



**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

7 May 2024 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 last meeting of the Corporate Parenting Board held on 19th March 2024.

(Pages 5 - 8)

3. VISITS MADE TO FRONTLINE TEAMS BY MEMBERS OF THE CORPORATE PARENTING BOARD DURING THE 2023 - 2024 MUNICIPAL YEAR

To receive the report of the Chair which provides an update on the visits made to frontline teams by Members of the Corporate Parenting Board during the 2023-2024 Municipal Year.

(Pages 9 - 10)

4. CORPORATE PARENTING PLEDGE FOR RHONDDA CYNON TAF

To receive details of Cabinet's recent decision to approve the draft Corporate Parenting Pledge for Rhondda Cynon Taf and commitment to the Welsh Government's Corporate Parenting Charter: "A Promise from Wales."

(Pages 11 - 104)

5. TROS GYNNAL PLANT CYMRU

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

(Pages 105 - 114)

6. VIRTUAL SCHOOL MODEL PILOT - INTERIM EVALUATION OF YEAR 2

To receive an update on the progress made during year 2 of the Virtual School (for CLA) Pilot.

(Pages 115 - 154)

7. RESIDENTIAL CARE TRANSFORMATION STRATEGY - A PROGRESS REPORT

To receive an update in respect of the delivery of the RCT Residential Care Transformation Strategy 2022-2027.

(Pages 155 - 160)

8. YOUNG CARERS ANNUAL REPORT 2023-2024

To receive an update on the work undertaken with young carers in RCT during the 2023-2024 Municipal Year.

(Pages 161 - 198)

9. 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."

10. QUALITY OF CARE REVIEW (REGULATION 80) REPORT

To receive an update on the monitoring carried out under Regulation 80 of the Regulation and Inspection (Wales) Act 2016.

(Pages 199 - 302)

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

To receive an update in relation to the Children Looked After: Residential Care Strategy 2022 – 2027

(Pages 303 - 312)

12. URGENT BUSINESS

To consider any items which the Chair by reason of special circumstances is of the opinion should be considered at the meeting as a matter of urgency.

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

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**RHONDDA CYNON TAF COUNCIL
CORPORATE PARENTING BOARD**

Minutes of the virtual meeting of the Corporate Parenting Board held on Tuesday, 19 March 2024 at 10.30 am.

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

County Borough Councillors – The following Councillors were present:

Councillor G Caple (Chair)

Councillor R Lewis Councillor C Leyshon
Councillor J Bonetto Councillor P Evans
Councillor S Hickman Councillor S Rees

Officers in attendance

Mr N Elliott – Director of Social Services
Ms A Lloyd, Service Director, Children's Services
Ms C Miles, Childcare Solicitor
Ms E Brabon, Senior EET Coordinator
Ms M Davies - TGP
Ms L Hawkins, Virtual School Head Teacher
Ms G Higgon-Young – Service Manager

39 DECLARATION OF INTEREST

In accordance with the Council's Code of Conduct, the following personal declarations were provided:

- County Borough Councillor G Caple – “I am a Member of the Virtual Schools Board”
- County Borough Councillor R Lewis – “I am a Member of the Virtual Schools Board”

40 MINUTES

It was **RESOLVED** to approve as an accurate record, the minutes of the meeting of the Corporate Parenting Board held on the 30th January 2024.

**41 EMPLOYMENT, EDUCATION AND TRAINING PROGRAMMES FOR
CHILDREN LOOKED AFTER**

The Employment, Education and Training Co-ordinator for Children Looked After provided the Corporate Parenting Board with an update in respect of the Council's dedicated programmes to support care experienced young people into employment, education and training.

The update contained a breakdown of outcomes between April 2023 and March 2024 for the Step in the Right Direction and Care2work programmes.

The Chair thanked the Officer and spoke of the fantastic initiatives that were being taken forward for the benefit of Children Looked After.

One Member questioned the follow up arrangements in place in respect of those that no longer engaged in the process and the Officer advised of the arrangements in place to ensure that the young people were never overlooked and advised how it was continually emphasised to the young people the opportunity to re-engage in the process at any time.

A Member asked for further information in respect of the virtual school project and an overview of the project was provided to Members, referencing the close working relationships between relevant partners for the benefit of young people.

Following positive discussions in respect of the work of the Employment, Education and Training department on behalf of Children Looked After, the Board **RESOLVED**:

- i. To note the content of the report

42 ALNET ACT AND ALN CODE FOR CHILDREN LOOKED AFTER

The Virtual School Headteacher provided an update to the Corporate Parenting Board on the implications of the ALNET (Additional Learning Needs and Education Tribunal) Wales Act (2018) and Additional Learning Needs (ALN) Code 2021 for Children Looked After with an ALN and to update the Board on the implementation of the above in Year 3 of the National ALN Implementation timetable in Rhondda Cynon Taf County Borough Council.

The Officer provided context on the requirements of the legislation and provided an update to the Board on how this looked within RCT, following development of the Council's own processes and procedures to ensure the Council could fulfil their new statutory duties.

Members were provided with detailed information regarding the support to schools, PEP training, Out of County Monitoring Protocol and Post 16 ALN Provision before the Virtual School Headteacher provided Members with information in respect of next steps of how Virtual School continue to support pupils, parents/carers and education settings to navigate the new ALN legislation.

The Chair spoke of the comprehensive protocols in place to help children looked after achieve, and the Chair referenced the positive impacts on young people as outlined within the report. The Chair welcomed the 'about me' profile and the positive messages this provided for children looked after.

Members commented on the merger of policies and queried how the pupils voice was continued to be heard. The Officer spoke of the opportunities available during PCP meetings. The Officer discussed the alternative provisions in place for those young people who were non-verbal / complex needs to still ensure that the young persons voice was still captured.

Following discussions it was **RESOLVED**:

- i. To acknowledge the content of the report; and
- ii. To consider whether any further information is required on any aspect of the report.

43 TROS GYNNAL PLANT CYMRU

Tros Gynnal Plant (TGP) Cymru provided the Corporate Parenting Board with an update on the progress made during the period October – December 2023.

Members were informed that, during the period, 54 young people accessed Issue Based Advocacy; and 39 were referred for the Active Offer. Of the 54 young people, 19 were care experienced, presenting with 23 issues. Of the 19 care experienced young people, 7 were accessing Issue Based Advocacy for the first time.

During the period, 9 of the care experienced young people became eligible for the Active Offer in the quarter or the previous quarter.

Members learned that, during the period, the most popular issues in need of advocacy support related to placements followed by contact issues and school issues.

Self referral and social services referrals continue to be the most popular route into the IBA service for care experienced young people.

Board Members noted how the small changes could make a big difference to the young people and Members referenced the individual care support available.

Members welcomed the schemes in place and queried the active offers to which the officer responded.

The Corporate Parenting Board **RESOLVED:**

1. To acknowledge the work undertaken by TGP Cymru, the content of which was attached at Appendix 1 to the report.

44 QUALITY OF CARE REVIEW - FOSTER WALES RCT REPORT

The Service Manager provided the Corporate Parenting Board with an update on the monitoring carried out under the Regulation and Inspection of Social Care (Wales) Act 2016, the Social Services and Well-being (Wales) Act 2014, and the Local Authority Fostering Services (Wales) Regulations 2018. Whilst there is no requirement to follow CiW's 'Guidance on Completing the Quality of Care Review', this approach had been chosen to assist in meeting statutory responsibilities.

Members were advised that Care Inspectorate Wales (CiW) had completed an Inspection in November 2023, the outcome was positive and reflected the current position of the service. The previous inspection took place in 2016, and it was difficult to assess the actions completed following the 2016 inspection to date due to the impact of changes that have occurred in legislation, regulation, and guidance over the time period. The recommendations arising out of the latest inspection were provided to Members.

The Chair thanked the Officer for the report and welcomed the increase in foster

caring, although noted that there was still a large deficit in the area with a lack of foster care for teenagers. The Chair commented on the knock-on effect of the need for residential placements and OWR settings due to such a deficit.

One Board Member acknowledged the positive inspection results of the November Care Inspectorate Wales (CiW) inspection, commenting on the changes in policy and legislation since the last inspection of the service. The Member queried the emergency placements in place and the officer agreed to provide these figures to Members.

It was **RESOLVED** to note the contents of the report.

45 EXEMPTION OF THE PRESS AND PUBLIC

It was **RESOLVED** that the press and public be excluded from the meeting under Section 100A(4) of the Local Government Act (as amended) for the following items of business on the grounds that it involves the likely disclosure of the exempt information as defined in paragraph 13 of Part 4 of the Schedule 12A of the Act.

46 REGULATION 73 REPORTS

The Residential Services Manager provided the Board with an update on the monitoring carried out under Regulation 73 of the Regulation and Inspection (Wales) Act 2016.

The report outlined the current position within children's residential homes and residential short breaks services for disabled children.

Following consideration of the report, which contained exempt information, it was **RESOLVED**

i. To note the contents of the Report.

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

The Service 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 a future report in respect of Children Looked After residential settings including any planning implications attached.

This meeting closed at 12.00 pm

**Councillor G Caple
Chair**

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RHONDDA CYNON TAF COUNTY BOROUGH COUNCIL

CORPORATE PARENTING BOARD

7TH MAY 2024

REPORT OF THE CHAIR ON VISITS MADE TO FRONT LINE TEAMS BY MEMBERS OF THE CORPORATE PARENTING BOARD DURING THE 2023-24 MUNICIPAL YEAR.

Members of the Corporate Parenting Board undertake scheduled visits to front line staff working in Children's Services to better inform Members of the work undertaken by staff to safeguard the health and wellbeing of children in Rhondda Cynon Taf, particularly those who are in our corporate care, their various needs, and as a means of understanding the needs of those staff.

The visits are led by myself as Cabinet Member for Health & Social Care in my role as Chair of the Corporate Parenting Board, accompanied by the Vice-Chair of the Corporate Parenting Board, Cabinet Member for Education, Youth Participation & Welsh Language. An invitation to the visits was also extended to all Members of the Corporate Parenting Board.

During the 2023-24 Municipal Year, front line visits were made to the following teams:

- Disabled Children's Team
- Families Plus Team
- IAA (Information, Advice & Assistance) & EAT (Engagement & Assessment Team)
- Miskin, Therapeutic Families Team & Integrated Family Support Team
- West Intensive Team
- East Intensive Team

There is a visit scheduled to take place at a later date to the Youth Justice Service Team.

I firstly wish to extend my thanks to the management and staff at each of the visits for their valuable time and for their openness to discussion. Once again, it was a pleasure to undertake these visits and it was evident that our staff at Rhondda Cynon Taf County Borough Council are committed to ensuring the best possible outcomes for the children within our care and care leavers.

Themes identified throughout the visits:

- Despite the post Covid legacy, morale was good, or had increased with dedicated and committed staff;
- It was recognised that case workloads had continued to increase and had become more complex;
- It was acknowledged that costs had increased, including for placements and school transport;
- It was recognised that recruitment and retention continue to be an issue which continued to mean shortages in some key areas of the service, although vacancies

being managed. It was also recognised the need to expand the graduation scheme for future management succession;

- It was acknowledged that social trends are being seen in RCT that are common in Cardiff; and
- Whilst in most service areas, integration with other agencies worked well, there was a need to explore improving relationship with RCT Housing with the aim of a more coordinated approach.

CLLR G CAPLE
CABINET MEMBER FOR HEALTH & SOCIAL CARE
CHAIR OF THE CORPORATE PARENTING BOARD



RHONDDA CYNON TAF COUNTY BOROUGH COUNCIL

CORPORATE PARENTING BOARD

7th MAY 2024

CORPORATE PARENTING BOARD 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 Corporate Parenting Board with information about the Corporate Parenting Pledge for Rhondda Cynon Taf that supports implementation of Welsh Government's Corporate Parenting Charter – "A Promise from Wales."
- 1.2 The Cabinet approved the draft Corporate Parenting Pledge for Rhondda Cynon Taf in April 2024 as attached in Appendix 2 to this report and commits to the Welsh Government's Corporate Parenting Charter: "A Promise from Wales."
- 1.3 To collate Corporate Parenting Boards "Promises" to children and young people (Appendix 2) and discuss the next steps to ensure children and young people can have their voice heard as part of the boards work. This includes developing our public facing information for the Corporate Parenting Board's purpose and visibility to care-experienced young people and feedback mechanisms.

2. RECOMMENDATIONS

It is recommended that the Corporate Parenting Board:

- 2.1 Considers the information contained within the report.
- 2.2 Acknowledge that Cabinet has approved responsibility to the Council's Corporate Parenting Board with leading and monitoring success and commitment to the Corporate Parenting Charter through its 7 priority areas noted in Appendix 2.

3. REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATIONS

- 3.1 The Welsh Government's Corporate Parenting Charter: "A Promise from Wales" and the newly approved Corporate Parenting Board 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 Board Pledge for Rhondda Cynon Taf, the Council would clearly be demonstrating this commitment.

4. BACKGROUND

- 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 support 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).

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.

Corporate Parenting Board 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 local Corporate Parenting Board Pledge for Rhondda Cynon Taf informed by 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 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 priority areas that underpin the draft Corporate Parenting Board 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.

NEXT STEPS FOR THE PLEDGE:

4.11 Corporate Parenting Board:

- Corporate Parenting Board has been asked to sign up to the Corporate Parenting Board Pledge for Rhondda Cynon Taf and develop a plan to support its implementation.
- Corporate Parenting Board has been delegated responsibility by Cabinet to agree governance arrangements to monitor the Pledge implementation and compliance and review Corporate Parenting Board membership.
- 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

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 Board 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 Board 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 for Wales” and the draft Corporate Parenting Board 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 corporate priorities, namely:

- People - promoting independence and positive lives for everyone especially. Improving services for children and young people and ensuring the needs of children are considered in everything we do.

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. NEXT STEPS

- 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 Board Pledge for Rhondda Cynon Taf , the Council would clearly be demonstrating this commitment.
- 12.2 Check membership of the Corporate Parenting Board and suitability for a cross-section of representatives from health, housing, education, Children's Services and for members to write their promises to be added to the pledge.
- 12.3 Promote the visibility of the Corporate Parenting Board to children, young people and their carers through ideas such as Pen pictures and through an animation to explain the purpose of what the Corporate Parenting Board do and promote via a section of the Children and Young People web pages and social media.
- 12.4 Care experienced young people need to know that their voice makes a difference and coupled with the next steps in 12.1, 12.2 and 12.3, organise a series of sessions for Corporate Parenting Board members to hear the voices of children and young people in Foster Care, Kinship Care, Residential and 16+ for how they may wish to get involved with the Corporate Parenting Board. This could be linked through example activities as evidenced in appendix 2 or through examples from other local authorities collated in appendix 3.



LOCAL GOVERNMENT ACT 1972

AS AMENDED BY

THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT (ACCESS TO INFORMATION) ACT 1985

RHONDDA CYNON TAF COUNTY BOROUGH COUNCIL

**AN INFORMATION PAPER FOR THE CORPORATE PARENTING BOARD
REPORT**

7th May 2024

**CORPORATE PARENTING BOARD DRAFT PLEDGE FOR RCT
(LINKS TO CORPORATE PARENTING CHARTER-
A PROMISE FROM WALES)**

**REPORT OF THE DIRECTOR OF SOCIAL SERVICES IN DISCUSSION
WITH THE RELEVANT PORTFOLIO HOLDER, CLLR GARETH CAPLE**

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.

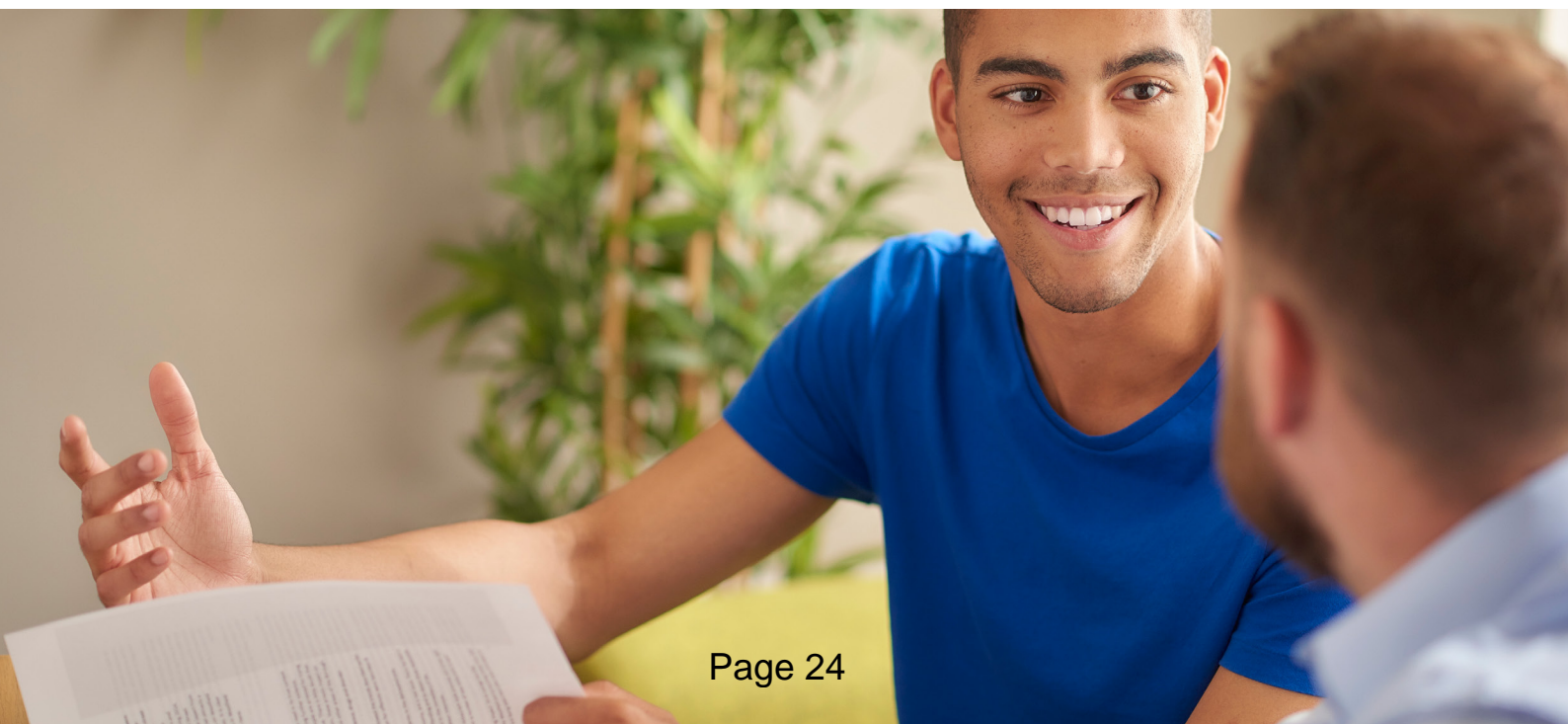
Which kind of public sector body, public service or professionals do we mean?

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

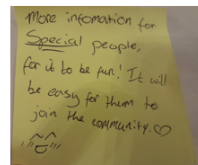
- Looking at a range of different ways to keep in touch with family.
- Living closer to family.
- Wellbeing - to feel better about yourself.

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 (see additional information attached at appendix Bi)

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'
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.






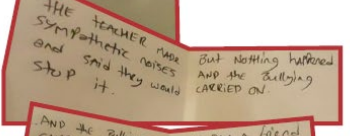
'The attic'
Theme: Safe space.
This young person discussed their zine with the artist and said that it's important to have a safe space to help with regulating their temper.



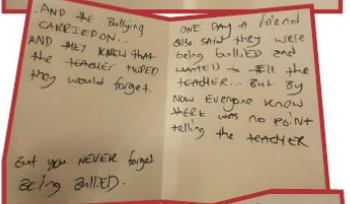
'Looking for a new owner'
Theme: Safe adult



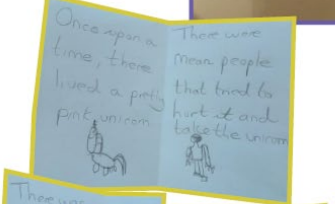
'Every living thing needs a safe place to grow.'



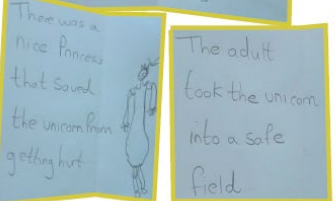
THE TEACHER MADE sympathetic noises and said they would STOP IT.



ONE DAY A friend said they were being bullied and wanted to tell the teacher... BUT BY NOW EVERYONE KNOWS there was no point telling the teacher.



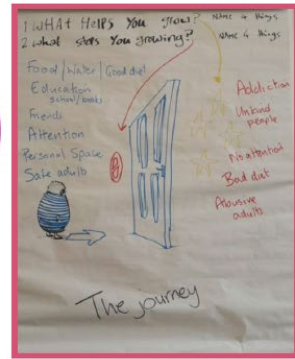
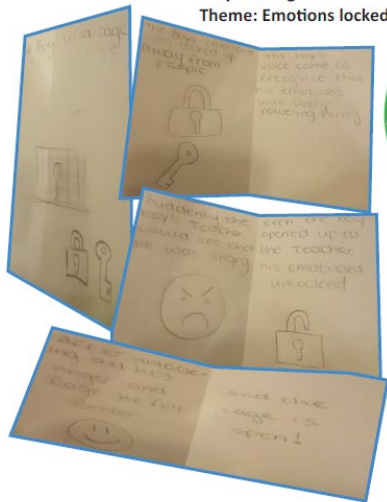
Once upon a time, there lived a pretty pink unicorn.



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

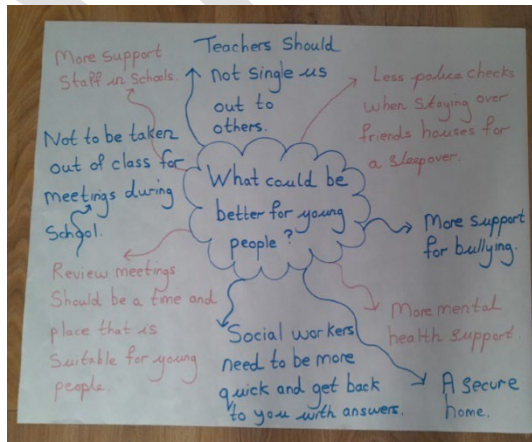
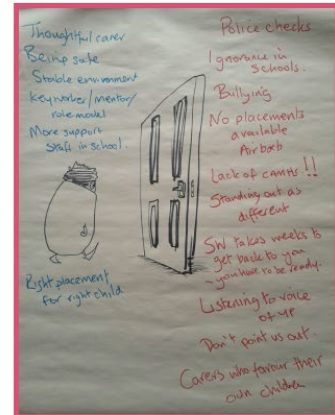
The adult took the unicorn into a safe field.

'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.

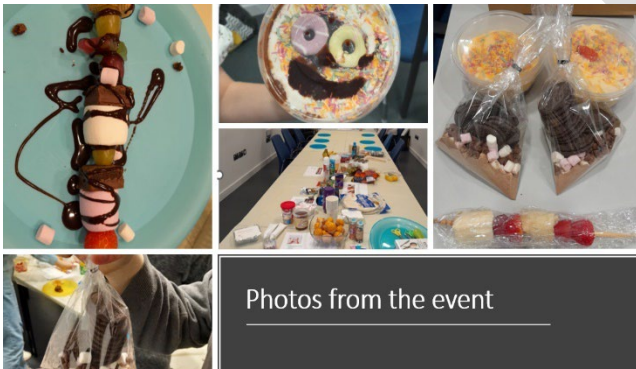


The 'Get Involved' Survey infographics for care-experienced children and young people attached at appendix C.

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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Appendix 3

Corporate Parenting Principles and Promises are about embedding visibility and a positive culture in the local authority towards care experienced young people. Their success depends on the extent to which Directors, Councillors, Heads of Service and frontline managers and officers promote the pledge and develop an implementation plan to hear the voices of how young people wish to be involved and to address the 7 priority areas.

Ideas have been collated from voice work in RCT (Appendix 2) and other local authorities for care experienced young people working with the Corporate Parenting Board.

RCT ideas to engage young people.

- Smaller group sessions such as activities children and young people are interested in to participate alongside members of the Corporate Parenting Board to get involved in and to hear children and young people's voices. This can include cooking, music, arts and crafts, drama, sports, one to one discussions and small groups. This can also include activity days to create less of a formal event.
- Working alongside specific cohorts of young people. Young people in Residential Care, Foster Care, Kinship Care, 16+ etc...
- Incentivising young people for their participation and time such as vouchers and experiences to get involved in.
- Promoting the visibility of the Corporate Parenting Board to engage young people via website pages, online platforms and in person.
- Members of the Corporate Parenting Board could be part of a schedule of activities in small group sessions with care experienced young people.
- Contact details for RCT Corporate Parenting Board for young people to get in touch.

Other local authority ideas

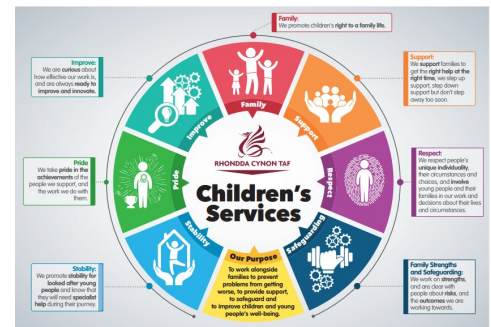
- Challenge cards. Young People can challenge Corporate Parents about issues including an annual question and answer-based session.
- Accessible venues, small groups, after school/ college and during school holidays and online platforms.
- Corporate Parents as Mentors.
- England has 'Elected Members called 'Total Respect' (National Award-winning resource delivered by care-experienced trainers).
- Councillors mentoring care experienced young people.

- Young people being involved in training of staff and designing packs and social media resources for young people coming into care.
- In Milton Keynes the Virtual School and Participation Officer provide a weekly Youth group ages 8 to 18 for emotional and education support. This includes sports, arts and crafts, homework and a range of other activities. This includes a meal and the Director attends on a fortnightly basis to hear the views of care experienced young people.

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.



