

CABINET COMMITTEE CORPORATE PARENTING - WEDNESDAY, 4 SEPTEMBER 2019

MINUTES OF A MEETING OF THE CABINET COMMITTEE CORPORATE PARENTING HELD IN COMMITTEE ROOMS 2/3, CIVIC OFFICES ANGEL STREET BRIDGEND CF31 4WB ON WEDNESDAY, 4 SEPTEMBER 2019 AT 10:00

Present

Councillor – Chairperson

HJ David
RM James
RE Young

J Gebbie
CE Smith

T Giffard
CA Webster

CA Green
HM Williams

Apologies for Absence

MC Clarke, N Clarke, DK Edwards, D Patel and PJ White, Mark Shephard

Officers:

Nicola Echanis	Head of Education & Family Support
Lindsay Harvey	Corporate Director Education and Family Support
Laura Kinsey	Head of Children's Social Care
Iain McMillan	Group Manager - Case Management & Transition
Michael Pitman	Business & Administrative Apprentice

201. ELECTION OF CHAIRPERSON

RESOLVED: That in the absence of Cllr P White, the Committee nominated Cllr Huw David as Chairperson.

202. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

None

203. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

RESOLVED: That the minutes of the meeting of 29/05/2019 be approved as a true and accurate record.

204. CARE INSPECTORATE WALES (CIW - FORMERLY CSSIW) INSPECTION OF RESIDENTIAL HOMES

The Head of Children's Social Care presented a report which outlined the reports and associated publication of the Action Plans following inspection reports regarding Sunnybank (December 2018), Bakers Way (January 2019) and Harwood house (February 2019).

She provided the committee with background of CIW which also detailed the types of annual inspections that they carry out on Children's Homes. Further background was provided at section 3 of the report.

The Head of Children's Social Care provided a summary of findings on each of the 3 previously listed children's homes while also exhibiting the areas of improvement. Further details were at section 4 of the report and the full reports for each care home were provided at Appendices 1, 2 and 3.

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The Head of Children's Social Care explained that initially there were major areas for improvement for Harwood house following the inspection as listed at 4.10 of the report. However, as of the end of July, a further inspection was carried out at Harwood house and she confirmed that the non-compliance areas had been addressed. She explained that the draft report for this inspection had been received only a few days before this meeting so therefore were unable to provide it in time. She explained that the final report should be available in the next couple of weeks.

The Head of Children's Social Care advised Members that Karl Culpeck, the regional manager of the children's home Sunny Bank was in attendance today to answer any questions that Members may have.

The Leader mentioned that he identified two actions in the report that were ongoing, both of which for Harwood House and asked if these issues were being addressed. The Head of Children's Social Care explained that all issues identified were in the process of being addressed.

A Member mentioned that the children's homes' personal plans had not been regularly updated and this appeared to be a consistent theme. She asked if this had been fed through to the establishments to ensure that they were being updated.

The Head of Children's Social Care explained that Maple Tree House was the other establishment in the area and confirmed that there were things in place to ensure managers of the establishments were meeting and sharing best practice with each other. This ensures that they can learn from each other and improve. Mr Culpeck confirmed that there were manager meetings and they were always looking to learn from each other.

A Member asked in relation to sign language, if training was provided on Signalong as well as Pecs as a method for communication.

Mr Culpeck confirmed that Signalong was a method of communication that training was provided for. The induction training provides a baseline knowledge for many communication methods to ensure that everyone has some degree of knowledge from the start.

The Head of Children's Social Care Explained that there were initial concerns while there were changes being made in relation to staffing, new legislation, changes in registration and inspections and a change in local inspectors, however, they believed this to be ironed out.

The Leader asked if the Committee could receive an update in 6 – 12 months regarding the two ongoing actions that were previously identified.

The Head of Children's Social Care agreed to provide an update at a future Corporate Parenting committee.

Members praised the action plan and the continued hard work carried out by the team and were pleased to hear that engagement with the staff at the children's homes has been positive.

RESOLVED: That the Cabinet Committee:

- (1) approved the updated Action Plan;
- (2) Requested an update in 6-12 months on the two ongoing actions as identified in the report.

205. FEEDBACK ON CARE LEAVERS WHO ATTEND UNIVERSITY

The Leader requested this item to be presented first as there were three care leavers who were invited to speak to the committee. The committee agreed to bring the item forward on the agenda.

The Group Manager - Case Management & Transition presented a report which provided the committee with an overview in respect of the care leavers currently attending university or who planned to attend university, their experiences and support provided from the local authority. He also advised Members that three care leavers were in attendance to present their experiences of attending university and their ambitions for the future.

The Group Manager - Case Management & Transition explained that the Corporate Parenting Committee received a report on the 6th March 2019 regarding the policy on University Support Packages for Care Leavers which subsequently received Cabinet approval on the 19th March 2019. He explained that a key priority for BCBC was to ensure that young people who aspire to attend higher education are able to achieve this and that support is provided. Further background was provided at section 3 of the report.

The Group Manager - Case Management & Transition provided details on the 16+ team within the Children's Social Care and the support they provide to care leavers during the transitional period of their lives. Further details were at section 4 of the report.

He provided details on Cardiff University and the First Campus Confident Futures Project which was accessed by care leavers aged 14-19 and aimed to raise their aspirations and confidence. Sessions ran monthly from October through to April on an annual basis. Further details were provided at section 4 of the report.

The Group Manager - Case Management & Transition informed the committee that there were currently 9 young people who were attending University including MSc, MA, BA, HND and PGCE. The statistics from previous year's attendance in comparison to 2019/20 were listed at 4.6 of the report.

