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Bridgend County Borough Council



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Cyfarwyddiaeth y Prif Weithredwr / Chief Executive's Directorate

Deialu uniongyrchol / Direct line /: 01656 643148 / 643147 / 643694

Gofynnwch am / Ask for: Michael Pitman

Ein cyf / Our ref:

Eich cyf / Your ref:

Dyddiad/Date: Wednesday, 22 May 2019

Dear Councillor,

CABINET COMMITTEE CORPORATE PARENTING

A meeting of the Cabinet Committee Corporate Parenting will be held in the Committee Rooms 2/3, Civic Offices Angel Street Bridgend CF31 4WB on **Wednesday, 29 May 2019 at 10:00.**

AGENDA

1. Apologies for Absence
To receive apologies for absence from Members.
2. Declarations of Interest
To receive declarations of personal and prejudicial interest (if any) from Members/Officers in accordance with the provisions of the Members' Code of Conduct adopted by Council from 1 September 2008.
3. Approval of Minutes 3 - 6
To receive for approval the minutes of 06/03/2019
4. Child Practice Review 7 - 12
To be supported by a PowerPoint Presentation
5. Approaches to Consultation and Engagement with Care Leavers 13 - 18
6. Looked After Children - National Technical Group 19 - 74
7. Urgent Items
To consider any other item(s) of business in respect of which notice has been given in accordance with Part 4 (paragraph 4) of the Council Procedure Rules and which the person presiding at the meeting is of the opinion should be reason of special circumstances be transacted at the meeting as a matter of urgency.

Yours faithfully

K Watson

Head of Legal and Regulatory Services

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Councillors:

MC Clarke
N Clarke
HJ David
DK Edwards
J Gebbie

Councillors

T Giffard
CA Green
RM James
D Patel
CE Smith

Councillors

CA Webster
DBF White
PJ White
HM Williams
RE Young

Agenda Item 3

CABINET COMMITTEE CORPORATE PARENTING - WEDNESDAY, 6 MARCH 2019

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, 6 MARCH 2019 AT 10:00

Present

Councillor PJ White – Chairperson

MC Clarke	N Clarke	HJ David	DK Edwards
J Gebbie	T Giffard	CA Green	D Patel
CE Smith	CA Webster	HM Williams	RE Young

Apologies for Absence

RM James

Officers:

Susan Cooper	Corporate Director - Social Services & Wellbeing
Nicola Echanis	Head of Education & Family Support
Julie Ellams	Democratic Services Officer - Committees
Michael Pitman	Business & Administrative Apprentice
Elizabeth Walton-James	Group Manager Safeguarding and Quality Assurance

190. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

None

191. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

RESOLVED: That the minutes of the meeting of the 10/01/2019 be approved as a true and accurate record.

192. CHILDREN'S SOCIAL CARE - UNIVERSITY SUPPORT PACKAGES FOR CARE LEAVERS - POLICY

The Group Manager Safeguarding and Quality Assurance presented a report on University Support Packages for Care Leavers including what it provided. She explained that the Cabinet Secretary for Education published the Diamond Report which proposed a costed package of recommendations for the future funding of higher education in Wales. This was agreed by Welsh Government and had been implemented during the academic year of 2018-19

She also explained to Members that the local authority was currently supporting 9 care leavers through University on various courses including teaching, accountancy and a Masters in Youth Justice. She said that this was good news and that this number was estimated to increase over the next few years.

A Member commented on the policy stating she was very pleased that the practice that the authority had followed for many years had been put into policy.

The Leader welcomed the report suggested that a review be undertaken in the future to ensure that the support was as effective and the process streamlined as it could be.

The Group Manager Safeguarding and Quality Assurance agreed that a review of the implementation in 6 – 12 months on the whole process would be beneficial to keep track

of the progress of current and new care leavers. The review could also ensure that the policy was making an impact.

A Member stated that she welcomed the policy and thought it was a good idea but had a query on the overall cost to the authority. The Corporate Director - Social Services & Wellbeing said that she could provide Members with that data following the meeting.

Another Member said that while she agreed it should align with the budget, she did not believe there should be a budget cap on what could be given to the care leavers.

The Corporate Director - Social Services & Wellbeing explained to the Member that each person was evaluated on an individual basis but reassured that there was no cap on what could be given. She did agree that there would need to be a monitoring process to ensure there was a responsible amount of money being spent.

A Member asked if support was given to students to apply for grants. The Corporate Director - Social Services & Wellbeing explained that there was help with applying for the grants that were available to them as well as locating other information on funding the students can apply for.

Another Member endorsed the policy but queried who was responsible for the Equalities Impact Assessment as the previous officer was no longer with the authority. The leader explained that the Consultation Engagement and Equalities Manager would be responsible for monitoring.

The Cabinet Member Education and Regeneration asked if there were any views on students working part time alongside their studies. The Corporate Director - Social Services & Wellbeing said it was up to the individual and there were no restrictions in place. They would do everything they could to continue advice and support for them so long as work did not interfere with their studies.

A Member asked if a procedure was in place for care leavers studying at university who were thinking about withdrawing from their studies either to pursue another career or because they felt University was not right for them.

The Corporate Director - Social Services & Wellbeing explained that the main concern was to ensure they are getting all the support that they need in University from the authority as well as the University. If the student still felt that they wanted to leave University then they would provide support for them and ensure that they have the information and guidance to pursue an alternative career.

The Leader said that he felt it would be a great idea to speak to successful care leavers and for them to give their experiences and positive story to current or new care leavers that were thinking of pursuing University. This may help to give them confidence in themselves as well as confidence in the emotional and financial support that may be available to them. The Group Manager Safeguarding and Quality Assurance advised Members that there was already a mentoring service in place but would be happy to develop the service further and welcomed any thoughts on this to be presented during the review.

The Cabinet Member Education and Regeneration stressed that information regarding the policy details needed to be made aware to the public so that misinformation was not spread but also to provide future care leavers with more knowledge and consequently more motivation to pursue University.

The Corporate Director - Social Services & Wellbeing advised the Cabinet Member that they would link in with schools in County Borough to help promote the policy. She also said that adding the policy to the business plan would be beneficial and looks to do this in the future.

She then provided Members with information about a development in regards to a framework that was currently in a consultation period. The working group responsible aimed for the framework to provide more data and statistics relating to what was done at each stage of the care leavers' process. The framework was being tested by Swansea Council and Gwynedd Council, both Councils volunteered to trial the framework and hoped to discuss the findings with Welsh Government. Bridgend Council hoped to bring the outcomes of their consultation to this committee.

She also explained to Members why some of the items on the Forward Work Programme (FWP) had not been brought to committee today. She explained that there were still enquires ongoing therefore the reports relating to these items have been pulled from the FWP until further notice. She asked the Committee if there were any items that were scheduled later in the year to be brought forward to the next meeting. The Chair suggested that the FWP could be discussed at the political group meetings and suggestions made from that. The Cabinet Member Wellbeing and Future Generations also suggested that after the group meetings it should be discussed at the Cabinet Committee – Equalities meeting at the end of March so that further suggestions could be made.

RESOLVED: (1) That the Corporate Parenting Committee noted the report

(2) That the Corporate Parenting Committee commented on the policy prior to it being presented to Cabinet.

193. URGENT ITEMS

None

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BRIDGEND COUNTY BOROUGH COUNCIL

CORPORATE PARENTING CABINET COMMITTEE

REPORT OF THE CORPORATE DIRECTOR, SOCIAL SERVICES AND WELLBEING

29th MAY 2019

CHILD PRACTICE REVIEW

1. Purpose of Report

- 1.□.1 To provide Corporate Parenting Cabinet Committee with information in respect of the most recent Child Practice Review from Bridgend.

