

Report of Elected Member Visit to Front-line Service within Children's Services

**Individual(s) visiting setting:**

Cllr Rhys Taylor and Cllr Peter Littlechild accompanied by CPAC Officer Lucy Thomas

Authors of report:

Cllr Rhys Taylor and Cllr Peter Littlechild

Date of Visit:

21/07/2023

Date of Report:

08/09/2023

Date reported to Corporate Parenting Advisory Committee:

02/10/2023

Location and Name of Service/ Team visited:

Ty Storrie, Vincent Road, CARDIFF, CF5 5AQ

General description of visit-

Members visited Ty Storrie, Vincent Road, CARDIFF, CF5 5AQ. The site is situated next to Ty Gwyn School and the Riverbank School in Ely. The Members were extremely grateful for the warm welcome they received and were inspired by the care and support staff provide to the children and families reliant on Ty Storrie.

Ty Storrie is a Home for children and young people aged between 6-17 with disabilities and complex needs. It has 8 en suite bedrooms, 2 lounge areas along with a playroom and sensory room.

The residential/bedroom part of the building is split into 2 wings; 4 bedrooms for children with physical complex medical needs and 4 for children who have behavioural needs and associated with the autistic spectrum.

Sian Herdman Tucker is the manager of the centre who has over 20 years experience of working in social care and more than 10 years working in residential care provision. Sian took over the management of Ty Storrie in September 2022 and at that stage there were 19 children accessing the facility. Since then, Sian has made several important changes to the processes within Ty Storrie meaning they have almost doubled the number of children having access to the service. At the time of writing there are 33 children having regular overnight respite care, however it is hoped that with the right support, this can grow to 45.

The Members would like to highlight the complexities of settling a child, prior to them enjoying their first stay at Ty Storrie. It is a gradual, phased process and can sometimes take up to 4 months before a child stays overnight. Every child has their own room, with a 'jack & jill' style bathroom. Staff also consider personal details, such as purchasing themed bedding and pyjamas along with tailored homemade food plans to make the stays as comfortable as possible for the children and young people.

Feedback on the service – Positive/ Negative

- Staff Training

The staff at Ty Storrie are a combination of contracted local authority employees and commissioned agency staff via safe hands or pro care. On occasion there is a difference between the standards of care provided by the staff trained 'in house' and those provided by an 'outside' agency. There are also inconsistencies created by agency staff as different staff will attend meaning the children and young people don't have continuity and familiarity with their carers. Ideally there would be a model equivalent to the domiciliary care academy in adult services. The Manager of Ty Storrie indicated that they would be able to deliver a more consistent service if they were able to have staff employed within the authority and training provided in house to those staff. The Members recognised this would not only improve the service, but it would also improve the budget. Members would like to recommend that the care academy be consulted on employment opportunities within Ty Storrie.

- General maintenance

There are a significant number of jobs which require attention at Ty Storrie, e.g., re painting of the fences surrounding the garden, cutting/weeding of the small gardens at the front, painting the interior walls. Assistance has been sought from the local authority in this regard but to date, the works have not been undertaken. Members were concerned that staff were spending time repeatedly trying to engage council services to undertake basic works. Some of the outdoor recreational equipment e.g., the trampoline, is unable to be used and therefore a replacement alternative is needed. Some of the materials used in the outside spaces also need to be replaced to make them easier to maintain and clean.

- Lack of space for additional provision

We understand that Cardiff are seeking additional properties for children's residential placements in Cardiff. However, questions have been raised in relation to the site of The Riverbank School which is adjacent to that of Ty Storrie and could provide a solution to the issue. Members believe that the council should fully explore the opportunities provided for expansion on the current Riverbank School site to maximise the opportunities and care available to families in Cardiff.

- Additional provision within schools

There is a lack of breakfast and afterschool club provision for children with disabilities and complex health needs.

- Lack of indoor facility for children with complex health needs

As a city that is awaiting child friendly accreditation, there should be an indoor facility specifically designed to cater for children with complex health needs- particularly for those aged 5-18 years. For example, there aren't many places for the children and young people to visit on rainy days meaning their opportunities are reduced, unlike other children and young people.

