



## **RHONDDA CYNON TAF COUNCIL CORPORATE PARENTING BOARD**

Minutes of the virtual meeting of the Corporate Parenting Board held on Thursday, 24 November 2022 at 10.00 am.

### **County Borough Councillors - Corporate Parenting Board Members in attendance:-**

Councillor G Caple (Chair)

Councillor R Lewis    Councillor J Bonetto  
Councillor S Rees    Councillor P Evans

### **Officers in attendance**

Ms C Jones, Head of Access & Inclusion  
Ms A Lloyd, Service Director, Children's Services  
Ms C Miles, Childcare Solicitor  
Ms J Thomas, Complaints & QA Manager, Social Services  
Mr M Free, Service Manager  
Ms M Davies - TGP  
C Emery, Interim Head of Community Safety and Community Housing

#### **14 Welcome and Apologies**

The welcomed attendees to the meeting of the Corporate Parenting Board and apologies for absence were received from County Borough Councillors C. Leyshon, S. Evans and S. Trask.

#### **15 Declaration of Interest**

In accordance with the Council's Code of Conduct, County Borough Councillor S. Rees declared the following personal interest in item 6 of the agenda - Vale, Valleys and Cardiff Adoption Collaborative (VVC) Annual Report 2021-2022: 'I represent the Executive as a Member of the Panel.'

#### **16 Minutes**

To approve as an accurate record, the minutes of the meeting of the Corporate Parenting Board held on the 24<sup>th</sup> November 2022.

#### **17 Tros Gynnal Plant (TGP) Cymru**

Tros Gynnal Plant provided the Corporate Parenting Board with a progress update for the quarter 2 period, which covered July 2022 – September 2022.

Members were informed that during the period 46 young people accessed Issue Based Advocacy and 21 were referred for the Active Offer across RCT. The officer advised that 19 care experienced young people and 1 care leaver accessed Issue Based Advocacy, presenting with 21 issues; and 5 care experienced young people were referred for the Active Offer.

Members learned that, during the period, 22 Care Experienced young people became eligible for the Active Offer, 4 Active Offers were delivered by advocates and 4 young people accepted the Active Offer and went on to receive Issue Based Advocacy. This means 23% of eligible young people were referred for Active Offer.

During the period, 6 Care Experienced young people were recorded as rejecting the offer of an Active Offer meeting. The officer explained that the main reason for rejecting the Active Offer was that the young person felt they didn't need the service because they could talk to their social worker or another professional. It was added that 1 young person rejected the Active Offer meeting without a reason but was later referred to the advocacy service.

Members were informed that the most popular issues in need of advocacy support in quarter two, were placement followed by contact and the Social services referral and 'self-referral' is the most popular route into the Issue Based Advocacy service for care experienced young people and care leavers.

The officer went on to provide Members with the statistics for Care Experienced young people accessing Issue Based Advocacy service and those referred for the Active Offer. This included information on age, gender, ethnicity and placement.

The Chair thanked Tros Gynnal Plant Cymru for the informative report and referred to a case study which showed the importance and success of the advocacy service. The Chair questioned if all young people are made aware of the service and it was explained that the Local Authority had worked hard to advertise and promote pathways through practitioners to the valuable service.

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

1. To note the content of the report.

## **18 Local Authority's Offer of Accommodation and Housing Support Related Services to Care Experienced Young People**

The Interim Head of Community Safety and Community Housing provided the Corporate Parenting Board with an update in respect of the housing and support assistance to young people leaving care for the period 1st April 2022 to the 31st of October 2022.

The officer advised Members of the housing and support options available for young people leaving care:

- Social Housing Homefinder (Allocations) – During the period, 14 care leavers applied to Homefinder and had been assessed as ready to live Independently and registered for housing and placed in Band A. 8 allocations of social housing had been made to care leavers during the period with 2 young people leaving care awaiting a tenancy in a new build project in Taff's Well,
- Private Rented Accommodation – A pilot scheme which aims to improve access and support to private landlords to offer long term affordable and good quality accommodation with support in the private rented sector;
- Housing Related Support Services - RCT currently commission, through Housing Support Grant, wide ranging provision and holistic support services to care leavers and young people aged 16 -25. This includes 28 units of supported accommodation and 11 units of emergency accommodation for young people aged 16- 25. During the period, 45 young people had accessed the 28 supported accommodation units. Of the 45 individuals, 9 were identified as care leavers. To date, officers had helped 32 young people access the 11 emergency units;
- Floating Support - This service helps young people who already have their own accommodations and supports many individuals including young people to further develop their independent living skills and help them to sustain their tenancies. Over the first 7 months of the year, 12 referrals from care leavers were received for tenancy related support and accepted on the scheme;
- Housing First Project - A partnership between RCTCBC and Llamau and provides a person-centred approach for young people who have high support needs and who will find living in supported accommodation and general needs accommodation without support a challenge. The project was currently supporting 10 young people with 4 young people maintaining their tenancies for 6 months or longer at the end of October.
- Supported Lodgings - To provide young people leaving care with a safe home and to offer practical advice and help to manage their lifestyle and become independent. At the time of the meeting, 9 care leavers were currently placed in a supported lodgings placement in Rhondda Cynon Taff; and
- Get Ready and Move on Project (GRAMO) – A project which provides an early intervention pre-tenancy learning environment for all individuals to develop and evidence the skills to manage a tenancy. During the period, 9 care leavers were referred to GRAMO and completed the course.