2. Connection to Corporate Improvement Plan / Other Corporate Priority

- 2.1 This report assists in the achievement of the following corporate priorities:-

- **Helping people to be more self-reliant** – taking early steps to reduce or prevent people from becoming vulnerable or dependent on the Council and its services

3. Background

- 3.1 In 2013, Child Practice Reviews replaced what were known as Serious Case Reviews (SCR). This new process stems from the Care and Social Services Inspectorate Wales report published in October 2009 - *Improving Practice to Protect Children in Wales: An Examination of the Role of Serious Case Reviews*. This work was pivotal to where we are today, and concluded that action was required to replace the SCR process which had become ineffective in improving practice and inter-agency working.
- 3.2 A key element of the new framework is different types of review – known as ‘concise’ and ‘extended’ – depending on the circumstances of the child involved. Child Practice Reviews will be effective learning tools where it is more important to consider how agencies worked together. The formal review process is underpinned by multi-agency professional forums that are critical to improving practice, and will allow practitioners to reflect on cases – to include the rights and wrongs of practice – in an informed and supported environment.
- 3.3 The guidance sets out arrangements for multi-agency Child Practice Reviews when a significant incident has occurred where abuse or neglect of a child is known or suspected.
- 3.4 The overall purpose of reform of the review system is to promote a positive culture of multi-agency child protection learning and reviewing in local areas. The Regional Safeguarding Children’s Board is responsible for ensuring that reviews are carried out effectively. Future reviews concerning any Bridgend children will come under the Cwm Taff Morgannwg Children’s Safeguarding Board.
- 3.5 A Multi-Agency Professional Forum is a multi-professional event facilitated for practitioners and managers. Its purpose is to examine case practice and provide opportunity for consultation, supervision and reflection, and to disseminate findings

from child protection audits, inspections and reviews. The outcome of all reviews are used as a learning process in order to improve local knowledge and practice and to inform the Board's future audit and training priorities.

- 3.6 Concise Reviews: a 'concise' Child Practice Review is carried out in cases where abuse or neglect of a child is known or suspected and the child has –
- died; or
 - sustained potentially life threatening injury; or
 - sustained serious and permanent impairment of health or development; *and* the child was neither on the child protection register nor a looked after child on any date during the 6 months preceding –
 - the date of the event referred to above.
- 3.7 Extended Reviews: an 'extended' Child Practice Review is carried out in cases where abuse or neglect of a child is known or suspected and the child has –
- died; or
 - sustained potentially life threatening injury; or
 - sustained serious and permanent impairment of health or development; *and* the child was on the child protection register and/or was a looked after child (including a care leaver under the age of 18) on any date during the 6 months preceding –
 - the date of the event referred to
- 3.8 On 17th April 2019 Bridgend County Borough Council published a Child Practice Review. The review commenced January 2018 and was commissioned by the Western Bay Safeguarding Children's Board following the identification of concerns where the above criteria for a 'concise review' was met. This review relates to a 9 week old child who died during the night whilst co sleeping with his parents.

4. Current situation/proposal

- 4.1 The subject of this review was a 9 week old child who died in November 2017 whilst co-sleeping with his parents. Following an inconclusive post-mortem examination and a coroner's inquest concluding an open verdict, the death was viewed as a result of Sudden Infant Death Syndrome (S.I.D.S)
- 4.2 Between 2008 and 2017 there were 10 referrals received in respect of the child's mother who was under 18 years of age at the time of the child's birth due to family instability, homelessness, substance misuse and mental health issues. The review highlighted that significant information in respect to these issues was not shared between professionals particularly between health professionals.
- 4.3 There were 9 historical referrals received in respect of the child's father when he was a child. The father was also "Looked After" for short periods due to his mother's poor mental health and domestic abuse within the family.
- 4.4 Whilst there was nothing to suggest the infant's death could have been prevented, there was evidence within the timeframe that the young family may have benefited from a pre-birth assessment and targeted support services.

- 4.5 The referrals considered in this review took place in the months leading up to pregnancy, continued into pregnancy and were instigated due to the ongoing lack of stability within the family.
- 4.6 Children's Social Care carried out an assessment of the young couple prior to the birth of the child but its focus was on housing issues. The assessment did not consider the mother in her own right nor did it explore historical and presenting factors which may have influenced the future parenting and support needs of this young family.
- 4.7 At the time of the infant's death, the young family were living in private rented accommodation and, their family support structure was unclear. They were not receiving any local authority intervention and home conditions were noted to have deteriorated.
- 4.8 The child's mother had visited the GP with regard to her low mood and self-harming. A referral to the Perinatal Response and Management Service (PRAMS) had been made by the GP following a previous suspected pregnancy at the age of 15 years but this was not shared with the Midwifery and Health Visiting service. The mother's frequent change of address led to her seeing 8 different midwives.
- 4.9 The themes highlighted from the review were:
- The G.P did not share relevant information around the mother's mental health with health colleagues and the extent of family support available to the parents was also not adequately explored.
 - The mother was not assessed in her own right as a child and the assessment of the child did not consider the wider risk factors about the parent's experiences e.g. parental domestic abuse, mental health, lack of family support.
 - There was no specific risk assessment undertaken to consider the above matters.
 - Referrals were dealt with in isolation and focused on housing being the dominant factor.
 - There was no report to the Police by agencies about the mother having under age sex.
- 4.10 The reviewers and members of the Practice Review Subgroup were concerned to note the reoccurring theme of the absence of the G.P in the practice learning event convened as part of the review process and an important component to future learning.
- 4.11 The family have not engaged with the reviewers in this case during the review process or upon notification of the publication of the report.
- 4.12 The implementation of actions recommended within the report will be reported into both the Cwm Taff and the Western Bay Child Practice Review Management group. In addition BCBC will convene team based learning events for practitioners and the findings will also be incorporated into core safeguarding training for employees.

5. Effect upon Policy Framework and Procedure Rules

5.1 There is no impact on the Policy Framework and Procedure Rules

6. Equality Impact Assessment

6.1 There are no equality matters relevant to this report.

7. Wellbeing of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015 Implications

7.1 The implementation of the duties and responsibilities under the Social Services and Wellbeing (Wales) Act 2014 (SSWBA) supports the promotion of two of the seven goals of the Well-Being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015 within the County Borough of Bridgend. By promoting an environment that maximizes people's physical and mental well-being and by supporting children, young people, adults and their carers and families to fulfill their potential no matter what their circumstances, the well-being goals of a Healthier and more equal Bridgend and Wales are supported.

7.2 The Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015 provides the basis for driving a different kind of public service in Wales, with five ways of working to guide how the Authority should work to deliver wellbeing outcomes for people. The following is a summary to show how the five ways of working to achieve the well-being goals have been considered in this report:

- Long Term – The SSWBA places a requirement on the Local Authority to meet the needs of people in the longer term and as such the themes and lessons learnt from Child Practice Reviews will be considered for practice when remodeling and transforming future service provision.
- Prevention – the report highlights themes within practice across agencies and the need to share information and provide support at an earlier stage. This will ensure that need is anticipated and resources can be more effectively directed to improve service delivery and the safeguarding of children.
- Integration – the report notes areas of improvement in information sharing between agencies and these will be closely monitored to ensure care and support for children, young people and carers is prioritised.
- Collaboration – the partnership working between agencies and professionals is critical to ensure the safeguarding and protection of children. This report clearly identifies the importance of collaborate working and the need to ensure learning is recognised by all professionals working with children and young people.
- Involvement – the professionals involved in this review have been included in a learning event to inform the report and its recommendations for future learning. This report has also been published by the Western Bay Safeguarding Children's Board allowing a wider audience, namely the public and professionals who have not been involved in this review. This provision of accessible information helps to ensure that the voice of adults, children and young people is heard.

8. Financial Implications

8.1 There are no specific financial implications linked to this information report

9. Recommendation.

9.1 It is recommended that Corporate Parenting Committee notes and provides comment about this report.

Susan Cooper,
Corporate Director Social Services and Wellbeing
May 2019

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Background documents:
None

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BRIDGEND COUNTY BOROUGH COUNCIL

REPORT TO CORPORATE PARENTING COMMITTEE

29th MAY 2019

REPORT OF THE CORPORATE DIRECTOR, SOCIAL SERVICES AND WELLBEING

APPROACHES TO CONSULTATION AND ENGAGEMENT WITH CARE LEAVERS

1. Purpose

- 1.1 To provide the committee with an update in respect of the approaches being used within the Local Authority to engage and consult with care leavers.
- 1.2 This report provides an update to the committee following the Care Inspectorate Wales engagement event which took place with care leavers in November 2018.

2. Connection to Corporate Improvement Objectives/Other Corporate Priorities

- 2.1 This report assists in the achievement of the following corporate priorities:-
 - **Supporting a successful economy** – taking steps to make the county a good place to do business, for people to live, work, study and visit, and to ensure that our schools are focussed on raising the skills, qualifications and ambitions of all people in the county.
 - **Helping people to be more self-reliant** – taking early steps to reduce or prevent people from becoming vulnerable or dependent on the Council and its services.
 - **Smarter use of resources** – ensuring that all its resources (financial, physical, human and technological) are used as effectively and efficiently as possible and support the development of resources throughout the community that can help deliver the Council's priorities.

