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Bridgend County Borough Council



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Cyfarwyddiaeth y Prif Weithredwr / Chief Executive's Directorate

Deialu uniongyrchol / Direct line /: 01656 643148 / 643147 / 643694

Gofynnwch am / Ask for: Michael Pitman

Ein cyf / Our ref:

Eich cyf / Your ref:

Dyddiad/Date: Tuesday, 25 February 2020

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, 4 March 2020 at 10:00.**

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 04/09/2019
4. Looked After Children Reduction Strategy & Early Help & Safeguarding Board Strategy 9 - 24

Invitees:

Laura Kinsey – Head of Children's Social Care
Iain McMillan – Group Manager - Case Management & Transition
Mark Lewis – Group Manager Integrated Working and Family Support
Dave Wright – Family Support Services Manager

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.

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Yours faithfully

K Watson

Chief Officer, Legal, HR & Regulatory Services

Councillors:

MC Clarke

N Clarke

HJ David

DK Edwards

J Gebbie

Councillors

T Giffard

CA Green

RM James

D Patel

CE Smith

Councillors

CA Webster

DBF White

PJ White

HM Williams

RE Young

Agenda Item 3

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.

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

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

BRIDGEND COUNTY BOROUGH COUNCIL

REPORT TO CORPORATE PARENTING COMMITTEE

4TH March 2020

REPORT OF THE CORPORATE DIRECTOR, SOCIAL SERVICES AND WELLBEING

LOOKED AFTER CHILDREN REDUCTION STRATEGY & EARLY HELP & SAFEGUARDING BOARD STRATEGY

1. Purpose of the Report

- 1.1 To update the Corporate Parenting Committee on the work of the Welsh Government National Technical Group which was presented to Corporate Parenting the 29th May 2019, and set out the actions that the Local Authority has undertaken since this date in respect of its implementation of its Looked after Children reduction strategy.
- 1.2 This report contains information on the Early Help & Safeguarding Boards' strategy and provides details on the associating work streams and key actions relating to its updated action plan.

2. Connection to Corporate Improvement Objectives/Other Corporate Priorities

- 2.1 This report assists in the achievement of the following corporate priorities:-
 - **Supporting a successful economy** – taking steps to make the county a good place to do business, for people to live, work, study and visit, and to ensure that our schools are focussed on raising the skills, qualifications and ambitions of all people in the county.
 - **Helping people to be more self-reliant** – taking early steps to reduce or prevent people from becoming vulnerable or dependent on the Council and its services.
 - **Smarter use of resources** – ensuring that all its resources (financial, physical, human and technological) are used as effectively and efficiently as possible and support the development of resources throughout the community that can help deliver the Council's priorities.

3. Background

- 3.1 On 29th May 2019 this committee was provided with a report by the Corporate Director of Social Services & Wellbeing in respect of the work being undertaken by Welsh Government to develop reduction expectations for Looked After Children (LAC) across Wales. The report highlighted that the First Minister's manifesto includes a firm commitment to support looked after children by focussing on the importance of reducing the need for children to enter care and also by improving outcomes for children in care.
- 3.2 The reports key findings were that in March 2018, there were 6,407 looked after children in Wales. This was an 8% increase on the previous year. Over the past 15 years, the number of looked after children had increased by 34%.

- 3.3 National data also highlights some other noteworthy patterns. For example, 24.6% of looked after children are placed out of county (1,575) and 5% are placed outside Wales (320). There will be good reasons why some of these children are placed out of area (e.g. placement with family or friends or the development of regional approaches to specialist provision), but it is recognised that others are placed further afield because there is no suitable provision locally. Some of the underlying issues have begun to be addressed through the National Fostering Framework, the Children's Residential Care Task and Finish Group and other work strands within the Improving Outcomes for Children programme. However, Welsh Government also wanted to take the opportunity to explore with local authorities the factors that influence decision making around out of county and cross-border placements, to ensure that more children can be placed closer to home where this is in their best interests.
- 3.4 To take this work forward Welsh Government established a technical group to inform and advise on the approach to this activity involving representatives from the Association of Directors of Social Services (ADSS) Cymru, Welsh Local Government Association (WLGA), local authorities, third sector and Welsh Government officials. The Corporate Director, Social Services and Wellbeing represents ADSS on this group. The Local Authority was visited by Welsh Government as part of the work of the technical group on the 1st May 2019. Following visits to all 22 Welsh Local Authorities the technical group has now produced an overarching report which highlights the key messages and also identifies actions that have to be taken forward nationally.
- 3.5 The overarching report highlighted the areas that each Local Authority has to target and report on a quarterly basis. The 4 areas in which the Local Authority has to set out its proposed reduction expectations are:-
- Numbers of children in care
 - Numbers of children who are placed out of county
 - Numbers of children placed outside of Wales
 - Numbers of children removed from parents with a learning disability

