and reductions of incidents in lessons.

The use of Motional as an assessment package has given programmes for young people and given staff activities to follow, all pupils have made progress using this



Evaluation Pupil Development Grant for Looked After Children 2021/2022

1. Cluster

School Cluster B

2. Local Authority

Rhondda Cynon Taf CBC

3. Plan Effectiveness

Effective

4. Context

PERMA - All cluster schools were involved in the Cluster Wellbeing project PERMA. Wellbeing & CLA leads from the cluster regularly attended meetings to discuss the progress and the use and impact of PERMA and ELSA intervention on our vulnerable learners.

Impact - The 'At Risk' pupils (8 pupils) whose questionnaire responses raised concerns regarding their wellbeing were targeted for support and intervention once a week by our ELSA teacher for 6 weeks. At the end of the 6 week intervention out of the 8 pupils that were identified for targeted support 5 were no longer 'At Risk'. 50% of the 8 pupils had improved on every wellbeing pillar, of the 3 pupils that were still 'At Risk' 1 pupil had improved by +4 in their positive emotions and decreased their negative emotions by -4. The 'At Risk' pupils whose questionnaire responses raised concerns regarding anxiety and worry were targeted for support and intervention once a week by our Emotional Literacy Support Assistant during the summer term. ELSA - Due to the emotional and wellbeing support provided for targeted vulnerable pupils, nearly all of these pupils now focus on their learning in class to achieve their full potential and show improved levels of enjoyment and attitudes to learning. There are currently 3% of pupils accessing ELSA sessions with 2% attending drop-in sessions. A safe and relaxing area have been set up and located in the Foundation Phase for these pupils and additional resources purchased to support the vulnerable learners.

5. Student Voice Quote

"I like PERMA, I think it's a good thing to do".

"It recognises people's emotions which is good".

"We all need to do PERMA".

"I think PERMA should be done more often because it's hard to remember how you have been feeling".

"We need a worry box in each class so that the whole class won't know how I'm feeling just my teacher".

"Its good to talk when I'm worried". (ELSA)

"When I was angry, I could use drawing and colouring to calm me down". (ELSA)



6. Staff Quote

"Perma has been a really good tool to track the vulnerable pupils that are experiencing negative emotions which would be a barrier to their learning". PERMA & ELSA support teacher.

"The children are more able to self manage their emotions through the strategies that are used in the ELSA sessions". ELSA

7. Have there been any opportunities for partnership working (e.g. school to school, external agencies).

Cluster PERMA project

Enfys consultation to support staff with strategies for CLA pupils.

Working with CAHMS and an introduction to the new In Reach SHINE programme.

Whole School Approach to Emotional and Mental Wellbeing pilot project

Training provided to schools utilising PDG LAC 2018/19, 2019/20, 2020/21 and 2021/22

List of Training Provided to Schools as per of PDG LAC 18/19

ACE - Trauma Informed Practice for Primary Schools
 ACE Ambassadors Professional Learning day (Train the trainers)
 ACE's, Assessment, Adoption and Attainment
 Attachment & Education
 Children Looked After Friendly Schools level 2
 Children Looked After Friendly Schools level 3
 Developing Emotional & Social Skills using Creative Storytelling
 Getting it Right for Every Child
 Making a Difference and Introduction to Emotion Coaching
 Negotiating behaviour change
 Observational Checklist Training - children aged 5-11
 Observational Checklist Training - Pre-school
 Observing Adolescents with Attachment Difficulties in Secondary Schools
 Relationship Based Play
 Whole school approaches for better outcomes for LAC

List of Training Provided to Schools as per of PDG LAC 19/20

ACE - Assessment, adoption and attainment: Adoption UK
 ACE – Trauma Informed Practice for Primary Schools - Level 2
 An Introduction to Restorative Approaches for Schools and Family Support Staff
 Building A Resilient school by Achievement for All (AfA)
 Children Looked After Friendly Schools Level 2
 Children Looked After Friendly Schools Level 3
 Core Strength and Structural Learning
 Creating Wellbeing through Stories and Storytelling
 Developing emotional and social skills using creative storytelling
 Getting it Right for Every Child Adoption UK
 How to aid school children with mindfulness and meditation
 Improving the Wellbeing of Vulnerable Pupils
 Negotiating behaviour change
 Observational Checklist Training - Pre-school
 Observing adolescents with attachment difficulties in secondary schools
 Observing Checklist Training - children aged 5-11
 Positive Psychology and Mindfulness for Building Resilience in School Staff
 Positive transitions for looked after children
 Relationship Based Play - Supporting Pupils with Attachment Difficulties
 Whole School Approaches to support better outcomes for Looked After Children

List of Training Provided to Schools as per of PDG LAC 20/21

Enhancing Teacher Wellbeing to help all Learners
 Page 199

Psychological First Aid - To help children who are distressed and negotiating behaviour change
ACE - Assessment, adoption and attainment: Adoption UK
Children Looked After Friendly Level 2
Anxiety in Children
Attachment Difficulties Training
Children Looked After Friendly Level 3
Observing Checklist Training
ACE - Assessment, adoption and attainment: Adoption UK
Relationship Based Play
Supporting Successful Transition
The role of Key Adults with vulnerable pupils in educational settings
Playing with Words: Action & Narrative Techniques to help emotional and mental wellbeing for Vulnerable Learners

List of Training Provided to Schools as per of PDG LAC 21/22

Enhancing Teacher Well-being to Help All Learners
Anxiety in Children
Attachment Difficulties Training
Children Looked After Friendly Schools Level 2
Children Looked After Friendly Schools Level 3
Observational Checklist Training
Relationship Based Play - Supporting Pupils with Attachment Difficulties
Supporting Successful Transition
ACE's - Assessment, Adoption and Learning: Adoption UK
Playing with Words: Action & Narrative Techniques to help emotional and mental wellbeing
The role of Key Adults with vulnerable pupils in educational settings
Psychological First Aid for Children - Supporting Children with Emotional and Behavioural Distress
Building Emotional Health in Childhood

Evaluation of the CLA Friendly Schools Quality Mark 2020/21

A review of the CLA Friendly Schools Quality Mark in Rhondda Cynon Taf

The current research was interested in exploring the views of students, school staff and parents/carers from schools that have achieved the CLA Friendly Schools Quality Mark status. The aim of this research was to review the impact of achieving CLA friendly school quality status on the school's knowledge base. School staff and carers understanding of their role supporting CLA pupils – as well as the pupils understanding of the support available for them was questioned.

The information was collected using an online survey, we reviewed the process to identify strengths and suggest recommendations when measuring the impact of achieving the CLA friendly schools Quality Mark for children and young people, carers and teachers.

Introduction

[Section 22\(3\) of the Children Act 1989](#) sets out the general duty of the local authority looking after a child to safeguard and promote the welfare of the child (Children Act, 1989). Both the rate and number of children in care in Wales has been increasing in recent years. As of 31st of March 2020 there were approximately 7,172 children looked after in Wales, this number continues to rise (Wales Centre of Public Policy, 2020).

The poor educational outcomes of children looked after has been documented within the literature (Ferguson 1966; Jackson 1987). Children who are looked after are much less likely than others to do well in school, and less still to go on to further and higher education. On average, CLA children have poorer academic outcomes compared to their peers, with the gap widening as they progress through school (O'Higgins et al, 2015). A recent study suggests that CLA pupils aged 16 on average score 43% lower in GCSE exams than their peers (McDonald, 2020). In addition, the challenges they face in their lives - identity, place, safety, love and encouragement – often take precedence over their ability to focus on academic achievements. Therefore, a lack of understanding, support and planning for the education of children looked after can further compound existing problems and miss an opportunity to help improve the wellbeing, future prospects and self-esteem of vulnerable learners.

There are a number of supports available to children who are looked after in education. Highlighting the significance of The Designated Person for CLA in schools, in supporting the child or young person and communicating their needs to all individuals involved is a key. This is a statutory role in every school. This includes ensuring that Personal Education Plans (PEP's) are in place and reviewed, as well as providing targets for improvements in attainments and wider educational outcomes. All looked after children (except those in respite care) are required to have a Personal Education Plan or 'PEP' (O'Higgins et al, 2018). The PEP complements Care Plans, with a specific focus on promoting and prioritising education This provides opportunity for meaningful, constructive and sensitive involvement of children in the process of producing and reviewing PEPs (Hayden, 2005).

