

CABINET COMMITTEE CORPORATE PARENTING - WEDNESDAY, 8 MAY 2024

MINUTES OF A MEETING OF THE CABINET COMMITTEE CORPORATE PARENTING HELD HYBRID IN THE COUNCIL CHAMBER - CIVIC OFFICES, ANGEL STREET, BRIDGEND, CF31 4WB ON WEDNESDAY, 8 MAY 2024 AT 10:00

Present

Councillor HJ David – Chairperson

N Farr

J E Pratt

HM Williams

Present Virtually

F D Bletsoe
T Thomas

JPD Blundell

W R Goode

M Lewis

Apologies for Absence

J Gebbie and JC Spanswick

Officers:

Steve Berry

Corporate Parenting and Participation Officer

Christa Bonham - Griffiths

Nimi Chandrasena

Democratic Services Officer - Support

Nicola Echanis

Head of Education & Family Support

Mark Lewis

Group Manager - Integrated Working

Claire Marchant

Corporate Director - Social Services and Wellbeing

Stuart Osborne

Team Manager - Just Ask Plus

David Wright

Family Support Services Manager

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Declarations of Interest

None

45. Approval of Minutes

Decision Made	RESOLVED : That the minutes of a meeting of the Cabinet Committee Corporate Parenting dated 01/02/2024 be approved as a true and accurate record.
Date Decision Made	8 May 2024

46. Basic Income Pilot Scheme Exit Strategy

Decision Made	<p>The Deputy Head of Children and Family Services presented a report which provided the Cabinet Committee Corporate Parenting with an update on the exit strategy of the Welsh Government's Basic Income Pilot (BIP) Scheme for eligible care experienced young people.</p> <p>A Member asked :</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• The purpose of the pilot scheme• The Welsh Government's intention for the scheme and if successful, was there a plan to roll it out indefinitely to care leavers. <p>He referred to point 3.7 of the report asking for clarification on the plan and support for the transition where basic payments came to an end.</p> <p>The Member also queried about the housing tenure of the 25 participants and asked if there could be an elaboration of positive outcomes of the scheme.</p> <p>The Deputy Head of Children and Family Services responded that the intention of the Welsh Government made reference to an evaluation looking at the impact of what the basic income pilot scheme had achieved for care leavers. It was an assumption that it would inform of steps to be taken as a result of that</p>
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evaluation. The Evaluation was expected to provide a better indication as to what the Welsh Government's proposals would be.

With reference to the point around the planning and looking at what would happen once the payments came to an end, the Deputy Head of Children and Family Services referred to a pathway plan, the transition of which was expected to be the key aspect determining the way the team, the personal advisor, the champion and the social worker would work very closely with the young person and other partners to determine what would be required next. This process was expected to identify any gaps linked to benefits claims, housing issues, education, training and employment.

In relation to the point around the housing tenure of the 25 young people, The Deputy Head of Children and Family Services stated that they would have to report back to committee as there were many living at home with family members and some within supported accommodation.

The Team Manager - Just Ask Plus provided some figures in relation to current housing tenures :

- 5 young people receiving “compiler tour” meaning they remained with their foster carers post 18
- 11 who had decided to move in with family or friends post 18
- 1 young person resides in a hostel
- 3 young people in supported living accommodation
- 1 Young Person in a shared lives provision
- 5 young people in rented accommodation.

The Team Manager- Just Ask Plus stated that there were three young people currently engaged in employment. Those three young people had saved their basic income pilot monies, one of whom had saved £20,000 and was hoping to put that towards a deposit on his own property.

A member inquired if there was a link with Employability Bridgend to which the The Deputy Head of Children and Family Services responded to state that there was a “Multiply” worker who was part of the employability service placed within the team and had close links with the Team Manager - Just Ask Plus, the champion social workers and personal advisors within the 16 plus service. The Deputy Head of Children and Family Services added that there were workshops planned to be held through the summer holidays for young people involving the Youth Development Service, which did a lot of work around education, training and employment.

He also stated that the Citizens Advice Bureau and the Department for Work and Pensions were to be a

part of the workshops. He stated that this was expected to be a real opportunity for young people under the Local Authority to gain clarity in terms of support available them to either remain engaged in education, training, employment or access opportunities around education, training and employment.

A discussion took place between a member and the Team Manager – Just ask plus with reference independent financial advice being available to the young persons. It was brought to light that the only financial advice being made available was through the Citizen’s Advice Bureau. It was agreed that this may be sufficient for some young people but others may benefit from a higher level of advice. The Team manager assured the member that if the requirement to provide higher financial advice was identified as part of their pathway planning, that would be pursued by the team.

