



## **RHONDDA CYNON TAF COUNTY BOROUGH COUNCIL**

### **CORPORATE PARENTING BOARD**

**7<sup>th</sup> MAY 2024**

### **CORPORATE PARENTING BOARD PLEDGE FOR RHONDDA CYNON TAF**

#### **REPORT OF THE DIRECTOR OF SOCIAL SERVICES IN DISCUSSION WITH THE RELEVANT PORTFOLIO HOLDER, CLLR GARETH CAPLE, CABINET MEMBER FOR HEALTH AND SOCIAL CARE**

**Author:** Nicole Katchi, Graduate Officer for Participation, Children's Services

#### **1. PURPOSE OF THE REPORT**

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to provide Corporate Parenting Board with information about the Corporate Parenting Pledge for Rhondda Cynon Taf that supports implementation of Welsh Government's Corporate Parenting Charter – "A Promise from Wales."
- 1.2 The Cabinet approved the draft Corporate Parenting Pledge for Rhondda Cynon Taf in April 2024 as attached in Appendix 2 to this report and commits to the Welsh Government's Corporate Parenting Charter: "A Promise from Wales."
- 1.3 To collate Corporate Parenting Boards "Promises" to children and young people (Appendix 2) and discuss the next steps to ensure children and young people can have their voice heard as part of the boards work. This includes developing our public facing information for the Corporate Parenting Board's purpose and visibility to care-experienced young people and feedback mechanisms.

#### **2. RECOMMENDATIONS**

It is recommended that the Corporate Parenting Board:

- 2.1 Considers the information contained within the report.
- 2.2 Acknowledge that Cabinet has approved responsibility to the Council's Corporate Parenting Board with leading and monitoring success and commitment to the Corporate Parenting Charter through its 7 priority areas noted in Appendix 2.



### **3. REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATIONS**

- 3.1 The Welsh Government's Corporate Parenting Charter: "A Promise from Wales" and the newly approved Corporate Parenting Board Pledge for Rhondda Cynon Taf sets out the principles and promises that underpin the Council's Corporate Parenting responsibilities.
- 3.2 There is a strong commitment in Rhondda Cynon Taf to support and promote the wellbeing of care-experienced children and young people. Through the signing of the Welsh Government's Corporate Parenting Charter: "A Promise from Wales" and adoption of the draft Corporate Parenting Board Pledge for Rhondda Cynon Taf, the Council would clearly be demonstrating this commitment.

### **4. BACKGROUND**

- 4.1 In December 2022 the Welsh Government held a summit where care-experienced young people from each of the 22 local authorities across Wales came together to voice their experiences of being in care.
- 4.2 The summit led to the development of the Welsh Government's Corporate Parenting Charter: "A Promise from Wales", which sets out the principles and promises to be adopted by public sector bodies when engaging with care-experienced children and young people.
- 4.3 Welsh Government wants all public sector bodies and senior leaders to sign up to this Charter as a good Corporate Parent. A copy of the Charter is included at Appendix 1.
- 4.4 The Charter sets out shared principles that all bodies and their leaders should follow when providing services to care-experienced children and young people:
  - **Equality** – We will support care-experienced children and young people to have the same life chances as every other young person in Wales. This is because all children have rights, no matter who they are (Article 1. UNCRC).
  - **Eradicate Stigma** – We will recognise care-experienced children and young people for who they are, not just by their experience of being in care. This is because all children have a right not to be discriminated against (Article 2).



- **Togetherness** – We will work alongside care-experienced children and young people to ensure their views, feelings and ideas are integral to, influence and inform the services they receive and the way they receive those services. This is because all children have a right to be listened to and taken seriously (Article 12).
- **Support** – We will ensure professionals working with care-experienced young people understand their care experiences, children and young people’s needs and/or have access to information and training.
- **Ambition** – We will ensure every care-experienced child and young person reaches their potential and can enjoy a wide experience of leisure, cultural, sport and social activities. This is because all children have a right to be the best they can be (Article 3 and 29) and have the right to relax and play (Article 31).
- **Nurture** – We will make all care-experienced children and young people feel valued, respected, cared for and loved. This is because all children have a right to be safe and protected from harm (Article 19) and because all children who are not living with their families should be checked on regularly to make sure they are okay (Article 25).
- **Good Health** – We will provide support to access the right health care and advice needed to support the best physical, mental health and general well-being for all care-experienced children and young people. This is because all children have the right to the best possible health and support (Article 24 and 39).
- **A Stable Home** – We will seek out and provide stable places to live that are right for all care-experienced children and young people. This is because all children have a right to special protection if they don’t live with their family (Article 20). This is because any adoption must be overseen by Government to make it support the young person in their growth and development, is lawful and that it prioritises children’s best interests (Article 21).
- **A Good Education** – We will provide opportunities and support for all care-experienced children and young people to learn/develop and help them become who they want to be. This is because all children have a right to an education (Article 28 and 29).



