

CORPORATE PARENTING ADVISORY COMMITTEE

26 JANUARY 2016

Present: County Councillor Lent(Chairperson)
County Councillors

62 : APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies were received from Councillor De'Ath.

63 : DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

COUNCILLOR	ITEM	REASON
Councillor Sanders	6	Family member works for Tros Gynnal Plant, an agency working closely with the Local Authority

64 : MINUTES

The minutes of the 17 November 2015 were agreed as a correct record and signed by the Chairperson subject an amendment to the final paragraph in minute number 51.

65 : YOUNG PERSONS GATEWAY PROJECT

The Chair welcomed Andrea James, Luke Harrison and Fin Madell to the meeting. Members were provided with a presentation on the Young Person's Gateway which was launched on 5 October 2015 with the aim of providing a 'one stop shop' for young persons housing provision which hopes to provide a structured and supported pathway, centralised systems managing all homeless accommodation for young people and provides a corporate Housing Solution for Young People.

The Chairperson invited questions and comments from Members.

- Members queried whether or not any pressure points could be identified at this early stage and were advised that it is still in its infancy. Phase 1 was the setting up process and Phase 2 has been about reviewing at what stage the young person is, and whether that young person is ready to move on. Often times they have been hesitant to move on in the past because of a fear of failure, however, it the provision of this service is helping to show young people that it is no longer about failing as they are able, with support, to take a step back, further assistance can be provided to enable them to move forward again when they are ready.
- Members asked whether the feedback from young people had been positive. Officers provided anecdotal evidence of a young person who had benefited from the involvement in the scheme. He had been visited in custody 2 months prior to his release, meetings had thereafter taken place and it had been possible to secure accommodation for him in his local area which he was able

to access immediately on his release from custody. The young person is still engaged and is now ready to move on. He is now the benchmark for future involvement.

The Chairperson thanked Andrea James, Luke Harrison and Fin Madell for their attendance at the meeting, the presentation and for answering questions from Members.

RESOLVED: To note the content of the Report and the Presentation provided.

66 : EDUCATION REPORT/ITEM - VISUAL SCHOOL TRACKER

The Chairperson welcomed Gilliam James, Achievement Leader, 'Closing the Gap' and Trevor Covey. Members were provided with a presentation about the Cardiff Virtual Tracker; a central tracking system that tracks Looked After Children's progress whatever school they are in which in turn enables informed challenge to improve outcomes for Looked After Children and promotes coordination of educational services at a strategic and operational level.

The Chairperson invited questions and comments from Members.

- Members queried whether the tracker was currently being used and for what purpose. Officers advised that it was being used to review data which in turn allowed for early intervention should the need arise.
- Data was being input in a more timely manner, which in turn allowed access to more accurate figures, such as attendance and exclusion data which can thereafter be monitored to allow for early intervention and can be used to compare school performance and attainment. It can also be used to track which of the strategies are the most effective. It is also possible to add further terms of reference to the database as and when required.

The Chairperson thanked Gillian James and Trevor Covey for their attendance at the meeting, their presentation and for answering questions from Members.

RESOLVED: To note the presentation provided

67 : NYAS ADVOCACY AND INDEPENDENT VISITING SERVICE ANNUAL REPORT 2015

The Chair welcomed Elly Jones (Project Leader, National Youth Advocacy Service) to the meeting to present the NYAS Cardiff Advocacy and Independent Visiting Service Annual Report. The report focussed on the promotion and development of the service, emerging themes/issues and corresponding recommendations made to Children's Services, participation and consultation work, feedback from children and young people and delivery of the independent visiting service. Also a summary of the services priorities for the next year.

The Chairperson invited questions and comments from Members.

