



County Hall  
Cardiff  
CF10 4UW  
Tel: (029) 2087 2000  
  
Neuadd y Sir  
Caerdydd  
CF10 4UW  
Ffôn: (029) 2087 2000

## AGENDA

<b>Committee</b>	CORPORATE PARENTING ADVISORY COMMITTEE
<b>Date and Time of Meeting</b>	TUESDAY, 24 MAY 2016, 2.00 PM
<b>Venue</b>	COMMITTEE ROOM 4, COUNTY HALL
<b>Membership</b>	Councillor Lent (Chair) Councillors Kirsty Davies-Warner, De'Ath, Evans, Goddard, Merry, Sanders and White

### 1 Apologies for Absence

To receive apologies for absence.

### 2 Declarations of Interest

To be made at the start of the agenda item in question, in accordance with the Members' Code of Conduct.

### 3 Minutes (Pages 1 - 6)

To approve as a correct record the minutes of the previous meeting on 1 March 2016.

## EXCLUSION OF THE PUBLIC

### 4 Looked After Children's Traineeship Scheme Annual Report (Pages 7 - 28)

**The public will be excluded from the meeting for the presentation in accordance with paragraph 12 of Part(s) 4 and 5 of Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972. Appendix E subject to the same exclusion.**

This report provides the Committee up an update on the Look After Children's Traineeship Scheme.

- Nicola Wood, Looked After Children's Traineeship Co-ordinator, will introduce the report and answer any questions;

|

- A number of trainees will provide the Committee with a presentation and answer any questions;

## **EXCLUSION OF THE PUBLIC**

### **5 Regulation 32 Report (Pages 29 - 92)**

**The report and appendices are confidential and not for publication by virtue of paragraph 12 of Part(s) 4 and 5 of Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972. The public will be excluded from the meeting for the presentation of the item in accordance with the same legislation.**

Debbie Martin-Jones (Operational Manager) Looked After Children Services will be attendance to present this report.

### **6 Education Matters**

To provide Members with an overview of the work undertaken by the Looked After Children Team.

### **7 Quarter 4 Complaints and Compliments Report 2015-16 (Pages 93 - 98)**

The report provides the Committee with the details of the complaints and representations from 1 January 2016 – 31 March 2016

- Kim Brown (Service Manager, Policy and Performance) will be in attendance to present the report and answer any questions.

### **8 Independent Reviewing Officers (IRO) Report (Pages 99 - 112)**

This report is to provide the Committee with information about the role, function and activity of the IRO Service.

- Natasha James (Service Manager, Safeguarding & Review) will be in attendance to present the report and answer any questions.

### **9 Corporate Parenting Advisory Committee Report - Discussion Item**

To provide the Committee with an opportunity to discuss the Annual Report for 2015-16.

### **10 Way Forward**

### **11 Date of next meeting**

The next meeting of the Corporate parenting Advisory Committee is 19 July 2016

**David Marr**  
**Interim Monitoring Officer**  
Date: Wednesday, 18 May 2016

Contact: Mandy Farnham, 02920 872618, [Mandy.Farnham@cardiff.gov.uk](mailto:Mandy.Farnham@cardiff.gov.uk)

***This document is available in Welsh / Mae'r ddogfen hon ar gael yn Gymraeg***

This page is intentionally left blank

## CORPORATE PARENTING ADVISORY COMMITTEE

1 MARCH 2016

Present: County Councillor Lent(Chairperson)  
County Councillors Kirsty Davies-Warner, De'Ath, Evans,  
Goddard, Merry, Sanders and White

## 73 : APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

No Apologies for absence were received.

## 74 : DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

The Chairperson reminded Members of their responsibility under Part 3 of the Members' Code of Conduct.

Councillor Sanders declared a personal interest on the basis that she has a family member employed at Tros Gynnal Plant, an agency working closely with the Local Authority.

## 75 : MINUTES

The minutes of the meeting of 26 January 2016 were agreed as a correct record and signed by the Chairperson.

## 76 : THE NEEDS OF ADOPTED CHILDREN IN SCHOOL

The Chairperson welcomed Ann Bell, Director Wales, Adoption UK to the meeting. Members were provided with a presentation outlining the ongoing work and aims of Adoption UK in Wales, focussing particular attention to educational attainment.

Members were also shown a video providing an insight into the views of adopted children, their educational attainment and the difficulties they face.

The Chairperson invited questions and comments from Members.

- Members discussed some of the reasons why children are adopted, including sexual abuse and queried whether being made aware of the reasons for the adoption, or the publicity that follows sexual abuse cases, makes it much more difficult for them to cope. Members were advised that it is important that those young people are constantly reassured that they are safe from the abuse.
- Members asked whether it would be good practice to make available therapeutic counselling? The Committee were advised that there should be additional information for parents about the background and reasons for adoption and also that from the Life Journey Work which is undertaken parents are able to understand and absorb the difficulties the adopted child is facing and therefore be able to have informed conversations with the adopted child.

- Members were advised that bullying is a problem faced by many adopted children as, because of their background, they are often more sensitive and believe that they are different. It is therefore both necessary and important that schools operate a good bullying policy.
- Members queried when it was felt that children/young people should be told that they are adopted and were advised that children should be told and that there has to be good support in place and available.
- Members asked whether it was the responsibility of the school to provide training for teaching in these circumstances and were advised that a percentage of the Pupil Deprivation Grant can now be used. Schools are purchasing good training packages for staff. Members were advised that there was also designated teacher training to equip teachers to deal with these types of issues. Members were informed that not all teachers are aware of that, but were now aware that the Pupil Deprivation Grant can now be used for both foster and looked after children.
- Members asked advice about the best way forward for them and the Local Authority as they believe that there are issues surrounding teacher training and whilst it accepted that there are unhealthy attainment issues it is not always foster and looked after children with those issues. Members were advised that it is important that there is widespread understanding and awareness of the adopted children, that has to apply to parents as well. There should be more openness about adopted children; every person has a different history. Officers advised that there are attainment difficulties with those children and young people who are not adopted and that adoptive parents and children should be allowed anonymity.
- Members were advised that there was little difference in the level of attainment between adopted children and looked after children, but as with other children whilst the support and help is there it does not follow that there will be high educational attainment and it is important that other ways to measure attainment are used.

The Chairperson thanked Ann Bell for her attendance, presentation and for answering Members questions.

#### 77 : EDUCATION REPORT/ITEM

The Chairperson welcomed Gillian James, Achievement Leader, Closing the Gap to the meeting.

The Committee were provided with an update on the Cardiff Visual Tracker, It is currently being refined by Trevor Covey to include more detailed information. Leading on from that a Designated Teacher Forum has now been established.

#### 78 : QUARTER 3 COMPLAINTS AND REPRESENTATIONS REPORT 2015/2016

The Chair person welcomed Kim Brown, Service Manager, Policy and Performance to the meeting.

Members were provided with an update on Children's Services Complaints and Representations between 1 October 2015 and 31<sup>st</sup> December 2015 (Quarter 3).

The Chairperson invited questions and comments from Members.

- Members requested information about the mechanism used to identify emerging themes and were advised that it is a subjective test undertaken by the Complaints Officer.
- Members indicated that previously they had been advised that contact between Social Workers at Young People had been raised as a 'theme' and the Director advised that whilst the issue was still not being managed as effectively as it should be it has been addressed in the Annual Report.
- Members discussed the access to records, in particular, by young people and Officers advised that care has to be taken when providing information to young people to try and ensure that others are not affected by the disclosure of information. A complaint was lodged by the mother of a young person to whom information had been provided due to the nature of some of the information therein.

The Chairperson thanked the Kim Brown for her attendance, presentation and for answering Members questions.

AGREED: To note the content of the report

## 79 : QUARTER 3 PERFORMANCE UPDATE

The Chairperson welcomed Kim Brown, Service Manager, Policy and Performance to the meeting who presented the report, the purpose of which was to enable the Committee to understand the factors that impact on outcomes for children in need and looked after children and also to enable them to consider opportunities for improving those outcomes.

Members were advised that Quarter 2 was a strong quarter and that there had been some slippage in progress against some of the milestones in the Corporate Plan relating to the Child Sexual Exploitation Strategy and some against the milestones in the Children's Services Plan.

The Chairperson invited questions and comments from Members.

Members asked how many children were currently the subject of 'Out of County Placements' and were advised that at the present time there were 100 children in out of county placements.

Members expressed concern as to whether or not there would be enough foster placements in the coming months. The Director advised that he was content that

there would be enough placements. The Director also advised that currently all Social Worker vacancies had been filled.

AGREED: To note the content of the report

## 80 : MEMBER VISITS - VERBAL UPDATE

The Committee welcomed Tony Young, Director Social Services and Irfan Alam, Assistant Director, Children's Services to the meeting to provide updated information in relation to the visits conducted by Committee Members to services and frontline teams as an ongoing part of the Committee's Annual Programme of work. The Director outlined the positive feedback from the various visits conducted.

The Chairperson had conducted a number of visits; concerns were raised about work loads and the capacity of staff to take leave and in the circumstances does that necessitate the employment of more Social Workers; whilst moral is good in the Looked After Children Service concerns were raised about the placement of children at home by the Courts; and during visits with Foster Carers concern was raised, not about the level of payment, but about the difficult tasks that Foster Carers were being asked to undertake and the banding of payments.

The Chairperson invited comments and questions from Members.

