



**RHONDDA CYNON TAF COUNCIL
CORPORATE PARENTING BOARD**

Minutes of the virtual meeting of the Corporate Parenting Board held on Tuesday, 19 March 2024 at 10.30 am.

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

County Borough Councillors – The following Councillors were present:

Councillor G Caple (Chair)

Councillor R Lewis Councillor C Leyshon
Councillor J Bonetto Councillor P Evans
Councillor S Hickman Councillor S Rees

Officers in attendance

Mr N Elliott – Director of Social Services
Ms A Lloyd, Service Director, Children's Services
Ms C Miles, Childcare Solicitor
Ms E Brabon, Senior EET Coordinator
Ms M Davies - TGP
Ms L Hawkins, Virtual School Head Teacher
Ms G Higgon-Young – Service Manager

39 DECLARATION OF INTEREST

In accordance with the Council's Code of Conduct, the following personal declarations were provided:

- County Borough Councillor G Caple – “I am a Member of the Virtual Schools Board”
- County Borough Councillor R Lewis – “I am a Member of the Virtual Schools Board”

40 MINUTES

It was **RESOLVED** to approve as an accurate record, the minutes of the meeting of the Corporate Parenting Board held on the 30th January 2024.

**41 EMPLOYMENT, EDUCATION AND TRAINING PROGRAMMES FOR
CHILDREN LOOKED AFTER**

The Employment, Education and Training Co-ordinator for Children Looked After provided the Corporate Parenting Board with an update in respect of the Council's dedicated programmes to support care experienced young people into employment, education and training.

The update contained a breakdown of outcomes between April 2023 and March 2024 for the Step in the Right Direction and Care2work programmes.

The Chair thanked the Officer and spoke of the fantastic initiatives that were being taken forward for the benefit of Children Looked After.

One Member questioned the follow up arrangements in place in respect of those that no longer engaged in the process and the Officer advised of the arrangements in place to ensure that the young people were never overlooked and advised how it was continually emphasised to the young people the opportunity to re-engage in the process at any time.

A Member asked for further information in respect of the virtual school project and an overview of the project was provided to Members, referencing the close working relationships between relevant partners for the benefit of young people.

Following positive discussions in respect of the work of the Employment, Education and Training department on behalf of Children Looked After, the Board **RESOLVED**:

- i. To note the content of the report

42 ALNET ACT AND ALN CODE FOR CHILDREN LOOKED AFTER

The Virtual School Headteacher provided an update to the Corporate Parenting Board on the implications of the ALNET (Additional Learning Needs and Education Tribunal) Wales Act (2018) and Additional Learning Needs (ALN) Code 2021 for Children Looked After with an ALN and to update the Board on the implementation of the above in Year 3 of the National ALN Implementation timetable in Rhondda Cynon Taf County Borough Council.

The Officer provided context on the requirements of the legislation and provided an update to the Board on how this looked within RCT, following development of the Council's own processes and procedures to ensure the Council could fulfil their new statutory duties.

Members were provided with detailed information regarding the support to schools, PEP training, Out of County Monitoring Protocol and Post 16 ALN Provision before the Virtual School Headteacher provided Members with information in respect of next steps of how Virtual School continue to support pupils, parents/carers and education settings to navigate the new ALN legislation.

The Chair spoke of the comprehensive protocols in place to help children looked after achieve, and the Chair referenced the positive impacts on young people as outlined within the report. The Chair welcomed the 'about me' profile and the positive messages this provided for children looked after.

Members commented on the merger of policies and queried how the pupils voice was continued to be heard. The Officer spoke of the opportunities available during PCP meetings. The Officer discussed the alternative provisions in place for those young people who were non-verbal / complex needs to still ensure that the young persons voice was still captured.

Following discussions it was **RESOLVED**:

- i. To acknowledge the content of the report; and
- ii. To consider whether any further information is required on any aspect of the report.

43 TROS GYNNAL PLANT CYMRU

Tros Gynnal Plant (TGP) Cymru provided the Corporate Parenting Board with an update on the progress made during the period October – December 2023.

Members were informed that, during the period, 54 young people accessed Issue Based Advocacy; and 39 were referred for the Active Offer. Of the 54 young people, 19 were care experienced, presenting with 23 issues. Of the 19 care experienced young people, 7 were accessing Issue Based Advocacy for the first time.

During the period, 9 of the care experienced young people became eligible for the Active Offer in the quarter or the previous quarter.

Members learned that, during the period, the most popular issues in need of advocacy support related to placements followed by contact issues and school issues.

Self referral and social services referrals continue to be the most popular route into the IBA service for care experienced young people.

Board Members noted how the small changes could make a big difference to the young people and Members referenced the individual care support available.

Members welcomed the schemes in place and queried the active offers to which the officer responded.

The Corporate Parenting Board **RESOLVED:**

1. To acknowledge the work undertaken by TGP Cymru, the content of which was attached at Appendix 1 to the report.

44 QUALITY OF CARE REVIEW - FOSTER WALES RCT REPORT

The Service Manager provided the Corporate Parenting Board with an update on the monitoring carried out under the Regulation and Inspection of Social Care (Wales) Act 2016, the Social Services and Well-being (Wales) Act 2014, and the Local Authority Fostering Services (Wales) Regulations 2018. Whilst there is no requirement to follow CiW's 'Guidance on Completing the Quality of Care Review', this approach had been chosen to assist in meeting statutory responsibilities.

Members were advised that Care Inspectorate Wales (CiW) had completed an Inspection in November 2023, the outcome was positive and reflected the current position of the service. The previous inspection took place in 2016, and it was difficult to assess the actions completed following the 2016 inspection to date due to the impact of changes that have occurred in legislation, regulation, and guidance over the time period. The recommendations arising out of the latest inspection were provided to Members.

The Chair thanked the Officer for the report and welcomed the increase in foster

caring, although noted that there was still a large deficit in the area with a lack of foster care for teenagers. The Chair commented on the knock-on effect of the need for residential placements and OWR settings due to such a deficit.

One Board Member acknowledged the positive inspection results of the November Care Inspectorate Wales (CiW) inspection, commenting on the changes in policy and legislation since the last inspection of the service. The Member queried the emergency placements in place and the officer agreed to provide these figures to Members.

It was **RESOLVED** to note the contents of the report.

45 EXEMPTION OF THE PRESS AND PUBLIC

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 13 of Part 4 of the Schedule 12A of the Act.

46 REGULATION 73 REPORTS

The Residential Services Manager provided the Board with an update on the monitoring carried out under Regulation 73 of the Regulation and Inspection (Wales) Act 2016.

The report outlined the current position within children's residential homes and residential short breaks services for disabled children.

Following consideration of the report, which contained exempt information, it was **RESOLVED**

i. To note the contents of the Report.

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

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

1. To acknowledge the information contained within the report; and
2. To receive a future report in respect of Children Looked After residential settings including any planning implications attached.

This meeting closed at 12.00 pm

**Councillor G Caple
Chair**