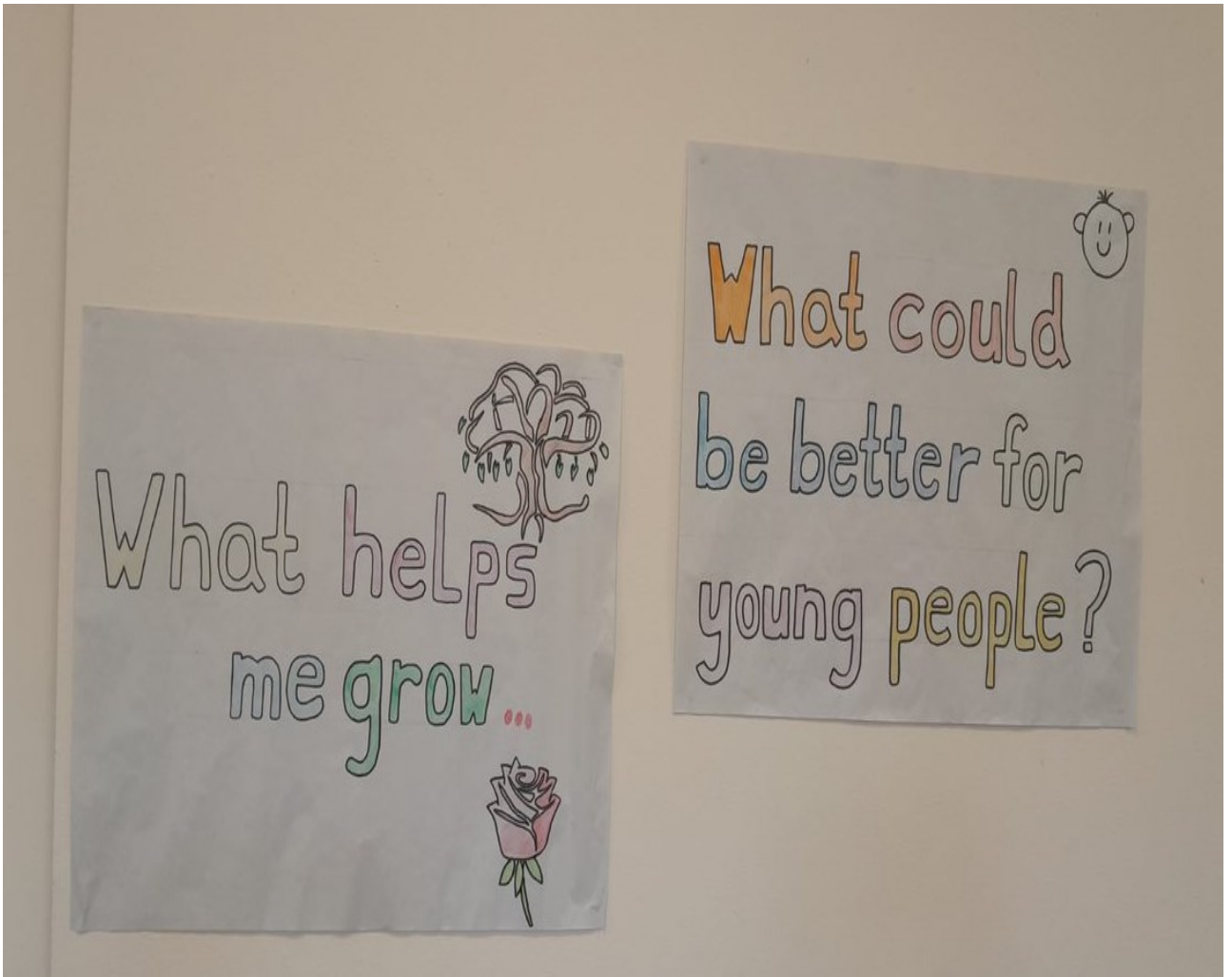
We wanted to find out the following:

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.

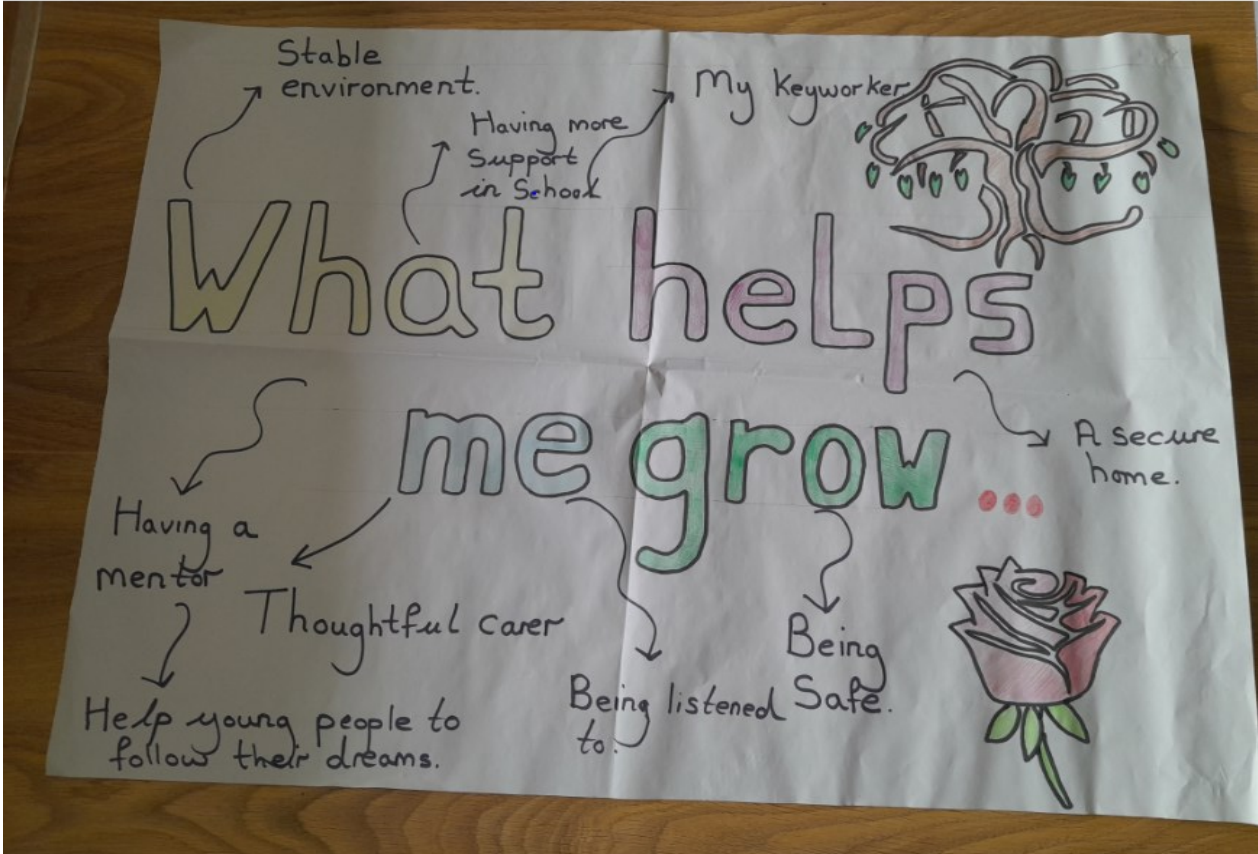
The young people took part through icebreaker activities and games before we discussed their rights to be listened to and taken seriously (Article 12).

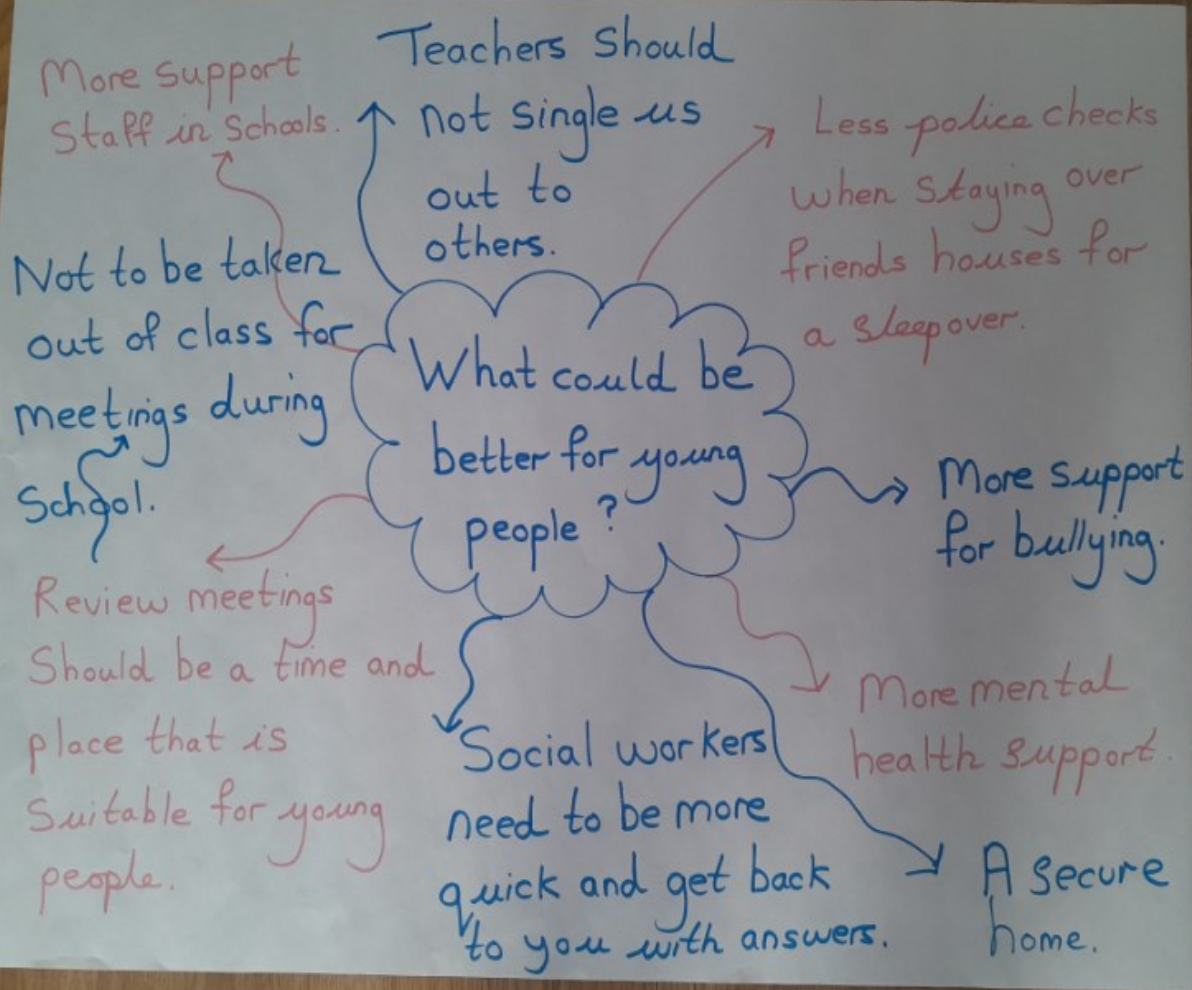
As part of engagement, young people worked in pairs to talk about what makes them grow and what could be better for young people.

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



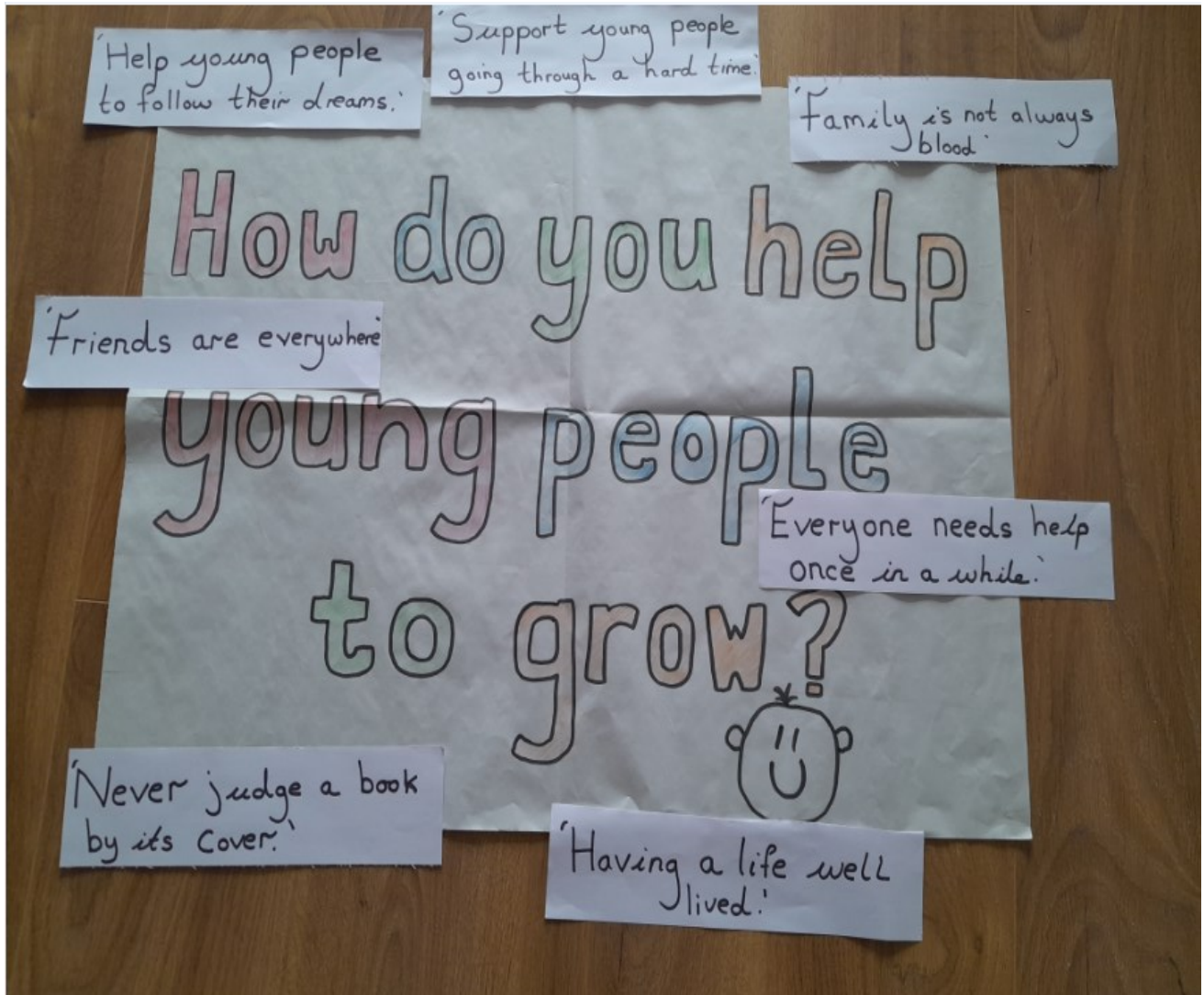


Article

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

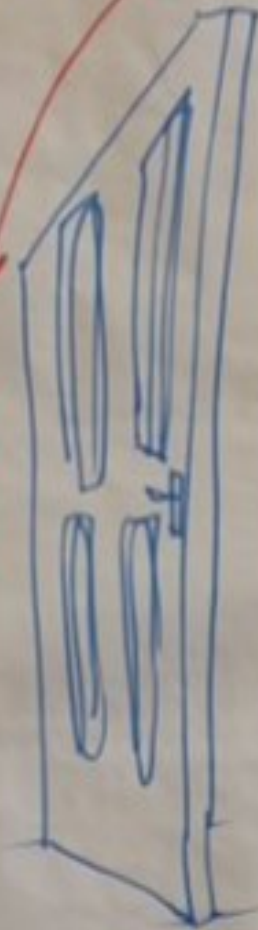
Education
School / books

Friends

Attention

Personal Space

Safe adults



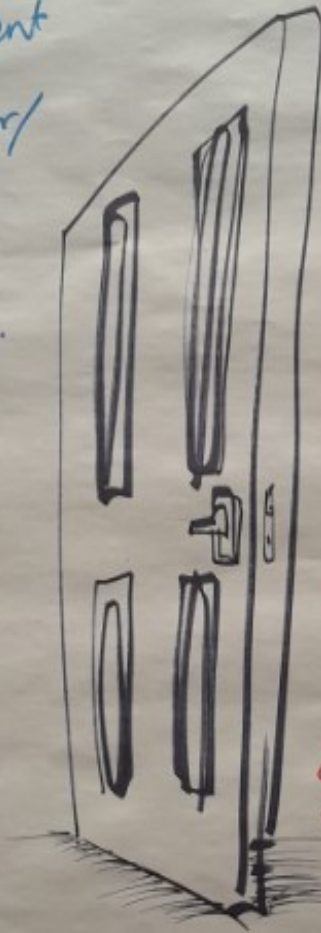
Addiction
Unkind people
No attention
Bad diet
Abusive adults

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.

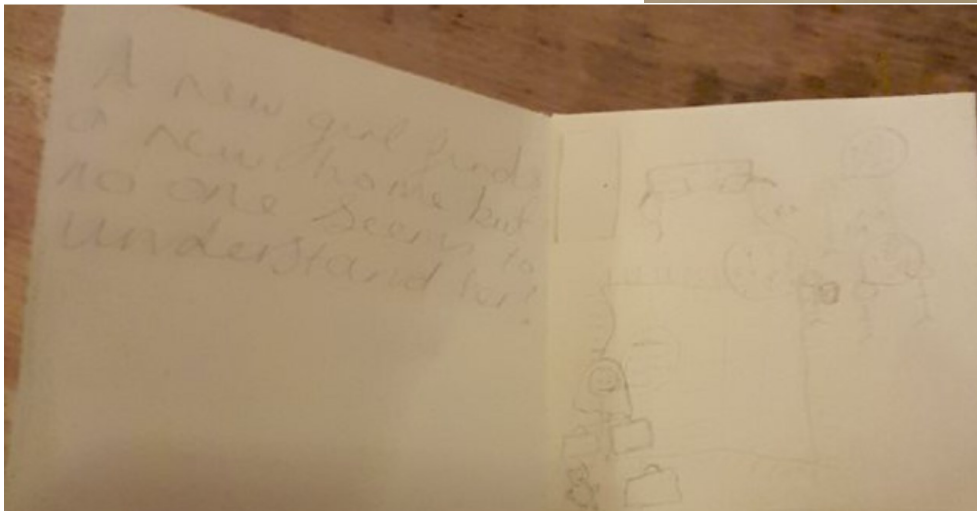
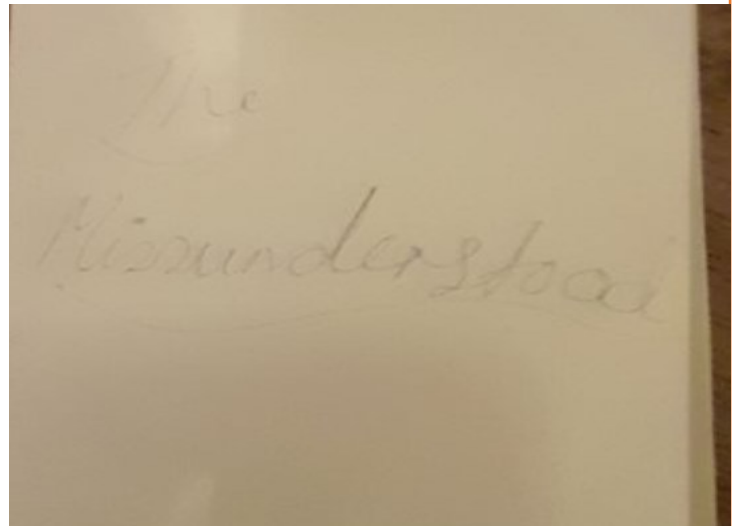


This young person discussed their zine with the artist and said that it's important to have a safe space to help with regulating their temper.

Zine 2

'The Misunderstood'

Theme: Moving from place to place



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

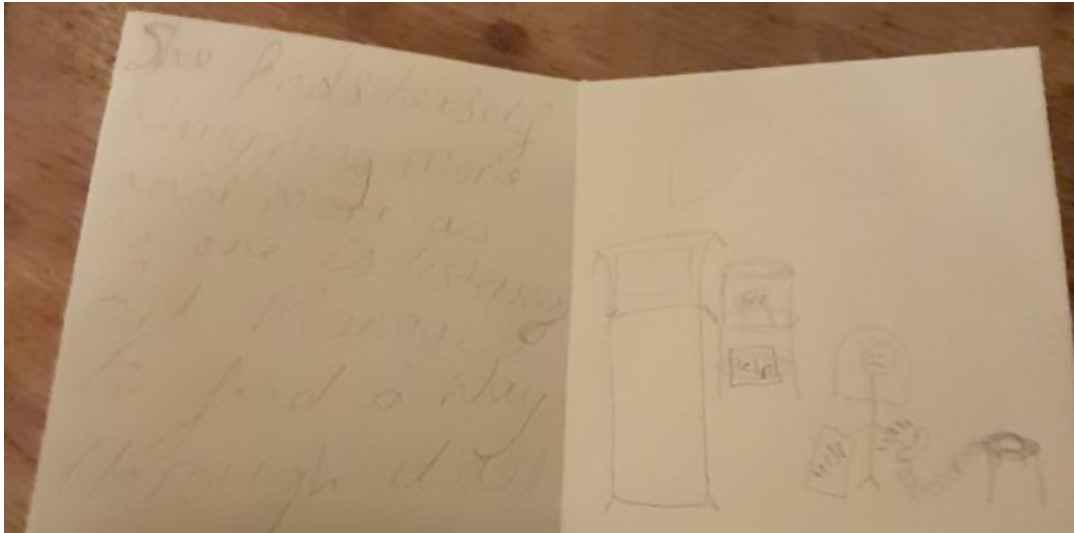
The picture caption was described as a young girl putting down her belongings and everyone laughing at her as she arrived at this new place.

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.

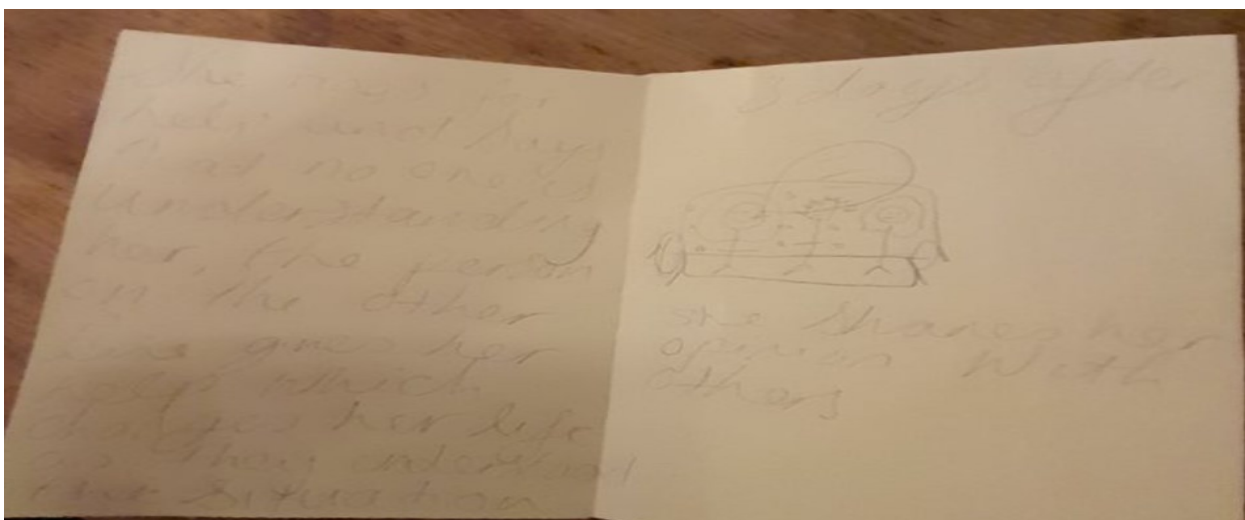
‘The Misunderstood’

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).



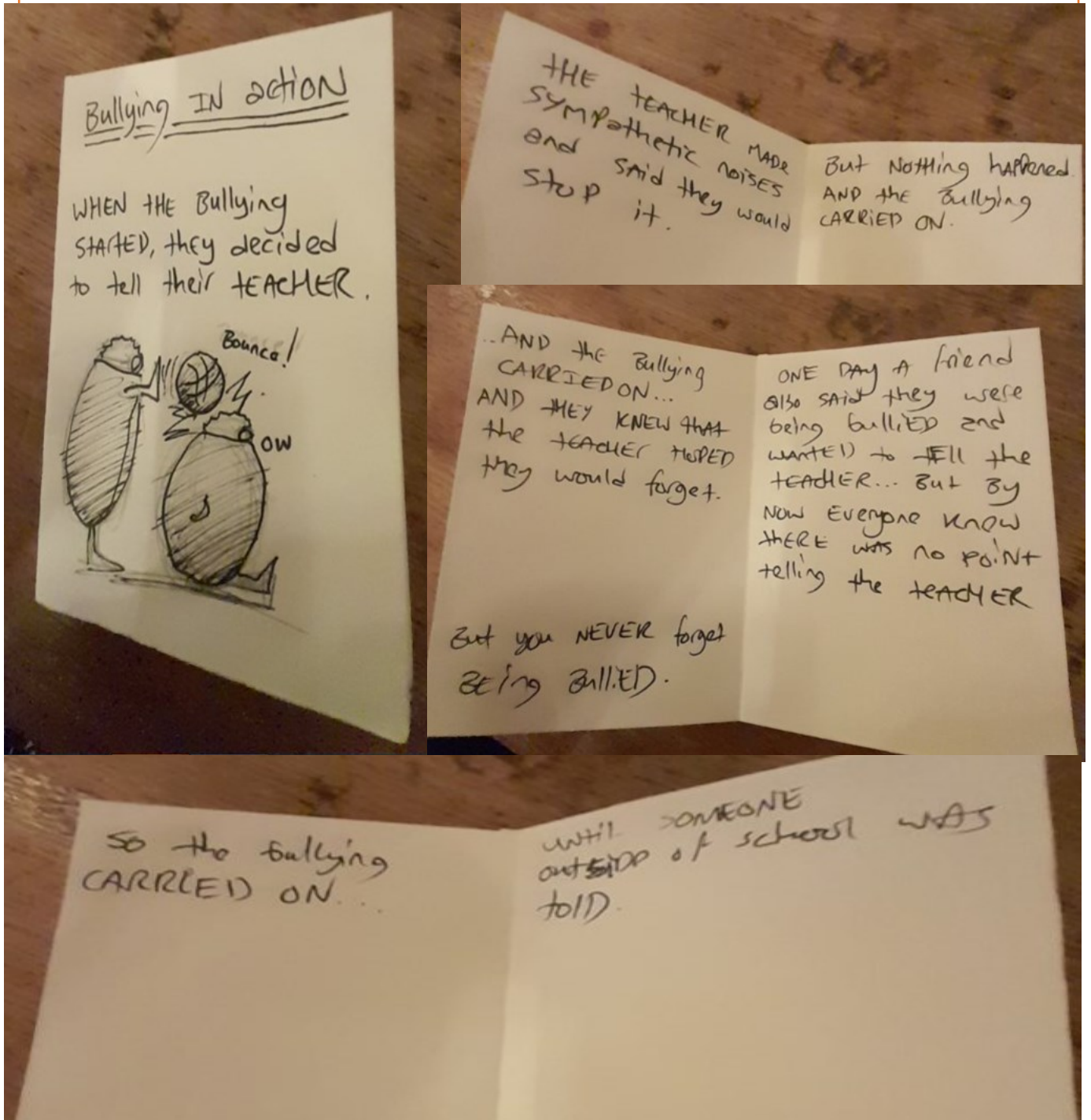
‘She rings for help and says no one is understanding her. The person on the other line gives her help which changes her life as they understand the situation. 3 days after, she shares her opinion with others.’