3. Background

- 3.1 On the 19th April 2017 the committee received a report on 'Hidden Ambitions – A Children's Commissioner for Wales report and Bridgend County Borough Council's position, in relation to the recommendations within the report. One of the recommendations from the hidden ambitions report was that *Local Authorities should consider setting up forums or discussion groups just for care leavers; what is of interest or concern to a care leaver may be different to what is discussed by children still living in care. Care Leaver's Forums can be asked for their views when the local authority is planning to change how a service is offered and in deciding what issues their staff need training on.*

- 3.2 A young person's Consultation Group began operating in BCBC in 2014. However, following the realignment and relocation of services and feedback from the young people themselves this group ceased to exist as a regularly planned meeting in 2015.
- 3.3 Care leavers advised that they would like to access services on a more informal basis. As a result Bridgend developed a 'drop-in' provision and other 'out of hours' provisions whereby care leavers can receive support and have the opportunity to share their views and wishes.
- 3.4 With regard to any specific change in our local policies, the service ensures that young people are consulted about such changes e.g. the current review of our financial policy for university fees as they occur and this has proved successful in making sure that our engagement is meaningful and current.
- 3.5 The Team Manager of the 16 Plus Team regularly attends the All Wales Leaving Care Forum and the South Wales Leaving Care forum. She remains up to date with current projects, information and facilitates discussion about aligning support services where possible.
- 3.6 In 2016, the 16 Plus Team developed a forum for care leavers based on the Supper Club which operates in Pembrokeshire. This involved care leavers meeting at the ARC (Assisted Recovery in the Community) centre in Bridgend in the evening where they would be able to eat, whilst also being offered support from workers and professional agencies to discuss relevant topics. This forum was offered in addition to the drop-in service, but only ran for a few sessions due to poor attendance.
- 3.7 In November 2018 the Care Inspectorate of Wales (CIW) undertook an engagement event with a group of Looked After Children, care leavers and foster carers. CIW undertook these events with all the Welsh Local Authorities who did not receive a children's services inspection in 2018. The purpose of the event was to inform a national overview report on care and support available to children looked after by Local Authorities. One of the issues identified was that *'A majority of the young people felt strongly that they would have benefitted from having access to a mentor'*. Following feedback an engagement action plan was developed by the service and it was agreed to *'Re-establish the care leaver forum to explore this concept and options'* and to *'Identify potential providers and options for commissioning'*.

4. Current situation / proposal

- 4.1 In the last 6 months, there have been changes to the management arrangements for the 16 Plus Team, and therefore it has been timely to also review our arrangements for effective engagement and support of care leavers and to consult with young people about re-establishing a care leaver's forum in Bridgend.
- 4.2 The young people to be consulted with on an individual basis by their Social Workers and Personal Advisors during May and June 2019. Following this, a consultation group will be hosted by the 16 Plus Team in June 2019. This consultation group will engage with the young people

in respect of their wishes and feelings for the forum. The young people will be asked whether they wish for BCBC to facilitate this forum or whether they would prefer an independent organisation, such as Voices for Care Cymru, to undertake this role.

- 4.3 It is envisaged that during the consultation session that the young people will be able to take control of the planning for the group and shape it so that it meets their needs and wishes. Following this the plan would be to launch the care leavers forum in July 2019, and then to hold further meetings on a bi-monthly basis. The 16 Plus Team will provide a venue, and support young people to be able to travel to and from the meeting. If the young people request it the 16 Plus Team will be able to provide key note speakers and deliver workshops on specific issues. Ultimately it is hoped that this forum will give care leavers the opportunity to have a greater say in how services are delivered to them, and to be able to shape future service provision.
- 4.4 At present young care leavers, have access to a Personal Advisor (PA), whose key function is to support care leavers during their transition into adulthood. This can involve supporting a young person to live independently, and to offer support and advice to a young person after they have left care. In addition to this universal support can be accessed via the 16 Plus Inspire 2 Work drop in which is provided on a daily basis (Mon – Fri) to support young people. This provision has proven to be very useful for care leavers that we work with. An example of this is a 21 year old female care leaver who engaged with her Social Worker and Personal Advisor (PA) prior to her 18th birthday. She was experiencing a period of being Not in Education, Employment or Training (NEET) due to her training provider not able to support her any longer. The young person then engaged with a training programme that was offered through the college/Inspire 2 Work team and her engagement was supported by the 16 Plus Team. Following a 3 month programme this led to her going to college and she was also able to move into supported lodgings. At the time, the supported lodgings provision was seen as an appropriate step for progression into independence and was successful for 9 months when it was agreed that the young person has made such good progress in her independence that a move to Supported housing would provide more appropriate support. She was then supported to gain the independent living skills required to enable her to sign a licensee agreement and manage her own flat (within a supported housing environment). The young person has successfully maintained her college place and has now been accepted onto a Level 3 media course which will start in September 2019. The plan is for her to now move into fully independent accommodation. As the young person has mental health difficulties, she continues to be supported to access health professionals, including the GP and ARC. She has continued to engage positively with her PA and support worker from the Wallich and will continue to receive support around her independence, education and mental health from her PA whilst she transitions into full independent living.
- 4.5 Currently we provide support to young people ages 16-25 in Bridgend, by opening an area in the local council offices for young people to attend as needed, gaining access to computers, and one-to-one support from trained youth workers, who provide close links and effective working

relationships with their allocated worker. The support includes opportunities to train, gain qualifications and to offer general support with any day to day queries. Young people can attend the drop in on a daily basis within general office time (9-5) with options to engage in evening work with staff. If eligible young people are then able to sign up to the Inspire 2 Work programme they are allocated a key worker to support them on a one to one basis to break down barriers to education / employment / training to potentially enable them to enter education, employment or training.

- 4.6 The Children's Rights and Participation worker based in the Education and Family Support Directorate has carried out a review of the Bridgend Youth Council. As a result work is underway to ensure that membership of the Youth Council is more representative, and that young people who are in receipt of local authority services, have a platform to influence delivery and policy. In respect of these representative groups, the Children's Rights and Participation worker has been working to support personal advisors and young people from the 16+ team specifically those involved in the 'voices from care' initiative. Over the coming months, this group will be meeting to identify and discuss issues that are specific to them as care leavers or care experienced young people. These will then be fed back to the main Youth Council membership for consideration and action where appropriate.
- 4.7 In respect of our young people's engagement with Voices from Care Cymru, there is regular attendance by our care leavers at their events. For example, in February 2019, 10 Care leavers attended the Proud To Be Me conference at the Swalec Stadium which was hosted by Voices from Care Cymru. We have also identified a number of care leavers to represent Bridgend on the Voices from Care Cymru advisory group. Those care leavers who are keen to represent Bridgend are being engaged with by their Personal Advisor's in order to decide who will initially represent Bridgend. This new Advisory Group which consists of 'care experienced representatives' from all areas of Wales will bring together a wealth of knowledge and experience from each of the different regions.
- 4.8 The Advisory Group meets four times per year in different parts of Wales to discuss the future of Voices from Care Cymru and how they can better improve the lives of care experienced young people. It creates an opportunity for the representatives to meet other care experienced young people and find out all about the great things happening in their area, as well as to discuss the things they would like to change. A member of this group represents care experienced children and young people at the Welsh Youth Parliament. The young person who is representing Voices from Care Cymru at the Welsh Youth Parliament has now been nominated, as part of the Advisory Group young people will play a huge part in driving change for Care experienced young people in Wales
- 4.9 The CIW report also commented that '*some of the young people told us they have not been offered advocates*'. However, some of the young people involved in the session subsequently told us that they were confused in respect of what the inspectors were referring to when they were asking about advocacy. Staff within the 16 Plus Team have also advised that numbers of referrals to advocacy for care leavers are often

lower as the young people often feel that they are able to advocate for themselves or have a close relationship with their Personal Advisor who will ask to advocate on their behalf.

