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Bridgend County Borough Council



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**Gwasanaethau Cyfreithiol a Rheoleiddiol / Legal  
and Regulatory Services**

Deialu uniongyrchol / Direct line /: (01656) 643148  
Gofynnwch am / Ask for: Mr Mark Anthony Galvin

Ein cyf / Our ref:

Eich cyf / Your ref:

**Dyddiad/Date: 1 April 2016**

Dear Councillor,

**CABINET COMMITTEE CORPORATE PARENTING**

A meeting of the Cabinet Committee Corporate Parenting will be held in Committee Room 2/3, Civic Offices, Angel Street, Bridgend on **Thursday, 7 April 2016 at 10.00 am.**

**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 - 12  
To receive for approval the minutes of a meeting of the Corporate Parenting Cabinet Committee dated 3 December 2015
4. Social Services and Well-being (Wales) Act 2014 (including specific reference to Part 6 Looked After and Accommodated Children) 13 - 20
5. Rota Visiting by Elected Members 21 - 28
6. Looked After Children Deprivation Grant 29 - 42
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

**P A Jolley**

Assistant Chief Executive Legal and Regulatory Services

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**Distribution:**

**Cabinet Members:**

Councillors:

HJ David  
M Gregory  
MEJ Nott OBE

Councillors

CE Smith  
HJ Townsend  
PJ White

Councillors

HM Williams

**Invitees:**

Councillors:

E Dodd  
E Venables

Councillors

EP Foley  
K Watts

Councillors

RD Jenkins  
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 THURSDAY, 3 DECEMBER 2015 AT 10.00 AM

Present

Councillor HJ David – Chairperson

M Gregory  
PJ White

MEJ Nott OBE  
HM Williams

CE Smith

HJ Townsend

Councillor E Dodd  
Councillor E P Foley  
Councillor E Venables  
Councillor K Watts  
Councillor D B F White

Officers:

Deborah McMillan	Corporate Director - Education & Transformation
Satwant Pryce	Head of Regeneration and Planning
Nicola Echanis	Head of Strategy Partnerships & Commissioning
Mark Lewis	Group Manager Integrated Family Support
Natalie Silcox	Group Manager Childrens Regulated Services

113. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from the following officers/ Members for the reasons so stated:

Councillor R Jenkins – Family Commitment

114. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

None

115. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

RESOLVED: That the minutes of a meeting of the Corporate Parenting Cabinet Committee dated 12 October 2015 be approved as a true and accurate record of the meeting

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

The Group Manager Childrens Regulated Services submitted a report to Committee with a proposal to establish and provide an in house parent and child fostering service and also to update the Committee on the current arrangements for commissioning the placements from external providers and outlined the potential benefits of taking a new approach which included reduced costs.

The Group Manager Childrens Regulated Services explained that BCBC was currently unable to provide an in-house service offering parent and child fostering placements. She explained that if required, parent and child (typically mother and baby only) placements were provided by commissioning the placements through a range of

independent fostering agencies (IFA's) via the children commissioning support resource (CCSR). She added that the cost of commissioning the external parent and child placements was significant, totaling an expenditure of £248,256.06 in 2014/2015.

The Group Manager Childrens Regulated Services informed Members that 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. Currently, the standard level 1 parent and child placement costs were £1,364.70 per week and a level 2 placement costs were £1,650 per week. Placements were initially set up for a 12-16 week assessment period but could last the length of care proceedings, namely 26 weeks. She added that 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. The Group Manager Childrens Regulated Services further added that as at 18th September 2015, there were 13 active mother and baby placements that had, in the financial year, cost the Local Authority £266,587.03 and as at the 31 October 2015 we have 8 referrals (a further 3 at the time of Committee) for potential parent and child placements for unborn babies.

The Corporate Director Social Services and Wellbeing concluded that she was positive that BCBC could provide a better in house service which would also include a provision for the fathers which was currently not on offer through the IFAs

A Member welcomed the report and stated that there would be a lot of positives to come from it, he added that it was good that BCBC would be able to keep more children in the Borough and was pleased to hear that the standards would not be lowered.

A Member asked how the cost savings were so high which equated to an almost 50% saving, he was concerned that BCBC would have to lower the standard of service in order to achieve such a high level of savings. The Group Manager Childrens Regulated Services stated that there would be no difference in the level of service offered with the in house provision and that the costs were currently high because there was a niche in the market so the IFAs were making a large profit. She added that many different local authorities had made provisions for their own in house services and were seeing vast savings.

A Member noted from the report that an IFA Parent and Child placement would end after a 12 week assessment but that the Authority had been faced with significant delays with courts directing that the parent and child placement should continue until the Final Hearing at 26 weeks. He asked Officers if they had any knowledge when this would resolve as it was having a financial impact on the Authority. The Group Manager Childrens Regulated Services stated that the Authority could not remove the child too early and that children were assessed if they were at risk of harm. She added that they go through a Legal surgery process for each child and if they removed a child too early they would be seen to be predetermining the decisions of the Courts

The Leader stated that he was pleased to see the improvement of service for clients and welcomed the report. He added that the savings would be very beneficial to the Authority and questioned why this could not have been put in place sooner and asked what stage in commissioning the service the Authority were at. The Group Manager Childrens Regulated Services replied that it had not been an easy scheme to set up and the Authority had to set up to very specific regulations and ensure that specific training was available to foster carers. The Corporate Director Social Services and Wellbeing added that a tight project plan would be put in place to drive the project forward to be

operational within a 6-9month time-frame, she added that a number of foster carers had already expressed an interest to the Authority in being a part of the service.

A Member asked how the foster carers would monitor the parent of the child that they have in their care. The Group Manager Childrens Regulated Services stated that all homes were checked by a Health and Safety assessment as part of carers assessments and that the mother and child would be in the same bedroom together with an understanding that the foster carer could enter at any time.

A Member asked if the Authority would speak to the existing foster carers at the IFAs to see if they would be interested in coming over to the Authority. The Corporate Director Social Services and Wellbeing stated that the Authority would be offering competitive allowances and an excellent bespoke training package. She added that there would also be a marketing campaign launched to attract potential foster carers.

The Deputy Leader welcomed the report and asked if it was possible to now get the process started as soon as was practicably possible, including the amendment and approval to the Statement of Purpose to avoid any delays in the project.

RESOLVED: That the Corporate Parenting Cabinet Committee:

1. Took note of the information contained within the report and agreed 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.
2. Agreed that a Parent and Child fostering service be added to the Statement of Purpose for Bridgend Foster Care.

117. CHILDRENS COMMISSIONING CONSORTIUM CYMRU (4CS) FORWARD WORK PROGRAMME

The Group Manager Childrens Regulated Services provided Committee with an update on the work being undertaken by the Children's Commissioning Consortium Cymru (4Cs) and their forward work programme

The Group Manager Childrens Regulated Services explained that the 4Cs 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. She explained that the Children's Commissioning Consortium Cymru (4C's) was a partnership of authorities across Wales who worked together to improve outcomes for vulnerable children and young people to achieve value for money through working together collaboratively. She further added that a Board that included Heads of Childrens Services governs the 4Cs work programme.

The Group Manager Childrens Regulated Services informed the Committee that as well as significant cost savings, benefits included 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.

The Group Manager Childrens Regulated Services stated that Participation and Co-Production with young people with care experience was well embedded in all 4Cs developmental work. She added that Participation in the 4Cs Consortium presented collaborative opportunities for children's social care within an acknowledged environment in which development and delivery of social care services was both

complex and challenging. She added that 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.

