



**RHONDDA CYNON TAF COUNCIL
CORPORATE PARENTING BOARD**

Minutes of the Virtual meeting of the Corporate Parenting Board held on Thursday, 26 January 2023
at 10.00 am.

This meeting was recorded, details of which can be accessed [here](#)

County Borough Councillors – The following Councillors were present:

Councillor G Caple (Chair)

Councillor R Lewis Councillor J Bonetto
Councillor S Rees Councillor P Evans

Officers in attendance

Mr N Elliott, Interim Director of Social Services
Ms A Lloyd, Service Director, Children's Services
Ms C Miles, Childcare Solicitor
Ms S Edwards, Service Manager, Children's Services
Mr L Lewis, Acting Head of the Youth Offending Service
Ms C Williams, Service Manager - Disabled Children
Ms L Hawkins, Virtual School Head Teacher
Ms N Katchi, Graduate Participation Officer (Children's Services)
Voices from Care Cymru Representative
Young Person Representative

Apologies for absence

Councillor C Leyshon Councillor S Trask
Councillor S Evans

25 Declaration of Interest

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

26 Minutes

It was **RESOLVED:** to approve as an accurate record, the minutes of the meeting of the Corporate Parenting Board held on the 24th November 2022.

27 The implementation of ALNET Act and ALN Code for Children Looked After

The Virtual School Head Teacher provided an update to the Corporate Parenting Board on the implications of the ALNET (Additional Learning Needs and Education Tribunal) Wales Act (2018) and Additional Learning Needs (ALN) Code 2021 for Children Looked After with an ALN and to update the Board on the implementation of the above in Year 2 of the National ALN Implementation

timetable in Rhondda Cynon Taf County Borough Council.

The Chair thanked the officer for the comprehensive report and opened the floor to questions.

One Member acknowledged that the transition period was often a difficult time for young people and questioned whether the educational aspect of the Educational Healthcare Plan was given as much impetus as the health aspect, in terms of transition. The officer advised that in respect of the Individual Development Plan, approximately 80% of it was education based and explained that during a PCP meeting, four areas of need are considered (Cognition and Learning; Social, Emotion and Behaviour; Communication and Interaction; and Sensory). Members were informed that once the specific needs are captured, the intended outcomes are identified, and the school is then supported to provide additional learning provision.

One Member noted that from experience, some parents had objected to the term 'special school' and questioned if there was any intention to rebrand the phrase. The officer advised that the information would be sought and brought back to a future meeting.

The Cabinet Member for Education, Youth Participation and Welsh Language spoke positive of his attendance at a Virtual School event, which he felt had highlighted both the way forward and its challenges. The Cabinet Member acknowledged the raft of new statutory responsibilities for the Local Authority and provided assurance that the Cabinet recognised that it was an area of pressure within the Education service, which requires additional funding and resource. The Cabinet Member spoke of two reports considered by Cabinet in 2022 in respect of an additional special school within the County Borough and additional funding for ALN.

The Corporate Parenting Board **RESOLVED:**

1. To acknowledge the content of the report; and
2. To receive a further report on ALNET (Wales) Act and ALN Code implementation for Children who are Looked After at a later date if necessary.

28 Independent Sector Placements Monitoring Report

The Head of Family Support and Accommodation and the Regional Commissioning Manager, Children's Commissioning Consortium Cymru (4c's) provided Members with an overview and update on RCT Children's services commissioning and monitoring of external placements for children looked after.

Referring to a concerning incident in an English Local Authority whereby the Ofsted reports were positive, one Member stated that as a Corporate Parenting Board, the focus was the wellbeing of the children placed out of the country and sought assurance that the reviews of placements and advocacy arrangements were robust within RCT. The Regional Commissioning Manager of the 4C's acknowledged the Member's concerns and explained that there is a layered approach to safeguarding and monitoring of standards. The officer advised that CIW were the regulatory body in Wales, with a framework in terms of registering, notifications of any issues and regular inspection reports. The officer explained that within Wales, there's strong mechanisms in terms of existing communication

with CIW and were told the 4C's have monthly meetings whereby both formal information such as inspection feedback, and softer information and concerns are shared. The officer then spoke of the framework providers, 4C's and the various monitoring visits (both formal and unannounced) to providers. The officer concluded by assuring Members that the teams work closely alongside RCT's Placement Team and that additional training had taken place with the Contract Monitoring Officer.

The Corporate Parenting Board **RESOLVED:**

1. To note the contents of the report and the actions being taken to ensure RCT obtain quality external placements for children.

