



**Agenda Item**

<b>CWM TAF PUBLIC SERVICES BOARD</b> <b>October 2021</b>	
<b>REPORT OF THE CWM TAF MORGANNWG REGIONAL EARLY YEARS INTEGRATION TRANSFORMATION BOARD – UPDATE ON THE REGIONAL EARLY YEARS INTEGRATION TRANSFORMATION PROGRAMME</b>	
<b>Author/s:</b>	Zoe Lancelott, Rhondda Cynon Taf County Borough Council Chris Hole, Merthyr Tydfil County Borough Council
<b>Contact:</b>	
<b>Classification:</b>	
<b>Reason for exemption:</b>	

**1. PURPOSE OF REPORT**

- 1.1 The purpose of the report is to update the Public Service Board on the progress made across the Cwm Taf Morgannwg region towards the delivery of an integrated early years system as part of the Welsh Government’s Early Years Transformation Programme.

**2. RECOMMENDATIONS/TASK**

- 2.1 Note the content of the report
- 2.2 Consider the findings of the Stage 1 external evaluation of the new delivery model being piloted as set out in section 4.3 of the report.
- 2.3 Consider and agree the proposed governance and reporting structure as set out in section 5 of the report.

**3. BACKGROUND**

- 3.1 In July 2017 a report was presented to Cwm Taf Public Services Board requesting consideration be given to the adoption of a common set of regional principles to support the integrated delivery of the following initiatives in partnership with Welsh Government:
- Children First
  - Early Years Co-Construction Project, and
  - Funding Flexibilities Pathfinder

3.2 In support of establishing a co-ordinated strategic approach across the region, the Public Services Board agreed a set of principles that included the following early years specific actions:

- a) A single integrated approach to early intervention is developed across Cwm Taf that focuses on the principles of building of resilience; applies vulnerability profiling data to support the targeting of services; delivers an integrated Early Years system through improved collaboration on approaches to TAF.
- b) An Early Years Vulnerability Profile (0-7 years) is developed to identify the level of need of families and piloted in RCT as an alternative to the geographically based eligibility criteria of Flying Start.
- c) Information sharing arrangements are introduced to enable the secure and appropriate inclusion of Health data in the Early Years Vulnerability Profile.
- d) Health visiting services provided by the UHB are jointly commissioned across Cwm Taf with a new service specification that reflects these principles and subsequent developments; delivering a model of Universal progressivism.
- e) That a Cwm Taf governance structure be agreed for the integration of the Early Years system.

3.3 The PSB also confirmed the commitment of partners in Cwm Taf to progress the development of these principles into a practical proposal to deliver an integrated Early Years system in Cwm Taf, to be piloted in Rhondda Cynon Taf. Recognising early years as a priority for the region, commitment was also given to the removal of any potential barriers to information sharing across organisations and to extend the further development of proposals to include Bridgend CBC, given the forthcoming changes to UHB boundaries.

3.4 The ambition of the Welsh Government Early Years Transformation Programme is to deliver on the vision which is set out in Prosperity for All “to create a truly joined-up, responsive system that puts the unique needs of each child at its heart”. This means every service that families and young children come into contact with being clear how they can best support child development in the broadest sense. It will target parents as early as possible and sustain support where it is needed. Investing in the early years is an investment in the economy and workforce of the future.

*‘We want children from all backgrounds to have the best start in life. Our aim is that everyone will have the opportunity to reach their full potential and maximise their chances of leading a healthy, prosperous and fulfilling adulthood, enabling them to participate fully in communities, the workplace, and contribute to the future economic success of Wales.’*

*Prosperity for All – the National Strategy (Welsh Government)*

3.5 The Cwm Taf Morgannwg Early Years Transformation Board oversees this work at a regional level and provides strategic direction and leadership to deliver on the following objectives:

- To explore how early years services might be re-configured,
- To explore what it will take to create an Early Years system locally,
- To work together to deliver services in a co-ordinated, integrated and timely way,
- Focussing on coordination of services, planning, commissioning and identifying and addressing needs,
- To identify barriers to integration and remove them.

3.6 As the proposals to pilot an integrated Early Years system in RCT had implications for the national Flying Start Programme, approval was required from Welsh Government Ministers. The approval to proceed

was granted in February 2020 on the condition that a hybrid model of childcare delivery was implemented; the geographical eligibility had to remain as well as the needs based eligibility proposed. The required re-organisation of Council services in RCT to facilitate the new early years system had been undertaken already and the costs of the new model met within existing budgets, through the flexible use of Community and Children's Grant funding and the recommissioning of services.

