



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

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

on

**2 October 2023 at 10.00 am**

**Contact:** Tracy Watson - Senior Democratic & Scrutiny Officer ( 07747 485567)

**ITEMS FOR DISCUSSION**

**1. DECLARATION OF INTEREST**

To receive disclosures of personal interest from Members in accordance with the Code of Conduct

Note:

1. Members are requested to identify the item number and subject matter that their interest relates to and signify the nature of the personal interest: and
2. Where Members withdraw from a meeting as a consequence of the disclosure of a prejudicial interest, they must notify the Chairman when they leave.

**2. MINUTES**

To approve, as an accurate record, the minutes of the Corporate Parenting Board meetings held on 27<sup>th</sup> June 2023 and 18<sup>th</sup> July 2023.

**(Pages 5 - 14)**

**3. MENTAL HEALTH SUPPORT**

To receive information about the services that are available to improve the emotional well-being and mental health needs for young people with cares and support needs.

**(Pages 15 - 24)**

**4. MAGU UPDATE**

To receive information about the progress of the Magu service since its implementation in May 2023.

**(Pages 25 - 30)**

**5. INDEPENDENT REVIEWING SERVICE MONITORING REPORT TO THE GROUP DIRECTOR COMMUNITY AND CHILDREN'S SERVICES**

To receive information about the discharge of the Independent Reviewing Officer (IRO) functions for children looked after (CLA).

**(Pages 31 - 46)**

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

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

**(Pages 47 - 56)**

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

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

**8. UPDATE IN RELATION TO THE CHILDREN LOOKED AFTER : RESIDENTIAL CARE STRATEGY 2022 - 2027**

To receive the exempt report of the Director Children's Services.

**(Pages 57 - 66)**

**Circulation:**

**County Borough Councillors:**

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



**RHONDDA CYNON TAF**

**RHONDDA CYNON TAF COUNCIL  
CORPORATE PARENTING BOARD**

Minutes of the virtual meeting of the Corporate Parenting Board held on Tuesday, 27 June 2023 at 1.30 pm.

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

**County Borough Councillors – The following Councillors were present:**

Councillor G Caple (Chair)

Councillor C Leyshon   Councillor P Evans  
Councillor S Rees

**Officers in attendance**

Ms A Lloyd, Service Director, Children's Services  
Ms N Bowditch - Service Manager Intensive Intervention Teams East  
Ms L Hawkins, Virtual School Head Teacher  
Ms N Katchi, Graduate Participation Officer (Children's Services)  
Ms C Limbrick - Head of Early Help  
Ms A Rowling - Lead Inspector CIW  
Mrs T Watson, Senior Democratic and Scrutiny Officer

**1 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

Apologies of absence were received from the Vice-Chair, Councillor R Lewis, County Borough Councillor J Bonetto, Councillor S Trask, Ms J Evans, Children's Services and the Complaints & QA Manager, Ms J Thomas.

**2 DECLARATION OF INTEREST**

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

**3 MINUTES**

To approve as an accurate record, the minutes of the meeting of the Corporate Parenting Board held on the 30<sup>th</sup> March 2023.

The Chair took the opportunity, on behalf of the Corporate Parenting Board, to congratulate the Vice-Chair, Cllr R Lewis, on the birth of his first child.

**4 CORPORATE PARENTING BOARD WORK PROGRAMME 2023/24**

The Senior Democratic and Scrutiny Officer provided the Corporate Parenting Board with a summary of the draft work programme for the 2023-2024 Municipal Year. Alongside the regular annual updates, many of the topics for consideration within the Programme had been identified by Members at previous meetings.

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

The Corporate Parenting Board **RESOLVED**:

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

## **5 CHILDREN LOOKED AFTER PREVENTION STRATEGY**

The Service Director of Children's Services provided the Corporate Parenting Board with information in respect of the Children's Services' progress with the looked After Prevention Strategy and advised this was the second update with a previous report having been endorsed by Cabinet in February 2022, received by the Corporate Parenting Board in July 2022.

The Director provided the methodology at section 4, and noted that this was part of a journey, and although she could refer to some progress, would continue to maintain and review the outcomes and appropriateness of interventions. Section 4 also included a data chart, at 4.4 which included how progress had been tracked, in terms of reducing numbers of children who needed to become looked after or children with increased care and support needs. Members were reminded that there were four areas for improvement and development identified within the report, at 4.5, and were provided with an update on progress and the next steps being taken.

The Chair thanked the Director for the update and referred to the model of practice for social workers, on page 19 and asked if it required additional resources and extra training and it was explained that when the strategy was brought to Cabinet, it included a business case which evidenced the need for additional resources under the strategy, with investments in 3 areas.

The Cabinet Member for Climate Change and Corporate was pleased to see in the report, that more children were able to stay with families, which was wanted, with support for that to happen, as well as being pleased to see that kinship carers and special guardians were now on the same foot, as foster carers.

The Corporate Parenting Board **RESOLVED**:

1. To note the information in the report.

## **6 CARE INSPECTORATE WALES PUBLIC LAW OUTLINE INSPECTION FEBRUARY 2023**

The Service Manager Intensive Intervention Teams East provided the Corporate Parenting Board with information in respect of the Care Inspectorate Wales (CIW) National Review of care planning for children and young people subject to the Public Law Outline (PLO) pre proceedings. The officer advised, in terms of the review of the PLO process, this had been embraced and the report provided, outlined the pilot phase of the PLO procedures, which had been operating for approximately a year, until the review.

The officer advised that the service was incredible proud of the outcome of the report which identified many strengths in terms of what RCT were already doing,

before providing Members with a comprehensive verbal update in respect of the strengths and areas for development, as outlined in section 4, of the report.

The officer concluded that overall, the service had seen a significant decrease in court applications being made, and there was a lot more innovative thinking to support, families, children, and young people to remain together in safe arrangements, that better suited their own family circumstances. They were already seeing the benefit of the pilot and it was hoped that the next 12 months, would see further benefits.

The Chair thanked the officer for the update, acknowledging that it was an excellent report and very complimentary and commendable to the Council's work.

A Member also congratulated the officer on the report and stated that they would be really interested to see the short animation video and information sheet, explaining the PLO process, when available, and also interested to hear some of the reasons why children were opting not to have the advocacy services and felt that it would be helpful to have a report back, around the findings in relation to parental advocacy.

The officer advised that there was a range of reasons why children had decided to decline the offer of an advocate, including feeling comfortable speaking to their social worker, and therefore not requiring an advocate, although for some, typically younger aged children, where parents were suspicious or unclear about what that advocacy services was going to offer, this could influence children's decisions, although overall, it had been a really positive experience. In terms of the parental advocacy, parents had engaged in the advocacy service, although where a decision was not made for a child to be placed upon the register, they tended to fall out of the pilot, but had been able to continue that journey, through other means of involvement e.g., if their child had remained on a support and care plan. In terms of child advocacy, it encouraged children to partake in the advocacy services for themselves, if they saw their parents having a positive experience.

The Cabinet Member for Climate Change and Corporate Services agreed that it was not only an excellent report, but an excellent verbal report.

The Chair referred to page 36, item 2.7 in respect of Newly qualified, and recently recruited social workers, and asked if this was part of the process?

The officer advised that in terms of the newly qualified social workers some workshops had been organised whereby various topics were covered around the PLO process, however newly qualified social workers didn't hold PLO cases, this was more about developing their understanding and confidence in that process, as part of their ongoing learning and development.

The Chair asked if colleagues in health and education, were familiar with the PLO process?

The officer advised that they were in terms of practice that was happening on the ground and there were plans to take that to the board and have further conversations about how that was rolled out, but there was very much a shared understanding.

The Service Director of Children's Services, on behalf of the Lead Inspector for CIW, noted that this was a positive report, with all issues identified known to children's services with realistic outcomes and timescales in place. Children and families were put first, and the service was well aware of risk.

The Chair complimented the service in general, and wider.

The Corporate Parenting Board **RESOLVED**:

1. To note the information in the report.

## **7 PROPOSAL FOR AN 'INFORM' SESSION**

The Head of Early Help provided the Corporate Parenting Board with information about a proposal for a dedicated 'Inform' session with Corporate Parenting Board, to include presentations from practitioners and managers, about their work with children and families.

The officer advised that a great deal of information was brought to Corporate Parenting Board, often at a high level so this was a good opportunity to bring some of that to life and enable people to talk about what that meant in practice, the challenges being faced, the types of risk being managed, the decisions having to be taken and how that was done as a Children's services, in conjunction with partners.

Members were informed that the session would ensure that the Corporate Parenting Board would feel more informed and reassured about how the needs of children were met and how risk was managed. The session would include bringing some anonymised cases to life, provide some performance information about children's services and an update on the action plan in relation to the 2 child practice reviews. The intended outcome from the session would be that Corporate Parenting Board would have an updated understanding about decision making and risk management processes, a greater insight into the volume and demand, that children's services were facing and be brought up to date on the 2 practice reviews.

The Chair thanked the officer for the report and explained it was good to hear from practitioners, the risks they had to manage, the volume and demand of case work and the child practice reviews, which was so important. The Chair was happy to take this forward and felt the inform session would be well worth it for the benefit of all concerned.

The Corporate Parenting Board **RESOLVED**:

1. To note the information in the report; and
2. To approve the proposal for Children's Services to provide more information about their work at the September Corporate Parenting Board meeting.

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

It was **RESOLVED** that the press and public be excluded from the meeting under Section 100A(4) of the Local Government Act (as amended) for the following items of business on the grounds that it involves the likely disclosure of the exempt information as defined in paragraph 14 of Part 4 of the Schedule 12A

of the Act.

**9 UPDATE IN RELATION TO THE CHILDREN LOOKED AFTER: RESIDENTIAL CARE STRATEGY 2022 - 2027**

The Director of Children's Services provided the Corporate Parenting Board with information about children in settings known as Operating without Registration (OWR), and Children's Services plans for supporting those children, and ending those arrangements.

Following discussion around potential planning issues, Members agreed that early engagement with planning was best.

Following consideration of the exempt report, the Corporate Parenting Board **RESOLVED:**

1. To acknowledge the information contained within the report; and
2. To receive subsequent reports until such time as there are no OWR situations for Rhondda Cynon Taf looked after young people.

**10 URGENT BUSINESS**

None.

**This meeting closed at 2.09 pm**

**Councillor G Caple  
Chair**

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

This page is intentionally left blank





**RHONDDA CYNON TAF**

**RHONDDA CYNON TAF COUNCIL  
CORPORATE PARENTING BOARD**

Minutes of the virtual meeting of the Corporate Parenting Board held on Tuesday, 18 July 2023 at 11.00 am.

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

**County Borough Councillors – The following Councillors were present:**

Councillor G Caple (Chair)

Councillor C Leyshon Councillor S Rees

**Officers in attendance**

Mr N Elliott, Interim Director of Social Services  
Ms C Jones, Head of Access & Inclusion  
Ms A Lloyd, Service Director, Children's Services  
Ms L Hawkins, Virtual School Head Teacher  
Ms N Katchi, Graduate Participation Officer (Children's Services)  
Ms J Thomas, Complaints & QA Manager, Social Services  
Ms C Miles, Childcare Solicitor  
Ms H Jones - Senior Executive and Regulatory Business Officer  
Mrs T Watson, Senior Democratic and Scrutiny Officer

**11 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

Apologies of absence were received from the Vice-Chair, Councillor R Lewis, and County Borough Councillors J Bonetto, P Evans, S Trask, and K Webb.