29 Participation Update for Care Experienced Children and Young People

The Graduate Officer for Participation provided Members with an update about RCT Children's Services engagement activities and the Participation Strategy for 2023. Members were advised that a further update on the Implementation Plan and Strategy would be provided at the next meeting of the Corporate Parenting Board.

As part of the update, a young person from Voices From Care Cymru was present to provide Members with an overview of the work undertaken to support care-experienced young people in Rhondda Cynon Taf.

The officer emphasised the importance of engaging with young people who had used the service, to help develop the Strategy and explained that, although there had only been a 7% response rate to the Get Involved survey to date, officers were working on increasing the number.

Members were invited to join a task group, to consider whether the membership of the Corporate Parenting Board could be amended to include care experienced young people, to involve young people in the governance arrangements. The Service Director advised that should Members be minded to join the group, proposals would then be brought back to the Corporate Parenting Board for consideration. The Chair asked that the Service Director forward the details to the Council Business Unit for circulation.

The Corporate Parenting Board **RESOLVED:**

1. To acknowledge and comment on the information contained within the report.

30 Cwm Taf Youth Offending Service

The Head of the Cwm Taf Youth Offending Service provided the Corporate Parenting Board with an update on the work of the Cwm Taf Youth Offending Service (YOS) for 2022/23. This includes an update on current service delivery following the restructure of the service in August 2021, to outline some of the current priorities and to inform members of future service priorities, challenges/risks.

One Member sought further information in respect of the work undertaken with Primary Schools and acknowledged that it was key in preventing escalation of issues. The officer advised that a Return to Learning Officer had undertaken work in secondary schools with children who had either been involved in

offending behaviour or were on the cusp of offending. The role involved talks with the young person about the dangers and potential consequences of becoming involved in anti-social behaviour. It was explained that, although in its infancy, this approach was being replicated in primary schools and dealt with more age-appropriate issues such as social media as opposed to knife crime. The Members agreed that it would be beneficial to receive a future update on the progress of the roll-out to primary schools.

The Chair thanked the officer for the informative update and the Corporate Parenting Board **RESOLVED:**

1. To acknowledge the changes made within the YOS, and the direction and challenges that lie ahead as a result of service changes following restructure and strategic change in relation to YOS performance measures; and
2. To receive further reports in due course in order to be satisfied of the progress and improvements made and how this contributes to better outcomes for children and families.

31 Cwm Taf Youth Offending Service - All Wales Protocol for Reducing the Criminalisation of Care Experienced Children and Young People 2022

The Head of the Cwm Taf Youth Offending Service informed the Corporate Parenting Board about the 'All Wales Protocol for Reducing the Criminalisation of Children and Young People 2022'.

This protocol is intended to help professionals who encounter care experienced children and young adults while carrying out their work, and in sharing a common framework of principles and expectations informed by an approach that actively promotes children's rights and which safeguards and promotes their wellbeing.

The Chair thanked the officer for the update and questioned whether the exploitation of children and young people was a problem in RCT. The officer advised that as a result of the pandemic, anti-social behaviour and drug-use had increased, along with children being exploited to carry drugs for older people. Members learned that an Exploitation Strategy was planned across the Cwm Taf Morgannwg region and that the challenge would be a shared understanding what that means as different agencies may have different perspectives.

The Corporate Parenting Board **RESOLVED:**

1. To acknowledge the report; and
2. To receive further reports in due course in order to be updated on local/regional data and how progress and improvements made contributes to better outcomes for care experienced children.

32 Fostering Quality of Care Annual Report

The Service Manager provided the Corporate Parenting Board Members with the Annual Fostering Service Quality of Care Report.

This report was 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.

One Member spoke positive of the recruitment of foster carers for mother and baby placements and questioned how this would work. The officer advised that the approach was needed but acknowledged that it would be a challenge going forward. One option was to work with Foster Wales to directly target eligible people to come forward, such as Health Visitors; another was to convert the foster carers already in place into the role; and another option was through a community style role.

The Corporate Parenting Board **RESOLVED:**

1. To acknowledge the information contained within the report.

33 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 paragraphs 13 and 14 of Part 4 of the Schedule 12A of the Act.

34 Carn Ingli Children's Home Complaint Investigation

The Head of Family Support and Accommodation provided the Corporate Parenting Board with the report containing exempt information.

Following discussion, it was **RESOLVED:**

1. To improve communication between Officers and Members in relation to Residential Services
 - Annual meeting with Ward Members to update on current provision in their Ward, corporate parenting responsibilities and how to report a concern.

This meeting closed at 11.35 am

**Councillor G Caple
Chair.**