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AGENDA

Pwyllgor	PWYLLGOR YMGYNGHOROL RHIANTA CORFFORAETHOL
Dyddiad ac amser y cyfarfod	DYDD MAWRTH, 16 IONAWR 2018, 2.00 PM
Lleoliad	YSTAFELL BWYLLGORA 4 - NEUADD Y SIR
Aelodaeth	Cynghorydd Merry (Cadeirydd) Y Cynghorwyr Davies, Hinchey, Jenkins, Lent, Lister, Molik, Walker a/ac Weaver

Tua
Amser.

- | | | |
|----------|---|---------|
| 1 | Ymddiheuriadau am Absenoldeb | 2.00 pm |
| | Derbyn ymddiheuriadau am absenoldeb. | |
| 2 | Datgan Buddiannau | |
| | Dylid gwneud hyn ar ddechrau'r eitem agenda dan sylw, yn unol â'r Cod Ymddygiad Aelodau. | |
| 3 | Cofnodion (<i>Tudalennau 1 - 6</i>) | |
| | Cymeradwyo cofnodion y cyfarfod blaenorol fel cofnod cywir. | |
| 4 | Rhaglen Waith/Diweddariad ar Ymweliadau (<i>Tudalennau 7 - 8</i>) | 2.05 pm |
| | Eitem i'w Thrafod: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Ymweliadau Aelodau• Trefniadau cyfarfodydd – Aelodau Arweiniol a Rheolwyr Gweithredol | |
| 5 | Eitem Addysg – Grantiau Datblygu Disgyblion | 2.15 pm |
| | Bydd Siriol Burford (Consortium Addysg) yn bresennol er mwyn rhoi cyflwyniad i aelodau parthed y Grantiau Datblygu Disgyblion. | |
| 6 | Gwasanaeth Trawma Datblygiadol ar gyfer Plant sy'n Derbyn Gofal (<i>Tudalennau 9 - 18</i>) | 2.45 pm |

Bydd Dr Libby Erin (Seicolegol) a Laura McGinnes (PSW) yn bresennol er mwyn rhoi cyflwyniad i'r Aelodau.

7 Diweddariad ar Ymchwiliad Gorchwyl a Gorffen Lleoliadau y Tu allan i'r Sir 3.15 pm

Bydd y Cynghorydd Lee Bridgmen (Cadeirydd, Pwyllgor Craffu Plant a Phobl Ifanc) yn rhoi diweddariad i Aelodau mewn perthynas â'r Ymchwiliad hwn.

8 Gyda'n gilydd neu ar wahân? Asesu brodyr a chworydd ar gyfer eu lleoli'n barhaol. (Tudalennau 19 - 24) 3.30 pm

Bydd Irfan Alam (Cyfarwyddwr Cynorthwyol, Gwasanaethau Plant) yn bresennol i gyflwyno'r adroddiad.

EITEMAU GWYBODAETH

Cyflwynir yr 8 eitem ganlynol i'r Pwyllgor fel eitemau gwybodaeth. Bydd cyfle i ofyn cwestiynau ynghylch yr adroddiadau a gyflwynwyd, os caiff yr atebion eu cynnwys fel rhan o'r cofnodion yn y cyfarfod nesaf.

9 Adroddiad 6 Misol SAA (Tudalennau 25 - 38)

Bwriad yr adroddiad hwn yw rhoi gwybodaeth i'r Pwyllgor am rôl, swyddogaeth a gweithgareddau'r Gwasanaeth Swyddog Adolygu Annibynnol.

Bydd Alys Jones yn bresennol er mwyn ateb unrhyw cwestiynau sydd gan yr Aelodau.

10 Rhaglen Bright Spots a'r Arolwg 'Eich Bywyd, Eich Gofal' (Tudalennau 39 - 78)

Diben yr adroddiad hwn yw rhoi diweddariad i'r Pwyllgor ar ran y Gwasanaethau Plant yn y Rhaglen Bright Spots.

11 Adroddiad Dosbarthu Ffonau Gofal Cymdeithasol AMW (Tudalennau 79 - 96)

Diben yr adroddiad hwn yw rhoi diweddariad i'r Pwyllgor ar y problemau gyda ffonau symudol yng nghyfarfod diwethaf y Pwyllgor ar 17 Hydref 2017.

12 Gwasanaeth Mabwysiadu Rhanbarthol Caerdydd, Y Cymoedd a'r Fro – Adroddiad Blynyddol (Tudalennau 97 - 126)

Mae'r adroddiad yn rhestru'r wybodaeth allweddol am wasanaethau rhanbarthol ynghyd â gwybodaeth chwarterol am berfformiad dros y cyfnod 2016-17.

- 13 **Adroddiad Cryno Chwarter 2 ar Berfformiad** (*Tudalennau 127 - 144*)
- 14 **Adroddiadau Chwarter 2 ar Gwynion** (*Tudalennau 145 - 152*)

GWAHARDD Y CYHOEDD

Mae'r Eitemau Gwybodaeth 16 ac 17 yn gyfrinachol ac ni ddylent gael eu cyhoeddi yn rhinwedd paragraff 12 a 21 Rhannau 4 a 5 Atodlen 12A Deddf Llywodraeth Leol 1972. Caiff y cyhoedd eu gwahardd o'r cyfarfod pan gaiff yr eitem hon ei chyflwyno yn unol â'r un ddeddfwriaeth.

- 15 **Adroddiadau Rheoliad 32 – Cartref Plant Crosslands** (*Tudalennau 153 - 194*)
- 16 **Adroddiadau Rheoliad 32 – Seibiannau Byr Caerdydd – Tŷ Storrie** (*Tudalennau 195 - 226*)
- 17 **Dyddiad y cyfarfod nesaf**

Mae cyfarfod nesaf y Pwyllgor Ymgynghorol Rhianta Corfforaethol ddydd Mawrth, 2.00 pm 24 Ebrill 2017.

Davina Fiore

Cyfarwyddwr Llywodraethu a Gwasanaethau Cyfreithiol

Dyddiad: Dydd Mercher, 10 Ionawr 2018

Cyswllt: Mandy Farnham, 02920 872618, Mandy.Farnham@cardiff.gov.uk

Mae'r dudalen hon yn wag yn fwriadol

CORPORATE PARENTING ADVISORY COMMITTEE

17 OCTOBER 2017

Present: County Councillor Merry(Chairperson)
County Councillors Hinchey, Jenkins, Lent, Lister, Molik and Walker

60 : APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Councillor Weaver

61 : CHAIRPERSON

It was noted that Council, at its meeting on 28 September 2017, appointed Councillor Sarah Merry as Chair.

62 : MEMBERSHIP AND TERM OF REFERENCE

It was noted that Council, at its meeting on 28 September 2017, reaffirmed the following Membership:

Councillors Davies, Hinchey, Jenkins, Lent, Lister, Merry, Molik, Walker and Weaver.

It was noted that Council, at its Annual Meeting on 25 May 2017 agreed the following Terms of Reference:

- (a) To actively promote real and sustained improvements in the life chances of Looked After Children, Children in Need, Care Leavers and children and young people in the criminal justice system and to work within an annual programme to that end;
- (b) To develop, monitor and review a corporate parenting strategy, and ensure its effective implementation through work plans and corporate parenting training programmes;
- (c) To seek to ensure that the life chances of Looked After Children, Children in Need and care leavers are maximised in terms of health, educational attainment, and access to training and employment, to aid the transition to a secure and productive adulthood;
- (d) To recommend ways in which more integrated services can be developed across all Council directorates, schools and other stakeholders to lead towards better outcomes for Looked After Children, Children in Need and care leavers;
- (e) To ensure that mechanisms are in place to enable Looked After Children, Children in Need and care leavers, to play an integral role in service planning and design, and that their views are regularly sought and acted upon;
- (f) To ensure performance monitoring systems are in place, and regularly review performance data to ensure sustained performance improvements in outcomes for Looked After Children, Children in Need and care leavers;

- (g) To receive all relevant Children's Services inspection and annual reports, including: Children's Homes Quality of Care Report; Case Practice Reviews, Fostering Annual Quality of Care Report; Adoption Fostering Annual Quality of Care Report; 4C's Commissioning; Out of Area Annual Report; Annual Report of Brighter Futures (with education); Children's Complaints reports; and Advocacy Annual Report;
- (h) To report to the Cabinet at least twice a year;
- (i) To make recommendations to the Cabinet where responsibility for that function rests with the Cabinet;
- (j) To report to the Children and Young People's Scrutiny Committee as necessary;
- (k) To recommend the appointment of co-opted members to the Committee for approval by Council;
- (l) To develop and undertake a programme of consultation, listening and engagement events with Looked After Children and care leavers, as well as visits to services providing support and advice to Looked After Children, Children in Need and care leavers;
- (m) To submit an Annual Report on the work of the Committee to full Council.
- (n) All Members of the Committee will be required to undertake relevant training to enable them to properly discharge their duties.

63 : NOMINATION AND ELECTION OF DEPUTY CHAIR

To note that the Committee elected Councillor Lent as Deputy Chair.

64 : DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

No declarations of interest were received.

65 : MINUTES

The minutes of the meeting on the 21 March 2017 was agreed as a correct record and signed by the Chairperson.

66 : CARDIFF SHORT BREAKS AT TY STORRIE CSSIW INSPECTION

The Chair welcomed Bridgette Gater (Director, Action for Children) to the meeting and to present the report. Members were provided with a presentation and copy of a further inspection report dated 17 October 2017 and advised that the non-compliance notice has now been lifted.

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

- Bridgette Cater advised that she was the National Director for Action for Children and outlined her role; Performance Management is now undertaken on an individual basis; and in-house investigations were carried out after publication of the June report, some of those investigations were not upheld.
- The Improvement Plan outlines the changes made in the various areas to include leadership and management. Staff supervision is taking place on a regular basis and moral is improving.
- Work to address staffing issues started before October 2016, however, there was then an incident which exacerbated the situation.
- There have been occasions when agency staff had not turned up for work and trips have been cancelled sometimes as a result of different management styles or what are considered to be reasonable requests. Whilst there has been some impact on the children it is not accepted and was not found that children were ever put in a dangerous position due to the lack of staff.
- The use of agency staff has reduced and those agency staff have become more familiar with the needs of the children at the home.

RESOLVED: To note the information contained in the reports, and in particular that the non-compliance notice has been lifted.

67 : ST DAVID'S DAY FUND - AWARD OF FUNDING

The Chair welcomed Debbie Martin-Jones (Operational Manager, Specialist Services) to the meeting and to present the report. The purpose of the funding is to support young people who are or have been in local authority care to access opportunities that will lead them towards independent and successful lives.

Members were provided with information as to the use of the funds and advised that the young people have also been consulted and are in agreement with the various plans for the funding.

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

- Members were advised that it is understood from Welsh Government that the funding will continue, and that the amount provided will increase.
- In relation to the various examples as to how the money could be used Members were advised that in respect of some applications for funding decisions will need to be made on a case by case basis and that those making the application - Social Workers and Personal Advisors who will be conversant with the needs of the young person involved.

As far as any application for foreign travel is concerned, it would not be funding for a holiday, it would be to broaden the work or life experience of a young person for example volunteering abroad.

In relation to mobile phones, most young people manage to afford to buy and thereafter pay a mobile phone bill, however, there are occasions when it is not possible and a mobile phone would help to address the safeguarding issues faced by a young person.

- Members were advised that before advertising the availability of funding it was important to ensure that agreement had been reached between all parties. All those involved will now be notified and made aware of the funding and how to access said funding.

RESOLVED: To accept and support the plans proposed by the management team, which have been created in line with the spirit of the aware of the Grant.

68 : EDUCATION ITEM

The Chair welcomed Gillian James (Achievement Leader, Close the Gap) to the meeting.

Members were provided with information in relation to the figures produced for Looked After Children – Key Stage 2 & 4 for 2017. The figures provided show how well Cardiff are doing. Members were advised whilst 81.1% of KS4 pupils have SEN – 56% currently have a statement. They are provided with additional support and there are delegated funds for those with SEN. There are designated teacher meetings to make sure that everyone helps to improve the progress of the looked after children.

Members noted that FSM is becoming less precise in terms of additional needs particularly as some of the benefits of been removed and would welcome the opportunity of considering the core data from other areas at a future meeting.

69 : DRAFT ANNUAL REPORT

The Chairperson welcomed Irfan Alam (Assistant Director, Children's Services) to the meeting to present the draft Annual Report.

RESOLVED: To approve the draft report for submission to Council.

70 : CORPORATE PARENTING ADVISORY COMMITTEE OVERVIEW/WORK PROGRAMME - DISCUSSION ITEM

Members discussed/considered the Committee Overview and Work Programme.

RESOLVED:

- To agree the provisional schedule of reports
- To agree the proposed structure for the work programme / themes proposed
- To agree who is leading on each theme
- To plan a schedule of visits to meet the emerging information needs

71 : CROSSLANDS CSSIW INSPECTION

Information Report

RESOLVED: To note the content of the report

72 : REGULATION 32 REPORTS

Information Report

RESOLVED: To note the content of the report

73 : FOSTERING SERVICE, ANNUAL QUALITY ASSURANCE REPORT

Information Report

RESOLVED: To note the content of the report

74 : PERFORMANCE REPORT: Q4 AND ANNUAL OUTTURN

Information Report

RESOLVED: To note the content of the report

75 : COMPLAINTS REPORT: Q4 AND ANNUAL OUTTURN

Information Report

Members expressed concern that there has been no improvement in the response from Social Workers to requests for calls. Members were advised that there have been issues with the mobile phones provided and that they are not fit for purpose; the battery life is poor. Whilst additional phones have been provided there have been difficulties with the WiFi.

Members request an update on the phone issue in readiness for the next meeting.

76 : DATE OF NEXT MEETING

The next scheduled meeting of the Corporate Parenting Advisory Committee is on Tuesday 16 January 2018 at 2.00 pm.

This document is available in Welsh / Mae'r ddogfen hon ar gael yn Gymraeg

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**CARDIFF COUNCIL
CYNGOR CAERDYDD**

CORPORATE PARENTING ADVISORY COMMITTEE

16 January 2018

Corporate Parenting Advisory Committee: Work programme

Reason for the Report

1. This report is presented as an update to the discussion of the Work Programme at the October 2017 Corporate Parenting Advisory Committee meeting.

Background

2. Ahead of the October 2017 Corporate Parenting Advisory Committee meeting members were provided with a paper outlining a proposed structure for the committee's work programme. At the meeting, Members agreed the proposal, stepped forward as leads for each of the five themes and identified services they wished to visit.
3. Since the October meeting Operational Managers have been identified as support to Members on their identified work strands.

Theme	Member	Officer
Prevention 1. Effective early intervention and prevention. 2. Safely reducing the number of looked after children.	Cllr Bablin Molik	Jan Coles Sarah Woelk/Dan Jones /Alys Jones
The experience of looked after children and outcomes 3. Promoting permanency 4. Providing high quality placements. 5. Provide young people leaving care with appropriate preparation for adult life, taking account of all of their needs including their wellbeing.	Cllr Graham Hinchey	Debbie Martin Jones and Team Managers

<p>Specialist services</p> <p>6. Continue to improve services for children with disabilities, including short break care.</p> <p>7. Improve and support the emotional health and mental wellbeing of looked after children.</p>	<p>Cllr Sue Lent</p>	<p>Sarah Woelk</p> <p>Jan Coles</p>
<p>Education</p> <p>8. Improve the education attainment and achievement for all looked after children.</p>	<p>Cllr David Walker</p>	<p>Gill James</p>
<p>The role of the Corporate Parenting within the Council</p> <p>9. Strengthening the role of the Corporate Parenting Advisory Committee within the Council.</p>	<p>Cllr Ashley Lister</p>	<p>Dan Jones</p>

4. Now that lead members have been identified together with officers, lead members will need to agree the milestones and activities to progress their work strands.
5. It is anticipated that lead members will update the Committee at future meetings on progress.

Financial Implications

6. There are no direct financial implications arising from this report.

Legal Implications

7. There are no legal implications arising from this report.

RECOMMENDATION

8. The recommendations are to note the information and decide next steps.

Irfan Alam
Assistant Director Children's Services
11 January 2018

**CARDIFF COUNCIL
CYNGOR CAERDYDD****CORPORATE PARENTING ADVISORY COMMITTEE**

16 January 2018

Presentation by the Psychologist and Principle Social Worker for looked after children

Reason for the Report

1. A Psychologist and Principle Social Worker will be attending the Corporate Parenting Advisory Committee meeting to present the types of therapeutic support for looked after children.
2. The emotional health and mental wellbeing of looked after children was identified by members of the previous Corporate Parenting Advisory Committee during 2016/17 as an important area to focus on in the future.
3. The Corporate Parenting Advisory Committee's terms of reference require the Committee to develop, monitor and review a corporate parenting strategy, and ensure its effective implementation through work plans. The strategy's implementation plan has an action to develop and maintain a clear mental / emotional health profile of our looked after children so that we understand their needs in more detail and improve access to services to meet those needs.

Background

4. A Corporate Parenting Strategy was prepared by managers in Children's Services in consultation with colleagues in Education and the University Health Board during 2015-16. The strategy was formally endorsed by the Council's Cabinet on the 19th of May 2016.
5. The Committee's work programme for 2018/19 is currently under development and is structured around the nine principles set out in the Corporate Parenting Strategy. The seventh of those principles is to improve and support the

emotional health and mental wellbeing of looked after children, and forms part of the Specialist Services theme in the work programme.

6. We know that looked after children are more likely to experience emotional, mental health and attachment difficulties than children living with their birth families. These difficulties make looked after children more vulnerable to placement breakdown and achieving poorer outcomes. In recognition of this, in partnership with Cardiff and Vale University Health Board, we have invested in providing a Clinical Psychologist to work within the Looked After Children Service to support our social workers to better understand the therapeutic needs of our looked after children.
7. The psychologist will be presenting to the Committee at this meeting and will be accompanied by a principle social worker from one of Children's Services Looked After Children teams.
8. The psychology response presented is an example of service integration and partnership working which demonstrates progress towards fulfilling the committee's requirement, as set out in its terms of reference, to recommend ways in which more integrated services can be developed towards better outcomes for Looked After Children.

Financial Implications

9. There are no direct financial implications arising from this report.

Legal Implications

10. There are no legal implications arising from this report.

RECOMMENDATION

11. The recommendation is to note the presentation.

Irfan Alam
Assistant Director Children's Services
11 January 2018

DEVELOPMENTAL TRAUMA SERVICE FOR LOOKED AFTER CHILDREN

Dr Libby Erin, Service Lead and
Clinical Psychologist

Rachael Hitchiner, Graduate Mental
Health Worker

Trainee Clinical Psychologist on
rotation

Based in Global Link / St. David's
Hospital

SO FAR

Began August 2016, full time in August 2017

Within Child Psychology, Child Health

Consultation model of service delivery: multi-agency working ('readiness' for therapy)

Small 'caseload' of 5-7 children and young people

Therapeutic orientation: DDP, theraplay and systemic/narrative

Nurturing Attachment Group

CONSULTATION

Foster carers / Kinship carers

LAC Social Services Cardiff and Vale monthly including Vale support worker

ARC – edge of care service monthly

CSE Team in social services bi-monthly

Youth Offending Service ad hoc

LAC Nurses Cardiff and Vale monthly

Psychology team and CAMHS ad hoc

Schools and education services (inc. ed psych) including one hour training introduction to trauma and how to manage it in the classroom

Health – paediatrics, OT, SALT, Health visiting

CIN / Intake teams / CHAD Cardiff and Vale

Adoptive parents

SERVICE MODEL

Referrals from social workers (LAC, CIN, CP), paediatricians, CAMHS, internal psychology team.

Presenting difficulties include: trauma work, attachment with foster carers, lack of therapeutic parenting, compassion fatigue, self-harm, eating disorders, suicidal ideation, developmental delay.

What is helpful?

“Choosing the right therapy and ensuring that this is explained to the service users in the right way.”

“Being able to get an in depth understanding of a child’s behavioural and emotional presentation and how to support them and their carers.”

“Libby’s approach and professionalism towards a young person, who is also an unaccompanied asylum seeking minor was excellent. Libby managed to speak to this young person about her life and worries and gave her hope in her life. She was not able to open up even to her FC of 7 years neither her SW.”

What more would be useful?

“Trauma training for the team”

“We need more opportunities for consultations as the current allocated hours are not sufficient for the level of need from the team.”

“To provide continued services and increased hours.”

NURTURING ATTACHMENT GROUP

6 week programme devised by Kim Golding:

“It has been fascinating to have the reasons behind the behaviour explained in simple terms”

“Coming away from this course I feel more confident that I can help my child and am the right person to do this”

“You have changed our lives. Every foster carer, social worker, health professional and adopters should have this training”

“Really enjoyed Libby and Rachael’s openness. Nothing seemed to shock which was reassuring”

HOPES AND CHALLENGES

Life before the trauma service...

Number of children – service has had ‘contact’ with 204 children.

Logistics e.g. clinic space, admin support

Turning down requests – capacity

Need for O.T. – sensory/body impact of trauma

Therapeutic life story /

Working with other organisations e.g. CAMHS, establishing better pathways

Service-user involvement – money from ASDA

Rolling out group – intervening earlier before placement breakdown and being part of foster care training, teacher training. Evidencing cost-effectiveness of our work.

AN EXAMPLE OF THE WORK

15 year old girl

□ *Key concerns:* No other service available, Life story book = pocket of work completed (challenge of out-sourcing therapy for a piece of work, limited sessions etc.)

Into care age 4 following neglect. Sexual abuse in foster care.

□ Seeing fortnightly for 14 months (with holiday breaks). DDP-informed with foster mum and girl.

□ *Process:* relationship building (including play), therapeutic life story work (making sense), emotion regulation and formulation, trauma work, emotion processing and deeper understanding

Need for long-term work – mistrust at core of work with children who are looked after.

Mae'r dudalen hon yn wag yn fwriadol

**CARDIFF COUNCIL
CYNGOR CAERDYDD**

CORPORATE PARENTING ADVISORY COMMITTEE

16 January 2018

Together or Apart? Assessing siblings for permanent placement

Reason for the Report

1. This report is presented in response to a request from Councillor David Walker for clarification on the policy relating to siblings being separated or kept together during fostering

Background

2. In response a report is provided by the Assistant Director Children's Services at Appendix A.

Financial Implications

3. There are no direct financial implications arising from this report.

Legal Implications

4. There are no legal implications arising from this report.

RECOMMENDATION

5. The recommendation is to note the information provided.

**Irfan Alam
Assistant Director Children's Services
10 January 2018**

Mae'r dudalen hon yn wag yn fwriadol

City of Cardiff Council

Children's Services

Together or Apart? Assessing siblings for permanent placement

Legislation

Children Act 1989 Section 23(7(b) emphasises the need to place siblings together 'so far as is reasonably practicable and consistent with his welfare'

July 2014 draft stat. guidance concerning sibling assessments states that 'there should be a clear decision making process which enables social workers to decide early on whether it is in the best interests of each child to be placed together or separately, and the impact of each child of that decision. The decision making process should be set out clearly with the supporting information and evidence so that all the professionals who are involved in making decisions about each child's future can see how and why the decision was reached'.

'This means that the agency is better able to make robust, evidenced decisions on whether it is in the interests of each child to be placed separately or together'.

'Family finding should begin as soon as adoption is under consideration and before the ADM decides that the child should be placed for adoption or a placement order is made'.

The intention is that the assessment takes place as soon as possible in order to decide whether the siblings should be placed together or apart.

Factors to consider

Age Factors: Where one older child has parented a younger child - can be difficult when this is no longer needed. They could still act as a consultant to new parents. May be quicker to place younger child, but this needs to be balanced against life-time loss of a sibling. May be necessary to place younger children on their own if joint placement has not been sought in the agreed timescales.

From when social worker becomes involved with a family they should develop an awareness/assessment of sibling relationships. e.g. Is there a favoured child? Is there a scapegoated child? Is there a parenting child? Are boys and girls treated differently? Are children modelling behaviour on parents? How much warmth and care is there between siblings?

How much conflict? Are siblings abusing each other-emotionally, physically or sexually? Consider what work could be undertaken to support relationships. Ascertain children's wishes and feelings what has happened to them including their feelings about brothers and sisters. How much do they identify with each sibling? Assess each individual child's relationship with each other. Include observations of how they are with each other. Observations of others who have seen children e.g. teachers, foster carers, social worker.

Four key factors which need to be assessed (Furman and Bushmaster 1985)

1. The degree of warmth
2. The degree of conflict
3. The degree of rivalry
4. The degree to which one of the siblings nurtures or dominates the other.
 - Look at overall dynamics of a large sibling group.
 - Consider what work could be done to improve sibling relationships e.g.: consider therapy, understand reasons for the behaviour.

Circumstances which may indicate that siblings should be placed separately

- Intense levels of conflict
- Dominant, abusive behaviour
- Consider carefully siblings who have been sexually abused
- Intense rivalry and jealousy - unable to tolerate any attention given to other sibling
- Exploitation - based on gender e.g. boys seen as superior.
- Chronic scapegoating of one child - maintaining unhelpful alliances - entrenched behaviours. Maintaining unhelpful positions e.g. a child may be stuck in the role of victim or bully.
- Highly sexualised behaviour with each other.
- Acting as triggers to each other's traumatic material.
- An older sibling may not be able to invest emotionally in a new family or may hinder emotional investment of younger child. Care plan for older children may include direct contact with parents but a younger child may need adoption with no contact.
- One sibling may have significant attachment to another carer which would be damaging to disrupt

Placing large sibling groups

Following assessment of each sibling's relationship, consider which relationship works best. Consider placing alternative siblings together if strength of relationship or potential to build a relationship is considered to be in each child's best interest.

Sibling Relationship Checklist Particular significance should be given to:

- Sharing in boisterous play
- Resolving conflict through age appropriate reasoning
- Reciprocal attempts to alleviate distress

1. Look at behaviour of child A to child B
2. List of behaviours child B to child A

3. Interactions:

- A. What evidence is there of sharing e.g. boisterous play, rituals, jokes, fun.
- B. Are there differences e.g: in roles they adopt, activities, interest, behaviour.
- C. What evidence is there of reciprocity? e.g. Pride in each other, praise and mutual help.
- D. Do they model on each other e.g. Think they look alike, imitate each other, unite in the face of problems.

