

CORPORATE PARENTING ADVISORY COMMITTEE

22 JANUARY 2023

Priority 5: Better Connections & Improved Relationships

Mentoring Scheme Update

Reasons for the Report

1. As part of the Corporate Parenting Strategy, Cardiff Children's Services are in the process of implementing an authority wide Mentoring Scheme to support our Children Looked After.
2. The Mentoring Scheme is designed to support and empower children and young people by offering them practical experiences and opportunities. This report outlines the objectives, structure, benefits, and challenges of the Mentoring Scheme, aiming to enhance the well-being and development of children and young people in the care of this authority.

Background

3. The Mentoring Scheme will be a structured programme focused on providing guidance, support, and assistance to children and young people in various aspects of their lives. The scheme will pair young people with adult mentors to offer them supervision, positive role modelling, and opportunities for personal and academic growth. This will be facilitated by way of practical work experience and volunteering opportunities within the authority.
4. The primary objectives of the mentoring scheme are to provide encouragement and guidance to young people facing challenges and to empower them to reach their full potential by fostering a sense of confidence and self-belief.

5. The aim of the scheme is to increase social, academic and life skill development in children and young people by giving them positive and consistent role models to learn from. It is hoped that this will create a sense of community and belonging for those young people taking part in the scheme.
6. A cohort of young people has been identified; initially it will be trialled with those who are currently in supported lodgings accommodation. There are currently three people over the age of 16, within this cohort group, that would be suitable to undertake the scheme.
7. It is hoped that the programme will then be scaled and made available to other young people who could benefit from it.

Project Development

8. At present, Matthew Osborne, Operational Manager and Lucy Thomas, Corporate Parenting Officer, are delivering comprehensive presentations relating to Corporate Parenting across each Directorate within Cardiff Council. The purpose of the presentation is to expand the knowledge and understanding of all our employees regarding their roles as corporate parents. The Mentoring Scheme is being included as one of the ways employees within the authority can fulfil their duties as corporate parents.
9. The aim is not only to promote awareness in relation to the project, but also to stimulate collaboration and the sharing of ideas across all Directorates within Cardiff, that not only further our corporate parenting objectives, but also the goals of the authority as a whole.
10. Significant progress has been made in regard to disseminating information about the Mentoring Scheme, and as a result, several scoping meetings have taken place with Parks and Leisure, Finance and Central Transport Services.
11. Some of these services are already offering work experience placements through a variety of channels, however, it is hoped that the mentoring scheme will

streamline the process and increase the availability of these opportunities specifically for CLA.

12. At present, the offer of work experience placements within the mentoring scheme will be for young people over the age of 16, however, the aim is to widen the offer to include younger children (GCSE age) in the future.
13. Volunteer/Mentor training materials are in the process of being prepared, which will focus on communication, young person development, and mentorship techniques. All mentors will be required to undertake this mandatory training prior to being matched with a suitable young person. Mentors will be chosen based on their suitability, empathy, and commitment. There will then be an assessment undertaken based on the needs and preferences of both mentors and mentees, prior to an appropriate match being made.
14. Careful consideration is being given to the wider logistics required to facilitate the scheme, including DBS processing, ongoing recruitment, and financial implications.

Issues

15. There are several issues to consider in relation to the implementation of the Mentoring scheme. Firstly, the creation and availability of the opportunities we can offer our CLA.
16. Secondly, ensuring compatibility between mentors and mentees is key to the success of the pilot. There needs to be a robust selection and matching process in place to mitigate the risks associated with this issue.
17. In addition, consideration needs to be given to the promotion of regular and sustained engagement. The implementation of frequent check-ins and appropriate support will aim to preserve engagement from all of those involved in the project but will need to be monitored closely.

18. Finally, any issues in regard to resource constraints will need to be explored and addressed as the mentoring scheme grows and increases capacity.

Next Steps

19. There are plans to deliver further information sessions and presentations in relation to the mentoring scheme, to assist in the recruitment of more volunteer mentors.

20. Every Directorate has been contacted to ask for their suggestions as to how they can support the mentoring scheme, so that there is a consistent and varied programme on offer. Meetings will then be held in January 2024 to explore these prospects and include them in the Corporate Parenting Operational Plan.

Matthew Osborne

Operational Manager- Children's Services

13 December 2023