
CABINET RESPONSES – LOOKED AFTER CHILDREN’S TRANSITION TO INDEPENDENT LIVING, CHAD and LISTENING EVENT

LOOKED AFTER CHILDREN’S TRANSITION TO INDEPENDENT LIVING

Background

1. The Children and Young People Scrutiny Committee agreed as part of their work programme to undertake an inquiry into Looked After Children’s Transition to Independent Living. As a result the Committee agreed to set up Task and Finish Group Inquiry. The terms of reference were agreed as follows:

- a) Gain an understanding of :the present provision and the challenges it faces;
- b) Consider evidence from officers, government organisations, third sector organisations, academic experts and young people;
- c) Examine good practice and successful initiatives in Cardiff and across comparable local authorities in the UK;
- d) Use the evidence collected above to make informed recommendations to the Cabinet and other relevant stakeholders aimed at improving the services and support for Looked After Children’s transition to independent life; and
- e) Report the findings of the Committee to the Cabinet and stakeholders.

2. The task group Inquiry was informed by the following:

- Overview and background – to set the context of the Inquiry and gain an understanding of what is meant by Transitions and the support in Cardiff for Looked After Children.

- Evidence from the Children’s Commissioner for Wales (*Lost In Care* report).
 - Evidence from the Cabinet Members for Social Care, Health and Wellbeing, and Children’s Services.
 - Evidence from the Director and managers from Children’s Services
 - Visit to the Leaving Care team – to meet with the staff and to discuss any issues of concern they have in supporting Looked After Children leaving care and once they have entered independent living, and discuss.
 - Research Papers / Reports (via Literature Review)
 - To review the evidence received from third sector organisations following the publication of a Call For Evidence letter.
 - To gather the views of those Looked After Children leading to transition and in independent living to gain an understanding on what support they feel they require, what worked and what could improve.
3. The report was presented to Cabinet in November 2014, and a full response was agreed by Cabinet on 19 March 2015, Copy attached at **Appendix A**.

Cabinet Response to Recommendations

4. The Cabinet response shows that all of the report’s 10 recommendations have been accepted. Which include increasing the care Leavers Grant to £2,000. As well as detailing the cabinet’s response to each of the recommendations, the response contains a commitment to include in the Directorates business plan the actions necessary to action plan to ensure that the recommendations will be implemented.

CHILD HEALTH AND DISABILITY TEAM

Background

5. The Children and Young People Scrutiny Committee agreed as part of their work programme to undertake an inquiry into the Child health and Disability Team as a

result the Committee agreed to set up Task and Finish Group Inquiry. The terms of reference were agreed as follows:

- a) Establish the level of service and support provided by the Team
 - b) Identify best practice that can be utilised in Cardiff;
 - c) Identify how best CHAD services should operate
6. The task group Inquiry was informed by evidence from Senior Management of Children Services, Interim Service Lead Manager, Staff from the Children's Health and Disability team, the previous Cabinet Member Councillor Richard Cook, the GMB Union as well as voluntary sector organisations and partners.
 7. The task group Inquiry heard from representatives of the following external voluntary organisations; ABCD Cymru, Touch Trust, Ty Gwyn School, Bobath Children's Therapy Centre, Action for Children, Ty Storrie, Ty Hafan. It visited other local authorities which included Newport Council and Luton Borough Council. The task group also heard from parents, carers and a grandparent of disabled children.
 8. The report was presented to Cabinet on 9 December 2013, and a full response was agreed by Cabinet on 19 March 2015, Copy attached at **Appendix B**.

Cabinet Response to Recommendations

9. The Cabinet response comments on all of the 18 recommendations. The response points out that the reports key findings and recommendations are comprehensive and relate to a very wide range of complex strategic policy and practice issues and several can only be realised over a sustained period and programme of improvement.
10. The Cabinet response includes a copy of the Departmental Development Plan which explains that the Service vision will be to ensure that:

- Disabled children are supported to live safely within their families, realise their aspirations and achieve their full potential;
- Where they cannot live at home disabled children will experience best care available within resources;
- Support disabled young people towards achieving smooth and safe transition to enabled adulthood.

The plan includes details of the actions, timescales, progress to date and the responsible officer, to ensure that each of the areas of activity; Strategy and Commissioning, Eligibility and Access, Service Standards and Quality; and Workforce) are undertaken.

LISTENING EVENT WITH LOOKED AFTER CHILDREN

Background

11. The Children and Young People Scrutiny Committee agreed as part of their work programme to undertake a Listening Event with Looked after Children under the age of 11.. The listening event was based around three key themes:

- a) School and healthy living;
- b) Visiting families and where you live
- c) Social Services.

12. The Committee agreed hold a listening event with a group of Looked After Children. Following discussions with officers and voluntary organisations it was agreed that the listening event would be developed and facilitated by Tros Gynnal Plant (Advocacy Service) together with a group of Looked After Children aged 11 and under in consultation with the Chairperson and officers from Scrutiny Services. It was further agreed that the event would be designed to enable Members of the Committee to hear the views of looked after children on their experiences, aspirations and concerns during their care by the Council. The

young people's views would be captured by members of the Advocacy Service and Scrutiny Services.

13. The report was presented to Cabinet on 17 July 2014, and a full response was agreed by Cabinet on 15 December 2015, Copy attached at **Appendix C**.

Cabinet Response to Recommendations

14. The Cabinet response shows that all of the report's 4 recommendations have been accepted.

Way Forward

15. Members may wish to consider the responses contained in the attached **Appendices** and the comments provided by the Cabinet Member for Children's Services, and provide any comments, advice or recommendations to the Cabinet Member and Director to help in supporting further improvements in the work of the Department.

Legal Implications

16. The Scrutiny Committee is empowered to enquire, consider, review and recommend but not making 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 the 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

17. The Scrutiny Committee is empowered to enquire, consider, review and recommend but not making 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. Any report with recommendations for decision that goes to Cabinet/Council will set out any financial implications arising from those recommendations.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The Committee is recommended to consider the Cabinet response reports, attached at **Appendix A, B and C** together with the information presented at the meeting, and provide the Cabinet Member and Director of Children's Services with any comments, concerns or recommendations.

Marie Rosenthal

County Clerk and Monitoring Officer

30 March 2015