**12 DECLARATION OF INTEREST**

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

**13 VISITS MADE TO FRONT LINE TEAMS BY MEMBERS OF THE  
CORPORATE PARENTING BOARD DURING THE 2022-23 MUNICIPAL  
YEAR**

The Chair provided the Corporate Parenting Board with an overview of the visits made to Frontline Teams, by Members of the Corporate Parenting Board during the 2022-23 Municipal Year.

The Chair advised that it was his, and the Vice-Chairs first visit, noting that staff morale was high, whilst acknowledging that everything had changed post-Covid, but staff were really adapting to the new hybrid way of working, which was working well, and would not change.

The Chair acknowledged that there were issues with understaffing, in terms of social workers, but in general the teams were working well. The caseloads had

become more complex and increased since Covid, but it was pleasing to meet the teams and say thank you. The Chair acknowledged that the visits were very useful and both himself, and the Vice-Chair had learnt a lot, and it had been a pleasure to go around the teams and just thank them for the work being done to protect children.

The Corporate Parenting Board **RESOLVED** to note the report.

#### **14 CORPORATE PARENTING BOARD ANNUAL REPORT 2022-23**

The Senior Executive and Regulatory Business Officer provided the Corporate Parenting Board with the Corporate Parenting Board Annual Report for the 2022-2023 Municipal Year. The report covered the breadth of work considered by the Board during the year; and put forward the items identified for future consideration. The officer reminded Members that if approved, the report would be presented to Scrutiny and Cabinet.

The Chair stated that it was a delight to follow his predecessor, Cllr Leyshon, and thanked her for the work she had done. The breadth of reports, over the last year had been tremendous, and the Chair congratulated Officers for their efforts in producing these reports.

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

1. To provide comment as appropriate on the draft Annual Report before its presentation to Cabinet.
2. Subject to 1, forward the final version of the report to the CIW for information.

#### **15 PARTICIPATION UPDATE 2022 TO 2023 FOR CARE EXPERIENCED CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE**

The Graduate Officer - Participation provided the Corporate Parenting Board with an update in respect of the progress achieved in taking forward the Participation Strategy 2023-2026 and to provide feedback on the participation activities, Children's Services had held during 2022-2023, with most of the details provided in the Appendices. The Graduate Officer – Participation took Members through the background and progress to date, at Section 3, highlighting a number of key points, before providing Members with details on the link to the Corporate and National Priorities and Well-being of Future Generations Act, before outlining the Next Steps, and Section 9 of the report. The Graduate Officer – Participation concluded by noting the appendices attached, for Members consideration.

The Chair thanked the Officer for the report and said it was great to see comments from Children, who wanted their voices to be heard, and the declaration was right and proper.

The Chair noted that page 45 of the report asked the question, what could be better, and asked if these issues, as highlighted in the responses, were being tackled through the scheme.

The Graduate Officer – Participation explained that this was part of the project implementation plan, to develop the public facing information, to take on board what young people had said, but would also work with young people as well to

develop that information going forward.

A Member asked, around the proposal to facilitate the autumn workshop, what this would like.

The Graduate Officer – Participation advised it was to develop a one voice forum, so CLA, were supported through staff and the Corporate Parenting Board to put forward their views as way of developing co-production. She noted that WG would shortly be producing, what that vision would look like, and how it could be developed at a local level.

A Member asked if the workshop would be online or hybrid.

The Service Director of Children’s Services explained that the ambition for the proposed workshop, was to provide a face-to-face meeting for Members to engage with care experienced young people. It was hoped that particularly, one of the results would be to work towards how care experienced young people with current experience of the system, could support the work of the Corporate Parenting Board, so exploring options for care experienced young people to be Members of the Board e.g., how to develop young person friendly reports, decisions, etc. The Service Director of Children’s Services was aware in some areas, Corporate Parenting Boards were co-chaired by a Cabinet Member and a young person, which was a very strong, co-produced model, which it was hoped to aim for and a move in that direction.

The Chair agreed that young people wanted a voice at the highest level, and it was only right and proper, to listen to what they had to say.

The Corporate Parenting Board **RESOLVED**:

1. To note the information in the report.

## **16 RADICAL REFORM: IF NOT NOW, THEN WHEN?**

The Service Director of Children’s Services provided the Corporate Parenting Board with information regarding the report by the Welsh Parliament’s Children, Young People and Education Committee following the inquiry linked to the Welsh Government’s commitment to explore radical reform of current services for children looked after and care leavers as part of the Programme for Government. The ambition was to make sure Members felt informed about the work under radical reform, in relation to children’s services, knowing it to be strongly connected to the work of the Board. There was a great deal of information in the report and the Welsh Parliament’s Children, Young People and Education Committee heard evidence from a range of sources, including RCT Children’s Services, which had provided evidence both in video and written form. The report outlined the evidence heard, with a number of recommendations detailed in the high-level summary table on pages 109 – 116 of the report. The Service Director of Children’s Services advised that what had struck her was the strong congruence with the direction of travel of Children’s services strategy areas, particularly around the workforce strategy in relation to participation and young people, parents, and carers voices, shaping and influencing the agenda at all levels, making sure to develop services linked to improving young people’s wellbeing and mental health.

The Service Director of Children’s Services noted that the Government’s

response to the recommendations, would be circulated following the meeting, acknowledging that not all recommendations had been accepted, with some in part, although she noted that in relation to the areas being progressed by the Council, alongside staff, families, and carers, these were largely accepted areas.

The Chair thanked the Director for her summary of the report and acknowledged that there were interesting comments on both pages 113 and 114 of the report, in respect of unregistered and unregulated placements, the issue of running away and reforms to the on-going support young people received when they left care. The Chair acknowledged that there was no beginning and no end, with the duty of care, because those children were so vulnerable and it was fantastic to see those issues were now being talked about at the highest level, informing policy, moving forward.

The Corporate Parenting Board **RESOLVED**:

1. To note the information in the report.
2. Receive an updated report when Government's decisions about the recommendations were known.

**17 TO CONSIDER PASSING THE FOLLOWING UNDER-MENTIONED RESOLUTION:**

It was **RESOLVED** that the press and public be excluded from the meeting under Section 100A(4) of the Local Government Act (as amended) for the following items of business on the grounds that it involves the likely disclosure of the exempt information as defined in paragraph 14 of Part 4 of the Schedule 12A of the Act.

**18 UPDATE IN RELATION TO THE CHILDREN LOOKED AFTER : RESIDENTIAL CARE STRATEGY 2022 - 2027**

The Director of Children's Services provided the Corporate Parenting Board with information about children in settings known as Operating without Registration (OWR), and Children's Services plans for supporting those children, and ending those arrangements.

Following consideration of the exempt report, the Corporate Parenting Board **RESOLVED**:

1. To acknowledge the information contained within the report; and
2. To receive subsequent reports until such time as there are no OWR situations for Rhondda Cynon Taf looked after young people.

**This meeting closed at 11.43 am**

**Councillor G Caple  
Chair**

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



## RHONDDA CYNON TAF COUNTY BOROUGH COUNCIL

### CORPORATE PARENTING BOARD

2<sup>ND</sup> OCTOBER 2023

### MENTAL HEALTH SUPPORT

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

Authors: Annabel Lloyd

#### 1. PURPOSE OF THE REPORT

- 1.1 This report provides information about the services that are available to improve the emotional well-being and mental health needs for young people with cares and support needs.

#### 2. RECOMMENDATIONS

It is recommended that the Corporate Parenting Board:

- 2.1 Note the information.
- 2.2 Decide whether future reports are required.

#### 3. REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATIONS

- 3.1 Alongside partner organisations, the Council has a duty to prevent need from escalating, and to meet the needs of children with care and support plans; this includes children who are looked after and care leavers as well.
- 3.2 Welsh Government's recently published Corporate Parenting Charter – A Promise from Wales ([Corporate parenting Charter | GOV.WALES](#)) includes the following undertaking at p.3 in relation to looked after young people and care leavers:
  - **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.

#### **4. BACKGROUND**

4.1 Children's Services last provided information on the subject to Scrutiny Committee in 2022. Since that date there has been changes in service provision that is matched by increasing need.

4.2 Those developments have been summarised below:

#### **4.3 Early Years Strategy**

Responsibility for the **RCT Early Years Strategic Plan 2022-25** sits jointly with Education and Inclusion Services and Community and Children's Services. For the purpose of this strategic plan, Early Years is defined as the ante- natal period up until a child is 7 years of age.

This plan sets out Rhondda Cynon Taf's medium to long- term vision for ensuring families have access to the services they need during the Early Years and Foundation Phase of school and that children have access to quality provision in order to maximise their chances of leading a healthy, happy and fulfilling life. Acknowledging that strong collaboration between partners is fundamental to achieving the vision of *'Every child in RCT has the right to have the very best start in life with access to equitable and excellent Early Years Services'* the strategic plan identifies four strategic priorities:

- All children and families in RCT will have timely access to high quality services and early intervention and prevention support throughout the Early Years;
- Parents and carers are actively engaged in their child's development and learning from the ante-natal period to the age of 7;
- Effective collaboration between Children's Services, Education, Health and wider partners upholds a strong Early Years system across the County Borough that facilitates smooth transitions for all 0-7 year olds, that is understood and promoted by an appropriately trained wider workforce;
- Information sharing and data management supports the effective and timely identification of children at risk of not meeting the developmental milestones necessary to progress effectively through the early years and tracks the outcomes for children of interventions delivered.

- 4.4 Agreement has been secured from the Regional Partnership Board to allocate Regional Integration Fund money in 2023-24 to support the regional delivery of interventions to support children's emotional wellbeing. It will compliment the range of services that are already available via the Resilient Families Service and seeks to address a provision gap for children in this age group. In RCT this will see the implementation of an **integrated wellbeing pathway for 8-11 year olds** requiring support to build their resilience and improve their emotional and mental health and wellbeing. Focusing on the provision of support for children outside of school the project will focus on:
- A Child's Right to Play (UNCRC) acknowledging that play is a protective factor for children's wellbeing. The methodology will use the principles of play as an engagement technique to provide community based 121 support;
  - making support fully accessible and where necessary helping children to re-engage with universal services;
  - building a child's resilience to manage family relationships and cope in the home environment employing a systemic / relational approach to problem solving.
- 4.5 This pathway will also be compliant with the principles set out in the NEST Framework ([NEST framework \(mental health and wellbeing\): introduction | GOV.WALES](#)) that aims to improve the integration of services and support to meet the emotional and wellbeing needs of children and families.

### **Development of the Whole School Approach known as Shine**

- 4.6 CAMHS In-Reach (SHINE) service was implemented in September 2022, and comprises of 3 team leads and 13 emotional wellbeing practitioners covering the entire Cwm Taf Morgannwg (CTM) primary and secondary school's footprint.
- 4.7 The purpose of the team is to support and maintain early identification and appropriate input for the emotional and mental wellbeing of the children aged 4-18 years and staff within CTM schools.
- 4.8 The service complements the Whole School Approach by applying the assessment framework and identifying current mental health and wellbeing provision and needs of the individual schools. Reviewing their own wellbeing landscape enables the SHINE service to develop plans to address the deficits and build on its strengths.
- 4.9 Focus has been on planning in a co-productive manner improving the integration of services and ensuring wider access to trusted adults. School staff, Children and young people and parents/carers have had

the opportunity to access early help and enhanced support in a timely manner adopting the NEST/Nyth framework.

