

CORPORATE PARENTING ADVISORY COMMITTEE

2 APRIL 2019

Present: Councillor Merry(Chairperson)
Councillors Bowden, Driscoll, Hinchey, Jenkins, Lent, Lister,
Molik and Weaver

Officers Deborah Driffield, Assistant Director, Children's Services
Present: Phil Bradley, Operational Manager, Children's Services

Advisors Gillian James, Achievement Leader (Closing the Gaps)
Present: Rose Whittle, Head of Operations, Community Child Health
Directorate

49 : MEMBERSHIP

The Chairperson welcomed Councillor Driscoll to his first meeting of the Corporate Parenting Advisory Committee.

50 : APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Emma Phipps-Magill (Committee Advisor)

51 : DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

No declarations of interest were received for this meeting.

52 : PRESENTATION FROM NATIONAL YOUTH ADVISORY SERVICE

The Chairperson welcomed Ely Jones, Service Manager, Cardiff & Vale National Youth Advocacy Service (NYAS) to the meeting.

Members were referred to the presentation which had been provided which outlined the services provided by NYAS, which include the following:

- Professional independent advocacy service;
- Active Offer;
- Independent visiting service;
- Participation; and
- Additional NYAS work/development including NYAS Cymru, IV Standards, Mental Health and Well-Being Project, Unity Project. Peer Advocacy and Mentoring and Parent Advocacy.

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

- Members referred to the 350 referrals and queried from where or and from whom the referrals came. Members were advised that the majority came from a range of professionals, usually social workers, but also from education and legal professionals.

- Members were advised that there were 15 Peer Advocates, across all the local authority areas. The funding for those advocates was provided by Welsh Government.
- Members queried whether social workers could act as the advocates for young people, it was explained that social workers will act in a 'best interests' capacity but often the young people have very different views as to what is in their 'best interests' which can in turn cause a conflict of interest.
- Members were advised that the normal referral route to the Mental Health and Well-being project operated by NYAS was through the National Healthline, however they were able to accept local referrals which would normally come through the office in Caerphilly.

Members noted the content of the presentation provided on behalf of NYAS.

53 : SAFE REDUCTION OF LOOKED AFTER CHILDREN: A VERBAL UPDATE ON THE MINISTERIAL ADVISORY GROUP

The Chairperson welcomed Deborah Driffield (Assistant Director, Children's Services) and Phil Bradley (OM, Children's Services) to the meeting. Members were provided with a verbal update on the work of the 'Improving Outcomes for Children Ministerial Advisory Group' which has been tasked with developing a programme to reduce the number of looked after children and to better support care leavers.

Members were advised that the first phase has now concluded, that phase dealt with the role of the IRO and the associated standards and good practice guidelines. Phase 2 is currently ongoing; permanency planning is one of the work streams which covers improving outcomes for children and young people in residential care and developing further support for care leavers. Members noted that a task group has been set up to consider the improvement in outcomes for children and young people in residential care and were interested to see what funding would be provided if further residential accommodation was required.

It was noted that representatives from Welsh Government will be visiting all local authorities, the visit to Cardiff has been arranged for May. Amongst the topics/priorities to be reviewed will be the reduction in the number of children looked after, out of area placements, placements outside of Wales and children and young people accommodated due to parental learning difficulties.

Members were also advised that locally the Children's Services strategy is in the final stages of development and reflects all of those priorities.

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

- Members queried whether a reduction in the number of children who are looked after in Wales is possible and where advised that

the First Minister is intending to set targets however, there has to be conversations about how those targets are set. Particularly as the issue is not just the number of children and young people becoming looked after but those remaining in care when alternative outcomes could be considered. Members noted that support for family members needs to be robust.

