

CORPORATE PARENTING ADVISORY COMMITTEE

18 SEPTEMBER 2018

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

14 : APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Sureen Kutubi (Advisor) and Councillor Hinchey had advised that he would be late.

15 : DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

No declarations of interest were received.

16 : MINUTES

The minutes of the meeting of the Committee on 17 July were agreed subject to one amendment, which is appears in italics and bold within the minutes, minute 4 bullet point 4 has been deleted and replaced with *Members will note the increased funding allocated into the current 2018-19 Social Services budget of £7.2m to help with the increased demand for services to vulnerable people. The majority of this extra funding (£5.6m or 11.8% increase) was specifically allocated to Children Services to assist with the significant rise in the number of LAC being seen across Wales and throughout the UK.*

They were signed by the Chairperson.

17 : BRIGHT SPOTS - YOUR LIFE YOUR CARE FINDINGS AND NEXT STEPS

The Chairperson welcomed Debbie Martin-Jones (Operational Manager, Specialist Services), Jane Jansen (Team Manager and Principal Social Worker), Steve Jenkins (Principle Social Worker), Lisa Kenniford (Team Manager, Looked After Children 14 plus team), Kayleigh Knox (Principle Social Worker) and Cara Birch (Principal Social Worker, Looked After Children 0-14 team) to the meeting to present the response to the 'Bright Spots' Survey 2018 provided by way of [presentation](#).

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

- Members referred to the survey findings - girls have lower well-being and suffer more bullying than boys, and noted that this related to young people generally and not only to looked after children. It was important that the individual needs of the young person are considered, within the team there are some very strong female role models who lead by example and are capable of offering very real support. It is also important to develop an understanding of what form the bullying takes, for example why they feel bullied, and how that bullying is manifested.

- Members expressed concerned in relation to the number of placement changes and were advised that changes are not always to the detriment of the young person; there are those that start in some form of secure accommodation, move to a children's home and thereafter to a foster placement. They are positive changes.
- Members noted 22% of young people indicated that they had had three or more social workers in the previous year. Members were advised that whilst there is high moral within the Looked After Service there are still difficulties with the recruitment and retention of social workers. Information is being considered as a result of exit interviews to try and understand why social workers are leaving and putting in place mechanisms to increase the retention of staff.

Members were advised that 38 new posts have been created within the service, however, it is accepted that the case load of a social worker is far higher than it should be. Currently the case load for social workers is 18, however, it is 28 within the looked after children service. The recommendation provided by Lord Laming is 15.

- Members were saddened by the information provided about second chances, and were advised that staff do offer chance after chance. However, it is accepted there are still areas for improvement, particularly within schools.
- Members asked what more they, as Members of the Committee and Elected Members, could do to help support looked after children. Officers advised that more appropriate foster placements were needed so as to provide as normal a life as possible, a better range of accommodation provision and more Social Workers as there has been an increase of just over 300 in looked after children numbers in the last 3 years. Councillor Hinchey to provide Members with an update on behalf of the Cabinet in relation to resource provision.
- Members discussed the well-being of 8-11 year olds, in particular the reference to a child not having friends and the support that needs to be provided. It is important that there is an acknowledgement that the child does have concerns and that there is support is given to make a network of friends, for example groups, brownies or guides.
- Members noted the figures provided by children and young people requiring further information as to why they were in care. It is accepted that greater effort needs to be made in communicating with younger children; Social Workers have to have very difficult conversations with young people, it may be that a decision is made not to explain straight away for a variety of reasons. There is now

a psychologist within the team who provides assistance to Social Workers to be able to have, and help through, those difficult conversations.

- Members were advised that the whole Your Life, Your Care Survey is to be published and Cardiff have agreed to be named within that survey. Members stated that a further Your Life, Your Care survey should be conducted in 2 years.
- Members discussed the need for an event to be held to talk to young people about their responses to the survey, the recommendations and also the implementation of those recommendations.

18 : URGENT ITEMS (IF ANY)

There were no urgent items.

19 : DATE OF NEXT MEETING - TUESDAY 16 OCTOBER 2018 AT 2.00 PM

The meeting terminated at 3.00 pm