- **Thrive** – We will ensure all care-experienced children and young people are prepared for the future and are able to make positive choices for independent living and adulthood. This is because all children have a right to reach their potential (Article 3 and 29).
- **Lifelong** – We will work to provide access to and raise awareness of the support and information available after leaving care. This is because adults have a duty to act in children's best interests (Article 3).

4.5 The Charter also clearly sets out the promises all Corporate Parents should fulfil when working with care-experienced children and young people:

- We will take time to listen to all care-experienced children and young people and ensure their views, wishes and feelings are heard and actively considered in all decisions made about them.
- We will treat all care-experienced children and young people with respect.
- We will involve all care-experienced children and young people in decisions that are made about them.
- We will keep all care-experienced children and young people informed about our involvement with them and explain our actions to them.
- We will use straightforward language when we communicate with all care-experienced children and young people.
- We will show compassion when considering the needs of all care-experienced children and young people.
- We will work with all care-experienced children and young people to help them achieve their goals.
- We will advise all care-experienced children and young people of the process to make a complaint should they feel we are not adhering to this charter.
- We will advise all care-experienced children and young people that they have a right to access independent advocacy to make sure their views, wishes and feelings are heard during decisions being made or



when they are unhappy and want something stopped, started or changed.

### **Corporate Parenting Board Pledge for Rhondda Cynon Taf**

- 4.6 In order to fulfil our Corporate Parenting responsibilities to care experienced children and young people, Children's Services has developed a local Corporate Parenting Board Pledge for Rhondda Cynon Taf informed by the Welsh Government's Corporate Parenting Charter: "A Promise from Wales" and the collective voice of children and young people in Rhondda Cynon Taf. A copy of the Pledge is included at Appendix 2.
- 4.7 A range of consultation and participation events have been held with Rhondda Cynon Taf care-experienced young people from September 2022 to the present. 66 young people responded to the 'Get Involved' survey and 70+ young people have attended in person events.
- 4.8 The purpose of the consultation and participation events was to find out from young people their thoughts about the following:
- **What is going well for you?** (And for other young people that are care-experienced).
  - **What could be better?** (Are there any changes that you would like made for your care and support and for other care-experienced young people?)
  - **How would you like to get involved with Children's Services to have your voice heard?**
- 4.9 Our consultations with children and young people have informed the development of the 7 priority areas that underpin the draft Corporate Parenting Board Pledge for Rhondda Cynon Taf. This Pledge builds on the undertakings of the the Welsh Government's Corporate Parenting Charter: "A Promise from Wales."
- 4.10 The 7 priorities are:
1. Ensuring that children and young people feel well cared for and supported.
  2. Having a voice to develop and improve services as part of our 'You said, we will, we did...' feedback loop and to let you know how we have made improvements for your care and support.



3. Access to mental health and well-being support.
4. A stable home that is comfortable and safe whilst being in care and when leaving care.
5. Accessible information and support for independent living.
6. Improving outcomes for education, training and employment.
7. Celebrating children and young people's achievements to develop current and future aspirations.

#### **NEXT STEPS FOR THE PLEDGE:**

##### 4.11 Corporate Parenting Board:

- Corporate Parenting Board has been asked to sign up to the Corporate Parenting Board Pledge for Rhondda Cynon Taf and develop a plan to support its implementation.
- Corporate Parenting Board has been delegated responsibility by Cabinet to agree governance arrangements to monitor the Pledge implementation and compliance and review Corporate Parenting Board membership.
- Children and young people will hold the Cabinet to account to ensure the Council deliver on the Pledge key priorities.
- Implementation of the Pledge will be monitored by the Corporate Parenting Board in its quarterly meetings, review and reported to the Cabinet through the Corporate Parenting Board's Annual Report.

#### **5. EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY IMPLICATIONS/SOCIO-ECONOMIC DUTY**

- 5.1 There are no negative impacts on those with one or more of the protected characteristics, or socio-economic disadvantage as a result of the recommendations set out in the report.

#### **6. WELSH LANGUAGE IMPLICATIONS**

- 6.1 There are no adverse Welsh Language implications associated with implementing the recommendations as a result of the recommendations set out in the report.

#### **7. CONSULTATION**

Consultation with key stakeholders and in particular, care-experienced children and young people has been key in developing the Welsh Government's Corporate Parenting Charter: "A Promise from Wales" and the draft Corporate Parenting Board Pledge for Rhondda Cynon Taf.



- 7.2 In addition, we will work with care-experienced children and young people to monitor compliance with the draft Corporate Parenting Board Pledge for Rhondda Cynon Taf. Our care-experienced children and young people will be central to this work.

## **8. FINANCIAL IMPLICATION(S)**

- 8.1 There are no direct financial implications aligned to this report.
- 8.2 Funding opportunities, through Children’s core budget, may need to be explored to take forward elements of the implementation plans.

