



RHONDDA CYNON TAF

**RHONDDA CYNON TAF COUNCIL
CORPORATE PARENTING BOARD**

Minutes of the virtual meeting of the Corporate Parenting Board held on Tuesday, 27 June 2023 at 1.30 pm.

This meeting was recorded, details of which can be accessed [here](#)

County Borough Councillors – The following Councillors were present:

Councillor G Caple (Chair)

Councillor C Leyshon Councillor P Evans
Councillor S Rees

Officers in attendance

Ms A Lloyd, Service Director, Children's Services
Ms N Bowditch - Service Manager Intensive Intervention Teams East
Ms L Hawkins, Virtual School Head Teacher
Ms N Katchi, Graduate Participation Officer (Children's Services)
Ms C Limbrick - Head of Early Help
Ms A Rowling - Lead Inspector CIW
Mrs T Watson, Senior Democratic and Scrutiny Officer

1 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies of absence were received from the Vice-Chair, Councillor R Lewis, County Borough Councillor J Bonetto, Councillor S Trask, Ms J Evans, Children's Services and the Complaints & QA Manager, Ms J Thomas.

2 DECLARATION OF INTEREST

In accordance with the Council's Code of Conduct, there were no declarations made pertaining to the agenda.

3 MINUTES

To approve as an accurate record, the minutes of the meeting of the Corporate Parenting Board held on the 30th March 2023.

The Chair took the opportunity, on behalf of the Corporate Parenting Board, to congratulate the Vice-Chair, Cllr R Lewis, on the birth of his first child.

4 CORPORATE PARENTING BOARD WORK PROGRAMME 2023/24

The Senior Democratic and Scrutiny Officer provided the Corporate Parenting Board with a summary of the draft work programme for the 2023-2024 Municipal Year. Alongside the regular annual updates, many of the topics for consideration within the Programme had been identified by Members at previous meetings.

The officer explained that the Work Programme was a fluid document that could be amended to reflect any changes to business needs throughout the year.

The Corporate Parenting Board **RESOLVED**:

1. To provide comment as appropriate on the draft Work Programme; and
2. To approve the draft work programme as a basis, which can be amended to reflect any changing priorities throughout the year.

5 CHILDREN LOOKED AFTER PREVENTION STRATEGY

The Service Director of Children's Services provided the Corporate Parenting Board with information in respect of the Children's Services' progress with the looked After Prevention Strategy and advised this was the second update with a previous report having been endorsed by Cabinet in February 2022, received by the Corporate Parenting Board in July 2022.

The Director provided the methodology at section 4, and noted that this was part of a journey, and although she could refer to some progress, would continue to maintain and review the outcomes and appropriateness of interventions. Section 4 also included a data chart, at 4.4 which included how progress had been tracked, in terms of reducing numbers of children who needed to become looked after or children with increased care and support needs. Members were reminded that there were four areas for improvement and development identified within the report, at 4.5, and were provided with an update on progress and the next steps being taken.

The Chair thanked the Director for the update and referred to the model of practice for social workers, on page 19 and asked if it required additional resources and extra training and it was explained that when the strategy was brought to Cabinet, it included a business case which evidenced the need for additional resources under the strategy, with investments in 3 areas.

The Cabinet Member for Climate Change and Corporate was pleased to see in the report, that more children were able to stay with families, which was wanted, with support for that to happen, as well as being pleased to see that kinship carers and special guardians were now on the same foot, as foster carers.

The Corporate Parenting Board **RESOLVED**:

1. To note the information in the report.

6 CARE INSPECTORATE WALES PUBLIC LAW OUTLINE INSPECTION FEBRUARY 2023

The Service Manager Intensive Intervention Teams East provided the Corporate Parenting Board with information in respect of the Care Inspectorate Wales (CIW) National Review of care planning for children and young people subject to the Public Law Outline (PLO) pre proceedings. The officer advised, in terms of the review of the PLO process, this had been embraced and the report provided, outlined the pilot phase of the PLO procedures, which had been operating for approximately a year, until the review.

The officer advised that the service was incredible proud of the outcome of the report which identified many strengths in terms of what RCT were already doing,

before providing Members with a comprehensive verbal update in respect of the strengths and areas for development, as outlined in section 4, of the report.

The officer concluded that overall, the service had seen a significant decrease in court applications being made, and there was a lot more innovative thinking to support, families, children, and young people to remain together in safe arrangements, that better suited their own family circumstances. They were already seeing the benefit of the pilot and it was hoped that the next 12 months, would see further benefits.