The Group Manager - Case Management & Transition explained that young people in University chose to live in their own independent accommodation, however if they wished to return to their placement outside of term time, the 16+ team will provide the support and guidance for the young person to make an informed decision.

He explained that the young person would have a PA (personal advisor) who regularly checks in with them to work with them and support them if required. He said that while university is often a place where young people choose to disengage with the 16+ team, this can often place the young person at risk if they begin to struggle, and therefore the team try to keep engagement with young person regularly.

The Group Manager - Case Management & Transition provided the committee with an example of a young person who withdrew from their studies but were supported back into studies by the team.

The Leader asked Becky, a young care leaver who recently began her studies at university, to give her experiences.

Becky explained that she started university last year. Her initial worries were the temporary accommodation and she believed that she would struggle with further education. She explained that the care service gave her the support she needed to have

the confidence to pursue further education helped her with her nerves and overall confidence.

Becky described the emotional and financial support from the care team as invaluable, stating that she would have not managed without it.

The Leader asked Holly, another care leaver who studies at university, to give her experiences.

Holly explained that she was in her 3rd year at Swansea University. She studied for a Tax Technician qualification for the Association of Taxation Technicians (ATT). She described the support as being really helpful and appreciated all the small things as they made a big difference, particularly help with confidence building. She planned to undertake her tax advisory qualification after this academic year and had been fortunate to receive an offer of funding for this from Somerset Council.

The Leader asked Aime, another care leaver attending University to give her experiences.

Aime explained that she was a bit of a trouble maker in school and did not always take her studies seriously. She explained that she left school at 16 and shortly after, had a child. Aime explained that after this, she did not think about work or have any aspirations for a career, which in turn caused her to lack self confidence in her abilities. Aime explained that the support she had received was really beneficial and had really helped drive her to do more. As a result of the support received, Aime said that she was now studying a Master's Degree.

The three care leavers commented on the support and expressed their gratitude for what they had received and all agreed that they could not have achieved what they did without them.

The Corporate Director – Social Services and Wellbeing gave her thanks to the care leavers and asked them if there were any comments or advice they could give to the staff.

Becky explained that consistency regarding the packages offered to care leavers varied. She explained that the 'When I am Ready' placement was not initially offered to her out of her university course term time. Holly also confirmed that there were changes to packages so there was some inconsistency with what was offered and when. Becky explained that there was some communication issues at times which meant during some of the changes with packages, many care leavers were unaware of what was happening.

The Corporate Director – Social Services and Wellbeing thanked the care leavers for their comments and said that she would take the comments back to the team and ensure there is more clear information being fed back to social workers.

A Member added that she had a background in working with young people and understood the experiences that many people have had to go through. She commented on the care leavers' experiences stating that she was inspired by their stories and was pleased to see such a level of success being achieved.

The Leader commented on the appearance of a gender bias in that there were far fewer boys going to university. He asked if there was a known reason for this.

The Corporate Director – Social Services and Wellbeing explained that it was more common for boys to choose the apprenticeship route when they left school. Boys showed more interest in apprenticeships overall than they did university.

The Leader thanked the care leavers for giving their experiences to the committee and was delighted to hear of the success they had achieved.

The Leader also thanked his colleagues in Social Services.

The Leader asked the Corporate Director – Social Services and Wellbeing and the care leavers if they would be able to present their experiences to schools in the Bridgend area to provide students with positive experiences, be a role model for them and show them what is possible for anyone in any situation.

RESOLVED: That the committee;

- Noted the contents of the report
- Supported the work that had been done to date in this area and continuation of future support.

206. APPROVAL OF THE STATEMENTS OF PURPOSE FOR RESIDENTIAL SERVICES

The Head of Children’s Social Care presented a report which provided members with the revised statements of purpose for the current residential services provision in Bridgend county borough council. She explained that it was a requirement under the council’s constitution that these were presented to the Corporate Parenting Committee for approval.

The Head of Children’s Social Care provided background to the committee with regards to the number of children’s homes in Bridgend County Borough delivering services to children/young people ages 0-19 years. Further details were at section 3 of the report.

The Head of Children’s Social Care explained that each Local Authority was now issued with a certificate of registration, as opposed to individual services being registered. She explained that this was to allow the statements of purpose to be presented in a uniform way. The Statement of Purpose for each of the four children’s homes in Bridgend County Borough are attached at Appendix 1 - 4 respectively, with the guide to compiling a statement of purpose attached at Appendix 5.

A Member asked the Head of Children’s Social Care if there was still a sensory room in Bakers Way, as in a previous report there was mention of a sensory room being converted into a bedroom.

The Head of Children’s Social Care explained that there was a change in the location of the sensory room but not the removal of it. This was outlined in the Statement of Purpose form Bakers Way attached at Appendix 3.

A Member asked why there was no sensory room in Harwood House and if they had plans for one.

The Regional Manager explained that if there was a requirement for it then the provision would be put in place, but as of yet, there have been no children who had required it to date. Children who had required a sensory room had been at the homes that already had it in place.

A Member asked if there were any welsh speaking staff at the children’s homes

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The Corporate Director – Social Services and Wellbeing explained that there had been no requirement to date for a welsh language staff member but would be able to provide this to a child if it were needed.

The Leader explained that if there was a requirement for a permanent welsh speaking staff member at any of the children's homes, they would look to acquire one to ensure no child were at a disadvantage.

RESOLVED: That the Corporate Parenting Committee;

1. Noted the content of the report and;
2. Approved the statement of purpose for each of the residential services provision.

207. URGENT ITEMS

None

The meeting closed at 11:45