

# CORPORATE PARENTING PANEL

## Minutes of the meeting held on 6 March 2017

**PRESENT:** Dr Caroline Turner (Assistant Chief Executive & Designated Statutory Director of Social Services (In the Chair))

Councillor K P Hughes (Portfolio Member for Education),  
Councillor Dylan Rees (Partnership and Regeneration Scrutiny Committee),  
Mr Douglas Watson (Chair Anglesey Foster Carers' Association),  
Mr Llyr Bryn Roberts (Interim Head of Children's Services),  
Alex Kaitell (Interim Principal Operations Officer),  
Dawn Owen (Child Placement Team Manager),  
Mr. Huw Owen (LAC Team Manager),  
Heulwen Owen (LAC Education Liaison Officer),  
Llinos Edwards (LAC Nurse – BCUHB),  
Enid Christie (Senior Manager – Education Department),  
Liz Fletcher (Betsi Cadwaladr University Health Board),  
Mairwen Hughes (Committee Officer).

**APOLOGIES:** Dr Gwynne Jones (Chief Executive) (Chair of the Corporate Parenting Panel),  
Councillor Aled Morris Jones (Portfolio Member for Housing and Social Services),  
Councillor Ann Griffith (Corporate Scrutiny Committee),  
Dr Einir Thomas (Education Officer - ALN).

**ALSO PRESENT:** Councillor Ieuan Williams (Leader of the Council)

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### 1 DECLARATION OF INTEREST

No declaration of interest was received.

### 2 MINUTES OF THE 5TH DECEMBER, 2016 MEETING

The minutes of the previous meeting of the Corporate Parenting Panel held on 5 December, 2016 were presented and confirmed as correct.

### 3 MATTERS ARISING

- **Children Missing from Care**

Submitted – a report by the Interim Principal Operations Officer outlining details of children looked after in Anglesey who have been missing from care.

The Interim Principal Operations Officer reported that the key corporate parenting responsibility is to ensure that children looked after by the Local Authority are adequately protected and their welfare is promoted. The All

Wales Missing Protocol provides a clear multi agency response to children missing from care (copy of the protocol was attached to the report). She said that the Children's Service, Police and other agencies have a statutory responsibility to safeguard children including children missing from care. Accordingly to data provided by North Wales Police between February 2016 and February 2017, 7 children/young people who were looked after, residing on Anglesey went missing but only 3 of these were looked after by Anglesey Children's Services. Barnardo's as an independent voluntary organisation has been commissioned to complete all missing return home interviews across North Wales including for Anglesey Children/Young people. However, due to this funding ceasing at the end of March, 2017 the responsibility will fall on the children's social workers to undertake interviews/visits and this may raise an issue due to children/young people being more likely to speak and share information with an independent person rather than a social worker. She further said that a review of the electronically recording system is required to record the missing children/young people. She noted that the Designated Statutory Director of Social Services should be briefed on a regular basis on the children missing from care.

The Officer suggested that the Corporate Parenting Panel may explore further in 12 months' the response and the resources needed by the Social Services Department with regard to issues raised in the report.

**It was agreed to note the report.**

**ACTION : That the Corporate Parenting Panel be afforded an update report in 12 months.**

- **County Children in Care (CIC) Progress Tracking Group**

The LAC Education Officer said that the first Tracking Panel was held on 9 February, 2017 where a small number of children who have acute educational needs were discussed. It has been agreed that each child/young people in care needs to be discussed individually. She said that it is intended to firstly start with the children in secondary schools and to invite a representative from each of the 5 Secondary Schools on the Island to attend. Discussions will focus on the child/young person's educational needs and whether extra resources need to be put in place to support these children. The LAC Education Officer said that she has incorporated this matter within her report at item 6 on the agenda.

**It was RESOLVED to note the information.**

**ACTION : An update report be afforded to the Corporate Parenting Panel in due course.**

- **Leaving Care Arrangements**

The Interim Head of Children's Service said that one element of the Service Improvement Plan is to develop services for young people who leave care.

