

CORPORATE PARENTING ADVISORY COMMITTEE

6 NOVEMBER 2023

Present: Councillor Merry(Chairperson)
Councillors Ash-Edwards, Kaaba, Lay, Lister, Littlechild,
Naughton and Taylor

Officers Present: Deborah Driffield (Director, Children's Services),
Deborah Williams (Virtual Headteacher), Libby Jones (CLA
Virtual School, Cardiff Project Manager), Davina Miller (Inclusion
Teacher, CLA Virtual School, Cardiff), Carly Davies (Project
Manager, Cardiff Commitment), Katie Elias (Into Work Co-
ordinator), Hayley Beynon (Personal Advisor Service Team
Manager), Jess Lloyd (Senior Personal Advisor), Luke Mussa
(Passport to the City Achievement Officer), Matthew Osborne
(Operational Manager, Children's Services), Lucy Thomas
(Senior Corporate Parenting Advisory Committee Participation
Officer) and Leanne Weston (OM Legal Manager)

41 : APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

No apologies for absence were received.

42 : DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

None received.

43 : MINUTES

The minutes of the meeting on the 26 June 2023 were approved as a correct record of the meeting and signed by the Chairperson.

44 : CHILDREN LOOKED AFTER IN EDUCATION ANNUAL REPORT 2022-23 AND VIRTUAL HEADTEACHER UPDATE

The Chair invited Deborah Williams, Virtual Headteacher, Libby Jones CLA Virtual School Cardiff Project Manager and Davina Miller, Inclusion Teacher, CLA Virtual School Cardiff to provide an update to Members on the Children Looked After (CLA) in Education Annual Report 2022-23 and the Virtual School and Virtual Headteacher Update. Members were informed how the Virtual School and Virtual Headteacher was working to further priority 4 of the Corporate Parenting Strategy: Educational Achievement and Training.

Members noted that since the last Educational Report to the CPAC 2021-2022 there had been changes to the LACE (Looked After Children in Education) Team, the assessment processes for schools linked to the curriculum changes as the Curriculum for Wales was adopted across the year groups and key stages and also provided with an update on the continued implementation of the ALN Reform.

Members were aware that the application for Welsh Government pilot funding was successful in July 2022 and the pilot for the Virtual School and the role of the Virtual School Headteacher in Wales started for Cardiff in July 2022. In terms of the application post April 2023, the Welsh Government had agreed the funding for the second year also which was good news for the team and the Local Authority as a whole.

Members noted that the Virtual School Headteacher had provided a written review to Welsh Government of the work of the Cardiff CLA Virtual School. There was also a follow up online interview with the research group carrying out the evaluation. The evaluation would be published in the near future.

Members were informed that the National Development Group for CLA met in July 2023 for the first time since the pandemic and that there were plans in place for the Virtual School Headteachers to meet and work collaboratively.

The following performance information was provided to Member

- 63% of Cardiff Children Looked After were educated in a Cardiff School or setting
- 31% of Cardiff Children Looked After were educated in an out of county setting
- 5% of Cardiff Children Looked After were in Education other than at School (EOTAS)

Work being undertaken to support Children Looked after in Education included:

- Collaborative and integrated working with Education and Children's Services
- Working with schools and other education settings in and out of county
- Leadership and managing the change from the Looked After Children Education to the Virtual School Team
- Developing partnerships and relationships with other professionals and agencies

Members were also provided with a summary of the priorities and future plans in Education to improve outcomes for Children and Young People Looked After including vision, funding, impact and timescale.

Members asked questions and sought clarification on the following:

- Members discussed the increase in the number of ALN (Additional Learning Needs) notifications. In addition, the number of Individual Development Plans (IDPs) needed in conjunction with an increase in the numbers of specialist provision requests places because a place in a mainstream school was not able to meet the young person's complex needs. Members noted that Specialist provision places were increasing in Cardiff and that Education and Children's Services were working collaboratively to develop provision within Cardiff. Members asked the reason for the increase in ALN and whether it was due to better reporting or the increase in numbers of children in the system. Officers responded that it was not due to one particular reason but because the children had complex needs.

