

CORPORATE PARENTING ADVISORY COMMITTEE

17 NOVEMBER 2015

Present: County Councillor White (Chairperson)
County Councillors Kirsty Davies-Warner, De'Ath, Merry and White

48 : APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies were received from Councillor Lent, Evans and Sanders.

49 : DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

No declarations were received.

The Chairperson welcomed Councillor Kirsty Davies-Warner to the Committee.

50 : MINUTES

The minutes of the 22 September 2015 were agreed as a correct record and signed by the Chairperson.

51 : CONNECT CROSSLANDS CHILDREN'S HOME MODEL OF CARE

The Chair welcomed Tony Young, Director Social Services, Siobhan Teague, together with Janice Moreland, Angharad Rees and Nadine Hunter from Crosslands Children's Home in Cardiff.

Members were provided with a presentation explaining Connect, the home's model of care. The Committee were informed that solid foundations were key in developing the Connect Model of Care. The staff are very experienced and are engaged in a constant programme of training and consolidation in practice, together with the support from the PROACT-SCIPr-UK Instructor on a regular basis.

Members were advised that Crosslands' positive reputation is generated mainly by the experience that young people and their associated professionals have while the young person is living at the home. Staff endeavor to ensure young people experience care that is secure, stable, and safe.

Members were provided with examples of goodbye albums that are done for all their young people focusing on their positive experiences and memories, it being something that they can keep forever.

The Chairperson thanked the officers for their presentation and having visited Crosslands herself thought a visit there was a very enlightening and worthwhile experience.

52 : REGULATION 32 REPORT - CONFIDENTIAL ITEM

This item was not for publication by virtue of Paragraph 12 of Part 4 of Schedule 12a of the Local Government Act 1972 as amended and pursuant to paragraph 21 of Part 5 of Schedule 12A. 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.

53 : NATIONAL ADOPTION SERVICE ANNUAL REPORT 2014-2015

The Chairperson welcomed Suzanne Griffiths, Director of Operations, National Adoption Service to the Committee.

Members were provided with a presentation which gave an outline of the following:

- the reasoning behind the establishment of the National Adoption Service;
- the framework for organising and delivering adoption services across Wales, focusing on National, Regional and Local involvement;
- the aims and objectives;
- the first year's achievements and performance improvements; and
- targets and priorities for 2015/2016.

The Committee viewed a video made by adopted young people expressing their views;

1. they want support to understand their emotions;
2. people do not understand adoptions;
3. they are bullied because they are adopted;
4. they want to know about their past and adoption; and
5. more support around Birth Family Contact

The Committee were advised that adopters also have a number of concerns, for example, obtaining therapy for the child, for example access to CAMHS, getting support in school, in both primary and secondary schools and contact with Birth Parents.

Tony Young, Director Social Services provided the Committee with some updated information in relation to the Vale, Valleys and Cardiff Regional Adoption Collaborative. It has been operational since June 2015, there have been some difficulties in transferring staff however it is an improving picture. Recruitment of prospective adopters has been prioritised. In 2014/2015, 74 adopters were approved and 112 children were placed.

The Chairperson invited questions and comments from Members.

Members requested information in relation to the number of adoptions which have broken down and whether this is because children are being placed more quickly. Members were advised that there is a figure of 3% breakdowns in Wales, and whilst the number of breakdowns is increasing, the percentage is decreasing. The significant issue with maintaining the level is having the support services available; that is something the Looked After Children and Adoption Service share.

The Committee were advised that strategic level discussions are taking place in relation to the use of pupil deprivation grants for adopted children.

The Chairperson thanked Suzanne Griffiths for her attendance at the meeting, her presentation and answering questions from Members.

54 : EDUCATION MATTERS - LOOKED AFTER CHILDREN'S PERFORMANCE IN CARDIFF SCHOOLS 2014 - 2015

The Chairperson welcomed Gillian James – Achievement Leader, Closing the Gaps Education to the meeting.

The Committee were provided with information on the report of looked after children's performance in Cardiff Schools 2014-2015.

The report provided an initial analysis of educational outcomes for the academic year 2014-2015 of Cardiff Looked After Children (LAC) in Cardiff Schools and identified the main strengths and shortcomings in performance.

The comparative performance of LAC was addressed and the following information noted:

- Foundation Phase Outcome Indicator – Cardiff LAC 2015 provisional – 75%
- Key Stage 2 Core Subject Indicator – Cardiff LAC 2015 provisional – 56%
- Key Stage 3 Core Subject Indicator – Cardiff LAC 2015 – provisional – 38%
- Key Stage 2 Level 2+ Threshold – Cardiff LAC 2015 – provisional – 17.1%

The Committee noted the overall improvement in Cardiff.

