

MINUTES OF A MEETING OF THE CABINET COMMITTEE CORPORATE PARENTING HELD IN COMMITTEE ROOMS 2/3 - CIVIC OFFICES ANGEL STREET BRIDGEND CF31 4WB ON WEDNESDAY, 11 JULY 2018 AT 10:00

Present

Councillor PJ White – Chairperson

D Patel

CA Webster

HM Williams

Apologies for Absence

J Gebbie and CE Smith

Officers:

Susan Cooper

Corporate Director - Social Services & Wellbeing

Julie Ellams

Democratic Services Officer - Committees

Laura Kinsey

Head of Children's Social Care

172. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Councillors HJ David, CE Smith and RE Young

173. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

None

174. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

RESOLVED: That the minutes of the Cabinet Committee Corporate Parenting meeting of 18 April 2018 be approved as a true and accurate record.

175. INSPECTION OF CHILDREN'S SERVICES - ACTION PLAN

The Corporate Director, Social Services and Wellbeing presented an update on the action plan relating to the Care Inspectorate Wales (CIW) Inspection of children's services in June 2017. She also updated the Committee on the progress made in addressing the recommendations and arrangements for monitoring any outstanding actions. This was a six monthly update following consideration of the report in January 2018.

The Corporate Director, Social Services and Wellbeing gave a brief summary of the findings and explained that the Action Plan was monitored by the Early Help and Safeguarding Board which was chaired jointly by the Corporate Directors for Social Services and Wellbeing and Education and Family Support. The Inspection had taken place a year ago and positive progress had been made but there were some areas that required improvement.

A member noted that most of the actions were green, a few were amber and she asked if there was anything that might not be completed in a reasonable time or anything not progressing as expected. The Head of Children's Social Care explained that if there were any areas of concern then they would be coloured red. Most of the amber actions were long term pieces of work which would take time to achieve. A member was pleased to see the number of blue actions that had been completed.

A member asked what plans were being made in preparation for the change to the Cwm Taff area. The Corporate Director, Social Services and Wellbeing explained that the Bridgend part of the area plan would be transferred to Cwm Taff. A Transition Board had been set up by Cwm Taff and ABMU and staff sat on that board looking at work streams around partnerships. It was important to continue to provide a quality service and a Commissioning Officer had already established links with Cwm Taff. A member asked how staff were coping with the additional work. The Corporate Director, Social Services and Wellbeing explained that the teams were coping at the moment but she was concerned that staff would be unable to sustain the additional workload long term. The workload would continue to increase and additional resources would be required from Welsh Government. The Health Boards also required additional resources and a meeting had been set up to discuss the matter. It was recognised that this would be a huge piece of work for the Health Boards and it was important to make sure the partnership arrangements were maintained and that grants were disaggregated appropriately. The Cabinet Member Social Services and Early Help added that the additional resources would also be required after the transfer to bed new systems in.

A member asked how the actions were evaluated. The Head of Children's Social Care explained that the officers updated the Action Plan and reported to the Directors and the Board for challenge. Progress was also reported to CIW.

A member referred to the recommendation in the report regarding the quality of front line staff supervision and asked if this service was being maintained and if there was capacity to continue doing this. The Head of Children's Services explained that that the managers were able to supervise the frontline staff and currently there were no vacancies. They were not concerned about staff turnover and the position was closely monitored at EXIT interviews. The number of agency staff had reduced to two, one full time and one part time and they were due to finish early autumn when new staff were in place. It was recognised that a number of staff were newly qualified and they needed an induction and the right level of support. BCBC had recently been informed that it had received an accolade and been shortlisted to the final for support to staff in their first year of practice.

A Member asked if there had been any impact on the average number of cases allocated to each social worker. The Head of Children's Services explained that they aimed for 18 cases and this figure was monitored closely. Some social workers had more depending on the complexity of cases.

A Member asked if there were problems with recruitment and retention. The Corporate Director Social Services and Wellbeing explained that until recently there had been no vacancies but this had since changed. There were new quality assurance and supervisory processes in place and this had improved the position. Members asked if there were any recurring themes at EXIT interviews. The Head of Children's Services reported that there were no recurring themes and there appeared to be a diverse number of reasons for leaving including promotion and the opportunity to work closer to home.