The Group Manager Childrens Regulated Services stated that significant progress had been made by the (4Cs) to improve the way local authorities commission looked after children (LAC) placement services. She informed Members that 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. The Group Manager Childrens Regulated Services stated that year on year significant cost savings had been achieved as a result of the collaborative approach taken by 4Cs to placement commissioning. She explained that £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

A member stated that they were pleased to see that the Authority had improved a service that would now be far more efficient. He asked for further clarification on how year on year cost savings were being achieved. The Group Manager Childrens Regulated Services confirmed that collaborative working had allowed stronger negotiations for placements. She added that bespoke packages were put together to enable service users to move out of residential care and receive in house provisions.

The Cabinet Member Childrens Social Services and Equalities stated it was pleasing to see that an Independent assessment for providers was in place therefore it was satisfying to know that children would be provided with a good quality placement. The Deputy Leader also added that he was reassured that the standard of placements would not be lowered and noted the quality assurance.

RESOLVED: That the Cabinet Committee took note of the information contained within the report.

118. WHEN I AM READY

The Group Manager Childrens Regulated Services provided the Committee with information about the "When I am Ready Scheme"

She explained that the scheme which comes into force on the 1 April 2016 having been developed by Welsh Government in partnership with Local Government and key third sector partners, is to enable eligible care leavers to continue to live with their foster carers once they attain 18 years of age. The Social Services and Wellbeing 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 in an arrangement facilitated by the Local Authority.

The Group Manager Childrens Regulated Services stated that 'When I Am Ready' would be different to supported lodgings, which were governed by a separate statutory framework. She added that supported lodgings were primarily a housing scheme for vulnerable young people, and did not operate on the familial model promoted by 'When I Am Ready'. She further added that supported lodgings placements were financed primarily by supporting people grant monies. The tax and benefit rules were also different especially in relation to qualifying care relief for the providers.

The Group Manager Children's Regulated Services informed members that the main aim for 'When I am Ready' were:

- To provide stability and continuity for young people leaving foster care as they prepared 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

The Group Manager Children's Regulated Services further informed the Committee that a 'When I am Ready' agreement may be made where:

- The young person was a Looked After Child immediately prior to their 18<sup>th</sup> 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.

The Cabinet Member for Childrens Social Services and Equalities asked Officers if there was any indication what the financial implications would be prior to the Government information that was set to be made available in January 2016 regarding the allowance rates payable and whether it was a budgetary pressure for the Authority or not. The Corporate Director Social Services & Wellbeing stated that the Authority was still not clear as WG were yet to clarify the position and that the finance department were aware of the impending pressures. She added that the costs associated with 'When I Am Ready' could be offset by the Universal Benefit.

A Member asked how a child would be eligible for 'When I Am Ready' and if they contributed towards the costs of the scheme if they were in employment. The Corporate Director Social Services and Wellbeing advised that the young person was not in education or training a proportion of their benefits would be used towards the cost of the placement. The same would also apply if they were in employment.

The Deputy Leader asked what the differences were between supported living and 'When I Am Ready'. The Group Manager Childrens Regulated Services advised Members that with the Supported Living provision the young person would not know the adult that they would live with. With 'When I Am Ready' the young person would stay with the family that they had previously been placed with

The Leader stated that he was concerned at the lack of financial information from WG and asked Officers if they were confident that we would have further information in January. The Corporate Director Social Services and Wellbeing stated that she hoped it would be January that they would have further information although it was not certain to be the case. She added that they would need cabinet approval for any further changes so that they would be ready to launch in April 2016.

RESOLVED: That the Corporate Parenting Cabinet Committee noted the information contained within the report

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

The Corporate Director Social Services and Wellbeing provided an update of the review and restructure of Safeguarding and family Support Services that commenced in November 2014 to the Committee.

The Corporate Director Social Services and Wellbeing explained that 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. She added that 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

The Corporate Director Social Services and Wellbeing informed Committee that the implementation of the new structure commenced in April 2015 and was completed in July 2015. She added that staff from the previous safeguarding teams had been 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, social workers, social work assistants and contact workers

She advised the Committee that a working group on recruitment and retention were tasked with focusing 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.

The Corporate Director Social Services and Wellbeing advised that Investigating why people leave and obtaining accurate information could 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 were being considered in addition to the routine exit interviews. The survey was issued specifically to qualified social workers, senior practitioners, deputy team managers and team managers in the front line Safeguarding teams, and 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.

The Corporate Director Social Services and Wellbeing informed members that it was recognised that a high number of newly qualified Social Workers had been recruited which meant that the overall number of Social Workers with less than two years' experience continued to present a real challenge for the service. She added that it also placed a pressure on managerial capacity to provide adequate support, which was essential to enable newly qualified Social Workers to become experienced and confident practitioners who would want to continue to work in BCBC. She advised that additional measures had been put in place to support the newly qualified Social Workers so that



they were better equipped to undertake the role and feel more confident and resilient; these included:

- 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.

The Cabinet Member Children's Social Services and Equalities asked Officers how the senior social worker vacancies were advertised and how competitive the salary was in comparison to neighboring authorities. The Corporate Director Social Services and Wellbeing stated that they had worked closely with HR to create the job advert and comprehensive training induction when Social Workers join the Authority. She stated that vacancies were advertised as a rolling advert on the BCBC website. She added that recent Job Evaluations had made it difficult to be competitive with the salary, however Bridgend has a system in place whereby after 2 years of working for the Authority the Social Workers undergo assessments and if they prove their competency they are able to progress to a senior social worker and therefore move up the salary grading system. Other Local Authority's the Social Worker would start at a higher salary but were unable to progress higher. She advised that it was also difficult to retain Social Workers in Bridgend as it was easy for them to move to another local authority in South Wales due to its convenient location and proximity to the M4.

The Cabinet Member Children's Social Services and Equalities informed members that she had spoken with Social Workers at the Authority and after a lot of transition they were now more settled and happier in their roles. She added that the integrated hubs were working well and also that managers were more involved with the team and received regular updates from them. She stated that the Head of Safeguarding and Assessment was settling in well into her role and that 2016 was looking positive. The Corporate Director Social Services and Wellbeing added that currently there were 6 agency workers at Bridgend which was hoped would be reduced in 2016 but in comparison with other local authorities this was relatively low.

A member asked if professional development was a motivator in social workers and also if distance learning was available to them to enhance their development. The Corporate Director Social Services and Wellbeing advised that the National Framework has an expectation that Social Workers would meet the minimum requirements during their first year in practice which included demonstrating that they had completed 90 hours of training per year. She explained that Social Workers had to register and pay a registration fee each year to the Care Council for Wales for them to be able to practice in Wales. She added that Social Workers were supported by the Authority and they try to ensure that they are matched to training that was relevant to their role. She also advised that they provided quality practice placements for Social Workers at studying at University. The Cabinet Member for Children's Social Services and Equalities informed members that she had recently spoken with a student Social Worker who was studying at Bridgend College who had come to the Authority to on a practice placement and told her that they would be very keen to work for the Authority after they had qualified as they felt the quality of the practice placement they were given was very good.

The Deputy Leader asked if there was a timescale for developing MASH and when it was likely to be taken forward as there were a high number of referrals coming through from South Wales Police that hadn't gone through basic screening first. The Corporate Director Education and Transformation stated that the issue was well recognised and was in issue for SWP to deal with in their internal processes, she added that they had applied for funding to be able to look at these issues. She added that the police do need

to let the Authority know of any incidents and it was for the Authority to determine if intervention was required from Social Services. The Corporate Director Education and Transformation advised Members that the Strategic Group and Programme Board were looking to progress with the proposals within the next 6 months which required restructuring of teams, processes and ICT and agreed that it needed to be in place as soon as possible.

RESOLVED: That Cabinet noted the content of the report

120. UPDATE ON IMPLEMENTATION OF EARLY INTERVENTION AND PREVENTION STRATEGY

The Group Manager Integrated Working and Family Support submitted a report to Cabinet Committee on the progress of the implementation of the Early Intervention and Prevention Strategy. He advised members that there was a significant re-structure of Early Intervention and Family Support Services that encompassed a wide range of services that had previously existed under separate management arrangements, with separate referral systems. This had resulted in a move from an individual service based model (Youth Service, Educational Welfare) to a locality/hub based model.

