



CYNGOR BWRDEISTREF SIROL
RHONDDA CYNON TAF
COUNTY BOROUGH COUNCIL

A hybrid meeting of the CABINET will be held on
Monday, 29th April, 2024 at 10.30 am

Contact: Hannah Jones - Council Business Unit (Tel No. 07385401954)

Venue: Rhondda Cynon Taf County Borough Council, 2 Llys Cadwyn, Taff
Street, Pontypridd, CF37 4TH / ZOOM

Councillors and members of the public wishing to request the facility to address the Cabinet on any of the business as listed below, must request to do so by 5pm on the Thursday, 25 April 2024 Councillors and Members of the public should stipulate if this address will be in the medium of English or Welsh.

It must be noted that the facility to address the Cabinet is at the discretion of the Chair and each request will be considered based on the agenda items being considered, the public interest/interest of the member in each matter and the demands of the business on that day. To make such a request please email:- ExecutiveandRegulatoryBusinessUnit@rctcbc.gov.uk

It is the intention to live stream this meeting, details of which can be accessed [here](#)

ITEMS FOR CONSIDERATION

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 receive the minutes of the Cabinet Committee on the 20th March 2024 as an accurate record.

(Pages 5 - 18)

3. PROPOSAL TO CLOSE RHIGOS PRIMARY SCHOOL WITH PUPILS TRANSFERRING TO HIRWAUN PRIMARY SCHOOL

To receive the report of the Director of Education and Inclusion Services, which advises the Cabinet of the outcome of the recent publication of a Statutory Notice in respect of the proposal to close Rhigos Primary School with pupils transferring to Hirwaun Primary School by no later than September 2024.

(Pages 19 - 60)

4. BUSINESS IN THE COMMUNITY AND RHONDDA CYNON TAF PLACE PARTNERSHIP

To receive the report of the Chief Executive, which seeks Cabinet approval to establish the Business in the Community and Rhondda Cynon Taf Place Partnership.

(Pages 61 - 74)

5. RHONDDA CYNON TAF HEALTH DETERMINANTS RESEARCH COLLABORATION

To receive the report of the Director of Public Health, Protection and Community Services, which updates Cabinet on the award of funding to establish the Rhondda Cynon Taf Health Determinants Research Collaboration (RCT HDRC) and to seek approval of the aims and objectives of RCT HDRC from 2024-2028.

(Pages 75 - 88)

6. DRAFT ADULT SOCIAL CARE STRATEGY

To receive the report of the Director of Social Services, which provides the Cabinet with a new six-year draft Adult Social Care Strategy (2024/30) that sets out our vision and priorities until 2030 and seek approval to undertake a targeted consultation.

(Pages 89 - 112)

7. DRAFT CORPORATE PARENTING PLEDGE FOR RHONDDA CYNON TAF

To receive the report of the Director of Social Services, which provides Cabinet with information on the development of a draft Corporate Parenting Pledge for Rhondda Cynon Taf that supports implementation of Welsh Government's Corporate Parenting Charter – "A Promise from Wales."

(Pages 113 - 204)

8. CHILDREN'S SERVICES REVIEW OF THE INFORMATION, ADVICE AND ASSISTANCE SERVICE

To receive the report of the Director of Social Services, which provides Cabinet with an overview of the transformation that is planned in relation to the Information, Advice, and Assistance (IAA) Service and seek agreement to approve and adopt the proposed IAA Review Strategy referred to below as Right Help, Right Time, and Right Place.

(Pages 205 - 218)

9. URGENT BUSINESS

To consider any urgent business as the Chairman feels appropriate.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "A. Smith", is written over a faint, illegible stamp or watermark.

Service Director of Democratic Services & Communication

Circulation:-

Councillors: Councillor A Morgan (Chair)
Councillor M Webber (Deputy Chair)
Councillor G Caple
Councillor A Crimmings
Councillor R Lewis
Councillor C Leyshon
Councillor M Norris
Councillor B Harris

Officers: Paul Mee, Chief Executive
Barrie Davies, Deputy Chief Executive and Group Director of Finance, Digital and Frontline Services
Andy Wilkins, Director of Legal Services and Democratic Services
David Powell, Director of Corporate Estates
Gaynor Davies, Director of Education and Inclusion Services
Louise Davies, Director of Public Health, Protection and Community Services
Richard Evans, Director of Human Resources
Simon Gale, Director of Prosperity & Development
Neil Elliott, Director of Social Services
Stephen Williams, Director for Highways, Streetcare and Transportation Services
Christian Hanagan, Service Director of Democratic Services & Communication
Paul Griffiths, Service Director – Finance & Improvement Services
Derek James, Service Director – Prosperity & Development

Mae'r ddogfen hon ar gael yn Gymraeg / This document is also available in Welsh



RHONDDA CYNON TAF

**RHONDDA CYNON TAF COUNCIL
CABINET**

Minutes of the hybrid meeting of the Cabinet held on Wednesday, 20 March 2024 at 10.30 am.

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

County Borough Councillors – The following Councillors were present;

Councillor A Morgan (Chair)

Councillor M Webber Councillor G Caple
Councillor A Crimmings Councillor R Lewis
Councillor C Leyshon Councillor M Norris
Councillor B Harris

Non-Committee Members in attendance

Councillor K Morgan
Councillor L Tomkinson
Councillor C Preddy
Councillor K Johnson
Councillor G Stacey
Councillor S Emanuel
Councillor C Lises

Officers in attendance

Mr P Mee, Chief Executive
Mr A Wilkins, Director of Legal Services and Democratic Services
Mr D Powell, Director of Corporate Estates
Ms G Davies, Director of Education and Inclusion Services
Ms L Davies, Director of Public Health, Protection and Community Services
Mr R Evans, Director of Human Resources
Mr S Gale, Director of Prosperity & Development
Mr S Williams, Director for Highways, Streetcare and Transportation Services
Mr C Hanagan, Service Director of Democratic Services & Communication
Mr P Griffiths, Service Director – Finance & Improvement Services
Mr D James, Service Director – Prosperity & Development
Mr N Elliott, Director of Social Services
Mr. M. Phillips, Revenues Services Manager
Mr A Critchlow, Parking Services and Streetworks Manager
Lawson, Performance Manager
Ms C O'Neill, Strategic Arts & Culture Manager
Ms A Richards, Service Director for 21st Century Schools and Transformation
Mr G Roberts, Integrated Transport Manager
Mr A Stone, Head of Flood Risk Management and Strategic Projects
Ms M Warburton, HR Advisor, Equality & Diversity Team

114 **Welcome**

The Chair welcomed attendees to the meeting of the Cabinet.

115 **Declaration of Interest**

In accordance with the Code of Conduct, the following declarations of interest were made pertaining to the agenda:

- The Leader declared a personal interest in respect of agenda item 10 – Education and Inclusion Services Planned Capital Programme 2024-2025: “There are schools referenced within the report of which I am Chair of Governors”;
- The Cabinet Member for Climate Change and Corporate Services declared a personal interest in respect of agenda item 10 – Education and Inclusion Services Planned Capital Programme 2024-2025: “I am on the Governing Body of Maes y Coed Primary School, which is referenced within the report”;
- The Cabinet Member for Development and Prosperity declared a personal interest in respect of agenda item 10 – Education and Inclusion Services Planned Capital Programme 2024-2025: “I am on the Governing Body of Cwm Clydach School, which is referenced within the report”
- County Borough Councillor K. Johnson declared a personal interest in respect of agenda item 6 – Review of the Council’s Home to School Transport Policy: “I am on the Governing Body of Maes y Bryn Primary School which is a feeder school to one of the comprehensive schools; I am a parent of two children who will, in the future, travel to a comprehensive school; and I am also an employee of Transport for Wales”; and
- County Borough Councillor C Lises declared a personal interest in respect of agenda item 6 – Review of the Council’s Home to School Transport Policy: “I am on the Governing Bodies of Hawthorn Primary School and Hawthorn Secondary School which are referenced within the report”.

116 **Minutes**

The Cabinet **RESOLVED** to approve the minutes of the meeting held on 21st February 2024 as an accurate record.

117 **Leader's Scheme of Delegation - 3A**

The Cabinet **RESOLVED** to note the update to the Leader’s Scheme of Delegation.

118 Pre-Scrutiny Feedback

For information, the Service Director of Democratic Services and Communication provided Cabinet with the feedback and comments of the items that were pre-scrutinised by the Council's thematic Scrutiny Committee's following its last Committee cycle.

The Cabinet **RESOLVED**:

1. To note the comments and observations of the Scrutiny Committees following pre-scrutiny of the items listed within section 5 of the report.

119 Cabinet Work Programme

The Service Director of Democratic Services and Communication presented, for Cabinet Members' comment and approval, an update on the Cabinet Work Programme on the proposed list of matters requiring consideration by Cabinet over the remainder of the 2023-2024 Municipal Year.

The Cabinet **RESOLVED**:

1. To approve the Work Programme for the 2023-2024 Municipal Year (with appropriate amendment where necessary) and receive a further update on a 3 monthly basis.

120 Review of the Council's Home to School Transport Policy

The Director of Highways, Streetcare and Transportation Services reported the results of the public consultation exercise initiated by Cabinet, together with updated Equality and Welsh Language impact assessments in relation to a proposed new Home to School Transport Policy to assist Cabinet in its determination of whether or not it wished to progress with implementation of a new Home to School Transport Policy.

The Cabinet Member for Environment and Leisure firstly took the opportunity to thank officers for providing the Cabinet with the correspondence and responses to the consultation; and to thank the contribution of residents, reflected in the report with 2858 valued responses.

The Cabinet Member noted that for over 10 years, the Council had provided discretionary transport for more learners than almost every other Welsh Council's Home to School transport operations; and that the Council had consistently gone above and beyond its legal requirement, as set out by Welsh Government, in delivering free transport to its pupils.

The Cabinet Member continued and stated that, as a result of significant underfunding from the UK Government and a budget gap of £85M over the next three years, Cabinet must consider the proposals put forward by Officers that review where the service goes beyond the statutory requirement and how savings can be made. Prior to concluding, the Cabinet Member emphasised that rising costs had made the Council's current Home to School Transport policy unsustainable and acknowledged the reason for the report being brought for

Cabinet's consideration.

In terms of the significant rise in Home to School Transport costs, the Leader added that it had increased from £8M in 2015 to over £15M in recent years.

The Leader reiterated the Cabinet Member's comments in respect of the Council going above and beyond in comparison to other Local Authorities and explained that if the Cabinet were to agree to the recommendations contained within the officer's report, the Council would still be providing one of the most generous Home to School Transport policies in Wales, with a large number of individuals benefiting from discretionary transport. The Leader stated that there were 18 other Local Authorities which had either made significant changes or had not provided the discretionary element for years.

The Leader stressed that this was a decision the Cabinet did not take lightly but that every option must be considered as part of the budget setting process, due to the extraordinary financial challenges as a result of low funding from central government and the continued pressures on social care.

The Deputy Leader firstly took the opportunity to thank the Overview & Scrutiny Committee for its valuable comments and feedback and noted the letter produced as part of the papers before Members.

The Deputy Leader recognised the concerns expressed by residents through the consultation process and echoed the Leader's comments that Members faced a difficult decision, but one which was deemed necessary given the current financial circumstances.

Referring to the consultation feedback and comments made during the Overview and Scrutiny Committee meeting, the Deputy noted that there were some concerns raised about safety and asked if officers could confirm that all routes would be reviewed and re-assessed, where appropriate, prior to eligibility confirmation; and if a route was not deemed to be safe, then pupils who are affected would retain free transport to school. The Deputy Leader spoke of a specific route in her ward, Rhydyfelin to Garth Olwg, and explained that officers had been helpful in addressing the concerns and questions raised by residents within the boundary.

The Deputy Leader also sought reassurance as to what impact, if any, the recent publication from Welsh Government regarding the review of the Learner Travel Measure would have upon the proposals recommended to Cabinet for consideration.

In respect of the Equality Impact Assessment, the Deputy Leader felt that it was a comprehensive assessment and emphasised the importance of having due regard to the relevant legislation and socio-economic impacts. It was noted that the Impact Assessment highlighted some negative impacts, if the proposal were to go ahead but that it set out a range of mitigating actions as to how any impacts should be monitored following implementation and actioned including considering alternative options as put forward by consultees and set out in section 14 of the report.

The Cabinet Member for Education, Youth Participation and Welsh Language commented that there was naturally a concern about how the proposals would impact the attendances at schools. In terms of how the Council were seeking to tackle low attendance levels, the Cabinet Member spoke of the significant

investment in recent years into a number of support services such as the Attendance and Wellbeing Service and the Resilient Families Service and also the introduction of Family Engagement Officers. The Cabinet Member noted from the report that there was an *increased likelihood* of a pupil not attending school if they are in receipt of home to school transport.

The Cabinet Member then sought to address another key point raised from the consultation, which was the potential impact on the Welsh language. The Cabinet Member spoke of the significant steps taken as a Local Authority to promote access to Welsh medium education through an extremely ambitious WESP and expansive Capital Programme investment into new Welsh medium school builds and refurbishments; in addition to the Council's efforts to reach Welsh Government's ambition of 1M Welsh speakers by 2050.

With the agreement of the Leader, the following County Borough Councillors were granted permission to address the Cabinet in respect of the item:

- County Borough Councillor K Morgan;
- County Borough Councillor L Tomkinson;
- County Borough Councillor C Preddy;
- County Borough Councillor K Johnson;
- County Borough Councillor G Stacey;
- County Borough Councillor S Emanuel: and
- County Borough Councillor C Lisles.

N.B The Leader noted that a petition had been circulated and received by the Cabinet prior to the meeting.

In response to comments made, the Leader stated that lobbying Welsh Government in relation to the Public Service Vehicles Accessibility Regulations, was not an option as it was not a devolved matter. In terms of building new schools and access to schools, the Leader noted that there were 116 schools in the County, which was a lot more than many other Local Authorities.

Officers were then provided with an opportunity to respond to the questions and queries raised so far in the discussion. The Director of Highways, Streetcare and Transportation Services noted that a common point raised was in relation to routes and explained that each route is assessed against the Learner Travel Operational Guidance 2014 criteria outlined within the report and thus deemed 'available' or 'unavailable'. Referring to the route mentioned by the Deputy Leader, the Director advised that despite perception, the route had been assessed in 2018 and was deemed available. The Director assured Members that, where applicable, routes would be reassessed to ensure the criteria is met.

In terms of the review of the Learner Travel Measure, the Director advised that it was concluded that there should be no immediate amendment to the legislation which underpins the learner travel in Wales and it had been acknowledged that the costs for the Local Authorities current statutory responsibilities had increased significantly with no aspect of this changing. The Director advised that, although the final amendments had not been made, the review makes several recommendations to improve the consistency, quality and safety of Learner Travel provision across Wales but assured the Cabinet that none of the recommendations had impact on the recommendations contained within the report before them.

In terms of the Director's comments in respect of the routes, the Leader added

that Cabinet were being asked to make a policy decision and that the assessment of the routes would then be undertaken independently. In terms of the anticipated savings relating to the proposal, the Leader advised that figures were based upon current figures, rather than future forecasting figures to enable the most accurate projection; and explained that a definite figure would not be available until the routes had been independently checked and verified. The Leader acknowledged that the saving could be more than anticipated due to inflationary transport costs over the coming years year or that it could be less in the event that some of the walking routes are deemed unavailable.

The Service Director of Finance and Improvement Services echoed the Leader's comments and assured Members that in terms of the costing, officers would take into consideration the impact of any changes to routes, current contracts in terms of costing and inflation impacts. The Service Director advised that the any changes would be built into the Council's medium-term financial planning to inform future budget setting processes and stated that any decision would not have an impact of the Council's 2024-2025 Revenue Budget.

The Cabinet Member for Climate Change and Corporate Services thanked the Overview and Scrutiny Committee for its feedback and noted the comments made by Members in respect of the climate change agenda. The Cabinet Member stated that from a carbon reduction perspective, there would be benefit in reducing the number of vehicles on the road. The Cabinet Member referred to Sections 18.6 to 18.8 within the report, which outlined that the majority of existing vehicles used for home to school transport were far from environmentally friendly and were some of the most polluting vehicles on the Council's highways. The Cabinet Member noted the potential impact of private vehicle usage increasing but explained that modelling this was not feasible or a prudent use of officer time.

The Leader added that it would be impossible to determine the impact in terms of private vehicle usage as individuals may choose to walk, cycle, car share or use public transport, if available.

The Cabinet Member for Health and Social Care acknowledged that any decision would bring consequences and impact on families; and echoed the Leader's earlier comments that it was a position the Cabinet did not want to be in. The Cabinet Member stated that due to the position the Council was in, as a result of funding pressures, all departments had been asked to identify potential savings, which can lead to some difficult decisions having to be made.

The Cabinet Member for Development and Prosperity advised that in his own ward, parents had taken it upon themselves to organise their own bus company and agreed that it would be impossible to determine impact on private vehicle usage. Taking into account the comments from the consultation exercise and from Scrutiny Members, the Cabinet Member was of the view that Section 14.2 of the report would be the most balanced in terms of achieving savings whilst reducing potential impacts. This option would be to maintain the Council's current discretionary distance criteria of providing transport for all primary schools, (English, Welsh, and Faith). Transport whilst provision to all secondary schools and colleges (English, Welsh, and Faith) would change to move in line with the relevant statutory distance criteria as set out in the Measure. The Cabinet Member noted that, if agreed, it would still see RCT offering a more generous eligibility than 18 of the 22 Councils in Wales.

The Leader noted that 1 in 5 Councils in England had suggested they would have financial difficulty in the next year with potential section 114 Notices being issued; and explained that in order to make up the funding through Council Tax, the Council would need an additional 8%+ in Council Tax. The Leader noted that Members of the opposition did not provide an alternative budget for consideration and voted against a rise in Council Tax.

The Cabinet Member for Public Health and Communities agreed with Councillor S Emanuel's point about capitalising on the benefits of the new South Wales Metro and working with Transport for Wales to mitigate some of the impacts on secondary school age children in Treorchy and Treherbert, in particular.

The Leader added that, if any changes were agreed, he would discuss with Transport for Wales whether there would be opportunities in terms of bus or metro travel to mitigate impacts, where possible. However, the Leader reminded the Cabinet that any decision made today must be based upon the facts before them and not on the assumption that such mitigations would be made in the future.

The Cabinet Member for Education, Youth Participation and Welsh Language was in agreement that the preferred option was detailed under section 14.2 of the report, to maintain the Council's current discretionary distance criteria of providing transport for all primary schools, (English, Welsh, and Faith). Transport provision to all secondary schools and colleges (English, Welsh, and Faith) would change to move in line with the relevant statutory distance criteria as set out in the Measure. The Cabinet Member felt that the option provided some assurance that the effects on Welsh medium education would be mitigated, as far as possible, whilst also recognising that the Cabinet decision could not be based solely on this basis. The Cabinet Member felt that this would be a reasonable approach, based upon the many factors for consideration, and that it should not hinder the ambitions that the Council strives to achieve within its WESP. The Cabinet Member acknowledged that there had been concerns raised around the impact on future parents selecting Welsh medium education, but the Member concluded that the option would mitigate the concerns, minimise the effect on Welsh language learners in particular and would continue to provide the discretionary distance criteria for all primary schools.

Referring to comments made by the opposition to maintain the status quo, the Deputy Leader stated that no alternative options to make savings or maintain a balanced budget had been submitted.

In terms of safe walking routes, the Deputy Leader was reassured by officers and their professional advice provided based on Welsh Government guidance and took the opportunity to extend her gratitude.

The Deputy Leader emphasised that the Council had managed its finances as well as possible, despite outside factors and blamed the UK government for the position in which all Councils had found themselves in.

The Deputy Leader was also of the view that 14.2 was the most balanced approach and commented that the Cabinet must take a broad view and examine all of the reasons as to why they must take a decision. The Deputy leader noted that, if agreed, an additional 305 primary school pupils would retain the provision, whilst there would also be a manageable reduction in the savings generated. The Deputy Leader concluded by stating that the Cabinet must take

a balanced view upon any proposal and take into consideration a range of factors. As such, the Deputy Leader was satisfied based upon the need to maintain financial stability, taking into consideration the feedback to received, that the option, on balance, would be the correct approach to take.

The Leader advised that due regard had been given to all comments made as part of the consultation and by the Overview and Scrutiny Committee, as well as the representations made by the speakers at the meeting and the petition received. The Leader also noted that due regard had been given to the comprehensive impact assessments. Although the recommendation had not been formally moved, the Leader acknowledged that the option suggested by Cabinet would reduce the potential savings to the Council but would be a positive step in terms of primary school transport.

The Leader echoed the Deputy's statement and commented that although the decision was not about politics, the economy had crashed and that all public services had been affected by many areas such as energy costs and high inflation as a result of such actions. The Leader stressed that he did not want the Local Authority to be in a position whereby it can only afford to provide statutory provision in its different service areas.

The Cabinet Member for Environment and Leisure moved the recommendations and specifically the proposal set out in (option 1) 14.2 & 14.3 of the report, which was:

14.2) The first option would be to maintain the Council's current discretionary distance criteria of providing transport for all primary schools, (English, Welsh, and Faith). Transport provision to all secondary schools and colleges (English, Welsh, and Faith) would change to move in line with the relevant statutory distance criteria as set out in the Measure.

14.3) Whilst the Council would be introducing a change to its secondary school and post-16 eligibility criteria, it would nevertheless continue to provide all other areas of its discretionary transport provision in excess of the current minimum Welsh Government statutory requirement.

The Cabinet **RESOLVED:**

1. To consider the content of the report and outcome of the public consultation, together with the associated Equality and Welsh Language Impact Assessments appended to the report;
2. To consider, in light of the feedback from the public consultation and analysis of the Equality and Welsh Language Impact Assessments, whether it wishes to amend the proposal as consulted upon, including consideration of alternative options presented within section 14 of the report;
3. To proceed with implementation of a revised Home to School Transport Policy as follows:
 - To maintain the Council's current discretionary distance criteria of providing Home to School transport for all primary schools (English, Welsh and Faith);
 - To change Home to School transport provision to all secondary schools and colleges (English, Welsh and Faith) in line with the relevant statutory distance criteria as set out in the Learner Travel (Wales) Measure 2008;
 - To continue to allow a learner to select their nearest suitable school in accordance with choice of English or Welsh Medium language or preferred religious denomination;
 - To continue to provide discretionary pre-compulsory school age

transport (in line with current discretionary distance criteria) and to provide discretionary post-16 transport (in line with the relevant statutory distance criteria); and

- To continue to provide discretionary Additional Learning Needs transport.
- 4. To publish the revised Home to School Transport Policy by 1st October 2024, in accordance with statutory requirements, and for the policy to be implemented for the commencement of the 2025/26 academic year; and
- 5. To delegate authority to the Director of Highways, Streetcare and Transportation Services to develop, introduce or amend any operational policies/guidance incidental to the implementation of the revised Home to School Transport Policy.

N.B - In terms of comments made by some Elected Members in relation to the conduct of other Elected Members, the Leader advised that the matter would be dealt with outside of the meeting.

121 Working with our Communities - The Council's Draft Corporate Plan 2024-2030

The Chief Executive set out a new draft Corporate Plan from 2024/25 – 2029/30.

The Leader took the opportunity to thank officers for the work undertaken to develop the comprehensive draft Corporate Plan. The Leader emphasised the importance of the strategic plan, which is used to shape the Council's priorities, budget and Capital Programme; and it was acknowledged that a smaller, 'easy read' Plan would be developed as a result.

The Leader was pleased with the new six-year Plan and explained that there may be additions and changes as and when the Council need to respond to situations.

The Cabinet Member for Climate Change and Corporate Services echoed the Leader's comments and was pleased to note that climate priorities had been embedded throughout the Plan. The Cabinet Member added that the Council's ambitions outweigh its challenges.

The Cabinet **RESOLVED**:

1. To review the contents of the draft Corporate Plan 2024-30;
2. To consider the outcome of the consultation and engagement process;
3. To consider the comments and feedback, following pre-scrutiny by the Council's Overview & Scrutiny Committee; and
4. To recommend the draft Corporate Plan to Council for approval at its meeting scheduled for 24th April 2024.

122 Council's Performance Report - 31st December 2023 (Quarter 3)

The Service Director of Finance and Improvement Services provided the Cabinet with an overview of the Council's performance, both from a financial and

operational perspective, based on the first nine months of this financial year (to the 31st December 2023).

The Cabinet Member for Climate Change and Corporate Services recognised the difficult environment which services were operating in; and the cost pressures across the Council, impacted by increased demand and higher level of inflation. However, the Cabinet Member remained reassured by the robust service management arrangements and proactive work across services to address the challenges. The Cabinet Member was particularly pleased to note the significant Capital Programme expenditure, which demonstrated a sustained year on year investment across the Council's assets and infrastructure.

The Leader spoke of the almost £2.5M projected overspend, which was largely down to the £2.7M overspend within social services. The Leader advised that this was an area of huge pressure in almost all Local Authorities and explained that the statutory demands must be met, despite financial pressures.

The Cabinet **RESOLVED**:

Revenue

1. To note and agree the General Fund revenue outturn position of the Council as at the 31st December 2023 (Section 2 of the Executive Summary);
2. To request that Cabinet approve the virements listed in Sections 2a - e of the Executive Summary that exceed the £0.100M threshold as per the Council's Financial Procedure Rules;

Capital

3. To note the capital outturn position of the Council as at the 31st December 2023 (Sections 3a – e of the Executive Summary);
4. To note the details of the Treasury Management Prudential Indicators as at the 31st December 2023 (Section 3f of the Executive Summary); and

Corporate Plan Priorities

5. To note the Quarter 3 progress updates for the Council's Corporate Plan priorities (Sections 5 a – c of the Executive Summary) that include updates in respect of the Council's on-going work to deliver its Climate Change ambitions.

123 Highways, Transportation and Strategic Projects Supplementary Capital Programme 2024-2025

The Director of Highways, Streetcare and Transportation Services set out the detailed capital programme for Highways, Transportation and Strategic Projects.

The Leader thanked the Director and noted the expansive capital programme of investment detailed within the report. The Leader was pleased to advise that in addition, notification had been received from Welsh Government of approximately £8M highway funding for larger projects including active travel and road safety; along with approximately £3.5-4M for flood risk management. The Leader was confident that there would be further successful grants through the year, which would be added to the extensive programme.

The Cabinet Member for Health & Social Care spoke of the destruction of Storm Dennis within RCT four years ago, which required an unprecedented amount of

work to report the Council's vital infrastructure. The Cabinet Member was of the view that the list of works detailed at Table 5 of the report, was testament to the investment required.

The Leader added that it had been four years since the country went into a National lockdown as a result of the Covid-19 pandemic and commended officers for continuing to work on the Storm Dennis infrastructure improvements and repairs through such a difficult period. The Leader commented that due to significant levels of investment and substantial flood risk management funding, the Council would be better placed to face a situation such as Storm Dennis, should it happen again.

The Cabinet **RESOLVED:**

1. To note and approve the Supplementary Capital Programme for Highways, Transportation and Strategic Projects as detailed within the report; and
2. To note that the current allocations are part of a 3-year capital programme that delegates authority to the Director of Highways, Streetcare and Transportation Services in consultation with the Leader of the Council and the Deputy Chief Executive & Group Director – Finance, Digital & Frontline Services, to extend activity to deliver additional projects during the financial year, where capacity exists for accelerated delivery in accordance with the purpose of the wider programme, or to suspend programmes/projects and reallocate funding to optimise delivery.

124 Education and Inclusion Services Planned Capital Programme 2024-2025

The Service Director of 21st Century Schools and Transformation provided the Cabinet with details of the capital works for approval for 2024/25 as part of the Council's three-year Capital Programme.

The Cabinet Member for Education, Youth Participation and Welsh Language welcomed the £6.3M commitment as part of the Capital Programme and emphasised that this had been a strategic decision of the Cabinet to support the schools. The Cabinet Member noted that the report referred to 'minor works' but emphasised that the difference the works make to the schools were not minor, but instead contribute to the very best learning environment for young people within the County Borough. The Cabinet Member also spoke of the positive relationship established between the Local Authority and the school leaders, which was appreciated by schools.

The Cabinet **RESOLVED:**

1. To approve the Education Capital Programme priority schemes for 2024/25 as outlined in Appendices 1-9 of the report and approve scheme commencement.

125 Annual Equality Report 2022-2023

The Diversity and Inclusion Manager provided information on the Council's Annual Equality Report for the year 2022-2023.

The Deputy Leader took the opportunity to thank the team for the considerable

amount of work involved in producing the Annual Equality Report and was pleased to note that the Council had met the General Equality Duty. The Deputy Leader recognised that equality covers a huge area and has an impact on all the work of the Council.

The Deputy Leader also extended her gratitude to the Overview and Scrutiny Committee for its comments and feedback, which was attached at Appendix 2 to the report.

The Cabinet **RESOLVED:**

1. To consider the comments and feedback, following pre-scrutiny by the Council's Overview & Scrutiny Committee, attached at Appendix 2 to the report; and
2. To the content and publication of the Annual Equality Report.

126 Strategic Equality Plan 2024-2028

The Diversity and Inclusion Manager provided the Cabinet with information on the Council's Strategic Equality Plan 2024-2028.

The Deputy Leader took the opportunity to thank the team for the considerable amount of work involved in producing the Strategic Equality Plan and the Overview and Scrutiny Committee for its comments and feedback, which was attached at Appendix 2 to the report.

The Deputy Leader noted that the Plan included all protected characteristics and details in terms of how performance is measured. The Deputy Leader added that the Local Authority had made good progress but that there was room for improvement.

The Cabinet **RESOLVED:**

1. To consider the comments and feedback, following pre-scrutiny by the Council's Overview & Scrutiny Committee; and
2. To the content and publication of the Strategic Equality Plan (SEP).

127 Working towards an Age-Friendly Rhondda Cynon Taf

The Head of Arts, Culture and Library Services provided the Cabinet with information in relation to the Council's continued commitment to being an Age-Friendly Community and its proposed application to become a member of the World Health Organisations Global Network of Age-Friendly Cities and Communities.

The Cabinet Member for Health and Social Care thanked the officer for the report and commented that it evidenced the Council's continued commitment to becoming an age-friendly community. The Cabinet Member spoke of the vision of the Council, which was to ensure RCT is a great place to grow older and that older residents feel heard, valued and informed.

As the Older People's Champion, the Cabinet Member was pleased to support the Council submitting an application to become a member of the World Health Organisations Global Network of Age-Friendly Cities and Communities.

The Deputy Leader echoed the Cabinet Member's comments and was pleased to support the recommendations contained within the report.

The Cabinet **RESOLVED:**

1. To consider the information within the report and approve the submission of an application to become a member of the World Health Organisations Global Network of Age-Friendly Cities and Communities.

128 The Council's Local Housing Market Assessment 2023 - 2028

The Head of Housing Strategy and Investment presented to Cabinet the findings of the Local Housing Market Assessment 2023 – 2028 and sought approval before submitting to Welsh Government and then to publicise the document.

The Cabinet Member for Development and Prosperity praised the piece of work, which was based on the outcomes of local data being fed into the Welsh Government modelling programme. The Cabinet Member emphasised the importance of the strategic document, which, in turn, feeds into the Council's Housing Strategy and the new Local Development Plan preferred strategy, which was currently being consulted upon.

The Cabinet **RESOLVED:**

1. That Members approve the Local Housing Market Assessment 2023 – 2028 as a key source of evidence to support the delivery of housing policies in the Council's Corporate Plan, Local Development Plan and Housing Delivery Plan;
2. That Members approve the Local Housing Market Assessment 2023 – 2028 as a tool to negotiate affordable housing provision on planning applications and to identify how housing need translates to different sizes and types of affordable housing (e.g. social rent and low cost home ownership); and
3. That Members approve the Local Housing Market Assessment 2022 – 2037 for use to inform funding bids (including Social Housing Grant) and to influence residential development in the County Borough.

129 To consider Passing the Following 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".

130 Write Off of Irrecoverable Debts

Following the consideration of the report of the Deputy Chief Executive and Group Director for Finance, Digital and Frontline Services containing exempt information as defined in Paragraph 14 of Part 4 of Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act, 1972 (as amended), namely information relating to the financial affairs of any particular person (including the

authority holding that information), the Cabinet was **RESOLVED:**

1. To write-off the accounts to the appropriate Bad Debt Provision contained within the Council's accounts (if further information on any debt becomes available, payment will be pursued).

This meeting closed at 12.00 pm

**Councillor A Morgan
Chair.**

Mae'r ddogfen hon ar gael yn Gymraeg / This document is also available in Welsh



RHONDDA CYNON TAF COUNTY BOROUGH COUNCIL

CABINET

29TH APRIL 2024

PROPOSAL TO CLOSE RHIGOS PRIMARY SCHOOL WITH PUPILS TRANSFERRING TO HIRWAUN PRIMARY SCHOOL

REPORT OF THE DIRECTOR OF EDUCATION AND INCLUSION SERVICES IN DISCUSSION WITH THE CABINET MEMBER FOR EDUCATION, YOUTH PARTICIPATION AND WELSH LANGUAGE (COUNCILLOR R LEWIS)

AUTHOR(S):

Gaynor Davies, Director of Education and Inclusion Services

Andrea Richards, Service Director of 21st Century Schools and Transformation

1. PURPOSE OF REPORT

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to advise Members of the outcome of the recent publication of a Statutory Notice in respect of the proposal to:

Close Rhigos Primary School with pupils transferring to Hirwaun Primary School by no later than September 2024.

2. RECOMMENDATIONS

- 2.1 It is recommended that Members:

2.1.1 Note the content of this report.

2.1.2 Note the information contained within the Objection Report, attached as Appendix A to this Cabinet Report, which includes a summary of correspondence received.

2.1.3 Agree to implement the proposal with no amendments.

3. REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATIONS

3.1 To progress the proposal in accordance with the process outlined in the Welsh Government's (WG's) School Organisation Code (2nd Edition) (011 / 2018).

3.2 RCTCBC has a statutory duty, through its approach to the organisation and leadership arrangements of schools, to maintain the efficiency and effectiveness of provision. Implementing the proposal is in accordance with this statutory responsibility.

4. **BACKGROUND**

- 4.1 Members will recall that, at the meeting of the Cabinet held on [18th September 2023](#), approval was given to begin a statutory process to formally consult on the proposal to close Rhigos Primary School with pupils transferring to Hirwaun Primary School by no later than September 2024.
- 4.2 On [14th December 2023](#), the matter was pre-scrutinised by the Education and Inclusion Scrutiny Committee who provided a [formal response](#).
- 4.3 Following the conclusion of the consultation period, and at a subsequent meeting of the Cabinet held on the [18th December 2023](#), a decision was taken to progress to the next phase of the statutory process and to publish the required Statutory Notice.
- 4.4 On [11th January 2024](#), the matter was subject to a 'call in' by the Overview and Scrutiny Committee for further scrutiny and a decision was reached by the Overview and Scrutiny Committee not to refer the proposal back to the Cabinet.
- 4.5 The Statutory Notice was published on the 26th January 2024 which triggered the commencement of the objection period. This ran until the 23rd February 2024. During the objection period, a total of 1,440 objections were received by the closing date of the 23rd February 2024. These are broken down below:
- 54 written objections.
 - Two petitions signed by 951 and 65 respondents, respectively.
 - 1,384 respondents individually signed pre-written objections co-ordinated by the 'Save Rhigos Primary School' action committee.
- 4.6 To note, 55 of the responses received during the consultation period which ran between 2nd October 2023 and 17th November 2023, were requested to be treated as objections and so these have also been included in the total below.

Number of Objections Received	
Period	Number
Objection Period	1,440
Consultation Period	55
Total	1,495

- 4.7 In accordance with the WG's School Organisation Code (2nd Edition) (011 2018), the Objection Report, attached at Appendix A, summarises the objections, along with RCTCBC's response to them.
- 4.8 To confirm, **all** of the objections received during the Objection Period and the preceding Consultation Period have been reviewed by RCTCBC's Cabinet Members.

5. EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY IMPLICATIONS

5.1 An Equality Impact Assessment has been prepared in respect of the proposal and published on Rhondda Cynon Taf County Borough Council's (RCTCBC's) website together with the Consultation Document that outlined the proposal in further detail in accordance with the requirements of the WG's School Organisation Code (2nd Edition) (011 / 2018). The Equality Impact Assessment was updated following a review of the responses received.

5.2 The outcome of Equality Impact Assessment identified:

- Positive and neutral impacts, and no negative impacts, upon the protected characteristics.
- Hirwaun Primary School is fully compliant with the Equality Act 2010 thereby ensuring that no pupil, staff member, parent / carer or member of the wider community is prevented from fully accessing the whole extent of the facilities.
- There would be positive impacts on the Welsh language as, despite Hirwaun Primary School being an English medium primary school, it provides improved facilities to assist with the delivery of Welsh as a key element of the curriculum. This is in line with the WG's Cymraeg 2050 and RCTCBC's WESP, as we aim for the teaching of Welsh as a second language in English medium schools to be of the highest quality.
- Hirwaun Primary School has first class facilities that ensure all families who wish to access places at the school can be accommodated. The excellent facilities on offer may encourage more parents / carers to choose their catchment school, including the families of learners with additional learning needs (ALN). The capacity at Hirwaun Primary School may also assist armed forces personnel and carers who may move to the area mid-academic year.

5.3 It was considered that no negative impacts were identified within the Equality Impact Assessment which would prevent approval to be sought to continue to implement the proposal. To confirm, the Action Plan included within the Equality Impact Assessment will continue to be reviewed throughout the duration of the proposal's delivery period.

6. WELSH LANGUAGE IMPLICATIONS

6.1 A Welsh Language Impact Assessment has been prepared in respect of the proposal and published on RCTCBC's website together with the Consultation Document that outlined the proposal in further detail in accordance with the requirements of the WG's School Organisation Code (2nd Edition) (011 / 2018). The Welsh Language Impact Assessment was updated following a review of the responses received.

6.2 The outcome of the Welsh Language Impact Assessment identified:

- Hirwaun Primary School has recently benefitted from a £9.6 million investment via the WG's Sustainable Communities for Learning Programme, delivering a brand new school with a high quality, 21st century teaching and learning environment, enriching the teaching and learning experiences for both pupils and staff. The school opened its doors to the English medium pupils previously attending Penderyn Community Primary School in September 2021. It is a fully accessible school building which wholly complies with the Equality Act 2010.
- Rhigos Primary school is also within the catchment of the Welsh medium provision at Ysgol Gynradd Gymraeg Penderyn, and tailored and individual support would be available from RCTCBC's Welsh Language Immersion Team for any pupils wishing to continue their education at Ysgol Gynradd Gymraeg Penderyn through the medium of Welsh. To note, the Immersion Team are already supporting a number of pupils at Penderyn that have made the decision to move from English medium education to Welsh medium.
- Although Hirwaun Primary School is an English medium primary school, Welsh is taught as part of the curriculum and all pupils would benefit from having the opportunity to be taught in brand new facilities fit for the 21st century.
- RCTCBC aims to embed positive habits and attitudes towards the Welsh language through purposeful planning to promote the informal use of the Welsh language amongst pupils inside and outside schools. Facilitating the use of the Welsh language across the curriculum and in wider contexts in schools, to ensure a continuum of linguistic progression to support pupils in the transition between key stages, offers all pupils the opportunity to become fully bilingual and aligns with the Curriculum for Wales 2022. Pupils attending Hirwaun Primary School would continue to be encouraged and supported to do this through the achievement of the 'Cymraeg Campus' Welsh Language Charter, a framework to promote and increase the use of Welsh.
- Hirwaun Primary School is a fully accessible and fully integrated community school. A dedicated area has been designed within so that the local community are allowed to safely use the facilities, both during and after the school day. The headteacher of the Hirwaun Primary School will continue to be encouraged and supported to consider using these facilities to increase participation in the Welsh language by offering parents / carers and other members of the community the opportunity to attend Welsh medium learning classes for adults and/or other opportunities for community engagement through the medium of Welsh.
- This could contribute towards the WG's Cymraeg 2050 and RCTCBC's WESP.

