

REMOTE CORPORATE PARENTING PANEL

Minutes of meeting held on 05th July, 2021

Present: Councillor B.T. Gray (Chair), P. Drake, Dr. I.J. Johnson, R. Nugent-Finn, N. Thomas and, E. Williams; Mrs J. Ballantine (Principal HR Business Partner), 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 Mr. M. Swindell (Cabinet & Committee Services Officer).

Invited attendees: Sandra Saif (Vulnerable Groups Support Manager and Casework Co-ordinator).

(1)	Apologies for Absence –
	Apologies for absence were noted from Councillor K.F. McCaffer, Mrs. M. Coles (LAC Education Co-ordinator and Lead Professional EAL), Ms. K. Conway (Operational Manager CYPS) and Miss CL (Care Leavers Forum Representative).
(2)	Minutes and Matters Arising –
	<p>M. Hudson (Head of Standards and Provision) was listed as present at the meeting that took place on the 17th May, 2021, whereas her apologies should have been recorded.</p> <p>With the amendment above agreed, the minutes of the meeting held on the 17th May, 2021 were agreed as an accurate record and would go on in Part I form to a future Cabinet meeting.</p> <p>There were no matters arising from the minutes.</p>
(3)	Pupil Referral Unit Provision Update –
	<p>MD provided Panel Members with an update concerning the Pupil Referral Unit (PRU) with a PowerPoint presentation on-screen, with the following additional points noted:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Significant transformation plans to the PRU provision.• Proposals would look to address the issues of ongoing rental costs for one building and availability of outdoor space for those with challenging emotional, social or mental health at the other.• Reduction in school transport costs.• Provision of an area for sports use facilities and a garden area.• Therapies available at Ysgol Y Deri (YYD) would enhance the learning experience for young people.

- There are discussions concerning a broader range of vocational opportunities utilising reconfigured outbuildings at Court Road for construction, art, music studio, film. Media etc.
- There would be a 5-day offer for some young people who require it for the first time in Key Stage 4. Due to current site restrictions all young people were currently part time at the Cowbridge site with alternative providers providing the other half.
- It was hoped that all building work would be on completed on time for January 2023 to meet the needs of young people far better.

The Chair thanked MD for the informative presentation and invited questions from Members.

Councillor Neil Thomas (NT) appreciated the positive and flexible approach and asked about lessons learned from the Covid experience, e.g., online and distance learning. MD said that education does want to provide varied engagement options as some, but not all young people had preferred engagement from a distance. Going forward, a hybrid way of teaching had been considered but Trade Unions do have some concerns as teachers are not able to provide both online and face to face teaching simultaneously. There may be a need to be flexible and possibly look to private providers in some cases. Some young people had felt that distance learning had been positive but there was an anxiety amongst parents about social aspects, ongoing college applications, relationships with peers etc.

Councillor Ian Johnson (IJ) noted this was part of an education programme but asked if it was a matter that would be going to Planning Committee as a planning application. He also asked how many Children Looked After (CLA) would use the facilities and referred the new Curriculum for Wales legislation which discussed mental health and wellbeing and how that would be integrated into the curriculum. MD said that there were not large number of CLA pupils accessing provision in the spring, 5 or 6 over the last academic year, but those numbers often fluctuated regularly as young people moved in and out of provision having reintegrated into mainstream or with new learners being taken on. There were close links with the Vulnerable Groups team where there were CLA pupils accessing services. Mental health and wellbeing were both core to delivery and a key reason to move provision under the YYD umbrella and was a very pupil-centred approach to learning under the new curriculum for those with challenging mental health and wellbeing needs.

Councillor Rachel Nugent-Finn (RNF) asked if there was any provision for in-house recognised qualifications for both academic and vocational courses, e.g., with Barry College, and were staff trained to that level. MD said that was something that would be strongly considered for the future but were currently offering the broadest range offer possible. There were further options available via Youth Engagement and also reliant on commissioned outside providers for courses in construction, motor mechanics etc., and sometimes out of county. There was some work to be done with Cardiff & Vale College in terms of provision in Barry, but there was available alternative provision close by in Cardiff also.

	<p>RNF said it was important for the Vale of Glamorgan’s young people to have the same opportunities for GCSE, kick start, apprenticeships, etc., as anywhere else and asked if this Panel as Corporate Parents could champion in discussions with Cardiff & Vale College. The Chair, as a Governor of Cardiff and Vale College interceded and advise he would discuss that as a matter with MD separately.</p> <p>Councillor Eddie Williams (EW) said it was important to focus on the life-chances being given to young people, how important it was for them to be able to progress to work and careers and was a credit to the staff involved in supporting them.</p> <p>The Chair thanked MD for the presentation and all participants for their contribution on the matter. The Chair advised he would liaise with MD and write as Chair of Corporate Parenting Panel with regards some of the suggestions around qualifications and seek some assurances from Cardiff & Vale College as to what may be able to be offered to young people in the Vale of Glamorgan.</p>
(4)	How will the Additional Learning Needs Act Affect Social Services –
	<p>SS provided Panel Members with an overview of how the Additional Learning Needs Act affect Social Services and a PowerPoint presentation on-screen, where the following additional points were noted:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • An Individual Development Plan (IDP) was a document that contained a description of the child or young person’s additional learning needs and the additional learning provision called for by the child or young person’s learning difficulty or disability. • IDPs covered from 0-25 years of age and were a working document reviewed annually, or in line with a Personal Education Plan or Care Plan review at any time. • An IDP only had value if it successfully implemented individual learning provision that met the child or young person’s needs. • An IDP should be created by collaboration of a number of agencies working together to meet the individual’s needs, written in plain language and avoiding the use of jargon. • For CLA that had an identified additional learning need that required an IDP, it would be a Local Authority maintained IDP which would be developed, maintained and reviewed by the Local Authority with responsibility for the young person regardless of where that person resided. • Normally the Person Centred Meetings would take place in one room, but as a consequence of Covid an interactive PowerPoint had been developed with Cardiff to be shared on-screen which was accessible by all participants at a meeting. Minutes of that meeting were then shared with parents, carers and attendees at the meeting to be agreed before becoming a formal IDP. • The One Page Profiles were quality assured. • Work did not stop as a result of Covid and continued throughout.