## **9. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS OR LEGISLATION CONSIDERED**

- 9.1 The development of Welsh Government’s Corporate Parenting Charter: “A Promise for Wales” and the draft Corporate Parenting Board Pledge for Rhondda Cynon Taf takes into account the overarching duties laid out in Part 2, General Functions of the Social Services and Well-being (Wales) Act 2014. Specifically, that a person exercising functions in relation to an individual for example a looked after child must have regard to the characteristics, culture and beliefs of the individual (including, for example, language. [www.law.gov.wales/social-services-and-well-being-wales-act-2014-further-legislation-codes-and-guidance-made-under-act](http://www.law.gov.wales/social-services-and-well-being-wales-act-2014-further-legislation-codes-and-guidance-made-under-act))
- 9.2 The Social Services and Well-being (Wales) Act 2014, Part 6 Code of Practice (Looked After and Accommodated Children) will be revised by Welsh Government to include additional guidance on the Charter. The updated Code of Practice will be published in 2024 and the Charter will be reviewed as part of this process.
- 9.3 The Principles and Promises link to the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC Article numbers). Children and Young People have 42 rights under the UNCRC Article numbers.
- 9.4 The role of a corporate parent is to seek for children in public care the outcomes every good parent would want for their own children.

## **10. LINKS TO THE CORPORATE AND NATIONAL PRIORITIES AND THE WELL-BEING OF FUTURE GENERATIONS ACT**

- 10.1 The recommendations in this report supports the Council’s corporate priorities, namely:



- People - promoting independence and positive lives for everyone especially. Improving services for children and young people and ensuring the needs of children are considered in everything we do.

10.2 The recommendations also supports the Council to contribute to all the seven well-being goals:

- **A prosperous Wales:** children who receive the right care and support are better prepared for adulthood and achieving prosperous futures.
- **A resilient Wales:** children who are given every opportunity to meet their developmental milestones and overcome barriers to developing skills are prepared with the space to grow and the tools to build resilience throughout life.
- **A healthier Wales:** access to high quality local services supports children to meet their developmental milestones and develop social skills, enhancing their emotional wellbeing.
- **A more equal Wales:** by delivering a full range of provision in all localities to meet the needs of children and parents ensures that children and families have access to high quality childcare irrespective of where they live.
- **A Wales of cohesive Communities:** access to services that are not restricted to particular communities promotes equality and harmony across communities and the means sharing community resources to be responsive to need and build resilience.
- **A Wales of vibrant culture and thriving Welsh language:** children who are given the potential to thrive learn to be tolerant and accepting, preparing them for a multi-racial, globalised adult world.
- **A globally responsible Wales:** children who have access to high quality care and support are afforded experiences that prepare them to be globally responsible.

## 11. STRATEGIC OR RELEVANT TO ELECTORAL WARDS

11.1 This report applies to all electoral wards.

## 12. NEXT STEPS





- 12.1 There is a strong commitment in Rhondda Cynon Taf to support and promote the wellbeing of care experienced children and young people. Through the signing of the Welsh Government's Corporate Parenting Charter: "A Promise from Wales" and adoption of the draft Corporate Parenting Board Pledge for Rhondda Cynon Taf , the Council would clearly be demonstrating this commitment.
- 12.2 Check membership of the Corporate Parenting Board and suitability for a cross-section of representatives from health, housing, education, Children's Services and for members to write their promises to be added to the pledge.
- 12.3 Promote the visibility of the Corporate Parenting Board to children, young people and their carers through ideas such as Pen pictures and through an animation to explain the purpose of what the Corporate Parenting Board do and promote via a section of the Children and Young People web pages and social media.
- 12.4 Care experienced young people need to know that their voice makes a difference and coupled with the next steps in 12.1, 12.2 and 12.3, organise a series of sessions for Corporate Parenting Board members to hear the voices of children and young people in Foster Care, Kinship Care, Residential and 16+ for how they may wish to get involved with the Corporate Parenting Board. This could be linked through example activities as evidenced in appendix 2 or through examples from other local authorities collated in appendix 3.



**LOCAL GOVERNMENT ACT 1972**

**AS AMENDED BY**

**THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT (ACCESS TO INFORMATION) ACT 1985**

**RHONDDA CYNON TAF COUNTY BOROUGH COUNCIL**

**AN INFORMATION PAPER FOR THE CORPORATE PARENTING BOARD  
REPORT**

**7<sup>th</sup> May 2024**

**CORPORATE PARENTING BOARD DRAFT PLEDGE FOR RCT  
(LINKS TO CORPORATE PARENTING CHARTER-  
A PROMISE FROM WALES)**

**REPORT OF THE DIRECTOR OF SOCIAL SERVICES IN DISCUSSION  
WITH THE RELEVANT PORTFOLIO HOLDER, CLLR GARETH CAPLE**

**Background papers**

None

**OFFICER TO CONTACT:**

**Nicole Katchi, Graduate Officer for Participation, Children's Services.**