6.3 It was considered that no negative impacts were identified within the Welsh Language Impact Assessment which would prevent approval to be sought to continue to implement the proposal. To confirm, the Action Plan included within

the Welsh Language Impact Assessment will continue to be reviewed throughout the duration of the proposal's delivery period.

7. CONSULTATION / INVOLVEMENT

- 7.1 The consultation process in respect of the proposal has been undertaken under the arrangements outlined in the WG's School Organisation Code (2nd Edition) (011 / 2018).
- 7.2 The consultation for the proposal took place between the 2nd October 2023 and the 17th November 2023. Following the conclusion of the consultation period, and at a meeting of the Cabinet held on the [18th December 2023](#), a decision was taken to progress to the next phase of the statutory process and to publish the required Statutory Notice. The Statutory Notice was published on the 26th January 2024 which triggered the commencement of the Objection Period. This ran until the 23rd February 2024.
- 7.3 A total of 1,495 objections were received. Information contained within the Objection Report, attached as Appendix A to this Cabinet Report, includes a summary of correspondence received.
- 7.4 On [14th December 2023](#), the matter was pre-scrutinised by the Education and Inclusion Scrutiny Committee

8. THE STATUTORY PROCESS

- 8.1 The Statutory Notice for the proposal refers to the:
- Closure of Rhigos Primary School with pupils transferring to Hirwaun Primary School by no later than September 2024.
- 8.2 The consultation processes in respect of the proposal have been undertaken under the arrangements outlined in the WG's School Organisation Code (2nd Edition) (011 / 2018).

9. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 9.1 There will be no capital funding implications should the proposal go ahead. Revenue savings accrued from the closure of Rhigos Primary School would be reinvested into supporting pupils' education in the County Borough of Rhondda Cynon Taf.
- 9.2 Given the 2.8 mile distance between Rhigos Primary School and Hirwaun Primary School, all pupils residing in the Rhigos Primary School catchment area would qualify for home to school transport to Hirwaun Primary School, in line with the statutory provision as identified within Learner Travel (Wales) Measure 2008. Additional revenue implications resulting as a consequence of the closure of Rhigos Primary School, including the increase in home to school transport

costs, would be identified as the proposal is developed and incorporated into RCTCBC's Medium Term Financial Planning arrangements.

The recent review of the Council's Home to School Transport policy does not impact the transport arrangements highlighted above in paragraph 9.2.

- 9.3 Financial projections show that progressing with the proposal would have a positive impact upon the budgetary position of Hirwaun Primary School. Further information on the current and projected budgetary positions of both schools affected by the proposals were included in the Consultation Document presented to Cabinet on [18th September 2023](#).

10. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS OR LEGISLATION CONSIDERED

- 10.1 Powers for Councils to develop school organisation proposals are governed by:

- The School Standards and Organisation (Wales) Act 2013.
- The WG's School Organisation Code (2nd Edition) (011 / 2018).

- 10.2 Councils must, when exercising functions under Part 3 of the School Standards and Organisation (Wales) Act 2013, act in accordance with any relevant requirements contained in the WG's School Organisation Code (2nd Edition) (011 / 2018) and must have regard to any relevant guidelines contained in it.

11. LINKS TO RCTCBC'S CORPORATE PLAN, NATIONAL PRIORITIES AND THE FUTURE GENERATIONS (WALES) ACT 2015

- 11.1 There are links between RCTCBC's Corporate Plan for the years 2020 to 2024, 'Making a Difference', specifically:

- **People:**
 - Encouraging all residents to lead active and healthy lifestyles and maintain their mental wellbeing:
 - Delivering new indoor and outdoor sporting facilities available for community use and enhancing existing sporting facilities such as changing rooms and outdoor play areas.
 - Improving services for children and young people and ensuring the needs of children are considered in everything we do:
 - Improving the social, emotional, and mental health and wellbeing of children and young people by increasing the range of specialist services available on our school sites for use by the wider community.
- **Places:**
 - Ensuring Rhondda Cynon Taf (RCT) is one of the safest places in Wales, with high levels of community cohesion where residents feel safe:
 - Supporting the voluntary, community and faith sectors to help build active and cohesive communities, creating safe and accessible spaces for meeting the needs of residents within their communities.

- **Prosperity:**
 - Ensuring we have good schools, so all children have access to a great education.
- 11.2 The proposal also supports the core aims of RCTCBC's new Corporate Plan for the years 2024 to 2030, 'Working with our Communities', and the four Well-being Objectives, which are:
- **People and Communities** – Supporting and empowering RCT residents and communities to live safe, healthy and fulfilling lives.
 - **Work and Business** – Helping to strengthen and grow RCT's economy.
 - **Nature and the Environment** – A green and clean RCT that improves and protects RCT's environment and nature.
 - **Culture, Heritage and Welsh Language** – Recognising and celebrating RCT's past, present and future.
- 11.3 There are links to RCTCBC's Directorate of Education and Inclusion Services' Strategic Plan for the years between 2022 and 2025, specifically:
- **Strategic Priority 3:**
 - Ensuring equity and support for vulnerable pupils and their families.
 - **Strategic Priority 5:**
 - Delivering 21st century learning environments and innovative services for our pupils and communities.
- 11.4 The proposal would lead to a more efficient use of RCTCBC's education estate supporting RCTCBC's Think Climate, Making RCT Carbon Neutral by 2030, for the years 2022 to 2025. It also aligns with the WG's ambition of a carbon neutral public service by 2030 and the wider goal of a net zero carbon Wales by 2050 as set out in the WG's Net Zero Carbon Strategic Plan: 2022. The investment at Hirwaun Primary School has seen a number of sustainable technologies incorporated into the design including a rainwater harvesting system, photo-voltaic panels, electric vehicle charging facilities and biodiversity areas on the school site.
- 11.5 Due regard has been made to all seven wellbeing goals and the five ways of working, as contained within the Wellbeing of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015 which requires RCTCBC to think about the long-term impact of decisions on communities to prevent consistent issues such as poverty, health inequalities and climate change.
- 11.6 The proposal could contribute towards achieving some of the seven wellbeing goals by:
- **A Healthier Wales** – Accommodation at Hirwaun Primary School consists of enhanced outdoor spaces and sports facilities. As well as supporting the full range of curriculum activities these facilities are also available for community use.

- **A More Equal Wales** – The wider catchment area for Hirwaun Primary School and the way the school is used would bring neutral or positive socio-economic impacts to all of the vulnerable groups over an extended geographical area.
- **A Wales of More Cohesive Communities** – Hirwaun Primary School is a fully accessible and integrated community school with a dedicated area designed within so that the local community can safely use the facilities, both during and after the school day.
- **A Wales of Vibrant Culture and Thriving Welsh Language** – Although Hirwaun Primary School is English medium, Welsh is taught as part of the curriculum and all pupils would benefit from having the opportunity to be taught in brand new facilities fit for the 21st century. As is currently the case, there is also the option for pupils to attend Ysgol Gynradd Gymraeg Penderyn and engage the support of RCTCBC's Welsh Language Immersion Team to support transition, subject to parent/carer choice.
- **A Globally Responsive Wales** – The new school at Hirwaun has been built to BREEAM excellent standards and the school can use sustainability features of the building, e.g., rainwater harvesting system, photo-voltaic panels, electric vehicle charging facilities and biodiversity areas, to further develop extra-curricular activities which encourage healthy lifestyles for the school and wider community.

11.7 The proposal could contribute towards achieving some of the five ways of working by:

- **Long Term** – The proposal forms a part of RCTCBC's wider 21st Century School Modernisation Programme and supports the better strategic management of RCTCBC's education estate.
- **Prevention** – RCTCBC believes that the proposal represents the best opportunity to safeguard and sustain educational standards for the future and provides a platform for further improvement.
- **Integrations** – Hirwaun Primary School is a fully accessible and integrated community school. A dedicated area is provided within the school so that the local community and parents/carers can safely use the facilities, both during and after the school day.
- **Collaboration** – RCTCBC would continue to work effectively with internal and external partners to ensure the changes brought about by the proposal would meet the short and long term needs of pupils, parents / carers, staff and the wider community.
- **Involvement** – The proposal is made in accordance with the WG's School Organisation Code (2nd Edition) (011 / 2018) and seeks the views of a prescribed list of stakeholders including pupils, parents / carers, staff and the wider community. As such face to face meetings were held with Governing Bodies, staff and School Councils of both Rhigos Primary School and Hirwaun Primary School.

11.8 As stated in paragraph 5.1, an Equality Impact Assessment which further details the contribution of the proposal to the Wellbeing of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015 has been prepared.

12. STRATEGIC OR RELEVANT TO ELECTORAL WARDS

12.1 The proposal to close Rhigos Primary School with pupils transferring to Hirwaun Primary School (subject to parent / carer choice) is relevant to the specific wards covered by these catchment areas.

13. CONCLUSION

13.1 RCTCBC has a statutory duty through its approach to the organisation and leadership arrangements of schools to maintain the efficiency and effectiveness of provision to ensure that all schools are well placed to deliver high quality education that meets the needs of the community and makes best use of public funding.

13.2 Rhigos Primary School is RCTCBC's smallest school and the number of pupils joining Rhigos Primary School has been in steady decline, with pupil numbers forecast to continue to fall in the next five years. To note, since the commencement of the consultation period in relation to the proposal, the number of statutory school aged pupils at Rhigos Primary School has reduced from 51 to 46.

13.3 Allowing surplus places to remain high through inaction would directly and negatively affect the future financial viability of Rhigos Primary School and impact children's education in the future. Rhigos Primary School's budget, with a diminishing income, would have less money for staff salaries, curriculum activities, equipment, running costs and maintenance of the school estate and would struggle to maintain their current good education offer.

13.4 The proposal seeks to provide the opportunity for more pupils to benefit from the significant investment delivered via the WG's Sustainable Communities for Learning programme in the Cynon Valley. Consultation outcomes suggest that there is strong opposition to the proposal, however, the rationale for change highlights many potential benefits.

13.5 Estyn have confirmed that the proposal is likely to, at least, maintain the standard of education provision and outcomes for pupils in the area. The response further states that the:

'Local Authority has set out a clear rationale for its proposal. It outlines strongly the many advantages of closing Rhigos Primary School, with all pupils transferring to Hirwaun Primary school'.

13.6 It is recommended therefore, that Members consider the contents of the attached Objection Report, and formally approve the proposal as consulted upon, with no amendments, allowing it to progress.

Other Information:

Relevant Scrutiny Committee:

Education and Inclusion Scrutiny Committee.

Contact Officer(s):

Andrea Richards, Service Director for 21st Century Schools and Transformation.

Lisa Howell, 21st Century Schools Business and School Organisation Manager.

LOCAL GOVERNMENT ACT 1972

AS AMENDED BY

THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT (ACCESS TO INFORMATION) ACT 1985

RHONDDA CYNON TAF COUNTY BOROUGH COUNCIL

CABINET

29TH APRIL 2024

**ITEM: PROPOSAL TO CLOSE RHIGOS PRIMARY SCHOOL WITH PUPILS
TRANSFERRING TO HIRWAUN PRIMARY SCHOOL**

Background Papers:

Appendix A – Objection Report.

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RHONDDA CYNON TAF COUNTY BOROUGH COUNCIL

OBJECTION REPORT

PROPOSAL TO CLOSE RHIGOS PRIMARY SCHOOL WITH PUPILS TRANSFERRING TO HIRWAUN PRIMARY SCHOOL

1. Purpose of this Objection Report

This Objection Report is prepared in accordance with the Welsh Government's (WG's) School Organisation Code (2nd Edition) (011/2018). Its purpose is to:

- Inform the outcome of the publication of the Statutory Notice published for this proposal, which was published on 26th January 2024 for a period of a minimum of 28 days.
- Include a summary of the statutory objections received and Rhondda Cynon Taf County Borough Council's (RCTCBC's) response to them.

2. The Statutory Notice

The Statutory Notice to progress this proposal, which was published on 26th January 2024, is reproduced below:

RHONDDA CYNON TAF COUNTY BOROUGH COUNCIL

Education and Inclusion Services, 21st Century Schools,
Valleys Innovation Centre, Navigation Park, Abercynon CF45 4SN

Notice is given in accordance with section 43 of the School Standards and Organisation (Wales) Act 2013 and the School Organisation Code that Rhondda Cynon Taf County Borough Council (RCTCBC), having consulted such persons as required, proposes to:

1. Discontinue the following school currently maintained by RCTCBC:
 - a. Rhigos Primary School, Heol Y Graig, Aberdare CF44 9YY.

RCTCBC undertook a period of consultation before deciding to publish this proposal. A Consultation Report containing a summary of the issues raised by consultees, the proposer's responses and the view of Estyn is available on RCTCBC's website at: <https://www.rctcbc.gov.uk/EN/GetInvolved/Consultations/CurrentConsultations/ConsultationonaproposaltocloseRhigosPrimary.aspx>

it is proposed to close Rhigos Primary School and extend the catchment area of Hirwaun Primary School, Glannant Street, Hirwaun, Aberdare, CF44 9NF, to incorporate the current catchment area of Rhigos Primary School. The pupils of

Rhigos Primary School will instead attend Hirwaun Primary School. It is proposed that Rhigos Primary School will close with pupils transferring to Hirwaun Primary School by no later than September 2024, subject to parent/carer preference. Hirwaun Primary School is a mixed English Medium Community Primary School, for pupils aged 3 to 11. RCTCBC will be the admissions authority and there will be no arrangements for pupil banding.

The capacity of Hirwaun Primary School is 394 plus Nursery. The admission number for pupils aged 4 into the Reception Class at the school is 56. There are 60 nursery places.

Pupils will be provided with transport in accordance with RCTCBC's Transport Policy. RCTCBC provides free transport for pupils who attend their nearest suitable school, or if there is no safe walking route, in accordance with Welsh Government guidance. The term 'nearest suitable' school applies to the catchment area or nearest Welsh, English, dual language or voluntary aided (faith) mainstream school or special school/class as appropriate.

Within a period of 28 days of the date on which this proposal was published, that is to say by 17:00 on 23rd February 2024, any person may object to the proposal. Objections should be sent to the Director of Education and Inclusion Services, 21st Century Schools, Valleys Innovation Centre, Navigation Park, Abercynon CF45 4SN, or e-mail schoolplanning@rctcbc.gov.uk.

Where objections have been received, RCTCBC will publish a summary of any such objections made (and not withdrawn in writing) within the objection period, together with their observations thereon, within 7 days of the determination of the proposal.

Signed:	<i>Gwynor Davies</i>
Director of Education and Inclusion Services For Rhondda Cynon Taf County Borough Council	
Date:	26 th January 2024

3. Details of Objections Received

The Statutory Notice was published on the 26th January 2024 which triggered the commencement of the objection period. This ran until the 23rd February 2024. During the objection period alone, a total of 1,440 objections were received by the closing date of the 23rd February 2024. These are broken down below:

- 54 written objections.
- Two petitions signed by 951 and 65 respondents respectively.
- 1,384 respondents individually signed pre-written objections co-ordinated by the 'Save Rhigos Primary School' action committee. The wording of this objection read *'I do not agree with the proposal due to the biased, incomplete and incorrect information contained within the consultation document and the bias of RCT throughout the process.'* The Action Group reported that 1393 objections had been submitted, but on removing the blank submissions, 1384 were counted.

55 objections received during the consultation period which ran between 2nd October 2023 and 17th November 2023, were requested to be treated as objections and so these have been included in the numbers below and in the written summary that follows.

The table below outlines a summary of the total number of objections received.

Summary of Objections Received	
Period	Number
Objection Period	1,440
Consultation Period	55
Total	1,495

This Objection Report summarises the objections, along with RCTCBC’s response to them. This is in accordance with the WG’s School Organisation Code (2nd Edition) (011/2018). It should be noted that due to the large number of responses received during the consultation period (which ran between 2nd October 2023 and 17th November 2023) which are now included as formal objections, where applicable the same themes, and in some instances the same responses, have been applied to this report as those that were included within the Consultation Report.

For completeness it should be noted that there were a number of responses received during both the consultation period and the objection period that made statements and comments in relation to political issues, staff conduct, and wider RCTCBC issues that are unrelated to the specific requirements of a school organisation consultation, and as such these comments have not been included within the themes below. For those respondents that wish to raise any further concerns on such matters, there is the opportunity to do so outside of this consultation process. More information on how to make your views known can be found on RCTCBC’s website.

To confirm **all** of the objections received during the objection period, and the preceding Consultation Period, have been reviewed by RCTCBC’s Cabinet Members.

4. Objections and Responses

The table that follows details the objections received along with their responses.

Objection Theme		Clarification
Additional Learning Needs (ALN)	What support will there be for the pupils with ALN?	All pupils with ALN will continue to be supported. The Additional Learning Needs Education Tribunal (ALNET) Act 2018 provides detailed guidance on the duties and responsibilities of Councils in meeting the ALN of children and young people. Children and young people have ALN if they have a learning difficulty which calls for an additional learning provision to be made for them.

		<p>The ALN Code for Wales (2021) recommends that early years and school settings adopt a graduated response to meeting ALN. A graduated response means that progressively greater expertise and support can be brought in to address the difficulties a child or young person may be experiencing. Additional or different provision should be made depending on the severity of the child or young person's level of need.</p> <p>This duty and responsibility in this regard will be met regardless of which school a child attends.</p>
	<p>The pupils of Rhigos Primary School will get lost in a school the size of Hirwaun Primary School.</p>	<p>As detailed above, there is a duty and responsibility placed on Councils for all pupils to receive the support they need regardless of the size of the school.</p> <p>Creating larger schools can build capacity within staffing structures and enable opportunities for developing more specialist wellbeing and/or family liaison posts which will clearly benefit more vulnerable children and families.</p>
Admissions	<p>My child will not be attending Hirwaun Primary School.</p>	<p>Choosing a school is a parent/carer choice. Applications will be dealt with in accordance with the WG's School Admissions Code 2013 (05/2013).</p>
	<p>What if I don't want my child to attend Hirwaun Primary School?</p>	
	<p>Reports of issues with applying for a place at Rhigos Primary School for September 2024.</p>	<p>During the school application period, between September 1st, 2023, to November 10th, 2023, RCTCBC received online applications for pre-nursery, nursery and reception places for Rhigos Primary School for the 2024 academic year.</p> <p>To note, there was a period of time during the application period that all parents/carers across Rhondda Cynon Taf (RCT) were unable to apply online due to essential works being undertaken on the online</p>

		<p>system from October 2nd, 2023, to October 3rd, 2023.</p> <p>RCTCBC's School Admissions Team have confirmed that they did receive a phone call from parent/carer from the Rhigos area requesting a hard copy of the application form, however it transpired that the parent/carer had already successfully applied for a place online. The parent/carer was informed of this at the time.</p>
Extra-curricular Activities	How will pupils' access after school clubs?	<p>After school clubs are the responsibility of the individual schools and whilst these provisions are considered to be important, it should be noted that post school activities are not a statutory requirement.</p> <p>As is the case across RCT, there will be no home to school transport available purely to access after school clubs. Transport will be provided at the start and end of the normal school day only.</p>
	The Consultation Document states the proposal will provide more opportunities for extra-curricular activities but given the transport issues this will be reduced.	<p>This is in reference to the multiple accessible spaces available in Hirwaun Primary School, internally and externally, that can be utilised for such purposes. The fully accessible facilities at Hirwaun Primary School by their very nature do provide more opportunities.</p> <p>As is the case across RCT, there will be no home to school transport available purely to access after school clubs. Transport will be provided at the start and end of the normal school day only.</p>
	There are lots of extra-curricular activities already on offer at Rhigos Primary School.	<p>This is not disputed. The Consultation Document states that the view of RCTCBC is that Rhigos Primary School is a good school. It is noted within the Community Impact Assessment that numerous after school clubs and community events run at both schools.</p>

Breakfast Club	How will pupils access breakfast club?	<p>Breakfast club is the responsibility of the individual schools and whilst this is considered to be important, it should be noted that pre-school activities are not a statutory requirement. Therefore, there will be no home to school transport available purely to access this provision., Transport will be provided at the start and end of the normal school day, as is currently the case for all schools across RCT.</p> <p>However, if any child travelling on the school bus wishes to have a breakfast once they get to school then arrangements will be put in place to ensure that they receive one.</p> <p>The breakfast club operating in Hirwaun Primary School is very popular with an average of 53 pupils receiving a breakfast every day. The average daily number for pupils accessing a breakfast in Rhigos Primary School is 13 so there will be plenty of space available for any pupils wishing to have a breakfast to do so. These figures have been calculated as a daily average of the attendance of the first half term of the 2023 academic year.</p>
	Rhigos Primary School was voted Best Breakfast Club in Wales 2022.	<p>RCTCBC are aware of this impressive achievement and rightly the school community are very proud. A statement of congratulations was provided by RCTCBC's Director of Education and Inclusion Services at the time the award was received. RCTCBC's Catering Services have responsibility for delivering breakfast clubs in partnership with schools.</p>
Building Condition	Why was the property condition survey used four years old?	<p>Property condition surveys are carried out cyclically on a five yearly basis. This aligns with an industry standard timescale, so the property condition survey used is still valid.</p>

		<p>The WG's School Organisation Code 2018 (011/2018) states that:</p> <p><i>'Information about the quality of accommodation at all existing schools likely to be affected by the proposals including reference to the Local Authority's most recent (property) condition survey using the categories of the original 21st Century Schools Survey'.</i></p> <p>This information has been included in compliance with the WG's School Organisation Code 2018 (011/2018). The 2019 property condition survey was the most recent undertaken and so this was used accordingly.</p> <p>To note, a copy of the property condition survey was shared with those who requested it during the consultation period.</p>
	<p>How much work has been undertaken at Rhigos Primary School since the property condition survey was undertaken?</p>	<p>Lots of work has been undertaken at Rhigos Primary School since the property condition survey was undertaken in 2019. Works include, but are not limited to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Replacement windows and doors. • New fencing and gates. • New drainage and resurfacing. • Repairs to roof areas. • Mechanical and electrical upgrades.
	<p>How much money has been spent at Rhigos Primary School since 2019?</p>	<p>Including the cyclical maintenance checks, over £180,000 has been spent at Rhigos Primary School. This can be broken down as follows:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Works funded through the Building Maintenance Service Level Agreement (SLA) for repairs and maintenance – £94,084. • Works funded directly by RCTCBC – £79,736.

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Works funded by Rhigos Primary School's delegated budget – £7,876.
	<p>Why hasn't the work identified within the property condition survey been undertaken?</p>	<p>Some of the work identified within the property condition survey has been undertaken, as listed above. Works are undertaken proactively and reactively across all 116 school sites across RCT, and as such have to be prioritised within the budgets available.</p> <p>In addition, lots of work has also been undertaken that was not identified in the property condition survey, including health and safety and safeguarding works.</p> <p>The property condition survey identifies the condition of a building at a point in time and is used as a tool for RCTCBC to manage its estate and as such they need to be undertaken in a consistent manner. In total, RCTCBC has 115 schools across 116 sites to manage. Regular visits are undertaken by RCTCBC's Corporate Maintenance Team and issues are flagged up on a priority basis and undertaken when required. Rhigos Primary School has been in regular contact with, and has been visited regularly by, the RCTCBC's Corporate Maintenance Team.</p> <p>The property condition surveys are not updated each time maintenance works are carried out on a school, RCTCBC would not have the finances or the resource to undertake this task.</p>
	<p>Why hasn't RCTCBC looked after its buildings?</p>	<p>RCTCBC has an obligation to ensure that its buildings are safe, watertight and warm, and that is what it has done. As stated above there have been regular visits to Rhigos Primary School by RCTCBC's Corporate Maintenance Team and its contractors, and it also undertakes cyclical maintenance checks and</p>

		<p>surveys of its mechanical and electrical equipment.</p> <p>All schools in RCTCBC buy into a Building Maintenance SLA and work is undertaken and managed through this Building Maintenance SLA. On many occasions, RCTCBC has paid for works at Rhigos Primary School that have been the responsibility of Rhigos Primary School's Governing Body, due to the school not having the required budget for the works to be undertaken.</p>
	<p>Why is one of the buildings at Rhigos Primary School deemed 'end of its life/beyond economical repair'? What does this mean?</p>	<p>The term 'beyond economical repair' is a classification given to an asset where that asset requires repairs likely to be more expensive than its replacement value. It does not mean that the building is unsafe.</p>
	<p>Why was permission denied for a member of the Save Rhigos Primary School Action Group to undertake their own survey during the consultation?</p>	<p>RCTCBC has 115 schools across 116 sites to manage and as such it is important that there is consistency in the way property condition surveys are undertaken so that it can appropriately manage its education estate and prioritise works. A third party looking at one particular school would not be comparable with our in-house procedures given the subjectivity of the property condition survey process.</p> <p>The property condition survey undertaken in 2019 was free from prejudice.</p> <p>Since the conclusion of the objection period, the Council was notified by the Chair of Governors that the governing body have commissioned a third party to undertake a property condition survey at Rhigos Primary School. At the time of writing this Objection Report this property condition survey has not yet been undertaken and the Council are awaiting details of the date the survey is intending to be completed.</p>

		<p>RCTCBC, as the building owner, has requested a copy of the property condition survey report on completion by the third party.</p>
	<p>A purpose-built 21st century school building help children benefit from a learning environment which already nurtures and supports pupils – education it is not about the building.</p> <p>A shiny new building in Hirwaun may offer nicer surroundings for pupils, but evidence suggests this will be at a detriment to their educational attainment. Your proposal consultation document tries to bat this away, totally ignoring the data that it presents from the most recent Estyn report.</p>	<p>The Consultation Document sets out the benefits that a new, purpose built, larger school could offer.</p> <p>Improving educational environments for pupils is at the heart of the WG’s Sustainable Communities for Learning Programme. It is a core current aim for the WG, and its continued investment remains to be a priority. The WG’s Sustainable Communities for Learning Programme lists ‘Transforming learning environments and learner experience’ as well as ‘Improving condition and suitability of the education estate’ as its investment objectives clearly demonstrating the importance of improving the learning environments in our educational settings.</p> <p>In relation to the comments regarding the most recent Estyn reports, in compliance with the WG’s School Organisation Code 2018 (011/2018) the response to the proposal from Estyn was provided in full at Appendix One of the Consultation Document. There has been full transparency in relation to publishing the findings of these inspections.</p> <p>Estyn have considered the educational aspects of the proposal and their conclusion is that the proposal is likely to, at least, maintain the standard of education provision and outcomes for pupils in this area.</p> <p>Estyn’s response further states that the:</p> <p><i>‘Local Authority has set out a clear rationale for its proposal. It outlines strongly the many advantages of</i></p>

		<i>closing Rhigos Primary School, with all pupils transferring to Hirwaun Primary school'.</i>
	How does Rhigos Primary School not comply with the Equality Act 2010?	<p>In terms of the physical site and the school buildings at Rhigos Primary School, these are largely inaccessible, however, there is scope for improvement. Looking just at the protected characteristic 'disability', Rhigos Primary School's site is largely non complaint. Given the topography and the age of the buildings there will inevitably be some areas of Rhigos Primary School's site that are inaccessible for those with mobility difficulties or for wheelchair users. In addition, there is no hygiene room available at Rhigos Primary School.</p> <p>Building Bulletin 99 (BB99): Briefing Framework for Primary School Projects, is what all Councils in Wales use as a guide to build new schools. BB99 states the following:</p> <p><i>'In the context of classroom layouts 'fully inclusive' means that which enables a pupil using a wheelchair to access all areas of the room, and therefore, all activities easily, without any disruption to classroom layouts.'</i></p>
Community Impact	The Community Impact Assessment is lacking in information.	<p>To confirm, what has been included within the Community Impact Assessment is in line with the requirements of the WG's School Organisation Code 2018 (011/2018).</p> <p>However, as advised in the published Community Impact Assessment, this document has been revisited and updated following a review of the comments received throughout the duration of the consultation process. The updated version of the Community Impact Assessment is available on RCTCBC's website.</p>
	What will happen to the Rhigos Primary School site? It's	Considerations and options of any potential future use of the Rhigos

	<p>mentioned in the Consultation Document that it could be used for the community.</p>	<p>Primary School site will be consulted upon separately.</p> <p>Should the proposal go ahead, colleagues in RCTCBC's Community Development Team will work with the local community of Rhigos to identify any viable and sustainable options for a community use. RCTCBC's Community Development Team will also be able to support any potential community groups to identify and apply for any funding that may be available to secure to develop any provision.</p>
	<p>The children will lose their cultural identity if the school closes; their 'Cynefin'.</p>	<p>There will be many opportunities for all pupils to learn about their local area and cultural identity as they navigate the Curriculum for Wales (CfW) and develop their enquiry based learning.</p> <p>The village of Hirwaun is approximately 2 miles from the village of Rhigos, and so the expectation is that this will not be lost for any pupils.</p>
	<p>If the school closes there will be a negative impact upon the community economically.</p>	<p>There is no direct evidence to support this. If the proposal goes ahead there will be free home to school transport for any pupils wishing to attend to Hirwaun Primary School, so we do not consider this proposal will detrimentally affect house prices or deter new families from moving in to the area. Economic and societal impacts such as these are multi-faceted and are based on a number of factors.</p> <p>We do not consider that the proposal will have a negative economic impact on the local community.</p>
	<p>Will the parent and toddler group currently running at Rhigos Primary School be moved to Hirwaun Primary School?</p>	<p>RCTCBC are aware that there is a parent and toddler group running at Rhigos Primary School for a day a week. There is a dedicated community room available at Hirwaun Primary School so should the group leader want to establish a</p>

		parent and toddler group at Hirwaun Primary School then this can be accommodated.
Educational Outcomes	<p>Pupils from Rhigos Primary School will not have the same educational experience at Hirwaun Primary School.</p> <p>Both schools should be reinspected by Estyn prior to a decision being reached.</p>	<p>In compliance with the WG's School Organisation Code 2018 (011/2018) the response to the proposal from Estyn was provided in full at Appendix One of the Consultation Document.</p> <p>Estyn is not a body which is required to act in accordance with the WG's School Organisation Code (011/2018) and the School Standards and Organisation Act 2013 places no statutory requirements on Estyn in respect of school organisation matters. However, Estyn are a statutory consultee in such matters and as such have provided their opinion on the overall merits of the school organisation proposal.</p> <p>Estyn have considered the educational aspects of the proposal and their conclusion is that the proposal is likely to, at least, maintain the standard of education provision and outcomes for pupils in this area.</p> <p>Estyn's response further states that the:</p> <p><i>'Local Authority has set out a clear rationale for its proposal. It outlines strongly the many advantages of closing Rhigos Primary School, with all pupils transferring to Hirwaun Primary school.'</i></p>
	<p>Why close a 'good' school to one that required 'Significant Improvement'.</p>	<p>The Consultation Document acknowledges that Rhigos Primary School is a good school. That is not disputed.</p> <p>Hirwaun Primary School's Estyn inspection was undertaken in 2018 and the following year, in 2019, a follow up visit was undertaken by Estyn which judged that sufficient</p>

		<p>progress had been made in relation to the recommendations.</p> <p>As a result, Estyn removed Hirwaun Primary School from the list of schools requiring 'Significant Improvement' with no further visits required. An inspection provides a snapshot of the school at that moment in time, Hirwaun Primary School would not have been removed from the category should any of Estyn's concerns remain.</p> <p>It is important to note that school performance and improvement is not static, and this does fluctuate over time. At the time of writing, both schools are accessing core support from the Central South Consortium Joint Education Service. Neither school is deemed to be in need of enhanced support due to presenting issues.</p>
	<p>Ability to successfully deliver the CfW.</p>	<p>The Consultation Document acknowledges that the teachers at Rhigos Primary School are providing pupils with a great education, however it also sets out the challenges in delivering the CfW in a small and aging school.</p> <p>At no point does it state within the Consultation Document that staff at Rhigos Primary School are not delivering upon their obligations in terms of delivering the CfW. The Consultation Document highlights the difficulties of doing so within the defined parameters at Rhigos Primary School in relation to its size and age, and the ongoing challenge this will create in view of the projected falling numbers at Rhigos Primary School. The possibilities for more distributed models of leadership are inevitably more restricted in smaller schools due to the smaller size of the workforce.</p>

	<p>Teacher/parent/carer interactions will be lessened, and relationships will be diminished as a result of the pupils being transported to school on a bus.</p>	<p>There are already children from the community of Penderyn who travel to Hirwaun Primary School on home to school transport and so the school has well established systems in place to ensure that parents/carers are kept fully informed of any issues that have arisen during the school day, and should the proposal go ahead this communication will continue in order to support both the new pupils joining the school and their families.</p>
	<p>The CfW lends itself well to vertical learning, meaning that current arrangement of mixed age learning is a sustainable educational model.</p> <p>It states children being taught in vertically streamed classes creates challenges for teaching and learning. Where's the evidence of this?</p>	<p>Currently Rhigos Primary School has three classes that are vertically streamed, with two of the three classes teaching pupils across three year groups. Given the projected reduction in pupil numbers at the school, this situation will become even more challenging in time.</p> <p>There are challenges to teaching vertically grouped pupils. In what is considered to be a standard size class of pupils there will always be a range of abilities that need to be catered for through effective differentiation to ensure that the work meets the pupils' needs, to ensure that they make strong progress in their learning and are suitably challenged. In a small school, such as Rhigos Primary School, where there are vertical groups and a wide range of abilities it can prove to be even more challenging for the teaching and support staff to meet the wide range of academic, as well as the social and emotional needs, of all the pupils. It is acknowledged in the Consultation Document that Rhigos Primary School offers pupils positive learning experiences. Nevertheless, the teaching of multiple year groups within one classroom environment can be a significant challenge. Clearly, this can be tackled through highly effective teaching and learning and extensive differentiation, this is not</p>

		<p>disputed, but this challenge is compounded when you have up to three year groups within one classroom.</p> <p>It should be noted that the school will only be funded for a Headteacher and two teachers from the 2024 academic year as the number of statutory school aged children (in reception to year six) continues to fall. If Rhigos Primary School does not have enough additional funding to employ a third teacher from its own budget, then this will again add to the teaching, learning, assessment and workload challenge as outlined and <i>may</i> require the number of year groups included within each class to increase from three to four. All of the issues cited in respect of three year groups together then become magnified and intensified by then having four year groups together.</p>
<p>Pupil Numbers and Capacity</p>	<p>How are the pupil projections calculated?</p>	<p>In terms of pupil projections, RCTCBC collects birth data from Cwm Taf Morgannwg University Health Board covering the Rhondda, Cynon and Taf Ely areas. This provides the births and postcode for each child. There is also an allowance for new housing developments and existing pupils on roll allowing for predictions to be accurate.</p> <p>In relation to the pupils already in school the cohort survival method is utilised, where the number of pupils in each year group is assumed to be the number in the preceding year group during the previous academic year multiplied by a constant.</p>
	<p>Why was Hirwaun Primary School built with so much capacity?</p>	<p>RCTCBC's current Local Development Plan (LDP), adopted in 2011, has a significant housing allocation identified as part of a strategic site within the current Hirwaun Primary School catchment area. In addition, at the time the new</p>

		<p>school in Hirwaun was being developed there were tourism and commercial opportunities being designed, as well as the plans for the dualling of the A465. Given the attention that was and still is focussed upon this specific area on a regional scale, it would have been remiss of us not to include additional capacity at that juncture.</p> <p>RCTCBC's revised LDP is currently being prepared and since the conclusion of the objection period, the draft LDP is now available on RCTCBC's website and is being consulted upon. It should be noted that the draft LDP includes no housing allocation identified within the current Hirwaun Primary School catchment area, however, it remains as a key site for employment and tourism.</p> <p>Comments made in relation to the size of Hirwaun Primary School being anything other than to plan for the pupil places required for the growth that was envisaged at the time of construction are refuted.</p>
	<p>There is surplus capacity in a lot of schools across RCT, why is just Rhigos Primary School affected.</p>	<p>There is a statutory duty placed on Councils to effectively manage its school places. All school places, capacities, admissions and projections are kept under constant scrutiny. RCTCBC has implemented reorganisation proposals affecting over 40 schools over the last 10 years and all schools will continue to be reviewed.</p> <p>Information on the capacity of all schools affected by proposal must be included within all school organisation documents in compliance with the WG's School Organisation Code 2018 (011/2018). Without the inclusion of this information the consultation would not be valid.</p>

		<p>This proposal has been prepared for consultation for a number of reasons, the rationale for closure is not purely based on one thing alone. The capacity of Rhigos Primary School is included for information, amongst many other data sets, as it provides stakeholders with a wider picture of the proposal presented.</p>
	<p>Why have nursery pupils not been included?</p>	<p>Nursery pupils have been included. The information within the Consultation Document contains information on both 'statutory' school aged children (in reception to year six) and 'non-statutory' school aged children (in pre-nursery and nursery).</p> <p>The numbers of the current non-statutory nursery pupils on roll at both Rhigos Primary School and Hirwaun Primary School, as well as the nursery projections, are included in the Consultation Document. There are also references to the number of statutory school aged pupils on roll at both Rhigos Primary School and Hirwaun Primary School, as well as the statutory age projections.</p>
	<p>Pupil number projection methodology not accurate</p>	<p>Pupil projections are just that, they are projections and are always based on best estimates with the information available at any given time.</p> <p>To note, on an annual basis over the last five years, the variance between RCTCBC's primary pupil projections, and actual primary pupil numbers, averages at less than 1.0%.</p>
<p>Rural School Categorisation</p>	<p>Why isn't Rhigos Primary School classed as a rural school?</p>	<p>The WG's School Organisation Code 2018 (011/018) contains a list of rural schools for the procedural presumption against the closure of rural schools. As such, it is specified within the WG's School Organisation Code 2018 (011/2018) that The National Statistics Urban Rural classification has been used as the</p>

		<p>basis of the designation of rural schools for this purpose.</p> <p>The rural schools listed were identified as being located within villages in the sparsest context, other (hamlet or dispersed) in sparsest context and other (hamlet or dispersed) in less sparse context. There are no schools in RCT on the list of rural schools as there are no schools that meet the above classifications for this singular purpose.</p> <p>For clarification, on the Office of National Statistics website, Rhigos itself does have a rural classification, as in fact does Hirwaun, but neither meet the specified criteria to be included on the list as defined above.</p>
	<p>RCTCBC was in receipt of a Small and Rural School Grant from the WG that was allocated to Rhigos Primary School, this demonstrates that RCTCBC acknowledges its rural status.</p>	<p>This is correct. Rhigos Primary School was one of the schools in receipt of funding awarded via this grant. Since 2017/2018 there have been 13 schools across RCT that have been a recipient of this grant.</p> <p>Given that there are no designated 'rural' schools in RCT, this grant was awarded due to the small pupil numbers at the schools in receipt of the funding.</p>
<p>Transport and Travel</p>	<p>The home to school transport costs have not been made available.</p>	<p>There will inevitably be a cost for home to school transport and this has been acknowledged in the Consultation Document and listed as a disadvantage in the assessment of the proposal.</p> <p>Should the proposal go ahead, any new home to school transport contract will be competitively tendered. As the number of pupils attending Hirwaun Primary School will factor into the size of the transport required and consequently have an impact upon the service costs, this financial information remains unavailable.</p>

