

Date: 13 May 2021

My Ref: SS/CYP/R&RCFR



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Councillor Huw Thomas  
Leader  
County Hall  
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CARDIFF  
CF10 4UW

Dear Huw,

**CHILDREN & YOUNG PEOPLE SCRUTINY COMMITTEE – 11 MAY 2021 –  
RECOVERY AND RENEWAL: DELIVERING A CHILD FRIENDLY RECOVERY**

Please accept my thanks for attending the Children & Young People Scrutiny Committee to facilitate the consideration of the proposals for delivering a child friendly recovery. Please also pass on our thanks to Councillors Hinchey and Merry; the Chief Executive and officers who attended for the item. The comments, observations and recommendations below were captured during the Committee's discussion at the Way Forward.

The Committee welcomed the report and commend it to Cabinet for approval.

Joined up Working

Members acknowledged your commitment to using a child friendly template going forward and appreciate the progress made in relation to improved joined up working, as demonstrated in a number of examples given throughout the report and arising from the Q&A session.

We all recognise that joined up and partnership working will be critical in delivering the proposals set out in the report and we have therefore agreed that this issue will continue to be a focus for the Committee's work. As we scrutinise issues in the coming months (including the regular updates on the Youth Justice Service and Summer Provision), we will take a stronger stance in asking for evidence of effective joined up/partnership working and ensuring that commitments are translated into practice.

## Summer Provision

Members welcomed the range of responses received in relation to summer provision. It has been agreed with Councillor Merry that summer provision will be considered as an Agenda Item by this Scrutiny Committee at its meeting on the 13<sup>th</sup> July 2021. At this meeting we will be expecting to receive details of the provision that has been agreed; how it will be delivered; resources; and who will be delivering it.

## Mental Health and Well-being

Members have been focused on the impact of the pandemic on children & young people's mental health and well-being for some time and have raised this with both Councillors Merry and Hinchey at previous meetings. We recognise the increase in demand, including those vulnerable to self-harm and suicide as raised by Deborah. We will continue to monitor the range of specialist services, the capacity of these services, and the effectiveness of joined up/partnership working in this area.

At the meeting, we were made aware of a well-being assessment that has been introduced, which aims to identify and assess children and young people at an early stage. Members request that they receive a copy of the assessment and any other relevant information or guidance to enable them to understand the process.

## Vulnerable children & young people

Members welcomed details of the VAP and enhanced work that is being done in working with vulnerable children and young people. To enable us to gain a better understanding of the process and its effectiveness, we request that you provide details on the following:

A breakdown of the 100 young people being dealt with by the VAP, to include and explanation of whether:

- They are young people only engaged in school/education
- If in school/education, are they in mainstream classes/ PRU/ other onsite provision etc?
- If some of these young people are not in education/school, what is being done to identify and engage with them?

Members are concerned about those children and young people who do not appear anywhere on school rolls etc. and those who are hard to reach. Members stated that this is more serious now than it would be in normal times. They felt that if these young people are under the radar, this increases their vulnerability and may exclude them from being offered opportunities to engage in education, training and

programmes on offer. Therefore, Members wish to be provided with a briefing on what is being done to address this, and data on the numbers and extent of this problem.

### Attendance Figures

Members acknowledged the commitment made by the Council to collect school attendance data, and that this is being considered regularly by Education Management Team. Members agreed that it was important for the Committee to keep a focus on school attendance figures as an indicator of the extent to which the service is monitoring children who are not in school.

Therefore, the Committee is requesting an overview of the data being collected, but more importantly, what the service does with this data as a further tool to follow up children not engaging in school.

Linked with this, Members are requesting data and information to those in EOTAS. This should include;

- How many of these young people are being monitored if they are on the school roll;
- How young people not on the school roll are monitored;
- How many hours of tutoring (on average) are being offered;
- What measures are in place to engage with young people outside of their supervised hours?

### School Leavers

Members welcomed the level of detail in the report on education and training for post-16, the recognition of the challenges and a proposed response to mitigating the challenges. Members agreed that the challenges are greater than they would be in normal circumstances. Therefore, we have agreed to keep a focus on data for those young people in years 11-13. Members requested data and evidence in relation to this at the meeting, but were informed that it was not yet available.

Members need to get sense of this issue and reassurance that the proposals in the report will have a have an impact for young people, and avoid those at risk dropping out of the system. Therefore, we request details of a date when Yr11-13 data will be available, and we have access to this when available.

Members also raised concerns regarding Year 13 pupils leaving school at the end of May and would request details of what kinds of tracking or provision will be put in place between then and their access to summer provision some two months later.

To recap, the Committee **is requesting**:

1. A copy of the well-being assessment form and any other relevant information or guidance to enable them to understand the process.
2. A breakdown of the 100 young people being dealt with by the VAP, to include and explanation of whether:
  - They are young people only engaged in school/education
  - If in school/education, are they in mainstream classes/ PRU/ other onsite provision etc.
  - Some of these young people are not in education/school, what is being done to identify and engage with them?
3. A briefing on what is being done to address those young people not on the school roll and are hard to reach and data on the numbers and extent of this problem.
4. An overview of the school attendance data being collected, and details of what the service does with this data as a further tool to follow up children not engaging in school.
5. Data and information to those in EOTAS. This should include;
  - How many of these young people are being monitored if they are on the school roll;
  - How young people not on the school roll are monitored;
  - How many hours of tutoring (on average) are being offered;
  - What measures are in place to engage with young people outside of their supervised hours?
6. A date when data and evidence of young people in years 11-13 will be available, and this be provided when available
7. Details of what kinds of tracking or provision are in place for Year 13 pupils between the end of May and access to summer provision.

There are no formal recommendations arising from this letter.

Once again, on behalf of the Committee, please pass my sincere thanks to all who attended Children & Young People Scrutiny Committee. I look forward to a response.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'L. BRIDGEMAN', written over a light grey rectangular background.

**COUNCILLOR LEE BRIDGEMAN**

**Chairperson – Children and Young People Scrutiny Committee**

CC: CYPSC Members  
Councillor Graham Hinchey, Cabinet Member for Children & Families  
Councillor Sarah Merry, Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Education, Employment & Skills  
Paul Orders, Chief Executive  
Sarah McGill, Corporate Director, People and Communities;  
Melanie Godfrey, Director of Education & Lifelong Learning;  
Mike Tate, Assistant Director of Education & Lifelong Learning;  
Suzanne Scarlett, Operational Manager, Partnerships and Performance  
Phil Norton, Youth Service  
Deborah Driffield, Director of Children's Services  
Deborah Said, PA to the Leader  
Rhian Jones, PA to the Chief Executive  
Melanie Jackson, Cabinet Support Office  
Alison Taylor, Cabinet Support Office  
Liz Williams/Debra Willis, PA to the Corporate Director  
Helen Eager, PA to the Director of Education & Lifelong Learning  
Ceri Tanti, PA to the Assistant Director of Education & Lifelong Learning  
Kim Thorpe, PA to the Director of Children's Services