- Members discussed the purpose of the visits and felt that it was important that when issues are raised by them as a result of visits that they receive a response to those issues and that those involved also receive a response and further that they are advised as to what changes are made as a result.
- Members were advised that if there are concerns as a result of visits and information provided they could be addressed in the Work Programme.
- Members noted from visits that schools are sometimes reluctant to admit Looked After Children. Officers advised that some schools have different approaches to Looked After Children, some embrace it and other have experienced difficulties previously with placements. However, partnership working within the various teams has improved and any difficulties that arise are not allowed to drift. It was noted that whilst all schools should be inclusive, what is required is the best placement for a particular child. Some schools are highly inclusive but what is offered is not necessarily the best placement for the child. Members felt that this should be followed up. Officers advised it is difficult to ascertain whether it is endemic in a particular school – officers have said that some are better than others whilst Estyn reports that all schools are inclusive.
- Members queried whether it would be of any benefit to meet officers are visits whilst the information is current. Officers advised that consideration would have to be given as to how to move forward having received comments from Members to more specific actions. Views of officers will be canvassed and information reported back to Members.



- Members queried the opportunities for work experience for those young people. Officers advised that there was a Looked After Children Traineeship Scheme, there is to be a presentation at the meeting in May in relation to that scheme, but were able to confirm that 6 young people had started with the Parks Department and 2 young people had obtained apprenticeships with the Council, one in IT and the other in the Youth Service.
- Officers advised in relation to the Foster Carer Banding, work is ongoing to ensure that it is more equitable and suggested further visits to Foster Carers are arranged so that Members can be updated.

81 : REGULATION 32 REPORT

**This item was not for publication by virtue of Paragraph 12 of Parts 4 & 5 of Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972. It was RESOLVED that the public would be excluded for this item.**

This item was deferred to the next meeting of the Corporate Parenting Advisory Committee.

82 : DATE OF NEXT MEETING

The next meeting of the Corporate Parenting Advisory Committee is 24 May 2016 at 2.00 pm.

The meeting terminated at Time Not Specified

This page is intentionally left blank

**CITY AND COUNTY OF CARDIFF  
DINAS A SIR CAERDYDD**

**CORPORATE PARENTING ADVISORY COMMITTEE**

**24 May 2016**

---

**Looked After Children's Traineeship**

---

**Reasons for the Report**

1. The reason for the report is:
  - To provide an update on the Looked After Children's Traineeship Scheme.
  - To provide an end of year report for consideration.
  - To introduce a small number of Trainees to the committee.

**Background**

2. The Looked After Children's Traineeship was launched in 2014 and a Traineeship Coordinator was appointed in March 2015. The scheme aims to provide Traineeship opportunities to Looked After Children within Council departments and improve their longer term educational and employment outcomes.

**Financial Implications**

3. There are no direct financial implications arising from the report.

**Legal Implications**

4. There are no legal implications arising from this report.

**RECOMMENDATION**

5. The Committee is recommended to read the report and discuss recommendations.

**TONY YOUNG**  
**Director of Social Services**  
**18 May 2016**

**Appendices:**

**Appendix A** The Looked After Children's Traineeship End of year report 2015-2016.

**Appendix B** End of Year Report Appendix A – Cardiff and the Vale College modules to support Trainee placements.

**Appendix C** End of Year Report Appendix B – Feedback from staff and young people.

**Appendix D** End of Year Report Appendix C – LAC Traineeship Focus Group feedback from Young People and Staff March 2016.

**Appendix E** End of Year Report Appendix D – LAC Traineeship End of Year Report

Appendix D – Case Studies.

**Appendix E is confidential by virtue of paragraph(s) 12 of Part(s) 4 and 5 of Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972 and should not be published nor submitted beyond the agreed readership.**

# Looked After Children's Traineeship

---

End of year report 2015-2016

Nicola Wood

5/10/2016

### Context

Integral to the City of Cardiff Council's Corporate Plan 2016-18 is that Cardiff's Looked After Children achieve their potential.

As corporate parents, Local Authorities have a duty to maximise the education, training and employment outcomes for children and young people leaving care. The Welsh Government's Youth Engagement and Progression framework identifies 3 key areas;

- Strengthening employability skills and opportunities for employment
- Identifying young people most at risk of disengagement
- Ensuring provision meets the needs of young people

The Looked After Children's Traineeship Scheme was set up in 2014. Its aim is to improve employment outcomes for young care leavers and those young people Looked After by the Local Authority by providing them with work experience and training within Cardiff Council.

Further guidance for the scheme is provided by The Corporate Parenting Strategy September 2016-2019. The Strategy aims to;

- "Improve the education and attainment and achievement for all looked after children" as well as;
- "Provide young people leaving care with appropriate preparation for adult life taking account of all their needs including their wellbeing"

### Looked After Children's Traineeship Coordinator

From April 2015 a dedicated Traineeship Coordinator was recruited. This is full time post and has been filled by Nicola Wood. The role consists of:

- Handling referrals for young people
- Building positive relationships with them
- Brokering placements within Council teams
- Liaising closely with partners
- Supporting successful Trainees onto Apprenticeship placements
- Administration and monitoring of the scheme

### Referrals

- From April 2015-April 2016 there was a monthly average of **68** young people aged 16-21 identified as Looked After Children or Care Leavers in Cardiff who were classed as Not in Education, Employment or Training
- This figure includes young people unable to work as well as those actively seeking employment so could be lower due to classification restrictions within CareFirst
- Referrals are received from the Looked After Children's 14+ Team, the Personal Advisor Service as well as from Careers Wales, Youth Offending and the Looked After Children's Education Team
- Within this period **73** referrals were received to the scheme
- An average of 6 referrals a month were dealt with
- Of those referrals **31** young people went on to engage with the scheme
- **29** started in work placements within Cardiff Council departments
- On average 2 young people started work per month
- 6 young people from this cohort have been offered Corporate Apprenticeships to date

No monitoring of equalities information was taken through the referrals but it can be reported that very few referrals were taken for ethnic minority groups and no referrals were taken for children with physical disabilities.

### **Tutoring**

A large proportion of care leavers have had breaks in education or have not achieved their full potential due to circumstances beyond their control. In order to add value to the Traineeship the need to provide opportunities to "learn" as well as "earn" was identified. The first piece of work undertaken by the Coordinator was to broker this support.

In order to **strengthen employability skills and opportunities for employment** Cardiff and the Vale College agreed to make funding available to focus on the specific needs of Looked After Young People whilst on the Traineeship.

Information that was shared was covered by the existing Wales Accord on the Sharing of Personal Information agreement between The City of Cardiff Council and the Vale College and Cardiff Council. The support translated into **8 hours of one to one tutoring** by a therapeutic Tutor trained in Restorative Approaches.

Modules focusing on personal development and employability skills were taken up by the young people. They were encouraged to think about what would benefit them most within their immediate workplace and for the future. Goal setting and CV writing are core elements of the tuition. The modules are accredited by Agored Cymru and students are enrolled in the college by the tutor. (A list of the modules can be found in **Appendix A**).

It was hoped that the personal development modules would encourage the young people to develop career aspirations, positive attitudes toward work and build resilience and self-esteem.

### **Results**

After facilitated introductions were made by the Coordinator in September 2015, tutoring began in October 2015.

#### **Between October 2015 and January 2016**

- 4 young people enrolled with Cardiff and Vale College
- 2 of those young people gained extended awards
- 2 completed single qualifications

#### **Between January 2016 and March 2016**

- 7 young people enrolled with the College
- 2 young people re-joined the scheme and carried on their studies
- 2 young people completed their extended award
- 7 are still working towards their extended award

### **Participation**

Learner voice is an important element of the Corporate Parenting Strategy and young person participation has been integral to the development of the Traineeship scheme.

Feedback has been sought from young people through a variety of methods;

- Traineeship placements are discussed with a young person and they decide on their placement as well as choosing from a choice of modules to undertake to compliment this
- They also decide their working days and hours in conjunction with the Coordinator and the Manager
- Monthly reviews with the Manager and the young people means that feedback is received about how well they feel they are doing, as well as how well supported by the Looked After Children's Traineeship Coordinator they feel
- Feedback questionnaires are also sent out to Managers and Trainees once a placement has finished
- Views have also been sought from Social Work Staff about their experience of the scheme (some of these can be seen in **Appendix B**).
- In March 2016 the Coordinator facilitated two focus groups. One with 4 young people and the CAVC tutor as well as one with staff representing Social Workers, Admin Staff, Personal Advisor Staff and Supported Lodgings Staff. ( Information gathered during these focus groups can be found in **Appendix C**)

### **Mentoring**

The benefit of mentoring is well documented and taking this into consideration the Coordinator aimed to ensure that all Trainees had a qualified mentor in the work place.

It was decided to access training for staff from Full Circle Education who have provided 2 training days within 2015-16. A further training day is planned for May 2016.

- The training is bespoke to the scheme and focuses on mentor techniques as well as raising awareness of the issues facing Looked After Children and Care Leavers
- 21 Cardiff Council staff have completed this training and are now trained mentors
- This was funded through Human Resources

### **Corporate Apprenticeships**

The Corporate Apprenticeship Scheme is coordinated by Human Resources and has a strong focus on Business Administration, ICT and Customer Services.

Posts are funded usually for a 12 to 15 month period through Welsh Government.

