

**SWYDDFA CYMORTH Y CABINET
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Fy Nghyf / My Ref : CM41788

Dyddiad / Date: 14th August 2019

Cllr Lee Bridgeman
Chair of the CYP Scrutiny Committee
C/O Members Services
County Hall
Cardiff
CF10 4UW

Annwyl / Dear Lee

**Children & Young People Scrutiny Committee - Q4 Performance Report and
Directorate Delivery Plan**

Thank you for your letter dated 18th June 2019 on behalf of the members of the Children and Young People Scrutiny Committee following its meeting on 11th June.

I would like to thank members for their constructive comments and I am pleased to provide the following response to your queries below.

A copy of the recent letter sent to the First Minister is attached, along with a briefing paper on the outcome from the follow-up calls made to potential foster carers, and a briefing paper on the development of the Young Carers strategy / plan.

In relation to children with sensory problems, it is the responsibility of the Education Directorate to identify appropriate provision which will depend of the specifics of the sensory impairment. Children's Services attend the regular Education Reviews and undertake Well-being Assessments, all of which assist to inform if the provision is meeting the child's needs. The transportation of children to and from school is an element of the Education Review which is

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GWEITHIO DROS GAERDYDD, GWEITHIO DROSOCH CHI

Mae'r Cyngor yn croesawu gohebiaeth yn Gymraeg, Saesneg neu'n ddwyieithog. Byddwn yn cyfathrebu â chi yn ôl eich dewis, dim ond i chi roi gwybod i ni pa un sydd well gennych. Ni fydd gohebu yn Gymraeg yn arwain at oedi.

WORKING FOR CARDIFF, WORKING FOR YOU

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discussed and agreed. Children's Services work alongside colleagues in Transport to ensure service delivery.

The Director and Interim Assistant Director look forward to meeting with you to develop the Scrutiny work programme over the summer.

Yn gywir / Yours sincerely



Councillor / Y Cynghorydd Graham Hinchey
Cabinet Member for Children & Families
Aelod Cabinet dros Blant a Theuluoedd

**SWYDDFA CYMORTH Y CABINET
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Fy Nghyf / My Ref : CM41738

Dyddiad / Date: 13th June 2019

Mark Drakeford, First Minister
Julie Morgan AM, Minister for Social Services



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Annwyl / Dear Mark and Julie

Children's Services in Cardiff Council

Following on from our recent discussions regarding children's services I would like to reiterate our commitment in Cardiff to ensuring that children and families get the right help at the right time in the right place and that at the heart of our vision is the key principle (enshrined in legislation) that children should be brought up by their parents or family and friends unless it is not in their best interests to do so.

We welcome the ongoing dialogue that has been taking place with colleagues from Welsh Government around this and have prepared this response in the ongoing spirit of partnership working.

We are aware that we need to develop our approach to participation both for parents and their children and we have a number of plans in place to drive forward this area of work including a new mobile app which allows children and young people to engage and participate in decisions that affect them in a way that is more natural for them.

We have clear plans in place to 'shift the balance of care' towards supporting more children to remain living with parents and extended family or friends. However, one of the current problems with the way LAC statistics are reported is that they do not differentiate those children living with their parents on a care order and those children living in foster care or residential care on a care order. So for example in Cardiff we have 150 children who have been through the court

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process but have been enabled to remain living with their parents on a care order which enables the local authority to share decision making with the parents in situations that require significant support and safeguarding. We believe these children should not be included in the LAC statistics as the key principle of keeping children with parents has been adhered to albeit with intensive support and monitoring.

We would also ask for consideration to be given to the way we capture information in relation to the number of children who are placed on care orders with family and friends (kinship care). These children, whilst being offered the support and safeguarding of being looked after are living with close relatives or family friends and are not placed away from their families. We have introduced systems to increase the number of kinship placements and so this is counter-intuitive to the current LAC reduction targets that do not differentiate between children that remain with their families and those that do not.

We would also like to draw your attention to another couple of anomalies when reporting the number of children that live outside of Cardiff as this includes children that are placed on care orders with parents and also with family and friends, again this would appear to be counter-intuitive. The other issue is in relation to actual geography with a number of children being placed outside of Cardiff and therefore being classified as out of area but in reality these children are only a short distance away from their community of origin and often still attend their local schools and colleges. The example of a child from Grangetown being placed in Penarth, rather than further away in the north of the Cardiff, highlights my view that "close to home" or within 20 miles is a more appropriate measure than the blunt term "out of county". The significant variations of population and geographical sizes of local authorities across Wales also needs to be taken into account, including the differences in property prices and (therefore) placement costs. Finally in relation to young people placed out of area it has to be recognised, especially in relation to the risks posed by exploitation, that some young people (including those trafficked) cannot be safely accommodated in their local communities.

