

BRIDGEND COUNTY BOROUGH COUNCIL
REPORT TO CORPORATE PARENTING CABINET COMMITTEE

6 MARCH 2012

REPORT OF THE CORPORATE DIRECTOR - CHILDREN

THE RESIDENTIAL CARE REDESIGN PROJECT

1. Purpose of Report

- 1.1 This report provides an update on the progress of the implementation of the Residential Redesign project.

2. Connection to Corporate Improvement Objectives or other Corporate Priorities

- 2.1 Residential provision within Bridgend for our Looked After Children is linked to the theme of "Young Voices" as part of the community strategy.

3. Background

- 3.1 The Residential Services Review was initiated in September 2008 and endorsed as part of the corporate *Supporting Vulnerable Children* programme. Its remit was:

"To examine the provision of residential services within Bridgend's community homes to identify whether a redesigned service can improve the outcomes of children and young people who become looked after".

- 3.2 The review included:

(i) the review of all key documents, policies and procedures for the service and for each new Unit;

(ii) the analysis of relevant data, for example - occupancy rates, admission and discharge information and financial costings;

(iii) interviews and discussions with residential staff, young residents and young people who had left the residential provision and were living elsewhere and their parents and/or carers;

(iv) feedback from social work staff, managers and other professionals.

- 3.3 The review concluded that children and young people who require residential care often have complex needs. Residential care can be

used to achieve positive outcomes for children and young people where the placement is appropriate and the young person's assessed needs can be met.

- 3.4 To meet the needs of children and young people, it is essential that all services provided are of a high quality, readily available and all relevant agencies working with children and young people are involved in the planning and delivery of services for each individual child.
- 3.5 An Options Appraisal was completed and presented to Corporate Parenting Cabinet Committee in January 2011. The Cabinet Committee agreed to retain two of the residential units as children's homes, those being Cartrefle and Pant Morfa and that these would be redesigned to become the "Transition Unit" and "Complex Needs Unit" respectively. A decision was also taken to decommission Maesteg children's home and this took effect on 11th January 2012.
- 3.6 The aims of the residential redesign project were to implement the changes to the service agreed by the Corporate Parenting Committee in January 2010 i.e.:
 - reduce the number of children's homes from 3 to 2;
 - reconfigure the two remaining children's homes to provide a:
 - complex needs unit;
 - 16+ transition unit;
 - make necessary changes to the staff structure to meet the needs of the new units;
 - manage current cohort of children and young people taking into account their needs, wishes and feelings.

4. Current Situation

4.1 The two new services became operational on 11th January 2012.

4.2 As part of the project:-

- all staff were consulted on the new service and, following a "match & slot" process, staff have been transferred into new positions within the Authority with one member of staff whose contract was for 12 hours per week accepting redundancy;
- children/young people and their families affected by the changes were consulted and their ongoing plans were progressed. The children that were accommodated before the commencement of the new service have moved into alternative accommodation. They were placed with foster carers, assisted to move onto independent living or were returned home to family. All have settled well and work to achieve their long term plans

are ongoing. Staff from the residential units have maintained contact with all of the children previously accommodated. Two children have been transferred to the new Complex Needs Unit where work continues to rehabilitate them home to their families. The four young people previously accommodated in Cartrefle continue to work towards their independence;

- new Statements of Purposes and Children's Guides have been developed and approved for each of the new Units;
- all relevant policies and procedures have reviewed, amended and approved;
- extensive refurbishment work has been undertaken to modernise and update the buildings to make them fit for purpose for the new services;
- Maesteg Community Home has now been decommissioned and the property is currently being prepared for disposal;
- new names for the reconfigured and remaining units have been agreed. The Complex Needs Unit has been named Sunny Bank (formally Pant Morfa) and the Transition Unit has been named Newbridge House (formally Cartrefle);
- detailed analysis has been undertaken to determine the need for ongoing "emergency bed" provision and an options appraisal is being completed to identify appropriate alternatives.

4.3 An evaluation of the service will be undertaken in July 2012 and as part of this process, in-depth consultation will be undertaken with the children/young people currently placed in the redesigned units and those that previously accessed the service. Consultation will also take place with families and professionals.

4.4 A formal launch of the redesigned service is being planned and members of the Corporate Parenting Cabinet Committee will receive an invitation to attend.

5. Effect upon Policy Framework & Procedure Rules.

None

6. Equality Impact Assessment

6.1 As part of the ongoing review, Equality Impact Assessments have been undertaken.

6.2 The Equality Impact Assessment submitted in January 2011, identified the need for appropriate disabled access to both properties. To ensure compliance this has been addressed during the refurbishment work.

6.3 A second Equality Impact Assessment has been completed following the review and amendments of related policies and procedures. The review indicated that all the policies and procedures continue to promote equality for all groups and no negative impact was identified.

6.4 The needs of the children/young people will continue to be assessed on an individual basis.

7. Financial Implications

7.1 Additional funding of £172k was secured from the Welsh Government to undertake the refurbishment of the units and the work has been completed within budget.

7.2 It was expected that the redesign of the residential services would make a saving of £200k over a 2 year period. This target has been achieved and following the sale of Maesteg children's home, it is anticipated that the Council will realise a capital receipt for the property.

8. Recommendation

8.1 It is recommended that the Corporate Parenting Cabinet Committee note the content of this report which outlines the progress of the Residential Redesign Project as previously identified in the Informal Forward Work Programme schedule.

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Background documents

None