- 4.10 To date, 2 pilot phases of approximately half of the schools in CTM have been completed with phase 3 currently in progress, feedback from stakeholders so far has been extremely positive with good outcomes. Phase 4 will commence in January 2024 with an end date of April 2024 the completed pilot will then be fully reviewed and evaluated.
- 4.11 All schools have full access to a dedicated team lead and emotional wellbeing practitioner at all times throughout term time.
- 4.12 The prevention and early intervention approach is key to upskilling tier 1 professionals, whilst also maintaining their emotional and mental wellbeing. SHINEs aim is to ensure effective and robust pathways to improve emotional and mental health needs of children from universal to more specialist services. The service has significantly progressed since its implementation date and currently provides schools with:
- Consultation and school cluster forums.
  - Relevant Emotional Mental Health Training.
  - Multidisciplinary fora.
  - Parent/ School staff drop-in sessions.
  - Psychoeducation to all.
  - 1-1 and group providing low intensity support.
  - Support and advice into PSE days.
  - Universal and targeted provision of resources through QR codes and information packs.

The SHINE service operates an open access support policy to all schools.

### **Embedding the Single Point of Access for CAMHS**

- 4.13 A single point of contact for access to CAMHS is now well-embedded provided access to consultation, advice and signposting for professionals and families. CAMHS colleagues have advised that there has been improvement in the waiting times for CAMHS assessments over the last 6 months following additional capacity being identified. The waiting list has reduced from 333 at the end of March 2023 down to 124 at the end of July 2023. As a result of the reduction in the waiting list 89% of patients receiving assessments in July were seen within 28 days. The average wait on the waiting list on the 8<sup>th</sup> September is 2.18 weeks and the longest wait is 3 weeks.



## Launch of the Neuro-divergence Improvement Programme

- 4.14 On 6 July 2022 a Written Statement was published by Government outlining the understanding that services for autism and other neuro - divergent conditions are inconsistent and under-developed.
- 4.15 The Neuro-divergence Improvement Programme will take a whole systems approach and will be developed in partnership across sectors, such as health, education and social care. Improvement will be co-produced with people with lived experience. Looked after children are over represented in eth waiting list for assessment with waiting times of 2-3 years.
- 4.16 The improvement programme is intended to drive through transformational change reducing reactive activities such as waiting list initiatives, whilst continuing to grow innovative, co-produced services that support families pre and post diagnosis.
- 4.17 People face long waiting times to access diagnostic assessment and our looked after children are numbered amongst those waiting up to 3 years for assessment.
- 4.18 Whilst it is recognised that significant investment is required into diagnostic services to provide a more timely assessment, this alone may not have a significant impact on waiting lists or waiting times. Additional investment is intended to develop services to achieve the following outputs:
- The provision of pre and post diagnostic support models.
  - The provision of information, advice and support for those families and individuals who do not reach diagnostic thresholds.
  - Accessible information and resources pre and post diagnosis.
- 4.19 Colleagues at CTMUHB are coordinating;
- A Scoping Study to establish the support needs of parents with children who are Neurodiverse, with commissioned agency 'Together Better Consultancy'. The scoping study will review what support parents need for their children and what services already exist across the region.
  - A co-production Hackathon Event (20th Oct 23) – an event for professionals, parents, families and adults with lived experience is planned to help shape and **co-produce solutions** and help improve service - presentation at Board.

## **Development of a Therapeutic Approach for Children who are Looked After**

4.20 MAPSS is a joint Local Authority and Regional Integrated Fund supported specialist therapeutic intervention service for care experienced children, especially those who have experienced placement breakdowns and those with plans for adoption. MAPSS is accessed via Children's Services Therapeutic Support Panel and is available for children with complex emotional and behavioural needs requiring a specialist therapy-led service that can deliver consistent and high quality intervention that includes:

- One off consultations to help make sense of the child's holistic needs and how best to support the child and their carers
- Provide a mixed model suite of suitable evidence based age appropriate therapies to address and overcome the difficulties the child is experiencing, including delivering trauma informed training to carers.

4.21 In the first year of commissioning MAPSS supported 108 children in RCT, with over 80% achieving placement stability.

### **Therapeutic Families Team (TFT)**

4.22 This is a Council funded multi-disciplinary team offering consultation, therapeutic assessments and interventions. The team is made up of Systemic (Family) Psychotherapists and Educational Psychologists, the team receives referrals via the Children's Services Therapeutic Support Panel and is now part of the wider services approach to therapeutic provision for all children at risk of family breakdown and children looked after within our in house residential provision.

4.23 TFT offer a range of ways to intervene with individuals, families, and professionals, these include:

- Consultation.
- Individual therapy
- Family therapy with the whole family, or parts of a family and wider family network.
- Family Consultation/Choice appointments.
- Staff group supervision.
- Psychological Assessments.
- Trauma Recovery Model and TRM Panel.
- Group work.
- Non-Violent Resistance for individual families.
- Staff training and skills workshops

- 4.24 TFT have supported 111 children and families over the last 12 months, with 70% remaining in the care of parents or extended family.

Both MAPPS and TFT work from the foundation of the trauma recovery model and work to the therapeutic model that has been developed for RCT.

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

- 5.1 This is an information report and an Equality Impact Assessment has not been carried out.

## **6 WELSH LANGUAGE IMPLICATIONS**

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

## **7 CONSULTATION / INVOLVEMENT**

- 7.1 Whilst each of these development has incorporated consultation including young person and parent / carer voice , there has not be consultation in relation to this information report.

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

- 8.1 There are no financial implications being brought to Corporate parenting Board's attention in this report, other than to note that services are under pressure due to demand.

## **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 content of the proposed session links directly to:
- The Council's Corporate Plan Vision of '*a County Borough that has high aspirations, is confident and promotes opportunity for all*'; as it focuses on the specific priorities of '*People - Promoting independence and positive lives for everyone and Place - Creating neighbourhoods where people are proud to live and work*'.
  - Three of the seven wellbeing goals that The Well Being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015' puts in place as follows:
    - A more equal Wales

- A healthier Wales
- A Wales of cohesive communities
- The sustainable approach promoted by the Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act through the five ways of working, by demonstrating how our work with children and families:
  - Seeks to make a long-term difference to people's lives
  - Supports the provision of preventative services and early help
  - Is integrated with relevant partner agencies.
  - Is collaborative in nature, seeking to find solutions within families and communities.
  - Involves families in determining what matters most, and how best they can be supported.

## **11. CONCLUSION**

- 11.1 Services to improve young people's mental health needs are developing. However, demand continues to exceed the services that are available. This is especially evident in relation to neuro -diversity.
- 11.2 Professionals will continue to work on developing services knowing that families need, and value responses that are integrated across the organisations.

**LOCAL GOVERNMENT ACT 1972**

**AS AMENDED BY**

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

**RHONDDA CYNON TAF COUNTY BOROUGH COUNCIL**

**CORPORATE PARENTING BOARD**

**2<sup>ND</sup> OCTOBER 2023**

**MENTAL HEALTH SUPPORT**

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

Officer to contact: Annabel Lloyd

This page is intentionally left blank



## **RHONDDA CYNON TAF COUNTY BOROUGH COUNCIL**

### **CORPORATE PARENTING BOARD**

#### **MAGU SERVICE**

**2<sup>ND</sup> OCTOBER 2023**

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

**Author: Julie Evans**

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

The purpose of the report is to provide Corporate Parenting Board members with information about the progress of the Magu service since its implementation in May 2023.

#### **2. RECOMMENDATIONS**

It is recommended that the Corporate Parenting Board:

- 2.1 Note the information.

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

- 3.1 Children's Services are providing information to Corporate Parenting Board about progress of Magu.

#### **4. BACKGROUND**

- 4.1 The Magu Project delivers an integrated support pathway for pregnant women and fathers to be across early intervention and edge of care services, focused on building skills and resilience and reducing risk. This early intervention approach will deliver targeted support for families to prevent escalation of statutory involvement ultimately reducing the number of children entering care at birth or in their first year.
- 4.2 The Magu Project has been developed in line with the Welsh Government Strategy of Keeping Families Together and reducing the number of Children Looked After in Wales. The term "Magu" translates from Welsh as "to bring up, rear, nurture, raise, gain" and it promotes

the ongoing long-term nature of the support required to deliver better outcomes for children and their families.

4.3 The Magu Team works with families from 10 weeks of pregnancy remaining involved, if required, until the child turns one. We provide bespoke support and skill building to enable children to safely remain in the care of their parents. The aim is to provide high levels of intervention in the early stages reducing in intensity to ultimately empower families to be making positive use of community-based resources. If purposeful the Magu team can continue to support the family even if the outcome of assessments and work is that their child can no longer remain in their care.

4.4 Whilst all referrals are given consideration there is particular emphasis on prioritising support for care experienced parents and parents who have previously been permanently separated from their children as a result of care proceedings.

4.5 Magu Aims to:

- Reduce the number of children under 1 becoming looked after.
- Reduce the number of parent child separations and reduce the length of time of any necessary separation.
- Increase the numbers of children under 1 successfully reunified with parents
- Reduce the number of care experienced parents having children removed from their care
- Reduce the number of families entering repeat care proceedings.
- Increase the involvement of fathers with intervention.
- Increase the resilience of parents involved with the service to reduce future statutory intervention.

4.6 Progress to date

- Team have completed their training and are now fully operational.
- Service is integrating well alongside established Intensive Intervention Teams and wider Children's Services teams.
- Partner agency links are forming positively.
- 51 referrals May - September
- Work consists of care experienced parents, cases noted to be high risk of child protection and PLO, parents whose children have been subject to previous care proceedings, very young unsupported parents.
- Highest number of referrals relates to those involved in previous care proceedings followed by care experienced parents.



- Feedback so far from service users, case responsible social workers and other agencies is proving to be positive.
- Too early to provide any comparative data but this is anticipated to be available early 2024.
- Developing a new pathway to support care experienced parents where risk is not evident but unmet need is identified.
- Joint work with 16+ Service on Parents in Care and Leaving Care Charter
- Development of service user feedback process to inform and shape the service is almost complete. This will involve direct representation from those who have used the service in addition to the more traditional written evaluation and feedback.

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

- 5.1 An Equality Impact Assessment has not been carried out in relation to this specific report,

## **6 WELSH LANGUAGE IMPLICATIONS**

- 6.1 Likewise, a Welsh Language Impact Assessment has not been carried out in relation to this specific report.

## **7 CONSULTATION / INVOLVEMENT**

- 7.1 Staff, partner agencies and parents have been involved in consultation, feedback is being used to continue to shape this Newly developing service.

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

- 8.1 The work outlined in this report is delivered within children's services budgeted resources.