A member referred to the Festival of Learning, an event that had recently taken place where experiences and knowledge had been shared to benefit those who both taught as well as students and asked if there were any similar schemes in children's services. The Corporate Director Social Services and Wellbeing explained that they were looking to do work with the training unit and that in the last year they had met the 21 new starters at the start of the year and they would see them again at the end of the year to hear how they were settling in and to promote the positivity of Bridgend.

A Member asked how the council would increase the voices of children and families in shaping service planning. The Group Manager Children's Regulated Services explained that children were instrumental in shaping the direction of travel. LAC met and presented their views and a young person had recently been appointed to join the Children's Commissioning Consortium Cymru.

RESOLVED: That the Committee note the CIW report on the Inspection of Bridgend's Children's Social Care and comments on the associated Action Plan.

176. APPROVAL OF THE STATEMENTS OF PURPOSE FOR RESIDENTIAL SERVICES

The Group Manager, Children's Regulated Services presented a report on the revised statements of purpose for the current residential services provision in Bridgend County Borough Council. She explained that it was a requirement under the Council's constitution that these were presented to the Corporate Parenting Committee.

The Group Manager, Children's Regulated Services explained that BCBC currently had four children's residential homes delivering services to 47 children and young people aged 0 – 19 years. The purpose of the Regulation and Inspection of Social Care (Wales) Act 2018 was to build on the success of regulation in Wales and to reflect the changing world of social care. Regulation would move beyond compliance with minimum standards and focus more on the quality of services and the impact they had on the people receiving them. She explained that each Local Authority would be issued a certificate of registration and all Statements of Purpose would be presented in a more uniform way.

The Group Manager, Children's Regulated Services explained that there were no changes to the statement of purpose for Newbridge House and Harwood House, for Sunnybank there was a change to the service offering medium to long term placements for children and young people aged 8 to 17 years and for Bakers Way, there were changes to the service operating hours following restructure and the staffing structure. A new statement of purpose would be produced in September 2018 for the remodelled residential service provision in Newbridge House as this would become the emergency and assessment hub in October 2018.

A member requested further information on the change to the operating hours at Bakers Way. The Group Manager, Children's Services explained that they still had the same number of stays but the hours had been reduced because they were not at full occupancy. Occupancy figures had increased to 92% and this followed a significant consultation process. Feedback following the changes had been very positive. Bakers Way was currently being refurbished and there were ongoing discussions with each family keeping them updated on developments.

RESOLVED: Members noted the content of the report and approved the statement of purpose for each of the residential services provision.

177. REVIEW OF DECISION MAKING ON THE LOOKED AFTER CHILDREN (LAC) PATHWAY

The Head of Children's Social Care presented the Institute of Public Care (IPC) review report and associated action plan. She explained that effective oversight and management of the looked after children population was a key priority for the Council and there was a further commitment to further improve both early intervention and statutory services for children, young people and their families.

In November 2017, IPC undertook a review of the pathways experienced by children and young people who had become looked after in the last year. The purpose was to review decision making and analyse practice across their care pathway and explore interventions and how decision making could be more effective. The Head of Children's Social Care referred to the recommendations in the report and the action plan attached at Appendix 2. This had been developed to progress the recommendations and was monitored by the Early Help and Safeguarding Board which was chaired jointly by the Corporate Directors for Social Services and Wellbeing and Education and Family Support.

A member referred to the recommendation to improve consistency of social work assessments and asked what had been done to address this. The Head of Children's Social Care explained that social workers had been given mandatory training and the risk assessment guidance had been revised. The new system would be launched over the next few weeks and reviewed after 12 months.

The Head of Children's Social Care referred to a pilot scheme in Newport for families in challenging circumstances. This service was successful and a similar initiative was being developed by Cwm Taff with Barnardos. A number of families had been referred and the success of the scheme would be fed back at a later date.

RESOLVED: Committee noted the IPC report and comments on the Associated Action Plan.

178. URGENT ITEMS

None

The meeting closed at 11:10