Within each quarterly report the Local Authority has to set out its proposed reduction expectation for the year, its achievements to date, the narrative behind these achievements and set out its next steps.

- 3.6 The Early Help & Safeguarding Board is jointly chaired by the Corporate Director of Education & Family Support and the Corporate Director of Social Services & Wellbeing. The Board is made up of senior managers from each directorate, and senior officers from the Police and Health. The purpose of this panel is 'to ensure a whole system approach to the safe reduction of the numbers of children in the Safeguarding arena'. The board has a joint action plan which has been in place since 2016. This plan focussed on the Institute of Public Care (IPC) recommendations in respect of Early Help & Safeguarding services (2018) and the Care Inspectorate for Wales (CIW) inspection of Children's Services in 2017. The plan also monitored actions linked to the Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACE's) agenda and rehabilitation and permanence. At the Board meeting on 22nd October 2019 it was identified that the existing action plan had been achieved almost in its entirety. As a result it was agreed that a new action plan would be drafted which would refocus on the crosscutting directorate activity.

4. Current situation / proposal

LAC Reduction Expectation Strategy

- 4.1 Ensuring the safe reduction of the LAC population was already a key strategic aim for the Local Authority. However, as a result of the LAC reduction expectation strategy, Children's Social Care have reviewed and refocused its approach and practice in this area. A key facet of this revised LAC strategy action plan was the launch of the Permanency Monitoring Group. The purpose of the Permanency Monitoring Group is to track the progress of children's journeys through the looked after system at an operational level, and for senior managers to assure themselves that actions are being taken to progress their plans for permanence appropriately. This group is an effective forum for not only tracking and monitoring but also in addressing care plan drift and practice issues.
- 4.2 Two key areas of practice have been the focus of this group. The first is to target the cohort of cases for looked after children/young people who could be subject to an alternative order or have their Care Order discharged. The second is preventing cases escalating to the point that the child/young person has to become looked after.
- 4.3 The first Permanency Monitoring Group which focuses on the LAC strategy action plan met on 10th September 2019. The group is chaired by the Group Manager for Case Management & Transition and the Group Manager for Information Advice and Assistance (IAA) and Safeguarding, and takes place bi-monthly. For more detail on the groups criteria and work streams please see **Appendix A** which contains the groups terms of reference. The group focuses on the case management of the cohort of cases in which it has been identified that there are opportunities to change the permanency plan. The group is currently concentrating on 45 cases, in which it has been identified that the care plan could potentially change in the following ways:-
- the Care Order could be discharged
 - a child/young person could be reunified with their birth family under placements with parents regulations
 - a Special Guardianship Order could be granted
 - a child/young person could be brought back into the county or from outside of Wales
- 4.4 By focussing on this cohort of cases, setting key time focused actions, and targeting services and resources on these cases it is anticipated that the Local Authority will increase the number of children that can be discharged from Care Orders in 2020-21, and increase the number of children who are brought back to live within the Local Authority. To support this programme of work the Local Authority has utilised Intermediate Care Fund (ICF) funding to create four Reunification Support Worker posts in the Fostering Service. These workers are focusing on providing placement stability, supporting the plans to bring children/young people back from out of county placements and reunification with birth families. The first workers were employed in November 2019. These Re-unification workers will work closely with edge of care services to support children to return home safely to families when they have been in the care system.
- 4.5 The Local Authority has adopted the National Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children (NSPCC) reunification toolkit. In October 2019, key members of staff undertook reunification training. There are now officers in each team within

Children's Social Care who are able to mentor and support their team members so that they can assess, plan and support children, young people and their families in respect of reunification. It is anticipated that this will lead to an increase in the number of children/young people who are reunified with their birth families and crucially there being a decrease in those children/young people returning to the care system at a later date.