## **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 Magu Project has been developed in line with the Welsh Government Strategy of Keeping Families Together and reducing the number of Looked After Children in Wales

- 10.2 Addressing the significant number of children removed from parents care at birth, is a clear priority in RCT. The creation of the Magu Project provides the opportunity to provide a continuum of support for pregnant women and their families from the earliest opportunity to prevent the need for statutory intervention. Investing additional resources now alongside existing efforts to ensure children and families receive the right support at the right time, will deliver cost saving longer term benefits to the Council.
- 10.3 The service delivery pathway the Magu Project offers will improve both the quality and timeliness of decisions that need to be made for those children most at risk. Tailored and intensive support throughout pregnancy and beyond offers the means to enhance parenting confidence and capability in the longer term, securing positive outcomes for children and families.
- 10.4 It will also help the Council to meet three of the seven wellbeing goals that The Well Being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015' puts in place as follows:
- A more equal Wales
  - A healthier Wales
  - A Wales of cohesive communities
- 10.5 The proposed changes are also consistent with the sustainable approach promoted by the Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act through the five ways of working:
- Long-term – the proposals seek to make a long-term difference to people's lives, the way we work with families and the Council's resources.
  - Prevention – the proposal is fundamentally focused upon strengthening our prevention offer.
  - Integration – Partner organisations have been invited to join the steering group and will continue to be involved. Particularly important in terms of integrating a seamless offer to vulnerable families with the Resilient Families Service, and Midwifery
  - Collaboration – Families, and staff have been involved in the evaluation and proposal.
  - Involvement – Families, and staff have been involved in the evaluation and proposal.

**LOCAL GOVERNMENT ACT 1972**

**AS AMENDED BY**

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

**RHONDDA CYNON TAF COUNTY BOROUGH COUNCIL**

**CORPORATE PARENTING BOARD**

**MAGU SERVICE**

**2<sup>ND</sup> OCTOBER 2023**

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

Officer to contact: Julie Evans, Head of Intensive Intervention

This page is intentionally left blank



## RHONDDA CYNON TAF COUNTY BOROUGH COUNCIL

### CORPORATE PARENTING BOARD

2<sup>ND</sup> OCTOBER 2023

#### INDEPENDENT REVIEWING SERVICE MONITORING REPORT TO THE GROUP DIRECTOR COMMUNITY AND CHILDREN'S SERVICES

**Authors: Emma Walters, Head of Partnerships  
Ceri Mann, Reviewing Team Manager, RCT Childrens Services  
Tel: 01443 490120**

#### 1. PURPOSE OF THE REPORT

The purpose of the report is to provide Corporate Parenting Board with information about the discharge of the Independent Reviewing Officer (IRO) functions for children looked after (CLA) for the period **30<sup>th</sup> June 22 – 30<sup>th</sup> June 23**.

#### 2. RECOMMENDATIONS

It is recommended that the Corporate Parenting Board note the information contained within this report.

#### 3. THE REVIEWING SERVICE

The Reviewing Service currently sits within the remit of the Head of Service for Partnerships (previously referred to as Head of Safeguarding). It comprises of 11 IRO FTE posts of which 1 post is vacant but appointed too. Despite some changes, the service has continued wherever possible to maintain established trusted relationships with IRO's. There is continued assistance from Business Support staff who are responsible for taking notes in complex CLA Reviews, and a Team Manager who is line managed by the Service Manager for Safeguarding.

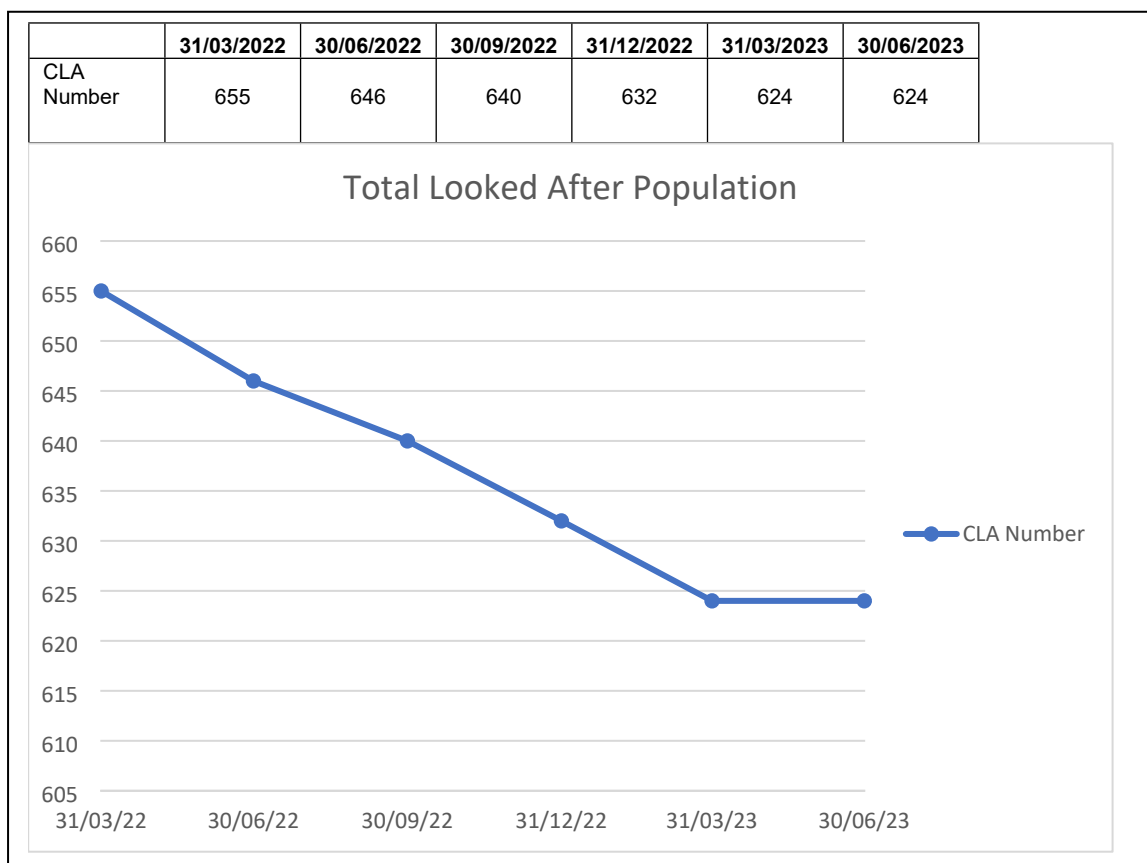
At the time of the last report, the reviewing service were operating to a remote delivery of service in line with the national guidelines as a result of the pandemic. Since moving into a pre-pandemic delivery, we are currently operating under a hybrid model of service delivery. We recognised the value and convenience of the remote technological infrastructure that we were reliant on throughout the pandemic, however as noted in previous reports, due to the nature of our service are, face to face meetings have always been our preferred option in line with best practice.

The hybrid model allows for children, young people and their families/carers and practitioners to request their chosen preference to the meeting. Any face-to-face request are being accommodated in a suitable venue. As a reviewing service, we are promoting the transition back to more 'face to face' meetings.

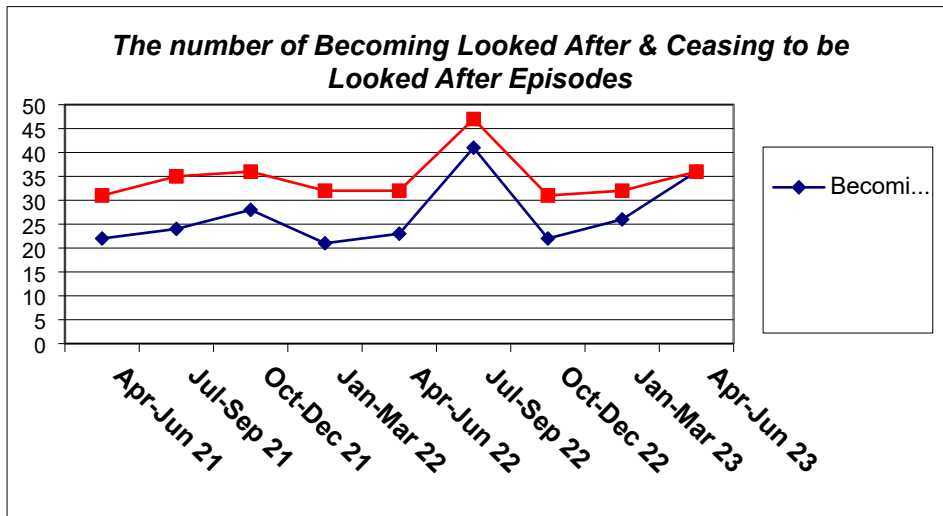
As noted above, the service has faced some significant changes in staffing, including a new head of service and more recently, service manager however, we have continued to operate to the same capacity and despite the many challenges faced since the beginning of the pandemic the commitment and professionalism of IRO's remains resolute in ensuring the best outcomes for children looked after.

#### 4. PERFORMANCE INFORMATION

##### Total Looked After Population

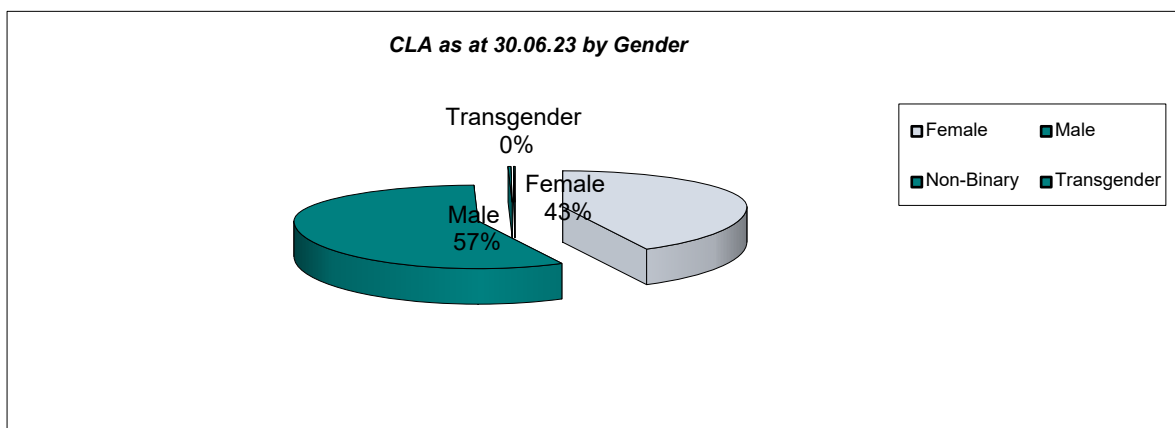


### Children Becoming Looked After and Ceasing to be Looked After



	Apr-Jun 21	Jul-Sep 21	Oct-Dec 21	Jan-Mar 22	Apr-Jun 22	Jul-Sep 22	Oct-Dec 22	Jan-Mar 23	Apr-Jun 23
Becoming Looked After Episodes	22	24	28	21	23	41	22	26	36
Ceasing to be Looked After Episodes	31	35	36	32	32	47	31	32	36

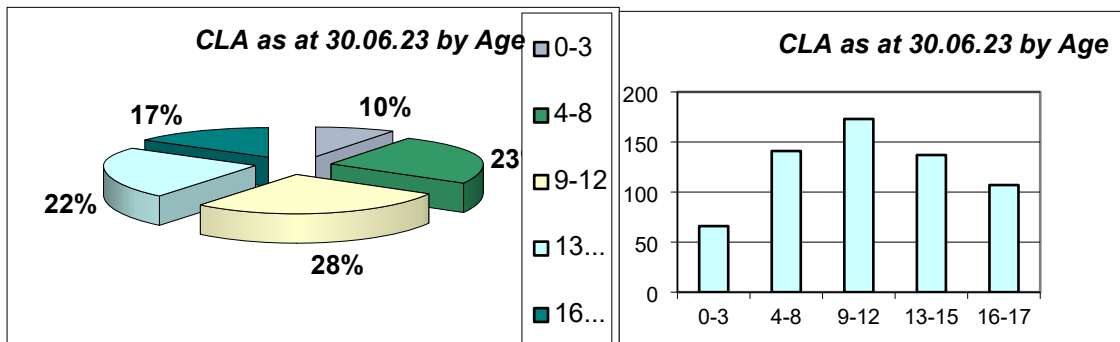
### Children Looked After by Gender



CLA as at 31.03.22 by Gender	CLA as at 30.06.22 by Gender	CLA as at 30.09.22 by Gender	CLA as at 31.12.22 by Gender	CLA as at 31.03.23 by Gender	CLA as at 30.06.23 by Gender

