



Vale School Governors' Association Cymdeithas Llywodraethwyr Ysgolion y Fro and Governor Support Unit **Newsletter**

Note from the Chair

This week, my two youngest grandchildren turned three and started at proper school - the nursery at the primary school in the Vale that their mother and her siblings attended. I feel very old!

This prompted me to think about the changes I have seen since I first became a parent governor at that school more than thirty years ago. How have schools changed? How has being a Governor changed?

Responsibilities seem to have crept up on Governing Bodies over the years. When I started, it was much more about being cheerleaders for the school than challenging what the headteacher wanted to do with her or his school. I don't remember any specific training, either. Induction was carried out on the job. After a couple of meetings, it was assumed you had got the hang of it.

Of course, it is still a Governor's job to turn up at school events and represent the school when necessary, but there is so much more to it now. Take managing a budget running to hundreds of thousands of pounds, appointing staff and holding them to account in the latest framework laid down by Welsh Government. We do need training to get this right in a climate encompassing all the regulations and laws which pertain to education and the wider legislation all schools must abide by on

health and safety, equal opportunities and everything else.

I seem to remember thinking naively that we would be discussing teaching, the details of the curriculum and all the nice things I remember about my own schooling. Nobody mentioned how long would be spent on serious issues like buildings and transport, safeguarding, admissions and exclusions, disciplinarys and grievances.

We are so much better informed now with the comprehensive training available from the Vale's Governor Support and the Consortium. I hope your Governing Bodies are on top of making sure everybody has met the mandatory training requirements. May I urge you to make sure someone goes on the other less glamorous training courses. You never know when you may need the knowledge and expertise.

May I wish you all a happy and joyful Christmas. I will be getting into the mood by going to my first nativity play for some years. The twins have what I am assured are starring roles as sheeps.

Dr Martin Price
Chair of VSGA and Vice-Chair of
Governors, St Richard Gwyn Roman
Catholic High School, Barry

Issue 47 Autumn Term 2019

Special points of interest:

- AVAGO was formed in 1996 and re-launched in 2006 as Vale School Governors' Association (VSGA)
- The Management Committee is made up of 15 elected governors together with 2 elected parent governor representatives

VSGA was set up to:

- Promote best practice in governance in schools within the Vale of Glamorgan LEA
- To promote partnership amongst schools and between schools and the LEA
- To work with stakeholders to ensure adequate resources for schools within the LEA
- To represent the Association's views on issues relating to school governance and the management and resourcing of schools to relevant authorities and organisations

In association with the Vale of Glamorgan Council's Governor Support Unit

Contact Details:

John Sparks

Head of Governor Support

Tel: 01446 709106 Fax: 01446 701820

Email: JSparks@valeofglamorgan.gov.uk

Janine Hoare

Governor Support

Administrator

Tel: 01446 709107 Fax: 01446 701820

Email: JHoare@valeofglamorgan.gov.uk



VSGA has an email address that you may contact us on.

It's VSGA@valeofglamorgan.gov.uk

alternatively you can contact VSGA by post at:

VSGA Governor Support Unit
Learning & Development Dept.
Vale of Glamorgan Council
Civic Offices, Holton Road,
Barry CF63 4RU



The Families First Advice Line (FFAL) is, as it says on the tin, an advice line for families in the Vale of Glamorgan and the first point of contact for those accessing early intervention and prevention support through the council. We take calls from both parents, carers, and professionals, with the latter being a broad selection from health, education, and social care.

The Advice Line is a skilled team who listen to and identify family strengths and needs. We provide access to early intervention and prevention services, with the aim of reducing the risk of developing more complex needs requiring statutory intervention. This would occasionally be done through over-the-phone advice, and sending out digital and physical resources where the need for a further service is not deemed a priority.

Commonly, a prevention service is needed, and for this the Advisor will make educated recommendations to local services and then fill out the referral with the help of the caller. This will mean only one number is needed for families to discern what local services are best for them at that time. This also provides an effective triage system to get the right services in place straight away, and decreases the workload for the services as they don't need to take as many time-consuming enquiries asking if the service is the right one for a given individual. The Advice Line is a single point of entry for referring into the Vale Parenting Service, Vale Youth Wellbeing Service, Flying Start Outreach Plus, and Young Carers Assessments. Referrals are also frequently made to Families Achieving Change Together (FACT) – the Vale's Team Around the Family - Emotional Wellbeing Service, Llamau, Barnardos, Assisted Places, Youth Offending Services, and there are safeguarding needs, Children's Services.