- 3.7 The Early Years Integration Transformation fund was introduced by Welsh Government in 2020-21 and made available to Pathfinder regions. The Cwm Taf Morgannwg Early Years Transformation Board is responsible for managing this grant funding across the region to ensure it supports the delivery of the regional objectives aligned to the principles agreed by the PSB. The 2021-22 allocation for Cwm Taf is £281,250, based on the 0-7 population figures for RCT and Merthyr which is used to fund activities in the following four areas:
- Key roles – Regional Transformation Lead Officer and Resilience and Wellbeing Health Programme Lead Officer
  - External evaluation of the pilot delivery model in RCT – Stage 2
  - Provision of wellbeing support to increase resilience and address inequalities resulting from impact of COVID-19
  - Attachment Research project
- 3.8 A separate grant of £50k from Welsh Government supports the joint work underway on the development of the Early Years Vulnerability Profile.
- 3.9 Bridgend CBC joined Merthyr Tydfil CBC and Rhondda Cynon Taf CBC as part of the regional Early Years Transformation Board in 2018-19, formally becoming part of the Welsh Government's pathfinder programme earlier this year. As a pathfinder area, Bridgend will receive a local co-ordination grant this financial year to support the mapping, scoping and visioning work required by Welsh Government. Following completion of this work any regional Transformation Grant funding awarded by Welsh Government for 2022-23 onwards will include additional monies to account for the 0-7 population figures in Bridgend.

#### **4. PROGRESS**

- 4.1 Good progress has been made to deliver the objectives of the Early Years Transformation Programme across the Cwm Taf Morgannwg region.

##### **Piloting a single integrated early years delivery model in RCT**

- 4.2 As part of the Early Years Transformation Programme in Cwm Taf Morgannwg, a new Flying Start delivery model with a Family Health Visitor as central is being piloted in Rhondda Cynon Taf. This new pilot approach builds on the pre-existing Resilient Families Service and sees the delivery of a new Resilience and Wellbeing Health Programme alongside the delivery of universal parenting support, early language support and a hybrid childcare delivery model.
- 4.3 The Resilience and Wellbeing Health Programme was launched in October 2020 despite the additional pressures and restrictions placed on a health service having to adapt services in response to the pandemic. Adopting an approach of universal progressivism, this service is providing all families across RCT with children aged 0-5 years with the opportunity to access an enhanced level of Health Visiting contacts as required, regardless of geographical location based on need and resilience. The universal offer delivered by Family Health Visitors provides the contact visits as described in the Healthy Child Wales Programme, with the additionality of an antenatal contact, as well as a contact at 20 months to undertake a Schedule of Growing Skills (SOGs) assessment. The assessments provide extra opportunities to identify developmental needs of children and inform the targeting of wider early years

services and family support interventions delivered via the Resilient Families Service (RFS) in addition to the wider health support.

- 4.3 To ensure the impact and outcomes of the pilot approach in RCT are effectively measured this work is subject to a three stage external evaluation, the first of which was completed by Miller Research in April 2021. The Stage 1 report evaluates the pilot since its launch, reviews the progress of implementation so far and the position across the Cwm Taf Morgannwg region. The key findings are summarised below and the full report can be found in Appendix 1.
- a. The pilot and its objectives appear fit for purpose and highly coherent with the policy context. It meets the explicit requirement for the coordination and integration of existing early years programmes and the close cooperation of the local authority and health board.
  - b. Progress has been made against the objectives of the pilot, which remain coherent and relevant to the policies and needs. As the programme is in the early stage of delivery there is still much to be done to fully realise the objectives, such as the removal of barriers that have been identified.
  - c. The resources available are adequate in the eyes of stakeholders. Through collaboration and coordination, the existing skills, knowledge, and experience of staff is being better deployed to meet the needs of families and organisational needs. Where there are identified gaps, training is being provided to address them. The majority of funding for the pilot is being met with existing budgets, with transformation programme funds being used to support some aspects and develop regional working. There are deliberate management processes in place with governance structures including all teams involved.
  - d. As the approach is built on the integration work that has already happened in Rhondda Cynon Taf County Borough Council, notably the establishment of the Resilient Families Service, delivery has begun successfully. Services are available to all in RCT with access determined by assessment of need. Reservations amongst stakeholders, notably over workforce capacity, have been overcome. COVID-19 has been a disruption but only with a similar impact as would have been the case on the sector without the pilot approach. The rapid adoption of remote communications has facilitated greater cooperation at the strategic level although there are concerns that there will be a greater strain on services due to the pandemic.
  - e. At this stage there is already some evidence of the outcomes of the pilot. The distinction between generic and Flying Start health visiting has been removed, with caseloads shared across the workforce. All health visitors are now able to offer the same range of support, including an additional antenatal visit and a visit at 20 months for the SOGS assessment. There is evidence of the presence of new families receiving support who previously would not have been eligible due to where they live.
- 4.4 The specification for Stage 2 of the external evaluation is currently being written with a view to this work being commissioned and completed by the end of the financial year. Stage 2 will focus on rigorous evaluation of the systems and processes underpinning the pilot delivery model.
- 4.5 A third stage of evaluation is planned for 2022-23 which will be a summative evaluation concerned with measuring the outcomes for service users and the impact on services and policy of the new delivery model and will mark the end of the pilot phase. The findings of this Stage 3 evaluation will inform local discussion about the adoption of this model on a regional footprint as well as formal discussions with Welsh Government about implications for national policy.