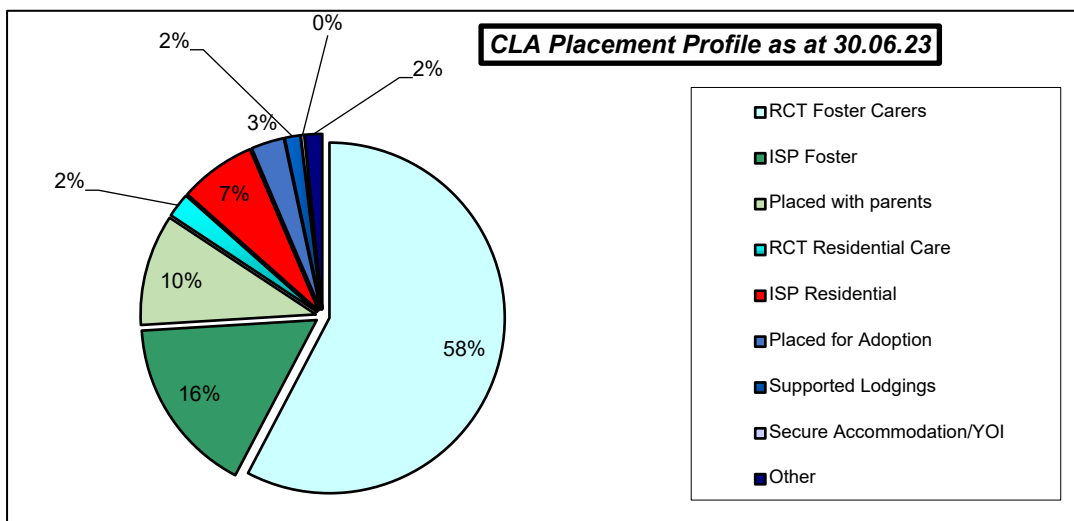
Female	284	273	267	263	264	265
Male	371	369	368	364	357	356
Non-Binary	0	2	2	2	2	2
Transgender	0	2	3	3	1	1
Total	655	646	640	632	624	624

### Children Looked After by Age



	0-3	4-8	9-12	13-15	16-17	Total
CLA as at 31.03.22 by Age	96	148	164	145	102	655
CLA as at 30.06.22 by Age	92	146	167	146	95	646
CLA as at 30.09.22 by Age	76	148	173	145	98	640
CLA as at 31.12.22 by Age	67	146	170	145	104	632
CLA as at 31.03.23 by Age	69	135	170	131	119	624
CLA as at 30.06.23 by Age	66	141	173	137	107	624

### Placement Profile

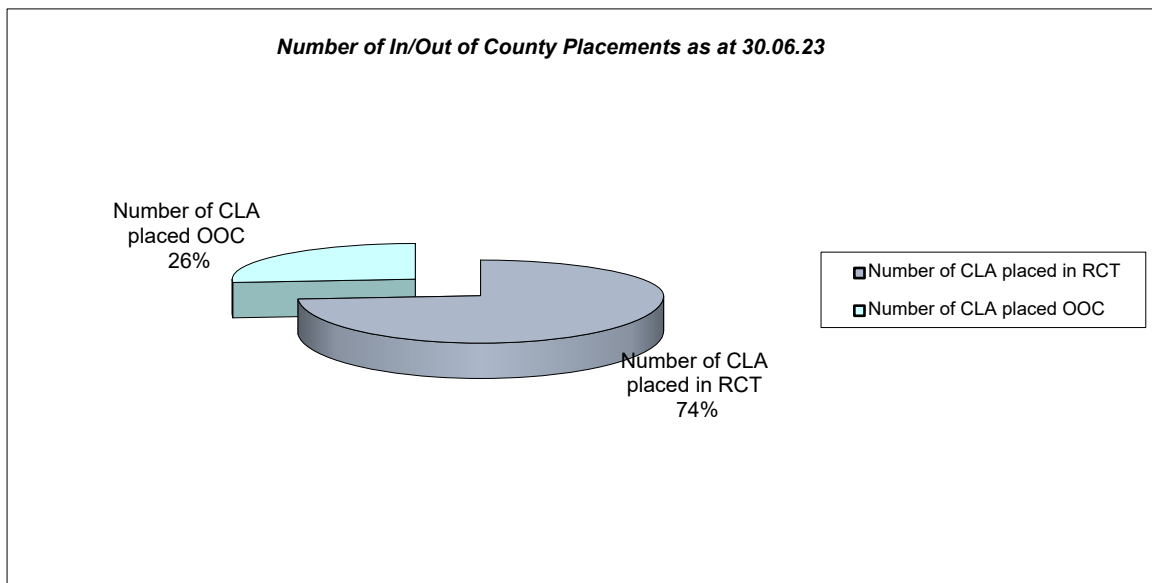


	Mar-22	Jun-22	Sep-22	Dec-22	Mar-23	Jun-23



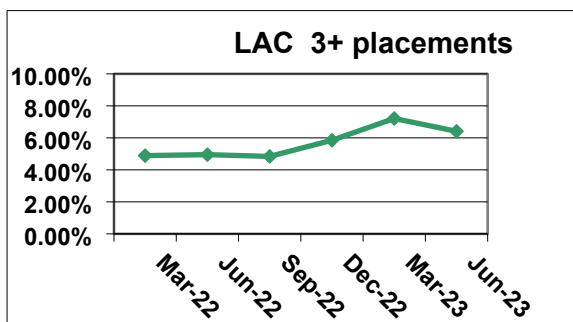
RCT Foster Carers	382	379	371	356	359	360
ISP Foster	119	113	109	108	103	102
Placed with parents	66	60	69	70	63	64
RCT Residential Care	10	12	12	11	9	14
ISP Residential	52	48	51	50	54	44
Placed for Adoption	17	22	15	20	22	19
Supported Lodgings	6	7	6	12	8	9
Secure Accommodation/YOI	0	0	1	0	1	2
Other	3	5	6	5	5	10
<b>Total</b>	<b>655</b>	<b>646</b>	<b>640</b>	<b>632</b>	<b>624</b>	<b>624</b>

### Number of In/Out of County Placements



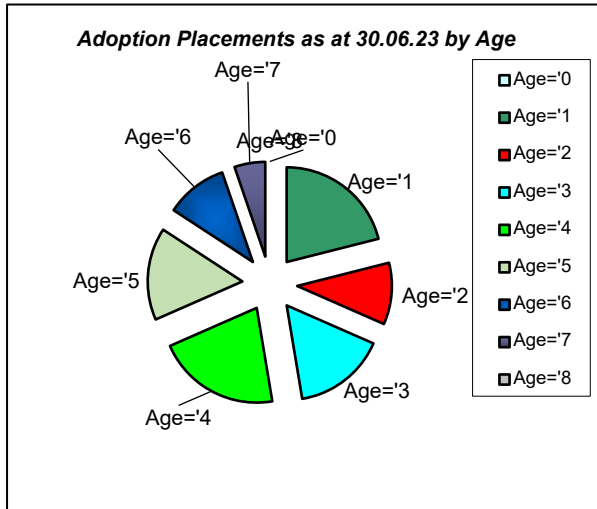
	Mar-22	Jun-22	Sep-22	Dec-22	Mar-23	Jun-23
Number of CLA placed in RCT	473	465	466	455	458	461
Number of CLA placed OOC	182	181	174	177	166	163
Total CLA	655	646	640	632	624	624
% OOC	27.8%	28.0%	27.2%	28.0%	26.6%	26.1%

### Children Looked After Placement Moves

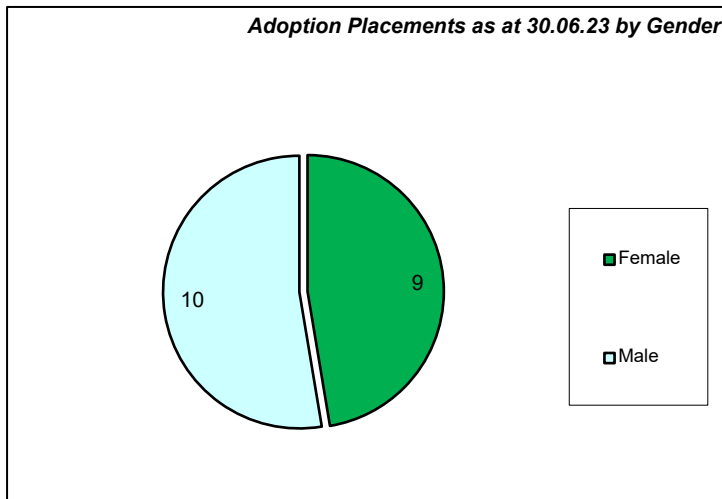


Mar-22	Jun-22	Sep-22	Dec-22	Mar-23	Jun-23
4.89%	4.95%	4.84%	5.85%	7.21%	6.41%

**Adoption**



Adoption Placements as at 30.06.23 by Age	Total
Age=0	0
Age=1	4
Age=2	2
Age=3	3
Age=4	4
Age=5	3
Age=6	2
Age=7	1
Age=8	0
Total	19



Adoption Placements as at 30.06.23 by Gender	Total
Female	9
Male	10
Total	19

Adoption Information	Total
Number of children placed for adoption as at 30.06.23	19
Number of children placed for adoption between 01.07.22 - 30.06.23	17
Number of Children adopted between 01.07.22 - 30.06.23	20

5. **REVIEW ACTIVITY 30<sup>th</sup> June 2022 - 30<sup>th</sup> June 2023**

**CLA Number:**

Overall, we are continuing to see a reduction in the number of children looked after. Comparative to end of Qtr 1 data 2022, this has reduced by 3.4 % however when compared to 30.03.20 when the number was 723 this has reduced by 13.6%. The number of children becoming looked after in 22-23 increased by 17.8% compared to the previous year (95/112).

**Admissions and Discharges:**

Our lowest number of monthly admissions was 4 children in December 22 and 17 children in August 22. When considering the monthly admissions there are no apparent themes that come out, however August may be considered a pressure point for some families due to the summer period.

145 children ceased being looked after between June 2022 and May 2023. This is a 3% increase in numbers compared to the same period June 21 - May 22 where 140 children ceased being looked after.

In relation to where the children reside upon leaving care, 51% of children returned home Family/Extended Family during the period which is the highest percentage. 19 children (13%) had Adoption Orders granted so now reside with their adoptive families. 32 children (22%) remained with foster carers either as a 'when I'm ready' arrangement upon turning 18 or subject to a Special Guardianship Order. Independent living accounted for 12% and these are mainly young people aged 16+.

41% of all children that ceased being looked after over the last 12 months were aged 16+. In relation to where the young people reside upon leaving care, 20 out of the 26 YP remain with their foster carers in 'When I'm Ready' arrangements and 6 children were open to DCT and have remained with their foster carers after transitioning to Adults Services. 17 YP left care and went into Independent Living placements which accounts for 29%. 15 children have returned to Family/Extended Family.