4. What are these siblings own views of their relationship.

5. Sum up positives and negatives that their relationship holds for each sibling.

Conclude on basis of all above information and explain reasons why a decision is made.

Lord, J and Borthwick ,S. (2008) Together or Apart: Assessing siblings for Permanent Placement (2nd edition) BAAF

*Prepared by Irfan Alam,
Assistant Director, Children's Services*

Mae'r dudalen hon yn wag yn fwriadol

**CITY AND COUNTY OF CARDIFF
DINAS A SIR CAERDYDD**

CORPORATE PARENTING ADVISORY COMMITTEE

16 January 2018

Independent Reviewing Officers (IRO) Monitoring Report – November 2017

Reasons for the Report

1. The purpose of this report is to provide the Committee with information about the role, function and activity of the Independent Reviewing Officer (IRO) Service.
2. The Corporate Parenting Advisory Committee's terms of reference require the Committee to regularly review performance data and ensure performance monitoring systems are in place to achieve sustained improvements.
3. The Committee receives a report from the IRO service twice a year.

Background

4. Independent Reviewing Officers (IROs) have a responsibility to act directly as corporate parents. Local authorities are required by law to appoint an IRO to every child who is looked after. They monitor care plans, convene and chair reviews for children subject to care orders, accommodated voluntarily, placed with foster carers, in residential or secure establishments, living with kinship carers or placed for adoption. Their role is to ensure that each care plan clearly sets out the help, care and support each child needs and takes full account of each child's wishes and feelings.
5. Independent Reviewing Officers have specific responsibility to escalate concerns about Looked After Children through a dispute resolution process. If the concern cannot be resolved within the line management structure, the process allows escalation to the Chief Executive and ultimately to the Children and Family Court

Advisory and Support Service (CAFCASS Cymru) to consider legal action if necessary.

6. The November 2017 monitoring report is attached at Appendix A and provides an overview of the service, its workload and performance information.

Financial Implications

7. The Social Services Directorate has submitted a pressure bid for two additional IR Officers. This is currently being considered as part of the budget process for 2018/2019.

Legal Implications

8. There are no direct legal implications arising from this report.

RECOMMENDATION

9. The Committee is recommended to note the information contained in the report; and make any observations or comments.

Irfan Alam
Assistant Director of Children's Services
11 January 2018

The Monitoring Report November 2017

Adoption and Children Act 2002 and The Review of Children's Cases (Amendment) (Wales) Regulations 2004

Independent Reviewing Officers Guidance Wales 2004 sets out the requirements of the IRO's and Responsible Authority in more detail. The key outcomes envisaged are:

- Focus on needs of children and ensuring they are addressed.
- Minimising drift.
- Consistency of care planning and decision-making.
- Involvement of appropriate persons in the process. The Reviewing Officers Guidance 2004 clearly requires an IRO to chair reviews of children who are:
 - In an adoptive placement prior to an adoption order being granted;
 - Looked after subject to a statutory order or accommodated with the agreement of parents.
- Young people in Young Offender Institutions subject to a Care Order or on remand as required under Legal Aid Sentencing and Punishment of Offender's Act 2012 (LASPO 2012)

Frequency of reports

The Independent Reviewing Service provides a report to the Corporate Parenting Advisory Committee twice a year and will also provide twice yearly reports to the LSCB.

The Reviewing Service

The Service comprises of 14 IROs in post made up of full and part time positions. Due to previous staff changes there is currently one agency worker covering a vacant post. There has been much change over the last twelve months to ensure that all vacant posts and spare capacity within the team has been filled on a permanent basis. As a result, the service offers a combination of IROs who have substantial experience and new staff member's joining the service within the last 12 months. There is a buddying system in place to support new staff. 3 IRO's have been previously trained to undertake reviews for the Integrated Family Support Team (IFST), but this arrangement is now under review due to the level of activity within this role.

All IRO and Child Protection (CP) chairs in the service are able to carry dual functions chairing Looked After Children reviews and/or child protection conferences. This has improved the effectiveness of the IRO function and quality assuring the support available for Looked After Children.

Immediate line management responsibility for the IROs is undertaken by the Service Manager Safeguarding and Review. The current Service Manager post is vacant following the departure of the previous manager, and an interim arrangement is being considered due to a failure to appoint to the post, and until a new recruitment process is initiated.

There are two Service Manager Safeguarding and Review posts, with both posts managed by the Operational Manager Safeguarding. The second Service Manager is responsible for the Adult Safeguarding Team and the Education Safeguarding Officers Service. Under the management of the Operational Manager, the Service Manager posts work on a strategic level to guide and advise on the safeguarding agenda across the council and the city.

The Corporate Safeguarding Board continues to develop and implement the recommendations made by the Welsh Audit Office in the Review of Corporate Safeguarding Arrangements in Welsh Councils (July 2015). The Corporate Safeguarding Board will:

- i. Ensure the compliance of all Council Directorates with key safeguarding requirements in relation to children and vulnerable adults
- ii. Support the Statutory Director of Social Services in the discharge of his/her wider safeguarding duties.
- iii. Support HR in the delivery of key vetting and barring requirements and workforce development.
- iv. Provide an Annual Corporate Safeguarding Report, setting out the performance of all Directorates, in relation to vetting and barring, staff safeguarding training, and the operation of front-line services in terms of their effectiveness in identifying and referring safeguarding concerns.
- v. Review and develop relevant corporate safeguarding standards and policy.
- vi. Review and develop appropriate corporate safeguarding performance measures.
- vii. Advise the Head of the Paid Service and recommend relevant action in relation to corporate safeguarding standards and policy.
- viii. Promote effective cross Directorate safeguarding practice particularly in terms of information sharing and data collection, front-line operational awareness, staff training and wider partnership engagement.

The corporate safeguarding board meets quarterly to review and update an agreed work plan arising from the recommendations made by the Welsh Audit Office.

Independent Reviewing Officer workload

The independent Reviewing Officer (IRO) service is a statutory function within each Local Authority. Each authority must appoint a person (IRO) in respect of all looked after children known to the authority. As part of this role each IRO must participate in all reviews for the child, monitor the performance of the authority's function, and refer the case of the child to the Children and Family Court Advisory Support Service if they consider it appropriate to do so. In addition to these duties, here in Cardiff the aim has been to split the role with the role of Conference Chairs in Child Protection

cases. This ultimately increases the duties and roles placed upon the individual officers.

The IRO role is key to improving outcomes for children in care, it is the critical mechanism in determining crucial decisions affecting a child's future and increasingly, IRO's are being called to account for the robustness of these decisions. The Social Services and Well-being (Wales) Act 2014 challenges local authorities to do things differently and to improve consistency and quality of practice, ensuring that children and young people are seen and heard and play a meaningful part in the decisions that are made about them and in determining their own wellbeing and outcomes.

Within Cardiff Council, the Social Services Department currently employs 9 FTE and 5 PT IRO/Conference Chairs who undertake the above statutory duties. Since the implementation of the Social Services and Well-being (Wales) Act 2014 combined with additional pressures placed on the department, the current number of IRO posts are now inadequate to respond to the increasing demands. The current caseload for IROs within Cardiff is approximately 753 cases divided amongst all team members. This currently equates to a FTE IRO with a caseload of approximately 90 cases. National guidance advocates that the caseload should be within the remit of 65-75 in number. Figures in Cardiff also demonstrate that the caseload number across the team has increased by 13.6% in the last year.

Increased numbers of Court proceedings have also impacted considerably on the work of the IRO whereby there is a requirement by the judiciary for IROs to take an active role in the proceedings, read and inform themselves of all documentation provided to the Court, and also present a statement on their view and opinion of the plans and support for the child. Whilst elements of this role were previously seen as good practice but not mandatory in all cases, this is now identified as a firm expectation on behalf of the courts. As a result of this, the Operational Manager has presented a Pressure Bid application to identify an additional resource of two further IRO posts within the service.

The team is located at County Hall, although the majority of the reviews are conducted within the community, usually in the child or young person's placement setting. There are travelling requirements involved in these reviews where some children have been placed in, for example, North of Scotland, London, Manchester, Devon and Cornwall. We currently have 249 looked after children placed outside of the authority.

All IROs and Safeguarding officers have completed the relevant Signs of Safety Training. The Signs of Safety framework is part of the wider change programme within the service that is designed to significantly improve our ability to achieve better outcomes for the children and families we work with. Signs of Safety requires a fundamental change to our overall approach when working with children and families. The purpose in implementing Signs of Safety is to:

- Promote the need for children and families to remain together where it is safe for them to do so.

- Develop its workforce in order to make sure children are as safe as possible.
- Create a culture which empowers staff to proactively manage risk and engage with children, young people and their families.
- Ensure that there is clear and supportive leadership and open communication across the service.
- Focus on the practice that will provide the necessary interventions for the needs of children and their families.

The Service Manager role of the Safeguarding Service has been identified as one of the practice leads for the support and implementation of the Signs of Safety model and is currently facilitating peer support groups for effective and comprehensive SoS implementation.

Purpose of reviews

The purpose of the review meeting is to consider the plan for the child, monitor progress and enable decisions to be made. Part 6 of the Social Services & Well-Being Act (Wales) 2014 relates to Looked After Children and the role of the IRO. Under this part of the Act, it is a statutory requirement for each looked after child to have an effective Care & Support plan that meets their day to day long term needs and which identifies the outcomes for the child. and also demonstrates the multi-agency plans to meet child's needs. The plan achieves this by settings objectives for work with the child, birth family and caregivers in relation to the child's developmental needs. These needs include health, education, emotional wellbeing and behavioural development, identity, family and social relationships, social presentation, and self-care skills.

A significant change of note is that section 20 of the Children Act 1989 'voluntary accommodation' is replaced with Section 76 of the 2014 SSWBA.

Frequency of Reviews

Looked After Children reviews must be conducted at the following frequency:

- Within 28 days of a child becoming looked after.
- Subsequently within 3 months
- 6 monthly thereafter,

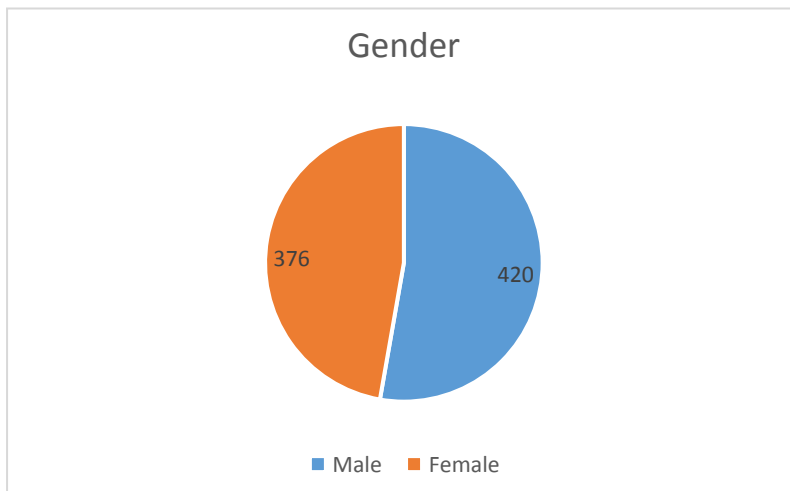
Reviews should be convened earlier if there is a significant change in the child's care plan or failure to carry out an important aspect of that plan. The cycle begins again from the date the child is placed with an adoptive family.

Quality Assurance role

The IRO's provide a quality assurance role through regular review of cases. This provides appropriate challenge to social work practice and care plans for looked after children. As part of their input to the new Quality assurance frame work, IRO's

will be required to audit one case file each month and provide feedback of their findings to the Quality Assurance Officer. The Quality Assurance Framework provides a systemic monitoring and evaluation of practice, policies and procedures. This will be achieved through monthly case file auditing. The findings from the monthly audits will drive service improvement, identify areas of practice that are good or in need of further development through training.

Looked After Children Performance Information

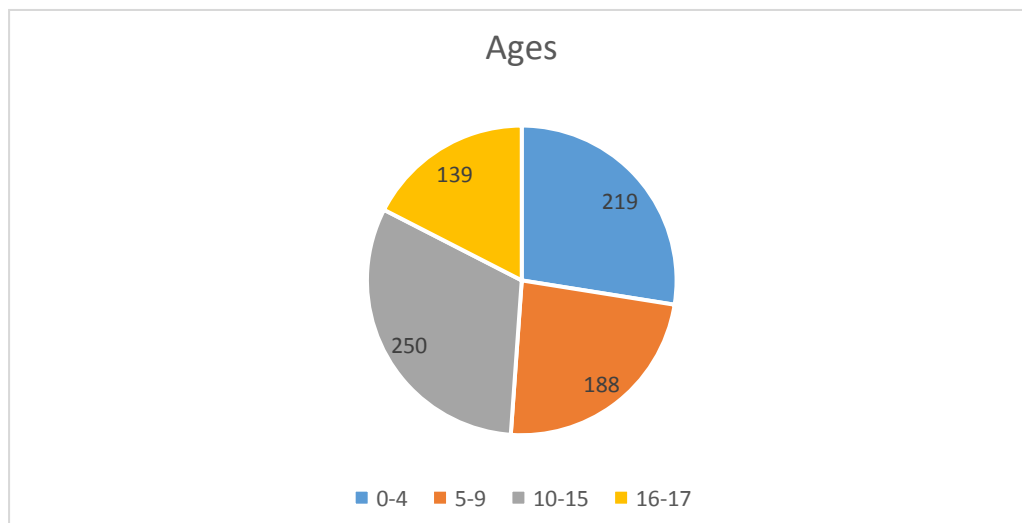


Gender (at 31/10/2017)

Male	420	52.8%
Female	376	47.2%
Total	796	

The Looked After Children Population as of the end of October 2017 was 796. We have seen a significant increase in the number of looked after children since the last reported figures of 709 in October 2016. This is an increase of 87 children. At present we are unable to provide specific details as to this increase although audit and case management reviews are taking place to look at any trends or issues that may have attributed to this significant increase. Across children's services concerted efforts are made to refer all children into edge of care arrangements such as Rapid Response and the Adolescent Resource Centre (ARC) as a means of preventing the child from ending up in the formal care process. Despite these arrangements, however, current numbers of children being looked after continue to increase. As detailed in the figures above neither males or females appear to be over represented within the Looked After population.

Ages of Looked After Children



Ages (at 31/10/2017)

0-4	219	27.5%
5-9	188	23.6%
10-15	250	31.4%
16-17	139	17.5%

Total **796**

There has been an increase in all the age groups over the last year, apart from the 16-17 age group in comparison to last years' figures.

Start and End Becoming Looked After

	Starts	Ends
Nov-16	17	29
Dec-16	13	20
Jan-17	37	21
Feb-17	26	18
Mar -17	28	12
Apr-17	18	7
May-17	39	26
Jun-17	32	23
Jul-17	41	28
Aug-17	24	20
Sep-17	22	7
Oct-17	22	10
Total	319	221

Number of Unaccompanied Asylum Seeking Children in Care Nov 16 – Oct 17

We have had 17 Unaccompanied Asylum Seeking Children (UASC) come into care during the last six months. The Local Authority has previously worked closely with the Home Office and Welsh Government in offering Care & Support to UASC who were being dispersed to the UK following the closure of the 'Jungle' camp in Calais. The majority of these have since been reunited with their families in various parts of the UK. For those not reunited with family the Local Authority will continue to support them as Looked After Children.

Number of children who have had 3 or more moves

2015/16	64/644	9.90%
2016/17	79/725	10.90%

As the figures show there has been an increase in children who have experienced three or more placement moves in 2016/17. This figure includes a percentage of children who have moved from out of county placements back into the authority area. The Reviewing Service continues to support children and social workers to ensure that placements offer stability and are meeting their individual needs. Any increase, however, will be monitored continuously to ensure that all children have a greater degree of permanency and stability.

Children placed for adoption between 01/11/2016 – 31/10/2017

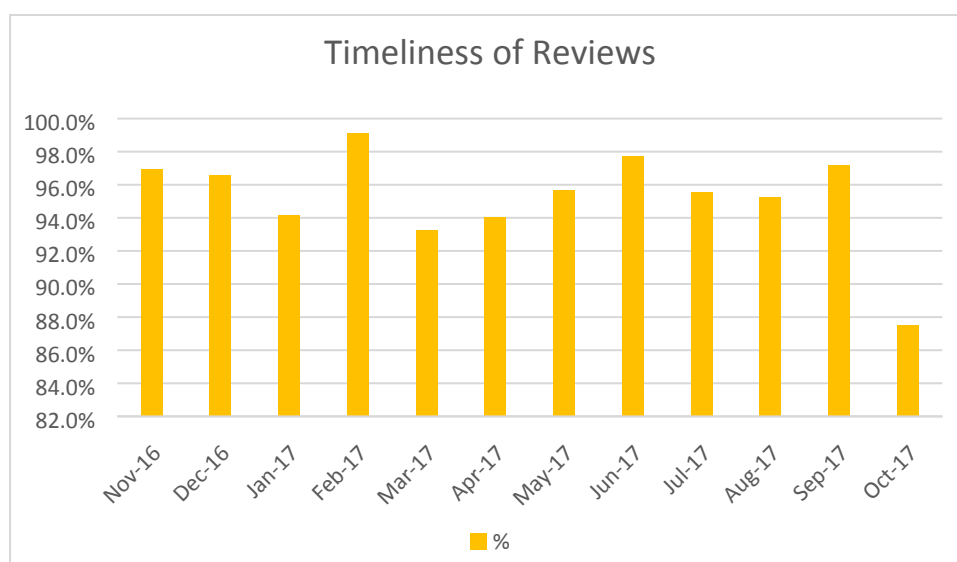
Age	Female	Male	Total
0-4	21	14	35
5-9	1	1	2
Total	22	15	38

A total of 38 children were placed for adoption between November 2016 and October 2017. The increase in these numbers can be attributable to the significant numbers of care proceedings that have taken place within the preceding months and concluding within this period.

There remains disparity between the numbers of children placed for adoption within the 5-9 age range, this emphasizes the need to develop best practice to increase the chances of older children being considered and eventually adopted.

Timelines of Looked After Children Reviews

	Late	On Time	Total	%
Nov-16	5	158	163	96.9%
Dec-16	5	141	146	96.6%
Jan-17	11	177	188	94.1%
Feb-17	1	112	113	99.1%
Mar-17	14	194	208	93.3%
Apr-17	11	174	208	94.1%
May-17	9	199	185	95.7%
Jun-17	4	171	208	97.7%
Jul-17	8	173	175	95.6%
Aug-17	8	161	181	95.3%
Sep-17	7	243	169	97.2%
Oct -17	23	162	250	87.5%
Total	106	2064	2170	95.1%



Cardiff continues to perform slightly below the Welsh average of 95.9% for reviews taking place within timescale with our current average of 95.1%. When looking at factors impacting on timeliness it was identified that issues relating to sickness; availability of workers and late notification of start of being looked after impacted on achieving 100% compliance with this timescale. It must, however, be stressed that given the increase in the number of looked after children within Cardiff over the year, and as discussed previously, the need for additional resource, that the ability of the IRO service to continue to maintain such a high level of timeliness highlights the team's commitment to ensure that we remain within statutory timescales.

The Service Manager for the Reviewing service is informed by the performance team on a weekly basis of all children that become looked after. This provides consistency and timeliness of allocation to an IRO, which in turn has resulted in less reviews being held out of timescales. There has also been changes to the internal notification system of start being looked after children which is now incorporated into

our Carefirst System. Due to the current vacancy of the Service Manager post, consistent allocation has proved difficult to maintain effectively. Once the post is filled then this will be implemented effectively moving forward.

Timeliness of Looked After children reviews is essential to ensure no child or young person has their welfare compromised due to the delay or cancellation of a review. The system in place ensures operational managers must approve a review being cancelled or postponed.

Placement with Parents (as at 31/10/17)

There are currently 97 Placement with Parent (PWP) arrangements that are subject to review by the IROs.

Out of Area Placements

	OOO	
DOH Type Description	OOO	Grand Total
Children's home outside LA boundary	45	45
Foster placement with relative / friend outside LA	7	7
Independent living	2	2
Placed with foster carer provided by LA outside LA	8	8
Placed with parents / person with parental resp.	14	14
Placement with agency foster carer outside LA	140	140
Resid accom not subject to Children's Home regs	1	1
Residential School	2	2
YOI or Prison	3	3
Grand Total	222	222

The above details the number and breakdown of children currently in out of area placements. As detailed above, there is a significant number of children with agency carers outside of the Local Authority. Work continues to look at the appropriateness of all placements outside of area and an Out of Area Placements Panel takes place on a monthly basis to consider all requests for out of area placements. This is represented by Children's Services senior management and representatives from Education and Cardiff & Vale Health Board.

IRO Resolution of Problems

IRO's are in a unique position within a local authority they carry out a critical monitoring and challenging role. They can highlight both positive and negative issues that affect children, ensuring that children's views are heard. They should be able to evidence how their role has made a positive difference to the child and helped to improve life chances of children they are involved with.

If an IRO believes that the practice or policy of the Local Authority is detrimental to the child's welfare, they have a duty to assertively challenge the Local Authority. A

key feature of the IRO role is that they should provide an independent perspective uninfluenced by managerial or resource pressures of the local authority.

The Local Authority has an active Dispute Resolution Protocol (DRP) in place. This enables issues to be addressed via a formalised document that is retained and responded to within the Carefirst system.

There have been several IRO DRPs that have been escalated to Operational Manager level in the last six months, in line with the protocol. These have resulted in clear agreements to progress that cases discussed effectively.

Elements of the role of the IRO include:

- To ensure that the welfare of the child in care is safeguarded.
- To provide consultation and advice for the child, social work teams, professionals, carers.
- To make effective challenges through the dispute resolution process when plans are not serving a child needs appropriately.

An IRO can raise any issues of practice with the social worker and team manager. If the issues are not addressed within an acceptable timescale the matter is escalated to the Operational Manager, in the relevant service area.

The IRO service provides robust challenge to social work team regarding case that have gone into drift or where the quality of care plan is not good enough.

Occasionally, this challenge has met with some resistance from some social workers or managers. Where matters have not been resolved satisfactory they have been escalated to the Assistant Director for resolution. In an effort to raise awareness and a better understanding of the IRO. The IRO service will be attending team meetings to discuss the role of the IRO and develop better working relationships. The escalation protocol has also been updated to reflect what will constitute the trigger for a case alert and/or escalation and will be distributed to all social work staff. Regular IRO's and Manager forums will take place to discuss cases and general practice to ensure better partnership working.

The range of powers available to the IRO include seeking of legal advice if they are not happy with the Local Authority's decisions regarding the long term plans for a child or young person. The Lancashire Judgement – 2012, a case brought by two teenage brothers, against Lancashire County Council and an Independent Reviewing Officer, found the Local Authority and the IRO had breached the boys' human rights by not challenging the care plan.

The Independent Reviewing Officer (IRO) was found personally responsible, alongside the Local Authority, because he did not hold the Local Authority to account for failing to implement its care plan and review decisions. In response to the Judgement, we have ensured that all IRO's have direct access to independent legal advice, which will aid challenge or should they need to attend court to give evidence. This will be spot purchased as and when required.

The monitoring forms are now embedded as part of the quality assurance framework.

It is a statutory requirement for IRO views to be included within all care plans submitted to court. This practice has not been widely adopted across Wales, however, Cardiff has embedded this practice, with the IRO being provided all care plans and relevant assessments prior to being filed and their views being recorded in all court care plans.

Pathway Plans

IRO's also chair pathway plan reviews for Young People from age 16 to 17 years who had previously been Looked After. Work is currently underway to develop reviews for Young Adults 18+ years in response to "When I'm Ready" for Young Adults who want to remain in their foster placement or continue in full time education or training. Evidence within the service suggests, however, that many of the 18+ age group do opt to disengage with the IRO service, and as such consideration needs to be given as to how the department attends to these cases in future.

Consultation with children and young people

The IRO ensures during the reviewing process that wishes and feelings of the child/young person are sought and they are encouraged to participate in their review. Parents and foster carers are able to contribute to the review process, and also ensure that younger children also have an opportunity to discuss their feelings about the reviewing process and their experiences in foster care.

The Independent Reviewing and Safeguarding Service are reviewing the way they engage children and young people in the reviewing process and will be undertaking a review of how they can encourage children and young people to chair their own reviews. IRO's also visit children and young people in between reviews to ensure they are happy in the placement and they have the opportunity to share their views independently, this also takes place if there are issues of concerns. The service is keen to strengthen further children's participation in reviews. The IROs are currently communicating with other Local Authorities and gathering examples of good practice in this area to contribute to effective communication and engagement with Looked After Children. Some examples provided have used apps, phones and other devices which has proved very successful in improving engagement and communication.

It is intended that the Service Manager for the Reviewing Service will work with the Quality Assurance Officer (post currently vacant) to undertake quality assurance visits to young people to inform other areas in which we can develop good practice in engaging children and young people in the reviewing process.

Adoption

The IRO team and the adoption team have worked closely together to improve adoption reviews. Timescales remain the same, but in many cases these placements are usually out of county arrangements, and this has an impact on capacity for IRO's and can affect caseloads. IRO's ensure they remain the chair for children until adoption is fully completed.

Next Steps:

- Recruitment to the vacant Service Manager post
- Ongoing recruitment to permanent posts
- Embed Signs of Safety across all areas of work
- Contribute to overall Safeguarding Action Plan and identify key areas for development
- Prioritise the participation and engagement of children & young people within their Looked After Reviews
- Explore use of software/apps to replace outdated modes of communication with young people and their families

Bright Spots Programme and the Your Life, Your Care Survey

Reason for the Report

1. The Corporate Parenting Advisory Committee's Terms of Reference require the Committee to ensure that the life chances of Looked After Children, Children in Need and care leavers are maximised. The terms of reference also require the Committee to ensure that mechanisms are in place to enable those children and young people to play an integral role in service planning and design, and that their views are regularly sought and acted upon.
2. This report is to inform the Committee that Children's Social Services have signed up to participate in the Bright Spots programme and the associated 'Your Life, Your Care' survey. The programme aims to identify and improve the well-being and care experiences of looked after children and young people through a participative approach.