		<p>If, for example, a large school bus (up to 70 seats) was required, then the cost for this would equate to approximately £400.00 per day. However, if a smaller vehicle would be required (which has been intimated in the responses received throughout both the consultation period and objection period that this would be the case), then the home to school transport costs would significantly reduce.</p>
	<p>There will be no active travel opportunities for those pupils who currently walk to school.</p>	<p>RCTCBC acknowledges that pupils living in Rhigos will need to travel to Hirwaun Primary School either by bus or by car. This information is included within the Community Impact Community Impact and is not in dispute, however what is also included within the Community Impact Assessment is how this will be partly mitigated by the opportunities the new school will provide given the many outdoor facilities at Hirwaun Primary School.</p> <p>The Community Impact Assessment states:</p> <p><i>‘Those pupils that will be travelling by bus or car under the new arrangements will still have the opportunity to experience the outdoors and gain plenty of fresh air given the plentiful opportunities on the Hirwaun Primary School site. External canopies, the outdoor classroom, the spacious yard, the MUGA, the sports field, gardens etc all present multiple opportunities to support and nurture health and well-being for pupils and staff’.</i></p>
	<p>Hirwaun Primary School is further away than Rhigos Primary School so the carbon footprint will be increased.</p>	<p>Given the distance between Hirwaun Primary School and Rhigos Primary School, all pupils residing in the current Rhigos Primary School catchment area will qualify for home to school transport, therefore</p>

		<p>negating the need for numerous car journeys to the school.</p> <p>If the proposal were to go ahead, RCTCBC will close an energy inefficient building with pupils moving to an existing energy efficient building, so implementing this proposal will have an overall positive impact upon the carbon footprint.</p>
	<p>If there is an emergency, how will my child get home if I don't have a car?</p>	<p>There are already children from the community of Penderyn who travel to Hirwaun Primary School via home to school transport and so Hirwaun Primary School has well established systems in place to ensure that parents/carers are kept fully informed of any issues that have arisen during the school day. Should the proposal go ahead this communication will continue in order to support both the new pupils joining the school and their families.</p> <p>Hirwaun Primary School, along with all other schools, have a duty of care in relation to the care and wellbeing of all pupils. If any issues or emergencies arise during the school day, as is currently the case, the staff at Hirwaun Primary School will ensure that they do all they can to support any families that cannot attend Hirwaun Primary School.</p>
	<p>The traffic outside Hirwaun Primary School is already busy.</p>	<p>Hirwaun Primary School has been built with a dedicated staff and visitor car park, as well as an onsite bus drop off facility. As part of the planning obligations for the project, an off-site school drop off/community car park was constructed. This additional parking has significantly reduced the congestion outside Hirwaun Primary School at the start and end of the school day. To note Rhigos Primary School has neither a dedicated staff nor community car park within the vicinity.</p>

		<p>In addition, work on the second phase of the Safe Routes in the Community initiative has been designed, which includes installing two new Zebra crossings in the village, to encourage more pupils attending Hirwaun Primary School to walk to school safely in turn reducing the number of car journeys. A decision by the WG on the funding application to deliver these works should be made shortly.</p> <p>Given that all pupils currently residing in the Rhigos Primary School catchment will qualify for home to school transport, there is an expectation that the impact upon the traffic, as a result of the proposal, is minimal.</p>
	<p>I'm not happy for my child to travel unaccompanied on a school bus.</p>	<p>RCTCBC's Integrated Transport Unit successfully transports thousands of children a day to schools throughout RCT from the ages of three to 19. Understandably there can be a great deal of anxiety for all parents/carers when their child travels on a school bus for the first time, this can also be the case for pupils travelling for the first time, however there is strict criteria in place that transport providers must adhere to in order to ensure the safety and safeguarding of the pupils, which is of paramount importance to us.</p>
	<p>The cost and frequency of public transport from Rhigos to Hirwaun is prohibitive for regular use.</p>	<p>Unfortunately, the cost and operation of the public transport in the area is not within the remit of RCTCBC to manage.</p> <p>As all pupils living in Rhigos will have the opportunity to utilise the home to school transport we anticipate the number of journeys required on public transport to be minimal.</p>
	<p>There is no sheltered bus stop outside Rhigos Primary School so where would children and parents</p>	<p>Should a decision be made to implement the proposal, then suitable pick up and drop off points would be identified by RCTCBC's</p>

	<p>wait in adverse weather conditions?</p>	<p>Integrated Transport Unit and the transport providers.</p> <p>There are already pick up and drop off points utilised for school transport in Rhigos utilising existing bus stops so it seems logical that these would remain as the location for any transport required to Hirwaun Primary School.</p>
	<p>Should the pupil numbers attending Hirwaun be lower than expected, would the home to school transport be cancelled?</p>	<p>No, in compliance with distance criteria contained within the WG's Learner Travel Measure, this transport would remain in place regardless of the numbers of pupils transported.</p>
<p>Impact on Pupils</p>	<p>Transition arrangements.</p>	<p>If the proposal were to go ahead, there will be targeted support for all pupils from Hirwaun Primary School and Rhigos Primary School. Meaningful and positive transition is an integral part of ensuring that pupils settle into their new school setting with little disruption to their well-being and education. This is supported by providing effective pastoral and academic support and structured opportunities for pupils to become familiar with the new school environment and staff.</p> <p>Advice and support will be provided by RCTCBC to both schools involved to ensure that the transition process is as smooth and seamless as possible.</p>
	<p>Pupil well-being has not been considered.</p>	<p>The well-being of all pupils has been considered and is paramount. The transition arrangements that will be delivered, as noted above, ensure there will be lots of opportunities to help the pupils navigate the change and happily settle into their new school as quickly as possible.</p> <p>Further information is included within the Equality Impact Assessment. In addition, RCTCBC considers that the proposal benefits the children and</p>

		<p>young people in accordance with the seven core aims set out within the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child.</p>
	<p>The children from Rhigos will feel like outsiders as they attend a school outside of their community.</p>	<p>Hirwaun Primary School already welcomes children from other communities. The catchment area was extended to include pupils from Penderyn in 2021 and there are also a number of pupils that attend from outside the current catchment area. The new pupils from Penderyn were welcomed into the Hirwaun Primary School family and they have successfully settled into their new school. To provide reassurance we can confirm that they are not treated any differently which will also be the case for any pupil from Rhigos wishing to attend Hirwaun Primary School.</p>
Impact on Staff	<p>What support is available for staff?</p>	<p>RCTCBC has well established Human Resource (HR) policies and procedures that give reassurance to staff and employers about the management of organisational change.</p> <p>RCTCBC's HR Team have already visited all staff in Rhigos Primary School, and all are aware of the processes that may follow and the operational and personal support that is on offer.</p>
Impact on Parents/Carers	<p>What about the cost implications of new uniforms etc?</p>	<p>RCTCBC acknowledges that, should the proposal be approved, there would be cost implications of new uniforms. Where necessary parents/carers will be signposted to the School Essentials Grant which provides assistance to families on lower incomes for the purchase of school uniform.</p> <p>At Hirwaun Primary School there is a uniform exchange service available, where good quality, pre-used uniform can be accessed by those that need it.</p>

Finance/Effective Financial Management	This is a money saving exercise by RCT	As has been stated many times, the reasons for the proposal is multi-faceted and is explained within the Consultation Document.
	<p>There is no detailed breakdown of the figures included in the consultation document so their accuracy cannot be challenged.</p> <p>The figures are based on assumptions.</p>	<p>The figures included in the Consultation Document are based on the pupil numbers and the information available at both Rhigos Primary School and Hirwaun Primary School at the time the Consultation Document was compiled.</p> <p>As has been previously stated, the Consultation Document sets out RCTCBC's proposal for change, and so has to be written from the perspective of the proposal being implemented so that the impact of the proposal can be clearly set out for scrutiny.</p> <p>In this regard, elements of the Consultation Document have to be written with the assumption that the proposal will be realised in order that the financial implications of the implementation of the proposal can be calculated.</p>
Alternative Options	We do not consider that the options included within the consultation document were ' <i>consciously considered</i> '.	<p>In accordance with the WG's School Organisation Code 2018 (011/2018) there were a number of options considered, as well as the expected benefits of the proposal and disadvantages when compared with the status quo.</p> <p>Some of the benefits and disadvantages contained within the Consultation Document have been repeated, which was cited as a criticism in some responses, but that does not make them irrelevant or less valid.</p>
	Why is there no funding available for a new school in Rhigos?	The funding used for Hirwaun Primary School was secured via the WG's Sustainable Communities for Learning Programme, (previously known as the 21 st Century Schools and Colleges Programme). There are funding parameters levied by the WG

		<p>that need to be met in order to secure funding via the WG's Sustainable Communities for Learning Programme, as well as being able to robustly demonstrate that the project will deliver value for money. This is a competitive process across the whole of Wales.</p> <p>When funding for Hirwaun Primary School was secured, it was rated one of the worst condition buildings in RCTCBC's building portfolio. The project met the WG's investment objectives, the need for investment was successfully evidenced, and funding approval was secured. The project was delivered under budget.</p> <p>RCTCBC has an obligation to invest in, and maintain, all of its 115 schools across 116 sites and so projects for inclusion in the new WG's Sustainable Communities for Learning Programme are prioritised in relation to various criteria including demonstrating need, viability and value for money.</p> <p>Funding a new school for Rhigos Primary School is not a priority for RCTCBC when other school sites in the RCT are more acutely in need of investment. In addition, given the falling pupil projections at Rhigos Primary School, demonstrating value for money on a cost per pupil basis would be extremely challenging, if not impossible.</p>
<p>Legitimacy of the Consultation Process</p>	<p>The consultation period was too short.</p>	<p>The WG's School Organisation Code 2018 (011/2018) sets out the parameters for the consultation. It states that consultees must be given at least 42 days to respond to the Consultation Document. For this proposal, consultees were given 47 days which exceeds the statutory obligation placed upon us in this regard.</p>

	<p>The information presented in the Consultation Document is biased in favour of Hirwaun Primary School.</p>	<p>The purpose of the Consultation Document is to present a proposal, and the fact that this is just a proposal at this point in time is clearly referenced. To confirm, all information presented has been done in accordance with the WG's School Organisation Code 2018 (011/2018).</p> <p>Some responses specifically question the choice of the images used in the Consultation Document. To clarify, the same data for both Rhigos Primary School and Hirwaun Primary School has been included in the 'Where we are now' section of the Consultation Document, with external images of both Rhigos Primary School and Hirwaun Primary School included. Further information and images on Hirwaun Primary School were included within the 'Where we'd like to be' section of the Consultation Document, as this sets out the perceived benefits of moving pupils from Rhigos Primary School to Hirwaun Primary School. There is no bias intended, merely the logical and coherent setting out of the proposal.</p> <p>RCTCBC refutes this comment.</p>
	<p>The data presented within the Consultation Document has discrepancies and is out of date.</p>	<p>The data presented within the Consultation Document is in compliance with the WG's School Organisation Code 2018 (011/2018).</p> <p>All data sets provided were the most up to date at the time of writing. Those included are in accordance with the information prescribed within the WG's School Organisation Code 2018 (011/2018). To clarify, in terms of the pupil numbers reported, there is a distinction made between statutory aged pupils and non-statutory aged pupils.</p> <p>The Estyn information included in the Consultation Document is taken from the most recent inspections</p>

		<p>undertaken in Rhigos Primary School and Hirwaun Primary School in 2018 and 2019 respectively. This is in accordance with the WG's School Organisation Code 2018 (011/2018) where it states a Consultation Document must contain:</p> <p><i>'Information from the most recent Estyn reports for each school.'</i></p> <p>The property condition survey information included in the Consultation Document is taken from the most recent property condition survey undertaken in 2019. This is in accordance with the WG's School Organisation Code 2018 (011/2018) where it states that:</p> <p><i>'Information about the quality of accommodation at all existing schools likely to be affected by the proposal including reference to RCTCBC's most recent condition survey'.</i></p>
	<p>The information presented in the Children and Young People's Consultation Document is biased in favour of Hirwaun primary School.</p>	<p>RCTCBC has acknowledged that the voice of children and young people is about involving them as active participants in the development, delivery, management, and improvement of their educational experience.</p> <p>Children and young people have a right to express their views in all matters affecting them and for their views to be heard and considered in accordance with their age and maturity. As such, RCTCBC's 21st Century Schools Team ensured that suitable arrangements were made to involve children and young people as active participants throughout this consultation process.</p> <p>RCTCBC consulted with the children and young people who attend Rhigos Primary School and Hirwaun Primary School. This was done by producing</p>

		<p>a children and young people's version of the Consultation Document and Consultation Response Form.</p> <p>RCTCBC's 21st Century Schools Team held meetings with the School Councils of Rhigos Primary School and Hirwaun Primary School to discuss the proposal and guide the School Councils through the document itself and through the children and young people's version of the Consultation Response Form. The Consultation Document was discussed page by page with the pupils at both Rhigos Primary School and Hirwaun Primary School and was done so within the context of the consultation process. It was explicitly explained on numerous occasions during the sessions at both Rhigos Primary School and Hirwaun Primary School that no decisions on the proposal had been made.</p> <p>These consultation sessions had the support of school-based specialist staff to support pupils and assist with the engagement process. Feedback from these meetings was collated, summarised and incorporated into the Consultation Report.</p>
<p>General Objection</p>	<p>I do not agree with the proposal due to the biased, incomplete and incorrect information contained within the consultation document and the bias of RCT throughout the process.</p>	<p>This is a generic objection that does not specifically reference which elements within the Consultation Document it refers to.</p> <p>However, for clarity, the information included within the Consultation Document was factual and was the most up to date information available at the time the consultation commenced.</p> <p>RCTCBC refutes the claim to the information being biased.</p>

LOCAL GOVERNMENT ACT 1972

AS AMENDED BY

THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT (ACCESS TO INFORMATION) ACT 1985

RHONDDA CYNON TAF COUNTY BOROUGH COUNCIL

CABINET

29TH APRIL 2024

REPORT OF THE DIRECTOR OF EDUCATION AND INCLUSION SERVICES IN DISCUSSION WITH THE CABINET MEMBER FOR EDUCATION, YOUTH PARTICIPATION AND WELSH LANGUAGE (COUNCILLOR R LEWIS)

ITEM: PROPOSAL TO CLOSE RHIGOS PRIMARY SCHOOL WITH PUPILS TRANSFERRING TO HIRWAUN PRIMARY SCHOOL

BACKGROUND PAPERS

18th September 2023

CABINET: STATUTORY SCHOOL ORGANISATION – PROPOSAL TO CLOSE RHIGOS PRIMARY SCHOOL WITH PUPILS TRANSFERRING TO HIRWAUN PRIMARY SCHOOL

14th December 2023

EDUCATION AND INCLUSION SCRUTINY COMMITTEE: PRE-SCRUTINY OF A DRAFT CABINET REPORT: ‘PROPOSALS TO CLOSE RHIGOS PRIMARY SCHOOL WITH PUPILS TRANSFERRING TO HIRWAUN PRIMARY SCHOOL’

18th December 2023

CABINET: PROPOSAL TO CLOSE RHIGOS PRIMARY SCHOOL WITH PUPILS TRANSFERRING TO HIRWAUN PRIMARY SCHOOL

11th January 2024

OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE: CALL-IN: PROPOSAL TO CLOSE RHIGOS PRIMARY SCHOOL WITH PUPILS TRANSFERRING TO HIRWAUN PRIMARY SCHOOL

Other Information:

Relevant Scrutiny Committee:

Education and Inclusion Scrutiny Committee.
Overview and Scrutiny Committee.

Officer to Contact:

Lisa Howell, 21st Century Schools Business and School Organisation Manager

RHONDDA CYNON TAF COUNTY BOROUGH COUNCIL

CABINET

29TH APRIL 2024

**BUSINESS IN THE COMMUNITY AND RHONDDA CYNON TAF PLACE
PARTNERSHIP**

**REPORT OF CHIEF EXECUTIVE IN DISCUSSION WITH THE LEADER OF
THE COUNCIL, CLLR ANDREW MORGAN, OBE**

Author(s): Paul Mee, Chief Executive

1. PURPOSE OF THE REPORT

- 1.1 The purpose of the report is to seek Cabinet approval to establish the Business in the Community and Rhondda Cynon Taf Place Partnership.

2. RECOMMENDATIONS

It is recommended that the Cabinet:

- 2.1 Approve the participation of the Council in the creation of the Business in the Community and Rhondda Cynon Taf Place Partnership, and
- 2.2 Approve the allocation of resources identified in section 8.

3 REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATIONS

- 3.1 Business in the Community (BITC) UK have invited the Council to participate in their national place programme and offered to work with the Council, local businesses, and our communities to create a Rhondda Cynon Taf Place Partnership. The partnership would follow the BITC approach for community regeneration focussed on uniting stakeholders around a single vision.
- 3.2 This report seeks members approval to participate in the creation of the BITC and Rhondda Cynon Taf Place Partnership.

4. BACKGROUND

- 4.1 Business in the Community (BITC) is the UK's largest and most influential responsible business network dedicated to building a fairer and greener world together. BITC is supported by His Majesty the King. BITC aim to inspire and challenge purposeful leaders to take practical action to mobilise their collective strength as a force for good in society.
- 4.2 BITC's vision is "A fairer and greener world driven by fairer and greener businesses". Their mission in places is "To deliver long term transformative change by convening and uniting business leaders, politicians, local councils and community leaders around a single shared vision."
- 4.3 BITC's place programme brings people together to create a leadership platform to deliver long term transformative change in communities. BITC have identified Rhondda Cynon Taf as an area that could become part of its place programme. This is on the basis that Rhondda Cynon Taf meets their criteria for establishing a place approach:
- Evidence of need.
 - Levers for change.
 - Business leadership and investment.
 - Local government engagement and investment.
- 4.4 Officers have been engaged in dialogue with BITC over recent months to explore and refine the BITC place proposal for Rhondda Cynon Taf. The output from these discussions is presented at Appendix I and proposes establishing a Business in the Community and Rhondda Cynon Taf Place partnership.
- 4.5 The proposal sets out BITC's place approach which includes:
- Cross sector collaboration.
 - Community engagement.
 - Developing a long-term vision.
 - Deliver short term change to build trust, and
 - Developing a prospectus which sets out the partnership's plans and ambitions.
- 4.6 The Council has shared information with BITC to support the development of this proposal, identifying the challenges that our communities are facing but also the opportunities that exist and the ambitions that the Council has set out in its new corporate plan.

- 4.7 In creating a place partnership there is the opportunity to determine what the partnership will focus on and its priorities, and the geographical area of focus. These would be agreed following consultation with the community, business, and the Council.
- 4.8 BITC have previously established place partnerships across the UK, including Blackpool, Rochdale, Coventry, Bradford, and Norwich. In Wales, BITC have created their most recent place partnership in Newport, which is referenced in the proposal as a case study. Rhondda Cynon Taf would be the second area in Wales to participate in the programme.
- 4.9 Should members decide to participate in the BITC place programme, this would require an initial commitment of three years and would require match funding from the Council to establish the partnership.

5 EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY IMPLICATIONS / SOCIO-ECONOMIC DUTY

- 5.1 As this report is seeking to simply establish the place partnership there are no equality and diversity or socio-economic duty requirements at this stage.

6 WELSH LANGUAGE IMPLICATIONS

- 6.1 As this report is seeking to simply establish the place partnership there are no Welsh language implications at this stage.

7 CONSULTATION / INVOLVEMENT

- 7.1 Cross sector collaboration and community engagement are an integral part of the BITC place approach. As this report seeks approval to commit this Council to the BITC place programme there are no consultation requirements at this initial stage.

8 FINANCIAL IMPLICATION(S)

- 8.1 The BITC proposal aims to secure a match funding contribution from the Council of £50k per year for three years. These resource requirements will be met from within existing resources. Subject to the development of the partnership and the priorities and plans it identifies there may be further resource requirements, but these would be subject to further consideration and approval as and when necessary.

9 LEGAL IMPLICATIONS OR LEGISLATION CONSIDERED

- 9.1 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 Council's Corporate Plan 'Working with Our Communities' sets out its vision where 'All people, communities, and businesses can grow and live in a healthy, green, safe, vibrant and inclusive County Borough where they can achieve their full potential in all aspects of their lives and work, both now and in the future' and sets out its four well-being objectives:

- **People and Communities** – Supporting and empowering Rhondda Cynon Taf residents and communities to live safe, healthy, and fulfilling lives.
- **Work and Business** – helping to strengthen and grow Rhondda Cynon Taf's economy.
- **Nature and Environment** – a green and clean Rhondda Cynon Taf that improves and protects the environment and nature.
- **Culture, Heritage, and Welsh Language** – recognising and celebrating Rhondda Cynon Taf's past, present, and future.

10.2 The BITC place proposal supports the Council's four well-being objectives and has the potential to contribute to many of the priorities identified in the Corporate Plan.

10.3 The Well being of Future Generations (Wales) Act established a duty that public bodies act in accordance with the sustainable development principle and sets seven well-being goals to be achieved through five ways of working. The BITC place proposal has the potential to make a positive contribution towards the well-being goals; in particular that of a prosperous Wales, a more equal Wales, and a Wales of more cohesive communities. The approach aligns closely with the five ways of working:

- Long term – the partnership will develop a long-term vision around which all stakeholders can unite.
- Integration – the partnership will set up a business led cross sector board.
- Involvement – the partnership will develop community conversations to engage and understand the place.
- Collaboration - the partnership will set up a business led cross sector board.
- Prevention – The partnership will deliver action on the ground and develop a prospectus setting out longer term plans and ambitions.

10.4 The Council has recently been successful in its bid for funding to establish a Health Determinants Research Collaboration (HDRC) in Rhondda Cynon Taf. If the Council supports the creation of the BITC Place Partnership, the work of both collaborations will be aligned to ensure they are complimentary.

11 CONCLUSION

11.1 The Council has been invited by Business in the Community UK to participate in the creation of the Business in the Community and Rhondda Cynon Taf Place Partnership, which aims to deliver long term transformative change by convening and uniting business leaders, politicians, local councils, and community leaders around a single shared vision.

11.2 The proposed approach aligns closely with the well-being objectives set out in the Council's Corporate Plan and has the potential to make a positive contribution to delivering the Council's priorities for community regeneration.

Other Information:-

Relevant Scrutiny Committee

Overview & Scrutiny Committee

Contact Officer

Paul Mee, Chief Executive

LOCAL GOVERNMENT ACT 1972

AS AMENDED BY

THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT (ACCESS TO INFORMATION) ACT 1985

RHONDDA CYNON TAF COUNTY BOROUGH COUNCIL

CABINET

29TH APRIL 2024

**REPORT OF THE CHIEF EXECUTIVE IN DISCUSSION WITH THE LEADER
OF THE COUNCIL, CLLR ANDREW MORGAN, OBE**

Item: Business in the Community and Rhondda Cynon Taf Place Partnership

Background Papers

None

Officer to contact: Paul Mee

Business in the Community and Rhondda Cynon Taf Place Partnership

Aligned in our desire for a better future for the people of Rhondda Cynon Taf and future generations.

Business in the Community

Business in the Community transforms businesses, lives and communities to deliver:

- Sustainable and inclusive economic growth
- Greater social mobility
- A faster and fairer transition to net zero and climate resilience

We are a high-impact network of collaborative, innovative and purposeful leaders with a unique ability to connect businesses to some of the UK's hardest-to-reach communities.

Rhondda Cynon Taf Council

Rhondda Cynon Taf is the third largest Local Authority in Wales providing services for the local community, businesses and the 237,651 people who live there.

Rhondda Cynon Taf Council's Corporate Plan 'Working with Our Communities' sets out its Vision where 'All people, communities, and businesses can grow and live in a healthy, green, safe, vibrant and inclusive County Borough where they can achieve their full potential in all aspects of their lives and work, both now and in the future' and sets out its four well-being objectives:

- **People and Communities** – Supporting and empowering Rhondda Cynon Taf residents and communities to live safe, healthy, and fulfilling lives.
- **Work and Business** – helping to strengthen and grow Rhondda Cynon Taf's economy.
- **Nature and Environment** – a green and clean Rhondda Cynon Taf that improves and protects the environment and nature.
- **Culture, Heritage, and Welsh Language** – recognizing and celebrating Rhondda Cynon Taf's past, present, and future.

BITC's Place Programme

The UK is one of the most geographically unequal countries in the developed world, and Place-based transformation is needed in communities most at risk of being left behind. This approach requires longer-term collaboration between the local council, community leaders, businesses, and government, with real vision, leadership and an understanding of local needs to make change happen.

Over the last 40 years, BITC has identified what is needed to deliver change within places of high deprivation and low social mobility and developed a blueprint approach for community regeneration focused on uniting stakeholders around a single vision.

We work in Places across the UK, such as Newport, Blackpool, Rochdale, Coventry, Bradford, Sheffield and Norwich transforming lives and enabling greater social mobility. While the places look and feel different, because they are place-led, our approach is consistent.

BITC's approach builds on our unique business network and experience of harnessing business leaders' skills and convening power to facilitate local partnerships between businesses, communities and local councils. BITC's local development leads play a crucial role in breaking down long-standing barriers between stakeholders to convene partnerships.

BITC'S PLACE APPROACH: HOW WE WORK

While the Places look and feel different, because they are Place-led, our approach is consistent



BITC's approach to setting up the place: the first 12 months

- **Recruit a Strategic Partnership Manager** - The Strategic Partnership Manager is a driven and tenacious individual, integral to the creation of trust, collaboration, and partnerships. They develop a deep understanding of the place and businesses' role in creating long-term change. They help solve day-to-day problems, whilst facilitating strategic, cross-sector relationships.
- **Galvanising Leadership and setting up the Place Board** - Securing the expertise, resource, and commitment from across the sectors, bringing together individuals with



passion and power over the key issues in the place to form an informal, business-led steering group.

- **Stakeholder engagement and building traction** – community conversations, mapping and engaging stakeholders and achieving ‘quick-wins’, in order to create momentum, build credibility and gain trust. early action will be tangible and aligned to local priorities.
- **Establish a vision and determining the priorities of the place** – Establishing a long-term, strategic vision for the place is an essential tool to: recognise and leverage the unique strengths, heritage, and identity of the place; draw on local pride; set long-term direction and attract inward investment; convene stakeholders; align disparate activity around a shared ambition. The vision will be created and owned locally and form the basis of a draft Prospectus document. Whilst the vision will outline priorities over a 10+ year period, action planning will help to prioritise those that we can begin to address in Year 2, based on local capacity, available resources, and level of urgency. This will translate into key workstreams, owned and led by a member of the steering group and a sub-group of delivery partners.

Identifying Priorities / Vision

BITC and Rhondda Cynon Taf Council will work in partnership to identify the issues we aim to address and to support us to do this we will use the Community Insight profile for RCT January 2024, the Community Insights ward profile, local area energy plans, Rhondda Cynon Taf Corporate Plan, Index of Multiple Deprivation and other key Rhondda Cynon Taf strategy documents.

The Community Insight profile for RCT shows that:

- People with no qualifications - 24.2% of working age people (Wales= 19.9%)
- People with highest qualification level 4+ (degree) - 26.7% of working age people (Wales= 31.5%)
- Repeated pupil absence is the percentage of primary and secondary school pupils missing more than 15% of school sessions – 6.2% (Wales average 5.3%)
- Youth unemployment is 5.3% (Wales average = 4.4%)
- Incapacity benefit claimants 8.0% (Wales average = 6.0%)
- Working age workless benefit claimants 11.1% (Wales average = 9.3%)
- Personal Independence Payments (PIP) have been introduced to replace Disability Living Allowance for all new claimants. PIP helps with some of the extra costs caused by long-term disability, ill-health or terminal ill-health. 15.1% of people (Wales= 12.5%)
 - PIP with mental health conditions 5.2% of people (Wales= 4.5%)



- Universal Credit claimants provides are benefits payable to all people of working age (16-64) who need additional financial support due to low income, worklessness, poor health, caring responsibilities, bereavement or disability 16.0% (Wales average = 15.5%)
- Housing Benefit claimants provides a measure on the number of households living in poverty 9.7% (Wales average 9.4%)
- Number of people in RCT January 2024 living in the most deprived 20% of areas in Wales 27.0% (Wales average = 19.5%)
- Vulnerable children, children in relative low income families 23.0% (Wales average = 21.2%)
- Vulnerable children, children in absolute low income families 15.1% (Wales average = 14.4%)
- Vulnerable children, number of people living in the most deprived 20% of areas in Wales on the Child Index 28.0% (Wales average = 23.4%)
- People renting from Housing Association or Social Landlord 8.2% (Wales average = 7.8%)
- Households with multiple deprivation are households experiencing four key measures of deprivation:
 1. All adult household members have no or low qualifications
 2. At least one household member is out of work (due to unemployment or poor health)
 3. At least one household member has a disability
 4. The household is living in overcrowded conditions
 - a. Household is deprived in 1 dimension 33.1% (Wales average = 33.4%)
 - b. Household is deprived in 3 dimensions 5.9% (Wales average = 4.5%)
- Mental health related benefits (DWP Feb-23) 4.0% of working age adults (Wales average = 2.9%)
- Number of people living in health deprivation 'hotspots' 42.0% (Wales average = 19.3%)
- Households living in 'Fuel Poverty' - 15.6% (Wales average = 13.9%)
- People with no access to a vehicle - 22.2% of 104,931 households (Wales = 19.4%)

Improved Outcomes

Determining what we focus on and our priorities will be agreed following consultations with the community, business and Rhondda Cynon Taf Council. However, based on the levels of deprivation indicated in the Community Insights profile and where Rhondda Cynon Taf Council deprivation indicators are higher than the Wales average, over the longer-term (10+ years) our place programme could work towards the following example outcomes:





1. **Education, Employment & Skills activities** that will help to improve people's confidence and self-esteem and raise people's aspirations -
 - Improve educational attainment
 - Increase number of people with high level skills and qualifications
 - Increase the potential for economic growth
 - Increase numbers of people in good quality employment
2. **Build Community resilience**
 - Enable communities to be resourceful, resilient and self-sufficient
 - Grow the capacity of the community
 - Galvanising that sense of pride that people have to help them strive for a better future
 - Work in partnership with the Welsh Government's Integrated health and social care hubs to improve health outcomes
 - Improve the wellbeing of future generations
3. **Reduce carbon, achieve net zero and improve nature**
 - Use the local area energy plans to reduce fuel poverty and create affordable warmth
 - Enable people to gain the skills to access the jobs created by climate action
 - Create more green spaces
 - Create more community growing spaces
 - Build resilience to climate impacts, such as flooding and excess heat

This is about long-term collaboration and the action planning that we do in year 1 will help to prioritise what we focus on in year 2 and 3.

Deep Dive Ward

Rhondda Cynon Taf covers 424 km² (164 sq miles) and the RCT CI report has identified wards with the highest levels of adverse impacts. We will review those wards against the ability of businesses to provide support, to identify specific places to focus.



Case Study

THE JOURNEY TO NEWPORT, BITC'S MOST RECENT PLACE



NEWPORT

- ✓ Evidence of need
- ✓ Levers for change
- ✓ Business leadership & investment
- ✓ Local government engagement & investment

1. BOARD COMMITMENT

The Wales Leadership Board were keen to establish a Place for Wales.

2. INITIAL IDENTIFICATION OF PLACES

The Board identified a shortlist of places, including Rhondda Cynon Taff (RCT) and Rhyl.

3. EVALUATION AGAINST PLACE CRITERIA

RCT and Rhyl scored low on levers for change and business leadership. Newport scored well across all four categories.

4. INITIAL INVESTMENT SECURED

KLA (via its KLA Foundation) made a three-year investment upfront to support the establishment of the place.

5. DEPLOY RESOURCE

BITC resource was appointed to begin building relationships on the ground.

6. A COALITION OF FUNDERS

Working with the Wales Leadership Board, other companies invested incl. Welsh Water, Wales & West Utilities, Mott McDonald, STG Aerospace and University of South Wales.

7. COUNCIL BACKING

In negotiation with Newport Council for funding and support.

BITC Cymru Leadership board

[BITC Cymru's Leadership Board](#) chaired by **Peter Perry, Chief Executive, Dŵr Cymru Welsh Water** is a network of senior leaders whose mission is to make Wales a responsible business nation.

They will bring their influence to bear in transforming the prospects of a place and creating a blueprint for business engagement in place-based transformation across Wales.

They have been instrumental in launching the place programme in Newport and are fully supportive of a place in the Rhondda Cynon Taff.



Cost

BITC'S PLACE APPROACH: WHAT IT COSTS

£100K

(per place, per year)



BUSINESS FUNDING

Typically makes up at least 50% of the overall funding.



COUNCIL MATCH FUNDING

We aim to get councils to match every £ of corporate contribution on a 1:1 basis.

££££



OTHER FUNDING OPPS

To support the delivery of projects in the place.

Rhondda Cynon Taf Council contribution - £50,000 per year for a minimum 3-year period.

BITC Contact

Tracy Rees, Senior Lead and Interim Wales Director Tracy.Rees@bitc.org.uk



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RHONDDA CYNON TAF COUNTY BOROUGH COUNCIL

CABINET

29th APRIL 2024

RHONDDA CYNON TAF HEALTH DETERMINANTS RESEARCH COLLABORATION

**REPORT OF DIRECTOR - PUBLIC HEALTH, PROTECTION AND
COMMUNITY SERVICES IN DISCUSSION WITH THE CABINET MEMBER
FOR PUBLIC HEALTH AND COMMUNITIES, CLLR. BOB HARRIS.**

**Author: Louise Davies, Director - Public Health, Protection and
Community Services**

1. PURPOSE OF THE REPORT

- 1.1 The purpose of the report is to update Cabinet on the award of funding to establish the Rhondda Cynon Taf Health Determinants Research Collaboration (RCT HDRC) and to seek approval of the aims and objectives of RCT HDRC from 2024-2028.

2. RECOMMENDATIONS

It is recommended that the Cabinet:

- 2.1 Acknowledge the award of £5 million to the Council from the National Institute of Health and Care Research (NIHR) to establish the RCT HDRC.
- 2.2 Endorses the role of the Council in leading a new collaboration with Wales Centre for Public Policy, Cardiff University, Cwm Taf University Health Board, Interlink RCT and Public Health Wales which seeks to tackle the wider determinants of health to reduce health inequalities and improve the health of residents in RCT.
- 2.3 Approve the aims and objectives of RCT HDRC and delegate responsibility for overseeing delivery of the programme by the collaboration and achievement of the outcomes of RCT HDRC to the Director - Public Health, Protection and Community Services.

3. REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATIONS

- 3.1 Reducing health inequalities is central to the priorities of this Council. Poverty and its impacts are long-standing challenges in RCT that have been exacerbated by the pandemic and ongoing cost of living crisis.

COVID-19 laid bare the relationship between poverty, the wider determinants of health and the inequalities in health outcomes for the most disadvantaged.

- 3.2 Over the next five years this Council will face difficult decisions about how to improve the life chances of its residents in the context of growing demand and constrained resources. RCT HDRC will strive to ensure that these decisions are rooted in the best available evidence, and that by the time the next Corporate Plan is produced, the Local Authority (LA) has a culture of co-production with citizens, a robust evidence base to identify what works and what matters, and an evidence informed approach to policy making.

4. BACKGROUND

- 4.1 NIHR is financed by the Department of Health and Social Care and is the nation's largest funder of health and care research with a mission to improve the health and wealth of the nation through research. The Health Determinants Research Collaboration (HDRC) is a new element of NIHR research infrastructure funded by its Public Health Programme that is based in local government. The purpose is to enable LAs to become more research-active, undertake new research and use existing evidence to inform our decision making and undertake evaluation activities. There is a central focus on health inequalities and actions to tackle issues faced by disadvantaged groups and areas. Awards of £5 million (total) per LA over 5 years are available to successful LAs.

- 4.2 The HDRC Programme was launched in 2022 with a rigorous application and interview process that determined awards were made to 13 local authorities. A second year of funding was announced and applications from LAs were invited in April 2023. A bid for RCT was co-led by the Council and Wales Centre for Public Policy, in collaboration with partners from Cardiff University, Cwm Taf Morgannwg University Health Board, Interlink RCT and Public Health Wales. In 2023, 11 LAs were successful in receiving full funding to establish a HDRC with 6 other LAs receiving one year of development funding. RCT is the only LA in Wales to be awarded full HDRC funding, from January 2024 to December 2028.

4.3 What does RCT HDRC aim to achieve?

4.3.1 The vision

The vibrant research culture of the RCT HDRC underpins an evidence-based decision-making system, which breaks the cycle of poverty, by improving the life chances of the most disadvantaged and addressing the wider determinants of health.

4.3.2 Aims

To achieve the vision, by the end of the five-year period RCT HDRC aims to demonstrate:

- I. RCT LA is a research active organisation where research is embedded in the LA culture and a sustainable research infrastructure has been developed.
- II. Increased use of research evidence in LA decisions about wider determinants of health and health inequalities.
- III. Increased research literacy among Staff, Citizens, Senior Leaders and Elected Members.
- IV. Evidence of improved capability of LA staff & citizens to routinely generate & use research evidence.
- V. Funding has been secured for research to inform and evaluate LA efforts to break the cycle of poverty, address the wider determinants of health and reduce health inequalities.
- VI. A stronger collaboration between the public, LA, Interlink RCT and Community Voluntary Organisations, CTM University Health Board, Wales Centre for Public Policy and Cardiff University, Public Health Wales, & other partners.
- VII. Regional & national research infrastructure is mobilised to support RCT HDRC objectives and build the reputation of RCT LA as a centre of excellence for health determinants research.
- VIII. RCT HDRC learning is actively shared with other LAs & Health Boards across Wales and with LAs and academic communities across the UK with an interest in improving collaboration across research, policy and practice.

4.4 How will the HDRC realise our vision and aims?

- 4.4.1 RCT HDRC brings together organisations and people, who until now, have not routinely and systematically collaborated to generate and use research. This will bring in the essential capability needed to drive a sustained culture of research and evidence within the LA.
- 4.4.2 To achieve our aims, RCT HDRC will deliver a co-ordinated set of objectives that will, over time, change the culture of RCT LA. **Appendix 1** of this report sets out the detail of those objectives (known as work packages), how we will measure success and monitor impact/outcomes. Work packages will be co-led by LA senior officers and domain experts from partner organisations.
- 4.4.3 The investment from NIHR will create a new multi-disciplinary Research and Development Team in the LA that draws on the expertise and experience of the partner organisations (**Appendix 2 - Figure A**).