The Group Manager Integrated Working and Family Support explained that BCBC now has three locality Early Help Hubs (North, West and East of the County Borough) made up of a range of roles that included

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

The Group Manager Integrated Working and Family Support added that the restructure of all of the services Early Intervention and Family Support generated a budget saving of £730k as part of the 2015/16 MTFS, the financial savings were predominately generated from streamlining management and back office functions. He advised members that the re-structured services had been operational since April 2015. However, some of the new processes, that included a simplified referral arrangement (one front door) and the re-direction of inappropriate contacts from the Safeguarding Assessment Team commenced in June 2015. He added that another positive outcome linked with the re-structure was the number of Safeguarding Cases that had been 'stepped down' into Early Help Services.

The Group Manager Integrated Working and Family Support advised Cabinet Committee that work was 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 were agreed and that accountability was attributed correctly.

The Cabinet Member Adult Social Care and Health and Wellbeing asked if there had been any indication from WG regarding further grant funding beyond 2016. The Corporate Director Education and Transformation stated that this had been a concern but there had been direction from politicians that the support would continue for at least a further year. She added WG were looking to combine two grants; Families First and Flying Start.

**CABINET COMMITTEE CORPORATE PARENTING - THURSDAY, 3 DECEMBER 2015**

The Deputy Leader stated that no Authority would want to give up control over their funding as this does not give them flexibility and creates more conditions. He added that all parties recognised the full value of the grant schemes and the successful delivery of results.

A Member asked if there was a risk of duplication with the various schemes including Integrated Family Support and Joint Assessment Family Framework. The Group Manager Integrated Family Support advised that by co-locating the services and having a single point of contact for the service this had allowed better co-ordination of the schemes and avoided the duplication of service.

RESOLVED: That Cabinet Committee noted the report.

121. URGENT ITEMS

None

The meeting closed at 12.04pm

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## BRIDGEND COUNTY BOROUGH COUNCIL

### REPORT TO CORPORATE PARENTING CABINET COMMITTEE

7 APRIL 2016

### REPORT OF THE CORPORATE DIRECTOR - SOCIAL SERVICES AND WELLBEING

#### **SOCIAL SERVICES AND WELL-BEING (WALES) ACT 2014 (including specific reference to Part 6 Looked After and Accommodated Children)**

#### **1. Purpose of report**

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to update Corporate Parenting Committee on the Social Services and Well-being (Wales) Act 2014, which provides the legislative basis for social services in Wales from 6<sup>th</sup> April 2016. This report sets out the requirements of the Act with specific reference to children in need of care and support, looked after and accommodated children and care leavers.

#### **2. Connection to Corporate Improvement Objectives/Other Corporate Priorities**

- 2.1 This report links to the following improvement priorities in the Corporate Plan:
- Helping people to be more self-reliant;
  - Smarter use of resources.

#### **3. Background**

- 3.1 The Social Services and Well-being (Wales) Act 2014 received Royal Assent in May 2014 and gives effect to the policy stated in the White Paper "Sustainable Social Services for Wales: A Framework for Action". It provides a legal framework for the policy aims of the Welsh Government in relation to Social Services, bringing together Local Authorities' duties and functions.

- 3.2 The Act has two key policy objectives:

- To improve the wellbeing outcomes for people who need care and support and
- To reform social services law.

It seeks to:

- Transform the way in which social services are delivered, primarily through promoting people's independence and giving them a stronger voice and control;

- Promote partnership working in social care;
- Enhance the preventative role of social care and health, setting out overarching wellbeing duties to reduce or delay the need for care and support.

3.3 This can be seen as part of the wider wellbeing agenda, in particular the opportunity to explore and support people to achieve individual wellbeing, either prior to, or instead of, becoming eligible for social care services. Local Authorities are charged with providing or arranging preventative services, developing new models of practical responses, based on social enterprise co-operative models as well as user led and with the third sector.

3.4 The Act also strengthens Local Authorities' duties so that:

- when assessing an individual, the Local Authority must consider not only the individual's needs and the outcome/s the person wishes to achieve but also the strengths and capacity of the individual, their family and others who may support them;
- Irrespective of whether the individual has an eligible need, they will have access to information, advice and (where necessary) assistance as well as a range of preventative options and other opportunities in the community;
- There is better access to good information, advice and assistance to engage the citizen, with links to the resources available in the community to enable people to exercise their voice, choice and control and make informed decisions;
- There is a wide spectrum of proportionate community-based support which citizens who have needs can access without having to rely on a complex assessment and care package;
- There is more targeted help to assess individuals and families with significant and enduring needs, and to organise and secure the care and support they require.

#### 4. **Current Situation / Proposal**

##### Legal Framework

4.1 The Act repeals much of the previous framework of social care legislation in Wales in an attempt to establish a single, clear, modern statute and code of practice that underpins a coherent social care system. It is important to note that some legislation will remain in place including elements of the Children Act 1989 for example Section 47 (Local authority's duty to investigate where there are concerns for a child's welfare) and the Mental Capacity Act 2005 (which applies to 16-17 year olds who lack capacity). The primary legislation is supported by regulations (secondary legislation) and detailed codes of practices.

4.2 The Act is made up of 11 parts. These are detailed below:

**Part 1: Introduction** – the introduction sets out definitions underpinning the rest of the Act. The Act moves away from definitions in previous legislation which used language such as age, illness and disability to ‘people who need care and support’ and ‘carers who need support’. The definition of carers is far broader than in previous legislation, removing the requirement that carers must be providing ‘a substantial amount of care on a regular basis’. The term Carers includes Young Carers.

**Part 2: General Functions** – this part of the Act details overarching duties, duties in respect of well-being outcomes and strategic and operational duties in respect of preventative services.

Overarching duties – The Act requires that persons ‘exercising functions’ under the Act give due regard to the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child Duties and include:

- Well-being Outcomes - this duty requires Local Authorities to be proactive in seeking to improve well-being for people who need care and support and carers (including young carers) who need support, when exercising social services functions for a person.
- Provision of information, advice and assistance - Each local authority, with the assistance of Local Health Board partners, must secure the provision of a service for providing people with information and advice relating to well-being, care and support in their area, and (where appropriate) assistance in accessing these.
- Preventative services - local authorities must provide or arrange for the provision of a range and level of preventative services which they consider will prevent people’s needs for care and support and stop needs from escalating. Authorities should promote well-being in delivering universal services.

**Part 3: Assessing the Needs of Individuals** – Part 3 outlines that in relation to children and families, assessment is in line with the Framework for Assessment of Children and their Families and needs to be a holistic process (not a single event), grounded in child development and built on partnership working with children, parents and wider family support networks. Assessments should be strengths based and should keep the child at the very heart of the process, whilst balancing the need to ensure that the child is safeguarded.

There is a clear requirement to work within an interagency model to ensure that there is shared responsibility between agencies with respect to assessment and service provision.

Assessments will be proportionate and need to focus on what matters to a child and how they can use their own strengths and resources to do things. It also begins a significant legal change as carers (including young carers) will have an equal right to an assessment.

Part 2 requires that the Local Authority must have regard to the views, wishes and feelings of person with parental responsibility for a child under the age of 16, in so far as this is consistent with promoting the well-being of the child.

**Part 4: Meeting needs**- The Act sets out duties to respond to identified needs and determine whether those needs are eligible for managed care services. Determining eligibility requires the assessor to focus on people's strengths and capabilities, as well as on their needs and the barriers they face, to achieve their personal outcomes.

The local authority must meet the needs of children which it considers necessary to meet in order to protect the child from abuse or neglect.