- 4.10 However, in order to ensure that there is a more active offer from skilled staff in the area of advocacy, and to enable a choice of support for young people the plan is to use the launch of the new regional advocacy service which is being run by Tros Gynnal Cwm Taff Morgannwg and due to commence on 1.5.19 to undertake further awareness and promotion of the service with care leavers. The evidence of this being effective would be an increase in the active offer being taken up by care leavers, and an overall increase in the use of advocacy by the same group of young people. It is planned that Tros Gynnal will be invited to speak at the launch of the Young Carers forum. In addition the Team Manager of 16 Plus is undertaking work with her staff to ensure that there is greater understanding of the role of the advocate being shared with care leavers.
- 4.11 The Team Manager of the 16 Plus Team is currently looking at how the team can engage with the young people they support in a more innovative way. This includes looking at technological options, as many of the young people prefer to engage via these forms of devices. As part of the consultation with the young people regarding the possibility of a care leaver's forum, discussions will take place in respect of alternative ways in which the team can engage with the young people.

5. Effect upon Policy Framework & Procedure Rules

- 5.1 There is no impact on the Policy Framework and Procedure Rules.

6. Equality Impact Assessment

- 6.1 This report is concerned with information rather than policy or decision making therefore, an equality impact assessment is not applicable.

7. Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015 Implications

- 7.1 The implementation of the duties and responsibilities under the Social Services and Wellbeing (Wales) Act 2014 (SSWBA) supports the promotion of two of the seven goals of the Well-Being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015 within the County Borough of Bridgend. By promoting an environment that maximises people's physical and mental well-being and by supporting children, young people, adults and their carers and families to fulfil their potential no matter what their circumstances, the wellbeing goals of a Healthier and more equal Bridgend and Wales are supported.
- 7.2 The Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015 provides the basis for driving a different kind of public service in Wales, with five ways of working to guide how the Authority should work to deliver wellbeing outcomes for people. The following is a summary to show how the five ways of working to achieve the well-being goals have been considered in this report:
- Long Term – Social Services is demand led and the SSWBA focusses on sustainable prevention and wellbeing outcomes for the

future. As a corporate parent the Local Authority has responsibility to support care leavers up until the age of 25, it is during the key years of 16-25 that a robust package of support to care leavers can have a significant impact on improving outcomes for care leavers in the short, medium and long term.

- Prevention – By offering care leavers support at the earliest opportunity when a need is identified it should prevent this need from escalating. The care leaver’s forum will allow care leavers to be engaged in terms of having a greater say over service delivery. By tailoring services to the assessed needs of care leavers, we should be able to ensure that needs are met at the earliest possible opportunity.
- Integration – The implementation of the SSWBA requires local authorities to work with partners. This report evidences consultation with care leavers, and with the third sector.
- Collaboration – A collaborative approach is being used in terms of setting up and implementing the care leaver’s forum, as the young people will be collaborated with throughout the process.
- Involvement – The key stakeholders are the care leavers, and potentially a third sector provider if this is requested by the care leavers.

8. Financial Implications

- 8.1 There are minimal financial implications. There may be costs incurred for the venue, the running costs of the group, travel arrangements, and refreshments for the care leaver’s forum. Costs attributed to supporting care leavers to attend the forum could be reimbursed from the St David’s day grant. The service is currently investigating whether the forum could be funded via an element of the Children and Communities Grant. If funding cannot be accessed via the grant, it will need to be funded from the core revenue budget.

9. Recommendation

- 9.1 It is recommended that if it’s in line with the wishes, feelings and requirement of the young people that the Care leaver’s forum is re-established in July 2019, and that a report is brought back to Corporate Parenting at a date in the future in order to update on progress

Susan Cooper
Corporate Director, Social Services and Wellbeing
May 2019

10. Contact Officer:

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11. Background documents None

BRIDGEND COUNTY BOROUGH COUNCIL

REPORT TO CABINET COMMITTEE CORPORATE PARENTING

29th MAY 2019

REPORT OF THE CORPORATE DIRECTOR, SOCIAL SERVICES AND WELLBEING

LOOKED AFTER CHILDREN – NATIONAL TECHNICAL GROUP

1. Purpose of Report

- 1.1 To inform the Cabinet Committee of the work being undertaken by Welsh Government to develop reduction expectation plans with each local authority across Wales.
- 1.2 To describe the process in place to take this forward and the local activity underway to progress this.
- 1.3 A presentation on the local headline data/key findings contained in the preparatory framework documents.

2. Connection to Corporate Improvement Plan/Other Corporate Priority

- 2.1 This report assists in the achievement of the following corporate priorities:-
 - **Helping people to be more self-reliant** – taking early steps to reduce or prevent people from becoming vulnerable or dependent on the council and its services.
 - **Smarter use of resources** – ensuring that all its resources (financial, physical human and technological) are used as effectively and efficiently as possible and support the development of resources throughout the community that can help deliver the council's priorities.

3. Background

- 3.1 The First Minister's manifesto includes a firm commitment to support looked after children. This is focussed upon reducing the need for children to enter care and improving outcomes for children in care.
- 3.2 As at March 2018, there were 6,407 looked after children in Wales. This was an 8% increase on the previous year. Over the past 15 years, the number of looked after children has increased by 34%; this increase cannot be attributed to austerity alone.

In 2018, the number of children starting to become looked after decreased by 2%, however the number of children leaving the care system also decreased by 10%.

- 3.3 National data also highlights some other noteworthy patterns. For example, 24.6% of looked after children are placed out of county (1,575) and 5% are placed outside Wales (320). There will be good reasons why some of these children are placed out of area (e.g. placement with family or friends or the development of regional approaches to specialist provision), but it is recognised that others are placed further afield because there is no suitable provision locally. Some of the underlying

issues have begun to be addressed through the National Fostering Framework, the Children's Residential Care Task and Finish Group and other work strands within the Improving Outcomes for Children programme. However, Welsh Government also wants to take this opportunity to explore with local authorities the factors that influence decision making around out of county and cross-border placements, to ensure that more children can be placed closer to home where this is in their best interests.

- 3.4 To take this work forward Welsh Government has established a technical group to inform and advise on the approach to this activity involving representatives from ADSS Cymru, WLGA, local authorities, third sector and Welsh Government officials. The Corporate Director, Social Services and Wellbeing represents ADSS on this group.
- 3.5 Welsh Government would like to work in partnership with local authorities across Wales to better understand the context in which organisations are working and to co-produce realistic and bespoke reduction expectation plans which focus on safely reducing the numbers of children in care whilst continuing to improve outcomes for those already in or leaving care. This will require close analysis of existing data at a local, regional and national level to help better understand the pressures within the system and how these can be best relieved. Welsh Government is committed to work in a co productive manner with individual authorities so that reduction plans are bespoke and tailored to their populations and demography. Individual visits will be made to each local authority during April and May of this year.
- 3.6 The technical group have developed a conversation framework to use during their visits to cover all areas of interest in a focussed way.

4. Current situation / proposal.

- 4.1 The visit to Bridgend County Borough Council took place on 10th May 2019 and officials from Welsh Government met with the Chief Executive, Corporate Director of Social Services and Wellbeing, Cabinet Member for Social Services and Wellbeing, Corporate Director of Education and Family Support, Head of Children's Social Care, Head of Education and Family Support, and colleagues from legal.
- 4.2 The conversation framework covered the following themes with sub headings as described below:

Reducing the need for, and number of, children entering care

Discussions will commence with an analysis of each local authority's data for:

- Looked after children population
- Rate per 10,000 population
- Number of children starting to be looked after
- Parental factors recorded for children looked after including, Abuse, Neglect, CSE (child sexual exploitation), Disability (physical, learning or mental), Domestic abuse, Substance Misuse, Behavioural.
- Rate of emergency admissions

Key questions:

- What is the biggest local driver behind the numbers of children in care?

- What early help and preventative services are in place?
- What evidence is there of their effectiveness?
- What should be scaled up – what should be stopped?
- What procedures do you have in place to assess and manage risks?
- What is the organisation's approach to positive risk management?
- Describe the role of Legal Services in decision making?
- Can you demonstrate a pathway of de-escalation?

Positive, stable placements

Discussions will focus on the following key data:

- Number of out of county placements
- Number of out of Wales placements
- Average spend per looked after child
- Proportion of LA spend on children's services
- Proportion of spend on placements and factors driving costs

Key questions:

- What steps are being taken by the LA to fulfil its sufficiency duty, and how do these feed into local and regional placement commissioning strategies?
- What commissioning arrangements are in place and how might these be improved?
- What efforts are being made to promote kinship care and find more family-based solutions (e.g. use of SGOs)?
- What efforts are being made to increase the number of LA foster carers?
- What efforts are being made to develop in-house residential provision and emergency / crisis provision (including regional approaches)?
- What local information is there about the cost of out of county and out of country placements?
- How are decisions made about out of area and cross-border placements, and which partners are involved?
- How effective are local out of county placement panels?
- What factors are driving any increase in out of county and cross-border placements?
- What factors are driving the cost of placements, especially expensive specialist placements?
- How can placement costs be reduced whilst maintaining quality and value for money, and ensuring positive outcomes for children?
- What approaches are you developing towards efficiency of placing children with adoption orders with their new families?

