

My Ref: Scrutiny/Correspondence/MJH

13 October 2017

Rachel Evans
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Dear Rachel

The Members of Cardiff Council's Children & Young People Scrutiny Committee would like to thank you for providing them with a copy of the Vale, Valleys & Cardiff Adoption Service's Annual Report, as hosts for the collaborative, and answering the Members questions.

The Committee also wished to thank, Angela Harris, Regional Adoption Manager Vale of Glamorgan Council, together with Councillor Graham Hinchey, Cabinet Member for Children & Families, Tony Young, Director of Social Services and Irfan Alam Assistant Director Children's Services, for their attendance and the honest and open answers to the Members questions.

The Committee welcomed the report and agreed to commend it to the Management Board and Joint Committee for their approval. During the way forward the Members identified a number of points which they felt I should write to you about.

The Members were pleased to be updated on the actions identified in the previous annual report, but wished to receive a further update on the following actions which still required more work to be undertaken, namely:

- To develop opportunities for engagement and obtaining feedback from service users;
- To improve efficiency and reduce administrative costs of the Adoption Panel by implementing a paperless Panel system.

The Committee was however concerned to hear of the poor uptake of Birth Parents Counselling, the Members understood the sensitivities in engaging with Birth Parents, but considered that this area needs more focus.

The Committee was also concerned at the resource issues which had effected five social worker posts during the second half of last year. The Members requested that an update on the recruitment and organisation of these posts be provided as part of the response to this letter.

The Committee noted that a best value review was being undertaken which covered, demand, shortfall in staffing and adoption support. The Committee requested that a

copy of the best value review report be presented to Members, when it has been completed, along with the Collaborative's Business plan.

Finally the Committee discussed at some length the Link Matching service and Activities Days which helped potential adopters in identifying children for adoption. The Members wondered how effective these were in helping people to adopt and requested that an impact assessment of the Link Matching and Activities Days be undertaken and included in this year's annual report.

I hope that the comments, advice and requests for information, detailed above, will be of use and support in the adoption of children across the region and in particular in Cardiff, and I look forward to a positive response to this letter within a month.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'L. BRIDGEMAN', written over a light grey rectangular background.

COUNTY COUNCILLOR LEE BRIDGEMAN
Chairperson – Children and Young People Scrutiny Committee

CC Angela Harris, Vale, Valleys and Cardiff Regional Adoption Service Manager
CC Councillor Graham Hinchey, Board Member
CC Tony Young, Board Member