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Bridgend County Borough Council
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Legal and Regulatory Services /
Gwasanaethau Cyfreithiol a Rheoleiddiol
Direct line / Deialu uniongyrchol: (01656)
643148/643147
Ask for / Gofynnwch am:

Our ref / Ein cyf:
Your ref / Eich cyf:

Date / Dyddiad: 27 November 2015

Dear Councillor,

CABINET COMMITTEE CORPORATE PARENTING

A meeting of the Cabinet Committee Corporate Parenting will be held in on **Thursday, 3 December 2015 at 10.00 am.**

AGENDA

1. Apologies for Absence
To receive apologies for absence (to include reasons, where appropriate) from Members/Officers.
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 - 10
To receive for approval the minutes of a meeting of the Corporate Parenting Cabinet Committee of 12 October 2015
4. Request To Provide Parent And Child Placement Via The In House Fostering Service 11 - 16
5. Childrens Commissioning Consortium Cymru (4Cs) Forward Work Programme 17 - 20
6. When I am Ready 21 - 24
7. Update of the Review and Restructure of Safeguarding and Family Support Services 25 - 28
8. Update on implementation of Early Intervention and Prevention Strategy 29 - 40

Tel/Ffôn: 01656 643643

SMS Messaging/Negeseuon SMS: 07581 157014

Fax/Facs: 01656 668126

Twitter@bridgendCBC

Email/Ebost: talktous@bridgend.gov.uk

Website/Gwefan: www.bridgend.gov.uk

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9. 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

P A Jolley

Assistant Chief Executive Legal and Regulatory Services

Distribution:

Councillors:

HJ David
M Gregory
MEJ Nott OBE

Councillors

CE Smith
HJ Townsend
PJ White

Councillors

HM Williams

Officers

Corporate Director - Education & Transformation
Corporate Director - Social Services and Wellbeing
Head of Safeguarding and Assessment
Head of Strategy Partnerships & Commissioning
Group Manager Childrens Regulated Services
Group Manager Integrated Working

Invitees

Councillors

E Dodd
EP Foley
R Jenkins
K Pascoe
E Venables
K Watts
DBF White

MINUTES OF A MEETING OF THE CABINET COMMITTEE CORPORATE PARENTING HELD IN COMMITTEE ROOMS 2/3, CIVIC OFFICES ANGEL STREET BRIDGEND CF31 4WB ON MONDAY, 12 OCTOBER 2015 AT 10.00 AM

Present

Councillor HJ David – Chairperson

M Gregory
PJ White

MEJ Nott OBE
HM Williams

CE Smith

HJ Townsend

Councillor EP Foley
Councillor E Venables
Councillor DBF White
Councillor RD Jenkins
Councillor E Dodd
Councillor KJ Watts

Officers:

Susan Cooper	Corporate Director Social Services and Wellbeing
Nicola Echanis	Head of Strategy Partnerships & Commissioning
Mark Galvin	Senior Democratic Services Officer - Committees
Laura Kinsey	Head of Safeguarding and Assessment
Jackie Morgan	Independent Reviewing Service Manager
Mark Shephard	Corporate Director - Communities
Wendy Wilcox	Group Manager Disability Transition and Case Management

106. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from the following Officers for the reasons so given:-

D Mepham – Attending CMB meeting
D McMillan – Attending CMB meeting
N Young – Attending CMB meeting

107. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

The following declarations of interest were made:-

Councillor M E J Nott – Personal interest in Agenda item 4 in that he was Chairperson of the National Adoption Service

Councillor D B F White – Personal interest in Agenda item 4 in that his role as an employee in Swansea City Council involved foster caring as part of the Western Bay Programme.

108. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

RESOLVED: That the Minutes of a meeting of the Corporate Parenting Cabinet Committee dated 30 July 2015 be approved as a true and accurate record, subject to Councillor E Dodd being added to the list of attendees present at the meeting

109. OVERVIEW OF WESTERN BAY REGIONAL ADOPTION SERVICES

The Corporate Director Social Services and Wellbeing submitted a report, that provided Members with an overview of the current position regarding the Western Bay Regional Adoption Service.

By way of background information, she confirmed that the creation of a National Adoption Service is one of the key policy strands of the Welsh Government, as enacted in the Social Services and Well-Being (Wales) Act 2014. A new model for delivering Adoption Services was introduced by Welsh Government, which dictated that all Councils are expected to deliver Adoption Services collaboratively. In the case of City and County of Swansea, Bridgend County Borough Council and Neath Port Talbot County this is the Western Bay footprint.

Paragraph 3.2 of the report confirmed that a Regional Adoption Project was initiated under the Western Bay programme and was funded via the regional collaboration grant in 13/14 and 14/15, and this section of the report detailed the aims of this Project.

In terms of the current situation, the Corporate Director Social Services and Wellbeing confirmed that membership of the Regional Management Board/Committee which has replaced the Steering Group has been agreed and complies with the requirements set out in the Adoption and Children Act 2002 (Joint Adoption Arrangements) (Wales) Directions 2015.

The flexible/remote working arrangements as part of the functional model were working well. At the initial set up of the Western Bay Adoption Service, differences to staff terms and conditions caused some difficulties. These issues have now been resolved stated the Officer.

Performance in the first quarter of the year and to date had been good in relation to a number of PI's, as was reflected in paragraph 4.3 of the report, with these figures demonstrating a positive trend for the service.

The Corporate Director Social Services and Wellbeing added that Western Bay had achieved 50% of the children matched within six months although doing well compared to performance across Wales, it was an area the required some improvement.

On a more positive note however, the conversion rate of enquiries to approvals was the highest in Wales.

Attached to the report at Appendices 1 and 2 was data and associated information which showed the qualitative performance to date across the region, with the specific cumulative Bridgend numbers of children being reflected at August 2015.

In terms of some key issues, the Corporate Director Social Services and Wellbeing confirmed that there are currently a number of social work and business support vacancies which have placed some pressures on the service since it became operational. There was a Strategy in place to address this with a combination of both permanent and temporary arrangements being progressed, including collaboration with one of the partner Voluntary Adoption Agencies.

She then outlined for the benefit of Members, the key milestones/priorities for the coming year, as were listed in paragraph 4.15 of the report.

The Cabinet Member Regeneration and Economic Development in response to a recent news press release, proposed that a Presentation be given at a future Corporate Parenting Cabinet Committee of the court processes that are followed prior to a child being proposed for adoption, so that Members have a full understanding of the 'checks and balances' that are followed during this process.

A Member referred to paragraph 3.3 of the report, where it stated that the Western Bay Adoption Service aimed to increase the recruitment of local adopters by 100%, given the high number of LAC across the Western Bay Region. He felt that data in respect of this should be included in any future reports.

Officers stated that this could be arranged, and that further information regarding this could be shared with the Member outside of the meeting.

A Member also added that some of the data attached to the report should be broken down further, in order to make it more easily explained and in turn understood.

The Corporate Director Social Services and Wellbeing agreed that in future such reports this information would be set out more clearly, though this supporting data was only confirming the information contained in paragraph 4.3 of the report.

The Cabinet Member Children's Social Services and Equalities enquired if certain categories of children we are seeking to place in adoption are harder to place than others, for example those of a certain age or with a severe disability.

The Group Manager Disability, Transition and Case Management confirmed that those individuals with complex needs and older children are sometimes hard to place under a fostering arrangement, but there were other organisations that accounted for these children, such as Barnardo's and certain other key organisations.

The Chairperson concluded debate on this item by thanking the Adoption Team in the Wellbeing Directorate for their hard work which had contributed to the report's positive outcomes.

RESOLVED: That the Corporate Parenting Cabinet Committee noted the report.