Enhancing exit strategies that better enable exit from care

Key data to inform this discussion will be:

- Episodes finished for looked after children, including numbers of:
 - Adoptions
 - Kinships/SGOs
 - Care at Home Orders/Placement with Parents
 - Care Leavers (inc those who return to birth family)
- Age profile of children looked after

Key questions:

- What support systems are in place to help promote independence?
- What support is provided to parents to enable them to be reunited with their children?
- How frequently do you review existing looked after children cases to see if circumstances have changed?

Managing the business

- What Practice Framework/Model is in place? What is your assessment of its effectiveness?
- Do you have a corporate LA strategy for reducing the need for children to enter care?
- What Quality Assurance procedures are in place?
- Describe the criteria for decision making for proceedings being met?
- Managing budget and financial affairs. How can the voice of children's services be strengthened?

Co-production of Bespoke Targets

- Consider stretching targets for the 4 priority areas identified by the First Minister
- Achieve mutually acceptable agreement about targets over 12, 24 & 36 months
- As a result of the conversation, any additional areas identified that we want to see specific action.

4.3 A presentation of our local data and profile which was shared with Welsh Government at the visit is attached at **appendix 1**.

4.4 When all the visits have been completed an overarching report will be collated and shared with the technical group before it goes to the First Minister. The overarching report will highlight the key messages and also identify some actions to be taken forward nationally. The technical group will also be considering monitoring and review.

5. Effect upon Policy Framework and Procedure Rules

5.1 There is no impact on the Policy Framework and Procedure Rules.

6. Equality impact Assessment

6.1 There are no equality implications in this report.

7. Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015 Implications

7.1 The implementation of the duties and responsibilities under the Social Services and Well-being (Wales) Act 2014 (SSWBA), in turn, supports the promotion of two of the seven goals of the Well-Being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015 within the County Borough of Bridgend. By promoting an environment that maximises people's physical and mental well-being and by supporting children, young people, adults and their carers and families to fulfil their potential no matter what their

circumstances, the wellbeing goals of a healthier and more equal Bridgend and Wales are supported.

7.2 The Wellbeing of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015 provides the basis for driving a different kind of public service in Wales, with five ways of working to guide how the Authority should work to deliver wellbeing outcomes for people. The following is a summary to show how the five ways of working to achieve the wellbeing goals have been considered in this report:

- Long Term – Social Services is demand led and the SSWBA focusses on sustainable prevention and wellbeing outcomes for the future. There is a requirement to meet the needs of people in the longer term and, because of rising demographics and increasing complexity, the safe reduction of looked after children numbers continues to be a priority.
- Prevention – the report reflects the ongoing commitment to new approaches adopted by the Directorate in line with the SSWBA, for example, the provision of information, advice and assistance to enable people to remain independent for as long as possible. This will ensure that need is anticipated and resources can be more effectively directed to better manage demand.
- Integration and Collaboration – the implementation of the SSWBA requires local authorities to work with partners, particularly the NHS and the Police, to ensure care and support for people and support for carers is provided. The report evidences the work with partners that will be required to enable people to remain living within their communities, and where necessary, responding to safeguarding concerns in a timely, efficient manner.
- Involvement – the key stakeholders are the people who use social care. There is considerable engagement including surveys, stakeholder meetings, feedback forms and the complaints process. The provision of accessible information and advice helps to ensure that the voice of adults, children and young people is heard.

8. Financial Implications

8.1 There are no financial implications associated with this report.

9. Recommendation

9.1.1 It is recommended that the Cabinet Committee notes the information provided in this report.

Susan Cooper
Corporate Director, Social Services and Wellbeing
May 2019

Contact officer

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Background Documents

None

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Looked After Children Conversation framework May 2019

- Profile of LAC population
- Background to structures and services
- Developments in children's social care
- Developments in prevention and early intervention
- Workforce and approach to practice
- Next steps

Profile

LAC population:

381 March 2019 (412 in 2014)

Rate per 10,000 130.40 2018/19 (141.85 in 2013/14)

Profile

Children becoming looked after:

Average monthly – 12.2 (2013/14)

7.7 (2018/19)

Children ceasing to be looked after:

Average monthly – 10.1 (2013/14)

- 7.9 (2018/19)

Parental factors (LAC population):

- Learning disability 43
- Mental Health 213
- Domestic Abuse 197
- Substance misuse 178

Age groups (becoming looked after):

Percentage by Age Group:	2014-15	2018-19
Under 1	28.7%	27.5%
1-4 Years Old	15.6%	18.7%
5-9 Years Old	11.5%	20.9%
10-15 Years Old	32.0%	26.4%
16-17 Years Old	12.3%	6.6%

Profile

Legal Status (LAC population):

74.3 % Care Order

6.8% Interim care Order

12.9% Placement Order

5.8% Section 76

0.3% Police protection

Placement type:

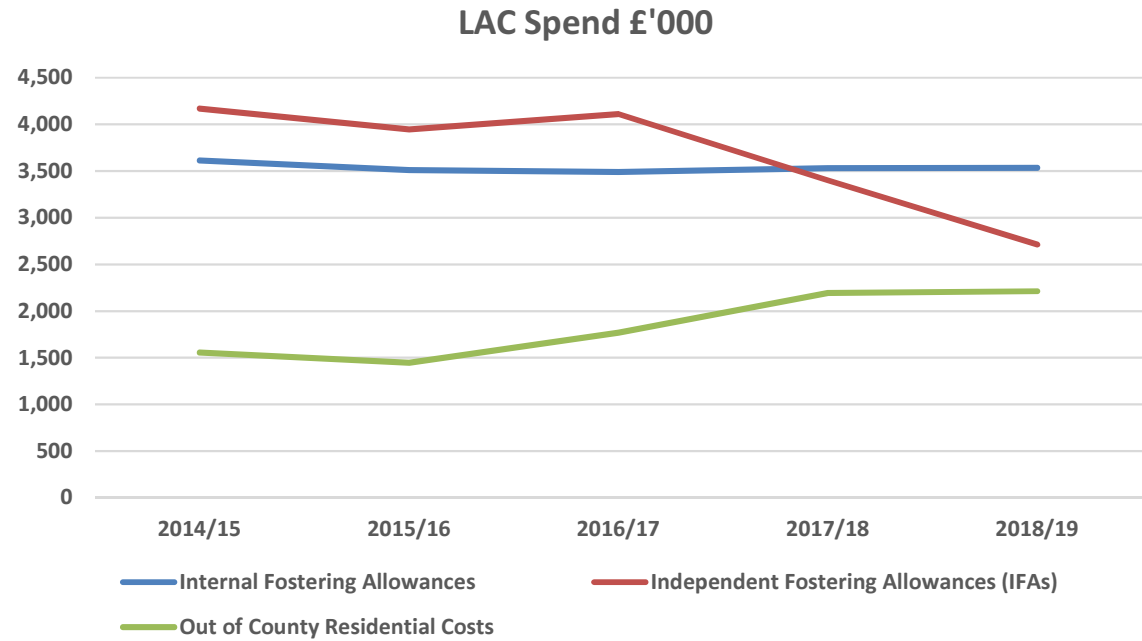
Percentage by Placement Type:	2014	2019
Independent Residential	3.16%	2.1%
In- house Residential	1.70%	2.1%
Independent Fostering	26.21%	16.80%
Kinship Fostering	15.78%	16.80%
In-house Fostering	39.08%	39.37%
Pre Adoption	4.61%	4.99%
Placement with Parent	7.28%	14.96%
Section 38(6) Court directed unregulated placement	1.21%	0.00%
Hospital	0.00%	0.52%
Independent Living	0.97%	0.52%
Supported Living	0.00%	1.84%
Young Offender Institution Or Prison	0.00%	0.00%

Placement location:

Percentage by Placement Location:	2014	2019
Within LA	68.93%	69.82%
In Wales (neighbouring authority)	16.02%	16.27%
In Wales (not neighbouring authority)	8.01%	7.09%
In England	2.43%	1.84%
Pre-adoption	4.61%	4.99%