This project has been developed over the last 12 months in response to the recommendations of the CSSIW Inspection Report 2014 to address issues for people leaving care arrangements. He gave an update to the Panel on the progress of the scheme for young people who require/are eligible for after care by the service. Feedback has been sought from these young people as to how the leaving care arrangements can be improved but take-up of the scheme has not been high. Work has been undertaken with the Housing Services with regard to developing an After Care Joint Protocol with regard to providing accommodation support for young people who leave care. He further said that further work needs to be undertaken with regard to the Supported Lodgings project.

The Officer said that discussions have been undertaken with the Human Resources Department and Betsi Cadwaladr University Health Board with regard to avenues of work experience for young people in care and who have left care. The Children's Commissioner has highlighted the need for work experience, apprenticeships opportunities for young people in care and who are leaving care. It was noted that the Children's Commissioner will be visiting the Authority at the end of March.

Questions were raised as to how many young people have taken up the 'When I am Ready' scheme. The Interim Principal Operations Officer responded that 3 young people have taken the 'When I am Ready' scheme and it is expected that the Authority should be able to support and provide guidance for such a small uptake of the scheme. **She said that an update report on the scheme together with the leaving care provision of looked after children needs to be reported to the Corporate Parenting Panel.** The Interim Head of Children's Service said that it would be advantages for the Corporate Parenting Panel to be afforded information about the examination results and where the young people in care have decided to carry on their further education. The LAC Nurse said that Health needs to be part of the Service Improvement Plan and she would discuss the matter with the Interim Principal Operations Officer and Liz Fletcher from Betsi Cadwaladr University Health Board in due course.

**It was RESOLVED to note the information.**

**ACTION : That a report be provided to the next Panel as noted above.**

- **Mental Health Provision for Looked After Children**

The LAC Nurse said that the Panel at its last meeting requested that a regional review on the effectiveness of the Looked After Children Mental Health Pathway as well as on the timing of mental health assessment for looked after children when entering the care system needs to be prioritised. She noted that following discussions with the Interim Principal Operations Officer of Anglesey Council it was agreed that the matter should be discussed with the neighbouring authority at Gwynedd Council. As yet the meeting with representatives from both authorities has not taken place. She considered that the matter may be discussed through CAMHS to ensure that looked after

children receive adequate mental health service and she would discuss the matter with Liz Fletcher (Betsi Cadwaladr University Health Board) with regard to the next steps to be taken in respect of this matter.

**It was agreed that the matter be discussed at the next meeting of the Corporate Parenting Panel following discussions with Health Board.**

**ACTION : As noted above.**

#### **4 TROS GYNNAL ADVOCACY SERVICE**

**It was agreed that the item be discussed at the next meeting of the Corporate Parenting Panel as a representative of the Tros Gynnal Advocacy Service was unable to attend this meeting.**

The Chair requested that information be included in the report about the number of service users requiring the service in the Welsh language.

#### **5 REPORT OF THE INDEPENDENT REVIEWING OFFICER**

The report of the Independent Reviewing Officer for Quarter 3 2016/17 was presented for the Panel's consideration. The report provided quantitative data in relation to the number of looked after children; their legal status; the number and nature of the placements made; the statutory visits undertaken, the performance of the IRO against key indicators and the caseload of the IRO.

As the Independent Reviewing Officer was not present the Chair reported on the following main considerations :-

