

CORPORATE PARENTING ADVISORY COMMITTEE

19 JULY 2016

Present: County Councillor Lent (Chairperson)
County Councillors De'Ath, Evans, Goddard, Sanders and White

1 : APPOINTMENT OF CHAIRPERSON

At the Annual meeting of Council held on 26 May 2016 Councillor Lent (Deputy Leader & Cabinet Member Early Years, Children & Families) was appointed as Chairperson of this Committee.

2: COMMITTEE MEMBERSHIP

At the Annual meeting of Council held on 26 May 2016, Councillors Lent (Chairperson), De'Ath, Evans, Goddard, Merry and White were appointed as Members of the Committee.

3 : APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Councillor Sarah Merry.

4 : DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

No declarations of Interest were received.

5 : NYAS LISTENING EVENT MARCH 2016 REPORT

The Chair welcomed Elly Jones (Project Leader, National Youth Advisory Service) and Dorian Lewis to the meeting to present the Report in relation to the event which took place on the afternoon of 12th March 2016 at the Looked After 14+ Team offices at Suffolk House. The event was attended by 13 young people, a number of Councillors and a number of Officers. The report detailed a number of recommendations including access to advice and support services, further financial supporting and housing/accommodation.

Officers were invited to comment on the recommendations. The Director advised that a written response would be provided by way of feedback to the young people, however, he provided the Committee with the following information in relation to the recommendations outlined in the report:-

- Meic Cymru will be more widely promoted, that is a 24 hour service. A social media App is currently being developed which will provide information.
- There is currently no provision to increase weekly allowances.
- The Gateway project is now offering greater support in relation to housing issues and accommodation generally.
- Additional benefits such as access to free sports and leisure facilities and bus passes can be considered.

- Young people would like to have a passport upon leaving care, the obtaining a provisional licence is all they can obtain at the present time.
- It is important that young people are given information about changes in staff involved with them, particularly their social worker, for example if they are leaving the Council.

The Committee was invited to comment, raise questions or seek clarification on the information received. Those discussions are summarised as follows:

- Members noted the view of those at the event that there should be more Personal Advisors and queried why there is a problem with the recruitment of Personal Advisors. Officers confirmed that there are currently 3 vacant positions, interviews are scheduled for August, one Advisor is currently on maternity leave.
- Members referred to the concerns raised in relation to Social Workers, namely that there should be more social workers and a managed transition when a Social Worker is leaving. Officers advised that progress is being made to ensure young people do have access to Social Workers.
- Members stated that they believed that young people should be represented on this Committee.
- Officers advised that they had tried to achieve a balanced report capturing the information obtained during the course of the day, particularly as some young people did not want to share their views as they do not see any positive response as a result.
- Members discussed the need for a Feedback event to be arranged with the young people.

AGREED: To note the contents of the report.

6 : LOOKED AFTER CHILDREN - OUT OF COUNTY PLACEMENTS 2015/2016 REPORT

The Chairperson welcomed Debbie Martin-Jones (Operational Manager, Specialist Services) who presented the report which provided information about the circumstances in which Out of Area Placement arrangements have been made to meet children's needs.

The Committee was invited to comment, raise questions or seek clarification on the information received. Those discussions are summarised as follows:

- Members sought clarification regarding the retrospective placement arrangements and were advised that there are occasions when placements are made without referral to the Panel. The Panel, which is Health led meets once a month and there are occasions when placements need to be identified urgently, however, all retrospective placements are scrutinised individually.

- Officers advised that there are no current plans for the authority to increase residential provision at this time, and that although Crosslands is maintaining its high standards these are challenging times bearing in mind the recent increase the numbers of those requiring residential placements.
- Members discussed the need to ensure that the officer of advocacy is available to all.

7 : CHILDREN'S SERVICES & EDUCATION INSPECTION FINDINGS REPORT

The Chairperson welcomed Irfan Alam (Assistant Director, Children's Services) to the meeting who presented the Children's Service element of the report which related to the inspection of Children's services by the Care and Social Services Inspectorate Wales in January 2016.

The inspection included consideration of the access arrangements for children and young people and their families who were either referred for care and support or where information was received about a child's well-being; and also a review of the effectiveness of the interface between preventative and statutory provision. There was no focus on services for disabled children.

Members were advised of the positive nature of the outcome of that report and confirmation that the recommendations outlined in the inspection report are to be incorporated into the business plan.

The Chairperson welcomed Gillian James (Achievement Leader, Closing the Gap) to the meeting who presented the Education element of the report which related to the Estyn monitoring visit which took place between 25th and 29th January 2016 and confirmation that Cardiff is now judged to have made specific progress in relation to the recommendations after the monitoring visit in February 2014 and as a consequence is no longer in need of significant improvement or follow up activity.

AGREED: To note the content of the report and appendices.

8 : QUARTER 4 PERFORMANCE 2015/2016

The Chairperson welcomed Kim Brown (Service Manager, Policy and Performance) to the meeting who presented the report, the purpose of which was to enable the Committee to understand the factors that impact on outcome for children in need and looked after children and also to enable them to consider opportunities for improving these outcomes.

Members were advised that there had been some continued progress but also some slippage in some areas detailed in the report.

The Committee was invited to comment, raise question or seek clarification on the information received. Those discussions were summarised as follows:

- Members queried the robustness of the Safeguarding monitoring requirements and were advised that a suite of performance measures and reporting measures are being developed. Monitoring is also undertaken by the IRO who report biannually.

- With reference to the information concerning Savings Members stressed the importance of ensuring that budgets are protected to enable young children to be protected, and queried whether the savings were both reasonable and realistic. Officers advised that savings are getting more difficult to both find and make. If a child becomes Looked After it is because it is best suits their needs.
- There has to be a commitment to providing the best placements for the children within the system, and whilst they are in the system for good reason it may well be that with better Early Help they may not need to be in the system and help can be provided to ensure they are able to remain with their families.

AGREED: To note the contents of the report.

9 : WORK PROGRAMME 2016 - 2017

Members discussed the content of the Draft Work Programme:

- It was suggested that there be a feedback session following the presentation of the Listening Event Report for Members and young people.
- Members discussed the type of visits to be arranged, CHAD, Rumney Primary School, Youth Offending Service and an out of county Children's Home.

Members were also advised that the Bright Sparks event is to take place at City Hall on 9th December 2016.

AGREED: To note the content of the report

10 : REGULATION 32 REPORT

This item was not for publication in accordance with paragraph 12 of Part(s) 4 and 5 of Schedule 12A Local Government Act 1972. It was RESOLVED that the public be excluded for consideration of this item.

Debbie Martin-Jones (Operational Manager, Specialist Services) was in attendance to present this report.

11 : PROGRAMME OF MEETINGS 2016 - 2017 AND DATE OF NEXT MEETING

The Committee noted the dates of the future meetings as being:

- Tuesday 13 September 2016 at 2.00 pm, CR1
- Tuesday 22 November 2016 at 2.00 pm, CR4
- Tuesday 17 January 2017 at 2.00 pm, CR1

Tuesday 21 March 2017 at 2.00 pm, CR4

The meeting terminated at 4.40 pm

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