

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, 17 OCTOBER 2018 AT 14:00

Present

Councillor – Chairperson

MC Clarke	N Clarke	HJ David	J Gebbie
T Giffard	CA Green	RM James	D Patel
CE Smith	CA Webster	DBF White	HM Williams
RE Young			

Apologies for Absence

PJ White

Officers:

Susan Cooper	Corporate Director - Social Services & Wellbeing
Nicola Echanis	Head of Education & Family Support
Julie Ellams	Democratic Services Officer - Committees
Lindsay Harvey	Corporate Director Education and Family Support
David Wright	Family Support Services Manager

179. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

None

180. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

RESOLVED: That the minutes of the Cabinet Committee Corporate Parenting meeting of 11 July 2018 be approved as a true and accurate record.

181. LOOKED AFTER CHILDREN IN EDUCATION

The Group Manager Integrated Working and Family Support presented a report providing Corporate Parenting Committee with an update on the support for Looked After Children in Education (LACE) across the local authority. The report specifically focused on the support provided to and the attainment outcomes of Bridgend's Looked After Children for the school year 2017-18. He explained that LAC often under achieved compared to their peers in terms of educational attainment and were less likely to progress into further education or training.

The Group Manager Integrated Working and Family Support explained that in May 2018, the role of supporting LACE moved to the Vulnerable Groups Team (VGT). The team worked in close partnership with Children's Social Care and other Early Help services to ensure LAC were accessing good quality education that met their needs. He added that as at January 2018 there were 278 LAC pupils in Bridgend profiled against the school clusters detailed in the report. The Group Manager Integrated Working and Family Support reported that locally a significant amount of work was being undertaken to ensure the right support for all pupils was achieved. This included the development of the access to education panel (AEP). The panel was created to ensure that all children could access an education that met their needs in a timely manner.

The Group Manager Integrated Working and Family Support stated that VGT training included raising awareness across schools on the impact of becoming a looked after child, including the trauma and how this could affect a child's ability to engage in learning. He explained the role of the authority in the development of a work experience and apprenticeship opportunity for LAC. All year 11 LAC learners had the opportunity to engage in work experience over the summer holidays and 7 took that opportunity resulting in 4 securing an Agored qualification.

The Group Manager Integrated Working and Family Support explained that a number of schools had introduced learning support assistants to assist with literacy and numeracy of LAC. This was a positive response and enabled more consistency of support.

A Member asked if there had been an increase in the number of LAC. The Corporate Director Social Services and Wellbeing confirmed that numbers were relatively static, possibly down a little on last year.

The Group Manager Integrated Working and Family Support provided an update on Bridgend LAC school attainment across the different age groups. He added that generally they were in a very positive position. He identified an error in the way 9 of the 19 children in Level 2 and level 2+ were reported. He referred Members to the two case studies included in the report and concluded that there were no financial implications associated with the report however the LAC PDG distributed to schools for 2018-19 amounted to £240,987.

A Member asked if there were any LAC in pre-school and if the children attending Heronsbridge had been taken out of these results. She also asked if there were any LAC out of county and if their results were included in the figures. The Group Manager Integrated Working and Family Support confirmed there were pre-school LAC, he did not have the information to hand but would provide details following the meeting. The Heronsbridge children had been included in the clusters. Members asked if they could be dealt with separately and the figures adjusted accordingly.

A Member said that results were very positive and asked if some clusters were performing better than others. The Group Manager Integrated Working and Family Support explained that it varied but generally they were all making progress but very small cohorts so it was difficult to compare like with like

A Member asked if the Pupil Development Grant was the same for primary school children. The Group Manager Integrated Working and Family Support explained that it was more a cluster bid rather than for individual schools.