- Members asked for clarification around the local authority 12-week review process for an IDP. Officers pointed out that the complication was when a child moved in the middle of a review period. Members noted the different processes connected with EHCPs in England in Wales were causing real challenges.
- Members asked if there was good practice in relation to exclusions that could be rolled out. Officers responded that building relationships and effective communications were vital. There was also work around admissions that needed to be carried out inside local authorities in Wales and outside Wales.
- In terms of children not in provision Members asked if the situation had improved as there were less children not in provision but a higher number of days involved of children not in provision. Officers responded that the not in provision times were currently too long and the Authority needed to be concentrating on provision in Cardiff if not going outside Cardiff to provide even if only as an initial pilot. Officers agreed to provide the Committee with more information on the discrepancy in days.
- Members noted that 31% of children were not in Education in Cardiff and asked about the extra demands that created and what steps were being taken to tackle that percentage. Officers referred to the importance of quality assurance and that the team met regularly to ensure those measures were in place. The links between schools and health services were also vital.

RESOLVED:

1. To note the update on the Annual Education Report of Children Looked After and the Virtual School and Virtual Headteacher Update and;
2. To feedback any observations or comments.

45 : CARDIFF COMMITMENT UPDATE

The Chair invited Carly Davies, Project Manager, Cardiff Commitment to provide a presentation to Members on the Cardiff Commitment Project

Members were informed that Cardiff Commitment had been developed as a programme to support the Capital Ambition, which was that all learners progressed into education, employment or training post-16. Members noted that supporting the progression of young people was a key priority for the Education Directorate and Cardiff Commitment was building strong relationships between Cardiff schools, employers and higher and further education partners to support young people to access good jobs and careers.

Members were pleased to hear that over 300 employers in Cardiff were working with Cardiff Commitment to offer young people employment and training opportunities, work experience and curriculum enrichment activities.

Members were provided with a description of what success looked like - young people with the right skills to support Cardiff employers and growth sectors in the Cardiff Capital Region; improved educational attainment in core subjects such as Science and Mathematics and Language, equitably across the city; integrated education and employment pathways for young people with easy access to information and advice on career opportunities and no young people 'NEET', in particular from vulnerable groups such as Children Looked After, low income families.

Members were also provided with details and examples around the 6 priorities within the Cardiff Commitment Forward Work Plan which were:

- Priority Partner Support
- Priority Experience of Work
- Priority Learning Pathways
- Priority Social Value
- Priority Children and Young People who need it most
- Priority Cardiff Curriculum

In terms of targeted support for Children Looked After it was highlighted that a CLA Working Group was being developed to support pupils across Cardiff schools with meaningful career and work-related experiences. The Group would help to promote high aspirations, and seek to secure the best outcomes, for those children and young people. The group would be chaired by the CLA Virtual Headteacher and Headteacher at Cardiff West Community High School. It would look at how meaningful opportunities could be developed within the Cardiff Commitment network to support Cardiff's CLA to develop their aspirations and support them to realise their ambitions for the future. The views of CLA would be central to this work and they would be consulted for their views in relation to the support needed to raise their aspirations and realise their ambitions. The intention was that Cardiff Commitment would listen to their ideas and needs and respond with a Call to Action across their partner network.

Members asked questions and sought clarification on the following:

- Members questioned what was being done to improve access to youth services for Cardiff young people living in the east of the City. Officers responded that there was scope to do more and suggested a Call to Action to bring in partners. It was also suggested that youth mentors could be involved.

RESOLVED:

- To note the Cardiff Commitment Update Report and;
- To provide any observations or comments.

46 : INTO WORK ADVICE SERVICE - BRIGHT FUTURES UPDATE

The Chair introduced Katie Elias, Into Work Co-ordinator, who provided a presentation on the Into Work Advice Service – Bright Futures Update.

Members were informed that the Bright Futures Project sat within the Into Work Advice Service as part of a wide team of employability and training projects. The

Service provided employment, training, volunteering and digital support to Cardiff citizens who were actively seeking work or looking to upskill. The Bright Futures Project provided support for Care Experienced young people (16-24) who were identified as Not in Education, Employment or Training (NEET) or at risk of becoming so and needing intensive help to access training and the workplace. A team of Youth Mentors liaised with partners in Children's Services and Youth Services to ensure that all Care Experienced young people were given the opportunity to reach their potential and be supported into education and work.