#### **Attachment Research Project**

- 4.6 The first stage of the Attachment Research Project work led by Merthyr Tydfil on behalf of the region

commenced in 2020-21, including delivering baseline training to the wider workforce across the region on identifying attachment difficulties.

4.7 The Parent Infant Foundation was commissioned in March 2021 to conduct the following regional research activities:

- Map existing services and interventions which support and/or treat the attachment relationship within a graduated response model of universal, targeted and specialist services and identifying gaps between services
- Identify any good commissioning and service delivery practice across the region in comparison to delivery in other regions of the UK
- Measure population needs across the Merthyr Tydfil, RCT and Bridgend
- Consult with parents/carers to gain their views and understanding of 'attachment', its importance to child development as well as identifying barriers to support, via surveys, focus groups and direct interviews.
- Undertake a training and skills audit of the workforce and develop a training needs pathway that compliments a graduated response approach to the delivery of attachment interventions
- Provide recommendations about best options of tools for measuring levels of parent–infant attachment, and developing an outcome measurement approach.
- Provide a summary of key evidence-based attachment approaches that would address the barriers identified by the consultation with parents and make recommendations on future practice across Cwm Taf Morgannwg region.

4.8 This research has been subject to significant interest from other parts of Wales and from Welsh Government due to its breadth and scope across the Early Years services. It is recognised and accepted that children's development does have a significant impact on the life trajectory of children, and for those whose development is impaired in these early stages can mean they can go on to be our most complex and most costly cases as they grow and progress through the systems be these Health, Social Services or Education.

4.9 Alongside the conducting of this research has been training across the region on attachment, due to the nature of Welsh government annual funding. However having recognised this work as a priority resources have already been earmarked from the grant to pilot work around the recommendations of the review as they become clear. A report to the PSB on the outcomes of the review will also be shared once completed and the areas of work that could be taken forward as pilots.

#### **Vulnerability Profiling Project an Information Sharing Arrangements**

4.10 The aim of the Early Years Vulnerability Profiling Project is to develop a profile that facilitates the *“Early identification of children aged 0-7 who are at risk of not meeting the developmental milestones necessary to progress effectively through the early years as a result of the socio-economic and health factors they and or their families face”* in order to offer an alternative to geographically based eligibility criteria for early years services. This project builds on the experience and successful application of Vulnerability Profiling by Local Authorities to improve the educational outcomes for children and young people aged 7-16 years.

4.11 Overseen by an established Steering Group, this work is now progressing on two project fronts and activity is split between two separate workstreams.

**Workstream 1** is the First 1000 days focused Health profile which considers a larger list of data sets that have been submitted to SAIL (Secure Anonymised Information Linkage) at Swansea University for analysis. This information will be combined with data SAIL already hold to produce a geographical map of risk factors and provide precedence rates that suggest the likelihood of future vulnerabilities. The work to date has focused on identifying and weighting risk factors for low birth weight, lower school readiness, children being taken into care, Adverse Childhood Experiences and analysing the strength of

the association and comparison between Flying Start and non-Flying Start areas.

