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**Gwasanaethau Gweithredol a Phartneriaethol /
Operational and Partnership Services**

Deialu uniongyrchol / Direct line /: (01656)
643148/643147

Gofynnwch am / Ask for: Michael Pitman

Ein cyf / Our ref:

Eich cyf / Your ref:

Dyddiad/Date: Thursday, 12 April 2018

Dear Councillor,

CABINET COMMITTEE CORPORATE PARENTING

A meeting of the Cabinet Committee Corporate Parenting will be held in the Committee Rooms 2/3
- Civic Offices Angel Street Bridgend CF31 4WB on **Wednesday, 18 April 2018 at 14:00.**

AGENDA

1. Apologies for Absence
To receive apologies for absence from Members.
2. Declarations of Interest
To receive declarations of personal and prejudicial interest (if any) from Members/Officers in accordance with the provisions of the Members' Code of Conduct adopted by Council from 1 September 2008.
3. Approval of Minutes 3 - 8
To receive for approval the minutes of a meeting of the Corporate Parenting Cabinet Committee of 24/01/2018
4. Update On The Establishment Of A National Fostering Framework (Nff) And Current Work In Relation To In House Foster Care Provision 9 - 16
5. 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

Corporate Director Operational and Partnership Services

Councillors:

N Clarke

HJ David

Councillors

D Patel

JC Radcliffe

Councillors

PJ White

HM Williams

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DK Edwards
J Gebbie
RM James

CE Smith
CA Webster
DBF White

RE Young

Agenda Item 3

CABINET COMMITTEE CORPORATE PARENTING - WEDNESDAY, 24 JANUARY 2018

MINUTES OF A MEETING OF THE CABINET COMMITTEE CORPORATE PARENTING HELD IN COUNCIL CHAMBER - CIVIC OFFICES ANGEL STREET BRIDGEND CF31 4WB ON WEDNESDAY, 24 JANUARY 2018 AT 14:00

Present

Councillor PJ White – Chairperson

N Clarke
D Patel
RE Young

HJ David
CE Smith

DK Edwards
CA Webster

J Gebbie
HM Williams

Apologies for Absence

Officers:

Susan Cooper	Corporate Director - Social Services & Wellbeing
Julie Ellams	Democratic Services Officer - Committees
Lindsay Harvey	Corporate Director Education and Family Support
Gary Jones	Head of Democratic Services
Laura Kinsey	Head of Children's Social Care
Darren Mepham	Chief Executive

160. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

None

161. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

None.

162. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

RESOLVED: That the minutes of the Cabinet Committee Corporate Parenting 18 October 2017 be approved as a true and accurate record.

163. CARE AND SOCIAL SERVICES INSPECTORATE WALES - SELF ASSESSMENT JANUARY 2018 - CHILDREN'S SOCIAL CARE

The Head of Children's Social Care presented a report informing the Cabinet Committee of the self-assessment that all authorities were being asked to undertake in relation to looked after children and the care leavers profile, placement sufficiency and stability and the impact of the Social Services and Wellbeing (Wales) Act 2014 and regulatory requirements on out of authority placements. The completed assessment had to be returned to the Care Inspectorate Wales by 26th January 2018.

The Head of Children's Social Care outlined the data/key findings contained in the assessment. She explained that they had been unable to work on the assessment before 1st January 2018 because figures as at 1st January 2018 had been requested. The assessment was not yet complete but she had captured some of the headlines and her observations on the findings. She explained that the aims of the self-assessment were to capture the complexity of the profile of looked after children and care leavers across Wales and to encourage authorities to evaluate the effectiveness of its

arrangements and to identify any issues impacting on looked after children and care leavers.

The Head of Children's Social Care outlined the seven themes of the self-assessment which were profile, placement stability and sufficiency, care and support, placement panels and notification arrangements, early intervention, safeguarding and the workforce.