110. OVERVIEW OF SERVICES TO YOUNG CARERS IN BRIDGEND

The Corporate Director Social Services and Wellbeing submitted a report, that provided the Cabinet Committee with an overview of the current service provision for Young Carers in Bridgend.

The Group Manager Disability, Transition and Case Management, advised that a carer was defined in the Carers Strategy (Wales) Measure 2010 as an individual, whether an adult or a child, who provides or intends to provide a substantial amount of care on a regular basis for:-

- a) A child who is disabled within the meaning of part 3 of the Children Act 1989, or
- b) An individual aged 18 or over

According to Carers Wales research, there are currently over 369,186 unpaid Carers in Wales with 17,855, in Bridgend. This is an increase of 10% since the previous census figure which was 16,164. Carers in Wales save the economy £7.72 billion per annum which is more than it costs to run the NHS. The NHS and Social Services rely on the

willingness and ability of carers to provide support to people with health and social needs. The cost of replacing this care has been estimated at £7.72 billion each year. The 2011 Census identified 1372 Young Carers in Bridgend. (Carers UK, 2011).

She explained that a Young Carer is someone aged under 18 years old who takes responsibility for someone who is disabled, elderly, experiencing mental distress or affected by substance misuse, or has substantial responsibility for caring for a sibling (ABMU Carers Strategy 2013-2016).

The report included information illustrating the number of children who are carers in the Bridgend area based on the 2001 and 2011 Census data information, ie with there being 509 in 2001 and 1,372 in 2011. She added that obviously there were more carers than this total suggested that the Authority weren't aware of, as they had not made themselves known for whatever reason that they were carrying out such a support role.

In terms of Local Support for Young Carers, a Carers Strategy for Bridgend County Borough has been developed by the Bridgend Carers Forum in partnership with statutory and non-statutory organisations and was reported to Cabinet in April 2010. Young Carers were also specifically mentioned in page 12 of the ABMU Carers Strategy, highlighting their specific needs.

The Head of Strategy, Partnerships and Commissioning then referred to the Carer Strategy (Wales) Measure 2010. This enabled the National Assembly of Wales to introduce legal duties on the NHS (lead organisation) and Local Authorities in Wales to work together and, in consultation with Carers, to prepare, publish and implement a joint Carers Information and Consultation Strategy. The Measure is not targeted at specific age groups but encompasses Carers of all ages including Young Carers (under the age of 18) and Young Adult Carers (aged 18 – 25 years).

Guidance issued by Welsh Government in relation to the Information and Consultation Strategy, specifically seeks to ensure that which was outlined in paragraph 4.3 of the report.

Paragraph 4.7 of the report then referred to some of the work that had been achieved through funding streams available under the Carers Measure, and that in October 2013, a Carers Co-ordinator for both Adult and Children's services was appointed, and a component of the role of this, was for the development of services for Young Carers. The next section of the report expanded upon some of the work this Officer had undertaken.

Paragraph 4.14 of the report then gave details regarding the appointment in July 2014 of a Young Carers Co-ordinator, and this part of the report gave an overview of service provision for Young Carers and Young Adult Carers within the County Borough (to date).

The Group Manager, Disability, Transition and Case Management concluded her submission by referring to the reports financial implications which confirmed that funding for the posts referred to would expire at the end of March 2016.

The Chairperson confirmed that he had attended the launch of the Young Carer's ID Card which had been an excellent event, as invitees were able to discuss and implement some of these young people's recommendations and suggestions.

A Member noted that sessions had been delivered to schools in relation to the matter subject of the report, and sought clarification if this had been delivered in primary and comprehensive schools across the County Borough.

The Group Manager, Disability, Transition and Case Management explained that this had been delivered in comprehensive schools, though the intention was to also roll this out to primary schools.

The Chairperson added that those Members who were also School Governors could arrange with teaching staff at schools there were governors at, to introduce such sessions if they had not already taken place at that particular school.

Members were unanimously in favour of looking for a funding stream that could continue in order to extend the Contract of the Carer's Co-ordinator post.

The Chairperson further asked if all the actions included in the Action Plan that supported the Carers Strategy had now been completed.

The Group Manager Disability, Transition and Case Management confirmed that she would obtain information regarding this request and feed this back to the Deputy Leader outside of the meeting.

The Chairperson also suggested that events for Young Carers be set-up in order to discuss and make known their achievements.

The Group Manager Disability, Transition and Case Management replied that she would take this suggestion up with the Action for Children Group and the Carers Centre.

- RESOLVED:**
- (1) That the Corporate Parenting Cabinet Committee noted the report.
 - (2) That the Committee receives a further report within 6 – 12 months time, giving an update on the services to Young Carers in Bridgend to include resource implications relating to the support of the services by BCBC.

111. INDEPENDENT REVIEWING SERVICE

The Corporate Director Social Services and Wellbeing submitted a report, that provided the Cabinet Committee with a report that was in line with the statutory duties under the Independent Reviewing Officers Guidance (Wales) 2004. The report would also provide an overview of the role and function of the Independent Reviewing Service.

The report gave some background information, that included information which outlined that Independent Reviewing Officers (IRO) are required to independently review the Care Plans of all Looked After Children, and in Bridgend they also independently oversee those children with a Child Protection Plan, subject to the Child Protection Register (CPR) through child protection conferences.

The Looked After Children Statutory review process requires the IROs to undertake bi-annual and annual reviews of children and young people's circumstances and they must consult with and ensure the attendance of relevant agencies including health, education and Police in some instances.

The Corporate Director Social Services and Wellbeing confirmed that, within Bridgend County Borough Council, the IRO Service was responsible for the review and oversee the effectiveness and the appropriateness of Care Plans for those Children and Young

People the Council had responsibility for. This included the Chairing of all Child Protection Conferences with Bridgend County Borough Council area on behalf of Western Bay Safeguarding Children Board, Looked After Children Reviews, which included children who are Looked After and placed in foster care, residential care, secure units, placed with parents, placed for Adoption and young people subject to Pathway Plans (for young people moving towards independent living and for those living Independently up to age of 21 years old or 25 if in full time education).

In terms of the composition of the IRO Service, there had been some change in the composition of the Team since the last Annual Report dated April 2014. There were currently 6 full-time posts and one ½ time post.

She explained that the current IRO cohort have a wealth of experience and all have been qualified Social Workers for a substantial period of time. The IRO Manager has been in her current post since June 2013 she added.

The Corporate Director Social Services and Wellbeing then covered the following areas, information upon each of which was expanded upon within the report:-

- IRO caseloads
- Reviewing activity
- Qualitative information
- Case Dispute Resolution and Complaints, and
- Service Challenges for 2014-15

Paragraph 4.8 of the report, then covered some Service Priorities and the Officer expanded upon some of these for Members' benefit.

The Corporate Director Social Services and Wellbeing confirmed that there was one issue that was very important from a Quality Assurance perspective, and that was that all children who are looked after have in place a suitable Care Plan for them.

She added that since April of this year, improvements had been made to the Independent Reviewing Service and an Action Plan had been introduced for this purpose.

A Member stated that the report not only made for good reading in that it highlighted improvements to the service, it was also honest through highlighting weaknesses that needed to be worked upon, as well as emphasising the future challenges that lie ahead.

The Head of Safeguarding and Assessment recognised these issues the Member had raised, and she added that training and mentoring was also being addressed in the Social Services team, particularly in respect of Social Workers so as to achieve improved work practices.

The Head of Safeguarding and Assessment added that the IRO's were supportive including in the role of critical friends in terms of achieving guidance and support that would lead to and result in improvements to the service in question. She added that last year had been a difficult one, as there had been a considerable amount of sickness absence affecting Managers in this area of work, as well as Social Workers. This had improved this year however, and coupled with increased collaborative working, future challenges would be met more effectively than previously.

