

REMOTE CORPORATE PARENTING PANEL

Minutes of meeting held on 15TH November 2021

Present: Councillor B.T. Gray (Chair), P. Drake, Dr. I.J. Johnson, R. Nugent-Finn, N. Thomas and, E. Williams; L. Carver (Director of Social Services), Ms. A. Condy (Operational Manager CYPS), Mr. M. Dacey (Lead Officer for Social Inclusion and Wellbeing), Mrs. T. Dickinson (Head of Human Resources and Organisational Development), Mrs. R. Evans (Head of Children and Young People Services), M. Hudson (Head of Standards and Provision), Mr. M. Ingram (Head of Housing and Building Services), C. O'Dare (Team Manager) and Miss. C. Western (Members & Committee Services Assistant).

Invited attendees:

(1)	Apologies for Absence –
	Apologies for absence were noted from Mr Matthew Swindell.
(2)	Minutes and Matters Arising –
	Minutes from 13 th September agreed. There were no matters arising from the minutes.
(3a)	End of Key Stage 4 – (Martine Coles)
	<p>MC – Presented and talked through end of Key Stage 4 assessments -</p> <p>Threshold for performance indicators –</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• MC explained what level 2 plus meant in detail and that the 24 learners in Nation Curriculum Year (NCY) 11 who had achieved vocational qualifications instead of GCSE's, up from 20 in relation to 2020.• MC took Members through the 24 young people one by one to give some context.• MC said that when the team looked at the GCSE results, they were pleased to see that where young people that struggled, additional support had been put in place that would continue for Key stage 5, whether that was in Cardiff & Vale Collage or 6th Form.• There were some young people who were NEET, and staff would continue to work with them, their social workers and carers. <p>The Chair thanked MC for the informative presentation and was pleased to hear so many young people wanted to in engage in the education system. He then invited any questions from members.</p> <p>Chair noted that there were no further questions on this and proceeded to the next agenda item.</p>

(3b) Y Daith – Key Stage 4 Review of Provision 2020 – 2021 (Martin Dacey)

MD referred to MCs presentation and advised that this would be a verbal update with regards the Y Daith provision.

Following on what MC said in her presentation MD noted that –

- Three young people engaged with Y Daith, which last year was called the Pupil Referral Unit. It was the final year of the Pupil Referral Unit and was now referred to the Centre of Learning & Wellbeing.
- Members were made aware that provision was now with Ysgol y Deri, dealing with pupils that had more complex needs such as social, emotional, and mental health problems. Pupils could present more challenging behaviour and have a range of complex needs and often access therapies and a range of support mechanisms to support the pupils. For example, Ysgol Y Deri also had expertise in trauma informed approaches as some of the young people present with such issues as part of their profile.
- Positive news from the last year of Y Daith was that in terms of a three-year comparison the capped 9 points score had now doubled from 107 in 2018 to 219 in 2021.
- There was a real sense of celebration for the last year of Y Daith and the Centre of Learning & Wellbeing were looking to build upon that when the new building opened at the Court Road site. They hoped to have capacity to offer vocational type pathways that could not be offered currently in the current buildings in Cowbridge and Amelia Trust.
- It was hoped to be able to offer those types of learning pathways in spring 2023. This would mean that young people would not have to travel outside the Vale to access such types of vocational learning.

MD Closed by saying that overall, it was a positive final year of Y Daith. He referred to the strong relationship between Amber Condy and Y Daith as Chair of the meeting, hoped that the Centre of Learning & Wellbeing would long continue and looked forward to the fantastic new provision that would be made available in 2023.

The Chair asked if AC would like to add anything further. AC echoed the comments made by MD, adding it was a great opportunity for those young people who required such kind of provision.

Chair thanked both MD and AC and invited any questions from Members.

Councillor Nugent Finn thanked MD for the information regarding the new vocational provision and asked if there were any examples of what types of courses would be provided at the new Court Road Centre in 2023.

MD advised that nothing had currently been formally agreed at present, but consideration was being given to media and music studies. There had also been some dialogue about possibly providing construction/trade related courses.