- Members queried the qualification of advocates and were advised that they had a range of professional qualifications; law, teaching, social work, youth work, or play leaders.
- Officers advised that currently there were 54 children placed out of county, mainly in neighbouring authorities. Up to date figures could be obtained and circulated to Members.
- Members queried the difference in gender figures/referrals for the 0 - 10 age group and questioned whether it was because girls were more willing to engage. Officers advised that previously it had been a more even split and at the present time no definitive answer can be given about the difference.
- Members queried whether those children and young people placed out of county actually wanted to return to this area. Officers explained that some of those children and young people are placed out of area because of safeguarding issues and because the homes met the needs of the children and young people however, a review of those placements is undertaken on a monthly basis. There are also monitoring meetings with the providers to ensure that their quality of care meets expectations. If it is appropriate they remain out of county, if the plan is for them to return arrangements are made as expeditiously as possible. When considering out of county placements the financial implications are also considered and also any financial contributions by other service areas.
- Members questioned the referral figures and were advised that there had been an increase in the referral figures due to ongoing promotional work being carried out to ensure that all the information is being provided to children and young people.
- Members asked whether there was enough staff capacity to manage the increase in referrals. Members were advised that at the present time there were no concerns about staffing levels and capacity. It was explained that there was a pool of self employed advocates and a budget available specifically for that purpose, should there be a need to increase current staffing levels.
- Members questioned whether there was a difference in the nature of the referrals from young people who are subject to a Foster Care Order and those in voluntary placements, and were provided with an example, namely difficulties which can arise in being unable to obtain passports in time to be able to holiday with Foster Carers. Contact can also be an issue with those in Foster care.

The Chairperson thanked Elly Jones for her attendance at the meeting, for presenting the report and for answering questions from Members.

RESOLVED: To note the presentation and report provided

68 : CORPORATE PARENTING STRATEGY

The Chairperson welcomed Tony Young (Director Social Services) and Debbie Martin-Jones (Operational Manager Looked After Children) to the meeting to present the report and answer Members questions.

The purpose of the report is to set out the Councils proposed Corporate Parenting Strategy and seek the Committee's approval prior to submission to Cabinet.

Members were advised that the strategy had not changed vastly from that previously considered by the Committee and is to be presented to Cabinet in March 2016.

The Chair invited questions and comments from Members.

- A comment was made as to whether or not a children and young persons version could be provided.
- Members queried the action plan and the fact that there was no reference to any involvement of Elected Members. Officers advised that training for Elected Members on their role as Corporate Parents is to be provided.
- Members asked whether guidance and a guideline could be provided about the duties of Elected Members.
- Members raised a query regarding the provision of out of county placements specifically in relation to the training undertaken and the monitoring of that provision. Officers advised that there has been an change in the management of the commissioning process; it is now routine to meet providers and if there is any concern about the quality of care young people are not placed with that provider.
- Officers advised that when children are placed out of county the preferred option, as far as any requirement for advocacy service involvement is concerned, is for our local service to become involved as it does provide and outside view of any issues that need to be addressed

The Chairperson thanked Tony Young and Debbie Martin Jones for their presentation of the report and answering Members questions.

RESOLVED: To endorse the strategy for submission to Cabinet.

69 : MEMBER VISITS

The Committee welcomed Debbie Martin-Jones (Operational Manager, Looked After Children) to the meeting to present the Member Visit Report. The report summarised the visits to front-line Children's Services Teams and services between April 2015 to date.

The Chairperson invited questions and comments from Members.

- Members queried whether or not all reports of visits had been annexed to the report. Members were advised that reports of all visits were contained in the

appendix, however, it was noted that more than one Member had attended one or more visit and they had not been attached but would be added to the next report for the sake of completeness.

- Members requested information to be provided in relation any specific themes arising from the various visits.

RESOLVED: To accept the reports of visits to front-line teams.

70 : FORWARD PLAN/WORK PROGRAMME 2015/2016

Members were advised that the Listening Event to engage children and young people has been arranged for Saturday 12 March 2016 between 1.00 and 3.00 pm. The venue has not yet been confirmed but Members will be provided with that information in due course.

RESOLVED: To note the suggested work programme

71 : REGULATION 32 REPORT

This item was not for publication by virtue of Paragraph 12 of parts 4 & 5 of Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972. It was RESOLVED that the public would be excluded for consideration of this item.

Debbie Martin-Jones (Operational Manager, Looked After Children) was in attendance to present this item.

RESOLVED: To note the information contained in the Regulation 32 reports.

72 : DATE OF NEXT MEETING - 1 MARCH 2016 @ 2.00 PM

The date of the next meeting of the Corporate Parenting Advisory Committee is on Tuesday 1 March 2016 @ 2.00 pm

The meeting terminated at 4.30 pm