This team will:

- Target key decisions on the wider determinants of health (e.g. housing, employment services, and school attendance and attainment) with projects that bring together the best available evidence and expertise to provide recommendations for action.
- Provide training and development to staff to improve core skills and research literacy across the LA.
- Identify opportunities for new research and create multi-disciplinary groups to develop these into fundable research proposals; and
- Work to adapt the LA's internal processes to ensure that the way that individuals, services and the organisation are managed supports the generation and use of research evidence.

4.4.4 Woven through the HDRC will be work that will support citizens to be collaborating partners in the work of RCT HDRC. Using the relationships and networks of Interlink RCT, RCT HDRC will recruit 'citizen researchers' who will work alongside the Research and Development Team, receiving training and support to enable them to do so.

4.4.5 Underpinning governance arrangements will establish the cross-organisational working practices and develop a monitoring framework for RCT HDRC. The governance arrangements for RCT HDRC are set out in **Appendix 2 - Figure B** of this report. The Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Public Health and Communities are members of the Strategic Oversight Board for the HDRC. There are also strong links to the Council's Information Management Board. Within the operating infrastructure of the HDRC, it will use existing internal processes of reflection and data capture to monitor impact and generate learning which will be shared with staff, councillors, the public and wider networks across Wales and the rest of the UK. With strong support from leaders in RCT LA, these activities will drive a change across the organisation, leading to positive impacts on the lives of the local population.

4.5 **What will be the added value and impact?**

4.5.1 RCT HDRC will provide essential capacity and develop LA capability to advance evidence-based practice, to generate knowledge to inform decisions, and to test and innovate to improve the health of our populations. As a result, the LA will tackle health inequalities in RCT and address wider health determinants that directly affect the life chances of our residents.

4.5.2 Each RCT HDRC Work Package will generate short and medium-term impact which will contribute to the expected long-term impact of the RCT HDRC as a whole: a research culture within the LA, in which the workforce are evidence-aware and research confident, research is

embedded in LA decision-making cycles and health inequalities and outcomes are improved for the citizens of RCT.

- 4.5.3 At the end of 5 years, the innovation delivered by the RCT HDRC will influence the health determinant priorities of a new Corporate Plan. By 2027-28, the impact of the RCT HDRC will mean the LA has a culture of co-production with citizens, a robust evidence base to identify what works and what matters and an evidence informed approach to policy making that affects the wider determinants of health and health inequalities. This will be the foundation for building the future strategic priorities of this Council and making sustainable changes to reduce poverty and improve the life chances of our population.

5. EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY IMPLICATIONS / SOCIO-ECONOMIC DUTY

- 5.1 As this report is to provide an update on the funding award to the Council and to seek approval of the strategic aims and objectives of the RCT HDRC, there are no equality and diversity or socio-economic duty requirements at this stage.

6. WELSH LANGUAGE IMPLICATIONS

- 6.1 As this report is to provide an update on the funding award to the Council and to seek approval of the strategic aims and objectives of the RCT HDRC there are no Welsh language implications at this stage.

7. CONSULTATION / INVOLVEMENT

- 7.1 Members of the public have already shaped the development of the RCT HDRC. The views of residents were a key component of the application for funding made to the NIHR. Residents told us they think it will make a difference to their communities and they have helped us plan how to work and communicate with them. Citizen involvement and participation is a cross cutting area of work for the RCT HDRC and there will be opportunities for members of the public to:

- Become citizen researchers.
- Be part of the management and advisory teams.
- Engage in workshops to review research priorities in RCT.
- Learn about research and findings through events, our website and social media.

Interlink RCT are a key partner in the RCT HDRC and they will support achievement of the public participation objectives for the HDRC.

8. FINANCIAL IMPLICATION(S)

- 8.1. RCT HDRC is fully funded by the NIHR award of £5 million from January 2024 to December 2028. The costs of the new staff infrastructure, operating costs and delivery of well supported community involvement activity will be met from the grant.

9. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS OR LEGISLATION CONSIDERED

- 9.1 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 Council's Corporate Plan "Working with Our Communities" sets out its vision where 'All people, communities, and businesses can grow and live in a healthy, green, safe, vibrant and inclusive County Borough where they can achieve their full potential in all aspects of their lives and work, both now and in the future' and sets out its four well-being objectives:

- **People and Communities** – Supporting and empowering Rhondda Cynon Taf residents and communities to live safe, healthy, and fulfilling lives.
- **Work and Business** – helping to strengthen and grow Rhondda Cynon Taf's economy.
- **Nature and Environment** – a green and clean Rhondda Cynon Taf that improves and protects the environment and nature.
- **Culture, Heritage, and Welsh Language** – recognising and celebrating Rhondda Cynon Taf's past, present, and future.

- 10.2 All four of the Council's well-being objectives impact on the wider determinants of health and ensuring the success of the RCT HDRC will support and contribute holistically to the priorities identified in the Corporate Plan.

- 10.3 The Well being of Future Generations (Wales) Act established a duty that public bodies act in accordance with the sustainable development principle and sets seven well-being goals to be achieved through five ways of working. RCT HDRC will make a positive contribution towards the well-being goals; in particular, that of a healthier Wales, a prosperous Wales and a more equal Wales. The approach aligns closely with the five ways of working:

- Long term – the collaboration aims to ensure the work of the HDRC is sustainable beyond the 5 years of initial funding and the outcomes achieved become embedded in the Council's way of working into the future.

- Integration – the collaboration will establish a diverse new partnership between health, academia, community and the LA with the citizen voice integrated throughout the work of the HDRC.
- Involvement – the involvement of the public in all RCT HDRC activities is a core principle on which the RCT HDRC is based.
- Collaboration - RCT HDRC is a collaborative venture that has full support of key partners and citizens in the development of the work programme and achievement of success outcomes.
- Prevention – The vision of RCT HDRC is to ensure the LA can reduce health inequalities and address the wider determinants of health through evidence based practice, to prevent ill health and promote longer and healthier lives for the residents of RCT.

10.4 The Council has recently been approached to create a Business in the Community Place Partnership, and should it determine to support the BITC proposal, the work of both collaborations will be aligned to ensure they are complimentary.

11. CONCLUSION

11.1 RCT HDRC offers a new and innovative opportunity to work with sector leading partners, academia and our communities to establish a culture of evidence informed practice and decision making, and research activity across RCT and the LA. The new funding ensures the required governance, infrastructure and relationships within the collaboration can be established. This will enable the Council to make positive progress to achieve the vision of tackling poverty and reducing health inequalities in RCT and improve the lives and health of our residents into the future.

LOCAL GOVERNMENT ACT 1972

AS AMENDED BY

THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT (ACCESS TO INFORMATION) ACT 1985

RHONDDA CYNON TAF COUNTY BOROUGH COUNCIL

CABINET

29th APRIL 2024

**REPORT OF DIRECTOR - PUBLIC HEALTH, PROTECTION AND
COMMUNITY SERVICES IN DISCUSSION WITH THE CABINET MEMBER
FOR PUBLIC HEALTH AND COMMUNITIES, CLLR BOB HARRIS**

**RHONDDA CYNON TAF HEALTH DETERMINANTS RESEARCH
COLLABORATION**

Background Papers

None

Relevant Scrutiny Committee

Overview & Scrutiny Committee

Officer to contact:

Louise Davies

Appendix 1

RCT HDRC Programme of work, success measures and impact

	Description	Success measures	Outcomes/impact
Overall RCT HDRC	The vibrant research culture of the RCT HDRC underpins an evidence-based decision-making system, which breaks the cycle of poverty, by improving the life chances of the most disadvantaged and addressing the wider determinants of health.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Research and evidence used as basis for development of RCT 2028 Corporate Plan. • National and regional research infrastructure mobilised. • Evidence of other decision-making bodies using HDRC outputs. • Evidence of other research infrastructure supporting RCT HDRC. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • LA is a research active organisation underpinned by a sustainable research infrastructure. • RCT has a reputation as a centre of excellence for health determinants research. • Improved health outcomes for individuals.
WP1: Involve and engage the public in all RCT HDRC activities	Working collaboratively with Interlink RCT, the HDRC will seek to engage and involve the public in all areas of work. Citizen researchers will be recruited to inform HDRC priorities and actions, join HDRC groups and boards, co-produce and co-deliver research projects and support dissemination activities. WP1 will engage seldom heard groups through innovative and creative approaches to maximise participation.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Recruitment process for identification and selection of citizen researchers developed and implemented. • Successful recruitment of members of the public as citizen researchers and within RCT HDRC governance. • Ongoing public engagement with RCT HDRC. • Positive feedback from members of public on experience of involvement and participation and evidence of changes made as a result. • Positive feedback from LA staff on impact of engagement. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increased awareness of research and health literacy across RCT communities. • Sustainable mechanisms for public involvement in LA research, including citizen researcher models. • Involvement of the public in LA decision-making, prioritisation and planning. • Sharing of best practice of the citizen researcher model in RCT HDRC across Wales & UK.
WP2: Mobilise evidence to support decision making	Evidence needs will be addressed through the LA annual self-assessment cycle. Knowledge mobilisation projects to address identified needs will be co-developed and co-delivered with practitioners, decision-makers, academics and citizen researchers. Evidence will be synthesised and relevant and responsive outputs will be created and disseminated.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Engagement of LA staff, academic experts, and citizen researchers in project design/delivery. • Engagement with knowledge mobilisation outputs. • Positive feedback on quality of outputs (relevance, timeliness, accessibility, if actionable). 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • LA decisions about the wider determinants of health are informed by research. • Service commissioning, provision and policies are evidence-informed. • Outcomes relating to the wider determinants of health are improved.

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Use of outputs (e.g. reference RCT HDRC outputs in policy documents). 	
<p>WP3: Develop skills and capacity to generate, translate and use evidence</p>	<p>LA skills, capacity and capability will be mapped through the Council performance management framework process, followed by a capability and capacity consultation to identify opportunities to use existing training provision, and where new training provision is required. Short courses will be co-developed and delivered to build capacity and capability amongst citizens and LA staff.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Number of staff and citizens pursuing relevant training opportunities • Staff and citizen engagement with RCT HDRC projects, training and research incubation. • Impact on capabilities / skills evidenced through Performance Management Framework (PMF) process. • Evidence of improvements in use of evidence, evaluation and knowledge mobilisation through the LAs Annual Service Self Evaluation process. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increased capacity and capability of LA staff to routinely generate and use research evidence. • Improved internal evaluation within the LA drawing on skills gained from training. • A skilled and diverse multi-agency partnership of research staff and stakeholders.
<p>WP4: Facilitate development of research proposals and funding applications to address identified evidence gaps</p>	<p>Multi-disciplinary groups, including citizen researchers, LA representatives, academic experts and partners, will be convened to develop research funding applications to address evidence gaps identified in WP2. As the HDRC progresses, LA staff will be supported to lead and facilitate development of bids as co- and lead-applicants.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Number of research development groups launched (up to 2 by the end of Year 1; with up to 3 per year for the following four years). • Number of research bids submitted per year (up to 4). • Proportion of submitted bids led by RCT. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Funding secured for research to inform and externally evaluate LA efforts to address wider determinants of health. • A transition to leadership by LA staff, supported by academic partners, of research projects and funding applications. • LA is research active, with staff strategically identifying opportunities for research development.
<p>WP5: Adjust LA structures and processes to facilitate and integrate research and evidence activity</p>	<p>Evidence and research use will be embedded in the LA annual PMF cycle. Access to, and use of evidence, will be strengthened. Opportunities to adapt behaviours, structures and processes to promote, support and facilitate research culture, and embed evidence more systematically in reports for consideration by decision-makers will be identified.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Integration of RCT HDRC activities into PMF and preparation of Socio-economic impact assessments that evaluate the potential impact of policy developments. • Adaptation of PMF processes to facilitate spread of learning and capture impact. • Engagement with RCT HDRC outputs, and other sources of evidence becomes a 'routine' behaviour for staff, senior leaders and elected members. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increased awareness of research and health literacy among LA staff • Corporate plans build on and integrate evidence. • A sustainable research infrastructure is developed to support local evidence use to inform practice. • Research culture is embedded in LA.

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • RCT HDRC facilitating placements and collaborations across partner organisations that extend beyond work programmes. • Changes to recruitment for key roles in the LA to recognise skills and competencies required to sustain ongoing evidence use and research activity. 	
<p>WP6: Create the governance structure to support HDRC delivery, monitor impact and disseminate learning</p>	<p>Robust governance structures will be established, and partnership agreements established to support effective HDRC set up and management of the HDRC. Activity indicators and outcome measures will be developed and monitored to capture impact, and outputs will be disseminated effectively with local, regional and national audiences, via established and new networks of influence of collaborating partners.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Building productive working relationships across partners in the Strategic Oversight Board and Operational Delivery Group based on a Collaboration Agreement. • Timely and impactful reporting on progress against RCT HDRC objectives to inform RCT Leadership Team, Cabinet and NIHR, and to support learning and evaluation of impact. • Engagement with outputs from outside RCT LA. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Strong partnerships between the public, LA, Interlink RCT, HB, CU, PHW and other partners. • RCT HDRC is integrated with and supported by national and regional research infrastructure. • Learning from RCT HDRC is shared across other LAs, HBs and UK-wide.

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Appendix 2

RCT HDRC Governance and Staffing Structures

Figure A: RCT HDRC Staffing Structure

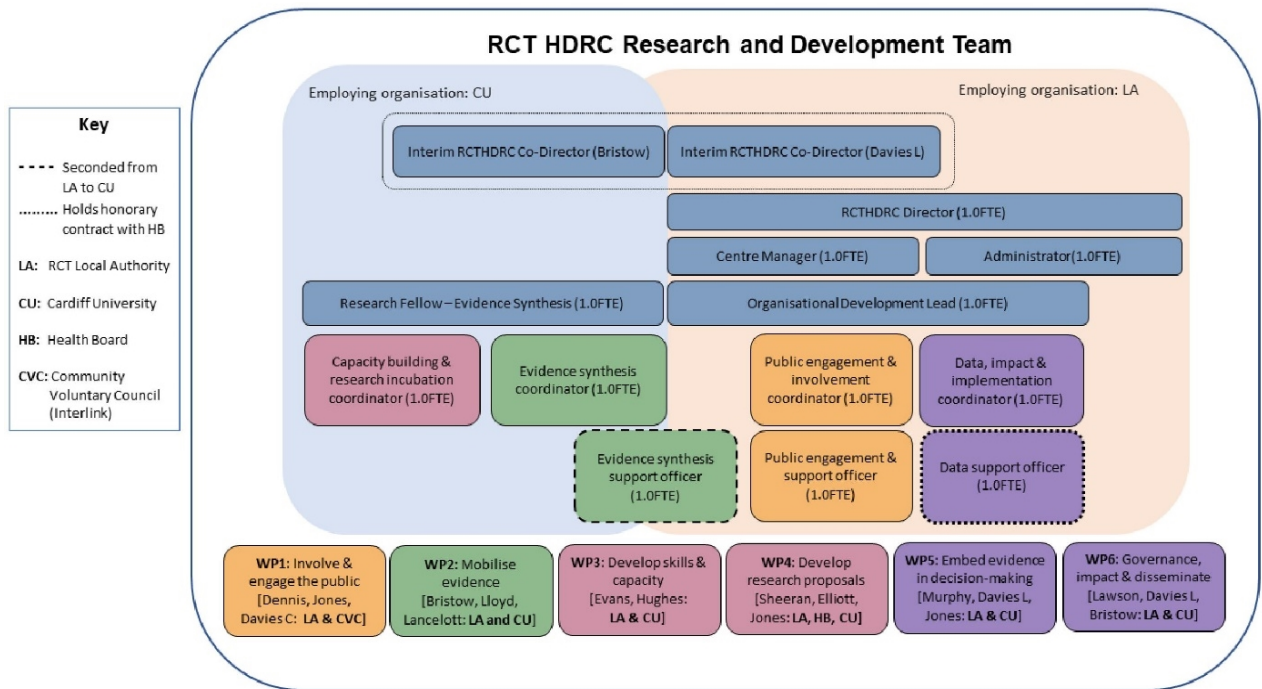
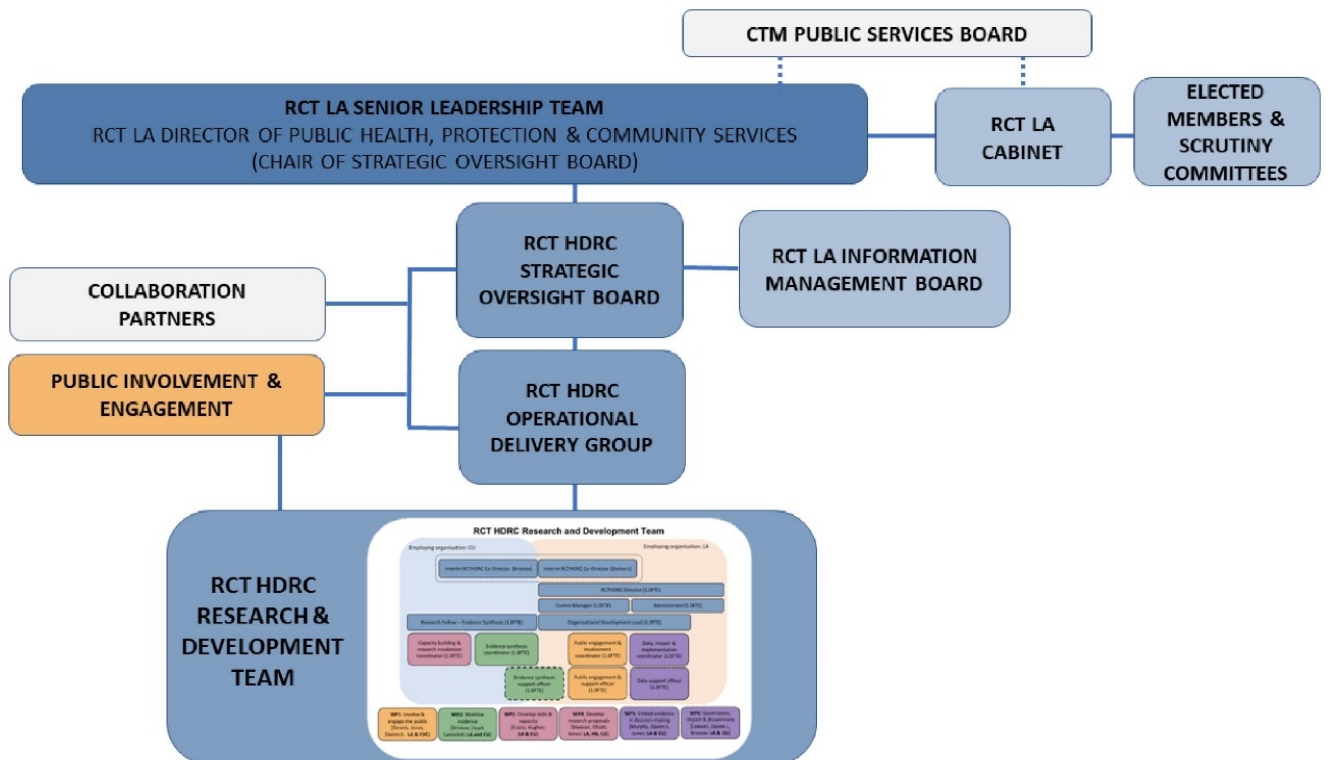


Figure B: Governance Structure



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RHONDDA CYNON TAF COUNTY BOROUGH COUNCIL

CABINET

DRAFT ADULT SOCIAL CARE STRATEGY

29th APRIL 2024

REPORT OF THE DIRECTOR OF SOCIAL SERVICES IN DISCUSSION WITH THE RELEVANT PORTFOLIO HOLDER, COUNCILLOR G CAPLE

Author: Sian Nowell, Director of Adult Services

1. PURPOSE OF THE REPORT

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to provide the Cabinet with a new six-year draft Adult Social Care Strategy (2024/30) that sets out our vision and priorities until 2030 and seek approval to undertake a targeted consultation.

2. RECOMMENDATIONS

It is recommended that Cabinet:

- 2.1 considers the information contained within the report and reviews the contents of the new six-year draft Adult Social Care Strategy (2024/30).
- 2.2 agrees to undertake an 8 week targeted consultation to seek the views of residents, partners and other key stakeholders, on the future strategy, vision and priorities for adult social care in Rhondda Cynon Taf as set out in Appendix 1.
- 2.3 subject to 2.2 above, agrees to receive a further report detailing the outcome of the proposed targeted consultation prior to any final decision being made in relation to the future strategy for adult social care in Rhondda Cynon Taf.

3. REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATIONS

- 3.1 In order to provide clarity about the future strategy and priorities for adult social care in Rhondda Cynon Taf it is important that the vision and priorities for adult social care have been shaped by residents, local partners and other key stakeholder. Thereby enabling people with care and support needs, their families, carers and residents to understand how adult social care will work with them to live their best life.

4. **BACKGROUND**

4.1 At a time of real challenge and change, It's important we work together to deliver a new Adult Social Care Strategy. We understand the importance of having a place to call home, surrounded by friends and neighbours, doing the things people enjoy and with people looking out for one another. However, we know that we still have work to do to transform our social care services for adults both to improve the experience of those with eligible needs but also to manage our resources sustainably. This is within the context of the Councils financial pressures, increasing demographic demands, growing public expectations and a challenging workforce agenda.

4.2 The new draft six-year strategy for adult social care in Rhondda Cynon Taf (2024/30) sets out our vision and priorities, and most importantly how we will achieve them. A copy is attached at Appendix 1.

4.3 Our draft Council vision for adult social care in Rhondda Cynon Taf:

Every person in Rhondda Cynon Taf that needs care and support is empowered to live in a place they can call home, with people important to them, in caring communities that look out for one another, doing things that matter to them.

4.4 This isn't just an adult social care vision; this is a whole Council vision for adult social care that informs the people of Rhondda Cynon Taf of our intentions for social care.

4.5 Specifically the strategy emphasises our direction of travel in adult services to

- Encourage people to help themselves:
- Support people when they need it:
- Support people to live a good life:

4.6 Adult services will work to this direction of travel by delivering on the 6 priority aims that are:

1. To connect people to their communities.
2. To make it simpler and easier for people to be independent.
3. To support people to have a safe place to live where they feel at home.
4. To deliver a connected system of support.
5. For people to benefit from a well-trained, engaged workforce.
6. To continually improve the standards and sustainability of the service

- 4.7 The priorities build on the good work that has been done so far by our workforce and with partner organisations, but further transformation is required.
- 4.8 Once the draft is agreed Adult services will set out a more detailed 6-year plan to progress the work within our current service planning arrangements.

5. EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY IMPLICATIONS/SOCIO-ECONOMIC DUTY

- 5.1 There are no immediate Equality and Diversity/Social-Economic Duty implications relating to the recommendations within this report.
- 5.2 An EQIA pre-screening exercise has been completed and no negative impacts identified at this stage and the indication is that the impact will be positive. However, it is recognised that the implementation of a new strategy for adult social care may affect people with care and support needs, their families, and carers so it is critical that they are able to contribute to the strategy. The proposed engagement and consultation will therefore be designed to ensure residents are effectively able to engage and ensure their voice can be heard and actively influences the outcomes.
- 5.3 If Cabinet agree to the recommendations in Section 2 of this report, a full EQIA will be completed evaluating any impact of the proposed new strategy and this will be included in the subsequent report to Cabinet for consideration prior to any final decision being made in relation to the future strategy for adult social care in Rhondda Cynon Taf.

6. WELSH LANGUAGE IMPLICATIONS

- 6.1 There are no immediate Welsh Language implications relating to the recommendations within this report. The Council will ensure compliance with Welsh Language Standards if a consultation process is initiated in relation to the proposals outlined within this report. All recommended proposals if implemented will comply with Welsh Government's "More Than Just Words" Strategic Framework in Health and Social Care.

7. CONSULTATION/INVOLVEMENT

- 7.1 It is proposed that, subject to Cabinet approval, an 8 week targeted consultation exercise is undertaken. This will consist of on-line surveys, along with, officers attending groups and forums around the county borough to reach to key stakeholders, including residents service providers and other partner organisations. A consultation document, an

easy read version of the Strategy, and plan on a page will all been developed prior to the consultation. In addition, all materials will be available in Welsh.

- 7.2 The Community Services Scrutiny Committee will be involved in the process.

8. FINANCIAL IMPLICATION(S)

- 8.1 Taking forward the priorities within the Strategy will be undertaken in line with the available budget, where appropriate. Programmes of work with financial implications will be outlined separately to seek approval will be considered as part of Medium-Term Financial Planning arrangements to ensure that spending priorities are aligned, where appropriate, with the Strategy, if approved.

9. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS OR LEGISLATION CONSIDERED

- 9.1 The new six-year draft Adult Social Care Strategy (2024/30) has been developed in accordance with The Social Services and Well-being (Wales) Act 2014.

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

- 10.1 The new six-year draft Adult Social Care Strategy (2024/30) aligns strongly with the ambitions of **Working With Our Communities**, and in particular, the following Wellbeing Objective:

- **People and Communities** - supporting and empowering Rhondda Cynon Taf residents and communities to live safe, healthy and fulfilling lives.

- 10.2 The draft strategy, subject to approval, would allow the Council to meet the requirements of the Social Services and Wellbeing (Wales) Act 2014 and the Wellbeing of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015. The strategy aims put adult social care on a sustainable footing whilst ensuring that people who need services receive them, promoting choice, wellbeing, and independence and thereby supporting achievement of the seven wellbeing goals for Wales and five ways of working, included in the Wellbeing of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015.

11. STRATEGIC OR RELEVANT TO ELECTORAL WARDS

- 11.1 The new six-year draft Adult Social Care Strategy (2024/30) is strategic and is applicable to all electoral wards and residents of Rhondda Cynon Taf.



12. CONCLUSION

- 12.1 The new six-year draft Adult Social Care Strategy (2024/30) sets out our vision and priorities until 2030 and seeks Cabinet approval to undertake an 8 targeted consultation in order for key stakeholders to contribute to the strategy and ensure their voice can be heard and actively influences the outcomes.



LOCAL GOVERNMENT ACT 1972

AS AMENDED BY

THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT (ACCESS TO INFORMATION) ACT 1985

RHONDDA CYNON TAF COUNTY BOROUGH COUNCIL

CABINET

DRAFT ADULT SOCIAL CARE STRATEGY

29th APRIL 2024

**REPORT OF DIRECTOR OF SOCIAL SERVICES IN DISCUSSIONS WITH
COUNCILLOR GARETH CAPLE, CABINET MEMBER FOR HEALTH AND
SOCIAL CARE**

Background papers

None

Officer to contact:

Sian Nowell, Director of Adult Services

Rhondda Cynon Taf Council

Draft Adult Social Care Strategy 2024-2030

The Council's Vision is for a Rhondda Cynon Taf where: People, communities, and business can grow and live in a healthy, green, safe, vibrant, and inclusive County Borough where they can achieve their full potential in all aspects of their lives and work, both now and in the future.

INTRODUCTION

Welcome to the Council's first Adult Social Care Strategy that sets out our vision and priorities until 2030, and the outcomes we expect to achieve, alongside our partners and stakeholders, on behalf of the residents of Rhondda Cynon Taf.

This strategy is developed with reference to 'Working with Our Communities' the Council's Corporate Plan (2024/30) and aligns particularly to the Council's wellbeing objectives for People and Communities - Supporting and empowering Rhondda Cynon Taf residents and communities to live safe, healthy and fulfilling lives.

As is the case for the Council's Corporate Plan, Adult Services is committed not just to make improvements for people accessing its services today but also has a responsibility to make sure our offer is fit to continue to support people with eligible needs live a good life in the future.

This strategy provides the framework that will guide and shape what we do, direct how and where we allocate our resources, manage, and mitigate strategic risks and inform how we train and develop our staff and support our Councillors to meet the current and future challenges.

Challenges such as:

- The growing vulnerability and complexity of need across our population, many of whom may experience poor health with complex care and support needs.
- The inequalities in health, education, work and life chances.
- The need to balance the competing needs and expectations of our population against the reality of reducing financial settlements for the Council.
- The need to manage the increasing cost of care associated with wider cost of living increases such as utilities, interest rates and inflation but also associated with an increasing value and recognition of the social care workforce and a compulsion to secure its supply.
- The imperative to maintain a recognised, motivated, skilled and flexible workforce that can help us to deliver excellent services to meet growing demand with optimism and ambition.
- The importance of working in partnership with a wide variety of stakeholders across a number of market sectors to enhance the efficiency and quality of the support options available for people.
- The requirement to meet the Legislative and Regulatory requirements that govern our work including specifically for adult services:
 - Social Services and Wellbeing (Wales) Act 2014
 - Mental Health Act 1983
 - Mental Health (Wales) Measure 2010
 - Mental Capacity Act 2014
 - Regulation and Inspection of Social Care Act 2016

These challenges mean we have to look to do things differently and change our service model to focus our adult social care resource where we can achieve the best outcomes for people.

Our model in summary will be to:

Encourage people to help themselves:

We will encourage and empower people to keep well and do as much for themselves as possible, for as long as possible, using their own personal strengths and resources as well as the assets they have around them either from family, friends or their community. This will include sometimes intervening at an early stage to avoid or reduce an escalation of need.

Support people when they need it:

We will work with people with good quality and intensive interventions to help them reach their optimum level of independence. Mostly this will require a short-term period of direct care and support but we will also explore how the use of equipment and technology can enhance people's ability to reduce their reliance on others.

Support people to live a good life:

For those people who have eligible needs that require longer term care and support we will commission services that are focussed on achieving what matters to the person and designed to restore, enhance and maintain their independence. We will in some situations deliver services directly or in partnership with our health service colleagues to meet the needs of people who are most vulnerable or who have the most complex needs.

CONTEXT FOR THE STRATEGY

Adult social care is an essential part of the fabric of our society, with an impact on the lives of adults of all ages (young people moving into adulthood, those of working age and those in older age) with a diverse range of needs (people with autism, people with a learning disability a physical disability a mental health condition including dementia, people affected by substance misuse and other people with long term conditions) and their unpaid carers.

People draw on adult care and support in different ways and at different stages of their life; some people will require support throughout their life whilst for others care needs develop suddenly or gradually at a specific point. Some people may only use social care for a short period to help them to regain, or maintain, their independence after being discharged from hospital whilst others need help for longer periods.

However, and whenever people need adult social care, the purpose of our intervention is to improve a person's wellbeing by facilitating what is needed for them to achieve what matters that they could not have done without our help.

The Social Services and Wellbeing (Wales) Act 2014 sets out our responsibilities as a local authority for improving the wellbeing of people who need care and support, and unpaid carers who need support, and for transforming social services in Wales. The fundamental principles of the Act are:

- **Voice and control**– putting the individual and their needs, at the centre of their care, and giving them a voice in, and control overreaching the outcomes that help them achieve wellbeing.
- **Prevention and early intervention**– increasing preventative services within the community to minimise the escalation of critical need.
- **Wellbeing**– supporting people to achieve their own wellbeing and measuring the success of care and support.
- **Co-production**– encouraging individuals to become more involved in the design and delivery of services.

In Adult Social Care, we are responsible for making sure that people can direct the care and support they need, to achieve what matters. We are also responsible for ensuring this care and support is well co-ordinated and effective. This does not always mean that we will provide the care and support directly ourselves but that we facilitate sufficient capacity and quality of care and support cross the Borough to meet the full range of eligible needs in the population.

Our intention is to develop long term partnerships with our commissioned service providers to support their investment in the local workforce and their commitment to good quality care. We also intend to support our community and voluntary sector partners to make sure alternative activities and wellbeing options that enrich people's lives continue to thrive in our Borough.

Adult Social Care is delivered in a variety of ways including directly through council services, services that we buy from other social care providers, the community and voluntary sector or by support from family and friends providing informal care.

At its best, Adult Social Care enables and transforms lives. It supports people to live the lives they want to lead, where they want to live them. There is enormous potential for social care to help people stay healthy, happy, and independent through scaling up our preventative, person-centred, strengths-based approaches. This is what we hope to harness and achieve through this strategy.

Much like the rest of the country, the population in Rhondda Cynon Taf is changing as set out below but of particular note is the 13% increase in people over 65 and 25.4% increase in people over 85.

Headline population data

Now	Looking Ahead
<p>People Total population: 237,4972</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Aged 0-15 43,680 (18.4%) ○ Aged 16-64 147,030 (61.8%) ○ Aged 64+ 46,787 (19.7%) <p>32,170 people live alone, including 14,049 over the age of 66.</p> <p>Health <u>Life expectancy</u></p> <p>Male 77.0 years Male healthy life expectancy 57.1 years</p> <p>Female 80.5 years Female healthy life expectancy 60.7 years</p> <p>12.0% of people in RCT said they had disabilities which limited them a lot in their daily lives.</p> <p>11.2% of people in RCT provide unpaid care for family members or friends.</p> <p>Housing 68.5% of people in RCT own their own home (with or without a mortgage) 13.7% rent social housing. 17.7% rent private housing.</p>	<p>People 4.1% increase in population to 2030 with RCT projected to remain 3rd largest LA by population in Wales.</p> <p>By 2030 changes in the population are expected to be as follows</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Aged 0-15 42,861 (1.9% decrease) ○ Aged 16-64 151,377 (3% increase) ○ Aged 65+ 52,884 (13. % increase) ○ of which Aged 85+ 6573 (25.4% increase) <p>Health projections for Wales. 33% increase in the prevalence of stroke by 2035 22% increase in people living with diabetes by 2036. 70% increase in people living with dementia by 2040. 25% increase in people diagnosed with cancer per year by 2040.</p> <p>Housing 27% increase in single person households in 2043 25% increase of 1 adult households with children and a 16% reduction in 2 adult households with children</p>

RCT Corporate plan 2024-2030

It is estimated that around 10% of people over 65, rising up to 50% of people over 85 years live with frailty. This creates a risk to a person's overall resilience and likelihood of a full recovery from a health issue. Further, the projected increase in numbers of older people with complex care needs (such as dementia, which is expected to increase over the same period), presents a concerning forecast of increasing demands for statutory health and social care services. Particularly where Rhondda Cynon Taf also experiences a higher-than-average proportion of people with multiple chronic conditions and a lower than the Welsh average estimate of healthy life expectancy.

This presents us with a challenging Health and Wellbeing picture. We are fortunate that we have a positive tradition of joint working with the NHS to co-ordinate care for people with complex conditions and care and support needs particularly in areas such as learning disabilities, mental health services, hospital discharge and reablement. However, to effectively meet the scale and interdependency of needs anticipated from

an ageing population that live with more complex needs, we will have to facilitate a move towards a more integrated health and social care model.

A more integrated approach to meeting the health and social care needs of our population offers significant benefits. Having a strong social care voice during this process, means that we need to be clear about our vision, values and priorities for social care within the Council.

This is not just an Adult Social Care strategy; this is a whole Council strategy for Adult Social Care to inform the people of Rhondda Cynon Taf about our aims and intentions for social care up to 2030.

OUR VISION AND VALUES

Every person in Rhondda Cynon Taf that needs care and support is empowered to live in a place they can call home, with people important to them, in caring communities that look out for one another, doing things that matter to them.

The Council vision for Adult Social Care is fundamentally about:

- equity, social justice and respecting people's rights - we recognise the importance of being proactive and open as an organisation, to move beyond tolerance, towards understanding.
- valuing people for who they are, the strengths and potential they bring; leading healthy, happy lives, where they are in control and able to make the best choices for themselves and their families.
- rewarding and recognising the people working in social work and social care; they are respected, valued and empowered in their roles.
- people as active and equal partners in how we work together to co-produce, co-design, co-deliver and co-evaluate care services in Rhondda Cynon Taf.
- partnerships, organising and delivering social care support together with other partners, services to achieve the best outcomes and keep people safe from harm.
- participation, this includes being connected with others and participating positively in society. It includes people's rights to family life and for unpaid carers to have a life beyond caring.
- our communities in Rhondda Cynon Taf benefiting from and contributing to good quality social care. It's about creating places where people feel they belong, and they have equal access, irrespective of any disabilities they may have to be part of that.
- making Rhondda Cynon Taf a great place to live for everyone, whether they have care needs now, might have them in the future or are unpaid carers.
- at the heart it is about not doing to people or for people, but working with people and with partners, in ways that reflect the different places in Rhondda Cynon Taf.

Our values are key to the vision for Adult Social Care in Rhondda Cynon Taf as they define who we are, how we will work and what people should expect from adult social care in Rhondda Cynon Taf.

Being open, honest and trusted

- We will make sure conversations with people, staff and partners are strengths-based, focusing on what matters most to the person.
- We will seek to understand how we are making a difference and will share our progress in delivering on our priorities.

Treating people fairly

- We will put the person first and support people to build on their strengths and live as independently as possible.
- We will work collaboratively with partners to ensure people are treated equally and fairly. We believe the diversity of individuals and their communities are a strength.

Spending money wisely

- We will work collaboratively with partners to use all available resources as efficiently and effectively as possible.
- We will ask for feedback from people on their experience and outcomes and use this to improve how we work.

Working together

- We will work across the Council, with our partners, including those who deliver services on our behalf, and with people to support them to live a good life.
- We will support our workforce to ensure their wellbeing and they feel valued for the work they do and the commitment they bring.

Working with communities

- We will place people, families, and communities at the very heart of our work.
- We will recognise that sense of belonging, positive relationships and contributing to community life are key to people's health and wellbeing.

THE OUTCOMES

In Rhondda Cynon Taf, we work closely with colleagues across the range of health and care services, to ensure we deliver the best outcomes for people.

The outcomes define what we are working to achieve for the people of Rhondda Cynon Taf to help them live their best life. They give us direction and help us to prioritise and evaluate the work that we do to keep us on track.

Our vision for social care has been developed with our shared outcomes in mind and we will know we are succeeding when people agree with these statements.

1. I can get information and advice that is accurate, up to date and provided in a way that I can understand.
2. I know about the activities, social groups, leisure and learning opportunities in my community, as well as the health and care services.
3. I feel welcome and safe in my local community and can join in community life and activities that are important to me.
4. I am supported to make decisions by people who see things from my point of view, with concern for what matters to me, my wellbeing and health.
5. I have care and support that is coordinated, and everyone works well together and with me.
6. I have care and support that enables me to live as I want to, seeing me as a unique person with skills, strengths, and personal goals.
7. When I move between services, settings or areas, there is a plan for what happens next and who will do what, and all the practical arrangements are in place before change happens.
8. I can live the life I want and do the things that are important to me as independently as possible.
9. I feel safe and am supported to understand and manage any risks.

THE PRIORITIES

We are committed to co-producing solutions with the people who use our services, and we will be working with people to determine how we deliver on these priorities.

We think this will put us in a strong position to deliver our vision for the people of Rhondda Cynon Taf.

Our 6 priorities for the next 6 years are:

1. We will connect people to their communities.
2. We will make it simpler and easier for people to be independent.
3. We will support people to have a safe place to live where they feel at home.
4. We want people to have a connected system of support.
5. We want people to benefit from a well-trained, engaged workforce.
6. We will continually improve the standards and sustainability of the service.

Priority 1: We will connect people to their communities.

People need a sense of purpose and meaning in their lives to thrive. This could be taking up hobbies, building social networks, helping others, finding or accessing employment, education or lifelong learning. Most people can achieve all this themselves; but some need a bit of help such as information or signposting to community-based activities. Others may require advice and assistance from Adult Services to make or maintain their connections to their community and the local resources around them.