With regards to the profile, the Head of Children's Social Care reported that BCBC had the fourth highest number of looked after children at the end of March 2017. All authorities had seen an increase in the number of looked after children and this appeared to be a theme across Wales.

The Head of Children's Social Care explained that there had been a reduction in the number of children placed with independent foster carers from 22% at the end of last year to 18.3% in January 2018. She added that 69.7% of children had been placed inside the local authority, an improvement of previous years although the number of children who had 3 or more moves in the last 12 months remained a challenge.

The Head of Children's Social Care reported that following preventative work with partner agencies and in particular the police, there appeared to be a downward trend reducing risks to looked after children. Also 20% of looked after children were receiving therapeutic services.

The Head of Children's Social Care explained that the next steps included a qualitative analysis of the data, and incorporating that information in the self-assessment to be submitted to CIW by 26th January 2018. There would then be a performance challenge meeting with CIW possibly in March when the information provided would be interrogated. Field work inspections would then be undertaken in six authorities but BCBC had not received notification that it was one of the six. The findings and analysis would then be used to inform a national overview report, a CIW annual analysis of local authority social services performance and CIW inspections of Local Authority Social Services and regulated services.

A Member asked for clarification regarding the 5% of looked after children with disabilities. She asked how many of the 5% were included in the 2.1% in supported living or residential schools. The Head of Children's Services did not have the information to hand but agreed to find the details and send to the Member.

A Member asked what steps were being taken to improve staff morale. He was advised that this issue would be addressed in the next item.

A Member asked why only a relatively low number of children (54%) remained with the same social worker after six months even though this would be a very traumatic experience for them. The Head of Children's Social Care explained that the other 46% could be for various reasons such as a child being assessed and moved to a different team for longer term care possibly in a hub where close contact could be made with the family. As children became older they were transferred to the care leaver team and in some cases the social worker left the authority or moved to another area so the case would have to be transferred. Every effort was made to provide stability for the child.

The Leader welcomed the positive results and in particular, the reduction in the number of children being placed out of county and the reduction in the number of placements in the independent sector. He noted that the complexity of cases appeared to be increasing and asked if this was happening in Bridgend and if there was any way of measuring this. The Head of Children's Services explained that there had been a lot of

interest nationally in some of the challenges with looked after children and finding suitable placements for them. It continued to be a challenge in Bridgend and was one of the reasons why children had to be placed out of county because of the lack of specialist provision in house to meet those children's needs. There was a small cohort of children with complex issues and finding suitable placements continued to be an issue.

A Member asked what trends and data would be pursued going forward. The Head of Children's Services explained that there were a number of sections under each theme that they would be required to look at. Staff would flag themes and hotspots and look at comparatives from previous years and report their findings to a future meeting.

A Member asked if there was an underlying trend to the 11.5% of children with 3 or more moves in the last 12 months and if best practice guidance had been sought. The Head of Children's Services explained that this figure was closely monitored. There appeared to be two types of children affected, very young children removed at birth possibly going to a placement that doesn't work and then on to a more suitable placement and teenagers with more complex issues. Data was interrogated every quarter and there appeared to be an improvement in figures. A Member suggested that it would be useful to have a separate set of statistics for teenagers.

A Member asked in how many cases there had been early intervention and how many were related to child sex exploitation and trafficking. This information was not available at the meeting but would be brought to a future meeting.

A Member noted that 96% of children had a care plan prior to becoming looked after and asked why they became looked after children. The Head of Children's Services explained that they had asked the same question and IPC had been instructed to undertake a review in Bridgend to see what did and didn't work and the findings would be reported to a future meeting

A Member asked for the contact rates for personal advisors with care leavers. She was advised that it varied depending on age and that some of the older care leavers were particularly difficult to engage with.

The Corporate Director, Social Services and Wellbeing added that the exercise had been very demanding and it wasn't always clear what information was being requested resulting in conversations back and forth to get clarity. There was more information not yet available. A report had been presented to scrutiny the previous week which covered the strategy around fostering and some of the issues raised today.

