

CORPORATE PARENTING PANEL

Minutes of meeting held on 8th July, 2019

Present: Councillor B.T. Gray (Chairman), Mrs. P. Drake, O. Griffiths, Dr. I.J. Johnson, K.F. McCaffer, Mrs. R. Nugent-Finn and E. Williams; Ms. J. Ballantine (Principal HR Business Partner), Mrs. K. Bowen (Principal Democratic and Scrutiny Services Officer), L. Carver (Director of Social Services), Mrs. M. Coles (LAC Education Co-ordinator and Lead Professional EAL), Ms. A. Condy (Operational Manager CYPS), Ms. K. Conway (Operational Manager CYPS), M. Dacey (Lead Officer Social Inclusion and Wellbeing), D. Davies (Head of Achievement for All), Mrs. R. Evans (Head of Children and Young People Services), Ms. M. Hudson (Head of Standards and Provision Learning and Skills) Ms. C. Light (Care Leavers Forum Representative), Mr. M.E. Thomas (Democratic and Scrutiny Services Officer) and Ms. G. Toon (Complex Needs Manager and Principal Educational Psychologist).

(1)	Apologies for Absence –
	There were no apologies.
(2)	Welcome, Introductions and Terms of Reference –
	<p>The Chairman welcomed the attendees and asked everyone to introduce themselves around the table. New attendees included C. Light from the Care Leavers Forum, who would be the representative for that Forum for the next 12 months. The Head of Children and Young People Services stated that the Care Leavers Forum had met and had considered the Corporate Strategy. Another new attendee was M. Dacey, who was the Lead Officer for Social Inclusion and Wellbeing.</p> <p>The Chairman referred to the Terms of Reference, attached to the agenda, stating that the role of the corporate parent was to seek for children in public care the outcomes every good parent would want for their own children. The Local Authority had a legal and moral duty to provide such loyal support to the children it was responsible for looking after.</p> <p>Cabinet had resolved on 17th June that the Corporate Parenting Panel be re-appointed, with its membership comprising the Cabinet Member for Social Care and Health (Chairman of the Panel), 2 Conservative Group Members, 2 Labour Group Members and 1 Member each from the Plaid Cymru Group, Llantwit First Independents Group and the Vale Independents Group.</p>
(3)	Minutes and Matters Arising –
	The minutes of the meeting held on 1 st April, 2019 were agreed as an accurate record.

(4) Corporate Strategy for Children Who Need Care and Support 2019-23 –

RE stated that current Strategy ends in 2019 and had provided a shared direction over the last three years and this work had helped inform the direction going forward.

This new four year Strategy had been developed in partnership with the Council's external partners in Health and the Third Sector and very positively reflected the relationships in the structure of the Strategy itself and the actions to support it. The Action Plan for the Strategy involved the Vale of Glamorgan Council and partners making commitments together with the four objectives. RE stated that it had been originally intended to present the Strategy in May, however, due to political changes this had been delayed until now. The Strategy would also be taken to Scrutiny and Cabinet.

The Chairman stated the intention was to have a discussion on this document and that the structure of the discussion would be based on the four objectives.

Councillor Nugent-Finn stated that prevention was a good theme and asked whether needs had increased due to increases in demographics. RE replied that there was indeed increased demand and complexity and went on to say the complexity was due to poverty and other factors, which impact education through to housing.

Councillor Nugent-Finn stated that the strength based approach was realistic, positive and achievable but did ask whether there would be any challenges or shortages. RE stated that support for families was based on offering 'the right support and at the right time' and where possible higher level support only in the short term. The requirement regionally was challenging and exciting in terms of new services.

In terms of the first objective, RE advised that 47% of children were still placed with parents or kin and that supporting families was the first aim, but if necessary children would be taken into care. She also noted the pressure on placements and associated external spend.

CL referred to the Care Leavers Forum which had come up with a number of suggestions such as the Voluntary Buddy System where care experienced young people offered their support to those in care, for example, going shopping, bowling etc. with children, in order to stop children in care feeling isolated. She also stated this proposal helped to achieve the first objective. CL said that peer group support did benefit those children in care as some of them felt a lot more comfortable dealing with their peers as opposed to officials and would help care leavers become more independent. RE stated that the Care Leavers Forum idea was a great one. CL also stated that children were happy with the Corporate Plan but wanted to do something in addition to it, such as the Care Leavers Forum.