We understand the importance community connections have with regards to helping people live a good life, maintain a sense of wellbeing and contribute to the resilience and diversity of other people's connections.

Informal connections will often be more beneficial and effective for people than a reliance on formal care and support services. Obviously formal interventions have a role for people who need them but our aim will be to build on the strengths and assets already available to people from their community rather than replace them.

Of course, people who need care and support and unpaid carers who need support are best placed to advise on what matters to them including what they want to achieve and how - We will therefore make sure our practice is to co-produce plans and arrangements with people to make sure they reflect what is already working well.

Most people will have caring responsibilities at some point in their lives and those caring relationships will be varied; all unpaid carers play an important role in the lives of people with care and support needs. We recognise that many unpaid carers derive satisfaction and pride in their roles but also that caring can sometimes come at a personal and financial cost.

Whilst the health and wellbeing of unpaid carers is a clear priority for adult social care and we will make sure their caring role is supported as appropriate, we also need to make sure carers have opportunities to continue a life alongside their caring responsibilities either to access work, education, leisure or connections to community life.

How will we achieve this?

We will:

- Utilise information to better inform our understanding of local need and enable more targeted approaches to address the health and wellbeing of our population.
- Work with partners to create resilient communities that support people to stay well connected and engaged.
- Provide engaging, clear and easy-to-access information and support to people when and how they need it in order to stay healthy and well.
- Maintain an effective 'front door' service that adopts a person-centred, and strength-based approach, enabling earlier intervention by working with partners that prevent an escalation into more formal care and support.
- Support individuals with eligible needs to live and/or work more independently within their community working in partnership with others including the third sector to develop community connections, employment and volunteering opportunities.
- Ensure that our support conversations enable people to access both community and family resources, as well as, where relevant, commissioned services, to maximise their independence and achieve the outcomes that matter to them.
- Ensure unpaid carers are valued, recognised and supported to provide care in a way that supports their resilience, health and wellbeing.
- Invest in digital and community equipment to support and reduce demand for formal care, developing our assistive technology offer to enable people to remain as independent as possible within their own homes.
- Continue to work with partners to develop viable care and support alternatives and accessible housing to reduce and delay the need for long-term and more restrictive care.
- Work alongside our partners to support people to maintain their tenancies within their local community and with our commissioned providers to provide tenancy related support for those who live in supported accommodation.
- Work alongside our health partners in their aim to provide a more proactive approach to supporting people with chronic conditions and frailty to improve the health and wellbeing outcomes of the population.

Priority 2: Making it simpler and easier to stay independent.

Most people want to be able to do things for themselves and avoid reliance on others, particularly for personal care or basic daily living activities. Independence in this regard enhances choice and control and allows for autonomy and flexibility in day-to-day routines.

We know that levels of independence will differ for every individual but our focus will be to make sure every opportunity is taken to support people achieve as much independence as they can regardless of their condition or disability.

As people access health and social care services in different ways, we will continue to work with our NHS colleagues to make sure access to the advice and assistance we can offer to help people regain or maintain independent living skills and mobility is simplified.

How will we achieve this?

We will:

- Offer a range of goal-focussed interventions, available to all, to enable people living with changes in their physical, sensory, or mental health, relearn skills, recover or adapt to new ways of managing their lives.
- Work with individuals to find new ways of doing things for themselves so that they maximise choice and control over their lives.
- Advise on a wide range of equipment, adaptations and technology that individuals can use to reduce reliance on others and enhance independence, choice and control.
- Work with partners and individuals to support the expansion of travel training opportunities, to support individuals to access their local community and enhance their independence.
- Encourage all our providers, through our commissioning processes, to maintain an enabling approach to their care and support arrangements to ensure people continue to maintain their skills even when they require more formal and long-term assistance.
- Promote direct payment options and improve the processes for doing so, enabling people to maximise their choice and control about how to meet their care and support needs.
- Work with young people, their families and other involved services towards maximising their independence, drawing on young people's own aspirations for inclusion, education, employment and quality of life as part of 'preparing for adulthood' and effective transitional safeguarding.
- Work with unpaid carers to consider a wider range of simple respite options in the community that can support a life alongside caring and enhance resilience.

Priority 3: We want people to have a safe place to live where they feel at home.

Everyone needs to feel safe and protected at home in order to manage any other challenges that they may be facing. Most people with care and support needs want to be able to stay in their own homes for as long as possible but some may need temporary or longer-term accommodation with care and / or support either to facilitate independent living, to meet complex or deteriorating needs or to provide support through a period of recovery.

We know that our population is changing and that the traditional accommodation offer need to change. We will therefore continue to develop a range of good quality accommodation so that there are more options for people with care and support needs to achieve what matters to them regardless of their disabilities and conditions. Including for people needing accommodation for a short period of time or in a crisis.

Accommodation is an essential but expensive service and we are committed to making sure the accommodation we provide is as efficient and effective as possible to ensure our resources continue to support those that need it.

How will we achieve this?

We will:

- Increase and improve flexible, responsive accommodation options for older people.
- Work in partnership with our care provider market to ensure there is sufficient residential and nursing placements available in the care home sector to meet the future demand anticipated with the expected increase in the older population and associated incidence of frailty and dementia.
- Make sure the overall care home capacity across the Borough meets the needs of the population and that we work with in-house and external providers to maximise available resources.
- Make sure people with learning disabilities have access to accommodation with support that enables them to live as full and independent a life as possible in the community.
- Make sure alongside our NHS partners that people with complex needs have access when they need it to appropriate accommodation with the care and support, they need whether this is for a long or short period of time while they recover.
- Make sure that people have access, when they need it, to accommodation with support whilst they recover their mental health or work towards a recovery from substance misuse
- Where people recover their health and their ability to manage their own living arrangements is restored, we will support them to move on to more appropriate accommodation in a timely way.
- We will work with our supported living providers to make sure the overall capacity of the service resource is maximised whilst continuing to respect what matters to the tenants at each property.
- We will facilitate the availability of a range of reliable respite care options for people and their unpaid carers to support the continuation and resilience of people's care and support arrangements. This could be facilitated in a care home, shared lives or in a more specialist respite facility to reflect the diverse needs of the people that need our care.

Priority 4: We want people to have a connected system of support.

Connections are essential to providing the right support in the right place at the right time and to facilitate those connections Adult Services needs to maintain strong relationships and arrangements with a wide range of partners.

A key opportunity to connect people with eligible needs to the right place at the right time is at the point of assessment, re-assessment and review of the care and support/treatment plan.

The assessment is centred around the 'What matters' conversation and follows a 5-stage approach to considering with the person – their circumstances, the outcomes

they want to achieve, the barriers they face to achieving them, the risks of not achieving them and importantly what strengths and capabilities they have already that will support them. An effective 'What matters' conversation is a valuable opportunity for many people.

Not everyone at the conclusion of 'What matters to me' conversation will need the Council to facilitate a care and support/treatment plan as most people can draw on their own resources and support networks to maintain their wellbeing independently, often with just information and advice about what equipment or community resources are available. However, for some, a facilitated care and support/treatment plan is needed either for a short or longer period of time to achieve the outcomes they have identified. These plans are co-produced with the person and generally require the commission of a service to support, and not replace, what is already working well for the person. The review of the care and support/treatment plan is the opportunity to reflect on 'What difference' the plan has made and 'What next' in terms of any alterations needed to acknowledge improvements or to consider a different approach.

Whilst we know from what unpaid carers have told us that early contact with people for informal advice and support is valuable particularly to connect them into a life alongside caring, for some a more formal conversation to focus on their wellbeing, what matters to them and what would support them to continue in their caring role is necessary which may or may not result in an ongoing support plan facilitated by us. This, as with the other assessments and conversations, can be a valuable opportunity to connect with other people or services that can offer formal or informal support.

We know that people sometimes find health and social care services difficult to navigate and we have made changes to make it easier but also recognise we have more work to do.

We now have a clear remit as part of the Cwm Taf Morgannwg region to accelerate integration with our health partners and create a community model that can respond effectively to urgent needs to prevent reliance on hospital care as well as provide more effective ongoing health and wellbeing services to manage the growing complex care requirements of the population. Our key partner will be Cwm Taf Morgannwg Health Board but we also work in close partnership with Swansea Bay Health Board to support people with learning disabilities.

Systems of support are not always about the connection between health and local government services. Aim 1 has identified the importance of community and family connections but there are other important connections that matter to people with care and support needs such as those made on their behalf with our care and support providers, those they have with their housing providers, with the 3rd sector, with other Departments of the Council and between social care services within Adult Services as well.

How will we achieve this?

We will:

- Provide an effective assessment service to assist people achieve what matters to them. Where waiting lists for assessment are necessary, we will continually review according to agreed risk criteria and establish escalation processes to focused resources on those in greatest need and at most risk of harm.
- Provide an effective approach to the review of a care and support/treatment plan to make sure it's making the difference desired. Maintain a balance between the risks presented in the waiting list with the requirement to undertake the annual reviews whilst managing the allocation of work to the care management staff.
- Have good quality carer conversations with unpaid carers who seek more formal support from us to assist them with their role and responsibilities, contingency planning and achieving a life beyond caring.
- Work in partnership with Cwm Taf Morgannwg University Health Board to implement an integrated community health and social care service that can coordinate an effective and seamless approach, either as an urgent response to acute illness or crisis or to manage chronic and long-term health and social care needs. Linked to this is an integrated approach to supporting timely hospital discharge.
- Work in partnership with Cwm Taf Morgannwg University Health Board to provide a joint community mental health and older persons mental health service that can respond effectively to people in crisis, recovery or with complex longer-term needs.
- Work in partnership with the Cwm Taf Morgannwg region and the community safety partnership to deliver an effective substance misuse service that can support people to provide the best opportunity for sustained recovery.
- Work in partnership with Swansea Bay University Health Board to provide an effective joint learning disability assessment and treatment service that can respond effectively to people with complex needs.
- Work in partnership with colleagues in Children's Services to ensure the transition for young people and their parents/carers into Adult Services is a positive experience that appropriately supports a progression to independence and autonomy.
- Work jointly with our partners of the Cwm Taf Morgannwg Safeguarding Board to make sure effective local safeguarding arrangements identify risks early to prevent abuse and neglect and support vulnerable people feel safe and able to focus on achieving what matters to them.
- Develop a strong partnership with our new home care framework providers to refine the potential of the outcome-based service specification and maximise opportunities to deliver what matters to people.
- Encourage and support a healthy Microenterprise market across the Borough to give additional options for people to achieve what matters to them, and make sure there are effective mechanisms to connect people to this opportunity.
- Promote the option for people to manage their own care and support arrangements through direct payments and connect people to good quality support and advice to increase confidence to pursue this opportunity.
- Develop a range of daytime opportunities and day services for people with eligible needs. Our key aim as set out in Aim 1 is to assist people into mainstream

community opportunities. However, this may not be appropriate or accessible to people with more complex needs. Our responsibility will be to provide or commission a range of opportunities within our available resources and ensure we facilitate the connection for people to a service that can help them achieve the best outcome.

Priority 5: We want people to benefit from a well-trained, engaged workforce.

We work together creatively to offer innovative solutions and are trusted to make the right decisions for people. Our open and transparent way of working meets professional standards, follows best value principles, and considers the impact on our local environment and climate change.

Our work in Adult Services is challenging and heavily reliant on our workforce, their skills, resilience flexibility and commitment. The pandemic has demonstrated how important it is to recognise the social care workforce for the valuable contribution it makes to the people living in our County Borough but it also demonstrated how fragile some aspects of the workforce have become and focussed attention towards the future. The key priority for the Council over the next 5 years and beyond will be to develop a resilient social care workforce and secure the capacity required in the future to meet demand.

How will we achieve this?

We will:

- Deliver our Adult Social Care Workforce Strategy and supporting action plans to ensure:
 - We provide an environment to support an engaged, motivated and healthy workforce.
 - We attract, recruit and retain the best. people with the best values, attitude and commitment to work in social care.
 - We develop opportunities for seamless health and social care roles to support integration with health.
 - We build a digitally ready workforce.
 - Our staff have access to good quality opportunities for education and learning.
 - We make sure we plan for succession, particularly the leaders of the future.
 - We have the workforce capacity to meet the demands of the population.
- Alongside the workforce strategy we will develop a culture across all services, whether in-house or commissioned, that values what matters to the people and focusses on opportunities to support independence using the strengths and resources people already have.
- Support staff to work collaboratively with partners in health and the community; to understand each other's roles and acknowledge the strengths and opportunities offered from increased integration.
- Make sure our staff, including those working for our commissioned providers, are provided with the leadership and training to support people positively regardless of

their background, age, ethnicity, disability, sex, sexual orientation, religion, or belief.

- Make sure we provide opportunities and encouragement for our workforce to learn Welsh so that our obligation to provide social care services using the language of choice for people is secured.
will

Priority 6: Continually improve the standards and sustainability of the service.

Key to achieving continuous improvement will be the development of leadership behaviour that role models and reinforces desired cultural change. This will assist people understand strategy and direction and enable better decision making and responsiveness.

Our workforce strategy is intended to ensure people are equipped to do their job and feel empowered to face the changes ahead. Our focus on quality will continue in the workplace by supporting and developing the adult service leadership to promote and embed cultural change.

How will we achieve this?

We will:

- Develop a cultural change programme for Adult Services that meets the requirement of the Social Services and wellbeing (Wales) Act 2014 to transform our approach to social care prioritise, particularly to emphasise:
 - Co-production
 - An outcome focus that emphasises what matters to people and what difference is being achieved.
 - More consideration to the strengths and resources people have that can assist with achieving what matters and the informal assets available to them in their community.
 - The priority to enhance independence.
 - To explore new ideas and technology to create more choice and control over their own arrangements.
 - That we support and reinforce our values.
- Co-produce our strategic commissioning to design models of care that are based on the need and what matters to our local population, best practice and the resources available so that we purchase a full range of good quality services that are local, integrated, sustainable and at the capacity needed to offer choice people need to live a good life.
- Commission effective systems and processes in Adult Services to make sure we have access to reliable data and intelligence to support effective operational and commissioning decision-making.
- Make sure effective performance management systems are in place to illustrate how we are achieving the outcomes we have prioritised and also to support effective management of areas that require additional support.

- We will make sure our in-house direct care services have effective leadership and management capacity to deliver the required regulatory and expected standards of care and support, and that contract management and monitoring arrangements for our commissioned services are equally as effective.
- Make sure we have effective quality assurance frameworks in place that are used by managers to reinforce our service model and cultural change programme.
- Use every opportunity to enhance the learning opportunities for the organisation presented from examining all aspects of our practice – including the outcomes from the representation, complaints and compliments process and feedback from our engagement with our stakeholders.
- Maintain a clear focus on our financial position, and continue to consider ways to improve efficiency either alone or with others. Our priority is to ensure resources are focussed on people in greatest need and are sustainable.
- Continue to make sure we safeguard and protect adults at risk from abuse and neglect.



RHONDDA CYNON TAF COUNTY BOROUGH COUNCIL

CABINET

29th APRIL 2024

DRAFT CORPORATE PARENTING PLEDGE FOR RHONDDA CYNON TAF

REPORT OF THE DIRECTOR OF SOCIAL SERVICES IN DISCUSSION WITH THE RELEVANT PORTFOLIO HOLDER, CLLR GARETH CAPLE, CABINET MEMBER FOR HEALTH AND SOCIAL CARE

Author: Nicole Katchi, Graduate Officer for Participation, Children's Services

1. PURPOSE OF THE REPORT

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to provide Cabinet with information on the development of a draft Corporate Parenting Pledge for Rhondda Cynon Taf that supports implementation of Welsh Government's Corporate Parenting Charter – "A Promise from Wales."
- 1.2 That the Cabinet approves the draft Corporate Parenting Pledge for Rhondda Cynon Taf as attached as appendix 2 to this report and commits to the Welsh Government's Corporate Parenting Charter: "A Promise from Wales."

2. RECOMMENDATIONS

It is recommended that the Cabinet:

- 2.1 Considers the information contained within the report.
- 2.2 Approves the draft Corporate Parenting Pledge for Rhondda Cynon Taf, detailed within appendix 2 of the report.
- 2.3 Subject to 2.2, signs 'the pledge' and adopts the Welsh Government's Corporate Parenting Charter: "A Promise from Wales."
- 2.4 Delegates responsibility to the Council's Corporate Parenting Board with leading and monitoring success and commitment to the Corporate Parenting Charter.
- 2.5 Subject to 2.4, reflect the delegation to the Corporate Parenting Board within the Leader's Scheme of Delegation.

3. REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATIONS

- 3.1 The Welsh Government's Corporate Parenting Charter: "A Promise from Wales" and the draft Corporate Parenting Pledge for Rhondda Cynon Taf sets out the principles and promises that underpin the Council's Corporate Parenting responsibilities.
- 3.2 There is a strong commitment in Rhondda Cynon Taf to support and promote the wellbeing of care-experienced children and young people. Through the signing of the Welsh Government's Corporate Parenting Charter: "A Promise from Wales" and adoption of the draft Corporate Parenting Pledge for Rhondda Cynon Taf, the Council would clearly be demonstrating this commitment.

4. BACKGROUND

Welsh Government's Corporate Parenting Charter: "A Promise from Wales."

- 4.1 In December 2022 the Welsh Government held a summit where care-experienced young people from each of the 22 local authorities across Wales came together to voice their experiences of being in care.
- 4.2 The summit led to the development of the Welsh Government's Corporate Parenting Charter: "A Promise from Wales", which sets out the principles and promises to be adopted by public sector bodies when engaging with care-experienced children and young people.
- 4.3 Welsh Government wants all public sector bodies and senior leaders to sign up to this Charter as a good Corporate Parent. A copy of the Charter is included at appendix 1.
- 4.4 The Charter sets out shared principles that all bodies and their leaders should follow when providing services to care-experienced children and young people:
 - **Equality** – We will support care-experienced children and young people to have the same life chances as every other young person in Wales. This is because all children have rights, no matter who they are (Article 1. UNCRC).
 - **Eradicate Stigma** – We will recognise care-experienced children and young people for who they are, not just by their experience of

being in care. This is because all children have a right not to be discriminated against (Article 2).

- **Togetherness** – We will work alongside care-experienced children and young people to ensure their views, feelings and ideas are integral to, influence and inform the services they receive and the way they receive those services. This is because all children have a right to be listened to and taken seriously (Article 12).
- **Support** – We will ensure professionals working with care-experienced young people understand their care experiences children and young people’s needs and/or have access to information and training.
- **Ambition** – We will ensure every care-experienced child and young person reaches their potential and can enjoy a wide experience of leisure, cultural, sport and social activities. This is because all children have a right to be the best they can be (Article 3 and 29) and have the right to relax and play (Article 31).
- **Nurture** – We will make all care-experienced children and young people feel valued, respected, cared for and loved. This is because all children have a right to be safe and protected from harm (Article 19) and because all children who are not living with their families should be checked on regularly to make sure they are okay (Article 25).
- **Good Health** – We will provide support to access the right health care and advice needed to support the best physical, mental health and general well-being for all care-experienced children and young people. This is because all children have the right to the best possible health and support (Article 24 and 39).
- **A Stable Home** – We will seek out and provide stable places to live that are right for all care-experienced children and young people. This is because all children have a right to special protection if they don’t live with their family (Article 20). This is because any adoption must be overseen by Government to make it supports the young person in their growth and development, is lawful and that it prioritises children’s best interests (Article 21).
- **A Good Education** – We will provide opportunities and support for all care-experienced children and young people to learn/develop and

help them become who they want to be. This is because all children have a right to an education (Article 28 and 29).

- **Thrive** – We will ensure all care-experienced children and young people are prepared for the future and are able make positive choices for independent living and adulthood. This is because all children have a right to reach their potential (Article 3 and 29).
- **Lifelong** – We will work to provide access to and raise awareness of the support and information available after leaving care. This is because adults have a duty to act in children’s best interests (Article 3).

4.5 The Charter also clearly sets out the promises all Corporate Parents should fulfil when working with care-experienced children and young people:

- We will take time to listen to all care-experienced children and young people and ensure their views, wishes and feelings are heard and actively considered in all decisions made about them.
- We will treat all care-experienced children and young people with respect.
- We will involve all care-experienced children and young people in decisions that are made about them.
- We will keep all care-experienced children and young people informed about our involvement with them and explain our actions to them.
- We will use straightforward language when we communicate with all care-experienced children and young people.
- We will show compassion when considering the needs of all care-experienced children and young people.
- We will work with all care-experienced children and young people to help them achieve their goals.
- We will advise all care-experienced children and young people of the process to make a complaint should they feel we are not adhering to this charter.

- We will advise all care-experienced children and young people that they have a right to access independent advocacy to make sure their views, wishes and feelings are heard during decisions being made or when they are unhappy and want something stopped, started or changed.

The Corporate Parenting Pledge for Rhondda Cynon Taf

- 4.6 In order to fulfil our Corporate Parenting responsibilities to care experienced children and young people, Children's Services has developed a draft local Corporate Parenting Pledge for Rhondda Cynon Taf informed by the the Welsh Government's Corporate Parenting Charter: "A Promise from Wales" and the collective voice of children and young people in Rhondda Cynon Taf. A copy of the draft Pledge is included at appendix 2.
- 4.7 A range of consultation and participation events have been held with Rhondda Cynon Taf care-experienced young people from September 2022 to the present. 66 young people responded to the 'Get Involved' survey and 70+ young people have attended in person events.
- 4.8 The purpose of the consultation and participation events was to find out from young people their thoughts about the following:
- **What is going well for you?** (And for other young people that are care-experienced).
 - **What could be better?** (Are there any changes that you would like made for your care and support and for other care-experienced young people?)
 - **How would you like to get involved with Children's Services to have your voice heard?**
- 4.9 Our consultations with children and young people have informed the development of the 7 priorities that underpin the draft Corporate Parenting Pledge for Rhondda Cynon Taf. This Pledge builds on the undertakings of the the Welsh Government's Corporate Parenting Charter: "A Promise from Wales."
- 4.10 The 7 priorities are:
1. Ensuring that children and young people feel well cared for and supported.

2. Having a voice to develop and improve services as part of our 'You said, we will, we did...' feedback loop and to let you know how we have made improvements for your care and support.
3. Access to mental health and well-being support.
4. A stable home that is comfortable and safe whilst being in care and when leaving care.
5. Accessible information and support for independent living.
6. Improving outcomes for education, training and employment.
7. Celebrating children and young people's achievements to develop current and future aspirations.

4.11 Subject to approval of the recommendations set out in Section 2 above:

- Cabinet will adopt the Corporate Parenting Pledge for Rhondda Cynon Taf and develop a plan to support its implementation.
- The Corporate Parenting Board will be delegated responsibility to agree governance arrangements to monitor the Pledge implementation and compliance.
- The Corporate Parenting Board, along with children and young people will hold the Cabinet to account to ensure the Council deliver on the Pledge key priorities.
- Implementation of the Pledge will be monitored by the Corporate Parenting Board in its quarterly meetings, review and reported to the Cabinet through the Corporate Parenting Board's Annual Report.

5. EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY IMPLICATIONS/SOCIO-ECONOMIC DUTY

- 5.1 There are no negative impacts on those with one or more of the protected characteristics, or socio-economic disadvantage as a result of the recommendations set out in the report.

6. WELSH LANGUAGE IMPLICATIONS

- 6.1 There are no adverse Welsh Language implications associated with implementing the recommendations as a result of the recommendations set out in the report.

7. CONSULTATION

- 7.1 Consultation with key stakeholders, and in particular, care experienced children and young people has been key in developing the Welsh

Government's Corporate Parenting Charter: "A Promise from Wales" and the draft Corporate Parenting Pledge for Rhondda Cynon Taf.

- 7.2 In addition, we will work with care experienced children and young people to monitor compliance with the draft Corporate Parenting Pledge for Rhondda Cynon Taf. Our care experienced children and young people will be central to this work.

8. FINANCIAL IMPLICATION(S)

- 8.1 There are no direct financial implications aligned to this report.
- 8.2 Funding opportunities, through Children's core budget, may need to be explored to take forward elements of the implementation plans.

9. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS OR LEGISLATION CONSIDERED

- 9.1 The development of Welsh Government's Corporate Parenting Charter: "A Promise from Wales" and the draft Corporate Parenting Pledge for Rhondda Cynon Taf takes into account the overarching duties laid out in Part 2, General Functions of the Social Services and Well-being (Wales) Act 2014. Specifically, that a person exercising functions in relation to an individual for example a looked after child must have regard to the characteristics, culture and beliefs of the individual (including, for example, language. www.law.gov.wales/social-services-and-well-being-wales-act-2014-further-legislation-codes-and-guidance-made-under-act)
- 9.2 The Social Services and Well-being (Wales) Act 2014, Part 6 Code of Practice (Looked After and Accommodated Children) will be revised by Welsh Government to include additional guidance on the Charter. The updated Code of Practice will be published in 2024 and the Charter will be reviewed as part of this process.
- 9.3 The Principles and Promises link to the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC Article numbers). Children and Young People have 42 rights under the UNCRC Article numbers.
- 9.4 The role of a corporate parent is to seek for children in public care the outcomes every good parent would want for their own children.

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

10.1 The recommendations in this report supports the Council's new corporate well-being objectives outlined in Working with Our Communities and in particular the people and Communities objective.

10.2 The recommendations also supports the Council to contribute to all the seven well-being goals:

- **A prosperous Wales:** children who receive the right care and support are better prepared for adulthood and achieving prosperous futures.
- **A resilient Wales:** children who are given every opportunity to meet their developmental milestones and overcome barriers to developing skills are prepared with the space to grow and the tools to build resilience throughout life.
- **A healthier Wales:** access to high quality local services supports children to meet their developmental milestones and develop social skills, enhancing their emotional wellbeing.
- **A more equal Wales:** by delivering a full range of provision in all localities to meet the needs of children and parents ensures that children and families have access to high quality childcare irrespective of where they live.
- **A Wales of cohesive Communities:** access to services that are not restricted to particular communities promotes equality and harmony across communities and the means sharing community resources to be responsive to need and build resilience.
- **A Wales of vibrant culture and thriving Welsh language:** children who are given the potential to thrive learn to be tolerant and accepting, preparing them for a multi-racial, globalised adult world.
- **A globally responsible Wales:** children who have access to high quality care and support are afforded experiences that prepare them to be globally responsible.

11. STRATEGIC OR RELEVANT TO ELECTORAL WARDS

11.1 This report applies to all electoral wards.



12. CONCLUSION

- 12.1 There is a strong commitment in Rhondda Cynon Taf to support and promote the wellbeing of care experienced children and young people. Through the signing of the Welsh Government's Corporate Parenting Charter: "A Promise from Wales" and adoption of the draft Corporate Parenting Pledge for Rhondda Cynon Taf, the Council would clearly be demonstrating this commitment.



LOCAL GOVERNMENT ACT 1972

AS AMENDED BY

THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT (ACCESS TO INFORMATION) ACT 1985

RHONDDA CYNON TAF COUNTY BOROUGH COUNCIL

CABINET

29th APRIL 2024

DRAFT CORPORATE PARENTING PLEDGE FOR RHONDDA CYNON TAF

**REPORT OF THE DIRECTOR OF SOCIAL SERVICES IN DISCUSSION
WITH THE RELEVANT PORTFOLIO HOLDER, CLLR GARETH CAPLE,
CABINET MEMBER FOR HEALTH AND SOCIAL CARE**

Background papers:

None

Officer to contact:

Nicole Katchi, Graduate Officer for Participation, Children's Services



Llywodraeth Cymru
Welsh Government

Corporate Parenting Charter – A Promise from Wales

“A SHARED PARENTING PLEDGE”

gov.wales

What is Corporate Parenting?

- Corporate parenting promotes the collective responsibility of local authorities to safeguard and promote the rights and life chances of care-experienced children and young people. Children can find more information about their rights here: [Children’s Commissioner for Wales – UNCRC Childrens Rights](#).
- Supporting care-experienced children and young people through their childhoods and as they leave care should be the responsibility of all public sector bodies.
- We want these bodies to understand and develop their responsibilities towards care-experienced children and young people, and to ensure they have the same life chances as all children living in Wales.



Why a Charter? What’s it for?

- A Charter is a set of principles and promises. This Charter has been developed in collaboration with care-experienced young people.
- This Charter is a set of promises that can be adopted by any public sector body when engaging with care-experienced children and young people.
- It also sets out shared principles that all bodies and their leaders should follow when providing services to care-experienced children and young people.
- We want all public sector bodies and senior leaders to sign up to this Charter as a good Corporate Parent. This Charter is not exclusive to local authorities and public bodies, and we would welcome any members of the third sector and private sector to sign up and become a Corporate Parent.
- The development of this Charter takes into account the overarching duties laid out in Part 2, General Functions of the Social Services and Well-being (Wales) Act 2014. Specifically, that a person exercising functions in relation to an individual for example a looked after child must have regard to the characteristics, culture and beliefs of the individual (including, for example, language). www.law.gov.wales/social-services-and-well-being-wales-act-2014-further-legislation-codes-and-guidance-made-under-act
- The Social Services and Well-being (Wales) Act 2014, Part 6 Code of Practice (Looked After and Accommodated Children) will be revised to include additional guidance on the Charter. The updated Code of Practice will be published in 2024 and Charter will be reviewed as part of this process.

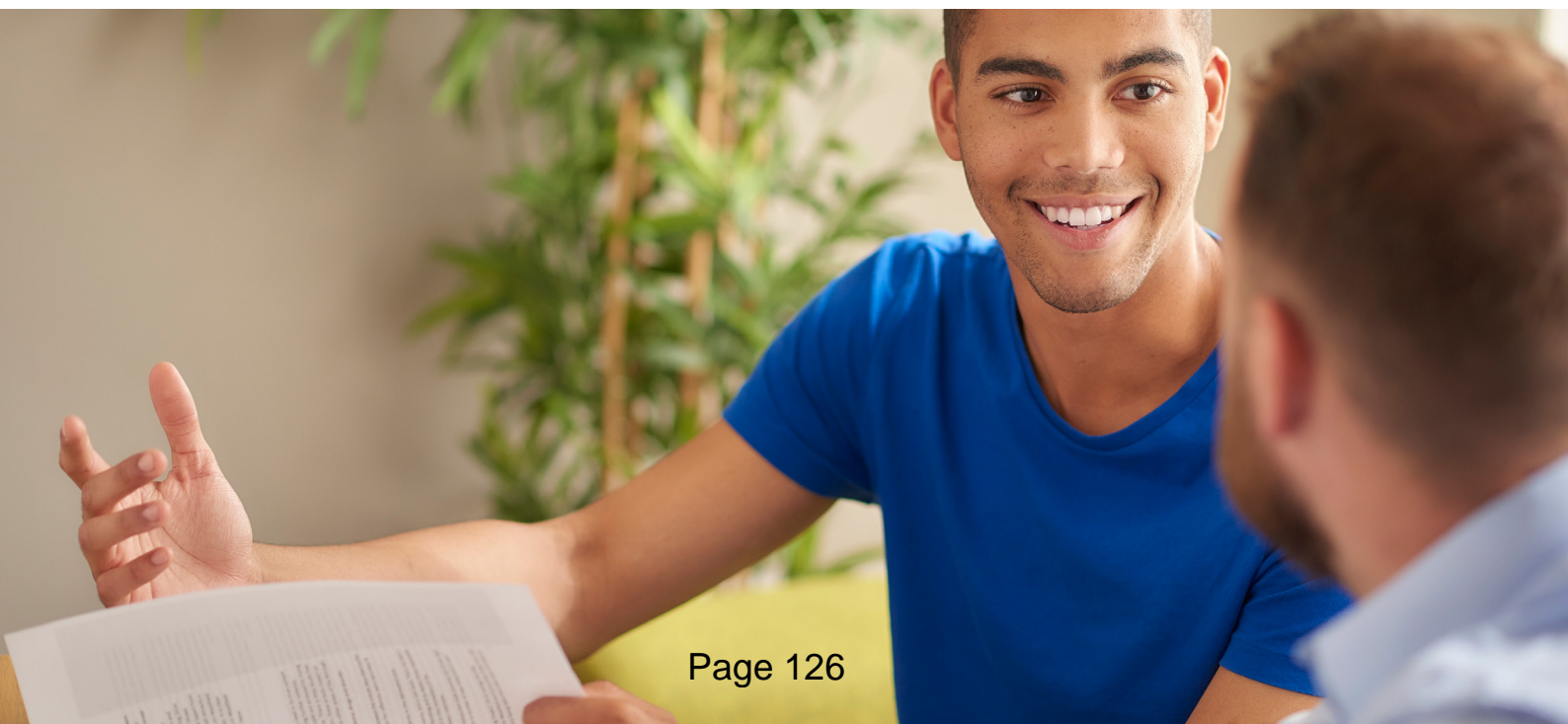
Which kind of public sector body, public service or professionals do we mean?

This charter is for any public sector body or individual who engages with or is responsible for care-experienced children and young people to adopt. For example:

- Politicians – Welsh Ministers, Members of the Senedd, (**United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child, Article 4**).
- Independent Bodies – The Children’s Commissioner, The Future Generations Commissioner and The Welsh Language Commissioner.
- Local Authorities – councillors, chief executives, directors of social services, local authority commissioners and procurement teams, housing and education, Foster Wales and National Adoption Service.
- Local Health Boards.
- NHS Trusts.
- Regional Partnership Boards.
- Social Care Providers – Local authorities, residential children’s homes and independent foster agencies.
- Social Care Professionals and practitioners – social workers, Independent Reviewing Officers (IROs), personal advisers, youth and support workers, residential children’s home staff, foster carers, kinship carers and adoptive parents.
- Housing Providers – housing associations.
- Education – schools, governors, universities, colleges and Qualifications Wales.
- Transport for Wales.
- Third Sector Organisations and voluntary adoption agencies or services.
- Inspectorates – Care Inspectorate Wales (CIW), Estyn and Health Inspectorate Wales (HIW).
- Cafcass Cymru.
- Department for Work and Pensions.
- Police – youth justice teams and those supporting individuals in custody.
- Employers/Apprenticeship/Traineeship providers.
- Other public bodies: National Resources Wales, National Park Authorities, The Arts Council of Wales, Sport Wales, National Library of Wales and National Museum of Wales. (**As listed in Section 6 of the Wales Future Generations Act 2015**).

Shared Principles for Corporate Parents

- **Equality** – We will support care-experienced children and young people to have the same life chances as every other young person in Wales. This is because all children have rights, no matter who they are (Article 1. UNCRC)
- **Eradicate Stigma** – We will recognise care-experienced children and young people for who they are, not just by their experience of being in care. This is because all children have a right not to be discriminated against (Article 2)
- **Togetherness** – We will work alongside care-experienced children and young people to ensure their views, feelings and ideas are integral to, influence and inform the services they receive and the way they receive those services. This is because all children have a right to be listened to and taken seriously (Article 12).
- **Support** – We will ensure professionals working with care-experienced young people understand their care experiences children and young people’s needs and/or have access to information an training.
- **Ambition** – We will ensure every care-experienced child and young person reaches their potential and can enjoy a wide experience of leisure, cultural, sport and social activities. This is because all children have a right to be the best they can be (Article 3 and 29) and have the right to relax and play (Article 31).
- **Nurture** – We will make all care-experienced children and young people feel valued, respected, cared for and loved. This is because all children have a right to be safe and protected from harm (Article 19) and because all children who are not living with their families should be checked on regularly to make sure they are okay (Article 25).
- **Good Health** – We will provide support to access the right health care and advice needed to support the best physical, mental health and general well-being for all care-experienced children and young people. This is because all children have the right to the best possible health and support (Article 24 and 39).
- **A Stable Home** – We will seek out and provide stable places to live that are right for all care-experienced children and young people. This is because all children have a right to special protection if they don’t live with their family (Article 20). This is because any adoption must be overseen by Government to make it supports the young person in their growth and development, is lawful and that it prioritises children’s best interests (Article 21).



- **A Good Education** – We will provide opportunities and support for all care-experienced children and young people to learn/develop and help them become who they want to be. This is because all children have a right to an education (Article 28 and 29).
- **Thrive** – We will ensure all care-experienced children and young people are prepared for the future and are able to make positive choices for independent living and adulthood. This is because all children have a right to reach their potential (Article 3 and 29).
- **Lifelong** – We will work to provide access to and raise awareness of the support and information available after leaving care. This is because adults have a duty to act in children's best interests (Article 3).

Our Promises as Corporate Parents

Set out below are the promises all Corporate Parents should fulfil when working with care-experienced children and young people:

- We will take time to listen to all care-experienced children and young people and ensure their views, wishes and feelings are heard and actively considered in all decisions made about them.
- We will treat all care-experienced children and young people with respect.
- We will involve all care-experienced children and young people in decisions that are made about them.
- We will keep all care-experienced children and young people informed about our involvement with them and explain our actions to them.
- We will use straightforward language when we communicate with all care-experienced children and young people.
- We will show compassion when considering the needs of all care-experienced children and young people.
- We will work with all care-experienced children and young people to help them achieve their goals.
- We will advise all care-experienced children and young people of the process to make a complaint should they feel we are not adhering to this charter.
- We will advise all care-experienced children and young people that they have a right to access independent advocacy to make sure their views, wishes and feelings are heard during decisions being made or when they are unhappy and want something stopped, started or changed.



References

Reference	Description
UNCRC 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.
UNCRC Article 4	Governments should make these rights available to children.
UNCRC Article 12	Respect for children's views. Children have the right to give their opinions freely on issues that affect them. Adults should listen and take children seriously.
UNCRC 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.
UNCRC 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.
UNCRC Article 21	Adoption. Government must oversee the process of adoption to make sure it is safe, lawful and that it prioritises children's best interests.
UNCRC 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.
UNCRC Article 25	(Review of treatment in care). If a child has been placed away from home for the purpose of care or protection (for example with a foster family or in a hospital they have a right to a regular review of their treatment, the way they are cared for and their wider circumstances.
UNCRC 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.
UNCRC 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.
UNCRC Article 31	All children have a right to relax and play, and to join in a wide range of activities.
UNCRC Article 39	Children who have been neglected or abused should receive special help to restore their self-respect.

UNCRC

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 1-42 set out how children should be treated.

For further information on the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child please visit: The Welsh Government's UNCRC website [Children's rights | Sub-topic | GOV.WALES](#).

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Appendix 2

Corporate Parenting Pledge for Rhondda Cynon Taf

Links to Corporate Parenting Charter-
A Promise from Wales

What is Corporate Parenting?

When a child or young person comes into care, the Council becomes the Corporate Parent. The role of a 'Corporate Parent' means the collective responsibility of the Council. This means that elected members (Councillors), employees and partner organisations have a responsibility to provide the best possible care and safeguarding for children who are looked after by us. For example, Health, Education and Children's Services to name a few would take joint responsibility for care-experienced young people.

- A child or young person that is aged 0 to 16 and has been in the care of the local authority such as a Residential Home or in Foster Care is known as 'care-experienced.'
- A young person aged 16 to 25 who is or has been in the care of the local authority is known as 'leaving care/have left care', a 'care leaver' or 'care experienced.'

Our Corporate Parenting Board in Rhondda Cynon Taf...

