

CORPORATE PARENTING ADVISORY COMMITTEE

27 MARCH 2023

Present: Councillor Merry(Chairperson)
Councillors Ash-Edwards, Lewis, Lister, Littlechild, Molik and Naughton

Officers Deborah Driffield, Director, Childrens Services

Present:

Advisors Candice Lloyd, NYAS, Becci Ingram, Children Young People
Present: and Family Health Services, Deborah Williams, Virtual
Headteacher

14 : APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies were received from Gillian James, Committee Advisor.

Cllr Molik, Candice Lloyd of NYAS and Deborah Driffield, Director of Children's Services, attended remotely.

The Chair welcomed Becci Ingram, General Manager for Children, Young People and Family Health Services at Cardiff and Vale University Health Board and Deborah Williams, Virtual Head Teacher for Looked After Children in Cardiff as new advisors to the Committee.

15 : DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

No declarations of interest were received.

16 : MINUTES

The minutes of the previous meeting on January 9, 2023, were approved and signed by the Chairperson.

17 : NYAS 'MY THINGS MATTER CAMPAIGN'

The Chair invited Candice Lloyd, NYAS, to give a presentation to inform the Committee on the NYAS 'My Things Matter' campaign.

The presentation provided Members with the results of surveys of both young people and professionals into the handling of children's and young people's possessions during moves from one accommodation to another while in care.

Members were also advised about the My Things Matter pledge and next steps that the Council could take.

Members wished to know about Cardiff Council's commitment to the My Things Matter campaign. Members were advised that the Council supports the campaign and has purchased appropriate luggage to help children and young people transport their possessions. The Council has a close working relationship with NYAS.

Members were advised that luggage bags had been distributed to teams including EDT and out-of-hours service in order to support emergency moves.

Members enquired as to how the security of children's and young people's possessions were ensured during moves. Members were advised that where possible such possessions were transported separately from other items, and that most went with the child or young person involved. Where the latter was not possible, arrangements were in place to ensure the security of the items.

RESOLVED:

1. To note the My Things Matter Campaign information provided; and
2. To recommend to Cabinet that the Council should endorse the Campaign.

18 : YOUNG PERSON GATEWAY UPDATE

The Chair invited Laura Garvey-Cubbon, Operational Manager Housing and Communities, to give a presentation on the Young Person's Gateway, during which she presented information on the current structure of the YPG, data on outcomes and information around the expansion and development plans for the Gateway.

Members discussed the increasing demand for accommodation and were advised that this was due to a number of factors, including the housing crisis, the record high level of rent in private accommodation in Cardiff, the higher number of relationship breakdowns with parents in the wake of the pandemic, the cost-of-living crisis and increases of domestic abuse. Effort is being put into prevention including working with parents and help with finance.

Members were advised that Unaccompanied Asylum-Seeking Children (UASC) were included in the figures in the report.

Members discussed the length of time children and young people were expected to have to wait for accommodation, and were advised that the Council was pursuing a dual approach to bring down the waiting list.

Members were concerned about what happened to children and young people who are refused accommodation, and were advised that the Council tries to prevent evictions with less than 10 taking place over the year. The Council provides an immediate response with an alternative placement or accommodation offered the same day. In cases of abandonment the young person undergoes an entry back interview and the social worker seeks to place them in accommodation.

Members raised concerns about bed blocking by UASC and enquired as to whether this was due to a lack of available accommodation. Officers advised that it was not possible to move UASC on to permanent accommodation as they had no legal status.

Members were advised that young people are not moved into adult accommodation once they reach a certain age threshold. They remain in their current accommodation

as stability is considered important. They move into permanent accommodation when they are ready to do so.

RESOLVED:

1. To note the information provided and development of the Young Persons Gateway.

19 : CHILDREN'S SERVICES ACCOMMODATION STRATEGY

The Chair invited Deborah Driffield, Director of Children's Services, to present a report on the Accommodation Strategy, which gave an overview of the current position, an analysis of demand and details of proposals for various workstreams, and a summary of progress to date.

Members paid tribute to the officers involved in the work and expressed their gratitude to councillors in wards where properties were purchased.

Members sought further information on the timescale involved in getting new properties ready for occupation. They were advised that there were two things involved: getting the properties ready for occupation; and getting them registered with the CIW. Two properties could be made ready for occupation within 6 months, and a further 2 later; however they would not be registered with the CIW in that time. The properties could be put into use before registration.

Members wished to know whether any problems were likely to arise due to the higher number of children at some properties, and sought information on the geographical spread of properties. They were advised that the Council was proposing to purchase smaller properties, but could not control the size of properties in the hands of private companies or not-for-profit organisations. The Council's experience was that children and young people cope best when living on their own or in smaller properties. It is the Council's intention to have properties spread out across the city, and to enrol children and young people into their local school.

Members were concerned about the higher number of boys and 16 and 17-year-olds in placements and wished to know whether they stayed on post-18. They were advised that the plan was always to work with residential providers to help young people towards independent living. Where there was still significant need post-18-year-olds were transferred to adult services or housing.

RESOLVED:

2. To note the report.

20 : CPAC DRAFT ANNUAL REPORT - 2022-2023

The Chair invited Matthew Osbourne to present a report, which gave a summary of the Committee's activities over the past year, and a forecast of the year ahead.

Members discussed why there were no invitations to Councillors to attend the Bright Sparks awards, and were advised that the challenge was to ensure that the awards were focussed on children and young people and ensure they were prioritised.

Members were advised that the report would go to Council in June.

RESOLVED:

1. To note the draft Annual Report 2022/23
2. To delegate authority to the Director of Children's Services in consultation with the Chair to finalise the Annual Report, having regard to comments provided by Members of the Committee and Members of Children & Young People Scrutiny Committee; and
3. That the Chair present the Annual Report to full Council in June 2023

21 : CHILDREN LOOKED AFTER & CARE LEAVERS CASE STUDIES

The Chair invited Matthew Osbourne to present the report. Members were advised that attention had been given to their request for real-life examples to be presented; however, there was a challenge in that Committee minutes were published and it had therefore been decided to present anonymised case studies in order to give an accurate portrayal of some typical examples. A number of such case studies had been prepared from various sources.

RESOLVED:

1. To note the report and case studies provided

22 : MEMBER VISITS

Members were provided with an update by the Chair of her visit to the Unaccompanied Asylum Seeker Children.

23 : FORWARD WORK PROGRAMME

The Chair invited Matthew Osbourne to present the report. Members were informed that Improving Emotional Wellbeing and Physical Health would be considered at the next meeting of the Committee.

An operational group has been set up to look at the plan for CPAC and how to bring it into operation. There will be an opportunity for Members and Officers to become mentors for Children Looked After. Members were advised that consideration would be given to Members being invited to the next Bright Sparks awards.

RESOLVED:

1. To note the content of the Work Programme

24 : URGENT ITEMS (IF ANY)

There were no urgent items.

25 : DATE OF NEXT MEETING

The date of the next meeting is to be confirmed.

The meeting terminated at 4.00 pm