

COUNCIL: 22 JULY 2021

CHILDREN & FAMILIES STATEMENT

Young People's Mental Health & Emotional Wellbeing – Starting Well Partnership

Under the governance of the newly-formed Starting Well Partnership, Children's Services and Early Help Services are working with partners to develop an integrated approach to meeting the emotional wellbeing and mental health needs of children and young people. This will enable the Council to respond to the recommendations in the Children's Commissioner's report, *No Wrong Door*, and work with key partners across the region to deliver a seamless approach across the range of services for children and young people.

To support the delivery of this integrated approach, an Emotional Health and Wellbeing workstream has been developed, which will report to the Starting Well Partnership. Membership of this group includes partners across Cardiff and the Vale of Glamorgan, such as Health, Social Services, Early Help, Education, and the Third Sector. Membership will also be extended to wider project leads who are involved in other initiatives for children and young people with emotional mental health and wellbeing needs (Whole School Approaches and the NEST/NYTH model). This will avoid any duplication across Welsh Government workstreams, and enhance the capacity available across the partnership for driving forward change.

A team has been engaged to develop at pace the integrated approach and respond to priorities within the workstream on behalf of the partners. Priority is being given to securing short- and long-term solutions to supporting children and young people who present in crisis to Emergency Departments, but who do not require hospital admission and who cannot return home in the short term. Operational leads across the partnership will work together to explore options to meet the needs of these children and young people. This early project development will dovetail into the further delivery of an integrated approach to children and young people's emotional mental health services.

Foster Wales

Foster Wales is a collaboration of all 22 Local Authority fostering services in Wales coming together under one brand, with the aim of significantly increasing the number and range of foster carers recruited directly to Local Authorities. By working together, they can create a significant national impact across Wales to raise awareness that fostering is an option, and that fostering with your Local Authority is the best option, whilst also maintaining the advantages of specific local expertise and community roles. Consequently, the fostering service in Cardiff will be re-branded as Foster Wales

Cardiff. The ethos of Foster Wales is to work as a team with foster carers to build better futures for local children by helping them stay in their local area when it is right for them, keeping them connected to their community and building stability and confidence.

The Foster Wales brand had a “soft” launch on 15 July 2021, with the activation of a national Foster Wales website and 22 Local Authority Foster Wales websites, along with social media activity and endorsement from the Welsh Government Deputy Minister for Social Services, Julie Morgan MS. In addition, from mid-September 2021, there will be a national campaign featuring television and radio advertisements, along with social media and other promotional activity that will be subject to any applicable Covid-19 restrictions at that time.

New multi-disciplinary assessment centre

Falconwood is the first in a range of residential solutions which are being developed by Children’s Services for children and young people in Cardiff. The four-bedroom property will house up to three young people at a time. Over the course of a young person’s ten-week residence at the home, multi-disciplinary assessment and support will ensure that the young person’s next move, whether back home to family or onto a new placement, is as suitable as possible for their needs and wellbeing.

Care Inspectorate Wales (CIW) have visited and the centre is in the final stages of the registration process and aiming to be operational in the coming weeks. The delivery of this new home is the first in the Council’s ambitious development plan to increase in-house residential provision, with the aim of reducing out of county placements and to better meet the need of those on the edge of care or care-experienced children and young people in our city.

Mind of My Own

Members will be aware from my previous updates that we have been preparing for the launch of the ‘Mind of My Own’ app. The app uses secure digital technology to enable children as young as two and those with additional needs to get in touch with the Council and let them know their views, wishes and feelings. It was co-produced with young people, and young people continue to be involved in ongoing developments. Staff training has started so the app is now live and available for children to use. This is an exciting opportunity to support children to communicate with the Council and enable their views to be captured. By understanding when children are struggling, interventions can be made at the right time for them. Supporting children to participate fully in their lives will also improve care planning, decision making and, ultimately, improve their outcomes.

Cardiff Family Advice and Support (CFAS)

On 1 July 2021, a Vulnerability Change pilot was launched in conjunction with South Wales Police. This will utilise the Family Gateway as a referral pathway for local police teams when the immediate needs identified for a family do not meet safeguarding thresholds. Where appropriate and with the family’s consent, referrals will be made directly to the Family Gateway. It is anticipated that the pilot will reduce the number of

Public Protection Notices (PPNs) submitted to the Multi-Agency Safeguarding Hub (MASH) and enable families to access Early Help services in a more timely way.

Demand for specialist support services has increased, as the pressures and restrictions of lockdown start to ease. 40% of contacts recorded by the Family Gateway team in May 2021 were in relation to individuals contacting the service for the first time. Families themselves continue to be the primary referrer to the service with 297 self-referrals recorded during April and May 2021. Schools (210 referrals) and Primary Health professionals (192 referrals) are also consistent and frequent referrers.