There are many children who cannot live with their parents who are being brought up in "*informal*" arrangements with family and friends, referred to as *family and friends care*. Children living in family and friends care should receive the support they and their carers need to safeguard and promote their well-being, and it is expected that full use should be made of the assessing and meeting needs arrangements in Parts 3 and 4 of the Act to work proactively with the child and carer to maintain this living arrangement.

The Code specifically states that these arrangements should receive the support the children and their carers need to safeguard and promote their well-being, whether or not the children are looked after children. The support should be based on the needs of the children rather than their legal status. No child should have to become a looked after child, whether by agreement with those holding parental responsibility or by virtue of a court order, for the sole purpose of enabling financial , practical or other support to be provided to the child's carer.

A care and support plan must identify the personal outcomes for the child and set out the best way to help achieve them.

In assessing and delivering care and support, local authorities must work with children's parents to develop a care and support plan that promotes a child's upbringing with their family, consistent with safeguarding needs and the child's wishes and feelings

Local authorities have a duty to explore innovative ways people's needs might be met through direct payments. A significant change is that direct payments can be used to purchase care and support direct from the local authority.

**Part 5, Charging and Financial Assessment** - The Local authority must not charge for care and support for a child, or for support to a child who is a carer. Nor must the Local Authority seek payment of a contribution towards any costs when the child has accessed direct payments.

**Part 6: Looked After and Accommodated Children** - Part 6 sets out local authority duties and responsibilities towards looked after and accommodated children as well as detailing arrangements and duties for leaving care, including making provision for post-18 living arrangements. Together with Part



2 it replaces most of Part III of the Children Act 1989. The Code explicitly states that once a child is in care all elected members and officers of the local authority, as corporate parents, need to be concerned about that child and must take the following principles into account when engaging with them and making any decision concerning them:

- is this good enough for my own child?
- does this provide a second chance if things don't go as expected?
- is this tailored to the child's individual needs, particularly if they are more vulnerable than other children?

Court proceedings provisions of the Children Act 1989 continue to apply in both England and Wales (Care and Supervision proceedings, Public Law and Orders with respect to children in family proceedings in private law) as well as the changes made as a result of the Children and Families Act 2014.

There are links to many other parts of the Act including duties surrounding Advocacy in Part 10 and required provision in relation to children and young people in the Secure estate in Part 11.

Following on from advocacy, Part 6 stresses the duty to appoint an independent visitor for a child where it appears to be in the child's best interest.

Part 6 makes provision for Short Breaks where required, for example for a disabled child, although the Act also makes provision under Part 4, where this is considered most appropriate

There is a duty to assess (under Part 3) from 'time to time' whether a looked after child has care and support needs and where those needs are eligible there is a duty to meet those needs (under Part 4). Part 6 also draws on the concept of working preventatively with looked after and accommodated children, as outlined in Part 2.

The role of the Independent Reviewing Officer is strengthened under the Act, although in Bridgend this appears to legislate what is already best practice.

Placement choice is highlighted as important and the Act introduces a placement hierarchy and set of "rules" that the authority must follow when deciding where to place a child it is looking after. It also places a new requirement of an order of preference when considering out of area placements and also make clear that when considering the placement of a child in Key Stage 4 that a move of school should only be in exceptional circumstances. There is also a clear focus on the assessment of a child's mental/emotional health while undertaking a looked after child health assessment.

'Foster to Adopt' has been introduced, which requires the authority to place a child with prospective adopters following the decision being taken that re-integration with birth family has been discounted but prior to the placement

order being granted. This will require prospective adopters who wish to be considered to also be approved as foster carers.

There are changes to the terminology in relation to leaving care and young people are now referred to by Category (1-6) depending on their legal status, as opposed to 'eligible' or 'relevant' for example.

Care leavers should expect the same level of care and support that others would expect from a reasonable parent. The local authority is expected to make sure that they are provided with the opportunities they need to come to terms with taking on the responsibilities of adulthood.

There are also changes to the duties in respect of post-18 living arrangements and the Act introduces the requirement for authorities to set up a 'When I am Ready' scheme for young people in foster placements who wish to remain living with their former carers beyond their 18<sup>th</sup> birthday.

The necessary work to amend current document and practice guidance and work is underway.

**Part 7: Safeguarding** - Safeguarding is a theme that runs throughout the Act. A new duty to report is introduced for relevant partners in relation to safeguarding children. New structures for safeguarding boards are mandated, with board areas and lead partners prescribed through regulations. Western Bay established safeguarding boards for both Children and Adults two years ago and they have now aligned their work plans to incorporate the new requirements for safeguarding set out in the Act.

**Part 8: Social Service Functions** - Part 8 of the Act specifies the Social Services functions of Local Authorities. Local Authorities must appoint a Director of Social Services who must demonstrate competencies specified by Welsh Ministers.

**Part 9: Well-being Outcomes, Co-Operation and Partnership** - Statutory guidance has been issued in respect of Part 9 relating to partnership arrangements between organisations and the need to ensure that effective regional partnership boards are in place. The statutory guidance requires regional partnership boards to prioritise integration of certain areas, for example children with complex needs and carers (including young carers).

**Part 10: Complaints, Representations and Advocacy Services** - This part of the Act has three sections – complaints and representatives, complaints about private social care and palliative care and advocacy services.

The Act re-states the existing entitlement of looked after children to advocacy.

The changes required around complaints and representation has been fully implemented and staff guidance has been developed and introduced. In addition e-module learning tools are being developed.

**Part 11 Miscellaneous and General** - This part of the Act includes various miscellaneous and general provisions, one of which is a change in how existing responsibilities for the care and support of children in the secure estate whether detained in England or Wales are fulfilled. Children, in the secure estate are to be treated in the same way as those in the community unless Part 11 omits rights or duties.

The Welsh home local authority must meet the care and support duties for children in the secure estate whether they are detained in England or Wales.

Children's Services are working with the Youth Offending Service to make arrangements to ensure that statutory responsibilities will be met.

### **Workforce Development**

- 4.3 The Care Council for Wales working with Local Authority partners have developed a national learning and development plan designed to ensure that the workforce is supported and informed to deliver social services in accordance with Welsh law, and its interface with other relevant statutes, and to practice in line with the principles of the Act.

Training for practitioners and managers has focused on the following key areas of the Act:

- Introduction and general functions;
- Assessing and meeting the needs of individuals ;
- Safeguarding (Adults & Children);
- Looked after and accommodated children. 8 one day training workshops on the Act as it relates to looked after & accommodated children have taken place with 2 further sessions scheduled. To date 154 staff have attended this training workshop.

Skills based workshops to support the transfer of knowledge into practice will follow.

### **5. Effect upon Policy Framework and Procedure Rules.**

- 5.1 Internal policies and procedures are being updated as appropriate.

### **6.0 Equality Impact Assessments**

- 6.1 The Social Services and Wellbeing (Wales) Act, by its very nature, will in part be providing support and care to the most vulnerable in our communities and should also have a positive impact on those people with protected characteristics.

- 6.2 An Equality Impact Assessment has been undertaken for each part of the Act by Welsh Government. There are no negative impacts cited. In undertaking the assessments, the Government stated that there is a clear and unequivocal commitment to an inclusive approach is set out within the statutory Code of Practice. The Act promotes equality, improvements in the quality of services

and the provision of information people receive, and a shared focus on prevention and early intervention.

## **7. Financial Implications.**

- 7.1 The Social Services and Wellbeing (Wales) Act 2014 sets a whole range of new challenges and entitlements which will have to be met at a time of severe financial restraints for local government and social services. It has been made clear that there will be no additional resources from the Welsh Government for this purpose, apart from transitional/transformational funding.
- 7.2 The Council recognises that there may be additional budget pressures arising from increased commitments and expectations in the face of growing demand for services, following the introduction of the Act. For 2016-17, the Council has already recognised some of these pressures within the MTFs and will continue to monitor the financial consequences of the Act as it is implemented.