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

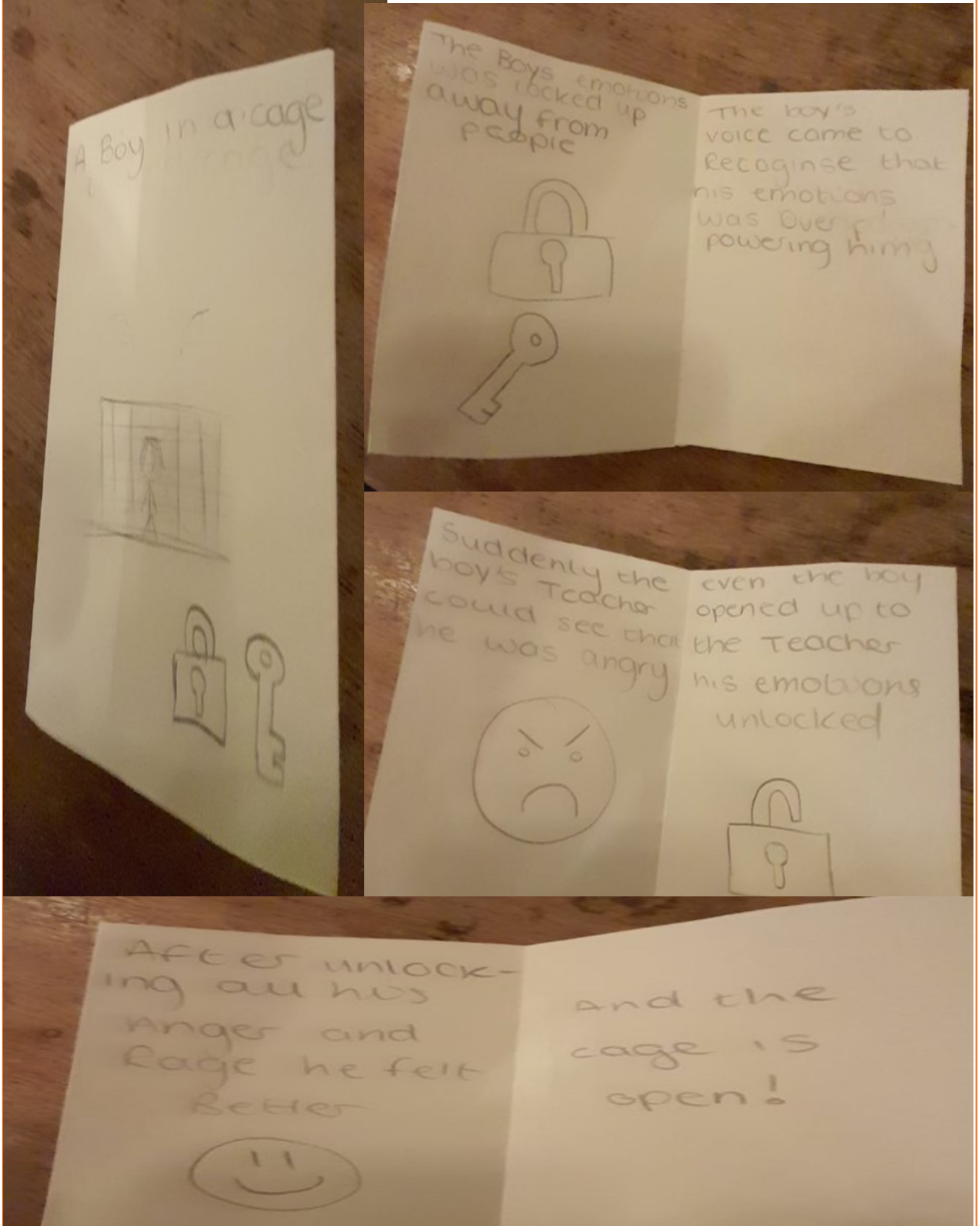


This young person discussed the theme of bullying and how a trusted foster carer supported them with bullying that they experienced in school.

Zine four

'Boy in a cage'

Theme: Emotions locked up.



Zine five

'Looking for a new owner'

Theme: Family

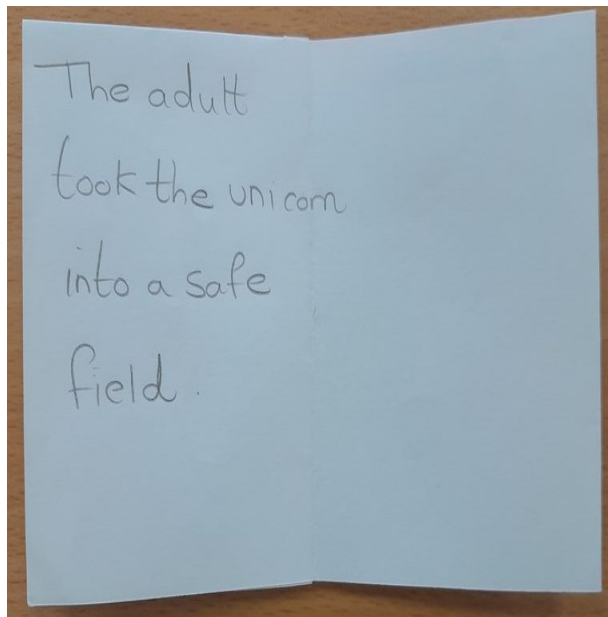
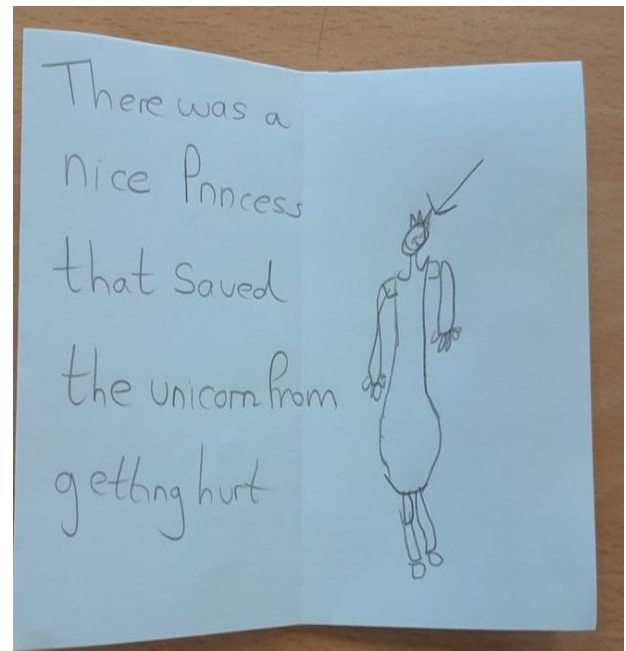
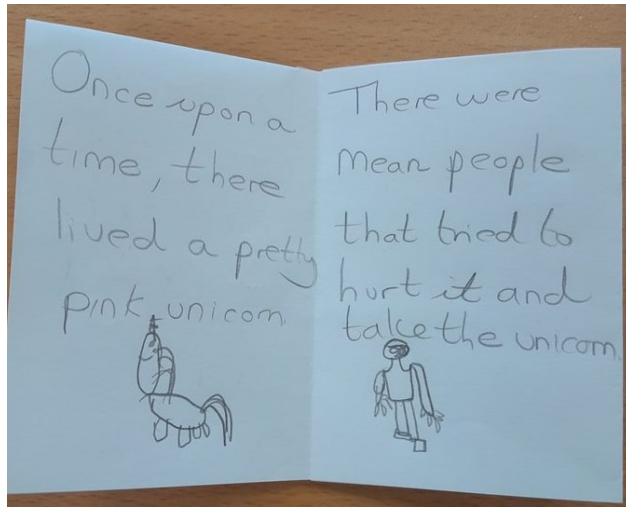


This zine is about an animal that has found his forever loving home.

Zine five

' Looking for a new owner'

Theme: Safe adult



Zine six

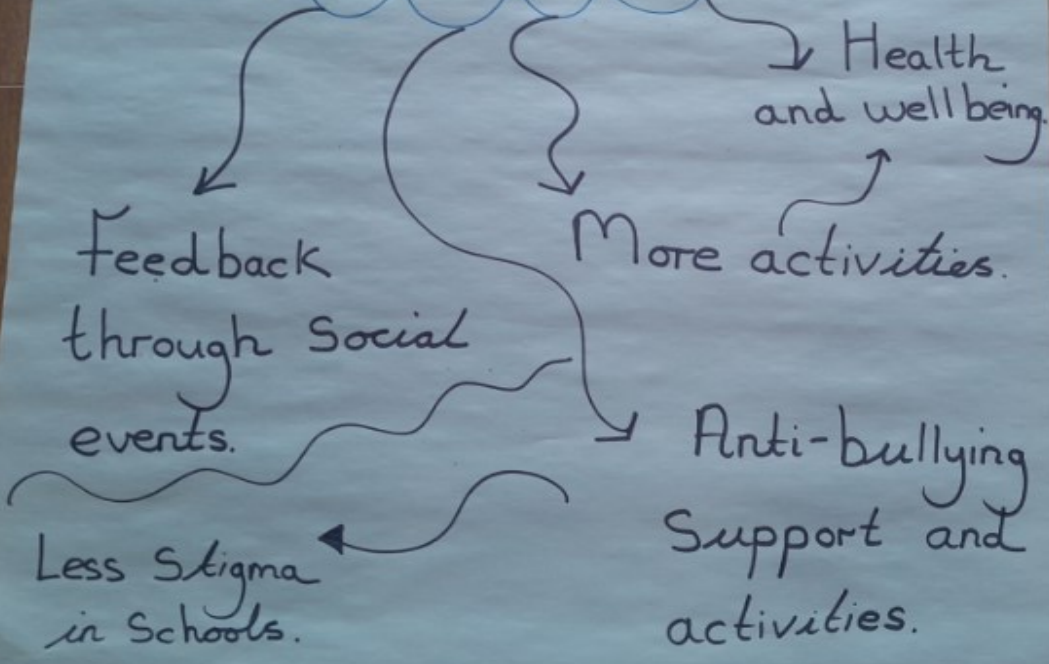
' The rat'

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 you 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 you 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*

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*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

Where I live

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

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 is positive (going well) for you?

positive things year
well home Happy Everything
Xbox family
Life school look
feel club
nice friends live going like
people Living football good piano

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

My work and self-development

I'm in a happy safe place

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 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.



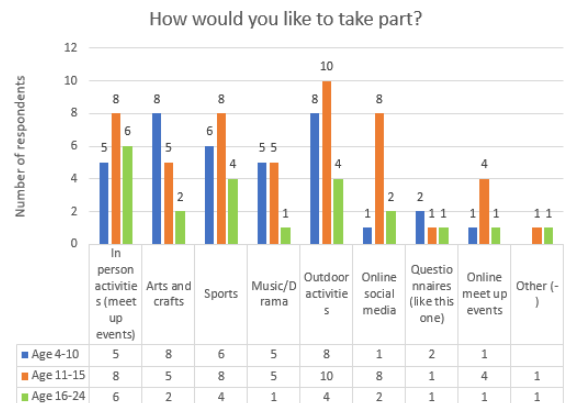
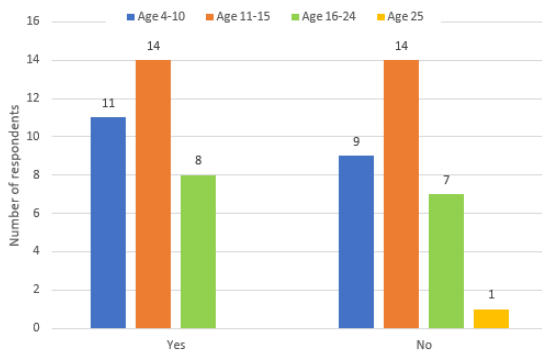
- Housing and tenancy support.
- Benefits support.

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



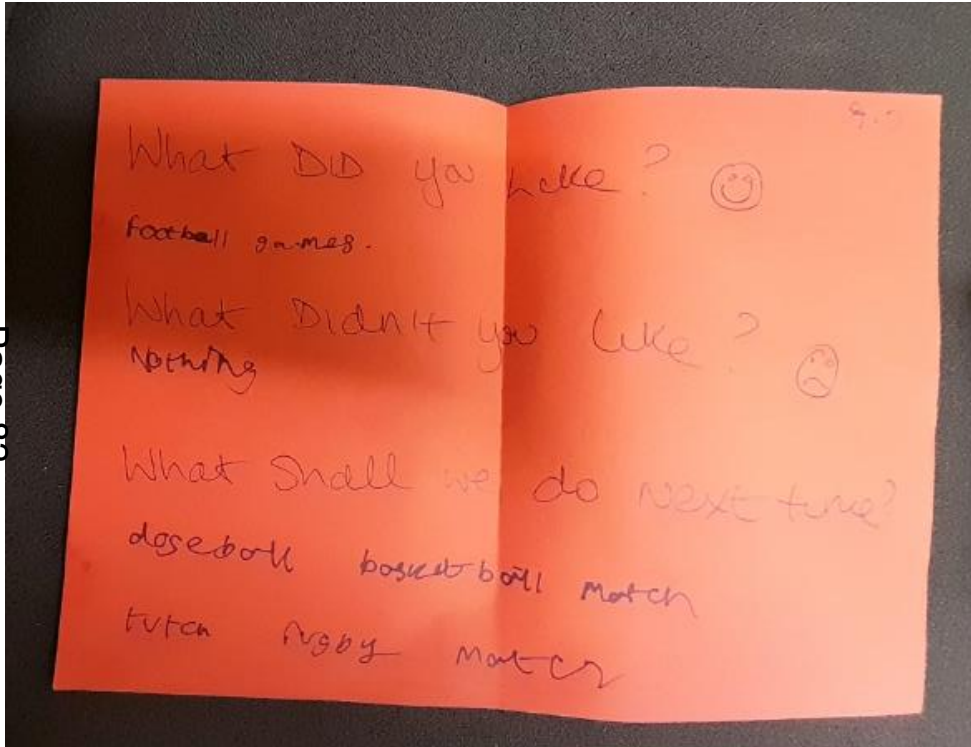
Further activities photos



Rounders and inflatable bubble photos



Feedback from young people



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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

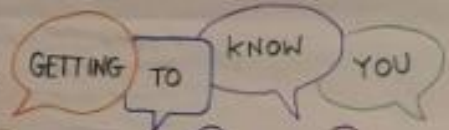
What activities
Should we do?

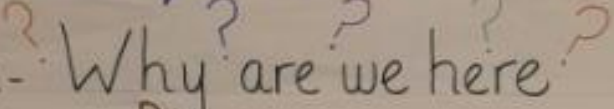
How do we get
more young
People involved?
☺️🗣️👂☺️


What are the
barriers that stop
young people getting
involved?


Visual timetable



 VISUAL TIMETABLE

4.10pm - 

4.25pm -  Why are we here?

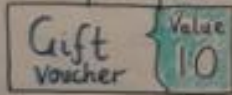

4.30pm -  What's going well?

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.**

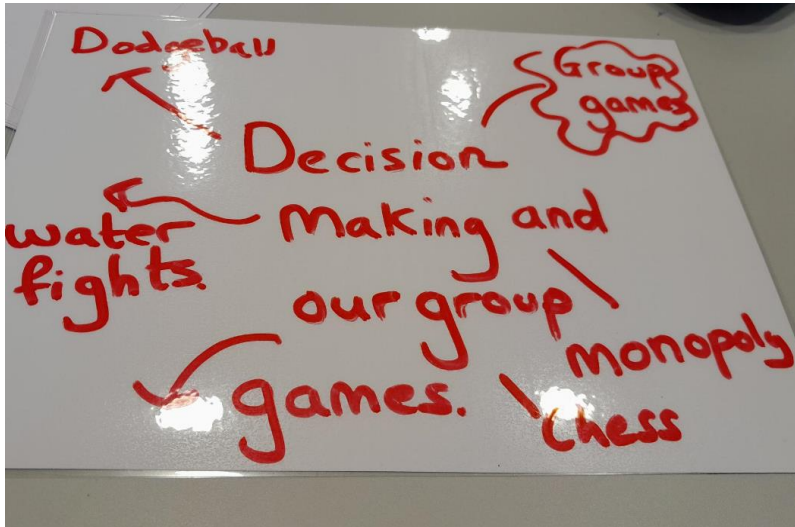
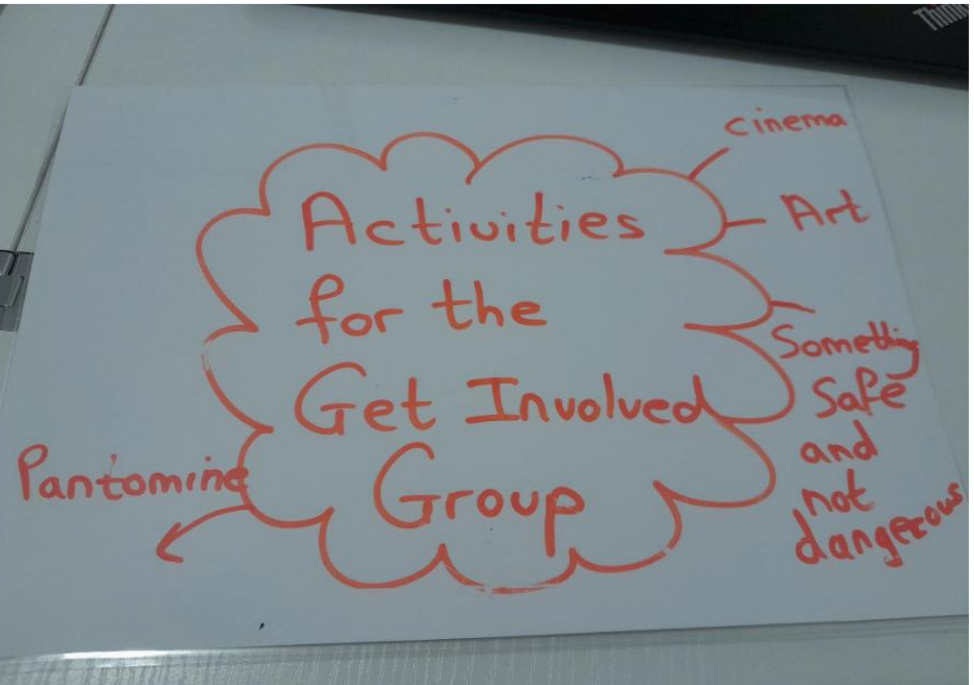
like to play football

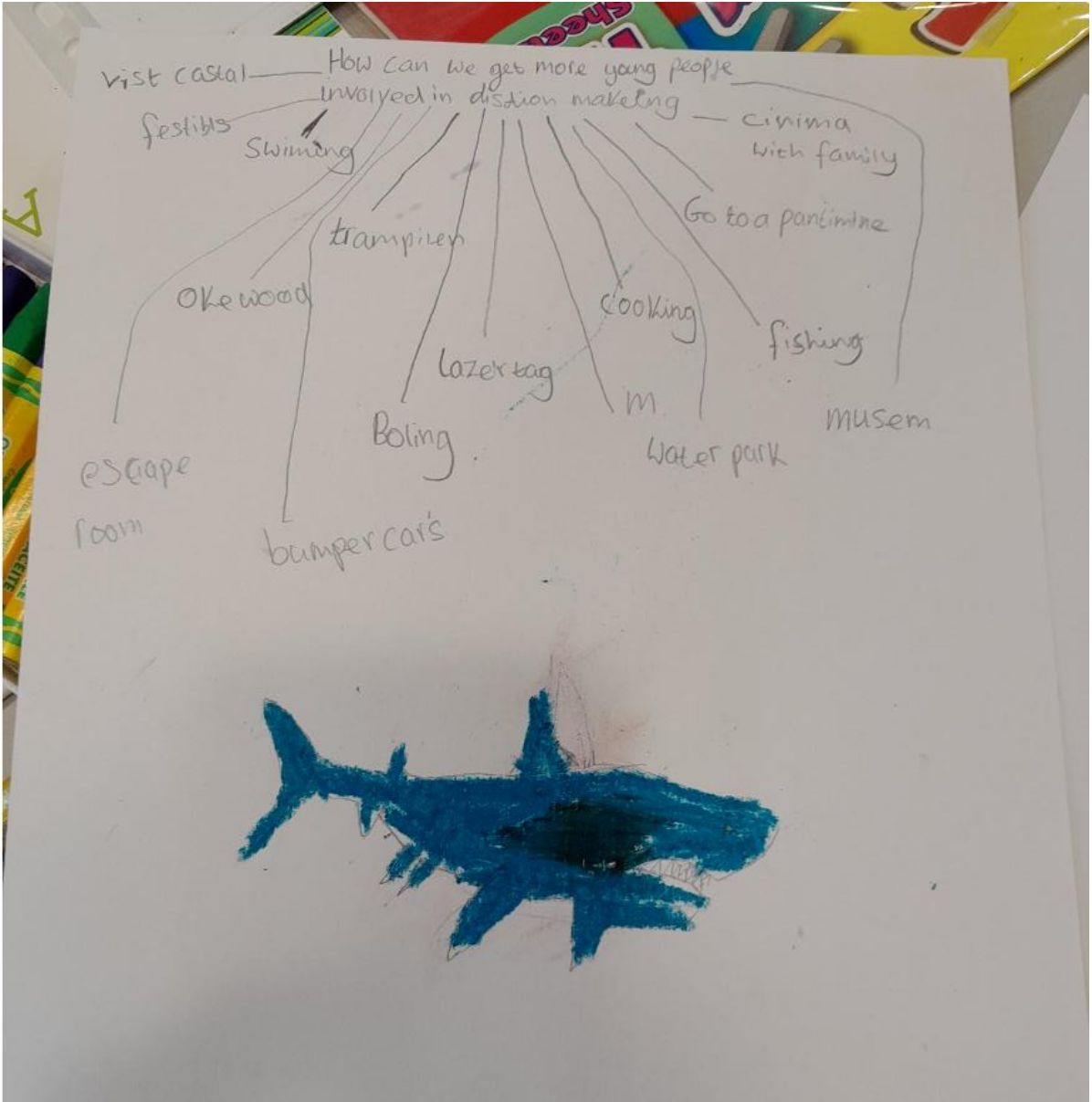
Castle

museum

escape room.

I play
rugby

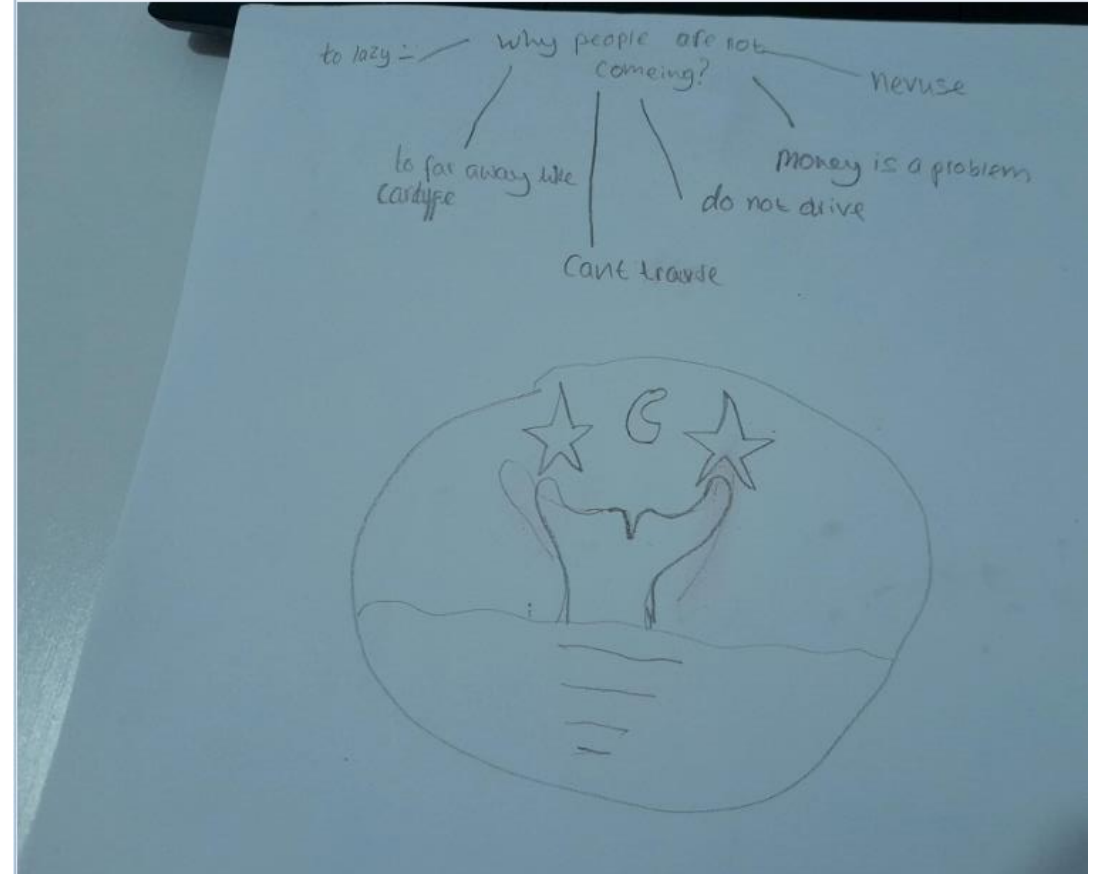




We asked the following 'What are the barriers that stop young people from participating?'

Young people said...