Human Resources offered to ring-fence 2 corporate apprenticeships for year 2015-2016 for our Trainees.

- One Trainee secured an Apprenticeship in ICT
- One Apprenticeship was created within Children's Services

The Youth Mentor Apprenticeship was created in a joint venture between Children's Services and Education to create a bespoke opportunity for a young person who was already working on interview panels, participating in events and was working in a Youth Food Project in Lamby Way.

The post was created in January 2016 and the young person started working with the Youth Mentor Team based at the Pavillion in Butetown. The placement came to an end in March 2016 in agreement with the young person who was dealing with some difficult personal circumstances at the time.

A young woman joined Central Hub In-To-Work Services and has completed a 6 month placement as well as achieving an extended award. She joined the scheme whilst pregnant and has an offer of a corporate apprenticeship to return to in September 2016 after her maternity leave.



### **Vocational Apprenticeships within City Operations**

In February 2016 an 8 weeks trial within the Parks Team was coordinated. This was a bespoke 8 week programme with the first week structured to include employability sessions in the morning with Careers Wales and the Traineeship Coordinator with introductions to the different parks team in the afternoon. The Cardiff and the Vale College tutor attended in that first week to introduce the tutoring options.

- All 5 completed the first 4 weeks
- 3 went on to complete the 8 weeks
- In April 2016 funding was secured through Education to fund 3 x 2 year Apprenticeships in Level 2 Horticulture for these 3 individuals aged 18,19 and 21

The young people are now looking forward to working in the Parks Team for the next two years. Agreement was reached with Education to fund their tutor provision throughout the summer until their college course starts in September. This will help to prepare them for their studies as they have no formal qualifications or GCSEs.

### **Stand out Sectors**

A number of teams have been consistent in their support of the scheme and these include:

- Central Hub In-To-Work Team
- Connect 2 Cardiff Contact Centre
- Parks Team
- Facilities Management
- Maindy Leisure Centre

### **Additional Support**

2 young people **identified at risk of disengagement** but not currently on the Traineeship were helped to maintain their employment by the Coordinator and the Tutor. This is outside the remit of the Traineeship however fits into the wider NEET Agenda and the Corporate Parenting Strategy.

### **Case Studies**

A number of case studies were captured for the learners in the Autumn and Spring term and based on their journeys Cardiff and the Vale College agreed to fund an increase of tutor hours from 8 to 12 per week. This translates in assisting 8-10 young people with a few hours for working with the Coordinator on the development of the scheme. The case studies are attached as **Appendix D** and are confidential by virtue of paragraph 12 of Part(s) 4 and 5 of Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972.

### **Restrictions and Limitations**

#### **• CAVC Provision**

As the scheme grows and develops not all young people have been able to access the support from the tutor as the average number of young people on the scheme at any one time is 12.

Some young people are unable to read or write or have undiagnosed special education needs that have not been addressed. The limited support available cannot tackle this within a short space of time.

Having an hour of time to reflect on their lives and behaviour can bring up painful thoughts and feelings for young people. Many weeks can be spent working through trauma. This builds trust with the tutor and enables them to retain their placements, but can impact on their ability to gain qualifications within the timeframe.

One young person ended her very successful placement due to mental health issues. The placement had looked likely to be converted into an Apprenticeship and she had achieved an extended award. However, anxiety and depression caused by childhood trauma meant that this, combined with being on a waiting list for therapy, left her unable to focus on her placement and she ended it before she could progress onto a corporate apprenticeship.

- **Traineeship Provision**

Opportunities within the Local Authority are scarce due to a number of service areas facing restructure and alternative models of delivery.

A planned trial with Waste Management did not take place after Union concerns prohibited it from going ahead. This resulted in the first and only official complaint regarding the Traineeship scheme lodged by a young man who had been waiting to start a Traineeship opportunity with them.

Due to limited capacity of only one person coordinating the scheme with no support, a waiting list exists and time to build positive relationships with staff and young people is restricted. Administration and monitoring capacity has also been limited.

### Next Steps

- **Time Credits**

In order to provide young people leaving care with **appropriate preparation for adult life taking account of all their needs including their wellbeing** we have worked with Cardiff and the Vale College and the Third Sector Organisation "Spice" so that Trainees will soon be able to earn Time Credits for work they do for the community such as mentoring or participation activities. They can use these credits in a variety of venues including cinema, theatre, leisure and sporting events. It is hoped that this embeds them into their local communities and provides cultural experiences in order to promote wellbeing.

- **LAC Support Worker**

A support worker post has been created and advertised. Shortlisting has been completed and interviews will take place in June 2016.

- **Summer CAVC Summer Provision**

In order to **ensure provision meets the needs of young people**, funding has been agreed through Education for 6 hours of tutoring per week throughout the summer in order to retain the relationship built with the tutor and not lose the momentum gained throughout term time.

### Evaluation

- The educational component of the scheme is essential to the success of individuals within the scheme
- Cardiff Bus IFF cards do not work as a means of regular transport
- Practical skills are needed for successful managing of time and money and therefore being successful on the scheme
- There is the need for an online presence for the traineeship scheme as this is how young people get information most readily
- Risk Assessments encourage stigma and don't give Managers the right information about young people

- The fact that the Traineeship is not recognised by Welsh Government impacts negatively on young people by making them claim JSA when they are working. This leads to a lack of motivation
- Mentors need ongoing support and more guidance
- Better links need to be made between the Looked After Children's Traineeship Scheme and the Corporate Apprenticeship Scheme
- Placement opportunities are sometimes limited within the Council
- Young people that make great personal progress are not having this recorded
- Better links to Education and the Cardiff Commitment are needed to align with corporate priorities
- There is a lack of referrals for ethnic minorities or disabled children but this information is not currently being monitored
- The positive relationships build through the Traineeship need to be extended into Apprenticeships as this transition can prove difficult for some
- We now have a better idea of what works and will have increased resources in order to deliver a more targeted service

### **Recommendations**

- Expansion into partners such as Health, Police and Third Sector would provide greater opportunities for vocational placements. The Traineeship Coordinator should present at the Vulnerable Children and Families Programme Board to assess the support for this idea
- A steering group should be set up to report in regularly to the senior CS Management
- Trainees should be involved in decisions that affect them and should have representatives on the Steering group
- Develop relationships with other learning providers other than Cardiff and the Vale College
- Improve the experience of staff and managers by providing clarity and more support around their roles as mentors
- Create a website for young people
- Work with the Children's commissioner to ensure the website is linked in to the My Planner App
- Work with the Welsh Government to get the Traineeship Scheme recognised
- Create a distance travelled tool in partnership with Cardiff and the Vale College to measure distance travelled to record soft outcomes similar to an outcomes STAR
- Utilize the Youth Mentor team within Education for further training of Mentors throughout the authority to ensure sustainability of training
- Record and monitor equalities information
- Increase work with minority groups
- Work to classify the Traineeship on Carefirst for accurate recording and monitoring
- Consider rebranding the Traineeship as the word "LAC" has negative connotations
- Young people and staff have suggested having a name changing competition and young people in the focus group like the term "learn and earn". This could tie in with the website launch

**Appendices:**

Appendix A: Cardiff and the Vale College modules to support Trainee placements

Appendix B: Feedback from staff and young people

Appendix C: LAC Traineeship Focus Group feedback from Young People and Staff March 2016

Appendix D: Case Studies

**This appendix is confidential by virtue of paragraph 12 of Part(s) 4 and 5 of  
Schedule 12 of the Local Government Act 1972**

## **Appendix A**

### **Cardiff and the Vale College modules to support Trainee placements**

<b>UNIT NAME</b>	<b>LEVEL</b>	<b>CREDITS</b>	<b>PSE</b>	<b>WRE</b>
Personal Development	E2	3	✓	
Emotional Health and Wellbeing	E2	1	✓	
Improving Confidence	E2	1	✓	✓
Improving Own Confidence	E3	3	✓	✓
Personal Development	E3	3	✓	
Skills Development	E3	3	✓	
Anger Management	E2	1	✓	
Anger Management	E3	1	✓	
Anger Management	L1	1	✓	
Resilience Skills	E3	1	✓	
Resilience Skills	L1	1	✓	
Assertiveness Skills	E3	1	✓	
Assertiveness Skills	L1	1	✓	
Critical Thinking Skills	L1	2	✓	
Decision Making	L1	1	✓	
Mental Health and Wellbeing	L1	2	✓	
Developing Personal Confidence and Self Awareness	L1	3	✓	
Personal Skills Development through Physical Activities	L1	3	✓	
Improving Own Learning and Performance	E3	3	✓	

Looked After Children's Traineeship End of Year Report  
2015-2016

Improving Own Learning and Performance	L1	3	✓	
--	----	---	---	--

STAND ALONE UNIT NAME	LEVEL	CREDITS	PSE	WRE
Completing and Using a Curriculum Vitae (Independent unit but also fits into Career Planning Unit)	E3	1		✓
Taster Course – Childcare (Stand-alone Unit)	E3	1		
Dog Walking Skills(Stand-alone Unit	E1	3		
Working with Animals(Stand-alone Unit)	E1	2		
Mentoring	L1	3		
Equine Yard Duties	L1	3		

## **Appendix B**

### **Feedback**

#### **Social Work Staff**

A very good service from putting the referral in to the job interview, always kept informed (S and myself) by phone or contact in office

Whilst out RC was very chatty and pleasant company, I asked about her role on the LAC traineeship, she really enjoyed talking about her placement with the Harbour authority, plus her involvement with the LAC traineeship in general, she stated that being involved with the traineeship has given her aims and objectives, she stated that her involvement has given her the confidence to consider becoming a Mentor for other Council run projects

Referrals are quickly followed up, and the Service User fully involved in the process. I have noted a positive working relationship between both the Coordinator and potential employers, as well as with the Service User

As the demand for the scheme is growing, I feel that extra members of staff would be well received to ensure that all young people's referrals can be dealt with promptly

#### **Young People**

I have more confidence in myself and my abilities

This is the best thing I have ever done!