	<p>There could potentially also be partnerships with Cardiff & Vale College for hair and beauty qualifications.</p> <p>Councillor Nugent Finn was excited to hear about all the types of possible vocational courses and the huge opportunities to come for these young people.</p> <p>Chair thanked MD for the update.</p>
(4)	Reduction Expectation Plan Progress Statement to Welsh Government – Quarter 2 (Rachel Evans)
	<p>RE presented the Quarter 2 information which was the third of three year submissions to Welsh Government. The Vale Council had committed to reduce the numbers of children looked after where it was safe to do so.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • RE wanted to note that that Section 1 was the Local Authority’s overall summary of activity to safely reduce the CLA population. The Council would not achieve the targets or intentions that were set three years ago. The preamble on the first page of the presentation reiterated that and put before Welsh government that the population was increasing. • It was noted that quarter 2 had seen a reduction from quarter 1 from 294 to 287. Welsh Government had been advised that it was not a stable situation and the Authority were still experiencing high demands for placements and reduced ability to discharge care orders and the associated challenges. • The position at present was that in September there were 287 children looked after with 54 placed with parents and 65 placed with kinship carers. • Three years ago, Officers set out an intention to discharge care orders for 7 children who were placed with parents. So far this year Officers have achieved 5 and felt that this was positive. • In terms of children that were placed with kin, the intention was 9 and 2 had been achieved, which was less progress than desired. Those situations were initially not prioritised by the courts as we went into the pandemic as they needed to prioritise the safeguarding of children. • Our social work resource was now able to make some progress but unfortunately our legal colleagues were not able to support with the discharge applications due to other demands, such as care proceedings. On the whole all resources had been compromised by the pandemic and during the past 19 months. • Officers had however achieved a non-care order outcome for 8 children, which meant those children started looked after and ended being non looked after and put them in a really good position. This also reflected well on all young people’s services division.

- One of the exits from care was adoption. Three years ago, it was estimated that we would achieve adoptions orders for 7 children, and we were able to reach 4.
- We were also trying to prevent admissions to reduce the numbers that were coming in where it was safe to do so, however this could be very difficult.
- We said we would prevent 15 admissions into care, and Officers were on track to meet that estimation at present. This meant we have managed the preventions that we set out three years ago in quarter 1.
- 14 of the children looked left care having turned 18 this year but did not mean that the commitment or involvement would stop. They would become care leavers and legislation exists that allows for the ongoing support of those young adults. However, they are no longer classed as children looked after. This involved a lot of work from the 15 plus team.

RE advised that Officers were committed to always place children locally, there are some instances where sometimes there may be a need to place a child further afield, normally where there were risks involved in their local situation, and where a period of stability was required for that child. This was important so that the children could still attend local schools, see their friends, family and be part of their local communities.

RE said that Welsh Government asked the Council to report on figures on placements outside the Vale authority and outside of Wales. Positively, between quarter 1 and 2, we had 3 less children placed outside of Wales and 4 children placed out of area. Welsh Government also asked for the number of children removed from parents with learning disabilities.

- Applying this to parents with additional learning needs, rather than a diagnosed learning disability, Officers continued to work with the 2 children (in 2 families) identified.
- In Q1, with planning taking place before the Court.
- In Q2, Officers began working with another family where both parents had an element of learning difficulty; they have two children.

RE closed by saying that although what was outlined three years ago had not been achieved, Officers were still working though the pandemic and for more positive outcomes for children. Progress was being made through the different areas. Welsh Government had not asked about any of the submissions that we had made and had not indicated their intentions once the end of the third year was reached.

Chair thanked RE for the update and agreed that Members could appreciate the strain of the pandemic had had on the various areas raised in the presentation and invited questions from Members.

	<p>NT thanked RE for the report and appreciated the complexity of the children being looked after over the past two years and pressures on Social Services that had considerably increased due to the pandemic. He also raised a comment that he would like to commend her colleagues for the work they've done during this time.</p> <p>RE added that it was enormously reassuring when people can understand the context, and the efforts were appreciated and wanted to thank Councillor Thomas for taking the time to say that.</p> <p>Chair advised that there were no further comments on this matter</p>
(5)	Children and Looked After – Breakdown (Karen Conway)
	<p>KC advised that there was a small increase from 13th September 2021 when presented last. The figures related to 259 at the end of March 2020, 273 at the end of January 2021, 284 at the end of March 2021 and 295 on the 10th September 2021. The number of children looked after fluctuated, influenced by the number of entrants, and exits.</p> <p>The Chair thanked KC for the updated information provided and invited any further questions from Members.</p> <p>Councillor Nugent Finn thanked KC for the breakdown. She went on to ask about those on a full care order and about the current waiting lists to take them to court.</p> <p>KC responded by advising that it was difficult in terms of the care proceedings. Previously there were some delays in adoption orders, but this had now been rectified. The delays seen concerned discharging those care orders.</p> <p>MC referred to the placing children out of county in terms of education provision, saying that often out of county authorities don't have the provisions to meet some of our young people's needs that then leads to delays and lots of challenges. She wanted to make the Panel aware that from an educational perspective placing children out of county was not done lightly even though there was a partnership with social services. Those challenges were something that would continue to be faced within our local authority and further afield as required by the needs of the child.</p> <p>The Chair asked for any further questions; no further questions or comments were added.</p>
(6)	Any Other Business –
	There were no items of other business for consideration.
(7)	Date of Next Meeting –
	The date of the next meeting would be Monday 10 th January 2022 at 4.30 p.m.