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AGENDA

Committee	CORPORATE PARENTING ADVISORY COMMITTEE
Date and Time of Meeting	TUESDAY, 17 MARCH 2020, 2.00 PM
Venue	COMMITTEE ROOM 4 - COUNTY HALL
Membership	Councillor Merry (Chair) Councillors Bowden, Hinchey, Hopkins, Jenkins, Lent, Lister and Morgan.

		<i>Time approx.</i>
1	Apologies for Absence To receive apologies for absence.	2.00 pm
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	Children's Commissioning Consortium Cymru (4Cs) Placements <i>(Pages 3 - 8)</i> Report and Presentation – Karen Benjamin	2.00 pm
4	Care Leavers Presentation Presentation – Finn Madell	2.35 pm
5	Themes from Child Practice Reviews <i>(Pages 9 - 16)</i> Presentation Kate Bishop	3.05 pm
6	Youth Offending Service Verbal Update Deborah Driffield	3.15 pm

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|-----------|--|---------|
| 7 | Personal Education Plans (<i>Pages 17 - 18</i>) | 3.25 pm |
| | Presentation – Gill James | |
| 8 | Children's Services Consultation Update (<i>Pages 19 - 38</i>) | 3.35 pm |
| | Presentation – Jade Harrison & Marie Reid | |
| 9 | Quarter 3 Performance and Complaints Reports (<i>Pages 39 - 52</i>) | 3.45 pm |
| | Reports – Deborah Driffield | |
| 10 | Fostering Annual Report (<i>Pages 53 - 80</i>) | 4.05 pm |
| | Report – Kate Hustler | |
| 11 | Member Work Streams & Visits | 4.15 pm |
| | Discussion Item | |
| 12 | Urgent Items (if any) | |
| 13 | Date of next meeting - 19 May 2020 | |

Davina Fiore

Director Governance & Legal Services

Date: Wednesday, 11 March 2020

Contact: Mandy Farnham, 02920 872618, Mandy.Farnham@cardiff.gov.uk



Consortiwm Comisiynu
Cymru ar gyfer Plant
Childrens' Commissioning
Consortium Cymru
Cydwethio Er Gwell • All Together Better

Report for Cardiff Corporate Parenting Board

March 2020

Overview of 4Cs

Background

The Children's Commissioning Consortium Cymru (4C's) is entering its ninth year as a Welsh Consortium. Developed in 2012, when 15 South & Mid Wales Authorities, including Cardiff, came together to address concerns about the variable standards evident in placement commissioning, to maximise the benefit of standardised contracts, terms and conditions, and purchaser economies of scale. The 4C's team is hosted by Rhondda Cynon Taf County Borough Council on behalf of the member Authorities. There is a staff team of 7 including the manager Karen Benjamin.

In 2019 the 6 North Wales Authorities became members acknowledging the benefits of joining the Consortium fully. Pembrokeshire is currently joining the Consortium as a full member rather than as a Signatory Authority which means the Consortium will be a fully national approach to children's services placement commissioning.

An ambitious Work Programme is in place with delivery overseen by the 4C's Board made up of Heads of Children's Services and Directors of Social Services. The 4C's manages the All Wales Fostering Framework (2016); the All Wales Residential Framework (2016) and the All Wales Residential Flexible Framework (2019). Each of the member Authorities benefit from these Frameworks. The Frameworks are outcomes focused and have won recognition for the strong ethos of participation, inclusion and young person feedback on outcome delivery. The 2019 Framework has an innovative legal and procurement structure more flexible to the changing needs of Local Authorities and the market.

4C's has a strategic role in national projects where there are links to delivery of improved outcomes for looked after children, placement contracting and commissioning. This work includes representation on the MAG and several task and finish groups. The Team have established strategic relationships with key partners such as CIW and SCW, influencing and shaping practice. The 4Cs team balances this workload of strategic development with operational level response in a busy environment. As strategic projects develop, the frontline pressures in problem solving placement issues should diminish, benefiting all members, however shaping the market is not a quick fix it is a cyclical process which has to be based on robust needs analysis.

4C's Vision

Cydweithio Er Gwell • All Together Better

All together to; work towards delivering better outcomes for children and young people; who require a range of short term placements or long term homes, by increasing placement capacity, choice and promoting robust matching for stability. To support Local Authorities in Wales to; maximise value for money, achieving transparency when commissioning and contracting placements with trusted, good quality providers. To promote co-production and positive relationships across the market ensuring that all Consortium members remain child centred and outcomes focussed in their commissioning and contracting arrangements. Working all together, better outcomes can be achieved.

4C's Outcomes for Children & Young People

The Consortium is underpinned by its engagement of children and young people in its work. This year has seen a significant increase in our Young Commissioners Work Programme. We now have a cohort of over 50 children and young people, aged between 7 and 17 who attend our workshops, events and activities. We also work with two recent care leavers.

Home for our Young Commissioners: foster families (both local authority and private provision) residential care homes (both local authority and private provision) kinship care arrangements, plus supported flats and independent living arrangements. This breadth of perspective and experience is invaluable to our work.

Recently our Young Commissioners have created:



- * A new specification for the 2019 residential framework;
- * A statement to be used in recruiting carers;
- * A statement of what a good home means to them;
- * 'This is Me' referral templates including 3 new formats for engaging children to contribute to their placement referrals;
- * Supporting guidance for social workers on how to engage children in contributing to referrals;
- * Presentations to be used in training events;
- * A video explaining the importance of their work;
- * Surveys for consultation.

In January 2020 a celebration event for our young commissioners was held at the Senedd where they were awarded certificates by the deputy minister in recognition of their hard work. The young commissioners can now work towards an accredited certificate developed in conjunction with Agored Cymru and Children in Wales.

Our Young Commissioners shape their own work programme and their next project over Easter is to consider what they would like to see in carer profiles for children and young people, to assist with matching and introductions.

Work Programme Snapshot

Key Work Projects:

1. New Flexible Framework 2019.
2. Mid-Point Reviews 2016 Frameworks.
3. Single Referral Task & Finish Group.
4. Referrals & Matching Toolkit & Training.
5. Needs Analysis & Commissioning Strategies.
6. Market Position Statement Task & Finish Group.
7. Models of Care Workshops & Training.
8. Emergency Dashboard Task & Finish Group.
9. Residential Managers Group initiated.
10. Parent & Child Fostering Forum.
11. Young Commissioners.
12. CCSR Development.
13. National Commissioning Board: Integrated Commissioning Workshops for RPBs, representation of AWHoCS.
14. National Fostering Framework: Strategic Steering Group & support for RDMs
15. Task & Finish Group on Residential Care: Project Management of the Grant. Secure subgroup.
16. Social Care Wales; Residential Care Expert Group.
17. CIW; National Review of Children's Homes Steering Group.

Commissioning - Priority Projects

1. **Scope, Consultation, Development & Launch of the new All Wales Residential Flexible Framework (2019).** This was the main project for the 4Cs team last year. Specialist legal and procurement advice was outsourced to support an innovative new approach which combines a Framework approach and a Dynamic Purchasing System approach allowing us to maximise the benefits of both and is the best fit for purpose.

Our consultation processes were more extensive than ever before, engaging with framework providers, non framework providers, new market entrants, children and their families, a range of local authority representatives and external stakeholders including health, education, SCW and CIW. 'You said; We Did' Evaluation Reports were produced for all stakeholders and a young person's version also produced.

A full procurement exercise was undertaken and the new Framework launched to timescale on the 1st April 2019. For full details of this piece of work we suggest you refer to the relevant project reports. Additional Lots have been added throughout 2019/20 to meet demand.

2. **Implementation of the Placement Commissioning Strategy (PCS) with Local Authorities.** This year we have taken a proactive approach to helping Authorities with their strategies for commissioning placements, both internally and externally. The team has invested significant time in assisting Authorities with needs analysis. There are common themes, learnings and recommendations emerging alongside the strategies which will help Local Authorities produce smarter commissioning intelligence to aid planning in future. We will continue to work with the remaining Authorities to support development of their PCS. The decisions emerging from these strategies will inform a series of Market Position Statements. Providers are positive that a consistent approach across Wales will help them expand business models and secure investment to develop services where there are gaps in the market.

3. **Market Engagement via Provider Forums, Workshops & Individual Meetings** are held regularly to support provider engagement focusing on: placement capacity; local sufficiency; placement quality; business plans and models of care. A relational approach to commissioning is embedded in the team. The vast majority of providers have welcomed more consultation and openness.

4. **Scoping the new 2021 All Wales Fostering Framework** started in January 2020 and is in its very early stages. The project plan will continue until launch in April 2021. Alignment with the National Fostering Framework's strategic priorities is a key opportunity given the timing of the new framework.

Activity Snapshot

The team manage the Service Level Agreement with Data Cymru who provide the CCSR e-tendering system.

Minimum of quarterly meetings are held to monitor CCSR performance.

Additional meetings this year have been focused on:

- System Upgrade including the interactive message board on live tenders;
- Embedding the new referral form;
- Embedding new matching form;
- Adding new framework;
- Adding new providers;
- Amending price structure to capture cost schedules;
- Creating an emergency dashboard;
- Direct liaison with software developers on specifications;
- System becoming bilingual;
- GDPR compliance;
- Reviewing the SLA with a view to ensuring value for money.

Contracting - Priority Projects

1. **Redevelopment of the CCSR.** Continued redevelopment of the e-tendering system to make the search process more user friendly and a fast intuitive system. Phase 5 scoping is due to be launched in the coming weeks. Feedback from users, both Local Authority and providers, has been positive with user involvement at scope, development and testing stages. However, there remains a number of business support users who do not use the system as it's designed. This has adverse implications for placement finding, value for money and collating valuable commissioning data which feeds into detailed needs analysis. This is an ongoing focus.

2. **All Wales Referral plus the Referrals & Matching Toolkit.** The toolkit includes a new referral which will be used across Wales by April 2020, comprehensive guidance, 'This is Me' direct work tools for children and best practice examples. The toolkit was co-produced by Local Authorities, Providers and our Young Commissioners. It was launched at the Spring Forum 2019. The best hope is this will improve the quality of referrals which will enable improved matching, promote increased placement stability and ultimately improve outcomes for children. Training continues to be offered to Authorities and Providers. Cardiff are currently receiving training for social workers.

3. **Framework Contract Management Toolkit.** This toolkit is supports Local Authority level contract management when using the Frameworks. It offers templates, explains reports and data intelligence that inform contract monitoring, there is guidance and best practice examples. A Health Check was completed for Cardiff in 2019 to identify areas for improvement. Discussions are underway to agree how 4Cs can offer Cardiff further support with monitoring.

4. **New Residential Framework Contracts Training & Support.** Regional and local training has been delivered to support effective use of the 2019 Framework from the outset. This has particularly focused on the key differences to the 2016 Frameworks and the introduction of a cost schedule approach rather than a maximum price approach. Training continues to be offered as the Framework expands. Additional requests for training on negotiation skills has led to an increase in the training sessions offered.

5. **Local Authority support with complex packages** remains a key feature of our individual Authority contract management support. Many Authorities continue to struggle with the interface with providers at point of contract award and exchange, with some placements starting before a contract is exchanged. This can lead to miscommunication and conflict which is escalated to 4C's for resolution. Often these placements are made at short notice or spot purchased. Supporting individual Authorities with children who are experiencing placement instability remains a key activity in the team.

Evidencing Value for Money from 4C's Membership

With increasing budgetary pressures the team is aware of the need to fully evidence value for money from the consortium arrangement. Below is a summary of the main benefits of membership and the team support many ad hoc requests in addition to the below.