The child or young person should be involved in each conversation and decision made by external agencies, particularly those in relation to personal and academic development. Their thoughts and opinions should be reflected by an appropriate adult and the next steps shared with the child or young person. Harker et al. (2004) reported that only 42% of the young people in their study had heard of PEPs. Following interviews

with the young people involved, it was felt that they did not feel part of the process. There is limited research that captures and records the voice of the school, parents/carers and CLA pupils relating to their knowledge and experience of having a PEP, the individuals involved and the processes in place.

This small scale evaluation may support our knowledge and understanding of teachers and pupils awareness of the key individuals involved in the care and support of CLA pupils, and the knowledge the children and young people have regarding the process in place to support them.

Background

RCT are committed to improving outcomes for CLA children, and a joint project was commissioned and developed between Rhondda Cynon Taf and Merthyr Tydfil. The project began in 2016/17, with the aim to 'promote good practice within schools and educational settings and achieve a shared vision and ambition for supporting CLA learners and improving outcomes'.

The project comprised of 3 elements, including

- 1) The use of a CLA handbook to support schools and settings,
- 2) training that reinforces the practices in the handbook, and ;
- 3) the CLA Friendly Schools Quality Mark, achieved by schools evidencing a high standard of practice for CLA Pupils.

The 'CLA Friendly Schools Quality Mark' can be awarded to a school that is able to evidence a high standard of practice for CLA (Children Looked After) pupils. The Quality Mark is based on a set of 44 indicators, these can be found in the CLA Friendly Schools Handbook. These are based on the **3** themes for making a school CLA Friendly. These themes were:

- **Whole school systems & practice**
- **Preventative approaches & building resilience**
- **Responsive strategies to support CLA presenting with more challenges**

The current research aimed to explore the views of school staff, children/young people and parents/cares from 12 schools who achieved Quality Marks Status in Rhondda Cynon Taf in 2019 - 20. In doing so, this project aims to capture the pupil, teacher and parent/carer voice in regards to the whole systems and practice that supports the development of CLA Pupils.

Methodology

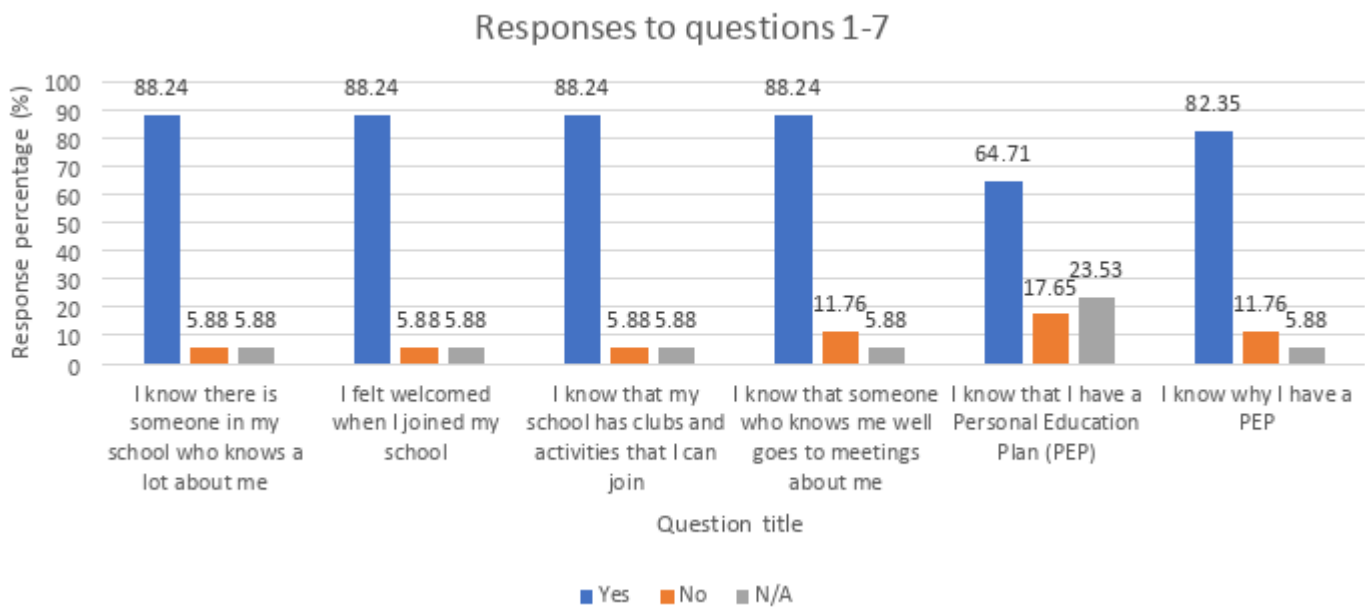
Two links to a survey for teachers and pupils was sent out to a total of 12 schools in Rhondda Cynon Taf that had achieved the Quality Mark status in 2019/20. This link would send the schools to a Survey Monkey site, where they were able to submit their views. In total, 48 responses were returned by school staff, 17 by school pupils and 1 by a parent/carer. The school staff survey comprised of 12 questions, the pupil survey 15 questions and the parent/carer survey also had 15 questions. The answers required were either 'yes' or 'no' in agreements/disagreement with the question or there was an option to 'add a comment' in response.

The surveys were anonymous. Schools were tasked with encouraging CLA pupils to complete the survey sent to them. In addition, the CLA Education Team sent out the survey link to all carers/parents of pupils in the cohort for 2019/20.

Results

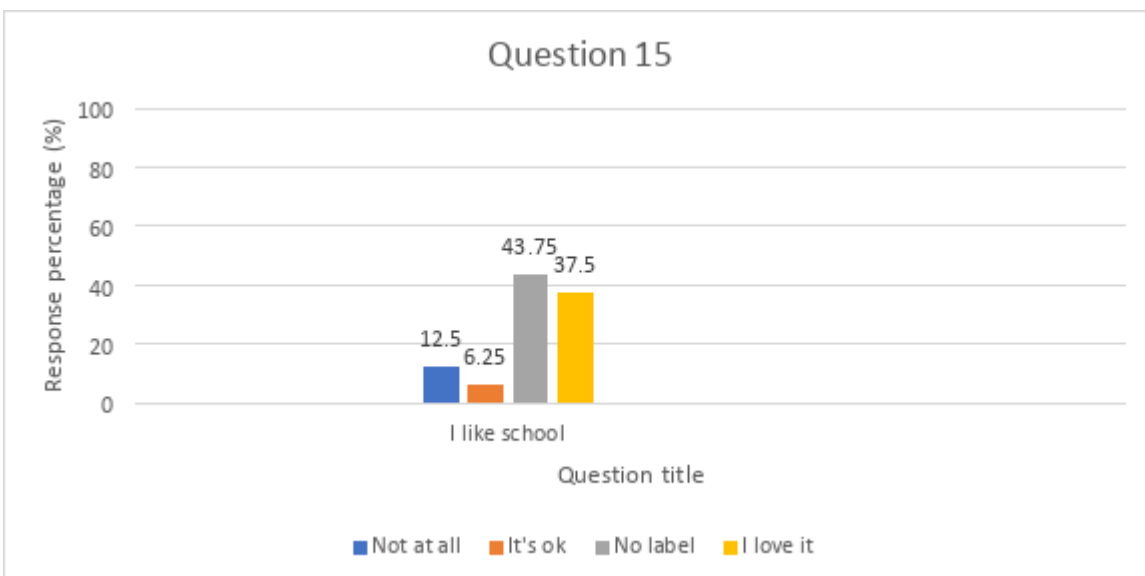
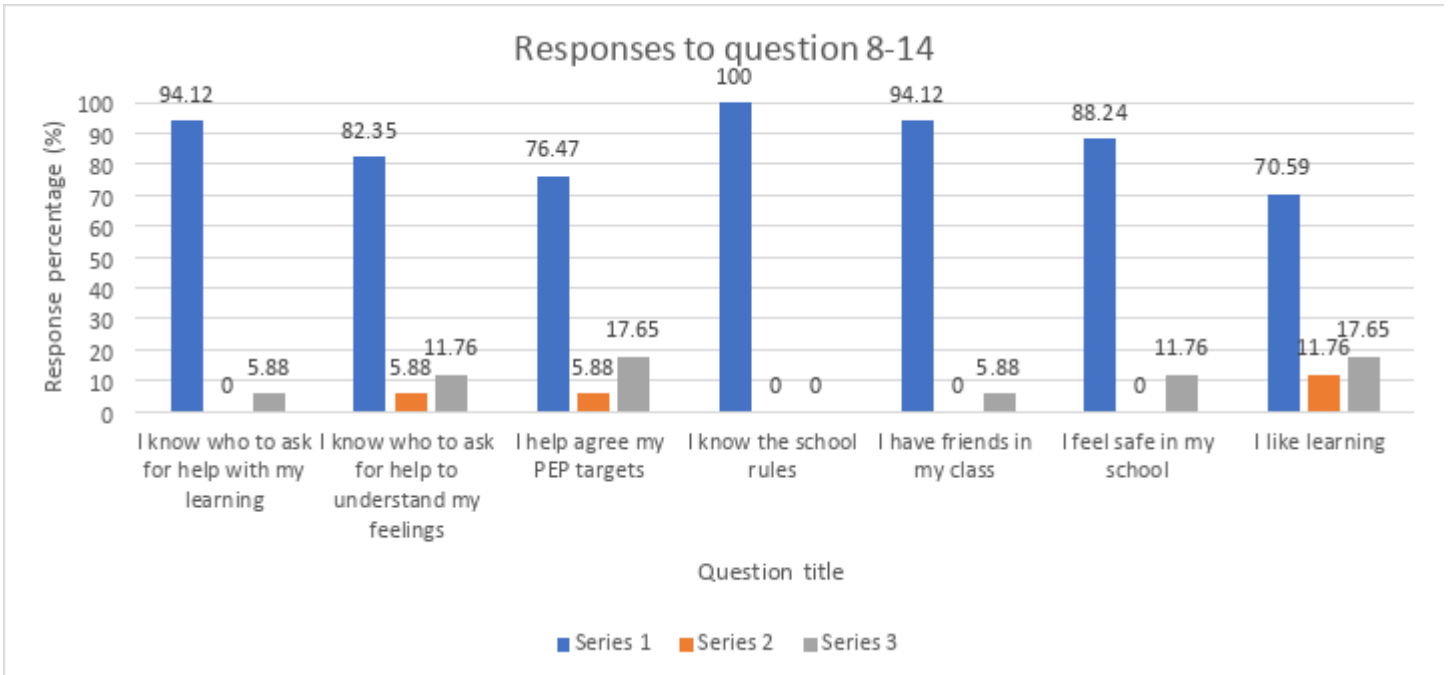
The results section is split into two sections: Pupil responses and Teacher responses. The graphs shows the percentage of responses for each question.