- 4.6 The Local Authority continues to focus on bringing children/young people back from independent and out of county placements. All placements with independent providers are continually reviewed within 12 weeks of the children being accommodated with Independent Fostering Agencies (IFA's). The aim being, where appropriate, to bring children and young people back into in-house fostering placements. All children placed with independent providers are monitored through the Placement Audit Tracking Monitoring Report. In addition to this, information is forwarded to the Fostering Team on a weekly basis, identifying children under the age of 10 currently in agency placements with a view to them reviewing their in house provisions. All cases should be reviewed at the Accommodation and Permanence Panel prior to the second LAC Review, for permanence planning. There is ongoing focus and investment in respect of marketing and the recruitment of general, respite, transitional carers and Parent and Child carers in order to ensure that there are placements for children to move into. The Development Officer who sits in the fostering team focusses on this and on the retention of existing foster carers.
- 4.7 At the end of quarter 3 the number of looked after children was 387, this is compared to the figure of 381 at the start of the financial year and demonstrates the fragility of this area and the frequent fluctuations in numbers throughout the year. So far during this year the number of children who have become looked after during a month has been 7.4. This is a decrease on the 7.7 average per month in 2018-19. This evidences that our Early Help and Safeguarding services are helping to support the reduction of the number of children and young people who need to become looked after. However, the number who have ceased to become looked after has been 6.8 per month, which is a decrease on the 7.9 per month in 2018-19, and explains why there has been a slight increase in the looked after children population.
- 4.8 The number of children who returned from out of county placements during the first 3 quarters of 2020 has been 17. This is positive as the expectation target the Local Authority had set itself for 2020-21 was for 6 children/young people to return. However, some children and young people have experienced changes in their placements or been placed out of the county. This remains an area of focus for Children Social Care, as wherever possible we would want children/young people to reside within the Local Authority. The number of children who returned from placements outside of Wales in 2020-21 has been zero. However, Bridgend only has 7 looked after children placed outside of Wales, and the Local Authority had already assessed that it would not have been appropriate for any of these children/young people to be returned during this financial year.
- 4.9 Edge of Care services are working closely with Children's Social Care in respect of the prevention agenda. Services have been developed which focus on reducing the numbers of children being looked after. These include the development of an innovative service called Baby in Mind. This service was developed in response to a review of the Local Authority's LAC population which demonstrated that 38% of children who became looked after during the year (2017-18) were under the age of

one. The Local Authority had also commissioned ten parent and child placements during the same period. It was recognised that by developing a service to respond to this identified group it could provide opportunities for earlier intervention and reduce the need to use the care system and/or parent and child placements. This team has now been in operation for 12 months and is able to demonstrate a positive impact on the prevention of babies entering the care system. 87% of babies who have been supported during 2018-19 by the Baby in Mind team have been prevented from becoming looked after. In addition, there has been a reduction of 50% in the use of Parent and Baby placements over the same period.

- 4.10 Early Help have developed the Rapid Response team to assist families in immediate crisis which offers wrap around support including support early in the mornings, evenings and weekends. This team was created to assist our long standing and successful edge of care service Connecting Families which has consistently demonstrated positive impact on prevention on of LAC. In addition to these services, we have the Integrated Family Support Service (IFSS) which is a statutory support service developed by Welsh Government in 2012 to support families where substance misuse is impacting on parents ability to care for their children.
- 4.11 Another service has been developed as part of a regional arrangement within the Cwm Taf Morgannwg region called Reflect, this service is delivered on behalf of the three local authorities by Barnardos Cymru. Reflect is a project that was created to support parents following the removal of their child from their care. Reflect was developed in recognition that many parents have children removed from their care but then access or receive little support and subsequently have further children who also need to be removed. The service therefore aims to prevent further pregnancy for a period of time and supports the parents to focus on their own needs so that they will be able to parent effectively in the future. The development of all of these new services alongside existing support services provides Children's Social Care with a wide range of services to support children and families with the aim of preventing children entering the care system safely or to safely exit care and live at home with the support they need.