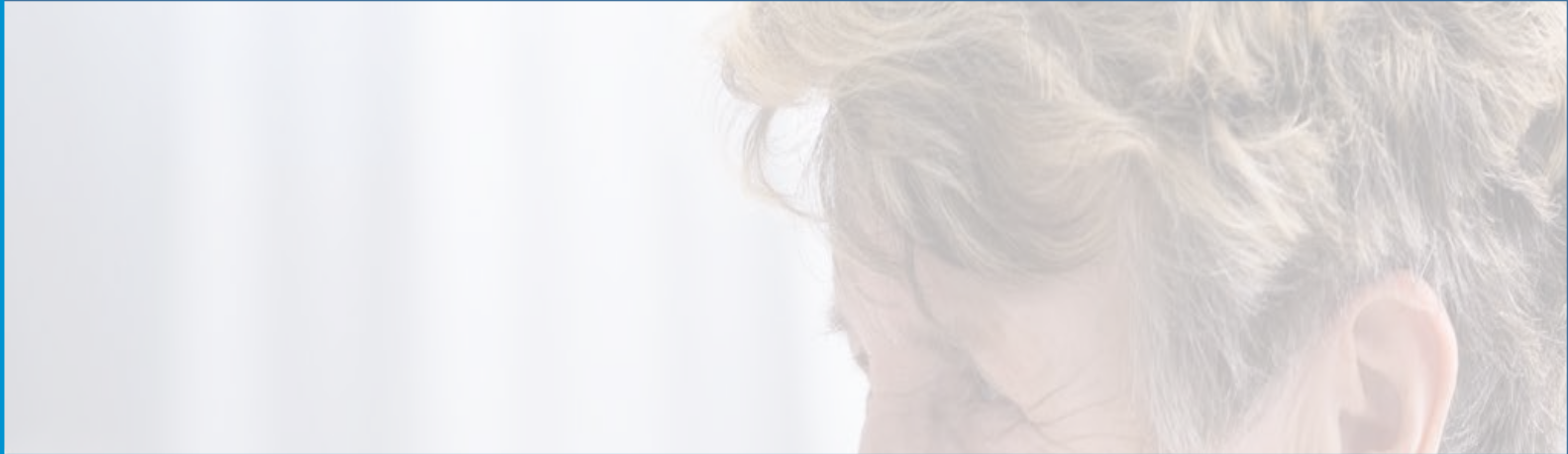
Contracting Benefits	Commissioning Benefits
Framework level contract management	Placement commissioning strategic support
Standardised contracts	Placement commissioning operational support
Standardised terms & conditions	Market shaping support at regional and local level
Contract monitoring visits at provider level	Market sounding exercises and consultations
Contract monitoring support and training at individual placement contract level	Data integrity reporting and support
Maintenance of provider registration and service compliance paperwork	Data analysis reporting and support
Quality performance assessment (QPA)	Young Commissioners Programme
Monitoring of Inspection reports with recommended actions for placing Authorities	Representation in national projects and forums
Issues, Concerns & Compliments process	Stakeholder engagement events
Escalation of Concerns process	Training, support and guidance on commissioning
Regional Matching Panels (IPM) for complex contracts	Internal service shaping support and advice
Development of bespoke specifications as required	Research and development projects
Procurement Benefits	Financial Benefits
Legally compliant frameworks	Maximum price modelling supressing average price
Innovative new flexible framework based on specialist legal and procurement advice of a blended approach to maximise benefits	Cost scheduling giving increased transparency of cost versus price to assist negotiation and audit
Legally compliant e-tendering system (framework and non-framework) with +200 providers	Long term placement discounts and parent and child discount at 12 weeks
Legally compliant mini competition process	Sibling placement discounts
Legally compliant provider evaluation to accredit to framework	Age range discounts
Transparent provider award process	Levy income
Frontline user system support and helpdesk	Support and training on negotiation
CCSR training and best practice guidance	Income to offset costs eg project management
Toolkit of non framework procurement	Economies of scale through regional personnel

4Cs and Cardiff – Support Priorities 2019/20

Recent priorities for 4Cs support specifically for Cardiff include:

1. Assistance with developing the Placement Commissioning Strategy
2. Assistance with developing the Market Position Statement
3. Series of jointly facilitated market engagement events
4. Health check report & recommendations for improvement
5. Bespoke care package support for children at the highest end of the continuum of need
6. Individual provider meeting support
7. Additional support for contract monitoring functions at local level.

If you require more information on 4Cs, please contact 4Cs@rctcbc.gov.uk



Cardiff and Vale of Glamorgan
Regional Safeguarding Boards

Child Practice Reviews

Kate Bishop – Strategic Business Manager, C&V RSB

Caerdydd a Bro Morgannwg
Byrdd Diogelu
Oedolion Rhanbarthol
CaFBDOR
C&VRSAB
Cardiff & Vale of Glamorgan
Regional Safeguarding
Adults Board

Bwrdd Diogelu
Plant Rhanbarthol
Caerdydd a Bro Morgannwg
Cardiff and Vale of Glamorgan
Regional Safeguarding
Children Board

National Findings

Page 10

Learning from Reviews

1 April 2018 to 31 March 2019

Analysis of Emerging Themes from
Child Practice, Adult Practice and
Domestic Homicide Reviews in Wales

NHS Wales Learning from Reviews
National Safeguarding Team

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Byrdd Diogelu
Oedolion Rhanbarthol
CaFBDOR
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Cardiff and Vale of Glamorgan
Regional Safeguarding
Children Board

- Between 1 April 2018 and 31 March 2019, there were **16** published reviews in Wales. This comprised of:
 - 3 Domestic Homicide Reviews
 - 7 Child Practice Reviews
 - 6 Adult Practice Reviews

National Themes

- Record Keeping and Information Sharing

Discrepancies in record keeping and information sharing practice, omissions, lack of clarity and detail, failure to share relevant information with others, inconsistent quality of information recorded.

- Long Term Neglect and Complex Cases

Unrealistic expectations, lack of coordination and joined up health services, confidence to effectively manage families and secure their engagement, cases allowed to drift with a lack of management oversight.

- Voice of the Child

Importance of seeing, hearing and observing the child; complexities in managing parents needs deflected attention from the child, importance of capturing the 'voice' of very young children including those with speech/language delay.

National Themes

- Disguised Compliance and Professional Optimism

Skilful strategies used by parents to allay professional concerns and diffuse intervention, professional optimism, false sense of security, lack of professional curiosity.

- Supervision and Professional Vulnerability

Poor management oversight, high caseloads, lack of adequate supervision.

- Risky Behaviour and Holistic Risk Assessments

Exclusion from school, going missing, escalating concerns, unpredictable and challenging behaviour which professionals felt unable to manage.

- Care Planning and Supporting Older People

Lack of care-coordination packages, anecdotal concerns, lack of documented evidence to indicate concerns had been acknowledged/explored by the placing authority, lack of joined up health services and coordination.

C&V Reviews Themes

Common Themes	Volume	References
Planning/Assessment/Review	5	CPR 1/2013, CPR 2/2014, CPR 9/2014, MAPF 2/2015 APR 2/2017;
Staff Development	5	CPR 1/2013, CPR 9/2014, MAPF 2/2015, CPR 9/2014 APR 2/2017;
Communication and Information Sharing	6	CPR 2/2014, CPR 3/2016, CPR 04/2016, CPR 2/2016 APR 2/2017; APR 4/2017
Voice of Child	5	CPR 02/2014, CPR 9/2014, MAPF 2/2015, CPR 3/2016 CPR 2/2016
Raising Awareness	1	MAPF 2/2015

C&V Reviews Themes

Common Themes	Volume	References
Disguised Compliance	3	CPR 3/2016, CPR 2/2016
Decision Making	2	CPR 9/2014, CPR 3/2016
Record Keeping	3	CPR 3/2016, CPR 4/2016 CPR 2/2016

C&V Reviews 2019-2020

Page 15

Caerdydd a Bro Morgannwg
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Established CPR/APR sub group with good attendance and appropriate membership

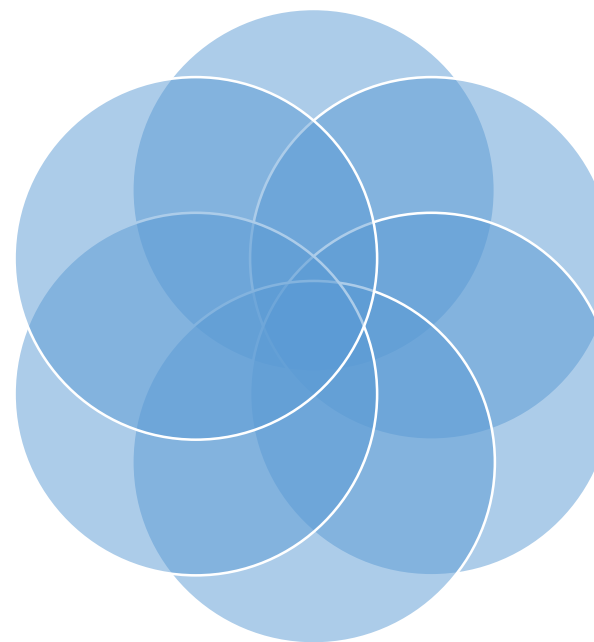
First APR Published, with positive feedback on content and learning from WG

Rolling Programme of CPR/APR Awareness Sessions – overview of what reviews are; who can refer; criteria (Business Unit)

Training has resulted in increased pool of reviewers and chairs

Shadowing opportunities (APR/CPR)

Two days reviewer training delivered in January 2020 by Barbara Firth. Half day 'train the trainer' sessions

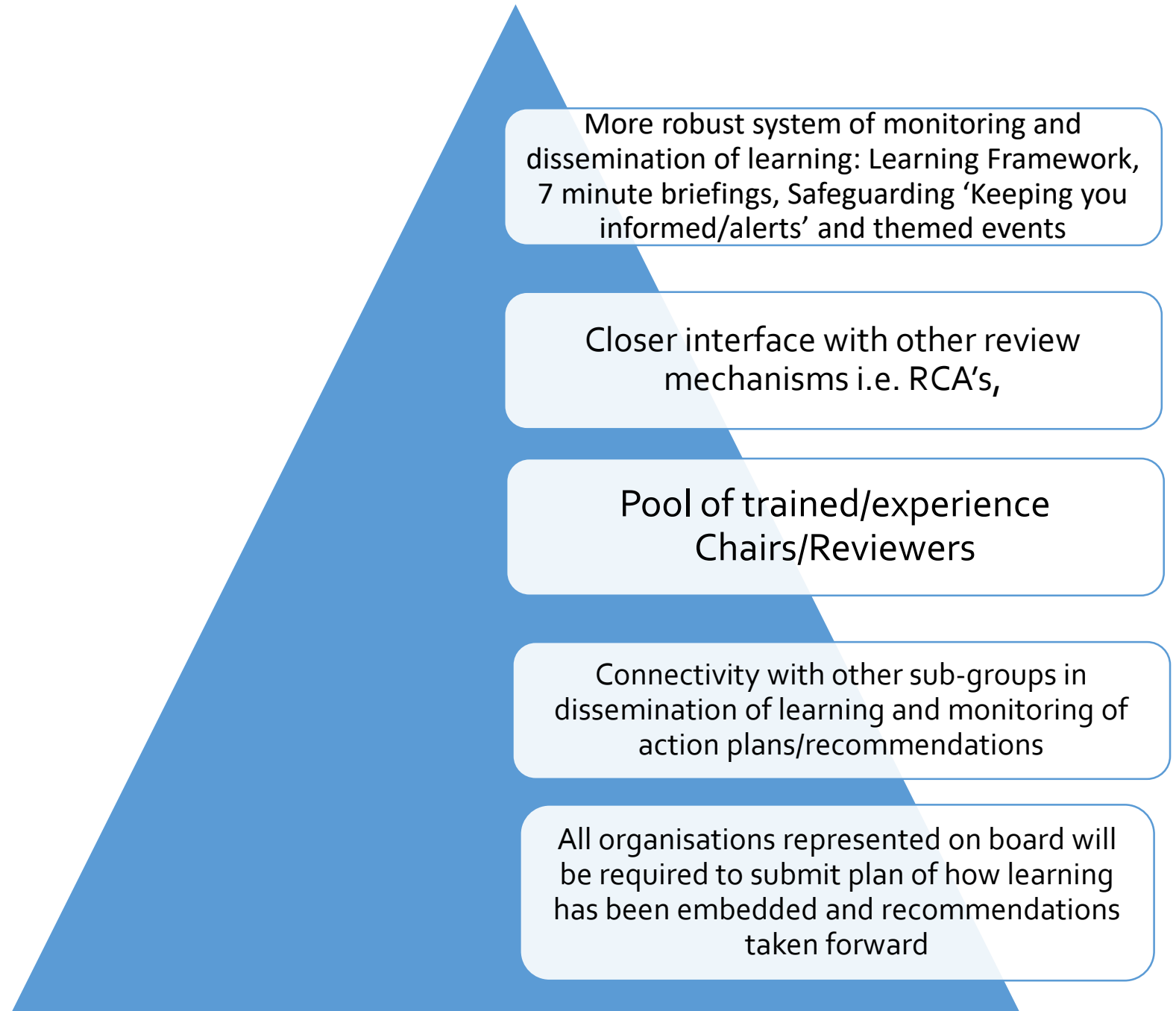


C&V Reviews

Page 16

Forward Planning

2020 - 2021



Looked after Children in Education Personal Education Plans

- **What is a PEP?**
- **Increase in completed PEPs since September 2019**
- **From as low as 20% a few years ago to over 80% this year**
- **So important in terms of meeting a Looked After Child's educational needs**
- **How the process has worked in practice**
- **What does a good PEP look like?**



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Corporate Parenting Strategy Review

What we know so far....

Page 19



Gweithio dros Gaerdydd, gweithio gyda'n gilydd
Working for Cardiff, working together



Agenda Item 8

The National Conversation

- Welsh Government – Corporate Parenting
- 3 working groups so far:
 - Task Groups
 - Wider Partners
 - Young People
- Push for Legislative Framework and Commissioning of Services
- Aim – to devise a charter of minimum expectations and role of Corporate Parents
- Timescale – completed Sept (ministers October)



Who we have spoken to...

- 11 Years old and over including care leavers—
2 groups
- CYP in residential care
- Foster Carers
- Kinship Carers



Stakeholder Meeting

- First Meeting 26th February
- 25 professionals from a range of organisations
- Positive discussions and focus
- Joint working – potential for wider approach to “the conversation”
- Provider representation – NYAS and Voices from Care



What's next?

Page 23

- Next stages of the engagement currently being set up
 - CYP 5 – 11 years old
 - More Children – 11 years old and over
 - Children with Disabilities
 - Parents currently receiving contact
 - Parents currently receiving the reflect service
 - Care Leavers
 - Children in foster care (in house and external)



What we are asking...

- House of Good Things
- House of Worries
- House of Dreams

Page 24



Who are we asking about:

- Cardiff Council and Social Services
- Education
- Housing
- Health
- Into Work Services
- Police
- Youth and Leisure Services
- Who else / what else?

Page 25



What we have found so far....

Page 26



All

- **Remove Stigma** – CYP and their families / parents
- Multi- Agency Working – **retelling their story**
- Increase Understanding
- Support up to 25 years regardless of education etc -
Housing, education, health (transition)
- Complex needs, trauma and emotional needs training
- Calendar of Events for Children Looked After
- Emotional needs – **from the most basic level**
- Long term connections – **it is going to be okay!**



Key Themes – general

- Consistency of relationships – Social Worker / Contact / Health / Education
- **Not being listened to** – being heard, supported and respected
- Understand Emotional needs
- Involvement in decisions (Accommodation, Placement, Contact)
- Language (Contact)



Consider our language...