Pupil Responses



These are the results for the first 7 questions. There was an average percentage of positive feedback with 83.34% responding 'yes'. In comparison, the average percentage for answering 'no' was just 8%. The questions regarding PEPS show the lowest percentage of positive responses with a clear increase in n/a.

The graph below shows the responses to the following 7 questions. The average percentage of positive responses is 86.56%. The lowest positive response was the one regarding whether the pupils like learning, with 70.59% saying 'yes'. The highest positive response was measured on whether pupils were aware of the school rules to which 100% of respondents said 'yes'.

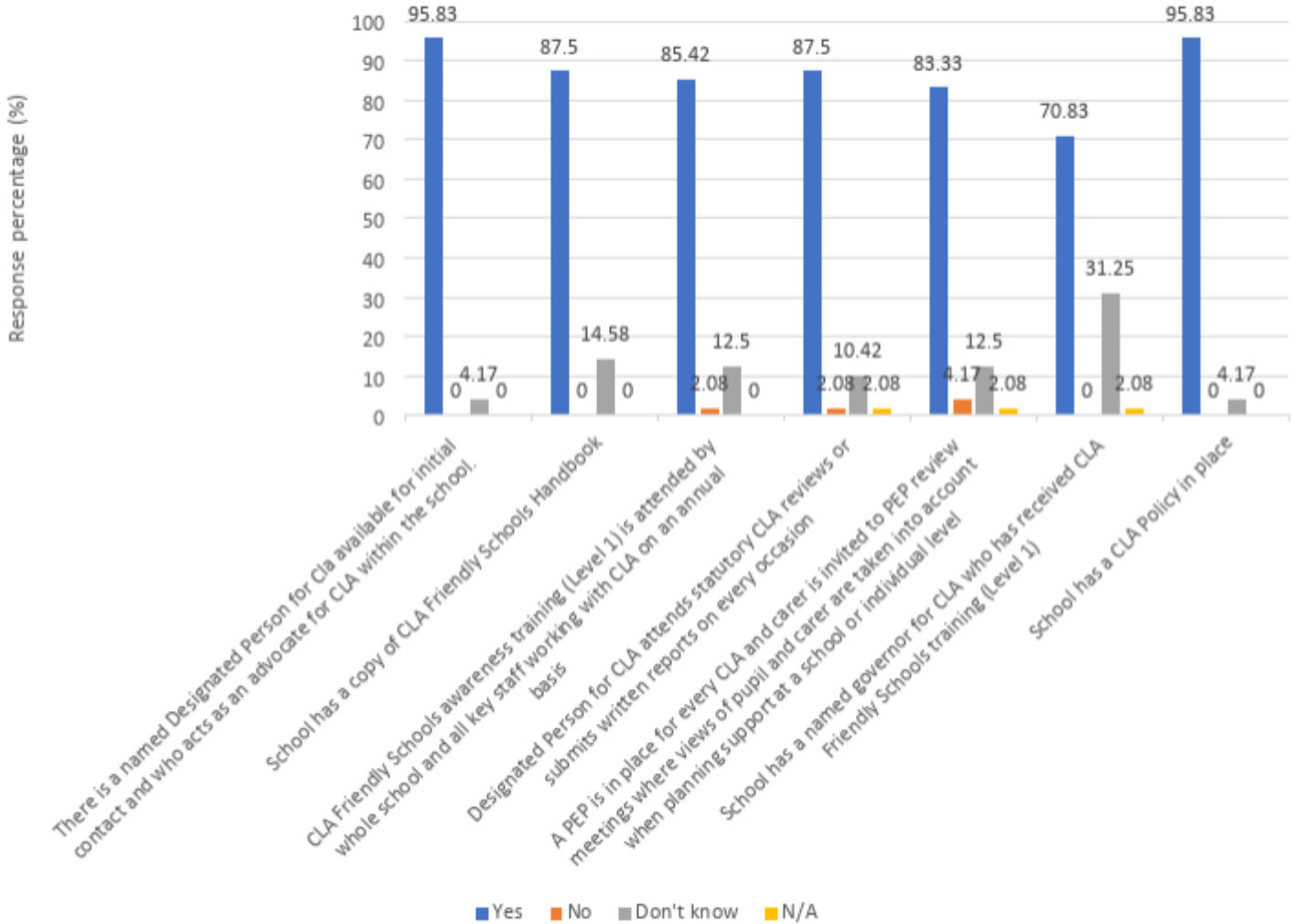


Question 15 was the only question that used a Likert scale and so has been displayed individually. Once again, the results are more positive than negative with 37.5% of pupils