RESOLVED: That the Cabinet Committee noted the information provided in the report.

164. CARE AND SOCIAL SERVICES INSPECTORATE WALES - INSPECTION OF CHILDREN'S SERVICES JANUARY/FEBRUARY 2017 - ACTION PLAN UPDATE

The Corporate Director, Social Services and Wellbeing presented a report on the updated Action Plan following the inspection of Children's Services in January/February 2017. She explained that the inspection undertaken in Children's Services in Bridgend focused on how children and families were empowered to access help and care and support services and the quality of outcomes achieved for children in need of help, care and support and/or protection including looked after children. The inspections were carried out on the weeks commencing 30 January 2017 and 13 February 2017.

The Corporate Director, Social Services and Wellbeing outlined the inspection, the sample of cases taken and the individual and group interviews with managers,

Members, partners and service providers. The CIW reported their findings on their website, to the Minister for Health and Social Services and presented a report and action plan to Scrutiny Committee 2 in July 2017. A commitment was also made to bring the report to Cabinet Committee Corporate Parenting.

The Corporate Director, Social Services and Wellbeing reported that Inspectors had found that the authority had worked hard in the context of the Social Services and Well-being Wales Act 2014, to reshape its services. The inspection found that the workforce were committed to achieving good outcomes for children and families but staff morale was variable across the service and needed to be nurtured at a time of significant change. Bridgend should continue to focus on how they could retain staff for longer and have more timely recruitment of experienced staff. These and other points were addressed within the action plan.

A Member asked what steps had been taken to improve staff morale, were exit interviews carried out and what did these identify. The Corporate Director, Social Services and Wellbeing explained that a piece of work had been undertaken on recruitment and retention and supporting social workers. There was regular communication with staff and access to senior managers, a supportive training programme, mentoring schemes for social workers and managers and a new supervision policy to ensure consistency in approach. Caseloads were also carefully monitored to avoid staff being overwhelmed by work. Exit interviews were undertaken and positive feedback had been received about the support given. Most staff left for promotion or to work closer to home.

The Leader thanked the Corporate Director and said that he was encouraged by progress made. There were some outstanding actions and a number related to the development of the multi- agency safeguarding hub. The leader asked for an update on the development of the hub. The Corporate Director, Social Services and Wellbeing explained that the only matter delaying progress was accommodation. The team were working already "virtually". The favoured accommodation had been found and agreed. The District Valuer has visited the property and reported back and paperwork was due to be signed off by Corporate Management the following day. She anticipated that the MASH would be in situ by 1st April 2018.

A Member asked what an acceptable caseload level was and what the split was between tier 1 and 2 social workers. He was concerned that the authority was top heavy with tier 1 social workers who were more experienced and expected to manage their caseload and to mentor new staff. The Head of Children's Social Care explained that there was no set formula for caseloads but the average in Bridgend was around 18 depending on the complexity of each case. The profile of the workforce changed across the teams. In the safeguarding teams, there were quite a few newly qualified social workers and a lot of work had been undertaken to attract more experienced practitioners into Bridgend. A "grow your own" scheme had been established a few years ago. There had been an improvement in retention rates but there was still more work to be done. The Corporate Director, Social Services and Wellbeing explained that it was important to make sure the right managers were available to support staff. She explained that 21 new social workers had started across the service. To date, only 1 had left and she was looking forward to a feedback session with them the following week.

A Member asked what collaborative work was being done with the health authority regarding early help provision in schools and was there also financial collaboration. The Interim Corporate Director, Education and Family Support asked if this was in relation to CAMHS. The Member explained that she was trying to find the level of collaboration between BCBC and who was paying for it. The Corporate Director, Social Services and Wellbeing explained that the main connection was with health visitors in relation to

safeguarding and there was no financial contribution for this because that was not what was required at that stage. The Group Manager, Integrated Working and Family Support explained that in terms of early help services, there was a variety of resources such as Flying Start where salary contributions were made to the salary costs of health visitors or midwives. The joint working with health was a positive arrangement.