	<p>Councillor Dr. Johnson referred to Objective 4 “To jointly develop with children a plan for the next stages of their lives” and wondered if the wording should be clearer but still reflected what was going on in terms of this objective and to ensure that the child is heard at all times. RE agreed to revisit this.</p> <p>Councillor Dr. Johnson further stated that the timescales and four year plan should be reviewed again in 18 months. RE stated that the Action Plan was the real driving force of the Corporate Strategy and as such, this was updated all the time. This is reflected later in the document. The Chairman suggested that the wording be brought forward in the Strategy.</p> <p>It was noted that there would be an annual review of Corporate Strategy.</p> <p>Councillor Williams stated the Corporate Strategy was a good document, and he was impressed with the goals. Councillor Dr. Johnson also stated that it was a fair division in terms of progress of social services and external partners under the Corporate Strategy.</p> <p>Councillor Dr. Johnson asked about mental health in the Strategy, to which RE replied mental health was referred to as emotional wellbeing and the Strategy was seeking to emphasise the importance of a common approach.</p> <p>The Chairman in conclusion advised that it was important that services were kept up to date around the Corporate Strategy.</p>
(5)	Breakdown of Our Numbers of Children Looked After –
	<p>KC provided details of the current statistics as at 8th July, 2019 which advised that there were currently 280 children looked after, of which 139 were female and 141 were male. The ages of children looked after were noted as:</p> <p>0-5 years – 83 6-10 years – 70 11-15 years – 88 16-17 years – 39</p> <p>The legal status of children looked after were:</p> <p>Care Order – 212 Interim Care Order – 15 Placement Order – 26 Section 76 – 25 Secure Order – 2 Remand – 0</p> <p>Children looked after were placed as follows:</p> <p>73 were placed in Vale of Glamorgan mainstream foster placements 45 were placed in independent fostering agency placements</p>

	<p>70 were placed in kinship placements with their wider family 63 were placed with their parents 15 were placed in residential placements: - 4 in residential schools and 11 in children's homes, 2 in a secure unit on welfare grants, 0 were placed in youth offender institute on remand, 2 were placed in parent and children assessment centre, 3 were placed in independent living projects and 7 were placed for adoption pending the grant of an Adoption Order.</p> <p>KC went on to detail the external placements costs: the cost of current independent fostering agency placements were between £606 - £1,890 per week, with the average placement costing £755 per week. The costs of current residential placements were between £2,800 - £4,830 per week. The costs of current secure placements was between £5,500 - £7,500 per week. The Council's external placements budget was £4,357k and current projected spend against that budget was £5,884k which meant that a £1,527k overspend was currently being projected at year end.</p> <p>Councillor Griffiths asked around children under Interim Care Orders and Section 76 as to whether they would be going back to their parents. KC advised that the primary goal, where achievable, was to support rehabilitation.</p> <p>RE advised that Children and Young People Services were looking to support parents as much as possible and indeed carers considered the Vale of Glamorgan to be a sensible Authority regarding discharging Orders. KC informed the panel that there had been a huge increase in Courts referring for private matters.</p> <p>Councillor Dr. Johnson raised a query regarding Secure Orders. KC informed the panel that Secure Orders were short term measures and were constantly under review, including monitoring children's progress in order to complete these where necessary and only extend them if appropriate.</p> <p>The Chairman wanted the work being done by Social Services to be noted.</p>
(6)	<p>Current Work Programme –</p> <p>The Chairman stated that the First Minister for Wales' aim was to see a reduction in the numbers of children in care down and as such, the reduction of children in care should be included on the work programme in time for the next Corporate Parenting Panel meeting on 23rd September, 2019 at 4.00 p.m.</p> <p>It was also noted that DD's remit was changing and the Panel took the opportunity to thank him for his support. MH would now be taking the lead on high risk students and achievement for all, as well as attending future Panel meetings.</p> <p>The proposed work programme for the Panel was agreed as below:</p> <p>23rd September, 2019 –</p>

	<p>Prevention of Homelessness and Mental Health Project – Mike Ingram The Reduction in the Numbers of Looked After Children – Rachel Evans</p> <p>Breakdown of Children Looked After – Karen Conway</p> <p>18th November, 2019 – Children most at risk; management of high risk students – David Davies</p> <p>20th January, 2020 – Edge of Care Analysis, Trends in/out of Care – Karen Conway and Amber Condy</p> <p>23rd March, 2020 – TBC</p>
(7)	Any Other Business –
	No items were raised.
(8)	Date of Next Meeting –
	23 rd September, 2019 at 4.30 p.m. in Committee Room 2, Civic Offices, Barry.