

COUNCIL: 12 SEPTEMBER 2019

CHILDREN & FAMILIES STATEMENT

Childcare Offer Update

The Childcare Offer for Wales provides funded Foundation Phase Nursery early years education and childcare for eligible working parents of 3 to 4 year olds. Totalling up to 30 hours per week of combined early education and childcare during term time and up to 30 hours of childcare during 9 weeks of the school holidays, the Childcare Offer aims to assist parents, particularly mothers, to return to work; to increase the disposable income of low income working families and to support child development and school readiness.

Since opening for applications in October 2018, the Childcare Offer Team has received applications relating to 2,400 children and 2,213 children have been approved to date. The team are currently working with families to gather further evidence required to approve their applications. There are currently 309 childcare settings (locations) to provide the Childcare Offer. This demonstrates excellent progress by the team since the full roll out began in January this year.

Expenditure on funding these childcare places, which includes support for children with additional needs, has now passed the £2.5m mark. This represents a 'real world' saving for families by offsetting their childcare costs, and allowing to spend their money in the Cardiff economy.

National Advisory Group

Officers from Cardiff Children's Services have been invited to attend a National Advisory Group in Westminster, which is developing UK-wide plans to embed working with parents as safeguarding partners when working through safeguarding with adolescents who are being exploited through non familial means. There has been wide acknowledgement that parents are a protective factor in this situation.

The National Advisory Group plans to develop some practice guidance / standards for working with parents as safeguarding partners and are working to share information, guidance and resources which are currently being used across the country that will assist the group in this exercise. The group meets quarterly and shares practice and discussion ideas. Cardiff is the only Welsh Local Authority attending these meetings.

Pride Cymru & Fostering

Six members of staff from our Fostering Service promoted in-house Fostering over two days at the Pride Festival. Our presence at the festival was to raise the profile

of Fostering for Cardiff Council, dispel some myths and to increase the diversity of our foster carers and promote the opportunities the service can offer. We had worked with Pride before the event and they are committed to sharing our Fostering Service on their social media platforms. Fostering will continue to support a range of community events in the city, to ensure that residents are aware of the opportunities to work as part of our in-house Fostering team. Members will be aware of the briefing sent out providing information and signposting for all Councillors as corporate parents to become proactively involved in increasing the number of foster carers in their wards.

Cardiff Family Advice and Support

Cardiff Family Advice and Support Service went live on 1st April this year. The service offers a range of information, advice and assistance for children, young people and their families in Cardiff. Since April 2019, 2788 people have been supported by the new service.

The Family Gateway team can provide information and advice on:

- Family Life
- Child behaviour
- Child care
- Parental support
- School attendance
- Employment, money and housing
- Information and signposting to other services

They can be contacted on 03000 133133 or by email: ContactFAS@cardiff.gov.uk
Further information is available at: www.cardiffamilies.co.uk

The Family Help Team are a team of trained Family Help Advisors and receive referrals from the Family Gateway. They can work with families in the home and in the community, offering information, advice and support on a range of topics.

The Support4Families Team are social worker led. This team works with families facing more complicated issues and work together with parents, children and young people to find the right solutions for them and their family.

Cardiff Parenting delivers a variety of services for parents and families across Cardiff with crèche facilities available.

These teams work together with children, young people and their families to find solutions that meet their individual needs.

Senior Management Restructure

The senior management restructure within Children's Services is progressing well and employees have commence in the following roles

- OM for Well-being, Protection & Support
- OM for Restorative, Leaving Care & Edge of Care
- OM for Substitute Family Care

- OM for Service Improvement & Strategy

In relation to the three new OM Locality posts; offers have been made to two successful candidates who are currently working notice with their current employer and further recruitment will now take place to appoint to the remaining post.

Work has commenced on the realignment of staff under the new posts, with significant work required to move to the new locality model. The localities chosen align to the Council's neighbourhood management areas, GP clusters and Police Unit areas.

Right Home, Right Support

The Commissioning Strategy for Accommodation and Support for Children Looked After 2019 to 2022, is currently in development. The Strategy has direct links with our new overarching 3-year Cardiff's Children's Services Strategy - "Delivering Excellent Outcomes" (2019-2022).

Cardiff, like all other developing cities across the UK, is facing unprecedented levels of demand for Children Looked After. As a result, the Council need to identify a range of options to ensure that the child is provided with safe, secure and supportive settings. This could include a wide range of support and placements for Children Looked After including kinship and foster care and developing a wide range of other appropriate placements.

It is our intention that the Commissioning Strategy and Market Position Statement will clearly map out the future intentions of Cardiff Council to ensure a mixture of in house and external provision for Children Looked After. A detailed implementation plan is also in development that identifies the next steps. I intend to put this before Cabinet colleagues later this year for approval.

Councillor Graham Hinchey
Cabinet Member for Children & Families
6 September 2019