The officer advised that the provision of Welsh Government funding to increase the supply of both temporary and permanent accommodation had helped. However, despite the financial assistance, there was a limited availability of suitable and affordable accommodation in both the social

and private rented sector, which was having a significant impact on young people being able to leave care in a planned way and to be able to live independently. The officer advised that a considerable amount of work had been undertaken to address the immediate housing and support needs of young people leaving care but noted that further work was needed to explore long-term support and accommodation options.

One Member acknowledged the difficulty of finding housing for young people under the Housing First Project and questioned whether the team consider the areas they are placing young people into. The officer advised that in terms of the Social Housing Homefinder option, the young people have a choice of area and can bid on homes when they become available. In terms of the Housing First Project, officers try to place individuals in areas they want to be based on support networks and areas of choice. If the choice isn't available, they sometimes must be placed in alternative areas.

The Chair questioned if there was any opportunity to link with the number of empty properties across the Borough. The officer advised of a Welsh Government initiative called the [Transitional Accommodation Capital Programme](#), which supports a wide range of projects by local authorities and registered social landlords to create much-needed extra housing capacity across Wales.

One Member raised questions in respect of the Private Renting Sector and whether the current financial situation was having an impact on the work undertaken by the service. The officer acknowledged the difficulties of the Private Renting Sector and particularly, the gap between the local housing allowance and the rent shortfall, which was too high for many young people. It was explained that the Council had set up a Social Letting Agency, which allow them to manage the property on behalf of the landlord. The officer explained that although the Agency was doing well and had exceeded Welsh Government's targets, the market was challenging.

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

1. To acknowledge its information.

## **19 Miskin Annual Report and Therapeutic Families Team Annual Report 2021-2022**

The Service Manager provided the Corporate Parenting Board with an update on the work of the Miskin Teams, Integrated Family Support Team (IFST), Therapeutic Families Team (TFT) set out in the services' annual report for 2021-2022.

The officer provided Members with some background to the Miskin service areas and the principals, values, and purpose, which was to prevent child-parent separation or placement breakdown. Members were

informed that this was done through the deployment of evidence-based, time limited interventions which are co-produced with the family and the referring case worker.

The officer provided Members with some of the feedback of the service users and explained that questionnaires are sent to the referring workers, young people, parents and foster carers. The approximate 25% return rate provided the team with an indication of the benefits of the service and areas to improve upon.

The officer provided an overview of the performance data, a comparison of referrals over the years and the impact of Covid-19.

The Chair referred to the service user quotes on page 9 and praised the staff for such rewarding work. Referring to parental substance misuse, mental health and domestic violence, the Chair questioned whether there had been an increase in those referrals since the pandemic. The officer advised that there hadn't necessarily been an increase, as they had always been prevalent in the vast majority of referrals and informed the Board, that one of the highest areas in RCT was parental alcohol misuse.

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

1. To acknowledge its content.

## **20 Vale, Valleys and Cardiff Adoption Collaborative (VVC) Annual Report 2021-2022**

The Service Director of Children's Services provided the Corporate Parenting Board with the Regional Adoption Collaboration Annual Report.

Members were informed that, during the period, the Vale, Valleys and Cardiff Adoption Collaborative (VVC) approved a significant pool of adopters with the result that more children can be placed within the region. The need however, to continue to recruit more adopters for more complex children remained a priority for VVC. Adoption Support represented a large set of challenges for VVC and the need to reduce the waiting list for services and to ensure that the service was targeted to those most in need remained a priority.

One Member commented, that as a Panel Member, social worker input was valued at meetings and encouraged their attendance but recognised how heavy their workload was.

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

1. To acknowledge the information contained within the report.

## **21 To consider passing the following under-mentioned Resolution:**

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

## **22 Fostering Wales - Fostering Friendly Employer /Charter**

The Foster Wales Regional Development Manager provided an update to the Corporate Parenting Board about the recruitment and retention of foster carers, with a particular focus on the regional front door for fostering recruitment and the changes to operational delivery within fostering recruitment.

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

1. To note for information the changes to fostering recruitment and the performance information provided.

## **23 Social Services Quarterly Complaints and Compliments**

The Service Improvement, Engagement & Complaints Manager provided the Corporate Parenting Board with an overview of the operation of effectiveness of the statutory Social Services complaints procedure between 1<sup>st</sup> July 2022 – 30<sup>th</sup> September 2022.

The report contained information on the number of complaints received, the nature of the complaints and any lessons learnt, as well as detailing Councillor, A.M and M.P enquiries and the number of complaints received.

Following consideration of the exempt report, Members **RESOLVED**:

1. To note its content; and
2. That additional training should be provided to all Elected Members, in respect of the risks of submitting complaints to the CRM in their capacity as Councillors on behalf of family members.

## **24 Regulation 73 Reports**

The Residential Services Manager provided the Board with an update on the Regulation 32 visits undertaken at the children's homes – Beddau, Bryndar, Nantgwyn and Ty Brynna during April – October 2022.

The officer outlined a summary of the inspection outcomes and it was **RESOLVED**:

1. To note the content of the report.

**This meeting closed at 11.32 am**

**Cllr G Caple (Chairman)**