The Council's Corporate Parenting Board consists of a dedicated group of Councillors, supported by Senior Officers from across the Council and other organisations who take the lead in ensuring that the Council fulfils its responsibilities as Corporate Parents. The Board meet to discuss how we can work together to ensure that care-experienced children and young people in care and leaving care have all the things they need to live happy, healthy and confident lives.

The Council's Corporate Well-being Plan '**Working with our communities 2024-2030**', is guided by the Vision of Rhondda Cynon Taf where:

'All people, communities, and businesses can grow and live in a healthy, green, safe, vibrant, and inclusive County Borough where they can achieve their full potential in all aspects of their lives and work, both now and in the future.'

Our Well-being Objectives:

1. **PEOPLE and COMMUNITIES** - Supporting and empowering RCT residents and communities to live safe, healthy and fulfilling lives.
2. **WORK AND BUSINESS** - Helping to strengthen and grow RCT's economy.
3. **NATURE AND THE ENVIRONMENT** - A green and clean RCT that improves and protects RCT's environment and nature.
4. **CULTURE, HERITAGE AND WELSH LANGUAGE** - Recognising and celebrating RCT's past, present and future.

Why a Corporate Parenting Pledge in Rhondda Cynon Taf? What's it for?


Corporate Parenting is about the collective responsibility for any public sector body or individual who engages with or is responsible for care-experienced children and young people and young people to adopt.

Welsh Government held a 'Care-experienced summit' in December 2022 and young people from each of the 22 local authorities across Wales came together to voice their experiences of being care-experienced and this led to the development of a set of Principles and Promises that can be adopted by any public sector body when engaging with care-experienced children and young people (Welsh Government, 2023).

The Principles and Promises to care-experienced children and young people builds on the signing of the declaration that was held by Ministers and care-experienced young people across Wales in December 2022 (see Appendix). This led to a charter that sets out the promises that Corporate Parenting Board members should fulfil when working with care-experienced children and young people.


Shared Principles for Corporate Parents (National, Welsh Government)

- **Equality** – We will support care-experienced children and young people to have the same life chances as every other young person in Wales. This is because all children have rights, no matter who they are (Article 1. UNCRC)
- **Eradicate Stigma** – We will recognise care-experienced children and young people for who they are, not just by their experience of being in care. This is because all children have a right not to be discriminated against (Article 2)
- **Togetherness** – We will work alongside care-experienced children and young people to ensure their views, feelings and ideas are integral to, influence and



inform the services they receive and the way they receive those services. This is because all children have a right to be listened to and taken seriously (Article 12).

- **Support** – We will ensure professionals working with care-experienced young people understand their care experiences children and young people’s needs and/or have access to information and training.
- **Ambition** – We will ensure every care-experienced child and young person reaches their potential and can enjoy a wide experience of leisure, cultural, sport and social activities. This is because all children have a right to be the best they can be (Article 3 and 29) and have the right to relax and play (Article 31).
- **Nurture** – We will make all care-experienced children and young people feel valued, respected, cared for and loved. This is because all children have a right to be safe and protected from harm (Article 19) and because all children who are not living with their families should be checked on regularly to make sure they are okay (Article 25).
- **Good Health** – We will provide support to access the right health care and advice needed to support the best physical, mental health and general well-being for all care-experienced children and young people. This is because all children have the right to the best possible health and support (Article 24 and 39).
- **A Stable Home** – We will seek out and provide stable places to live that are right for all care-experienced children and young people. This is because all children have a right to special protection if they don’t live with their family (Article 20). This is because any adoption must be overseen by Government to make it supports the young person in their growth and development, is lawful and that it prioritises children’s best interests (Article 21).
- **A Good Education** – We will provide opportunities and support for all care-experienced children and young people to learn/develop and help them become who they want to be. This is because all children have a right to an education (Article 28 and 29).
- **Thrive** – We will ensure all care-experienced children and young people are prepared for the future and are able make positive choices for independent living and adulthood. This is because all children have a right to reach their potential (Article 3 and 29).
- **Lifelong** – We will work to provide access to and raise awareness of the support and information available after leaving care. This is because adults have a duty to act in children’s best interests (Article 3).



Corporate Parents in Rhondda Cynon Taf will deliver on the 'All Wales Pledge' through a localised pledge that is based on what the collective voice of care-experienced young people in Rhondda Cynon Taf are telling us for service development and improvements (see Appendix).

The Promises to Care-experienced Young People (National, Welsh Government)

- We will take time to listen to all care-experienced children and young people and ensure their views, wishes and feelings are heard and actively considered in all decisions made about them.
- We will treat all care-experienced young people with respect.
- We will involve all care-experienced children and young people in decisions that are made about them.
- We will keep all care-experienced children and young people informed about our involvement with them and explain our actions to them.
- We will use straightforward language when we communicate with all care-experienced children and young people.
- We will show compassion when considering the needs of all care-experienced children and young people.
- We will work with all care-experienced children and young people to help them achieve their goals.
- We will advise all care-experienced children and young people of the process to make a complaint should they feel we are not adhering to this charter.
- We will advise all care-experienced children and young people that they have a right to access independent advocacy to make sure their views, wishes and feelings are heard during decisions being made or when they are unhappy and want something stopped, started or changed.

The collective voice of Care-experienced young people in Rhondda Cynon Taf

Our consultations with children and young people (see Appendix) provide the following recommendations for service development and improvements. This includes the 7 priorities as a localised pledge that builds on the collective voice of children and young people.

Recommendations

- **Make sure that all trusted adults explain who they are.** Consider leaving child friendly information such as 'All about me' profiles or a child friendly letter to the young person before meeting them or with a change of Social Worker/ key member of staff.
- **Access to information.** To develop information in a range of formats that can be easily accessed and shared. Young people **16+** have told us they want easy access to information for benefits, housing, tenancy support and funding entitlements.
- **Children and young people have told us how they want to get involved.** They would like more in person meet up events, activities with nature, sports, arts and crafts and music and drama.
- **To look at different ways to keep in touch with family.** Young people have told us they would like more contact with their families.
- **Mental Health and wellbeing support.** Young people would like further support with their mental health and wellbeing activities.


Our 7 Priorities that link to the Shared Principles and Promises...

1. Ensuring that children and young people feel well **cared for and supported.**
2. Having a **voice** to develop and improve services as part of our 'You said, we will, we did...' feedback loop and let you know how we have made improvements for your care and support.
3. Access to **Mental health and well-being support.**
4. A **stable home** that is comfortable and safe whilst being in care and when leaving care.
5. **Accessible information and support for independent living.**
6. Improving outcomes for education, training and employment.
7. **Celebrating children and young people's achievements** to develop current and future **aspirations.**

How will we achieve these priorities?

We will develop an implementation plan which will be developed and agreed upon to action the 7 priorities outlined within the Pledge,

The Corporate Parenting Board will agree an implementation plan, with achievable outcomes to action these **7 priorities.**



We will look at each priority and put in place targets and achievable milestones to reach these. It is important to hear children and young people's voice through their ideas and opinions to improve services in Rhondda Cynon Taf.

We will also write a report every 12 months to provide progress updates on meeting these priorities and provide children and young people with a newsletter and infographics to support our **'You said, we will, we did...'** feedback loop.

Our Pledge/Plan for Children and Young People...

Our pledge/plan has been written for Children and Young People based on their collective voice.

Children and Young People, through the Corporate Parenting Board, can hold the Cabinet to account to ensure we deliver on these key priorities.

1. How we will care for you and support you.

(Links to the **'Support, Togetherness and Eradicate Stigma 'Principles'** and **taking the time to listen and using straightforward language 'Promises' (including UNCRC Article 2 and 12)**)

- We will ensure that you feel well cared for, safe and have a comfortable place to live.
- We will make sure that the adults that work with you are well trained, understand your individual needs and know what your rights are and support you to know your children's rights through straight forward language.

2. How we will support you to have a voice.

Having your **voice heard** to improve services as part of our **'You said, we will, we did...'** feedback loop (Links to **Equality and Togetherness Principles** and **hearing young people's voice and UNCRC Article 12**).

- We will listen to your wishes, views and feelings and support and work with you to make decisions that are about you or impact you.
- Our participation events are a chance to hear your voice on how you would like to improve services and for your voice to be heard by our Corporate Parenting Board members to improve services for children and young people.
- We will provide you with an update every year on the progress we have made through a report/ newsletter and engagement, via, an annual question-and-answer session in person with our Corporate Parenting Board.

If you are not happy with the care and support that we offer

(Links to the Promises- We will advise all care-experienced children and young people of the process to make a complaint should they feel we are not following (adhering) to this charter).

- You have the right to have your views, feelings and opinions listened to. You can speak to the following people to support you.
 - ✚ **Your Carer(s)**
 - ✚ **Teacher**
 - ✚ **Social Worker**
 - ✚ **Youth Worker**
 - ✚ **Key Worker or Personal advisor**
 - ✚ **Your Nurse or Doctor**
 - ✚ **You can make a complaint via our RCT website via the ‘Compliments and Complaints’ section or ask a trusted adult to support you to do this.**
- If you want to speak to someone who is independent from the above people and will only work to your views, wishes and feelings, you can ask to have an independent advocate from **TGP Cymru**.
- You can ask any of the above people to arrange for you to have an **independent advocate**, or you can contact TGP Cymru directly yourself:
- Freephone number: 0800 4703930
- Website: www.tgpcymru.org.uk
- Telephone: **01443 805940** /Email: cwmtafmorgannwg@tgpcymru.org.uk



3. How we can support you to access mental health and well-being support.

(Links to the Nurture and Good Health principles, the promise for ‘Compassion’ and UNCRC Article 24 and 39)

- We will make sure all trusted adults explain who they are by providing children and young people with friendly information or a child friendly letter.
- Young people told us that they would like accessible information in a range of formats that can be easily accessed and shared for their mental health and well-being.
- We will make sure that you know how to access information for your health, fitness and wellbeing in your community through our websites for children and young people.
- We will ensure that the adults that support you know what you need to have a healthy lifestyle.

4. How we can support you to feel safe and have a stable place to live.

(Links to our Principles/Promise for a 'Stable home', UNCRC Article 20 and 21)

- Our vision is to provide children and young people with a stable home and for young people leaving care with a continuum of accommodation and support to meet the needs of care leavers in Rhondda Cynon Taf, whilst developing a clear accommodation pathway for care leavers.
- We will provide you with a comfortable home/place to live so that you feel safe and cared for properly.
- Young people told us that they would like a range of ways to keep in touch with family.
- Young people also told us about how staying 'local' matters to them (through videos).

5. How we can support you to access the information that you would like or need and support for independent living.

(This links to the 'Thrive' Principle for positive changes for independent living. Also, the 'lifelong' Principle to support young people as part of a continuum for adulthood and a right for young people to reach their potential (UNCRC Article 3 and 29)

- We are currently developing our public facing information (website) and other resources for children and young people.
- Young people 16+ told us that they want easy access to information for benefits, housing, tenancy support and funding entitlements.
- Young people from the 16+ drop in told us that they would like the drop-in times extended from 1 day per week to either 2 or 3 days per week.
- Body language can be difficult for young people trying to access advocacy when they have a disability and parent/carer self-reporting is used. How can we further support young people with a disability to access advocacy services?
- How can we support young people with neurodiversity to access the information that they need?

6. How we can support you to have improved outcomes for education, training and employment.

(Links to the Principles for 'A Good Education' and providing opportunities as part of the rights to a good education (Article 28 and 29) and listening to the wishes, views and feelings of children and young people and that they



are heard and actively considered in all decisions made about their lives (Article 12).

- Young people 16+ told us that Care2Work is really helping them and relations with key staff is important to maintain.
- We will support you to engage in your education, training and employment and to have high aspirations for your future.
- We will provide you with information about alternative education opportunities (if you need them) and support you to succeed.
- We will support you to access all the information that is available for education, training, apprenticeships, volunteering, and employment.

7. How we can support you to celebrate your achievements and to develop your current and future aspirations.

(Links to Principles for 'Ambition' and Promises to support you to reach your achievements (UNCRC Article, 3, 29 and 31))

- We held a Celebration event in November 2023 and over 100 people including young people, parents/carers and staff attended along with our Corporate Parenting Board to celebrate children and young people's achievements in Rhondda Cynon Taf.
- We will continue to hold annual events to celebrate your achievements and aspirations.
- We will ensure every care-experienced child and young person reaches their potential and can enjoy a wide experience of leisure, cultural, sport and social activities.



Our Promises to children and young people in writing from the Corporate Parenting Board

(Name, responsibilities, quote...)

Draft Example: Nicole Katchi (Participation Officer) *'I promise to listen to all children and young people that are care-experienced and to take your views seriously (Article 12) and ensure that we provide annual (every year) updates on how we are making developments and improvements for your care and support in Rhondda Cynon Taf.'*

DRAFT

Consultation and Participation events in Rhondda Cynon Taf

Prior to the care-experienced summit, consultation and participation events have been held for Rhondda Cynon Taf care-experienced young people from September 2022 to the present that include the following:

- **A Consultation event** with games, storytelling (zines) and Art for young people aged 10 years and under and for young people aged 11+ at Pontypridd Museum (September 2022).
- **The 'Get Involved' survey** for care-experienced young people aged 5 to 25 years old (November 2022 to February 2023).
- **A feedback consultation event as part of the 'Get Involved' survey and survey infographics** for our 'You said, we will, we did' feedback loop (February 2023).
- **Wellbeing events** facilitated by Voices from Care Cymru for 'Sky's the Limit' group aged 8 to 13 years old and for the 'Local Group aged 14+'. This includes outdoor activities with nature, drama, choir, dance, sport, themed activities and wellbeing sessions.
- **A series of 'Get Involved' feedback conversations** with young people aged 11 to 15 and 16+ in Residential care, Foster Care, Kinship care and through the 16+ drop in to find out how they would like services to be developed and improved through participation events from September 2022 to the present.
- **A Celebration event for care experienced young people.** Children's Services and the Virtual School for Children Looked After held a joint Celebration event to recognise children and young people's achievements. Over 30 young people were nominated for an award with a 100 people attending in total.
- **66 young people responded to the 'Get Involved' Survey.**
- **70+ young people have attended in person events from September 2022 to the present.**
- **37 young people were nominated by carers and staff and received an award at the Celebration event for either education, sports, personal achievements and the arts.**

The purpose of these consultation and participation events were to find out from young people about the following:

- **What is going well for you?** (and for other young people that are care-experienced)
- **What could be better?** (Are there any changes that you would like made for your care and support and for other care-experienced young people?)
- **How would you like to get involved with Children's Services to have your voice heard?**

A Rhondda Cynon Taf pledge strengthens the UNCRC principles for Children’s Rights in Wales and the Social Services and Wellbeing (Wales) Act 2014, Part 6 Code of Practice.

The collective voice of Care-experienced young people in Rhondda Cynon Taf

Positives (going well) for young people

- Education, volunteering and learning opportunities.
- Seeing siblings.
- Youth club.
- Hobbies.
- Having a safe place.
- ‘Safe adults to support young people’ (Foster Care and Residential Care).
- ‘Living with other young people’ (Residential Care).
- ‘Care2Work’ has been amazing and so supportive’ (16+ drop in West).
- ‘The staff for 16+ are amazing’...and attending the 16+ drop in’ (16+ Drop in West).



What could be better to improve young people's care and support?

5 to 10 years old

- Make sure young people know who their Social Worker is and other trusted adults.
- More activities in the community.
- Some young people want to know about their children's rights.

11 to 15 years old

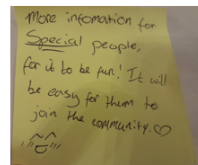
- Looking at a range of different ways to keep in touch with family.
- Living closer to family.
- Wellbeing - to feel better about yourself.

16 to 25 years old

- Access to information about mental health and wellbeing services.
- **'Extend the 16+ drop in from one day per week to 2 or 3 days per week.'** (16+ Drop in West- collective voice).
- More in person meet up activities in the community.
- Housing and tenancy support.
- Benefits support.

List three things that could be improved/ made better for young people?

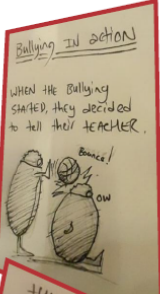
- *'More info for special people (young people with additional learning needs) for it to be fun. It will be easy for them to join the community.'* (young person aged 11)
- This young person discussed further and said, 'More information on the internet for young people to access and to get involved in the community.'
- *'Info about mental health for young people.'* (young person aged 14)



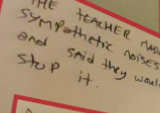
Children and Young People’s Voice and events

Consultation event - September 2022

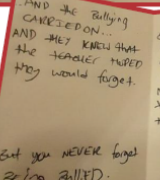
Consultation with Children and Young People through zines (short stories) and games about what is going well, what could be better and how children and young people would like to communicate with Children’s Services- September 2022.



Bullying in Action
WHEN THE BULLYING STARTED, they decided to tell their TEACHER.

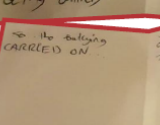


THE TEACHER MADE sympathetic noises and said they would stop it.




AND THE BULLYING CARRIED ON... AND THEY KNEW THAT THE TEACHER HOPED THEY WOULD FORGET.

ONE DAY A FRIEND SAID THEY WERE ONLY BULLIED AND WANTED TO TELL THE TEACHER... BUT BY NOW EVERYONE KNOWS THERE WAS NO POINT TELLING THE TEACHER.




But you NEVER forget being BULLIED.


THE BULLYING CARRIED ON.




Children's Services




Gwasanaethau i Blant



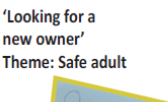
ONCE THERE WAS A BOY WHO WAS ALWAYS PLAYING IN HIS ATTIC. BUT HE HAD A SHORT TEACHER.



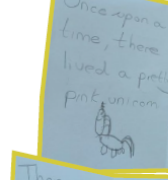
WHO



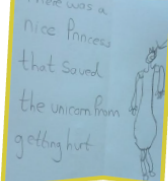
Every living thing needs a safe place to grow.



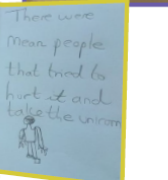
'Looking for a new owner'
Theme: Safe adult



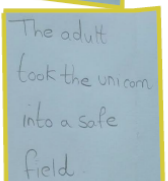
Once upon a time, there lived a pretty pink unicorn.



There was a nice Princess that saved the unicorn from getting hurt.

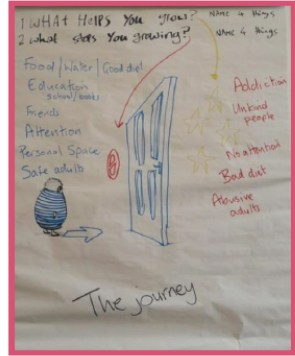
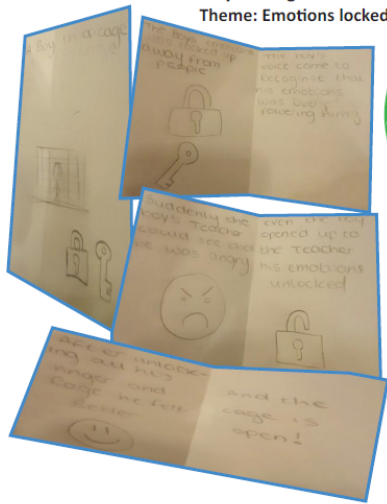


There were mean people that tried to hurt it and take the unicorn.



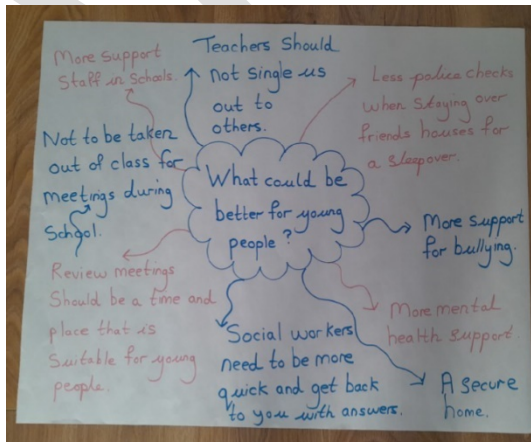
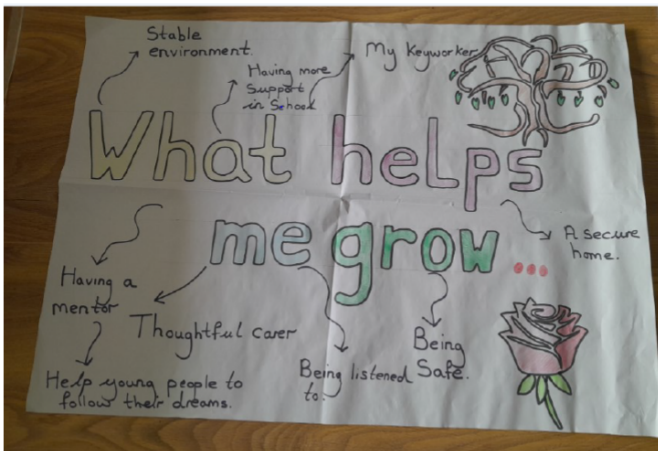
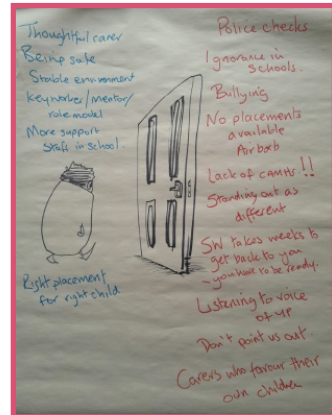
The adult took the unicorn into a safe field.

'Boy in a cage'
Theme: Emotions locked up.



'The rat'
Theme: Finding a Family

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.

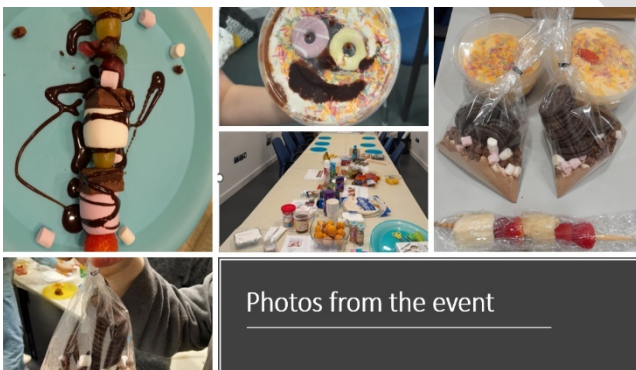


The 'Get Involved' Survey infographics for care-experienced children and young people attached at appendix C.

Staff Summary report of the 'Get Involved' survey results attached at appendix D.

Wellbeing and feedback events (some examples) attached at appendix E.

- i. Sports activities event 12th April 2023
- ii. 'Get Involved' event feedback 22.9.23
- iii. Get Involved Group poster- Tasty treats workshop
- iv. 'Sky's the Limit' Nature workshop for 8- to 13-year-olds 22.10.22



Pictures from the Art with Nature activities- Paint, press, sewing and carving pumpkins



**Appendix F - Celebration event for care-experienced young people
29.11.23.**



(Sing Proud Cymru- Voices from Care Cymru choir and RCT young people. Makaton was also used by the young people in the choir to make the songs more accessible).

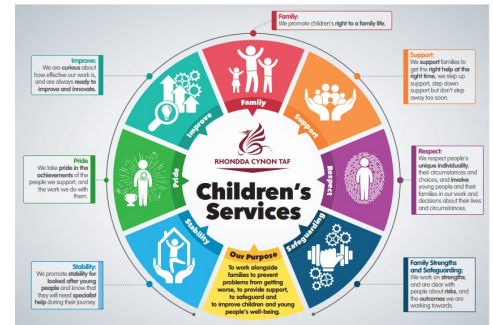
DRAFT

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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.



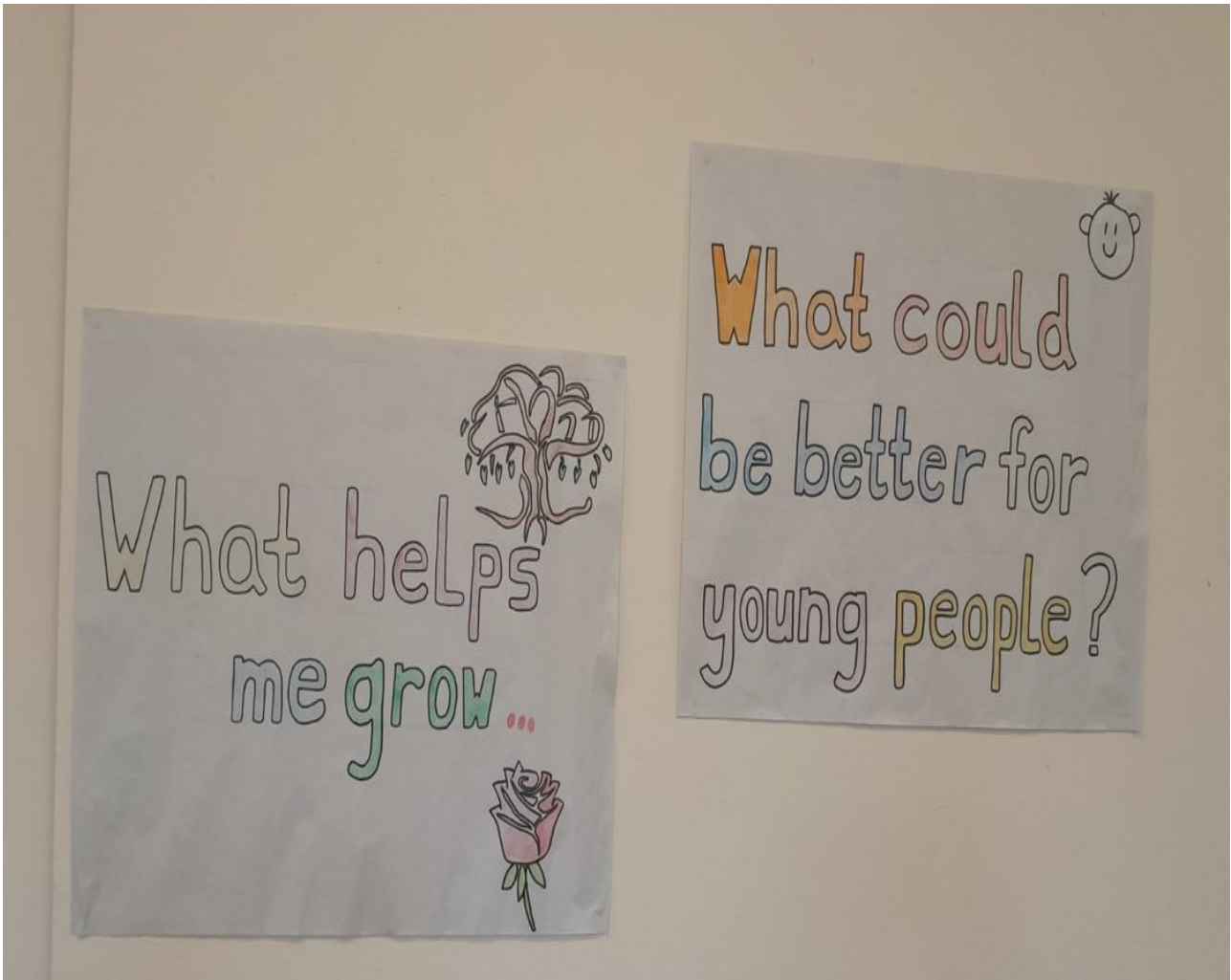
We wanted to find out the following:

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.

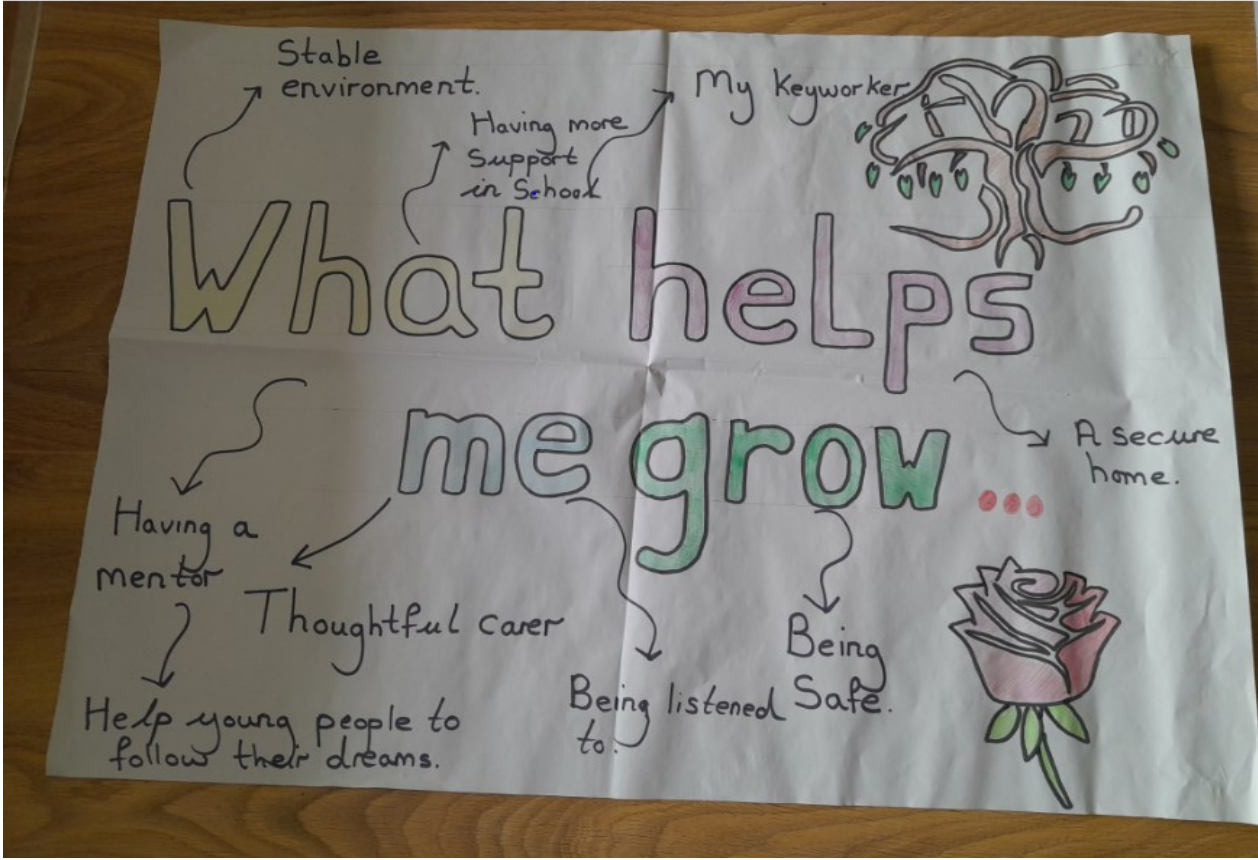
The young people took part through icebreaker activities and games before we discussed their rights to be listened to and taken seriously (Article 12).

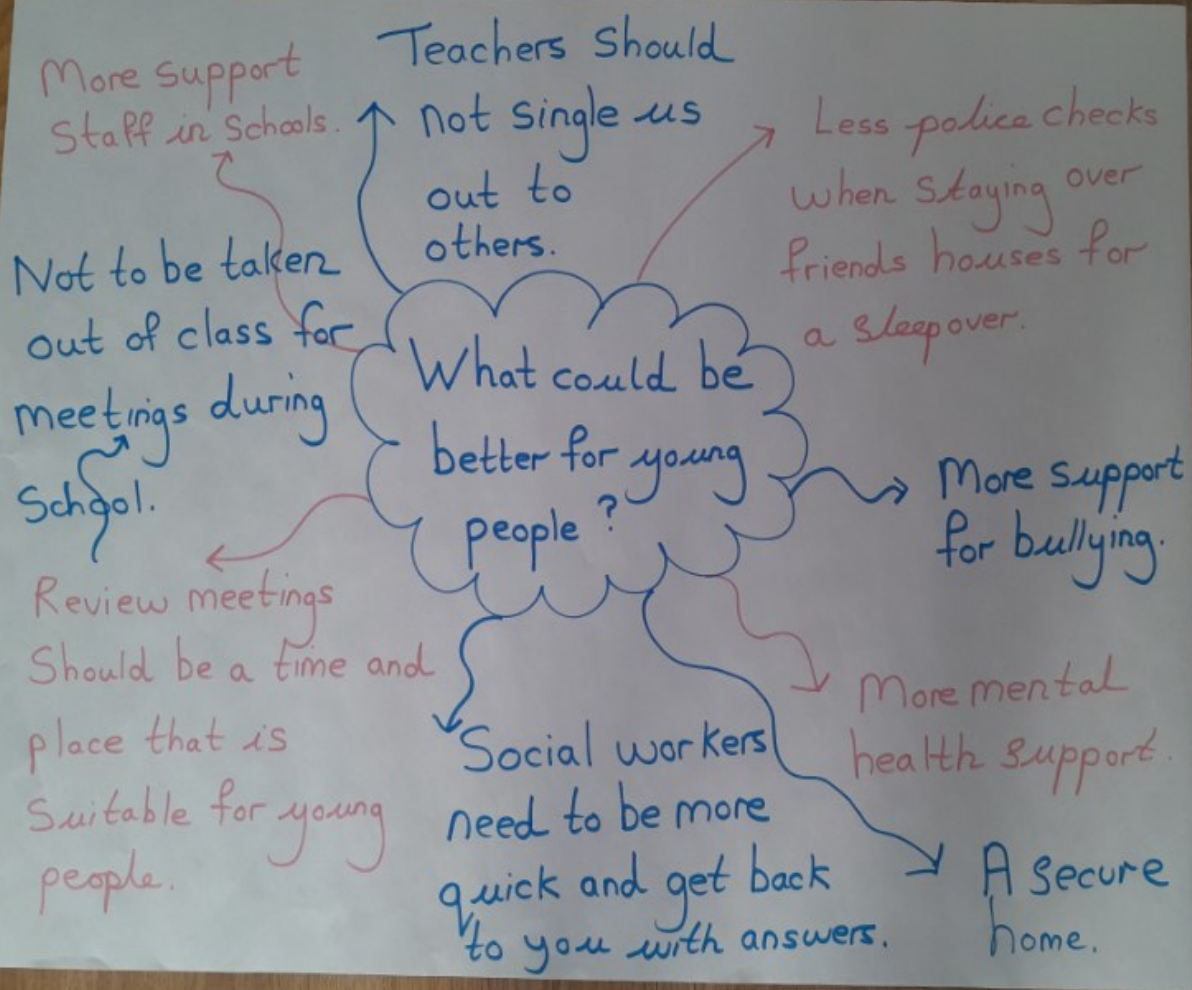
As part of engagement, young people worked in pairs to talk about what makes them grow and what could be better for young people.

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



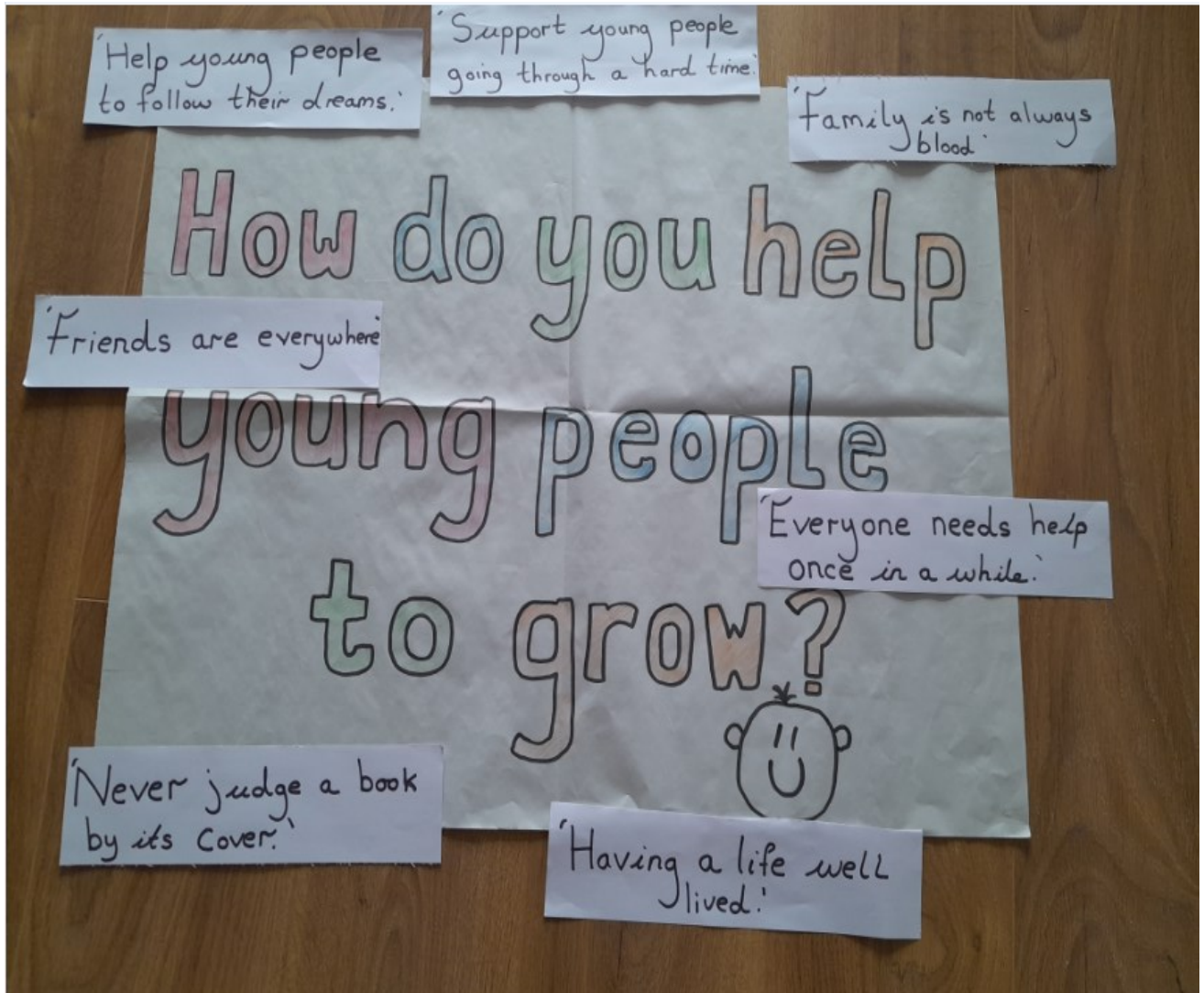


Article

12



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

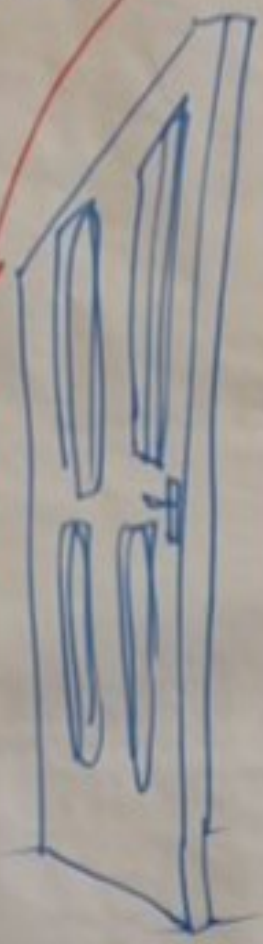


Information transcribed from young people.