Background

3. The Bright Spots programme was launched in 2013 as a joint partnership between Coram Voice and the Hadley Centre for Adoption and Foster Care Studies at the University of Bristol. Funded by the Hadley Trust, the programme has worked with local authorities across England and is now being extended into Wales.
4. The programme aims to identify and promote 'bright spots'. Bright spots being the policies and practices that have a positive influence on children and young people's well-being.
5. The programme is unique in combining a children's rights perspective with rigorous data analysis, facilitating local authorities to drive change based on

what is important to children and young people. To do so, the project has developed Bright Spots Well-being Indicators and the Your Life, Your Care survey to systematically examine children's care experiences and well-being. The Indicators are broken down into four domains: Resilience, Recovery, Relationships and Rights. The survey asks children age-appropriate questions about their carer, social worker, friends, where they live, how they feel and the things they get to do. The survey will be completed by children aged 4-18 and relies on identifying trusted adults who can help them complete the survey honestly. Those trusted adults cannot be social workers or foster carers since children and young people might not feel comfortable answering the questions in their presence.

6. Further information is provided in **Appendix A** the Local Authority Guidance Pack, and copies of the surveys are provided as **Appendix B, C and D**.
7. The survey will be undertaken in April / May 2018. The Bright Spots lead officer for Wales attended the Children's Services Management Team meeting in December 2017 to discuss the process, key tasks and how to get the most out of the survey. A representative from the Council's advocacy service provider also attended and will support the implementation of the survey.
8. The Committee will receive an evaluation report containing outcomes from the survey.

Financial Implications

9. There are no direct financial implications arising from this report.

Legal Implications

10. There are no legal implications arising from this report.

RECOMMENDATION

11. The Committee is recommended to note the information.

Irfan Alam

Assistant Director of Children's Services

11 January 2018



'Your Life, Your Care' Survey Local Authority Guidance Pack



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Introduction and Welcome

Dear Local Authority,

Thank you for signing up to participate in the Bright Spots programme and the 'Your Life, Your Care' survey. We are extremely pleased that you are taking the first steps to identifying and improving the well-being and care experience of children and young people in your care.

In this guidance pack you will find a list of resources created to help you to understand the purpose of the survey and support you to achieve organisational buy-in and distribute the survey to all looked-after children and young people aged 4 to 18.

The Bright Spots programme was launched in 2013 as a joint partnership between Coram Voice and the Hadley Centre for Adoption and Foster Care Studies at the University of Bristol. Funded by the Hadley Trust, the programme has worked with local authorities across England to improve the care experience and well-being of children and young people in care and care leavers.

The programme is unique in combining a children's rights perspective with rigorous data analysis, allowing local authorities to use the information from the survey to drive change based on what is important to children and young people. The Bright Spots programme starts from the premise that children have important things to say about their lives, as 'experts' in their experience of the care system. The surveys we have created give a unique insight into children's subjective well-being that is also comparable to national data.

We are really proud of the interest from local authorities that can see the potential of the survey, and hope that you will join us in identifying and promoting the 'Bright Spots' – the practices that have a positive influence on children and young people's well-being.

Best wishes,



Linda Briheim-Crookall
Head of Policy and Practice Development, Coram Voice

If anything in this guidance pack is unclear please do not hesitate to contact susanna.larsson@coramvoice.org.uk

Bright Spots Programme Overview

The *Your Life, Your Care* survey was developed through the Bright Spots Programme – a partnership between Coram Voice and the University of Bristol. The programme aims to improve the care experience and well-being of looked after children and care leavers by identifying and promoting 'bright spots' – the policies and practices that have a positive influence on children and young people's well-being.

Through the project, we have developed the Bright Spots Well-being Indicators and the *Your Life, Your Care* survey, which measures them – tools to systematically look at children's care experience and well-being, based on what they say is important. Over the past five years we have invested in developing, piloting and refining the tool and our methodology for disseminating it.

The role of Coram Voice

We have developed a successful methodology for distributing the survey with local authorities in England achieving an average 35% response rate in the 16 areas we worked with in 2017. Our model of support to local authorities has been an essential part of making the roll out of the survey a success. We provide intensive support both face-to-face and by email and telephone to assist local authorities to adapt our national model to their local context and ensure the dissemination of the survey is successful. We also support local authorities by analysing and presenting the findings to help them explore the implications for policy and practice.

Our successful model of distribution, relies on:

- **Strategic buy-in** so that the Local Authority (LA) prioritises the survey and can dedicate time to ensuring successful distribution (e.g. releasing staff; sharing information and contact lists; senior managers communicating value of engagement). Coram Voice currently undertakes an initial visit to the LA to present the project to senior managers and answer queries prior to sign up to ensure the LA understands the benefits and commitment required and can make an informed decision about using the survey.
- Distributing an **online survey** to all looked after children in care during a **time-limited survey period** – providing focused activity to encourage participation.
- Identifying a **trusted adult** who is responsible for identifying a time and space for the child to complete the survey and supporting them if necessary (essential for younger children and children with disabilities).
- A **Strategic champion, a Project Lead and Working Group** within the local authority who takes responsibility for disseminating the survey, sending reminders and encouraging participation – supported by Coram Voice staff.
- **Wide communications** about the survey to children and young people, foster carers, residential care staff, social workers, schools, managers and other stakeholders to ensure buy in and awareness of the survey – in advance of and during the survey period.
- A **detailed guidance pack with communications templates**, as well as regular prompts about key activities and updates on response rates during the survey period.
- **Comprehensive analysis and reporting** of findings to local authority staff and young people including a full report, summary findings for staff and all children and young people in each of the survey age groups.
- **Follow up visits to share and explore findings** – we present findings and facilitate discussions to understand local implications and help plan next steps including the response to and dissemination of findings.
- **Peer learning seminars** that provide local authorities with opportunities to network and share learning.

In coordinating the delivery of the survey process, Coram Voice and the University of Bristol will:

- Visit each local authority prior to the survey period to facilitate working group meeting to plan local dissemination
- Clone and set up online surveys for each local authority (LA) 2-4 weeks prior to the survey period in Welsh and English.
- Give weekly feedback to local authorities on response rates and provide support and advice on how to boost response rates during the survey period.
- Respond to queries from local authorities via email and telephone.
- Clean and anonymise the data and make raw data available to participating local authorities upon request.
- Analyse each LA's local data to create reports of findings, summaries for professionals and summaries for children and young people.
- Visit each participating LAs to present and explore local findings.

Why distribute the 'Your Life, Your Care' Survey

Our aim is for the survey to be the main resource for identifying the quality of children and young people's care experience and well-being. The survey is unique because:

- **Measures well-being and quality of care experience** – YLYC is the **only** survey of its kind to provide an effective measure of looked after children's subjective well-being, capturing the quality of the care experience of children as young as four.
- **It is designed by young people** – the survey has been developed based on what 140 young people in care told the researchers was important to looked after children, through focus groups and interviews around the country. It uses a basket of indicators to measure well-being.
- **It is strongly evidence based** – the survey draws on two international literature reviews, conducted by the University of Bristol, of '[Children and young people's views of being in care](#)' and '[Measuring well-being](#)', which informed the focus groups with young people. We have also used survey development experts to simplify and test questions and make sure our findings can be compared to national data.
- **It is quick and easy to complete** – young people stressed the survey should not be too long. We carefully tested and chose questions, developing three age-appropriate questionnaires (for ages 4-7, 8-11 and 11-18) that only take an average of 10 minutes to complete. We ensured that children understood and interpreted the questions as intended through cognitive interviewing in the pilot phase.
- **It is confidential** – the data is aggregated, individual children cannot be identified and this increases the likelihood of more honest feedback.
- **It captures the experience of younger children:** Through age appropriate questionnaires and a methodology using trusted adults it allows children as young as 4 to share their experiences.
- **It helps local authorities understand children's experience of care and well-being, what is working well and where things could improve** – we can analyse the data to help local authorities understand how their looked after children compare to: (a) general population (b) their own cohorts over time (by repeating the survey) and (c) children in care nationally.
- **It allows a wider group of children and young people to participate and give their views** – the survey is a way of giving more looked after children in a local authority the chance to say what is important to them, not just those who are able to participate in groups like the Children in Care Council.
- **It supports evidence led practice** – When we work intensively with a local authority to roll out the survey we analyse what children and young people say and support local authorities to understand what that means for their services. We create bespoke reports and summaries and facilitate workshops to help them feedback to staff and children and young people what they found and what actions they will take as a result.

The Role of the Local Authority Working Group

The aim of the working group is to coordinate and disseminate the 'Your Life, Your Care' survey, and set up an action plan based on the survey findings. Each local authority will nominate a project lead whose role will be to liaise with Coram Voice and champion the Bright Spots programme internally.

The local authority working group will consist of lead and key staff members from the following areas within your local authority:

- Senior managers in Children's Services;
- Service Development or Quality Assurance;
- LACE Team or Independent Reviewing Services;
- Youth Engagement or Participation.

You may also want to involve leads from relevant specialist services, e.g. services for young people with disabilities, asylum-seeking, not in education, employment and training, youth offending, health and well-being teams.

The working group will:

1. Generate buy-in and commitment to the survey across the local authority amongst professionals, carers and children and young people in care;
2. Identify how many children aged 4-18 who are able to complete the survey with assistance;
3. Identify the best way to distribute the survey to children and young people and what professionals are best placed to support young people to complete it (i.e. designated teachers, IROs, youth workers, YOT, health visitors/LAC nurses, advocates, participation workers, support workers, NEET workers etc.);
4. Ensure that communications to professionals and children and young people is timely and inclusive;
5. Identify how the local authority will use and respond to the findings once children and young people's responses have been analysed.

To achieve the above, the working group will:

1. Contact professionals, send information and provide updates and reminders;
2. Communicate the programme objectives to professionals, carers and young people across the local authority via different communication channels;
3. Identify named individuals who could support children and young people to complete the survey during the survey period, particularly the younger children and children with additional needs;
4. Identify how the survey findings will feed into and inform the local authority's service development programme.

Frequently Asked Questions

Below are frequently asked questions about the Bright Spots programme and the 'Your Life, Your Care' survey. In addition to providing the answers to important questions, this document should serve as a reminder to the key points of the programme and running the survey in your local authority.

Bright Spots Programme

What information does the 'Your Life, Your Care' survey capture?

In bringing together literature reviews, roundtable interviews with professionals and focus groups with 140 children and young people across England, we have developed the 'Bright Spots Well-Being Indicators', which set out what looked after children and young people have said is key to their well-being. The Indicators are broken down into four domains: Resilience, Recovery, Relationships and Rights, which contribute to improving the well-being of children and young people in care.

The 'Your Life, Your Care' survey asks children and young people aged 4 to 18 age-appropriate questions (there are three versions of the survey for 4 to 7 years; 8 to 11 years and 11 to 18 year olds) about their carer, social worker, friends, where they live, how they feel and the things they get to do. The survey allows children and young people to share their views on the things that have an impact on their well-being and care experience.

What is a 'Bright Spot'?

The term 'Bright Spot' refers to an area of local authority practice which positively influences the well-being and care experience of children and young people in care. Through the 'Your Life, Your Care' survey, we identify 'Bright Spots' where children do better than expected in relation to children in the general population or looked after children across local authorities.

The purpose of focusing on 'Bright Spots' is to look beyond negatives and to share and emulate what is going well.

What makes 'Your Life, Your Care' different from other surveys?

'Your Life, Your Care' is a child-led survey where children are asked about their feelings on things that they have said are important to them. The purpose of focusing on well-being and the subjective responses of children and young people rather than objective measures, is to give local authorities a real opportunity to understand how their looked after population are feeling.

Can we include additional questions to the 'Your Life, Your Care' survey?

You cannot include additional local questions to the 'Your Life, Your Care' survey. The questions included were carefully selected to capture what is most important to children and allow comparisons against national data and over time, whilst ensuring it takes no longer than 10 minutes to complete.

The analysis of findings and the production of the report rely on the survey maintaining a consistent structure.

Who is a trusted adult and who can be one?

The trusted adult supports a child or young person to complete the 'Your Life, Your Care' survey. For the 4 to 7 year olds, the trusted adult will read the questions aloud to the child and tick the response they give. For the older groups the support is dependent on the child or young person's needs – this may include explaining the definition of a word or what a question means.

Social workers and foster carers cannot act as trusted adults as there are questions about them in the survey, and children and young people may not feel comfortable answering questions honestly.

Examples of trusted adults in local authorities have been designated teachers, SENCOs, IROs, youth workers, YOT, health visitors/LAC nurses, advocates, participation workers, support workers, NEET workers etc. This list is not exhaustive and will depend on the approach adopted for each local authority.

Can children and young people with learning disabilities complete the surveys?

Trusted adults will be important when supporting a child with learning disabilities to complete the survey. They are asked to use their knowledge of the child to put the questions to them in a way that they will understand and make a judgement about whether or not they are able to respond.

All the questions in the survey are optional and it is possible to skip questions that a child is not able to understand. You must however go through the whole survey and click 'Submit' on the final screen for the responses to be recorded.

How can we address safeguarding issues if the survey is anonymous?

The trusted adult will be asked to be aware of the child or young person's body language or things they say when completing the survey as possible signs of distress. In these instances, local authority safeguarding procedures will apply.

We provide contact information for the Coram Voice advocacy helpline and ChildLine on the instruction sheet and the final page of the survey for any child or young person who is worried or concerned about memories or feelings completing the survey may have brought up for them. The local authority can also add contact information for a named individual or local helpline on these pages.

Why do you set a minimum response rate target?

The minimum response rate exists to ensure that the data collected is analysable. If the minimum target is not met, there is a risk that individual children and young people could be identified by the information they provide, the findings might not be representative and overall comparative analysis may not be possible.

We would consider the implications of such a scenario in line with the University of Bristol's research ethics.

What resources will we need to run the ‘Your Life, Your Care’ survey?

Coram Voice will set up the online survey and provide advice and support around how to set it up and analyse the data.

The resource needed from the local authority is the staff time to effectively disseminate the survey to all children and young people. You will need to know how many children you have in care for each of the groups we survey (so we can give you feedback on response rates), ensure that you have the means to contact the professionals you want to act as trusted adults and others who should know the survey is happening (e.g. email distribution lists) and the time to plan and share communications about the survey to ensure you get the best response rate.

What support will we receive to run the survey successfully?

The Bright Spots team will provide support pre-, during and post-survey. This may include:

- The provision of a guidance pack, including email/letter templates;
- Attending meetings with the working group;
- Providing regular reminders and prompts about key activities;
- Helping you to troubleshoot, including sharing learning from other local authorities;
- Providing feedback on response rates.

Is the survey incentivised?

We took the decision not to incentivise the survey because of logistics and cost in terms of providing vouchers to the large numbers of children and young people completing the survey across Wales. We also wanted to avoid asking children and young people to provide their contact details to receive a voucher, which might confuse them about the anonymity of the survey.

In the focus groups that informed the development of the survey children and young people said that one of the major things that put them off completing surveys was not seeing an impact of what they said. It is important that you let people know what the survey will be used for and provide them with feedback on the findings. Coram Voice will create summaries of the findings for children and young people where your local authority can add what you will do as a result.

Will we need to analyse the data ourselves?

No, the Bright Spots team will analyse the data for you. We will present the findings to your local authority and facilitate discussion to decide on an action plan.

The project lead in the pilot local authority commented on the post-survey support they received:

“Thank you so much for speaking so clearly and passionately about the findings in our ‘Your Life, Your Care’ survey... You have enabled all of us in [the local authority] to have a very thorough understanding of what we do well and what we need to change from our children in care’s perspective. Because the survey has been carried out to the highest possible standards from beginning to end, the messages are not only clear but very convincing...”

What do we do with our findings once we receive them?

The survey gives you an evidence base to inform service improvement and strategy development based on the subjective well-being of children and young people. They can be used to help staff understand children’s current experiences and identify areas for service improvement and where things are going well. You may choose to explore specific issues in more detail develop and adapt services as a result.

The pilot local authority presented and discussed the findings across the local authority and developed a series of 'we will' commitments, which were sent to all looked after children and young people together with a summary of the findings. They have also worked with their children in care council to address specific issues highlighted by the survey.

"Children's participation in service development is a strength and is evidenced by a clear, child-focused pledge, and the annual survey seeks, and acts on, children's views... Senior managers and political leaders demonstrate a strong commitment to external scrutiny and challenge. (...) Research projects, such as the, 'Your life, your care' survey, conducted with a local university and a national charity, involving young people in care, have resulted in improvements in services for children in care and care leavers." (Ofsted, North Somerset inspection report, 2017) +

Will you share our findings externally?

Data attributable to individual local authorities will be kept confidential and not shared with others without your permission. However, aggregated national anonymised findings will be pulled together in a National Report to be published by the Children's Commissioner for Wales and may be shared as part of research reports and presentations by Coram Voice and the University of Bristol to professional and public audiences and to allow local authorities to benchmark against national averages.

Mae'r dudalen hon yn wag yn fwriadol



Your Life, Your Care (ages 4-7)

For the adult reading this survey:

Hello.

This survey gives a voice to children aged 4 to 7 who find themselves in care. It is designed to be read to the child by a trusted adult, who completes it on their behalf. The answers will help us to better understand children's experiences of being in care. We will use the information to improve the care system.

How can you help?

You can help us by sitting with the child who is in care, asking them these questions, and filling in the survey for them. When doing this, be mindful that it is the child/young person's opinion we are after. This means that we want to record *exactly* what the child says. We ask therefore that you do not paraphrase, interpret or attempt to clarify what they want to say, and try to remain as neutral as possible while supporting them.

We have designed this survey carefully so it will be easy and fast to complete. All 16 questions are optional, and the survey has been set up so that it is possible for a child to choose not to respond to some questions.

What happens to this child's answers?

We will not ask for the child's name. This means that no one will know what answers they give to the questions except you – the trusted adult. We will group all the answers together to give an overall picture of how children in your area of the country feel about being in care.

What if the child raises a safeguarding concern?

Children and young people are told that the survey is confidential and therefore adults should only intervene if there is a safeguarding issue.

The survey asks a range of questions about a child's life, some of which may have brought up difficult memories for them. If you have safeguarding concerns you should:

- Let the child or young person finish the survey;
- Check with the child or young person what their answer might mean. For example, they may have ticked the wrong box, or be thinking of past events.

If you still have safeguarding concerns, follow the safeguarding procedures within your local authority and inform the appropriate person. Let the child know that this is occurring. As the survey is confidential, you should not disclose any information about the child or young person's other survey responses that do not specifically relate to the safeguarding concern.






Please complete these questions on behalf of the child


Is the child a...

- Girl
- Boy

Are they...

- Asian
- Black
- Mixed
- White
- Other (please specify what)  _____

Who does the child live with?

- With foster carers
- With family or friends (e.g. Grandparents or Aunt)
- In a residential home
- Somewhere else (if you can, please tell us where)  _____

How long has the child been in care?

- Less than one year
- 1-2 years
- 3-4 years
- 5 or more years
- I don't know

Please read this text to the child:

I am going to ask you 13 questions about your life since you have been in care and how you feel. These questions won't ask for your name and your answers won't be shown to your social worker or carers.

There are no right or wrong answers. These questions just ask for your thoughts.

Your answers will be put with the answers from other children who are also in care. All of these answers will allow the people looking after you to learn more about how to make life better for children in care.

I will help you to answer the questions, and you can ask me if there is anything you don't understand. I won't tell anyone what answers you give, unless you have told me that you or somebody you know has been hurt or is in danger. If that happens, I will speak to somebody else to get advice.

You don't have to answer any of the questions if you don't want to. That's OK too.

So let's get started. Can I ask you the first question? Here it is.



The home you live in

Do you feel safe in the home you live in?

- Mostly yes
- Mostly no

Do you feel settled in the home you live in? (Do you feel comfortable, accepted and at ease?)

- Mostly yes
- Mostly no

Do you like your bedroom?

- Mostly yes
- Mostly no

Being in care

Has someone explained why you are in care?

- Yes
- Not fully
- No

Do you know who your social worker is now?

- Yes
- I think so
- No

If you do know who your social worker is, do you trust your social worker?

- Mostly yes
- Mostly no

Do you trust your carers?

- Mostly yes
- Mostly no

Do your carers notice how you are feeling?

- Mostly yes
- Mostly no

Do you like school?

- Mostly yes
- Mostly no

At the weekends, do you get to have fun?

- Mostly yes
- Mostly no

Do you have a really good friend?

- Yes
- No



Please don't select more than 1 answer(s) per row.

How happy did you feel yesterday?

				
---	---	---	--	---

Very sad

Quite sad

OK

Quite happy

Very happy

Finally, is there anything you want to say or tell us about being in care? What would make being in care better for you?







Thank you both for helping us with this survey today.

We would be very grateful if you could tell the child who is with you that their feelings matter, and thank them again for their help.

What you can do if the child you are with is upset or worried by the questions in this survey

This survey is anonymous, and we cannot identify individual children from the answers given in the survey.

If the child you are with is upset or worried about anything they were asked in the survey you can encourage them or help them to **speak to their social worker**, or call Coram Voice on 0808 800 5792 or visit www.coramvoice.org.uk. This is a free and confidential helpline where you can talk to someone between 9.30am and 5.30pm, Monday to Friday. They can also call ChildLine on 0800 1111 or visit www.childline.org.uk. They have a free telephone service open 24 hours a day.

If you have safeguarding concerns, follow the safeguarding procedures within your local authority and inform the appropriate person. Let the child know that this is happening.

Mae'r dudalen hon yn wag yn fwriadol



Your Life, Your Care

(ages 8-11)

About this survey

Hello.

This survey gives a voice to young people aged 8-11 who find themselves in care. It contains 33 short questions about:

- Yourself
- Being in care
- Your feelings
- People you know
- Chances you get

How can you help?

You can help us by sparing 10 minutes to answer these 33 questions.

We have written the questions carefully so they should be easy and fast for you to answer. You can either fill in the questions yourself, or you can ask for your trusted adult to fill it in with you.

You don't have to answer any questions you don't want to – just leave them blank if you don't want to answer.

What happens to your answers?

We will not ask for your name. This means that no one will know what answers you give to the questions. We will use the information to improve the care system for young people in care.

Thank you for your help in answering this survey.




About you


Are you a...

- Girl
- Boy
- Prefer not to say

Are you...

- Asian
- Black
- Mixed
- White
- Other (please specify what)  _____

Who do you live with?

- Foster carers
- Family or friends (e.g. grandparents or aunt)
- Residential home
- Somewhere else (please tell us where)  _____

How long have you been in care?

- Less than one year
- 1-2 years
- 3-4 years
- 5 or more years
- I don't know

The home you live in now

Do you feel safe in the home you live in?

- All or most of the time
- Sometimes
- Hardly ever
- Never

Do you feel settled in the home you live in? (Do you feel comfortable, accepted and at ease?)

- All or most of the time
- Sometimes
- Hardly ever
- Never

Do you like your bedroom?

- Yes
- No



Is there a pet that you like where you live?

- Yes
- No
- I don't like pets

Being in care

Has someone explained why you are in care?

- Yes
- Not fully
- No

Do you see your mother...

- Too much
- Just the right amount
- Too little
- I cannot see her

Do you see your father...

- Too much
- Just the right amount
- Too little
- I cannot see him

If you have brothers or sisters, do you see them...

- Too much
- Just the right amount
- Too little
- I cannot see them
- I do not have brothers or sisters

Do you have any thoughts or opinions about how much contact you have with your birth family?



Your rights



Do you know you can ask to speak to your social worker on your own?

- Yes I do know this
- No I do not know this

Do you feel included in the decisions that social workers make about your life?

- All or most of the time
- Sometimes
- Hardly ever
- Never

Your worries

Do you ever worry about your feelings or behaviour?

- All or most of the time
- Sometimes
- Hardly ever
- Never

If you DO ever worry, are you getting help with these worries?

- Yes
- No

Your happiness

How happy did you feel yesterday?



Very sad

Quite sad

OK

Quite happy

Very happy

Is your life getting better?

- Much better
- A bit better
- No change
- A bit worse
- A lot worse

You're over half way through - please keep going!

People you know



Do you have an adult who you trust, who helps you and sticks by you no matter what?

- Yes
- No

Do you have a really good friend?

- Yes
- No

Do you trust your carers?

- All or most of the time
- Sometimes
- Hardly ever
- Never

Do your carers notice how you are feeling?

- All or most of the time
- Sometimes
- Hardly ever
- Never

Do your carers show an interest in what you are doing at school?

- All or most of the time
- Sometimes
- Hardly ever
- Never

Do you know who your social worker is now?

- Yes
- I think so
- No

Do you trust the social worker you have now?

- All or most of the time
- Sometimes
- Hardly ever
- Never

School



How much do you like school?

- A lot
- A bit
- Not very much
- Not at all

Do you ever feel afraid of going to school because of bullying? (For example being hit or called mean names, or nasty stories being spread about you.)

- All or most of the time
- Sometimes
- Hardly ever
- Never

If you feel like you are bullied, do you get support from an adult?

- Yes
- No

How often do you...

... get the chance to help the teacher?

- All or most of the time
- Sometimes
- Hardly ever
- Never

... get to have fun at the weekends?

- All or most of the time
- Sometimes
- Hardly ever
- Never

... explore outdoors (e.g. visiting the beach, woods, fields, or going to the park)

- All or most of the time
- Sometimes
- Hardly ever
- Never

Finally, is there anything else you want to say or tell us about being in care? What would make being in care better for you?





Thank you, and support information

Thank you for helping us collect this important information – your opinions matter. Please remember that this survey is anonymous: we cannot tell who you are or who gives what answers to the questions in the survey.

What you can do if you are upset or worried by the questions in this survey

Some of the questions in this survey may have brought up difficult memories for you. If you have any worries or want help with anything do let someone know. If you want help and support you can speak to your social worker or the person who is helping you complete this survey.

You can also call **Coram Voice** on 0808 8005792 or visit www.coramvoice.org.uk. This is a free and confidential helpline where you can talk to someone between 9.30am and 5.30pm, Monday to Friday.

You can also call **ChildLine** on 0800 1111 or visit www.childline.org.uk. They have a free telephone and online chat service open 24 hours a day, 7 days a week.