A Member asked for clarity on how many of the Local Authority’s care leavers were unemployed whilst receiving the basic income. He stated that if combined with the national minimum wage, it was a lot of money that individuals were receiving with the premise that the income was going to disappear when the scheme came to its end. He stated that it was important that the Young People explored Financial management advice because it was comparable anyone losing their employment which would result in financial difficulty.

The Deputy Head of Children and Family Services stated that the key aspect was the pathway plan and the importance of reviewing that pathway plan while considering options that were available. He stressed that the role of the personal advisor or the social worker of the Young person was critical in reviewing that plan and making sure the young person was clear about their rights, knowing what they had access to and points of contact on who was best placed to advise and guide. He also stressed the importance, accessibility and impact the roles of employability workers, the Citizens Advice Bureau, Department for Work and Pensions could have on young people.

The Leader asked if there was a figure available based on education and employment prior to the launch of the pilot scheme. The Team Manager- Just Ask Plus responded that the outcome of an analysis done in the previous year was 65%.

A Member inquired about Key Performance indicators in place to measure the progress of the scheme. The Deputy Head of Children and Family Services responded that his understanding was that information will be drawn out from impact a payment of £1600 has had on a young person accessing education, training, employment, permanent housing, and the kind of arrangements in place to set them up. He stated that he felt it was important to obtain feedback from the evaluation not just for Bridgend but across Wales and bring back the information to the committee for a further discussion. The Corporate Director, Social

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	<p>Services and Wellbeing stated that the Interim Evaluation Report had been published by Cardiff University where seven impact outcomes were being measured in terms of the impact on the young people who benefit from the pilot. Namely, their well-being, Financial literacy and security, community cohesion and engagement, the impacts of poverty, access to labour and education markets, volunteering and life skills and physical and mental health. She stated that it would be helpful to share with committee the interim report and then bring back the final evaluative report when it is available, to enable tracking progress in Bridgend in relation to their outcomes compared to the All Wales outcomes.</p> <p>RESOLVED : It was agreed that the interim evaluation report from Cardiff University would be shared with the committee. The Cabinet Committee Corporate Parenting considered and noted the progress and exit strategy relating to the Basic Income Pilot Scheme.</p>
Date Decision Made	8 May 2024

47. A 3 Year Sustainability Plan To Improve Outcomes For Children And Family Services In Bridgend - Year 1 Report On Progress 2023/24

Decision Made	<p>The Corporate Director Social Services and Wellbeing presented a report which updated the Committee on service progress against milestones identified for improvement within the 3-year sustainability plan to improve outcomes for Children and Family Services in Bridgend at the end of Year 1, September 2023 to March 2024.</p> <p>A member made the following inquiries:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• An explanation of the colours on the RAG status.• The number of agency staff compared to the year before• The outcome of the Carer's Assessment, were there any specific needs identified and where the Service would need to meet those needs• How the new Media Communication Officer was going to link in with the Council's communication team• What was being done to ensure that staff training on Safeguarding is at 100% <p>The Corporate Director Social Services and Wellbeing responded explaining the 'Key' on the RAG status. She also stated that the Service moved from 73 agency workers as at the 13th of March 2023 to 50 agency</p>
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workers at the end of February 2024, resulting in a reduction of 41% agency workforce. In relation to the carer's assessments, the 100% achievement in offering a carers assessment, the service would like to make significant improvements in terms of uptake of carers assessments. They were continuously looking at ways to encourage a higher uptake of the assessments. The Corporate Director Social Services and Wellbeing stated that she did not have exact figures at the time of the meeting but would look to get this information to the committee at a later date. In response to the query around the Media Communication Officer, the Corporate Director Social Services and Wellbeing stated that the Officer was based within Central Communications Team the role was funded through an earmarked reserve.

In relation to the question on staff training on Safeguarding, the Corporate Director Social Services and Wellbeing stated that achieving 100% was a challenge within the service owing to meeting day to day needs within the service. She stated that she envisioned a training strategy reflective of staff being trained in safeguarding to the appropriate level for their role, rather than requiring all staff to have the basic training. She stated that this would involve a range of potential changes to policy around Safeguarding. She also stated measurement of progress was key and as such means of measurement would also have to be put in place.

A member asked what percentage of those that are eligible to take part actually did take part and how often did they meet, he also asked for an example of where the improvements had been made to the service as a result of the meetings within the forum.

The Corporate Parenting and Participation officer responded that with regards to actual feedback, there are 36 individual unique points of contact with young people in care. He stated the service was mindful to be respectful of how they feel about providing feedback, but on a regular basis they offer good opportunities to join in the forum, respond to surveys and also have contact with the social worker. He mentioned that care experienced young people have access to the complaints and compliments officer . Additionally, the team have met with the forum to further promote the voice of the child and look at how their role can be better promoted in the future for the care experience population.

