



RHONDDA CYNON TAF COUNTY BOROUGH COUNCIL

CORPORATE PARENTING BOARD

26th JANUARY 2023

**CWM TAF YOUTH OFFENDING SERVICE
'ALL WALES PROTOCOL FOR REDUCING THE CRIMINALISATION OF CHILDREN
AND YOUNG PEOPLE 2022'.**

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

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1. PURPOSE OF REPORT

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to inform Corporate Parenting Board about the 'All Wales Protocol for Reducing the Criminalisation of Children and Young People 2022'.

2. RECOMMENDATIONS

- 2.1 It is recommended that members:
- 2.2 Acknowledge the publication of this report.
- 2.3 Receive further reports in due course in order to be updated on local/regional data and how progress and improvements made contributes to better outcomes for care experienced children.

3. BACKGROUND AND CONTEXT

- 3.1 This protocol is intended to help professionals who come into contact with care experienced children and young adults while carrying out their work, and in sharing a common framework of principles and expectations informed by an approach that actively promotes children's rights and which safeguards and promotes their well being.
- 3.2 In January 2021, a task and finish group for reducing the criminalisation of care experienced children and young people in Wales (as part of a wider ministerial

Advisory Group for improving outcomes for children) requested knowledge and data on the current number of Children Looked After (CLA) within the Youth Justice system. It was agreed that a snapshot for the Wales Youth Justice caseload would be taken on 1st February 2021, and a selected group from the Task and Finish Group members would interrogate the findings and report back to the group.

A short video presentation that explains the tool kit more fully can be found on this site: <https://www.missingpeople.org.uk/reducing-the-criminalisation-of-care-experienced-children-and-young-adults-in-wales-a-practical-toolkit-for-professionals#section-4>

- 3.3 To provide some context in terms of the number of offences recorded annually across Wales (provided by the Youth Data Service), over the past 5 years, overall figures are decreasing. The number of out of court disposals are increasing, therefore diverting children and young people from formal sanctions, and a criminal record. This is a positive trend which aligns with policy direction and the drive to reduce the criminalisation of children and young people wherever appropriate.

| Year | Youth Offences |
|---------|----------------|
| 2020/21 | 1776 |
| 2019/20 | 2369 |
| 2019/19 | 2650 |
| 2017/18 | 2709 |
| 2016/17 | 3341 |

4. **APPROACH**

- 4.1 A Steering Group was set up and a Terms of Reference created to take the work forward. The work strands comprised of;

- The establishment of biannual data collections by Youth Offending Services in Wales. To provide Wales specific trend data on care experienced children and young people involved with the Youth Justice and Criminal Justice System in Wales. Also to capture data on Welsh children and young people who may be placed in England.
- The development of a toolkit for the care workforce and supporting multi agency partners, to support use of consistent good quality evidence-based practice.
- The awareness raising and implementation of the National Protocol (*due to be published Spring 2022*) subject to further direction from the Welsh Government.

- 4.2 A report suggested improvements for subsequent data collections to strengthen the depth of data available and information provided. Data collection from Youth Justice Services has taken place on a frequent basis and two more data lifts are anticipated during 2023. Supported by YOT Managers Cymru, the exercise was

led by the 4Cs Team, with support and guidance from the Steering Group members. A number of collaborative events were held with various stakeholders including children and young people, which contributed to the production of a Toolkit, training and resources for professionals (refer to link below).

4.3 Cwm Taf YOS has been proactive in developing a child first approach which treats children as children and seeks to ensure that they are not unnecessarily criminalised as a result of their vulnerability or the challenges they face. The YOS has a Child First ‘champion’ within the team who has led on the implementation of a Child First Strategy with accompanied guidance for staff, and this very much reflects the central approach and guiding principles set out in the Youth Justice Board’s (YJB) Strategic Plan 2021 – 2024.

4.4 **Data for RCT Children Looked After**


A recent exercise was carried out for the Youth Justice Board, looking at children receiving an Out of Court Disposal or a Community Order from court. 15% of the total were children looked after (CLA). A snapshot between April 2021 – March 2022, showed 13% of ‘children looked after’ were subject to an Out of Court Disposal and 27% for the smaller cohort received a court order.

These figures are produced on a quarterly basis and the figures of Child Looked After (CLA) vary between 10% and 15%.


5. **CONCLUSION AND NEXT STEPS**

5.1 This protocol has been shared with the Offender Management Board, colleagues in Children’s Services, and all relevant partners. Future training regarding the protocol and use of the accompanying toolkit should be delivered on a multi-agency basis.

5.2 The YOS will continue to monitor and analyse data on an annual basis, recognizing that trends and challenges will change overtime. As such, a YOS diversity panel will aim to develop child friendly resources that will further assist practitioners to obtain accurate data in relation to the child’s experience/identification and to monitor disproportionality. This is outlined in the current Cwm Taf YOS Child First action plan which is one of the priorities set out in the main plan for 2022/23.

| BACKGROUND PAPERS | | |
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| Title of Document (s) | Date | Document Location |
| All Wales Protocol for Reducing the Criminalisation of Care Experienced Children in Wales. | June 2022 |  all-wales-protocol-re ducing-the-criminalisa |



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|---------|------------------|--|
| Toolkit | December 2022 |  Flyer - Launch of toolkit.docx |
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