

CORPORATE PARENTING ADVISORY COMMITTEE

18 JANUARY 2022

Present: Councillor Merry(Chairperson)
Councillors Hinchey, Jones-Pritchard, Jenkins, Lent, Naughton
and Parkhill

189 : APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies were received from Councillors Lister and Ford and from Committee Advisor Rose Whittle.

190 : DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

No declarations of interest were received.

191 : MINUTES

The Committee approved as a correct record the minutes of the meeting on 19 October 2021, as proposed by Councillor Hinchey and seconded by Councillor Lent.

192 : YOUTH JUSTICE SERVICE UPDATE

The Chair invited Angharad Thomas from the Youth Justice Service to present the report, which aims to inform the Committee of the current structure of the YJS along with data on outcomes and information on Children Looked After who come to the attention of the service.

Members were asked to comment or raise questions on the information received. Those discussions are summarised as follows:

- Members enquired as to the nature of work undertaken with children aged 8-9 to help prevent them entering on a pathway into the YJS. Officers advised that while some areas did conduct prevention work among 8-9 year olds HMIP had advised that this was not appropriate for YJS. There might be scope for targeted work within primary schools which YJS could contribute to.
- Members enquired as to whether a breakdown of the data could provide further information about the greater number of boys than girls entering the YJS. Officers indicated that they would seek to provide the information.
- Members were advised that education was a major partner of YJS. The importance of working with children before and after they enter YJS was discussed, in order to prevent both entry and re-entry into the service.
- Members were advised that the name of the service had been changed along with its counterparts in other LA areas in recognition of a change in focus away from solely on offenders to encompass victims as well, and in response to requests from young people.

- Members discussed examples of decriminalisation within the care setting. Officers advised that a case study could be provided if desired.
- Members sought clarification on whether the substance misuse workshops had started and how they were targeted. Officers advised that the workshops would commence once an additional staff member had been recruited. The workshops are targeted according to the needs of the different residential establishments. Members were advised that the work of the substance misuse workers was about providing information and support to children in reducing harmful behaviours and making positive choices.

RESOLVED:

To note the report.

193 : PARTICIPATION - BRIGHT SPARKS

The Chair invited Samantha Anderson (Participation Officer, NYAS Cymru) to present the report, which provided an update on the Bright Sparks Club and the activities that Bright Sparks has undertaken in relation to the fourth of the 5 Priorities outlined in the Corporate Parenting Strategy – Educational achievement, Employment and Training, as well as other activities in which the group has participated.

Ms Anderson and Leigh Vella, Corporate Parenting Officer, reported on the joint meeting between Bright Sparks participants and members of the Committee on 29 October 2021, which included a discussion of the Corporate Parenting Strategy.

Members were asked to comment or raise questions on the information received. Those discussions are summarised as follows:

- Members enquired as to a review of the costs for children in hostels and attempts to reduce them. Officers advised that they would seek information on the matter.
- Members expressed the importance of peer support for the aspirations of Children Looked After, both from other Children Looked After and from non-CLA peers, as well as from adult professionals. Officers advised that the Care Experienced young people that they worked with were proud of their experience as CLA and working with others who fall into that category is important to them. They expect a degree of discrimination and prejudice from other children, but it is particularly damaging when it comes from adult professionals.
- Members enquired as to the success of Stable Homes Goal 5 Keeping people out of homelessness and hostels. Officers advised they had no information on that.
- Members discussed the length of time for which the Council could provide a safety net for Care Experienced young people as they progressed into adult life.

RESOLVED:

To note the report.

194 : INTO WORK ADVICE SERVICE

The Chair invited Kate Elias (Assistant Into Work Coordinator for Youth) and Cherie Macquis (Bright Start Youth Employment Mentor) to present the report, which provided information in relation to the Bright Futures Project and Bright Start Traineeship Scheme.

Members were asked to comment or raise questions on the information received. Those discussions are summarised as follows:

- Members requested a breakdown of the support the Council is able to provide in relation to housing costs for the next meeting. Officers advised that young people had been encouraged to apply for Discretionary Housing Payment to cover the initial period when they start work. However, a successful application is not guaranteed and many young people would rather not work than risk getting into debt.
- Members enquired about placements with private partners. Officers advised that there had been a pause on external placements due to concerns around Covid. The Employer Liaison Team had been working on setting up placements for when the pause is lifted.
- Members expressed disappointment that it had only been possible to make internal placements. The importance of widening placement opportunities when Covid restrictions allow was discussed.
- Members discussed the benefits of face-to-face meetings with young people on placements and commended the work of officers in supporting young people.
- Members sought clarification on whether there would be funding available to continue operations next year. Officers advised that confirmation of continued funding was still awaited. There was funding available for 4 mentors until June 2023. Funding for an additional mentor is anticipated but not confirmed.

