

CORPORATE PARENTING ADVISORY COMMITTEE

16 JANUARY 2018

Present: Councillor Merry(Chairperson)
Councillors Davies, Hinchey, Jenkins, Lent, Molik, Walker and Weaver

77 : APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies were received from Councillor Lister and Tony Young

78 : DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

None received.

79 : MINUTES

The minutes of the meeting held on 17th October 2017 were agreed as a correct record and signed by the Chairperson subject to the inclusion of Councillor Tim Davies in the apologies listed.

80 : WORK PROGRAMME/VISITS UPDATE

Committee were updated on the work programme and visits, and informed of details of the meetings that had been diarised and those that had already taken place.

Members discussed how the feedback from the meetings would be reported back to Committee and the Chairperson suggested that this be established once all the meetings had taken place.

RESOLVED: to note the information and decide on the reporting back once all meetings had taken place.

81 : EDUCATION ITEM - PUPIL DEVELOPMENT GRANTS

Members were provided with a presentation on Pupil Development Grants from Siroil Burford (Education Consortium) which outlined information on her employment background; The Grant; The Grant for 17/18; Outcomes and Objectives.

The Chairperson invited questions and comments from Members:

- Members asked what was being asked of Children's Services in Cardiff and were advised that the Consortium already has a positive relationship with Education and work with social care, it was considered that education and social care needed to be more collaborative and have a partnership across Wales but Cardiff was very nearly there.
- Members asked how the Consortium and Welsh Government measure the effectiveness of the Grant. Members were advised that there had been

improvements in attendance, behaviour issues, exclusions and exam results, all wellbeing measures that Estyn use.

- Members asked if these pupils are more likely to get bullied and is there was data to evidence this. Members were advised that apparently yes they were, this had been identified by Public Health Wales.
- Members asked if Schools apply for money for training and if they are able to club together to do this and were advised that in EAS there was already a cluster approach, meetings happen regularly and it was hoped that there could be a National model. Schools do already apply as clusters.
- Members noted that the results showed that Looked After Children outside of Cardiff for education performed less well than those in Cardiff and asked for the reasons for this. Members were advised that it was down to relationships, when these break down and pupils are moved, it causes stress and makes them vulnerable thus effecting their education and performance.
- Members asked if the Grant would now be used for a wider group of people and not just for Looked After Children and were advised that it would be used for Looked After Children and formerly Looked After Children but not adopted children who have been Looked after. Officers offered to provide information on former Looked After Children who have been adopted for Cardiff and the Vale.
- Members asked how much difference is because the children are Looked after or because there are special needs. Officers advised that Looked After Children would have priority in all schools, children with special needs would have to go through panel which slows the process from local authority to local authority.

The Chairperson thanked Siriol Burford for her presentation.

82 : DEVELOPMENTAL TRAUMA SERVICE FOR LOOKED AFTER CHILDREN

Members were provided with a presentation on the Developmental Trauma Service for Looked After Children from Dr Libby Erin Service Lead and Clinical Psychologist and Laura McGuinness which outlined information on the Service So Far; Consultation; Service Model; Nurturing Attachment Group; Hopes & Challenges and an example of the work undertaken.

The Chairperson invited questions and comments from Members;

- Members asked if the aim was that in long-term cases, the children would not need the service anymore, as they would be able to cope more independently. Dr Erin stated that yes they want to front load and provide the service much earlier, build resilience to help them cope; the children have often had a very difficult early life and were likely to need therapeutic services at some point. As the service is developing people are thinking of the service earlier and providing better direction. Laura McGuinness added that Dr Erin comes in

monthly, names are put on a board and forward plans are established, the service is no longer just being used in crisis.

- Members asked if there was a gender difference in the preparedness to come forward and use the service. Members were advised that the young people are generally professionally identified as needing the service rather than self-identifying the need, the gender divide was generally equal.
- Member asked about the scale of the need for the service, and were advised that there were 803 Looked After Children and most would need some part of the service at some point in their life.
- Members were advised that this was a specialised service and depended on the presenting problem, CAHMS only have certain boxes and if the presenting problem doesn't fit it can make things more difficult. There was a need to understand trauma and how it fits with other presentations. Officers added that the work prevents placement breakdowns too by supporting the foster carers etc.
- Members asked if there was any work on the preventative side and were advised that this was currently only through ARC and Edge of Care as there was no capacity to do more at the moment.
- Members asked how the service links with Education Psychologists in Cardiff and were advised that currently it links poorly and on a needs basis. Over the next 6 months there was a hope that the links would be strengthened and a formal relationship established but again this was a capacity issue.

The Chairperson thanked Dr Libby Erin and Laura McGuinness for the presentation.