- **Changing the way we care (TACT, 2019)**

New dictionary of words developed by care experienced children

Care Experienced adult – not care leaver

Having trouble coping – not challenging behaviour

Parents/Family/Tummy Mummy – not Birth/Biological Parents

Family Time/making plans to see family – not contact

My family/foster mum/people who care about me – not Foster carers

Corporate parents???

Page 29



Opportunities

- Provide Opportunities
- College – **sense of having a future**
- Share good practice (specifically schools)
- Training on complex needs, trauma and the impact
- Remove Labels – provide normality
- Calendar of Events for CYP and Family

Page 30

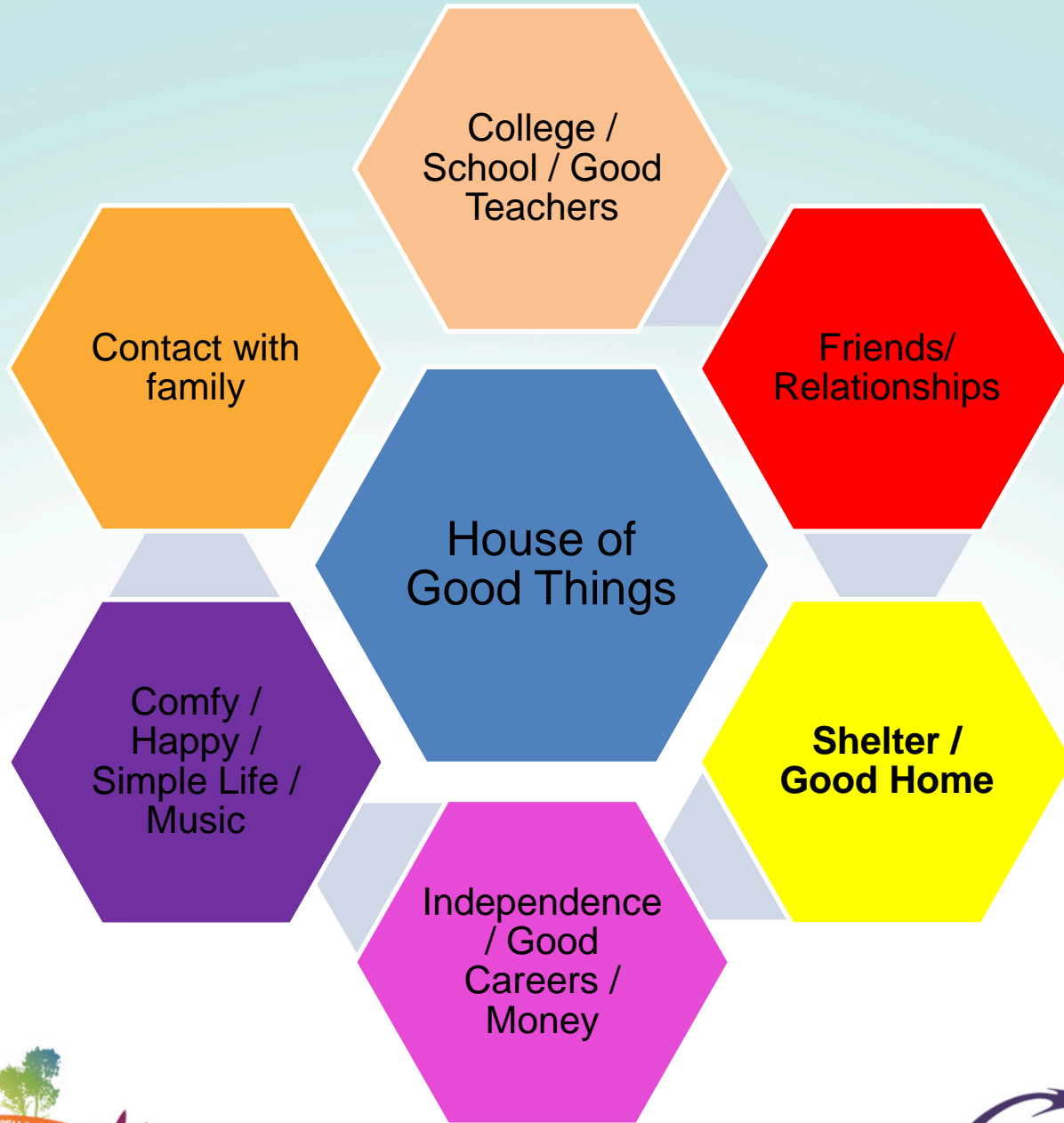


Emotional

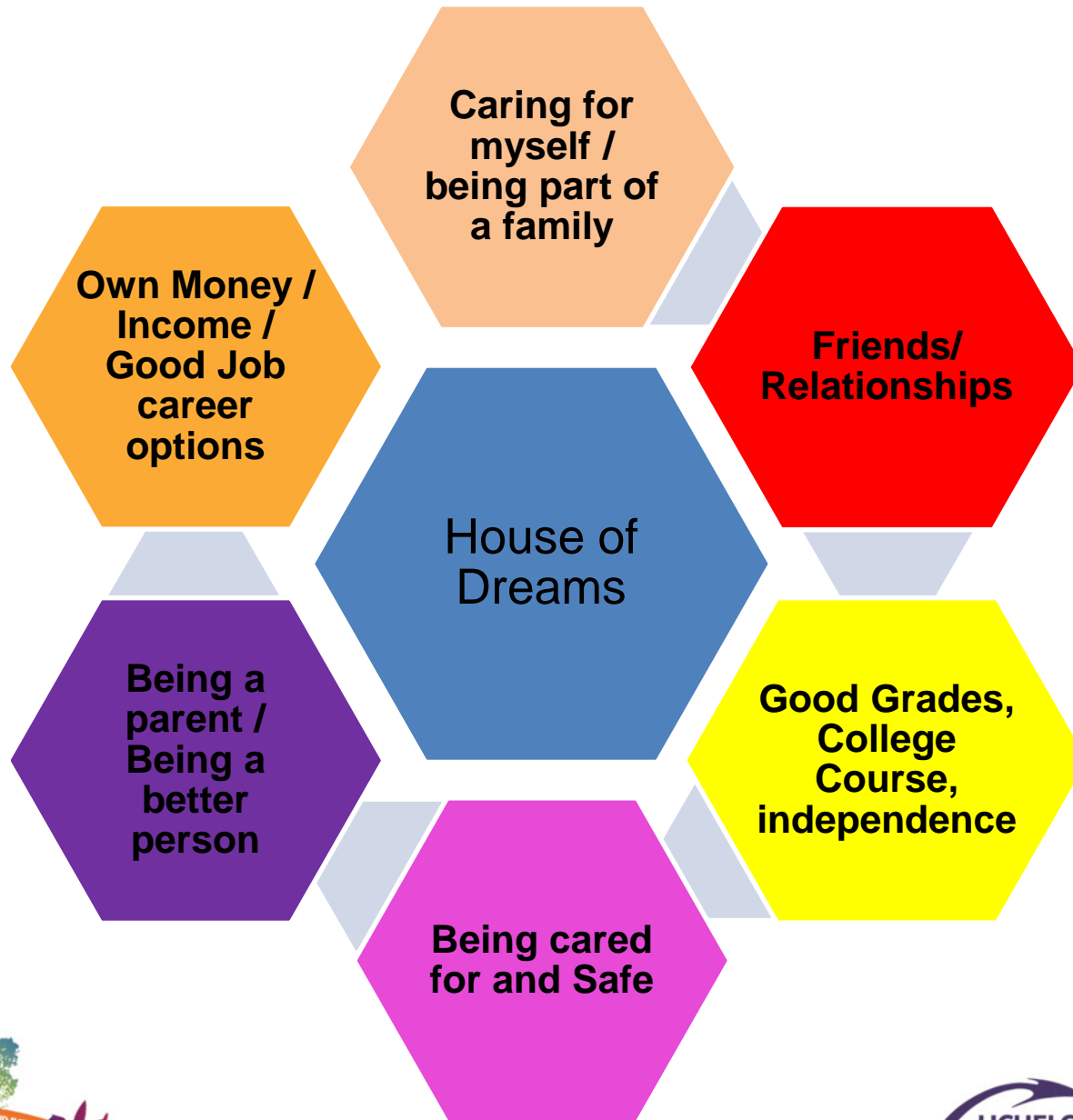
- More focus on wellbeing, emotional needs
- Huge amount of emotions find it difficult to vocalise them – need more emotional support
- “people think our parents are bad people but there are reasons we are looked after”
- Wanting independence but a fear of managing – loosing the support

Page 31









What else do we know?

Wales Centre for Public Policy – What do Children, Young People and their Families think about care:

- Placement Moves
- Stability of relationships
- Participation and communication



Foster Carers We Will Statements

- Never give up on a child or young person
- Provide a safe and stable home
- Always be there for the child or young person
- Always tell the truth
- Care and nurture
- Treat the child or young person as their own family

Page 36



What will you do?

Corporate Parenting Together –
the system and family around the
Child!



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

CORPORATE PARENTING ADVISORY COMMITTEE

28th February 2020

**QUARTERLY COMPLAINTS AND REPRESENTATIONS REPORT
QUARTER 2 2019-20**

Reason for the Report

1. The Committee's terms of reference state that it will receive Children's Services Complaints reports.
2. This Quarter 3 report covers complaints and representations from 1st October 2019 to 31st December 2019.

Introduction

3. The current Welsh Government guidance and regulations in relation to social services complaints and representations came into being on 1st 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 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 Council 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	Q3 2019-20
Number open at start of period (01/10/2019)	3
Number received (qtr. 3)	33
Number received directly from children and young people	4
Number closed during quarter 3	34
Number outstanding at end of period (31/12/2019)	2
% acknowledged within 2 working days	100%

9. During this quarter, the number of complaints received by Children’s Services was 33, a decrease of 4 from Q2 when 37 were recorded.
 - a. Of the 33 complaints received, 9 were disputing decision-making, a slight decrease from Q2 when 12 were recorded. 15 of the complaints received were in relation to the Social Worker or the service received, an increase from the 12 recorded in Q2. A further 6 complainants alleged a delay in providing services and this has remained relatively static compared to Q1 and Q2 when 6 and 5 complaints were recorded respectively.
 - b. 12 complaints were received regarding the Looked after Children Service compared with 14 in Q2. Complaints regarding the Intake & Assessment Service remained static as 8 complaints were recorded in both Q2 and Q3. 5 complaints were received regarding the Child in Need Service, a notable decrease from Q2 (9).

Examples of complaints concluded during the quarter are:

A complaint where we were able to put things right

A complainant had concerns about the delay with receiving their child's "life story" book

Following a review of the case file, the Operational Manager arranged for the Life Story book and Later Life letter to be issued to the complainant and apologised for the delay in issuing these documents. The complainant responded to say that she was thankful for the quick resolution to her complaint.

A complaint where we had no case to answer

A complainant was unhappy with what she described as the "inconsistency" of social worker visits

The Council accepted there had been some inconsistency as unfortunately the main social worker in question had been on sickness leave and duty social workers had been attending in the meantime. An Operational Manager addressed these issues by apologising to the complainant and offering to look through the plan with the complainant.

Stage 2 Independent Investigations

10. 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.

11.5 Stage 2 complaints were initiated during Quarter 3.

Ombudsman Investigations

12. There were 0 Ombudsman investigations in relation to complaints during this quarter.

Learning from Complaints

13. Action Plans are initiated after each Stage 2 investigation to ensure that the recommendations are implemented, lessons are learned and themes recognised. Issues about staff conduct are sent to an Operational Manager to consider.

Themes Emerging During the Quarter

14. Quarterly complaints reports are shared with managers so any emerging themes can be considered and actions can be taken to improve practice. Outside of this avenue the Complaints Manager can highlight issues to an Operational Manager.

15. There were no specific themes that emerged during this quarter, other than those mentioned at point 9.

Early Resolution

16. 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. During this quarter, there were 19 enquiries. The issues in these were brought to the attention of the relevant Team or Operational Managers who acted promptly to address the issues raised to the satisfaction of the individual. This prevented 19 complaints being formally opened as stage 1 complaints, resolving the issue at the earliest opportunity.

Summary of Compliments

17. 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.

18. 23 compliments were received in Quarter 3. A breakdown of compliments by teams is provided below. This will help Children's Services build upon positive work and can assist in identifying improvements

Team	No. of Compliments
Targeted Services	15

Specialist Services	5
Other	3

Example of a compliment received during the quarter:

From a Foster Carer in relation to a Social Worker

“I know that social workers are often very busy and have lots of demands placed on them. However X always replies to my calls, emails and texts very promptly, usually within half an hour. He's never been late for a meeting which in my experience is unheard of!

Everytime he visits, he speaks to everyone in our family, including our young boys who are very impressed with his football knowledge. When others have not done their job properly he has been incredibly professional and not had a bad word to say about them.”

Summary for Quarter 3

19. As at the 31st December 2019, the service were working with 3,034 children and young people and of these, we received:

- a. 33 complaints, a slight decrease from Quarter 2. 4 were directly from the young person, a slight decrease from the 4 recorded during Quarter 2
- b. 23 compliments.

Responses to AM / MP / Councillor Enquiry Letters

20. 10 AM / MP / Councillor Enquiry letters were received by Children’s Services during the quarter, a decrease of 8 from Q2.

