

MINUTES OF A MEETING OF THE CABINET COMMITTEE CORPORATE PARENTING HELD IN COMMITTEE ROOM 2/3, CIVIC OFFICES, ANGEL STREET, BRIDGEND ON MONDAY, 13 APRIL 2015 AT 10.00 AM

Present:-

Councillors:

M Gregory - Cabinet Member Resources
MEJ Nott OBE - Leader
CE Smith - Cabinet Member Strategic Change

Invitees:

Councillors:

E Dodd
JE Lewis
HJ Townsend

Officers:

Deborah McMillan	Corporate Director - Education & Transformation
Leanne Miller	Children's Advocacy Agency
Natalie Sillox	Group Manager – Children's Regulated Services
Colin Turner	Head of Safeguarding and Family Support
Mark Galvin	Senior Democratic Services Officer Committees
Sarah Daniel	Democratic Services Officer

90 APPOINTMENT OF CHAIRPERSON

RESOLVED: That in the absence of the Committee's Chairperson, it was moved and seconded that Councillor M E J Nott be appointed Chairperson for the meeting.

Councillor Nott took the Chair.

He also welcomed S Daniel to the meeting, a new Democratic Services Assistant in the Democratic Services Section.

91 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from the following Members/Officers for the reasons so stated.

Councillor D Sage – Recuperating
Councillor PWJ White – Recuperating
Councillor DBF White – Hospital appointment
Councillor HJ David – Unwell
Councillor JE Lewis – Holiday
Councillor LC Morgan – Unwell
S Cooper – Annual leave

M Shephard – Other Council business

92 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

None.

93 APPROVAL OF MINUTES

RESOLVED: That the minutes of the Corporate Parenting Cabinet Committee of 5 January 2015, be approved as a true and accurate record.

94 OVERVIEW OF CURRENT REGULATED RESIDENTIAL CARE PROVISION IN BRIDGEND

The Corporate Director – Social Services and Wellbeing submitted a report, to provide Cabinet Members with an overview of the current residential regulated childcare provision in Bridgend CBC and provide cases studies of Children and Young People who have benefited from the services offered, and also to seek Cabinet's approval to change the "Statement of Purpose" for Newbridge House in order to match the terms of the registration certificate provided by CSSIW.

The Head of Adult Social care advised by way of background information, that Bridgend CBC currently has three residential Children's Homes, regulated by CSSIW, delivering services to children and young people aged between 0 – 18 years and these were outlined in paragraph 3.1 of the report, including the type of support services they provided.

The Group Manager – Children's Regulated Services confirmed that each of the above residential homes had its own "statement of purpose". These have all previously been approved by the Corporate Parenting Committee and were detailed in Appendix 1 to the report. None of the units were currently registered to provide emergency bed provision as other effective arrangements are in place to respond to such situations.

She added that each residential unit is subject to "The Children's Homes (Wales) Regulations 2002" and as such is inspected by CSSIW every year. (Copies of each of the most recent inspection reports were shown at Appendix 2 to the report.) For many years, all the Council's residential child care homes had received very positive inspections with Managers and Practitioners receiving praise for the quality of services being delivered.

All the units' registered Managers were experienced managers and worked closely together to support each other. They had clear reporting mechanisms in place and were confident decision makers she added.

The Group Manager – Children's Regulated Services advised that all the residential units had developed positive links within the local neighbourhood, with Newbridge House and Sunnybank having named Police Community Service Officers (PCSO's) who regularly call in at the homes to meet with and develop important relationships with the young people accommodated in order to minimise situations of self-harm, risk taking behaviour and any offending or anti-social behaviour.

She then proceeded to give a resume of further information in respect of these establishments, as was contained in more detail, in paragraphs 4.5, 4.6 and 4.7 of the report.

The Cabinet Member – Resources asked if the Committee could in due course, be informed if accreditation to staff at Sunnybank had been successful.

The Leader advised that he was happy with the progress being made in the Residential Care facilities detailed in the report, and particularly at Bakers Way, where the most recent CSSIW Inspection report noted that ‘ support is provided for children/young people and their families in an environment which is caring and supportive and child centred in their approach. ‘

A Member echoed the comments of the Leader, but asked if there were any children or young people on a waiting list awaiting care provision in one of these facilities, or were they having to be referred out of the area.

The Head of Adult Social care advised that Impact assessments were undertaken in respect of all young people who entered the system, and where possible, they were brought out of high costing Out of County placements and placed in Sunnybank. If there weren't any places available in that facility, however, if there was no such provision available locally, these children and young people were accommodated in private placements. He added that occupancy rate was nearly always full, with children with the most needs given a priority in terms of placements.

RESOLVED: That the Corporate Parenting Cabinet Committee both noted and considered the content of the report and associated Appendices

95 **UPDATE ON PROGRESS MADE TO INCREASE THE NUMBER OF IN-HOUSE FOSTER CARERS AND PLACEMENTS WITHIN BRIDGEND**

The Corporate Director – Social Services and Wellbeing submitted a report to provide the Cabinet Committee with an update in respect of the progress made to increase the number of in house foster carers and placements within Bridgend, as well as highlighting significant achievements made during this financial year.