- At the end of quarter 2 a total of 135 children and young people were accommodated by Ynys Môn County Council but by Quarter 3 this figure has increased by one to 136;
- As previously shared in the quarterly reports, there has been a gradual increase in the overall 'looked after' population since Q1; in 2014/15 figures stood at 78 children and young people. This shows that there has been a significant increase in the number of children and young people accommodated by Ynys Môn County Council as illustrated by the graph in A (iii);
- In terms of legal status, there has been a slight increase in the number of children and young people on Full Care Orders to the Authority and similarly, there is a slight increase in the number of children and young people who are accommodated with parental consent under Section 76 of the Social Services and Wellbeing (Wales) Act 2014.
- Safeguarding is the main reason children and young people are accommodated by Ynys Môn County Council as illustrated by the graph in C;
- The graph at D (i) demonstrates the age groups of the children and young people currently looked after by Ynys Môn County Council with 36 children in the age group 0 to 4 years old and increase from Q1 of 31 and Q2 of 35; 42 children in the age group 5 to 10 years old an increase from Q1 and Q2 from 37; 41 children and young people in the age group 11 to 16 years old have

- seen an increase from Q1 at 39 to 44 in Q2; 17 young people in the age group 16+, an increase from 14 in Q1 to 16 with a further increase in Q2 to 17;
- Children and young people of Ynys Môn are accommodated in a variety of different settings which was highlighted within the report at E (i) with an increase in the number of children and young people placed at home with their parents – 16 in total. This is due to the Court instructions to place the children at home with the parent(s) under Regulation 38 whilst the parental assessment is continued ‘in the community’. There has been an increase in the number of children and young people placed in Residential Units out of County since the last quarter due to their behaviour being deemed problematic. A large number of Ynys Môn children and young people are placed with their families or friends.
  - There has been an increase in the number of LAC reviews held within the timescale from 85.96% to 92.94%. 84 LAC reviews were held in Quarter 3 of which 62 were within the county and 22 out of county. **The Panel wished to thank the Officers for their work to increase the LAC reviews and it was hoped that a further increase will be reported within the Quarter 4;**
  - There has been a trend in the number of children and young people having being placed with ‘friends and families’ under Regulation 38. The outcome is far more beneficial both in the short and long term, than if they were placed with foster carers or in residential units and out of county. 16 young people subject to a Care Order are placed at home with their parent(s) under ‘Placement with Parents’, however a small number are placed with their parent(s) by the Court under Regulation 38(6) and therefore the family’s assessment will continue to be completed in the community;
  - The IRO case load continues to be very high. There is support available, especially with the out of county’s LAC reviews. An Independent Safeguarding and Reviewing Officer was duly appointed in October, but this individual left to take up another post at the end of November 2016; this post will need to be advertised once more.
  - Issues have been raised that no regular or consistent administration support is available which impacts not only on minute taking unavailable to the Court but also to the families in a timely manner. The Chair said that the administration support post has now been approved and measures will be undertaken to fill the post in due course;
  - Areas of concerns identified at the last meeting, as noted in Page 7 (ix) of the report will be continually monitored and any concerns shared with initially the team manager. **The Panel requested an update report of the details of the monitoring of the areas as noted on Page 7 (ix) at the next meeting of the Corporate Parenting Panel.**

The Interim Principal Operations Manager reported that the report does not specify how many children are on Care Orders or Interim Care Orders. However she noted that there are National issues due to the stance or view in respect of ‘Children Looked After’ whether that was the appropriate use of voluntary accommodation and local authorities should be taking swifter actions to go into Court proceedings to obtain parental responsibilities for that group of young people.

The Panel considered the information presented and it raised the following issues :-

- The Panel sought clarification as to the number of children/young people on the 'at risk' register compared to children/young people in care and whether this information should be within the terms of reference of the Independent Reviewing Officer report. The Panel was informed that the remit of the Independent Reviewing Officer and the Corporate Parenting Panel is to deal with children/young people who are in care. Children/young people on the 'at risk' register are discussed within the Gwynedd and Anglesey Safeguarding Board together with the Regional Board. Since the authority has agreed to invest resources in the Edge of Care Team it was suggested that the Panel be afforded information of the work of the Edge of Care Team once it has been established. The Interim Principal Operations Manager said that it would be useful to have information within the Independent Reviewing Officer report with regard to details of the children/young people who have exited from care i.e. whether into adoption or living with families;
- The Panel requested that details of children and young people whose legal status needed to be assessed and the numbers/statistics of families who require intensive support needs to be incorporated within the Independent Reviewing Officer Q4 report to the next meeting of the Corporate Parenting Panel;
- The Panel sought clarification that LAC reviews have consistently identified the need to re-assess the family situation in order to revoke the Care Orders. Comments were made that the locations to hold such LAC review is not always suitable. **Information should be afforded to the Panel whether further resource is required to enable a more effective procedure and identify a more suitable location to carry out LAC reviews in the future.**

