

CORPORATE PARENTING ADVISORY COMMITTEE

21 MARCH 2017

Present: County Councillor Lent(Chairperson)
County Councillors Evans, Merry and Sanders

49 : APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Councillor De'Ath.

50 : DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

No declarations of interest were received.

51 : MINUTES

The minutes of the meetings on the 22 November 2016 and 17 January 2017 were agreed as a correct record of those meetings and signed by the Chairperson.

52 : STAFF WORKLOAD PRESENTATION

The Chairperson welcomed Finn Madell (Team Manager, Looked After Children & Leaving Care) to the meeting to provide Members with an overview on the current staff workload.

- Members were advised that currently there is still a vacancy for a principal social worker. The deadline for applications is this week, the position is currently being covered by agency staff.
- The Officer outlined the nature of the varied caseload managed by her team; examples of which were Assessments; Child Protection Investigations and risk management.
- Members were then provided with information in relation to two specific cases which demonstrated the competing demands, pressures and complexities social workers manage and respond to on a daily basis.
- Because of the nature and complexities of some of the cases it is often difficult to prioritise timescales when there is a pressing need to respond to a child.

The Assistant Director, Children's Services advised that a case load of approximately 18 cases for each social worker is on the higher side, however the recent investment in social work posts will go some way to reduce the number of cases allocated to social workers provided that the number of looked after children remains stable.

53 : CORPORATE PARENTING ADVISORY COMMITTEE MEMBERSHIP

The Chairperson welcomed Irfan Alam (Assistant Director, Children's Services) to the meeting to present the report in relation to Membership of the Corporate Parenting Advisory Committee.

- Members were advised that nomination had been sought for a Health representative and that Rose Whittle, Head of Operations and Delivery for the Community Child Health Directorate had been nominated by Cardiff and Vale University Health Board.
- Members discussed the current position in relation to the National Youth Advocacy Service who are a commissioned service provider under to contract to the Council. That contract is due for renewal during 2017. Concern was raised as to whether there was a potential conflict of interest or perceived preferential treatment of NYAS as a current and prospect contractor. It was noted that NYAS had not been co-opted onto the Committee.
- Members were also informed that whilst two young people had previously been nominated to attend the Committee to present the perspective of young people to the Committee, one of those, Jessica Smith was no longer able to fulfil that role and was to be replaced by Sureen Kutube.

RESOLVED:

- I. That two young people referred to paragraph 8 of the report be invited to act as Advisors to the Committee; and
- II. That the following officers be requested to attend Committee meetings in an advisory role
 - a. Director of Social Services
 - b. Assistant Director, Children's Services
 - c. Operational Manager Children's Services, Specialist Services
 - d. Education Achievement Leader Outcomes & Partnerships
 - e. Head of Operations and Delivery for the Community Child Health Directorate of Cardiff and Vale University Health Board
 - f. A representative of Cardiff Council's Advocacy Service

54 : QUARTER 3 COMPLAINTS & COMPLIMENTS REPORT

The Chairperson welcomed Kim Brown (Service Manager, Policy and Performance) to the meeting to present the report. The Quarter 3 report covers complaints and representations from 1st October through to 31st December .

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

- Members raised concern that there remains an issue of social workers not returning calls and what is being done to improve the situation. A query was raised as to whether the figure referred to related to Looked After Children but Members were advised that it was across the board and that analysis can be done to ascertain to the figures for Looked After Children only.

- Members were advised that currently both social workers and personal advisors do have phones, there is admin support to ensure that a message can be taken and the social worker/personal advisor can be emailed immediately providing details of the message.

RESOLVED: To note the content of the report.

55 : QUARTER 3 PERFORMANCE REPORT

The Chairperson welcomed Kim Brown (Service Manager, Policy and Performance) to the meeting to present 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 these outcomes.

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

- Members expressed concern that the launch of the Corporate Parenting Strategy had not yet taken place and were advised that officers are currently working on an implementation plan.
- Members were advised that as of today the number of children being looked after is 720.
- Members noted with concern that LACE team are struggling to meet demand; Looked After Children need to be prioritised. It is often difficult getting these children into school in other areas. Members felt that they should be Corporate Parents across Wales to enable a collaborative approach between authorities.

RESOLVED: To note the contents of the report.

56 : EDUCATION REPORT

The Chairperson welcomed Gillian James (Achievement Leader, Closing the Gap) to the meeting.

Members were provided with some information about PALAC (Promoting the Achievement of Looked After Children). It is a bespoke programme for Cardiff schools supported and delivered in collaboration with UCL Institute of Education and Cardiff Council to support professionals to enhance the achievement and wellbeing of looked after and adopted children and young people in school.

57 : MEMBER VISITS

Members noted that there had been a number of visits over the last months; Rumney Primary School; an Out of County Placement visit and Targeted Services.

58 : REGULATION 32 REPORTS

This item was not for publication in accordance with paragraph 12 and 21 of parts 4 and 5 of Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972.

RESOLVED: that the public be excluded for consideration of this item.

59 : DATE OF NEXT MEETING

It was noted that the next meeting of the Corporate Parenting Advisory Committee will be included in the Schedule of meetings agreed by Full Council in May 2017.

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