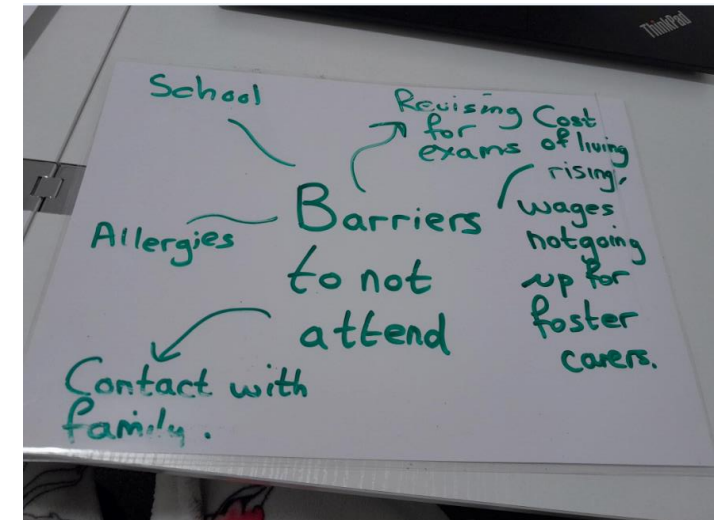
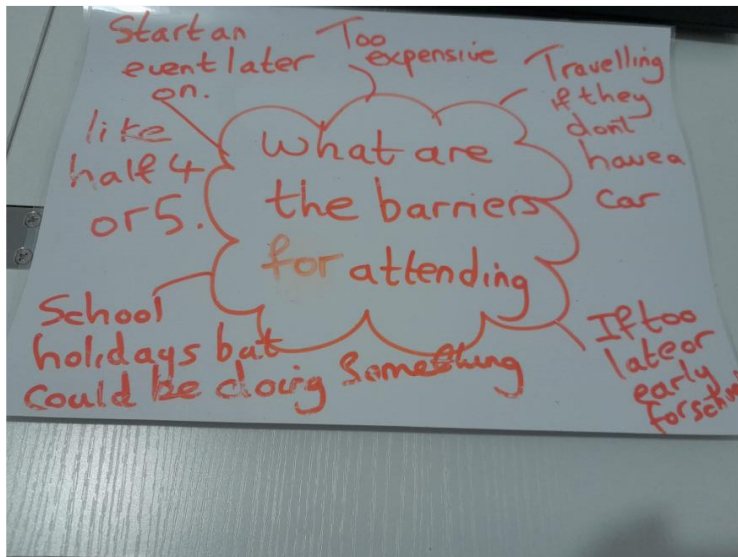
- 'Nervous.'
- 'Money is a problem.'
- 'Can't travel.'
- 'Do not drive.'
- 'Too far like Cardiff.'



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.'

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Make Sure its on a Friday.

Travel - Prices $\frac{p}{2}$
Travel = Money.

Bus prices.

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

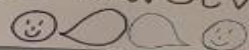
Music

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!

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

VOICE teamwork
LEARNING
FRIENDSHIP
FUN TOGETHERNESS
BELONGING
HAPPY UPLIFTING
CONFIDENCE

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.

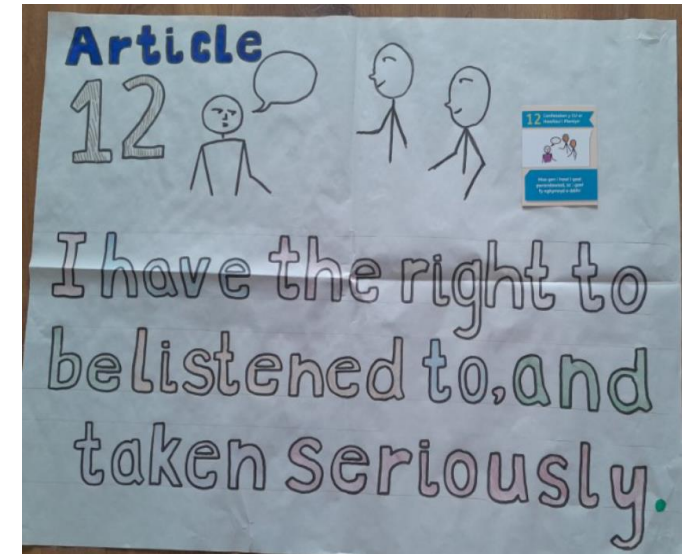
RCT Children's Services

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
park
the enjoyed
Bags

Sale/Raise Money

Pumpkins good
would do again

ice
cream

plan
can 2
can
again

Defo
coming
again

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







RHONDDA CYNON TAF COUNTY BOROUGH COUNCIL

CORPORATE PARENTING BOARD

7TH MAY 2024

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 Four January 2024 – March 2024

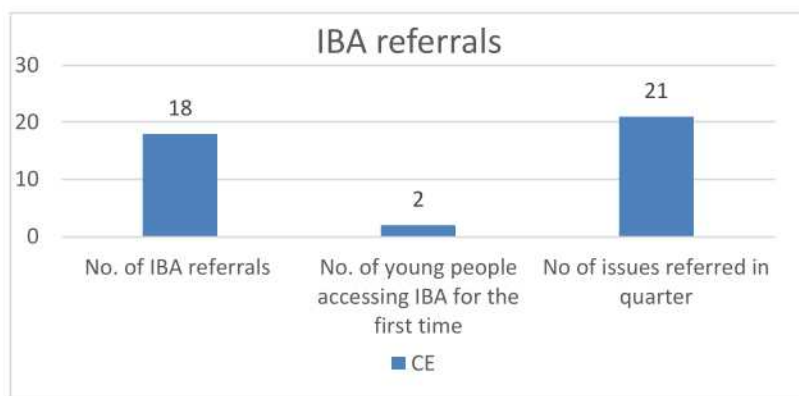


Activity Overview

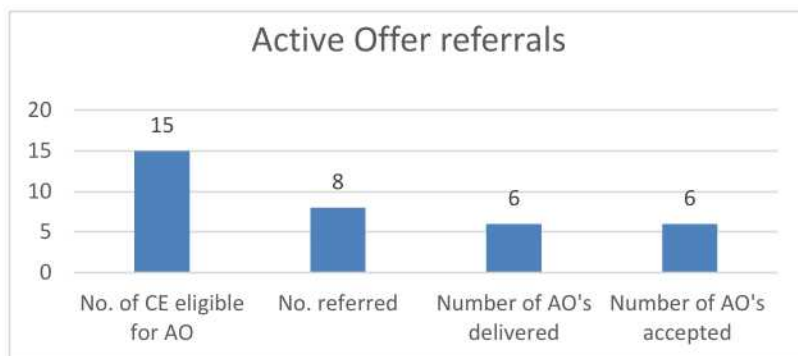
In quarter four, 41 young people accessed Issue Based Advocacy (IBA) and 32 young people were referred for the Active Offer (AO) across RCT.

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

In quarter four, 18 CE young people accessed IBA, just one less than in the previous quarter. Those 18 young people presented with 21 issues. No care leavers were referred for IBA in quarter four. Eight care experienced young people were referred for the AO, two less than in quarter three.



In quarter four, two of the 18 CE young people accessing IBA were doing so for the first time.



Four of eight the CE young people referred for AO in quarter four became eligible for AO in the same quarter whilst two became eligible in the previous quarter. The remaining two young people did not appear on the

spreadsheet provided by RCT, but are likely to have become eligible in previous quarters but initially turned down an AO referral when it was offered by their social worker.

Five of the 15 young people who became eligible for AO via the CLA pathway were recorded as rejecting the opportunity to receive the AO in quarter four. There were no reasons recorded.

Five young people are recorded as accepting the opportunity to meet with an advocate and all five were referred for AO. Six young people were recorded as rejecting the opportunity to receive the AO. There were no reasons recorded for three of those young people, one young person did not want to talk to anyone else and the reason stated for the remaining two young people was that they did not have capacity to understand. Two young people were not recorded as either accepting or rejecting the opportunity to receive the AO, but the social worker stated that they wanted to think about it and would decide later. We do not know if

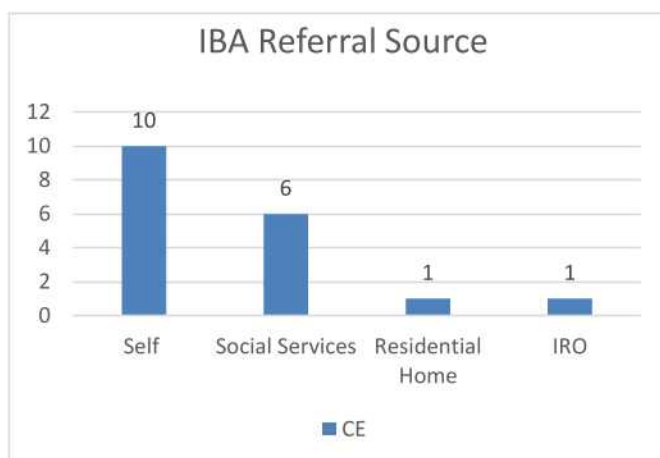
the three remaining eligible CE young people have been offered the opportunity to receive the AO by their social worker as this is not recorded on the spreadsheet provided by RCT, although we note it is likely this information will be available in the coming months. This means 33% of eligible C.E. young people were referred in quarter four, although we know at least 87% of those eligible had a conversation with their social worker about advocacy.



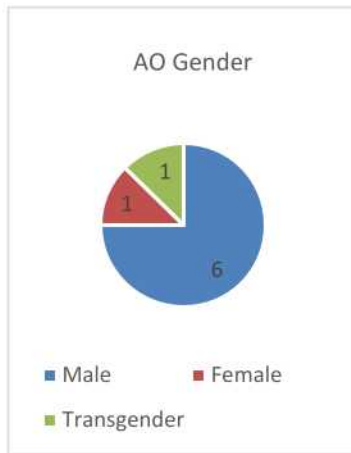
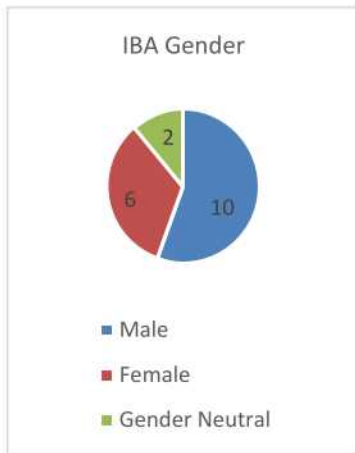
The most popular issues in need of advocacy support in quarter four were again placement followed by contact issues. We have plans to collect more detailed information in relation to placement issues in coming quarters.



Five young people presented with contact issues. In quarter four, all five young people wanted to start spending time with a family member or members, or have more time with a family members or friends.

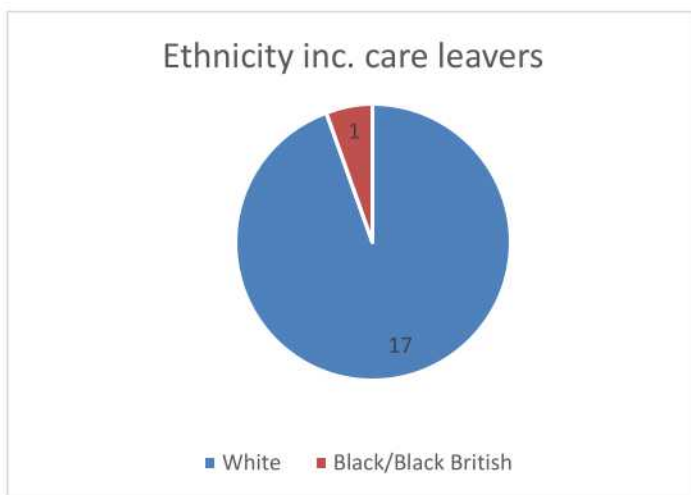


'Self-referral' and Social Services referrals continue to be the most popular route into the IBA service for care experienced young people. Self-referral is usually either the result of the young person accepting the AO and going on to receive IBA, or the young person contacting their advocate directly with a new issue.

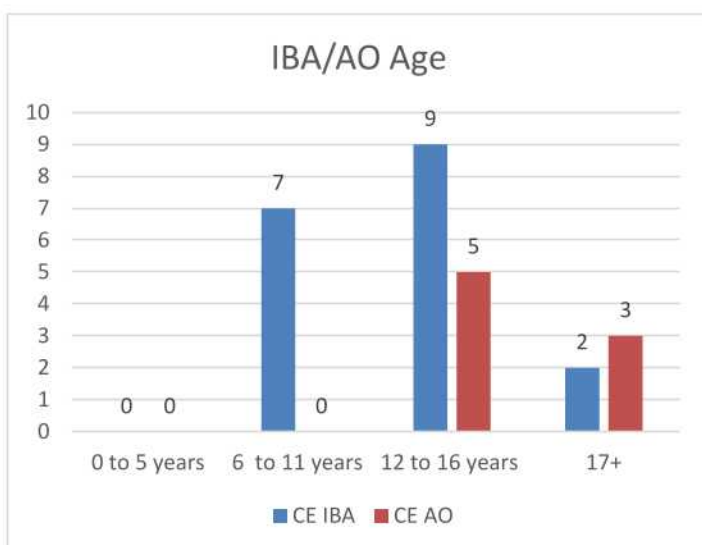


As in the previous quarter, most IBA referrals were for males in quarter four. Referrals for females decreased slightly and two gender neutral young people were also referred for IBA in quarter four.

Only one female was referred for AO in quarter four, along with six males and one transgender young person.

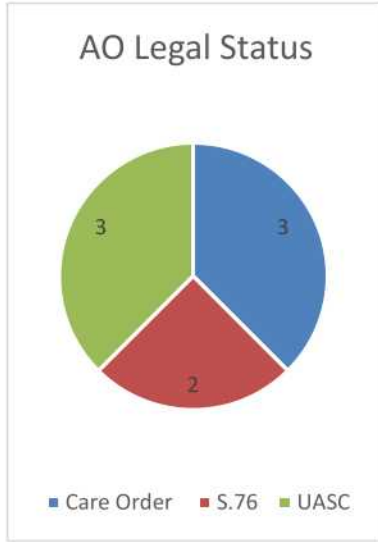
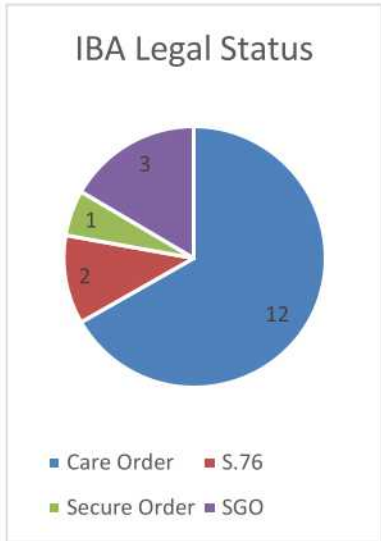


Most CE young people accessing IBA services in quarter four described themselves as white.



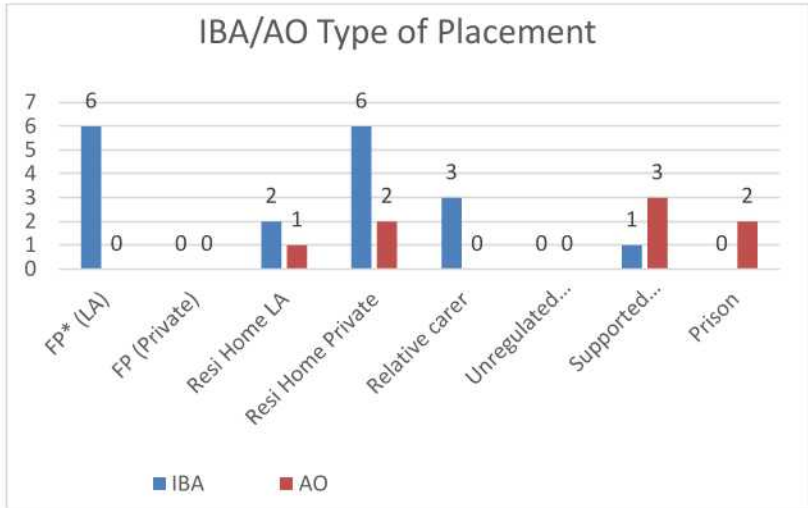
As in the previous quarter, most young people accessing IBA in quarter four were aged between 12 and 16 years, although we also observed an increase in young people aged between six and 11 years accessing IBA in quarter four.

As in the previous quarter, most CE young people referred for AO were aged between 12 and 16 years, no AO referrals were received for young people under the age 12.

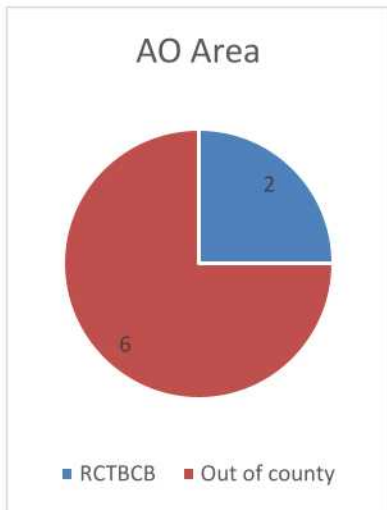
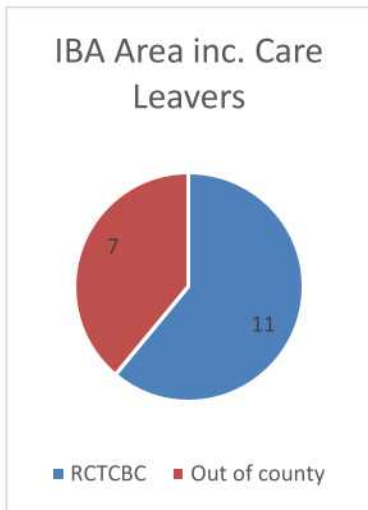


Most CE young people accessing IBA in quarter four were again subject to full care orders. One unaccompanied asylum-seeking young person also accessed IBA in quarter four.

Three unaccompanied asylum-seeking young people were referred for AO in quarter four.



Most CE young people accessing advocacy services in quarter four were living in a residential care setting.



Advocates supported seven CE young people living outside of RCT in quarter four. Other areas were Swansea, Cardiff, Newport, the Vale, Carmarthenshire, and Powys.

Six CE young people referred for AO lived outside of RCT, in Bridgend, Cardiff, the Vale and Swansea.

Other Information

Two CE young people with additional needs were referred for IBA in quarter four. One has a diagnosis of ADHD along with Tourette's, whilst another young person has a diagnosis of ADHD and additional learning needs.

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. Two young people living in RCT community homes recently completed pieces of advocacy work with the visiting advocate.

A review of the RVA services was postponed previously to allow us to concentrate on recruitment and advocacy capacity. The current residential visiting advocate plans to retire in the next quarter and we have recruited a new advocate to continue the RVA in RCT. The new advocate will be responsible for completing the review of the service, which will start during the next quarter.

Service Information

The (C.E.) young people and Care Leavers advocacy quarterly progress report was shared at the RCT Child Looked After Quality Assurance Panel in February and at the RCT Corporate Parenting Panel in March.

Following recruitment in quarter three, a new full time senior advocate role has been created, and the successful candidate is due to take up the post at the beginning of April. A casual advocate has also been recruited to take over the residential visiting advocacy (RVA) role when the current RVA retires during the next quarter. We are confident this will ensure no gap in service.

During quarter four, the CTM team completed first aid training provided by the Red Cross, and three team members completed training provided by Pause, relating to supporting mothers through Care Proceedings.

We have arranged internal training for the team, in Non-Instructed Advocacy and Restorative Engagement, to take place during the next quarter.

Conclusion and Looking Forward

We are pleased to observe continued consistency in both IBA and AO referrals for CE young people in quarter four. We appreciate the detailed information regarding the AO take up we receive from the LA and note the high percentage of young people recorded as having the AO conversation with their social worker. 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 Sam is 15 years old and lives in foster care in RCT. Sam first met her advocate last summer and they have worked together on several issues since. Sam text her advocate directly and asked for a school visit to take place before her CLA Review which was coming up the following week.

Action The advocate contacted Sam's school and arranged to visit her as soon as the school had availability. When the advocate arrived, Sam explained that several weeks ago she had some suicidal thoughts, and this has resulted in several rules being put into place to keep her safe. This included not being allowed out unsupervised. Sam said she understood this at the time but had not had any suicidal thoughts for weeks and felt much better. Sam said she was upset that the restrictions were still in place, was missing going out with her friends and felt this was having a detrimental effect on her emotional wellbeing. The advocate wrote up a wishes and feelings report for Sam, and Sam asked the advocate to attend the CLA Review with her, to help explain her feelings and why she felt it was safe for her to be allowed out with her friends unsupervised again. They also discussed several other ways that Sam could let her carers know she is safe, and the advocate agreed to help Sam put these ideas forward at the meeting.

Outcome: The advocate attended the meeting with Sam, and supported her to share her wishes and feelings, including why she was unhappy, why she felt she should be allowed out with her friends and how she could reassure her carers she was safe. Following discussions and negotiations, with Sam being supported by her advocate, it was agreed that Sam would be allowed out with her friends provided she kept her mobile phone always charged and switched on, that her carers know who she is going out with and where she is going in advance, and that Sam agrees to check in using her mobile phone at agreed times. Sam was delighted to be allowed out to spend unsupervised time with her friends.

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RHONDDA CYNON TAF COUNTY BOROUGH COUNCIL

CORPORATE PARENTING BOARD

7TH MAY 2024

VIRTUAL SCHOOL MODEL PILOT – INTERIM EVALUATION OF YEAR 2

AN UPDATE ON THE PROGRESS OF THE PILOT OF YEAR 2 OF THE VIRTUAL SCHOOL FOR CHILDREN LOOKED AFTER (CLA) IN RHONDDA CYNON TAF

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): Ceri Jones, Head of Inclusion Services
Linda Hawkins, Virtual School Headteacher

1. PURPOSE OF THE REPORT

- 1.1 The purpose of the report is to provide an update to the Corporate Parenting Board on the progress made during year 2 of the Virtual School (for CLA) Pilot – specifically looking at the steps taken to address and complete actions that form the Virtual School Action Plan for 2023-2024.

2. RECOMMENDATIONS

It is recommended that Members:

- 2.1 Acknowledge the content of the report.
- 2.1 Consider whether any further information is required on any aspect of the report.

3. REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATIONS

- 3.1 This is an information report.

4. BACKGROUND

- 4.1 The Virtual School Model has been an ongoing pilot project in RCT since September 2021. The first-year funding was used to carry out a scoping exercise; liaising with different departments within both Education and Children's Services on how the Virtual School Model may look in RCT. The temporary Virtual School Headteacher was appointed on 16th May 2022 and took over the responsibility of leading the former CLA Education Team from

September 2022. Changes in protocol and practice since the launch of the Virtual School have seen provision for care experienced children and young people move from compliance to involvement in strategic planning at both a local and national level including contributing to discussions regarding shaping the potential roadmap for future Virtual Schools in Wales.

- 4.2 The Virtual School Model (VSM) is well established in England and, under the Children's and Families Act 2014, local authorities have a statutory duty to appoint a Virtual School Head (VSH). This is not the case in Wales.
- 4.3 The Welsh Government has recently commissioned 'Miller Research UK' to carry out an evaluation of the VSM Pilot funding to inform the future direction and viability of the VSM in Wales. The research will consider how the VSM funding has been used to support care-experienced children, and the early impacts of the funding. The evaluation will begin imminently and conclude in March 2025. As part of the evaluation local authorities, including RCT, will be asked to contribute by providing details of how this new model is working in practice and the early impacts of the funding. The voices of care experienced children and young people in RCT will be heard in focus groups; the evaluation team are keen to hear their perceptions and experiences of the support in place in their local authority.
- 4.4 The Welsh Government launched the Corporate Parenting Charter – A Promise from Wales “A Shared Parenting Pledge” in June 2023. Welsh Ministers and Welsh Government are signing up to the Charter and setting the precedent for all public bodies across Wales as well as private sector organisations. The Virtual School in RCT will work to ensure the promises set out in the Charter are integral to how we work with children and their families.
- 4.5 The Virtual School is supporting the implementation of a Trauma Informed approach to supporting children and young people within RCT. Liaison has begun with the Virtual School in Ynys Mon, which is a trauma informed island, regarding the potential for any identified effective evidence-based practice to inform the development of a trauma informed approach by the RCT Virtual School. This work is in its very early stages.
- 4.6 Education and Children's Services are committed to funding the Virtual School in RCT as a permanent service to support the educational outcomes of care experienced children and young people; as such the Virtual School Head post is currently out for advertisement as a permanent role and it is hoped that a permanent post holder will be in place for September 2024.

5. CURRENT CONTEXT AND UPDATE ON PROGRESS

- 5.1 The Care Experienced Children Statistical Briefing issued in March 2024 states as at 31st March 2023, 7,210 children were looked after by Welsh local authorities. This is a rise from 7,080 on 31st March 2022.
- 5.2 On 12th April 2024, there were 635 children and young people looked after within RCT, 465 of which are of statutory school age.
- 5.3 On 12th April 2024, of the 465 school aged CLA learners, 356 are educated within the local authority and 109 out of county.

- 5.4 In the academic year 2023-2024, 66 CLA learners in RCT have a local authority maintained Individual Development Plan.

Action Plan Activities for 2023-2024

There are a number of priorities that have been embedded deeper into the ethos and remit of the Virtual School as the Pilot moved into the second year. Several ideas for excellent practice that evolved from the priorities of year one have been developed further over the academic year 2023-2024. Through robust self-evaluation of the Year One Implementation Plan and responses from other stakeholders, the Virtual School Headteacher drew up an Action Plan for 2023-2024 which reflects current overarching objectives for the Virtual School. These include:

- Building upon positive links made with other service areas within both Education, Children's Services and other 3rd sector agencies in order to continue to champion care experienced children and young people.
- Implementing a new protocol for measuring the learning progress of care experienced children and young people over time.
- Enhancing pupil and parent/carer engagement.
- Establishing an effective Management Committee.
- Monitoring the effectiveness of the new PCP tool.
- Ensuring CLA local authority maintained IDPs are issued in a timely manner to ensure appropriate provision is in place to support pupils' progress.
- Demonstrating impact of the use of new data systems in terms of challenging schools in relation to attendance, exclusions, learning outcomes, softer outcomes, e.g. wellbeing and mental health for their CLA learners.

- 5.5 The Virtual School Action Plan contains 23 actions for implementation during financial/academic year 2023/24. The following section provides a high level overview of progress in relation to the actions. As such the impact statement provided for each action is intended to provide an insight / summary of the impact rather than a full evaluation due to the amount of information that would need to be included. A copy of the 2023/24 Virtual School Action Plan is attached at Appendix 1. This provides members with a more detailed overview of the individual milestones identified to support the 23 priority actions referenced in this report.

- 5.6 **Priority area 1:**
To contribute to the evaluation of the Virtual School model and Virtual School Headteacher role which is being carried out by key personnel from Welsh Government.