**It was AGREED to accept the report of the IRO and the recommendations as noted above.**

**ACTION : The IRO to include the recommendations as noted above in the Quarter 4 report to the next meeting.**

## **6 SERVICE REPORTS**

6.1 The report of the Child Placement Team Manager was presented for the Panel's consideration.

The Panel considered the report and noted the following :-

- The Panel noted that the retention of foster carers remains high on the agenda for the fostering service and the Recruitment and Marketing Officer plays a key part in this. Questions were raised as to how many foster parents have been lost during last year and how many foster parents have moved from the local authority to the private sector. The Child Placement Team Manager responded that she was unaware that any foster parents had move to the private sector during the last year; she noted that she would prepare a report for the next meeting with regard as to the number of foster parents have been lost together with an account of the different circumstances as to why they have ceased to be foster parents;

- The Panel sought clarification as to whether the foster parents consider that they are receiving adequate support from the local authority. The Chair Anglesey Foster Carers' Association said that some families may experience more challenging children/young people which may require more support from the authority.
- The Panel questioned as to whether the Independent Reviewing Officer has a role to monitor as to why a foster family cease to be foster carers. **It was also suggested that the Fostering Panel should also be afforded more training on a regular basis when considering recruitment of foster parents.**
- The Panel noted that capacity of the Child Placement Team has been under pressure during Quarter 2 as three members of the team were absent on long term sickness. The remaining three Social Workers have been sharing the workload of those who have been absent and responding to duty referrals and emergencies. By the end of quarter 3 the three members of staff who have been on long term sickness have returned with phased return and return to work plans.

**It was AGREED to accept and to note the report.**

**ACTION : The Child Placement Team Manager to afford the Corporate Parenting Panel with details of the number of foster parents who have ceased to be foster parents as noted above.**

- 6.2 The LAC Nurse verbally addressed the Panel with regard to health issues and the information was noted.

**NO FURTHER ACTION ENSUING**

- 6.3 The report of the LAC Education Officer was presented for the Panel's consideration.

The Panel noted that children in care's educational attainment should be monitored. Their projected achievements in gaining GCSE's, A Levels and potential of attaining University and further education places needs to be looked upon, with closer working between departments within authority.

**It was AGREED to accept and to note the report.**

**NO FURTHER ACTION ENSUING**

- 6.4 The report of the LAC Team Manager was presented for the Panel's consideration.

The Panel considered the report and noted the following :-

- The LAC Team has now seen a period of stability with staff members remaining constant. There continues to be a dependency on agency Social Workers, however two members of staff have recently returned following maternity leave;

- The plan for the LAC Team going forward was noted as number 8 within the report.

**It was AGREED to accept the report and the plan set out for the LAC Team as noted above.**

**NO FURTHER ACTION ENSUING**

**7 THE NATIONAL FOSTERING FRAMEWORK : CORPORATE PARENTING**

To note that the National Corporate Parenting Conference is to be held in Wrexham on 28 March, 2017.

**8 MEETINGS OF THE PANEL FOR 2017/18**

It was noted that the Panel's next meetings are as follows :-

2.00 p.m. on Monday, 10<sup>th</sup> July, 2017

2.00 p.m. on Monday, 11<sup>th</sup> September, 2017

2.00 p.m. on Monday, 11<sup>th</sup> December 2017

2.00 p.m. on Monday, 19<sup>th</sup> March, 2018

The meeting concluded at 4.05 pm

**DR CAROLINE TURNER  
IN THE CHAIR**