**CLA by Gender:**

When making a comparative to same Qtr last year Female CLA population has reduced by 2.9%. If compared to the same period in 2021 this has reduced by 9.5%.

When making a comparative to the same Qtr last year Male CLA population has reduced by 3.5%. If compared to the same period in 2021 this has reduced by 8.9%.

Males represent the highest proportion of the CLA population.

When considering gender and age group in children becoming looked after in 22-23, males represented 59.4 % of children BLA and were the only gender in the age groups, 6 (6), 11 (8), 12 (1), 16 (2), 17 (5) and females represented 39.6% of children BLA and were the only gender in the age group 8 (3).

2 children identified as non-binary and 3 as transgender.

### **CLA by Age:**

As at the end of 30.06.23, 22% of admissions are children aged under 1 year old. The number has decreased by 4 when compared to the previous year and the trend shows that this age group continues to have the highest number of admissions.

The number of children aged 1-4 becoming looked after has increased by 3 compared to last year's figures, from 20 (21%) children in 2021-22 to 23 (20%) children in 2022-23.

The number of children being brought into care aged 16+ is 7 (6%) a decrease by 1 compared to the same period last year.

Based on current CLA numbers the highest number are in the 10-15 age group. This age group is consistently the highest percentage.

### **Placement Details:**

Based on current CLA numbers, most children reside with Relative Carers (34%). The number has decreased by 12 when compared to the same time last year. Relative placements are the highest % among CLA aged 1-15. 69% of children aged under 1 are placed with RCT foster carers as at 15/06/23.

In House Foster Care placements continue to be higher than Independent Sector Foster Care. The number of Independent Foster Care placements has decreased by 9.7% when compared to Qtr 1 last year, from 113 to 102.

The number of children placed in external residential placements has decreased by 4 when compared to Qtr 1 last year (from 48 to 44). 67% of current external residential placements are occupied by 10-15 year olds.

YP aged 16+ have the highest % among CLA placed in Foster Care Ind. Sector.

The number of Parent & Child placements has increased by 1 when compared to the same period last year however remains the same number as in Qtr1 in 2021 (3).

The number of children placed with parents increased by 4 when compared to the same period last year.

74% of children looked after are residing within RCT. The number of children residing out of county has reduced by 2% when comparative with same Qtr last year. For many children and young people who reside out of county this may be with family members or in secure long-term placements where they are settled and/or a provision of specialist placement provision.

### **Placement Stability:**

Children move placement for a variety of different reasons & some of the 3rd placements will relate to children's moves to a permanent long-term placement.

Performance had dropped from 5.9% at the end of December 2022 to 7.2% at the end of March 2023 although you will see an increase at end of Qtr 1 to 6.4%

Performance can also be affected by the continued high number of children looked after which can put pressure on placement availability.

### **Adoption:**

13 children have had a Placement Order granted between June 22 and May 23. 6 children are currently residing in foster care placements and 7 children are placed with potential adopters.

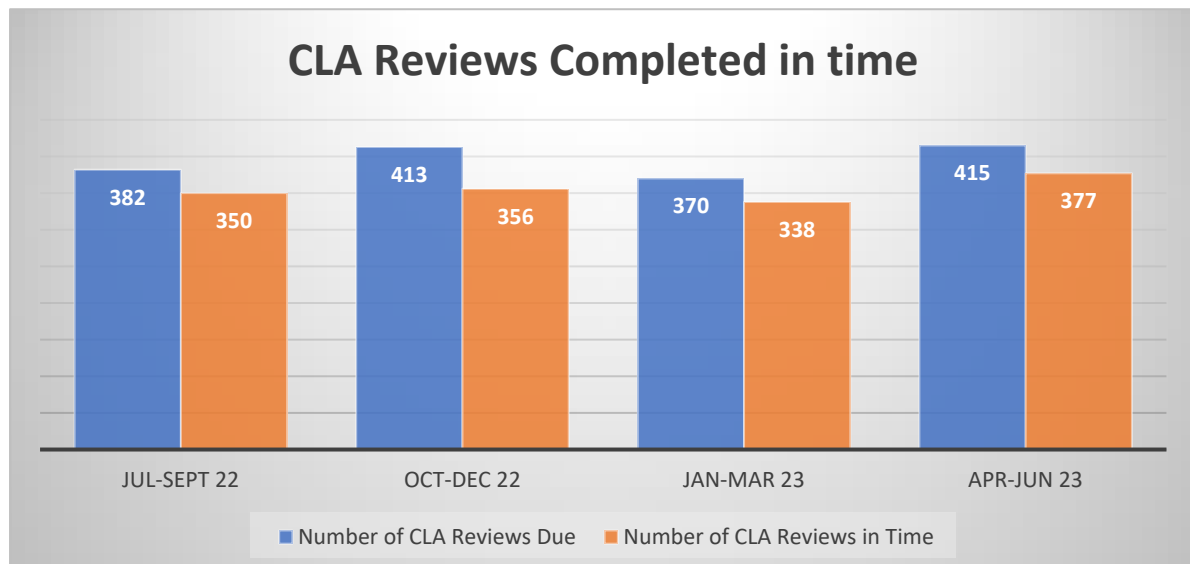
In comparison to the previous year there has been a 57% decrease of Placement Orders granted during 2021-22.

A total of 20 adoption placements were started between June 22 - May 23 which a decrease of 4 compared to the previous year.

19 Adoption Orders have been granted over the last 12 months which is a 21% decrease compared to the same period in 2021-22.

## CLA REVIEWS

### CLA Reviews in Time 30<sup>th</sup> June 2022 – 30<sup>th</sup> June 2023



	Jul-Sep 22	Oct-Dec 22	Jan-Mar 23	Apr-Jun 23
<b>Number of CLA Review's Due</b>	382	413	370	415
<b>Number of CLA Review's In Time</b>	350	356	338	377
<b>% In Time</b>	92%	86%	91%	91%

### Quarter Comparators 2021 (over this reporting period)

	Jul-Sep 21	Oct-Dec 21	Jan-Mar 22	Apr-Jun 22
<b>Number of CLA Review's Due</b>	412	411	396	441
<b>Number of CLA Review's In Time</b>	386	376	363	408
<b>% In Time</b>	94%	92%	92%	93%

In addition, IROs chaired 16 combined CLA Reviews and Review Conferences to remove the names of children looked after under Care Orders from the Child Protection Register.

## **6. REASONS FOR CANCELLATION**

156 CLA Reviews were not held in time between July 22 - June 23. The reporting period 4 (Jan-Mar) 2022 was our best quarter with only 28 reviews out of time. Reporting period 3 (Oct-Dec) 2022 seen the most reviews go out of time at 57. Every effort is made to ensure that cancelled reviews are reconvened within time, and where this isn't possible permission to go out of time is sought from a Service Manager or Head of Service. This is reflected in the significantly lower number of reviews that have gone out of time to those

that have been rearranged within time. For example, in reporting period 3, only 20% of cancellations went out of time (28/143) 115 meetings were rearranged in time. In reporting period 4, 31% of cancellations went out of time (57/181) 124 meetings were rearranged in time.

The reasons for cancellations and postponements vary although this year we has seen staffing resources have an impact on those meetings that are held out of time with 27.5% (43/156) rearranged due to no chairperson being available. 14.1% (22/156) due to the key worker not being available and 11.5% (18/156) due to other professionals not being available. The availability of professional's overall accounts for 53% of reviews being held out of time. Other change of circumstances account for 21.1% (33/156) and families and/or child's availability accounted for 10.2% (16/156).

## **7. CURRENT ISSUES FOR THE REVIEWING SERVICE**

Whilst a considerable amount of work has been undertaken on optimum IRO caseloads in line with research and evidence of best practice, where necessary we are continuing to go above these to ensure our statutory duties continue to be met particularly when the availability of external chairs has become more difficult to source. We are continuing to undertake a monthly case load analysis and are utilising supervisions to monitor individual performance in respect of completion of paperwork. It is hoped that the new IRO appointment due to commence in October will provide further resilience and stability within the team.

Despite the staffing issues and demand, it is important to share with Corporate Parenting Board the extensive work that has been undertaken within the service including the successful introduction of mid-point reviews in line with AFKA Cymru Best Practice Guidelines – Reviewing and monitoring of a child or young person's Part 6 Care and Support Plan. This allows for more robust monitoring by the IRO and where appropriate timely resolution to issues that require formal escalation. Other key development work can be found below.

## **8. RESOLUTIONS RAISED BY IROS**

In all the reviewing team have raised 16 resolutions over 2022 – 2023 with 7 of these being raised in reporting period 4. Of the 16 resolutions raised 8 were responded to within timescales. Where a response hasn't been received the Reviewing Team Manager has contacted the relevant team manager to request a response and on 4 occasion the Service Manager / Head of Service has taken discussions forward. 4 resolutions have been raised in Qtr 1 of 23-24 and one Stage 2 resolution meeting was held.

Some themes included:

**Delay in Life Journey Work** – IRO identified in midpoint review that work had not started the work that was required before child made transitional move to

secondary school. Outcome: Manager to address with work and case transferred to another team to commence work to avoid further drift and delay.

**Delay in agreement for PWP** – IRO concerned about drift as agreed actions in respect of overnight visits had not commenced. Outcome: HOS liaised and it was noted that additional information had been sought by II HOS and this had been resolved and the matter was moving forward.

**Statutory Visit and Planning** – Visits to the child had not taken place in line with statutory requirements and kinship carers reported they felt unsupported. Mother to child had not received parenting assessment to make representations on negative outcome despite SGO for grandmother nearing completion. Outcome: Team Manager acknowledged concerns and gave reassurance that visits were now taking place alongside multi agency meetings and a package of support and confirmed mother had received a copy of the relevant assessment.

**Child not in Education** – Child not in school due to cross boundary issues. Some home tutoring had began. Child has ALN but did not have an Individual Development Plan. Outcome: IRO escalated and RCT Virtual School arranged to liaise with all professionals and facilitate a PCP meeting in order to draft IDP.

## 9. **DEVELOPMENT WORK**

The Reviewing Service has continued to work on service developments throughout the year despite facing a number of challenges linked to staffing as a number of experienced IRO leaving the service area too pursue career development in other fields.

Some of the key areas of development nearing completion that will ensure the voice of the child is encapsulated throughout our practice include:

## 10. **IRO Roles and Responsibilities Practice Protocol**

This protocol seeks to improve outcomes for children looked after by providing guidance to independent reviewing officers (IROs) about how they should discharge their distinct responsibilities to children looked after by Rhondda Cynon Taff. We have aimed to keep the voices of children and young people and their rights consistently in mind as we have drawn up this protocol. Once this has been signed off at CSMT, IRO's will create a short training presentation that can be delivered across the teams and the wider multi agency network.

### **IRO Resolution Protocol**

This in final draft and will be sent for sign off at CSMT imminently.



## **Becoming Looked After and IRO One Page Profile**

First draft of the IRO BLA letter for young children and older children, young people has been completed and additional drafts are in progress to ensure it is accessible and informative using child friendly language for children with additional needs or disability. Most one-page profiles are completed, and it is anticipated that these will be enclosed in the BLA letter. Before final version is agreed we will consult with children and young people to gain their views in respect of the proposed drafts and consider any proposed amendments and ensure they are involved in co-producing these moving forward.

Equality: Public facing documentation will be available in English and Welsh and will note that they can be made available in different languages and formats on request.