After a brief introduction to the report from the Head of Adult Social Care, the Group Manager – Children's Regulated Services advised that Bridgend CBC had a clear corporate parenting responsibility to ensure that its Looked After Children (LAC) population wherever possible, and when it is safe to do so, are looked after within their local community where they will maintain family contacts and have their cultural, social, health and educational needs promoted.

She added that the Local Authority has access to a dedicated marketing resource to support recruitment of foster carers and ensure that marketing is appropriately targeted. It also has a Recruitment Officer based within the team to oversee the planning and management of assessments, both for general foster carers and managing the court timescales and assessments for relative foster carers.

She further added that the Local Authority currently had 38 approved relative foster carer households, and was focused towards working to secure permanence via legal orders other than care orders, thereby reducing the number of children placed with family who are categorised as LAC. Relative foster carers were carers who are approved specifically to look after named children within their family.

The Group Manager – Children's Regulated Services stated that the Local Authority has 17 general in-house foster carers who are resident outside of the Local Authority's boundaries, supporting the Council to offer in-house provision to children who have been identified as needing out of county placements.

The Local Authority had seen an increase over the past year of carers who wish to transfer from Independent Fostering Agencies (IFA's) to the Local Authority service. This is reported to be due to the reputation of BFC and as a result of consistent positive CSSIW inspection reports. BFC also had a sound reputation amongst its foster carers for the excellent support it provides to carers from a dedicated team of professional social workers and a placement support worker. The IFA carers report identified that in BFC there was a better choice of placements and matching of children to households and, in some cases, better remuneration for the task they perform.

She reminded Members that in 2013 a decision was made to disband the Resolutions fostering service. Consequently existing Resolutions carers were encouraged to opt to transfer to any one of the four Resolutions partnership Local Authorities. Throughout the past year Bridgend CBC had been fortunate, through acting promptly and setting out clear guidelines and expectations in writing (for all the carers wishing to transfer), in being able to secure a significant number of the foster carers who were previously approved by the Resolutions Fostering service. Only one carer household out of 19 chose to transfer to another fostering agency (for whom they previously fostered). This has provided the Local Authority with a pool of experienced carers located within a number of Local Authorities across South Wales.

The Group Manager – Children's Regulated Services confirmed that the practice in respect of relative foster carers had recently been revised, so that all potential relative foster carers were subject to a Unified Assessment (UA). This provided 3 recommendations in respect of three types of care provision and placement options, shown in bullet point format within paragraph 4.1 of the report.

She added that over the last twelve months, BFC had been successful in achieving a steady increase in the number of general foster carers approved, approving an additional 12 carer households offering a further 17 placements to children.

Similarly, over the last twelve months BFC had also been successful in achieving a steady increase in the number of general IFA foster carers who had transferred to BFC. During this financial year, 8 former IFA carers had transferred to BFC, offering 22 placements.

Since March 2014 there had been a net increase of 28 foster carer households offering an additional 55 placements.

Turning to the reports financial implications, the Group Manager – Children's Regulated Services confirmed that paragraph 7.1 of the report showed savings made to date as a result of the transfer of a number of former IFA carers to Bridgend Foster Care, as well as further savings being realised as a result of an additional 10 children either moving from IFA placements to in-house foster care or as a result of children moving from residential care to foster care, or as a result of former IFA foster carers transferring to Bridgend Foster Care, often bringing their fostered children with them.

Unfortunately, the Group Manager – Children's Regulated Services, added that although the savings made in respect of the above were welcomed, this would only reduce a potentially higher over-spend position, as a result of more LAC being placed in both in-house and external placements

RESOLVED: That the Corporate Parenting Cabinet Committee noted the contents of the report and continued to support the valuable work that Bridgend Foster Care delivers to Bridgend's LAC population

96 INFORMAL FORWARD WORK PROGRAMME – APRIL 2015 TO OCTOBER 2015

The Head of Safeguarding and Family Support submitted a report, seeking approval for the proposed Informal Forward Work Programme (IFWP) covering the above period.

Committee Members noticed from debate earlier in the meeting, that a further item was to be added to the IFWP for the meeting scheduled in July, namely a report regarding the "National approach towards Advocacy Services".

The Head of Safeguarding and Family Support confirmed this, and added that a report on the ' Connecting Families "Edge of Care Project" ' had also been deferred from today's to the July meeting, the agenda for which was probably now too large when bearing in mind the other items scheduled to be considered at that meeting.

In light of this, and following a directive from the Corporate Director – Education and Transformation, it was

RESOLVED: That the Corporate Parenting Cabinet Committee noted the report, and agreed that in view of the number of agenda items proposed for the next scheduled meeting, the Head of Safeguarding and Family Support consults with the Chairperson of the Committee in order to establish agenda items for the next two scheduled meetings.

The meeting closed at 10.55AM