I believe the skills I've learned here would definitely help me get another job.

I feel more positive

You could have more choices such as Cardiff Bus or Sports Cardiff

I have more confidence in myself and my abilities

#### **Managers and mentors**

more money for hours worked!

What do we need to know in advance, e.g. does the young person have learning difficulties

Can we have a guide to 'etiquette', e.g. should we ask a young person about their past and so forth, to be able to help them better "

He's an amazing kid and he's got on really well.

I love having her here; I want to do a Counselling course after the mentor training

This page is intentionally left blank



## **Appendix C**

### **LAC Traineeship Focus Group feedback from Young People and Staff March 2016.**

#### **Q1. What should the aim of the LAC Traineeship be?**

##### **Young People**

- Gaining experience
- Gaining qualifications
- Confidence building
- References
- Relationship building
- Employment/College progression
- To encourage people into a working environment with a chance to learn
- Gain some independence

##### **Staff**

- To get NEET young people re-engaged
- Build confidence
- Increase motivation
- Gain a skill set and move on to something else
- Get them away from benefits
- Worry about the wrong referrals going in and wasting time

#### **Q2. What should the referral process be?**

- *Options given were 1<sup>st</sup> come 1<sup>st</sup> served, Need or Age*

##### **Young People**

- **NEED**
- Social Services need to tell young people in time so it's an option after school as you don't hear in time
- They should engage with Sadie first to find out what they want to do, otherwise they might mess it up for others
- It can't be only about money, if they are lacking in qualifications they need to come on the scheme
- There should be taster days to see what area you might want to go into

##### **Staff**

- **NEED**
- But must measure commitment which could involve talking to the Social Worker
- Meet with Sadie first to do some goal setting
- Once that assessment has taken place this is given back to the social worker and say that they may have to build up to that
- Link in with the supported lodgings providers as they often know the young people best and can encourage them

**Q3. How, when, and how much should Trainees get paid?**

**Young people**

- £65 is sometimes not enough you need to look at individuals personal circumstances
- Should be minimum wage for age
- We don't like bus travel there should be other options
- We would like driving lessons
- A bus pass should be paid for on apprenticeships
- Public transport can sometimes cause anxiety for young people there may be people that they don't want to see
- Hire a driving instructor
- have a two week intensive driving course for good trainees
- if young people are showing commitment then they should get more than £57.90

**Staff**

- Increase lunch money to £3.30 per day, look at the age and circumstances of the young people as at the moment they get more when they are younger – doesn't make sense
- Start everyone part time for the first couple of months to get them used to it
- Use timesheets and deduct money by paying in arrears
- Give driving lesson vouchers for those that show commitment, pay for blocks
- Pay for theory and provisional driving lessons as this is a big motivator
- Get the Welsh Government to approve the scheme so that the job centre can understand it like ACT and they can get the proper benefits rather than having to be on JSA when they are working full time
- Increase budgeting abilities
- Give vouchers for clothing rather than cash payments with supervised spend
- Give an attendance incentive
- Increase age that can work with to 24
- Look at bus IFF card allocation – it's not working and suspicions are that they are being sold on or used by other family members. Could the cards come to Suffolk house?

**Q4. What does the Scheme need to succeed?**

**Young People**

- A website or online presence "LAC APP"
- Sadie to have her own page with info about courses
- Info on there about jobs and testimonials to hear what it's really like to work in the Council.
- Link to the Council Academy to hear about different courses that we can go on
- Do not send our risk assessments to the Managers as they are not always accurate " I am not a self harmer but its on my risk assessment". It can create a negative impression before we've walked through the door, we need to see them before they are sent or don't send them or at least make them specific to the Traineeship
- We need more college hours as 1 hour a week is not enough, could we do 2.5 hours and do some work in our own time? To complete units faster
- Add BTECs into the Traineeship

**Staff**

- Money
- More opportunities
- Sensible referrals from staff

- Needs Assessment
- Link in Sadie and Social Workers so that a goal setting plan can be created or individual work plan
- Create a specific risk assessment for Traineeship
- Referrals should only include known risks to the employer or risks of absconding or Child Sexual Exploitation. Also bail conditions
- Website – young people should have log in details for name and password and have their own account so that they can keep track of their time credits and can look at their CV and get a copy as well as looking at what training is available, perhaps linking in to my planner app from the Children's Commissioner

**Q5. What educational experience should/could the Traineeship cover?**

**Young People**

- Don't patronise us or act like teachers
- Had negative experiences in school and don't want to be like that
- Like working one to one and would work in small groups but don't want to be around certain people. "I need to know who's going to be there"
- Increase provision of Sadie and do GCSEs and BTECs

**Staff**

- Practical skills such as budgeting
- Tangible solid ways of developing confidence
- Interview practice
- Developing positive relationships
- What and when to divulge personal information
- Techniques in calming self
- Exploring core values
- Time Management
- Nic should check out corporate induction that has been done for YP by Human Resources and see if it's any good
- Equalities training
- YP won't sustain employment without personal development

**Q6. How can we use time credits in the Traineeship?**

**Young People**

- Time credits for focus groups
- 3 credits for gaining extended awards
- Any training with external providers
- 1 credit for a 1 month review

**Staff**

- Give them as rewards for being on time or for being committed
- Reward "full commitment"
- Should be given on the basis of need and ability
- Should have individual achievable goals with time credits built into this
- Incremental achievements should be rewarded
- Short and long term goals could include them

***Q7. How can we recognise the achievements of our Trainees?***

**Young People**

- Separate Category at Bright Sparks
- Have certificates and gift certificates at the end of the placement
- Have a party!
- Have a McDonalds
- Have information from employers who is doing really well and give them a prize
- Let them take holiday

**Staff**

- Have a separate awards ceremony away from Bright Sparks just for older kids and adults
- Use a grown up venue like a college or the New Theatre and have a graduation

By virtue of paragraph(s) 12 of Part(s) 4 and 5 of Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972.

Document is Restricted

This page is intentionally left blank

By virtue of paragraph(s) 12 of Part(s) 4 and 5 of Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972.

Document is Restricted

This page is intentionally left blank



By virtue of paragraph(s) 12 of Part(s) 4 and 5 of Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972.

Document is Restricted

This page is intentionally left blank

By virtue of paragraph(s) 12 of Part(s) 4 and 5 of Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972.

Document is Restricted

This page is intentionally left blank

By virtue of paragraph(s) 12 of Part(s) 4 and 5 of Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972.

Document is Restricted

This page is intentionally left blank

By virtue of paragraph(s) 12 of Part(s) 4 and 5 of Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972.

Document is Restricted

This page is intentionally left blank



**CITY AND COUNTY OF CARDIFF  
DINAS A SIR CAERDYDD**

**CORPORATE PARENTING ADVISORY COMMITTEE**

**24 May 2016**

---

**QUARTERLY COMPLAINTS AND REPRESENTATIONS REPORT  
QUARTER 4 2015-16**

---

**Reason for the Report**

1. The Committee's terms of reference state that it will receive Children's Services Complaints reports.
2. This Quarter 4 Report covers complaints and representations from 1<sup>st</sup> January 2016 through to 31<sup>st</sup> March 2016.

**Introduction**

3. The current Welsh Government guidance and regulations in relation to social services complaints and representations came into being on 1<sup>st</sup> August 2014.
4. The procedure places the emphasis on the initial local resolution stage – Stage 1 - with complainants being offered a discussion to resolve the matter. The second formal stage (Stage 2) provides for independent investigation. If the outcome of Stage 2 does not satisfy the complainant s/he has recourse to the Public Services Ombudsman for Wales.
5. Citizens making complaints have a right to be listened to properly and have their concerns resolved quickly and effectively. Children's Services emphasis is on listening to concerns and using this learning to improve services for everyone who uses them.
6. Complaints should be handled in such a way that the complainant is the focus, not the process, and that the particular circumstances of the complainant are taken into account (including their age or disability). Where the complaint relates to a looked after child, a child in need or a care leaver the local authority has a duty under the Children Act 1989 to provide an advocate as required. All

children or young people who make complaints are offered a meeting and all children and families will receive a written response to the concerns they have raised.

7. The Social Services and Wellbeing (Wales) Act 2014 devotes Part 10 to complaints and this reflects Welsh Government guidance and regulations and the Councils procedures. The Council is mindful that the Act will further promote people's rights and collaborative working will be actively encouraged.

### Summary of Complaints Activity During the Period

8.