Members were informed that the support consisted of:

- Intensive youth mentor support for care experienced young people in Cardiff to help them remove the barriers into employment, education or training;
- Financial support was available to help young people get into employment; access to a flexible barrier fund to help them with clothing, transport, training, childcare etc;
- Support to prepare for 6 month Bright Start Work Placements;
- Access to wellbeing and confidence building, including summer wellbeing sessions and access to ICare boxes partnership with the Youth Service

Members were provided with a snapshot of engagement since April 23 with 52 young people signed up for mentor support, 16 young people helped into employment, 24 young people completed training, 22 young people completed Bright Start placements and 244 were supported into Employment or Education since Bright Futures launched in 2020. Some of the quotes received from the young people involved in the programme were also shared: " This chance you helped me with could change my life now, thank you so much.", "Thank you so much ... for going above and beyond. I feel so much better after talking to you" and "Without the support from you I would have been on a very dark path. Thank you for being constant and not giving up on me."

In addition to Bright Start Members were informed that there was a Bright Start Trainee Scheme and an open invitation was given to the Committee to visit the young people on placement. Members responded that they would welcome the opportunity to visit the young people on placement.

Members asked questions and sought clarification on the following:

- Members enquired if the UBI pilot was having an impact on young peoples' desire/impact to work. Officers responded that there were mixed reactions to the pilot. Some young people were using the money for driving licences and other incentives to work whilst others were not.
- Members sought clarification in the percentage of young people were staying in full time employment after the scheme ended. Officers to research this information and provide feedback following on from the team's six monthly catch-ups.

RESOLVED:

- 1 To note the update on the Into Work Advice Service;
2. To provide any observations or comments.

47 : PARTICIPATION STRATEGY UPDATE

The Chair introduced Matthew Osborne, Operational Manager, Children's Services, to provide Members with an update on the Participation Strategy and the associated consultation that had been undertaken in conjunction with the development of the strategy.

Members noted that the consultation had been co-produced by members of the Bright Sparks groups, as well as children and young people who attended services provided by Cardiff Youth Service and the Personal Advisor Service. It was explained that the aim of the Participation Strategy was to develop a strategy that would set out how the Authority engaged with Cardiff's children, young people and families and how services could be shaped in the future to better meet their needs. The strategy would be co-produced with children and young people, ensuring their voices were at the heart of the strategy development.

Members were informed that a steering group was set up with members from Children's Services, Cardiff Youth Service and NYAS to map out a structure to engage with children and young people. It was noted that, in September 2023, children and young people totalling 300 (including 602 CLA), had been invited to take part in a co-produced online questionnaire. A target of 100 responses had been set and 130 responses had been received to date.

Visits had been made to young people in children's homes and residential homes and the strategy was at the point where all the information gathered from young people was being analysed. It was notable how many young people mentioned their families were important and the importance of sport for young people. Members were also informed they had mentioned how being looked after was really important.

Members noted the aim was to complete the draft Participation Strategy by the end of November and the Committee was asked for any comments/thoughts in taking the strategy forwards. An early draft would be presented to Members in order for them to communicate their views.

RESOLVED:

1. To note the update in **Appendix A** and to make any observations or comments;
2. To consider how the Participation Strategy meets the needs of Cardiff's Children Looked After and how it is reported to Committee going forwards.

48 : SUPPORT FOR CARE LEAVERS REPORT

The Chair invited Hayley Beynon, Personal Advisor Service Team Manager and Jess Lloyd, Senior Personal Advisor to update Members on the Support for Care Leavers Report.

Members were provided with an update regarding the Personal Advisor Service and support provided to care experienced young people (Appendix A). Details were given on the current work being undertaken to support young people leaving care and information on the service over the past 12 months as well as future developments.

Members were informed the Personal Advisor Service was a fundamental service providing support, advice and guidance for young people aged between 16-25. It was a statutory requirement outlined in the Social Services and Wellbeing (Wales) Act 2014.

It was highlighted that the main update since the last meeting was the service recently moving into Adults, Housing and Communities under the management of the Advice Service. Members heard how the alignment of the service helped to provide a holistic and cohesive approach to address the needs of young people with more of a 'wrap around' of services.

Another update was provided to Members on the Basic Income Pilot (a £1600 monthly payment for care experienced young people turning 18) which was being undertaken with 98 young people across the service. The entry to the pilot had ended but it would continue to progress until 2025. The service was working closely with the Money Advice Team in ensuring that all the young people had met the advice worker to discuss their individual circumstances to be able to make informed choices on entering the pilot.

The main concern for the PA Service in relation to the payments was that in receiving the money the young person would no longer be entitled to universal credit and rent support. As a result, meetings had been arranged with the young people to undertake financial health check/benefit checks.

Members noted that wellbeing and mental health had been a reoccurring theme since the pandemic and the service had focussed on providing ways to improve young people's self-esteem and confidence.