## **Parent and Child Feedback Form**

We have created a short feedback form that will be sent to parents/carers and children who attend their reviews. The purpose of this is to gain the lived experience of those accessing our service in order to continuously reflect, develop and improve our service.

## **CLA Review of Arrangements**

This is in final draft version and is ready to be sent to Information Management to set up a tester form on Beta (WCCIS) for us to pilot. A complimenting child friendly agenda for CLA reviews is also nearing completion and child friendly version of this will be finalised and shared with children and young people.

The adoption review documents currently in use are those that were piloted in 2019 however these were never formally reviewed and finalised because of the disruption caused by the Covid pandemic. A regional face to face meeting was arranged in June 2023 and work is now progressing on the new template.

## **YEPS & 2 Sides**

The information has now been uploaded to the 2Sides pages on the YEPS website and includes links to both the My Voice My Review consultation document and the "Is Anyone Listening" advocacy animation. We have recently shared the link with the childcare teams and invited them to provide feedback.

Updating the bespoke 2 Sides Website is on hold until discussions within the Participation Strategy, task and finish group have considered how the Local Authority will host its public facing information moving forward and whether 2 Sides should remain as a standalone site or whether the information would be better presented alongside other public facing pages.

### **My Voice My Review.**

We have continued to experience challenges with the online platform that facilitates the My Voice -My Review consultation as there were technical errors with the link and the reporting mechanism. Continued consultation with the relevant department has taken place and on the recommendation of the Customer Improvement and Development Manager a request was made to consider whether a new digital process could be developed to meet our service needs. In recent months we have met regularly in order to progress this, (. In-house developers are confident that they can design a bespoke questionnaire that will meet our needs. This is under construction, and we will consult further with children and young people as soon as it is constructed. We are continuing to work closely with colleagues in DCT to create a version that will meet the needs of children with disabilities and/or additional needs.

### **Children's Rights**

We have recently started to develop child friendly information sheets using the 7-minute briefing format. We have completed a Guide to Children's Rights and Making a Complaint-A Child Friendly Guide. We will consult and share these with children and young people and if they find them useful, we will ask them what other topics they would like to see and ensure they are involved in co-producing these moving forward.

#### **11. EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY IMPLICATIONS**

This is an information report therefore no Equality and Diversity Assessment is required.

#### **12. CONSULTATION**

This is an information report therefore no consultation required.

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

None

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

This is covered in the Appendix Document

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

The statutory responsibilities and good practice standards of the Reviewing Service compliment the Council's Corporate Priorities to promote independence and positive lives for everyone by ensuring:

- Rhondda Cynon Taf children and young people will receive a great start in life.
- Where children and young people are unable to live to live with their own parents, we put in place the care arrangements, including specialist accommodation, which will keep them safe and well. We will ensure that we listen to the voices of these children and young people by involving them in monitoring the action plan to address a child's journey through care from admission to exit.

This page is intentionally left blank



## RHONDDA CYNON TAF COUNTY BOROUGH COUNCIL

### CORPORATE PARENTING BOARD

2<sup>nd</sup> OCTOBER 2023

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

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

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

##### 2. **RECOMMENDATIONS**

It is recommended that the Corporate Parenting Board:

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

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

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

##### 4. **BACKGROUND**

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

##### 5. **EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY IMPLICATIONS**

- 5.1 An Equality Impact Assessment is not needed because the contents of the report are for information purposes only.

## **6. CONSULTATION**

6.1 There is no consultation required for this report.

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

7.1 There are no financial implications aligned to this report.

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

8.1 There are no legal implications aligned to this report.

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

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

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

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

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

## **10. CONCLUSION**

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

**Cwm Taf Morgannwg Independent Advocacy Service  
RCT Care Experienced Young People and Care Leavers  
Report**

**Quarter One April 2023 – June 2023**

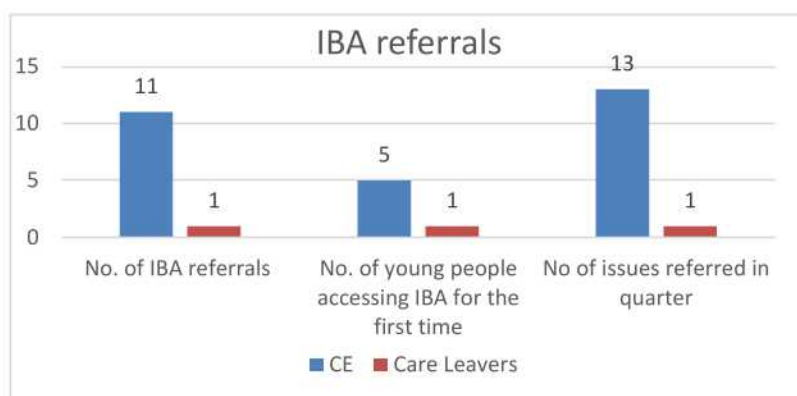


## Activity Overview

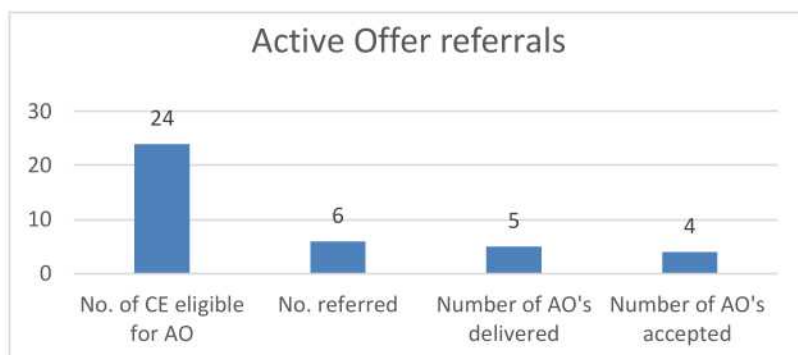
In quarter one, 49 young people accessed Issue Based Advocacy (IBA) and 29 young people were referred for the Active Offer (AO) across RCT. The majority of young people referred for advocacy services in quarter one were in the child protection arena rather than care experienced.

This report provides information on the service delivered to care experienced (CE) young people and care leavers only.

In quarter one, 11 CE young people accessed IBA, five less than in the previous quarter. Those 11 young people presented with 13 issues. Six care experienced young people were referred for the AO, the same number as in quarter four, and one care leaver was referred for IBA.



In quarter one, five of the 11 CE young people accessing IBA were doing so for the first time, two more than in the previous quarter.

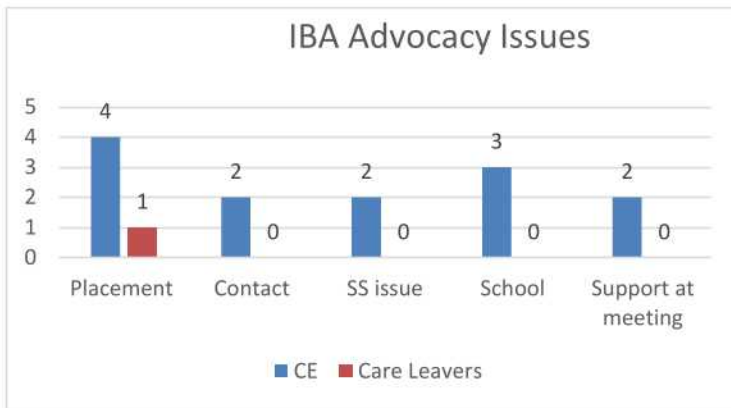


Four of the six young people referred for AO in quarter one became eligible for AO in the same period. The remaining two young people became eligible in the previous quarter.

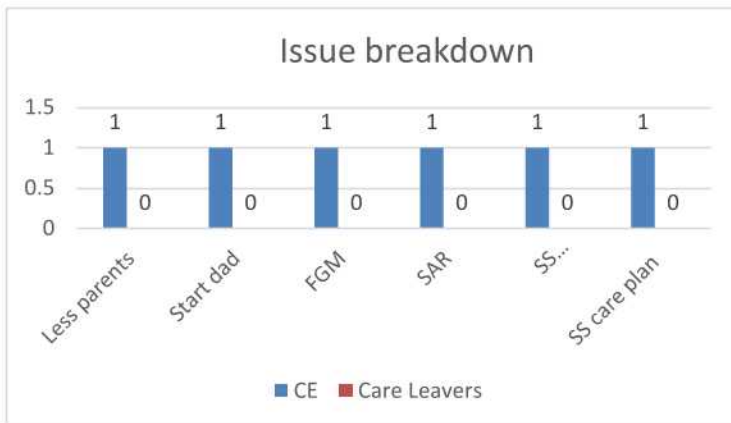
Seven of the 24 young people who became eligible for AO via the CLA pathway were recorded as rejecting the opportunity to receive the AO in quarter one. They either did not want to meet with any professional or felt well enough supported by their social worker.

Six young people are recorded as accepting the opportunity to meet with an advocate and four were referred for AO. Two young people who are recorded as accepting have not been referred, although one of those two young people did receive advocacy services several years ago. Their names will be sent to RCT for investigation. We do not know if the seven remaining eligible CE young people have been offered the opportunity to receive the AO by their social worker as this is not recorded on the spreadsheet provided by RCT. This means 25% of those eligible in quarter one were referred for AO, compared to 18% in the previous quarter.





The most popular issues in need of advocacy support in quarter one, were placement followed by school issues. Placement was also one of the most popular issues in the previous quarter.



Two CE young people accessed IBA for support with two contact issues in quarter one. One relating to wanting to start seeing their dad, and the other wanted to reduce the time they spent with their parents.

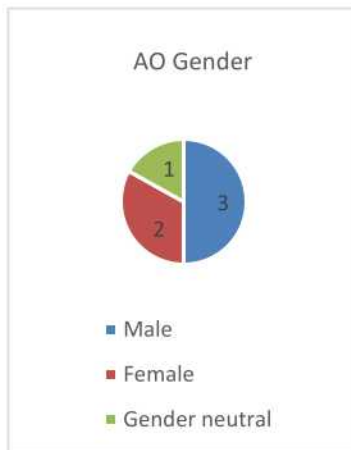
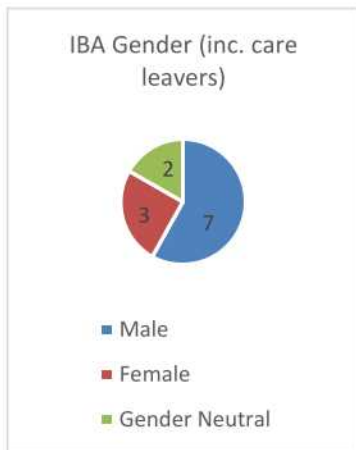
One young person asked for support at a family group meeting (FGM) and another asked for

support at a secure accommodation review (SAR).

Social services issues consisted of one young person wanting support around their relationship with their social worker and the other wanted to challenge some aspects of their care plan.

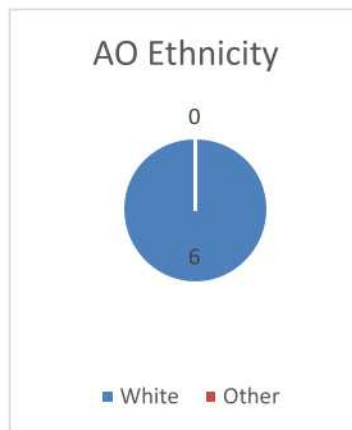


'Self-referral' and social services referrals continue to be the most popular route into the IBA service for care experienced young people. Self-referral is usually either the result of the young person accepting the AO and going on to received IBA, or the young person contacting their advocate directly with a new issue. One referral was made by a TGP Cymru FGM Coordinator.