The Chair thanked the officer for the update, acknowledging that it was an excellent report and very complimentary and commendable to the Council's work.

A Member also congratulated the officer on the report and stated that they would be really interested to see the short animation video and information sheet, explaining the PLO process, when available, and also interested to hear some of the reasons why children were opting not to have the advocacy services and felt that it would be helpful to have a report back, around the findings in relation to parental advocacy.

The officer advised that there was a range of reasons why children had decided to decline the offer of an advocate, including feeling comfortable speaking to their social worker, and therefore not requiring an advocate, although for some, typically younger aged children, where parents were suspicious or unclear about what that advocacy services was going to offer, this could influence children's decisions, although overall, it had been a really positive experience. In terms of the parental advocacy, parents had engaged in the advocacy service, although where a decision was not made for a child to be placed upon the register, they tended to fall out of the pilot, but had been able to continue that journey, through other means of involvement e.g., if their child had remained on a support and care plan. In terms of child advocacy, it encouraged children to partake in the advocacy services for themselves, if they saw their parents having a positive experience.

The Cabinet Member for Climate Change and Corporate Services agreed that it was not only an excellent report, but an excellent verbal report.

The Chair referred to page 36, item 2.7 in respect of Newly qualified, and recently recruited social workers, and asked if this was part of the process?

The officer advised that in terms of the newly qualified social workers some workshops had been organised whereby various topics were covered around the PLO process, however newly qualified social workers didn't hold PLO cases, this was more about developing their understanding and confidence in that process, as part of their ongoing learning and development.

The Chair asked if colleagues in health and education, were familiar with the PLO process?

The officer advised that they were in terms of practice that was happening on the ground and there were plans to take that to the board and have further conversations about how that was rolled out, but there was very much a shared understanding.

The Service Director of Children's Services, on behalf of the Lead Inspector for CIW, noted that this was a positive report, with all issues identified known to children's services with realistic outcomes and timescales in place. Children and families were put first, and the service was well aware of risk.

The Chair complimented the service in general, and wider.

The Corporate Parenting Board **RESOLVED**:

1. To note the information in the report.

7 PROPOSAL FOR AN 'INFORM' SESSION

The Head of Early Help provided the Corporate Parenting Board with information about a proposal for a dedicated 'Inform' session with Corporate Parenting Board, to include presentations from practitioners and managers, about their work with children and families.

The officer advised that a great deal of information was brought to Corporate Parenting Board, often at a high level so this was a good opportunity to bring some of that to life and enable people to talk about what that meant in practice, the challenges being faced, the types of risk being managed, the decisions having to be taken and how that was done as a Children's services, in conjunction with partners.

Members were informed that the session would ensure that the Corporate Parenting Board would feel more informed and reassured about how the needs of children were met and how risk was managed. The session would include bringing some anonymised cases to life, provide some performance information about children's services and an update on the action plan in relation to the 2 child practice reviews. The intended outcome from the session would be that Corporate Parenting Board would have an updated understanding about decision making and risk management processes, a greater insight into the volume and demand, that children's services were facing and be brought up to date on the 2 practice reviews.

The Chair thanked the officer for the report and explained it was good to hear from practitioners, the risks they had to manage, the volume and demand of case work and the child practice reviews, which was so important. The Chair was happy to take this forward and felt the inform session would be well worth it for the benefit of all concerned.

The Corporate Parenting Board **RESOLVED**:

1. To note the information in the report; and
2. To approve the proposal for Children's Services to provide more information about their work at the September Corporate Parenting Board meeting.

8 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.

9 UPDATE IN RELATION TO THE CHILDREN LOOKED AFTER: RESIDENTIAL CARE STRATEGY 2022 - 2027

The Director of Children's Services provided the Corporate Parenting Board with information about children in settings known as Operating without Registration (OWR), and Children's Services plans for supporting those children, and ending those arrangements.

Following discussion around potential planning issues, Members agreed that early engagement with planning was best.

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

1. To acknowledge the information contained within the report; and
2. To receive subsequent reports until such time as there are no OWR situations for Rhondda Cynon Taf looked after young people.

10 URGENT BUSINESS

None.

This meeting closed at 2.09 pm

**Councillor G Caple
Chair**

Mae'r ddogfen hon ar gael yn Gymraeg / This document is also available in Welsh