The Virtual School Headteacher attends the Welsh Government led National Delivery Group (NDG) for Care Experienced Children and Young People. At these forums evaluation of the Personal Education Plan (PEP) and the Virtual

School Model are discussed. As stated in 4.3 of this report it is anticipated that the Virtual School will be contributing to the upcoming Virtual School Model evaluation commissioned by Welsh Government which will include listening to the voice of care experienced children and young people. The new RCT PEP designed by the Virtual School team that was developed following the work of a working party of Designated Persons for CLA in RCT schools has been shared with the NDG as part of their workstream on reviewing PEPs on a national basis.

Impact statement: By sharing the PEP with the NDG, it is hoped that RCT can contribute to a *common* template for Personal Education Plans (PEP) to aid transition arrangements and improve consistency when CLA move between local authorities in Wales.

5.7 **Priority area 2:**

- a) **To strategically meet the educational requirements of the Corporate Parenting Charter in partnership with colleagues from Children's Services and Health.**
- b) **To support Headteachers and school leadership to make trauma, informed decisions compatible for corporate parenting duties.**

5.8 A multi-agency working party with representation from the Virtual School RCT, the Educational Psychology Service RCT and an out of county Independent Specialist School has been created to develop a strategy to support schools to make trauma informed decisions re: CLA pupils in relation to exclusions and behaviour management.

Impact statement: A secondary school in RCT which permanently excluded two care experienced pupils in the academic year 2023-2024 has not excluded any further CLA pupils since the working party delivered training in March 2024.

5.9 **Priority area 3:**

To quality assure the CLA PCP process, ensuring a person-centred approach is adopted and every opportunity is taken to include the voice of the child.

For care experienced children/young people with additional learning needs, part one of the PCP meeting is the PEP. Pupil voice is intrinsic to the new PEP created by the Virtual School Team. Each section includes questions/statements which need to be addressed by the child/young person themselves. This includes 'my strengths', 'what I can celebrate about me', 'my good day', 'my bad day', 'what is important to and for me' 'what is working/not working for me', 'my barriers to learning', 'what I wish my teacher knew about me', 'I can...' statements and 'my next steps in learning'. In effect, the revised PEP puts an enhanced emphasis on ensuring the attendance of children and young people at the PCP meeting by putting the voice of the child/young person at the heart of the discussion within the PCP meeting format. Where it may not be possible for the child/young person to be present at their PCP meeting the Virtual School has provided schools with person centered tools to elicit responses from children and young people prior to the PCP meeting – this includes ideas that can be used with children and young people with profound and multiple learning difficulties.

As part of the new CLA PCP quality assurance (QA) process, the Virtual School Team are attending PCP meetings during the summer term. This will enable the Virtual School to evaluate person-centred practices with a particular focus upon the participation of children/young people in their PCP meeting and schools' use of person centered planning tools prior to the meeting. This will provide benchmark data for the Virtual School to develop performance measures/ targets moving forward. The Virtual School Headteacher is also facilitating some PCP meetings to demonstrate best practice.

Impact statement: By the end of the Summer term benchmark data / information will inform measures and targets moving forward to ensure more effective participation of children and young people in PCP meetings.

5.10 **Priority area 4:**

To agree the Terms of Reference of the Management Committee and ensure participation from care experienced young people (when relevant and appropriate) in line with the Children, Young People and Education Committee's recommendations in the radical reform for care experienced children and young people report.

In his report 'An integrated approach to improving educational outcomes for looked after children in Wales' (May 2020), Sir Alasdair Macdonald cited within his recommendations best practice in relation to governance arrangements of Virtual Schools in England and Scotland which included Virtual Schools having a Management Committee to provide an additional local level of scrutiny, support and accountability. In line with the above recommendation, the RCT Virtual School has recently established a Management Committee. As there is no current Welsh Government guidance in relation to Management Committees for Virtual Schools, RCT has based their Management Committee governance arrangements upon the Welsh Government 2014 statutory guidance for Management Committees of Pupil Referral Units.

Management Committee members include a cross-section of representation, including Headteachers from Primary, Secondary, Faith, Welsh medium and Special schools, the Cabinet Member for Health and Social Care, the Cabinet Member for Education, Youth Participation and Welsh Language, Children's Services representatives. It is hoped that there will be involvement of a foster carer and a care experienced young person.

On 8th April 2024, the Management Committee agreed roles and responsibilities in line with the above guidance. The Management Committee has received a presentation on the role of the Virtual School Head and the 2023-2024 action plan. The Chair of the Management Committee has reached out to Head of the Family Support and Accommodation department within RCT Children's Services to request a Pioneer Foster Carer to form part of the committee. The Virtual School Headteacher has identified a young person to attend an appropriate and relevant Management Committee meeting.

The work of the Management Committee is in its very early stages as only two meetings have taken place.

Impact Statement: The Virtual School Headteacher now has a group of critical friends (management committee) to support in the performance her functions,

which will include critical and questioning support. The management committee are aware of the priority actions for the Virtual School.

5.11 **Priority area 5:**

To develop relevant and appropriate policies pertaining to the Virtual School and its procedures and processes.

The Virtual School Headteacher has liaised with Virtual Schools in England to ascertain which policies are pertinent to the Virtual School and its protocols and procedures. Below is a list of some of these policies:

- Budget and funding
- PEP
- Tuition
- Transition
- Joined up working
- Training.

On Monday 18th March 2024, the Virtual School held a Collaborative Learning Day which included a workshop on policy writing for schools. This involved looking at current school policies and deciding how CLA could be represented in these policies. Examples include:

- School Uniform Policy – exemption from having to wear school uniform when first arriving at a school as CLA often have many school moves and often these moves are unplanned, therefore there may be no time to get a uniform before starting at a school.
- Transition policy – provide CLA pupils with enhanced transitions.
- Relationships Policy – ensuring trauma informed approaches are threaded through the whole policy.

Next Steps: Virtual School Headteacher to develop policies in the summer term 2024.

5.12 **Priority area 6:**

To introduce the new Personal Education Plan (PEP) to schools at the CLA Forum.

The new PEP has been well received by school staff. Pupil voice is intrinsic throughout the document. Schools completing the PEP document are now required to click a link which opens up a Microsoft Form. The purpose of this is to RAG rate the pupils' targets for Language, Literacy and Communication, Maths and Numeracy and Health and Wellbeing.

Impact statement: There is now a system in place through the Microsoft Form to track pupil progress. Moving forward we will be able to identify individual pupils who are not making expected progress; intervention can then be identified to support the pupil.

5.13 **Priority area 7:**

To develop a robust system to track the submission of PEPs by schools, ensuring higher levels of compliance in terms of adhering to statutory timeframes.

The Virtual School Headteacher has proposed that schools are provided with two PEP deadlines per academic year which will enable the Virtual School to identify more effectively schools that are not adhering to statutory timeframes and offer support where needed. The Director of Children's Services is currently liaising with Welsh Government in terms of the guidance they have issued around PEPs.

Next steps: Agree the process and share with the Designated Person (DP) for CLA in each school via the Teams channel, Access and Inclusion newsletter and at the DP Forum. Establish benchmark data and performance indicators for improvement.

5.14 Priority area 8:

To develop and implement a Quality Assurance Framework to ensure schools track pupil progress appropriately

Pupil progress in the PEP is now able to be tracked via a link to a Microsoft Form where all relevant data regarding pupil progress is requested. At the end of this academic year there will be sufficient data to inform a quality assurance framework and identify improvement priorities. The framework will examine how many PEPs have evidence of RAG rated targets. The framework will be utilised once per term and schools identified as not tracking pupil progress will be offered support.

Next steps: Interrogate the data using the quality assurance framework at the end of the academic year and establish a set of improvement priorities and performance indicators.

5.15 Priority area 9:

To evaluate the effectiveness of the Quality Assurance process for tracking pupil progress and revise for 2024-2025 as necessary

We can evaluate the effectiveness of the quality assurance process after two full terms of data collection. Evaluation will include the following questions:

- Is the Microsoft Form consistently working through the link in the PEP?
- Is the Quality Assurance process highlighting schools that are not tracking pupil progress?
- Is the Quality Assurance process highlighting progress/lack of progress of pupils over time?
- Is the Quality Assurance process identifying progress/lack of progress for different cohorts of pupils?
- Do we need to amend the Quality Assurance process?
- Is there other data that we need the Quality Assurance process to demonstrate?

Next steps: To evaluate the effectiveness of the Quality Assurance Framework in January 2025.

5.16 **Priority area 10:**
Use range of data to improve outcomes for cohorts of CLA pupils.

The Virtual School Dashboard has been a key development during the pilot and now provides the Virtual School with data on CLA attendance and exclusions. It provides data relating to the number of CLA in RCT, the number of CLA attending RCT schools, the school they attend, their year group, whether they are in receipt of free school meals, schools' attendance bands, attendance codes of individual pupils, attendance by year group (provides historical information on attendance), exclusions, permanent exclusions, reason for exclusion, length of exclusion. Moving forward the data team are working on adding data for reduced timetables, PEPs and IDPs to the dashboard.

Impact statement: The Virtual Headteacher has easily accessible data relating to CLA and as such is able to report to CLA quality assurance panel on CLA attendance and exclusion and how The Virtual School is providing challenge and support to schools identified as having poor CLA attendance and/or a high rate of CLA exclusions.

5.17 **Priority area 11:**
To evaluate the 'Out of County' Monitoring Protocol to ensure provisions and settings providing statutory education to RCT CLA pupils are delivering on their responsibilities in terms of improving pupil outcomes.

The Out of County Monitoring Protocol takes the format of a questionnaire where responses from Out of County educational settings may trigger a package of support for the school and/or pupil to address identified concerns with their educational provision. The Out of County Monitoring Protocol is carried out three times per academic year. The first evaluation of the protocol took place in the spring term 2024 and identified that the process is not being completed by the majority of Out of County schools. In response, the process has been simplified by transferring the questionnaire to an online Microsoft Form and, whilst there is no statutory requirement for Out of County settings to take part in the monitoring protocol, it is hoped that we will see an increase in responses from Out of County schools.

Impact statement: The evaluation of the Out of County Monitoring Protocol identified the next steps needed in securing a better response from stakeholders in Out of County schools.

5.18 **Priority area 12:**
a) To provide relevant and appropriate training to in county and out of county schools in terms of making trauma informed decisions when providing education and emotional support to care experienced children and young people.
b) To monitor the impact of training that the Virtual School provides and demonstrate evidence of impact on practice and pupil outcomes.

Online training in 'Best Practice in Pupil Voice' is planned for the summer term for all out of county schools. The training programme for RCT schools is currently being reviewed and will be available to schools in September 2024. Training opportunities will include 'Making Trauma Informed Decisions'.

Next steps: A full timetable of training for schools in Trauma Informed Practice. Monitor the uptake in training opportunities of both RCT and out of county schools.

5.19 **Priority area 13:**

To review current RCT Virtual School Model structure and make recommendations for change.

Due to the success of the Virtual School Pilot both the Education and Inclusion Services and Children's Services have made the decision to make the role of Virtual School Headteacher a permanent role and are committed to the Virtual School model as a continuing service. Following the completion of the recruitment process during the summer term it is anticipated that the permanent post holder will take up their position from September 2024. The Virtual School Headteacher has explored roles within other Virtual Schools in Wales and England to inform the development of the virtual school in RCT.

Next steps: Appoint a permanent Virtual School Headteacher and consider the structure of the Virtual School.

5.20 **Priority area 14:**

To collaborate with 'Pioneer Fostering' in order to support foster carers to ensure children and young people in their care receive the best possible educational outcomes.

The Virtual School Team met with the Pioneer Foster Carers Group on the 30th January 2024. An audit of the training needs of the foster carers identified the following priorities:

- ALN – the new legislation and code
- IDP
- Teaching reading
- Numeracy.

On the 24th April the Virtual School Team will begin a series of training sessions for the Pioneer Foster Carers Group. The first session will address ALN. Subsequent sessions will cover IDP, phonics and early reading skills, using games to teach Maths, using the outdoor environment for learning, thinking skills and multi-sensory learning.

Impact statement: The initial meeting with the Pioneer Foster Carer Group enabled the Virtual School Team to audit training needs and design a bespoke calendar of training events.

5.21 **Priority area 15:**

To evaluate the effectiveness and outcomes of a pilot project designed to support schools in self-auditing their whole-school systems and practice for care experienced children. To identify good practice and areas for development to inform Virtual School planning for 2024-2025.

Five schools took part in the pilot project. The first activity as part of this pilot was for schools to complete a self-audit tool: Evaluating whole school systems

and practice for care-experienced children. From the responses to the audit schools were required to develop a SWOT analysis. The SWOT analysis highlights strengths, areas for development/opportunities, data and next steps. At the beginning of the project, 3-5 care experienced pupils in each school were asked to complete a 'Student Resilience Survey' and staff were asked to complete a 'Supporting the Needs of CLA Staff Survey'. These surveys will be completed again at the end of the project in order to evaluate impact. On Monday 18th March 2024, during the Virtual School Collaborative Learning Day each school presented to the group on an area of excellent practice for the provision of CLA, presentations included:

- Zones of Regulation
- Family Learning Hub
- Nurture
- Family Time.

Aims of the Collaborative Learning Day were to share innovation and expertise relating to effective CLA provision, to reflect on current policy and practice, considering how schools support CLA pupils, to explore how to effectively measure progress and capture impact, for the Virtual School to provide an overview of making trauma informed decisions to support CLA provision. An expectation of the project was to carry out a case study based on the areas of development identified in the SWOT analysis. A follow up session has been arranged for 16th May 2024 for schools to present their case studies.

Impact statement: High levels of collaboration as part of this project has ensured school staff have benefitted from a wealth of professional learning. The outcome of the pilot will inform the Virtual School's planning in relation to the roll out of training on self-evaluation of whole school systems and practice in relation to care-experienced learners to all schools in 2024/25.

5.22 **Priority area 16:**

To formulate a robust system for alerting the Virtual School as to when pupils' IDPs are due for review in order to increase the percentage of CLA IDPs finalised within statutory timescales.

An Additional Learning Provision (ALP) Coordinator within Access and Inclusion drafts all CLA IDPs for the Virtual School. As part of this role the ALP Coordinator tracks the CLA IDPs in terms of dates for review, time needed to draft, draft IDP issue and final IDP issue. The Virtual School Headteacher quality assures all CLA IDPs. In the absence of national performance indicators relating to the completion of IDPs for CLA learners within statutory timescales, Access and Inclusion has developed a local improvement performance indicator for 2024/25 which is that 80% of LA maintained IDPs for CLA will be issued within 12 weeks (RCT pupils in all schools) for 2024/25.

Impact statement: A more concise process of quality assuring CLA IDPs has been developed to ensure that a higher number of CLA IDPs are finalised within statutory timescales.

5.23 **Priority area 17:**

To quality assure the delivery of Additional Learning Provision on a CLA IDP by visiting schools and capturing pupil voice.

Although all CLA IDPs are maintained by the local authority it is the responsibility of the school to provide the additional learning provision (ALP) outlined in the IDP. The Virtual School Team will be making visits to schools during the summer term to capture pupil voice in relation to IDPs. Questions asked will include: 'Do you know what your targets are in your IDP?'; 'Can you tell me what support you receive in order to achieve your targets?'; 'Do you know who you can go to for support?'; 'Are you receiving any individualised interventions to help support you?'

Next steps: To carry out school visits during the summer term and analyse outcomes of visits to inform future support for schools.

5.24 **Priority area 18:**

To ensure the PDG/LAC Bursary is used to target identified areas for improvement and evaluate impact.

The PDG/LAC Bursary 2023-2024 has been used to support the education of care experienced children and young people. Several pupils received 1:1 support whilst they were experiencing a turbulent time to support their access to education, many pupils are being supported as they prepare for the transition to secondary school, staff training in the Helping Hands Project provided secondary school staff in 7 clusters with the knowledge and skills needed to implement an enhanced transition project for Year 6 pupils within the cluster primary schools. A cohort in one secondary school enjoyed a visit to 'Jamie's Farm' and a large cohort of young people in Year 10 and 11 who are not attending school have been provided with a bespoke package of education based around their individual interests.

Impact statement: Pupils supported with 1:1 support continued to attend school every day. The Year 10 and 11 cohort of pupils attended all bespoke education sessions and some completed work towards formal qualifications.

5.25 **Priority area 19:**

To implement and evaluate a pilot project in collaboration with the Education, Employment and Training Team: 'Planning our Way' to support Year 11 pupils with destination choices at post 16.

This action was not achieved as secondary schools in RCT did not take up the offer of 'Planning our Way' as they had already engaged in the 'Green Light Project'.

Next steps: The Virtual School Team are continuing to work collaboratively with the Education, Employment and Training Team in developing a Year 10/11 post 16 destination project to ensure every care experienced young person has a destination after they have completed their statutory education.

5.26 **Priority area 20:**

To work pre-emptively with schools and Central South Consortium to identify CLA pupils at risk of permanent/high levels of exclusion and provide challenge and support to reduce exclusions.

This work is in its early stages. As part of the trauma informed practice training the Virtual School Team are delivering messages to school staff via the DP Forum and school visits about the importance of school staff making trauma informed decisions, especially when considering exclusion of a CLA pupil. Exclusion is not a trauma informed decision and the Virtual School Team are talking to school leaders about alternatives to exclusion. In May 2024, the Virtual School Team are attending a training session 'Strengths Based Strategies for Children on the Edge of Exclusion' and will cascade this information to schools in the aim to strengthen the message we are delivering on the need to make trauma informed decisions.

It is anticipated that the revised PEPs and the range of live data relating to exclusions that is now accessible to the Virtual School will enable the Virtual School to provide targeted support and advice to schools more effectively on both a systemic and individual pupil level, including more effective targeted allocation of PDGLAC funding.

Performance indicators have been developed to measure performance in relation to exclusions for CLA pupils and the potential impact of the Virtual School in reducing exclusions for CLA pupils with challenging behaviours.

Next steps: To attend training session and share learning with schools. To provide support to schools where there are identified concerns on a systemic and individual pupil level to reduce the number of exclusions incurred by CLA pupils in line with LA performance indicators.

5.27 **Priority area 21:**

To work pre-emptively with schools to identify CLA pupils at risk of low attendance/with low attendance and provide challenge and support to improve attendance figures for CLA pupils.

As for exclusion data, the Virtual School Dashboard provides data on CLA attendance at school. Attendance of CLA pupils is now monitored monthly by the Virtual School and individual pupils with decreasing levels of attendance are identified. The Virtual School Team arranges multi-agency meetings in relation to these pupils. High levels of collaboration take place when discussing poor attendance of care- experienced pupils; social workers are key when working with foster carers and staff in the residential homes in RCT. The specialist Educational Psychologist for CLA works closely with foster carers and residential home staff, this work includes teaching carers how to work with the PACE model to support children and young people to attend school.

Next steps: Training in the PACE model to continue in September 2024. To provide targeted support to identified schools/pupils to improve attendance rates of CLA pupils in line with LA performance indicators.

5.28 **Priority area 22:**

To develop a process to track the number of days CLA pupils are without a school placement.

The Virtual School Dashboard is now able to track the number of days CLA pupils are without a school placement.

Impact statement: We now have the data relating to the number of days CLA pupils are without a school placement. Moving forward the Virtual School Team will include actions in the Virtual School Action Plan for 2024-2025 to reduce the number of days CLA pupils are without a school placement.

5.29 **Priority area 23:**

To identify barriers to pupils accessing appropriate educational placements/provision and agree potential solutions.

The Virtual School Team has completed a large piece of work around this priority area and has identified that barriers tend to relate to the need to develop a greater understanding in schools of the importance of implementing robust trauma informed decisions. As a result, the work of the Virtual School during 2024/25 will have a strong focus upon developing trauma informed practice in schools. The Virtual School has provided a stronger solution-focused presence from Education Services in multi-agency meetings regarding support/interventions that can be offered to pupils who are not attending school. Actions taken by the Virtual School Team include engaging with alternative education providers. Some examples of these are a tutor with a therapy dog, online tuition, cookery lessons, and the commissioning of a range of approved alternative education providers. The Virtual School Team has also carried out case studies on pupils who are without a school placement to identify barriers and potential solutions. Case studies highlighted the continued need for effective communication between all parties in relation to school admissions.

Impact statement: All pupils who attended the alternative provision arranged by the Virtual School have attended and engaged. The Virtual School has a greater understanding of the barriers to pupils accessing appropriate educational placements to inform planning for 2024/25.

6. EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY IMPLICATIONS / SOCIO-ECONOMIC DUTY

6.1 This is an information report.

7. WELSH LANGUAGE IMPLICATIONS

7.1 This is an information report.

8. CONSULTATION / INVOLVEMENT

8.1 This is an information report.

9. FINANCIAL IMPLICATION(S)

9.1 This is an information report.

10. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS OR LEGISLATION CONSIDERED

10.1 The legal requirements for children who are looked after who have special educational needs or an additional learning need are set down within the Education Act 1996, the Additional Learning Needs and Education Tribunal (ALNET) Act (Wales) 2018 and the associated statutory Additional Learning Needs (ALN) Code (Wales) 2021.

11. LINKS TO CORPORATE AND NATIONAL PRIORITIES AND THE WELLBEING OF FUTURE GENERATIONS ACT 2015

- 11.1 There are links to RCTCBC's Education and Inclusion Services Strategic Plan for 2022 to 2025 and its mission: '*To deliver equity and excellence in Education and enhanced well-being for all*', most notably:
- Strategic Priority 2: Supporting educational settings to deliver a transformational curriculum, high quality teaching and learning and improved outcomes for all.
 - Strategic Priority 3: Ensuring equity and support for vulnerable learners and their families
- 11.2 The information in the report contributes to the priorities within the Council's Corporate Plan, 'Making a Difference'.
- 11.3 The implementation of the new Welsh Government ALN legislation and the processes and systems developed at a local council level will ensure that some of RCTCBC's most vulnerable learners will have the best chance of achieving positive outcomes.
- 11.4 The above also contributes in particular to the following wellbeing goals:
- A prosperous Wales
 - A resilient Wales
 - A more equal Wales
 - A Wales of cohesive communities.
- 11.5 Organising services so that they are focussed on early intervention and prevention is a key statutory requirement of the Wellbeing and Future Generations Act 2015¹ and a key element of RCTCBC's Corporate Plan.

12. STRATEGIC OR RELEVANT TO ELECTORAL WARDS

- 12.1 The Virtual School Model is a universal provision that will support the Council in improving the outcomes and wellbeing of all CLA learners in Rhondda Cynon Taf and as such is a strategic provision relevant to all wards.

13. CONCLUSION

- 13.1 The Virtual School Model pilot is coming to an end and as mentioned previously in this report, RCT have made the decision for the Virtual School to become a permanent service within Access and Inclusion. As can be seen from the above information, good progress has been made in relation to the 23 priority areas outlined within the Virtual School Action Plan. The Welsh Government's full evaluation of the national Virtual Schools Wales pilot will be completed next year and as a result there may be further funding and / or strategic support and guidance for the Virtual School model on a national basis. Whilst awaiting a national steer following the above evaluation, the Virtual School in RCT is working closely with the Virtual School Headteachers in Cardiff and Ynys Mon,

¹ [Wellbeing and Future Generations Act 2015](#)

strengthening cross border arrangements and ensuring that RCT continues to improve its provision for CLA learners.

