

Vale of Glamorgan Council: Communication to Corporate Parenting Panel

Good morning,

I hope you and your families are well at this time.

Given we are not meeting for Corporate Parenting Panel, at the request of the chair and in response to a query from one of our members, I am able to confirm the following with regard to our children looked after.

All social work teams in Children and Young People Services are working, but from home. Support for children looked after and their families remains in place, but in line with Government and Health advice, we are seeking to undertake this remotely as far as possible. This means teams are working creatively and maximising a range of platforms that support us in speaking to, and ideally virtually 'seeing', our children looked after.

Every child looked after has been assessed in respect of risk and vulnerability so that we are clear how our support is being offered and where this cannot be done remotely but needs to be face to face. In that context, we are also assessing the appropriate use of personal protective equipment where the type of visit we are undertaking requires this. Support and risk assessments remain live and are being kept under review.

We are aware that for some of our children looked after, their home environments; whether with family or in placement, will be stable and for others less so. We are doing everything we can to maintain a child's home environment and identifying how we offer additional support where stability may be affected. Our Education colleagues and those in Flying Start have responded promptly with a childcare offer for school aged children and those under 5 which includes a provision for our most vulnerable families. Take up is currently low which is consistent with Government and Health advice that the best place for children is at home if it is safe to be so, but we are ensuring we maintain a continuing dialogue so that those children and families who would benefit from this childcare offer, are able to access it, either fully or partially as need dictates.

Our experience over recent weeks has been an increasing demand at the edge of care and we have accommodated a higher number of children than is usual for us. This has included a sibling group of four and an increasing demand for teenage placements. This has not been easy at a time when our ability to offer support to families is compromised and our placement availability restricted. We are however continuing to explore all opportunities to increase our placement capacity and to determine how best we deliver support at this time.

Our Independent Reviewing Officers are also continuing to have oversight of children looked after and maintaining a dialogue with those involved so that reviews are still taking place using conference calling or virtual meeting platforms.

The situation is of course evolving but I am confident we have a workforce who have stepped up to the challenge, have strong communication channels in place and excellent relationships with our partners; pulling together to respond to the current situation.

In the event of queries, please do not hesitate to contact me, by email in the first instance is probably best.

Many thanks for your continuing support.

Rachel Evans

Head of Service / Pennaeth Gwasanaethau Plant a Phobl Ifanc