Item	Q4 2015-16
Number open at start of period	25
Number received (overall)	30
Number received directly from children and young people	2
Number closed	12
Number outstanding at end of period	43
% acknowledged within 2 working days	26 / 30 = 87%
% concluded within 15 working days of acknowledgement	3 / 12 = 25%

9. During this quarter Children's Services has seen a reduction in the number of complaints received (34 to 30).
  - a. 63% (19) of the complaints received were in relation to the Social Worker or the service received. 13% (4) of the complaints received were in relation to communication / confidentiality. The remaining 23% (7) of complaints were in relation to other issues including decision making, contact, finance and placement.
  - b. 11 complaints were received about the Intake & Assessment Service, compared with 7 in Quarter 3. 8 complaints were received regarding the Child in Need Service compared with 11 in Quarter 3; 1 of which was received from a child in need. 8 complaints were received about the Looked After Children Service compared with 10 in Quarter 3. The

remaining 2 complaints were in relation to the Personal Adviser Service and Protection of Vulnerable Adults.

10. An example of a complaint resolved during the quarter is:

*An MP contacted the Directorate on behalf of adoptive parents who were in desperate need of help to cope with the challenging behaviour presented by their daughter. They were concerned about the possibility that their daughter may need to be taken into the care of the local authority if they did not receive support such as respite and appropriate education arrangements.*

*The complaint was investigated and the Directorate were able to confirm that targeted work was being currently being undertaken and that there were plans for the young person to be transferred into our Child In Need Team with the emphasis on longer term intervention.*

## **Stage 2 Independent Investigations**

11. If complainants remain unsatisfied at the conclusion of the informal Stage 1, they are entitled to seek a formal Independent Investigation under Stage 2 of the procedure.

12. At 31<sup>st</sup> December 2015 there were 5 complaints open at Stage 2. These are still ongoing at the end of Quarter 4

13. 3 new Stage 2 investigations were initiated during the quarter so at 31<sup>st</sup> March 2016 there were 8 complaints being investigated under Stage 2 of the complaints procedure.

## **Learning from Complaints**

14. Stage 2 reports undertaken by Independent Investigators include recommendations if required. In response, an Action Plan is initiated to ensure that the recommendations are implemented and lessons are learned.

## **Ombudsman Investigations**

15. Following on from a previous Ombudsman investigation, a referral for Child Practice Review was not accepted, however an Independent Management

Review has been undertaken and the report is being finalised. The Public Service Ombudsman is currently investigating one complaint and liaising with Children’s Services in relation to two other complaints.

### **Themes Emerging During the Quarter**

16. No patterns emerged from the complaints received during the quarter that suggest there are any thematic issues that need to be addressed.

### **Update on Progress from Themes Identified in Previous Periods**

17. No new themes emerging from complaints were identified during Quarter 3.

### **Early Resolution**

18. Children’s Services place an emphasis on resolving issues at the earliest possible opportunity, and where these concerns are dealt with immediately they are not opened as a formal complaint. On these occasions, the issues are brought to the attention of relevant Team or Operational Managers who acted promptly to address the issues raised to the satisfaction of the individual. There are no examples of this during Quarter 4.

### **Summary of Compliments**

19. Teams are more readily sharing the compliments they receive from a variety of sources, e.g. service users and professionals, although it is recognised that further work is required to ensure that all compliments are captured and reported.

20. 9 compliments were received in Quarter 4 compared with 13 in Quarter 3. A breakdown of compliments by team is provided below. This will help Children’s Services build upon positive work and could identify improvements.

<b>Team</b>	<b>No. of Compliments</b>
I&A	1
CiN	4
LAC	0
Other	4

21. Example of a compliment received during the quarter:

*Children's Services were contacted by a solicitor asking for their gratitude and praise to be passed on to Senior Management for the quality of the social work undertaken by RE (social worker) in a particular case. It was noted that the social worker presented her evidence in a clear, concise and reasoned manner which was no doubt appreciated by the Court.*

### **Responses to AM / MP / Councillor Enquiry Letters**

22. 11 AM / MP / Councillor enquiry letters were received by Children's Services during the quarter. An example of these enquiries is representation from a foster carer to keep in contact with a child that they had fostered from birth.

### **Subject Access Requests**

23. A Subject Access Request is a request from an individual to see a copy of the information an organisation holds about them, or their children. These requests should be responded to within 40 calendar days of receipt. Some types of personal data are exempt from the right of subject access and so cannot be obtained by making such a request. On receipt of the request work is undertaken to ensure that individuals are only provided with information that they are entitled to receive.

24. Children's Services received 12 Subject Access Requests in Quarter 4 2015-16, of which:

- a. 2 were responded to on time.
- b. 3 were completed outside of the statutory time frame.
- c. 1 was closed because no fee was received.
- d. 2 are on hold awaiting receipt of identification / fee.
- e. 4 are in process.

25. Work has been undertaken by Children's Services and the corporate Improvement and Information Management Team to determine the arrangements for managing this work due to the high level of requests and the capacity required to respond in a timely manner. The pilot arrangement for this work to be managed corporately has been successful and the arrangement has

been made permanent.

26. In addition to this, Children's Services received:

- a. 2 Subject Access Requests that related to more than one Directorate; both were responded to on time.
- b. 28 requests from the Police under Section 29 of the Freedom of Information Act. These requests relate to the prevention or detection of crime, or the apprehension or prosecution of crime.
- c. 10 requests from other Councils, Solicitors and Insurance for access to records under Section 35 of the Freedom of Information Act. These requests relate to cases in legal proceedings.

### **Financial Implications**

27. There are no direct financial implications arising from the report.

### **Legal Implications**

28. There are no legal implications arising from this report.

### **RECOMMENDATION**

29. The Committee is recommended to:

- i. To endorse the report.

**TONY YOUNG**  
**Director of Social Services**  
**18 May 2016**

**CITY AND COUNTY OF CARDIFF  
DINAS A SIR CAERDYDD**

**CORPORATE PARENTING ADVISORY COMMITTEE**

**24 May 2016**

---

**REPORT OF DIRECTOR OF SOCIAL SERVICES**

---

**Independent Reviewing Officers (IRO) Report**

**Reasons for the Report**

1. The purpose of this report is to provide the statutory Director of Social Services for Children and Young People with information about the role, function and activity of the IRO Service.

**Background**

2. The purpose of an Independent Reviewing Officer (IRO) is to ensure that the care plan for a Looked After Child clearly sets out the help, care and support that they need and takes full account of their wishes and feelings. Local authorities are required by law to appoint an IRO for each Looked After Child.
3. Social Services and Well-being (Wales) Act 2014, makes provision for Looked After and accommodated children that currently exist in Part 3 of and schedule 2 of the Children Act 1989. IRO's convene and chair reviews for all children looked after by the Council; be they subject to care orders, accommodated voluntarily, placed with foster carers, in residential or secure establishments, living with kinship carers or placed for adoption.
4. Changes to Care Planning, Placement and Case Reviews (Wales) Regulations 2015 have strengthened the IRO role. IROs are now not only responsible for chairing statutory reviews but also for monitoring children's care plans on an on-going basis. IROs should also monitor the local authority's overall performance as a 'corporate parent' for Looked After Children. As a "Corporate Parent" all those who have responsibility for Looked After Children should act as a responsible and conscientious parent would act for their own children
5. Independent Reviewing Officers have specific responsibility to escalate concerns about Looked After Children, through a dispute resolution process, if it cannot be resolved within the line management structure, the process allows escalation through to the Chief Executive level within the Local Authority and ultimately to CAF/CASS Cymru to consider legal action if necessary. This escalation step will only be taken if all other avenues of resolution have been exhausted in turn. In the last six months, there have been no escalations to CAF/CASS Cymru for consideration of legal proceedings.

## **Issues**

6. The Independent Safeguarding and Reviewing unit came into being in October 2014. During this time there have been a number of changes to the management structure. The most recent changes in the senior management structure has seen the appointments of an interim Operational Manager and two Service Managers all of whom joined the service in November and December 2015.
7. Regulatory guidance requires the IRO service to be managed by an officer who does not have line management responsibility for individual children's cases or service provision. The Independent Reviewing Officers are managed by a Service Manager who has no line management responsibility for case work, or care planning decisions affecting Looked after Children.
8. Attached at Appendix 1 is the second annual six month monitoring report for 2015/16.

## **Financial Implications**

9. There are no direct financial implications arising from this report.

## **Legal Implications**

10. There are no direct legal implications arising from this report.

## **RECOMMENDATION**

11. The Committee is recommended to
  - (1) note the information contained in the report; and
  - (2) make any observations or comments on the six month monitoring report.

**TONY YOUNG**  
**Director of Social Services**  
**18 May 2016**



## **The Six Month Monitoring Report February 2016.**

### **Adoption and Children Act 2002 and The Review of Children's Cases (Amendment) (Wales) Regulations 2004**

1. Independent Reviewing Officers Guidance Wales 2004 sets out the requirements of the IRO's and Responsible Authority in more detail. The key outcomes envisaged are:
  - Focus on needs of children and ensuring they are addressed.
  - Minimising drift.
  - Consistency of care planning and decision-making.
  - Involvement of appropriate persons in the process. The Reviewing Officers Guidance 2004 clearly requires an IRO to chair reviews of children who are:
    - In an adoptive placement prior to an adoption order being granted;
    - Looked after subject to a statutory order or accommodated with the agreement of parents.
    - Young people in Young Offender Institutions subject to a Care Order or on remand as required under Legal Aid Sentencing and Punishment of Offender's Act 2012 (LASPO 2012)

### **Frequency of reports**

2. The Independent Reviewing Service provides a report to the Corporate Parenting Advisory Committee twice a year and will also provide twice yearly reports to the LSCB.

