

COUNCIL: 30 JANUARY 2020

CHILDREN & FAMILIES STATEMENT

All Wales Safeguarding Procedures

In September last year, the Deputy Minister for Health and Social Services, Julie Morgan AM, launched the Wales Safeguarding Procedures at the Temple of Peace and Health in Cardiff. The work to develop a comprehensive set of safeguarding procedures was led by the Cardiff and Vale Regional Safeguarding Board on behalf of all Welsh safeguarding boards. The procedures are available to all professionals and the public as an app, which contains full details of the practice guidance for adults and children.

The launch of the procedures took place at the start of National Safeguarding Week in November 2019. The procedures aim to be adopted locally and by other Safeguarding Boards in Wales by April 2020, which allows time for training and familiarisation with the new procedures. Training dates on the procedures will be delivered to professionals over the next few months prior to their full implementation by April 2020.

The culmination of National Safeguarding Week in Cardiff was marked with the Regional Safeguarding Board Awards, at which the contribution of people who have made an exceptional contribution to safeguarding children or adults at risk in the region was recognised.

Cardiff Family Advice and Support

The full launch of the Cardiff Family Advice and Support services took place on 15th November 2019. The event took place at City Hall and was attended by more than 100 representatives from partner agencies who were provided with the opportunity to network and share information about their services with all those in attendance. Two families who have recently benefitted from support from the service were also in attendance and they shared their stories through the use of a case study video. Delegates also heard from Chloe, a young person who was able to share her personal experience about receiving the right support at the right time, and Connor Clarke, a member of the Youth Parliament who participated in recent interviews for Family Help Advisers.

Since the launch of the service:

- 1660 calls have been received by the Gateway, which takes the year total to date to 6884.
- 311 children, young people and their families have been referred to the Family Help team for short term intervention. Of these 44 have successfully completed the agreed family plan, whilst the remainder are receiving ongoing support.

Since April the team have now engaged with a total of 1198 children and young people.

- 155 referrals have been made to Cardiff Parenting for either one-to-one or group support with parenting strategies improving confidence, well-being, resilience and family relationships. The total for the year to date is 404.

Three Police Community Support Officers joined the team at the start of this month and are working with staff in order to develop the Early Help role and to establish links with neighbourhood, response and specialist teams. The additional knowledge and expertise that the officers bring will enhance the support that the service can offer to children, young people and families.

Work is also ongoing with Cardiff & Vale University Health Board to recruit Emotional Health and Wellbeing practitioners who will provide training, advice and support to the teams working with families. The practitioners will also become trusted referrers to specialist health teams such as Child and Adolescent Mental Health and Neurodevelopment teams.

Bright Sparks Awards

I was pleased, alongside Councillor Lister, to attend and introduce the Bright Sparks Awards (Children Looked After own awards) on 15th November 2019. The awards were focused on the appropriate theme of 'Heroes', which provided an opportunity for the children who are looked after to reflect on what and who a hero is. As part of the awards, the young people chose to introduce a Lifetime Achievement Award in 2019 and dedicated the award to a foster carer who has provided an amazing 25 years of service to caring for children and young people. It was really encouraging to hear young people talk of their parents, teachers and caregivers as heroes and to see how they recognised the people who have made a positive impact on their lives. Every year, the Bright Sparks Awards remind us how resilient, talented and remarkable the young people are.

Cardiff Winter Wonderland Event for Looked After Children

Cardiff Winter Wonderland hosted a special event for nearly 250 of the city's Looked After Children, their carers and their families, who were invited to the seasonal attraction to enjoy a morning of skating, rides and refreshments, all on the house. The Council is very grateful for the fantastic care and support our carers provide to some of Cardiff's most vulnerable children and young people and this was a wonderful way to say thank you and give something back, in the true spirit of Christmas.

Cardiff has over 900 Looked After Children and the Council is looking for foster carers from a variety of backgrounds with unique experiences, skills & qualities. There are different types of foster care, including respite (short stay), long-term and supported lodgings. Any potential foster carers can find more information on the Foster Care Cardiff website: (<https://fostercarecardiff.co.uk/>) to learn more about how they can help a young person.

Visit to Crosslands and Ty Storrie with the Lord Mayor

On 17th December 2019, I had the pleasure of visiting Crosslands children's home and Ty Storrie respite home with the Lord Mayor of Cardiff.

At Crosslands, I met with 4 of the 6 young people who are currently looked after at the home and talked to them about their individual Christmas arrangements and the activities that staff had arranged for them over the festive period. It was lovely to see such positive interaction between staff and young people. Staff and young people are very excited about plans to refurbish the kitchen and dining room at the home and I look forward to returning later this year when the renovations have been completed. Members may have seen the Senior Residential Childcare Officer at Crosslands who appeared in the Wales Online article dedicated to those people who worked on Christmas Day. The commitment and regard that Ben has for the young people at Crosslands, which shone through in the article, was very apparent in all of the staff and managers that I met during my visit.

At Ty Storrie, I joined their annual Christmas party celebrations with 12 of the young people who receive respite from the services and their parent and staff. Young people met with Father Christmas and his elf in Santa's Grotto and we all ate lots of cake! All the parents I spoke to were hugely complementary about the service and it was a pleasure to see such positive relationships between staff and the young people and their parents who all joined in the festivities. Ty Storrie provides vital support to parent whilst ensuring that the time that their children spend away from home on respite is lots of fun.

Signs of Safety Annual Celebration Event

In 2016, Children's Services adopted the Signs of Safety model as its approach to working with children and families in Cardiff. This approach focuses on working together with families to support them to find their own solutions to their issues and problems. Good working relationships are key to this, as is the need to recognise the strengths in families, any concerns Children's Services may have, and what we need in place so that we know that children are kept safe, in language that the family understands. Social care staff in Children's Services are working hard to make sure that they use this model in their everyday practice and have been building on their skills and experience.

One way of sharing experiences is by hosting an annual celebration event. This year, 200 social care staff and partner agencies came together on 16th January 2020 to share their experiences of how the tools from the model were used to work with families to support them to achieve their goals. Representatives from Support4Families, the Integrated Family Support team, Youth Homelessness, Adolescent Services, as well as the Safeguarding team presented examples of work undertaken with children and their carers and shared the successes when using the model. The teams also shared how they are using the model in creative and innovative ways to work differently with children, young people and their families to enable real and significant long-term changes to their lives.

Councillor Graham Hinchey
Cabinet Member for Children & Families
24 January 2020