LOCAL GOVERNMENT ACT 1972

AS AMENDED BY

THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT (ACCESS TO INFORMATION) ACT 1985

RHONDDA CYNON TAF COUNTY BOROUGH COUNCIL

CORPORATE PARENTING BOARD

7TH MAY 2024

Item: AN UPDATE ON THE PROGRESS OF THE PILOT OF YEAR 2 OF THE VIRTUAL SCHOOL FOR CHILDREN LOOKED AFTER (CLA) IN RHONDDA CYNON TAF

Background Papers

Officer(s) to contact: Ceri Jones, Head of Inclusion Services
Linda Hawkins, Virtual School Headteacher

ACTIONS (Priority areas)		Ref	MILESTONES/Sub Actions <i>that will help to achieve the Action</i>	Delivery Date <i>(Month/Year)</i>	Accountable Officer <i>(For achieving action)</i>
A01	To contribute to the evaluation of the Virtual School model and Virtual School Headteacher role which is being carried out by key personnel from Welsh Government	M01	Attend National Delivery Group Meetings	October 2023	Linda Hawkins/ Hannah Bevan
		M02	To share responses to the Whole School Evaluation Questionnaire 23-24 with all relevant stakeholders within the National Delivery Group	October 2023	Linda Hawkins
		M04	Discuss the Virtual School Model and Virtual School Headteacher role with Jane Dodds, member of the Senedd for Mid and West Wales	Monthly	Linda Hawkins
		M05	Contribute to discussions with Jeremy Miles, Minister for Education in Wales regarding the Virtual School Model and Virtual School Headteacher Role	TBA	Linda Hawkins
		M06	Share the WG evaluation process with the Director of Children’s Services to encourage a wider response to the Virtual School Model evaluation	September 2023	Linda Hawkins
A01	Success Criteria	M01	National Delivery Group, Enfys Dixey, lead for Virtual School Model evaluation (Welsh Government) and ESTYN aware of the evaluation of the Virtual School Pilot in RCT Year 1		
		M02	Key personnel in Welsh Government have a detailed understanding of the work of the Virtual School and the role of the Virtual School Headteacher		
		M03	Welsh Government evaluation of the Virtual School Model includes a wide breadth of stakeholders		

ACTIONS (Priority areas)		Ref	MILESTONES/Sub Actions <i>that will help to achieve the Action</i>	Delivery Date <i>(Month/Year)</i>	Accountable Officer <i>(For achieving action)</i>
A02	To strategically meet the educational requirements of the Corporate Parenting Charter in partnership with colleagues from Children's Services and Health	M01	<p>Discuss Article 28 of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child in terms of the education of care experienced children and young people and how we can support schools to deliver on these articles: 28: Children have a right to an education. Discipline in schools should respect children's human dignity</p> <p>To establish a multi-agency working party with representation from secondary and primary schools to develop a strategy to support schools to make trauma informed decisions re: CLA pupils in relation to exclusions and behaviour management</p>	January 2024	Linda Hawkins
	To support Headteachers and school leadership to make trauma, informed decisions compatible for corporate parenting duties	M02	<p>Discuss with the Post 16 ALN Steering Group:</p> <p>Principle 9 of the Corporate Parenting Charter:</p> <p>... providing opportunities and support for all care-experienced children and young people to learn/develop and help them become who they want to be. Example: Offering care experienced children and young people work experience placements, work shadowing opportunities, internships, traineeships and apprenticeships</p> <p>Discuss how the Virtual School can support schools to provide these opportunities through the MATSM</p>	November 2023	Linda Hawkins

ACTIONS (Priority areas)		Ref	MILESTONES/Sub Actions <i>that will help to achieve the Action</i>	Delivery Date <i>(Month/Year)</i>	Accountable Officer <i>(For achieving action)</i>
		M03	Present the Corporate Parenting Charter at the Secondary and Primary School Heads meetings in order to ensure an understanding in schools in order for schools to develop their responsibilities towards care-experienced children and young people, so that they have the same life chances as all children living in Wales	ASH March 2024 PSHT March 2024	Linda Hawkins
A02	Success Criteria	M01	Schools can demonstrate how pupils' rights are met in the culture and ethos of the school. Schools can evidence the non-punitive strategies utilised when supporting pupils with adverse childhood experiences, trauma and attachment difficulties. Schools have a positive relationship policy in place. Multi-agency groups established Strategy developed and communicated to schools 50% reduction in fixed term exclusions for CLA pupils compared to 22/23 50% reduction in permanent exclusions for CLA pupils compared to 22/23		
		M02	Multi-agency Transition Screening Meeting (MATSM) highlights care experienced children and young people who need work experience placements, work shadowing opportunities, internships, traineeships and apprenticeships in Years 10 and 1. All Year 10 & 11 CLA pupils have accessed at least one of the above		
		M03	School leaders and school staff have a thorough understanding of the Corporate Parenting Charter and how the educational requirements of the charter can be met at school through making trauma-informed decisions and utilising pupil voice		

ACTIONS (Priority areas)		Ref	MILESTONES/Sub Actions <i>that will help to achieve the Action</i>	Delivery Date <i>(Month/Year)</i>	Accountable Officer <i>(For achieving action)</i>
A03	To quality assure the CLA PCP process, ensuring a person-centred approach is adopted and every opportunity is taken to include the voice of the child	M01	Devise a Quality Assurance Framework for CLA PCPs	January 2024	Team
		M02	Share the protocol with Designated Persons/ALNCOs at Forum	February 2024	Team
		M03	Introduce dip sampling as part of the Quality Assurance Framework. This method will enable us to test out quality of practice in relation to PCP meetings, both in terms of gaining a baseline and then going forward to monitor progress	May 2024	Team
		M04	Feedback to schools post dip sampling, including areas to celebrate and develop	May 2024	Linda Hawkins
		M05	Identify best practice in pupil – voice and invite relevant schools to share the good practice at CLA Forum	July 2024	Linda Hawkins
A03	Success Criteria	M01	Regular timetable of Quality Assurance in place for PCP Reviews. Higher compliance with statutory IDP timescales – target 90%		
		M02	Protocol shared with DPs / ALNCOs. – shared understanding of expectations improves quality and increased compliance with statutory timescales		
		M03	Quality Assurance of a dip sample of schools' PCP Reviews from Rhondda, Cynon and Taf schools completed. Baseline information identified to inform future service delivery performance		
		M04	Feedback to schools is meaningful and informs future planning of PCP Reviews		
		M05	Subsequent dip sampling identifies improvement in practice compared to baseline information		

ACTIONS (Priority areas)		Ref	MILESTONES/Sub Actions <i>that will help to achieve the Action</i>	Delivery Date <i>(Month/Year)</i>	Accountable Officer <i>(For achieving action)</i>
A04	To agree the Terms of Reference of the Management Committee and ensure participation from care experienced young people (when relevant and appropriate) in line with the Children, Young People and Education Committee's recommendations in the radical reform for care experienced children and young people report	M01	Agree the terms of reference for the Virtual School Management Committee during the first Management Meeting	November 2023	Linda Hawkins
		M02	Identify care experienced children and young people and foster carer representative to attend relevant and appropriate management committee on a rota basis	December 2023	Linda Hawkins/ Nicole Katchi
A04	Success Criteria	M01	All committee members aware of the TOR of the Virtual School Management Committee		

ACTIONS (Priority areas)		Ref	MILESTONES/Sub Actions <i>that will help to achieve the Action</i>	Delivery Date <i>(Month/Year)</i>	Accountable Officer <i>(For achieving action)</i>
		M02	Representation from foster carer and care experienced child/young person in relevant Management Committee meetings		
A05	To develop relevant and appropriate policies pertaining to the Virtual School and its procedures and processes	M01	Identify relevant and appropriate policies – looking at established virtual schools in England for advice on policies needed	November 2023	Team
		M02	Write policies that are relevant to the work of the Virtual School in RCT	January 2024	Linda Hawkins
		M03	Ensure robust quality assurance of policies	January 2024	Management Committee
		M04	Disseminate policies to relevant services/teams, agencies, etc	January 2024	Team
		M05	Develop a timetable for the reviewing of all policies	January 2024	Team
A05	Success Criteria	M01	Relevant policies in place and shared with appropriate stakeholders		
		M02	Calendar of policy review in place		
		M03	Policies scrutinised by Management Committee		
		M04	Policies disseminated to relevant stakeholders		
		M05	Timetable in place		
A06	To introduce the new Personal Education Plan	M01	Publish revised PEP guidance that aligns with the new PEP	February 2023	Team
		M02	Develop a training presentation to be delivered to designated persons for CLA in Forum	October 2023	Linda Hawkins/ Donna Hughes

ACTIONS (Priority areas)		Ref	MILESTONES/Sub Actions <i>that will help to achieve the Action</i>	Delivery Date <i>(Month/Year)</i>	Accountable Officer <i>(For achieving action)</i>
	(PEP) to schools at the CLA Forum	M03	Deliver presentation in Forum and offer online 'catch up' sessions for designated persons who were not present at forum	October 2023 February 2024 June 2024	Linda Hawkins/ Donna Hughes Team Team
		M04	To develop and implement a QA process to evaluate effectiveness of revised PEP and establish baseline information	January 2024	Linda Hawkins
		M05	Evaluate effectiveness of QA process and revise for 24/25		
A06	Success Criteria	M01	Revised PEP guidance is published and disseminated to relevant stakeholders. New PEP is being used for all PEP meetings taking place in every relevant school in RCT		
		M02	Training presentation is completed		
		M03	DPs and relevant professionals report secure understanding of the new PEP PEP is a successful document for capturing the education, progress, goals and aspirations, next steps in learning etc of CLA pupils		
		M04	QA process implemented. Baseline information collated and informed service delivery Good practice and areas for development identified and shared with relevant stakeholders Subsequent QA demonstrates improvement in quality of PEPs compared to initial baseline information		
A07	To develop a robust system to	M01	Research how other Local Authorities in Wales track the submission of PEPs	December 2023	Team
		M02	Discuss findings of the research	December 2023	Team

ACTIONS (Priority areas)		Ref	MILESTONES/Sub Actions <i>that will help to achieve the Action</i>	Delivery Date <i>(Month/Year)</i>	Accountable Officer <i>(For achieving action)</i>
	track the submission of PEPs by schools, ensuring higher levels of compliance in terms of adhering to statutory timeframes	M03	Finalise a system of tracking the submission of PEPs by schools	January 2024	Linda Hawkins
		M04	Share the information around the system with schools at DP Forum	February 2024	Team
		M05	Develop a graduated response to non-compliance	February 2024 (before Forum)	Team
		M06	Support schools to ensure statutory timescales for PEPs is adhered to	March 2024	Team
A07	Success Criteria	M01	Information regarding PEP compliance and tracking from a number of local authorities across Wales is available		
		M02	Final decision is reached in regard to tracking the submission of PEPs by schools in order to ensure a higher level of compliance in terms of adhering to statutory timescales		
		M03	Schools are aware of the tracking system		
		M04	Clear step-by-step responses to non-compliance is available At least 80% of PEPs are completed within statutory timescales		
		M05	Schools feel supported in submitting PEPs in line with statutory timescales At least 80% of PEPs are completed within statutory timescales		
A08	To develop and implement a Quality Assurance	M01	Develop a process where pupil progress is tracked in the PEP (Microsoft Form)	October 2023	Linda Hawkins
		M02	Create a Microsoft Form linked to the Education Record in the PEP	October 2023	Iwan Griffiths

ACTIONS (Priority areas)		Ref	MILESTONES/Sub Actions <i>that will help to achieve the Action</i>	Delivery Date <i>(Month/Year)</i>	Accountable Officer <i>(For achieving action)</i>
	Framework to ensure schools track pupil progress appropriately	M03	Present the process at CLA Forum in order for school staff to be aware how to input pupil progress in the PEP. Use the link in the PEP to demonstrate the Microsoft Form	October 2023	Linda Hawkins
		M04	Quality assure the recording of pupil progress in the PEP termly using the data gathered from the Microsoft Form questions and establish baseline information	November 2023	Team
		M05	Support and challenge schools who are not recording pupil progress via the tracking process	November 2023	Team
A08	Success Criteria	M01	Microsoft form is ready for use		
		M02	Link is working successfully in the PEP (Education Record)		
		M03	School staff are confident in using the link and completing the Microsoft Form		
		M04	Data is readily available in terms of pupil progress as identified through the Microsoft Form link in the PEP Baseline information is collated and good practice and areas for development are identified to inform service delivery priorities		
		M05	Identified schools demonstrate Increased compliance		

ACTIONS (Priority areas)		Ref	MILESTONES/Sub Actions <i>that will help to achieve the Action</i>	Delivery Date <i>(Month/Year)</i>	Accountable Officer <i>(For achieving action)</i>
A09	To evaluate the effectiveness of the Quality Assurance process for tracking pupil progress and revise for 2024-2025 as necessary	M01	Develop a QA framework with relevant success criteria and measures. Is the Microsoft Form consistently working through the link in the PEP? Is the Quality assurance process highlighting schools that are not tracking pupil progress? Is the Quality Assurance process highlighting progress/lack of progress of pupils over time? Is the Quality Assurance process identifying progress/lack of progress for different cohorts of pupils? Do we need to amend the Quality Assurance process? Is there other data that we need the Quality Assurance process to demonstrate?	June 2024	Team
		M02	Good practice and areas for development identified and shared with relevant stakeholders	June 2024	Linda Hawkins
		M03	Evaluate the effectiveness of the QA process and revise as necessary for 24/25	June 2024	Team
A09	Success Criteria	M01	QA framework developed with clear success criteria and measures to establish baseline information to inform service delivery priorities		
		M02	Schools report greater shared understanding of effective tracking of pupil progress		
		M03	Evaluation report of QA with recommendations		
		M04	Rationale for any change is recorded		

ACTIONS (Priority areas)		Ref	MILESTONES/Sub Actions <i>that will help to achieve the Action</i>	Delivery Date <i>(Month/Year)</i>	Accountable Officer <i>(For achieving action)</i>
A10	Use range of data to improve outcomes for cohorts of CLA pupils	M01	Implement targeted approach to identifying CLA pupils who require enhanced support from VS for behaviour, wellbeing, attendance, academic progress	September 2023	Team
		M02	Effective use of PDGLAC bursary to support identified pupils	September 2023	Team
		M03	Impact report produced to evaluate above new process	June 2024	Team
A10	Success Criteria	M01	Cohorts of CLA pupils identified for enhanced support Clear support plans in place for schools and pupils with agreed success criteria Improved outcomes for pupils in line with their individual targets and in line with VS success criteria		
		M02	Bursary is targeted to support identified cohorts of pupils to demonstrate impact		
		M03	Report written to demonstrate impact and recommendations		
A11	To evaluate the 'Out of County' Monitoring Protocol to ensure provisions and settings providing statutory education to RCT	M01	Half termly meetings to discuss Out of County pupils	November 2023	Team
		M02	Develop an evaluation of the protocol using a series of questions: Do we have a live record of where pupils attend school out of county? Do we know how out of county pupils are doing? Do we know if out of county pupils' attendance has dipped? Do we know if out of county pupils are excluded? Do we have up-to-date contact details for out of county pupils' social workers, carers and Designated Persons? etc	May 2024	Linda Hawkins

ACTIONS (Priority areas)		Ref	MILESTONES/Sub Actions <i>that will help to achieve the Action</i>	Delivery Date <i>(Month/Year)</i>	Accountable Officer <i>(For achieving action)</i>
	CLA pupils are delivering on their responsibilities in terms of improving pupil outcomes	M03	To rag rate the out of county monitoring protocol termly to determine whether it is providing the data needed to track pupil outcomes	November 2023	Team
A11	Success Criteria	M01	Diary of dates for half termly meetings is set		
		M02	Questions in the evaluation are answered		
		M03	Half termly rag rating evident		
A12	To provide relevant and appropriate training to in county and out of county schools in terms of making trauma informed decisions when	M01	Audit training needs of in and out of county schools	November 2023	Team/ Richard Evans
		M02	Create a timetable of training dates and topics	December 2023	Team
		M03	Deliver training face to face and online	January 2024	Team
		M04	Provide termly CLA Forums and 'Drop-Ins' for disseminating information, training, networking and sharing good practice in making trauma informed decisions for CLA pupils	October 2023	Team
		M05	Create a QR code for training evaluation	October 2023	Iwan Griffiths

ACTIONS (Priority areas)		Ref	MILESTONES/Sub Actions <i>that will help to achieve the Action</i>	Delivery Date <i>(Month/Year)</i>	Accountable Officer <i>(For achieving action)</i>
	<p>providing education and emotional support to care experienced children and young people</p> <p>To monitor the impact of training that the Virtual School provides and demonstrate evidence of impact on practice and pupil outcomes</p>	M06	<p>Chase up missing evaluations from course delegates</p> <p>Analyse feedback from training and evaluations</p> <p>Demonstrate the impact of training on practice and pupil outcomes/wellbeing</p>	<p>November 2023</p> <p>February 2024</p> <p>June 2024</p>	<p>Team</p> <p>Linda Hawkins</p>
A12	Success Criteria	M01	List of training needs available		
		M02	Training sessions diarised for the academic year		
		M03	Completed evaluations available for analysis		
		M04	Visits to schools post training (8 weeks) to collect evidence of improved outcomes for pupils as a direct result of training		
A13	To review current	M01	Continue to research Virtual School Models in England	November 2023	Linda Hawkins

ACTIONS (Priority areas)		Ref	MILESTONES/Sub Actions <i>that will help to achieve the Action</i>	Delivery Date <i>(Month/Year)</i>	Accountable Officer <i>(For achieving action)</i>
	RCT Virtual School Model structure and make recommendations for change	M02	Discuss the roles and responsibilities of the Virtual School Model in Wales with Virtual School Headteachers in Powys, Gwynedd and Cardiff who have the same model as RCT	November 2023	Linda Hawkins
		M03	Attend meetings to discuss the future plans and funding for the Welsh Virtual School Model via the National Delivery Group	TBA	Linda Hawkins/ Hannah Bevan
		M04	Discuss the future of the RCT Virtual School with Heads of service in Education	TBA	Linda Hawkins
		M05	Discuss the future of the RCT Virtual School with Heads of service in Children's Services	TBA	Linda Hawkins
		M06	Provide a Virtual School Evaluation questionnaire to all stakeholders to evaluate the 2023-2024 year of the Virtual School Model and consider responses which may inform future plans for the structure of the Virtual School model in RCT	June 2024	Linda Hawkins
A13	Success Criteria	M01	Effective practice identified from established VS models to inform service delivery		
		M02	Roles and responsibilities reviewed and revised as appropriate to align with best practice models		
		M03	Attendance at meetings ensures up to date understanding of WG policy decisions re: VS in Wales		
		M04	Decision made regarding VSM following year 2 pilot		
		M05	As above		
		M06	Evaluation report completed identifying impact, areas of strength and areas for development to inform service delivery		

ACTIONS (Priority areas)		Ref	MILESTONES/Sub Actions <i>that will help to achieve the Action</i>	Delivery Date <i>(Month/Year)</i>	Accountable Officer <i>(For achieving action)</i>
A14	To collaborate with 'Pioneer Fostering' in order to support foster carers to ensure children and young people in their care receive the best possible educational outcomes	M01	Arrange a meeting to meet the Pioneer Fostering Group	January 2024	Team
		M02	Audit the training needs of foster carers in order to provide high quality training on how they can support the education of the children and young people that they care for	January 2024	Team and Educational Psychology
		M03	Arrange a series of relevant workshops for foster carers on topics such as: How to listen to a child read; Using the outdoor for learning; Executive Functioning activities; Phonics, etc	January 2024	Team
		M04	Provide training of a blended content of Trauma Informed Practice and CLA Friendly Schools	TBA	Educational Psychology
		M05	Evaluate the impact of the training on foster carers practice and pupil progress	July 2024	Team
A14	Success Criteria	M01	Awareness of the Pioneer Fostering Group – who they are and their specific roles		
		M02	Carousel of workshops arranged with relevant course providers		
		M03	Improved confidence and practice of foster carers around supporting pupils in/with education		
		M04	Improved outcomes for pupils in terms of reading/spelling age, etc		

ACTIONS (Priority areas)		Ref	MILESTONES/Sub Actions <i>that will help to achieve the Action</i>	Delivery Date <i>(Month/Year)</i>	Accountable Officer <i>(For achieving action)</i>
A15	To evaluate the effectiveness and outcomes of a pilot project designed to support schools in self-auditing their whole-school systems and practice for care experienced children	M01	Meet regularly with Sunflower Therapy to maintain oversight of the project and how the 5 schools taking part in the pilot are engaging	Half Termly: September 23, November 23, January 24, March 24, May 24, July 24,	Linda Hawkins/ Camilla Crowter (Sunflower Therapy)
		M02	Analyse schools' self-audits	November 2024	Linda Hawkins/Camilla Crowter
		M03	Create a robust evaluation for teachers and pupils	January 2024	Linda Hawkins/ Iwan Griffiths
		M04	Examine data provided from schools from their own systems of monitoring pupil progress	May 2024	Linda Hawkins/ Camilla Crowter
		M05	Interview pupils for feedback – have schools improved in terms of making trauma informed decisions?	May 2024	Linda Hawkins/ Camilla Crowter
A15	Success Criteria	M01	Self -audit completed		
		M02	Evaluation prepared for distribution		
		M03	Data available in terms of pupil progress and impact statements as a direct effect of the pilot project		

ACTIONS (Priority areas)		Ref	MILESTONES/Sub Actions <i>that will help to achieve the Action</i>	Delivery Date <i>(Month/Year)</i>	Accountable Officer <i>(For achieving action)</i>
		M04	Pupils provide statements evidencing change in policy and practice at school in terms of CLA Friendly approaches		
A16	To formulate a robust system for alerting the Virtual School as to when pupils' IDPs are due for review in order to increase the percentage of CLA IDPs finalised within statutory timescales	M01	Discussions with ALNAS	September 2023	Linda Hawkins/ Lisa Carter
		M02	Liaise with CLA ALP	September 2023	Linda Hawkins/ Emma Lewis
		M03	Create a system for tracking CLA IDPs	September 2023 Revisit November 2023	Linda Hawkins/ Emma Lewis
		M04	Regular monitoring of the tracking system in order to ensure maximise the number of CLA IDPs finalised within timescale	September 2023	Linda Hawkins/ Emma Lewis
A16	Success Criteria	M01	CLA ALP identified		
		M02	Tracking system in place to track CLA IDPs		
		M03	Increased number of CLA IDPs finalised within timescale – target: 90% compliance		
A17	To quality assure the delivery of ALP on a CLA IDP by visiting schools	M01	Meet to target different cohorts of schools to quality assure	January 2024	Team
		M02	Create a timetable for quality assurance in order to reach all schools with CLA pupils over time	January 2024	Team
		M03	Devise a quality assurance check list for delivery of ALP	January 2024	Team

ACTIONS (Priority areas)		Ref	MILESTONES/Sub Actions <i>that will help to achieve the Action</i>	Delivery Date <i>(Month/Year)</i>	Accountable Officer <i>(For achieving action)</i>
	and capturing pupil voice	M04	Feed findings into a Microsoft form designed to highlight good practice and areas to develop	February 2024	Team
		M05	Analyse data from Microsoft form	March 2024	Team
		M06	Identify which schools need support in their delivery of ALP and decide the best way to offer the support	March 2024	Team
A17	Success Criteria	M01	List of schools to visit is available		
		M02	Timetable adhered to in terms of school visits		
		M03	QA checklist includes lines of enquiry		
		M04	Data shows which schools need support and support from the Virtual School is evident		
		M05	Data evidenced in a variety of graphs produced by MS Forms		
		M06	Effective ALP in place and pupils making progress in line with IDP outcomes. Evaluation of QA process and targeted support in relation to impact on pupil progress		
A18	To ensure the PDG/LAC Bursary is used to target identified areas for improvement and evaluate impact	M01	Assess value for money from pervious expenditure for 2022-2023	November 2023	Team
		M02	2023 Complete service level agreement for PDG/LAC funding 2023-2024 – ensuring links to work outlined in the Virtual School Action Plan for 2023-2024	November 2023	Team
		M03	Scope areas of particular need in terms of supporting pupils' educational outcomes	November 2023	Team

ACTIONS (Priority areas)		Ref	MILESTONES/Sub Actions <i>that will help to achieve the Action</i>	Delivery Date <i>(Month/Year)</i>	Accountable Officer <i>(For achieving action)</i>
		M04	Scope areas of particular need in terms of supporting pupils' mental health and emotional wellbeing	November 2023	Team
		M05	Scope areas of particular need in terms of schools supporting CLA learners	November 2023	Team
		M06	Evaluate impact of interventions/training/support provided to schools, social workers, foster carers etc provided by the PDG/LAC funding	May 2024	Team
A18	Success Criteria	M01	Effective practice identified in previous year and carried over if relevant to 2023-2024		
		M02	Service level agreement for 2023-2024 outlines several effective (known) activities and several potentially effective activities		
		M03	Clear knowledge of need of pupils and schools etc		
		M04	Fully evaluated Bursary expenditure shared with CSC		
A19	To implement and evaluate a pilot project in collaboration with the Education, Employment and Training Team: 'Planning our Way' to support Year 11 pupils with destination choices at post 16	M01	Initial Meetings with EET to organise delivery of project	September 2023	Linda Hawkins/ Donna Hughes/ Emma Brabon
		M02	Implement regular sessions in school with Year 11 CLA pupils	November 2023	Donna Hughes/ Luke Evans
		M03	Regular discussions with Virtual School Team to feedback on progression of project	January 2024	Donna Hughes/ Luke Evans/Team
		M04	Attendance at GCSE results day	August 2024	Donna Hughes/ Luke Evans
		M05	Evaluation of project – pupil voice only	September 2024	Donna Hughes/ Luke Evans

ACTIONS (Priority areas)		Ref	MILESTONES/Sub Actions <i>that will help to achieve the Action</i>	Delivery Date <i>(Month/Year)</i>	Accountable Officer <i>(For achieving action)</i>
A19	Success Criteria	M01	Project outline available for Virtual School Team and schools/pupils		
		M02	Dates set for visits to schools and shared with schools		
		M03	Discussions include positive feedback of project		
		M04	Plan B visited on results day for some pupils who did not achieve desired grades		
		M05	Project evaluated successfully and planned to include Year 10 in 2024-2025 90% of pupils have planned destination		
A20	To work pro-emptively with schools and Central South Consortium to identify CLA pupils at risk of permanent/high levels of exclusion and provide challenge and support to reduce exclusions	M01	Track pupil exclusions monthly. Identify schools needing support and challenge	September 2023	Linda Hawkins
		M02	Arrange series of meetings with CSC (Jon Welch) to discuss strategy	November 2023	Linda Hawkins/ Jon Welch
		M03	Link with educational psychology to discuss an integrated approach in terms of reducing CLA exclusions	December 2023	Linda Hawkins/ Kerry Webster
		M04	Meet with school leaders to discuss alternatives to exclusion for example restorative approaches Provide bespoke training delivered by staff at Mynydd Haf – alternatives to exclusion	January 2024	Team
		M05	Attend Pupil Disciplinary committee meetings where relevant to support pupils and aim to liaise with Governing Bodies to rescind exclusions and instead adopt trauma informed decisions	September 2023	Team/ Andrew Brazier

ACTIONS (Priority areas)		Ref	MILESTONES/Sub Actions <i>that will help to achieve the Action</i>	Delivery Date <i>(Month/Year)</i>	Accountable Officer <i>(For achieving action)</i>
		M06	Continue to provide school Governors with CLA Friendly Training to raise awareness of CLA within education	November 2023	Hannah Bevan/ Donna Hughes
A20	Success Criteria	M01	Identifiable data in terms of schools needing support and challenge is available		
		M02	Strategies agreed with CSC		
		M03	Integrated approach with psychology evident		
		M04	School leaders are aware of options other than exclusion		
		M05	Increased number so rescinded exclusions for CLA pupils		
		M06	Positive evaluations for Governor CLA training		
A21	To work pre-emptively with schools to identify CLA pupils at risk of low attendance/with low attendance and provide challenge and support to improve attendance figures for CLA pupils	M01	Track pupil attendance monthly. Identify schools needing support and challenge	September 2023	Linda Hawkins
		M02	Link with educational psychology to discuss an integrated approach in terms of increasing CLA attendance	December 2023	Linda Hawkins/ Kerry Webster
		M03	Link with the Attendance and Wellbeing Service (AWS) to discuss an integrated approach in terms of increasing CLA attendance	December 2023	Linda Hawkins/ Dan Williams/ Kimberley Bowditch

ACTIONS (Priority areas)		Ref	MILESTONES/Sub Actions <i>that will help to achieve the Action</i>	Delivery Date <i>(Month/Year)</i>	Accountable Officer <i>(For achieving action)</i>
A21	Success Criteria	M01	Identifiable data in terms of individual pupils/cohorts of pupils with low attendance is available		
		M02	Strategies agreed with CSC		
		M03	Integrated approach with psychology evident		
		M04	Integrated approach with AWS evident Increase in attendance for CLA.		
A22	To develop a process to track the number of days CLA pupils are without a school placement	M01	Meet with relevant colleagues in the data team in order to obtain data on CLA pupils without a placement	January 2024	Linda Hawkins/ John Tratnik/ Gregg Morris/ Aled Rees
		M02	Liaise with AWS on CLA pupils without a placement	February 2024	Linda Hawkins/ Dan Williams/ Kimberley Bowditch
		M03	Audit the reasons CLA pupils are without a school placement	March 2024	Team
		M04	Reach out to out of county educational provisions to arrange for communication between them and the Virtual School when a pupil leaves the school and where is the next destination	April 2024	Team
		M05	Discuss a plan in order to support pupils without a school placement and what role the Virtual School can take to help avoid drift and delay for these pupils, including a review of ALN Panel processes	May 2024	Team
A22	Success Criteria	M01	Data readily available for pupils without a school placement		

ACTIONS (Priority areas)		Ref	MILESTONES/Sub Actions <i>that will help to achieve the Action</i>	Delivery Date <i>(Month/Year)</i>	Accountable Officer <i>(For achieving action)</i>
		M02	Common reasons for no school placements evident		
		M03	Reasons identified and recommendations inform 24/25 planning		
		M04	Increased communication with out of county schools		
		M05	Plan with identified actions in place to reduce number of days pupils are without a school placement		
A23	To identify barriers to pupils accessing appropriate educational placements/ provision and agree potential solutions	M01	Identify common barriers/reasons why these pupils are not accessing appropriate educational placements/provisions	March 2024	Team
		M02	Carry out a case study on individual pupils who are not accessing appropriate educational placements/provisions	April 2024	Hannah Bevan
		M03	Study the findings of the case study and suggest areas for improvement in terms of reducing barriers to accessing appropriate educational placements/provisions	June 2024	Team
		M04	Share findings and solutions with heads of service in education and Children's Services	June 2024	Linda Hawkins
A23	Success Criteria	M01	List of common reasons compiled		
		M02	Case study completed and shared with relevant stakeholders		
		M03	Plan in place to implement areas for improvement		
		M04	HOS aware of findings and solutions		

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RHONDDA CYNON TAF COUNTY BOROUGH COUNCIL

CORPORATE PARENTING BOARD

7TH MAY 2024

RESIDENTIAL TRANSFORMATION STRATEGY: A PROGRESS REPORT

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

Author(s): Annabel Lloyd, Service Director

1. PURPOSE OF THE REPORT

- 1.1 The purpose of the report is to provide Corporate Parenting Board members with updated information about progress with the Residential Transformations Strategy.