You can write these numbers down if you want, just in case you ever want to call in the future.

Thanks again for your help.

Mae'r dudalen hon yn wag yn fwriadol



Your Life, Your Care

(Secondary +)

About this survey

Hi.

This survey gives a voice to young people like you, who are in secondary education and who find themselves in care.

We'd like to hear about your experiences. We will use the information to improve the care system.

It contains 46 short questions about:

- Yourself
- Being in care
- Your feelings
- People you know
- Chances you get

How can you help?

You can help us by sparing 10 minutes to answer these questions.

We have written the questions carefully so they should be easy and fast for you to answer.

You don't have to answer any questions you don't want to - just leave them blank and move to the next one.

What happens to your answers?

We will not ask for your name.

This means that no one will know what answers you give to the questions. Instead we will group all the answers together to give an overall picture of how young people in your area of the country feel about being in care. Thank you for your help in answering this survey.




About you

Are you a...

- Girl
- Boy
- Prefer not to say


Are you...

- Asian
- Black
- Mixed
- White

- Other (please specify what)  _____

Who do you live with?

- Foster carers
- Family or friends (e.g. Grandparents or Aunt)
- Residential home

- Somewhere else (please tell us where?)  _____

How long have you been in care?

- Less than one year
- 1-2 years
- 3-4 years
- 5 or more years
- I don't know

How many placements have you had?

- 1 placement
- 2-4 placements
- 5-7 placements
- 8-10 placements
- 11 or more placements
- I don't know

The home you live in now



Do you feel safe in the home you live in?

- All or most of the time
- Sometimes
- Hardly ever
- Never

Do you feel settled in the home you live in? (Do you feel comfortable, accepted and at ease?)

- All or most of the time
- Sometimes
- Hardly ever
- Never

Do you like your bedroom?

- Yes
- No

Is there a pet that you like where you live?

- Yes
- No
- I don't like pets

Being in care

Has someone explained why you are in care?

- Yes
- Not fully
- No

Do adults do things that make you feel embarrassed about being in care?

- Yes
- No

If you ticked 'Yes', can you explain what adults do to make you embarrassed?



Your rights



Did you know you can ask to speak to your social worker on your own?

- Yes I do know this
- No I do not know this

Do you feel included in the decisions that social workers make about your life?

- All or most of the time
- Sometimes
- Hardly ever
- Never

Is there anything else you want to say about feeling included?



Contact with your family

Do you see your mother...

- too much
- just the right amount
- too little
- I cannot see her

Do you see your father...

- too much
- just the right amount
- too little
- I cannot see him

If you have brothers or sisters, do you see them...

- too much
- just the right amount
- too little
- I cannot see them
- I do not have brothers or sisters

Do you have any thoughts or opinions about how much contact you have with your birth family?



Your feelings

Is your life getting better?

- Much better
- A bit better
- No change
- A bit worse
- A lot worse

How happy are you with the way you look?

	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	
Very unhappy												Completely happy

Do you ever worry about your feelings or behaviour?

- All or most of the time
- Sometimes
- Hardly ever
- Never

If you DO ever worry, are you getting help with these worries?

- Yes
- No

People you know



Do you have an adult who you trust, who helps you and sticks by you no matter what?

- Yes
- No

Do you have a really good friend?

- Yes
- No

How often do you talk to your carers about things that matter to you?

- About every day
- More than once a week
- About every week
- About every month
- Rarely / never

Do you trust your carers?

- All or most of the time
- Sometimes
- Hardly ever
- Never

Do your carers notice how you are feeling?

- All or most of the time
- Sometimes
- Hardly ever
- Never

Do your carers show an interest in what you are doing at school or college?

- All or most of the time
- Sometimes
- Hardly ever
- Never

You're over half way through – please keep going!

Social workers



How many social workers have you had in the last 12 months (since this time last year)?

- None
- One
- Two
- Three or more

Do you know who your social worker is now?

- Yes
- I think so
- No

Do you trust the social worker you have now?

- All or most of the time
- Sometimes
- Hardly ever
- Never

Is it easy to get in touch with your social worker?

- All or most of the time
- Sometimes
- Hardly ever
- Never

School

How much do you like school or college?

- A lot
- A bit
- Not very much
- Not at all

Do you ever feel afraid of going to school or college because of bullying? (For example being hit or called mean names, or nasty stories being spread about you.)

- All or most of the time
- Sometimes
- Hardly ever
- Never

If you feel like you are bullied, do you get support from an adult?

- Yes
- No

Chances you get



How often do you...

... **get the chance to show you can be trusted?**

- All or most of the time
- Sometimes
- Hardly ever
- Never

... **get a second chance if you do something wrong?**

- All or most of the time
- Sometimes
- Hardly ever
- Never

... **get to practice life skills like cooking healthy food, washing clothes or going to the bank?**

- All or most of the time
- Sometimes
- Hardly ever
- Never

Just 10 questions left. You've nearly finished!

Getting out and about

When you are not in school or college, how often do you go online (e.g. via your mobile, tablet, laptop or desktop computer?)

- Every day
- Most days
- About once a week
- Once a month or less
- Never

Outside of school or college, do you get the chance to...

...**do similar things to your friends?**

- All or most of the time
- Sometimes
- Hardly ever
- Never



...explore outdoors (e.g. visiting the beach, woods, fields or the park)?

- All or most of the time
- Sometimes
- Hardly ever
- Never

...spend time on your own hobbies or activities?

- All or most of the time
- Sometimes
- Hardly ever
- Never

Final section!

Your life and happiness

How satisfied are you with your life?

	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	
Not at all satisfied												Completely satisfied

How happy did you feel yesterday?

	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	
Very sad												Very happy

What would you change to make being in care better for you?



How positive are you about your future?

	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	
--	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	----	--



Not at all positive													Completely positive
---------------------	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	---------------------

How much do you think your life is worthwhile?

	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	
Not at all worthwhile												Completely worthwhile

Finally, is there anything you want to say or tell us about being in care? What would make being in care better for you?





Thank you, and support information.

Thank you for helping us collect this important information – your opinions matter. Please remember that this survey is anonymous: we cannot tell who you are or who gives what answers to the questions in this survey.

What you can do if you are upset or worried by the questions in this survey

Some of the questions in this survey may have brought up difficult memories for you. If you have any worries or want help with anything do let someone know. If you want help and support you can speak to your social workers or the person who is helping you complete this survey.

You can also call **Coram Voice** on 0808 8005792 or visit www.coramvoice.org.uk. This is a free and confidential helpline where you can talk to someone between 9.30am and 5.30pm, Monday to Friday.

You can also call **ChildLine** on 0800 1111 or visit www.childline.org.uk. They have a free telephone and online chat service open 24 hours a day, 7 days a week.



You can write these numbers down if you want, just in case you ever want to call in the future.

Thanks again for your help.

Mae'r dudalen hon yn wag yn fwriadol

AMW Social Care Phone Issue Report

Background

- The phone model provided to social care agile workers was the Microsoft Nokia Lumia 950. Like all technology, this device requires regular updates to maintain performance and access the latest functions available. If the mobile phone device becomes out of date at any point, the end user may experience overheating and battery drain.
- There had been reports initially in June 2017 that there may be a wider issue across different teams within social care, with staff primarily reporting the above issues around overheating and battery drain. Initially there was no negative feedback and the assumption was that the solution provided had filtered through.
- Subsequently in October 2017, there were further reports of the same issue effecting a larger number of staff.
- Anecdotal feedback prior to both periods of support provided, indicated low levels of end user satisfaction and that the mobile phone device was not fit for purpose due to poor performance.
- The AMW Project Team were asked to investigate initially in June 2017.

Identifying the Issue

- Page 79
- The recommendation from Microsoft makes it clear a Windows 10 device requires regular updates to maintain and improve performance. The adverse effect will be overheating and battery drain at a minimum, with degrading performance thereafter possibly resulting in software and hardware failure long term.
 - During the previous 18-month period where this phone model was in use, the AMW Project Team had researched possible issues and found the solution to the most common complaint (overheating and/or battery drain).
 - To improve and maintain performance the AMW Project Team began updating any phones where end users reported these issues with successful results. Feedback after a period of time was consistent – the solution worked.

First Steps

- In June, 3 x 1-day drop in sessions were set up across two social care sites to address these issues. Attendance to these sessions were low, with some staff advising they would feedback information provided, to their colleagues. The AMW Project Team guided staff, so they could update their mobile phone devices to the latest version and OS.
- To provide future guidance on this issue the AMW Project Team wrote a Windows 10 End User Phone Management Guide. This included step by step instructions and further guidance around the issue and solution and other relative information an end user may need to know. This was cascaded across all social care agile workers in September 2017. The Windows 10 End User Phone Management Guide can be downloaded by authorised staff from the AMW Resource website, [Windows 10 Mobile Phone End User Management Guide](#).

Next Steps

- In October 2017, the AMW Project Team arranged additional sessions – this time with scheduled appointments for most social care agile workers based across two locations. In total 45+ hours of additional support was provided across 11 days from 12/10/2017 – 06/12/2017.
- Teams from Hafan Gobaith (where two June drop in sessions were held), followed the Windows 10 End User Phone Management Guide and therefore did not attend these additional sessions.
- Data from all sessions held between 12/10/2017 – 06/12/2017 was recorded and collated with feedback responses from staff a set period of time later. *(Data Table 1.0)*

Data Table 1.0

Team	Attendance	Version: 1709 OS: 12	Version: 1703 OS: 674	Version: 1703 OS: 608	Version: 1703 OS: 540	Version: OS: 297	Version: 1703 OS: 297	Version: 1607	Version: 1511	Updates Completed	No reported issues	Battery Drain	Over heating	Over heating and Battery Drain	Other Issues	Request Feedback (up to 31/12/2017)	Feedback Response +	Feedback Response -	Other Issues Remaining
CIN 2	4	0	0	0	0	1	1	2	3	4	4	0	0	0	0	3	1	0	0
CIN 3	4	0	0	2	0	0	1	1	4	4	4	0	0	0	0	4	2	0	0
CIN 4	7	0	0	6	0	0	0	1	7	7	7	0	0	0	0	7	3	0	1
CIN 5	3	0	2	0	0	0	1	0	3	3	3	0	0	0	0	3	2	0	0
CIN 6	8	0	2	1	0	2	1	2	8	6	6	1	0	0	1	7	5	0	1
CHAD 7	4	0	1	1	0	0	0	2	2	3	3	0	0	0	1	1	1	0	1
CHAD 8	6	0	3	1	0	1	0	1	5	4	4	0	0	0	2	4	3	0	0
I&A A	4	0	1	1	0	0	0	2	4	4	3	0	1	0	0	4	3	0	0
I&A B	13	0	1	5	0	3	0	4	12	9	9	0	1	0	3	11	9	0	1
I&A C	10	0	2	0	1	4	0	3	10	8	8	0	2	0	0	10	9	0	0
Review Team	15	0	2	1	4	2	2	4	13	12	12	0	0	1	2	9	9	0	0
Review Duty Team	6	0	0	0	1	0	0	5	6	6	6	0	0	0	0	4	2	0	0
CCCM	14	0	2	3	0	0	3	6	12	12	12	0	0	0	2	8	8	0	2
CCSWT	2	0	1	0	0	0	1	0	2	2	2	0	0	0	0	2	2	0	0
Adult Assessment	14	1	2	2	0	2	2	5	14	12	12	0	0	0	2	11	9	1	1
CADT	6	1	1	0	0	0	1	3	5	2	2	0	1	2	1	4	3	0	1
FPOC	2	0	1	0	0	0	1	0	2	2	2	0	0	0	0	2	2	0	1
POVA	2	0	0	0	1	0	0	1	2	1	1	1	0	0	0	1	1	0	0
YOS	15	6	1	0	0	0	1	7	9	13	13	0	0	0	2	9	5	0	0
Total	139	8	22	23	7	15	15	49	123	113	113	2	5	3	16	107	80	1	9

Current Update Version

- Due to the date range, the sessions were held across a period of time where a new update was released.
- The consequence is some staff are recorded as having two different current versions and OS.
- These are 1709/12 and 1703/674 (November and October updates).
- All staff were shown how to ensure updates download and install automatically in future.
- Microsoft update history can be found on their website, <https://support.microsoft.com/en-gb/help/4018124/windows-10-update-history>

Attendance during 12/10/2017 – 06/12/2017 support sessions

- Out of Approx. 350 staff (based on most up to date phone asset list) who could attend these sessions, 139 staff attended.
- There were 61 staff from Adult services and 79 staff from Childrens services.
- Staff from 19 teams across adult and children services within social care attended the sessions.
- There were staff from 8 Adult services and 11 Childrens services teams who attended the sessions.
- Based on the most up to date asset list, a higher proportion of staff who attended were from adult services.

Reported Issues

- Of the 139 staff who attended these sessions, 113 reported no initial issue.
- 5 staff reported only overheating
- 2 staff reported only battery drain
- 3 staff reported overheating and/or battery drain
- 16 staff reported other unrelated issues, mostly with potential network issues – these have been reported to EE for new settings to be pushed through to resolve network issues. There were a couple of devices which require an insurance claim due to damage – these have been passed to the social care AMW Team.

Initial Version and OS

- 30 out of 139 staff were completely up to date with their version and OS (Oct/Nov 17 updates)
- 60 staff were not on the latest or the original version and OS – so were somewhere in-between
- 49 staff were on the original version and OS (factory settings) and have never received an update

Initial Evaluation of Issues

- Only 10 staff out 139 reported overheating and/or battery drain
- Out of the 10 staff who had initially reported an issue – none of their devices were fully up to date
- 5 staff who initially reported issues were on the original version and OS
- 5 staff who initially reported issues were on an out of date version and OS
- The initial perception seems incorrect that this is a wider issue, based on those initially reporting this issue who had attended a session with the AMW Project Team.
- As all 10 staff who had reported an initial issue were not on the latest version and OS, the poor performance they have experienced can be directly attributed to outstanding updates required
- None of the 30 staff on the latest version and OS reported initial issues

Updates completed

- Out of 139 staff who attended the sessions 123 staff could be verified as completing the update process
- The remaining 16 staff are due to report back and/or meet with the AMW Project Team again to confirm they have completed the update process
- These staff couldn't complete the update process initially due to visits and other commitments

Feedback Requested

- Out of 123 staff who have completed the update process – feedback has been requested from 107 staff who have attended the sessions – specifically regarding overheating and/or battery drain
- Feedback is requested at least 1 week subsequent to completing the update process – allowing a period of time to measure performance of their mobile phone device

Feedback Responses

- Out of 107 staff where feedback had been requested – 81 staff replied
- Out of 81 responses to the feedback request – 80 were positive
- These staff experienced no overheating and/or battery drain at all subsequent to updating their mobile phone devices to the latest version and OS
- One staff member reported some slight overheating subsequently – however, they reported this was primarily when charging their device (this mobile phone model will get slightly warm whilst charging due to rapid charge). Have advised this person to monitor and report if overheating occurs when not charging their device.
- 9 staff out of the 81 who responded to the feedback request reported other network issues
- 4 staff had reported similar network issues initially
- 5 staff were reporting these issues for the first time
- AMW Project Team to contact EE again to resolve outstanding network issues (unrelated to phone model)

Conclusion

- 139 staff from 19 teams across adult and children services attended session between 12/10/2017 – 06/12/2017
- 7.2% of staff who attended these sessions reported an initial issue directly related to overheating and/or battery drain
- 11.5% of staff (incl. those reporting overheating and/or battery drain) reported other network issues and/or required an insurance claim on their device due to damage
- 100% of staff reporting initial issues (overheating and/or battery drain) were not on the current version and OS
- Out of the staff who had reported initial issues all of them reported back a period of time later that there was a marked improvement in the performance of their mobile phone device and/or did not experience any further issues
- Only one staff member was advised to monitor further performance – however is expected to report no further issues
- Some remaining and new network issues will be resolved with EE

Team Name: Adult Assessment

Manager: **** *

Date	First Name	Second Name	Team	Current Version	Current OS	Updated Version	Updated OS	Issues reported	Request for feedback	Feedback Response
25/10/2017	****	*****	Adult Assessment	1703	608	1703	674	No reported issues	Emailed for feedback	
25/10/2017	****	*****	Adult Assessment	1703	674	1703	674	No reported issues	Emailed for feedback	
25/10/2017	****	*****	Adult Assessment	1511		1703	674	No reported issues	Emailed for feedback	
25/10/2017	****	*****	Adult Assessment	1511		1703	674	No reported issues	Emailed for feedback	
25/10/2017	****	*****	Adult Assessment	1511		1703	674	No reported issues	Emailed for feedback	User reports no issues as of 21/11
25/10/2017	****	*****	Adult Assessment	1703	297	1703	674	No reported issues	Emailed for feedback	User reports no issues as of 09/11
25/10/2017	****	*****	Adult Assessment	1703	297	1703	674	Call dropped message - calls cutting off	Emailed for feedback	User reports no issues as of 09/11
25/10/2017	****	*****	Adult Assessment	1703	608	1703	674	Screen lock when answering calls Battery Drain/ Overheating	Emailed for feedback	Reporting getting hot when charging - requested further feedback
01/11/2017	****	*****	Adult Assessment	1511		1703	674	No reported issues	Emailed for feedback	User reports no issues as of 09/11
01/11/2017	****	*****	Adult Assessment	1511		1703	674	No reported issues	Emailed for feedback	User reports no issues as of 09/11
01/11/2017	****	*****	Adult Assessment	1703	674	1703	674	No reported issues EE settings required - MDN not visible	Emailed for feedback	User reports no issues as of 09/11
01/11/2017	****	*****	Adult Assessment	1607		1703	674	No reported issues	Emailed for feedback	
08/11/2017	****	*****	Adult Assessment	1607		1709	1	No reported issues	Emailed for feedback	User reports no issues as of 09/11
08/11/2017	****	*****	Adult Assessment	1709	1	1709	1	No reported issues Insurance claim required	Emailed for feedback	User reports no issues as of 09/11

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Team Name: CADT

Manager: **** *

Date	First Name	Second Name	Team	Current Version	Current OS	Updated Version	Updated OS	Issues reported	Request for feedback	Feedback Response
23/10/2017	****	*****	CADT	1511				Overheating Battery Drain		
25/10/2017	****	*****	CADT	1511		1703	674	Overheating Unknown Number - EE settings required	Emailed for feedback	User reports no issues as of 21/11 Only slight overheating whilst on long phone calls
26/10/2017	****	*****	CADT	1607		1703	674	Overheating/ Battery drain	Emailed for feedback	User reports no issues as of 09/11
26/10/2017	****	*****	CADT	1703	674	1703	674	Screen goes dark etc.	Emailed for feedback	User reports no issues as of 09/11 Slight battery drain - asked for further feedback and re 1709 update
09/11/2017	****	*****	CADT	1709	1	1709	1	No reported issues	Emailed for feedback	
09/11/2017	****	*****	CADT	1511		1709	1	No reported issues	Emailed for feedback	User reports no issues as of 21/11

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Team Name: CCCM

Manager: **** *

Date	First Name	Second Name	Team	Current Version	Current OS	Updated Version	Updated OS	Issues reported	Request for feedback	Feedback Response
23/10/2017	****	*****	CCCM	1703	608	1703	674	No reported issues	Emailed for feedback	User reports no issues as of 06/11
23/10/2017	****	*****	CCCM	1703	674	1703	674	No reported issues Answering calls glitch - only 1-2 times a month. Update - issue answering calls and hanging up.	Emailed for feedback	User reports no issues as of 01/11
23/10/2017	****	*****	CCCM	1703	608	1703	674	No reported issues	Emailed for feedback	User reports no issues as of 03/11
25/10/2017	****	*****	CCCM	1511		1709	1	No reported issues	Emailed for feedback	
25/10/2017	****	*****	CCCM	1607		1703	674	No issues reported	N/A - left authority	User reports no issues as of 21/11
26/10/2017	****	*****	CCCM	1703	674	1703	674	No issues reported	Emailed for feedback	User reports slight battery drain and overheating. Further feedback requested.
26/10/2017	****	*****	CCCM	1607		1703	674	No reported issues	Emailed for feedback	User reports no issues as of 09/11
26/10/2017	****	*****	CCCM	1703	608	1703	674	Not ringing when making calls	Emailed for feedback	User reports no issues re overheating/ battery drain Still occasions of other issues as noted. Advised to feedback over the next couple of weeks
26/10/2017	****	*****	CCCM	1607				Not receiving text messages		
26/10/2017	****	*****	CCCM	1511		1709	1	No reported issues		
01/11/2017	****	*****	CCCM	1511		1703	674	No reported issues	Emailed for feedback	User reports no issues as of 09/11
01/11/2017	****	*****	CCCM	1511		1703	674	No reported issues	Emailed for feedback	
02/11/2017	****	*****	CCCM	1511		1709	1	No reported issues	Emailed for feedback	User reports no issues as of 21/11
09/11/2017	****	*****	CCCM	1511				No reported issues		

Team Name: CCSWT

Manager: **** ******

Date	First Name	Second Name	Team	Current Version	Current OS	Updated Version	Updated OS	Issues reported	Request for feedback	Feedback Response
26/10/2017	****	*****	CCSWT	1703	674	1703	674	No reported issues	Emailed for feedback	User reports no issues as of 09/11
26/10/2017	****	*****	CCSWT	1607		1703	674	No reported issues	Emailed for feedback	User reports no issues as of 21/11

Team Name: FPOC

Manager: **** ******

Date	First Name	Second Name	Team	Current Version	Current OS	Updated Version	Updated OS	Issues reported	Request for feedback	Feedback Response
29/10/2017	****	*****	FPOC	1607	N/A	1703	674	No reported issues	Emailed for feedback	User reports no issues as of 09/11
01/11/2017	****	*****	FPOC	1703	674	1703	674	No reported issues	Emailed for feedback	User reports no issues as of 09/11

Team Name: POVA

Manager: **** ******

Date	First Name	Second Name	Team	Current Version	Current OS	Updated Version	Updated OS	Issues reported	Request for feedback	Feedback Response
23/10/2017	****	*****	POVA	1703	540	1703	674	Battery Drain	N/A	
09/11/2017	****	*****	POVA	1511		1709	1	No reported issues	Emailed for feedback	Not used since update

Team Name: Review Team

Manager: **** ******

Date	First Name	Second Name	Team	Current Version	Current OS	Updated Version	Updated OS	Issues reported	Request for feedback	Feedback Response
23/10/2017	****	*****	Review Team	1511		1703	297	No reported issues		
23/10/2017	****	*****	Review Team	1703	540	1703	674	No reported issues	Emailed for feedback	User reports no issues as of 01/11
23/10/2017	****	*****	Review Team	1703	608	1703	674	No reported issues	Emailed for feedback	User reports no issues as of 21/11
26/10/2017	****	*****	Review Team	1607		1709	1	No issues reported	Emailed for feedback	User reports no issues as of 21/11
26/10/2017	****	*****	Review Team	1703	540	1709	1	No issues reported	Emailed for feedback	
26/10/2017	****	*****	Review Team	1703	540	1703	674	No reported issues	Emailed for feedback	User reports no issues as of 09/11
26/10/2017	****	*****	Review Team	1511		1703	674	No issues reported Messages delayed coming through.	Emailed for feedback	User reports no issues as of 09/11
26/10/2017	****	*****	Review Team	1703	297	1703	674	No issues reported	Emailed for feedback	User reports no issues as of 09/11
26/10/2017	****	*****	Review Team	1703	674	1703	674	No reported issues Insurance claim required	Emailed for feedback	User reports no issues as of 09/11
26/10/2017	****	*****	Review Team	1703	540	1703	674	Overheating/ Battery drain	Emailed for feedback	User reports no issues as of 09/11
26/10/2017	****	*****	Review Team	1511				No reported issues		
26/10/2017	****	*****	Review Team	1511		1703	674	No reported issues	Emailed for feedback	
01/11/2017	****	*****	Review Team	1703	674	1703	674	No reported issues	Emailed for feedback	User reports no issues as of 09/11
01/11/2017	****	*****	Review Team	1607		1709	1	Slight overheating and battery drain Occasional swipe freeze		
02/11/2017	****	*****	Review Team	1703	297	1703	674	Reporting overheating whilst charging Dropped calls	Emailed for feedback	

Team Name: Review Duty Team

Manager: **** ******

Date	First Name	Second Name	Team	Current Version	Current OS	Updated Version	Updated OS	Issues reported	Request for feedback	Feedback Response
23/10/2017	****	*****	Review Duty Team	1511		1703	674	Not used phone since training	Emailed for feedback	Not used since update
23/10/2017	****	*****	Review Duty Team	1511		1703	674	No reported issues		
23/10/2017	****	*****	Review Duty Team	1511		1703	674	Not using on regular basis	Emailed for feedback	
23/10/2017	****	*****	Review Duty Team	1511		1703	674	Not used phone since training	Emailed for feedback	
26/10/2017	****	*****	Review Duty Team	1703	540	1703	674	No issues reported	Emailed for feedback	User reports no issues as of 15/11
26/10/2017	****	*****	Review Duty Team	1511		1709	1	No issues reported	Emailed for feedback	
08/11/2017	****	*****	Review Duty Team	1511		1709	1	No reported issues	Emailed for feedback	

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Team Name: CIN 2

Manager: **** ******

Date	First Name	Second Name	Team	Current Version	Current OS	Updated Version	Updated OS	Issues reported	Request for feedback	Feedback Response
16/10/2017	****	*****	CIN 2	1511		1703	674	No reported issues	Emailed for feedback	
16/10/2017	****	*****	CIN 2	1511				No reported issues		
17/10/2017	****	*****	CIN 2	1703	297	1703	674	No reported issues	Emailed for feedback	
08/11/2017	****	*****	CIN 2	1607		1709	1	No reported issues	Emailed for feedback	User reports no issues as of 21/11

Team Name: CIN 3

Manager: **** ******

Date	First Name	Second Name	Team	Current Version	Current OS	Updated Version	Updated OS	Issues reported	Request for feedback	Feedback Response
16/10/2017	****	*****	CIN 3	1703	608	1703	674	No reported issues	Emailed for feedback	User reports no issues as of 19/10
16/10/2017	****	*****	CIN 3	1703	608	1703	674	No reported issues	Emailed for feedback	
16/10/2017	****	*****	CIN 3	1511		1703	674	No reported issues	Emailed for feedback	User reports no issues as of 20/10
16/10/2017	****	*****	CIN 3	1607		1703	674	No reported issues	Emailed for feedback	