The team now consists of 5 Advisors (including a Senior Advisor) who between them share over 75 years' experience working within youth and family work. The Families First Advice Line is a partnering service to the Family Information Service (FIS), and together both teams provide the mandatory support for all councils of offering Information, Advice, and Assistance. Whereas FIS provide information on local events and information for the public, FFAL will provide personally tailored advice, guidance, and access to professional services.

In addition, the Advice Line undertakes outreach work, attending weekly clinics in Llandough Children's Centre, information sessions for families who have been referred to the Neurodevelopment Team at St David's Children's Centre, Barnardos ADHD information sessions, family events hosted by partner agencies, and other promotional networking events. We also make use of home visits where necessary to help a family where there are obstacles in providing the best service, for example, literacy and communication barriers, language barriers, additional learning needs, complex needs, or referrals that require a signature.

In relation to schools, the Families First Advice Line is a valuable asset in maintaining a holistically positive environment for children. As Teachers, LSAs, ELSAs, and ALENCOs work tirelessly to guide students into becoming happy and proactive adults, preventative services can provide support for families outside of the school walls. These additional resources are imperative to a child and family's wellbeing, and the Advice Line is in place to clearly guide families to the most valuable service.

The Families First Advice Line can be used as many times as an individual needs, and is available through calling **0800 0327 322** on weekdays from 9am-12pm and 1pm-4:30pm or emailing familiesfirstadvicel@valeofglamorgan.gov.uk

New Safeguarding Officer for the Vale of Glamorgan Council

Dear all,

My name is Annemarie McKay and I am the new safeguarding Education Officer. Having had 18 years' experience working in the field of child protection and safeguarding, I have worked in Cardiff Children's Services as a Social Worker and Team manager, been an Independent Reviewing Officer, managed the safeguarding team in Caerphilly and more recently been a Family Court Advisor in Caf-cass, representing children and young people in the Family Court arena. My career has been an extremely challenging but insightful experience and I wanted to bring this into the education safeguarding role.

Some of you I may have met already and those who I haven't I look forward to meeting in the very near future.

Regards

Annemarie

Pupil Voice Support from the Vale Youth Service

The Vale Youth Service facilitated pupil voice training for school council link teachers from secondary schools on the 25th September. A number of secondary schools have recently appointed new teachers to the role of school council link. It was a great opportunity to meet with those new teachers and an opportunity to encourage schools to build on existing links. The training was well attended and teachers provided the following feedback:

"Excellent and relevant information and resources."

"Great training for being so new to the role."

"Thank you for putting on this training session."

2020 Education Update & Briefing Session Date For Your Diary

DATE	VENUE	TIME
Wednesday 1 July 2020	Corporate Suite, Civic Offices, Barry	6.00 - 7.30pm

*Wishing you a Merry Christmas
and a
Happy New Year
from the
Governor Support Unit*



Understanding Disability Award Ceremony



In a fitting tribute to her 42 year career Mrs Adrina Jones a teacher at St Illtyd Primary School, is celebrating winning the Understanding Disability Award organised by the Parents Federation.

Adrina was nominated by the Chair of Governors of the school due to her tireless efforts on behalf of children with additional needs. The awards ceremony was held on 4 November 2019 in Cardiff.

The judges highlighted Adrina's outstanding commitment to her pupils. She has always ensured that her pupils got the most from their education and always fought to ensure they received all the support from the Vale to which they were entitled.

Thinking of Fostering? Think The Vale of Glamorgan Council!

Many of our Foster Carers work within the Public Sector. Fostering provides them with a unique opportunity to utilise their skills whilst earning a competitive additional income.

As a School Governor, you already possess many of the qualities and attributes needed to make a fantastic Foster Carer. You're committed to putting the needs and rights of children first and foremost and have insightful and innovative approaches and ways of working- something you would put to fantastic use when nurturing The Vale's foster children. You're used to working as part of a multi-disciplinary team, something that will stand you in good stead when representing the needs of your foster child at social care meetings. As a Governor, you're at the heart of how the schools works and we'd love for you to take the passion you already demonstrate for the wellbeing of Vale of Glamorgan's young people and use this as a valid member of our fostering team.

