



MINUTES OF MEETING

SCRUTINY : SOCIAL SERVICES MEETING

TUESDAY, 16TH MARCH, 2021

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

Councillors G Richards, D Sammon and I Thomas

Other Councillors in Attendance:

Councillor Chris Jones (Cabinet Member for Social Services)

Officers:

L Curtis Jones (Chief Officer (Social Services)) and T Hudd (Family Support), Rachel Gray (Children's Services) and M Phillips (Democratic Services Officer)

ITEM NO.	AGENDA MATTER	DECISION
478	Apologies for absence	No apologies for absence were received.
479	Declarations of Interest (including whipping declarations)	No Declarations of interest were received.
480	Cwm Taf Morgannwg Safeguarding Board Annual Report 2019/20	Lisa Curtis-Jones introduced the item to the committee and highlighted the key priorities within the report. Nicola Kingham apologised for the delay in publishing the report and for the lack of data which wasn't available due to the pandemic.

		<p>The following questions were raised by the committee and answered in detail by the officers in attendance.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Can you confirm if there are two separate multi agency hubs and if so are there any plans to merge them • Page 37 – Statutory Duty to Scrutinise Local Arrangements, Column 2 – Presented at Board, can you confirm if this is when for example MTCBC Children’s Services bring something to the Board for discussion or ratification • Merthyr Tydfil CBC Public Protection Attendance is quite low compared to RCT, are there issue in this area or what are the reasons for the lack of statutory attendance at the meetings • This report is referring to 2019-2020, can you confirm if the Public Protection engagement levels have improved over the past year • Can you confirm who the Head of Service is for Public Protection and raise the issue with them to help resolve the matter • Page 45 – Guidance received from Welsh Ministers or the National Board in relation to Nursery Provision, can you confirm where we are as a local authority and how many unregistered provisions we currently have <p>The Cabinet Member for Social Services addressed the committee and confirmed that he would be raising the attendance issue highlighted by the committee with the Head Service of Public Protection.</p> <p>The Chair thanked the Officers for the report.</p>
481	Adult Services and Children’s Services Carers Strategy	<p>Taryn Stephens introduced the report to the committee and provided a general overview of young carers before handing over to Rachel Gray who provided an overview of Adult Services.</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"> • Will there be a follow up report highlighting the lessons learned once the covid-19 restrictions are lifted • Do you know how many unpaid carers we have registered in Merthyr Tydfil and has there been an increase due to Covid • You highlighted the changes to the Carers Assessment, what do you want to achieve with the new format of assessment

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Can you confirm what plans you have in place to support young carers once the Covid-19 restrictions are lifted such as trips away etc • Can you confirm if the Local Authority automatically notified of all carers in receipt of carers allowance • The report states that unpaid carers are not coping during the lockdown, can you confirm what has been put in place to assist them • The report states that the current strategy is under review can you confirm if you have an end date for this • Weekends are always difficult for any local government service, are you able to provide a high level of support for both children and adult carers on weekends • Can you provide the committee with examples of some of the day to day support that you provide to the young carers in Merthyr Tydfil and confirm whether they receive any financial assistance <p>The Chair thanked the officers for the excellent report.</p>
482	Social Services Recovery, Transformation and Improvement Plan Update	<p>Lisa Curtis-Jones introduced the report to the committee and provided an update on the Plan and the service moving forward.</p> <p>The following questions were raised by the committee and were responded to in details by the officers in attendance.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Can you confirm how many members of staff have received their Covid vaccinations • Will you be looking to develop a mental health support pathway across the spectrum considering the issues that have arisen from the Pandemic • Has the authority picked up on the offer of funding from Welsh Government over the past few weeks to assist with preventative work / family resources to move into next year which would aid the sustainability and the financial pressures in preventative services <p>The Cabinet Member for Social Services addressed the committee and confirmed his appointment as the new Chair of the Regional Partnership Board for Cwm Taf Morgannwg and hopes it will be a good thing for Merthyr Tydfil going forward.</p>

		<p>The Cabinet Member also shared the exciting news with the committee that Merthyr Tydfil has been chosen as 1 of 6 communities in the UK and the only one in Wales to work with the Lloyds Banking Foundation, it is a two part program, Part One – Developing organisational resilience for Third Sector and Community Sector organisations in Merthyr Tydfil to be more sustainable and Part 2 – A systems change and a cultural change programme with Public Sector and Third Sector and the theme that the partners in Merthyr have chosen is Children and Young people’s Mental Health.</p> <p>The Chair requested that the Cabinet Member work closely with the Public Service Board to ensure that things are fed back to the committee in a timely manner.</p> <p>The Chair thanked Lisa Curtis-Jones and the Social Services Team as a whole for all they have achieved and for the way they developed and changed their working practices during a very difficult time due to the Pandemic.</p>
483	Forward Work Programme 2020/21	No updated was provided on the Forward Work programme.
484	Scrutiny Referrals, Feedback and Follow up Actions	The Chair advised the committee that there were no Scrutiny Referrals, feedback or follow up actions.
485	Reflection and Evaluation of Meeting	The Chair and the Committee reflected in detail on the matters that had been discussed at the Meeting
486	Any other business deemed urgent by the Chair	The Chair thanked the members for their attendance and closed the meeting.