Members noted the main aim of the service was to provide wrap around support for the young people which included education, training, Into Work Service, Money Advice Team, housing and homeless support prevention and also support for unaccompanied asylum-seeking children.

It was highlighted that the number of young people passing through the service had grown resulting in the capacity of the PA service growing.

The future aims for the service were outlined which included working with young people at an earlier age (15 and a half), a leaving care pilot/website in conjunction with a virtual youth hub, parenting support groups and entitlement support groups.

Members asked questions and sought clarification on the following:

- Members referred to unaccompanied asylum-seeking children aged 15-25 and if anyone aged 25 unaccompanied could use the service or whether it was only for young people under the age of 25. Officers responded that the service was notified of unaccompanied asylum seekers aged 17 or 18 but not over 21 as yet. It was stressed that not everyone who presented had complex needs and sometimes the young person required some support. However, the service would support someone aged 26, who was looked after, if they came to them but it was also a case of ensuring all the preparatory work was carried out.
- Members discussed capacity issues for the services and inconsistencies in the level of cover across Cardiff. Officers responded that caseload numbers would be analysed and if there was an inconsistent service it would not be good enough. Members were informed that currently young people were matched with advisors. It was a question of looking at the caseloads as numbers were currently very high and the services was stretched. It was acknowledged that the aim was to be in a situation no young person was left unallocated to a PA and from an age where a relationship could be built up. It was noted that a performance review would be put in place to help to achieve this.

RESOLVED:

1. To note the update in Appendix A and to make any observations or comments.
2. To consider how the Personal Advisor Service was meeting the needs of Cardiff's Children Looked After and how it be reported to Committee going forwards.

49 : PASSPORT TO THE CITY REPORT

The Chair invited Luke Mussa, Passport to the City Achievement Officer to provide a presentation to Members on the Passport to the City, a programme, within the Cardiff Curriculum Team, to ensure children and young people from all backgrounds could enjoy the amenities Cardiff had to offer.

Members were informed that the programme, which had been running for a year, provided fun, engaging and aspirational experiences across the city for children and young people, in particular Cardiff's most vulnerable, to help improve their self-esteem, confidence, and well-being. The Passport to the City Programme helped children and young people to develop a sense of pride and belonging in our Capital City as part of the Levelling Up agenda and was closely related to the Cardiff 2030 document. Members noted that some work related to learning in schools but there was a much broader remit and Members were provided with some bespoke examples.

RESOLVED:

1. To note the content of the report and;
2. To explore ways the scope of the programme could be widened so that it reached as many of Cardiff's Children Looked After as possible.

50 : MEMBER VISITS UPDATE

The Chair invited Matthew Osborne, Operational Manager, Children's Services to provide an update on Member Visits.

The Committee was informed about Member Visits that had taken place since the last meeting at services and organisations that supported care experienced young people in Cardiff. The Member visits provided an opportunity for members of the Committee to meet the staff and teams that supported young people. Some of the visits also provided an opportunity to hear directly from the children and young people.

Cllr Littlechild and Taylor provided feedback on a visit to Ty Storrie, which was a facility set up to provide respite care for those children and families who required it. By giving this regular support there was an increased likelihood that the children and young people remained in their family unit as opposed to being placed in long term residential facilities. The financial implications of this were significant as the cost of long-term residential placement was approximately three times the cost of supporting them to remain at home. Members welcomed a listening exercise from the manager and staff of Ty Storrie to identify ways the Committee could support the service.

The Members' feedback was that it was good to go and see facility the council was offering and the commitment by the staff to create an environment where the children felt comfortable. The Committee heard that the Manager had taken the capacity from 19 to 43 children and it was hoped to grow the facility to 45. One of the issues uncovered was that it sometimes took three months to secure a place for a child at Ty Storrie. A positive was that there was continuity of care with the children having the same bedding and toys. Members thanked the staff and officers for arranging the visit.

Cllr Ash Edwards provided feedback to the Committee on two visits to the John Kane Centre, Gabalfa – Youth Justice Service and a Fostering visit. The Operational Manager for the Youth Justice Service team and nine other staff were met and spoken with about the work of the team and their individual roles. No service users were present at the time the visit was made.

Members noted there was an awareness of the 2020 YJS Cardiff poor inspection report and a staff review with a new Operational Manager in post who was focussing on rebuilding the service from the ground up. Significant progress had been made. There was strong evidence of a committed and enthusiastic staff team working well together. Members recalled it had been impressive to see the cross disciplinary partnership between different organisations providing intervention and support for young people and their families. There was also a significant energy to prevention to ensure those young people did not pass into the Justice system permanently. It was

also notable that the young people are almost exclusively young men with young women were not being identified early enough.