The Chief Executive asked if enough was being done in relation to an outcomes focus. It would be easy to get pulled in to the process of meeting the recommendations and overlooking the outcomes eg sometimes the Inspectorate do not make it clear what outcome will arise from a recommendation. He explained that it was important to understand that something was happening as a consequence of an action being completed.. The Corporate Director, Social Services and Wellbeing explained that the inspection had been undertaken at the same time as systems were being bedded in. The transformation journey was changing practice and shifting cultures. They had “paused” that journey to meet the requirements of the inspection. IPC were invited in to do further review and a report would be submitted on that shortly. The quality assurance process was also being established.

The Leader suggested that a further report be submitted in six months to ensure progress continued to be made.

RESOLVED: 1) That the Cabinet Committee received and approved the updated Action Plan.
2) That a further report be submitted in six months.

165. URGENT ITEMS

None

166. EXCLUSION OF THE PUBLIC

RESOLVED: That under Section 100A (4) of the Local Government Act 1972 as amended by the Local Government (Access to Information) (Variation) (Wales) Order 2007, the public be excluded from the meeting during consideration of the following item of business as it contains exempt information as defined in Paragraphs 12 and 13 of Part 4 and Paragraph 21 of Part 5 of Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972, as amended by the Local Government (Access to Information) (Variation) (Wales) Order 2007.

Following the application of the public interest test in consideration of this item, it was resolved that pursuant to the Act referred to above, to consider the item in private, with the public being excluded from the meeting as it would involve the disclosure of exempt information of the nature as stated above.

167. APPROVAL OF EXEMPT MINUTES

RESOLVED: That the exempt minutes of the Cabinet Committee Corporate Parenting 18 October 2017 be approved as a true and accurate record.

The meeting closed at 15:20

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BRIDGEND COUNTY BOROUGH COUNCIL

REPORT TO CABINET COMMITTEE - CORPORATE PARENTING

18 APRIL 2018

REPORT OF THE CORPORATE DIRECTOR, SOCIAL SERVICES AND WELLBEING

UPDATE ON THE ESTABLISHMENT OF A NATIONAL FOSTERING FRAMEWORK (NFF) AND CURRENT WORK IN RELATION TO IN HOUSE FOSTER CARE PROVISION.

1. Purpose of Report.

- 1.1 The purpose of the report is to provide the Corporate Parenting Committee with background information about and update regarding the progress of work undertaken on establishing a National Fostering Framework in Wales.
- 1.2 Provide the Corporate Parenting Committee with updated information about Bridgend Foster Care service provision and the fostering service review that is underway.

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

- 2.1 The report links to all of the corporate priorities:
 - Helping people to be more self-reliant;
 - Smarter use of resources;
 - Supporting a successful economy.

3. Background

National Fostering Framework

- 3.1 For many years, key stakeholders have advocated for greater collaboration across all sectors, to address strategically the growing concerns about the overall effectiveness and sustainability of fostering services in Wales. The creation of a National Framework was seen as a means of ensuring that known concerns are addressed and of introducing greater consistency without sacrificing the acknowledged strengths and diversity of local accountability within the current system.

Phase One

- 3.2 In 2015 the Minister for Health and Social Services endorsed the framework proposal and provided funding from investment by Welsh Government to prevent children from entering care and improve outcomes for those leaving care. The agreement for the establishment of a National Fostering Framework reflected both the scale of people's concerns and also the need to support effective change, tackling some major challenges which could only be addressed at a strategic level. Above all was the acknowledgement that a National Fostering Framework will aim to achieve:

- improvement in permanence planning for children and quality of placement provision;
- a more cogent, compelling and strategic intent in relation to fostering services;
- increased collaboration and co-operation by all key stakeholders:
- sector-led improvements:
- greater transparency about performance of fostering services and efficient use of resources;
- economies of scale, where appropriate, but with a respect for localism;
- more shared services in planning and commissioning;
- consistent use of 'Best Practice' models for recruiting and supporting foster carers; and
- closer links to research and evaluation.