## **8. Recommendation.**

- 8.1 The Committee is requested to note the content of this report and the actions set out for the future implementation of the Social Services and Well-being (Wales) Act in Bridgend.

**Susan Cooper**  
**Corporate Director, Social Services and Wellbeing**  
**March 2016**

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### **Background Documents**

- Social Services and Well-being (Wales) Act 2014
- Codes of Practices and Regulations made under the 2014 Act
- When I am Ready Good Practice Guide March 2016  
<http://gov.wales/docs/dhss/publications/160307guidanceen.pdf>
- Social Services and Well-being (Wales) Act 2014 – Parts 4 and 6 Provision of Short Breaks for Children  
<http://gov.wales/docs/phhs/publications/160128part4and6en.pdf>

**BRIDGEND COUNTY BOROUGH COUNCIL**  
**CORPORATE PARENTING CABINET COMMITTEE**

**7 APRIL 2016**

**REPORT OF THE CORPORATE DIRECTOR, SOCIAL SERVICES AND WELLBEING**

**ROTA VISITING BY ELECTED MEMBERS**

**1. Purpose of Report**

- 1.1 To provide the Committee with an update on the programme of rota visiting to the Council's children's social care establishments.
- 1.2 Members will be aware that the rota programme includes visits to adult social care establishments and a separate report is taken to the Adult Social Care Overview and Scrutiny Committee on an annual basis.

**2. Connection to Corporate Improvement Plan / Other Corporate Priority**

- 2.1 The report links to the Corporate Priority: Helping people to be more self reliant.

**3. Background**

- 3.1 Members are aware of the importance of visiting social care establishments as a valuable contribution to the safeguarding of vulnerable adults, children and young people and ensuring that the quality of care provided is appropriate. It is essential that opportunities are presented for Elected Members to meet with people who receive services to listen to their views.
- 3.2 Rota visiting is part of the quality assurance of the Authority's services; there are other inspections and visits that contribute to the safeguarding of people who use social services. For example, there is a robust contract monitoring process in place, there are CSSIW inspections, Health and Safety checks and statutory visits carried out by independent officers within the Council.
- 3.3 Comprehensive guidance, developed with Members, is regularly reviewed and provided at the start of each annual programme of visits. Training sessions have taken place including some 1:1 sessions to ensure that any new Members were updated on the process. Also, to assist Members with the process, an email is sent to them on the first day of every month to remind them of the visits that are due that month.
- 3.4 Recent reports to the Overview and Scrutiny Committees (Children and Young People – 9<sup>th</sup> March 2016 and Adult Social Care – 11<sup>th</sup> February 2016) noted the importance of Member visits as they provide a point of contact for service users that was over and above that of the staff. It is recognised that it gives service users an opportunity of expressing their feelings to persons outside the establishments.

#### **4. Current situation / Proposal**

- 4.1 Some Members have raised concerns about the variety of services they visit. As the purpose of the visits is to gain feedback about the quality of care received, it is hoped that Members will be able to spend time with different service users each time they visit.
- 4.2 Attached at **Appendix 1** is a schedule of visits carried out to the children's establishments between April 2014 and January 2016 together with a summary of the comments made by Members and the service responses where appropriate. There are a few comments relating to the fact that there were no children present at the time of the visits. To assist Members, the guidance (details of establishments) includes the best time to visit and times to avoid if at all possible. It is not possible to include every comment and the summary gives the main points relating to the welfare of the children and young people.
- 4.3 Out of a possible 63 visits to children's services, 28 visits were carried out during the period covered by this report. This equates to about 45% of the visits that were due.
- 4.4 The next rota period will commence in April 2016 and invitations will be sent to all 54 Elected Members to try and increase the level of participation. It is anticipated that the existing cohort of Members will remain in the programme.
- 4.5 At the Children and Young People Overview and Scrutiny Committee on 9<sup>th</sup> March 2016, Members requested that consideration be given to including independent sector children's establishments on the rota programme. This is currently being explored and it is hoped that some additions will be made to the programme once discussions have concluded with the providers.

#### **5. Effect upon Policy Framework and Procedure Rules.**

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

#### **6. Equality Impact Assessments.**

- 6.1 There are no equality implications.

#### **7. Financial Implications.**

- 7.1 There are no financial implications.

#### **8. Recommendation.**

It is recommended that the Committee:

- 8.1 Note the information provided in this report;
- 8.2 Note that the next rota period will commence in April 2016 and invitations will be sent to all 54 Elected Members to try and increase the level of participation.

**Susan Cooper**  
**Corporate Director – Social Services and Wellbeing**

**January 2016**

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- 10 Background documents:**  
None.

**BRIDGEND COUNTY BOROUGH COUNCIL  
Children's Social Care services  
ROTA VISITING**

**PREMISES VISITED – April 2014 to January 2016**

	Apr 14	May 14	Jun 14	July 14	Aug 14	Sep 14	Oct 14	Nov 14	Dec 14	Jan 15	Feb 15	Mar 15	Apr 15	May 15	Jun 15	Jul 15	Aug 15	Sep 15	Oct 15	Nov 15	Jan 16
Bakers Way Respite House: 2a Bakers Way, Bryncethin, Bridgend, CF32 9RJ	X	X	X			X	X	X			X	X	X	X					X	X	
Newbridge House Transition Unit: Merthyr Mawr Road, Bridgend, CF31 3NY	X					X	X		X		X	X			X						
Sunnybank Complex Needs Unit: 31 Pant Morfa, Porthcawl, CF36 5EN		X		X			X		X			X	X		X		X				X



Establishment	Comments
<p>Bakers Way Respite House: Bryncethin, Bridgend,</p>	<p>When we visited we were unable to meet staff for all but a brief chat as they were tied up in interviewing. No major issues were raised.</p> <p>We received a friendly greeting and visited the lounge area. Staffing structure, levels and training were discussed.</p> <p>Décor and painting 'tired' and chipped around door frames. Lounge windows need cleaning inside. Hole in kitchen ceiling. No shade on ceiling light in sensory room.</p> <p>Only room for one wheelchair on the minibus. <b><u>Service response: This is being reviewed as part of the children with disabilities project</u></b></p> <p>Visited and spoke to service users and staff. The four service users were in the minibus looking forward to a trip to Porthcawl, They were very happy to be at the home for the evening and having their trip and told us they were looking forward to getting a new larger minibus in a few months' time.</p> <p>The facility looks very presentable from the outside and the lounge was receiving a 'makeover' by staff who were painting it. Delivery of a sofa and two beds was awaited.</p> <p>Staff were pleased with the provision of the resource, the children appeared well catered for. We made an evening visit when there would be children present.</p> <p>The premises were very homely and the children were enjoying playing in a clean, well-equipped play room with staff who were interacting and very hands on. We felt confident in their ability to do the job and were glad to see the children feeling comfortable and at home.</p> <p>We visited at tea time when there were two children present.</p> <p>The home is taking more, younger children currently and two sensory bedrooms are planned as they are taking more children in wheelchairs.</p> <p>The living room's been redecorated since our last visit and the bedrooms were looking fresher.</p> <p>There is an issue with the driveway, part of which is in need of repair especially as many clients are wheelchair users. <b><u>Service response: This has since been re-tarmacked.</u></b></p> <p>There were two children there when we visited, one of who was able to engage with us and was obviously happy and contented in the home.</p>