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

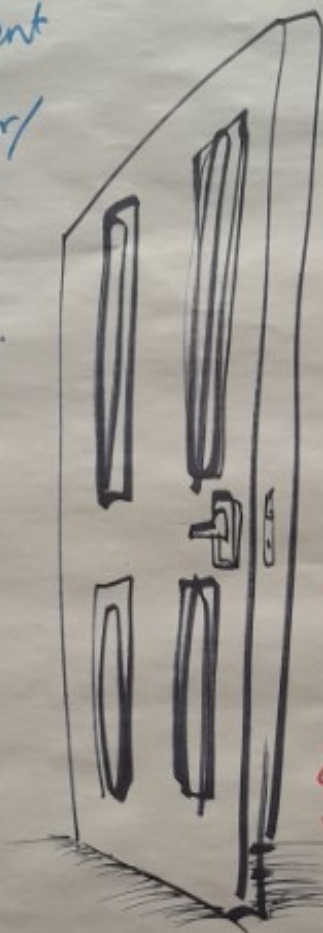
Stable environment

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.

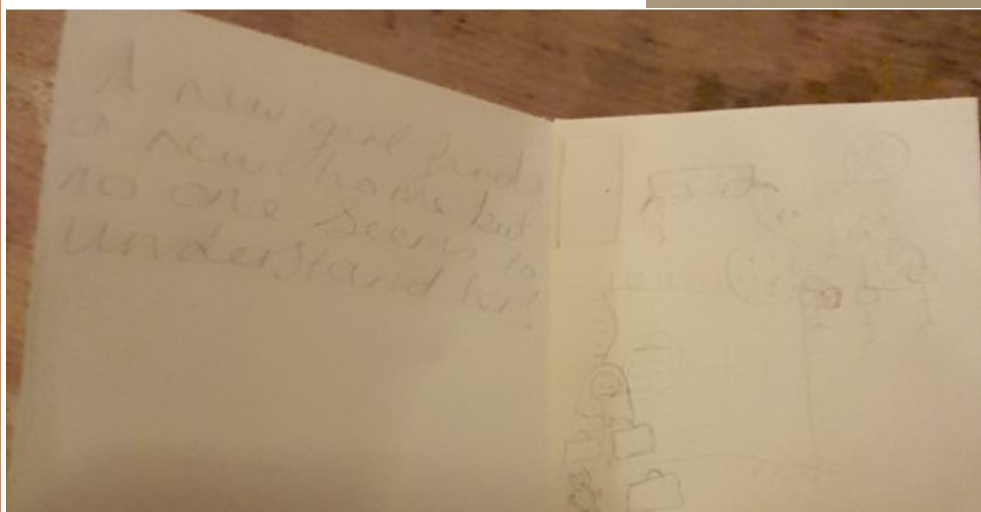
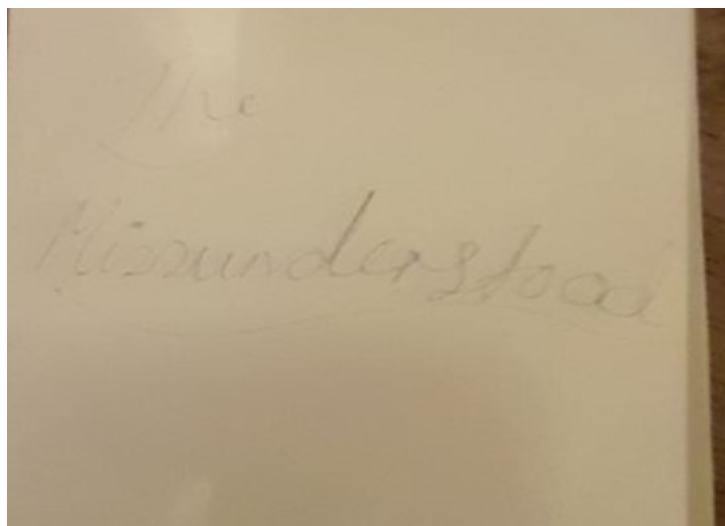


This young person discussed their zine with the artist and said that it's important to have a safe space to help with regulating their temper.

Zine 2

'The Misunderstood'

Theme: Moving from place to place



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

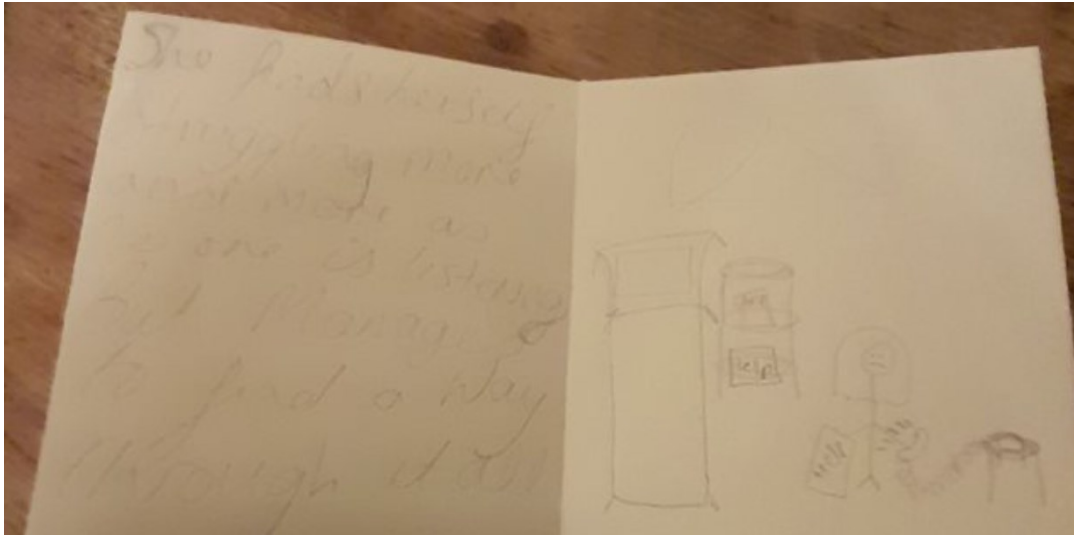
The picture caption was described as a young girl putting down her belongings and everyone laughing at her as she arrived at this new place.

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.

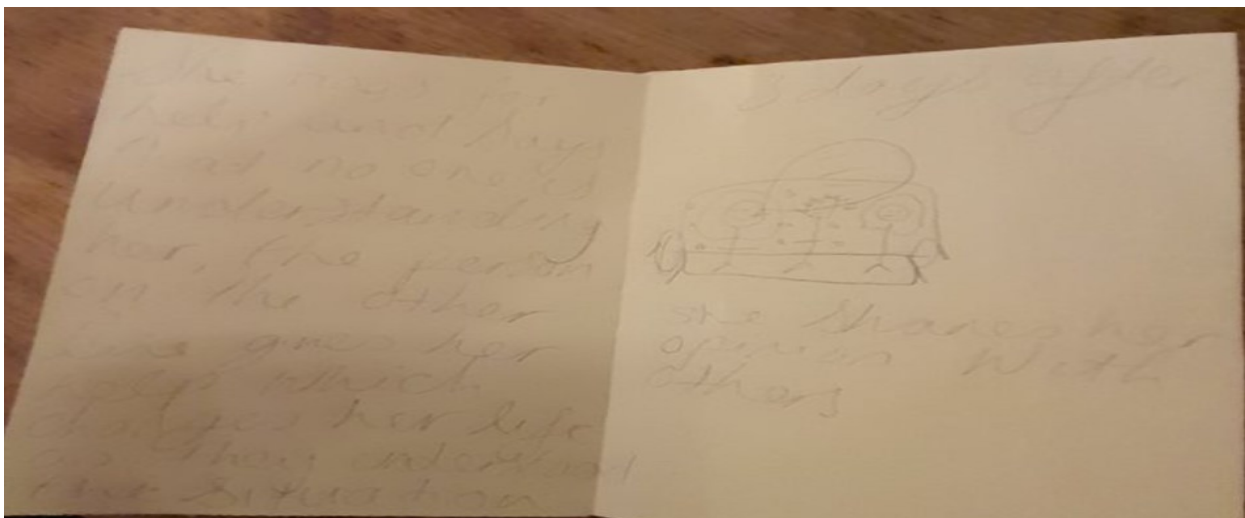
'The Misunderstood'

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).



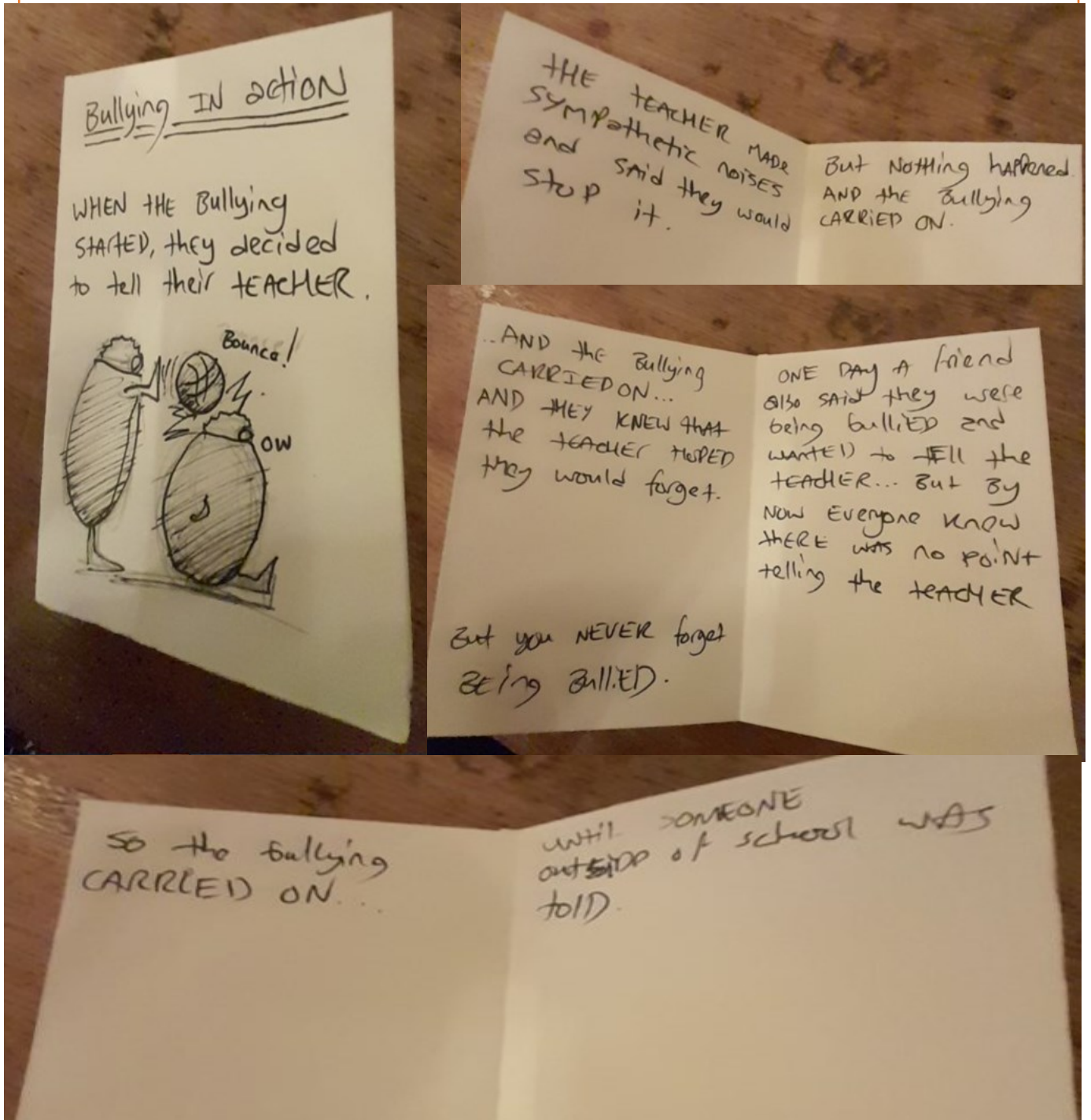
'She rings for help and says no one is understanding her. The person on the other line gives her help which changes her life as they understand the situation. 3 days after, she shares her opinion with others.'

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

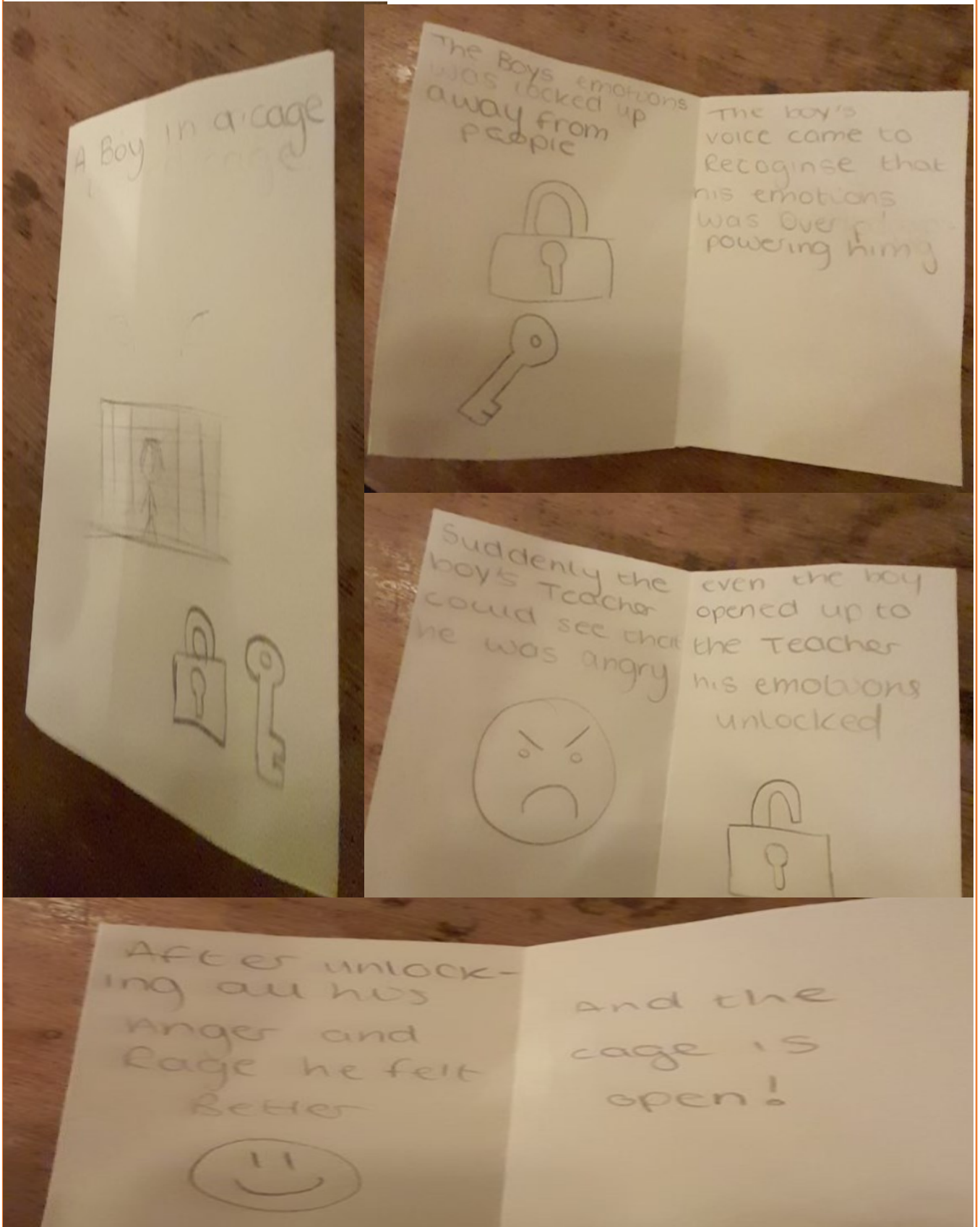


This young person discussed the theme of bullying and how a trusted foster carer supported them with bullying that they experienced in school.

Zine four

'Boy in a cage'

Theme: Emotions locked up.



Zine five

'Looking for a new owner'

Theme: Family

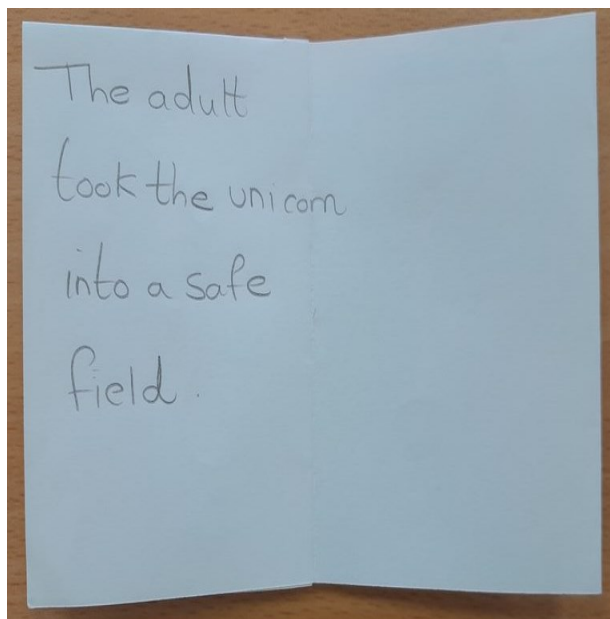
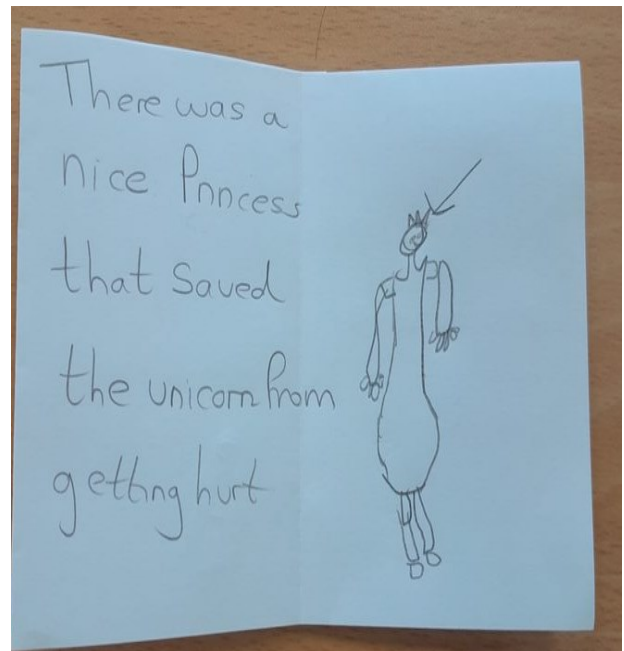
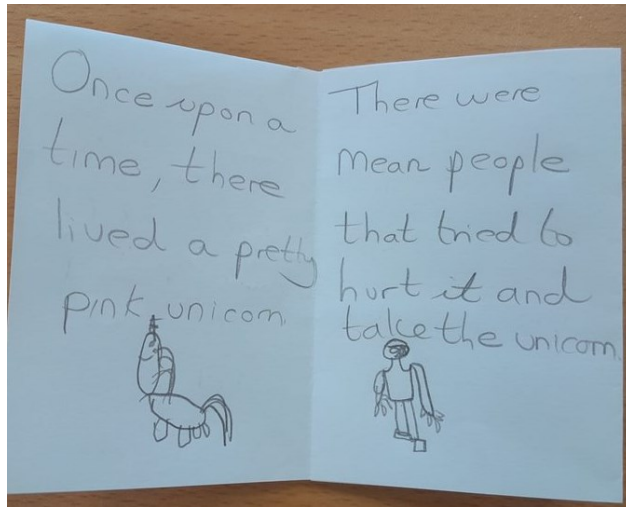


This zine is about an animal that has found his forever loving home.

Zine five

' Looking for a new owner'

Theme: Safe adult



Zine six

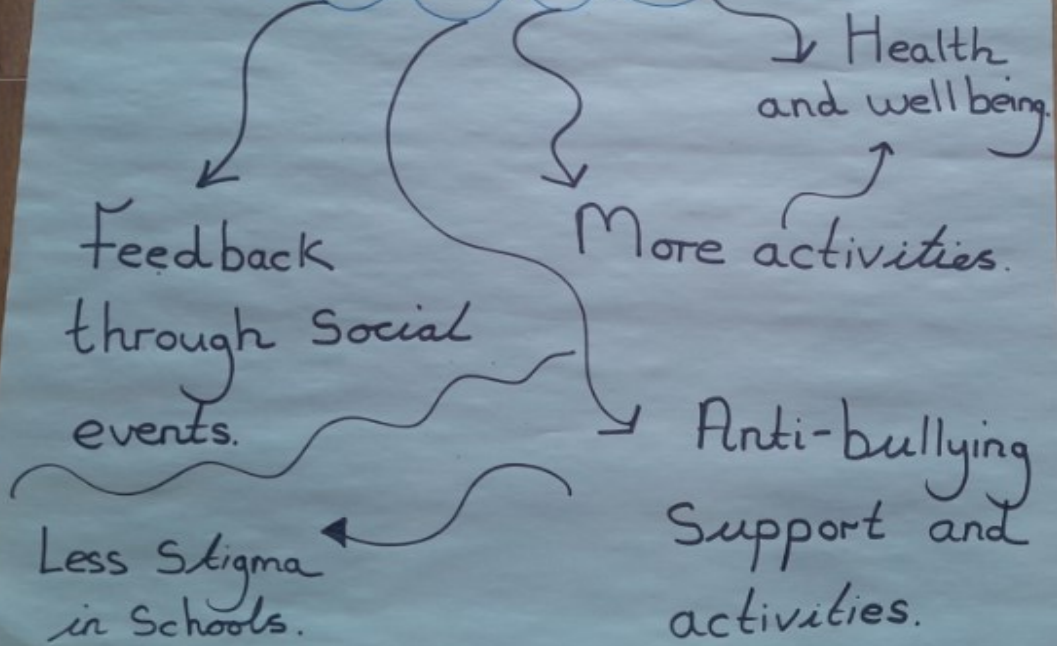
' The rat'

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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The 'Get Involved' Survey

We asked you some questions about what is going well, what could be better and how you might like to get involved with care experienced young people.



YOU SAID

4 to 10 years old Survey Findings

What is going well...

- Nearly all of said you felt very safe or safe where you live.
- Nearly all of you said you had friends you trust to talk with.
- Almost all of you said you know your children's rights.
- You get asked about your views most of the time or some of the time.
- Social workers, teachers and carers ask you the most about your thoughts and opinions.
- Fun activities, hobbies and safe adults.

What could be better...

- Make sure you know who your Social Worker and other trusted adults are.
- More activities to do in the community.
- Some young people want to know more about their children's rights.

YOU SAID



*Nearly all young people said **yes** to attending activities with other care experienced young people*

You said you would like to take part in:

- 1. Outdoor activities**
- 2. Arts and crafts**
- 3. Sports**
- 4. In person activities**
- 5. Music / drama.**

Thank you for answering the questions. We will make changes to help all young people.

WE WILL

1. Make sure you know who your Social Worker and other trusted adults are.
2. We will make sure that the adults supporting you know about your children's rights and where you can find information about this.
3. Support you to get involved with other care experienced young people through outdoor activities, arts and crafts, sports, in person activities and music and drama.

The 'Get Involved' Survey

We asked you some questions about what is going well, what could be better and how you might like to get involved with care experienced young people.



YOU SAID

11 to 15 years old Survey Findings

What is going well...

- Nearly all of said you felt very safe where you live.
- Almost all of you said you had friends you trust to talk with.
- Almost all of you said you know your children's/ human rights.
- You get asked about your views most of the time or some of the time.
- Social workers, teachers, carers and family ask you about your thoughts and opinions.
- Safe adults to talk to and feeling supported.
- Enjoying school and hobbies.

What could be better...

- Keeping in touch with your family.
- Living closer to family.
- Wellbeing- to feel better about yourself.

YOU SAID

Half of all 11-15 years old (14 young people) said **yes** to attending activities with other care experienced young people

You said you would like to take part in:

1. **Outdoor activities**
2. **In person meet up activities**
3. **Sports**
4. **Online social media**
5. **Arts and crafts/ music and drama**

Thank you for answering the questions. We will make changes to help all young people.

WE WILL

1. Make sure you know who your Social Worker and other trusted adults are.
2. Help the adults looking after you, listen to what you have to say.
3. Explore different ways to keep in touch with family.
4. Support you to get involved with other care experienced young people through outdoor activities, in person meet up activities, online social media, arts and crafts and music and drama.

The 'Get Involved' Survey

We asked you some questions about what is going well, what could be better and how you might like to get involved with care experienced young people.



YOU SAID

16 to 24 years old Survey Findings

What is going well...

- Nearly all of said you felt very safe (53%) or safe (33%) where you live.
- Nearly all of you said you had friends you trust to talk with.
- Almost all of you said you know your children's rights/ human rights.
- You get asked about your views most of the time or some of the time.
- Family members, Social Workers and other young people ask about your opinions.
- Family connections.
- Education and further education.

What could be better...

- More activities to do in the community.
- Access to information about Mental Health and Wellbeing.
- Access to Housing and Tenancy support.
- Benefits support.



YOU SAID



*53% (8) said
yes to attending
activities with
other care
experienced
young people*

*You said you would like to
take part in:*

- 1. In person activities (75%)**
- 2. Sports (50%)**
- 3. Outdoor activities (50%)**
- 4. Arts and crafts (25%)**
- 5. Online social media (25%)**

Thank you for answering the questions. We will make changes to help all young people.

WE WILL

1. Support you with information about benefits and housing.
2. Provide you with information to access mental health support.
3. Support you to get involved with other care experienced young people through in person activities, sports, outdoor activities, arts and crafts and online social media.



66 children and young people responded to the survey. A response rate of just under 8%.

'Get Involved' Survey findings

A summary of the results for Children Looked After and Care Leavers aged 4 to 24 years old

We asked the following:

1. What is going well...
2. What could be better...
3. How children and young people would like to get involved with Children's Services.

What is going well?

- Nearly all children and young people said they felt either **very safe** or **safe**.
- 59 young people (89%) said they had **friends** they trust to talk with.
- 61 young people (92%) said they spend **regular time with family**.
- 80% of children and young people said they know their children's rights/ human rights.
- Almost all young people said they get asked their view **'All of the time'** or **'Some of the time.'**
- Young people said their Social Worker, Teachers/school staff and foster carers (top three) ask them about their viewpoint.

Positives (going well) for young people

- Education and learning opportunities.
- Seeing siblings.
- Youth club.
- Hobbies.
- Having a safe place.
- Safe adults to support young people.





My education and learning opportunities

I feel safe and comfortable where I live. I am comfortable around the people who look after me. I've got people who care about me. I've got things in my future to look forward to

I get to see my brothers

My mam is always asking me stuff

What is positive (going well) for you?



I think its good I'm going to school, that I have friends and I am doing well

Where I live

My work and self-development

School, and I go to a club down the community centre by my house and it's called youth club

I'm in a happy safe place

I'm feeling happy

I have people who I can talk to I am now supported to present myself as a girl with confidence

What could be better...

4 to 10 years old

- Make sure young people know who their Social Worker is and other trusted adults.
- More activities in the community.
- Some young happy people want to know about their children's rights.

11 to 15 years old

- Looking at a range of different ways to keep in touch with family.
- Living closer to family.
- Wellbeing- to feel better about yourself.

16 to 24 years old

- Access to information about mental health and wellbeing services.
- More activities to do in the community.



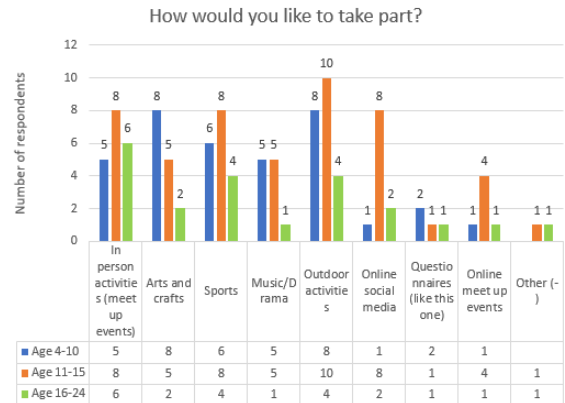
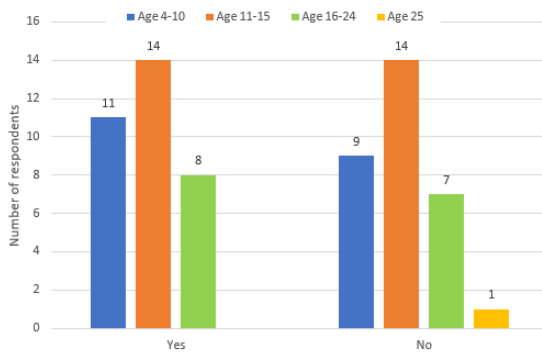
- Housing and tenancy support.
- Benefits support.

Getting involved with other care experienced young people

Gaming events such as an esports team

Indoor activities

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



Think I would have benefited from this when I was younger

Parties

Attending activities with other care experienced young people

- 33 young people said **yes** (51%).
- 31 said **no** (49%).
- 2 young people **skipped** the question.

How would you like to take part? (Click all that apply)

1. Outdoor activities= 22 clicks
2. In person activities= 19 clicks
3. Sports= 18 clicks
4. Arts and crafts= 15 clicks
5. Online social media= 11 clicks
6. Music and drama= 11 clicks
7. Online meet up events= 6 clicks
8. Questionnaires= 4 clicks
9. Other= 2 clicks

Recommendations

- **Make sure that all trusted adults explain who they are.** Consider leaving child friendly information such as 'All about me' profiles or a child friendly letter to the young person before meeting them or with a change of Social Worker/ key member of staff.
- **Access to information.** To develop information in a range of formats that can be easily accessed and shared. Young people **16+** have told us they want easy access to information for benefits, housing, tenancy support and funding entitlements.
- **Children and young people have told us how they want to get involved.** They would like more in person meet up events, activities with nature, sports, arts and crafts and music and drama.
- **To look at different ways to keep in touch with family.** Young people have told us they would like more contact with their families.
- **Mental Health and wellbeing support.** Young people would like further support with their mental health and wellbeing activities.



Sports activities event- 12th April 2023



Voices from Care Cymru and the Graduate Officer for Participation held a Sports event for 8 to 18 year olds at Hawthorn Leisure centre during the Easter holidays.

- We had **20** out of 25 people registered that attended the event. The minimum age was **8** and the maximum age that attended was **15**.
- This included young people in foster care and kinship care.
- The purpose of the event was to respond to **You said** you wanted more meet ups and sporting activities. **We** facilitated this event for young people.
- The CYP enjoyed football, rounders, inflatable bubble games along with arts and crafts and making new friends.
- Young people also enjoyed a buffet lunch.



Sports activities event- 12th April 2023

Outline of the day

- **11:00am-** registration and welcome bags
- **11:30am-** Football and rounders
- **13:00-** Inflatable bubbles
- **13:30-** Lunch
- **14:00-** Crafts
- **15:00-** Feedback and home time



Key staff:

- Graduate Officer- Participation (RCT)
- x4 Voices from Care Cymru staff
- x2 Leisure Centre Coaches



Football and rounders photos



Further activities photos

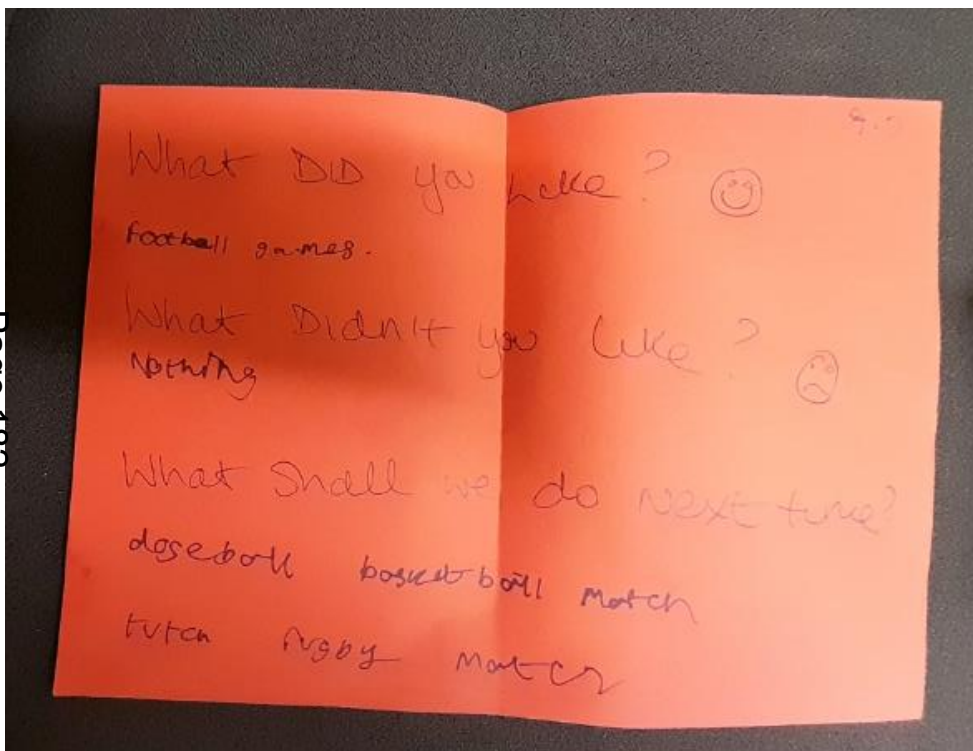




Rounders and inflatable bubble photos



Feedback from young people



Page 182

Young people put their feedback into the comments box.



What did you like?

What didn't you like?

What shall we do next time?

Feedback

What did you like? 😊

Football

Games

Arts

Everything!

Meeting new people

Making a new friend

Exercising

Arts and crafts and the fun things

What didn't you like 😞

Nothing!

It was loud

Liked it all

Not enough time

The food- different sandwiches

What shall we do next time?

Dodgeball, basketball, rugby

VR- Virtual Reality

The bubbles

More ball time, less rounders

Pizza

Indoor sports

Something fun

Inflatable bubbles

Rock climbing

Feedback via email (compliments)

Hi Nicole

Can you please thank everyone involved for today. Our 3 had an amazing time and were still talking about it when they were on their way up to bed. Much appreciate the time and effort that went into today's activities. They can't wait till next time.

Diolch.

(Kinship carer and 3 young people that attended).



'Get Involved' Participation event

(care experienced young people aged 11 to 17 years old).

Friday 22nd September 2023 from 4pm to 5:45pm
Weston workshop, YMa, Pontypridd

Hoffet ti fod yn rhan o'n grŵp 'Cymera Ran' i bobl ifainc?



Ar gyfer pobl ifainc 11-17 oed yn Rhondda Cynon Taf sydd â phrofiad o dderbyn gofal

Beth fydd yn digwydd?

Bydd ein gweithdy 'Cymera Ran' cyntaf yn cael ei gynnal ddydd Gwener 22 Medi 2023 rhwng 4pm a 5.45pm yng Ngweithdy Weston, YMa, Stryd y Taf, Pontypridd, CF37 4TS

Bydd byrbrydau ysgafn ar gael.
Bydd pobl ifainc yn derbyn TALEB am gymryd rhan.

- Fel aelod o'r grŵp 'Cymera Ran' bydd gofyn i ti rannu dy farn a phrofiadau mewn perthynas â sut mae modd i ni wella gwasanaethau ar gyfer pobl ifainc sydd â phrofiad o dderbyn gofal.

Er mwyn cymryd rhan, anfone e-bost at Nicole Katchi ar nicole.katchi@rctcbc.gov.uk neu ffonia 07880 044595 erbyn dydd lau 14 Medi 2023



Would you like to be part of our 'Get Involved' Young People's group?



For care-experienced young people aged 11 to 17 in Rhondda Cynon Taf

What's involved?

Our first 'Get Involved' workshop will be on Friday 22nd September 2023
From 4:00pm to 5:45pm at Weston Workshop, YMa, Taff Street, Pontypridd, CF37 4TS

Light snacks will be provided.
Young people will receive a VOUCHER for participating.

- As a member of the 'Get Involved' group you will be asked to share your views and experiences on how we can improve services for care-experienced young people.

To get involved, you can email Nicole Katchi at nicole.katchi@rctcbc.gov.uk or phone 07880 044595 by Thursday 14th September 2023



Key Questions for Discussion

What ideas can we think of to get more young people involved in decision making?

- How do we get more young people involved?
- What are the barriers that stop young people participating?
- What activities should we do?
- What would be the best venue? When and how often?
- Mind map the ideas through creative ways and verbal discussion with each other and staff.

Visuals for young people

What would be the best venue?
When and how often?

How can we get more young people involved
in DECISION making?




Mind map or
Create a poster
of our ideas

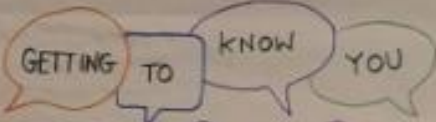
What activities
Should we do?

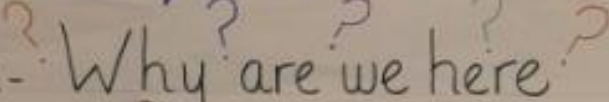
How do we get
more young
People involved?
☺️🗣️👂☺️


What are the
barriers that stop
young people getting
involved?


Visual timetable



 VISUAL TIMETABLE

4.10pm - 

4.25pm -  Why are we here?

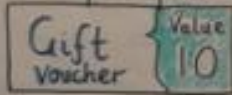

4.30pm -  What's going well?

4.45pm -  Our ideas


5.00pm - Break  

5.10pm - Collect our ideas

5.40pm - Voucher and our next group event.

5.45pm - Home time

See you soon 

We asked the following ‘How do we get more young people involved?’