Joint Action Plan

- 4.12 A new joint action plan has been drafted (**Appendix B**) and will be presented to the Early Help and Safeguarding board on 9th March 2020. The action plan focuses on 5 key areas that cut across the Social Services & Wellbeing and Education & Family Support directorates. These areas are:-
- The Youth Justice Service
 - The safe reduction of the Looked After Children population
 - To review and monitor edge of care services
 - Evaluation of the step up/down process between Early Help & Safeguarding
 - Regional MAPPS (Multi- Agency Placement Permanence Service)
- 4.13 The focus of the Early Help and Safeguarding board remains 'to ensure a whole system approach to the safe reduction of the numbers of children in the safeguarding arena'. The above five fields of business are the current areas of focus for the directorates, which are cross cutting and support the strategy of the safe reduction of Looked After Children, or in the case of the MAPPS service, ensure that children and young people and their carers receive the appropriate specialist therapeutic support whilst they are looked after. Edge of care services

play a critical role in supporting the Local Authority to reduce the number of looked after children. The teams work closely with Children's Social Care to support families and contribute to decision making regarding children remaining at home with their family safely. Bridgend Youth Justice Service also works closely with Early Help and Childrens Social Care.

- 4.14 The joint action plan focuses on the working interface between Early Help and Safeguarding to ensure that it is meeting the needs of the children, young people and families that they support. Early Help & Safeguarding colleagues are co-located together in the North, East & West safeguarding hubs. There are processes in place to ensure that the team managers work closely together and meet on a weekly basis to discuss cases and working practises. Regular joint development days are held to support the development of the staff and maintain positive working relationships. Team managers undertake audits together in respect of cases which have either been stepped down by safeguarding or stepped up by Early Help to ensure good practice is in place. The Early Help & Safeguarding Board monitors the interface between the two services, and receives regular feedback from senior managers at the board in respect of progress in this area.
- 4.15 From April 1st 2020 MAPSS (Multi Agency Permanence Support Service) will be commissioned within the Cwm Taf Morgannwg region. The commissioning process is currently underway in respect of a MAPSS for children who have the most complex and challenging needs and require a specialised high level service providing therapy to support both the child/young person and the parent/carer/staff member to prevent any placement or adoption from breaking down.
- 4.16 The service aims to:

Improve the mental health and emotional wellbeing of children looked after (CLA) who experience multiple difficulties for example mental illness, emotional and/or behavioral difficulties. Promoting secure attachment as a means of helping children and young people and their carers maintain placements (living and educational) so that they can feel safe enough to develop supportive attachments/relationships, opportunities for positive growth and start to process developmental trauma. Through helping the child's welfare system (Social Workers, carers, teachers etc) to best understand the child, their development, the trauma they have experienced and how this can present challenges for their care, to inform planning and intervention. The Early Help & Safeguarding Board will be monitoring the impact of this newly commissioned service.

5. Effect upon Policy Framework & Procedure Rules

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

6. Equalities Impact Assessment

- 6.1 There are no equality implications in this report.

7. Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015 Assessment

- 7.1 The implementation of the duties and responsibilities under the Social Services and Wellbeing (Wales) Act 2014 (SSWBA) supports the promotion of two of the seven

goals of the Well-Being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015 within the County Borough of Bridgend. By promoting an environment that maximises people's physical and mental well-being and by supporting children, young people, adults and their carers and families to fulfil their potential no matter what their circumstances, the wellbeing goals of a Healthier and more equal Bridgend and Wales are supported.

7.2 The Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015 provides the basis for driving a different kind of public service in Wales, with five ways of working to guide how the Authority should work to deliver wellbeing outcomes for people. The following is a summary to show how the five ways of working to achieve the well-being goals have been considered in this report:

- Long Term – Social Services is demand led and the SSWBA focusses on sustainable prevention and wellbeing outcomes for the future. There is a requirement to meet the needs of people in the longer term and, because of rising demographics and increasing complexity, the safe reduction of looked after children numbers continues to be a priority.
- Prevention – the report reflects the ongoing commitment to new approaches adopted by the Directorate in line with the SSWBA, for example, the provision of information, advice and assistance to enable people to remain independent for as long as possible. This will ensure that need is anticipated and resources can be more effectively directed to better manage demand. There is a focus on prevention and early intervention in the Early Help & Safeguarding action plan.
- Integration and Collaboration – the implementation of the SSWBA requires local authorities to work with partners, particularly the NHS and the Police, to ensure care and support for people and support for carers is provided. The report evidences the work with partners that will be required to enable people to remain living within their communities, and where necessary, responding to safeguarding concerns in a timely, efficient manner.
- Involvement – the key stakeholders are the people who use social care. There is considerable engagement including surveys, stakeholder meetings, feedback forms and the complaints process. The provision of accessible information and advice helps to ensure that the voice of adults, children and young people is heard.