The Group Manager Disability Transition and Case Management added that a considerable amount of supportive work was being carried out through the various Hubs that had been established in parts of the County Borough, particularly in respect of Performance Indicator statistics.

CABINET COMMITTEE CORPORATE PARENTING - MONDAY, 12 OCTOBER 2015

A Member noted that the IRO caseloads in BCBC were higher than in neighbouring authorities, and she asked Officers why this was the case.

The Head of Safeguarding and Assessment advised that this was because there were more Independent Reviewing Officers in certain neighbouring authorities, that included Neath Port Talbot CBC.

She added that in terms of caseloads, 80 was an acceptable number for 6.5 IRO's which was the current number in BCBC, however, they had a total of 100 cases to manage, which meant that they were carrying a heavy workload.

With regard to Case Dispute Resolution Complaints, the Chairperson asked if all these complaints were resolved in 5 working days as was the directive.

The Head of Safeguarding and Assessment confirmed that they were.

RESOLVED: That the Corporate Parenting Cabinet Committee noted the contents of the report and the accompanying Annual Report of the Manager of the Independent Reviewing Service.

112. URGENT ITEMS

None.

The meeting closed at 11.37 am

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BRIDGEND COUNTY BOROUGH COUNCIL

REPORT TO CABINET COMMITTEE CORPORATE PARENTING

THURSDAY, 3 DECEMBER 2015

REPORT OF THE CORPORATE DIRECTOR - SOCIAL SERVICES & WELLBEING

REQUEST TO PROVIDE PARENT AND CHILD PLACEMENT VIA THE IN-HOUSE FOSTERING SERVICE

1. Purpose of Report.

- 1.1 To share with corporate parenting committee a proposal to establish and provide an in house parent and child fostering service; to describe the current arrangements for commissioning these placements from external providers; to outline the potential benefits of taking a new approach, including reduced costs.

2. Connection to Corporate Improvement Objectives/Other Corporate Priorities

- 2.1 The report links to the following corporate priorities:

- Working with children and families to tackle problems early
- Working together to make the best use of our resources

3. Background.

- 3.1 Bridgend County Borough Council is currently unable to provide an in-house service offering parent and child fostering placements. If required, parent and child (typically mother and baby only) placements are provided by commissioning the placements through a range of independent fostering agencies (IFA's) via the children commissioning support resource (CCSR).

- 3.2 This cost of commissioning these external parent and child placements is significant, totalling an expenditure of £248,256.06 in 2014/2015.

Year	Expenditure (£)
2014/2015	247,656.25
2014/2013	241,889.77
2013/2012	233,015.48
2012/2011	188,093.58

- 3.3 There are 2 main circumstances in which a Local Authority will require a parent and child placement:

- The Court will recommend the Local Authority to provide a parent and child placement and will not sanction any other placement for the child; and
- The parent of the child will agree to their baby becoming Looked After under section 20 and the Local Authority wants to assess the parent's ability to care for the baby and to do so in the safety of a parent and child

foster placement. In some cases the parent may be a child who will also be Looked After (LAC).

- 3.4 It was determined via the Children's Commissioning Consortium Cymru (4C's) that there was a gap in provision for parent and child placements across Wales and in response a number of the larger independent fostering agencies (IFA's) established such a provision, within the framework parameters. These placements come at a cost.
- 3.5 Currently, the standard level 1 parent and child placement costs £1,364.70 per week and a level 2 placement costs £1,650 per week. Placements are initially set up for a 12-16 week assessment period but can last the length of care proceedings, namely 26 weeks.
- 3.6 Levels 1 and 2 are determined by the issues/risks associated with the family e.g. if either parent is already a Looked After Child, there is a history of substance misuse, challenging behaviour /aggression, where previous children have been removed, or where there is a history of offending behaviour. Family situations where the risks are higher require a more specialist, level 2 placement.
- 3.7 The Local Authority commissioned 12 parent and child placements in 2014/2015, 11 at level 1 and 1 at level 2, resulting in a cumulative spend of £247,656.25.

4. Current situation / proposal.

- 4.1 The Local Authority currently commissions all parent and child foster placements via independent fostering agencies (IFAs).
- 4.2 As at 18th September 2015, there were 13 active mother and baby placements that have, in this financial year, thus far cost the Local Authority £266,587.03
- 4.3 As at the 31st October 2015 we have 8 referrals for potential parent and child placements for unborn babies. Since the Public Law Outline was introduced we have experienced a steady increase in the demand for parent and child foster placements. The explanation for this is that the legal test for justification of removal of a child from parental care now demands a high level of evidence of imminent risk of harm. If this evidence cannot be adduced, for example in the case of a new baby where no firm evidence of parenting ability yet exists, the Court will refuse to endorse a care plan that proposes to separate a baby from parental care. In these situations, where it is not safe enough to leave a baby in the care of its parent in their own home and without supervision, the Local Authority has little alternative than to assess the first months of the baby's life in a parent and child foster placement. The supervision by experienced foster carers provides the necessary safety measures to keep the baby safe in parental care.
- 4.4 The benefits of providing an in house service are as follows:-
 - More cost effective and flexible in terms of what can be offered. For example, it would potentially enable fathers to be placed with the mother and baby and participate in the assessment. Increased opportunities for families to remain in their locality and when appropriate enabling cases to be stepped down for community assessments in a more timely way.

- Local placements enable parents to maintain extended familial links and access local support services including education or training. This provides a more realistic assessment as parents are tested in their local environment and not placed in an artificial environment in an area remote from their home county which may not expose them to the same challenges they will face when they return to their home community.
- Social work staff will have greater time to spend assessing and supporting the families as their placement will be in the local area. This also reduces the travel time and expenditure for families and Local Authority staff.

4.5 For the Local Authority to promote and effectively utilise a parent and child scheme there would need to be clear guidelines and processes in place for potential carers, including a transition plan for the young people and the carers offering the service. The service will be managed and will be fully compliant with the Fostering Regulations Wales (2003)

4.6 Currently, whilst Bridgend County Borough Council has in place a principle that an IFA parent and child placement will end after a 12 week assessment, we have been faced with significant delays with courts directing that the parent and child placement should continue until the Final Hearing at 26 weeks. To mitigate some of the costs in these situations, our fees for in house carers would be on a sliding scale with a reduction after the assessment phase is complete.

4.7 This service will adopt the brand of and be formally launched by Bridgend Foster Care. There will be a bespoke marketing campaign for the new service. It is positive to note that we already have some expressions of interest from our existing carer cohort.

5. Effect upon Policy Framework& Procedure Rules.

5.1 The service would need to be added into the Fostering Services Statement of Purpose The statement of purpose will therefore require amendment by the addition of this service.