- Young people said that for young people to share their feedback with adults- matching an activity to this would be important for them.**
- Activities include sports (rugby, football and dodgeball), board games, cinema, arts and crafts, pantomime, trips to museums and group games.**
- 6 young people aged 11 to 16 attended the participation event.**
- 2 additional young people couldn't attend due to extracurricular activities paid for by their carer but would like to attend on either Tuesdays or Thursday evenings.**

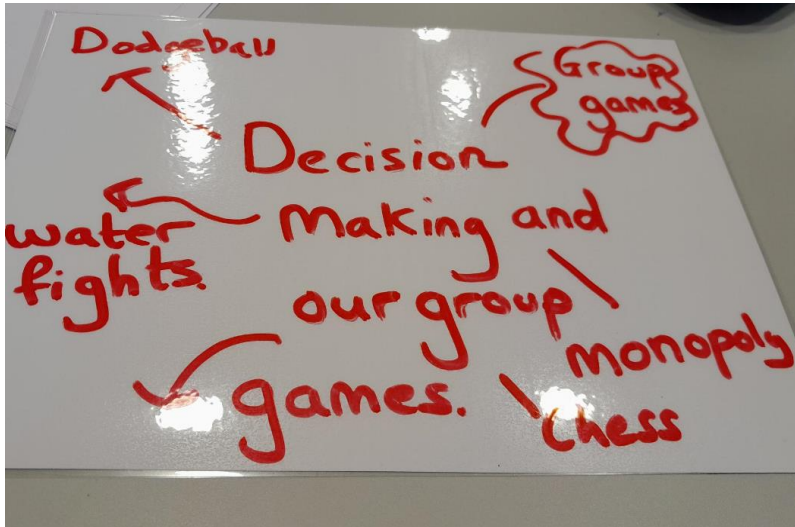
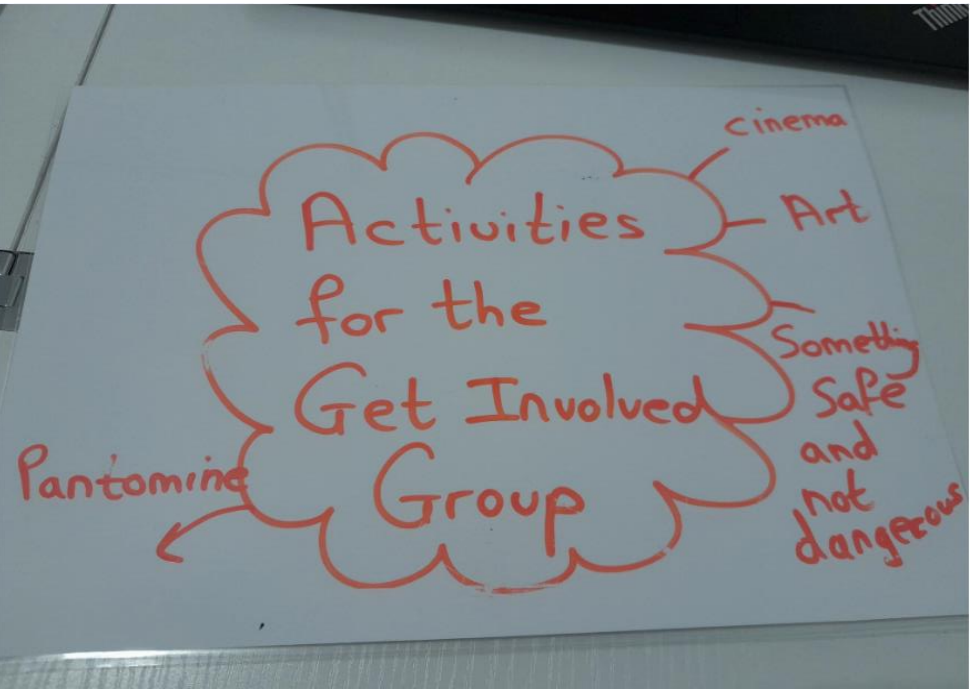
like to play football

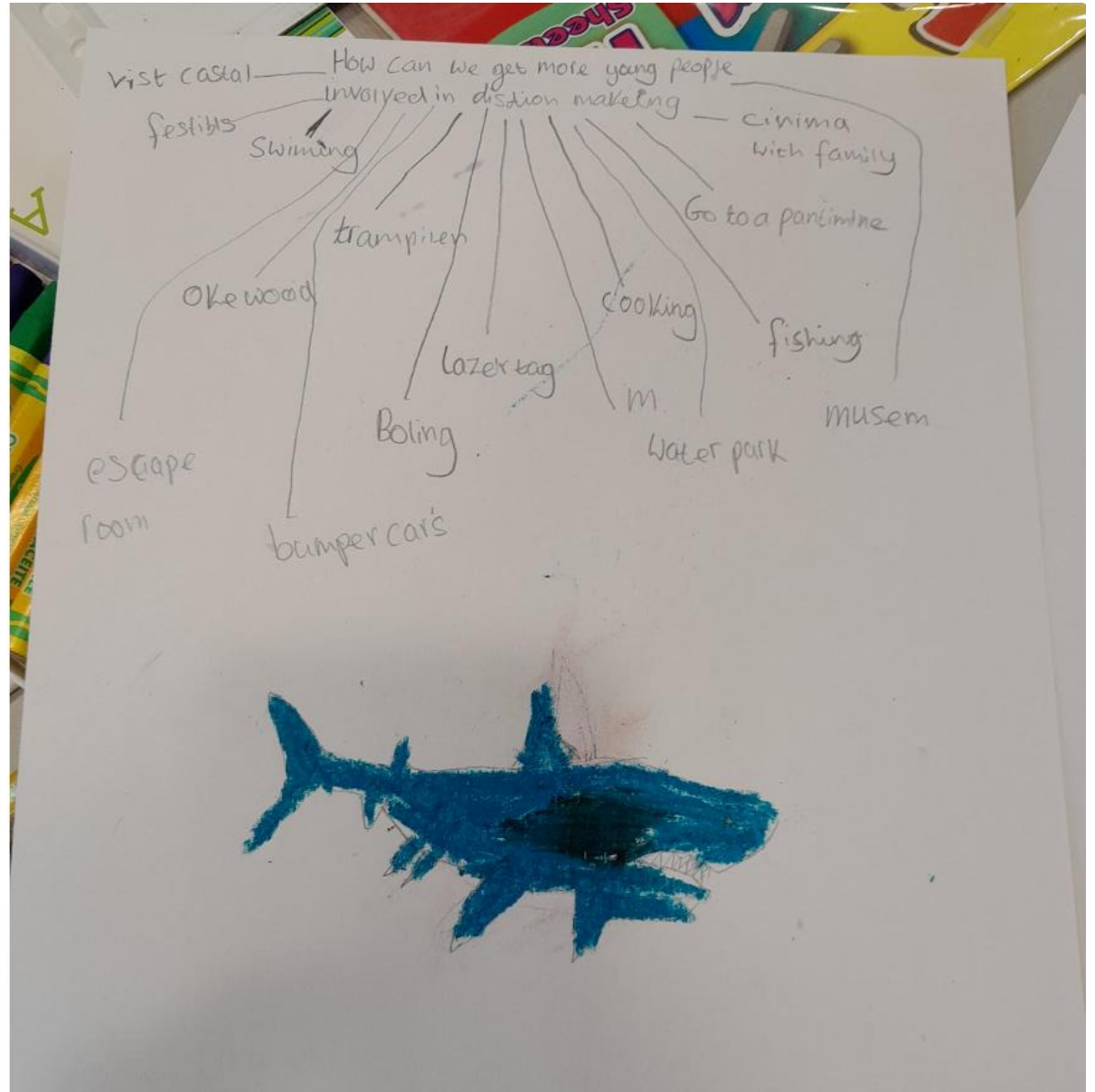
Castle

museum

escape room.

I play
rugby

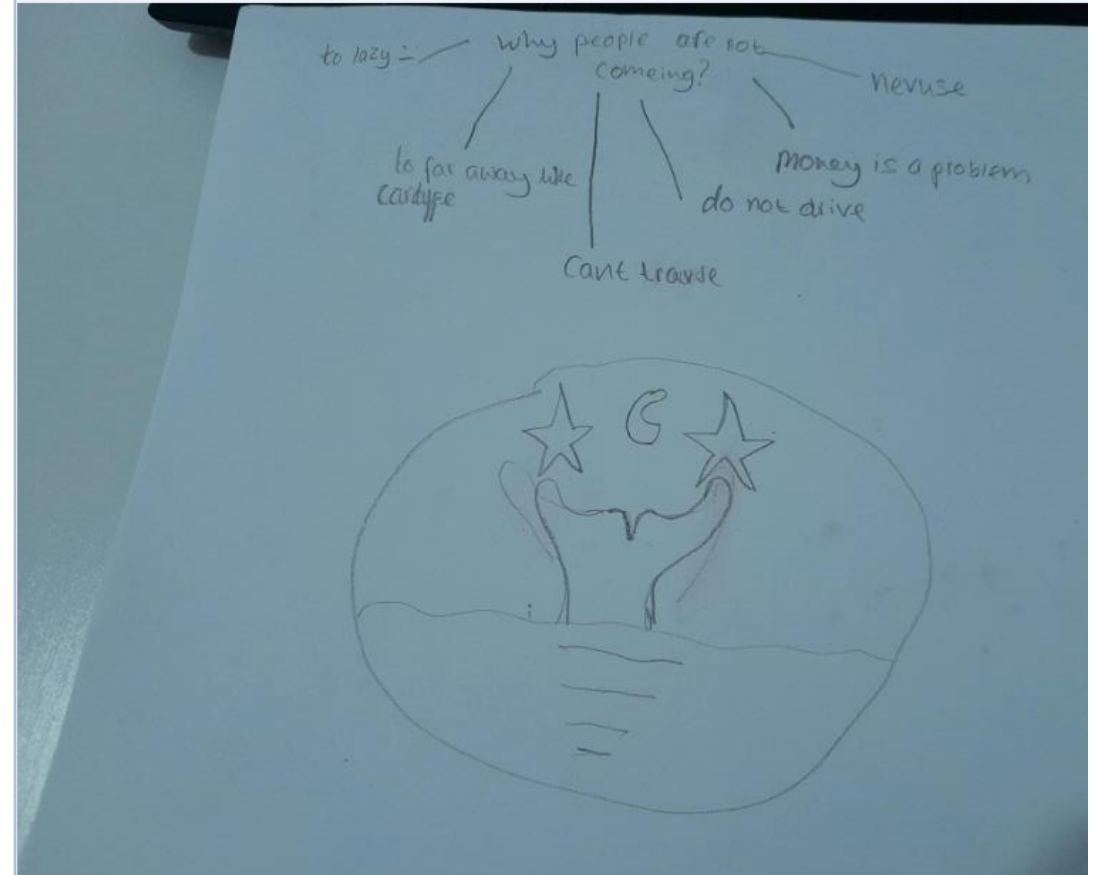




We asked the following 'What are the barriers that stop young people from participating?'

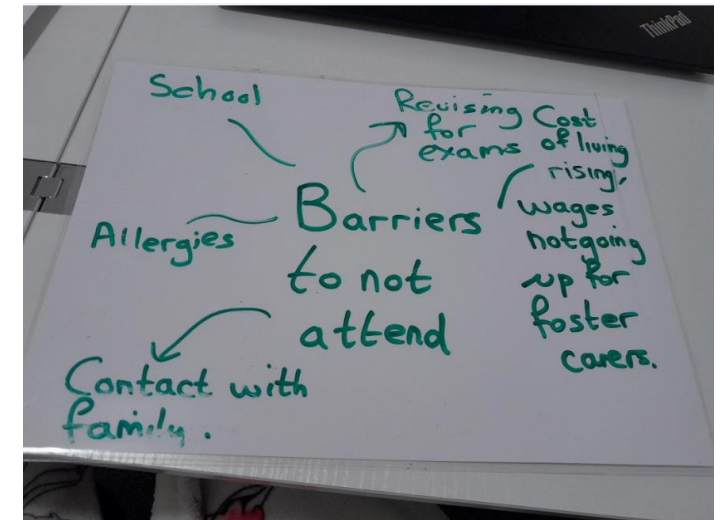
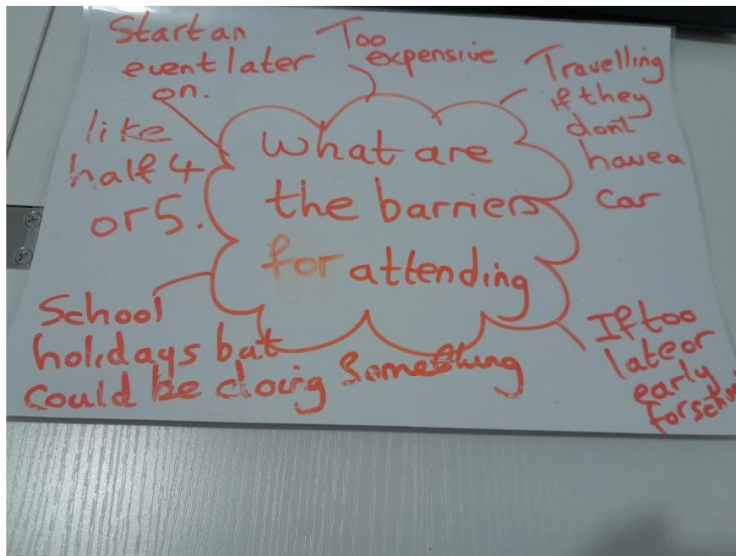
Young people said...

- 'Nervous.'
- 'Money is a problem.'
- 'Can't travel.'
- 'Do not drive.'
- 'Too far like Cardiff.'



Barriers for young people to attend participation events

- 'School and after school homework takes up time especially in years 10 and 11.'
- 'Revising for exams.'
- 'Events start too early.'
- Young people said that '4pm is too early as young people need time after school and time to travel for an event.'
- 'Travelling is a barrier if carers don't have a car, or you need to get a bus after school.'
- 'School holidays can be a barrier if you're doing something.'
- 'Cost of living rising.'
- 'Wages not going up for foster carers.'
- Young people said, 'contact with family members can prevent them attending.'



Make Sure its on a Friday.

Music

Travel - Prices $\frac{p}{2}$

Travel = Money.

Bus prices.

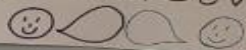
How can we get more young people involved in decision making?

Travel Costs
School homework

What are the barriers that stop young people getting involved?

Mind map or Create a poster of our ideas

How do we get more young people involved?



Make sure its from 5pm - 6.30pm



Ideas from young people to increase participation

'Events starting from 5pm to 6:30pm on weekday evenings such as a Friday... and every month or two months.'

'Venues close to buses and the bus station.'

'Travel costs reimbursed/ available bus tickets.'

'Tell people on Social media about events.'



Would you attend another participation event?

All young people (6 out of 6) said they would like to attend again.

Voices from Care Cymru updates

- Choir sessions for care experienced young people every Wednesday after school during term time.

VFCC
VOICES FROM CARE CYMRU

SING PROUD CYMRU

THIS IS A CARE COMMUNITY CHOIR!
SING PROUD. SING LOUD. SING TOGETHER!

WEDNESDAYS 4.15-6.15PM
TERM TIME!

SING PROUD CYMRU is a Friendly, Fun, Relaxed group. All abilities, needs and strengths included.

We are a community of Care Experienced Children (Fostered/CLA/Kinship/Adopted/Leavers), Foster Carers, Support/Social Workers and Kinship Carers. All Welcome! From any area in Wales. All Ages!

VOICE teamwork LEARNING FRIENDSHIP
FUN TOGETHERNESS BELONGING HAPPY UPLIFTING CONFIDENCE

THE SHELLEY HALL
THE YMA
TAFF STREET
PONTYPRIDD
CF37 4TS.

If you are interested in attending, please contact
Voices From Care Cymru on:
02920 451431 /
info@vfcc.org.uk

BBC Children in Need

Come along to our **'Get Involved'** Young People's group



For care-experienced young people
aged 11 to 15 in Rhondda Cynon Taf

What's involved?

- As a member of the **'Get Involved' group** you will be asked to share your views and experiences on how we can improve services for young people. **We'll get to make tasty non-bake treats and desserts for you to enjoy!**

To get involved, you can email
Nicole Katchi at nicole.katchi@rctcbc.gov.uk
or phone 07880 044595 by
Friday 3rd November 2023

We meet on **Friday 10th November 2023**

From **4:15pm to 5:45pm** at **Weston Workshop, YMa, Taff Street, Pontypridd, CF37 4TS**

Light snacks will be provided.
Young people will receive a **£10 VOUCHER** for participating.



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Gwasanaethau i Blant RhCT

Rydyn ni'n gwranddo. Rydyn ni'n rhoi cymorth. Rydyn ni'n amddiffyn.

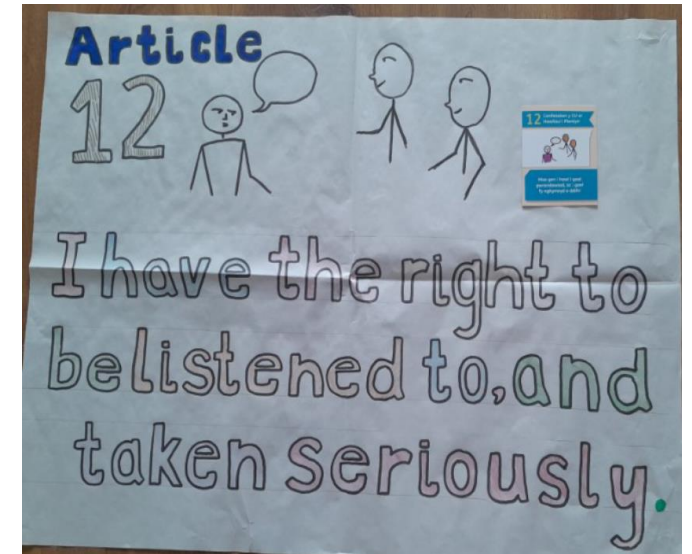
RCT Children's Services

We listen. We support. We protect.

- 9 young people attended the 'Sky's the Limit' Nature workshop for 8- to 13-year-olds on Saturday 22/10/22.
- Paint and press on to tote bags, sewing (Hannah from Growing Space-supported with the paint and press and the sewing).
- The young people also did pumpkin carving, games and a nature walk.
- Some direct and email feedback included:

'I've never done sewing before and I really enjoyed the arts and crafts. I didn't realise I was good at sewing. I would definitely like to come again' (aged 11).

'Just wanted to say thank you for the event today, the children had lots of fun and kept saying how lovely it was, also both are interested in build your strength and Halloween party. If you have more info with dates and where would be great' (Foster carer via email).



Feedback

Black Paper cents
Placks
good more
Pumpkins
Bags
Sale/Raise Money
Pumpkin good
Would do again
Ice cream
Defo coming again
Can I come again?
Pumpkins good, would do again
Sale, raise money - (Get involved to sell crafts to raise money)
Nothing bad

- *“Nothing to make better, all good”*
- *“Good food”*
- *“Defo coming again”*
- *“Can I come again?”*
- *“Pumpkins good, would do again”*
- *“Sale, raise money”- (Get involved to sell crafts to raise money)*
- *“Nothing bad”*

Pictures from the Art with Nature activities- Paint, press, sewing and carving pumpkins





Page 204





RHONDDA CYNON TAF COUNTY BOROUGH COUNCIL

CABINET

CHILDREN'S SERVICES REVIEW OF THE INFORMATION, ADVICE AND ASSISTANCE SERVICE

29th APRIL 2024

REPORT OF THE DIRECTOR OF SOCIAL SERVICES IN DISCUSSION WITH THE RELEVANT PORTFOLIO HOLDER, CLLR GARETH CAPLE, CABINET MEMBER FOR HEALTH AND SOCIAL CARE

Author: Colette Limbrick, Head of Early Help

1. PURPOSE OF THE REPORT

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to provide Cabinet with an overview of the transformation that is planned in relation to the Information, Advice, and Assistance (IAA) Service and seek agreement to approve and adopt the proposed IAA Review Strategy referred to below as Right Help, Right Time, and Right Place.

2. RECOMMENDATIONS

It is recommended that Cabinet:

- 2.1 Considers the information contained within the report.
- 2.2 Agrees to adopt the 'Right Help, Right Time, Right Place' Strategy, and its implementation plan, noting its ambition to deliver sustainable better access to the right help for vulnerable families whose needs are predicted to continue to increase.

3. REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATIONS

- 3.1 Demand for Children's Services had seen an increase in recent years, and change is required. The correlation between families accessing the right help at the right time and reduced community needs for care and support services is well established. Children's Services is seeking to transform the offer of IAA in a way that is sustainable in the context of likely continuing high levels of demand, and with the ambition of providing better services for families and improved outcomes for children. It is aligned with digital transformation, and place-based transformations that will be taking place over the next few years.

4. **BACKGROUND**

- 4.1 Our vision for this strategy is to provide a service that helps **prevent** problems getting worse by **allowing people to make informed decisions, take independent measures to support their wellbeing, and where necessary receive support and interventions** that ensure children and young people are **protected from harm and abuse**. We will work closely with our partners, and communities, to ensure that children and families can access trusted and high-quality information, advice, and assistance as close to their initial point of contact as possible. The work included in this report forms part of a system of change, it's one of 5 areas of transformation being progressed by Children's Services in line with the Council's vision and corporate plans, Government Policy as well as service values and purpose. The other 4 areas of transformation are Workforce, Children Looked After Prevention, Residential Transformation and Participation.

Legal Duty

- 4.2 The Social Services and Well-Being Act sets out a Council's duty to provide IAA at Part 2 [part-2-code-of-practice-general-functions.pdf \(gov.wales\)](https://www.gov.wales/part-2-code-of-practice-general-functions.pdf). IAA represents the front door for well-being services for families, and is a core component within Children's Services. The IAA service provides information about support from services including community based, and local partner services. In addition to the provision of information, the service offers advice through the undertaking of 'What Matters Most' conversations, where families are assisted with making informed decisions about how to access their own support from the range of early help services, and it is identified whether there is a role for social services. The IAA Service can, with consent, connect families to the Resilient Families Service for early intervention support, and the Enquiries and Assessment Team for further assessment where there is a safeguarding concern or more complex needs. The Service also triage any safeguarding concerns and will refer to the Multi-Agency Safeguarding Hub (MASH) as required.

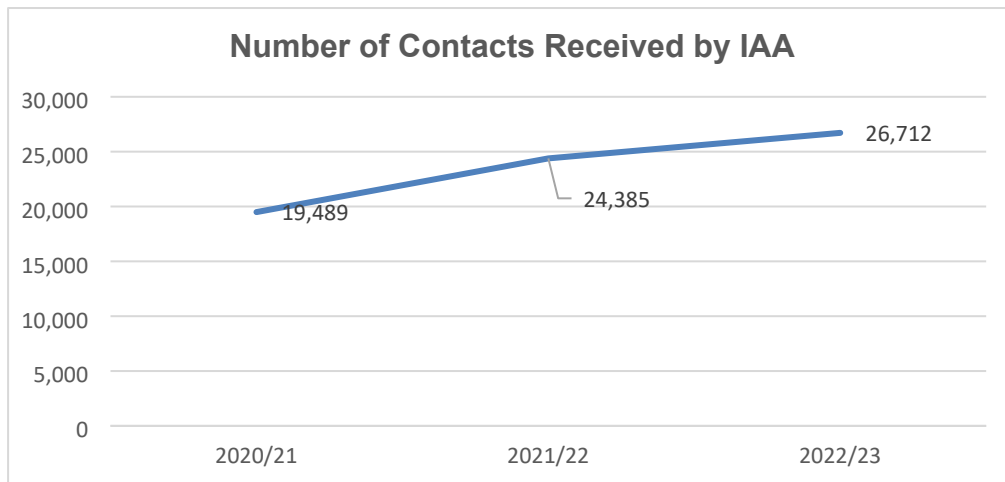
Meeting Need

- 4.3 Ongoing increases in demand illustrated in the chart below and resulting pressures on service delivery, made it a prudent time to conduct a review of the IAA Service. We asked the Institute of Public Care to co-produce a review enabling us to reflect on what has been learnt over the last 3 years and identify what we need to do to develop the strongest possible approach to the provision of IAA, and Early Help, in Children Services.

Contacts received by IAA

4.4 As shown on the charts below, there has been a 25% increase in contacts between 2020/21 and 2021/22, and 10% increase between 2021/22 and 2022/23, representing a 37% increase between 2020/21 and 2022/23

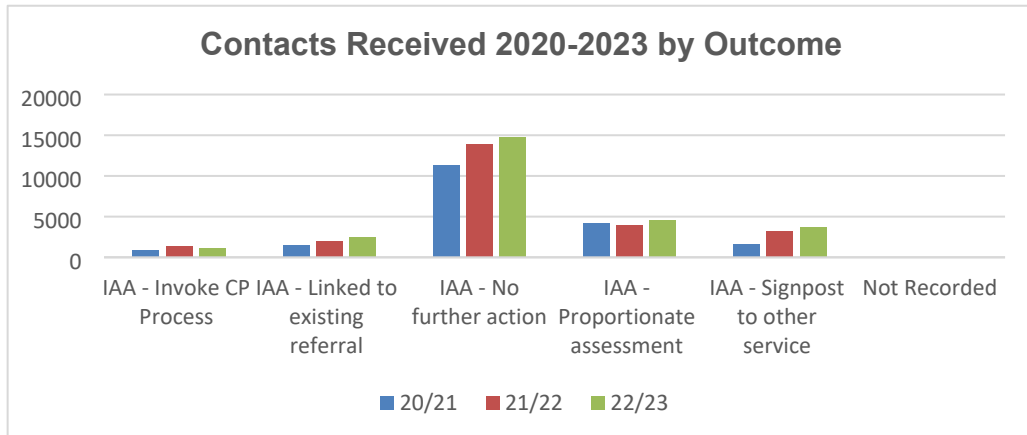
	2020/21	2021/22	2022/23
Number of contacts received by IAA	19,489	24,385	26,712



Outcome of contacts received

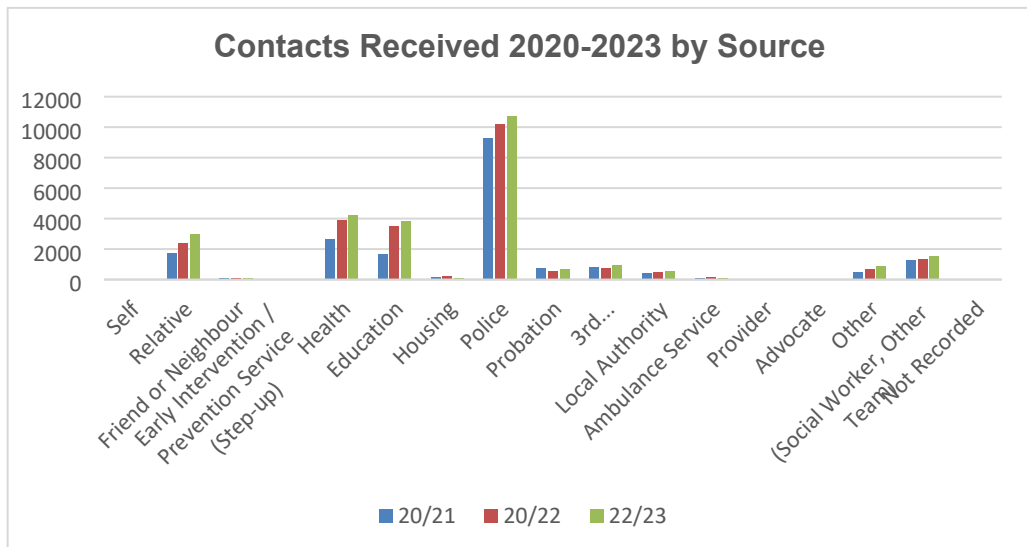
4.5 There has been a 30% increase in contacts that do not proceed to proportionate assessment (referenced as no further action in the chart below), between 20/21 and 22/23. There has been a 132% increase in contacts that are signposted to other services.

4.6 This data supports the need to ensure that families are as quickly as possible connected to the right help, in the right place, at the right time, where there is no need for a referral into Children’s Services.



Referral source

4.7 As shown the chart below, Police, Health, and Education submit the highest number of referrals, followed by relatives. There has been a 5% increase in referrals from the Police, a 7% increase from Health, and a 9% increase from Education, between 2021/22 and 2022/23.



Co-occurring transformation work

4.8 At the time of writing Children’s Services have been consulted or contributed to other related strategic work involving partners in a cultural shift with the aim of working alongside communities to find better ways of meeting need locally, sustainably and with more choice and involvement. This provides a welcome context in which to connect with partners who are in change-mode but equally a level of complexity where we will need to interface well, and also seek to avoid duplication. Those initiatives are:



**Health Determinants Research Collaboration (HDRC) £5 Million
Awarded to Reduce Health Inequality (rctcbc.gov.uk)**

4.9 The purpose of the HDRC is to provide essential capacity and develop local authority capability to advance evidence-based practice, to generate knowledge to inform decisions, and to test and innovate to improve the health of our populations. The HDRC will focus on improving the outcomes that can be achieved against priorities in the Corporate Plan. Of relevance to the Right Help, Right Time, and Right Place strategy are:

- Striving to reduce child poverty, providing services that encourage and build resilience of children and their families. Improving services for children and young people and ensuring their needs are considered in everything the Council does.
- Supporting the voluntary, community and faith sectors to help build active communities, creating the capacity for meeting the needs of residents within those communities.

Community Resilience Hubs (RPB feasibility study underway)

4.10 Cabinet approved the development of up to 10 Community Resilience Hubs in 2019. A feasibility study is currently underway which is seeking to identify potential neighbourhood assets (buildings) that have the potential to be developed into General Community Wellbeing Hubs or could be utilised to build from new Integrated Health and Social Care Hubs.

4.11 The Right Help, Right Time, and Right Place strategy identifies the need for Children's Services to bring together partners and communities in one ambition to better coordinate and integrate responses to early help needs.

RCT Locality Planning Group

4.12 This is an All-Wales Accelerated Cluster Development programme linked to a Healthier Wales ([A healthier Wales: long term plan for health and social care | GOV.WALES](#))

CTM offer, a CEO LA and UHB led proposal (Lessons from the Wigan Deal | [4.13 As leaders of public services, we are looking for a different and better way of doing things and are inviting a new conversation and partnership with communities that requires transformational change with a view to engaged and empowered communities and sustainable future provision.](http://The King's Fund (kingsfund.org.uk))</u></p></div><div data-bbox=)



We are committed to acting as one team, across Health, Social Care and our communities, pursuing the common goal, united in our purpose and in how we achieve this. In doing so we are seeking to achieve the following impact.

- Choice about how to get help when its needed
- Control about how that help is accessed
- Locally attuned responses for local people
- Reduced escalation of need and risk to statutory services
- Community led peer support
- More resilient communities
- Better conversations between services and people that result in improved understanding of need and solutions
- Improved health, well-being and life-expectancy
- Greater job satisfaction, wellbeing and recruitment amongst staff

5. IAA REVIEW

5.1 The purpose of the review was to make recommendations on the optimum operating model that will deliver a good quality sustainable IAA in the context of significant public finances pressures and is aligned with compatible with other digital and place-based transformations that will be taking place over the next few years. The review highlighted what was working well, challenges, and opportunities. It concluded by highlighting areas for development and change as follows, the detail of which will be further developed in the implementation plan. Paragraphs 5.2 to 5.13 set out a summary of the work ahead.

What is working well

5.2 Partners felt that the service was effectively led and managed, and that staff had the right training and expertise and were doing a good job in a challenging environment of rising demand.

5.3 The team were felt to be approachable and willing to discuss concerns and review decisions if needed. Stability of staffing, and the team had a good track record of retention which helped with establishing good relationships with partner agency staff.

5.4 There was an effective pathway to early help. About a third of 'What Matters' conversations resulted in a referral to the Resilient Families Service (RFS) in 2022/23.

5.5 There was an effective & efficient response to safeguarding issues - these were quickly identified and channelled to MASH. Strategy meetings were held very quickly, and the majority were well attended, with well-informed discussions.

- 5.6 Partnership working focused on safeguarding at strategic level was felt to be good. The Regional Safeguarding Board was highly thought of and described by one interviewee as a “Healthy and mature partnership” (Police representative). The IAA manager was said to make a positive contribution to safeguarding subgroups and school cluster meetings.

Managing demand

- 5.7 There is a need to develop new ways of working which will help with responding to the high volume of referrals coming into the IAA Service, and which will include exploring co-location with relevant partners.

The IAA workforce

- 5.8 Managers are working closely on implementation of the Children’s Services Workforce Strategy. Additionally, managers will explore how capacity can be increased through reviewing how key functions within the team are currently delivered.

Enhancing the Offer

- 5.9 This involves improving the digital offer of information and advice to families, children, and professionals by bringing together multiple sources of information held by the Council as well as by partners, and community organisations, so that families can self-help through being able to access trusted information and advice.

Improving partnership working

- 5.10 Providing more opportunities for all agencies to come together and discuss the fine balance between an agency’s own responsibility to manage safeguarding concerns and risks and when it is appropriate to share these with the IAA, is just one way in which this area for development will be addressed.

Better use of IT

- 5.11 Recognising the constraints of many different IT systems, work is already underway to improve connectivity between the MASH and other agencies including IAA.

Improve data collection and analysis

- 5.12 There is a need to ensure that staff in the IAA team are more aware of the team’s performance metrics and links to wider children’s service performance data/management.

Development of a regional approach

- 5.13 In response to the difficulties that partner agencies including Health and the Police experience in working across 3 different local authority IAAs, it would be helpful to explore whether there could be some common agreement about definitions of the IAA function and shared terminology. There are already some useful regional projects underway, for example work on initial decision making.

6. OUR STRATEGY

- 6.1 Our ambition is to transform service delivery, and align it with the place-based transformation of service delivery that is being planned for RCT. This will involve developing strong service delivery in communities, developed with people and their communities that is focused on prevention, self-help, and early intervention, which can lead to more intensive support when needed. A key element of the strategy will be to develop the skills within community-based services to identify early on when people need to have a broader conversation about what matters most to them, and to facilitate access to the right support, in the right place, at the right time. Implementation of this strategy will require significant collaboration with other Council departments who are similarly engaged in supporting people to connect to help in their communities, and timescales will be contingent on the pace of change that can be achieved in this collaboration. The implementation plan overseen by the steering group will develop the timeline for that.

- 6.2 The overall objectives are that:

- Families and professionals can access information and advice how and when they want, which includes a trusted, and high-quality digital offer, which helps parents help themselves.
- Our information and advice offer is active, and supports families to access relevant help. We want to make the very first contact the most important one, so that families feel listened to and have a clear response which could include referral to 'universal services' or help from other service providers.
- Our partners are present, and we work with and alongside each other to support families to prevent escalation of need, by ensuring they get help from the right person at the right time.
- Our work is relationship based - we carry out high quality 'what matters most' conversations (what this looks like will be shaped by our model of practice) – families and professionals can speak, consult, work out next steps together.

- Referrals reduce because people get the right help, in the right place, at the right time.

Situations that require more structured care and support intervention from children's services, or child protection, etc. are quickly identified and channelled for assessment and inter-agency intervention, as necessary.

6.3 We will evaluate success using the following measures:

- Feedback from public and professionals who have accessed our digital information and advice concludes that they are able to access relevant resources that they feel are reliable and trustworthy.
- Feedback from families who have received a direct service from a co-located and co-delivering team concludes that they can access the right support, in the right place, at the right time.
- Referrals for information and advice into the service decrease by 10%.
- Increased capacity within the service reduces reliance on agency staff by 10%.

6.4 A multi-agency IAA Review Steering Group has been established that will oversee the development and delivery of the strategy and implementation plan. The Steering Group representatives are coming together in a workshop facilitated by IPC using a "theory of change" methodology to explore opportunities to develop key areas contained within the strategy.

6.5 A detailed implementation plan, impact assessment and project risk management plan has been developed, and the Steering Group will oversee implementation and adjustment of that plan and the interface of this work with the other co-occurring transformation work mentioned in section 4 above.

6.6 Additionally, there is an internal Council working group that is collaborating to ensure that there is joined up thinking and activity on the development of community based delivery of services.

7. EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY IMPLICATIONS/SOCIO-ECONOMIC DUTY

7.1 There are no immediate Equality and Diversity/Social-Economic Duty implications relating to the recommendations within this report.

- 7.2 An EQIA pre-screening exercise has been completed and no negative impacts identified at this stage and the indication is that the impact of the new strategy will be positive. Processes are in place to monitor the impact of the Strategy for any unintended negative consequences.

8. WELSH LANGUAGE IMPLICATIONS

- 8.1 There are no immediate Welsh Language implications relating to the recommendations within this report. Implementation of proposed Strategy will comply with Welsh Government's "More Than Just Words" Strategic Framework in Health and Social Care.

9. CONSULTATION/INVOLVEMENT

- 9.1 Consultation with stakeholders, including children and young, has taken place throughout the review. We will continue to involve children and young people and stakeholders from statutory partners, and the voluntary sector, in the development and implementation of the strategy.

10. FINANCIAL IMPLICATION(S)

- 10.1 Thus far staff have met the increasing demand within existing resources that are presently strained with examples of additional hours being worked. Staff supported by managers are carrying out process reviews aimed at reducing activity to only what is necessary to run a safe service and looking for new ways of doing things.
- 10.2 If this work cannot deliver its intended goal, the service may need to make the case to increase the staffing base of the team in order to meet unavoidable need.

11. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS OR LEGISLATION CONSIDERED

- 11.1 The Social Services and Wellbeing Act (SSWA) (Wales) 2014¹, requires all Welsh local authorities to provide an IAA Service. A key objective for the service is that it promotes early intervention and prevention so that people of all ages can be better supported to achieve their personal outcomes and explore options for meeting their care and support needs. The legislation says that IAA should be seen as a preventive service in its own right.

¹ <https://www.legislation.gov.uk/anaw/2014/4/contents>

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

12.1 This provision aligns strongly with the ambitions of **Working With Our Communities**. It also supports the Council to contribute to all of the seven well-being goals:-

- **A prosperous Wales:** children and families who can access high quality information, advice, and assistance are better supported for prosperous lives.
- **A resilient Wales:** children and families who are enabled to help themselves to overcome adversity, and access support when necessary, are better able to work through challenges towards success.
- **A healthier Wales:** high quality provision of information, advice, and assistance, will support children and families to connect to, and take advantage of, local opportunities and services to help them improve their lifestyle.
- **A more equal Wales:** children and families will be supported to achieve their fulfil potential, no matter what their background or circumstances, through the delivery of information, advice, and assistance in the localities in which they live.
- **A Wales of cohesive Communities:** access to services that are not restricted to particular communities promotes equality and harmony across communities and the means to share community resources in order to be responsive to need and build resilience.
- **A Wales of vibrant culture and thriving Welsh language:** children who are given the potential to thrive learn to be tolerant and accepting, preparing them for a multi-racial, globalised adult world.
- **A globally responsible Wales:** children who have access to high quality information, advice, and assistance are afforded experiences that prepare them to be globally responsible.

13. **STRATEGIC OR RELEVANT TO ELECTORAL WARDS**

13.1 The document is strategic and is applicable to all electoral wards and residents of Rhondda Cynon Taf.

14. **CONCLUSION**

- 14.1 The Social Services and Wellbeing Act (SSWA) (Wales) 2014², requires all Welsh local authorities to provide an IAA Service.
- 14.2 The Review of the IAA has highlighted areas for development, which are encapsulated in the new Strategy and implementation plan for approval in Section 2 above.
- 14.3 The Strategy to transform the delivery of IAA has been prepared with a view to providing a service that helps prevent problems getting worse by allowing people to make informed decisions, take independent measures to support their wellbeing, and where necessary receive support and interventions that ensure children and young people are protected from harm and abuse. By working closely with our partners, and communities, we seek to ensure that children and families can access trusted and high-quality information, advice, and assistance as close to their initial point of contact as possible.

² <https://www.legislation.gov.uk/anaw/2014/4/contents>



LOCAL GOVERNMENT ACT 1972

AS AMENDED BY

THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT (ACCESS TO INFORMATION) ACT 1985

RHONDDA CYNON TAF COUNTY BOROUGH COUNCIL

CABINET

CHILDREN'S SERVICES REVIEW OF THE INFORMATION, ADVICE, AND ASSISTANCE SERVICE

29th APRIL 2024

REPORT OF DIRECTOR OF SOCIAL SERVICES IN DISCUSSIONS WITH COUNCILLOR GARETH CAPLE, CABINET MEMBER FOR HEALTH AND SOCIAL CARE

Background papers

None

Officer to contact

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