83 : OUT OF COUNTY PLACEMENTS TASK & FINISH INQUIRY UPDATE

This item was deferred to a later meeting.

84 : TOGETHER OR APART? ASSESSING SIBLINGS FOR PERMANENT PLACING

Members were advised that this report was 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. The response from the Assistant Director was appended to the report for Members' information.

The Chairperson invited questions and comments from Members;

- Members considered that more information on when to place siblings together or not would be useful. The Assistant Director stated that he would provide information on the lack of placement capacity on a 12 monthly period if Members would find this useful. Officers added that groups of 2 or 3 siblings are not an issue generally, but more recently there have been groups of 5 and

8 which were more difficult to place. Generally siblings are kept together if appropriate.

- Members considered it would be helpful to have the criteria used to determine the decisions. Officers explained that when placing large sibling groups, social workers are aware of the need to support and maintain relationships if the siblings are separated. There were also issues to be considered if some but not all siblings are fostered/adopted.
- Members asked if this information was available to the child at a later date and were advised that the decision making information would be available.
- Members asked how officers deal with situations such as when an older sibling wants contact with the parent but the younger sibling does not. Officers advised that this would depend on the care plan for the younger child, if there was a no contact order in place then that would inform the decision.

RESOLVED: to note the report.

85 : IRO 6 MONTHS REPORT

Members were advised that 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. The Committee receives a report from the IRO service twice a year.

Members noted that the 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.

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.

The Chairperson invited questions and comments from Members on the report;

- Members noted that the workload had significantly increased and asked what the cause of this was. Officers advised that there had been an increase in the number of Looked After Children over the past 2 years brought about by a number of factors such as Poverty, Deprivation, Abuse and Neglect. There was also the recognition that reporting had increased.

- Members asked about the impact of the Social Services Wellbeing Act on the workload of the IRO's and were advised that the role and function remains the same as the 1999 Act; there was however the wider impact of the general capacity of demand.
- Members discussed escalations and the related processes and noted that the service was fully stretched currently, the Service Manager post had been filled on an interim basis on secondment; there was a pressure bid in for 2 more IRO posts.

RESOLVED: to note the information contained in the report.

86 : BRIGHT SPOTS PROGRAMME AND THE 'YOUR LIFE, YOUR CARE' SURVEY

Information Report

RESOLVED: To note the content of the report

87 : AMW SOCIAL CARE PHONE ISSUE REPORT

Members were pleased to note that this issue had been resolved and the technical issues addressed.

RESOLVED: to note the content of the report.

88 : VALE, VALLEYS & CARDIFF REGIONAL ADOPTION SERVICE ANNUAL REPORT

Members were provided with the Vale, Valleys and Cardiff (VVC) Regional Adoption Collaborative's Annual Report for 2016/17. The report set out the key information about the regional services together with quarterly performance information for the period 2016 – 2017.

Members noted that 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 was required to receive the Adoption Annual Quality of Care Report each year.

The Chairperson invited questions and comments from Members on the Annual Plan:

- Members asked how fast Cardiff was in processing adoptions compared to the rest of the UK, noting that there had been a report written 5 years ago on this issue. Members were advised that there was no benchmark in terms of speed but timescales were well within the 26 weeks guideline and that the process continues on from that point.
- Members asked what work was being done to attract new adopters and were advised that there was a regional and National recruitment campaign ongoing

mostly all of the time. Officers stressed that people do come forward all the time but are sometimes put off when then realised that some children have complex issues. The assessment process has to be very robust due to the children being the most vulnerable; this process could not be curtailed as it is as comprehensive as it needs to be.

RESOLVED: to note the information contained in the report.

89 : PERFORMANCE SUMMARY REPORT QUARTER 2

Members noted the number of complaints acknowledged in timescale and were pleased to see this had been taken seriously and acknowledged.

Members were also pleased to see the strengthened links with the Community and considered an even more proactive approach could be taken to engaging with other communities.

RESOLVED: to note the content of the report.

90 : COMPLAINTS REPORT QUARTER 2

Information Report

RESOLVED: To note the content of the report.

91 : REGULATION 32 REPORTS - CROSSLANDS CHILDREN'S HOME

Information Report. The item was not for publication in accordance with paragraph 12 of Part 4 of the Local Government Act 1972.

RESOLVED:

- To exclude the public for consideration of the report
- To note the content of the report.

92 : REGULATION 32 REPORTS - CARDIFF SHORT BREAKS - TY STORRIE

Information Report. The item was not for publication in accordance with paragraph 12 of Part 4 of the Local Government Act 1972.

RESOLVED:

- To exclude the public for consideration of the report
- To note the content of the report.

93 : DATE OF NEXT MEETING

24 April 2018 at 2.00pm

Councillor Lent provided her apologies for the next meeting.