### **The Reviewing Service**

3. The Service comprises of 10 IROs in post made up of full and part time positions. Due to staff sickness there are three agency workers who are covering vacant positions and sickness. The service offers IROs who have substantial experience with relatively new staff member's joining the service within the last 12 months. There is a buddying system in place to support new staff. 3 IRO's are currently being trained to undertake reviews for the Integrated Family Support Team (IFST). These reviews are also monitored and tracked by the IRO's.
4. All IRO and Child Protection (CP) chairs in the service are able to carry dual functions chairing Looked After Children reviews and/or child protection conferences. This has improved the effectiveness of the IRO function and quality assuring the support available for Looked After Children.
5. Immediate line management responsibility for the IROs is undertaken by the Independent Reviewing Service Manager.
6. There is also an interim POVA (The Protection of Vulnerable Adults) Safeguarding Service Manager in post who is responsible for the management

of POVA Service and Safeguarding Education Service. The review of the POVA service has seen the development of a suite of documents which will enable information to be recorded on Care First and reduce the duplication of work currently held in Word documents. POVA has also been considered for a move to the Multi-Agency Safeguarding Hub (MASH) after April, these arrangements have not completely been finalised, as to whether POVA moves to the MASH as a whole service or whether POVA presence in MASH will be on a duty rota basis.

7. The work of the Corporate Safeguarding Board continues to work through the recommendations made by the Welsh Audit Office (October 2014). As mentioned in the previous report in August 2015 The Corporate Safeguarding Board will:
  - i. Ensure the compliance of all Council Directorates with key safeguarding requirements in relation to children and vulnerable adults
  - ii. Support the Statutory Director of Social Services in the discharge of his/her wider safeguarding duties.
  - iii. Support HR in the delivery of key vetting and barring requirements and workforce development.
  - iv. Provide an Annual Corporate Safeguarding Report, setting out the performance of all Directorates, in relation to vetting and barring, staff safeguarding training, and the operation of front-line services in terms of their effectiveness in identifying and referring safeguarding concerns.
  - v. Review and develop relevant corporate safeguarding standards and policy.
  - vi. Review and develop appropriate corporate safeguarding performance measures.
  - vii. Advise the Head of the Paid Service and recommend relevant action in relation to corporate safeguarding standards and policy.
  - viii. Promote effective cross Directorate safeguarding practice particularly in terms of information sharing and data collection, front-line operational awareness, staff training and wider partnership engagement.
8. In addition a safeguarding awareness raising DVD has been developed to support those staff across the council who do not work directly with vulnerable children or adults in order to help them identify safeguarding issues in their day to day roles. The corporate safeguarding board meets quarterly to review and update an agreed work plan arising from the recommendations made by the Welsh Audit Office.

### **Independent Reviewing officer workload**

9. The team works on the basis that each IRO (FTE) is responsible for the reviews of up to 65 Looked After Children. Caseloads presently are running between 60 and 95 children. There are a number of reasons why case loads are variable ranging from part time staff hold a smaller case load, to mixed case loads from some IRO's undertake Child Protection conferences and Looked after children reviews.
10. The team is located at County Hall, although majority of the reviews are conducted within the community, usually in the child or young person's placement setting. There are travelling requirements involved in these reviews

where children have been placed in North of Scotland, London, Manchester and Devon and Cornwall. We currently have 202 looked after children placed outside of the authority. There has been a decrease of children placed out of county within the last six months with this figure being 213 at the end of September 2015.

### **Purpose of reviews**

11. The purpose of the review meeting is to consider the plan for the child, monitor progress and enable decisions to be made. It is a statutory requirement for each looked after child to have an effective care plan that meets their day to day long term needs and which identifies the outcomes for the child. The plan achieves this by setting objectives for work with the child, birth family and caregivers in relation to the child's developmental needs. These needs include health, education, emotional wellbeing and behavioural development, identity, family and social relationships, social presentation, and self-care skills.

### **Frequency of Reviews**

12. Looked After Children reviews must be conducted at the following frequency:

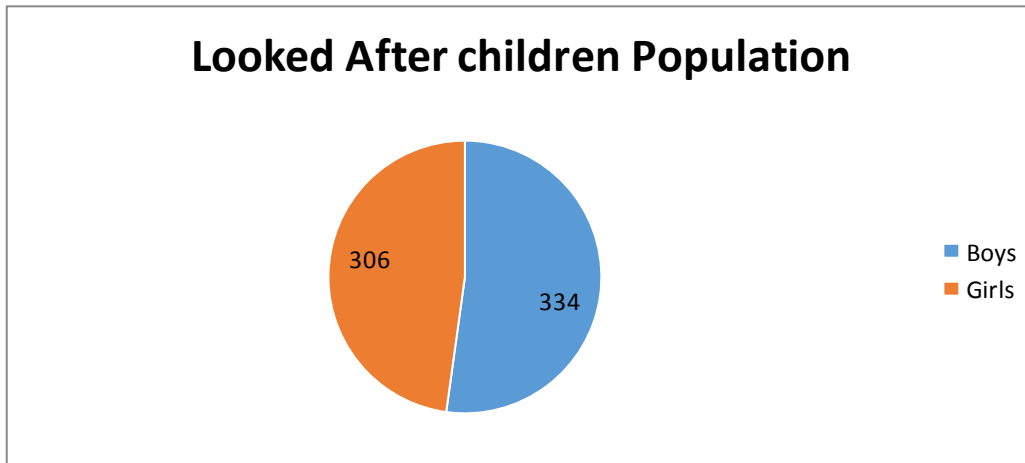
- Within 28 days of a child becoming looked after.
- Subsequently within 3 months
- 6 monthly thereafter,

13. Reviews should be convened earlier if there is a significant change in the child's care plan or failure to carry out an important aspect of that plan. The cycle begins again from the date the child is placed with an adoptive family.

### **Quality Assurance role**

14. The IRO's provide a quality assurance role through regular review of cases. This provides appropriate challenge to social work practice and care plans for looked after children. As part of their input to the new Quality assurance framework to be implemented in April, IRO's will be required to audit one case file each month and provide feedback of their findings to the Quality Assurance Officer. The Quality Assurance Framework provides a systemic monitoring and evaluation of practice, policies and procedures. This will be achieved through monthly case file auditing. The findings from the monthly audits will drive service improvement, identify areas of practice that are good or in need of further development through training.

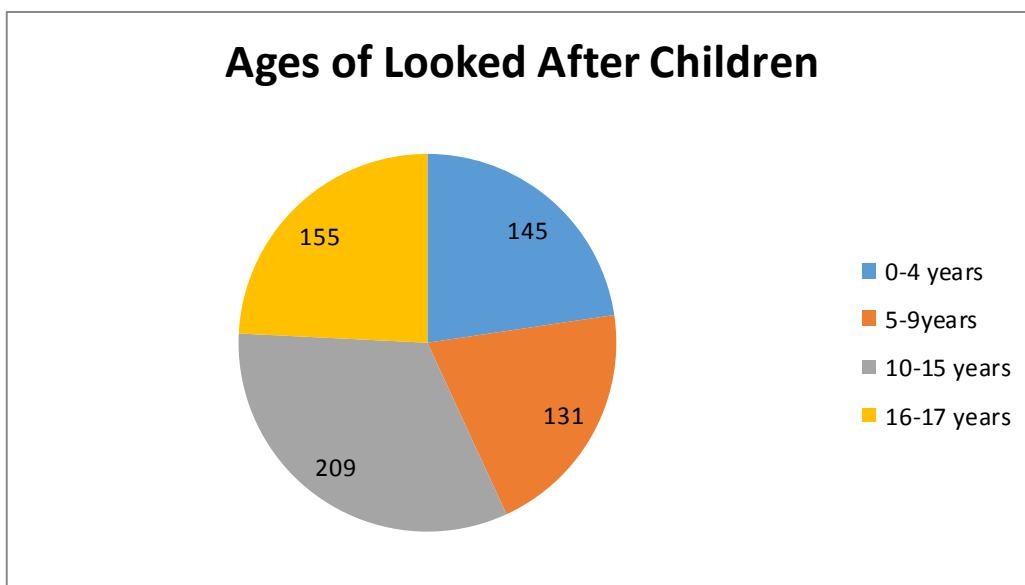
## Looked After Children Performance Information



### Gender

Male	334	(52%)
Female	306	(48%)
<b>Total</b>	<b>640</b>	

15. We have seen a drop in the number of looked after children since the last reported figures of June 2015. Previously we had a total of 662 looked after children. This is a reduction of 22 Looked After Children, 16 boys and 6 girls, a reduction of 3.4 %. This is mainly due to Looked After children reaching the age of majority and successful reunification with their families.