Team Name: CIN 4

Manager: **** ******

Date	First Name	Second Name	Team	Current Version	Current OS	Updated Version	Updated OS	Issues reported	Request for feedback	Feedback Response
16/10/2017	****	*****	CIN 4	1511	N/A	1703	674	No reported issues	Emailed for feedback	
16/10/2017	****	*****	CIN 4	1703	608	1703	674	No reported issues	Emailed for feedback	
16/10/2017	****	*****	CIN 4	1703	608	1703	674	No reported issues	Emailed for feedback	No issues re overheating Reports slight battery drain 19/10 Slight glitch re lock function
16/10/2017	****	*****	CIN 4	1703	608	1703	674	No reported issues	Emailed for feedback	
16/10/2017	****	*****	CIN 4	1703	608	1703	674	No reported issues	Emailed for feedback	User reports no issues as of 20/10
16/10/2017	****	*****	CIN 4	1703	608	1703	674	No reported issues	Emailed for feedback	User reports no issues as of 19/10
16/10/2017	****	*****	CIN 4	1703	608	1703	674	No reported issues	Emailed for feedback	

Team Name: CIN 5

Manager: **** *

Date	First Name	Second Name	Team	Current Version	Current OS	Updated Version	Updated OS	Issues reported	Request for feedback	Feedback Response
17/10/2017	****	*****	CIN 5	1607		1703	674	No reported issues	Emailed for feedback	User reports no issues as of 26/10
17/10/2017	****	*****	CIN 5	1703	674	1703	674	No reported issues	Emailed for feedback	
17/10/2017	****	*****	CIN 5	1703	674	1703	674	No reported issues	Emailed for feedback	User reports no issues as of 26/10

Team Name: CIN 6

Manager: **** *

Date	First Name	Second Name	Team	Current Version	Current OS	Updated Version	Updated OS	Issues reported	Request for feedback	Feedback Response
17/10/2017	****	*****	CIN 6	1703	297	1703	674	Insurance claim required EE settings required - unknown number	Emailed for feedback	User reports no issues as of 01/11
17/10/2017	****	*****	CIN 6	1703	674	1703	674	No reported issues	Emailed for feedback	Reported numbers missing 26/10 - emailed for further feedback
17/10/2017	****	*****	CIN 6	1511		1703	674	No reported issues	Emailed for feedback	
17/10/2017	****	*****	CIN 6	1703	608	1703	674	No reported issues EE settings required - unknown number	Emailed for feedback	User reports no issues as of 26/10
19/10/2017	****	*****	CIN 6	1703	297	1703	674	No reported issues	Emailed for feedback	User reports no issues as of 01/11
19/10/2017	****	*****	CIN 6	1607		1709	12	No reported issues Cracked screen		
19/10/2017	****	*****	CIN 6	1511		1709	1	Battery Dain	Emailed for feedback	User reports no issues as of 21/11
25/10/2017	****	*****	CIN 6	1703	674	1703	674	No reported issues	Emailed for feedback	

Team Name: CIN 7

Manager: **** *
 **** *
 **** *

Date	First Name	Second Name	Team	Current Version	Current OS	Updated Version	Updated OS	Issues reported	Request for feedback	Feedback Response
26/10/2017	****	*****	CHAD 7	1703	674	1703	674	Lock slide - daily	Emailed for feedback	User reports no issues as of 09/11
26/10/2017	****	*****	CHAD 7	1511		1709		No reported issues	Emailed for feedback	
26/10/2017	****	*****	CHAD 7	1703	608			No reported issues		
26/10/2017	****	*****	CHAD 7	1511				No reported issues		

Team Name: CIN 8

Manager: **** *
 **** *
 **** *

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Date	First Name	Second Name	Team	Current Version	Current OS	Updated Version	Updated OS	Issues reported	Request for feedback	Feedback Response
16/10/2017	****	*****	CHAD 8	1703	674	1703	674	Call Dropped when calling out Not getting missed calls etc.	Emailed for feedback	User reports no issues as of 19/10
26/10/2017	****	*****	CHAD 8	1703	297	1703	674	No reported issues	Emailed for feedback	
26/10/2017	****	*****	CHAD 8	1703	608	1703	674	No reported issues	Emailed for feedback	User reports no issues as of 09/11
26/10/2017	****	*****	CHAD 8	1511				Unknown Number - EE settings required		
26/10/2017	****	*****	CHAD 8	1703	674	1703	674	No reported issues	Emailed for feedback	User reports no issues as of 09/11
26/10/2017	****	*****	CHAD 8	1703	674	1703	674	No reported issues	Emailed for feedback	

Team Name: I&A A

Manager: **** ******

Date	First Name	Second Name	Team	Current Version	Current OS	Updated Version	Updated OS	Issues reported	Request for feedback	Feedback Response
12/10/2017	****	*****	I&A A	1703	608	1703	674	No reported issues	Emailed for feedback	User reports no issues as of 18/10
12/10/2017	****	*****	I&A A	1511		1703	674	Overheating	Emailed for feedback	User reports no issues as of 09/11
18/10/2017	****	*****	I&A A	1511		1703	674	No reported issues	Emailed for feedback	User reports no issues as of 25/10
18/10/2017	****	*****	I&A A	1703	674	1703	674	No reported issues	Emailed for feedback	

Team Name: I&A B

Manager: **** ******

Date	First Name	Second Name	Team	Current Version	Current OS	Updated Version	Updated OS	Issues reported	Request for feedback	Feedback Response
12/10/2017	****	*****	I&A B	1703	608	1703	674	No reported issue Number unknown - EE setting required	Emailed for feedback	
12/10/2017	****	*****	I&A B	1511		1703	674	No reported issues	Emailed for feedback	User reports no issues as of 18/10
12/10/2017	****	*****	I&A B	1511		1703	674	Overheating Calls issues	Emailed for feedback	User reports no issues as of 18/10 Only issue re calling out and hearing some calls - happening at home and twice in the office. Advised to speak to AMW team to call EE to investigate.
16/10/2017	****	*****	I&A B	1703	608	1703	674	No reported issues	Emailed for feedback	User reports no issues as of 19/10
16/10/2017	****	*****	I&A B	1703	608	1703	674	No reported issues	Emailed for feedback	
17/10/2017	****	*****	I&A B	1511		1703	674	No reported issues	Emailed for feedback	User reports no issues as of 26/10
17/10/2017	****	*****	I&A B	1703	608	1703	674	No reported issues Subsequently issue with network -Also issue with action centre not activating upon swipe down when on home menu	Emailed for feedback	User reports no issues as of 06/11
17/10/2017	****	*****	I&A B	1703	297	1703	674	No reported issues	Emailed for feedback	User reports no issues as of 26/10
17/10/2017	****	*****	I&A B	1511		1703	674	No reported issues	Emailed for feedback	User reports no issues as of 26/10
25/10/2017	****	*****	I&A B	1703	297	1703	674	Cannot hang up from calls - screen dark	Emailed for feedback	User reports no issues as of 10/11
08/11/2017	****	*****	I&A B	1703	297			Phone not in use since 05/17 -phone keeps re-starting -SIM card not recognised Hard re-set required		
08/11/2017	****	*****	I&A B	1703	674	1703	674	Missed calls delayed Swipe issue answering calls	Emailed for feedback	
09/11/2017	****	*****	I&A B	1703	608	1709	1	No reported issues EE Settings required	Emailed for feedback	User reports no issues as of 21/11 EE settings required

Team Name: I&A C

Manager: **** *

Date	First Name	Second Name	Team	Current Version	Current OS	Updated Version	Updated OS	Issues reported	Request for feedback	Feedback Response
12/10/2017	****	*****	I&A C	1703	297	1703	674	Overheating When phone off it rings and switches back on Freezing whilst answering calls	Emailed for feedback	User reports no issues as of 18/10
12/10/2017	****	*****	I&A C	1703	297	1703	674	Overheating When phone off it rings and switches back on Voicemails not coming though on time	Emailed for feedback	User reports no issues as of 18/10
12/10/2017	****	*****	I&A C	1511		1703	674	No reported issues	Emailed for feedback	User reports no issues as of 18/10
12/10/2017	****	*****	I&A C	1703	297	1703	674	No reported issues	Emailed for feedback	User reports no issues as of 18/10
12/10/2017	****	*****	I&A C	1511		1703	674	No reported issues	Emailed for feedback	User reports no issues as of 18/10
12/10/2017	****	*****	I&A C	1703	297	1703	674	No reported issues	Emailed for feedback	User reports no issues as of 18/10
12/10/2017	****	*****	I&A C	1511		1703	674	No reported issues	Emailed for feedback	User reports no issues as of 19/10
16/10/2017	****	*****	I&A C	1703	540	1703	674	No reported issues	Emailed for feedback	
16/10/2017	****	*****	I&A C	1703	674	1703	674	No reported issues	Emailed for feedback	User reports no issues as of 20/10
26/10/2017	****	*****	I&A C	1703	674	1703	674	No reported issues	Emailed for feedback	User reports no issues as of 09/11

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Team Name: YOS

Manager: **** *

Date	First Name	Second Name	Team	Current Version	Current OS	Updated Version	Updated OS	Issues reported	Request for feedback	Feedback Response
06/12/2017	****	*****	YOS	1709	12	1709	12	No reported issues EE settings	Emailed for feedback	
06/12/2017	****	*****	YOS	1607	321			No reported issues		
06/12/2017	****	*****	YOS	1511		1709	12	No reported issues	Emailed for feedback	
06/12/2017	****	*****	YOS	1511				No reported issues		
06/12/2017	****	*****	YOS	1709	12	1709	12	No reported issues	Emailed for feedback	User reports no issues
06/12/2017	****	*****	YOS	1709	12	1709	12	No reported issues	Emailed for feedback	User reports no issues
06/12/2017	****	*****	YOS	1511		1709	12	No reported issues	Emailed for feedback	
06/12/2017	****	*****	YOS	1511		1709	12	No reported issues	Emailed for feedback	
06/12/2017	****	*****	YOS	1511				No reported issues		
06/12/2017	****	*****	YOS	1709	12	1709	12	No reported issues	Emailed for feedback	User reports no issues
06/12/2017	****	*****	YOS	1511				No reported issues		
06/12/2017	****	*****	YOS	1703	674			No reported issues Issue re migration to 365 - has condition which means she finds change difficult and is currently using a fixed desk windows 7 device.		
06/12/2017	****	*****	YOS	1709	12	1709	12	No reported issues	Emailed for feedback	User reports no issues
06/12/2017	****	*****	YOS	1511				No reported issues		
06/12/2017	****	*****	YOS	1709	12	1709	12	No reported issues	Emailed for feedback	User reports no issues

Mae'r dudalen hon yn wag yn fwriadol

**CARDIFF COUNCIL
CYNGOR CAERDYDD**

CORPORATE PARENTING ADVISORY COMMITTEE

16 January 2018

VALE, VALLEYS & CARDIFF REGIONAL ADOPTION SERVICE – ANNUAL REPORT

Reason for the Report

1. The Vale, Valleys and Cardiff (VVC) Regional Adoption Collaborative's Annual Report for 2016/17 is attached at **Appendix A**. The report sets out the key information about the regional services together with quarterly performance information for the period 2016 – 2017, which is attached at **Appendix B**.
2. The Corporate Parenting Advisory Committee's Terms of Reference require the Committee to ensure that performance monitoring systems are in place, and regularly reviews performance data to ensure sustained performance improvements in outcomes for looked after children, children in need and care leavers. The Committee is required to receive the Adoption Annual Quality of Care Report each year.

Background

3. The National Adoption Service was launched in November 2014 to bring together local, regional and national organisations and activities as a key part of implementing the Social Services and Well Being Act (Wales) 2014.
4. The Adoption Service is probably most accurately described as a network of interdependent services operating at local, regional, and national levels through local government and the voluntary sector.
5. Five local collaboratives are responsible for developing and improving adoption services across Wales. Cardiff Council is part of the Vale, Valleys and Cardiff (VVC) Adoption Collaborative which also includes the Vale of Glamorgan Council, Rhondda Cynon Taf County Borough Council, and Merthyr Tydfil County Borough Council.

6. The Corporate Parenting Advisory Committee received the first annual report of the National Adoption Service in November 2015 along with the first report of the Vale, Valleys and Cardiff Regional Adoption Collaborative. As per the Committee's terms of reference the 2015/16 annual report was presented to the November 2016 meeting. The 2016/17 is now presented to the January 2018 Committee meeting.
7. This report has already been presented to the Children and young People Scrutiny Committee, having been presented in October 2017. The cover report presented to the Scrutiny Committee is attached for information at **appendix C**, along with the letter which outlines the resulting comments, advice and requests from the Scrutiny Committee at **appendix D**. The response provided to the Committee from the Collaborative is attached at **appendix E**.
8. This information is provided as part of papers for information and will not be presented in person at the meeting. Any questions may be posed to the Assistant Director of Social Services. Answers to any questions that require further clarification will be fed back to the next meeting.

Financial Implications

9. There are no direct financial implications arising from this report.

Legal Implications

10. There are no legal implications arising from this report.

RECOMMENDATION

11. The Committee is recommended to note the information contained in the report; and make any observations or comments.

Irfan Alam
Assistant Director Children's Services
11 January 2018

Annual Report: 1 April 2016 to 31 March 2017

1. BACKGROUND

1.1 Vale, Valleys and Cardiff Adoption Collaborative (VVC) provides a regional adoption service to the Vale of Glamorgan Council, Merthyr Tydfil County Borough Council, Cardiff Council and Rhondda Cynon Taff County Borough Council. VVC is one of the five regional Collaboratives which form part of the National Adoption Service in Wales (NAS). The Vale of Glamorgan Council hosts the Collaborative.

1.2 All adoption services are required to provide an annual review of their service as set out in Regulation 22 of the Local Authority Adoption Service (Wales) Regulations 2007. In addition, Section 15 (c) of The Adoption and Children Act 2002 (Joint Adoption Arrangements) (Wales) Directions 2015 sets out the responsibilities of regional Collaboratives to report to the Director of Operations for the National Adoption Service on a quarterly and annual basis.

1.3 The legal agreement underpinning the operation of the Collaborative sets out the reporting requirements to partner local authorities. This report aims to encompass the various reporting requirements in one report.

This is VVC's second annual report and covers the period 1 April 2016 to 31 March 2017.

Appendix 1 to the report sets out the performance data by quarter and local authority.

2. SERVICE AND GOVERNANCE STRUTURE

2.1 Vale, Valleys and Cardiff Adoption Collaborative continues to be managed by a Regional Adoption Manager and three service specific managers for Family Finding, Adoption Support, and Recruitment and Assessment. The Adoption Support Manager's post has been increased to full time on a temporary basis during this period.

2.2 Staff within the service have moved to working to their functional specialism during the year with the expectation that they will pick up work in other areas as and when the need arises. Managers within the service have developed a more strategic overview of the performance of the region which has helped to embed this in the culture of the region.

2.3 The service reviews undertaken into the specific functions performed by the Collaborative have fully highlighted the increased demands within the service and a shortfall in staffing resource to meet these demands. An Options Paper detailing the capacity issues and pressures across the whole service was presented to the Management Board in November 2016. This report detailed the original assumptions upon which the service structure and staffing within VVC was based, the current pressures and the increase in workload, and proposed a number of

options to increase resource within the Collaborative to address the shortfalls in service.

2.4 This report was presented to the Directors of Social Services across the four authorities and Joint Committee in December 2016. The Directors agreed to the appointment of an additional staff member for Adoption Support utilising monies within the budget and to an extension of temporary staff within Adoption Support. A Best Value Review for the whole service was then commissioned to help determine a longer term resolution.

2.5 The Review is being undertaken by an Officer from the Vale of Glamorgan Business Improvement Team and a Finance Officer from Merthyr Tydfil County Borough Council. A Project Brief and Plan has been put in place and a timetable set for finalisation and consideration of the Review.

2.6 VVC experienced some resourcing issues during the second half of the year created by one full time Social Worker leaving to pursue agency work, one part time Social Worker leaving to pursue training and independent work, and three Social Work posts being reconfigured to accommodate a reduction in working hours. These vacancies were advertised and the region was successful in receiving a high number of applications for these posts which enabled offers of appointment to be made. These posts were filled by July 2017. The region has had to rely upon the employment of some short term agency cover in the interim.

2.7 The service has continued to be based in Ty Pennant, Pontypridd although RCT staff vacated the premises in October 2016 and the licence to occupy the building transferred to Trivallis as new owners of the premises. The licence is in place until September 2018. The transfer of ownership has meant additional costs being placed upon the Collaborative in terms of payment of rates etc.

2.8 The pooled budget for the Collaborative is managed by the Vale of Glamorgan as the host and is monitored on a regular basis and reported to the Management Board and Joint Committee. A Finance Technical Group has remained in place attended by the Finance Officers from each of the partner authorities.

2.9 VVC's governance structure is by way of a Management Board and Joint Committee. The Management Board has continued to meet bi-monthly. Board meetings have been well represented and supported by Heads of Service from the partner authorities and membership from a Voluntary Adoption Agency and Health and Education representatives. The Chair of the Board transferred to the Director of Social Services for Merthyr Tydfil CBC in line with the legal agreement in July 2016.

2.10 Standing agenda items for meetings include performance reporting, budget monitoring, service user and stakeholder engagement, VVC's interface with local authority partners alongside reports from the Voluntary Sector, Health and Education representatives. The Board also considers any items referred from the National Adoption Service Advisory Group and Governance Board.

2.11 The Management Board has considered reviews of all the service areas provided by the Collaborative during the year and considered reports in relation to

capacity issues within the service. Specific performance measures such as the provision of Life Journey Material for children placed for adoption have been highlighted by the Board as areas for improvement and actions have been put in place to address any shortfall in practice.

2.12 The Director of Operations for NAS attended the VVC Management Board in September 2016 to present the NAS plan to address areas of national improvement, and again in July 2017 to present the NAS end of year report in respect of VVC's performance.

2.13 A workshop on the role of the local authority Agency Decision Maker was commissioned by the Management Board and facilitated by AFA Cymru Legal Adviser in January 2017. This session drew upon the implications of case law and was attended by all Heads of Service and Agency Advisers.

2.14 The Joint Committee meets twice a year and is comprised of elected members from the four authorities. Joint Committee meetings were held in July and December 2016. The Joint Committee has responsibility for approving the annual plan for the service and annual budget. Membership of the Joint Committee changed following the May Council elections. The new Joint Committee met in July 2017.

3. SERVICE AREAS:

3.1 The National Adoption Service set the following priorities for service improvement during 2016-17:

- *Placing children effectively and quickly*
- *Effective recruitment of adopters who are and are likely to become available for adoption.*
- *Improving adoption support.*

These priorities formed the basis of VVC's annual plan and the progress made in each of these service areas is evaluated below.

4. FAMILY FINDING

4.1 The Family Finding Manager undertook a review of the Family Finding function within VVC which was presented to Management Board in September 2016. This aspect of the service has seen a marked rise in the number of children being referred for adoption and increase in workload overall.

4.2 The region alongside other regional Collaboratives reports upon performance on a quarterly basis to NAS. The performance measures which make up the Performance Management Framework have increased during the year to take on board new measures particularly in relation to Adoption Support. The measures monitor performance in relation to key stages in the adoption process. Some of these relate directly to local authority performance and some are shared jointly between the local authority and the Collaborative.

4.3 The recording of the number of children referred for adoption is a new measure although VVC previously recorded this data. VVC received a total **280** referrals for the year which represents a 66% increase from 2015-16. **81** children were placed for adoption which is an increase from **70** in the previous year.

4.4 At the end of the reporting period **103** children had a 'should be placed' for adoption decision but had not been placed for adoption which is an increase on the previous quarter and previous returns and **95** children of these children were subject of a Placement Order.

4.5 The region has recorded **113** Placement Orders being made during the year which also represents an increase of 70% on 2015-16. The number of Adoption Orders granted during the period is **65**. This is a decrease on the previous year when **82** Adoption Orders were made. This may partly be explained by more protracted Court proceedings in some instances as a result of legal challenges from birth parents.

4.6 The measures in relation to the timeliness of the process from key decision making points to placement for adoption indicate an increase in the length of time it takes to place children. In some instances overall timescales were skewed by outliers i.e. one or two children with more complex needs where it has taken much longer to place them for adoption. VVC is now more able to identify these children and explain the reasons for the delay as part of the reporting framework.

4.6 On 31 March 2017, there were **10** children who had been waiting longer than six months for a match which is an increase on the previous year. The reasons for the delay in the placement of these children can be attributed to their range of needs which could not be easily met within the available adopter resource.

4.7 There were **3** placement disruptions during the year and no matches disrupted during introductions, which is a decrease on the previous year.

4.8 In November 2016, the Adoption Support Manager undertook a review of early disruptions. This report covered a period of 4.5 years from April 2012 to October 2016 with the aim of assisting our understanding of the factors associated with disruptions of adoption placements.

4.9 The process involved collation of data regarding disruptions pre –Adoption Order and reviewing the relevant matching/placement documents in each of these cases. This revealed that out of 394 placements made during this period, 21 disrupted which represents 5.33%. A workshop was held for staff in late November 2016 to consider the findings and implications for practice.

4.10 The number of birth parents referred to the service for counselling is collected on a quarterly basis although the take up of the service is collated annually. Overall take up in this area continues to pose significant challenges for the region as out of **435** referrals for birth parent counselling received during the year only **126** parents took up the service. This represents a decrease on the previous year although the number of parents referred has increased by two hundred. The region has begun to pilot sending out information to birth parents in a less stigmatising format removing

the reference to Vale, Valleys & Cardiff Adoption in the hope that parents may be more receptive. This will however need to be evaluated to ascertain if this influences the level of take up in any way. VVC also continues to explore different venues and approaches to reach birth parents in an effort to improve performance. These figures take into consideration a number of parents who were unobtainable.

4.11 The provision of Life Journey Material for children at their second adoption review has been a consistent agenda item for Management Board and action point for regional partners. Some overall improvement in performance has been noted as a result of proactive measures taken by Heads of Service within the region; 61% of children had been provided with Life Journey Material at their second adoption review compared to 30% in 2015-16.

4.12 Some of the initiatives developed to improve local practice and performance include the development of a new regional family finding process which builds upon national guidance developed by NAS.

4.13 The process requires a minimum of 12 weeks between the child being referred for adoption and the agency decision on adoption to ensure that there is sufficient time for the adoption medical to be completed and that the decision is not delayed. A pre-Placement Order meeting between Child's Social Worker and VVC Family Finder has been added to the process to share information and complete paperwork prior to the making of the Placement Order in an effort to reduce delay. Staff resources within VVC and staff turnover with local authority teams has inhibited full implementation of the changes in some cases but there have been ongoing discussions with LA partners as to how best to improve practice and reduce delay.

4.14 The Family Finding process developed within the region requires staff to be proactive in tracking plans and delays and to challenge Childcare Social Workers in relation to their family finding expectations. Childcare Social Workers will also sometimes reject profiles of adopters they have considered previously which often necessitates challenge by the Family Finder.

4.15 The Family Finding Manager and the Recruitment and Assessment Manager facilitate monthly Placement Meetings where children's referrals are presented, their needs discussed and suitable adopters are considered. This ensures that decisions in relation to the need for external placement funding are completed in a timely way.

4.16 A family finding report is generated monthly which provides an analysis of how many placements have been made, the children who are waiting, their ages and the potential reasons for this to inform ongoing family finding.

4.17 All children are referred or registered with the Wales Adoption Register to ensure that delay is minimised in family finding if there are no suitable VVC adopters.

4.18 The region also purchased the licence for Link Maker, a national data base of children waiting which prospective adopters can access directly. VVC staff also attended and profiled 16 children at two national Coram BAAF/ Welsh Adoption Register Activity Days during the year. Activity days involve participation of children, their foster carers and Social Workers and direct interaction with prospective

adopters. This has been a new experience for VVC but which has been found to be a useful alternative means of family finding.

4.19 There is regular dialogue and meetings between the Medical Advisers and VVC Managers to ensure that issues which delay family finding /medicals are resolved and strategies to reduce recurrence are put in place.

4.20 A Children's Guide has been created and provided to children and adopters.

4.21 The Family Finding Manager provided the following overview of the numbers, ages and range of needs of children subject of a Placement Order on 31 March 2017:

Currently there are 95 children with a Placement Order. This compares with 60 children with Placement Orders at the end of 2015-16. The profile of needs we are family finding for are as follows:

Sibling Groups:

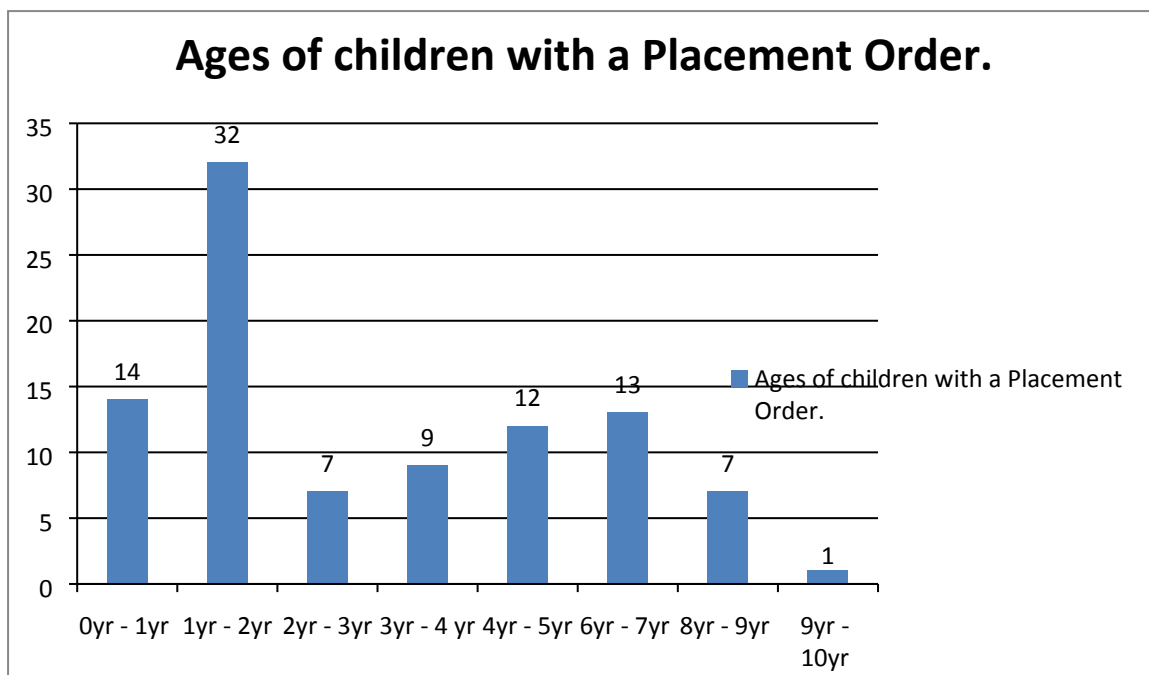
*40 of the children are in a sibling group of 2.
There is 1 sibling group of 3.*

Matching Considerations:

*6 children are defined as having an ethnicity which is not white British.
8 children have additional health needs i.e. genetic condition/foetal alcohol syndrome.
3 children have behavioural needs which would be considered to require therapeutic parenting.
2 have to be placed outside of Wales due to risk from birth parents.*

Care Planning:

*3 children are on hold due to a placement breakdown.
1 child is on hold due to a legal challenge from birth parents.
2 are on hold whilst a placement with siblings is being explored.
1 child is waiting due to a delay in receiving a profile to complete searches.
8 have matches which are proceeding within VVC.
2 children have a change of care plan to long-term fostering.*



All of the children who are over 5 are either part of a sibling group or have needs which require therapeutic parenting.