- Councillor Hinchey (Cabinet Member for Children & Families) outlined the work being undertaken to increase the number of foster carers, and advised that recently there had been a successful 'fostering evening' at which a number of new potential foster carers had the opportunity of talking to existing foster carers. Members were advised that there were a number of other ongoing projects, which could be outlined in future meetings of the Committee.
- Members also noted that Julie Morgan AM, Deputy Minister for Health and Social Services was attending a meeting tomorrow to discuss the reduction in numbers of young people going into local authority care.
- Members were advised that the Early Intervention Service is being launched this month which offers support prior to crisis point being reached.

54 : BRIEFING PAPER: SOCIAL SERVICES AND WELL-BEING (WALES) ACT 2014, PART 6 - LOOKED AFTER AND ACCOMMODATED CHILDREN

The Chairperson welcomed Deborah Driffield (Assistant Director, Children's Services) and Phil Bradley (OM, Children's Services) to the meeting. The briefing paper was prepared to provide Members with an outline of Part 6 of the Social Services and Well-being (Wales) Act 2014 which relates to Looked After and Accommodated Children.

Members noted the content of the Briefing Paper.

55 : MEMBERS' WORK STREAMS UPDATES

Councillor Lister had provided Members with an update in relation to his involvement in the updated draft Terms of Reference for the Committee, which features later on in the agenda and the need for all Members to attend any Corporate Parenting training arranged by Democratic Services. Councillor Lister stressed the importance of all Committee Members encouraging that colleagues to attend any training sessions provided.

56 : MEMBERS' VISITS

Councillor Bowden advised Members that she and Councillor Merry had attended Hywel Dda School in February of this year. Members noted that the school serves as

an exemplar of the work that needs to be done around Children who are Looked After (CLA) and those on the edge of care.

- Members asked about the difficulties faced by CLA or those on the edge of care being relocated due to the current location of foster carers within the city and were advised that every effort is made to keep the child or young person at the same school, but it is accepted that there are 'patches' of foster carers in certain areas.
- Members were advised that there are designated teachers at the schools who oversee any children who are looked after who attend the school. Those teachers meet on a regular basis and share good practise to try and maintain the same standards across all schools in the city.
- Members queried the uniformity of decisions to exclude children and young people from school and were advised that whilst Welsh Government has issued guidelines to be followed there is not a common threshold within Wales. Members were advised that within in Cardiff the Authority does has more control and is more able to challenge schools about their decisions.

Members noted the content of the visit report.

57 : REVIEW OF TERMS OF REFERENCE

The Chairperson welcomed Gill Nurton (Manager, Committee & Members Services) to the meeting.

Members were advised that the draft of the Terms of Reference had been circulated to Members for consideration.

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

- Members discussed the Terms of Reference and queried some of the terminology used and whether further amendments were required, particularly in relation to paragraphs (a) and (g). Officers indicated that further consideration would be given to the terminology and reporting mechanisms prior to them being ratified by Council.

58 : FORWARD PLAN

Members noted the content of the foreword plan. It was also noted that a review of the current work streams for Members of the Committee is to be undertaken.

59 : BRIEFING REPORTS

Members were provided with the following Briefing Reports:

- Quarter 3 Performance Report
- Quarter 3 Complaints Report
- Registered Individual Reports (Ty Storrie)

Members discussed the Quarter 3 performance report:

- Members referred to the increased overspend why it was not foreseen and were advised that there has been a lot of investment in Children's Service, but it is impossible to predict the number of children who will come into local authority care over a period of time.
- Members discussed the reliance on agency staff and whether they should be given full time contracts. Members were advised that it is not always as easy as it seems, further Officers do not wish to destabilise and already vulnerable work force. Members were advised that a review is currently taking place.
- Members queried the number of referrals to the MASH from the Police and were advised that the figure was high because a number of the calls are for information purposes.

The Committee noted the content of the various reports.

60 : URGENT ITEMS (IF ANY)

No urgent items were tabled.

61 : DATE OF NEXT MEETING

Members would be provided with dates of the future meeting once agreed at the Annual Meeting of Council.

The meeting terminated at 4.00 pm

This page is intentionally left blank