



Cyngor Bwrdeistref Sirol
MERTHYR TUDFUL
MERTHYR TYDFIL
County Borough Council

MINUTES OF MEETING

SCRUTINY : SOCIAL SERVICES MEETING

TUESDAY, 12TH DECEMBER, 2017

PRESENT: Councillor W R Smith (**In the Chair**)

Councillors D Sammon, G Richards and I Thomas

Officers:

Mark Anderton (Head of Adult Services), Angela Edevane (Principal Officer - Initial Support Services), Chris Hole (Head of Community Wellbeing), Lisa Curtis Jones (Chief Officer (Social Services)), Gareth Kedward (MIA & TAF Co-ordinator), Annabel Lloyd (Head of Children's Services), Sian Lyons (Performance and Risk Support Officer), Diane Jones (NEETs Co-ordinator), Suzanne Lewis-Abbott (Supporting People/Young People and Adults) and Kerry O'Donovan (Corporate Risk and Equalities Manager)

Outside Bodies:

Angela Harris and Rachel Evans (Vale of Glamorgan Council)
(Vale, Valleys and Cardiff Adoption Service)

Howard Jones (Scrutiny Officer) and Matthew Phillips
(Democratic Services Officer)

ITEM NO.	AGENDA MATTER	DECISION
536	Apologies for absence	Apologies for absence were received from Cllr T Rogers and Co-Opted member B Lewis.
537	Declarations of Interest (including whipping declarations)	No Declarations of Interest were made.

538	Vale, Valleys and Cardiff Adoption Service Annual Report	<p>Rachel Evans (Head of Children’s Services, Vale of Glamorgan Council) and Angela Harris (Regional Adoption Manager, Vale Valleys and Cardiff Adoption Service, (VVC)) led the committee through the report and provided additional information to bridge the gap in data for March to date.</p> <p>The following questions were raised by the committee and responded to in detail by the appropriate officers.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Can the figures provided be broken down to show the adoption figures by authority • The Chair asked for a verbal update in relation to the review that took place earlier in the day • The committee requested that additional figures for previous years be provided so that comparisons can be made • Why are the figures provided for Merthyr Tydfil so low in comparison with the other authorities in the Collaborative • In relation to the Adoption Manager’s post being increased to full time on a temporary basis, is this still the case and for how long will it be a temporary • Is the Service more effective now that the four authorities are working together • How long do you envisage before the Service will be running to its full potential • Is the Service providing value for money • Do you work closely with the carers network in Merthyr Tydfil • Is the Project Brief and Plan readily available. If so can it be provided to the committee • You say that it is anticipated the vacant posts would be filled by June 2017. What is the latest position now that we are 6 months further on • Are medical reports having an adverse effect on finding adopters • In relation to children having additional health needs, do you look into the history of the parents and does this have an affect on finding adopters • The Family Funding function has seen a rise in the number of children being referred for adoption. What are the main reasons for the rise in the number of children being referred for adoption
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		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Can you provide clarification on the timescale for approving adopters • The number of children involved in adoption has risen markedly. Has the criteria for taking children from their parents changed • Are the agenda and minutes of the Management Board made available to the committee • Can you explain what is meant by Therapeutic parenting and are there adequate therapeutic services available to the children and families <p>Resolved that:</p> <p>The comments of the scrutiny committee be noted.</p> <p>The Chair thanked Rachel Evans and Angela Harris for the report and wished them a Merry Christmas.</p>
539	Wellbeing Objective Living Well (LW3) - People Live Independently	<p>Lisa Curtis Jones led the committee through the report and highlighted the salient points.</p> <p>The following questions were raised by the committee and responded to by the appropriate officers.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How are Social Services managing with workload, staffing levels and the current budget • In relation to the key performance indicators on page 23 of the report you say that the percentage of people that received the right information or advice when they needed it was 79% and the target is 80%. Why isn't the target 100% and what do you do about the 21% who did not receive the right information • Is it possible that the committee can be provided with figures as well as the percentages • Can you provide an update on the well-being website for Children and Young People • Are the carers network involved in this development stage • In relation to the two fact sheets that have been developed in relation to Disability and Sexual Orientation, can you tell the committee how many hits they have had since publication • Can the issue on measuring the number of hits be looked at and raised with the ICT Department • In relation to the Well-being website the key actions state that consultation events were conducted with various Youth Groups within Merthyr Tydfil, can