21. Requests for Information from statutory agencies:

- a. 92 requests were received and responded to on time, this compares to 150 received in Q2.
- b. 0 were completed outside of the statutory time frame.
- c. 0 requests were withdrawn
- d. There are no new requests in process at the time of writing.

22. The turnover has to be rapid due to the nature of the enquiries. Of these:
- a. 49 requests were from the Probation Service asking if there are children living in a household with individuals who have been bailed or will be etc. and wanting background information
 - b. There were 17 requests from other Council's Children's Services Departments
 - c. 26 requests were received directly from other services such as HMRC, Education and Health Services.

Financial Implications

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

Legal Implications

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

RECOMMENDATION

25. The Committee is recommended to:

- i. To endorse the report.

Deborah Driffield
Assistant Director Children's Services

Children's Services Performance Report – Children Looked After Quarter 3 2019-20



What's working well?

- The Cardiff and Vale **Regional Safeguarding Board Awards** evening was held in November. This was a successful event and the Adolescent Service won an award recognising the commitment of the staff in the service. The annual **Bright Sparks awards** were also held during the quarter and were once again a success, celebrating the achievements of our children who are looked after and care leavers.
- Approximately 120 of our children went to **Winter Wonderland** and the sheer joy was inspiring. In addition to this, young people from the Youth Offending Service made and sold **Christmas wreaths** and spent the proceeds on gifts for our care leavers.
- The **Adolescent Resource Centre** has been developed to provide a regional service and is now operating jointly with the Vale of Glamorgan. The soft launch will take place early in Quarter 4.

What are we worried about?

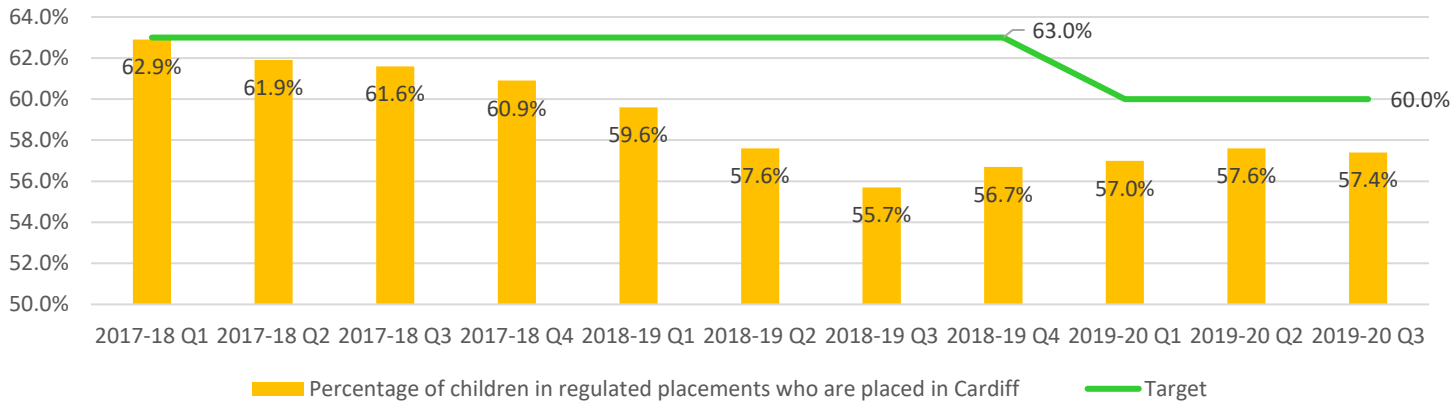
- **Performance in Children's Services** continues to be closely monitored and the number of children looked after continues to be a concern (972 at 31st December from 885 at the end of Quarter 3 2018-19). This does, however, include increasing numbers of children in kinship and family placements. A further area of concern is monitoring the timeliness of children looked after reviews and statutory visits has been affected in recent quarters by recording issues in the review team. However, focussed work has had an impact and improvement is anticipated by year end.
- **Children's Services workforce** – recruitment to vacant social worker posts is ongoing, but progress continues to be slow. The Children's Services vacancy position for the quarter is 32.9%, with 185.5 / 563.7 posts vacant in December.
- Resource to meet demand following the planned implementation of the **Extended Entitlement** of care leavers.

What do we need to do?

- **Key priority actions are underway in 4 key areas** – placements / fostering, accommodation and delivery of the assessment unit, practice and workforce.
 - **Fostering** – conversion of 31 currently ongoing full assessments to approved foster carers.
 - **Assessment unit** – delivery by October 2020.
 - **Practice** – quality assurance and performance in key areas.
 - **Children's Services workforce** – implement market supplement by April 2020 whilst longer term proposals are developed to retain social workers in Cardiff, through ensuring competitive rates of pay and ensuring that social workers are fully supported.
- **Extended Entitlement** of care leavers - work in relation to the proposal will take into account the existing structure and capacity of the service to meet the requirements of the proposed new duty.

Key Performance Indicators

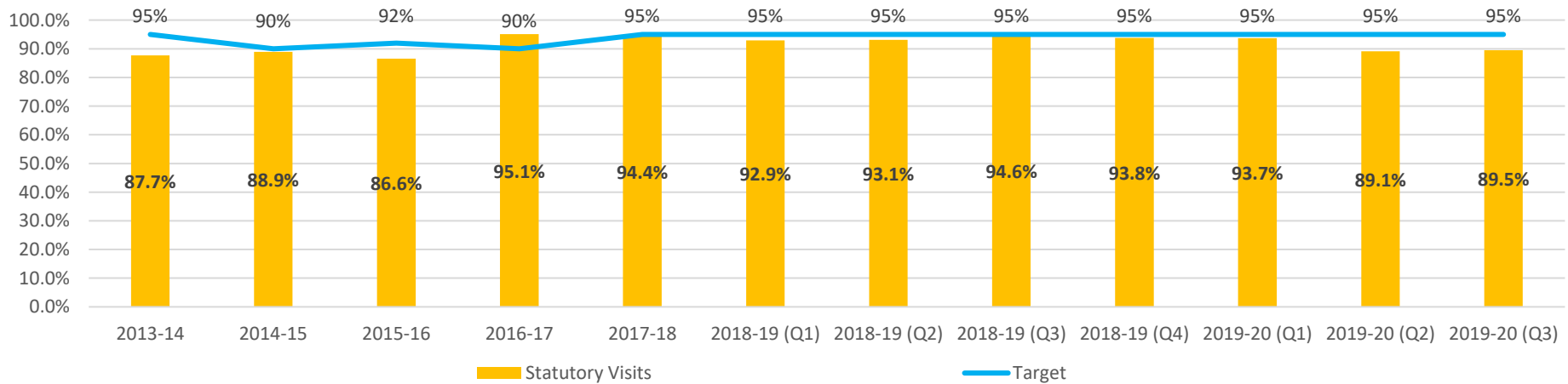
CS LAC 58 Percentage of children in regulated placements who are placed in Cardiff



CS LAC 58 The **percentage of children in regulated placements who are placed in Cardiff** = 57.4% (399 / 695). The PI counts only children placed within the LA boundaries and excludes children placed in neighbouring authorities close to their home area and attending Cardiff schools. Please see page 7 for a breakdown of placements.

Page 47

SCC/025 The percentage of statutory visits to children looked after due in the year that took place in accordance with regulations



N.B. Data for 2019/20 is provisional

Children Looked After

Page 48

What's working well?	What are we worried about?	What do we need to do?
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Children's Commissioning Strategy was presented to Cabinet in November 2019. The Strategy evidences our need and sets out our direction of travel for the next 3 years. • Social media and online marketing is impacting on the volume of enquiries (31 full assessments ongoing at 31st December 2019). • Meetings with fostering and residential providers to look at improving the provisions for children looked after in Cardiff. <p>Work to develop a small emergency unit is being taken forward alongside work to open an assessment unit. One property has been identified with Housing and another is being sourced.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Engagement with residential providers is very positive with lots of interest in setting up new homes in Cardiff. • A Marketing Officer for adoption has been appointed and a process is in place with a timely response. • Compliance with Court timescales remains good and we are continuing to work on a practice guidance document for social workers. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The number of children looked after continues to be a concern (972 at 31st December from 885 at 30th September 2019). • Supply of the right type of services for our most vulnerable children, including scarcity of fostering and residential provision for children and young people with more complex needs. • Monitoring the timeliness of children looked after reviews and statutory visits has been affected in recent quarters by recording issues in the review team. • Work needs to be progressed with Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic (BAME) communities in Cardiff in relation to fostering and adoption. • All young people need to have their Pathway Plan reviewed and updated into the new format by the end of March 2020. • Challenges in securing the right accommodation to ensure that care leavers accommodation needs are fully met. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Implement the priorities in the Children's Commissioning Strategy, including conversion of 31 currently ongoing full assessments to approved foster carers and delivery of an assessment unit. • Focussed work has had an impact and the backlog has reduced considerably. Accurate reporting will be available when the backlog has been cleared. • Focus more on faith groups and minority ethnic groups and improve links with partner agencies to improve the choice for Cardiff children needing to be placed out of area. • Work is in progress. • Move on from Young Person Gateway is consistently being reviewed with support being offered from Housing Options Centre to move clients who are considered suitable for Private Rented Sector (PRS) accommodation into this type of accommodation. A Children's Services guarantee scheme is being finalised which will further assist care leavers to secure suitable

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Pilot with the Child and Family Court Advisory Support Service to accelerate the discharge of Care Orders where parents are in agreement. The intention is for children who are looked after under Placement with Parent Regulations to cease being looked after where it is safe and appropriate to do so. ● The Personal Adviser Service is now under the Adolescent Service following the restructure. This allows for a more robust and cohesive service that effectively engages with partners to share resources, and ensure a more effective transition for care leavers. ● There are strong links between the Adolescent Service and the Into Work Service, with referrals being made to allow care leavers opportunities to access education, training and employment. <p>Consistent representation at Housing Panels to ensure accommodation needs of care leavers are met and effectively monitored.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Revised Pathway Plan in place. ● The annual Bright Sparks awards were held and were once again a success, celebrating the achievements of our children who are looked after and care leavers. ● Youth Offending Service made and sold Christmas wreaths and spent the proceeds on gifts for our care leavers. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Resource to meet demand following the planned implementation of the Extended Entitlement of care leavers. ● Permanency planning for children and young people is under developed. ● Numbers of children waiting for adoption 12 months after Placement Order made (65, 21 of whom are not yet placed). Although there is a reduction from Quarter 2 when there were 68, children; 28 of whom were not placed). ● Delay in completing the review of the Corporate Parenting Strategy. 	<p>PRS accommodation.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Work is ongoing and will take into account the existing structure and capacity of the service to meet the requirements of the proposed new duty. ● Develop robust permanency planning arrangements. ● A Marketing Officer for adoption has been appointed and a process is in place with a timely response. We are building information about where enquiries are coming from to inform our recruitment and with the aim of increasing appropriate enquiries that convert to applications. ● Engagement session planned for Quarter 4 so children and young people can be actively involved in the review of the Strategy.
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Key Stats

972 children looked after.

88 children started to be looked after in the quarter (up from 66 in Quarter 2). These children comprised of 15 sibling groups and 51 individuals. The average number of children starting to be looked after was 1.33 (1.55 in Quarter 2 and 1.34 in 2018-19).

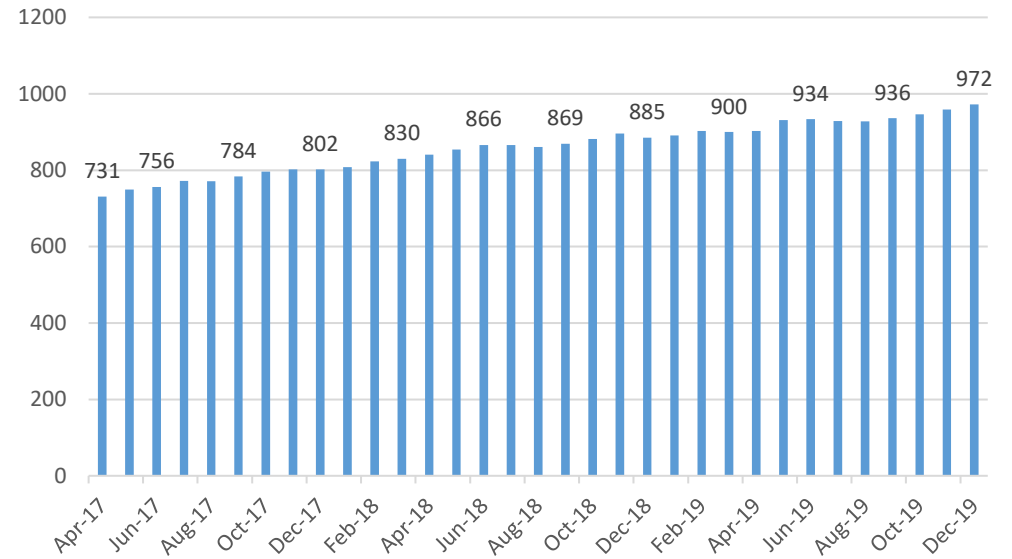
55 ends of being looked after this quarter.

399/ 695 (57.4%) children looked after in regulated placements are placed within Cardiff, increasing to 77.0% when taking neighbouring authorities into consideration.

99.1% of children looked after allocated to a social worker.