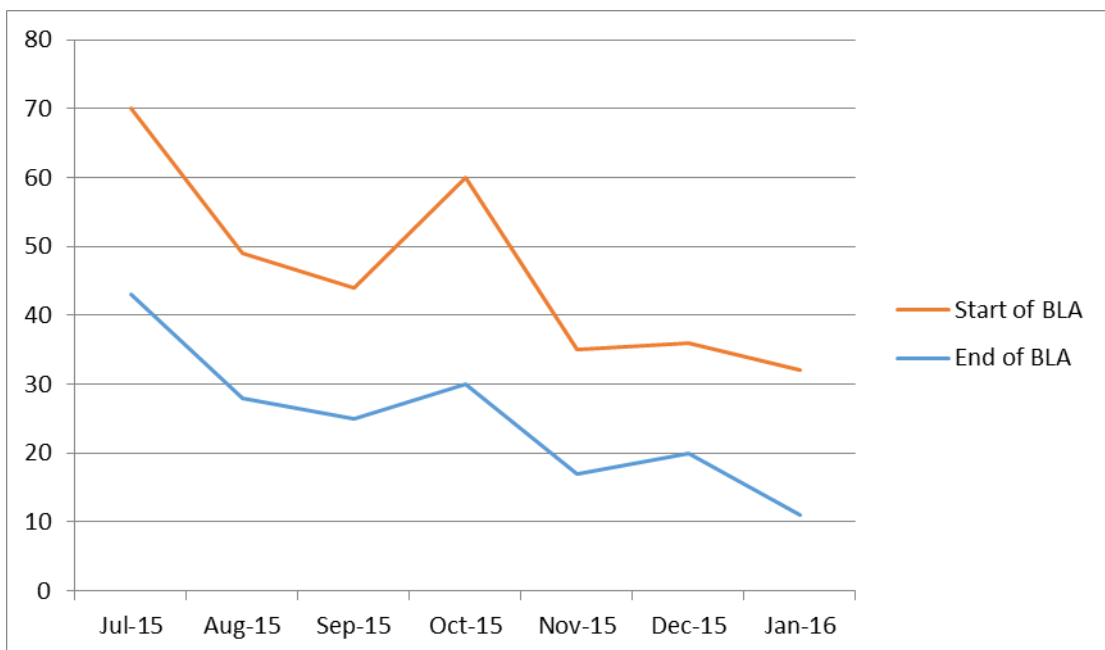


### Age

0-4	145	(23%)
5-9	131	(20%)
10-15	209	(33%)
16-17	155	(24%)
<b>Total</b>	<b>640</b>	<b>100%</b>

16. There has been an increase in the number of looked after children between the ages of 0-9 years. Previously there were 264 Looked After Children. We now have an increase by 12 children to 276, an overall increase of this age range of 4.7%. This would suggest we are more robust in the protection of children who are younger and more vulnerable as they lack the ability to care for themselves.

17. The number of looked after children/ young people aged between 10-17 years reduced from 398 in January to June 2015 to 364 during during July to January 2016. This is a reduction of 34 children, a fall of 8.9 %. This figure correlates with the previous chart that has outline the reduction of Looked After children reaching the age of majority and reunification with families.

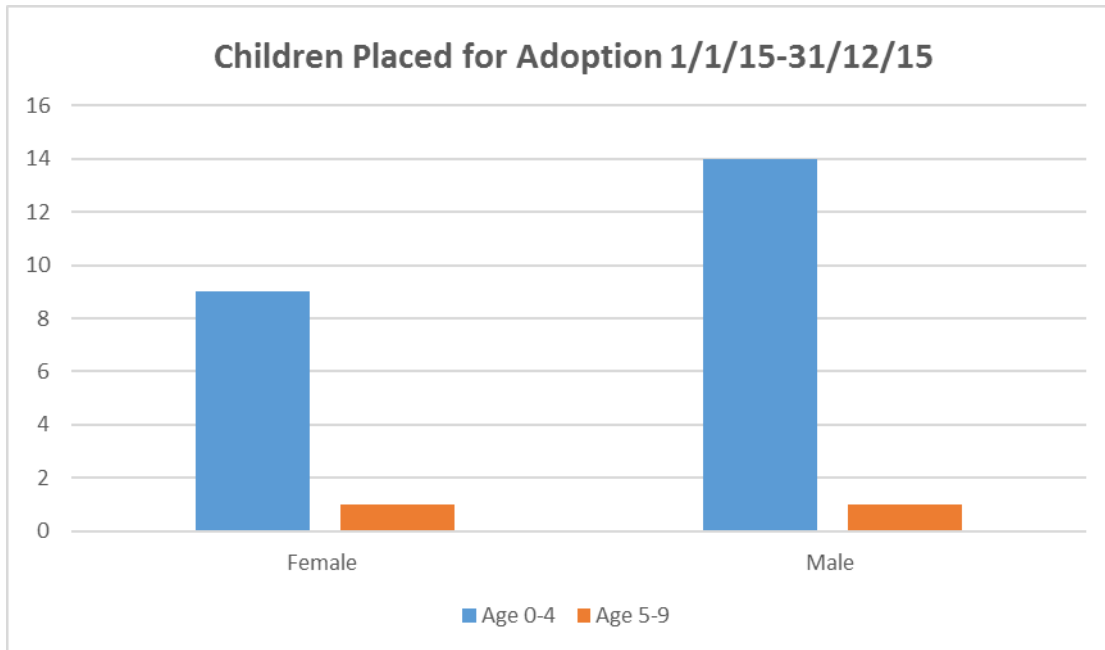


	<b>BLA Starts</b>	<b>BLA Ends</b>
Jul-15	27	43
Aug-15	21	28
Sep-15	19	25
Oct-15	30	29
Nov-15	18	17
Dec-15	16	20
Jan-16	21	11
<b>Total</b>	<b>152</b>	<b>174</b>

18. The monitoring of children becoming looked after and the ending of their period of being looked after has shown a steady reduction over the last 6 months. There was a peak in October 2015 where 30 children became looked after in one month; an average of a child becoming looked after each day. It was noted there was a significant number of sibling groups that became looked after during the month of October which give rise to the figures.

### Number of children who have had 3 or more moves

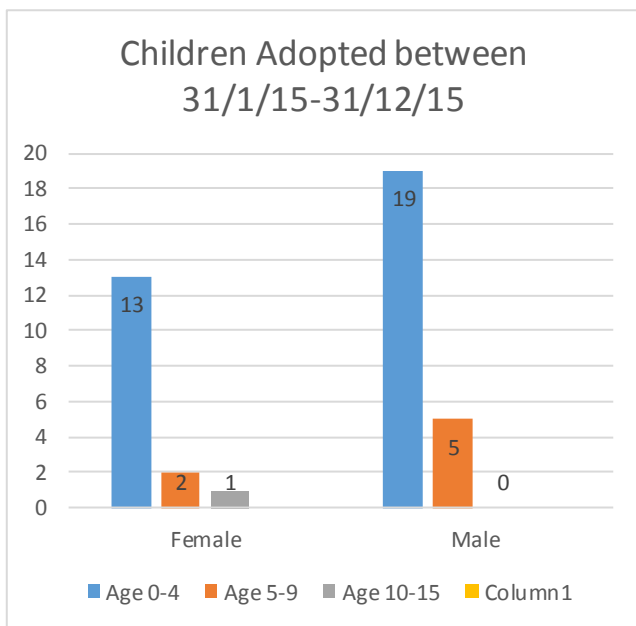
2014/15	68/650	10.46%
2015/16	Figures not available until April/May 16	



### Children placed for adoption between 1/1/15 - 31/12/15

Count of Child ID	Gender		
	Female	Male	Total
1) 0-4	9	14	23
2) 5-9	1	1	2
Grand Total	10	15	25

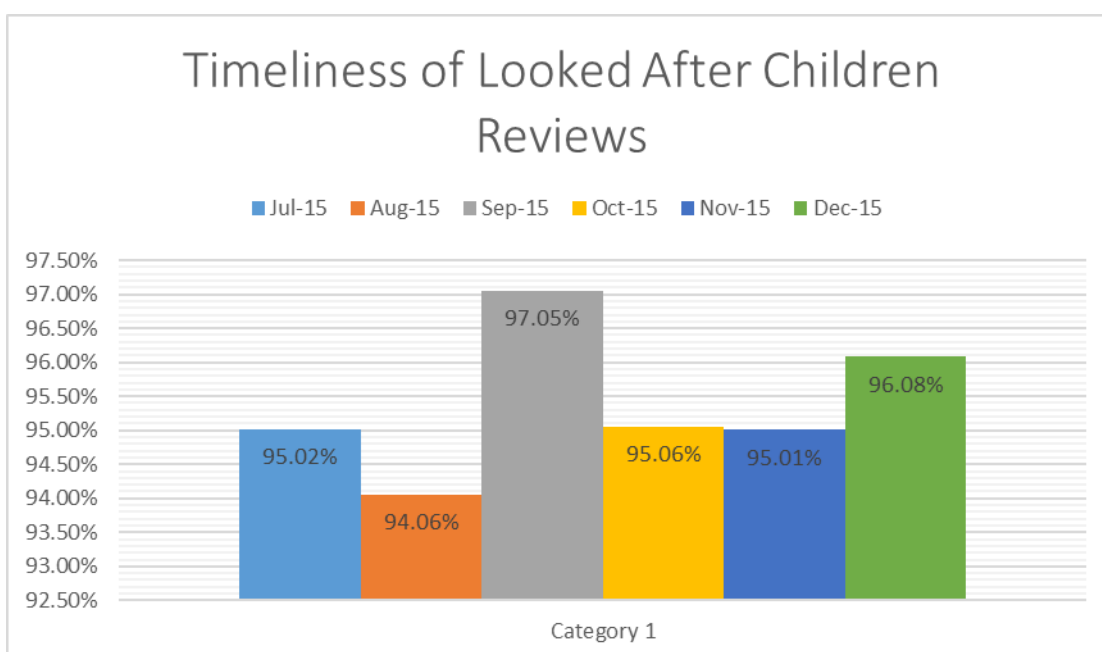
19. These figures demonstrate a decrease of 45% compared with the figures between 1/1/14 – 31/12/14, where 45 children were placed for adoption.
20. There remains disparity between the numbers of children placed for adoption within the 5-9 age range, this emphasizes the need to develop best practice to increase the chances of older children being considered and eventually adopted.



