



RHONDDA CYNON TAF COUNTY BOROUGH COUNCIL

CORPORATE PARENTING BOARD

30TH JANUARY 2024

**PARTICIPATION QUARTERLY UPDATE FOR CARE EXPERIENCED
CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE**

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(Children's Services)**

1. PURPOSE OF THE REPORT

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to update Members on the quarterly progress achieved in taking forward the implementation plan as part of the Participation Strategy 2023-2026 and to provide feedback on the participation activities Children's Services have held in the last quarter. Also, to update members about the request from Cabinet for a report on the draft Corporate Parenting Board Charter that links to Welsh Government's 'Corporate Parenting Board Charter- A Promise from Wales' (see appendix 1).

2. RECOMMENDATIONS

It is recommended that Members:

- 2.1 Acknowledge the information contained within the report.
- 2.2 Comment on the information provided.

3. BACKGROUND/ PROGRESS TO DATE

- 3.1 The Participation Strategy 2023-2026 has been finalised and a steering group has met to take forward a key action for developing public facing information for children, young people and families. The Transform Team for Children's Services are leading on this. An aspect of this project will be to redevelop our website information for care experienced children and young people. This is taking forward feedback from the 'Get Involved' survey and in person participation events, where young people have said they would like more accessible information that they

can quickly look up along with information for supporting their mental health and wellbeing.

‘Get Involved’ conversations

- 3.2 As part of continuing and strengthening the ‘Get Involved’ conversation with care experienced young people, participation events were held with young people aged 11 to 15 on the 22nd September 2023 and 10th November 2023 at the YMa, Pontypridd (see appendix 2 and 3). Young people got involved in an arts and crafts session and a session making non-baked desserts (based on previous feedback). Young people also shared their voice about what is going well for them and what could be improved for children and young people. This information will be referenced in the annual Voice report in May 2024.
- 3.3 In December 2023, Residential visits were also held for young people in Bryndar and Beddau making Christmas crafts and hearing feedback about developing young people’s care and support. A visit to the 16+ drop in was also held in December 2023 to hear young people’s voice for service developments and improvements through crafts, discussion and games.
- 3.4 A CLA Celebration event was held on the 29th November 2023 at the Heritage Park Hotel as a joint celebration between the Virtual School for Children Looked After and Children’s Services. Over 35 young people were nominated for achievement awards in education, personal achievements, arts and sport. Our Sing Proud Cymru choir that is made up of children, young people and carers performed for us as part of Voices from Care Cymru including a song with the use of Makaton along with inspirational speeches and performances from children and young people. Corporate Parenting Board Members also attended. Over 100 children, young people, carers and staff attended to recognise young people’s achievements.
- 3.5 A Participation newsletter will be sent to children, young people, parent/carers and staff to provide an update on how we are hearing children and young people’s voice and how young people can get involved in redeveloping our public facing information (website) to meet their care and support needs.
- 3.6 For young people to engage with the Corporate Parenting Board in a face to face session, it would be necessary to arrange an informal introduction based on ‘Who are the Corporate Parenting Champions’ in RCT through either a short video or a Corporate Parenting Board newsletter explaining who the Corporate Parenting Board are, what they do, how the board will support young people to share their voice about care and support and why they would like to meet with the young people. Many young people and Carers don’t have prior knowledge of what the Corporate Parenting Board represent. The introductions will provide information to children, young people and carers to encourage them to engage with the Corporate Parenting Board through events and an annual question and answer-based session.

- 3.7 The Transformation Team in Children's Services are developing accessible public facing information for children, young people, carers and families. This includes revised content for children looked after and care leavers. This information will be piloted with young people from March/April 2024.
- 3.8 The Graduate Officer for Participation has prepared a draft Corporate Parenting Board Pledge for RCT that builds on Welsh Government's 'Corporate Parenting Board Charter- A Promise from Wales'. The draft pledge will go to Cabinet in February 2023 prior to sharing with the Corporate Parenting Board. This builds on the voice and participation work in RCT from September 2022 to the present for care experienced young people and how we develop our key priorities to engage and support care experienced children and young people in RCT.
- 3.9 As part of our engagement with children and young people, Voices from Care Cymru have also been delivering their 'Sky's the Limit' workshops for young people aged 8- to 13-year-olds through accessible wellbeing events that include a Christmas Party, two pantomime events at the New Theatre Cardiff and Park and Dare. They've also held a New Years Party for care experienced young people and a Techniquet trip for young people in Residential care. Voices from Care Cymru have a 'Sing Proud Cymru' choir for children and young people in RCT that meet once a week during term time.

4 EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY IMPLICATIONS / SOCIO ECONOMIC DUTY

- 4.1 This is an information report.
- 4.2 An Equality Impact Assessment will be undertaken as required as part of the future implementation process.

5 CONSULTATION / INVOLVEMENT

- 5.1 This is an information report.
- 5.2 Further consultation will however be undertaken as part of the work of the participation strategy.

6 FINANCIAL IMPLICATION(S)

- 6.1 There are no direct financial implications aligned to this report.

7 LEGAL IMPLICATIONS OR LEGISLATION CONSIDERED

- 7.1 The legal requirements for children and young people are set down within the Social Services and Well-being (Wales) Act 2014.

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

- 8.1 This links to the Children's Services Delivery Plan 2023 to 2024 that, 'Children's Voices Are Heard: To improve engagement with children and young people, to ensure co-production and that the voice of the child is heard in service development and delivery.'
- 8.2 It also links to the work of the Children's Commissioner for Wales that champion's the development of a Children's Rights Approach grounded in the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC).

9 NEXT STEPS/ ACTIONS

- 9.1 The Transformation Team in Children's Services are developing accessible public facing information for children, young people, carers and families. This includes revised content for children looked after and care leavers. This information will be piloted with young people from March/April 2024.
- 9.2 Provide information leaflets to care experienced young people and carers/family in February 2024 to explain the purpose of participation events and engaging young people to share their voice for service developments. This may support consultation with a wider range of children and young people who are looked after.
- 9.3 The Graduate Officer for Participation has prepared a draft Corporate Parenting Board Pledge for RCT that builds on Welsh Government's 'Corporate Parenting Board Charter- A Promise from Wales'. The draft pledge will go to Cabinet in February 2023 prior to sharing with the Corporate Parenting Board.
- 9.4 Continue to work with Children's Services colleagues and ICT in developing the accessibility of the 'My Voice, My Review' through Widgit software that includes text and symbols for easy reading. The Reviewing Team will also pilot this information with young people once the Widgit software is ready to be used.

LOCAL GOVERNMENT ACT 1972

AS AMENDED BY

THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT (ACCESS TO INFORMATION) ACT 1985

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30 January 2024

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