A member asked clarification on what the single point of access meant. The Corporate Director Social Services and Wellbeing stated that this related to their restructure around early help education services from the Education Directorate to Social services and wellbeing which thereby provided the users two points of access which would relate to each other.

There was a further discussion about the arrangements made with South Wales Police in relation to referrals raised by them which were not always a matter for the Social Services and Wellbeing directorate. The benefits of 'Joint Screening' was discussed and the Deputy Head of Children and Family Services

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	<p>stated discussions between Social Services and Wellbeing, Police, Education and Early help were taking place to determine best practice that could be adopted around joint screening.</p> <p>RESOLVED : It was agreed that the committee would be provided with progress figures in relation to Carer's Assessments. The Committee discussed the progress made by Children's Social Care Services against the milestones identified in the Year 1 Action Plan.</p>
Date Decision Made	8 May 2024

48. Care Inspectorate Wales (CIW) Inspection Of Foster Wales Bridgend

Decision Made	<p>The Group Manager - Placements & Provider Services presented a report which updated the Committee on the outcome of the Care Inspectorate Wales (CIW) inspection of Foster Wales Bridgend November 2023. The report was accompanied by a presentation on the work of Foster Wales Bridgend to address the sufficiency issues in foster care capacity in the county borough.</p> <p>She stated that one of the areas highlighted by the inspectors was about the strain on placements with numbers of children that were moving at the point of the writing the report. The figures were unavailable at the time of the meeting, however, she stated she could confirm that the service has had a 47% reduction over the year where children had three plus placement moves. The reduction being almost half and was therefore seen as an improving picture . She stated that there was work to be done and the service were in active discussions about ways they could enhance their offer of support to foster carers and have tailored support packages to meet the individual needs of children which included looking at complex training needs.</p> <p>A Member asked :</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• The process followed when having to remove a child, if the decision to place with family and friends was explored and was Fostering considered as at the first or last resort• Who makes the decisions regarding funding for fostering• In relation to moving children during fostering, what support was available to foster carers who manage children with challenging behaviour.
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The Group Manager - Placements & Provider Services responded stating that the service had produced practice guidance for all social workers, outlining steps to be taken when looking at moving a child. She stated that there were usually several reasons behind a planned move. Social workers have the opportunity to carry out a thorough assessment, updating the needs of the child so that there is a clear indication of support required and thereafter a placement which would best meet those needs, enabling the matching process. She stated that there was a constant level of movement for children and young people. Social workers actively review family systems because families change over time. As examples, she stated that people could be with different partners, others may have joined families and blended families. Social workers conduct reviews proactively to determine if there were any family options for children because children's outcomes were best improved when they were supported to remain with their families or support a return to families. There were times when there were foster carers appropriately matched to enable children to be supported on a short-term basis. She explained situations where the process would be at its inception and the beginning of care proceedings where there would be multiple assessments of family members and children's needs. It was therefore often that the service would have foster carers to support children on a short-term basis. In the event the service were unable to return children to the care of a family member, they would then look to match them to an appropriately approved longer term foster carer. In response to the members question, the Deputy Head of Children and Family Services confirmed that the service look towards placing the child within the family network as it was known to provide a better outcome and look at foster placements as the last resort.

The Group Manager - Placements & Provider Services stated that there were systems in place for funding arrangements. The social worker who knew the child best would consider the match alongside any partners. Social Workers would in the first instance determine if it was a viable option for a young person and see how best the service could support it. The proposal was then passed to a team manager and then up to senior manager depending on the nature of the placement that was requested. She stated that there was potential to then escalate up to assistant head of service, director level and head of service level if required. She stated that it depended on the placement type, the implications and the placement service.

A Member asked what work had been undertaken to map the age profile of the base of Foster carers as Bridgend has much older demographic of foster carers the expectation was that there would be a drop in figures. He also inquired what work had been undertaken to support younger people to take up foster care as while it is rewarding it was complicated and also difficult at times.