### Children adopted between 31/1/15 - 31/12/15

Count of Child ID Age range	Gender		
	Female	Male	Total
1) 0-4	13	19	32
2) 5-9	2	5	7
3) 10-15	1		1
Grand Total	16	24	40

21. A total of 40 children were adopted between 31/1/15 - 31/12/15. A positive increase of 7 children compared to the figures from last year between 21/1/14 – 31/12/14, where 32 children were adopted. This is a total increase of 19 %. This would suggest we have begun to ensure permanency planning for children is timelier at the crucial age of 0-4 years.



	Late	On Time	TOTAL	% On Time
<b>Jul-15</b>	7	138	145	95.2%
<b>Aug-15</b>	7	123	130	94.6%
<b>Sep-15</b>	5	197	202	97.5%
<b>Oct-15</b>	6	131	137	95.6%
<b>Nov-15</b>	6	116	122	95.1%
<b>Dec-15</b>	5	150	155	96.8%
<b>Average</b>				95.8%

22. There was a slight dip in the month of August regarding timeliness of reviews; however, September highlights the high rate of reviews which took place within timescales. Cardiff is performing slightly below the Welsh average of 95.9% for reviews taking place within timescale with our current average of 95.8%. When looking at factors impacting on timeliness it was identified that issues relating to sickness; availability of workers and late notification of start of being looked after impacted on achieving 100% compliance with this timescale.

23. In an effort to address the timeliness of reviews the Service Manager for the Reviewing service is now informed by the performance team on a weekly basis of all children that become looked after. This provides consistency and timeliness of allocation to an IRO, which in turn has resulted in less reviews being held out of timescales. There has also been changes to the internal notification system of start being looked after children which is now incorporated into our Carefirst System.

24. Timeliness of Looked After children reviews is essential to ensure no child or young person has their welfare compromised due to the delay or cancellation of a review. The system in place ensures operational managers must approve a review being cancelled or postponed.

### **IRO Resolution of Problems**

25. IRO's are in a unique position within a local authority they carry out a critical monitoring and challenging role. They can highlight both positive and negative issues that affect children, ensuring that children's views are heard. They should be able to evidence how their role has made a positive difference to the child and helped to improve life chances of children they are involved with.

26. If an IRO believes that the practice or policy of the Local Authority is detrimental to the child's welfare, they have a duty to assertively challenge the Local Authority. A key feature of the IRO role is that they should provide an independent perspective uninfluenced by managerial or resource pressures of the local authority.

### **Elements of the role of the IRO include:**

- To ensure that the welfare of the child in care is safeguarded.
- To provide consultation and advice for the child, social work teams, professionals, carers.



- To make effective challenges through the dispute resolution process when plans are not serving a child needs appropriately.
27. An IRO can raise any issues of practice with the social worker and team manager. If the issues are not addressed within an acceptable timescale the matter is escalated to the Operational Manager, in the relevant service area.
  28. The IRO service provides robust challenge to social work team regarding case that have gone into drift or where the quality of care plan is not good enough. Occasionally, this challenge has met with some resistance from some social workers or managers. Where matters have not been resolved satisfactory they have been escalated to the Assistant Director for resolution. In an effort to raise awareness and a better understanding of the IRO. The IRO service will be attending team meetings to discuss the role of the IRO and develop better working relationships. The escalation protocol has also been updated to reflect what will constitute the trigger for a case alert and/or escalation and will be distributed to all social work staff. Regular IRO's and Manager forums will take place to discuss cases and general practice to ensure better partnership working.
  29. The range of powers available to the IRO include seeking of legal advice if they are not happy with the Local Authority's decisions regarding the long term plans for a child or young person. The Lancashire Judgement – 2012, a case brought by two teenage brothers, against Lancashire County Council and an Independent Reviewing Officer, found the Local Authority and the IRO had breached the boys' human rights by not challenging the care plan.
  30. The Independent Reviewing Officer (IRO) was found personally responsible, alongside the Local Authority, because he did not hold the Local Authority to account for failing to implement its care plan and review decisions. In response to the Judgement, we have ensured that all IRO's have direct access to independent legal advice, which will aid challenge or should they need to attend court to give evidence. This will be spot purchased as and when required.
  31. The monitoring forms are now embedded as part of the quality assurance framework. This first reporting of the monitoring forms data will take place at the end of April 2016.

### **Pathway Plans**

32. IRO's also chair pathway plan reviews for Young People from age 16 to 17 years who had previously been Looked After. Work is currently underway to develop reviews for Young Adults 18+ years in response to "When I'm Ready" for Young Adults who want to remain in their foster placement or continue in full time education or training. Consideration needs to be given to how these young people would like their reviews to take place in the future.

## **Consultation with children and young people**

33. The IRO ensures during the reviewing process that wishes and feelings of the child/young person are sought and they are encouraged to participate in their review. Parents and foster carers are able to contribute to the review process, and also ensure that younger children also have an opportunity to discuss their feelings about the reviewing process and their experiences in foster care.
34. The Independent Reviewing and Safeguarding Service are reviewing the way they engage children and young people in the reviewing process and will be undertaking a review of how they can encourage children and young people to chair their own reviews. IRO's also visit children and young people in between reviews to ensure they are happy in the placement and they have the opportunity to share their views independently, this also take place if there are issues of concerns. The service is keen to strengthen even further children's participation in reviews. The IROs are currently communicating with other Local Authorities and gathering examples of good practice in this area to contribute to effective communication and engagement with Looked After Children. Some examples provided have used apps using phones and other devices which has been very successful in other authorities and improved engagement and communication.
35. It is intended that the Service Manager for the Reviewing Service will work with the Quality Assurance Officer to undertake quality assurance visits to young people to inform other areas in which we can develop good practice in engaging children and young people in the reviewing process.

## **Examples of Good Practice**

36. 'A' is 12 years old and subject of a care order, she struggled to develop healthy attachments. Initially contact took with her Mother. Contact ceased due to mother's failure to attend and was withdrawn by the local authority in 2013. Contact for Father was subject to completion of parenting programme which he initially complied with but did not complete. He rejected all attempts of communication with Children's Services. 'A' repeatedly requested contact with her Father and it was agreed that she needed to know whether contact could work to help her to move on. Her Father had a settled family life and new partner and child.
37. It was agreed that the IRO would try to contact the Father directly; emphasising the independent nature of her role. This was reinforced by an extended family members and Father agreed to meet with IRO. The social worker and team manager were in agreement with this plan. During this meeting a full and frank discussion took place to exploration the difficult history, but more importantly the need to move forward. Father was persuaded to attend a planning meeting with the IRO and social worker. This meeting was productive and included contact arrangements. To date, these contacts have been consistent and positive for 'A'.
38. "B" is a young person who had been subject to a care order for several years and was struggling at school. "B" was in Year 10 and due to take her GCSEs unfortunately the death of her mother compounded her ability to achieve any

grades for her GCSEs. "B" had no other family members who could support her apart from the Local Authority. "B" wanted to re-do Year 10 but school was resistant; as was Looked After Children Education Liaison despite attempts by the social worker to advocate for her. "B" had experienced a number of changes of social worker but had a consistent IRO throughout. The IRO was therefore able to advocate successfully on her behalf to get senior management support for the plan. 'B' was then able to re-do her Year 10.

39. 'C' and 'D' are subject to "Place with Parents" (PwP) with Mother following significant episodes of Domestic Violence. The Court directed that contact with Father had specific constraints and was structured/closely supervised. Father would not provide an address for correspondence and was often not available by telephone so it was difficult to arrange contact.
40. As he was subject to a restraining order, it was agreed that 'split reviews' would be held with a separate consultation meeting for the Father. These meetings had to be tightly chaired to ensure that the agenda was not deviated from as father had a negative view of women and social services. Difficulties arose during contact sessions when he behaved inappropriately towards the female contact workers. The social worker requested that the IRO chair an additional meeting to explore contact and provide an independent professional view. At this point the children were doing very well in the care of their Mother and the Local Authority would have requested reallocation of the care order, apart from these difficulties. The meeting was chaired by the IRO and it was agreed contact would be stopped as it was not in the best interest of the children and the contact had begun to impact of their emotional wellbeing.

## **Adoption**

41. The IRO team and the adoption team have worked closely together to improve adoption reviews. Timescales remain the same, but by the nature of adoption it is usually the case that these placements are out of county and this has an impact on capacity for IRO's and can affect caseloads. IRO's ensure they remain the chair for children until adoption is fully completed.

## **Next Steps:**

42. The IRO service will
- Hold a service day in September 2016 to discuss the vision of the Service over the next 12 months.
  - Develop further the relationship between the IRO and social work teams across the service.
  - Commission bespoke training sessions for IRO in recognition of their unique role.
  - Develop practice standards for the IRO service,
  - Update current escalation protocol.
  - Develop of suite of performance indicators.
  - Develop of managers and IRO forums.

This page is intentionally left blank