3.3 A 'First Thoughts' paper on the National Fostering Framework identified some suggestions for how this work might move forward. A programme of engagement and consultation was undertaken to find out what key stakeholders thought about proposals in the First Thoughts Paper. It was acknowledged that this was the start and further work would be required.

Alongside the consultation programme, a Resources and Performance sub-group was also established to focus on the development of a national performance framework, giving consideration to what information is needed to be able to manage fostering services more effectively.

As a result of the programme of engagement and consultation a Phase one report was produced and submitted to Welsh government. This report made a number of recommendations for how the National Fostering Framework work should be taken forward. These were as follows:

1. Develop a National Fostering Framework, including the allocation of functions at national, regional and local levels and begin putting in place the appropriate structures (Year one).
2. Introduce a national performance and resource framework aligning this with the work to deliver (WCCIS). A phased approach to implementation will be developed. A distinct performance framework to be developed for the independent sector (commercial and Third Sector providers) (Year one).
3. Introduce a national website, social media, brand identity for foster care in Wales, to underpin a marketing strategy for recruiting foster carers and improving communication. (Year one)
4. Ensure greater consistency in the use of Kinship Foster Care for Children who are looked after, building on the initial scoping paper in Phase One. (Year One)
5. Develop national arrangements for the commissioning of all placements regardless of sector, but building on the work of the 4Cs (Childrens Commissioning Consortium Cymru).(Year one)
6. Benchmark best practice in corporate parenting across Councils and other public services to improve outcomes for children and increase resilience for foster care placements.(Year one)
7. Establish the right balance between Local Authority foster care, third sector providers and commercial providers in terms of national policy objectives, service quality considerations and value for money requirements. (Year two)

8. Produce a national policy framework for fostering services, to include the training and support of foster carers. (Year two)
9. Establish an all-Wales public service fostering collaborative, delivering services regionally and locally, incorporating all the relevant services directly provided by Local Authorities. (Year three)
10. Harmonise policies for paying fees and allowances to Local Authority foster carers (Year three)

Phase two

3.4 A national strategic steering group was established which continues to meet on a bi monthly basis attended by Councillor Huw David, Leader of Bridgend County Borough Council. A further series of consultations took place across Wales with a wide range of stakeholders about what a 'National Fostering Framework' and its components should look like. The planned implementation plan was for 2017–2020. A grant monitoring group was also established to oversee the Welsh Government funding that had been agreed to achieve the aims of the project.

3.5 The work programme from phase 2 carried out during 2016-17 included:

Work stream 1: Develop a National Fostering Framework including the allocation of functions at national, regional and local authority levels and begin putting into place the appropriate structures.

- Set up small groups of key stakeholders: ADSS Cymru, WLGA, NAS, 4 Cs (Childrens Commissioning Consortium Cymru) and Association for Fostering and Adoption Cymru.

Work stream 2: Introduce a national performance framework aligning this with the work being done to deliver the Welsh Community Care Information Service (WCCIS).

- Nine Local Authorities (Bridgend County Borough Council included) volunteered to work on the draft national performance framework; they worked together on the codes/definitions for each of the performance measures and completed a dry run.

Work stream 3: Introduce a national website, social media, brand and identity for Local Authority foster care in Wales, to underpin a marketing strategy for recruiting foster carers and improving communication.

- Staff from 6 Local Authorities across Wales who are involved in the marketing and recruitment of foster carers have worked together. A visit to the North West of England Regional Collaborative has been undertaken to learn from their experience

Work stream 4: Ensure greater consistency in the use of Kinship Foster care for children who are looked after.

