



MINUTES OF MEETING

SCRUTINY : SOCIAL SERVICES MEETING

TUESDAY, 10TH MARCH, 2020

PRESENT: Councillors: W R Smith (Chair)
S Jago (Vice-Chair)

Councillors G Richards, T Rogers, D Sammon and I Thomas

Other Councillors in Attendance:

Councillor C Davies (Cabinet Member for Social Service)

Officers:

L Curtis Jones (Chief Officer (Social Services)), A Lloyd (Head of Children's Services), L Morgan (Principal Manager Adult Services) S Jablaoui (Performance Officer) and M Phillips (Democratic Services Officer)

Outside Bodies:

A Harris (Vale, Valleys and Cardiff Adoption Collaborative (VVC))

ITEM NO.	AGENDA MATTER	DECISION
782	Apologies for absence	No apologies for absence were received.
783	Declarations of Interest (including whipping declarations)	No Declarations of Interest were received.

784	<p>Vale, Valleys and Cardiff Adoption Collaborative (VVC) Annual Report for 1 April 2018 to 31 March 2019</p>	<p>Annabel Lloyd introduced the item and apologised for the delay in the report being brought to the committee due to circumstances beyond their control.</p> <p>Angela Harris then highlighted a number key performance data points within the report and briefly highlighted some general findings, which were of interest to the committee.</p> <p>The following questions were raised by the committee and were responded to in detail by the officers in attendance.</p> <p>The chair highlighted that the report was very positive and different to the Annual Report last year.</p> <p>The Cabinet Member for Social Services echoed the Chairs comments and thanked the officers for all the excellent work that is been carried out in adoption services. Councillor Davies also highlighted a number of the key headlines from Appendix One.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Can you confirm that the service is now fully staffed • Clarification was sort in relation to the figures on page 15 relating to the number of adoptive placements and the number of children waiting who had not been placed. • The report states that 43% of adoption referrals were withdrawn, can you explain why they were withdrawn and who is responsible for making the withdrawal • The report states that 65% of placements were made within the region, 9% elsewhere in Wales and 26% outside of Wales. Can you explain the reason 26% of placements were outside of Wales • Can you explain to the committee why the Merthyr Tydfil figures in the graph on Page 28 (children who have waited longer than 6 months for SBA to Match) are significantly lower than other regions • The report highlights that on average children are placed within 17.1 months, are the reasons for this timescale out of the local authorities control • Can you explain to the committee how you support families that are currently waiting to adoption • Can you explain to the committee what is meant by the term “open letterbox cases” • Do parents of the adopted children have to take part in the letterbox scheme
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		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Can you provide more information in relation to the new finding family scheme, Adopting Together that has been set up by St David's Adoption Agency and Barnardos. The report states that ten referrals were made to the scheme and six children have been placed on a spot purchase basis. What is "spot purchase basis" • The committee commended the work being carried out around Marketing, but raised concern that the majority of events were held outside of the County Borough of Merthyr Tydfil • Letterbox Cases – It was stated that a small number of children are allowed physical contact with close family members, is this something that the family would request during the court process and is it encouraged by The Vale, Valleys and Cardiff Adoption Collaborative (VVC) • What percentage of Foster Carers go on to adopt <p>The information requested on the percentage of Foster Carers who go on to adopt will be sent out by email to the committee members</p> <p>The Chair thanked the Officers for the report and the responses that were provided to the committees questions.</p>
785	Children's Services Strategy	<p>The Chair addressed the committee in relation to a workshop that was scheduled to go ahead last month, however; it was postponed due to issues outside of the Officers control.</p> <p>The workshop has now been rescheduled for the week commencing 16 March and the Chair requested the committee not Scrutinise the report until after the workshop as members will gain a better understanding of the services after attending the workshop.</p> <p>The committee agreed for the item to be deferred and brought back to the committee after the members have attended the workshop.</p> <p>Annabel Lloyd provided the committee with an update on the strategy and covered a number of highlights within the report.</p> <p>The committee did request a response to the following question:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • It is clear that the pressure point highlighted in the report is capacity, what are the current sickness levels within Social Services

786	Adult Services Accommodation Strategy for Older People and Adults with a Learning Disability	<p>Lowri Morgan introduced the report and provided the committee with the highlights and the salient points.</p> <p>The following questions were raised by the committee and were responded to in detail by the officers in attendance.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The report states that residential care is the least favoured option as there are concerns about quality of care and standards, can you confirm if this statement is the public's perception of the service • There have been many changes of the years, are you confident that as an Authority we can achieve what we have set out to achieve • Dementia Day Care Services has it already closed and if so will this impact on the plan outlined in the report • Can you confirm what 'Other' means in the tables on Page 59-61 • Under Key Milestones in the report it states – 2021 Revise the Older Persons provision at Ty Gurnos to provide support for people with dementia. Can you explain this to the committee <p>The Chair thanked the Officer for an excellent report and for all the work that is being carried out.</p>
787	Forward Work Programme 2019/20	<p>The Chair advised that the work programme will be updated to include Children's Services Strategy once members have attended the planned workshop.</p>
788	Scrutiny Referrals, Feedback and Follow up Actions	<p>No Referrals, Feedback or Follow Up Actions were received.</p>
789	Reflection and Evaluation of Meeting	<p>The Chair and the Committee reflected on the issues that had been considered.</p>
790	Any other business deemed urgent by the Chair	<p>Lisa Curtis-Jones addressed the Committee on the Corona Virus and the possible impacts within Social Services.</p> <p>The Chair thanked the members for their attendance and closed the meeting.</p>