The Committee were advised of the factors impacting on outcomes, namely:

- Over the last year there has been a concerted effort to focus on increasing the transparency of data and a robust tracking system is now in place.
- A stronger working relationship between the Local Authority and the consortium is ensuring that schools receive the appropriate degree of challenge. Challenge advisers have the names of all LAC pupils so that they can challenge individual performance.
- Stronger, effective partnerships with Children's Services have ensured quicker responses to concerns and barriers impeding pupil progress.
- The progress of and provision for Looked After Children is now discussed in Team Around the School (TAS) meetings and ways forward agreed if revisions need to be made.

The Committee were advised that those figures contained, on the whole, Looked After Children from Cardiff as opposed to those placed in Cardiff.

Members were informed that a thematic review had been undertaken of three schools, reviewing the personal education plans, the traineeship schemes and the virtual tracker. The feedback from that review has been very positive.

RESOLVED: To note that a further update on progress would be provided at the next meeting.

55 : Q2 COMPLAINTS AND REPRESENTATIONS REPORT 2015 - 16

The Chairperson welcomed Kim Brown, Service Manager, Policy and Performance to the meeting.

Members were provided with an update on Cardiff's Children's Services Complaints and Representations between 1 July 2015 through to 30 September 2015 (Quarter 2).

The Committee were provided with examples of two complaints received and resolved during the quarter.

The Chairperson invited questions and comments from Members:

Members were advised that the complaint in relation to a young persons concern that she had not seen her allocated social worker was an isolated incident, in that both the Social Worker and Team Manager were on sick leave at the same time, once the case load has been transferred contact was made with the young person and the issue was resolved. The Committee were informed that procedures had been put in place to ensure that it does not happen again.

Members queried whether there is a time limit on action being taken if staff are on sick leave. Officers confirmed that the Team Manager will have systems in place to monitor the situation.

Members were advised that dealing with potential complaints by way of Early Resolution was not meant to trivialise the complaint(s) raised, however, some are borne out of frustration. However a record is kept of potential complaints and the outcome.

RESOLVED: To endorse the content of the report.

56 : Q2 PERFORMANCE SUMMARY REPORT

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 outcomes for children in need and looked after children and also to enable them to consider opportunities for improving those outcomes.

The Committee were informed that there had been a reduction in the number of children placed in independent residential placements which equated to a reduction in costs.

There has been a significant improvement in the completion of pathway plans, due in part to the proactive approach taken by Children's Services in establishing additional personal advisor posts.

Members were advised that the Single Gateway for accommodation for vulnerable young adults is ready for implementation in Quarter 3.

The Chairperson invited questions and comments from the Committee.

Members queried the reduction in the 2014/15 figures of those young people entitled to leaving care services who had a pathway plan from those provided for 2013/14 and whether or not there was a target figure. Officers advised that targets were being missed, however some of the concerns as to whether Social Workers or Personal Advisors were responsible for completing the pathway plans have been addressed by the implementation of electronic systems. There has been an increase in the number of 16/17 year becoming care leavers in light of the Southwark Judgement. Members were also advised that the figures can be slightly artificial; if the young person becomes a care leaver 3 months after their 16th birthday they have already passed the target for the pathway plan.

The Committee questioned the figures provided regarding the health assessment for looked after children, whilst these figures had remained stable there had been a reduction in the number of looked after children registered with a GP within 10 days of the start of a new placement. Officers advised that the reduction is due to recording issues and that the information is under recorded.

RESOLVED: To note the content of the report.

57 : DRAFT WORK PROGRAMME/FORWARD PLAN 2015 - 2016

Members were keen to be provided with a presentation on the Young Persons Gateway.

Whilst not on the Work Programme the Committee were advised that the Bright Sparks Ceremony is to take place at County Hall - Committee Rooms 1, 2 and 3 at 5.00 pm on Friday 11 December 2015 and that the Committee were invited to attend.

RESOLVED: To note the suggested work programme

58 : DISCUSSION ITEM - FEEDBACK ON WORKSHOP FROM 22 SEPTEMBER 2015

This item was deferred until the next meeting of the Corporate Parenting Advisory Committee in January 2016.

59 : CORPORATE PARENTING STRATEGY - VERBAL UPDATE

The Committee received a verbal update on the report. Officers advised that whilst a draft had been prepared the report was not yet ready to be considered by this Committee or the Children and Young People Scrutiny Committee.

60 : MEMBER AND DIRECTOR VISITS TO FRONT- LINE TEAMS

This item was deferred until the next meeting of the Corporate Parenting Advisory Committee in January 2016.

61 : DATE OF NEXT MEETING

The date of the next meeting of the Corporate Parenting Advisory Committee is on Tuesday 19 January 2015 @ 2.00 pm.