Fostering with The Vale Council is a fantastic opportunity to contribute to the wellbeing and future of The Vale of Glamorgan's children and young people whilst simultaneously developing your skills and earning a competitive income.

Our Foster Carers are the integral part of our team, committed to helping transform the lives of children and young people across The Vale of Glamorgan. Our Foster Carers sit alongside our Children Looked after and Front Line teams, offering invaluable communication for the whole journey of each child coming into our care. In return, we provide fantastic training and development opportunities, including nationally recognised qualifications. We also offer our Foster Carers competitive skill allowances and recuperation breaks where the children will be looked after by qualified respite carers. For those who are directly employed by The Vale of Glamorgan council you will also benefit for up to 5 additional days leave for fostering activity to support you in the role.

The Vale Fostering have a regularly changing cohort of children in our care and subsequently have a high demand for the best matched carers. If you think you can join our mission to give every Vale child the chance to reach their potential or if you would just like to find out more please contact Amy in our fostering team. You can do this by:

Phone: Call them on **029 2087 3797** Monday - Thursday 8.30am-5pm and Friday 8.30 a.m. - 4.30 p.m.

Website: visit

https://www.valeofglamorgan.gov.uk/en/living/social_care/children_and_young_people/fostering/fostering.aspx



Tŷ Ystumllwynarth/Oystermouth House
Llys Siarter/Charter Court, Phoenix Way
Abertawe/Swansea SA7 9FS
01792 765600

comisiynyddplant.cymru
childrenscommissioner.wales

post@comisiynyddplant.cymru
post@childrenscommissioner.wales

Croesawn ohebiaeth yn y Gymraeg yn ogystal â'r Saesneg ac mewn amryw o fformatau
We welcome correspondence in the medium of Welsh and English as well as alternative formats

Dear Colleagues,

In March 2019, I published A Charter for Change: Protecting Welsh Children from the impact of poverty. This report presented the views and experiences of children, their families and professionals in respect of child poverty in Wales. The report also included a series of recommendations to Welsh Government, Local Authorities and schools. One significant theme arising from this work was the cost or associated costs of the school day and, as Commissioner, I feel there are tangible things schools across the country can implement to alleviate the financial burden some families face.

The report highlights the fundamental role that teaching staff and Governing Bodies have in creating change in their schools. I acknowledge the huge pressures and demands on schools currently, therefore in order to facilitate some of these changes, my team has developed resources for schools. My request to you as Governing Bodies is threefold:

- encourage the use of our 'Revolve' resource in your school, to create a pupil-led school uniform reuse schemes in your school;
- encourage the use of our 'Check with Ceri' resource; a pupil led audit of school costs, and support the delivery of the plan and actions that arise from this work;
- identify a "Ceri's champion" for your school as detailed in the resources. This could be someone within the school's governing body, or within the school staff body, who takes the lead on analysing the costs of the school day and over the school year to populate a 'calendar of costs', and create an action plan to reduce the financial burden on families.

These are three critical recommendations from the report which I believe will deliver tangible changes to pupils' lives. If you'd like to read the full report and its recommendations head you can find it [here](#).

Over 600 primary schools and two-thirds of secondary schools are signed up to my Ambassador schemes. Those schools have already been tasked with implementing the above recommendations as their special 'mission' this term. If your school is a member of the scheme there should be a link teacher who co-ordinates this in your school and two pupils appointed Ambassadors. If you're not already signed up, the scheme is free to join and you can find out more [here](#). Please note that it is not compulsory to become a member of my schemes to implement these recommendations but would encourage you to sign up due to the wealth of bilingual, accessible resources we produce for teachers and pupils.

I would be most grateful if you could share the contents of this letter with other members of the Governing Body, including the head teacher and would appreciate feedback on how the school has or intends to implement these recommendations. You can do this by following these links to the on-line feedback forms; 'Revolve reuse school uniform' feedback, 'Check with Ceri' audit feedback. There are also QR codes in the resources which will take you to these forms.

If you would like further information about the resources or have any questions please contact Emma Curtis (Policy Adviser) who is leading on this work - emma.curtis@childcomwales.org.uk or **01792 765600**.