BCBC LAC Analysis

Average No. Placements	2016/17	2017/18	2018/19
Internal Fostering	209	218	214
Independent Fostering (IFAs)	90	75	61
Out of County Residential	6	9	15



Background

- **2014/2015:** Significant re-structure of EH services resulting in a development of locality/hub based model.
- Review of statutory case management teams
- Safeguarding Hubs established and co located with Early Help Teams

Joint Early Help and Permanence Strategy

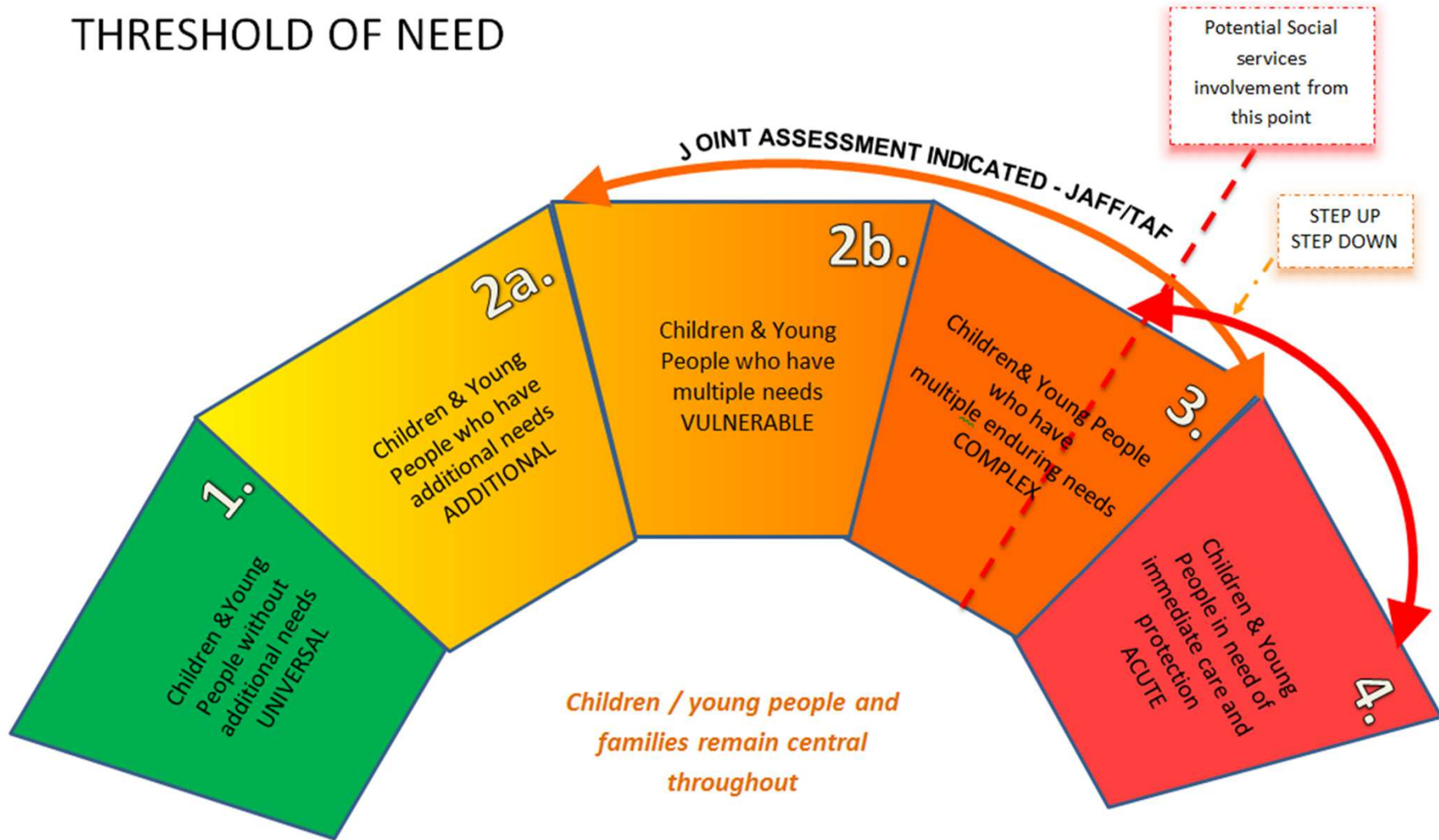
- Described our aim of supporting families to stay together wherever it is safe to do so, and minimising the need for children to become “Looked After” in the first instance or receive other statutory interventions
- Outlined what would change in relation to our work with children, young people and their families at the earliest possible stage
- Confirmed we were committed to striving for stability and permanence for children who were looked after

Action Plan (Early Help and Permanence)

- Front Door arrangements
- Early Intervention and Prevention
- Rehabilitation and Permanence
- Shared data set

Thresholds for Accessing Services

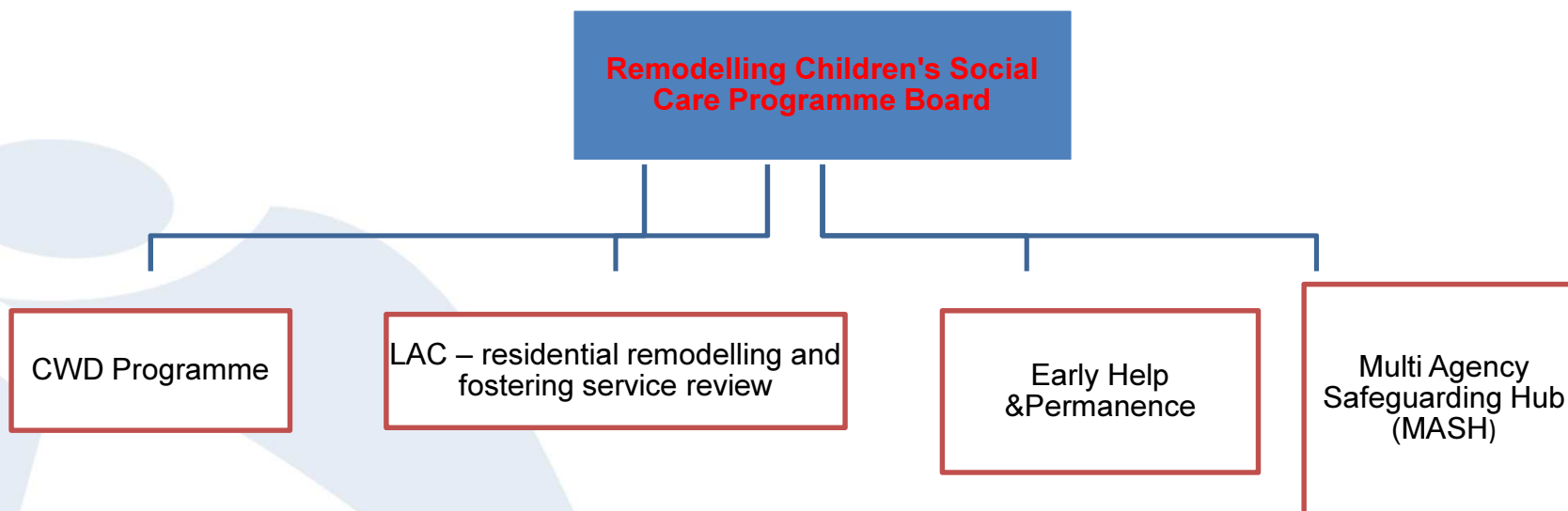
THRESHOLD OF NEED



Children's Social Care – Vision Statement (2016)

‘Together enabling better outcomes for children, young people and their families via responsive and timely services which support them to live together, work on difficulties and be safe’

Journey so far



Front Door Arrangements

- Co-location of Staff within MASH
- Single Point of Contact
- Processes in line with SSWB Act
- Consistent Threshold between SS and EH

REVIEW OF DECISION MAKING ON THE LOOKED AFTER CHILDREN (LAC) PATHWAY (2017)

In November 2017, IPC undertook a review of the pathways experienced by 35 children and young people who had become looked after in the last year, to review decision-making and analyse practice across their care pathway and explore with teams how interventions and decision-making might have been more effective.