- The Association for Fostering and Adoption Cymru has led on this work. Regional events have been held in addition to a national conference in February 2017.

Workstream 5:- Develop national arrangements for commissioning of all placements regardless of the sector and building on the work of the 4 Cs

- The 4 Cs have taken a lead role on this recommendation. A national conference was held in October 2016, which was attended by the Group Manager Regulated Services and the commissioning and placements officer from Bridgend County

Borough Council. A working group of managers and commissioning officers are taking this forward

Workstream 6:- Benchmark best practice in corporate parenting across Councils and other public services to improve outcomes for children and increase the resilience of foster care placements.

- Voices from Care and Association for Fostering and Adoption Cymru have led on this recommendation. Regional events have been held in addition to a national conference took place in March 2017 which was attended by the Group Manager Regulated Services and the Team Manager of Bridgend Foster Care.

Work stream 7:- Harmonise policies for paying fees and allowances to local authority foster carers.

- The Fostering Network has led on this work. A survey of all Local Authorities fees and allowances has been undertaken to map the picture across Wales.

4. Current situation.

Phase Three

4.1 Phase 3 commenced in 2017 and included the National Adoption Service (NAS) central team being expanded and developed in order to provide unity and coordination, supporting the coordination and leadership of the National Fostering Framework. There is no statutory basis for the National Fostering framework; however, it is recognised as a national commitment with a strong intent for improvement.

4.2 There are now regional development managers being appointed throughout Wales to engage with the national work streams and coordinate plans for delivery in their areas. Swansea is hosting this post for Western Bay.

4.3 The work programme upon which the regional plans are being developed is outlined below:

4.4 **Work stream 1: Create capacity for an extended National Adoption Services central team to provide the co-ordination and leadership for the NFF.**

- Discussions to secure dedicated funding for the NFF post 2018-19 –complete
- Consider the possibility of developing a vision for a unified adoption and fostering framework once funding is secured and ring fenced post April 2018
- A Grant monitoring group has been set up

Work stream 2:- Development of Regional work programmes based on the regional priorities identified by the national performance framework.

- Discussions with the Heads of service with a view to setting up regional work programmes - complete
- The information and intelligence emerging from the national performance work will inform the development of the work programmes

Work stream 3:- Implement the national performance framework across all Local Authorities to help shape the regional priorities.

- All Local Authorities completed the national performance framework for 2016-17.

- Capacity is to be created to analyse data emerging from the Local Authority returns. A part time performance management post will be appointed.
- Work to continue to link the NFF performance framework with the Welsh Community Care Information System(WCCIS).
- Work has begun to establish a similar performance framework within the independent and third sectors.

Work stream 4:- create an All Wales brand for Local Authority fostering. Establish a marketing strategy at regional and central level for the brand

- Work has been undertaken on what activity could best be delivered at central, regional and local level and this is being incorporated into the regional plans.
- A part time national marketing officer has been appointed to lead on this.

Work stream 5:- Increase capacity within the regions to respond to additional enquiries following the market activity:

- Work is underway with regions to identify current recruitment processes.
- Map the nature of additional capacity required in each region to respond to an increase in enquiries and allocate funding as required.

Work stream 6:- develop a national approach to commissioning of fostering services:

- Capacity in the 4Cs has been established to lead on this work and they are producing a Step by Step Guide to Commissioning for Local Authorities

Work stream 7:- develop consistent standards and Best Practice Guide for Kinship Care and Implementation Plan:

- Work is being led by Association of Fostering and Adoption Cymru who, in conjunction with the regions, will develop implementation plans for the draft Best Practice guide.
- Plans in place to begin dialogue with the judiciary to ensure a consistent approach within the courts.