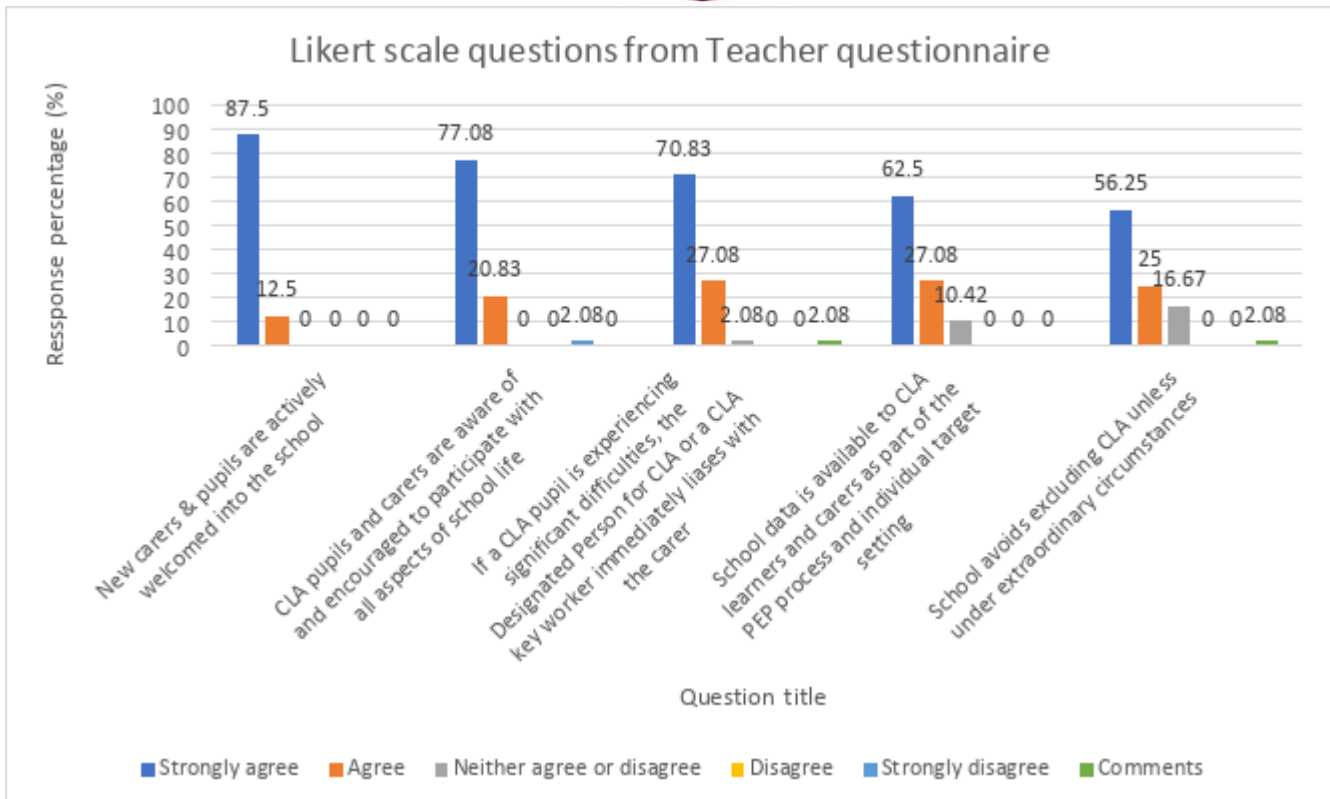
saying they 'love' school. This is twice as much as the more negative responses with 12.5% responding 'not at all' and 6.25% saying 'it's ok'. 43.75% rated school as better than OK but not quite loving it.

Teacher responses

Polar questions from Teacher questionnaire



This graph shows the responses to the questions in the format of 'yes', 'no', 'don't know' and 'n/a'. The responses are very positive with an average 'yes' score being 86.61%. The responses with the highest percentage of positive responses are those regarding a named designated person for CLA as well as whether there is a CLA policy in place. This highest 'no' percentage was on whether there is a PEP in place for every CLA with 4.17%. This is still very low which is a positive. The highest percentage of 'don't know' responses related to whether there is a named governor for CLA with 31.25% responding 'I don't know'.



This graph shows the responses to the Likert scale questions. Once again, most responses are positive, with an average of 70.83%. There is also the positive response of ‘agree’ which gives an average of 22.5%. The most positive response was to the active welcoming of new carers and pupils where 100% of answers were either ‘strongly agree’ or ‘agree’. The most mixed response was to avoid excluding CLA pupils except for extraordinary circumstances where 81.25% of responses were either ‘strongly agree’ or ‘agree’, 16.67% answered ‘neither agree or disagree’ which is the highest from any question.

Findings

The pupil responses were largely positive, with the most positive response being chosen 81.67% of the time. The most positive response was to whether pupils know the school rules with 100% of pupils responding ‘yes’. The least positive response was for question 6 with 64.71% of pupils responding ‘yes’ to whether they know that they have a PEP.

The teacher responses were also largely positive with 80% of responses being the most positive choice. The most positive response was question 4 which asked if new carers and pupils are welcomed into the school with 87.5% of responses ‘strongly agreeing’ and 12.5% being ‘agree’ and so 100% of responses were positive. The least positive response was to whether there was a named CLA governor in the school with 70.83% of responses being ‘yes’ and 29.17% being ‘N/A’.

The single foster carer participants responded positively on every question except for the one regarding exams as their child is too young for them.

Discussion

The results from the pupils show a largely positive view of their school. This is particularly good for the questions surrounding safety and feeling welcomed as it points to a positive teacher-pupil relationship. Furthermore, the positive responses to the questions regarding PEP is also promising as it suggests children are actively involved in their own PEP and their thoughts towards what would benefit them is being listened to. For CLA pupils this is especially important due to their vulnerability to poorer educational outcomes.

For schools who have received the quality mark we would expect most responses to be positive as these practices need to be observed in order to obtain the quality mark, against the criteria listed on the Quality mark criteria document (Children Looked After Friendly Schools Handbook, 2017). Despite the overwhelming nature of the positive responses, it is important to draw attention to the negative responses. In particular, the inconsistencies surrounding the questions about PEPs. This can be seen with one pupil who responded 'no' to whether they knew about having a PEP but then responded 'yes' to whether they agree their PEP targets. Whilst this is only a small number, this suggests a level of miscommunication or a lack of understanding.

The results from the teacher's questionnaire is similar to that of the pupils with most results being positive. The validity of the results could also be questioned due to the time disparities taken to complete the questionnaire. Whilst there will be a natural disparity between the time taken to answer questions between individuals, the quickest times of under a minute also relate to the most positive answers being chosen for each question. This could be completely accurate and representative of the quality of the schools however, it could also be participants rushing through and selecting the seemingly best answer on every question without any consideration.

The results from the foster carers have not been put into the results due to there being only one respondent. This questionnaire was sent to all foster carers of CLA registered pupils attending the cohort for 19/20. This means that there is very little to take from the data as no themes can be determined. One reason for this could be the time in which the survey was sent out. As it was sent at the end of the school year, exams and end of year projects would lead to added stress and less time for the carers which could have led to the lack of responses. In future, sending the survey out earlier in the year may be beneficial and get more responses which in turn leads to more data to draw trends and conclusions from.

The use of a further small-scale study using semi-structured interviews to gain a more in-depth insight could be an aim of future research as this would allow more data to be collected, particularly with foster carers and pupils.

Summary

In summary, the small-scale evaluation drew largely positive responses from both pupils and teachers. Whilst the validity of the data needs to be strengthened the clear trends should not be ignored. The surveys show that since receiving the quality mark, positive relationships with pupils and teachers have been maintained with pupils feeling engaged with teaching. Pupils feel safe and welcome in school with the vast majority (81.25%) reporting positively to their enjoyment of school.

There was also a majority of pupils reporting positively on PEP involvement although further work needs to be completed to ensure all pupils know what a PEP is and that all pupils are engaged in the PEP process.

The teacher responses are positive as well although the CLA governor role needs to be promoted amongst staff in school.

The main drawback of the survey is the lack of foster carer engagement and this needs to be improved in future surveys.

Appendix 8

CYTUNDEB GWASANAETH LEFEL / SERVICE LEVEL AGREEMENT

PDG LAC evaluation

Cyfnod y cytundeb: Ebrill 2020-Mawrth 2021

Period of Agreement: April 2020 - March 2021

| | |
|---|-----------------------------|
| Awdurdod Lleol Local Authority | RCT |
| LACe | Hannah Bevan/ Donna Hughes |
| Prif Swyddog Lead Officer | Kerry Webster |
| Manylion Cyswllt Contact Details | Kerry.webster@rctcbc.gov.uk |

2. Ffocws yr Hyfforddiant/Cefnogaeth Focus for Training/Support

The CLA Ed team are building skills and confidence with those who work with and support the education of CLA children. We continue to provide a range of training opportunities to support a better understanding in how best to support the learning of children who have experienced developmental trauma and those who are looked after. A further 11 schools completed this process and achieved the award at either gold or platinum level.

We continue to promote and model evidence based approaches and work with a range of key adults including foster carers.

We provided

ELSA for Foster Carers – A five day course which focuses on loss and bereavement, social skills, managing emotions, friendships and self-esteem. This has been offered twice this year and evaluated positively with supervision groups set up to meet termly. We will continue to offer ELSA twice each year and supervision three times.

A new one-day training was available for Foster carers and the focus will be to support Foster carers role in education.

