



RHONDDA CYNON TAF COUNTY BOROUGH COUNCIL

CORPORATE PARENTING BOARD

27th June 2023

CARE INSPECTORATE WALES PUBLIC LAW OUTLINE INSPECTION FEBRUARY 2023

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

Author: **Julie Evans**

1. PURPOSE OF THE REPORT

- 1.1 This report provides information to Corporate Parenting Board about Care Inspectorate Wales (CIW) National Review of care planning for children and young people subject to the Public Law Outline (PLO) pre proceedings. RCT was one of 5 sites in Wales identified for this work.

2. RECOMMENDATIONS

It is recommended that the Corporate Parenting Board:

- 2.1 Note the information.

3. REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATIONS

- 3.1 Children's Services are providing information to Corporate Parenting Board about the results of a recent CIW inspection.

4. BACKGROUND



- 4.1 The purpose of CIW work in this area was:
- To provide external scrutiny, assurance and to promote improvement regarding the quality of practice in relation to the care planning for children and young people subject to the public law outline pre-proceedings
 - To consider the extent to which practice has progressed since the publication of both the CIW *'National Review of care planning for children and young people subject to public law outline pre*

proceedings' and the publication of the Public Law Outline (PLO) working group report 2021 including best practice guidance.

- 4.2 Children's Services embraced the opportunity of this inspection having invested heavily in translating the PLO reforms into meaningful operational change in our approach with families.
- 4.3 CIW inspection method included the sharing of internal process documents about how Children's Service had implemented PLO reforms, file inspection and interviews of family members (where possible), alongside interviews with staff including managers and partners as well. The management team provided a presentation on the first day of the inspection that gave an overview of our PLO process and evaluation of that, children's services having implemented phase 1 of the PLO reforms as a pilot.
- 4.4 Overall it was a successful inspection, the report which is included below identifying the following strengths and areas for development:

Strengths	Areas for Development
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Care and support planning is timely, meaningful and directed by the safety and wellbeing outcomes of the child • Good evidence that a strength-based, outcome focused approach underpins practice • Documents evidence balanced decision making in children and young people's best interest • Social workers have prevention of breakdown and the maintenance of family unification at the forefront of their practice • Social worker supervisions are clearly focussed on care and support plans and evidence that timescales are actively monitored to avoid delay • Evidence of good quality legal advice which is separated in documentation from social work assessment underlining professionally led approach • Families subject to legal 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Need for more accessible information about the process to be made available to children and families • Family Group Meetings to be utilised earlier in the process • Promoting advocacy earlier in the process and more robustly considering both children and parents • Currently there is a reliance on data collated from the legal department, need to utilise WCCIS to establish own PLO data reporting • Beneficial to include partner agencies in PLO training developments • Clarity required with regards to advocacy for disabled children • More evidence in recordings and documentation of communication methods and tools used to understand and represent views of children with disabilities

<p>planning are given extensive support and opportunities to make effective changes before legal action is taken</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Evidence of ongoing support continuing as needed when legal planning has ended • Evidence of timely and authoritative action when required to protect children • Good range of established intervention services such as Miskin and Resilient Families Service 	
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<p>CIW Report</p>	<div style="display: flex; justify-content: space-around; align-items: center;"> <div style="text-align: center;">  CIW - RCT - PLO - Findings Letter - EN </div> <div style="text-align: center;">  CIW - RCT - PLO - Findings Letter - CY </div> </div>
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4.5 Children’s Services forward plan in relation to the areas for development is;

1. Need information to be more accessible to children and families

A short animation video explaining the PLO process in user friendly language is in the last stages of preparation. An information sheet will accompany this video for those who would prefer to read about the process. They will both be made available on the RCT Website and will be incorporated into the wider work on accessible public facing information being undertaken by the graduate participation officer – Proposed completion date September 2023

2. Family Group Meetings to be utilised earlier in the process

Timing of the family group meetings became evident as needing reconsideration during the pilot stage of the PLO implementation. Initial thoughts had been that the meetings would be beneficial to assist in resolving identified difficulties at the stage of PLO being initiated. The uptake has been poor which appears likely to be due to families feeling overwhelmed with a new process, additional meetings and the introduction of a solicitor. Encouraging the use of these meetings at an earlier stage of family difficulties has so far resulted in more uptake of the service. Quality assurance data provided as part of this service will enable us to analyse if earlier

use of this form of intervention contributes to prevention of escalation

3. Advocacy offer to be timelier and more robust

Action has been taken to change the timing of referral for the Active Offer Advocacy. This now ensures that every child who is eligible will have already had the option of discussion with an advocate before any meetings are held in the child protection process. In terms of this process being more robust than simply making the offer, reasons as to why children refuse an advocate are now routinely being sought and recorded. This enables the social worker to attempt to overcome identified barriers. This recommendation has already been addressed but ongoing analysis of reasons for refusal will be used to continue to improve practice

A pilot offer of advocacy to parents who have children involved in the child protection process is currently underway. A focus group meet to monitor this and evaluation will take place at the end of the pilot to consider how parental advocacy will be delivered in the future

4. PLO documentation to be added to the information recording and management system

The necessary discussions have taken place to identify what data needs to be captured to enable effective monitoring and review of the PLO process - It is anticipated that the system will be effective from early September

5. Informing partner agencies of progress and any new developments

The Head of Service for Partnerships has joined the PLO implementation group and is feeding back to partner agencies as part of her membership of the CWM Taf Morgannwg Safeguarding Board

6. Clarity with regards to advocacy services for disabled children

This action has been completed. TGP Cymry provide our advocacy services for all children regardless of their disability. The needs of the individual child are taken into account when planning the intervention. It is recognised that this may not have been made clear to CIW at the time of the inspection but information has since been passed on

7. Improve recorded evidence of communication methods and tools used to understand and represent views of children with disabilities

The relevant service manager has considered the issue of evidencing what tools have been used and methods of communication to ensure that such is suitable for the child's age, stage of development and specific needs. This will be incorporated as an element of ongoing quality assurance file checks

5 EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY IMPLICATIONS / SOCIO-ECONOMIC DUTY

- 5.1 An Equality Impact Assessment has not been carried out in relation to this specific report, but one has been completed in relation to the overall Children Looked After Prevention Strategy where no negative impacts were identified.

6 WELSH LANGUAGE IMPLICATIONS

- 6.1 Likewise, a Welsh Language Impact Assessment has not been carried out in relation to this specific report but one has been carried out in relation to the overall strategy as per section 5.1. for review.

7 CONSULTATION / INVOLVEMENT

- 7.1 Staff, partners and parents with experience of the services took part in the inspection.

8. FINANCIAL IMPLICATION(S)

- 8.1 The work outlined in this report is delivered within children's services budgeted resources.

9. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS OR LEGISLATION CONSIDERED

- 9.1 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 CIW PLO Inspection has taken place providing positive assurance and independent validation of the work in this area which includes the management of risk alongside families in the community.

11.2 The CIW report has been welcomed, and children's services plan to address the learning.

LOCAL GOVERNMENT ACT 1972

AS AMENDED BY

THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT (ACCESS TO INFORMATION) ACT 1985

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