6. Equality Impact Assessment

6.1 Not Applicable for the purposes of this report.

7. Financial Implications.

7.1 Parent and child placement spend financial year 1.4.14 – 31.3.15

	Date started	Date ended	No. of weeks in placement	Weekly cost £	Total cost £	level
1	21.2.14	17.7.14	21	1,364.70	28,658.70	1
2	28.2.14	16.1.15	50	1,349.10	67,455.00	1
3	30.5.14	3.2.15	37	970.55	35,910.35	1
4	12.6.14	7.11.14	18	970.55	17,469.90	1
5	17.7.14	27.10.14	14.5	1,364.70	19,788.15	1
6	14.11.14	31.3.14	20.5	1,364.70	27,976.35	1
7	27.10.14	28.11.14	4	1,256.78	5,027.12	1
8	24.12.14	5.01.15	2	1,349.10	2,698.20	1
9	8.1.15	31.3.15	12.5	1,364.70	17,658.75	1
10	2.2.15	31.3.15	10.5	1,650.00	17,325.00	2
11	18.3.15	31.3.15	2	1,394.50	2,789.00	1
12	19.2.15	31.3.15	5.5	999.95	5,499.73	1
Total			207.5		248,256.25	

Parent and child placement spend year to date 1.4.15 – 18.9.15

	Date started	Date ended	No. of weeks in placement	Weekly cost £	Total cost £	level
1	1.4.15	19.5.15	7	1,364.70	9,552.90	1
2	1.4.15	8.5.15	4.5	1,364.70	6,141.15	1
3	1.4.15	10.7.15	13.5	1,650.00	22,275.00	2
4	1.4.15	Still in	27	1,394.50	37,651.50	1
5	1.4.15	Still in	25	999.95	24,998.75	1
6	31.3.15	26.5.15	17	1,650.00	28,050.00	2
7	22.4.15	Still in	21.5	1,386.08	29,800.72	1
8	5.5.15	Still in	19.5	1,593.12	31,065.84	2
9	26.5.15	Still in	16.5	970.55	1,614.07	1
10	16.6.15	Still in	13.5	1,364.70	18,423.45	1
11	19.6.15	Still in	13	1,386.08	18,019.04	1
12	26.6.15	Still in	12	1,499.55	17,994.60	2
13	21.8.15	Still in	4	1,650.00	6,600.00	2
Total			194		266,587.03	

- 7.2 BCBC would continue to use IFAs for level 2 placements due to the complex requirements of these cases but attempt to bring level 1 placements in-house
- 7.3 The proposal is that Bridgend Foster Care will provide a fostering fee of £721.86* to foster carers offering parent and child placements (*this is based on one parent and one child in placement). This would reduce each individual placement cost by £642.84 per week.
- 7.4 The service would require a member of staff to recruit, assess and supervise the scheme. Research from the existing IFA providers suggests this would need to be a full time post at senior practitioner level. The cost to the Local Authority based on 15 parent and child households offering the service, of providing this member of staff (SCP 39-41) would be £58.89 per week bringing the overall placement cost to £780.75 and offers a potential saving per placement of £583.95 per week
- 7.5 Summary of potential savings

	01/04/14 to 31/03/15	01/14/15 to 18/09/15
Total Current Costs	£248,256	£266,587
Level 1 No. of weeks	197	128
Proposed Level 1 Weekly Rate	£721.86	£721.86
Plus Additional Weekly Staff Cost	£58.89	£58.89
Total Level 1 Weekly Rate	£780.75	£780.75
Revised Level 1 Costs	£153,808	£99,936
Level 2 Costs (as current)	£17,325	£105,985
Total Revised Costs	£171,733	£205,921
Potential Savings	(£77,123)	(£60,666)

8. Recommendation.

- 8.1 That the corporate parenting cabinet committee takes note of the information contained within this report and agrees to bring forward proposals to make changes to the existing Bridgend Foster Care Statement of Purpose to include the ability to offer parent and child foster placements in house.
- 8.2 That the corporate parenting committee agrees that a Parent and Child fostering service is added to the Statement of Purpose for Bridgend Foster Care

Susan Cooper
Corporate Director - Social Services & Wellbeing
26 November 2015

Contact Officer: Natalie Silcox

Telephone: Tel: 01656 372319

E-mail: natalie.silcox@bridgend.gov.uk

Postal Address Social Services & Wellbeing
Bridgend County Borough Council
Civic Offices
Angel Street
Bridgend

Background documents: None

BRIDGEND COUNTY BOROUGH COUNCIL

REPORT TO CABINET COMMITTEE CORPORATE PARENTING

THURSDAY, 3 DECEMBER 2015

REPORT OF THE CORPORATE DIRECTOR - SOCIAL SERVICES & WELLBEING

CHILDRENS COMMISSIONING CONSORTIUM (4CS) FORWARD WORK PROGRAMME

1. Purpose of Report.

- 1.1 To provide the corporate parenting cabinet committee with information and an update of the work being undertaken by the Children's Commissioning Consortium Cymru (4C's) and their forward work programme

2. Connection to Corporate Improvement Objectives/Other Corporate Priorities

- 2.1 The report links to the following corporate priorities:

- Working with children and families to tackle problems early
- Working together to make the best use of our resources

3. Background.

- 3.1 The 4C's was originally formed by the 10 South East Wales Improvement Collaboration authorities, 4Cs was renamed and expanded in 2012 to include five Mid and West Wales authorities. The Children's Commissioning Consortium Cymru (4C's) is a partnership of authorities across Wales who work together to improve outcomes for vulnerable children and young people and achieve value for money through working together collaboratively. A Board which includes Heads of Childrens Services governs the 4Cs work programme.
- 3.2 As well as significant cost savings, benefits include improved management information, consistent and secure collaborative tools and processes across authorities to facilitate individual placement matching, contract award and contract monitoring, collaborative risk management, and quality assurance of providers; sustained reduction in prices; and an environment of partnership with the independent sector to commission new sustainable care models. It also rationalised processes for all participant authorities ensuring a consistent placement process fit for purpose by focusing on the needs of the child.
- 3.3 4Cs has won awards, including a prestigious Government Opportunities (GO) National Excellence in Procurement for Innovation and Initiative Award for a health and social care organisation in the National Government Opportunities Excellence in Public Procurement Awards 2013/14. The Consortiums commissioning work has been commended by the Childrens Commissioner for Wales.

- 3.4 Participation and Co-Production with young people with care experience is well embedded in all 4Cs developmental work. Participation in the 4Cs Consortium presents collaborative opportunities for children's social care within an acknowledged environment in which development and delivery of social care services is both complex and challenging. Over 91% of young people who responded to the 2014 Framework 360 Outcomes Survey felt their outcomes were being met by their placement most or all of the time.
- 3.5 Significant progress has been made by the (4Cs) to improve the way local authorities commission looked after children (LAC) placement services. In 2012 4C's launched the first collaborative social care Frameworks in Wales for Fostering and Residential LAC placement services, BCBC staff were involved in the original, scoping, tendering and interview process. These will now be renewed in May 2016. Year on year significant cost savings have been achieved as a result of the collaborative approach taken by 4Cs to placement commissioning. £79 million per annum was spent on independent sector LAC placements by 4Cs authorities. Over the life of the current Placement Frameworks projected savings are £6.18m in actual cost avoidance, with potential cost avoidance being estimated at £10.68m
- 3.6 The Foster and Residential Frameworks provide a strategic procurement solution for independent sector Looked After Children's (LAC) placement needs. For the life of the contract the provider; quality, cost per placement, terms conditions and specifications are determined and agreed. This has eliminated the need for a full procurement process for each and every placement and removed options of 'opportunistic' pricing which previously existed for some urgent requirements. Non-framework placements are more expensive than Framework placements. When making placements in the independent sector authorities increasingly place with Framework assured providers, in fact 97% of independent foster care placements are with framework providers. BCBC has been commended by the 4C's for their consistent use of the database. Significantly higher rates of concerns are reported by local authorities to the 4Cs regional commissioning unit in relation to non-framework providers leading to higher costs and higher rates of disruption
- 3.7 Local authorities have been able through the Frameworks to match placement needs with providers at predetermined or improved prices through the individual placement matching process. BCBC now uses a module within the database which enables us to ensure that any long term or sibling foster placement discounts are applied at the earliest opportunity.