There are members of the team trained to deliver Emotion Coaching based on the principle that nurturing and emotionally supportive relationships provide optimal contexts for the promotion of children's outcomes and resilience. We were able to provide 6 sessions of emotion coaching for school staff and 1 for foster carers.

We continued to focus on Transitions as this can be challenging for children with care experience and despite the challenges of lockdown were able to share good practice and encourage school to school learning through the designated persons training and through the CLA quality mark. We provided resources so schools could support children preparing for a transition as well as working with individual pupils and seeking pupil voice using personal construct psychology and the ideal school.

We continued to build on our resources to support CLA Friendly Schools and to provide recognition to schools who achieve gold and silver awards- We have developed some resources that we will make available to lend to schools and foster carers.

We have a member of our team trained and supervised in Video Interaction Guidance (VIG), an intervention that focuses on promoting positive relationships. We continue to offer this by engaging clients (foster carers) actively in a process of change by affirming the positive interactions that are reflected through video footage. VIG is recommended as an evidence-based intervention for health visitors and midwives in the NICE guidelines 'Social and Emotional Wellbeing - Early Years' published October (2012), and in several other NICE guidelines (e.g. Autism 2013, Attachment 2015). We want to develop this further and an interest group of other people trained is being established. Covid restrictions has had an impact on our ability to work in schools but this is again being offered and work continues with several families.

We have members of the team trained and supervised in Dyadic Developmental Psychotherapy (DDP)- an attachment-focused approach in which a therapist supports the caregiver and child's relationship and the development of secure attachment by encouraging the reflective function of the caregiver, enabling attunement, regulating emotion and co creating meaning. The therapist interactions are characterised by PACE (playfulness, acceptance, curiosity and empathy). This approach has been well evaluated with foster carers and adoptive parents and recently elements of this model have been successfully introduced within residential childcare (Becker-Weidman and Hughes, 2008). This approach underpins all our practice and we have developed a parenting with PACE course that will be available to foster carers in the summer term 2022. The whole team will be available to complete level 1 DDP and the two psychologists continue to have supervision to support continued practice.

We continued to offer Give us a break groups building on the successful pilot- This groups work supports young people who have experienced loss and bereavement in schools, often a need for many of our CLA pupils. A further intervention is planned in September in response to a critical incident that occurred in a secondary school,

We trained 6 adults (ELSAs) in SandStory Skills. Designed for those in supportive roles (such as Teachers, SENCOs, ELSAs, TAs, Nurture Group Leaders, Early Years Practitioners, Behaviour Support workers and anyone else supporting the wellbeing and emotional development of children) We targeted ELSAs and Tas who worked with CLA pupils. This approach helps pupils manage emotional responses and tell their story. SandStory Skills is not a therapy but provides a session structure which ensures practitioners are working

safely and respectfully within the remit of their role. These skills harness the child's natural instinct to engage in playful storytelling and gives practitioners confidence to understand and support the storytelling process. It has been well received by those who completed the training and the schools they work in.

Short term LSA intervention – We have provided funds available to give additional support to those individuals who are finding a particular time of their life/education difficult or who are managing a difficult transition. This support has encouraged engagement in school and avoided exclusions.

As a response to school closures we provided additional tutoring – for 20 weeks for year 10 and Yr 11 in Maths, English or Welsh. Virtual tutors delivered an hour each week. This has been well received/positively evaluated and will continue next year with an extension to year 6. We extended the offer to the summer term for pupils who wanted it.

We were able to offer schools the opportunity to provide established programs that work directly with young people to support their self-esteem. One school benefitted from Empire fighting chance interventions for a group of students in the form of weekly training and we offered a session of days to Jamie's farm - which offers experiences working on a farm and focusing on developing relationships and self-identity for a group of 4 young people. All enjoyed these experiences

We wanted to provide some primary school pupils a 6-week package of additional support, such as enhanced ELSA or Enhanced interventions. A sum of money was available but due to Covid this was not feasible and will be available for next year.

2. Gorolwg o'r buddiannau/Deilliannau Overview of Expected Benefits/ Outcomes

The training and resources provided by the bursary fund supported an understanding of the often-complex needs of our CLA and the ability to meet these needs in a more focused and successful way. As a team we promote and advocate for CLA pupils and work to ensure they receive good educational experiences and opportunities. The bursary enables us to provide high quality, research-based approaches that schools, children and young people enjoy and that are different to those often available to them in school.

We recognise the importance of the care given to our vulnerable learners and value the role of foster carers and we were able to support them in their work to provide positive change through training and providing resources.

We aim to provide sustainable training to develop skills and knowledge in our schools that enable staff to meet the emotional needs of pupils in order to facilitate future learning. These skills benefit CLA and other vulnerable children in the future.

We have been able to provide additional access to quality learning experiences through tutor support, to support individuals to remain engaged through LSA support and through targeted projects.

**4. Niferoedd plant mewn gofal mewn ysgolion/Clwstwr (os yn gymwys)
School/Clusters involved and CLA numbers (if applicable)**

The CLA Education Team promotes and encourages schools across RCT to achieve the CLA Friendly Schools Quality Mark. The CLA Friendly Schools handbook has been updated and distributed to all schools electronically.

Over 40 foster carers attended ELSA training/ supporting education and emotion coaching

8 families benefitted from DDP approaches or VIG intense work

Over 15 schools were supported through enhanced interventions, specific projects to support groups of young people. At least 10 schools were also supported through transition work and with targeted additional LSA support when a child is at risk of exclusion.

In response to the disrupted educational experience due to COVID -19, PDG LAC money has provided an offer of online tuition in Maths or English for all Key Stage 4 pupils taking exams. We extended this offer to some younger year groups where a need was identified. Online tuition began in October 2020 and continued until May 2020.

14 year 11 students have continued Tuition with a further 3 being provided with additional tuition in a second subject from January.

24 Year 10 students received Tuition with a further student being offered both English and Maths in January.

4 year 9 students, 3 year 8 students and 2 year 7 students have engaged with tuition since January.

During the Summer term 2020 there was a further offer for Year 6 students to have 10 sessions of Maths or English tuition to support transition to Key stage 3.

25 students accepted this offer. Feedback from tutors is positive and we are currently evaluating this support with foster carers and pupils.



Cofiwch bod angen gwario'r cyllid erbyn y 31ain o Fawrth 2021 70,983

Please note, all funding must be spent by the 31st March 2021

| Rhaglen / Blaenoriaeth Programme / Priority Area Prif Weithgareddau Key Actions | Cyllid Funding | Cynlluniau i fonitro'r gweithgareddau Planned monitoring activities | Gwerthuso diwedd y flwyddyn 31ain o Fawrth 2021 | Gwariant gwirioneddol 31ain o Fawrth 2021 |
|--|---|--|---|--|
| | Staffio ac adnoddau Staffing & Resources Cost (£) | | Evaluation Year End Update 31st March 2021 | Actual Expenditure 31st March 2021 |
| Virtual tuition for Year 10 and Year 11 in maths or English. 1 hour a week for 20 weeks. | Yr 10 and 11 For the provision of 20 sessions (one hour of maths and 1 hour of English weekly) for 56 students at a cost of £30ph would be a total of £33,600. Using Cardiff and the Vale tutors 2 EOTAS pupils 1 hour additional tuition in maths or English for 20 weeks £1,294 Using New directions | All sessions are evaluated and progress monitored with regular reports. | Small scale evaluation completed and shared with Childrens services. | £20,400 |

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| <p>The provision of 1.5 hours per week for 10 weeks online English/Literacy or Maths/Numeracy tuition for 9 Y6 students TOTAL 135 hours x 30 £4050 total</p> | <p>All sessions are evaluated and progress monitored with regular reports.</p> | <p>Evaluation completed</p> | <p>TOTAL 135 hours x 30 £4050 total</p> | |
| <p>Each package for 6 weeks would be £180 and we anticipate that 40 packages could be provided £ 7200</p> | <p>Schools to provide details of additional support and these to be evaluated.</p> | <p>This did not take place due to Covid, difficulties in breaking bubbles and children not being consistently in school.</p> | <p>Spend Nil</p> | |
| <p>£20000</p> | | <p>Pupils supported joined a school successfully and/</p> | <p>Pontypridd High Year 8 £3174</p> | |
| | | | <p>Pontypridd year 9 5 hours for 20 weeks £3180</p> | |