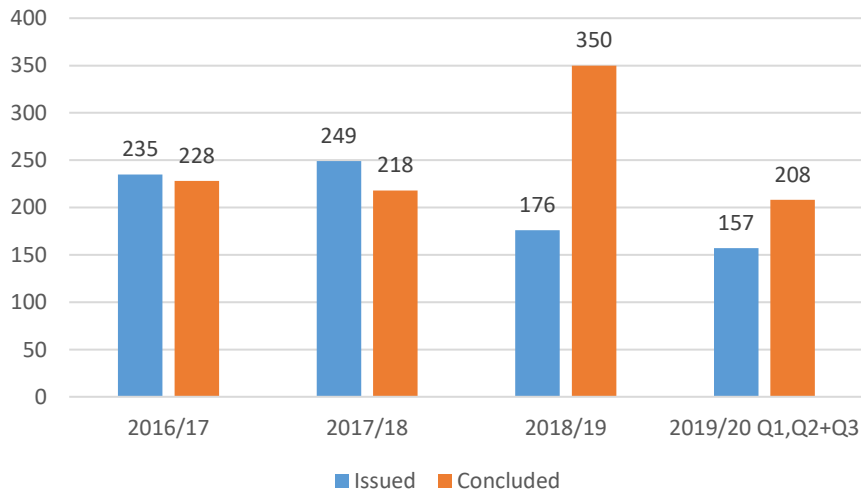
Permanence secured for 26 children through adoption since 1st April 2019.

Number of children looked after



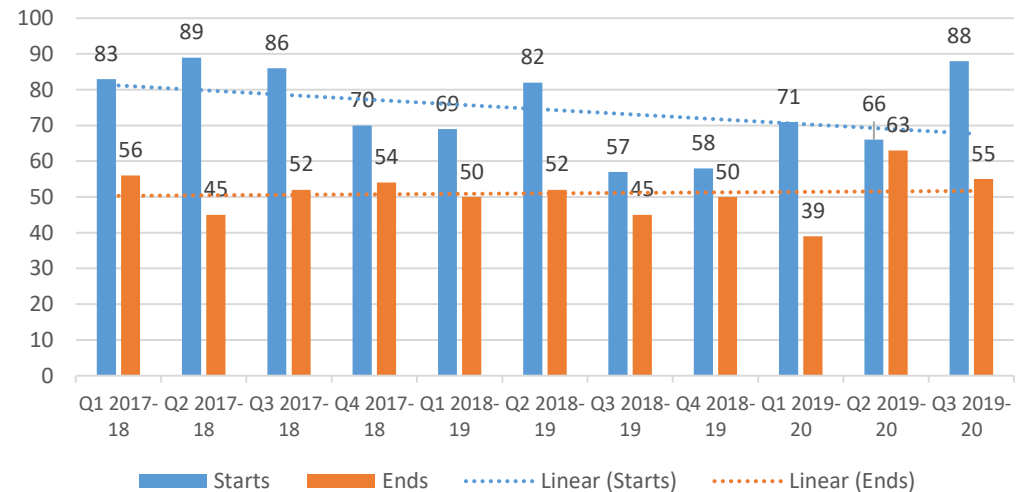
Page 50

Care Proceedings issued and concluded during year

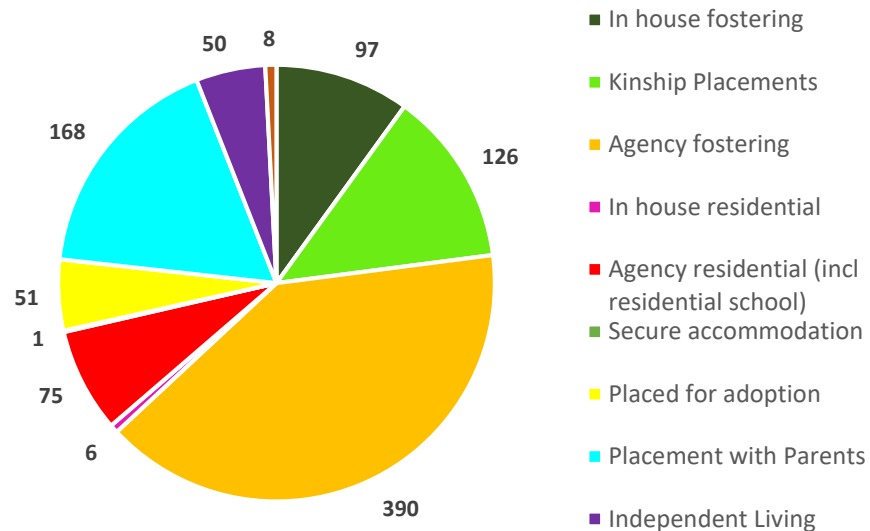


Q3 data is provisional

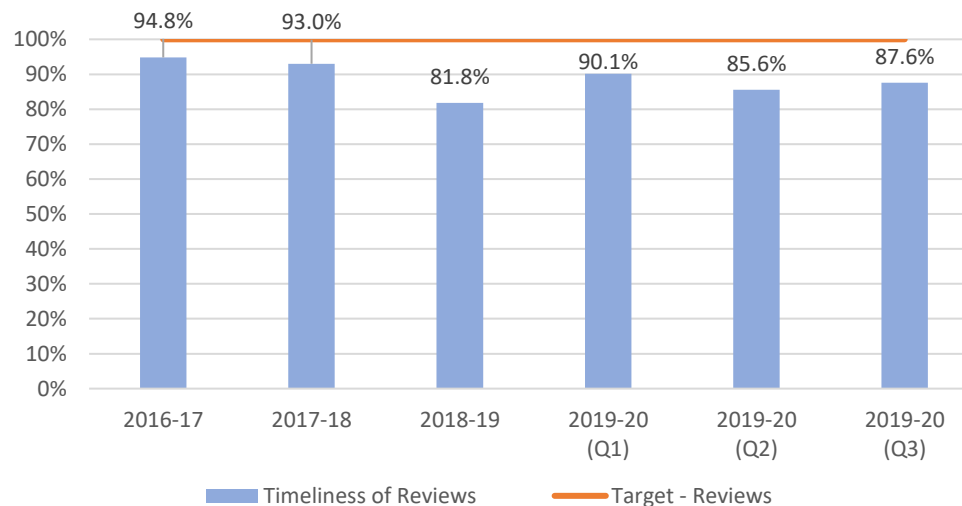
Starts and ends of being looked after



Breakdown of placements by type – as at 31.12.19

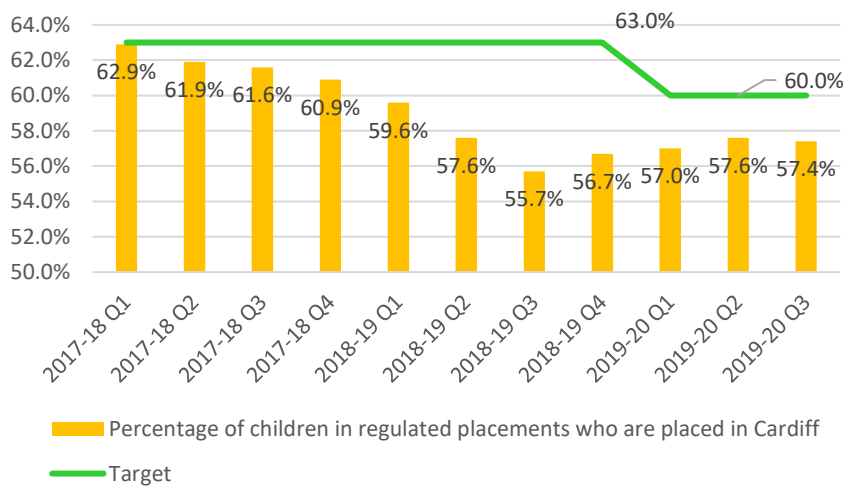


Timeliness of Children Looked After Reviews

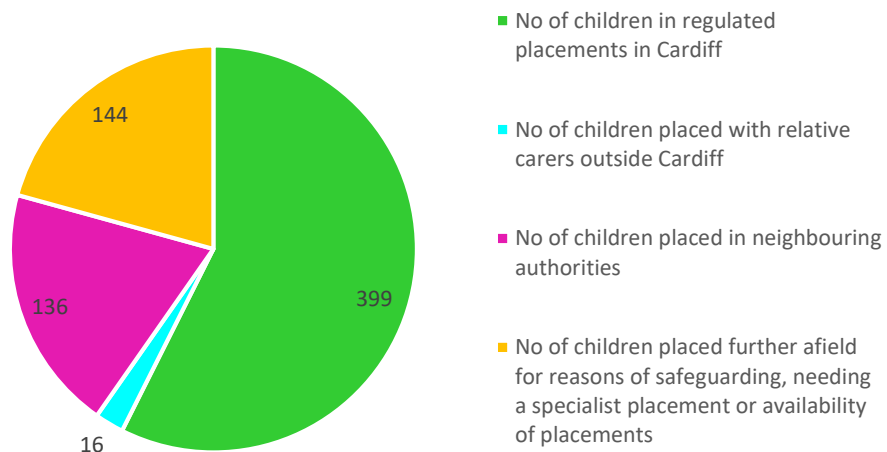


N.B. 2019/20 data is provisional

Percentage of children in regulated placements who are placed in Cardiff



Breakdown of all children in regulated placements – as at 31.12.19



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CITY AND COUNTY OF CARDIFF
DINAS A SIR CAERDYDD

CORPORATE PARENTING ADVISORY COMMITTEE

17 March 2020

The Annual Quality Assurance Report for Cardiff Council Fostering Service
2018/19

(Regulations 34 Report)

Reason for the Report

1. The terms of reference for the Corporate Parenting Advisory Committee require that the Committee receives the annual quality of care report of Cardiff Council's Fostering service. The report is attached at **Appendix A**.
2. The terms of reference also require that the Committee works within its annual programme to actively promote real and sustained improvements to maximise the life chances of looked after children.

Background

3. The purpose of the attached report is to provide a review of the quality of care offered by Foster Care Cardiff during the 2018/19 year in accordance with the requirements of Regulation 42 of the Fostering Services (Wales) Regulations 2003.
4. Regulation 42 of the Fostering Services (Wales) Regulations 2003 specifies that:
 - 1) *The registered person must establish and maintain a system for—*
 - (a) *Monitoring the matters set out in Schedule 7 (of the regulations) at appropriate intervals, and*
 - (b) *Improving the quality of foster care provided by the fostering agency.*
 - 2) *The registered person must supply to the appropriate office of the National Assembly a report in respect of any review conducted by the registered*

person for the purposes of paragraph (1) and make a copy of the report available upon request to the persons mentioned in regulation 3(2).

3) The system referred to in paragraph (1) must provide for consultation with foster parents, children placed with foster parents, and their responsible authority (unless, in the case of a fostering agency which is a voluntary organisation, it is also the responsible authority).

5. The Introduction section of the report summarises the background and improvements made during 2018/19.
6. Part 1 of the report provides feedback from children, young people, social workers, foster carers, and foster carer applicants. This part of the report also provides evidence of outcomes achieved.
7. Part 2 of the report provides an overview of the service.
8. Part 3 provides information of performance in relation to the monitoring of the matters detailed in Schedule 7 and Schedule 8 of the Fostering Services (Wales) Regulations 2003.
9. This Report has been written with contributions from children and young people, foster carers, social workers, and managers from across Children's Services.
10. The report is produced to provide children, parents, foster carers, elected members, staff and other professionals with a review of the Cardiff Fostering Service.

Financial Implications

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

Legal Implications

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

RECOMMENDATION

13. The Committee is recommended to note the information contained in the attached report and make any observations or comments.

Claire Marchant
Director of Children's Services
10 March 2020

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**ANNUAL QUALITY ASSURANCE REPORT FOR
CARDIFF COUNCIL FOSTERING SERVICE (01.04.2018 – 31.03.2019)**

Introduction & Background

The purpose of this report is to provide a review of the quality of care offered by the Cardiff Fostering Service during the period 01.04.18 – 31.03.19 in accordance with the requirements of Regulation 42 Fostering Services (Wales) Regulations 2003. The report provides information regarding quality and the monitoring of matters set out in Schedule 7 and Schedule 8, and the quality of the services being delivered. The report is produced to provide children, parents, foster carers, elected members, staff and other professionals with a review of the Cardiff Fostering Service.

The next Quality of Care Report will need to be produced - as now required under the Local Authority Fostering Services (Wales) Regulations 2018

This Report has been collated with contributions from Children and Young People, Foster Carers, Social Workers, and Managers from across Children's Services

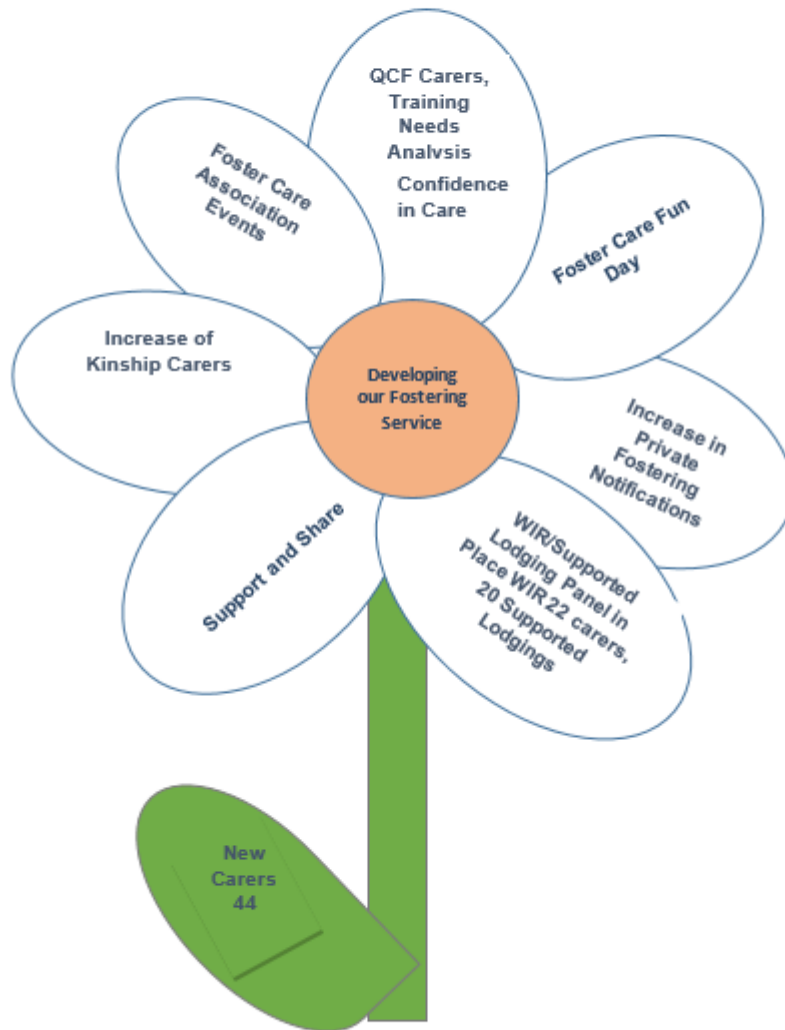
Contents:

Part 1: Feedback from Children and Young People, Social Workers, Foster Carers, and Applicants, Evidence of Outcomes.