Referrals to Family Help and Family Help Disability teams have significantly increased this financial year. Recent referrals have also tended to be of greater complexity, requiring a longer period of intervention. As a result, there are currently 382 open cases for the Family Help teams (East and West) and 140 for the Family Help Disability team.

The number of Multi-Agency Referral Forms (MARFs) and PPNs received on open cases has increased. Each one received necessitates a re-assessment of the family's circumstances given the latest information, increased risks, and emerging needs. 27 cases were stepped up to statutory services because of the heightened risk between April and May 2021.

Cardiff Parenting

Demand on the Cardiff Parenting team has similarly increased, with referrals almost doubling from May to June 2021. 526 referrals were received during the first quarter of 2021/22; around half these were through the Family Gateway. The other half were received from Flying Start colleagues and parents.

Between April and June, 124 parents completed a formal parenting intervention, benefitting 166 children in the home. 90% of families offered an initial assessment regarding a bespoke one-to-one parenting intervention took up the offer. The complexity of issues affecting families has increased and the length of time families require support is now up to between 15 to 30 weeks.

To respond to the increased demand, funding has been secured from the Welsh Government Child Development Fund to create some short-term posts. Four new practitioners joined our one-to-one psychology-led team in May and June 2021.

Alongside formal parenting programmes, more informal activities such as Little Cooks at Home and Story & Rhyme times continue to be offered online. In line with Covid-19 regulations, the team have recently begun indoor parent and baby groups, such as baby massage and sensory groups, as well as small walking groups for parents and toddlers. Feedback from parents has been incredibly positive and the groups will continue over the summer.

The team is also working on preparing resources and plans for the autumn term, with the introduction of new targeted programmes for new parents and parents of children with a diagnosis of Autism Spectrum Conditions.

Childcare and Play Grant

The terms and conditions of the Childcare and Play Grants to support Improving Provision; New Places; and Sustainability, and a revised Assisted Places Scheme were developed during April 2021, and were published in May 2021 on the [Childcare Business Support webpage](#). By the end of June 2021, two applications had received funding, with £1,961 being provided to a childminder under the Improving Provision grant, and £3,653 being provided to support four children where their additional needs require a higher staff to child ratio to ensure they can safely attend the childcare provision, thereby allowing their parents to maintain their employment. A further 15 grant applications are currently being assessed and further grant payments will be made this month.

Childcare Offer Capital Grant

The Childcare Offer Capital Small Grants Scheme has provided 17 grant payments in the financial year to date, totalling £51,811.26. This grant scheme will cease at the end of the 2021/22 financial year. As the grant is released in two payments, with the second payment only being made once all capital works are completed, the final round will close for applications on 14 July 2021 in order to maximise the opportunity for all works to be completed and payments made by the year end (31 March 2022). A further grant application round for capital equipment only will operate in autumn 2021.

The Childcare Offer

63 applications were received in June 2021, bringing the total for the 2021/22 financial year to 179, and the running total for the lifetime of the Childcare Offer to 4,848. In June 2021, 29 applications were approved, bringing the total number of children approved for Childcare Offer funding since commencement of the scheme to 4,472, with 1,899 children currently receiving funding. This represents 95% of the previous highest monthly figure of 1,994 in April 2020. Furthermore, £563,109 was spent in June 2021 on childcare places and related support for children with additional needs, bringing spending in the year to date to £1,758,732.

Bright Start Work Placement Scheme

I am pleased to announce that the Bright Start Work Placement scheme has been given the green light to resume after being on hold for 18 months due to Covid-19. The Bright Start scheme gives care-experienced young people an opportunity to try jobs in various sectors and experience interesting roles which help to boost knowledge, confidence and soft skills to enter employment.

A tailored support package is agreed before each placement with the young person and the manager of that work placement. This ensures they are successful positive experiences for all parties. Working with their mentors, young people identify careers that would interest them. The Into Work Service Employment Liaison team then reaches out to source the best opportunities. The response and uptake from this has been positive, with new and exciting opportunities waiting for young people.

The first round of placements will begin on 19 July 2021 for up to six months with positions available in Parks, Cardiff International White Water, Waste Management

and the Into Work Advice Service initially. Future placements have been agreed with the new Onsite Construction Academy, Cardiff Dogs Home, Storey Arms Centre and Connect 2 Cardiff. I look forward to seeing the outcomes, which have been so positive previously.

Councillor Graham Hinchey
Cabinet Member for Children & Families
15 July 2021