The Committee was informed that the fostering visit was a drop in event. Members met with the foster carers and young carers together. The conversations with foster carers was positive and the event provided an opportunity for them to meet with their peers. Members noted that it was impressive to speak to some of the carers and find out how many young people they had fostered with one fostering 150 young people. There was tremendous admiration for the contribution of foster carers and the team.

RESOLVED:

1. To note the information in **Appendix A** of the report.
2. To discuss how Members could support and further the needs of the services.

51 : MEMBER VISIT PROGRAMME

The Chair invited Matthew Osborne, Operational Manager Children's Services to present the Member Visit Programme

Members were directed to the list of Member visits circulated. It was suggested that the Into Work Service be added to the list. It was also noted that some of the dates had moved. It was felt useful to include other residential – Crosslands, new provisions and linking in with Bright Sparks participation. Members were also made aware of another fostering event in December 2023. Members were informed an updated email would be sent advising of updates to Members Visits Programme.

RESOLVED:

1. To note the programme of visits in Appendix A of the report and;
2. To indicate any expressions of interest in attending any of the visits contained in the programme.

52 : COMPLAINTS - VERBAL REPORT

The Chair invited Matthew Osborne, Operational Manager, Children's Services to provide a verbal update on Complaints.

It was accepted that there was a need to reflect against the terms of reference in relation to what need to be reported in terms of complaints. It was agreed that the Item be placed on the agenda for the next Committee meeting.

RESOLVED: To note the verbal update on complaints.

53 : RESIDENTIAL ANNUAL REPORTS

The Chair invited Matthew Osborne, Operational Manager, Children's Services to provide an update on Residential Annual Reports. The report was an update to that provided to the Committee in March 2023.

Members were informed that the purpose of the report was to give them the opportunity to discuss the Accommodation Strategy and new residential homes in Cardiff. As the number of new residential placements in Cardiff was increasing, the

Committee would need to decide how it would like progress updates and annual reports to be shared going forward.

Members discussed and sought clarification on the following:

- Members felt it was important to be provided with an overview of the whole residential accommodation estate and stressed the differences between accommodation of different sizes. For example, even though provisions and care might not be different for 2 and 6 bedded properties approaches would be.
- Members discussed the importance of having an overview of need as well in order to gain an indication of the resources in terms of staffing and the percentage of time the bed had taken.
- Members discussed unregistered placements and asked for an indication of why it was not easy to buy property and employ staff. Officers responded that they would ensure that Members were kept up to date with any developments in unregistered provision.
- It was suggested that residential homes could become a standard agenda item for each Committee and officers to attend to provide an overview and update to Members.

RESOLVED:

1. To note the content of the report;
2. To provide comments and feedback.

54 : FORWARD WORK PROGRAMME

The Chair invited Lucy Thomas, Senior Corporate Parenting Advisory Committee & Participation Officer to provide an update on the Forward Work Programme.

Members were aware that the Corporate Parenting meeting agendas were arranged thematically with a Corporate Parenting policy theme. Today's meeting was Educational Achievement, Employment and Training.

The theme for the next meeting was better connections, improved relationships. Members were informed that the agenda items for the next meeting was as follows:

- Guaranteed interview scheme for CLA or care leavers,
- Mentoring Scheme currently in process of putting together - Pilot scheme whereby volunteers would work with small cohort in supported lodgings,
- Residential Homes Annual Report Update,

- Voices from Care Cymru Update– good opportunity to hear from them and involvement in Government programmes,
- Youth Service Report Update – An overview of the Youth Service and what they are doing in terms of their support of children in Cardiff
- Children in Cardiff NYAS – Committee can hear about Children Looked After
- Child Friendly Cities Report
- CLA Performance Dashboard Update.

RESOLVED:

1. To agree the Work Programme and;
2. To identify any other topic for inclusion on the Work Programme

55 : URGENT ITEMS (IF ANY)

There were no urgent items.

56 : DATE OF NEXT MEETING

Due to the proximity of meetings the date of the next meeting of the Corporate Parenting Advisory Committee was agreed to be re-scheduled to Monday 22 January 2024 at 2.00 pm in Committee Room 4, County Hall, Cardiff.

The meeting terminated at 4.15 pm