Part 2: Service Overview

Part 3: Information of performance in relation to the monitoring of the matters detailed in Schedule 7 and Schedule 8 of the Local Authority Fostering Services (Wales) Regulations 2003.

CONGRATULATIONS Cardiff Fostering Services Achievements for 2018/19



Improvements made during 2018 – 2019:-

- Survey Monkey used to gain feedback from staff , Carers and Young people
- Robust Statistical information collated
- **Recruitment:** Continued profile raising through Social Media
- **Training:** We engaged with our carers starting the year with a training needs analysis, which then informed the program of training and development for the year. This included Team and Panel training, and a series of Support and Share workshops facilitated by carers for carers. Promotion of Confidence in Care, QCF and bespoke training for Kinship carers and training delivered at times and venues for ease of access to our carers.
- **Foster Carers Association:** We are proud that our Foster carers continue to have their own Foster Carer Association. The FCA organise social events and can act as a Consultation group. Last year saw the development of Peer support and development of more informal support networks for carers.
- **Male Carers Support Group:** A successful group that currently meet on a quarterly basis.
- **Quarterly Newsletters**
- **Celebration event:** Each year we hold a Celebration of Foster Carer and Service Achievements , we also take the opportunity to Launch the next Confidence in Care program.
- **Summer Fun day:** held at Insole Court in August '18 and the weather was kind to us, activities included No Fit state Circus and Music workshop, facepainting and manicures.
- **Assessment Practice Group:** Improving practice in Assessment revising templates to ensure safety and quality. Implementing Signs of Safety. Improving Foster carer's recording and reporting at LAC Reviews ,
- **When I am Ready and Supported Lodgings :**
The amalgamation of the Supported Lodgings and When I am Ready arrangements within the Fostering Service.

PART 1

Part 1 of this report provides information in relation to the way in which the Fostering Service ensures that a quality service is being provided.

1. Quality of life of children, promoting quality of care within the child's placement .

1.1 Children's Views

Survey Monkey Feedback from Children 2018/19

Your Life, Your Care 6-10yrs

- (1 participant)
- The participant feels happy living in their home;
- The participant feels safe in their home;
- The participant has had someone explain to them why they are in care but; would like to know more;
- The participant knows who their social worker is;
- The participant trusts their social worker;
- The participant likes school;
- The participant gets to have fun on the weekend;
- The participant doesn't have a pet but would like one;
- The participant has a really good friend;
- Comments from the participant; they would like more contact with their birth family.

Your Life, Your Care 10-18yrs

- 100% of participants like their bedrooms they live in now;
- 100% of participants feel settled in the home they live in now;
- 100% of participants feel happy in the home they live in now;
- 50% of participants don't have a pet but would like one, 33.3% have a pet, and 16.7% don't have a pet and don't want one;
- 83.3% of participants have had someone explain to them why are not able to live at home their parents/families and 16.7% have had someone explain this to them but would like to know more;
- 83.3% say they see their family just the right amount, 16.7% say they see them too little;

Comments on how much contact they have with their birth families;

1. Happy that I have unsupervised contact with my brother and sister, I would like it a bit longer;

2. I would like contact with other family members;

- 100% of participants know they can ask to speak to their Social Worker on their own;
- 66.7% feel included in the decisions that social workers make in their lives all or most of the time, 33.3% said sometimes;
- 33.3% worried about their feelings sometimes, 33.3% worried hardly ever and 33.3% worried never;
- 83.3% said they are getting help with these worries while 16.7% are not;
- 33.3% said they felt very happy yesterday, 33.3% felt happy and the other 33.3% felt okay;
- 83.3% feel their life is getting much better and 16.7% felt there is no change;
- 100% of participants agreed they have an adult who they trust and who helps them and sticks by them no matter what;
- 100% have said that they have a really good friend;
- 83.3% feel happy all or most of the time with the adults they live with, 16.75% said sometimes;
- 66.7% agreed that the adults they live with notice how they are feeling all or most of the time, 33.3% said they sometimes notice;
- 100% of the participants agreed the adults they live with show an interest in what they're doing at school;
- 100% know who their social workers are;
- 83.3% trust their current social worker, 16.7% said they sometimes do;
- 50% of participants said they like school/college a lot, 33.3% said they like school/college a bit, 16.7% said not very much;
- 83.3% said they never feel afraid of going to school/college because of bullying, 16.7% said they hardly ever feel afraid;
- 83.3% said if they felt like they were being bullied they would get support from an adult, 16.7% said they don't get support;
- 50% of participants said they have fun at the weekends sometimes and the other 50% said all or most of the time;
- 66.7% of participants said they sometimes explore outdoors (e.g. visiting a beach or going to the park) 33.3% said they do all most of the time;
- 50% get the chance to show they can be trusted most or all of the time the other 50% said they sometimes get the chance.
- 83.3% said they get a second chance all or most of the time, and 16.7% sometimes get a second chance;
- 66.7% of participants get to practice life skills (cooking, washing etc.) all or most of the time, 16.7% said sometimes, the other 16.7% said never;
- 100% of participants can connect to the internet from their home;
- 66.7% get the chance to do similar things with their friends outside of school/college, 16.7% said sometimes, the other 16.7% said hardly ever;
- 66.7% are somewhat positive about their future and 33.3% are completely positive.

Final comments of participants about being in a foster family;

- I like where I am living. It is better than being at home. I am hoping to go out with friends more when I start high school;
- Foster carers care about you a lot and you get a fair bit of pocket money.

2. Applicant's and Foster carer's views in relation to the service provided

2.1 Feedback from Foster care Reviews:

02/07/2018

'Fantastic team of people doing a wonderful job for the children of Cardiff – very professional at all times'

01/08/2018

'My last review was one of the best I have had during my 13 years as a foster carer. I felt I was being listened to and was given advice and not rushed, lasted longer than any I have had in the past, Thanks to team manager and social worker.'

25/08/2018

'Find everyone we come into contact with very professional and not just bed spaces thought given to right placement.'

04/10/2018

'Everything about the fostering service is good and we are always happy working with them and we have a really good support worker who is always very helpful'.

The feedback we receive demonstrates positive outcomes for children and young people; but also demonstrates that the service puts a high value and focus on services to Foster Carers and applicants.

Cardiff Fostering Service strives to engage with children and young people on an individual basis to ensure their wellbeing. We work in partnership with our carers and promote a high quality service.

2.2 Compliments about Carer or Fostering Service

11/04/2018

The parents offered their opinion on the placement and care that he received from foster carer (unprompted) mother stated that she "could not have asked for a better person to care for him. Social Workers' overall view of placement was that he received excellent care in the placement and as said, was very impressed by her ability to work with the parents.

14/06/2018

"I chaired the annual review for the carers yesterday. I wanted to highlight the extremely positive feedback provided about the care given which was received from allocated Social Worker. Her view was that they are excellent carers, they go above and beyond to ensure that needs are met. They enjoy lots of activities together including swimming. Are extremely caring and are brilliant at supporting birth mother also, making contact a positive experience. Significantly in a further email recorded that she wanted to ensure she provided feedback for 'such excellent carers!'"

I thought I would highlight as I know that you will be looking for comments for the Reg 42 report and as it is lovely to hear the positive impact and difference these carers as a fostering family (including back up carers) are having to his life. Crucially their child focused and decision making in his interest was very apparent as sadly his adoption link had broken down and the couple had to go to significant lengths as a fostering family / cost to be able to include him in the holiday that had been planned for after he was due to move on.

27/06/2018

I was today sent the judgement and just wanted to let you know that the High Court Judge was extremely complimentary about foster carers, they are described as remarkable carers and they are thanked on behalf of the Court for the support and care they have provided. They may have received this feedback within the court arena but I just wanted to flag it.

14/09/2018

I just wanted to let you know what an amazing job carers did with child placed with them over a year ago. She was rehabilitated to her father care following the court hearing. This has been a very long and difficult process that would not have been done without the support and assistance offered by both carers they have worked tirelessly in preparing for her return, and supported her father throughout the process, they always had her best interest at heart and advocated for her throughout. I am positive that without their support and hard work over the last six months the transition may not have been successful and she would not have been able to return to her home and family. So I just wanted to say thank you and let you know what amazing carers they have been for this little girl.

03/10/2018

I chaired carers Annual Review this week. The feedback from Social Worker Looked after Children 0-14 Service dated 13.9.2018 was extremely complimentary above and beyond other feedback I have read recently. A key part to highlight was

"Carers met child care plan to the letter. They met her needs to an excellent standard. Promoted and supported contact. Developed positive relationships with parents, and professionals alike. Their contribution to the developmental improvements that this little girl is making cannot be underestimated. They know what they are doing and why. They have provided her with the best start that she

could have, having had one of the toughest beginnings. Thank you both. I look forward to working with you again”

15/10/2018

I just wanted to formally recognise these foster carers. They have recently moved on a little boy to adopters and they have been instrumental in making this transition a successful one.

They have demonstrated an amazing commitment to this little boy, even to the extent of ensuring he attended their recent holiday when the previous match fell through. It wasn't straightforward to get him booked onto the holiday and caused them several days of phone calls etc! They were determined though and would not consider a respite placement as they did not feel this would be in his best interests.

They formed a positive relationship with his birth mother and gave her support and sympathy whilst remaining professional. They have kept birth mum up to date with his progress and made her feel included by providing photos and videos for her to keep. Carer even attended to support the birth mother and the adopters when they met last month.

I just wanted to pass on this feedback. Carers are outstanding foster carers who I feel have gone above and beyond. Cardiff are lucky to have them!”

30/11/2018

The carer showed excellent insight into the family dynamics and an exceptional focus on her and her siblings. This was demonstrated in her focus on contact arrangements, her interaction with parents (which they both reported as excellent), her links with the school (chasing additional work as soon as a weak area of learning was identified). She was supportive in using this work to analyse the weak areas and support learning herself.

She was also proactive in tracking her enuresis which allowed the group to discuss possible links to contact. Because she has invested time in communication with both parents she was able to discuss this openly and her sensitive approach to the subject allowed us to consider changes needed to contact, because the parents were not defensive and were then able to focus on the possible impact on their daughter.

The carer was incredibly sensitive to the family and this will form a strong basis of acceptance for her within her family network that it is hoped will increase her sense of belonging and positive identity building blocks for the future

05/02/2019

An annual review evaluation form which has been received from foster carers They have complimented 2 member of staff,

- The transition to a new supervising social worker went really smoothly.
- was a great support.
- is efficient on placements and ensure matching is a priority

Also they have asked if their daughter can be assessed as back up.

18/03/2019

I have been working with foster carers 2 ½ years and throughout they have always been professional and I believe they have the children in their cares best interests at heart. The carers will always update me appropriately and will always ask for advice/guidance where appropriate. I view them to be great advocates for the children and they have worked hard to ensure that they feel a part of the family. Both carers have an excellent relationship which is lovely to see. They promote age appropriate activities and specifically, they have worked hard with her to encourage positive friendships, which have on times, been very difficult and involved challenging the school where appropriate. I feel this highlights their commitment as well as their professional and advocacy skills development. They have evidenced their sheer commitment and resilience over the past few months considering the challenges they have faced. They never ask for support but rightly so, they did in this instance due to the severity of the issues. However, throughout the challenging few weeks, they both did everything they could and went over and beyond what would be expected of any foster carer. I feel that the carers fully view her as their family and it is clear for all whom are involved. Considering all that these carers have faced recently, their hard and persistent work with looked after children needs to be recognised and commended. I have no concerns whatsoever and believe that the children in their care are having their needs met to an excellent standard. It is a pleasure to work with them.

2.3 Views of foster carer's children and other household members.

"From day 1 living in my 'Fostering' household was home. It's a place of safety and security, something myself and many others hadn't experienced before. Being accepted into loving family and being treated no differently has changed and saved my life. If I hadn't come here, I dread to think where I would be today. Having been adopted, I now get to experience fostering in another light and it is just the most loving, rewarding lifestyle that I wouldn't change for anything."

"I was happy when my mum discussed with me that she was thinking about fostering because she always wanted to and I knew she would be good at it. When he arrived at our house I knew that he would fit perfectly. He has become a part of our family. It has been an amazing experience to have a little baby in the house. I am really enjoying having him in the house."

