

COUNCIL: 29 NOVEMBER 2018

CHILDREN & FAMILIES STATEMENT

Bright Sparks Award Ceremony

The 12th annual Bright Sparks Award Ceremony took place on 26th October 2018 at County Hall. The event was attended by 300 looked after children and care leavers, parents and carers, staff and members of the Corporate Parenting Advisory Committee, as well as the Leader of the Council. The event celebrated the many achievements of those children in areas such as education, sport, creative writing, bravery and volunteering. It also acknowledged the commitment of foster carers and supported lodgings providers to our children and young people. Guests were treated to performances from young people, as well as a fashion show from some of our Bright Start Trainees.

Hywel Dda Primary School and St Teilo's Church in Wales High School both received awards for their outstanding support of looked after children. The Corporate Parenting Advisory Committee also gave awards to three young people, who as members of the Bright Sparks Club, have shown dedication to improving outcomes for young people by participating in consultations and developmental events, including work on the Child Friendly City initiative.

National Safeguarding Week – Safeguarding Awards

A Safeguarding Awards Ceremony was held on Friday 16th November 2018 at Cardiff Central Police Station, which was a fitting finale to the end of National Safeguarding Week (12th-16th November 2018). The awards recognised both professionals and members of the public who have made a great contribution to safeguarding children and vulnerable adults in Cardiff and the Vale of Glamorgan. The ceremony was officially opened by Assistant Chief Constable Jon Drake and I was delighted to present the awards alongside my Cabinet colleague, Councillor Elsmore, and Chief Superintendent Steve Jones.

The awards were also an opportunity to recognise individuals' efforts and acknowledge that their hard work is valued by the Regional Safeguarding Board. Award winners from Cardiff Council were Margarita Mesa-Gutierrez (Children's Services), Nicola Jones (Regional Safeguarding Board) and Carl Davies (Prevent).

Staff Engagement – Back to the Front Line

I was pleased to be involved recently in the second round of staff engagement sessions. *Back to the Front Line* sessions are now underway, allowing myself and senior managers the opportunity to talk to staff about key projects taking place across the Children & Families Portfolio. The sessions are aimed at hearing directly from front line staff about the work they are engaged in, whilst providing them with an opportunity to raise any concerns they may have and for them to provide feedback about any challenges they are facing, including any questions and queries they may have.

Welsh Government Childcare Offer

The Welsh Government's Childcare Offer for Wales went live in Cardiff on 8th October 2018 in the 10 wards selected for the initial roll-out – Adamsdown, Butetown, Caerau, Cathays, Ely, Grangetown, Llanrumney, Plasnewydd, Riverside and Splott. The Cardiff Childcare Offer provides 30 hours a week of government-funded early education and childcare for eligible working parents of 3 to 4 year olds, for up to 48 weeks of the year.

Since going live last month, 147 parent applications have been received. Of these, 144 have been assessed and a total of 116 applications have been approved. The Childcare Offer team is also in contact with 26 families, seeking further evidence to support the assessment of their application. Only 2 applications have been rejected due to them not meeting all the criteria. Promotion to parents has focused on the initial 10 wards in the city, with information e-mailed to all primary schools and relevant local Members.

Engagement events for childcare providers that were held in September 2018 attracted around 100 childcare settings. To date, there are 92 childcare providers registered to provide Childcare Offer places. Following a recruitment drive over the last fortnight, a further 17 providers are in the process of registration in readiness for all of Cardiff going live in January 2019. New registration forms are also being received on a daily basis.

The Childcare Offer team has developed a promotion strategy, which utilises the Council's website, Facebook, Twitter and other social media, alongside the distribution of posters and leaflets to schools, Hubs, leisure centres and libraries to ensure that parents are aware of the Offer. The childcare providers themselves also have a key role in promoting the Offer to parents using their childcare settings.

Corporate Parenting Training

Some Members have already completed the Corporate Parenting workshop. Democratic Services are arranging further dates for Corporate Parenting workshop sessions for Members in the New Year. I would remind all Members that this session is essential.

Councillor Graham Hinchey
Cabinet Member for Children & Families
23 November 2018