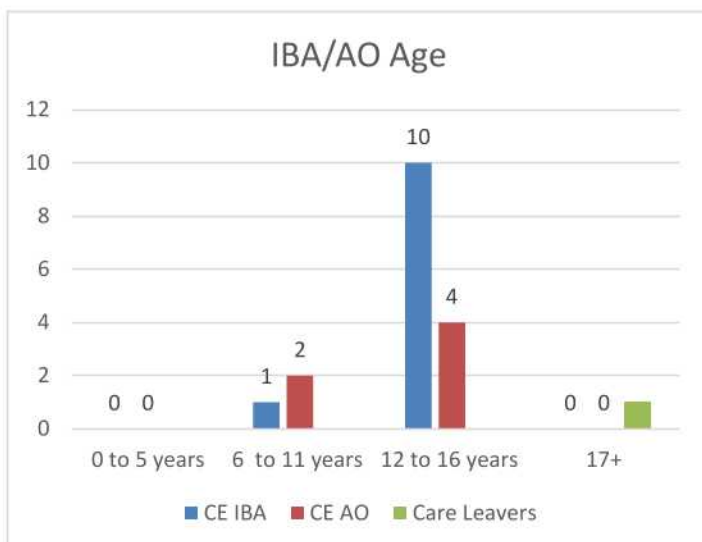
The majority of CE IBA referrals were for males for the second consecutive quarter. Two gender neutral young people were referred for IBA and one gender neutral young person was referred for AO.

Males also made up the majority of AO referrals, while more females were referred for AO in the previous quarter.



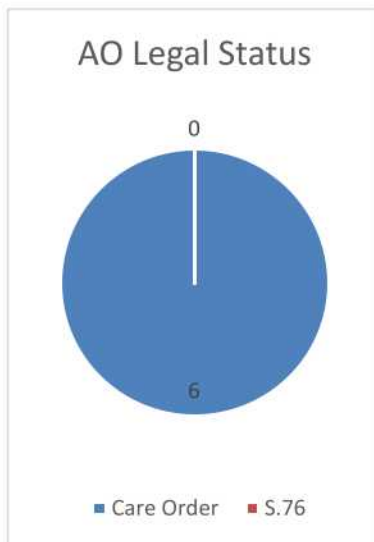
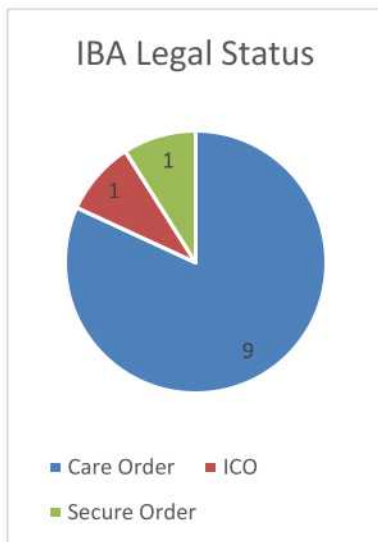
All but one of the 13 CE young people and Care Leavers receiving IBA in quarter one described themselves as white.

All six of the CE young people referred for AO in Q1 described themselves as white.



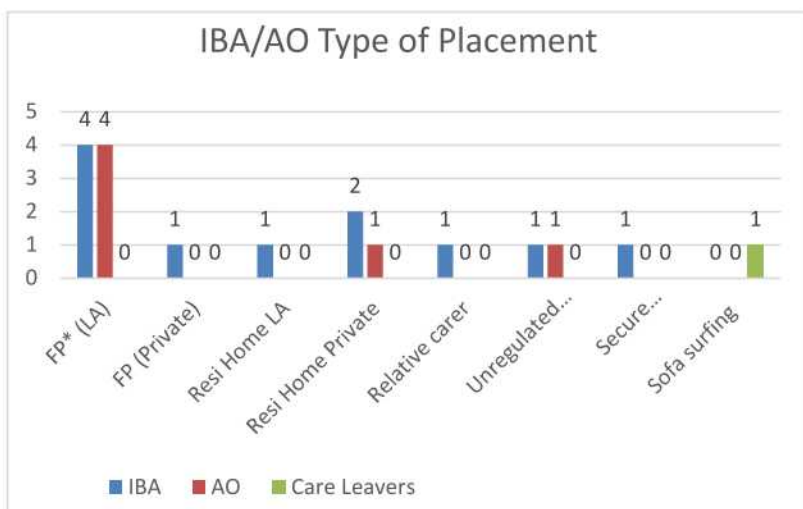
Most CE young people accessing the IBA service in quarter one were again aged between 12 and 16 years, followed by those aged between six and 11.

The majority of CE young people referred for AO were also aged between 12 and 16 years, a change from the previous quarter when most young people were aged under 12 years.

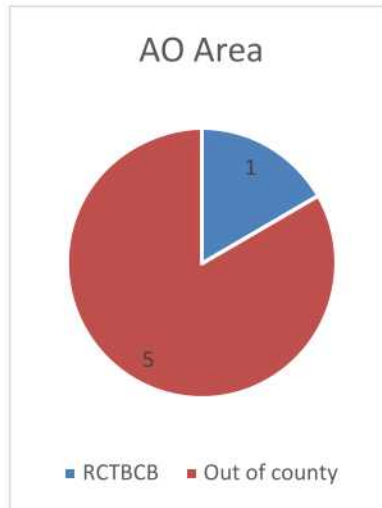
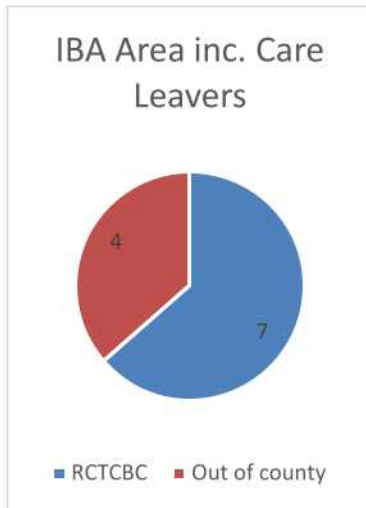


Most CE young people accessing IBA and AO in quarter one were again subject to full care orders.

One young person was subject to an interim care order and another subject to a secure order.



Most CE young people accessing advocacy services in quarter one were living in LA foster placements and community residential homes.



Advocates supported four CE young people living outside of RCT in quarter one. Other areas included Swansea, Neath, Cardiff and Torfaen.

Only one CE young person referred for AO lived outside of RCT, in Cardiff.

### Other information

Three CE young people with additional needs were referred for IBA in quarter one. One has a diagnosis of ASD and ADHD along with physical disability, while another has additional learning needs.

One young person, whose needs mean they are unable to access the mainstream IBA service has accessed the Non-Instructioned Advocacy (NIA) service instead. Several visits have been completed and an NIA report has been sent to the young person’s IRO in relation to a school issue.

### Visiting Advocacy

Residential Visiting Advocacy (RVA) continues in five Local Authority community homes across RCT. Face-to-face visits have continued monthly in Bryndar and Beddau. The remaining three homes, Carn Ingli, Nantygwyn and Ty Brynna have advised monthly visits are not appropriate and have requested the advocate visits every two months and stays connected via telephone contact instead. The RVA advocate is currently providing IBA to three young people living in RCT community homes.

The review of our RVA services is ongoing, although we made the decision to pause this piece of work to concentrate on recruitment and advocacy capacity during quarter one. The newly recruited senior advocate will lead on this piece of work following his induction period. This will include further consultation with staff and young people who live in community homes in RCT and Bridgend. The outcome of the review will allow us to make informed changes to ensure the RVA service is working as effectively as possible for young people living in community homes across Cwm Taf Morgannwg.



## **Service Information**

The (C.E.) young people and Care Leavers advocacy quarterly progress report was shared at RCT Corporate Parenting Panel at the end of June.

The sudden resignation of a full-time team member due to illness in the previous quarter, and a change in circumstances for a casual advocate, has led to a decline in the number of young people who have had contact with their advocate within five working days of referral. Following recruitment in quarter one, we are pleased to report that three new team members will be joining the Cwm Taf Morgannwg Advocacy Service in the next quarter. These are, one full-time advocate, one senior advocate who will work 30 hours per week along with a new casual advocate. We are confident this will address recent capacity issues and allow us to respond effectively to the recent increase in advocacy referrals.

Following the retirement of Jackie Murphy, Rhiannon Beaumont-Walker has taken up the role of Chief Executive Officer of TGP Cymru as of the 1<sup>st</sup> of June. Rhiannon has been with TGP Cymru since 2006, when she joined the organisation as Team Leader to develop the Be Heard Advocacy Service in Newport.

In recent months, advocates have continued to report difficulty in obtaining feedback for young people when they have sent wishes and feelings reports to some social workers. On receipt of referral, social workers are made aware that the expectation is that the recipient of any wishes and feelings report will respond to the young person's wishes and feelings and the advocate will then visit the young person again to discuss the response. The lack of response, as well as being frustrating for the young person, also adversely affects the capacity of the advocate as it can mean some young people's cases are open longer than they need to be.

## **Conclusion and looking forward.**

Referrals for CE young people and care leavers have remained fairly consistent when compared to the previous quarter. While we did observe a decline in those accessing IBA in quarter one, more CE young people accessed the service for the first time than in quarter four. We were also pleased to observe an increase in the percentage of eligible CE young people being referred for AO. We will continue to keep in contact with RCT and share information with a view to understanding the take up of advocacy services in the area.

## **Case Example**

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

**Situation:** Mase is 15 years old and currently living in foster care. Mase was originally referred in 2021 after becoming looked after, and has accessed the service three times since, with three separate issues. Each time Mase has accessed the advocacy service, he has worked with the same advocate. In quarter one, Mase asked to speak to his advocate as he felt he wasn't being listened to by his social worker.

**Action:** The advocate asked Mase if he would prefer a phone call or a face-to-face visit as he had previously preferred to engage over the phone. Mase explained as he felt his issue was

urgent, he would prefer to speak on the phone, therefore the advocate arranged to call Mase at a time convenient to him. Mase explained last year, he travelled to see a family member for an event, and he was hoping to do the same this year but stay overnight rather than travel there and back in the same day. Mase was frustrated and anxious as the date was drawing nearer but despite calling and emailing his social worker for several weeks, he hadn't received a response. The advocate agreed to contact the social worker on Mase's behalf, and after several phone calls and emails managed to contact the social worker via the children's services admin team. The social worker explained he hadn't been in work due to illness, and apologised this hadn't been communicated to Mase. The advocate explained the urgency of the situation and the social worker agreed to undertake the necessary checks straight away.

Outcome: Unfortunately, despite the social worker completing the necessary checks, and initially indicating a positive outcome, a serious safeguarding concern meant Mase was unable to stay with his family member. Despite the outcome, Mase was happy with the advocacy support he received. We are pleased Mase has accessed his advocate for the third time and are confident he will continue to do so if further issues arise.

By virtue of paragraph(s) 13 of Part 1 of Schedule 12A  
of the Local Government Act 1972.

Document is Restricted

This page is intentionally left blank



By virtue of paragraph(s) 13 of Part 1 of Schedule 12A  
of the Local Government Act 1972.

Document is Restricted

This page is intentionally left blank