"I like looking after babies and playing with them. He likes me going into the ball pit with him. He is always happy and I like to feed him his bottle and help mum."

"I like looking after babies and helping and I am sad when they leave"

2. Evaluation forms of Foster Carers 2018

- 94% of participants have been regularly visited by their supervising Social Worker;
- 94% felt they had received appropriate support from their SSW. (Comments on this question)

1. Fantastic team of people doing a wonderful job for the children of Cardiff, very professional at all times;
2. My last review was one of the best I have had during my 13 years as a foster carer, I felt I was being listened to and was given advice and not rushed. Lasted longer than any I have had in the past.
3. I would like our daughter properly assessed as our back up carer if possible so it is clear to all parties involved what she is fully able to help out if needed;
4. Communication could sometimes be better.
 - 94% gave an excellent rating to reflect the quality of support they've been provided with, 6% said above average.
 - 94% have been regularly visited by the child's social worker (comments on this question)
1. Regular social worker is on long term sick;
2. Previous social worker was excellent but had no contact since she left some months back.
 - 94% have had the child/children placed in their care visited in accordance with the statutory regulations;
 - 25% have needed to use the EDT out of hours service;
 - 13% of those that contacted EDT scored the service as excellent, 13% above average, 74% not applicable;
 - 81.25% have completed training in the last month/6 months;
 - 38.46% rated the training as excellent, 46.15% above average, 31.25% not applicable;
 - 100% felt they had sufficient help to attend training, Comments from participants on training they would like to see; more mental health courses, self-esteem and confidence building in children courses, PACE,FASD, Adoption, moving on, babies in withdrawal;
 - 94% felt that they received sufficient information regarding fostering/the Fostering Service (Support groups, letters, website, newsletters);
 - felt the quality of this information 56.25% excellent, 43.75% above average;
 - 31.25% have requested equipment since their last annual review;
 - Of those that received equipment 80% felt the standard/quality of the equipment was excellent and 20% above average, (68.75% - those who did not receive equipment;
 - 94% are aware that there is a complaints procedure;
 - 100% have not felt the need to raise a concern about the service;
 - 43.75% wanted to compliment the Fostering Service, 37.5% did not, 12.5% not answered;
 - On a scale of 1 to 10 with 10 being the most positive an average overall score of 8.88 was given for how participants rated their experience of the Cardiff Fostering Service;

PART 2

Over view of Services delivered

Recruitment:

The process of recruiting foster carers to the service begins from the moment a prospective foster carer 'discovers' the service. Through the various stages of the process there is a need to be 'customer-focused' to build confidence in the agency from the outset and enhance the likelihood if approved, that foster carers will advocate for the service.

When it comes to increasing awareness of the fostering service, there was evidence that previous Cardiff Cares campaigns have had a positive impact. Significantly, use of social media has driven up traffic to the Cardiff Council Fostering website and increased levels of enquiries. The campaign was paused in January 2018, and there was evidence of more people choosing to foster with Independent Agencies and less choosing the Council's offer and the Children's Placement Board therefore directed in autumn 2018 that the Communications and Media Team reintroduce the Cardiff Carers Recruitment Campaign. The overarching theme of the recruitment campaign has been 'Thinking of Fostering? Think Cardiff Council', which is a key message consistent with the materials being developed by Narrative Edge on behalf of the National Fostering Framework where a primary objective is to encourage individuals considering fostering to apply to their Local Authorities.

The Children's Placement Board also commissioned a number of mutually complementary work strands, one of which was to ensure that there are sufficient resources in place to give the Fostering Service the best possible opportunity to convert enquiries into Cardiff Council Foster Carers. The other is the development of the Cardiff offer and incentives.

A programme of activity was delivered specifically targeting those already fostering with Independent Agencies, those considering fostering or those looking for a career who may not have previously considered becoming a foster carer. What has set this round of activity apart is that on a pilot basis, a budget was allocated to fund targeted social media marketing, using detailed characteristic analysis and profiling.

Organic Social Media messaging via the Council's Twitter & Facebook accounts in has taken place raising awareness of fostering and which also advertised drop in sessions / events that the Fostering Service were in attendance of with a view to encouraging members of the public to come to talk to the team about fostering with a view to generating potential foster carer enquiries, this including the manning of stands at Ely and Caerau Festival (July), The Running Festival (October), Cardiff and Christmas Market (November). Additionally, a Fostering Information Evening was held March 2019 targeting individuals who had responded to a Budget Consultation question where individuals were asked if they would wish to have further information about fostering. The event was also publicised via partner

agencies targeting those already working within the public sector including the Police and Health Service. Promotion of events on social media has had some positive impact with some individuals specifically saying that they had attended events because of seeing a feature on Social Media.

Internal communications channels have continued to be utilised which included inclusion of a feature on the Cardiff.gov.uk homepage carousel, Councillor E-briefing, in the spotlight feature and articles in the Council's Core Brief. External communications activity also took place in the form of radio advertising with Capital Radio targeted to Fostering Fortnight featuring foster carers who had transferred from the Independent Sector.

Positively, a partnership has been developed with the Into Work Services to directly reach those looking for a career. The Fostering Team has briefed the Into Work Service Staff Team, attended Job Fairs and held a monthly recruitment / drop in session on a rotation basis at Council Hubs.

A light touch refresh of the current Cardiff Carers website has been undertaken including the rewards and benefits page as activity on the website had demonstrated that this is the most popular page.

In 2018-2019, the Service ran five Skills to Foster Programmes April 2018, July 2018, October 2018, January 2019 and March 2019.

2. Training:

A wide menu of specialised training continues to be available alongside the mandatory required training for Foster Carers. The annual calendar was available in March allowing carers plenty of time to plan training into their schedule. There is a mix of classroom, support groups, twilight sessions and weekend training in order to meet the needs of the service. Training has been well attended with an ongoing improvement on last year's figures. We have seen a positive increasing rise in kinship carers attending training.

Support and Share sessions continue to be popular and well attended. Sessions are facilitated by carers; for carers. A range of planned topics are discussed, feedback at the end of each session is facilitated by training and fostering representative and passed to relevant services/agencies if any action is required.

A 'Preparation for Placement' workshop has been devised to bridge the gap of time and training, between foster carer's approval, and their attendance at induction training. It enables the sharing of key information and knowledge they need in the early days when a child is first placed. The workshop is suitable for mainstream and kinship carers, it has been well evaluated. 20 carers have attended this workshop to date, with a large percentage being kinship carers; this has contributed to an early engagement with training, resulting in a willingness to attend further training sessions.

A 3-day Induction Programme for newly approved carers continues to run 4 times throughout the year, this is coordinated as a regional approach. Cardiff have devised and run 7 - kinship carers Induction Day courses, 54 carers have attended to date, this is facilitated in house and well evaluated.

The lottery-funded training, Confidence in Care Programme is 12 days learning and reflective practice over consecutive weeks. This continues to be making a large impact on practice, providing a tool kit of strategies to use when working with children and young people. The first course ran in 2016 since then 43 foster carers and 8 team members have completed the course to date. Within those figures includes 8 kinship/connected carers. Courses are delivered annually and a mix of 12 carers and 2 staff will start the fifth and final round of fully funded training in January 2020. To keep the concept of support, and the contents and skills/techniques learnt during fostering changes, Cardiff provides quarterly support groups for each of the four groups who have completed the programme. These are facilitated in house and are well attended.

Survey Monkey was used to invite all foster carers to evaluate last year's training and support and to contribute and feed into the training plan for the forth-coming year. 35 carers responded which was a vast improvement on previous years.

An internal framework for foster carers learning and development has been devised in the model of a 'Continuous Professional Development Portfolio'. These are currently being introduced to carers by their supervising social workers on a monthly basis.

3. Connected Persons/ Kinship:

Kinship foster care is a formal arrangement where a child is looked after by the Local Authority and placed with a relative, friend or connected person. 'Relative of Friend' is defined as a: grandparent, brother, sister, uncle or aunt (whether of the full blood or by marriage), step-parent, or friend of the child; A 'Connected Person' is anyone who has a pre-existing connection to a child through his or her extended network.

There continues to be an increase in the numbers of assessments undertaken on 'connected persons' who are put forward to look after Cardiff children. This in turn has had a significant impact on the number of cases presented to Cardiff's Foster Panel and has implications for the supervisory capacity in the Fostering Service. This trend is going to continue as connected persons carers are a major growth area due to PLO and the requirement to look within a Child's own family network when initiating proceedings.

Resources to undertake assessments still remain with the Children in Need teams as the fostering service does not have the capacity, but the supervision of approved 'connected persons' remains within Cardiff's fostering service and continues to be a main area of activity during the year. It is predicted that the number of connected person's carers will surpass the number of mainstream carers by the summer of 2019.

Increasingly, many new connected person's carers are not fully prepared for the role they are taking on in caring for children who have experienced trauma. The increased support required to many connected persons has evidenced a resource implication for the fostering team in providing an appropriate level of support

Whilst any placement with natural family is seen as beneficial for a child this also needs to be consistent with the welfare of the child concerned and based on permanence or long term planning.

4. WIR / Supported Lodgings:

WIR

Previously, young people have continued to live with their foster carers under a person specific supported lodgings arrangement. However, following the implementation of the Social Services and Well Being Act (Wales) 2014 in Wales, the 'When I am Ready' ('WIR') scheme is now in place to enable care leavers to continue to live with their former foster carers under a different arrangement once they turn 18 years of age. These proposed arrangements are presented to Cardiff's When I'm Ready panel for consideration. As of the 31.03.19 Cardiff County Council currently have 22 such arrangements, which are aiming to provide further stability and positive outcomes for young people.

Supported Lodgings

The Supported Lodgings Scheme is a form of temporary supported accommodation for vulnerable young people who are not ready to live independently for a variety of reasons. It is expected that the scheme will provide places for care leavers aged 16 to 21 years, Unaccompanied Asylum Seekers or one of the accommodation options for young people who present as homeless to the Authority. Young people placed on this scheme will have their own room within the Supported Lodgings provider's home and be given support by the adult or adults in the home to develop independent living skills. Supported Lodgings providers are assessed, presented to Supported Lodgings Panel and approved by Cardiff Council to provide safe and friendly accommodation within a family home.

As of the 31.03.19 we have 20 approved supported lodgings providers, with 19 young people accessing a supported lodgings placement.

5. Private Fostering:

The fostering service has used various strategies to raise public awareness of private fostering throughout 01.04.18 to 31.03.19. These strategies have included:

- Developing a private fostering awareness raising strategy explored with the Council Comms department for 18/19
- Ensure Private Fostering awareness raising information was available on Cardiff Council website and reviewed regularly
- Actioned monthly Social Media adverts / messages regarding private fostering awareness raising on the Cardiff Council Twitter and Facebook pages
- Provided leaflets and posters about Private Fostering and redistributed to schools in Cardiff
- Provided leaflets and posters about Private Fostering to be redistributed to all Hubs in Cardiff
- Displayed an advert detailing information on Private Fostering in the Cardiff Metro newspaper.

Evidence of the potential reach of the awareness raising is as follows:

- Monthly Facebook posts has the potential to reach 1.9k to 3.4k
- Fortnightly Twitter posts has the potential to reach 86.4K to 87.7K followers (English Tweet) and 2.6K to 2.7K followers (Welsh Tweet)
- The current analytics show that each Facebook post and Tweet has led to visitors on the Private Fostering awareness raising information available on Cardiff Council website. The number of visitors to the website following a Tweet or Facebook post range from 5 to 29 visitors to Website.

Pertinent statistics from 01.04.18 to 31.03.19:

- The Local Authority are aware of 8 new private fostering arrangements commencing.
- 10 private fostering arrangements have ended since 01.04.18. This number is made up of some arrangements already known pre 01.04.18 and post 01.04.18.
- Currently there are 4 known private fostering arrangements open to the Local Authority.

6. Retention:

Retention of approved Foster Carers is a key priority for the Service. Positively, the Service has not lost any carers through them seeking to transfer to another Agency. The Service in terms of retention is aware that for post approval support packages it is crucial to communicate directly, to be involved in decision making and carers have therefore been actively involved on the basis of partnership and consulted on the future service design e.g. involvement with the Service Annual Training Needs Analysis held in January 2018. The Service aims to ensure that all looked after children in Cardiff receive the best possible care, so they can make the most of their opportunities, now and in the future. It recognises and values the demanding and

highly significant role that Foster carers play in providing excellent care and support to our looked after children. We want to strengthen our partnership with registered foster carers to ensure they are fully involved in the development of the fostering service for the benefit of all Stakeholders.

The Service has a Fostering Peer Support scheme where it seeks to link all newly approved foster carers or carers facing a new area of challenge with an experienced carer who acts as a Peer who will be 'on hand' to offer primarily, telephone support. The aim is to enhance the support package provided to new carers with the Peer playing a crucial role on helping to a new carer into both the formal and informal fostering network. Peers have commented that they have valued being linked with other carers have commented that they have felt it rewarding to be involved in supporting new carers to try to improve the outcomes for children.

The Service has introduced a range of training initiatives from induction training for all newly approved foster carers to targeted training for enhanced development and support and share sessions, giving an opportunity to welcome new carers to the City of Cardiff Fostering Service, to share information, introduce key staff team members and to discuss ongoing foster carer development and the benefit from learning about experiences and gaining support from experienced carers. A key change is the development of the Cardiff Foster Carers' Association (CFCA) and within the first year they have with the support of funding from the Service successfully organised a number of activities hosted a Christmas party; and regularly held coffee mornings which continue to provide a safe environment in which to meet other carers and staff.