Yours sincerely

Sally Holland
Children's Commissioner for Wales

Update on Admission Arrangements for Reception Age Children 2019-20

Introduction

Following a consultation to introduce a pilot scheme for co-ordinated admission arrangements for the Reception age group for the 2019-20 academic year, the governing bodies of Llansannor C.W Primary, St Andrew's Major C.W Primary, St Bride's Major C.W Primary, St David's C.W Primary and Wick & Marcross C.W Primary agreed to participate in the scheme.

In addition to Vale of Glamorgan community Schools parents were now able to apply for places in these schools by using the online application service as detailed above.

Background/Methodology

Co-ordination of admissions criteria and questions for application form etc. were determined in partnership with all schools and led by the diocesan, Andrew Ricketts.

Admissions Portal – Schools were added as options for parental preference on the online application portal, which also included variety of information relating to the application process and in particular the criteria for the schools and links to school websites etc.

Contact/Availability – School Admissions team were easily contactable for parents and school staff alike and were on hand to provide any advice or solutions to potential issues.

Findings/Results – The pilot scheme was successful and allowed parents additional preferences and resolved the issue of parents being allocated multiple places via different admissions authorities and created a more transparent process for schools and the local authority. Feedback has been received from participating schools and parents as to how the process can be improved and we are keen to enhance the support available wherever possible.

Increased transparency for parents, schools and the authority has decreased the amount of appeals in the areas where the pilot has been introduced and has resulted in a fairer distribution of school places.

Super Ambassador Events

The Vale Youth Service's Rights Ambassador Project, organised two Super Ambassador events this term to raise awareness of Children and Young People's Rights and the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child.

Super Ambassadors is one of three schemes run by the Children's Commissioner for Wales to promote children's rights in primary schools. The two events were held on the 11th October 2019 at CF61 Centre, Llantwit Major and 24th October at Hebron Hall, Dinas Powys. Thirty primary schools from across the Vale of Glamorgan attended the events. This year also sees the 30th Anniversary Celebrations of the UNCRC, we hope that as many schools across the Vale mark the occasion.



Survey Invitation

Dear School Governor,

I warmly invite you to participate in a survey designed to gain a better understanding of the support school governors would value. The survey also provides an opportunity to generate useful case studies that will be made available to governors across Wales as a resource. It will take between 15 – 30 minutes to complete.

https://socsi.qualtrics.com/jfe/form/SV_4VgrNq2bLq2IsHX

The survey forms part of a project funded by the Higher Education Funding Council for Wales (HEFCW) and is being conducted through the Wales Institute of Social and Economic Research, Data and Methods (WISERD). Further details about the survey are included within it, along with information about data use.

https://socsi.qualtrics.com/jfe/form/SV_4VgrNq2bLq2IsHX

Our aim is directly benefit school governors and everyone's participation is valued, whether you are a new or a very experienced governor. Please share the links with your governing body colleagues. Many thanks in advance.

Kind regards,
Dr Nigel Newton

WISERD, Cardiff University

VSGA Management Committee 2018-20

The Management Committee is comprised of elected governors plus the two Parent Governor Representatives (one each from the Primary and Secondary sectors).

No.	Title	Initial	Surname	School
1	Mr	R	Bailey	Peterston-Super-Ely C/W Primary
2	Dr	C	Brown	Llantwit Major Comp
3	Mr	N	Craggs	Gwenfo C/W Primary
4	Mrs	M	Gibbs	Romilly Primary
5	Mr	A	Hennessey	Oak Field Primary & Ysgol Sant Baruc
6	Mrs	S	Hodges	Ysgol Sant Baruc
7	Mrs	A	Males	St Cyres Comp
8	Mrs	A	Malkin	Gladstone Primary
9	Dr	M	Price	St Richard Gwyn R/C High
10	Mr	R	Smith	Wick & Marcross C/W Primary
11	Mr	D	Treharne	Llansannor C/W Prim
12	Mrs	T	Vaughan-Taylor	Cowbridge Comp
13	Mrs	E	Wapner-Carter	Ysgol y Deri
14	Mrs	S	Williams	All Saints C/W Primary
15	Cllr Mr	M	Wilson	Fairfield Primary & Victoria Primary
Parent Governor Representatives' (PGRs) terms of office				
PGR - Prim	Mrs	J	Lynch-Wilson	St Athan Primary
PGR - Sec	Vacant			