2. RECOMMENDATIONS

It is recommended that Members:

- 2.1 Consider the information contained within the report.

3 REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATIONS

- 3.1 To provide the Corporate Parent Board with information and assurance about progress with the Residential Transformation Strategy.

4. BACKGROUND

- 4.1 In February 2023, Cabinet approved Children's Services Residential Transformation Strategy, the link to those documents can be found here: [\(Public Pack\)Agenda Document for Cabinet, 28/02/2023 11:30 \(modern.gov.co.uk\)](#). On 13th March 2023, 16th March and 12th June 2023 briefing sessions were made available to all Councillors with a recording of that for those who could not make it.
- 4.2 Phase 1 of that strategy has been implemented and evaluated. From the outset the requirement to develop at pace, at scale, and with the target of high quality, keeping outcomes for young people and their families at the heart of what we do was well understood. The degree of organisational and transformational change involved with the development of this number of homes should not be underestimated. Change of this scale needs to take account of the investment of time required to prepare settings and teams that can provide the quality of

care that is required. The pace of development has been unprecedented.

Phase 1 – What worked	Phase 1 – Obstacles
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Continued to provide high quality care for children in our existing 4 children’s homes (capacity for 13 children) and short breaks home • Signed off a Purchase Protocol alongside colleagues in estates, • Opened Willowford House (3 young people therapeutic approach) • Registered Ystrad Fechan as a children’s home (3 young people same day / assessment) • Recruited and trained staff • Purchased Catref Melys (4 young people therapeutic approach) • Purchased Meadow View and Ty Ni • Agreed purchase of a further solo provision • Responded to CIW enforcement process • Managed considerable demand and risks of children in OWR • Responded to Government’s request for meetings given the policy imperative 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The dearth of suitable settings and locations • Recruiting staff with sufficient experience and qualifications • Training large numbers of staff whilst providing the service • The need to look after children with different and greater needs • The pace of disruption in the provider sector has led to an increase in placement breakdowns and a need to develop Operating Without Registration arrangements • Lack of availability of contractors at short notice to carry out refurbishments works to achieve RISCA compliance • Lack of sufficiency and supply of skilled temporary workers • Considerable costs that exceeded budget

4.3 Workforce

Many appointed staff are new to their rewarding yet demanding roles in residential care with little or in some cases no experience or relevant qualifications. Whilst this provides good potential for rapid knowledge and practice transfer, it is also a challenge. Acquisition of knowledge and skills can be achieved by instruction but is consolidated through experience, observation of experienced staff, supervision, support, and regular training inputs through the first year. This requires time and considerable logistical planning. There is a particular challenge in relation to attracting senior staff.

4.4 Phase 1 - What have we learned?

Overall we have learned that the rate of development in Year 1 cannot not be safely sustained into Year 2, especially given that good outcomes for children remains our priority objective. The work is resource intensive and high cost in every way. In the year ahead, given the impact of budget restrictions, children’s services will be asked to give account for the cost involved in this transition. Refurbishment and staffing of newly acquired settings must take place alongside developing, upskilling and supporting the new staff teams. This consolidation period is accepted as necessary and will allow focus to be on deepening the resilience and skill base of new provision. Despite

development, we have not been able to avoid or reduce OWR. Costs considerably exceed the grant that has been made available.

4.5 Performance Results

The performance results for Phase 1 demonstrated that:

- There has been an increase in LA provided capacity of 11 beds with a further property yet to be developed
- There has been an overall increase in demand for Residential Care from 64 placements and 8% of the overall CLA population at 31.3.22 to 73 placements which is 11 %. This is in part inflated by insufficient supply of foster care placements
- There has been a 14% decrease in the commissioning of for profit residential care placements from 51 or 80% at 31.3.22 to 48 or 66% at 31.12.23
- There has been a 16% increase in the number of children who need residential care living in homes in RCT changing from 18 children or 28% of the cohort at 31.3.22 to 32 children or 44% of the cohort as at 31.12.23

4.6 Phase 2 action plan 2024- 2025 will focus on the following workstream priorities:

- (i) **Achieving registration** for each new setting
- (ii) **Workforce** : Recruitment, Training and Supporting Staff
- (iii) **Young Peoples' Well-Being** : Residential Review and best interests of individuals, planning for 31.3.27
- (iv) **Accelerating Developments**: Foster Wales, Our 16 + and Commissioning Strategies
- (v) **Governance** : Updating risk register, reducing OWR, and controlling costs

5. EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY IMPLICATIONS

5.1 A full impact assessment accompanies the residential transformation strategy.

6. CONSULTATION/INVOLVEMENT

6.1 Young people and stake holder views were included in the overall development of the strategy.

7. FINANCIAL IMPLICATION(S)

7.1 The costs are considerable and increasing, they are monitored on a weekly basis.

7.2 The expenditure being incurred is necessary to satisfy our duties to looked after children and young people as set out in part 6 of the Social Services and Well-Being (Wales) Act 2014 (SSWBA).

7.3 There are specific duties placed upon the Council's Statutory Finance Officer with regard to lawfulness of expenditure. In this instance the over-riding purpose of the expenditure is to satisfy our legal obligations under the SSWBA and to not do so would have a far greater detrimental impact on the Council and those young persons under our care. The costs for these settings are met within Children's Services budget. Due to reliance on agency staff, and the staffing levels required, costs are significant.

8. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS OR LEGISLATION CONSIDERED

8.1 The Councils' duties to looked after children and young people are included in part 6 of the Social Services Well-Being Act (Wales) (SSWBA) 2014. The duties include at s.75 of SSWBA a duty to arrange sufficient accommodation.

8.2 This report also refers to duties to ensure that accommodation is registered and inspected in line with RISCA and the CIW process for addressing non-compliance.

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

9.1 This report supports the Council's corporate priorities, Working With Our Communities.

9.2 The business covered in this report contributes to the following well-being goals:

- A prosperous Wales
- A resilient Wales.
- A healthier Wales.
- A more equal Wales
- A Wales of cohesive communities
- A globally responsible Wales

10. CONCLUSION

10.1 Achieving good outcomes for young people is always the priority.

10.2 Good progress has been made during phase 1 of the Residential Transformation Strategy, and the Phase 2 plan builds on the learning from Phase 1.

- 10.2 Achieving full transition to a 100% not for profit will take much longer than the legislative timescale allows for. Children's Services will work alongside Government officials should best interest exemptions be required in line with the decision about the legislative timeline.
- 10.4 Children's Services will supply future update reports to Corporate Parenting Board.



LOCAL GOVERNMENT ACT 1972
AS AMENDED BY
THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT (ACCESS TO INFORMATION) ACT 1985
RHONDDA CYNON TAF COUNTY BOROUGH COUNCIL
CORPORATE PARENTING BOARD
7TH MAY 2024

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CORPORATE PARENTING BOARD

7th MAY 2024

REPORT OF DIRECTOR CHILDREN'S SERVICES: YOUNG CARERS AND YOUNG ADULT CARERS REPORT

Author(s): Catherine Silver, Interim Service Manager – Carers, Direct Payments, and Service User Engagement

1. PURPOSE OF THE REPORT

1.1 The purpose of the report is to provide Corporate Parenting Board members with an update on the work with young carers in RCT during 2023/2024.

2. RECOMMENDATIONS

2.1 It is recommended that Members:

Acknowledge the information contained within the report.

3. REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATIONS

3.1 This is an information report.

4. BACKGROUND

4.1 The support service for young carers (aged 5-17) continues to be provided on a commissioned basis by Action for Children. Specific support is available via an externally funded post for Young Adult Carers (aged 18-25). Sibling carer support (children whose sibling has additional needs) is now provided entirely by Action for Children on a commissioned basis.

4.2 The assessment function for young carers remains within the Information, Assistance and Advice Service for Children's Services.

4.3 The all-age carers hub in Gelliwastad Road, Pontypridd, remains as a highly valued asset to unpaid carers across RCT. The main Carers Support Project, the Young Carers and Sibling Support Services, and the Young Adult Carers Project Worker are all co-located at the hub.

4.4 The full report for RCT Young Carers and Young Adult Carers 2023/2024 is attached in Appendix A. Members may wish to note the below key details:

- There has consistently been an increased demand on services for Young Carers.
- The grant funding for the Young Adult Worker post awarded for 2024/25 remains uncertain. Families First are reviewing the services they commission and have advised that further information will be provided by the end of June 24.

5. EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY IMPLICATIONS

5.1 This is an information report.

6. CONSULTATION

6.1 This is an information report.

7. FINANCIAL IMPLICATION(S)

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

8. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS OR LEGISLATION CONSIDERED

8.1 The Social Services and Wellbeing (Wales) Act 2014 came into force in April 2016 and is intended to transform the way services are delivered. It repeals the majority of community care legislation including the Carers Strategies (Wales) Measure 2010.

8.2 The National Strategy for Unpaid Carers 2021 has become increasingly important for developing strategies and delivering support to carers of all ages going forward.

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

9.1 The business covered in this report contributes to the following well-being goals:

- A prosperous Wales
- A resilient Wales.

- A healthier Wales.
- A more equal Wales
- A Wales of cohesive communities
- A globally responsible Wales

10. CONCLUSION

10.1 Young Carers and Young Adult Carers are now receiving a fully restored carer support service.

10.2 Work to improve the young carer offer will continue.

10.3 The National Strategy for Unpaid Carers 2021 will inform regional and local unpaid carers strategies and priorities.

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Annual Report
2023/24

RCT Young Carers & Young Adult Carers



Cathrine Silver

Interim Service Manager – Carers, Direct
Payments & Service User Engagement

Annual Report 2023/24

Overview

This report provides a summary of the support provided to Young Carers, (aged 0-17) and Young Adult Carers (aged 18-25) across RCT. It also highlights some of the key developments achieved this year.

Background

RCT Young Carers Service sits within the wider all-age Carers Support Project and the Service Manager for Carers has responsibility for all carer issues, including Young Carers, Sibling Carers, Young Adult Carers and Adult Carers.

Structure of Support for Unpaid Carers Under 25

- The service has a dedicated Young Carer's Assessor, who sits within the wider Information, Advice and Assistance function of Children's Services. This ensures that statutory obligations are met in terms of assessment and monitoring of young carers.
- The remainder of the Young Carer Support Service is commissioned, facilitating a greater level of integration with the third sector. In January 2023, Action for Children successfully bid for the contract, and as a result continue to offer our Young Carer provision within RCT. As part of the contract, Action for Children now deliver the Sibling Carer Support, as well as offering an increased level of involvement with the Schools Award.
- The support for Young Adult Carers (aged 18-25) continues to be provided by a dedicated part-time worker partially funded via the Families First grant.

It is important to note that the funding has not been confirmed for 2024/25. Families First are reviewing all contracts, and currently funding has only been confirmed until June 2024, (pending the review). Essentially, this means both the post and the service is potentially vulnerable.

Types of Support Offered to Unpaid Carers Under 25

- Assessment
- Information Advice and Assistance
- 1:1 sessions
- Groups
- Trips
- Events
- Training
- Mentoring
- Signposting

Young Carers (YCs)

Although most activities and events are delivered by Action for Children, assessments remain a statutory function and the worker sits within the Information, Advice and Assistance (IAA) team structure, managed by Children's Services.

All referrals for Young Carer support (including siblings), goes through the IAA team for recording and allocation. The worker contacts the family, or young person if they are 16+ and begins the engagement process.

Assessments

Face to face assessment visits are offered by the Children's Services Worker, along with the option for a period of short term 1-1 support sessions, (if necessary).

The young carer is central to the development of their support plan and deciding the outcomes they wish to achieve. When agreed, the YC Worker initiates the plan, transferring to Action for Children and referring to relevant agencies where appropriate.

If the Young Carer declines support from the project, 1-1 sessions are delivered by the Children's Services Worker. Where they choose ongoing support via the YC project, they are supported to access the initial sessions, then transferred to Action for Children, (AFC).

Reviews are arranged for all Young Carers on a minimum basis of at least every 6 months (sooner if the case is complex). During reviews, feedback is sought from the young carer, support staff, AFC, RFS, school etc.

Where agreed, details of Young Carers are sent to each school's Carer Champion to ensure appropriate support is offered in their educational placement. This information is individual to each young carer, but also outlines the general challenges lots of young carers face, and how this can impact on their education and their social development.

The table below summarises the numbers of referrals for Young Carer Support:

	23/24	22/23
Q1 Apr-Jun	37	29
Q2 Jul-Sep	28	50
Q3 Oct-Dec	41	29
Q4 to date	41	25
TOTAL to date	147	133

During 23/24, 147 young carer assessments and 353 reviews were completed. As can be seen from the table above, referrals have increased again, showing an ongoing growth in the demand for Young Carer support within RCT. The Local Authority continues to make the highest number of referrals; however it is positive to see an increase in referrals from schools.

Source of Referrals	23/24	22/23	Outcome of referrals	23/24
Children's Services/L.A	112	21	Needs met using a young carer's support plan or C&S	91
Resilient families	U/K	27	Needs met by other means	9
Family School	3	19	No needs to be met	45
Disabled Children's Team	26	12	Invalid	2
Health	U/K	15	Total	147
College	1	2	Assessments completed in language of choice	147
YEPS service	U/K	3		
Adult Services	U/K	3		
CSP/Young Carers Project	U/K	2		
Miskin	U/K	1		
3 rd Sector	3	U/K		
Total	147			

**Data has been categorised slightly differently for 23/24*

In addition to the assessment, reviews, and direct support, the YC worker is responsible for the delivery of the Young Carers ID Card.

Young Carers ID Card

The card is a tool to help young carers access information, help and support and to have a greater understanding of their rights. This year, the additional funding previously made available by Welsh Government ended and we had an event to celebrate our young carers and the 'Story behind the Card'.

The event was not only an opportunity to promote the ID card, but also to highlight what young carers do and the difference they make. It celebrated how, despite juggling a caring role, many of them are achieving incredible things, whether through educational attainment, contributions to their community or the impact they make at home. The event was a great success and received very positive feedback from the families who attended.

In view of the positive impact the scheme has made, RCT decided to continue to offer ID cards. However due to limited resources, the additional work of promoting the card, developing the scheme, and engaging with potential partners has not been an option. Despite this, the scheme continues to maintain a level of interest, with a steady rate of referrals.

Positively, WG has started to engage with local authorities to revisit the scheme, and hopefully some resources will be made available in the future.

ID Card Referrals received

	23/24
Q1 Apr-Jun	22
Q2 Jul-Sep	30
Q3 Oct-Dec	20
Q4 Jan-March	18
TOTAL	90

Young Carer Direct Support

Following the initial engagement and assessment phase, the Young Carer may be referred for ongoing support from Action for Children. They undertake a basic assessment of the activities the young carer would like to attend, any health and safety requirements and the outcomes they would like to achieve by engaging with the service. The young carers are offered opportunities to give feedback on the groups and events that they attend, and their progress is evaluated on a regular basis.

The table below provide a breakdown of the support offered by AFC 23-24.

Month	Caseload	Referrals	Groups	Attendees	Events	Attendees	1:1
April	81	1	6	50	6	41	0
May	79	4	10	58	7	70	2
June	75	9	12	84	0	0	1
Q1		14	28	192	13	111	3
July	77	2	9	58	8	65	1
August	77	0	0	0	8	98	3
Sept	75	1	9	54	5	128	3
Q2		3	18	112	21	291	7
Oct	75	4	9	49	5	53	1
Nov	75	7	13	86	1	10	1
Dec	83	2	3	35	3	44	0
Q3		13	25	170	9	107	2
Jan	85	5	10	57	0	0	1
Feb	86	2	7	49	2	15	5
March	84	5	11	52	0	0	1
Q4		12	28	158	2	15	7
Total		42	99	632	45	524	19

Group Sessions

Groups are offered across the authority in all three districts. Rhondda is held in Trebanog Community Centre, Cynon takes place in Mountain Ash YMCA and there are three groups in Taff. (Llanharan Drop-in Centre, the Llan Centre in Rhydyfelin and the CSP hub in Pontypridd).

Groups offer young carers the opportunity to meet with peers who understand the caring role, to offer a break from that role. AFC offer games, cooking, chill out areas, film nights, workshops etc.

Following each session the young carers are asked for feedback on what went well, and future sessions are decided in conjunction with their thoughts and feelings.

Feedback from YC:

- I love groups and meeting my friends.
- We cook, but arts and crafts are my favourite.
- I've made loads of new friends through groups, and I meet up in school with the ones who are in my school.
- Staff are easy to talk to, and I know if I have any issues, I can speak to them.
- I love everything, especially the trips - and bowling is my favourite.
- It's time away from my caring role and a chance to speak to my friends.
- I just like chilling and taking with my friends.

As well as the groups, something that is hugely valued by Young Carers and also provided by AFC are the trips and events that provide longer breaks from caring.

Trips

For trips AFC try to use local venues and suppliers within the local authority or surrounding areas. Examples include:

- Bowling/cinema etc usually going to Nantgarw or Merthyr/Cardiff.
- Swimming - local sports centres or the Lido in Ponty.
- Beaches -ca Barry, Porthcawl or Gower.
- Theatre shows in the New Theatre and Wales Millenium Centre
- Ninja Warrior

Also throughout the holidays there are additional activities that the children have requested:

- Theme parks – Thrope Park, Drayton Manor, Alton Towers, Folly Farm
- Harry Potter studio
- Lego Land
- Swimming in Cardiff or Swansea Pools

All Wales Carers Festival 2023

Young Carer projects across Wales are invited to attend the All-Wales Carers Festival and RCT have attended two festivals so far. Each project (35 in total) can take 15 young people and stay for 3 days/2nights.

There are lots of activities for the young carers to take part in including:

- Singing workshops
- Graffiti art
- Jewellery making
- Head massage
- Arts and crafts
- Bouncy castles
- Outdoor games and activities
- Musical workshops
- Silent disco
- Karaoke
- Prize bingo
- Quizzes
- Chill out tents.

It's a great time to make new friends with other young carers from all over Wales and to try different activities that they might not otherwise access. It also offers some much-needed time away from their caring roles.

YC Choir

The YC choir is made up of 12 young carers/sibling carers and YACs. Over the past year they have had some great opportunities. They have performed at AFC annual Stephenson Awards several times over the past few years and have performed at AFC Byte Night events at the Principality stadium in Cardiff. This year the choir were invited to work and perform alongside Charlotte Church at AFC's inaugural "Starry Night Gala".

The choir worked with Charlotte and her band throughout the year and were incredibly lucky to be able to spend some time at her retreat up at Rhyadaer.

The Gala was a star-studded event the whole process was followed and filmed by ITV's This Morning Show. This meant that the choir were asked to perform on the show, starting off their Christmas season.

This was huge for the Choir; the mentoring from Charlotte, time at the retreat, recognition from a celebrity and the gala event combined to provide a fantastic experience for all of our young carers involved.

YC Achievements

In addition to the choir, our young carers have spent time in various forums and schools, raising awareness of young carers and the issues they face. Some of the carers were also recognised individually for their achievements in the celebration event last summer.

Online Support

AFC have expanded their social media provision and have made a new Young Sibling Carers Facebook page. This, along with the Young Carers page, is a place where general information along with updates on groups, trips, and forthcoming activities can be shared.

The online service for those wishing to access support from the comfort of their own homes remains an option.

Training/Workshops

- Wellbeing
- Cooking
- Mentoring

Youth Forum

There are nine representatives in the Youth Forum, one from each of the groups throughout RCT. We also have two sibling carers who attend, and hopefully this number will increase next year.

The forum looks at all aspects of the service from the day to day running to budgets and planning of trips/activities. Forum training has been offered on the following topics:

- Interview techniques
- Money Management
- Delivering Services
- Equality & Diversity
- Mentoring

The forum has been instrumental in ensuring young carer voices are heard. Most recently they have been working with Gaynor Davies, Director of Education, and Inclusion Services along with Councillor Rhys Lewis to discuss issues within the education system. We also have representation on the regional, AFC UK and Ireland Young Carers Forums.

Family Sessions

- Fuze
- Speedway Cardiff
- Porthcawl Day trip
- Monsters of the Mine
- Cooking
- Aladdin
- Christmas Party

Sibling Carers

AFC also provide the support for sibling carers across RCT. Although the service is mainly aligned with the support offered to all young carers, there are sessions and topics offered that target the issues that are specific to those who care for their siblings.

These statistics are listed below:

Sibling support offered by AFC 23-24

Month	Caseload	Referrals	Groups	Attendees	Events	Attendees	1:1
April	96	3	2	10	1	13	0
May	98	2	5	23	0	0	0
June	105	12	4	19	0	0	0
Q1		17	11	52	1	13	0
July	96	3	3	27	2	14	0
August	96	1	0	0	8	98	3
Sept	81	3	4	28	0	0	3
Q2		7	7	55	10	112	6
Oct	87	5	3	12	2	20	0
Nov	75	1	4	31	0	0	0
Dec	78	2	0	0	2	21	0
Q3		8	7	43	4	41	0
Jan	81	2	10	50	3	35	1
Feb	75	2	4	15	2	12	0
March	69	4	4	34	0	0	0
Q4		8	18	99	5	47	1
Total		40	43	249	20	213	7

Groups

The Sibling Carers groups are run from the same locations as the young carer groups, however there is only one offered in Taff, (CSP Hub).

Sibling groups offer similar activities, games, cooking, chill out, film nights, etc. In addition there are opportunities discuss their sibling's illness, wellbeing sessions and educational sessions.

Feedback Sibling Carers:

- It's lovely to have monthly group sessions and be able to speak to my friends.
- Time to chill.
- We cook, which I like because I can eat and try new things.
- I've gone on a few trips and have loved them especially Alton Towers.
- We get offered so much now and I love it.
- Have met loads of new friends and I can't wait to go away in the summer for a few days.

AFC also offer parent/carer sessions so that the sibling carers and parents have that quality time together. Activities have included:

- Family day trips.
- Shows/Theatre performances.
- Monsters of the Mine.
- Cooking Sessions.
- Bowling.
- Escape Rooms.

Parent/Carer Feedback:

- It's lovely seeing my daughter grow in confidence and taking part in the groups and activities offered.
- My daughter and I took part in the cooking session, we learnt new skills and recipes and most importantly spent quality time together.
- I loved Monsters of the Mine and can't wait to do it again. My son really enjoys going to the groups and on the trips.
- My daughter joined the choir last year and I can't believe the difference in her. Her confidence has soared and singing has really helped her. They have had amazing opportunities and she's loved every minute.

Young Adult Carers Service

The Young Adult Carer, (YAC) Service is the support offered specifically to unpaid carers within the 18-25 age group. It continues to be delivered by a part-time worker, who is partially funded by Families First.

The aim of the service is to support YACs with personal growth through educational workshops and some social events. It also provides a break from the caring role and a chance to learn new skills.

All referrals for YAC support are processed through the Carer Support Project. Once recorded, the worker contacts the young person and begins the engagement process, checking the referral is appropriate, the young person is aware of the support offered by the project and consents to an assessment.

Assessments

Face to face assessment visits are offered by the Children's Services Worker, along with the option for a period of short term, 1-1 support sessions, (if necessary).

The young carer is central to the development of their support plan, and deciding the outcomes they wish to achieve. When agreed, the YC Worker implements the plan by completing actions and referring to relevant agencies if appropriate.

If the Young Carer declines support from the project, 1-1 sessions are delivered by the Children's Services Worker. Where they choose ongoing support via the YC project,

they are supported to access the initial sessions, then transferred to Action for Children, (AFC).

Reviews are arranged for all Young Carers at least every 6 months (sooner if the case is complex). During reviews, feedback is sought from the AFC, RFS, school etc.

Where agreed, details of Young Carers are sent to each school's Carers Champion to ensure appropriate support is offered in their school placement.

The table below provides an overview of the support offered to YACs:

YAC Support Offered

Month	C/load	Refs	Ass	Rev	Events	No
April	73	1	0	3	1	8
May	74	4	1	3	1	7
June	74	1	3	1	2	18
Q1		6	4	7	4	33
July	75	3	0	6	2	17
August	74	1	1	11	3	20
Sept	66	2	2	0	2	11
Q2		6	3	17	7	48
Oct	67	2	1	7	1	8
Nov	68	1	2	1	0	0
Dec	71	3	1	4	2	18
Q3		6	4	12	3	26
Jan	70	0	3	5	1	5
Feb	71	1	3	4	2	25
March	71	2	0	5	3	31
Q4		3	6	14	6	61
Total		21	17	50	20	168

The YAC Worker supports the Caring and Supporting Each other (CASE) group. This group was set up as a charitable community interest group by the YACs. The group meets quarterly to discuss ideas for ongoing support, encouraging YACs to become actively involved in shaping the service, choosing events and topics to be covered over the next few months. The CASE group has started to raise funds, and this is an area of development moving forward.

The YAC Worker has also been working with other professionals to develop extended support networks. Joint events and projects are starting to develop, especially with Coleg Y Cymoedd and the YEPs Service, (see Appendix 1)

Sessions offered to YACs include:

- Design your own YAC Logo and T-shirt Printing
- Bowling
- Escape Room
- Challenge Wales Sailing
- Manor Wildlife Park
- Pottery
- Wreath Making
- Case Meetings
- Caving
- White water rafting
- Zip World
- Escape Room
- Ghost Tour

Residential Stay

Following feedback from the YACs, we were incredibly fortunate to be able to offer a residential. 9 YACs visited the Gower and stayed at Little Bryn Gwyn which acted as a base for various trips. The YACS had opportunities to experience new activities including sunflower fields, swimming in the LC2 and a beach day – which some young people hadn't had the chance to enjoy before.