		<p>you tell me what groups they were and how many youths were involved</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The report states that the project finish date is 31st March 2018, however; the project evaluation states that you are well behind schedule. Can you provide an update on whether the project will be finished on 31st March or is there a new end date <p>The Chair requested an update in relation to the Stay Well @Home Service.</p> <p>Angela Edevane provided the update in relation to the Stay Well@Home Service.</p> <p>The Chair requested an update in relation to Supporting People Pricing System (Cost Calculator). Mark Anderton provided the committee with an update and highlighted salient points.</p> <p>Resolved that:</p> <p>The content of the report be noted.</p> <p>The Chair thanked the Officers for their attendance and wished them all a Merry Christmas.</p>
540	Caseloads - Children's Services	<p>Annabel Lloyd led the committee through the salient points within the report and the following questions were raised by the Committee.</p> <p>The Chair asked the Cabinet Member for reassurances in relation to staffing levels and funding for Children's Services.</p> <p>The following questions were raised by the committee and were answered by the relevant officer.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> With the Government rolling out Universal Credit in March 2018, do you think you will see an increase in work load You mentioned the letter to staff explaining what support is available; can you please tell the committee what support is available As a Lead officer do you feel that the level of support is adequate In relation to supervision sessions, what provision is made if a session cannot be attended due to unforeseen circumstances The change in approach to working with families that is required of the Social Services and Well-being Act means that practitioners need to spend more time working with families to achieve lasting change in an operating environment where office based activities and reporting requirements are

		<p>unchanged. Does this have a negative effect on the end result as practitioners are spending more time with families for the same results</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How are the authority's budget cuts affecting your ability to improve the service • Officers are spending more time with the family/child which will provide benefits in the future, but the caseload size is too much and there is no reduction in demand at the front door. Do you envisage a reduction in demand in the near future • Do you envisage that the department in question will be fully staffed in 6 months thus reducing the case load size <p>Resolved that:</p> <p>The scrutiny committee receive the report.</p> <p>The Chair thanked Annabel for the report.</p>
541	NEETS Strategy 2018-2021	<p>Diane Jones introduced the report to the committee and highlighted the salient points in relation to the NEETS Strategy 2018-2021.</p> <p>The following questions were raised by the committee and responded to by the appropriate officer.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • You say that the rate of improvement across Merthyr Tydfil has been at an accelerated pace in comparison to the rest of Wales. What are the reasons for this; and is it sustainable • How many young people in Merthyr Tydfil not in training, work etc. <p>Resolved that:</p> <p>The scrutiny committee receive the report.</p> <p>The Chair thanked the officers for their attendance and for providing an excellent report.</p>
542	Communities Update report First	<p>Chris Hole provided the committee with an update in relation to Communities First and the committee raised the following questions.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Communities First worked very well, do you feel that the decision to shut it down was justified • By April 2018 you need to have a number of approvals and actions in place. How confident are you of achieving all of these and what are the repercussions if they are not

		<p>Resolved that:</p> <p>Scrutiny notes the contents of the report.</p> <p>The Chair thanked Chris Hole for the report and verbal update.</p>
543	Scrutiny Referrals, Feedback and Follow up Actions	The Chair advised that there was no update on this item.
544	Reflection and Evaluation of Meeting	The Chair and the Committee reflected on the issues that had been considered.
545	Social Services and Well-being (Wales) Act 2014	Lisa Curtis-Jones provided the committee with a brief update in relation to the Social Services and Well-being (Wales) Act 2014.
546	Forward Work Programme	The Chair advised that there was no update on this item.
547	Any other business deemed urgent by the Chair	The Chair advised that there was no business deemed urgent and wished the committee a Merry Christmas