

CORPORATE PARENTING ADVISORY COMMITTEE

16 JUNE 2015

Present: County Councillor Lent (Chairperson)
County Councillors De'Ath, Goddard, Sanders, White and Merry

Also: Tony Young (Director Childrens Services), Gillian James (Achievement Leader, Closing the Gaps, Education), Bethan Davis (Complaints Manager, Children's Services), Debbie Martin Jones (Operational Manager Looked After Children), Elly Jones, NYAS and Mandy Farnham (Committee clerk)

25 : APPOINTMENT OF CHAIRPERSON

It was noted that at the Annual meeting of Council held on 21 May 2015, Councillor Sue Lent, Deputy Leader, was appointed as Chairperson of this Committee.

26 : MEMBERSHIP OF COMMITTEE

It was noted that at the Annual meeting of Council held on 21 May 2015, Councillors Lent (Chairperson), Dan De'Ath, Jonathan Evans, Sue Goddard, Heather Joyce, Sarah Merry, Eleanor Sanders and Susan White were appointed as Members of this Committee.

27 : TERMS OF REFERENCE

RESOLVED: To agree the Terms of Reference of the Corporate Parenting Advisory Committee.

28 : APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies were received from Councillor Evans and Councillor Joyce. Apologies were also received from Marie Rosenthal.

29 : DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

No declarations of interest were received.

30 : MINUTES

The minutes of the meeting held on 22 April were agreed as a correct record and signed by the Chairperson.

31 : CHILDREN'S SERVICES - COMPLAINTS AND COMPLIMENTS REPORT

The Chairperson welcomed Bethan Davis Complaints Officer Children's Services to the meeting.

Members were provided with an update on Cardiff's Children's Services Complaints and Representations between 1 January 2015 and 31 March 2015 (Quarter 4).

The Chair invited questions and comments from Members:

- Members were pleased to note that the information provided in respect of complaints and representations would be provided in tabular form in readiness for the next quarterly report.
- Members were advised that at the present time it is too early to provide details of any improvements made in relation to the review of, and amendment to, the audit tool used to capture information on whether assessments demonstrate that fathers were included/consulted as part of the assessment process and whether that information had been shared with them appropriately.
- Members discussed the procedures in place which enable young people to make contact with their social workers. Members were advised that Officers were trying to capture the various issues raised by those young people. Some teams have message books and the switchboard could also email messages, however Social Workers do not yet have the technology to access emails remotely as yet.

Members were advised that there is always a Social Worker on duty, either to be able to assist directly with issues raised or certainly make contact with the Social Worker involved.

- Officers advised that Social Workers have a busy case load which is increasing. There are still a number of vacancies – there are 10 in the Children in Need team and 10 in the Intake and Assessment Team. The increasing caseload is being monitored closely.
- Members queried whether a summary kept of any complaints recorded by staff. Members were advised that there was no avenue of complaint for staff. There is only the grievance procedure. Issues could be raised at the time of any exit interview. Staff are automatically offered an exit interview within Children's Services. A report had previously been sent to the Management Team. Members requested sight of that report.

32 : REGULATION 32 REPORTS

This item was not for publication by virtue of Paragraph 12 of Part 4 of Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972 as amended and pursuant to paragraph 21 of Part 5 of Schedule 12A. It was RESOLVED that the public be excluded for consideration of this item.

Debbie Martin Jones Operational Manager Looked After Children was in attendance to present this item.

The meeting was 'closed' to review the confidential information regarding residents at the Cardiff Children's Residential Home.

33 : EDUCATION MATTERS INC. FORTHCOMING INSPECTION OF LAC ATTAINMENT

The Chairperson welcomed Gillian James – Achievement Leader, Closing the Gaps, Education to the meeting.

Members were provided with updated information in relation to the raising of ambitions and attainment of Looked After Children in Wales and the thematic inspection to be carried out by Estyn. Details of the remit and the information required were provided. Officers advised that the manner in which the Pupil Deprivation Grant was being distributed is to be changed. It will come through the consortia and then directly to schools. The grant in Cardiff for Looked After Children was £352,000

Members made specific reference to minute 19, minutes of 22 April 2015 which related to their request for information about the attainment of Looked After Children. Members again wanted to ensure that information was provided to them. Officers advised that the Virtual Schools, Tracking, Training and Personal and Educational plans were still moving forward and that there was likely to be a Virtual School from September. The tracking of children will be on a termly basis to include attendance, progress and exclusions.

34 : MEMBERS VISITS - UPDATE

Members were provided with an update on Member Visits.

A visit had been arranged for Members to attend a 'Dragons Den' style event on 13 June. Members who attended were very positive about the event and the information provided by the young people who had attended together with a number of Officers.

Attendees felt that they should be more involved in the consultation before decisions are made about them; they would like to be represented on this Committee and they felt that being referred to as 'LAC' children was derogatory term.

Concern was raised by Members that an attendee also described the difficulties they faced when leaving the care system and managing their very limited finances, namely £57.50 per week when they were charged £7.50 for laundry and ended up living on pasties and pot noodle.

Members discussed representation by young people on the Committee. Elly Jones confirmed that Care Leavers have been sitting on similar panels. Participation in the group was growing and the issues from the group could be raised via the committee. Elly Jones stated she would consider the type/nature of representative to attend the Committee.

It was hoped that all Members would be in a position to attend events like this, or others to be arranged in the future. Members believed that there should be further visits to the Looked After Children Service and Foster Carers.

Members were advised that visits could be arranged to Crosslands as long as they were planned visits, further arrangements are to be made for the Manager or Deputy Manager to attend to provide a presentation.

Members were advised that it would be difficult to change the Looked After Child name as it is encompassed in the legislation.

RESOLVED – that a programme of visits would be arranged over the coming weeks/months with the Looked After Children Service and Foster Carers.

35 : SAFEGUARDING REPORT

Tony Young, Director Children's Services updated Members in relation to the Safeguarding arrangements.

The Director provided Members with an outline of the main points contained in the Draft Cabinet Report. That report was scrutinised by the Children and Young People Scrutiny Committee recently and will now go to Cabinet for approval on 14 July 2015.

Members discussed the Corporate Training and Development Programme for Staff. Officers referred Members to the training provided through the Local Safe Children Board and further that it was important frontline staff in the public domain were aware of safeguarding practice and requirements in relation to both children and vulnerable adults.

36 : CORPORATE PARENTING ADVISORY COMMITTEE ANNUAL REPORT - UPDATE

Tony Young, advised Members that the Annual Report has not yet been prepared and will be available by the meeting in September 2015.

37 : DATE OF NEXT MEETING

A date for the meeting in September has not yet been confirmed, however, Members felt that the meetings should continue to take place on a Tuesday at 2.00 pm although the first Tuesday of the month should be avoided.