4. Current situation / proposal.

- 4.1 In preparation for the new collaborative Frameworks 4Cs has completed a regional needs and market analysis and agreed a regional Commissioning Strategy which sets out an ambitious joint agenda over the next few years for placement commissioning.

Key objectives are to ensure:

- Outcomes and life chances of Looked After Children and young people are good
- A range of services which improve outcomes and meet the needs of vulnerable children and their families and
- Value for money

4.2 The new Regional Commissioning Strategy, through the two new Frameworks will meet the anticipated placement requirements. Bridgend CBC has representatives attending to promote our interests. Furthermore it will encourage new provision into Wales where gaps currently exist and facilitate strategic partnership with placement providers to develop new models of care which offer new solutions to placement issues, whilst delivering better outcomes and value for money.

5. Effect upon Policy Framework& Procedure Rules.

5.1 Not applicable for the purpose of this report

6. Equality Impact Assessment

6.1 Not applicable for the purpose of this report

7. Financial Implications.

7.1 Not applicable for the purpose of this report

8. Recommendation.

8.1 That the cabinet committee takes note of the information contained within this report.

Susan Cooper
Corporate Director - Social Services & Wellbeing
<Date of final sign off>

Contact Officer: Natalie Silcox

Telephone: Tel: 01656 372319

E-mail: natalie.silcox@bridgend.gov.uk

Postal Address Social Services & Wellbeing
Bridgend County Borough Council
Civic Offices
Angel Street
Bridgend

Background documents: No additional documents are being submitted with this report

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BRIDGEND COUNTY BOROUGH COUNCIL

REPORT TO CABINET COMMITTEE CORPORATE PARENTING

THURSDAY, 3 DECEMBER 2015

REPORT OF THE CORPORATE DIRECTOR - SOCIAL SERVICES & WELLBEING

WHEN I AM READY

1. Purpose of Report.

- 1.1 Provide Information to Corporate Parenting Committee about the 'When I am Ready' scheme.

2. Connection to Corporate Improvement Objectives/Other Corporate Priorities

- 2.1 The report links to the following corporate priorities:

- Working with children and families to tackle problems early
- Working together to make the best use of our resources

3. Background.

- 3.1 'When I am Ready' is a scheme which comes into force on the 1st April 2016 having been developed by the Welsh Government in partnership with local government and key third sector partners to enable eligible care leavers to continue to live with their foster carers once they attain 18 years of age. The Social Services and Well Being Act (SSWBA) uses the term 'post-18 living arrangement' to describe a situation where a care leaver who has turned 18 years of age continues to live with his or her foster parent/s in an arrangement facilitated by the Local Authority.
- 3.2 These arrangements differ from foster care as once a young person has attained 18 years of age and is an adult they are no longer legally 'looked after' or 'in care'. The legislation and regulation that apply to fostering no longer applies and the legal basis on which a young person resides in the foster carers' home changes. The Local Authority would be facilitating a 'post-18 living arrangement' for that young person.
- 3.3 'When I Am Ready' will be different to supported lodgings, which are governed by a separate statutory framework. Supported lodgings is primarily a housing scheme for vulnerable young people, and does not operate on the familial model promoted by 'When I Am Ready'. Supported lodgings placements are financed primarily by supporting people grant monies. The tax and benefit rules are also different especially in relation to qualifying care relief for the providers.
- 3.4 Supported lodgings may be a suitable option for some care leavers, instead of a 'When I Am Ready' placement, for example, where a person in full time education needs vacation accommodation. The relative merits of 'When I Am Ready' and supported lodgings will be discussed with the young person and their foster carers as part of the Pathway Planning process commencing at 16 years of age. If the young person wishes to remain with their foster carers beyond the age of 18 years

of age, this will in future almost always be under a 'When I Am Ready' arrangement. 'When I Am Ready' is also very different to the (adult placement) 'Shared Lives' scheme, which may be suitable for people with ongoing care and support needs who are unlikely ever to live independently.

- 3.5 The main aims for 'When I Am Ready' are:-
- To provide stability and continuity for young people leaving foster care as they prepare for independent living.
 - To improve the life chances of Looked After Children
 - To provide Looked After Children with increased opportunities to exercise choice and control over their lives.
- 3.6 'When I Am Ready' helps to ensure that young people do not experience a sudden disruption to their living arrangements which can have a negative impact upon their education, training or employment, or upon their developing independent living skills.
- 3.7 A list of outcomes have been developed in line with the National Outcomes Framework to monitor and evaluate the success of the 'When I Am Ready' scheme at a local and national level.
- 3.8 All 'Looked After Children' who have been placed in care and are approaching the age of 18 years of age are eligible to be considered for 'When I Am Ready'. Under section 108 of the SSWBA through a Pathway assessment the Local Authority must ascertain whether a young person and their foster carers wish to make a post-18 years of age living arrangement.
- 3.9 In summary a 'When I Am Ready' agreement may be made where:-
- The young person was a Looked After Child immediately prior to their 18th birthday and is living with foster carers in a placement arranged by the Local Authority (this includes in house, relative or Independent provider foster placements); and
 - The young person is deemed, under current legislation, to be an eligible child within the meaning of the Children Act 1989 immediately before they reached 18 years of age (from 1st April 2016 the term 'eligible child' will be replaced with the term category 1 young person under the SSWBA); and
 - The young person and the foster carers both wish to enter into a 'When I Am Ready' agreement and the arrangement has been set out in the young person's pathway plan; and
 - The Local Authority is satisfied that such an arrangement is consistent with the young person's wellbeing; and
 - A proportion of the allowance paid to the 'When I Am Ready' carer will be paid by the Local Authority.
- 3.10 'When I Am Ready' arrangements should cover all young people who were previously in foster care and who were looked after prior to their 18th birthday, as long as the above criteria are met. This is regardless of whether the young person is undertaking full or part time education, training or employment or none of these activities.
- 3.11 However there is an expectation that any young person accessing the 'When I Am Ready' scheme will commit to undertaking skills development to prepare for the

future. This could include education, training, employment or volunteering. This expectation should be written into the young person's pathway plan and will form part of the 'living together agreement' once the 'When I Am Ready' arrangement has started.

3.12 When I Am Ready' agreements extend until:-

- The young person leaves the arrangement; or
- The young person reaches their 21st birthday (provided they have been continuously living in that arrangement since their 18th birthday); or
- The young person completes their agreed programme of education or training after their 21st birthday (provided they have been continuously living in that arrangement since their 18th birthday)

4. Current situation / proposal.

4.1 We currently have 18 young people over the age of 18 years accessing ongoing living accommodation:

- 5 young people are residing within our supported lodgings service;
- 5 young people are living with BCBC foster carers who have converted to supported lodgings provision - specifically for them;
- 1 young person lives with their relative who was previously their relative foster carer;
- 7 young people are continuing to reside with independent foster agency providers who have converted to supported lodgings via BCBC, whilst remaining approved by the independent fostering agency to provide fostering placements.

4.2 We currently have 80 Looked After Children who are 15, 16 and 17 years old and will become 18 years of age after the 1st April 2016. We have identified, via their current pathway planning, that 2 will seek a supported lodgings placement and 14 will be considered for assessment for 'When I Am Ready'. The remaining 64 young people have alternative identified Pathway plans; such as move on to Llamau or other housing projects, returning to family, or living independently.

4.3 Ongoing discussions are being held at a national level about the impact of providing 'When I Am Ready' arrangements for foster carers. There are issues relating to the potential for Local Authorities to implement differing standards and financial recompense across Wales. The South Wales Management group is working with the Fostering Network in order to discuss the potential of a uniform approach and rate set across Wales as a preferred option. Once this has been established we will be better placed to consider the budget implications relating to the implementation of the scheme locally.