In addition to the above children there are 16 children where it is currently anticipated they will be placed with VVC adopters.

It is anticipated that 63 of the above children will require placement outside VVC due to availability of adopters who can meet the needs of a sibling group, children whose ethnicity is not white British, children requiring placement outside of Wales for safety reasons and those with additional health and behaviour needs.

4. 22 During 2016-17 VVC was in fact successful in placing a high proportion of children within the region (62 out of 81 placements). Due however, to the reasons outlined above and a large percentage of the available stock of adopters having being used during the year, it is likely that more external placements will be required in the coming year.

5. RECRUITMENT AND ASSESSMENT OF ADOPTERS

5.1 A review of Recruitment and Assessment activity within the region was presented to the Management Board in November 2016. This area of activity is a significant one for the region and one which presents its' own set of challenges in terms of being able to effectively recruit to meet our ongoing needs.

5.2 The Performance Framework records key activity around enquiries, response times to enquiries, applications and timeliness in respect of approval of adopters. The returns in respect of adopter activity during the year represent some worrying trends. The region received **150** enquiries from prospective adopters in total which represents a 30% decrease on the previous year. Part of the reason for this may be

explained when it was discovered during quarter 3 that email enquirers were not always being captured in the same way. Improvements have therefore been made to recording mechanisms to ensure that all email enquirers are recorded accurately.

5.3 There has also been a slight decrease during the year in VVC's response to enquiries within 5 working days which at year end totalled 99%. VVC has however, been able to track the enquiry where information was sent outside of this timescale and report this as part of the performance reporting.

5.4 The region approved **47** adopter households compared with **55** in the previous year. Part of the reason for the decrease in approvals can be attributed to some of the capacity issues being experienced within the service resulting in staff involved in recruitment having to focus upon family finding. The other area of concern has been in relation to our overall performance in relation to the timeliness of assessments which has significantly deteriorated during the year to **12.2 months** which is significantly below the national benchmark of 8 months. The region is able to account for the delays and is now supplying an explanatory narrative to accompany the return in respect of this measure. Again it is evident that the increased workload in other areas of the service has significantly impacted upon timescales in respect of this area of work.

5.5 Some of the measures VVC has put in place to address the gaps in recruitment have been to develop the initial approach to recruitment. In line with national direction, VVC has developed a targeted approach to recruitment with the intention of increasing the breadth of age range and needs that prospective adopters would feel confident parenting. Improved analysis of the children being referred and requiring placement has also informed this process.

5.6 The evidence which has also emerged from the analysis of adoption support within the region has also helped shape the information provided to prospective adopters at the initial stage. VVC has taken the approach that those interested in adoption should be provided with more information on the needs of children at a far earlier stage in the process in order for them to make a more informed decision around whether adoption is the right choice for them. To this end VVC has revamped the format of their information evenings, which are currently held bi-monthly, to provide a comprehensive information pack which attendees are invited to digest before progressing to an initial visit from a Social Worker.

5.7 As a result of this approach there has been some decline in the numbers of people seeking an initial visit and some potential applicants may delay before making contact about an initial visit. This approach has however yet to show a marked difference in the numbers coming forward for siblings and a number of those approved for more than one child have gone on to be matched with a single child. The recruitment of families for siblings and children with additional needs remains a challenge.

5.8 The region has invested in the service of a part time Marketing Officer employed by NAS. A project group has been established with her support and the IT Department to develop VVC's website which is now nearing completion. Three members of staff will receive training in order to be able to update the website. The

website will provide a useful mechanism to monitor enquiries from prospective adopters and the different geographical areas, information which can be used to target future marketing.

5.9 There had been a noticeable decline in relation to enquiries from Cardiff and the Vale of Glamorgan, both areas which have previously generated a significant number of enquiries with no need for active awareness raising. It therefore felt that should this trend continue then consideration would need to be given to more active awareness raising within these geographical areas in the coming year.

5.10 Towards the end of the reporting period, the decline in enquirers seeking an initial visit as evidenced during quarter 3 appears to be showing signs of reversing. Information evenings held in January and February 2017 produced a significant number of initial visits compared to the previous quarter and this has resulted in an increase in the number of adopters attending the most recent Preparing to Adopt training course held at the end of the year.

5.11 As of 31st March 2017 there were 29 assessments being completed by the region, with 11 first time assessments and one second time assessment awaiting allocation.

5.12 Over the past year there has been a conscious effort, wherever possible, to allocate assessments to those workers specialising in recruitment and assessment. There are significant benefits to this approach in building expertise and skill but improvements to performance have not been seen due to those staff also undertaking generic work. Assessment plans and mid-point reviews are now more routinely established to improve practice and timeliness.

5.13 VVC continues to receive high numbers of non-agency adoption referrals, the majority of which are from step parents wishing to adopt their step child. This is not an area currently collated by NAS. As a result of having to prioritise the recruitment of adopters for children waiting to be adopted, this area of work now has a growing waiting list.

6. ADOPTION SUPPORT

6.1 Improving adoption support services within the region has also remained consistently challenging. The Adoption Support Manager has undertaken regular reviews of the service to assess ongoing service needs, shortfalls and resource implications. The workload in this area is high and data collected since the establishment of the Collaborative indicates that it has increased significantly in key areas.

6.2 In April 2016, NAS introduced a range of measures in respect of Adoption Support which are collated and reported upon each quarter. During the past year **83** requests for adoption support services have been received representing a 54% increase on the previous year and this support had been provided in **61** cases. In terms of Access to Birth Records requests, **66** referrals were received during the year which represents a slight decrease from 70 having been received in 2015-2016. **34** requests for intermediary services were received during the period which is an

increase of 79% from the previous year when only 19 were received. Open letterbox cases have also increased from 636 at the end of 2015-16 to **767** on 31 March 2017.

6.3 The workload within the team has posed difficulties in terms of prompt allocation and there is a backlog of unallocated work in all these areas. As outlined previously temporary measures utilising underspend monies from 2015-16 have been put in place to address some of the service deficits. The Manager's role has been increased to full time and two part- time Social Workers have been employed to manage the letterbox system and to clear some of the waiting list for ABR, as a pilot exercise to enhance the staffing resource within the Adoption Support Team. An additional Social Work post has also been agreed utilising monies set aside within the adoption support function and an appointment has been made. In addition, the Directors have agreed to the extension of the pilot into 2017-18 pending the outcome of the Best Value Review of the service.

6.4 Another aspect of the plan put in place to improve adoption support has focused upon training and support of adopters and training staff. Membership of Adoption UK was secured for the region and a Non Violent Resistance training programme for adoptive families was facilitated by Adoption UK. This course was run for 20 families with the support of two VVC staff and concluded in November 2016.

6.5 One of the adopters who attended the training has set up a quarterly peer support group supported by Adoption UK for a year.

6.6 The service has also invested some resources in up skilling staff within the team to more adequately support adoptive families. Training in therapeutic interventions and approaches has been provided for staff to improve practice.

6.7 Staff within the Adoption Support Team are experienced and committed to service improvement. Quarterly support groups have been established to address key issues for adoptive families, in addition to the maintenance of monthly toddler groups which provides opportunities for early intervention as well as bi-annual fun days which have high attendances.

6.8 A family fun day was held in November 2016 which was well attended. It has been noted that attendances at the bi-annual fun days are increasing to around 100 children with the result that alternative venues will have to be explored for future days. There have been two workshops run for adoptive parents in respect of life story work. Other topics covered in support groups have dealt with managing contact issues and managing behaviour.

6.9 Within the team, there is a commitment to improve the provision of services to all families requiring support through the means outlined above and there is a commitment to develop services further. There is a need to develop consultation and information mechanisms with adoptive families but this has been delayed due to capacity within the team. There has been a delay in being able to produce the newsletter for families but it is anticipated that the development of the website will provide a much needed source of information for families and adopted adults.

6.10 During the past year, which was VVC's first full year of operation, the service has been able to develop a clearer picture of the demand for targeted and therapeutic services with families needing support and the cost of these to the local authorities. At present the adoption support budget is not held centrally in the region and is retained by the individual local authorities. This has posed some challenge in terms of equity of service and timeliness of decision making, but generally local authority partners concur with the assessment undertaken by VVC and packages of support are being put in place as needed.

6.11 In the autumn of 2016, NAS produced a national framework to improve adoption support services and commissioned the Institute of Public Care (IPC) to produce a business case and action plan to develop the framework across Wales. As part of this work a national Project Board was set up to oversee the plan which the Regional Manager and Adoption Support Manager have been actively involved in. Members of the Management Board and regional stakeholder representatives have also met with IPC to contribute to the national discussions regarding improving adoption support across Wales.

7. ADOPTION PANEL

7.1 The Collaborative operates a joint regional Panel from two sittings, a north sitting covering RCT and Merthyr and south sitting covering Cardiff and the Vale of Glamorgan.

7.2 The workload of the Panel remains high and Panel meetings are now scheduled four times a month. During 2016-17, the north sitting met twenty times, three Panels were cancelled due to no cases being presented. The south sitting met twenty three times, one Panel was re-arranged due to quoracy issues and three were cancelled because no cases were booked in.

7.3 VVC's Panel recommended **51** approvals to adopt, **1** review of approval, **75** matches of children with prospective adopters and **3** recommendations for children to be adopted in the cases of 3 relinquished children.

7.4 A significant area of development for the Panel is to move to a digital system. Tablets have been issued to Panel members and a licence with Egress obtained to enable secure transfer of Panel information. Panel members have received training on the new system and some trialling has taken place with a view to full implementation.

7.5 Maintenance of the central list of Panel members serving two sittings has caused some difficulties to the Collaborative in terms of available independent members and available Social Workers to become Panel members. Some recruitment of new members has taken place and induction and training is scheduled for the first quarter of next year.

7.6 Capacity issues within the management team have inhibited progress in conducting annual reviews of Panel members which will need to be prioritised in the coming year.

8. COMPLAINTS AND COMPLIMENTS

8.1 During 2016- 17, the region received two complaints.

8.2 The first complaint was from prospective adopters who had come forward for a specific child. The Family Finding Social Worker and Childcare Social Worker had visited the couple and decided not to proceed further with the enquiry for a number of reasons. The couple complained about the decision, the content of the initial visit and the approach of the Family Finding Social Worker. The complaint was investigated by the Recruitment and Assessment Manager and resolved at Stage 1.

8.3 The second complaint was from another couple following VVC's decision not to proceed to the application stage due to the male applicant's psychiatric condition. This was dealt with under Stage 1 by the Regional Adoption Manager. Following this the male applicant made representation to NAS and a meeting has now taken place with the couple, NAS Policy Officer and the Regional Adoption Manager to explain the reasons for VVC's decision.

8.4 Both these complaints have similarities and concern complaints from couples who have complained about the decision not to proceed with an adoption application or link. The Complaints Procedure is the only mechanism available for making representations against a decision not to take up an application to adopt and does not afford potential applicants the right to make representations to an independent review mechanism which highlights a gap in existing regulations.

8.5 There have been eleven compliments and records of thanks received during the year. Two of these have been from birth relatives; one from a grandmother in relation to the management of direct contact with adopters and one from a birth mother in respect of their letterbox contact. One of the compliments was from a voluntary agency expressing their satisfaction in working with VVC regarding the placement of a child with additional needs. The other compliments have been from adoptive parents and prospective adopters expressing their gratitude for the support and service they have received from regional staff.

9. CONCLUSION

9.1 The first full year of operation of the Collaborative has provided an opportunity for further consolidation of the service and to build upon the performance of the region in the initial year. The region has maintained and improved performance in key areas such as the matching and placement of children for adoption and the provision of Life Journey Material. It is however apparent that the increased workload in terms of referrals of children for adoption, children waiting for placements and for adoption support services has impacted upon performance in other areas, particularly the timely recruitment and assessment of adopters. This coupled with the downturn in the number of enquiries received from prospective adopters makes effective recruitment of adopters a key priority going forward.

9.2 Capacity and resourcing issues within the service have featured significantly during the period but it is hoped that the forthcoming review of the service will assess

whether the current structure and staffing is fit to meet the current demands placed upon the service to ensure that performance is improved during the coming year.

10. FUTURE PRIORITIES

10.1 Capacity issues and workload pressures within the regional management team has impacted upon key service developments and has resulted in the need to carry forward some of the priorities identified in year one.

10.2 Our priorities for 2017-18 will focus upon focus upon key activities required to improve performance in respect of our core service areas.

10.3 There is an urgent need to develop a recruitment and marketing strategy for adopters and to increase our available adopter resource to better meet the needs of children being referred and ensure more timely placements.

10.4 Other priorities to support our infrastructure and create efficiencies will be to induct and train new Panel members, complete annual reviews of existing members and secure full implementation of the digital Panel.

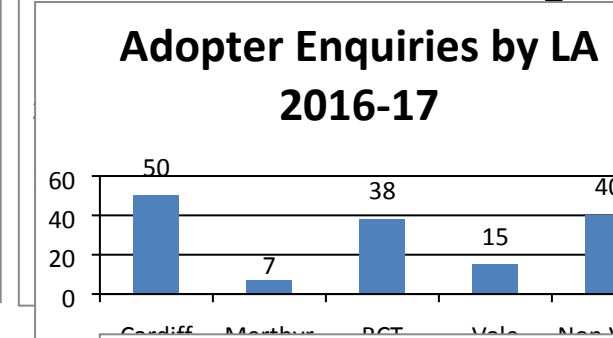
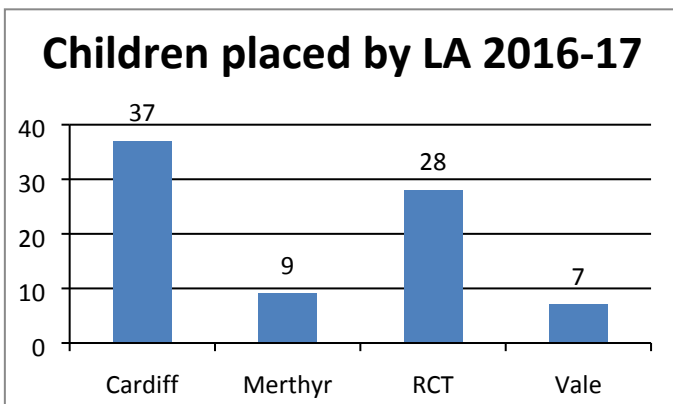
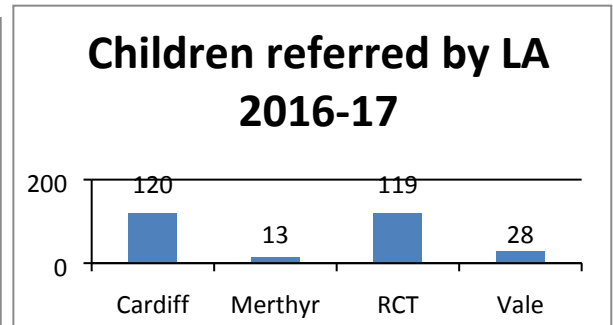
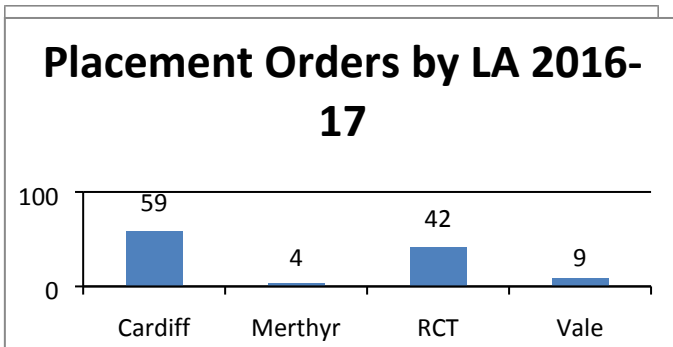
10.5 Finally, the region will need to be able to absorb the findings arising from the development of the national framework for adoption support and continue to look to ways to better support adoptive families and engage them in the development of services.

Angela Harris
Regional Adoption Manager
September 2017

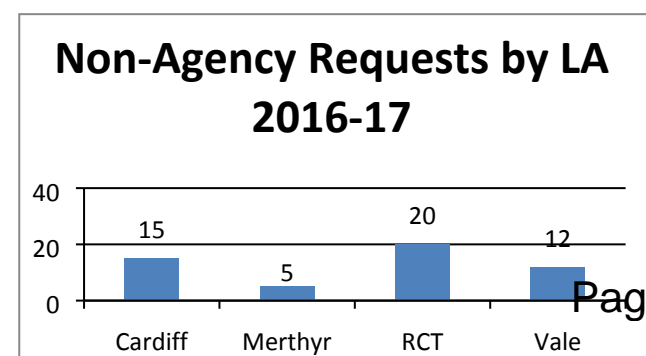
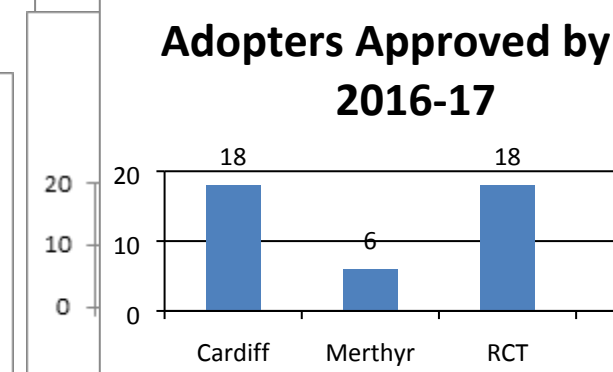
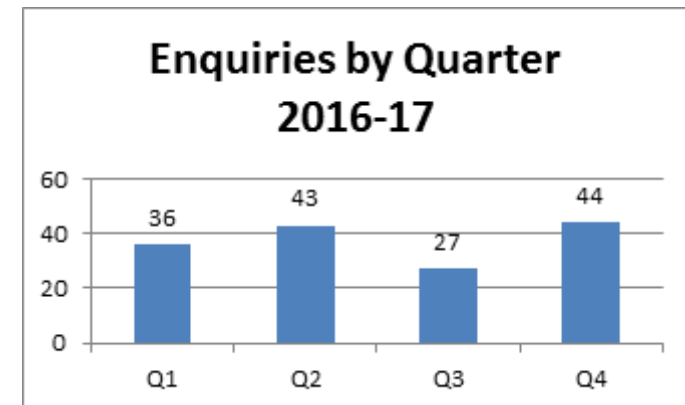
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Appendix 1 VVC Annual Report 2016-17

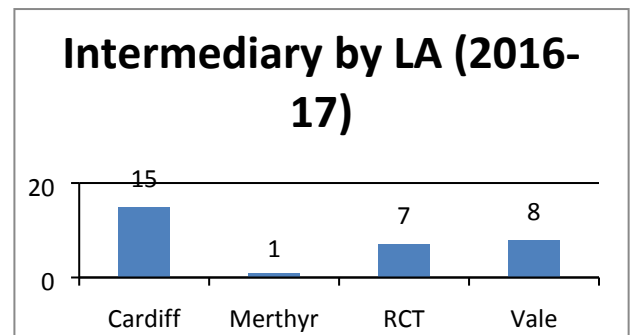
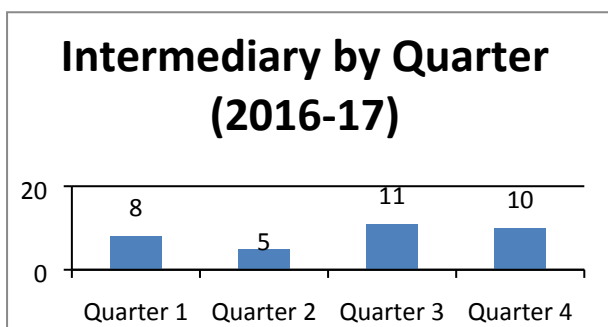
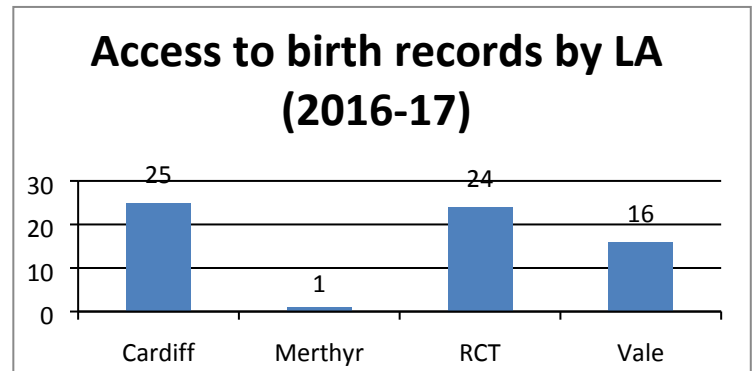
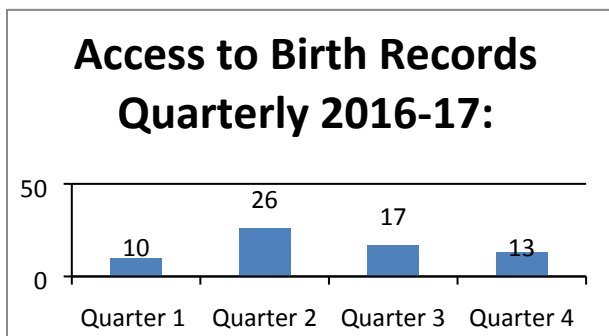
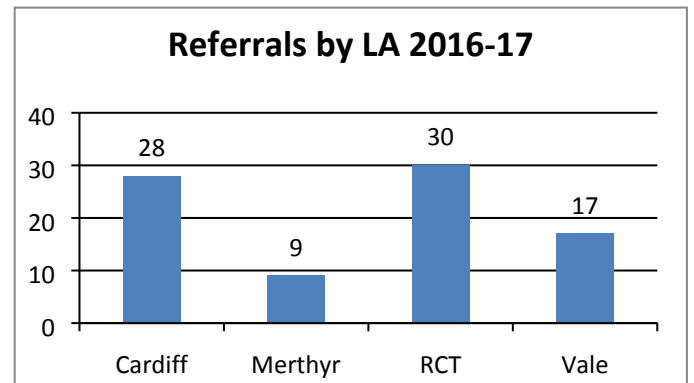
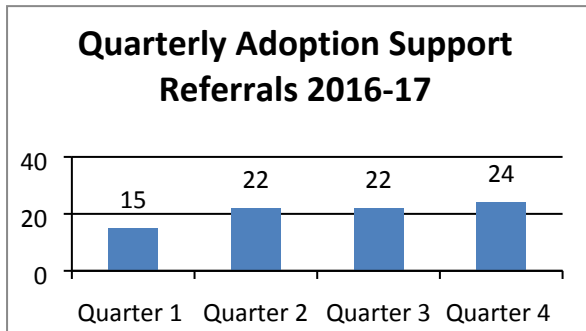
Family Finding:



Recruitment and Assessment:



Post-Adoption Support:



**VALE, VALLEYS & CARDIFF REGIONAL ADOPTION SERVICE – ANNUAL
REPORT**

Purpose of the Report

1. The purpose of this report is to provide the Committee with a copy of the Vale, Valleys and Cardiff (VVC) Regional Adoption Collaborative's Annual Report 2016/17 (copy attached at **Appendix A**). The report sets out the key information about the Regional services together with quarterly performance information for the period 2016 – 2017.

Background

2. As a key part of the implementation of the Social Services and Well Being Act (Wales) 2014, the National Adoption Service for Wales has been created to bring together existing local government services into a three tier system, with partnership arrangements for services provided in other sectors, to co-ordinate and deliver adoption services in a different way.

These tiers are:

- local authority level – where all local authorities will continue to identify and meet needs of children for whom adoption is the most appropriate plan;
- regional level – where five local authority collaboratives have been created to deliver agreed adoption functions and develop operational links, as appropriate, with voluntary sector and other services to develop and improve service delivery; and at

- national level – a small team to co-ordinate and drive improvement and consistency, while maintaining strategic and planning links with Voluntary Adoption Agencies (VAAs) and the delivery of certain national functions.
3. The previous Committee scrutinised the National and Regional Adoption Service proposals in December 2014. Members supported the key principles contained within the proposals, but expressed some concern about the role of this scrutiny committee in the governance of the National and VVC Regional Adoption Service, to ensure that plans are put in place to optimise performance monitoring and future service delivery.
 4. The Regional Adoption Service agreed to provide its annual report to committee to enable Members to review performance and assess the services future priorities.
 5. The Collaboration's Annual Report for last year, 2015- 2016, included a number of specific improvements and priorities for implementation during the year 2016-17, these included:
 - To review the feasibility of implementing a more specialised, functional model of service delivery.
 - To improve efficiency and reduce administrative costs of the Adoption Panel by implementing a paperless Panel system.
 - To develop VVC's website and to improve the range of information available for users of our service.
 - To develop the family finding process within the region to improve practice in relation to the timely placement of children
 - To target the recruitment and assessment of adoptive families to better meet the needs of children awaiting placements within the region and reduce reliance upon external sources of placement.
 - To develop the plan to enhance the Adoption Support service in the short term and evaluate its' effectiveness to inform future planning of the service

- To further develop processes, procedures and guidance to support the work of the Collaborative ensuring compliance with Welsh language requirements.
- To develop opportunities for engaging and obtaining feedback from service users.