The Group Manager – Placements & Provider services responded that Bridgend had a foster Wales funded placement referral officer within the team who has undertaken a mapping exercise and had highlighted that most of Bridgend's carers were in the 50 plus age bracket which was expected to be an issue over the next 10 years. The Service have adapted their recruitment and retention activity in order to

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	<p>better enable younger people to come into fostering. The service were also looking to enhance the support packages to support carers enabling them to support children, enhancing the training available and looking to expand support to cover out of hours arrangements as well. She mentioned their intention to go into more detail during the presentation.</p> <p>The presentation was made by the Regional Development Manager of Foster Wales for Cwm Taf Morgannwg.</p> <p>A Member asked about considerations that had been made in terms of data protection with the introductory app that was expected to be available online. He also asked if the data collected has been utilized to manage a child’s emotional needs or any other needs within the school system. The Regional Development Manager clarified that the App was more for the benefit of the child and was a means of getting to know their foster families through their profiles.</p> <p>The Group Manager – Placements & Provider services stated when a search was conducted to determine placement for children, one of the key parts of the document used was called an All Wales referral. Part of this form was a pen picture of the child and where possible this was completed in the child's own words. Young Commissioners were consulted on it and the information that needed to be enclosed and the language used. She stated that Bridgend had a child-focused way of putting children's profiles into placement searches and provided that to carers to accompany the All Wales referrals. She stated that they utilize a template called “All about me” where children want to contribute information.</p> <p>A Social worker would sit with the children and complete the document with them. The children had the option to draw pictures, talk about specific interests, hobbies. While Bridgend did not have the technology yet, there were systems in place already to enable young people to have a part in that matching and finding process for their placement.</p> <p><u>RESOLVED</u> : The Cabinet Corporate Parenting Committee agreed to note the outcome of the CIW Inspection of Foster Wales Bridgend and the work that was being progressed which would then be presented to Committee to improve sufficiency of foster carers in the county borough.</p>
Date Decision Made	8 May 2024

49. Youth Justice Service Update on Care Experienced Young People

Decision Made	<p>The Strategic Manager - Youth Justice presented a report which updated the Committee on the Bridgend Youth Justice Service (BYJS) provision available for care-experienced children who enter the criminal justice system.</p> <p>She stated that one of the main aims of the service was to establish pathways to improve the outcomes of those children most at risk of offending behaviour or harm-related behaviour. The service aimed to ensure that children between ages 10 and 18 who were at risk of offending, were identified and a robust assessment plan and pathway for those children that enter the service was formulated to try and reduce that offending. She mentioned the service had a responsibility to comply with the Youth justice Strategic Plan, which was a three-year plan and also comply with frameworks such as the Youth Justice Blueprint for Wales, which very much focused on a child being a child 1st and an offender second. To ensure this, the service aimed to divert those children from being stigmatized by criminalization.</p> <p>The Cabinet Member for Education, the Leader and the Cabinet Member for Housing commended the Youth Justice team for progress made. He related that progress to the team's success at being the only Youth Justice Service in Wales who benefited from UK Government funding.</p> <p>A Member referred to the recent death of a 17 year old inmate at Parc Prison in Bridgend and inquired what work is being undertaken by the Youth Offending unit to address the increasing concerns regarding inmates at Parc Prison.</p> <p>The Group Manager (Early Years and Young People) responded that the company G4S were part of Bridgend's youth Justice Service Management Board, which was due to meet the day after the committee meeting and the Service were seeking updates on a strategic level with a view to gaining reassurance. The Strategic Manager, Youth Justice added that a senior practitioner had been appointed specifically the purpose that Bridgend needed to provide safety planning for all children under the service. The practitioner met regularly with other designated social workers across the country to discuss cases and safety planning. She stated that whilst there was a lot of media attention at the moment around Park Prison, the young person's area at the facility was a positive one in terms of what the service could see.</p> <p>The Chairperson and Leader added that his office had written to the Minister responsible in the Ministry of Justice in regards to the recent very sad deaths at Parc Prison. They have had a response and were continuing a dialogue. They were seeking an urgent meeting with the Governor of the prison to discuss measures being put in place to make the prisoners safe as they can be, particularly for young people who</p>
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	<p>were resident. The Corporate Director Social Services and Wellbeing added that in relation to the directorate's role as the safeguarding authority, they had a role around any issues relating to individuals at risk of harm, be that children or adults at risk. The Service progress individual safeguarding cases for anyone resident for a period in Parc Prison as they would do for any other part of the Bridgend population.</p> <p>The Chairperson and Leader commended the process to enable young offenders to undertake work in the community thereby giving them a sense of purpose and value. The Strategic Manager - Youth Justice, agreed that one of their main responsibilities was to ensure that the needs of victims were also met as per the victim code of practice. Thereafter they were asked whether they wished to participate in a restorative opportunity.</p> <p><u>RESOLVED</u> : The Cabinet Committee Corporate Parenting agreed to note the contents of the report.</p>
Date Decision Made	8 May 2024

50. Urgent Items

Decision Made	None
Date Decision Made	8 May 2024

To observe further debate that took place on the above items, please click the following links

[Part 1](#)

[Part 2](#)

The meeting closed at 12:41.

This document is available in Welsh / Mae'r ddogfen hon ar gael yn Gymraeg