	<p>On our visit there were two clients in residence, one was watching the television and engrossed in a game with a care worker there to engage with him. There was one resident who was getting a lot of help and support from a member of staff.</p> <p>We visited just before tea time – there were four children present. We spoke to the children who were all quite happy.</p>
<p>Newbridge House Transition Unit: Bridgend,</p>	<p>We were greeted on arrival and given an overview of the unit's operation. We spoke with two service users who were happy and contented. The rooms were clean and tidy.</p> <p>The home felt relaxed and happy and we have no concerns.</p> <p>We were given a tour of the facility, spoke to residents and heard how they learn independent skills like budgeting and cooking, progressing until they are ready for different options. There is a variety of activities, e.g. a recent trip to Oakwood Park.</p> <p>The residents seem to get on well together and the facility appears to have good outcomes, with progression to independent living working well. We spoke to one young resident who had settled in very well and was pleased with what was on offer.</p> <p>The computer has no wifi or Facebook access. <b><u>Service response: The home has internet access.</u></b></p> <p>Currently accommodates five residents with plans underway for the return of an out-of-county resident. Other returnees are being planned for and, to this end, initiatives are being taken involving the Moving Forward project which aims to develop basic skills for young people with little formal schooling and Agored Cymru which involves staff training as tutors/assessors to build student portfolios.</p> <p>Restrictions on access to social networks could be relaxed somewhat for residents. <b><u>Service response: The position regarding this is that the usage is restricted as per safety guidance but all young people can use computers for learning/training needs</u></b></p> <p>The unit was very clean and the staff were very knowledgeable of their residents. Each resident had their own room which had a sink, fridge and TV/dvd. However they were encouraged to eat together and take part in a more communal life. We were extremely fortunate to speak to a resident. It was very encouraging to see how the unit was having a positive impact on their life and how it was going to affect their future decisions.</p>
<p>Sunnybank Complex Needs Unit: Porthcawl,</p>	<p>We were met and given a tour of the very nicely refurbished home. All the unit's facilities appeared up-to-date and well organised including the education room's modern equipment. The unit was fully staffed.</p> <p>We were unable to meet with any of the residents as they were all in school. Will consider a later appointment next time.</p> <p>All facilities in excellent order.</p> <p>We noted the progress the residents were making educationally. Above all, we saw clear evidence that this service allows fences to</p>

	<p>be rebuilt domestically, resulting in no young person spending Christmas day at home for the first time in years.</p> <p>We have visited the property at least twice before and we spoke to the staff about the young people who were in the unit. We were impressed with the caring attitudes but the young people were all at school when we visited.</p> <p>The manager explained that the residents had changed as a previous group had moved on. Some ex residents has returned to say thank you for guiding them etc.</p> <p>Physically the establishment has been successfully modified. Standards of cleanliness were evident throughout and residents were encouraged to help in cooking meals. We were able to talk with two residents. There was evidence of success of previous residents who had gone on to achieve well.</p>
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**BRIDGEND COUNTY BOROUGH COUNCIL**  
**REPORT TO CORPORATE PARENTING COMMITTEE**

**7 APRIL 2016**

**REPORT OF THE CORPORATE DIRECTOR – EDUCATION AND TRANSFORMATION**  
**LOOKED AFTER CHILDREN DEPRIVATION GRANT**

**1. Purpose of Report**

The purpose of this report is to update and inform committee on the support being delivered to improve the educational performance of looked after children in Bridgend.

**2. Connection to Corporate Improvement Objectives/Other Corporate Priorities**

2.1 These proposals are related to the Corporate Plan and, in particular, in the Corporate Plan Improvement priority two and priority six:

- Working together to raise ambitions and drive up educational achievement
- Making best use of resources

**3. Background**

3.1 As stated in the Welsh Government strategy document, 'Raising the ambitions and educational attainment of children who are looked after in Wales' (January 2016, page 7, para 1.1), *'The negative impact of poor educational attainment of children who are looked after can, and often does, result in these children failing to take advantage of opportunities to progress to post-16 education, training and meaningful employment.'*

3.2 Across Bridgend, there is an improving trend in GCSE performance at grades A\* - G for looked after children and in 2014/15 no looked after children left education at the age of 16 without a qualification. However, as corporate parent with ambition for looked after children, the local authority recognises that the proportion of grades above 'C' is still too low and so this is an area for improvement. GCSE attainment is shown in the table below:

DESCRIPTION	2012/13	2013/14	2014/15
<b>Looked after children as at 1st April</b>	<b>34</b>	<b>41</b>	<b>23</b>
% A* - C GCSE	41%	49%	42%
% A* - G GCSE	74%	88%	92%
LEFT WITHOUT QUALIFICATIONS	21%	2.40%	0%

Equivalent data for all children (Source: StatsWales):

DESCRIPTION	2012/13	2013/14	2014/15
<b>Whole cohort at PLASC</b>	<b>1797</b>	<b>1680</b>	<b>1617</b>
% achieved 5 passes at A* - C GCSE	72%	80%	84%
% achieved 5 passes at A* - G GCSE	93%	93%	95%
LEFT WITHOUT QUALIFICATIONS	0.45%	0.06%	0.06%

- 3.3 Bridgend experiences significant socio-economic challenges. Bridgend County Borough Council (BCBC) has a higher proportion of looked after children than the average in communities with similar levels of deprivation. A large proportion of Bridgend's looked after children have additional learning needs. On the 31<sup>st</sup> March 2015, it was identified by the Looked After Children in Education (LACE) team that over 52% of all statutory school aged children looked after by Bridgend have additional learning needs sufficient for intervention as identified by the SEN Code of Practice compared to 21.4% of the whole cohort of children identified as having and Additional Learning Need (ALN) as recorded at PLASC in January 2015. 13% of the cohort of looked after children (32) had a statement of special educational need compared to 1.4% of children from the whole cohort (317 out of 22830). It is important that in this context, consideration is given to the achievement as well as the attainment of looked after children with special educational needs.

Setting targets for cohorts of looked after children is problematic across Wales, given the variable nature of the looked after children population and the relatively small cohort sizes at local authority level. Pupil performance is tracked at an individual pupil level and appropriate targets are set. Central South Consortium is a school improvement service delivering school improvement functions on behalf of five local authorities, namely: Bridgend, Cardiff, Merthyr Tydfil, Rhondda Cynon Taff and the Vale of Glamorgan. Within the Central South Consortium ('the Consortium'), a regional target has been established to narrow the gap in performance outcomes between looked after children and non-looked after children at the expected levels, as noted within the Local Authority Annex, as follows:

Priority	Performance in the LA (2013/14 Outcomes)	Outcomes expected in 14/15		
1. Narrow the gap in outcomes for looked after children	Percentage of pupils achieving FP - FPOI, KS2 CSI, KS3 CSI, KS4 L2+:		Gap in performance between looked after children – non-looked after children (Regional target)	
				Looked after children
	Foundation Phase, FP			38.9%
	KS2			58.3%
	KS3			47.8%
	KS4	13.9%		
	FP	-30.1%		
KS2	-18.1%			
KS3	-23.4%			
KS4	-23.8%			

3.4 As part of the strategy outlined above (3.1), Welsh Government has set a national target in the educational achievement of 15 year-olds at Key Stage 4 of the Level 2 inclusive threshold from 17% in 2014 to 25% in 2016.<sup>1</sup>

#### 4. Current situation / proposal

4.1 There is a multi-level approach to supporting and targeting the educational performance of looked after children in Bridgend. This is a priority in the Education & Transformation Directorate business plan and a key project overseen by the Children's Change Programme Board, and reported to Performance Management Board (PMB). At a local level a multi-agency group has been established to develop a strategy to improve the attainment of looked after children and other identified vulnerable groups. Funding for the multi-agency group is met from existing resources. Membership of the multi-agency group is comprised of representatives from primary and secondary school senior managers, school governors, the Consortium, BCBC data officers, members of the LACE team, colleagues from the Safeguarding and School Improvement teams and a representative from the local health board. The work of this group is closely aligned with the recently published 'Raising the ambitions and educational attainment of children who are looked after in Wales'.

4.2 Each school has a designated teacher (DT) with responsibility to monitor and promote the education of looked after children. Funding for the DT is from within each school's allocated budget. These DTs work closely with the LACE team. Furthermore, at a local authority level there are key performance indicators and targets related to the attainment of looked after children. These are reported quarterly through CPA.