8. Financial Implications

8.1 Based on current projections the Local Authority in 2019-20 will, on average, spend £32,799 per Looked After Child, with a projected overall spend of £12,535,378. At the same period in 2018-19, the projected overall spend was £11,930,122. At the end of 2018-19 the actual overall spend was £11,486,106. The average spend per Looked After Child in 2018-19 was £30,147.

8.2 This figure has been largely affected by a small number of very complex cases with court orders in place requiring the authority to commission specialist placements and/or high levels of staffing to ensure the level of supervision and support is adequate.

9. Recommendation

9.1 It is recommended that the Cabinet Committee notes the information provided in this report.

Susan Cooper
Corporate Director, Social Services and Wellbeing

DATE: February 2020

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Background documents

None

Permanency Monitoring Group Terms of Reference

September 2019

Definition of Permanence

Permanence is the framework of emotional permanence (attachment), physical permanence (stability) and legal permanence (the carer has parental responsibility for the child) which gives a child the sense of security, continuity, commitment and identity. The objective of planning for permanence is therefore to ensure that children have a secure, stable and loving family to support them through childhood and beyond.

A range of placement options for permanence exist, which can deliver good outcomes for children. These include:

- Return to birth parents where it has been possible to address the factors in family life which led to the child becoming looked after
- Shared care arrangement
- Permanence within the looked after system which could include residential care, long-term unrelated foster care or family and friends care
- Legal permanence through adoption, special guardianship or child arrangement orders.
- Early permanence through Fostering for Adoption.

The purpose of a **Permanency Monitoring Group** is to track progress of children's journeys through the looked after system at an operational level, and for senior managers to assure themselves that actions are being taken to progress their plans for permanence appropriately. This group is an effective forum for not only tracking and monitoring but also in addressing practice issues.

Purpose

- To track all cases (S76 and within court proceedings) where children/YP are not in identified or matched permanent placements.
- To monitor progress of children when a Permanence Plan has already been identified but is yet to be finalised.
- To ensure that the Local Authority safely reduces its LAC population in line with its reduction expectation.
- To monitor all new Looked After Children to ensure that by the second LAC review all children have a clearly identified Permanence Plan.
- Identify issues thematically that have contributed to delays in achieving a final permanency placement – e.g. courts, delay between S76 and proceedings, lack

of timely adoption/permanent fostering placements for children: lack of expediency in progress of parallel planning process from the second review.

- Identify procedural and policy changes identified through core business of the meetings.
- Collating thematic information and using this to provide constructive challenge and change, which contribute to improved partnership working with both the judiciary and CAFCASS.
- To identify training needs to support social workers to strengthen and support understanding and confidence with permanency planning in line with pre-consultation: knowledge and skills statement for achieving permanence.

Process

- PMG will be held on a six weekly basis to ensure/monitor progress on permanent placement planning for Looked After children. The meeting will be jointly chaired by the Group Manager for Safeguarding and the IAA Service and by the Group Manager for Case Management and Transition. In their absence the meeting will be chaired by the PO for Case Management or the IRO Service Manager.
- Each of the service areas will be represented by a nominated Team Manager from Children's Social Care who will provide case updates relating to the permanence plans. If they are unable to attend they must nominate an appropriate deputy to attend in their absence.
- To assist the meeting the chair will identify particular thematic/practice issues that warrant further discussion. Once key cases have been identified, paperwork will be circulated and read by the group members in advance to support discussions. There is an expectation that panel members are prepared in advance. Any actions identified in the previous meeting should have been completed and an update will be required to be provided at the next meeting.
- The chair will finalise the agenda one week in advance of the meeting which will then provide sufficient time for group members to prepare for the forthcoming meeting. This will then be circulated to group members and the case relevant managers within the service area.
- Themes/Issues including statistical and qualitative data will be shared within the Senior Management Team Meeting which includes the Head of Children's Social Care.
- The meeting will be serviced by dedicated Business Support