- Young people found the process productive, and they felt that the use of Teams was positive rather than being in a room full of professionals.
- Not every CLA had an IDP.
- The VOG PEP/IDP was still in draft during consultation; once finalised over the summer holidays it would be translated into Welsh in readiness for September.

The Chair thanked SS for the informative presentation and invited questions from Members.

The Chair understood there would be individual reviews of individual circumstances and asked what we would be doing to understand collectively how young people had felt about the process. SS said that those discussions were taking place with children and young people to ensure that they felt the process working for them.

EW said he understood why some young people would have felt intimidated being in a roomful of different professionals and understood that they would prefer a remote process for that and asked who led on the Personal Education Plans (PEP). SS said that they liked to review the PEPs termly for those out of catchment as those who attended education provision in the Vale of Glamorgan could have their attendance, attainment, etc. monitored more easily. For those out of county, it was requested that their information be updated termly. The One Page Profile would not be updated termly, possibly biannually. Any PEP/IDP review would be done simultaneously to feed into their CLA review.

NT asked to what level was Health involved and asked how it worked if this ran parallel to statements which did not always have compulsory elements to them. SS advised that there would be more weight to the IDP than statements previously had and that statements would be statutory until September 2022. Any review due before that date would be led by an IDP process, in particular for those transitioning from primary to secondary education.

L. Carver (Director of Social Services) (LC) asked if SS would make the presentation available in order to share it with Social Services colleagues, which was agreed.

SS advised Panel that Mrs. M. Coles (LAC Education Co-ordinator and Lead Professional EAL) (MC) had been delivering training to each of the Children's Services teams and planned to deliver that training to the IRO team before the summer break also. SS had also delivered three training sessions since February to carers and supervising social workers on the One Page Profile aspect. LC felt that training may be beneficial to colleagues in Adult Services also, which Mrs. R. Evans (Head of Children and Young People Services) (RE) advised was an action in the Corporate Strategy.

RNF asked about out of county children and if their PEPs were consistent and accurate. SS said that they were but that enquiries for additional information from a variety of agencies did sometimes have to be made for completeness.

	The Chair thanked SS for the presentation and all participants for their contribution on the matter.
(5)	End of Year CLA Reduction Submission and Current CLA Breakdown –
	<p>RE took the Committee through the latest available information, which had not been circulated but was available on-screen at the meeting, concerning a breakdown of Children Looked After in the Vale of Glamorgan as of the 28th June, 2021, for information.</p> <p>RE advised that the number of CLA as of Monday the 28th June, 2021 was 289, which was a small increase to the figure presented to Panel at the last meeting. As of Friday, the 02nd July, 2021 that figure was 292, showing that the figures were still fluctuating.</p> <p>The following additional points were noted:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 16 of the current CLA 0-5 years age group were under 1 year old. • The number of IFA placements is currently double the number it was only a few years ago. • The numbers of kinship and parental placements is positive in respect of children residing within their own families. • The numbers of residential placements has increased. <p>The Chair thanked RE for the information provided. and invited questions from Members.</p> <p>The Chair asked if it was an 8-week review for secure placements.</p> <p>Ms. A. Condy (Operational Manager CYPS (AC) said that ordinarily there could be an order for 3 or 6 months, usually the Court would grant a three month / twelve-week order. More commonly, that time is now shorter, often for 1 week before further review before Court reviewing the case and potentially allowing a further 11 weeks. When a Secure Order was requested, it had to be made clear what exit strategy was in place.</p> <p>The Chair said that the national press had reported immense pressure in some areas of the country where they were assessing increasing numbers of asylum-seeking children which was putting pressure on some Local Authorities that did not have capacity to assist with every case potentially and may be looking for support. AC said that the Authority would currently find it difficult to assist with any such request, but she was aware of the issue. RE clarified that the Vale had previously worked in partnership with Cardiff to support 2 asylum seekers.</p> <p>NT asked if the secure placement case was envisaged to be a long-term matter. RE said that secure placements were never intended to last longer than was necessary and that an exit strategy had to have been agreed. Work would be done to stabilise the situation and then look to step down from secure placement.</p>

(6)	Forward Work Programme –
	<p>The Chair looked forward to the meeting after the summer recess and there being a focus on fostering planned for that meeting. It was hoped to be able to bring forward some Edge of Care analysis also in November and hear from advocates in March.</p> <p>Should Panel Members wish to add anything further for future discussion, they can advise the Chair or Democratic Services Officer at any time.</p>
(7)	Any Other Business –
	<p>There were no items of other business for consideration.</p>
(8)	Date of Next Meeting –
	<p>The date of the next meeting would be Monday the 13th September, 2021 at 4.30 p.m.</p>