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| | Feedback and close monitoring by CLA ed team. | or remained in school. Attendance and engagement improved. | Treorchy Primary Year 5 6 hour support a week 3 hours for 12 weeks £1702 | |
| | | | LLantwit Major school Year 11 Amelia trust farm placement £3230 | |
| | | | Tonyrefail Year 10 15 hours a week support for 10 weeks £4560 | |
| | | | Vale of Glamorgan Year 9 Bryncelynnog 10 hours for 6 weeks of managed move. £578 | |
| | | | RCT CLA pupil Year 3 Newport school to support transition into new placement and school. 15 hours for October, November, and December £4,042 | |
| | | | Year 4 pupils Cwmdar to support transition into school Year 2 pupil £905 | |
| | | | Gwauncelyn Primary School for June/July 2021. For 10 hours for 10 weeks at £10.00 £1000 | |

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| | | | <p>Virtual Tuition - Yr 11 in monmouthshire to support transition and provide education as awaiting placement in PRU.</p> <p>£30 x 50 hours =£1500</p> | |
| | | | <p>Yr 9 in RCT – to support transition into school</p> <p>£30 x 60 hours =£1800</p> | |
| | | | Actual spend £25671 | |
| £1800 | Evaluations of training and feedback from participants. | <p>6 ELSA participants (a members of the CLA team and a student)undertook the training and completed the course.</p> <p>Feedback from the course was positive and all those who participated used</p> | £1440 | |

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|---|--|---|--|--|
| | | the skills and approaches in their daily work. It provided support for CLA pupils and incorporated into a key worker approach. | | |
| 2 hours per week at £37.50 per hour totalling £75.00 20-week duration = £1,500 | Companies to provide evaluations and to share engagement of pupils | Awaiting feedback from school. | £1500 for a group of pupils and Ysgol Nant Gwyn. | |
| CLA certificated and displays | Evaluations of training / projects to be provided. CLA friendly school quality mark evaluation undertaken with carers. Teachers and pupils. Elsa feedback from foster carers positive. | CLA Friendly school evaluation complete. Training well received and more requested from training unit. GUAB intervention pilot reviewed and intervention has been offered in one school. | £ 322 Certificates and display £658 for resources £1900 for trainers Total spend £2880 | |

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| | Purchased resources to share with schools and foster carers and will promote the availability of these in September 2021. | | | |
| Trauma informed | Training for the team on attachment | Supporting team to develop helpful resources for foster carers and schools. | £375 | |
| 10 days over 6 months | 2 members of team attended. Both passed and are now practitioners. | Positive feedback and noted in reflection and support/challenge to school. | £2400 | |
| Tai centre - Clown in space. 6 sessions and launch plus illustration and printing. | Distributed in schools and libraries across RCT. | Feedback from staff and pupils positive. Book has been printed and shared. | £5000 plus £89 | |
| Provided App for all RCT schools and ELSAs £576 for AFIT year subscripton and £1,407 for App. | Launched in June to designated persons. Distributed across schools and support services in RCT. | Evaluation to take place in summer term. | £1983 | |

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|---|--|--|---------------------------------|--|
| <p>Purchased for all Year 6 £146 plus £86</p> | <p>Schools have been informed and ready in preparation for next academic year. Some pupils will be identified by CLA team and supported with the worry monsters.</p> | <p>Booklets have been used with foster carers and positive feedback received.</p> | <p>£232</p> | |
| <p>4 day visit for 4 pupils</p> | <p>This was an opportunity for 4 CLA boys to spend time on a farm and develop independence and relationships.</p> | <p>Feedback and photos from positive visit</p> | <p>£660</p> | |
| <p>Brief 2 and two Psychological portfolio and Cognitive ability profiles ABAS</p> | <p>Assessment recommended to support FASD diagnosis and to support pupils wellbeing Resources to develop new courses for foster carers</p> | <p>Utilised with CLA pupils and information and reports are provided to support understanding of educational needs and barriers to learning</p> | <p>£2,739 £350 £464</p> | |
| <p>Annual subscription for online surveys and evaluations</p> | <p>Evaluations of CLA friendly quality mark and tuition as</p> | <p>Completed evaluations shared with Children's services</p> | <p>£750</p> | |

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| | well as formulation meetings | | | |
| | | | £70,983 | |

CYTUNDEB GWASANAETH LEFEL / SERVICE LEVEL AGREEMENT

PDG LAC evaluation

Cyfnod y cytundeb: Ebrill 2021-Mawrth 2022
Period of Agreement: April 2021 - March 2022

| | |
|---|-----------------------------|
| Awdurdod Lleol Local Authority | RCT |
| LACe | Hannah Bevan |
| Prif Swyddog Lead Officer | Kerry Webster |
| Manylion Cyswllt Contact Details | Kerry.webster@rctcbc.gov.uk |

3. Ffocws yr Hyfforddiant/Cefnogaeth Focus for Training/Support

The CLA Education team have focused on developing trauma informed responses and ensuring that children who are in the care of RCT have their needs identified, understood and met. We are continuing to build a strong knowledge base on developmental trauma and the impact it has on all areas of a child's development. The bursary has enabled us to provide a range of training opportunities to schools including governors, teaching assistants and to foster carers.

The training we have scheduled includes CLA friendly schools level 1, 2 and 3, the development of personal education plans, emotion coaching, parenting with PACE (a six day course for foster carers) and introduction to PACE training, loss and bereavement and reducing and responding to suicide and self-harm. In the academic year 2021 – 22 a further 8 schools completed the CLA friendly school award at either platinum or gold levels.

We invited Scott King (a motivational speaker who has care experience) to talk to key professions to share his experiences to promote a better understanding of the needs of children and young people who are looked after. A response from one school (a large comprehensive) indicated the impact the information he shared had on them and they want to invite him to speak to all their staff to support a better understanding that experiencing being in care has on presentation, behaviour and emotional/social development and what helped.

We are building on our resources to support all schools have a purchased books to lend to schools and foster carers

We have a consistent approach in our work modelling an attitude of PACE. All members of the team have been trained as Level 1 practitioners in Dyadic Development Psychotherapy (DDP) with 3 psychologists trained to level 2 and the team has a sound understanding of this approach and promote and model this to others. The psychologists in the team receive regular supervision from a trained DDP practitioner

We were able to offer Give us a break project support in response to a critical incident that occurred in a secondary school

We trained a further 5 teaching assistants in Sand Story Skills and an assistant educational psychologist (AEP) has successfully completed work with two children using this approach to help children manage big emotions

With positive feedback from tutors, schools, pupils and carers we continue to offer additional virtual tutoring – for 20 weeks for year 10 and Yr 11 in Maths, English or Welsh and 20 sessions for year 6 pupils in Maths or English

Supporting change and transition continues as a focus and we provide a range of resources and consultations, so schools can put into place strong and robust transition plans.

Governor training and Designated persons for CLA reflective sessions are offered on a termly basis and a regular newsletter outlines key offers, training and updated information

This year some of our team have taken on the additional role of designated officer for those learners who are taught out of county and have additional learning needs. This has involved training and supporting schools in Person centred planning practice and liaison with carers, social workers and other key adults.

After further training in trauma informed schools supervision the psychologists in the team have offered regular reflective sessions for supervising social workers as well the opportunity to consider individual case work and overarching themes in a safe space

This year we provided an enhanced offer to increase our letter box scheme to a further year group. Along side this we provided paired reading training for foster carers to support reading in the home

To support transitions we organised training from Inclusive solutions in Paths and Maps for central service staff, family therapeutic staff and 6 schools. We have completed several Paths and Maps for individual children and for a group of ALNCOs as well as the CLA team

The CLA ED team completed an audit with learners in one of our through schools to identify safe spaces. This information was shared with the school so they could develop and adapt their environment and support engagement for all learners

2. Gorolwg o'r buddiannau/Deilliannau Overview of Expected Benefits/ Outcomes

As a team we tirelessly advocate for CLA pupils and work to ensure they receive good educational experiences and opportunities by supporting a good understanding of the needs of CLA learners. The bursary enables us to provide high quality, research-based approaches, training and resources that schools, children and young people enjoy and that are different to those often available to them as universal provision. It allows a flexible approach during periods of instability than many of our learners experience where the team can support both school and carers with training, resources and to facilitate approaches that positively plan for better futures and provide stability.

