

<b>Meeting of:</b>	<b>CABINET COMMITTEE CORPORATE PARENTING</b>
<b>Date of Meeting:</b>	<b>7 MAY 2025</b>
<b>Report Title:</b>	<b>FOCUS ON ENGAGEMENT – VOICE OF THE CHILD</b>
<b>Report Owner / Corporate Director:</b>	<b>CORPORATE DIRECTOR SOCIAL SERVICES &amp; WELLBEING</b>
<b>Responsible Officer:</b>	<b>STEVE BERRY CORPORATE PARENTING &amp; PARTICIPATION OFFICER</b>
<b>Policy Framework and Procedure Rules:</b>	<b>There are no implications for the policy framework and procedure rules.</b>
<b>Executive Summary:</b>	<b>An update report to inform Cabinet Committee of the Specialist Independent Participation Service support to our Care Experienced Youth Forum.</b>

## **1. Purpose of Report**

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to provide the Cabinet Committee Corporate Parenting with an overview of the Care Experienced Youth Forum activity for the year April 2024 to March 2025.

## **2. Background**

- 2.1 TGP Cymru is commissioned by Bridgend County Borough Council Children Services, in connection with the Bridgend Corporate Parenting Board, to deliver specialist independent participation support to gain the views of care experienced young people and care leavers on a range of themes identified by Bridgend Corporate Parenting Board and Bridgend County Borough Council Children Services, Bridgend's independent advocacy provider and the forum members themselves. This three-pronged approach is supported by regular attendance to the forum by advocacy staff, including the advocacy team manager, and by Bridgend County Borough Council via the Corporate Parenting & Participation Officer.

## **3. Current situation/ proposal**

- 3.1 TGP Cymru has produced a report covering the activities that the Bridgend Youth Voice Forum have been involved in from April 2024 to March 2025 (**Appendix 1**).
- 3.2 **Appendix 1** provides an insight to the range of activities that the forum have been involved in and also sets out what the Forum are looking to undertake in the future.

- 3.3 There were 13 Forum sessions held between April 2024 and March 2025 with 103 attendances recorded. This attendance was made up of 13 individual young people from our care experienced population.
- 3.4 During the past year, the Forum have been involved in local and National projects and initiatives that have included:
- Meeting with Bridgend County Borough Council Officers to inform service improvement, training courses and share their experiences
  - Taking part in recruitment and selection panels for the appointment of TGP Cymru staff
  - Engagement session with Director of Social Service & Wellbeing for Bridgend County Borough Council to inform the Director report for 2023-2024
  - Gaining recognition for previous work by winning two different awards for their involvement in the 'These are our voices' project which is now displayed as a mural in Bridgend town centre
  - Involvement in the [Lwc / Luck Project](#) where the experiences of children in care were illustrated through a variety of mediums with in a 'pop up foster home' erected within the Senydd during November.
  - Workshop with Children In Wales to inform the production of an information padlet providing resources for young people leaving care
  - Co-production activities to inform the Achievement Awards of care experienced children and young people in Bridgend County Borough
  - British Transport Police field trip to Port Talbot
  - Engagement event at the Children Commissioner for Wales office that included consultation with Welsh Government Education Department to inform the review of Personal Education Plans
  - Involvement in the Voices from Care Cymru 'Proud to be me' event in Swansea that included workshops and activities
- 3.5 Within the report, young people have also offered their views on being part of the Forum:
- "Forum gives me a place where I feel accepted, and my voice is listened to"*  
*"I can be myself and discuss my mental health openly"*  
*"I feel accepted even though I have autism, and I feel I can influence important decisions"*
- 3.6 The Forum has seen several challenges over the past year, listed within the report, however these are being addressed in their forward plan for the coming year.
- 3.7 For the coming months, the Forum is seeking to increase the number of attendees to the group sessions and activities through a recruitment drive, receive more guest speakers and explore other opportunities for care experienced young people in Bridgend County.

#### **4. Equality implications (including Socio-economic Duty and Welsh Language)**

- 4.1 An initial Equality Impact Assessment (EIA) screening has identified that there would be no negative impact on those with one or more of the protected characteristics, or socio-economic disadvantage or the use of the Welsh Language. It is therefore not necessary to carry out a full EIA on this policy or proposal.

## **5. Well-being of Future Generations implications and connection to Corporate Well-being Objectives**

- 5.1 Long term – the establishment of the Corporate Parenting Board will address how agencies can address their responsibilities for Corporate Parenting in a strategic manner to make robust plans for the future – this includes the activity of the Bridgend Youth Voice Forum.
- 5.2 Prevention – the proposals that have been made mean that the responsibilities we all have for Corporate Parenting are identified and established into what we need to report on. Measuring and reporting on these responsibilities through the Corporate Parenting Board will enable us to take early action on any issues identified.
- 5.3 Integration – the Corporate Parenting Board has a multi-agency membership. This membership is intended to provide sufficient representation to cover who has specific responsibilities for our children and young people in particular circumstances and regular liaison between the Youth Forum and the Board is undertake through the work of the Corporate Parenting Officer.
- 5.4 Collaboration – the success and effectiveness of our Corporate Parenting in Bridgend is dependent on how well agencies work together to achieve shared goals and aspirations for our children and young people. These goals and aspirations are cited within the ‘Bridgend Corporate Parenting Strategy – Our plan for you....’
- 5.5 Involvement – due consideration has been given to how different ‘providers of care’ are involved in the proposals around Corporate Parenting. Specific attention and proposals are given to enabling the voice and lived experience of our children and young people.

## **6. Climate Change Implications**

- 6.1 There is no direct impact on Climate Change through the implementation of this report.

## **7. Safeguarding and Corporate Parent Implications**

- 7.1 All safeguarding implications have been fully considered within Corporate Parenting development and the Youth Forum. No safeguarding issues were raised within the work cited in this report.
- 7.2 The subject matter of this entire report relates directly to corporate parenting and any implications are discussed within it.

## **8. Financial Implications**

- 8.1 Corporate Parenting development does not have a specific allocated budget. Where costs have arisen to support participation of children and young people, engagement, meetings and training of professionals the costs have been met from within the Children's Services core budget.

## **9. Recommendation**

- 9.1 For the Cabinet Committee to take note of report in **Appendix 1** and give recognition to the work Bridgend Youth Voice Forum where appropriate

## **Background documents**

None