4.3 In partnership with the Consortium's looked after children Lead, local authorities developed a strategic and operational plan for looked after children. The plan is to develop capacity in schools and build on good practice across the five local authorities with an emphasis on provision of funding to support strategic services managed by the Consortium and those at local authority level which have a proven

impact on outcomes. The operational plan for looked after children is funded through existing resources.

4.4 At a national level there has been a change to the allocation of the Pupil Deprivation Grant for looked after children. Grant distribution is now administered by regional education consortia instead of schools. The grant is allocated via the Consortium to facilitate more strategic working and to ensure the grant funding has greatest impact. For each looked after child, as reported in the April 2014 Children in Need census, the regional consortium will receive £1,050. In addition to children presently looked after, under revised arrangements of the grant children who have left local authority care for one of the following reasons may also be eligible:

- adoption
- a special guardianship order
- a child arrangement order
- a residence order

4.5 It is expected that the Pupil Deprivation Grant for looked after children will be used to support interventions and practices that are proven to have the greatest impact and sustainability in raising the attainment of looked after children.

4.6 One element of Pupil Deprivation Grant for looked after children was set aside for allocation to schools on a case by case basis. A multi-agency panel met on the 27<sup>th</sup> November to consider all school requests for this grant money. The panel scrutinised all applications rigorously to determine whether applications met the criteria for the grant and in addition whether proposals :

- were sustainable – e.g. do they offer match funding to demonstrate this?
- accelerate attainment
- make a difference to well-being

#### **Pupil Deprivation Grant for Looked After Children school funding 2015/16**

4.7 The following schools were successful in obtaining grant funding:

<b>Archbishop McGrath</b> To provide additional numeracy/literacy and emotional support. 'Talkabout emotional literacy' intervention, together with additional support in maths and language (Learning Support Officer to receive communication training from a training company)
<b>Abercerdin Primary</b> To improve the wellbeing/confidence and social skills of each child.
<b>Brynteg Comprehensive</b> 'Achievement for All Cymru' programme for schools. Develop strategies to build 'resilience' to support student's responsibility for their own learning through the introduction of 'Growth Mindset' across the school. Purchase 'show my homework' software for schools. Additional tutoring through 'Love to Learn'.
<b>Bro Ogwr</b> Whole staff training on Attachment Disorder. Individual resources.



<p><b>Cefn Cribwr Primary</b> Lego therapy staff training and resources.</p>
<p><b>Coleg Cymunedol Y Dderwen</b> To provide additional English and Maths session per week.</p>
<p><b>Cynffig Comprehensive</b> Train and upskill Learning Support Assistant (LSA) to work with looked after children to support emotional and academic development. Fund additional tuition.</p>
<p><b>Ffaldau Primary</b> Extra phonic work. Catch up reading. Rapid writing. Specific Learning Difficulties (SpLD) group. Fine motor group.</p>
<p><b>Croesty Primary</b> Digital literacy boosting programme.</p>
<p><b>Highfield Hall Primary – Derbyshire*</b> Whole school training on ‘Attachment Disorders’ Extra phonic catch up programme.</p>
<p><b>Héronsbridge</b> The purchase of specialist equipment and resources.</p>
<p><b>Hyde Park Infants School – Plymouth*</b> Catch up Numeracy and Literacy programmes Additional resources. Staff training Attachment Disorders.</p>
<p><b>Llangewydd Primary</b> Lego Therapy training and resources.</p>
<p><b>YGG Llangynwyd</b> GCSE Art Pack and additional resources.</p>
<p><b>Nottage Primary</b> Language links concepts and associations programme. Resources. Therapeutic interventions.</p>
<p><b>Oldcastle Primary</b> Reading Dog Programme. Formula One Goblin car.</p>
<p><b>Pencoed Primary</b> Lexia computer programme. Additional tuition.</p>
<p><b>Penybont Primary</b> LSO to be trained in 5 specific therapeutic strategies.</p>
<p><b>Porthcawl Comprehensive</b> ‘Link up Care.’ Additional tuition.</p>
<p><b>Tondu Primary</b> Additional English and maths programmes. Behaviour support intervention .</p>
<p><b>Tremains Primary</b> Training for staff emotional and nurture support to pupils identified by National Behaviour &amp; Attendance Review (NBAR).</p>
<p><b>Ysgol Bryn Castell</b></p>

Play Therapy Support.  
Anger management training course for x1 staff.

**Maesteg Comprehensive School**  
Sports Leadership Programme for looked after children and related training for teachers to build capacity.

\* Schools outside of Bridgend may qualify for funding where they provide education for Bridgend's looked after children who are educated out of county.

In addition to the element of the Pupil Deprivation Grant for looked after children allocated to schools as above, another element of the grant was made available to support wider initiatives to promote the attainment of looked after children. The criteria for this element of the grant was that initiatives would have proven outcomes and would build capacity for future improvement.

Additional local authority initiatives funded through the Pupil Deprivation Grant for looked after children are as follows:

#### 4.8 **Thrive training**

As part of the BCBC philosophy to meet the needs of all children belonging to the authority through early intervention and sustained support, BCBC has commissioned Thrive, to provide training to a member of staff in each secondary and special school and a member of staff from each cluster in order to support looked after children within their own schools and within their cluster. Funding for Thrive training is fully met through the Pupil Deprivation Grant for looked after children.

- 4.9 Thrive is a rigorous, scientifically informed approach that is differentiated carefully to address children's emotional development in a systematic and specific way. It trains staff to recognise the root causes of behaviour in children which can interrupt their learning. The programme is designed to address the children's needs with specific targeted interventions.
- 4.10 The main objective of Thrive is to support children's engagement and progress in learning so that they are ready for school, willing to join in, curious and keen to learn. It is a dynamic, developmental approach which draws on the latest developments in neuroscience, attachment theory, child development and the role of creativity and play in development emotional resilience.
- 4.11 The benefits of Thrive are that looked after children at risk of exclusion can be maintained in education, and helped to re-engage with learning to achieve their potential. It also helps young people to take responsibility for their behaviour and to increase their attendance and attainment.
- 4.12 Thrive offers an evidence based programme to address the needs of all BCBC's looked after children. The programme caters for the children's well-being and educational needs and has been trialed and well-received in neighbouring LAs. Its approach meets the aims of BCBC to ensure sustainable improved outcomes for looked after children.
- 4.13 Ten days of training for selected staff has begun and each member of staff will support the school with Thrive delivery, supported by the Inclusion Service.

#### 4.14 **Appointment of Virtual Head Teacher for looked after children**

A virtual head teacher is someone appointed by a local authority to promote the educational achievement of all children looked after by that council. Those children are on a 'virtual' school roll, even though they are physically spread across the schools in the borough and beyond. At present this post will be 100% funded via the Pupil Deprivation Grant for looked after children.

4.15 The idea is that each local council employs an experienced teacher to oversee the educational progress of all children under the care of that local authority. A single school may have only one or two children in care on their registers and be unfamiliar with the issues.

4.16 The virtual headteacher will have the specialist knowledge to provide extra support to designated teachers. They also have a 'bigger picture' remit to work with all professionals in the Children's Services department of the council and with all schools in the area on initiatives to promote the education of children in care.

4.17 BCBC intends to appoint a part-time Virtual School Head Teacher and to develop a Virtual School for looked after children, funded from the looked after children PDG. This will be a phased approach initially with a part-time secondment of a Head Teacher with the additional responsibility to commission the development of a Virtual School website and tracking system, to rigorously track and monitor the progress of looked after children, challenging schools on under performance. This role will be supported by the LACE Coordinator and the LACE team who will become an integral part of a Virtual School.

#### 4.18 **Case Studies to demonstrate local authority support for looked after children**

##### **Case Study 1: Local authority corporate parent support to facilitate the progression of a former looked after child to Higher Education:**

Supported by a stable foster home from the age of 12 years in 2004, this female pupil attended mainstream schools in Bridgend. In 2008, she gained a place at Bridgend College to study Fine Art. However, after successfully completing this course, she lacked the necessary skills and confidence to move away from home to go to university.