Vale, Valleys and Cardiff (VVC) Regional Adoption Collaborative

6. The Vale, Valleys & Cardiff Adoption Collaborative (VVC) brings together the adoption services of the Vale of Glamorgan Council, Merthyr Tydfil County Borough Council, Cardiff Council and Rhondda Cynon Taff County Borough Council. It is one of the five regional Collaborative's which form part of the National Adoption Service in Wales (NAS) .The Vale of Glamorgan Council host the Regional Collaborative.
7. In March 2015 Welsh Government published the (Joint Adoption Arrangements) (Wales) Directions 2015, known as “ The Directions Powers “ , which prescribe the regional areas and the governance structure for the service at a national and regional level. The merger of the adoption services within the region in June 2015 was the culmination of much co-ordinated effort and joint working on the part of all partners in progressing the plan to implement the service.
8. The Annual report brings together into one document a review and analysis of the activities of the collaborative, together with a number of performance measures which monitor performance in relation to the key stages in the adoption process for children with particular emphasis upon the overall timeliness off the process. The report also provides the annual review of the service as required by Regulation 22 of the Local Authority Adoption Service (Wales) Regulations 2007 and section 15 (c) of the Adoption and Children Act 2002 (joint Adoption Arrangements) (Wales) Direction 2015.

9. The report, copy attached at **Appendix A** focusses on the following areas of the regions work:

- a. Service and Governance Structure
- b. Service Areas
- c. Family Finding
- d. Recruitment & Assessment of Adopters
- e. Adoption support
- f. Adoption Panel
- g. Complaints and Compliments
- h. Conclusion
- i. Future priorities

10. Also attached at **Appendix 1** to the Annual Report is a copy of the Region's performance data for each Local Authority in the Collaborative together with quarterly data of the year.

11. The Regional report also acts as the Regions Annual Report to the Director of Operations for the National Adoption Service, the Management Board and Joint Committee.

Scope of the Scrutiny

12. The Report will provide the Members with the opportunity to review the progress made in the management and operation of the Regional Adoption Service. Members may wish to evaluate the following aspects of the reports:

- a. How well has the VVC Regional Service progressed against the targets and performance measures;
- b. The progress that the VVC Region has made in addressing the improvements and priorities highlighted in paragraph 5.
- c. What are the plans for the future for the VVC Region.

Way Forward

13. Angela Harris, Regional Adoption Manager, VVC, will present the report on the implementation and performance of the regional collaborations following which they will all be available to answer questions Members may have. Councillor Graham Hinchey, Cabinet Member for Children and Families, Tony Young, Director of Social Services and Irfan Alam Assistant Director Children's Services will also be available to answer any questions.

Legal Implications

14. The Scrutiny Committee is empowered to enquire, consider, review and recommend but not to make policy decisions. As the recommendations in this report are to consider and review matters there are no direct legal implications. However, legal implications may arise if and when the matters under review are implemented with or without any modifications. Any report with recommendations for decision that goes to Cabinet/Council will set out any legal implications arising from those recommendations. All decisions taken by or on behalf of the Council must (a) be within the legal powers of the Council; (b) comply with any procedural requirement imposed by law; (c) be within the powers of the body or person exercising powers on behalf of the Council; (d) be undertaken in accordance with the procedural requirements imposed by the Council e.g. Scrutiny Procedure Rules; (e) be fully and properly informed; (f) be properly motivated; (g) be taken having regard to the Council's fiduciary duty to its taxpayers; and (h) be reasonable and proper in all the circumstances.

Financial Implications

15. The Scrutiny Committee is empowered to enquire, consider, review and recommend but not to make policy decisions. As the recommendations in this report are to consider and review matters there are no direct financial implications at this stage in relation to any of the work programme. However, financial implications may arise if and when the matters under review are implemented with or without any modifications. These financial implications

will need to be considered before any changes are implemented. Any report with recommendations for decision that goes to Cabinet/Council will set out any financial implications arising from those recommendations.

RECOMMENDATIONS

That Members review the information contained in **Appendices A** together with any additional information provided at the meeting and submit any comments, concerns or recommendations about the services to the Cabinet Member for discussion with the Regional Manager.

Davina Fiore

Director of Governance and legal Services

3 October 2017

My Ref: Scrutiny/Correspondence/MJH

13 October 2017

Rachel Evans
Head of Service
Director's Office - Social Services
Vale of Glamorgan Council, Dock's Office
Barry



County Hall
Cardiff,
CF10 4UW
Tel: (029) 2087 2087

Neuadd y Sir
Caerdydd,
CF10 4UW
Ffôn: (029) 2087 2088

Dear Rachel

The Members of Cardiff Council's Children & Young People Scrutiny Committee would like to thank you for providing them with a copy of the Vale, Valleys & Cardiff Adoption Service's Annual Report, as hosts for the collaborative, and answering the Members questions.

The Committee also wished to thank, Angela Harris, Regional Adoption Manager Vale of Glamorgan Council, together with Councillor Graham Hinchey, Cabinet Member for Children & Families, Tony Young, Director of Social Services and Irfan Alam Assistant Director Children's Services, for their attendance and the honest and open answers to the Members questions.

The Committee welcomed the report and agreed to commend it to the Management Board and Joint Committee for their approval. During the way forward the Members identified a number of points which they felt I should write to you about.

The Members were pleased to be updated on the actions identified in the previous annual report, but wished to receive a further update on the following actions which still required more work to be undertaken, namely:

- To develop opportunities for engagement and obtaining feedback from service users;
- To improve efficiency and reduce administrative costs of the Adoption Panel by implementing a paperless Panel system.

The Committee was however concerned to hear of the poor uptake of Birth Parents Counselling, the Members understood the sensitivities in engaging with Birth Parents, but considered that this area needs more focus.

The Committee was also concerned at the resource issues which had effected five social worker posts during the second half of last year. The Members requested that an update on the recruitment and organisation of these posts be provided as part of the response to this letter.

The Committee noted that a best value review was being undertaken which covered, demand, shortfall in staffing and adoption support. The Committee requested that a

copy of the best value review report be presented to Members, when it has been completed, along with the Collaborative's Business plan.

Finally the Committee discussed at some length the Link Matching service and Activities Days which helped potential adopters in identifying children for adoption. The Members wondered how effective these were in helping people to adopt and requested that an impact assessment of the Link Matching and Activities Days be undertaken and included in this year's annual report.

I hope that the comments, advice and requests for information, detailed above, will be of use and support in the adoption of children across the region and in particular in Cardiff, and I look forward to a positive response to this letter within a month.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'L. BRIDGEMAN', with a long horizontal stroke extending to the right.

COUNTY COUNCILLOR LEE BRIDGEMAN
Chairperson – Children and Young People Scrutiny Committee

CC Angela Harris, Vale, Valleys and Cardiff Regional Adoption Service Manager
CC Councillor Graham Hinchey, Board Member
CC Tony Young, Board Member



Vale, Valleys
and Cardiff
Adoption | **Mabwysiadu**
yn y Fro, y Cymoedd
a Chaerdydd

Date/Dyddiad: 15 November 2017
Ask for/Gofynwch am: Angela Harris
Telephone/Rhif ffôn: 01443 490460

County Councillor Lee Bridgeman
Chairperson
Children and Young People Scrutiny Committee
County Hall
Cardiff
CF10 4UW

Dear Councillor Bridgeman

Re: Vale, Valleys & Cardiff Adoption Collaborative Annual Report 2016-17

Thank you for letter dated 13 October 2017 concerning the presentation of the above report to your Scrutiny Committee on 6 October 2017. I will address the points upon which you seek further clarification as follows:

1. Actions from 2015-16 Report:

To develop opportunities for engagement and obtaining feedback from service users

VVC currently facilitates two family fundays and a monthly toddler group for adoptive families. Adoptive parents have been involved in the preparation and delivery of these activities. In addition the service provides a quarterly support group which has focused upon topics of interest and issues raised by families.

Adoptive families within the region have been encouraged to engage in consultation events held by the National Adoption Service (NAS). In the spring of 2017 NAS commissioned the Institute of Public Care to undertake a web based survey of adoptive families in respect of adoption support services. VVC had the highest participation rate in Wales and these findings have now been fed back to the region to inform service development.

VVC has now developed its' website which provides a ready means of contact with the service for potential adoptive parents. VVC has also funded membership of Adoption UK for the past two years which provide opportunities for engagement. Adopted children 7 + are also referred to Talk Adoption which provides support for children and young people. Talk Adoption provide activities as part of our fundays.

The service has recognised the need to obtain more direct means of obtaining feedback upon the services delivered and has worked with the Participation Officer in

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Pontypridd CF37 2TB**

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Catherine, Pontypridd, CF37 2TB
www.adopt4vvc.co.uk**

**Correspondence is welcomed in Welsh or English/Croesawir Gohebiaeth yn y
Gymraeg neu yn Saesneg**

developing questionnaires. Capacity issues within the service has impacted upon embedding the use of these questionnaires into practice and so this still remains an area for development.

To improve efficiency and administrative costs of the Adoption Panel by implementing a paperless Panel system.

The development of a paperless digital Panel system remains a key priority for VVC. As indicated previously tablets have been purchased for members alongside a licence to use a secure web portal, Egress. Panel members and staff have received training in the use of Egress and as part of an implementation plan, have trialled the use of tablets to access the Panel information. As a result of these trials some technical difficulties have been identified which are being worked on by the IT Department. It is anticipated that once these are resolved then full implementation of the system can be put in place. It is anticipated the digital Panel will be launched within this financial year.

The efficiencies and benefits of moving to a digital Panel system have been considered as part of the Best Value Review.

2. Birth Parent Counselling

The provision and take up of birth parent counselling is monitored closely as part of the Performance Management Framework and regions have to report on a quarterly and annual basis in respect of these measures. VVC's performance is not unusual in respect of this work and is comparable to other regions with a similar workload.

Nonetheless, Social Workers continue to strive through their individual practice to explore ways of engaging parents more effectively by utilising planned contact sessions, home visits and other venues to meet parents. The region is also trialling a birth parent support group to try another means of engagement.

3. Resources

The five vacancies outlined in the report have all been recruited to. Staff were appointed from late May – mid July 2017 and all have remained in post. Three of the staff have been employed in Family Finding and two in Adoption Support. Some temporary agency cover was put in place to cover Family Finding which ceased prior to the last appointment.

4. Best Value Review

The timetable for conclusion of this process is planned for December 2017 when the final report is scheduled to be presented to VVC's Joint Committee. This will provide

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a mechanism for feedback into the respective local authority by the nominated elected member who sits on the Joint Committee. The presentation of this Review to the four Scrutiny Committees will be considered with a view to seeking common agreement as to the most appropriate approach to this.


5. Link Maker and Activity Days.

Link Maker has been endorsed by NAS and is a service which all regions subscribe to. It is also widely used by English authorities, where it originated. VVC subscribes to Link Maker, although the subscription this year has been funded by Welsh Government pending the outcome of the tendering exercise in respect of the Welsh Adoption Register. Link Maker provides a useful platform for profiling children and for adopters to access directly. NAS undertook an early evaluation of the effectiveness of Link Maker and it is possible to obtain regional reports to assist in analysing usage and potential matches. Some of this can be incorporated in this year's Annual Report.

The use of Activity Days are in their infancy in Wales but again much more developed practice in England. Nevertheless, the region has been proactive in engaging with this process as an alternative means of securing adoptive placements. A further Welsh day is being planned by the Wales Adoption Register in March 2018. This will provide more data and a further opportunity to evaluate their effectiveness which can then form part of this year's annual report.

I trust this addresses the points you have raised in addition to our attendance at Committee.

Yours Sincerely



Angela Harris
Regional Adoption Manager.

**Vale, Valleys and Cardiff Adoption, Level 7, Ty Pennant, Catherine Street,
Pontypridd CF37 2TB**

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Mae'r dudalen hon yn wag yn fwriadol

CITY AND COUNTY OF CARDIFF
DINAS A SIR CAERDYDD

CORPORATE PARENTING ADVISORY COMMITTEE

16 January 2018

Corporate Parenting Advisory Committee Performance Summary
Quarter 2 2017/18

Reasons for the Report

1. The purpose of the report is to provide the Committee with information and performance data in respect of Quarter 2 2017/18 to enable the Committee to:
 - a. Understand the factors that impact on outcomes for looked after children.
 - b. Consider opportunities for improving outcomes for looked after children.
2. This is the latest attempt at a more strategic approach to reporting to Committee. It will be used as the basis for developing future reports that will give Members an understanding of cross cutting issues relating to looked after children both within the Council and wider partnerships.
3. Quarter 2 covers the period from 1st July 2017 to 30th September 2017.
4. The performance report attached at **Appendix A** has been constructed to highlight the progress made in delivering the key objectives, associated performance indicators, and commentaries that help to identify progress, issues and actions planned where the trend in performance is falling. To make the information in the performance report clearer, each indicator is accompanied by an arrow, and in some cases, a happy, indifferent or sad face.
5. For your information, these symbols represent the following:

- The face symbol shows whether performance is likely, unlikely to, or may meet the target set for the year.
 - The arrow direction shows whether performance has declined, has been sustained or improved when compared with an appropriate previous period.
6. The new Social Services & Wellbeing (Wales) Act 2014 that came into force on 6th April 2016 provides the legal framework for improving the wellbeing of people who need care and support, and carers who need support, and for transforming social services in Wales.
 7. We are looking to develop future reports that include more infographics and less text.

Overview of Performance

8. Within Quarter 2 performance was mixed and there are some areas of strength, particularly given demand pressures, however there are also some areas for improvement. Performance in relation to initial child protection conferences improved slightly to 94% (109 / 116), which is on target.
9. However, performance in respect of timely wellbeing assessments reduced to 76% (516 / 675) from 83% (523 / 630) in Quarter 1. This is in the context of a 7% (45) increase in the number of assessments completed.
10. Performance in relation to allocation of children on the Child Protection Register and looked after children to social workers remained at 100% (230 / 230).
11. Work to progress the Directorate's commitments in the Corporate Plan has continued and key areas of progress include:
 - a. **Improve engagement with faith communities** - Key strategies around communication and engagement have been successfully developed with the Muslim Council of Wales and in partnership with Cardiff and Vale

Regional Safeguarding Children's Board; this has led to the publication of 'Safeguarding our Children: A Guidance for Mosque Schools and Islamic Studies Settings'. The guidance is about valuing and keeping Muslim children who receive an Islamic education in Cardiff and the Vale of Glamorgan safe. Its purpose is to raise community awareness about safeguarding children and to provide information about how to deal with concerns. Copies have been distributed to all mosques in Cardiff and the Vale of Glamorgan and a launch is planned for Quarter 3.

- b. **Young carers** - Implementation of the regional young carers' action plan is ongoing and will facilitate better awareness of this group and the support available to them. Young Carer's Champions have been identified in two high schools, one in the East and one in the West of Cardiff. Future development includes identifying additional school based support workers with posts expected to be operational in Quarter 1 2018/19. The Young Carers in Schools programme is currently being piloted by a number of schools across Wales including, Gwynedd, Denbighshire, Conwy, Pembrokeshire, Merthyr Tydfil, Caerphilly, Cardiff and Greater Gwent. Supporting Young Carers in Schools: A Step-by-Step Guide for Leaders, Teachers and Non-Teaching Staff, is part of the Young Carers in Schools programme. The guide uses a number of tools to assist in raising awareness, identifying, assessing and supporting young carers in schools. Wider use of the guide will be explored in Quarter 3 looking at the potential for the guide to be used across other agencies including social care.
- c. **Signs of Safety** - Implementation of the Signs of Safety approach within Children's Services is ongoing and is on target to meet the milestones set out in the Directorate Plan. Practice Leader workshops have continued to take place throughout the quarter and a 5 day intensive Practice Leader course is due to be held in the first week of October. Engagement and sharing of best practice continues with other Local Authorities within both Wales and UK wide. The project plan is progressing well.

- d. **Corporate Parenting Strategy** – The Corporate Parenting Strategy implementation plan has been delivered and operational during the past 12 months with the majority of the actions having been met in full. As a result it has been decided that the formal launch of the Strategy is no longer necessary.

During Quarter 2 2017/18, there were 21 referrals to the **Looked After Children Traineeship scheme**. Of these, 6 have started Traineeship Placements and 1 has attended taster days. 10 will receive pre-engagement work before starting a Trainee placement. The remaining 4 are due to be met early in Quarter 3. An additional 11 young started Traineeship Placements during Quarter 2 from referrals in previous quarters. 2 young people were offered and accepted Paid Trainee roles. 1 young person interviewed but was not successful for a Corporate Apprenticeship and 1 young person registered with Cardiff Works. At the end of the quarter there were a total of 11 Trainees and 6 Apprentices (as some of these arrangements commenced in previous years). Monies identified as part of the Cardiff Ambition to create a new post that will sustain and develop the Trainee Scheme, including opportunities outside of the Council. A focus group was held with young people who have been through the Trainee Scheme to look at changing the identity of the scheme. The scheme will be renamed Bright Starts Trainee Scheme and processes will be redesigned with Communications Team before being relaunched.

A **Participation and Consultation Steering Group** for looked after children has been established within Specialist Services (Looked After Children, Personal Advisers and Advocacy) that will give some governance and meaningfulness where young people are involved in participation and consultation exercises.

12. There has been some slippage in progress against some of the milestones in the Corporate Plan relating to:

- a. **Safeguarding Vision and Strategy** – The development of a Vision and Strategy for Safeguarding in Cardiff was originally targeted for completion by 31st March 2018, but vacancy related delays now mean that we are targeting completion in Quarter 1 2018/19.

- b. **Direct Payments** – 835 people have used the Direct Payment scheme during Quarters 1 and 2 (172 children and 663 adults aged 18+). During Quarter 2, 19 started Direct Payments and 12 ceased (of which, the main reason was deceased).

The new Direct Payments Support Service commenced on 31st July 2017. The transition to the successful provider, Dewis Centre for Independent Living (CIL) is being undertaken and the transition plans are being implemented. This provides a solid platform for improving performance in keeping with the target. The growth bid was successful and, as a result, the Personal Assistant rate and agency rate will increase from £10.02 to £10.52 and £11.96 to £14.66 respectively. Decision that Continuing Health Care is not available where Direct Payments are in place for children is being challenged.

- c. **Disability Futures** - The Disability Futures Strategy is making strong progress in a highly complex partnership environment and is effectively driving the changes needed in relation to models for a regional Complex Needs Service, regional recommissioning of services, transition, autism services and integrated respite for children. Despite strong performance in relation to the strategy, there has been some slippage against the milestones set out in the Directorate Plan.

Integrated delivery models for a regional **Complex Needs Service** are currently being explored, e.g. scoping out the development of a regional Occupational Therapy service for Children across Health, Education and Social Services.

The Project Group has undertaken a scoping exercise on the **regional recommissioning of services** e.g. Independent Living Skills (ILS). As a

result a project brief to support regional commissioning and alignment is to be considered by the Families First Programme Board.

Work to create a **Transition** process and protocol for Cardiff that can be closely aligned with regional partners is ongoing. Transition process workshops with key stakeholders working on transition in Cardiff Council Social Services were held and completed during the quarter. The draft process that was agreed at the workshop was further discussed and agreed at the regional operational group meeting with relevant Operational Managers from Cardiff, Vale, Education and the University Health Board.

Existing University Health Board and Cardiff and the Vale **autism services**, Cardiff and Vale Autism Spectrum Service (CAVASS) and Adult Autism Advice (AAA), have been restructured and aligned into an integrated Autism Service. The integrated service was launched by Cllr Hinchey (Cardiff), Cllr Kerry (Vale of Glamorgan) and the Minister for Social Services and Public Health on the 27th September. A wide range of stakeholders will come together to join the launch across varied Health directorates, Social Services, Education, schools and the Third Sector.

The Officer Decision Report (ODR) in relation to **Integrated Respite for Children** is being finalised and prepared for sign off in Quarter 3.

- d. **Recruitment and retention of children's social workers** - The impact of ongoing work to recruit social workers is beginning to show, with vacancies reducing to 20% in Quarter 2, from 26% in Quarter 1. In September 2017, 30.0 / 153.8 social worker posts were vacant. The vacancy position dipped below 20% in August for the first time since September 2015. The improvement in the vacancy rate is despite 4 Principal Social Worker posts in the Looked After Children's Service being filled with existing staff, creating vacancies at Social Worker level.

13. In relation to the Directorate Plan, there has been progress in relation to:

- a. **Emerging areas of risk** - Think Safe Service Operational Manager appointed and in post. Practitioner and Team Manager posts for the service have been advertised and recruitment is underway. Cardiff Council arranged to host an all Wales network event on sharing best practice in tackling CSE, human trafficking and the exploitation of vulnerable adults (held on 2nd October 2017). The event was attended by UK speakers, Welsh Government and partners from across Wales.

- b. **Further embed First Point of Contact / Information, Advice and Assistance functions** – Work to develop an **Early Help Front Door** with the Team Around the Family (TAF) is ongoing. The purpose will be to enable referrers to have greater understanding of current services and their accessibility prior to contacting statutory services. The first phase of the plan will be to extend the current TAF service to give the team additional capacity to deal with Information, Advice and Assistance (IAA) contacts, using the freephone number as the main contact point. The team will also have additional capacity to provide key working support for families who are being stepped down from Intake & Assessment. Currently, the front door service is managed via the Multi-Agency Safeguarding Hub (MASH) and there is evidence of improved communication between the MASH and referrers, particularly in light of the Signs of Safety model being introduced.

- c. **Recommission Families First Services** – Recruitment to central posts has concluded and appointments have been made. Service Specifications have been finalised and the draft Officer Decision Report is in development for sign off in Quarter 3. Recruitment of Social Workers from within Children’s Services to the Early Help Front Door has also been concluded.

- d. **Integrated Finance and Service Strategy** – The scope of the Institute of Public Care (IPC) commission in relation to Adult Service’s financial sustainability was agreed and will focus on 4 key work streams:

- i. Development of a whole systems '**Reablement Strategy**' with Health including:
 - 1. Review of Community Resource Team (CRT) operating model.
 - 2. Initiated Partner engagement.
- ii. Development of an **Accommodation Strategy for Older People**.
- iii. Development of a new model for **Adult Social Work practice** to parallel Signs of Safety.
- iv. Development of a new **Regional Learning Disabilities Strategy**.

14. There has also been some slippage in progress against some of the milestones in the Directorate Plan relating to:

- a. **Youth Offending Service (YOS)** – The numbers of First Time Entrants (FTEs) to the Youth Offending Service (YOS) has increased during Quarter 2 to 21 (from 14 in Quarter 1). The 21 young people committed 39 offences, averaging 1.86 offences per young person.

The final training session with staff in partner agencies regarding the **Enhanced Case Management (ECM) service model** has been completed. The model of intervention will go live in Quarter 3 with staff in the process of identifying suitable young people to start working with the ECM model.

An initial meeting has been held to develop a **Youth Offending Service (YOS) Young Person's Panel** – a lead officer has been identified in YOS to work in collaboration with regional YOS to develop a Participation Strategy. Cardiff Youth Service Active Involvement Team are currently identifying the young people who will participate in service feedback sessions and interview panels.

A contract has been awarded to the existing provider to continue delivering a **Triage Service** to the end of this financial year whilst the commissioning of new service through the tendering process is completed.

Restructure of YOS staff is an ongoing process. The next phase will involve Unions consulting with staff members on the impact of the creation and deletion of posts.

Building work is due to be completed by mid October, at which point staff will begin the **YOS relocation** to the John Kane Building in Gabalfa.

There is potential for mental health needs to be better met due to Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services (CAMHS) recruiting to a long standing vacancy that has resulted in the provision of a service across all referring agencies.

- b. **Effectiveness of the current partnership arrangements for the delivery of Child & Adolescent Mental Health Services** – An initial meeting has taken place with senior officers from Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services (CAMHS) – this engagement will need to continue whilst we measure the impact of improvements that CAMHS have suggested that we will see.

c. **Promoting Family Stability**

- Building work on the **Adolescent Resource Centre (ARC)** has been delayed due to discovery of some asbestos in the building that was not detected during the procurement process; associated cost implications are being considered.
- **Family Group Conferencing (FGC)** continues to be delivered by Tros Gynnal; the commissioning process for a new FGC service will be undertaken when the service specification has been finalised. It is anticipated that the service specification will be finalised by the end of Quarter 3.

d. **Support Services to Care Leavers**

- **Preparation Programme** – this is part of the recommissioning of accommodation happening in partnership with, and led by, Housing through a project group. Development of written information for care leavers has been deferred and will be taken forward via the Preparation Programme as part of the new outcomes framework for commissioning services.
- Once the recommissioning of the accommodation for **The Youth Gateway** has been completed we will be able to produce written information for young people which can include information about all resources available. The newly appointed Project Support Officer will be tasked with coordinating this work along with work on Transitions.
- Work on re-design of **Personal Education Plans (PEPs)** has been completed and the new PEPs are currently being printed. We are aware that Welsh Government plan to issue an all Wales PEP in the future.