5. Effect upon Policy Framework & Procedure Rules.

5.1 Not applicable for the purposes of this report.

6. Equality Impact Assessment

6.1 Not applicable for the purposes of this report.

7. Financial Implications.

7.1 It is too early to assess any financial implications that may arise from the 'When I am Ready' scheme. Further government information is set to be made available in January 2016 that will inform the potential allowance rates payable and whether it is a budgetary pressure for the authority or not.

7.2 There will be no additional financial administrative burden

8. Recommendation.

8.1 That the corporate parenting cabinet committee takes note of the information contained within this report.

Susan Cooper
Corporate Director - Social Services & Wellbeing
26 November 2015

Contact Officer: Natalie Silcox

Telephone: Tel: 01656 372319
E-mail: natalie.silcox@bridgend.gov.uk
Postal Address Social Services & Wellbeing
Bridgend County Borough Council
Civic Offices
Angel Street
Bridgend

Background documents: There are no additional documents submitted with this report.

BRIDGEND COUNTY BOROUGH COUNCIL

REPORT TO CABINET COMMITTEE CORPORATE PARENTING

THURSDAY 3 DECEMBER 2015

REPORT OF THE CORPORATE DIRECTOR - SOCIAL SERVICES & WELLBEING

UPDATE OF THE REVIEW AND RESTRUCTURE OF SAFEGUARDING AND FAMILY SUPPORT SERVICES

1. Purpose of Report

1.1 To provide the Committee with an update of the review and restructure of Safeguarding and Family Support Services that commenced in November 2014.

2. Connection to Corporate Improvement Objectives/Other Corporate Priorities

2.1 This report links to the following Corporate Priorities:

- Working with children and families to tackle problems early;
- Working together to make the best use of our resources.

3. Background

3.1 In November and December 2014 employees were consulted on proposals to re-structure the former Safeguarding and Family Support Service. During the period of consultation, extensive feedback was received from individual employees and teams.

3.2 This coincided with changes to the Corporate Management Board Structure which resulted in the realignment of the management of the service to the Corporate Director of Social Services and Wellbeing, with effect from 1 January 2015.

3.3 Consideration of the feedback from the consultation exercise consequently resulted in revisions being made to the proposed structure which was subject to a further consultation exercise in February and March 2015.

3.4 These changes included a commitment to maintain the Assessment Team whilst proposals were developed and agreed for the Multi Agency Safeguarding Hub (MASH) and the establishment of three Safeguarding Locality Hubs.

3.6 It was recognised that there was a need to establish the role of a deputy team manager to increase the management capacity in the hubs and ensure a robust support and supervision structure.

4. Current situation / proposal

4.1 The implementation of the new structure commenced in April 2015 and was completed in July 2015. Staff from the previous five safeguarding teams were co-located within one of three newly formed safeguarding hubs – East, North and West of the county. Each hub has a team manager who leads a team comprising of a

deputy manager, senior practitioner (s), social workers, social work assistants and contact workers.

- 4.2 A working group on recruitment and retention were tasked with focussing on:
- Implementing the new staff structure;
 - Improving the learning and development arrangements;
 - Developing more attractive recruitment materials;
 - Marketing and promoting BCBC as an employer of choice;
 - Creating capacity by developing a flexible bank of qualified, experienced social workers who would be able to support the service if and when required.
- 4.3 The new staffing structure has been successfully implemented with the team manager and new deputy team manager positions having been filled alongside the majority of social work posts. Two vacancies remain at Senior Practitioner level and discussions are underway about how the Authority promotes these and attracts applicants.
- 4.4 Investigating why people leave and obtaining accurate information can be difficult. Therefore, in order to focus on the retention of the current workforce, a staff survey was undertaken in July/August 2015, the outcomes of which are being considered in addition to the routine exit interviews.
- 4.5 Issued specifically to qualified social workers, senior practitioners, deputy team managers and team managers in the front line Safeguarding teams, the survey was undertaken over a four week period to gain a better understanding of employees' views. The response rate was 69%, with 45 responses from a potential of 65.
- 4.6 The main messages coming from the survey showed that the most important factors in attracting employees to work in BCBC were 'Permanent employment opportunities' and 'Opportunities for continuing education and professional development'. The well-established arrangements for continuing educational and professional development in BCBC will be promoted as part of the work being undertaken to improve recruitment materials and market BCBC as an employer of choice.
- 4.7 It is recognised that a high number of newly qualified Social Workers have been recruited which means that the overall number of Social Workers with less than two years' experience continues to present a real challenge for the service. It also places a pressure on managerial capacity to provide adequate support, which is essential to enable newly qualified Social Workers to become experienced and confident practitioners, who will want to continue to work in BCBC.
- 4.8 Additional measures have been put in place to support the newly qualified Social Workers so that they are better equipped to undertake the role and feel more confident and resilient; these include:
- The First Year in Practice programme has been updated and is being implemented on a mandatory basis;
 - Consultant Social Workers based in the hubs providing direct support to staff through case mentoring, direct observation of practice and reflection and peer supervision.

- 4.9 Similarly it is also recognized that learning and development activities play a key part in the ongoing professional development of all of our staff. The Social Care Workforce Development Programme (SCWDP) offers a range of continuing professional development opportunities for all Social Workers, team managers and deputies. This includes bespoke training including induction, a specific programme for newly qualified workers, a consolidation programme for those entering their second year in practice and mentoring support for managerial positions.
- 4.10 In addition to supporting the qualified social work workforce, the SCWDP team also contributes to the provision of new Social Workers through the co-ordination and support of practice placements for social work students and the employment of a Social Work Trainee.
- 4.11 The Social Care Supervision Policy has been relaunched and is due to be implemented across all Safeguarding Social Work teams. Going forward, compliance with the Supervision Policy will be monitored through local performance data.
- 4.12 Bridgend has developed 3 Safeguarding Locality Hubs which have been up and running for four months. These are now well established with the early intervention team co-located with the safeguarding team. This has resulted in more effective joint working to identify the needs of children in a more timely way and having mechanisms for transferring cases across the relevant services more efficiently.
- 4.13 The implementation of the Deputy Manager role has been critical in terms of ensuring robust management arrangements within the Safeguarding hubs. The Deputy Managers support the Team Managers in the oversight and improvement of performance and this is being reflected in the Key Performance Indicators (KPIs).
- 4.13 The Service continues to be fully committed to developing a MASH and partner agencies have joined the Strategic Group to take this forward.

5. Effect upon Policy Framework & Procedure Rules.

- 5.1 None.

6. Equality Impact Assessment

- 6.1 This report is for information purposes only.

7. Financial Implications

- 7.1 There are no additional financial implications arising from this report as the costs associated with the activities outlined will be contained within existing resources.

8. Recommendation

- 8.1 It is recommended that the Committee note the content of this report.

Susan Cooper
Corporate Director, Social Services and Wellbeing
26 November 2015

Contact Officer: Laura Kinsey
Telephone: (01656) 642314
E-mail: laura.kinsey@bridgend.gov.uk **Postal Address** Civic Offices
Angel Street
Bridgend
CF31 4WB

Background documents: None

BRIDGEND COUNTY BOROUGH COUNCIL

REPORT TO CABINET COMMITTEE CORPORATE PARENTING

THURSDAY, 3 DECEMBER 2015

REPORT OF THE CORPORATE DIRECTOR - EDUCATION AND TRANSFORMATION

UPDATE ON IMPLEMENTATION OF EARLY INTERVENTION AND PREVENTION STRATEGY

1. Purpose of Report.

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to update the Cabinet Committee on progress with implementation of the Early Intervention and Prevention Strategy.