Membership

- Group Managers for Safeguarding and IAA Service & Case Management and Transition (jnt Chairs)
- Principal Officer Case Management and IRO Service Manager (jnt vice chairs)
- Team Managers in Safeguarding Hubs, Children with Disability & Transition, Just Ask Plus, Fostering.
- Family support Service Manager
- Permanence Social Worker
- Child Care Lawyer
- Business Support

Outcomes

- All children who become looked after will have an identified permanence plan that is monitored through achieving better outcomes for children/young people and targeting the timely provision of resources. It is anticipated that there will be an associated benefit of reducing the Looked After Children population and associated costs.
- The LAC population is safely reduced in line with the reduction expectation.
- There is an increase in the use of alternative orders such as Special Guardianship Orders.
- The number of children/young people who are placed outside of Wales or out of county is reduced.
- The time that children/young continue are subject to Placement with Parents Regulations is reduced.
- All blocks and barriers to achieving this are identified as early as possible and where necessary are actively challenged both internally and externally.
- Learning from placement breakdowns and disruption meetings to ensure that we as Corporate Parents who strive to achieve placement stability through appropriate placement matching and choice.
- The authority knows how many children they are planning to care for in the longer term and those whose plans for permanence may have other opportunities for permanence.

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Early Help and Safeguarding Joint Action Plan April 2020 to March 2021

B	Completed
R	A problem needs serious attention and action now
A	Issues are being managed and if addressed should not affect delivery
G	On track, in progress, any minor risks/ issues being managed
NYS	Not Yet Started

Youth Justice Service								
	Owner	Due date	Recommendation	Action	Evidence	Update	Last RAG	RAG
1	Group Manager Integrated working and Family support	May 2020	To address the issues identified by HMIP in respect of the Youth Justice service (formerly Western Bay)	To implement the post inspection action plan	Outcome report following re-inspection of BCBC Youth Justice service in summer of 2020	Steady progress being made. Structural changes have been made and new management arrangements are in place. Focus now on quality assurance and risk management.	n/a	Amber
Reduction of Looked After Children (LAC) population								
	Owner	Due date	Recommendation	Action	Evidence	Update	Last RAG	RAG
2	Group Manager Case Management	March 2021	To safely reduce the Looked After Children population	Reduce the number of children and young people	A quarterly report to Welsh Government in			

	and Transition Group Manager IAA and Safeguarding		in Bridgend	placed outside Wales Reduce the number of children and young people placed out of the county Reduce the number of children and young people removed from parents with a learning disability Reduce the number of children and young people subject of Care Orders to BCBC	respect of the reduction of children and young people Looked After by Bridgend Local Authority			
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Review and monitor Edge of Care Services

	Owner	Due date	Recommendation	Action	Evidence	Update	Last RAG	RAG
3	Group Manager Integrated working and Family support	March 2021	Ensure Edge of Care Services inclusive of: Baby In Mind, Rapid Response, Connecting Families, Integrated Family	Provide regular performance data to the Early Help and Safeguarding Board in respect of its impact on preventing children and young people	Data information that is provided to the Early Help and Safeguarding Board on a quarterly basis			

			Support Services, Reflect, Family Group Conferencing and Reunification Support Workers continue to demonstrate effective intervention to prevent children and young people in Bridgend becoming Looked After	becoming Looked After in Bridgend				
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Evaluation of Step Up / Step Down Quality Assurance Audits

	Owner	Due date	Recommendation	Action	Evidence	Update	Last RAG	RAG
4	Group Manager Integrated working and Family support Principal Officer Case Management	April 2021	To ensure compliance with step up / step down audits and report identified themes to the Early Help and Safeguarding Board	Evaluation report to be shared with the Early Help and Safeguarding Board twice yearly	Regular quality assurance audit activity 6 monthly review meeting of findings Report to the Early Help and Safeguarding Board			

Regional MAPPS (Multi-Agency Placement Permanence Service)

	Owner	Due date	Recommendation	Action	Evidence	Update	Last RAG	RAG
5	Group	April	To ensure there is a	Develop a regional		Service specification is		

	Manager regulated Services	2021	specialist therapeutic service to support Looked After children.	MAPPS Service on a Cwm Taf footprint		being drafted with a view to tender in February 2020		
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Draft