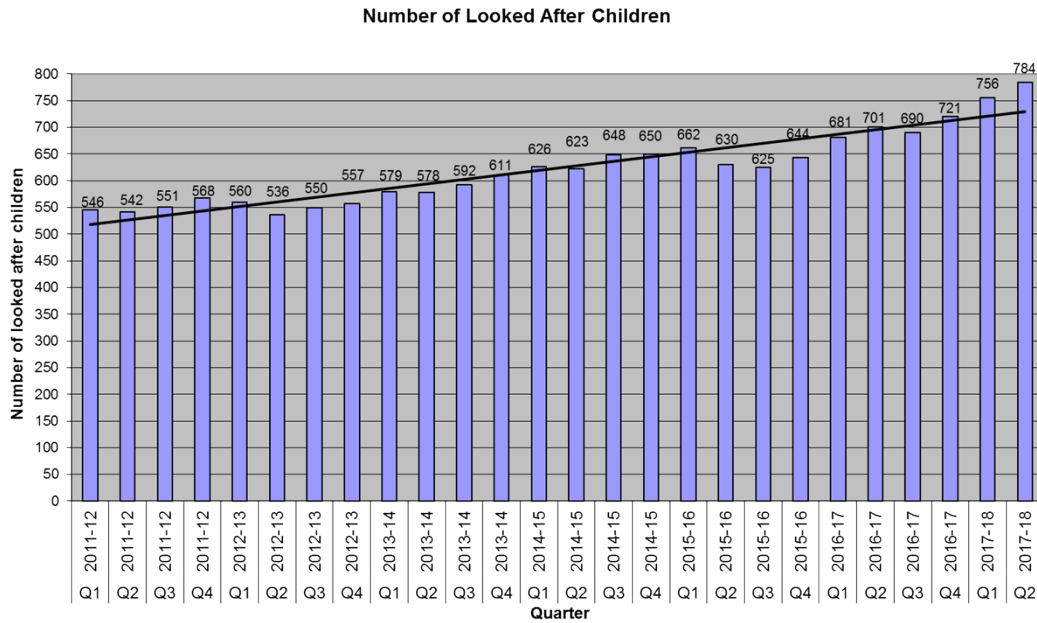
Progress in relation to the Education of Looked After Children

15. Seven schools in Cardiff have completed action research under the 'Promoting the Achievement of Looked After Children' programme. They shared their action research projects with each other on 10th July 2017. The research is in the process of being written up by University College London and learning from the projects will be shared with other schools across the region.
16. A regional co-ordinator for Looked After Children has been appointed and took up post in September. A Looked After Children consortium action plan is now in place. Schools in Cardiff have submitted plans to release the Looked After Children's Pupil Deprivation Grant to their school to work on capacity building and direct work / support for Looked After Children

17. The Achievement Leader and Looked After Children Education (LACE) team are having pupil progress meetings to discuss pupils that appear to be underachieving and to ensure that the school puts in additional support and intervention. Specialist Additional Learning Needs teams are supporting the LACE team to ensure pupils are receiving the additional support that they need.
18. The Looked After Education team are also attending social worker team meetings to ensure good communication and timely intervention where there are concerns from either side. The Achievement Leader attends the Children's Services Managers' meeting where placement moves are discussed so that education can be considered at the earliest possible opportunity.
19. The data sections of the current Personal Education Plans (PEPs) have been revised so they capture relevant outcome data for individual pupils. The work at a national level continues to produce a national PEP that will be used across Wales.
20. There has been preliminary reporting of the outcomes of Looked After Children 2016/17 to the Corporate Parenting Advisory Committee. A full report will be submitted to the next committee in January.

Detailed Commentary – Quarter 2 2017/18

21. The number of children who were looked after at 30th September 2017 (not including those children being looked after as part of a respite care arrangement) was 784 compared with 756 at 30th June 2017 (CS LAC 3e). This represents a rate of 10.6 children per 1,000 in Cardiff. Whilst this is above the all Wales rate of 9.0 per 1,000 as at 31st March 2016, the rise is consistent with national trends across Wales and the UK. Fluctuation in the number of looked after children is displayed in the graph below:



22. The percentage of children supported to remain living within their family (SSWB 25) was 51.2% (823 / 1,607) compared with 53.0% (856 / 1,612) in Quarter 1. Of the 1,607 children with a Care and Support Plan at 30th September 2017, 823 were being supported to live at home (i.e. were not being looked after).

23. The percentage of looked after children returned home from care during the year (SSWB 26) was 4.5% compared with 6.2% in Quarter 2 2016/17. Of the 890 children who have been looked after during the year, 40 have returned home. This PI is cumulative, and performance will improve as we progress throughout the year. In addition to the 40 children who were returned home from care, 95 children were in the care of their parents, but remain subject to a Care Order, and 67 children were placed with relative carers. It is noted that our judiciary have indicated a reluctance to discharge Care Orders, and continue to make new Care Orders as opposed to other orders, e.g. Supervision Orders.

24. The latter two PIs are a welcome measure of the effectiveness of the service in supporting children and young people within their families and are in line with our Corporate Parenting Strategy which seeks to promote family placements.

25. 72.4% (439 / 606) of looked after children were placed with agency providers at the end of Quarter 2 (CS LAC 44), decreasing from 73.7% (431 / 585) in

Quarter 1. The number of children placed in agency residential placements has further decreased to 45 from 50 at the end of Quarter 1. 47 care proceedings were initiated in Quarter 2, compared with 79 in Quarter 1.

26. 61.9% (375 / 606) of children in regulated placements were placed in Cardiff at the end of Quarter 2 compared with 62.9% (368 / 585) at the end of Quarter 1 (CS LAC 58). A further 106 children placed outside Cardiff were within 20 miles of their home address. 15 of the children not placed in Cardiff are placed with a relative carer. For some children placement outside the authority is in their best interests, examples include children placed with family members who live outside Cardiff, children placed in specialist placements and children who are placed in areas that are closer to their home address than some parts of the city.

27. 96.2% (577 / 600) of statutory reviews for looked after children were held within prescribed timescales in Quarter 2, stable from 95.8% (544 / 568) in Quarter 1 (SCC/021). Of the 23 reviews that were not held on time, 7 were held within a week, 6 within 2 weeks, 4 within 3 weeks, 3 within 4 weeks and 3 within 6 weeks.

28. 93.8% (563 / 600) of statutory visits were held in accordance with regulations in Quarter 2 showing a decrease from 96.0% (545 / 568) in Quarter 1 (SCC/025). This is in the context of an increase in both the overall population of looked after children and in the number of children placed at home with their parents who require a higher level of statutory visiting.

29. 100.0% (774 / 774) looked after children were allocated to a social worker at 30th September 2017.

30. As at 30th September 2017, 45 children were in external residential placements (including two young people in secure placements). Children's Services were solely responsible for funding 30 of these placements with the remaining 15 receiving contributions from Education, Health, or both. The average weekly cost per child was £3,511, although this ranged from £1,800 to £5,810. Contributions from Education range from 9% to 28% and Health range from 1%

to 33% of the weekly cost - the percentage of the contribution is based upon factors such as how much the provider charges for education and therapy costs, the number of weeks in the school terms, the period of therapy, continuing health care needs and whether the child is statemented.

Financial Implications

31. There are no direct financial implications arising from the report.

Legal Implications

32. There are no legal implications arising from this report.

RECOMMENDATION

The Committee is recommended to:

- Consider the contents of the report and report any comments to the Cabinet Member.

TONY YOUNG

Director of Social Services

17th November 2017

Quarter 1

Indicator Ref	Indicator Title	PI Type	2007-08	2008-09	2009-10	2010-11	2011-12	2012-13	2013-14	2014-15	2015-16	Q1 2016-17	Q2 2016-17	Q3 2016-17	Q4 2016-17	2016-17	Q1 2017-18	Q2 2017-18	Current Progress	Status	2017-18 Target	Level Triggering Mgt Action	Comments
Children are protected from significant harm and are empowered to protect themselves																							
Contacts 1 Local PI	Number of Contacts / Referrals Received	Local	New for 2016-17	New for 2016-17	New for 2016-17	New for 2016-17	New for 2016-17	New for 2016-17	New for 2016-17	New for 2016-17	New for 2016-17	7,558	7,950	6,927	6,954	29,389	7,476	7,224	Target setting not appropriate	N/A	Target setting not appropriate	Target setting not appropriate	New indicator introduced for 2016/17 in response to changes implemented as a result of the Social Services & Wellbeing (Wales) Act 2014. Contacts and referrals are no longer recorded separately - since 6th April 2016 they have been recorded on a single "Contact & Referral" form. 3.4% decreases in Contacts / Referrals to 7,224 in Quarter 2 from 7,476 in Quarter 1.
CS CPR 4 Local PI	CPR caseload	Local	207	213	283	272	255	372	314	255	342	336	279	196	191	191	204	230	Target setting not appropriate	N/A	Target setting not appropriate	Target setting not appropriate	Figure does not include 16 temporary registrations where case management responsibility for the children is retained by their home authority.
SSWB 27 National PI	Percentage of re-registrations of children on local authority Child Protection Registers	CP- 2.1 DDP										3.1%	5.6%	2.0%	3.9%	3.8%	4.0%	8.7%	Target setting not appropriate	▼	Target setting not appropriate	Target setting not appropriate	9 / 104 9 of the children registered during the quarter had been on the CPR within the previous 12 months. The 9 children comprised 3 sibling groups and one individual.
SSWB 28 National PI	Average length of time for all children who were on the CPR during the year	DDP										206	200	271	259	230	289	249	Target setting not appropriate	▲	Target setting not appropriate	Target setting not appropriate	18,905 / 76 The average length of time on the CPR for the 76 children who we de-registered during Quarter 2 was 249 days.
SCC/014 Local PI	Percentage of initial child protection conferences due in the year which were held within 15 working days of the strategy discussion	Local	48.9%	73.5%	72.7%	86.3%	82.6%	84.6%	83.8%	90.7%	94.4%	91.2%	96.5%	89.1%	100.0%	94.2%	93.4%	94.0%	😊	▲	94.0%	84.6%	109 / 116 7 conferences were late including 3 for 1 sibling group during the quarter. All late conferences have since been held. All Wales average 2014-15 = 92.6%
SCC/034 Local PI	Percentage of child protection reviews carried out within statutory timescales during the year	Local	98.9%	99.2%	99.5%	99.2%	98.5%	98.0%	98.5%	99.8%	99.8%	98.4%	100.0%	96.9%	100.0%	98.8%	98.8%	97.4%	😐	▼	100.0%	70.0%	190 / 195 5 conferences were late during the quarter, three of these are for a sibling group. All late conferences have since been held and the children were de-registered. All Wales average 2015-16 = 98.0%
Children and young people are supported to live safely within their families with the lowest appropriate level of intervention																							

Quarter 1

Indicator Ref	Indicator Title	PI Type	2007-08	2008-09	2009-10	2010-11	2011-12	2012-13	2013-14	2014-15	2015-16	Q1 2016-17	Q2 2016-17	Q3 2016-17	Q4 2016-17	2016-17	Q1 2017-18	Q2 2017-18	Current Progress	Status	2017-18 Target	Level Triggering Mgt Action	Comments
SSWB 24 National PI	Percentage of assessments completed for children within statutory timescales	DDP										99.2%	86.3%	88.3%	77.3%	86.3%	83.0%	76.4%	☹	▼	80.0%	72.0%	516 / 675 Performance decreased in the context of a 7% increase in the number of assessments completed.
SSWB 25 National PI	Percentage of children supported to remain living within their family	CP- 2.1 DDP										59.0%	57.3%	56.6%	55.2%	55.2%	53.1%	51.2%	☹	▼	59.0%	53.1%	823 / 1,607 Quarterly result. Actual end of year result is populated from Looked After Child Census. Of the 1,607 children with a Care and Support Plan at 30th September 2017, 823 were being supported to live at home (i.e. were not being looked after).
SSWB 26 National PI	Percentage of looked after children returned home from care during the year	CP - 1.2 DDP										3.2%	6.2%	9.9%	11.6%	11.6%	3.1%	4.5%	☹	▼	12.0%	10.8%	40 / 890 Quarter 2 target = 6% Provisional result. Actual result will be populated from the Looked After Child Census. Of the 890 children who have been looked after during Quarters 1 and 2, 40 have returned home. This PI is cumulative, and performance will improve as we progress throughout the year. In addition to the 40 children who were returned home from care, 95 children were in the care of their parents, but remain subject to a Care Order, and 67 children were placed with relative carers. It is noted that our judiciary have indicated a reluctance to discharge Care Orders, and continue to make new Care Orders as opposed to other orders, e.g. Supervision Orders.
Looked after children experience the best care and support to help them recognise their abilities, have aspirations and achieve their full potential																							
CS LAC 3e Local PI	LAC caseload (not including respite care arrangements for disabled children)	Local	521	520	530	521	568	557	611	650	644	678	701	690	721	721	756	784	Target setting not appropriate	N/A	Target setting not appropriate	Target setting not appropriate	Cardiff rate at 30.09.17 = 10.6 per 000 Wales rate at 31.03.16 = 9.0 per 000
CS LAC 58 Local PI	Percentage of children in regulated placements who are placed in Cardiff	Local	New for 2008-09	61.4%	64.8%	67.0%	65.6%	62.2%	62.0%	60.7%	62.5%	61.2%	60.9%	61.6%	63.5%	63.5%	62.9%	61.9%	☹	▼	63.0%	56.7%	375 / 606 The PI counts only children placed within the LA boundaries and excludes children placed in neighbouring authorities close to their home area and attending Cardiff schools. 13.5% (31) of children not placed in Cardiff are placed within 10 miles of their home address. 15 of the children not placed in Cardiff are placed with a relative carer. Planning always takes account of placement location for children. Some children need a specialist placement that is not available in the city or need to live away from families, communities or individuals that could present risks for them.

Quarter 1

Indicator Ref	Indicator Title	PI Type	2007-08	2008-09	2009-10	2010-11	2011-12	2012-13	2013-14	2014-15	2015-16	Q1 2016-17	Q2 2016-17	Q3 2016-17	Q4 2016-17	2016-17	Q1 2017-18	Q2 2017-18	Current Progress	Status	2017-18 Target	Level Triggering Mgt Action	Comments
SCC/021 Local PI	Percentage of looked after children reviews carried out within statutory timescales during the year	Local	92.3%	95.9%	96.2%	96.4%	95.2%	95.2%	92.4%	88.3%	94.5%	96.1%	93.8%	94.6%	94.9%	94.8%	95.8%	96.2%	☹️	👉	100%	70.0%	577 / 600 Of the 23 reviews that were not held on time, 7 were held within a week, 6 within 2 weeks, 4 within 3 weeks, 3 within 4 weeks and 3 within 6 weeks. All Wales average 2014-15 = 95.5%
SCC/025 Local PI	Percentage of statutory visits to looked after children due in the year that took place in accordance with regulations	DDP	69.3%	79.5%	88.2%	83.9%	85.1%	89.5%	87.7%	88.9%	86.6%	94.1%	95.3%	96.3%	94.7%	95.1%	96.0%	93.8%	☹️	🔴	95.0%	85.5%	563 / 600 Performance has decreased in the context of an increase in both the overall population of looked after children and in the number of children placed at home with their parents who require a higher level of statutory visiting. All Wales average 2015-16 = 88.1%
Cardiff is the destination of choice for committed social work professionals																							
Staff 1 Local PI	Percentage of social work vacancies in all teams	CP- 2.1	22.1%	26.1%	15.2%	14.7%	15.9%	14.5%	20.8%	27.2%	22.2%	22.9%	24.8%	23.3%	23.3%	23.5%	26.0%	20.3%	☹️	🟡	18.0%	19.8%	93.6 / 460.4 MASH = 16.7% I&A = 20.1% CIN = 21.1% LAC = 21.3% The impact of ongoing work to recruit social workers is beginning to show, with vacancies reducing to 20% in Quarter 2, from 26% in Quarter 1. The vacancy position dipped below 20% in August and September for the first time since September 2015. The improvement in the vacancy rate is despite 4 Principal Social Worker posts in the Looked After Children's Service being filled with existing staff, creating vacancies at Social Worker level.
Children's Services are provided on the basis of the most efficient and effective use of resources																							
CS LAC 44 Local PI	Percentage of LAC placements with independent sector providers	Local	56.4%	56.6%	58.9%	62.0%	64.2%	68.6%	67.4%	71.8%	72.0%	73.6%	74.0%	73.8%	75.3%	75.3%	73.7%	72.4%	😊	🟢	72.0%	79.2%	439 / 606 Of the 439 placements with agency providers, 197 started within the last 12 months. Performance is at target level and reflects the lowest level of agency placements reported at quarterly outturn since March 2016.

Mae'r dudalen hon yn wag yn fwriadol

**CITY AND COUNTY OF CARDIFF
DINAS A SIR CAERDYDD**

CORPORATE PARENTING ADVISORY COMMITTEE

16 January 2018

**QUARTERLY COMPLAINTS AND REPRESENTATIONS REPORT
QUARTER 2 2017-18**

Reason for the Report

1. The Committee's terms of reference state that it will receive Children's Services Complaints reports.
2. This Quarter 2 report covers complaints and representations from 1st July 2017 through to 30th September 2017.

Introduction

3. The current Welsh Government guidance and regulations in relation to social services complaints and representations came into being on 1st August 2014.
4. The procedure places the emphasis on the initial local resolution stage – Stage 1 - with complainants being offered a discussion to resolve the matter. The second formal stage (Stage 2) provides for independent investigation. If the outcome of Stage 2 does not satisfy the complainant s/he has recourse to the Public Services Ombudsman for Wales.
5. Citizens making complaints have a right to be listened to properly and have their concerns resolved quickly and effectively. Children's Services emphasis is on listening to concerns and using this learning to improve services for everyone who uses them.
6. Complaints should be handled in such a way that the complainant is the focus, not the process, and that the particular circumstances of the complainant are taken into account (including their age or disability). Where the complaint relates to a looked after child, a child in need or a care leaver the local authority has a duty to provide an advocate as required. All children or young people who make complaints are

offered a meeting and all children and families will receive a written response to the concerns they have raised.

7. The Social Services and Wellbeing (Wales) Act 2014 devotes Part 10 to complaints and this reflects Welsh Government guidance and regulations and Council procedures. The Council is mindful that the Act will further promote people's rights and collaborative working will be actively encouraged.

Summary of Complaints Activity During the Period

8.

Item	Q2 2017-18
Number open at start of period (30.06.17)	9
Number received (qtr 2)	18
TOTAL complaints	27
Number received directly from children and young people	0
Number closed	10
Number outstanding at end of period (30.09.17)	17
% acknowledged within 2 working days	13 / 18 = 72%*
% concluded within 15 working days of acknowledgement	5 / 18 = 27%

*The directorate does not accept that 72% acknowledgement is satisfactory and requires an improvement in this area.

9. During this quarter the number of complaints received by Children's Services has seen a reduction in complaints to 18 (20 in Quarter 1, 2017-18).
 - a. Of the 18 complaints received, 72% (13) of the complaints received were in relation to the Social Worker or the service received. 6% (1) of the complaints received were in relation to finance. 6% (1) of the complaints received were in relation to contact. The remaining 16% (3) of complaints were in relation to other issues including decision making and foster carer.
 - b. 7 complaints were received about the Intake & Assessment Service, which is a slight decrease from 8 in Quarter 1 (17-18). 5 complaints were received regarding the Child in Need Service (0 from young people) which

compared the same Quarter 1 (17-18); 4 complaints were received about the Looked After Children Service compared with 6 in Quarter 1 (17-18). The remaining 2 complaint was in relation to Adoption/Finance.

Examples of complaints concluded during the quarter are:

A complaint where we were able to put things right

The mother of children who are currently allocated a social worker due to concerns about their welfare, complained that despite leaving messages for the social worker, her calls were not returned. The Team Manager spoke with the mother and offered her apologies and reassured her that she would ensure that she was informed about events at all times. Team Manager met with the social worker who offered his apologies for not returning the mothers calls and for not informing her of pending annual leave, the social worker provided his assurance that he would retain weekly contact to update the mother in the future and would inform her of planned annual leave.

A complaint where we had no case to answer

A young person being looked after in a Children's Home wrote to express her unhappiness about her social worker, stating that she didn't visit enough, did not return phone calls to the young person or another professional during the young person's network and had failed to sort out contact between the mother and young person.

Children's Services response outlined and evidenced that additional visits had been offered by the social worker but that this was refused by the young person. Return telephone calls were made to the young person but in the event the young person was unavailable the social worker spoke with staff at the Residential Home and left messages via this route. It was confirmed that no professional from another Agency had left messages for the social worker but the social worker did make contact with the professional and informed the young person of this. Attempts to arrange contact between the mother and the young person had been made, letters were sent to mother, without response. Eventually the mother requested communication via the complainant's 12 year old brother's phone and this was not acceptable to the social worker. The mother's communication with the Residential Home had ceased but the social

worker wrote with a date for a visit to discuss contact understanding that this was a priority for the young person. The Team Manager offered to visit the young person or speak over the telephone in the future.

Stage 2 Independent Investigations

10. If complainants remain unsatisfied at the conclusion of the informal Stage 1, they are entitled to seek a formal Independent Investigation under Stage 2 of the procedure.

11. 2 stage 2 complaints were resolved during Quarter 2.

12. 4 new Stage 2 investigations were initiated during Quarter 2 (17-18) which remained open at 30th September 2017.

Ombudsman Investigations

13. There was Ombudsman activity in relation to 3 complaints during the quarter –

- a. The Ombudsman recommended a 'quick fix' to resolve one complaint and an early resolution was agreed and the complaint has been finalised.
- b. The Ombudsman liaised with Children's Services to assess one complaint and it was agreed that a Stage 2 investigation would be undertaken.
- c. The Ombudsman recommended 'No further action' following the review of a complaint case that had been referred to them.

Learning from Complaints

14. Stage 2 reports undertaken by Independent Investigators and reports from the Ombudsman include recommendations if required. In response, an Action Plan is initiated to ensure that the recommendations are implemented and lessons are learned.

Themes Emerging During the Quarter

15. Quarterly complaints reports are shared with managers so any emerging themes can be considered and actions can be taken to improve practice.

16. The only patterns that emerged related to complaints which were in court proceedings so we were unable to answer the complaint. No other patterns emerged

that suggest there are any new thematic issues that need to be addressed.

Update on Progress from Themes Identified in Previous Periods

17. The previously noted issue of social workers not returning calls continues to be the cause of, or an element of, complaints received. The strong message regarding the importance of returning calls continues to be reiterated by senior managers who follow up individual issues that are brought to their attention. The new agile / mobile working arrangements have provided social workers with more flexibility and the right kit to enable them to respond to messages in a more timely way and this will continue to be monitored to seek an improvement in this area.

18. As a result of the following, there is an improved oversight and overall a reduction in the number of complaints being received

- a. Senior managers have more of an oversight into casework (e.g. by chairing the Legal Surgery) and challenge practice where it is considered that both parents have not been consulted.
- b. In preparation for the implementation of the Signs of Safety approach (which maps out a safety network for children considered to be at risk), social workers routinely consider every relationship linked to the child and this will include both parents and extended family.
- c. The re-introduction of Family Group Conferences reinforces the whole family approach as they also involve both parents and extended family.

Early Resolution

19. Children's Services place an emphasis on resolving issues at the earliest possible opportunity, and where these concerns are dealt with immediately they are not opened as a formal complaint. On these occasions, the issues are brought to the attention of relevant Team or Operational Managers who acted promptly to address the issues raised to the satisfaction of the individual. There were 2 examples of this during Quarter 2

Review of Complaints in Social Services

20. An external independent review of the arrangements for receiving, managing and resolving complaints in Social Services was completed in January 2017 and the recommendations were accepted by the Directorate Management Team. This will

result in a combined social services complaints unit for both Adults and Children's complaints and work will be underway during quarter 3 to develop joint processes. Recruitment to a newly created post has been completed.

Summary of Compliments

21. Teams are more readily sharing the compliments they receive from a variety of sources, e.g. service users and professionals, although it is recognised that further work is required to ensure that all compliments are captured and reported.

22. 7 compliments were received in Quarter 2, which is a decrease from 13 in Quarter 1 (17-18). A breakdown of compliments by team is provided below. This will help Children's Services build upon positive work and could identify improvements.

Team	No. of Compliments
Targeted Services	4
Specialist Services	2
Other	1

Example of a compliment received during the quarter:

In 2 of the compliments, praise has been given by the Judge, one was very complimentary about a SW's parenting assessment in court, describing it as a "comprehensive, balanced and detailed assessment". Another Judge 'was pleased with an Annex A, which captured the child and the situation'

Summary for Quarter 2

23. As at the 30th September 2017, the service were working with 2717 children and young people and of these:

- a. In total, we received 18 complaints (0.6%), of which, 4 related to Looked after Children (0.1%). None were directly from the young person.
- b. 2 of the Looked after Children complaints related to communication with the social worker which were upheld and full apologies were provided and accepted. The remaining 2 complaints related to contact visits being cancelled at short notice but when investigated the reasons were inevitable and the response provided accepted by the complainant.
- c. In total, we received 7 compliments (0.2%).

Responses to AM / MP / Councillor Enquiry Letters

24. 18 AM / MP / Councillor Enquiry letters were received by Children's Services during the quarter. An example of these enquiries is a request 'wishing to gain child arrangements order for the five children in the family'.

Subject Access Requests

25. A Subject Access Request is a request from an individual to see a copy of the information an organisation holds about them, or their children. These requests should be responded to within 40 calendar days of receipt. Some types of personal data are exempt from the right of subject access and so cannot be obtained by making such a request. On receipt of the request work is undertaken to ensure that individuals are only provided with information that they are entitled to receive.

26. Children's Services undertook the following activity in relation to Subject Access Requests in Quarter 2 2017-18:

- a. 10 were responded to on time.
- b. 2 were completed outside of the statutory time frame.
- c. 11 were closed because no identification was received or fee was not paid.
- d. 1 request was withdrawn
- e. 1 new request is in process at the time of writing.

27. In addition to this, Children's Services received:

- a. 37 requests from the Police under the 2013 Protocol and Good Practice Model re: Disclosure of information in cases of alleged child abuse and linked criminal and care directions, an increase from 29 in Qtr 1 (17-18).
- b. 67 requests were processed in relation to access to requests from other Councils, Probation, Solicitors or Insurance, an increase from 35 in Qtr 1 (17-18)

Financial Implications

28. There are no direct financial implications arising from the report.

Legal Implications

29. There are no legal implications arising from this report.

RECOMMENDATION

30. The Committee is recommended to:

- i. To endorse the report.

Irfan Alam
Assistant Director Children's Services
10 January 2017

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