2. Connection to Corporate Improvement Objectives/Other Corporate Priorities

- 2.1 This report links to the following corporate priorities:

- Working together to raise ambitions and drive up educational achievement.
- Working with children and families to tackle problems early.
- Working together to help vulnerable people to stay independent.

3. Background

- 3.1 In April 2015 there was a significant re-structure of Early Intervention and Family Support Services that encompassed a wide range of services which had previously existed under separate management arrangements, with separate referral systems. This resulted in a move from an individual service based model (Youth Service, Educational Welfare etc.) to a locality/hub based model.

- 3.2 We now have three locality Early Help Hubs (North, West and East of the County Borough) made up of a range of roles including:

- Family Support Workers
- Education Welfare Officers
- Family Engagement Officers
- Lead Workers (Youth Workers)
- Counsellors
- Young Carers Co-ordinator

- 3.3 In addition to the locality hubs, we have a central hub that offers a range of county wide specialist services including Connecting Families, specialist Youth Services, and workers who co-ordinate and provide support for those young people not in education, employment or training (NEET). We also have a separate regional Western Bay Intensive Family Support Service.

- 3.4 In addition, there is an Early Years and Childcare service which includes the Flying Start programme.

3.5 The re-structure of all of these services (Early Intervention and Family Support) generated a budget saving of £730kas part of the 2015/16 Medium Term Financial Strategy (MTFS). The financial savings were predominantly generated from streamlining management and back office functions. We were able to protect and in some cases increase the number of front line delivery staff by moving a range of previously core funded posts to grant funded sources (e.g. Families First).

4. Current situation / proposal

4.1 The re-structured services have been operational since April 2015. However, some of the new processes, including a simplified referral arrangement (one front door) and the re-direction of inappropriate contacts from the Safeguarding Assessment Team commenced in June 2015.

4.2 Central to the new Early Help locality hub arrangements is the Joint Assessment Family Framework (JAFF). This is an assessment of the family's needs. The co-location of a broad range of staff has not only resulted in a better 'join-up' of service delivery but it has also seen a significant increase in the number of families we are working with. This is evidenced in the table below:

	2014/15	2015/16 (April – Oct)	Comments
Number of completed JAFF Assessments	228	251	In 7 months we have completed 23more JAFFs than we did in the whole of 2014/15

4.3 Another positive outcome linked with the re-structure is the number of Safeguarding cases that have been 'stepped down' into Early Help Services. This is highlighted in the table below together with other relevant data:

	2014/15	2015/16 (April – Oct)	Comments
Number of Safeguarding step-down cases to Early Help	3	53	This partly accounts for the reduction in CIN numbers
No of EH cases escalated to Safeguarding	16	9	
No of Safeguarding Assessment Team Contacts re-directed to Early Help	9	104	

4.4 Each of the three Early Help Locality Hubs is co-located with the Safeguarding Social Work Teams. This is proving invaluable in terms of facilitating

communication, sharing information and embedding the processes for 'Stepping Up' and 'Stepping Down' families, who move between different service areas as their needs and circumstances change.

- 4.5 Attached as Appendix A and B are case studies which support the benefits of the co-location of Safeguarding and Early Help Services.
- 4.6 Work is currently underway to bring together the Authority's Early Intervention and Prevention and Looked After Children Placement and Permanency Strategies with a joint action plan, in order to ensure service priorities are agreed and that accountability is attributed correctly.
- 4.7 More generally, there are a range of initiatives that have been progressed in Early Help services such as 'Team Around the School', 'Team Around the 'Cluster' and 'Team Around the Family' which are proving effective in terms of improving outcomes for children, young people and their families.
- 4.8 There are however, pressures and risks associated with the new working arrangements. With an emphasis on 'stepping down' and redirecting contacts from safeguarding services, capacity within early help services is a cause for concern. and In addition, a significant risk to early help services is that over 70% of staff are funded from grant (e.g. Families First, Flying Start). At the time of writing this report, Welsh Government has not indicated whether these monies will be made available to local authorities in 2016/17 and beyond.

5. Effect upon Policy Framework & Procedure Rules

- 5.1 None

6. Equality Impact Assessment

There are no direct equality impact issues arising from this report.

7. Financial Implications

- 7.1 The Integrated Working and Family Support service budget is £7.712 million as detailed in the table below;

Provider		15/16 Allocation £
	Core Funding	1,528,296
WG	Families First	1,516,283
WG	Communities First	219,151
WG	Education Improvement Grant	165,000
WG	Youth Strategy Grant	123,100
Big Lottery	Invisible Walls	40,271
WG	Flying Start	3,330,600
WG	Flying Start Basic Skills	61,767
Health	Healthy Pre School	12,000
WG	Out of School	101,563
SCBC/NPT	WB IFSS (contribution from NPT & SCBC)	572,000
	Earmarked Reserves	42,000
	TOTAL BUDGET	7,712,031

7.2 Over 70% of the current budget is grant funded. As indicated in 4.8 of the report, we have not yet received notification of whether any of the grant monies will be available in 2016/17. Welsh Government will publish its draft budget for consultation in early December 2015 but a final budget will not be published until March 2016. Smaller external funding sources (e.g. Big Lottery) are secure until March 2017. However, the contribution from the City and County of Swansea and Neath Port Talbot authorities to the regional Integrated Family Support Service (IFSS) is only confirmed at this point until March 2016.

7.3 A resilience plan is in place but this would need to be presented to Cabinet should the grant funding not be available or is reduced in any way.

8. Recommendation

8.1 That the Cabinet Committee note the report

Deborah McMillan
Corporate Director - Education and Transformation
27 November 2015

Contact Officer: Mark Lewis
Group Manager - Integrated Working and Family Support

Telephone: Tel: 642679

E-mail: Mark.lewis@bridgend.gov.uk

Postal Address Education & Transformation
 Bridgend County Borough Council
 Civic Offices
 Angel Street
 Bridgend

Appendix 1 – Case Study – Child D

Background documents: Early Intervention and Prevention Strategy.

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Case Study - Child D

Context to Case

D is a young man who has been known to Safeguarding for over three years. He was initially brought to the attention of the department at the request of his mother who was finding it increasingly difficult to manage his aggressive behaviour within the home. D would have regular “kick offs” within the home, and during these incidents would become physically and verbally aggressive to his mother and younger step-brother, would cause significant property damage and would refuse to comply with rules within the home.

D’s mother was offered significant support from Safeguarding via a Social Work Assistant to help her develop her skills in meeting D’s needs. She was provided the support of the Connecting Families Service (prior to the development of the Early Help service) to help her develop her parenting skills, and attended a structured parenting programme provided through Action for Children and was given specific support in developing her non-violent resistance skills to help her manage D’s aggression. Despite this input, D continued to act aggressively both within the family home and in the community, and D’s mother feared that D would require either accommodation by the Local Authority or would end up within the criminal justice system.

The situation reached a “head” in March 2015 when D’s maternal grandfather physically intervened in an altercation between D and his mother, resulting in him physically chastising D in the home. D informed his school of this incident the following day, and Child Protection procedures were initiated. S.47 enquiries concluded that an Initial Child Protection Conference was required, and D’s name was placed on the BCBC Child Protection Register.

As a result of D’s registration, the case was reallocated to a Social Worker, who was able to further assess the situation and identify that the root cause of D’s aggressive outbursts was his feelings of anger towards his father. D, who had idolised his father for his entire life, would be regularly let down by his father who would promise presents and holidays, and then not follow through on these promises. In response, D, who was unable to manage his feelings of frustration and disappointment with his father, would respond through aggressive outbursts towards his mother and half-brother.