Transitions

Working with AFC we have started to develop a programme for the transition between young carers and YACS. These sessions familiarise the young carers with the staff, their peers and the activities they can expect to engage with if they are referred into the service.

Consultations

Delivering person centred services is incredibly important to staff at CSP, and the YAC service is no different. We value the input of the carers we are working with and hold events to encourage feedback and open discussions about the shaping of the service and the future events that we offer. This year we have held two consultation events, which seem to have strengthened the group and improved engagement levels.

All YACS can link into the activities offered within the main project and are offered to join the mailing list for Carers News, (newsletter for unpaid carers). In addition to the generic newsletter the YACs receive regular updates in the form of an electronic YAC newsletter, (see Appendix 2).

Young Carers Schools Award

The RCT Young Carers Schools & College Award was developed in 2015, following feedback received from Young Carers. They highlighted changes they would like to see within schools and colleges, including processes to ensure their own needs were highlighted to staff. They felt that if they felt supported and guided in school/college, and if they were acknowledged for the vital role they play, the more likely they were to achieve.

Our Young Carers told us that they believed if schools/colleges improved their understanding and developed a more supportive approach towards young carers, this would result in more Young Carers identifying themselves and increase the likelihood of them speaking to someone about their situation.

Since 2016, in partnership with secondary schools and colleges as well as identifying a 'Carer Champion' in each school, an award process has been established, whereby schools can be recognised for the support they put in place for Young Carers. Now schools are able to achieve certificates at Bronze, Silver, and Gold levels, when they achieve certain criteria.

The types of support schools and college have in place can vary from standard practices including a Young Carers notice board displaying information regarding help and support services, as well as TV's / web pages displaying information pertinent to Young Carers. Some schools offer peer-support sessions, assemblies to year groups about Young Carers and other schools provide more intensive interventions including 'Crisis Support Plans,' or tailored monitoring systems where staff on a need-to-know basis, can monitor the welfare and educational attainment of the Young Carers.

The support offered to secondary schools is the provision of a 'link' person to liaise with each school-based Carers Champion. This includes:

- Regular contact with the Carers Champion and raising awareness of Young Carers.
- Assisting with promoting awareness days including 'Young Carers Action Day'.
- Attending schools to deliver 'awareness assemblies.'
- Attending schools to deliver talks in PCSE sessions.
- Facilitating Young Carers 'drop in' sessions.
- Supporting with staff training events.
- Providing carer related information and advice.
- Assemblies.
- PSE Lessons.
- Drop Ins.
- Teacher Talks.
- 1 to 1 support with YC within school settings.

In addition to the Secondary Schools and College Young Carers Award there is also a unit of work available to the primary schools, which usually targets Year 5 and 6 age groups. The Young Carers Primary Schools Award consists of six sessions of work, one of which includes a role play assembly of 'a day in the life of a young carer.' At the time of writing, unfortunately there are not any primary schools in RCT engaging in the sessions.

The table below lists the schools that have already achieved, or are working towards the awards:

Young Carers Schools Award

Bronze		Silver		Gold	
Working Towards	Achieved	Working Towards	Achieved	Working Towards	Achieved
Ysgol Nant Gwyn	Mountain Ash Comprehensive	Ysgol Garth Olwg	Tonyrefail Community School	Tonyrefail Community School	Coleg Y Cymoedd (all 4 campuses)
	St John the Baptist School	Y Pant Comprehensive School	St John the Baptist School		
	Tonyrefail Community School		Coleg Y Cymoedd (all 4 campuses)		
	Ysgol Garth Olwg				
	Ysgol Llanhari				
	Y Pant Comprehensive School				
	Coleg Y Cymoedd (all 4 campuses)				

Carers Hub

We are very fortunate within RCT to have a building we can use as a Carer's Hub. The Hub is accessed by carers of all ages and provides office space for all staff within carer support.

Action for Children their own room within the office and use the building for several groups and activities with the young carers.

APPENDICES

Appendix 1 – Coleg Y Cymoedd Partnership Feedback



Partnership Provision
with Coleg Y Cymoed

Appendix 2 – YAC Newsletters



YAC Newsletter
Summer 2023 .docx



YAC Newsletter
Winter 2023 .docx



YAC Newsletter
Spring 2024 .docx

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Partnership Provision with Coleg Y Cymoedd - as quoted in their Organisation Self Report:

We ensure that those with caring responsibilities have reasonable adjustments made to enable them to achieve their dreams.

There are support plans in place for those who have caring support needs, and the wellbeing Team can assist with this when appropriate. At Cymoedd we hold regular information events about YACs, and the Carers Services work with the Wellbeing Team, coming into college throughout the year across all campuses to raise awareness and deliver drop-ins. The college continues to hold its Annual YC award, celebrating and promoting the achievements of its student carers.

A college App is available to all students and includes a YAC group. This is being continuously developed to provide more information and easier access for student carers. A YAC video is accessible through the App and on Cymoedd Extra (student intranet). Information is shared across campuses so that YACs can see what is going on across sites, when drop-ins are happening, etc. The YAC groups provide peer support and an opportunity to feedback on support provision. The groups engage in awareness raising projects, and this year student carers have identified creating a YaC pin badge.

YACs can be reimbursed for additional transport costs if they need to leave college early or arrive late due to caring responsibilities and are given consideration when applying for travel grants. The Financial Contingency Fund can also be accessed by YACs to pay for college/course trips, etc.

Carers Champions on each campus link to regional external services. The college has well established links to Carers services and has worked closely with Darren Young (RCT) over a number of years. He acknowledged the pro-active approach college takes toward supporting YACs, identifying that the majority of referrals into the service come through the college.

There are effective communication and information-sharing pathways to provide joined-up working and wraparound support. Laura Wilson provided an example of a YAC who was anxious about the progression to university. She requested that Darren contact the student over the summer, which supported him to make a successful transition into HE.

RCT will go into college to meet students and provide Drop-Ins. Darren attends Open days, Freshers Fairs, and awareness raising events throughout the academic year. The college has also provided a venue and photographic equipment for the YAC service to use with its service users to make a video, reinforcing its commitment to wider community engagement.

The college is proactive in supporting YACs in Pathways to University taster days, working collaboratively with RCT and local HE providers.

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**RCT Young Adult Carers
Summer Newsletter July 2023**

Hi everyone! I hope you are all having a lovely summer 😊 I've been busy over the last couple of months whether it's been attending the events such as sailing, go-karting and a transition bowling event, to supporting any of you who have got in touch to assist with paperwork and form filling, CV writing, supporting letters to housing, referrals for our counselling service, writing references for you, from making grant applications to referrals to partnership agencies such as Communities For Work and The Princes Trust. Some of you have attended taster days at University, attended some of their courses and even days out such as a day trip to the Hay Festival! Congratulations to those of you who have secured interviews, commenced employment, received grants, got University placements, passed your exams, attended training and so much more! I honestly love my job so thank you! If you want to get in touch about anything, please do so and I will always do my best to help, and if I can't do it myself, I can usually find someone who can! Please email, text or call me and I'll get back to you – as most of you know it may not be immediately as I'm only part time so bear with me, but I will get back to you! Darren.young@rctcbc.gov.uk
07385 401851 or 01443 281463.

Thanks to everyone who got involved in the planning of the YAC service for the coming year. You were full of great ideas and thank you to those who put themselves forward to take up positions within the YAC constituted community group. It's your service and you can shape it your way by getting involved as little or as much as you want! I'll be planning another one soon and if you would like to become more active within YACs and have your voice heard, or even become a chair person, vice-chair, treasurer or secretary for the group (these are great to have on your CV by the way and won't take up much of your time at all) then please do get in touch!

Residential! Last call for anyone else who wishes to come on an overnight stay in the Gower on 23rd-24th August. A beach day, a visit to the sunflower fields at Rhosilli, pizza oven, bingo, quiz, karaoke & other games, water park, spa, pub meal at Swansea marina... if you fancy a well deserved break from your caring role, please let me know if you haven't already, please email darren.young@rctcbc.gov.uk or call 07385 401851.



Manor Wildlife Park – Wednesday 9th August. There are still 2 spaces available to join us on a day out to see the tigers, rhinos, zebras, red pandas and many more endangered animals. There is also a petting section and you can hand feed wallabies I believe! Free entry and minibus and you can even take the person you care for along with you, or even your own child to enjoy a lovely family day out, but equally you can come alone 😊 please email darren.young@rctcbc.gov.uk or call 07385 401851 to book.



Monday 7th August at 11am, Kelsey will be at our office, 11-12 Gelliwastad Road, Pontypridd CF37 2BW from 11am to display some of her photographs and give a little talk about how she got into photography and talking about some of her favourite photographs. We have also invited some of the Young Adult Carers about to transition into the service so anyone who would like to informally pop into the office to see Kelsey's amazing work and then welcome some of the YACs to be with a cuppa and some snacks please do come along, the more the merrier!



I have a large amount of free taster day passes to any of the Leisure For Life centres across RCT. This enables you to access the gym, classes, table tennis, swimming, spa, badminton, squash etc across any leisure centre in RCT except the Lido Ponty. Please feel free to get in touch and I'll get some posted out to you 😊 please email darren.young@rctcbc.gov.uk or call 07385 401851.

If you would like to take it one step further, you can also apply for a STARS card, essentially allowing cheaper entry to all of the same Leisure For Life centres. Any activity is £2.50 as opposed to paying a monthly fee and this can often work out much more cost effective than a subscription. Let me know if you'd like the card, it's free to apply and I'll arrange the rest!



The charity 'Period Poverty' have supplied the project with a large number of sanitary products so if you're ever in the office for an event or just passing, please pop in and help yourself. Bags of products have been made up just by the front door or also in the toilet so if you'd like to collect some, so please do help yourself. You can also let me know what you want, and I'll put them aside for you, whatever works best for you. The range includes disposable and reusable products. Please email darren.young@rctcbc.gov.uk or call 07385 401851.



Thursday 31st August – make your own unique sketch pad / notebook. We have a facilitator to inspire us through sensory poetry whilst walking around Ynysangharad Park in Pontypridd to design a sketch pad that we can take away with us. 1100 hours in Pontypridd Park. If you would like to attend, please email darren.young@rctcbc.gov.uk or call 07385 401851.

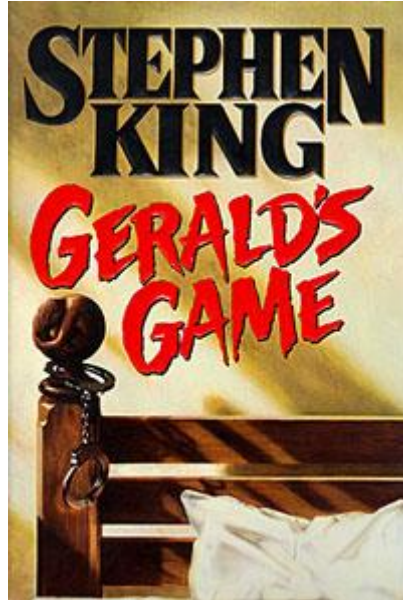


Pottery! Before summer is out I have secured funding for a 2-session pottery class at a potters' studio in Porth, Rhondda. Please let me know if you are interested by emailing Darren.young@rctcbc.gov.uk You don't have to attend both days so hopefully this offers some flexibility to juggle life's ever-increasing demands. If you attend one session, you will be able to create your own pot, jug, vase, mug etc and I will get it fired in the kiln for you to decorate at your leisure at home, but if you can attend both sessions you can obviously do the decorating over the 2 sessions and create more bespoke pieces! Food is also likely to be provided, I will email details out once I have them.



Carers news – issue 77 Summer 2023 is attached to this email, feel free to have a browse. Remember, all YACs are always welcome to any of the main carers Support Project events in the magazine as well as the bespoke YAC only events! Issue 78 the autumn / winter edition will be out next month, and I will email you all as soon as it becomes available.

YAC book club! This has recently started and was the idea of one of the newest members of YACs so thank you for the great idea! The first book we are reading is Stephen King's 'Gerald's Game' and if you would like to join in, have a read at your leisure and meet up online and have a chat about it, please do let me know and I'll add you to the book club's Whatsapp group! Keep your eyes on your emails for a soon to be launched cinema club!



Stagecoach bus fares £1 maximum! From now until September you won't pay more than £1 for a single bus fare within RCT so no excuses not to come to any events or pop in and see me in the office for a cuppa!

Enjoy the rest of your summer and you know where I am if you do need anything! Thanks 😊

Darren

[Darren Young](#)

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**RCT Young Adult Carers
Newsletter - Winter 2023**

Hi everyone! I hope you all had a wonderful Christmas and a Happy New Year to you all! I hope 2024 treats you all well 😊 Outlined below are a few opportunities coming up over the next two months, I hope there is something for everyone and look forward to seeing many of you there! If there's nothing you fancy, please let me know your ideas!

White Water rafting – Saturday January 20th, 1230 – 1400 hours (arrive by 1200 hours)

White Water rafting at the Cardiff International White Water in Cardiff Bay. A great experience for those adrenalin junkies amongst you, despite it being winter, you won't feel the cold as all thermal wetsuits, gloves, helmets etc are all provided! This event is free but you will need to make your own way to the venue. It is about a 20-minute walk from Cardiff Bay train station. All you need is a £1 for a locker and to bring your bathers and a towel! We've been previously and it is a great experience! We need a minimum of 6 for this event to go ahead but if we have more, that's no problem, we can have extra rafts! If you would like to go, please drop me a text on 07385 401851 or email me at Darren.young@rctcbc.gov.uk and I will secure your place! No food on this one so please do bring your own packed lunch!



Escape Rooms Rhondda – January or February (to be confirmed soon!)

We did this less than a month ago but everyone who went said they enjoyed it so much, I have managed to secure another opportunity to experience a different room to the ones we did last time! If you didn't or couldn't go last time out and fancy going this time, no problem! Date to be confirmed once I have an idea of numbers. I'll contact everyone that has shown an interest with a few options and as it's a democracy, we will go with the most popular date and time! If you'd like to go to this one, again you'd have to make your own way to Tonypany, but if you would like to go, please drop me a text on 07385 401851 or email me at Darren.young@rctcbc.gov.uk with a preferred day and whether you'd prefer half term or an evening!



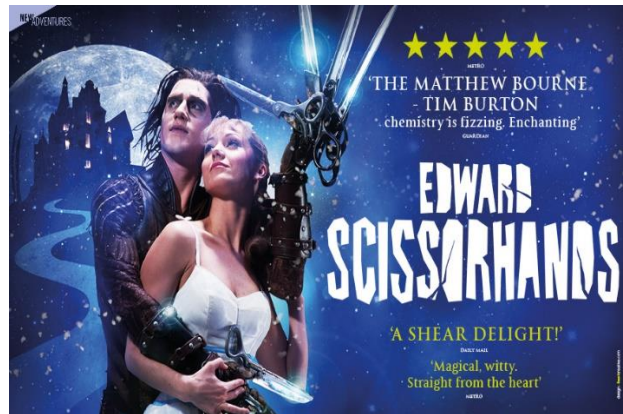
Caving at Dollegau – Tuesday 20th February (half term) – all day & transport provided!

A great opportunity to experience caving! Explore the 300-million-year-old caves in the Brecon Beacons! This thrilling experience will take you deep into the heart of the earth, exploring breathtaking underground landscapes and discovering the unique beauty of the subterranean world. All equipment will be provided, and expert tuition will allow us to maximise this adventure! Again we need a minimum of 6 for this one to go ahead so if you would like to go, please drop me a text on 07385 401851 or email me at Darren.young@rctcbc.gov.uk and I will secure your place! Transport will be provided from Pontypridd so you would need to be able to meet at Pontypridd bus station and bring your own packed lunch and don't forget your camera to capture some unique landscapes!



Edward Scissorhands – The Musical – Wednesday 20th March 2024 – Wales Millenium Centre

Join us for an amazing night of theatre as this award-winning show comes to Cardiff! I'm old enough to remember the original film with Johnny Depp and Winona Ryder, directed by Tim Burton this film is a classic and I'm sure translates well to the stage! Tickets for this are limited so please ensure you get in touch to secure your spot either by text or email and I'll let you know if you have one of the tickets! You would need to get your own transport to the venue, but it is only a 10-minute walk from the train station at Cardiff Bay.



Carers News

The latest Carers Support Project newsletter 'Carers News' is out in early January and you should all receive yours by mid-January via post or email. If you haven't received yours by mid-January, please get in touch with me as it is likely we have incorrect information recoded for you (a change of address or a mis-spelt email etc) and I will get a copy to you. As well as attending the YAC events, exclusively for 18-25 year olds, you can access any of the events on offer to the main project too, all of which are outlined in this latest edition. This spring, you can try tai-chi, experience chocolate making at the Rhondda Heritage Park, an easter craft event amongst other things. All you need to do is contact the office on 30th January (booking day) to secure a place. Just to clarify, this is separate from the YAC events and I won't be able to book you on until 30th and you would have to contact the office, all details are in the newsletter!

STARS card / Leisure For Life taster day sessions

I have a large amount of free taster day passes to any of the Leisure For Life centres across RCT. This enables you to access the gym, classes, table tennis, swimming, spa, badminton, squash etc across any leisure centre in RCT except the Lido Ponty. Please feel free to get in touch and I'll get some posted out to you 😊 please email darren.young@rctcbc.gov.uk or call 07385 401851.

If you would like to take it one step further, you can also apply for a STARS card, essentially allowing cheaper entry to all of the same Leisure For Life centres. Any activity is £2.50 as opposed to paying a monthly fee and this can often work out much more cost effective than a subscription. Let me know if you'd like the card, it's free to apply and I'll arrange the rest!

Darren

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RCT YACs Newsletter – Spring 2024

Hi everyone, coming up in March...

- Tuesday March 5th – live online escape room & CASE meeting – come along and decide what activities and experiences you'd like to see this coming year and have the ultimate say in your service! We will also assign anyone who wishes to volunteer to be in the roles of chairperson, vice-chair, secretary & treasurer for the coming year of CASE (the YAC constituted group) All attendees will be fed well thanks to Subway and we will have our meeting and finance discussion from 5-615pm. At 630pm we then go live to an Escape Room in Birmingham where we will hook up our laptop to the big tv and you can play on your phones whilst we control a live human to help us escape the room! If you would like to come along, please do – it will be great to see you there – if you could let me know if you plan to that would be appreciated just to give me an idea of numbers by emailing Darren.young@rctcbc.gov.uk or sending me a text or Whatsapp. Venue – 11-12 Gelliwastad Road, Pontypridd CF37 2BW, thank you!



- **Zip World** – We have limited spaces for you adrenalin junkies on Saturday 16th March. Join us to fly the fastest sit down zip wire in the world! Meet at Tower Zip World in Hirwaun at 1030am for the 11am flight! See the magnificence of the Brecon Beacons as you fly over the reservoir at 70mph! There is no transport provided for this one and sadly isn't on a bus route so please make sure you have the means to get there before confirming with me you'd like to go. Again, if you'd like to give it a try, please email get in touch by emailing Darren.young@rctcbc.gov.uk or send a text or Whatsapp please 😊



- **Cardiff Anime & Gaming Con** – Saturday 13th April 2024 – I’ve secured some tickets for this event, held at Cardiff University Students Union (Cathays train station stops right outside!) so if you would like to go, please get in touch either by text, Whatsapp or email. This isn’t a group event and you can also pay on the door so you can go with whoever you choose as long as they pay, but your ticket is free! This ticket allows you entry between 1030 and 6pm throughout the Saturday only as this is a two day event. Those who went last year had a fab time!



- **Theatre trip - Edward Scissorhands** – The Musical – Wednesday 20th March 2024 – Wales Millennium Centre. Join us for an amazing night of theatre as this award winning show comes to Cardiff! I’m old enough o remember the original film with Johnny Depp and Winona Ryder, directed by Tim Burton this film is a classic and I’m sure translates well to the stage! Tickets for this are limited so please ensure you get in touch to secure your spot either by text or email and I’ll let you know if you have one of the tickets! You would need to get your own transport to the venue but it is only a 10 minute walk from the train station at Cardiff Bay.



- **Haunted house ghost tour** – Saturday 23rd March 2024 - 715pm pick up from stand 13 at Pontypridd Bus Station and drop off at 230am – please ensure you have the means to get home from Ponty ion the early hours! This event is full but if anyone would like to add their names to the reserve list please let me know. If anyone can't make it, please do let me know at the earliest opportunity to ensure none of the tickets go to waste – thank you, really looking forward to this one!
- **Evaluation forms** – After every event, I'll ask people to do a quick evaluation form, basically the people who fund the events we go to ask for them so completing them allows me to apply for future funding so just a big 'thank you' from me in advance for completing them! If there are events like Edward Scissorhands and Anime & Gaming Con, I won't be attending so I'd really appreciate if I send them through on email that you could send them back – thanks!
- **Winter fuel grants** - Pure Energy hardship vouchers - If you are really struggling with your energy bills this winter, there is a scheme running at the moment where you can get £50 off your gas and electric bills, but there is very strict criteria for this one. It's all digital so you need to be computer literate, have an email address and also you must have an online account such as paying by direct debit. Sadly and frustratingly, this scheme is not available at present for those using pre-pay meters such as using pay point or topping up using a key. If you feel you are in need of this grant, please let me know and I will put the request through to the Community Resilience Hub who will process your request by sending you an email with a code. This code is then inputted by you into your online account and the code will activate and you will get £50 off your energy bill. I hope that makes sense, if not please get in touch!

Dates for the diary...

- **Go-karting** – Thursday 30th May – Teamsport in Cardiff. There are no height or weight restrictions but they say anyone over 6'4 or 18 stone may find slight discomfort when driving. This is an event where transport isn't provided, however it is about a good 25 minute walk from Cardiff Central train station. Totally worth the walk though and trophies for the top 3 drivers! We get practice laps and qualifying before the race where the fastest are determined! No driving experience necessary 😊



- **CASE meeting / pottery** – Monday 10th June – we will have an hour meeting followed by a pottery session where you can create your own, well anything! Mugs, bowls, pots or wherever your imagination takes you, the event will take place in the office and the potter will bring their clay and expertise to us. It will be air drying clay so you can take your creations home and paint them at your leisure.
- **Fitness Fun & afternoon Tea** – To celebrate Carers Week, on Saturday 15th June, we will be hiring a venue to have a sporting extravaganza! Try your hand at new sports, just taster sessions of many different sports such as netball, hockey, football, cricket, table tennis, badminton etc – we will have a sports gurur from RCT with us so any advice needed on clubs local to you, they will be able to answer all your questions and offer advice. The aim is fun and just taster sessions to try our hand at different activities. We will follow this with an afternoon tea 😊
- **Sailing** – 1st August 2024 – a day at sea! Board Challenge Wales yacht, a veteran of round the world races and venture into the English Channel for a day at sea, learning about sailing and everyone will even have a go of skippering and steering the yacht at certain points throughout the day! If you would like to register your interest for this one please do email text or Whatsapp me your interest – Darren.young@rctcbc.gov.uk



- **Rhondda Escape Rooms** – We will be returning to the Rhondda Escape Rooms over the coming months – many of you have done 2 of their 3 rooms and have thoroughly enjoyed them so we will be returning to complete the set and even attempt their new room which is apparently based upon the film ‘Saw!’
- **Transition event** – Wednesday 29th May is a date for the diary – we will be inviting the 16 and 17 years olds from Young Carers along to an event, possibly bowling but yet to be confirmed just to allow them to get used to the YAC service and you all. The more who can come and be friendly the better 😊
- **STARS card / Leisure For Life** taster day sessions - I have a large amount of free taster day passes to any of the Leisure For Life centres across RCT. This enables you to access the gym, classes, table tennis, swimming, spa, badminton, squash etc across any leisure centre in RCT except the Lido Ponty. Please feel free to get in touch and I’ll get some posted out to you 😊 please email darren.young@rctcbc.gov.uk or call 07385 401851.
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- **Better Breaks Grant** – There is still time to apply for one of the following experiences... Just open the Carers News attachment and on page 2 is a QR code. If you scan this and enter your name and choices, you’re in with a good chance of getting one of your favourite 3 choices. The only criteria is you are registered as a carer, which you are so honestly worth doing! The choices are...
 - Cefn Mabley Farm family entry (vouchers)
 - Ninja Warrior Cardiff
 - Showcase Cinema (vouchers)
 - New Theatre vouchers (Cardiff)
 - Rhondda Heritage Park ‘black gold tour’ tickets
 - Afternoon Tea – Rhondda Heritage Park
 - Spa Day at the Vale
 - £100 Park Dean voucher off a holiday / short break

- Royal Mint experience tickets
- Magazine subscription (vouchers)
- Netflix subscription (£50 voucher)
- **Annual questionnaire (prize!)** – another request from the people who fund my post is to send out an annual questionnaire. I've attached it to this email – honestly it won't take more than a minute to fill in. There's no obligation to do so, but everyone who completes it gets entered into a draw for a fantastic chocolate making experience workshop at The Rhondda Heritage Park! I have to submit my questionnaires by 31st March so the winner will be informed then! The form is attached to this email.
- **Eisteddfod 2024** – For those of you unaware, RCT is hosting the Eisteddfod this year and it is being held in Pontypridd! RCT have asked for anyone with any talent and is interested in performing to come forward hence I am sharing the following...

PERFORMERS' CALL-OUT

We are currently working on the line up for our numerous stages and are keen to hear from artists or groups who have ideas, performances, shows, talks for us to consider for #Steddfod2024.

Do you have the perfect idea?

Maybe an existing show that fits? Let us know....

Is the Eisteddfod a celebration of the Welsh language, we are looking for content in the Welsh language or non-verbal content.

[Please complete the following application form](#) if you'd like to present an idea.

If you need any help filling out the application form or if you have any questions, please email gwylb@eisteddfod.cymru.

- **Princes Trust** - Please see attachment and despite the date on the promotional poster, there is still time if you are interested. Please get in touch as quickly as you can if you'd like further information. The criteria is aged 16-25 and not in employment, education or training. There are some great opportunities on offer!
- As always, if there is anything I can help with, please just get in touch and ask! Food vouchers, referral for counselling, Citizen's Advice Bureau, bursary letter for colleges and University, Leisure For Life and |STARS card for cheaper access to leisure facilities in RCT are just some of the things I've done this month for people so please just ask and I'll always do my best!

Thanks and see you all soon 😊

Darren

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