Themes

- The quality of decision making, timeliness, and threshold management at the front door including any relevant Information Advice and Assistance (IAA) arrangements;
- How risk was identified, assessed, mitigated and managed;
- Whether there is a coherent model of early intervention and preventative services, and the relationship between children's social care and these services;
- Whether there is evidence of strength based, outcome focussed assessments and care plans;

Themes cont'd

- Whether there is evidence of strength based, outcome focussed assessments and care plans;
- Whether there is evidence of strong partnership working underpinned by a common value base and clear roles and responsibilities;
- Whether there are dynamic quality assurance and quality improvement systems driving continuous improvement within and between teams;
- Whether there is evidence of the involvement of children, young people and families at a service level and in practice.

Findings/Recommendations

- Safeguarding practice/decisions were “solid”
- Strengthen progression of work in pre-birth cases
- Review services for parents who have had more than one child removed
- Ensure parenting/psychological assessments are considered as part of CPR/PLO process

Findings/Recommendations cont'd

- Better use of FGCs
- Chronologies in all cases
- Ensure consistency of assessments
- Ensure robust management oversight
- Review Early Help model and impact.....

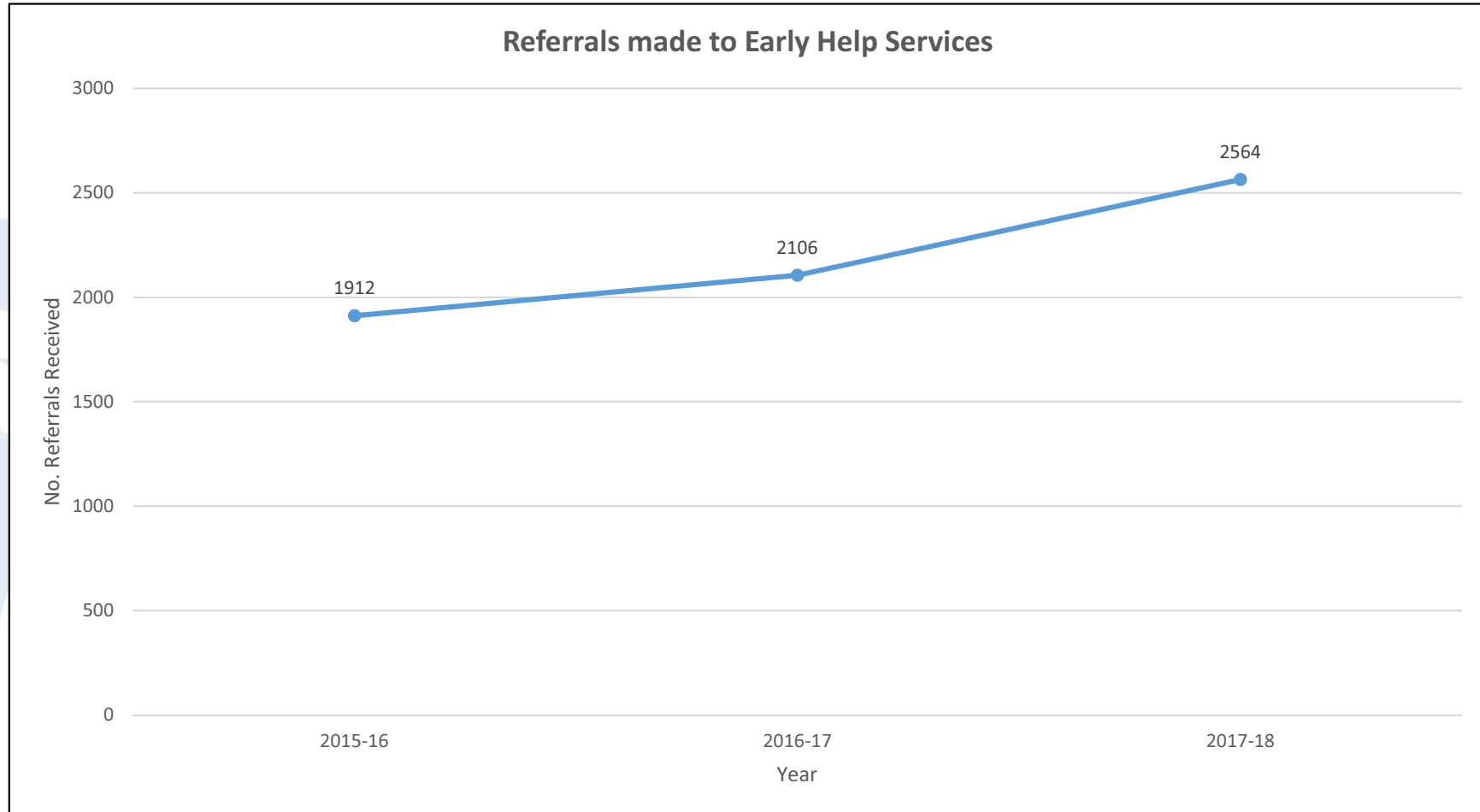
Early Help review (2018)

“Review the impact of early interventions to understand whether and where they are making a positive difference, especially with the children and families with the highest needs, and where there are gaps in services or where existing services are not having an impact”.

Early Help Teams

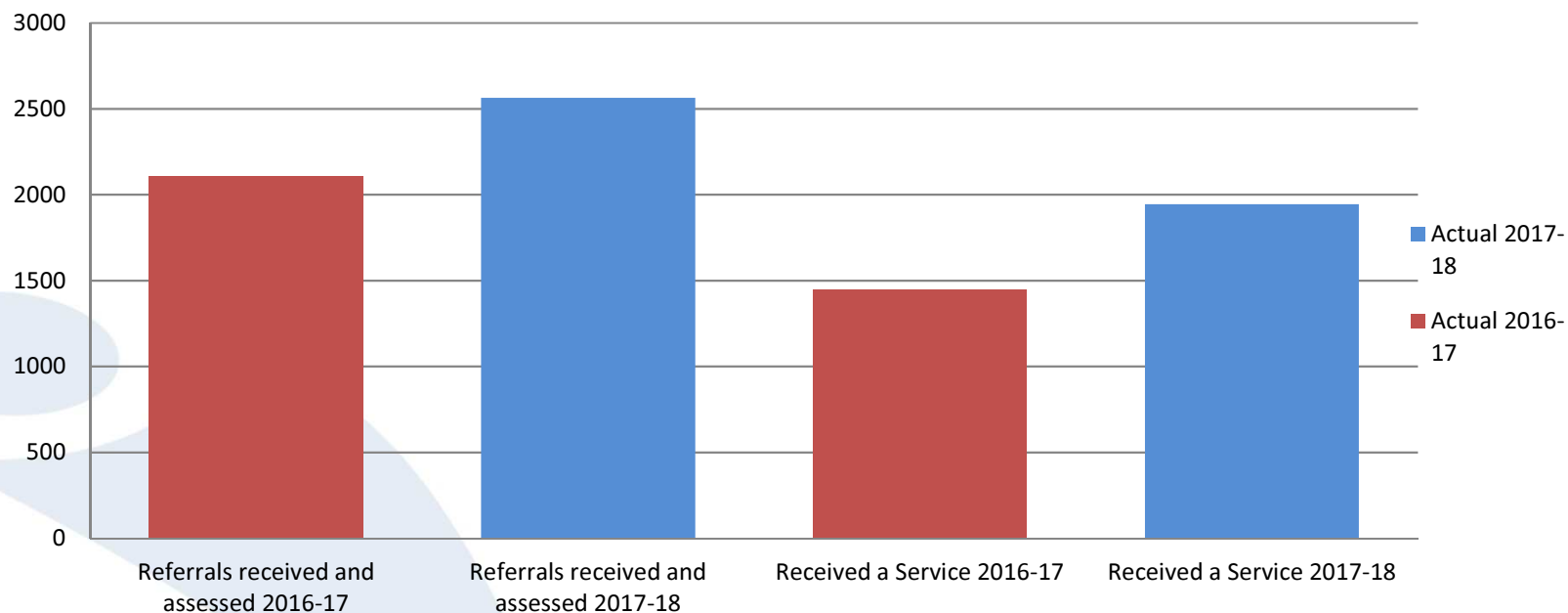
- **Screening Team** – SPOC for all referrals into Early Help co-located with MASH
- **Early Help Hubs** – Family Assessments and Direct Work with children and families
- **Youth Development** – Lead Workers, Part Time Youth Service, Participation
- **Early Years and Childcare** – Flying Start, Basic Skills