Similar to other local authorities Cardiff is striving to shape and influence the market in relation to fostering and residential care. Local authorities are struggling to compete with the 'for-profit' sector and costs are being continually driven upwards by a demand led situation. A review of where children are placed across Wales shows an apparently fragmented approach to placement planning with most local authorities hosting other local authority's children whilst placing their own children outside of area in other local authority's areas. I am aware that some of these issues are being progressed via the Ministerial Advisory Group, but we would welcome the opportunity to discuss this in more detail and to review other models of commissioning placement provision, including those currently being used in Scotland. Officers and I would welcome a joint visit and participation in any such review.

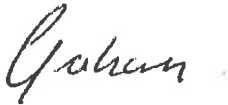
We also discussed the benefits of better marketing of care roles within Wales - improving Social Worker recruitment, retention and reducing the high levels of our agency workforce. This could include closer working with our High Schools, Colleges, Universities and Public Service Partners. A national pay spine would

reduce the fluidity and competition of staff moving between neighbouring authorities.

In conclusion, we welcome the drive to refocus on the key principles of keeping children with their families wherever it is in their best interests to do so. It would be helpful if the reporting data measured how many children had been supported to continue to live with their parents, family and friends rather than, as at present, report on the type of legislation they are placed under.

At a previous meeting there was some discussion about visiting some of our resources and we would welcome the opportunity for you to meet some of our staff and families. Please do let me know if this is still something that would be of interest.

Yn gywir / Yours sincerely



Councillor / Y Cynghorydd Graham Hinchey
Cabinet Member for Children & Families
Aelod Cabinet dros Blant a Theuluoedd

**Cardiff Council
Social Services**

Briefing Note re: Fostering

As part of the Authority's public budget consultation earlier in the year, the public were asked 'if they were interested in learning more about becoming foster carers'.

Sixty individuals expressed an interest and they were contacted via email and invited to an event at County Hall. The event was chaired by Deborah Driffield, Councillor Hinchey and Kate Hustler and stalls were available giving information about not only fostering, but also When I am Ready, Supported Lodgings and Into Work Services. Existing foster carers also attended the event to share their experiences of being a foster carer.

The event attracted seven individuals, one of whom went on to make an application. Their application has since been put on hold, due to a change in the family's circumstances.

In addition to this, one individual contacted the fostering team directly and made an application; this application is still ongoing and will be concluded shortly.

Further emails will be sent to the cohort to determine if they are still interested.

Online and social media marketing continues to be the most effective way of communicating and recent activity in this area has resulted in an increase in enquiries and 15 new foster care applications being received.

The Fostering Team are committed to attending events to raise the profile of the service and will be at this year's PRIDE, as well as events in the community.

Briefing Note re: Young Carers Strategy / Plan

The Young Carers Strategy / Plan seeks to deliver on the needs of young carers in Cardiff. It is proposed that Integrated Care Fund (ICF) monies will assist Cardiff to work on a regional basis with our partners in the Vale of Glamorgan through the identification of dedicated strategic and operational resource to lead on Young Carers.

Cardiff have reviewed their pathway for young carers in relation to the Social Services and Well-being (Wales) Act 2014. Funding has been sought to deliver on two key areas of need in developing a response to young carers; namely the strategic development of a young carer's pathway and focus, and the development of a direct service provision to young carers. Additionally, Cardiff is developing arrangements for the identification and screening of young carers across Cardiff, as part of its new Early Help arrangements.

Identification of young carers / early help front door

Cardiff will resource capacity within its new and developing early help front door arrangements to screen for young carers. This function will be undertaken by members of the core team with all posts within the team will undertaking this function. Demand for assessments will be closely monitored and activity data collected by the early help front door will be used to inform the strategic developmental work that will be undertaken by a Change Manager and will also be used to inform the development of future direct services for Young Carers.

Young Carers Service

We propose to develop specifications and tender for a dedicated team of workers to undertake young carers assessments proportionate to their needs and deliver a holistic support service, specifically designed to the needs of the young carer and considering the needs of their family.

Young Carers Summary of Achievements in 2018/19

- Pathway into services through the Early Help Gateway defined and ratified on 24th June 2019. Early help staff informed of training options available, including the online training module. Requests have begun to come through this route.
- Statutory assessments to be undertaken by the Support4Families team where requested / required.
- Funding for dedicated Grade 8 post available – expressions of interest sought.
- Meeting with YMCA, existing providers of Young Carers service. YMCA currently work with approximately 170 young carers offering a range of services including 1-1 support, respite / time out, twice weekly Youth Clubs and a 'Skills for Life' programme. YMCA staff have been briefed on the Gateway referral process and are happy to use this route.
- Meetings held with colleagues in Education and the Youth Service to look at school data, referrals and services for Young Carers.
- ICF monies to be used to hold consultation events with Young Carers to determine what services are needed.
- Tender for commissioned service to enhance Young Carer's experience to go out following consultation. Market sounding exercise underway.