Just before reaching 18 years of age, she moved into approved supported lodgings to help her develop these vital skills. In these lodgings, she was able to socialise with other young people who had been to university, helping to raise her ambition and aspiration. She was supported by a number of agencies (LACE team, Just Ask Plus, supported lodgings and Bridgend College) for eighteen months (beyond her 18<sup>th</sup> birthday) until she was sufficiently skilled and confident enough to progress to Stafford University in 2011 where she studied Art and Design. She continued to receive support during her years of study facilitating a successful transition. She graduated in 2015.

- 4.19 **Case Study 2: Feedback from a successful young person who was formerly a looked after child in Bridgend.** He regularly returns to Bridgend to help motivate other looked after children (September 2015):

*"I was brought into foster care at the age of 13, at this age I was an irregular attendee at secondary school and had already floated around double digits of primary schools. When this occurred obviously I had to start attending, I was at the start of year 9 (pre GCSE). ...my estimated grades were given to me as DEFU's. This is also the year that I was brought into the LACE after school clubs and invited along to there summer trips to Sealyham. After just 9 months of being in the care system I was brought forward a year into sitting my maths GCSE, which I passed. I'd go to LACE after school clubs ... Needless to say, it all paid off. So throughout the years of attending these clubs and multiple other activities setup by the LACE team I grew my confident within my self and with others around me who were in exactly the same situation, LACE was a place we could meet up and just chat and keep up with each other because we were all in the same boat. With the help of ... the LACE team I went on to pass all my GCSE's with ABC'S! This was the year they introduced the Cardiff Uni mentor sessions and Cardiff Uni stay over, my mentor ...from the sessions I am still in contact with and definitely pushed me! The visits to the uni were amazing and really inspiring to visit, knowing that only a minority of children in care actually go on to higher education. The LACE team taught us a lesson that anything is possible if you want it that badly, this was the most valuable thing I've ever learnt. I had a small time YouTube channel posting videos of music I had created, ...Now my channel is a platform channel with over 35,000 subscribers ...and has it's on radio show on local frequencies and online radio station! ...I'm taking this into the big time now with all the work we're putting into it, our demographic just keeps expanding! A side to the LACE team pushing me to keep that going they also made sure my main focus was on school work and achieving my A Levels which I decided to stay on to do. Needless to say I passed them all and go into the University of Portsmouth where I now reside for the next 4 years of my life in the study of Television and Broadcasting. It's such a great feeling being within the minority of achievers amongst so many people who have fallen victim to the horrible system they were put in. If it wasn't for the support and backing of the LACE team I can hand on heart say I wouldn't be in the position I'm in now. I've also planned with [a member of the LACE team] to produce a weekly blog/VLOG/podcast on a weekly basis to help inspire and push the children that are currently in the position I was in. I feel it is important for them to hear back off of someone who has fought the system, become a minority and is doing well with even all the background stuff which occurred. They need to know that is not what defines them, and for them not to become a product of their old environment but to strive for greatness no matter what!"*

- 4.20 **Case Study 3: Ongoing educational support for a looked after child who changed placement:**

The LACE team are responsible for supporting and monitoring the education of looked after children. The team works closely with schools and the Safeguarding teams to ensure continuity for the child. Personal Education Plans are devised for each child when they are placed in care and/or move placements/schools. If a looked after child has to move placements but remains within the locality then there is no disruption to their education. The school are made aware of the situation and transport is arranged accordingly. When a child is placed in a long term stable

placement they may change school to attend the school in their locality but this decision is taken in partnership with the social worker, school and parent or carer and is only taken in the best interests of the child i.e. never to save the cost of transportation.

The Safeguarding Team notify the LACE team of any change of school/placement and transfer forms are completed to include details of a child's educational background and needs. This information is shared with pupil services and any new school to minimise disruption caused by the transfer. Admission meetings are attended by the carer and the young person and a member of the LACE Team, if requested. In complicated cases or where a child is statemented then decisions about changes are made on a multi-agency basis.

In a recent case where a placement broke down for a looked after child attending a mainstream school in a neighbouring local authority, a suitable placement was sought to meet their needs. The new placement was further out of county. After discussions with the new foster carers and the LACE team in that area, the Bridgend LACE team applied for the most appropriate school. A pre-admission meeting was arranged due to the complexities of the young person. The young person was out of education for a number of weeks during the admission process. The previous school kept the young person on roll and provided work to be completed during that time.

The DT from the previous school plus all the other agencies involved attended the admission meeting to devise a package of support to be put in place to avoid the new school placement breaking down and minimise any disruption to the young person's education. The LACE Team, the social worker and the foster carer were in constant communication to ensure the plan worked. Since then the foster carer and the school continue to communicate and monitor the position.

- 4.21 Interventions and new initiatives are monitored by providers who are expected to report to BCBC/ the Consortium by completing Impact Evaluation forms (**Appendix A**) using the Guidance Notes for the Impact Evaluation (**Appendix B**)

## **5. Effect upon Policy Framework & Procedure Rules**

- 5.1 There is no effect upon the policy framework or procedure rules.

## **6. Equality Impact Assessment**

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

## **7. Financial Implications**

- 7.1 There are no financial implications arising from this report as the initiatives described throughout this report are met through a combination of Pupil Deprivation Grant for looked after children and existing resources.

## **8. Recommendation**

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

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### **Background documents**

- Raising the ambitions and educational attainment of children who are looked after in Wales' (January 2016) Strategy and Action Plan accessible via:  
<http://gov.wales/topics/educationandskills/schoolshome/deprivation/educational-attainment-of-looked-after-children/?lang=en>

### **Appendices**

- Impact Evaluation forms (**Appendix A**)
- Guidance Notes for the Impact Evaluation of Pupil Deprivation Grant for looked after children 2015-16 (**Appendix B**)

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<sup>i</sup> Raising the ambitions and educational attainment of children who are looked after in Wales' (January 2016, page 35, para 3)

## Impact Evaluation for PDGLAC 2015-16

**Name of School:**

**Allocation Amount:**

**Name of Local Authority:**

A. Objective/ Action	B. Actual Impact (Has the desired impact been met?)	C. Evidence (Quantitative or qualitative)	D. If the desired impact has not been achieved, please provide reasons?	E. Additional information
1. Objective/ Action	Choose an item.			
2. Objective/ Action	Choose an item.			
3. Objective/ Action	Choose an item.			

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**Guidance Notes for the Impact Evaluation of PDGLAC 2015-16**

**Guidance notes for column A**

***Objective/Action***

Evaluate each objective/ action on a separate row. This will allow the impact of each intervention to be judged.

**Guidance notes for column B**

***Actual Impact (Has the desired impact been met?)***

- In this column you will need to use the drop down menu to assess how well the objective has been met.

Nearly all objectives met	With very few exceptions
Most objectives met	90% or more
Many objectives met	70% or more
A majority of objectives met	Over 60%
Half of objectives met	50%
A minority of objectives met	Below 40%
Few objectives met	Below 20%
Very few objectives met	Less than 10%

**Guidance notes for column C**

***Evidence (Quantitative or qualitative)***

- Please ensure that any evidence is quantitative or qualitative in nature e.g. literacy or numeracy data - reading ages/maths ages, attendance, exclusions, wellbeing data, pupil voice, number of staff trained, and training evaluations.
- This evidence may also include secondary (indirect) outcomes as a result of the initial objective and anticipated outcomes.

**Guidance notes for column D**

***If the desired impact has not been achieved, please provide reasons?***

- e.g. change of school placement, change in young person’s personal circumstances, course availability

**Guidance notes for column E**

***Additional information***

Please give any additional information that you feel is relevant to the impact evaluation.

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