Referrals into Early Help



Analysis of referrals to Early Help Services

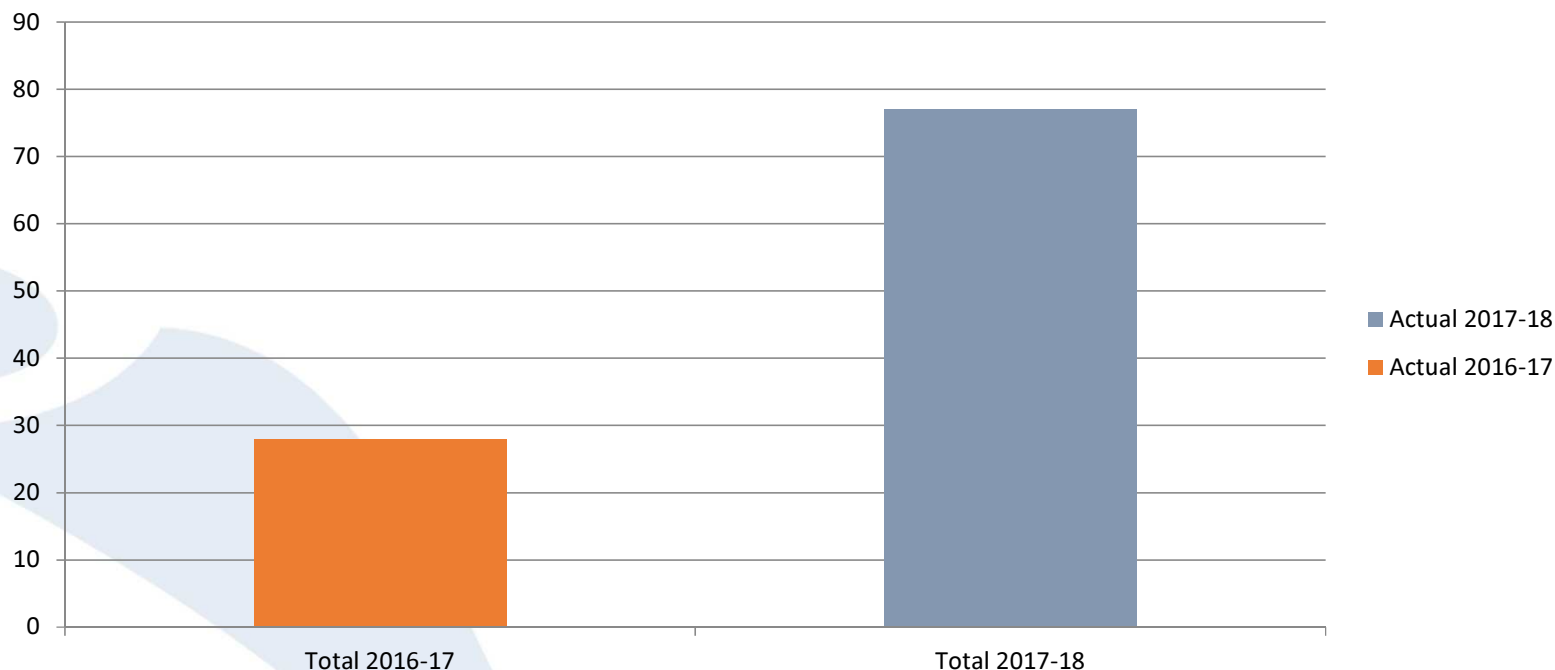
Referrals to Early Help Services



- In 2016-17, 68.8% of families referred and assessed went on to receive a service.
- This increased to 75.9% in 2017-18.

Requests for Step Down from Safeguarding

Requests for Step Down Support



- The number of Requests for Help made by the Safeguarding Teams for Step Down support during 2017-18 (77) shows an increase of 185.2% from requests made during 2016-17 (27).

Central Hub Services

Rapid Response

- Operational August 2017
- 3 x Rapid Response Workers
- Intensive support to prevent becoming known to Children Services or becoming accommodated
- Support for child/children to return to family care.
- Mornings, Evenings and Weekend Working – large demand
- Evidenced Based Practice
- 168 children have been supported (data to 30th June 2018)
- 145 children identified as being at risk of becoming looked after
- 23 children were supported to prevent foster placement breakdown

Impact

- **29.7% (43 / 145)** of children have been closed to safeguarding
- **2.1% (3 / 145)** of children have been de-registered from the Child Protection Register
- **5.5% (8 / 145)** of children were placed on the CPR
- **6.2% (9 / 145)** of children became looked after
- **93.8% (136 / 145)** remain out of care

Connecting Families

- Multi-agency team
- Intensive support
- Prevention of LAC
- Re-unification work
- 12 week package of support
- Group work
- Evidenced Based Working

Impact

- 204 children identified as being at risk of coming into care were supported in 2017-18
- **91.0% (186 / 204)** of the children referred remain out of care
- 14 family referrals for reunification received
- **16.6% (3 / 18)** children have been reunified with families from care
- 16 workshops involving 105 individuals

Integrated Family Support Service

- Multi-Agency Team – Health and Social Worker's
- Parental Substance misuse
- Children at risk of significant harm
- Children at risk of becoming looked after
- Re-unification from care
- Intensive 4-6 week intervention
- Leading on Family Group Conferencing work
- Training Element including NQSW and CPEL work
- Evidenced Based Intervention
- Statutory service

Impact

- 47 family referrals received into service during 2017-18
- **38.3% (18 / 47)** progressed into Intensive Support
- These 18 referrals were made up of of 44 adults and 33 children
- **18.2% (6 / 33)** children were closed to Safeguarding

New Edge of Care Services

Baby in Mind Service

- Operational April 2018
- 1 x Consultant Social Worker, 1x p/t Health Visitor, 2 x Family Support Worker
- Mother no later than 26 weeks pregnant
- Risk of becoming looked after
- Family willing to work with service
- Care proceedings ended 6 months prior to new pregnancy and there is a change in circumstances
- Flexible support – mornings, evenings and weekends
- Weekly support pre-birth. Intensive post-birth
- Evidenced Based Interventions (EBI's)

Reflect Project

- Welsh Government commissioned service working across Rhondda Cynon Taf (RCT), Merthyr and Bridgend Councils
- 2 x project workers
- Prevent repeat pregnancies where risk of baby being removed
- Operational April 18

Other Local Authorities

- Visits to other local authority's were conducted to explore the impact their approach to reducing LAC numbers was having.
- Neath Port Talbot County Borough Council (NPT)
- Newport City Council (NCC)
- Carmarthenshire County Borough Council (CCBC)

Findings

- All experiencing similar pressures linked to budget and preventing children becoming looked after
- Lots of similarities between LA's and delivery of Edge of Care services
- Increased pressures at front door especially for Early Help services
- Social Work model implemented in all LA's visited
- IFSS identified as a challenge

Action Taken so far

- Reconfigured IFSS to expand criteria to work with mental health and domestic abuse. The service also works with more cases than the previous guidance.
- Explored potential resource to assist in the increased demand at the front door of early help services. This was achieved with the appointment of an additional screening officer in August 2018.

Next steps

- Establishment of a practice framework/ social work model
- Implementation of the NSPCC reunification toolkit.
- Evaluate the new service provisions of Baby in Mind, Rapid Response Team and Reflect in April 2019.
- Creation of 4 practice support workers to assist with direct work, crisis intervention, placement support for LAC including weekend and evening working and FGC.

Placements

Residential remodelling:

- Hub opened in December 2018
- 2 emergency beds
- 4 Assessment beds
- Co located with placements team
- Outreach provision
- Therapeutic services
- Alternative supported living/move on options

Placements cont'd

Fostering Service Review:

- Realigned structures
- Liaison carers
- Training
- Payments and fees
- Recruitment
- SGOs

Placements cont'd

Placement Commissioning Strategy:

- Data/trends
- Profile of LAC
- Existing provision and gap analysis
- Options for future provision
- Commissioning intentions

Leadership

Strong corporate parenting commitment:

- Overview and scrutiny
- Corporate parenting committee
- Cabinet
- Corporate management board

Leadership & Management

- IPC Leadership & Management Development Programme
- Bespoke Management Development Programme
- Action Learning sets
- Coaching & Mentoring

Recruitment and Retention

- Established a Recruitment and Retention Board
- Developed a Social Care Recruitment Website
- Exit interviews for all leavers
- Flexible employment
- 'Growing our own'
- Supporting the Newly Qualified Workforce in their first three years of practice
- First year in practice programme
- Consolidation Programme
- Aspiring senior practitioners programme
- Development of a Casual Social Worker Scheme

Thank you

Any questions?

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