RESOLVED:

To note the report.

195 : SUPPORT FOR CARE LEAVERS

The Chair invited Sharlaine Bird (Team Manager, Personal Adviser Service) and Gareth Gronow (Participation and Wellbeing Coordinator) to present the report, which provided an update on the work being undertaken by the service to support young people leaving care, including provisions that have been put in place to support

young people leaving care during the past 12 month, as well as future plans for the service.

Members were asked to comment or raise questions on the information received. Those discussions are summarised as follows:

- Members enquired as to whether Officers worked with other bodies such as Scout groups which offer a range of activities to young people. Members were advised that so far there had not been joint working with Scout groups as young people in or leaving care had not expressed any interest in joining them.
- The view was expressed that it was the activities that young people wished to do that mattered. Life skills such as cooking and DIY and financial awareness are important to enable young people to live independently. Officers advised that young people learnt life skills during their training with Wates Construction. Sessions given by the team are intended to give young people more independence and confidence that will enable them to join outside groups such as Scouts.
- The additional team post has allowed the team to develop a cohort of young people who are able to feedback on their views of the service and their activities, as well as creating new opportunities for the service.

RESOLVED:

To note the report.

196 : CHILDREN LOOKED AFTER IN EDUCATION - ANNUAL REVIEW BRIEFING

The Chair invited Gill James, (Achievement Leader, Key Groups) and Libby Jones (Looked After Children Education Team) to present the briefing, which provided an overview of the results of tracking and monitoring the performance of Looked After Children as well as focusing on sharing the strengths of current practice in terms of supporting Looked After Children.

Members were asked to comment or raise questions on the information received. Those discussions are summarised as follows:

- Members sought clarification on the distances travelled by Looked After Children educated in out of county settings. Officers advised that even where the settings were just over the border they still presented difficulties.
- Officers confirmed that the CPAC Dashboard was part of the report and explained acronyms used in the report.
- Members discussed whether it would be appropriate to incorporate targets for exclusion rates, transition to GCSE, and progression to employment, education or training. Officers advised that the aspiration was for no children to be excluded and all children to progress to employment, education or training.

It is important to consider what success means for an individual. Any targets would not be distinct from those for the Education Directorate as a whole.

RESOLVED:

To note the briefing provided.

197 : ADDITIONAL LEARNING NEEDS AND EDUCATION TRIBUNAL WALES
ACT 2018 UPDATE BRIEFING

The Chair invited Gill James (Achievement Leader (Key Groups) and Libby Jones (Looked After Children Education Team) to present the briefing, which provided an overview of the implications of the ALN system for Looked After Children. A presentation was also provided.

Members were asked to comment or raise questions on the information received. Those discussions are summarised as follows:

- Members sought clarification on where responsibility for a child's IDP would lie. Officers advised that the LA would be responsible for the IDP and it would rest upon colleagues in Children's Services and Education to ensure a joined-up approach. The sole focus of the inclusion teacher is the IDPs.
- Members welcomed the inclusion of Looked After Children in the development of their IDPs and discussed how the experience of Children Looked After by the Local Authority and those who were not differed.

RESOLVED:

To note the briefing provided.

198 : PERFORMANCE REPORT

The Chair invited Deborah Driffield (Director, Children's Services) to present the Performance Dashboard.

RESOLVED:

To note the performance figures provided.

199 : WORK PROGRAMME 2021 - 2022

The Chair invited Leigh Vella to present the work programme and invited Members confirm whether there were any specific issues they would like covered at the next meeting of the Committee in March.

Members suggested the following for the next meeting:

- Information in relation to training for the Committee and new Members going forward, bearing in mind the local election which is took place in May;

- Information in relation to the costs of living of children looked after – with specific reference to housing costs; and
- The sort of services that the Corporate Parent could help to provide once a young person reaches 25.

RESOLVED:

To note the report and comments in relation to further items.

200 : URGENT ITEMS (IF ANY)

No urgent items were received.

201 : DATE OF NEXT MEETING

The next scheduled date of the Committee is on Tuesday 15 March 2022 at 2.00 pm via MS Teams

The meeting terminated at 4.30 pm