We work with all adults who support children who are looked after and we offer training to our foster carers in an increasing number of areas relating to school and emotional wellbeing. A better understanding of the needs of pupils who have experienced disrupted care supports placements and helps our children and young people flourish.

Aware of poorer attainments in education for CLA learners we have continued to offer additional support in Maths and English through virtual tuition in key year groups, this is to improve confidence and to promote progression and skills in these key areas of the curriculum.

**5. Niferoedd plant mewn gofal mewn ysgolion/Clwstwr (os yn gymwys)
School/Clusters involved and CLA numbers (if applicable)**


50 plus foster carers attended ELSA training/ supporting education and emotion coaching.

35 RCT schools engaged with level 1, 2 or 3 CLA friendly school training and Scott King training.

10 families/care homes have benefitted from direct more intensive therapeutic work.



20 schools were supported though enhanced interventions, training and specific projects to support groups of young people.

9 schools were also supported through transition work and with targeted additional LSA support when a child is at risk of exclusion.

| Cofiwch bod angen gwario'r cyllid erbyn y 31ain o Fawrth 2022 £74,490.47 Please note, all funding must be spent by the 31 st March 2022 | | | | |
|---|---|--|---|---|
| Rhaglen / Blaenoriaeth Programme / Priority Area Prif Weithgareddau Key Actions | Cyllid Funding | Cynlluniau i fonitro'r gweithgareddau Planned monitoring activities | Gwerthuso diwedd y flwyddyn 31ain o Fawrth 2021 Evaluation Year End Update 31 st March 2021 | Gwariant gwirioneddol 31ain o Fawrth 2021 Actual Expenditure 31 st March 2021 |
| | Staffio ac adnoddau Staffing & Resources Cost (£) | | | |
| <p>Virtual tuition for Year 10 and Year 11 in maths or English. 1 hour a week for 20 weeks.</p> <p>Virtual tuition for Year 6 in maths or English. 1 ½ hours a week for 10 weeks.</p> | <p>Cardiff and the Vale tuition The Y10/Y11 tuition would be $45 \times 20 \times 1 \times \text{£}33 = \text{£}29,700$</p> <p>The Y6 tuition would be $25 \times 1.5 \times 10 \times 33 = \text{£}12,375$</p> | <p>Feedback from tutors and evaluation with pupils and foster carers</p> | <p>Small scale evaluation completed and shared with Childrens services.</p> <p> Tuition one page visual.pptx</p> | <p>£42,075</p> |

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| <p>Short term LSA intervention to support engagement for up to 15 hours a week.</p> <p>Plus individual tuition for students out of school during transition due to placement moves.</p> <p>ASAP after funds are delegated to LA.</p> <p>Autumn and Spring term.</p> | <p>£20000</p> | <p>Feedback and close monitoring by CLA ed team.</p> | <p>Pupils supported joined a school successfully and/ or remained in school. Attendance and engagement improved.</p> | <p>Camarthen OoC £3090</p> |
| | | | | <p>Pontypridd High Year 7 and 11 £2686</p> |
| | | | | <p>Treorchy Primary Year 6 £792</p> |
| | | | | <p>Out of County school, Pembroke £4300</p> |
| | | | | <p>Tonyrefail Year 11 £550</p> |
| <p>Training for the team</p> <p>MAPS and PATH – Inclusive Solutions https://inclusive-solutions.com/person-centred-planning/path/</p> | <p>£1800 plus VAT</p> <p>£720</p> | <p>Training evaluated and skills being evidences as used in practice.</p> | <p>£4320</p> | <p>Llwyncrwn Primary School – transition work £1200</p> |

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|---|--|--|---|----------------|
| Mindfulness for 2 members of the team Sand story training for 6 ELSAs/Tas Level 1 DDP | £1800 | | | |
| TIS training supervision Virtual conf – being a trauma informed school | 2 day for 3 members 1 day for 2 members | All attended and offer reflective sessions and supervision | Supervision sessions are documented | £585 £200 |
| Scott King training | 2 sessions | 18 attended | Evaluations received | £1350 |
| Letter box extension | For one year additional year group – 27 children | Books will be distributed and training offered to foster carers | | £3,645 |
| Reach to teach App and one year subscription | Provided App for all RCT schools and ELSAs £576 for AFIT year subscripton and £1,407 for App. | Distributed across schools and support services in RCT. | | £1983 |
| Resources for CLA quality mark and transition work. Evaluations of CLA quality mark and transition booklets Worry monsters. | Booklets purchased for all Year 6 Certificates printed Worry Monsters purchased | CLA team have worked across all schools and supported vulnerable individuals with the worry monsters and booklets. | Booklets have been used with foster carers and positive feedback received. | £395.47 |

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|  Transition Programme.docx | | | | |
| Resources and updated assessments |  Resources to Purchase.xlsx | Assessment to support identifying need Resources to develop lending library for schools and foster carers. | Utilised with CLA pupils and information and reports are provided to support understanding of educational needs and barriers to learning | £5235.66 |
| Survey monkey | Annual subscription for online surveys and evaluations | Evaluations of CLA friendly quality mark and tuition as well as formulation meetings | Completed evaluations shared with Children's services | £750 |
| Total spend | | | | £73,157.13 |



CLA FRIENDLY SCHOOLS QUALITY MARK PROJECT 2017 -2022



| SCHOOL GROUP | PROJECT AIM 1 school with QM in each school group by July 2021 | SCHOOLS WITH QM July 2021 |
|--------------------------------------|---|--|
| Aberdare Cluster Schools | EXCEEDED (3) | Aberdare Park Primary/Cwmbach Primary/Cwmdar Primary |
| Bryncelynog Cluster Schools | EXCEEDED (2) | Gwauncelyn Primary/Llantrisant Primary |
| Ferndale Cluster Schools | EXCEEDED (2) | Maerdy Primary/Darran Park Primary |
| Hawthorn Cluster Schools | EXCEEDED (3) | Coedpenmaen Primary/Parc Lewis Primary/Hawthorn High |
| Mountain Ash Cluster Schools | EXCEEDED (3) | Darrenlas Primary/Glenboi Primary/Miskin Primary |
| Pontypridd Cluster Schools | EXCEEDED (2) | Pontypridd High/Trerobart Primary |
| Porth Cluster Schools | EXCEEDED (2) | Alaw Primary/Cymmer Primary |
| Nantgwyn Cluster Schools | EXCEEDED (3) | Ysgol Nantgwyn/Cwmclydach Primary/Pontrhondda Primary |
| Tonyrefail Cluster Schools | ACHIEVED | Tonyrefail Comprehensive School (11-18) |
| Treorchy Cluster Schools | EXCEEDED (5) | Treorchy Comp./Treorchy Primary/Gelli Primary/Ton Pentre Junior/Ton Pentre Infants |
| Y Pant Cluster Schools | EXCEEDED (2) | Tonysguboriau Primary/Llanharan Primary |
| Dual Language Primary Schools | EXCEEDED (2) | Dolau Primary / Heol Y Celyn Primary |
| Welsh Medium Schools | EXCEEDED (2) | YG Rhydywaun/ YGG Bodringallt |
| Faith Schools | EXCEEDED (2) | SJB High/Cwmbach CIW Primary |
| Special Schools | EXCEEDED (4) | Maesgwyn/Ysgol Ty Coch/Park Lane/Ysgol Hen Felin |
| Pupil Referral Units | EXCEEDED (2) | Tai Education Centre/Ty Gwyn Education Centre |

40 SCHOOL SETTINGS HAVE ACHIEVED CLA FRIENDLY SCHOOLS QUALITY MARK

16 GOLD LEVEL AWARDS & 24 PLATINUM LEVEL



App B Lending Library AND RESOURCES

Essentials of Trauma–Informed Assessment and Intervention in School and Community Settings

Kirby Wycoff

Working with Attachment Difficulties in Teenagers

Sue Jennings

Trauma Cards

Karen Treisman

Dobble Card Game - Harry Potter

Dobble Card Game - numbers

Dobble card game

Attachment in the Classroom: The links between children’s early experience, well-being and performance in school

Heather Geddes

Inside I’m hurting: Practical strategies for supporting children with attachment difficulties in schools

Louise Bombèr

What About Me? Inclusive Strategies to Support Pupils with Attachment Difficulties make it Through the School

Louise Bombèr

The Teachers Introduction to attachment: practical essentials for teacher, carers and school

Nicola Marshall

Why can’t my child behave?