7. Performance Indicators In house Cardiff Carers

12.2% returned home from care during the year (Cardiff LAC total 6.2%)

76.2% were placed in Cardiff (Cardiff LAC total 56.6%)

88.6% were placed in Cardiff or neighbouring LA (Cardiff LAC total 76.6%). This PI has changed from last year – no longer 'within 10 miles'.

20.8% were seen by a dentist within 3 months (Cardiff LAC total 35.2%)

84.6% were registered with a GP within 10 working days (Cardiff LAC total 82.4%)

17.2% experienced one or more change of school (Cardiff LAC total 16%)

Developments and improvements planned for 2019 / 2020

During 2019 /2020 there are plans to further develop and improve the service and some specific areas that have been identified:-

- To continue to engage with developments under the National Framework
- To continue to issue the Training and Development Portfolio for carers.
- To further develop bespoke Training for Kinship carers
- To implement the Review of the Fostering Service to enhance Recruitment and Retention.
- To maintain Confidence in Care Support groups as a permanent feature of the service
- To deliver informal Support and Share sessions for carers, and Coffee Meet ups facilitated by carers.
- To Promote the Service at every opportunity

PART 3

This section provides information and analysis of performance in relation to the monitoring of the matters detailed (in accordance with the requirements of Regulation 6 of the Local Authority Fostering Services (Wales) Regulations 2018) as previously required under Regulation 42 Fostering Services (Wales) Regulations 2003.

Monitoring service delivery

There are structures and systems in place to ensure accountability of service provision and these include regular management meetings, team meetings, and the collation of performance data and feedback for example:-

- Monitoring monthly recruitment statistics;
- Monitoring information about placements and producing monthly reports related to placement / occupancy figures;
- Monitoring via monthly budget reports;
- Monitoring the regular supervisory activities of the workers and managers via supervision, files audits, etc.
- Gaining feedback from the views or comments expressed through the Statutory Reviews of children in placement and via Foster Carer Annual Reviews;
- The work of the Fostering Panel;
- Monitoring of compliments and complaints;
- Issues raised by carers through Consultations and Feedback forms;
- Producing a Quality of Care report on an annual basis (a copy of which can be obtained on making a request to the service).

All of this information is used to assist in monitoring how well the needs of Cardiff's Looked After Children are met by the services being provided. The information provided in these reports also assists the service in identifying areas for improvement.

In addition to our in-house monitoring, the Fostering Service provides data, reports & presentations to the Children's Services Management Team and Council's Corporate Parenting Advisory Committee as requested / required.

Schedule 7

Compliance in relation to each child placed with foster parents, with the foster placement agreement and the responsible authority's plan for the care of the child.

1 Foster Placement Agreements

Compliance in relation to fostering placement agreements for children is currently monitored through:-

- Formal supervision sessions;
- File audits / file spot checks undertaken by the Managers/Senior Social Workers;
- Utilising a monitoring system which we've implemented on our CareFirst computer system i.e. when the Fostering worker completes a Foster Carer Visit they are able to log that a Fostering Placement agreement is required and the system will generate an automatic reminder ('Activity') so that the worker is prompted to chase up the agreement.

2 All accidents, injuries and illnesses of children placed with foster parents.

Accidents, injuries and illnesses are monitored through the 'Register of significant incidents' that is held/maintained by the Fostering Service. The Fostering Service monitors this area utilising 2 categories:-

- **Serious illness or serious accident of a child placed with foster parents (these incidents are reported to the CSSIW)**

Between 01.04.18 – 31.03.19 there were **1** incident(s) of this nature recorded.

- **All Other Accidents, Injuries, Illnesses (these incidents are not reported to the CSSIW)**

Between 01.04.18 – 31.03.19 there were **9** incidents of this nature recorded.

The incidents reported reflect that foster carers and social workers understand the need for reporting incidents and illnesses and any concerns for a child's welfare. The majority of the incidents required no more than low level medical treatment.

3 Complaints about the service

In addition to the information held on the 'Register of significant events' the service keep a Complaints Register to monitor all complaints received.

Serious complaints about a foster parent are reported to the CSSIW.

Between 01.04.18 – 31.03.19 there were **2** complaints about the service recorded:-

The move to managers chairing reviews has meant that carers are raising issues more informally. Also, the Fostering Service has strived to be more accessible via direct contact and newsletters.

4 Any allegations or suspicions of abuse in respect of children placed with foster parents and the outcome of any investigation.

Between 01.04.18 – 31.03.19 there 0 incidents of this nature were recorded.

5 Staff recruitment records are held and a record of required checks for new workers (re: 01.04.18 – 31.03.19) There was a new Business Support Panel Administrator and 2 Grade 8 Social Workers and 1 grade 7 social work. Staff group remained stable.

Relevant checks are undertaken in relation to all staff appointed to the service e.g. DBS, references, relevant qualifications and evidence of social work registration.

6. Notifications of the events listed in Schedule 8

Compliance is monitored through the '**Register of significant incidents**' that are held/maintained by the Fostering Service.

The Fostering Service maintain the register in relation to the events listed in **Schedule 8** but also keep registers in relation to some additional categories/events that it was felt useful for the Service to record/monitor:-

Nature of Event	No. of incidents in relation to this type of event recorded between 01.04.18 – 31.03.19
Death of a child placed with foster parents	0
Referral to the Secretary of State pursuant to section 2(1)(a) of the Protection of Children Act 1999 (1) of an individual working for a fostering service	0
Serious illness or serious accident of a child placed with foster parents	1
Outbreak at the home of a foster parent of any infectious disease which in the opinion of a registered medical practitioner attending the home is sufficiently serious to be so notified	0
Involvement or suspected involvement of a child placed with foster parents in prostitution	0
Serious incident relating to a child placed with foster parents necessitating calling the police to the foster parents' home	2
Any serious complaint about any foster parent approved by the fostering service provider	2
Instigation and outcome of any child protection (CP) enquiry	3

involving a child placed with foster parents	
Allegation that a child placed with foster parents has committed a serious offence	0
Absconding by a child placed with foster parents	2
All accidents, injuries and illnesses of children placed with foster parents (in addition to serious illness or accidents which are reported to CSSIW)	9
Use of any measures of control, restraint or discipline in respect of children accommodated in a foster home	0
Any Other Incidents	4

The number of incidents equates to less than a quarter of the total Cardiff Foster Carer population and more than half were low level day to day incidents, that did not require reporting to CSSIW.

The reporting of incidents is discussed at each foster carer visit this needs to remain robust.

7. Any unauthorised absence from the foster home of a child accommodated there.

Between 01.04.18 – 31.03.19 there are **2** incidents of this nature recorded, each was reported to the Police and EDT and the child returned safely.

8. Use of any measures of control, restraint or discipline in respect of children accommodated in a foster home.

Between 01.04.18 – 31.03.19 there **0** incident of this nature recorded

9. Medication, medical treatment and first aid administered to any child placed with foster parents.

All children and young people placed with foster carers are registered with a GP, dentist and optician (if required). Cardiff's foster carers receive training on meeting the health needs of children and young people in their carer, and First Aid training is mandatory for all carers. All Foster Carers should have a copy of the Foster Carer Handbook which provides information and general guidance on health issues. Furthermore, health issues are discussed as part of the supervising social workers regular visits to carers.

Carers are also required to complete a Health Record for all children placed. The Local Authority has performance indicators to monitor health outcomes for Looked After children.

Carers are required to record all details of a child in placement's health (including medication, medical treatment and first aid administered to any child placed with

foster parents). Regular medication / medical treatment would therefore be expected to be recorded by the carer in the child's Health Record.

However, in addition to the carer recording all health related information in the child's Health Record they are also expected to record any irregular occurrences of medication, medical treatment and first aid being administered in their log (duplicate) books.

10. Where applicable, the standard of any educational provision provided by the fostering service.

The Fostering Service does not provide any formal educational provision in relation to children and young people.

However, the Local Authority does monitor the educational performance of Cardiff's Looked After Child population.

11. Recruitment / Assessment data

Please see table below for information in respect of the new applications that were received by the Fostering Service during 2018 / 2019:-

OVERVIEW OF FOSTERING RECRUITMENT ENQUIRES / ASSESSMENTS 2018/2019	
Total No. of Mainstream enquiries =	150
Total No. of Kinship enquiries =	62
Total No. of enquiries that proceeded to Initials Assessments =	45
Total No. of enquiries that proceeded to Full assessments =	34
Total No. Mainstream applicants / carers approved =	10
Total No. Kinship applicants / carers approved =	34

12. Records of Fostering Panel meetings

The Fostering Panel generally meets every two weeks (unless there are exceptional circumstances that lead to it being cancelled or if an exceptional panel needs to be held). Records of all Foster Panel minutes are held on the Fostering Services computer system (and hard copies are placed on the files of applicants and carers).

In the period 01.04.18 – 31.03.19 minutes are held for the following dates (in accordance with all the Fostering Panels held during that period):-

April 11th and 25th, May 9th and 23rd, June 6th and 20th, July 4th and 18th, August 1st, 15th and 29th, September 26th, October 10th and 24th, November 7th and 21st, December 5th and 19th, January 2019 9th, 16th and 30th, February 13th and 27th, March 13th and 27th.

The figures for 2018 -2019 show that 25 panel meetings were held during the year A total of 127 cases were presented at the panel during 2018 – 2019 (1 of which was an initial reviews of newly approved carers) and of the 127 recommendations made, the Agency Decision Maker (ADM) upheld 70% of the recommendations (which provides evidence that the panel are effective in their role).

The average time taken for the ADM to provide a decision after the Panel date was 8.4 working days which evidences efficiency and timely decision making in relation to the running of the panel.

The Panel Chair and the Fostering Managers / Panel Advisors ensure that the Fostering Panel continues to operate in line with the requirements of the Fostering regulations and Cardiff's policies and procedures.

There are some very positive messages about the efficiency of the Panel and the Decision making. The panel functions well and meets Regulatory requirements. The panel completed training focusing on analysis of risk in complex situations. The figures reflect that the service continues to facilitate approximately two panels a month, with sufficient number of carers are presented with the necessary information in order that timely decisions can be made.

Consultation about Fostering Panel

Another way in which the service consults with applicants / carers is via a feedback questionnaire for people who have attended the Fostering Panel.

	No. of Responses	Rating of Panel experience on a scale of 1 to 10 (with 10 being the most positive)									
		1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Foster Carer	0										
Applicants	8									x	
Totals =	8										

In addition to the above data, some examples of the comments received via these questionnaires:-

What was your experience of Panel?

“Everyone was friendly and the informal environment helped take away the nerves.”

“Nice, relaxed and friendly”

“Thank you for inviting us to Panel.”

“Our experience at panel was very positive. We were made to feel welcome and at ease. It was clear panel has taken the time to understand the case.”

“It was excellent, thoroughly explained to us and supported throughout.”

“The people on the panel were friendly and made us feel welcome and at ease. Somebody came into the visiting room to discuss what was going to happen, this

was of great benefit. We feel the timing was adequate, not too long in front of panel or waiting for their recommendation.”

“We were nervous before panel but put at ease by the panel members who were very kind and came to us before we entered the room.”

“Our experience was a nice and relaxed atmosphere. Everybody on panel were friendly and understanding which made me feel relaxed and confident.”

“Pleasant.”

“Very Friendly and made to feel at ease.”

“It was a nerve wrecking experience but overall the process was good. The panel were friendly and their experience and comments were appreciated.”

What could Panel do better to improve your experience of Panel?

‘Nothing.’

“Felt it was as good as it could be”

“As experience was not too traumatic and panel were welcoming there is nothing more. Maybe Paint the room where you wait and a more relaxing chair.”

“No suggestions for improvements.”

“Nothing.”

“Nothing is was a good experience.”

“Felt it was as good as it could be.”

“Our Social Worker said laid out the experience to be a little different-it would be good for the invite to show step by step what will happen from the panel’s POV.”

The information gained via these new questionnaires are reviewed and shared to ensure that feedback (both positive and negative) given is addressed appropriately (and that appropriate action is taken) any issues raised by applicants, carers, panel members / advisors or the ADM are also discussed during the ‘any other business’ section of the panel and / or at Panel Business meetings.

13 Duty rosters of persons working for the fostering agency, as arranged and as actually worked

The staff in the Fostering Service are able to utilise a flexi time system; their flexi sheets are submitted to their supervisor’s to be checked / approved at the end of each flexi cycle and if they are requesting over 3hrs of flexi leave.

In relation to the Fostering Duty system (within office hours) there are monthly rotas for the Duty Workers circulated to the team and any amendments to these rotas need to be agreed by the Managers.

Out of hours support to carers is provided via our Emergency Duty Team (EDT), there is always a senior manager on call that EDT can access to provide advice and guidance if required regarding matters that arise out of hours in relation to foster carers and the children placed with them.

14. Records of staff appraisals.

The procedure for Personal Performance & Development Plans (PPDP) is that they should be undertaken / completed annually but that they are then reviewed on a 6 monthly basis i.e. a Personal Performance & Development Review (PPDR) is undertaken on a 6 monthly basis.

A copy of the PPDP should be held on the relevant staff members supervision file and a record of when they have been completed is also recorded centrally i.e. all staff PPDPs / PPDRs are recorded on the 'Digi Gov' computer system and compliance is monitored by Human Resources (HR) and Senior Management.

During 2018 – 2019 the Fostering Service was 100% compliant in respect of undertaking and completing staff PPDPs / PPDRs.

15. Minutes of staff meetings.

Team Meetings are held once a month; minutes are produced and held on file.