Actions Taken

Recognising that D’s actions were caused by his frustrations towards his father rather than his mother’s lack of parenting skills, an intervention was developed to support D. Integral to this intervention, was a support worker from the Early Help Team (EHT) who would develop a relationship with D to help him explore his anger

issues and build strategies to manage this anger more appropriately rather than directing it towards his mother and half-brother.

A referral was made to the EHT directly after the initial Child Protection Conference, and a worker was identified after six weeks. It should be noted that the timescales for the allocation of the worker was longer than would normally be expected, as due to D's specific need the allocated social worker requested a male worker to allow D to develop a positive male role model. D was kept fully informed throughout the process, and discussions were held with his allocated social worker throughout the statutory Child Protection visits to help D understand why a worker was allocated to him, and what work they would be undertaking. D was initially reluctant to engaging in direct work due to previous experiences of workers not attending appointments or not following through on promises, however agreed to the work taking place with encouragement from his social worker and assurances that these concerns would be fed to his EHT worker.

Once an appropriate worker had been identified, an initial case discussion was held between the social worker and the EHT worker. This initial case discussion was an essential step in the process as it allowed the social worker to elaborate on the context of the case and provide details that were not contained within the referral form, such as D's anxiety about being let down. Through these discussions the social worker was able to elaborate on the specific details of the work required as well as the best ways to approach D and his reticence due to his previous experience of being let down by workers.

Following this meeting a joint visit was arranged between the social worker, D and the EHT worker to facilitate introductions and agree the work that would be undertaken. The EHT worker then undertook sessions with D on a fortnightly basis, supported by D's mother school to allow sessions to take place both in home and in school. Supported by the social worker who undertook statutory visits and arranged and attended Core Group Meetings, which the EHT worker was a key participant in, the work was undertaken with D for six weeks before a Review Child Protection Conference was undertaken in July 2015.

Ongoing Work

The professionals at the conference felt that D was no longer at risk of significant harm, and while his name was removed from the Child Protection Register it was identified that further work was required with D to help him explore his feelings towards his father and develop the skills he would need to manage his anger. While it was acknowledged that D's EHT worker was the appropriate professional to complete this work, it was identified that the support of Safeguarding would remain essential for the short term to continue to support the EHT worker and help manage any further complexities in the case.

As such, the case remained open to both Safeguarding and the EHT, with the EHT worker completing direct work with D on a fortnightly basis. After a further period of three months, all professionals who remained involved with D and his family – the social worker, EHT worker and education – agreed that the case no longer required social work involvement and the case was “stepped down” to the EHT for further work. At this point, the case was closed to Safeguarding, and the EHT worker became the keyworker for the family, offering ongoing support to D and general case management to address the outstanding issues.

Challenges and Benefits

The case of D has highlighted a number of benefits of the integrated working approach:

- D’s needs were both complex and long standing, and it was clear from the social work assessment that they stemmed from his anger towards his father, compounded by feeling “let down” by other professionals promising more than they could deliver. By assessing this need quickly and appropriately, an appropriate worker from the EHT was able to become involved with D and complete work that had previously been overlooked, thus helping address the root cause of his aggression and improve his situation for himself, his mother and his half-brother.
- D’s case was open to both Safeguarding and the EHT for approximately 4.5 months, meaning that he had the dual input of both a social worker and an EHT worker. While both professionals had differing roles throughout this time, this cross over period allowed D to build up a relationship with his EHT worker while his social worker remained in place, ensuring that D did not feel “pushed from pillar to post” by professionals.
- The EHT worker was a key part of the core groups that took place as part of the Child Protection Plan and was well known to all other professionals and D’s mother. As such, when the case was eventually closed to Safeguarding, the EHT worker was able to effectively transition to D’s keyworker with minimum of disruption to the management of the case.
- D’s social worker and EHT worker were based in adjoining offices, meaning that communication between them was easily facilitated. As such, the flow of information was both continuous and timely, with D the subject of regular face to face discussions and informal reviews, with advice provided from both parties about the developing situation at home as and when incidents occurred or difficulties were encountered.

While these benefits remain key, there were a number of challenges to this approach that needed to be overcome:

- It was identified early that D needed a male worker to not only undertake the work with him, but also help him develop a positive male

role model. It took longer than would have been ideal (six weeks) to identify a suitable worker due to a lack of suitable workers within the North Hub of the EHT.

- D's case was one of the first cases to be "stepped down" to the EHT from Safeguarding, and there were some uncertainties around process, and whether or not the family needed to be formally closed to safeguarding before work could begin with Early Help. Since this time the process has been streamlined markedly and smoother transitions are now the norm.

While these challenges will need to be addressed in the future, the process appears to have worked well for D, and he has benefitted from the support of agencies who were able to work closely and effectively together to provide him and his family targeted support.

Case Study- Child MD

Context to Case

MD was referred to Safeguarding Services in February 2015 by his health visitor, aged 1 year. The referral was based on information shared with the health visitor, by MD's maternal grandmother (MGM).

MD's mother, Ms B (who was aged 17 at the time of the referral), had recently returned to live with her mother. MGM alleged that Ms B was a victim of domestic abuse by MD's biological father, Mr D, and that he misused substances. Child MD was said to have been present during incidents where Mr D smashed up Ms B's property. MGM also alleged that Ms B was not providing regular meals for MD. She said Ms B had lied about the food she has given him, and he appeared hungry when he had been in her care.

Actions Taken

MD was opened to Safeguarding Services on a 'child in need' basis. A core assessment was undertaken. Ms B was assessed as being able to meet MD's basic needs; she took him to all his health appointments, she also engaged well with professionals.

Throughout this period, MD and his mother remained at the home of MGM. Although Mr D and Ms B were not in a relationship during the core assessment, Mr D continued to have contact with his son. Shortly after the core assessment was completed, Ms B and Mr D resumed their relationship, and moved in with MD's paternal grandfather (PGF).

The family were offered support under a 'child in need' plan, for a period of three months. There were no further allegations of domestic violence or substance misuse during this period.

At MD's second Child in Need review, professionals agreed that the family could be 'stepped down' to Early Help. Professionals felt that, as a young mother, Ms B remained vulnerable and lacked in confidence. Support from Early Help was requested to support Ms B to continue to develop her parenting skills and for support with practical issues such as acquiring her own tenancy.

Ms B and Mr D gave consent for this, and a referral was made to Early Help. The family were allocated a Family Support Worker (FSW). A joint visit was arranged between the social worker, the family and the FSW to facilitate introductions and agree the work that would be undertaken.

The family were then closed to Safeguarding Services and 'Stepped Down' to Early Help. The FSW worked with the family to undertake a JAFF (Joint Assessment

Family Framework) assessment and to agree a support plan which was aimed at meeting the outcomes identified in the assessment.

Support provided

Ms B and Mr D expressed a wish to be able to provide their son with a settled and stable family life. For them, this entailed securing their own tenancy. They had identified a private rented property via a family friend. The FSW provided information, advice and guidance on a range of issues, such as benefits and grants, as well as signposting them to furniture recycling facilities. Throughout this period, the FSW has been mindful of building Ms B's confidence and problem solving abilities, by encouraging Ms B to undertake key tasks herself.

The FSW has also supported Ms B to access community facilities with MD, such as a 'Language and Play' group via Flying Start. This will help develop MD's social and language skills, as well as providing opportunities for Ms B to socialise with other parents.

This outcome focussed approach is helping to build capacity and resilience within the family. 'Team around the Family' meetings, involving family members and professionals, help ensure that support continues to be coordinated effectively and information shared appropriately.

Conclusion

The Step Down process seems to have worked well for MD; he has benefitted from the support of agencies who were able to work closely together to provide targeted support, as the family's needs changed.