Amber Elliott

My Social Stories Book

Carol Gray

Teaching the Unteachable: Practical ideas to give teachers hope and help when behaviour management strategies fail

Marie Delaney

Sarah Jayne

Blackemore

Judith Howard

Louise Bomber

A. Kelly

A. Kelly

M. Silver.

Inventing Ourselves: The Secret Life of the Teenage Brain

Distressed or Deliberately Defiant

Attachment Aware Schools Series

Talkabout

Talkabout –Building self esteem and relationship skills.

Attachment in common sense and doodles. A Practical Guide.

W.I.S.E. Up! Powerbook

Worry monsters x 10

Worry Monster book x 10

Working with Relational Trauma in Schools

Trauma Informed Act

Emotion Coaching in Schools



When my worries get too big

Incredible 5 point scales

The boy who built a wall

Zones of Regulation

Relationship Cards

Helping Teenagers to talk about their lives

Cleo Crocodile

Presley the Pug

Gilly the Giraffe





Ollie the Octopus

Binnie the Baboon

Neon the Ninga

PACE and DDP
<https://ddpnetwork.org>



| | |
|-------------------------|---|
| <p>GUAB information</p> |  <p>Short information leaflet.pdf</p> <hr/> |
| <p>Sand Story</p> |  <p>Train to be a SandStory Skills Practi</p> |
| <p>Tuition</p> |  <p>TUITION EVALUATION 2021-21</p> <hr/> |
| <p>Scott King</p> |  <p>Growing Up In Care Lived Experience Flyer</p> |

Reflective sessions example Child a

- Initially concerns around transition
- Child A is Year 6
- School are concerned about his behaviour – think that this is linked to him going to secondary in Year 7. This was the main focus initially.
- Later in the meeting, the school felt that behaviour was beyond repair, having inappropriate relationships with certain children in the class – other children are afraid
- There have been a number of exclusions – hurting his TA
- School are concerned about relationships with others –
- Where is Child's voice?
- No concerns in community or local clubs, at home – he isn't allowed to go out in the community. Went to summer hub – asked to leave.
- He is saying 'you don't want me anymore'
- Foster carer works in the school
- Pulling down trousers
- Challenges in behaviour – since 2018
- Previously attended nurture class - Shine
- No behaviour support involvement –
- We cannot manage him anymore
- 15 hours support on Statement – school are topping it up for an extra 15 hours
- Attachment Disorder
- EP was involved when he was in Shine – there was some difficulties with staffs understanding of what nurture approaches were and why they were in place
- Change of headteacher – Shine class closed, children returned to mainstream class.
- EP – involved when he returned to mainstream class – key adult was key. Circle of understanding type meeting – looked at key worker, team around RTC.
- School were really committed
- Relationship between foster carer and previous head – lots of blame and judgement between home and school
- Statemented – 15 hours, class teacher was going
- Were managing recently
- Life story work completed previously – new social worker not aware of how much has been completed (this was completed in school)

Construct & Clarify Key Change Issues

Our ideas:

- School staff – concerns about what about when he goes to Secondary School – how will they manage as primary school have invested so much
- Where is he going to secondary school – clarification around processes
- Frustration between home and school
- Difficulties with trust – everyone going off and doing their own thing
- What does Child think/feel?
- Clarification surrounding the work of the key adult
- Anxiety around transition
- Lack of trust between the adults – adults working together
- Clarifying Child's views
- Clarifying what the key adult is doing?

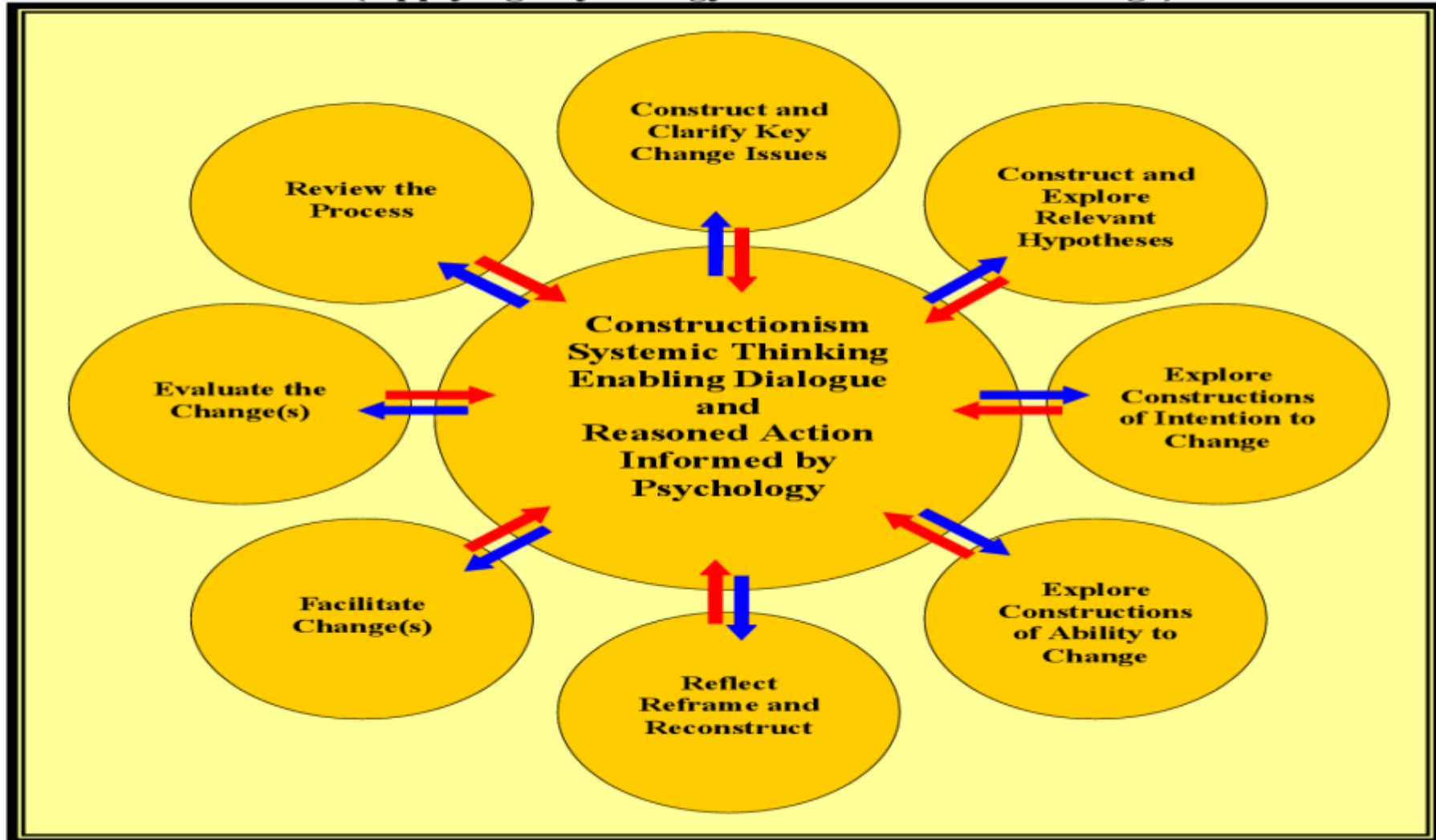
What Psychology

- Attachment theory – safety/security of key adult
- Transition – anxiety?
- Pupil Voice – identity, self-esteem, friendships?
- Bringing people together
- PACE

Facilitate Change:

- Hold the headteacher and key adults – containing – naming fears/concerns – meeting with the head, time and room without judgement – face to face – PACEful!!
- Clarify what the key worker/team around RTC are doing? Dynamics of teaching staff change?
- Is there a need for refresher training? Reflective sessions?
- Clarify who has the concerns around transition – school staff? RTC? Both?
- Following the meeting – perhaps gaining Child's views? – transitions? Understanding of friendships? Ideal School? He likes arts and crafts – having a few ideas as he can be dysregulated. Consider space – close to TA/key adult – sense of safety. Possible B/G steem – school based . Exploring ideal school using sandtray? SIP?
- Possibly exploring what Foster Carers – best hopes/fears are?

**Figure 1 - A Constructionist Model of Informed, Reasoned Action (COMOIRA)
(Applying Psychology to the Process of Change)**



Paired reading



Path and MAP training



Parenting with PACE for foster carers



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