



RHONDDA CYNON TAF COUNTY BOROUGH COUNCIL

CORPORATE PARENTING BOARD

21st JULY 2022

CHARTER FOR PARENTS IN CARE AND LEAVING CARE

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

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1. PURPOSE OF THE REPORT

- 1.1 This report supplies information to Corporate Parenting Board about the Charter for Parents in Care and Leaving Care.

2. RECOMMENDATIONS

It is recommended that the Corporate Parenting Board:


- 2.1 Note the information
- 2.2 Decide that Rhondda Cynon Taf County Borough Council should sign up the Charter for Parents in Care and Leaving Care.

3. REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATIONS

- 3.1 Under the Part 6 of the Social Services and Well-Being Act (Wales) 2014, the Council has a duty to continue to provide supportive services to looked after young people and care leavers, this includes supporting young people when they become a parent. Recent research has highlighted the experiences of care experienced young people and care leavers when they become parents and provided opportunities to improve services and approaches. This has given rise to the development of a charter by young people that outlines young people's expectations, in light of the learning from research, and the Council's duties.

4. **BACKGROUND**

- 4.1 Cascade (Children's Social Care Research and development Centre at Cardiff University) has published research into the experiences of parents in care and leaving care. (The study can be found at: <https://cascadewales.org/first-signatories-for-innovative-charter-announced>.) The study found evidence highlighting the potential for stigma and discrimination, showing concerning levels of statutory intervention and separation, as well as variable support services. It concluded that urgent policy and practice attention was needed at national, local and individual levels to improve corporate parent support responses to parents in and leaving care.
- 4.2 The charter itself documents a promise of a fair and attuned supportive approach to parents who are in care or leaving care, and can be found below:

Charter for Parents in Care and Leaving Care	 Best-Practice-Charter.pdf
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- 4.3 A workshop took place on 4.7.22, the purpose of which was to assess the Council and stakeholder's readiness to deliver under the Charter's 4 areas. The workshop was attended by representatives from:
- An RCT care experienced young person supported by Voices from Care Cymru
 - Corporate Parenting Board
 - Children's Services
 - Education
 - Care2Work
 - Resilient Families Services
 - University Health Board
 - Project Unity
 - Cascade
- 4.4 At the workshop presentations were received from stake holders ahead of reflective group discussions that made recommendations about our next steps in achieving better compliance to the Charter. Some case studies had been prepared which demonstrate positive outcomes for parents and children. However, the most poignant section of the workshop was the contribution from an RCT care experienced parent who gave a breakdown of the strengths and weaknesses of her recent experience of our services which is summarised below and provides focus for our next steps:

- A referral was made when the parent became pregnant. She had been a 'partying teenager' until she became pregnant when she said that stopped;
- The parent's experience was that her Midwife informed her that the referral about her baby was made because she was a care leaver;
- The professionals assessing the needs of the baby and the subsequent Child Protection Conference considered information about the parent's own parent that she felt was not relevant to her as a parent. The parent's experience was that not enough weight was afforded to the information shared by professionals who knew her well, and who she felt trusted her commitment to the baby and being a good parent;
- The decision was made to add the baby's name to the Child Protection Register at birth. The parent explained why this was intensely anxiety provoking, and the subsequent visiting by professionals, made an already stressful time more difficult.
- The baby's name came off the Child Protection Register at the first Review (3months) and mother and baby are doing well. The parent is committed to taking part in changes that improve others' experiences
- The parent explained that positive and consistent support from 16+ staff throughout made a real difference

4.5 Overall, participants agreed that the Council and partners were well placed to deliver on the commitments in the workshop with the following developments as necessary to enhance delivery:

Charter Commitment	Next Steps
1. Before You Become a Parent	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A further workshop will take place similar to that of 4.7.22 involving practitioners and IROs as an opportunity to share the learning from the research, refresh awareness about the services that are available and develop a 12 minute guide for practice under the Charter
2. When You are Expecting a Child or Become a Parent	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Workshop as above • Full implementation of Magu (a new intensive service that will support families expecting a child with a view to safely preventing child-parent separation) • Practitioners should support young people to get a break
3. Challenging Stigma and Discrimination	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Workshop as above

<p>4. If you are Living Apart from Children</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Workshop as above • Develop a support role as part of Magu for parents who are separated from their children. A Regional Integration Fund proposal is in place with a view to enhancing support for parents who are at risk of parent-child separation
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5.0 QUALITY AND DIVERSITY IMPLICATIONS / SOCIO-ECONOMIC DUTY

5.1 An Equality Impact Assessment has not been carried out so far.

6 WELSH LANGUAGE IMPLICATIONS

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

7 CONSULTATION / INVOLVEMENT

7.1 Staff and parents with experience of the services took part in the research and the workshop on 4.7.22.

8. FINANCIAL IMPLICATION(S)

8.1 There are no additional costs with signing up to the charter. one-off resources to fund this in line with the aforementioned principles.

9. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS OR LEGISLATION CONSIDERED

The proposed development will see the Council enhance its potential to deliver against its prevention duty to families. There are no legal implications arising from this report.

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

10.1 The implementation of the proposed changes to foster carer allowance allowances will make a positive contribution towards the Council's Corporate Plan Vision of '*a County Borough that has high aspirations, is confident and promotes opportunity for all*'; as it will deliver against the specific priorities of '*People - Promoting*

independence and positive lives for everyone and 'Place - Creating neighbourhoods where people are proud to live and work'.

10.2 It will also help the Council to meet three of the seven wellbeing goals that The Well Being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015' puts in place as follows:

- A more equal Wales
- A healthier Wales
- A Wales of cohesive communities

10.3 The proposed changes are also consistent with the sustainable approach promoted by the Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act through the five ways of working:

- Long-term – the proposals seek to make a long-term difference to people's lives, the way we work with families and the Council's resources.
- Prevention – the proposal is fundamentally focused upon strengthening our prevention offer
- Integration – Partner organisations have been invited to join the steering group and will continue to be involved. Particularly important in terms of integrating a seamless offer to vulnerable families with the Resilient Families Service, and Midwifery
- Collaboration – Families, and staff have been involved in the evaluation and proposal
- Involvement – Families, and staff have been involved in the evaluation and proposal

11. CONCLUSION

11.1 Research has found a need to develop practice and services for parents who are in care or leaving care, and a best practice charter has been developed as a result.

11.2 A workshop has taken place to assess the potential to deliver against the commitments and further development work is planned to address those areas.

11.3 A recommendation has been made that the Council sign up to the Charter and keep this area of business under review with a view to continuous improvement.

LOCAL GOVERNMENT ACT 1972

AS AMENDED BY

THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT (ACCESS TO INFORMATION) ACT 1985

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