Work stream 8:- continue work on harmonising fees and Allowances for foster carers:

- Work is being led by the Fostering Network
- Mapping out of fees and allowances across the regions has been completed
- A working group has been established with representation from each region to develop a plan as to how greater harmonisation can be achieved.

Work stream 9:- Develop a national training framework for foster carers:

- Association for Fostering and Adoption Cymru, Fostering Network and Social Care Wales have an outline plan to, in conjunction with the regions, develop a draft national training framework.
- Consultation events will take place in North and South Wales.

- 4.5 Officers of Bridgend County Borough Council are represented on the work streams to ensure any developments happening locally in this area of service are consistent with those that are planned nationally.

Bridgend Foster Care

- 4.6 Bridgend Foster Care currently offers fostering services for:

- General foster care - short term, long term, support care and respite.
- The Family Link Scheme - disabled children's respite.
- Supported Lodging – non regulated service offering homes for young people leaving care who are assessed as needing further support to transition to adulthood.
- Parent and Child scheme
- Private Fostering
- Relative foster carers
- Regulation 26 carers (emergency placement with family or friends)

4.7 As at February 28th 2018 within Bridgend Foster Care:

- There were 111 approved Fostering households for general foster placements;
- There were 159 children placed with in-house general foster carers;
- There were 56 approved fostering households for relative foster placements;
- There were 75 children placed with independent fostering agencies.

4.8 A review of Bridgend Foster Care is underway to ensure maximisation of the service potential and development of the approach/model in a way that is consistent with the Residential Placements & Services remodelling project and the National Fostering Framework.

4.9 The review has a number of work streams as outlined below:-

- **Workstream One: Capacity, Competency and systems review:**

- Work has been undertaken to establish the profile of current Bridgend foster carers, where within Bridgend they reside, their level of experience and aspirations in their career development.
- Plans are in place to deliver a 16 week induction training plan for newly approved foster carers. This will improve and enhance their existing skills and knowledge to promote stability and sustainability for children in their care.
- Development of systems that monitor and process placement demands and 'children leaving care' are being progressed.
- Establishment of a system on WCCIS for placements to ensure that all placement searching and matching activity carried out is accurately recorded for children and young people using information from the Children's Commissioning Consortium Cymru (4 Cs) (as defined above at paragraph 3.3, sub paragraph 5) and to better inform the commissioning plan.
- Review the current Independent Placement Matching form and provide training and support to safeguarding teams.
- Develop a placement monitoring process for reviewing independent fostering providers with placements under 16 weeks.

- **Workstream Two:- Recruitment and retention:**

- Work with the marketing department to develop and promote specialist recruitment campaigns for transition carers, promotion of fostering fortnight and supported lodgings.
- The current carer recruitment and development programme is under review to improve career development opportunities for in-house foster carers and

ensure the Local Authority is competitive with independent fostering providers.

- Improving and enhancing support and supervision to in-house foster care households through engagement and consultation forums.

- **Workstream Three - Developing specialist foster carers:**

- Developing a support package and an enhanced training programme which will enhance the skills and knowledge of practitioners within the placements hub.
- The recruitment of a psychologist to support and advise professionals working with complex children and families.

- **Workstream 4 – Finance**

- A review of the financial packages for carers is being undertaken, this will include benchmarking in line with independent fostering agencies and other Local Authorities using the National Fostering Framework data.

4.10 The findings from this review will be collated into a report which will present recommendations and options with regard to any changes to systems, finance, policies and structure in the service.

5. Effect upon Policy Framework and Procedure Rules.

5.1 There are no legal implications arising from this report.

6. Equality Impact Assessment

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

7. Financial Implications.

7.1 There are no specific financial implications arising directly out of this report.

8. Recommendation.

8.1 That the Cabinet Committee notes the updated information contained within the report and supports the further development of the Bridgend Foster Care service as set out above.

Susan Cooper
Corporate Director, Social Services and Wellbeing
March 2018

9. Contact Officer: Natalie Silcox
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10. Background documents
None

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