A Member asked who represented the children at an Access to Education Panel. He was advised that the Corporate Director Education and Family Support chaired the Panel with representative from across the directorate including primary, secondary and special schools. This was helpful for schools and made it clear who they should contact and progress could be made quickly. The VGT played an important role and helped the authority meet its statutory responsibilities in identifying every vulnerable group and working closely to make sure they offered the best deal for learners as early as possible.

A Member asked for information on LAC out of county and if in terms of attainment they had the same opportunities. The Corporate Director Social Services and Wellbeing explained that they were no less a priority but often had specialist needs in specialist placements.

The Leader stated that there had been positive progress made in the last year. The outcomes they would like to see in the next year were clear along with the actions

necessary to make sure there were further improvements. Members welcomed the inclusion of case studies in the report.

RESOLVED: The Corporate Parenting Committee noted the content of the report.

182. REVIEW OF THE MODEL FOR EARLY INTERVENTION SERVICES

The Family Support Services Manager provided an update on the work completed to date in response to one of the recommendations made by the Institute of Public Care (IPC) specifically around the impact of early help services. In response to the recommendation - to review the impact early intervention services have to ensure that they are making a difference for children and families, existing services available within the Central Hub were reviewed.

The Family Support Services Manager outlined the services available within the Central Hub that supported children and young people open to Children's Social Care. These services included Connecting Families, Western Bay Integrated Family Support Services (IFSS), Rapid Response, Baby in Mind Service and the Reflect Service. He also summarised local authority visits to Neath Port Talbot County Borough Council, Newport City Council and Carmarthenshire County Borough Council who were deemed to have good early help services. In addition a workshop was held in May 2018 to review existing services, share good practice and identify any perceived gaps in service provision. The Family Support Services Manager reported that following the visits and the workshop it was apparent that there was no significant difference in the way Bridgend delivered its services compared to those visited. He stressed that a number of new services had recently come into effect and the impact of these would be evaluated in due course.

The Family Support Services Manager added that all local authorities commented on the positive joint-working relationship between Early Help and Children's Social Care in Bridgend. He believed it was evident that Bridgend was more advanced in relation to step up/step down work between Children's Social Care and Early Help and seamless transitions for children and families. All local authorities appeared to be facing similar challenges.

The Family Support Services Manager outlined the matters previously presented to the local authority's Corporate Management Board in September 2018 for information.

A Member asked if when children were taken into care, the families left behind were given support to make sure it didn't happen again. The Family Support Services Manager explained that these families were closely supported by Barnardo's.

A Member asked what support was given to these children to involve them in wider life experiences such as participating in football etc. The Group Manager, Case Management and Transition explained that foster carers were expected to support children and to prepare them for life in a positive way.

A Member asked if any Special Guardianship Orders (SGO) had broken down for financial reasons. He was advised that SGO's did not break down for financial reasons. Existing carers could become SGO's and the rates would be fixed for 2 years.

The Leader asked if SGO's were given the same support as foster carers. The Group Manager Case Management and Transition explained that the support given to SGO's in Bridgend was well regarded. There was a specialist team that focused on this area providing annual reviews and crisis support.

The Deputy Leader asked what the impact would be of moving from Western Bay to Cwm Taff. The Corporate Director Social Services and Wellbeing explained that there were financial implications and with a 200% increase in referrals, it was important to deal with these as early as possible avoiding care costs. She added that a ministerial advisory group had recently visited 5 authorities including Bridgend. The team had given a presentation outlining 3 years of work and the improvements made. Further support had been promised by Welsh Government for LAC. Cwm Taff had been successful in bringing money into children's services and social care however the majority of regional funding was in adult care. It was important to press for children's social care in future. The level of Western Bay funding for Bridgend had been secured. The financial projections were that the bill for social care would be coming down because of progress made in other areas. They were starting to see better outcomes for children and also protect the budget.

RESOLVED: That the Corporate Parenting Committee noted the considerations in the report and agreed to monitor progress towards the implementation of these as part of its forward work programme.

183. URGENT ITEMS

None

The meeting closed at 15:00