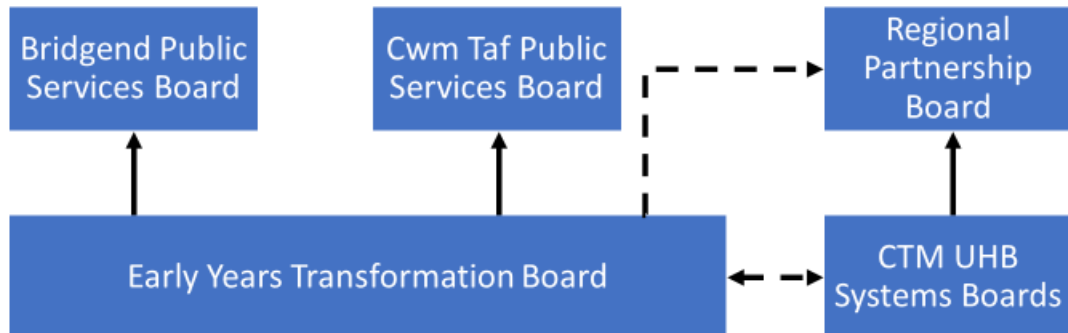
**Workstream 2** is concerned with the development of an Early Years Vulnerability Profiling model to be piloted in RCT that can add key data sets from Health to the existing LA vulnerability profile able to identify individual children and families likely to be in need of enhanced support to be piloted as an alternative model to support the planning and targeting of Early Years support. The work to date has focused on the technical considerations and the physical transfer of electronic data between CTM UHB and RCTCBC, in order to facilitate the testing of an initial profile in 2021-22.

- 4.12 The Health Board has honorary contracts with key lecturers in the University of South Wales who are supporting a review of the FRAIT (Family Resilience Assessment Instrument Tool) and opportunities to follow a family journey and map the impact and help quantify the 'so what?'. Work has started to ensure that the FRAIT is aligned with and a key component of the Early Years Vulnerability Profile.
- 4.13 To support this development work, Data Disclosure Agreements are in place between RCT CBC and CTM UHB with a view to WASPI Information Sharing Protocols being developed in the near future. The findings of the qualitative research undertaken by EMPOVA to gather citizen's and professionals' opinions about data sharing will be used to inform the way in which this work is communicated to both the public and professionals alongside information governance considerations.
- 4.14 Merthyr Tydfil has been developing its capacity around the Capita system and has been working alongside key individuals in RCT in order to benefit from the learning and work piloted by RCT and CTM UHB.
- 4.15 Regular updates on this area of work are reported to the PSB under Well-being Objective 2.1a - The first 1000 days in the Cwm Taf Delivery Plan.

## **5. CURRENT AND FUTURE REQUIREMENTS**

- 5.1 The landscape for this work is now very different from when this work began back in 2017. The Early Years Transformation Board was established in partnership with Welsh Government due to being a pathfinder region and was accountable to the Public Service Board. The focus of the programme being how to develop better universal and early preventative services whilst joining up the service offers across both the statutory partners and third sector Early Years services.
- 5.2 Since then the Regional Partnership Board (RPB) has established a clear set of priorities for children and families that are overseen by the Children Services Programme Board. Alongside this Cwm Taf Morgannwg UHB have introduced the new Systems Group structure, with the First 1000 Days System Group being critical to the future success of a joined up integrated Early Years system across the region. The established joint work of the Early Years Transformation Board has already accelerated the shared thinking across partners within the First 1000 Days Systems Group.
- 5.2 In light of these developments, discussion regarding the governance arrangements for this work has taken place to ensure effective communication channels and good governance between the different workstreams. Membership of the Early Years Transformation Board includes key senior officers across the region representing the three Local Authorities, various departments of the UHB and Public Health Wales. In parallel to this, these officers are also members of the regional Children Services Programme Board and Emotional Health and Wellbeing sub group of the RPB, and sit on the First 1000 Days and Children and Young People Systems Groups at various levels, thereby evidencing good communication and connectivity between the Boards and the agendas each are progressing.
- 5.3 Whilst there are clear shared priorities, it is important that the Early Years Transformation work remains

focused on the wider preventative agenda and engages with the full range of partners across the entire Early Years spectrum of services. Therefore, it is proposed that Early Years Transformation Board continues to be accountable to the PSB with regular updates shared with the Systems Boards and the RPB via the Children Services Programme Board as set out below, to the mutual benefit of all workstreams.



## 6. CONCLUSION

- 6.1 This report as provided the Public Service Board with an update on the progress made to date towards the development of an integrated early years system for children aged 0-7 across Cwm Taf Morgannwg as part of the Welsh Government’s Early Years Transformation Programme.