Any other Comments

The whole purpose of Ty Storrie is to provide respite care for those children and families who require it. By giving this regular support there is an increased likelihood that the children and young people remain in their family unit as opposed to being placed in long term residential facilities. The financial implications of this are significant as the cost of long-term residential placement is approximately 3 times the cost of supporting them to remain at home. Members would welcome a listening exercise from the manager and staff of Ty Storrie to identify a ways the Committee can support the service.

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Individual(s) visiting setting:

Cllr Mike Ash Edwards, supported by Lucy Thomas CPAC officer

Author of report: Lucy Thomas / Cllr Mike Ash-Edwards

Date of Visit: 9 August 2023

Date of Report: 14 August 2023

Date reported to Corporate Parenting Advisory Committee: 2 Oct 2023

Location and Name of Service/ Team visited:

John Kane Centre, Gabalfa – Youth Justice Service

General description of visit – e.g. number of staff (approx) involved in meeting visitor; number spoken to and engaged in discussion; whether the visit involved service users and/or carers, how did the visit look,

Operational manager for YJS team and 9 other staff met and spoken with about the work of the team and their individual roles. No service users were present at the time the visit was made

Briefing provided as follows:

Cardiff YJS is a multi disciplinary partnership between different organisations to provide intervention and support for young people and their families. It includes (but is not limited to) The Youth Justice Board, Welsh Government and The

Police & Crime Commissioner. The aim of the partnership is to prevent anti-social behaviour, offending and re-offending by young people aged 10-17. It also offers support to victims of youth crime and anti-social behaviour. Children and young people are referred to the service via Police, Childrens Services and schools. Currently, there are approximately 150 children and young people using the service and there is an 80/20 split ratio of boys to girls.

Structure

The service is split into 3 areas; Prevention, Diversion and Court. The prevention team is for children and young people who have never offended before and have committed a low-level offence. Approximately 66% of the children and young people using the service are within this category. YJS undertook a consultation with children, young people and their parents and decided to rebrand the prevention service, which is now called Crossroads. It was felt that the young people were at a 'crossroads' in their life and could potentially take the wrong path- of those young people who engage with Crossroads, only 10-15% go on to offend.

It has become clear that girls and young women are not entering the YJ process until after the prevention stage. Work is going on to find out why more of them are not being identified as suitable for the Crossroads programme prior to committing offences.

Variety of skills within the Service

Cardiff YJS is the first service in Wales to have a full time speech and language therapist. Over 70% of the young people who use the service have speech and language needs, some of which are undiagnosed until they undergo direct assessment via YJS. The speech and language therapist also provides training to staff within schools to create awareness around the use of appropriate communication. Other team members include an art therapist, substance misuse worker, probation officer and restorative justice worker.

There is a strong health presence in the team to work with the many participants who do not have equal access to health services prior to their participation in the programme.

YJS offer a wide range of activities, which include proactive sessions to address racism, hate crimes and misogyny. Young people are able to use cooking and laundry facilities whilst at the centre and have access to support as they need it.

There is also a summer activity programme, whereby children and young people have had the opportunity to take part in activities such as fishing, biking and badminton as well as attending trips to St Fagans and Cardiff golf centre.

Ongoing work

YJS have identified that the children and young people who use this service are often those who are most vulnerable within society. They are co-ordinating a volunteer service to support these young people and to provide the good role models they need. Volunteer opportunities include Appropriate Adult, Community

Panel Member, Community Reparation Volunteer, Mentoring and School Holiday Programme Support.

Feedback on the service – Positive/ Negative

In 2020 YJS Cardiff had a well-publicised poor inspection report. There is now a new Operational Manager in post- Angharad Thomas, who is focusing on rebuilding the service from the ground up. Significant progress has already been made and the team are very much on an upwards trajectory. There was strong evidence of a committed and enthusiastic staff team working well together.

Any other Comments

Noted that further work is required to identify why girls and young women are not becoming engaged with the YJS at the prevention (Crossroads) stage

Volunteering opportunities with YJS could be brought to wider attention.