

**CROSS PARTY GROUP ON LOOKED AFTER CHILDREN**  
**ANNUAL REPORT AND FINANCIAL STATEMENT**  
**MARCH 2014**



**LLEISIAU O OFAL VOICES FROM CARE**



### **David Melding (Chair) Foreword**

The Cross Party Group on Looked After Children aims to use the scrutiny mechanism available in the National Assembly to help drive up the standards of services provided to children in care and care leavers.

During the year the group looked at adoption support, children missing from care and the collection of this data, maintaining opportunities for meaningful contact for siblings in care, and extending the duration of foster care placements up to the age of 21.

As Chair of the Cross Party Group I am grateful to all the AMs who have supported our work. We have also benefited from the expertise of several guest speakers who have given their time most generously. But without the outstanding support of the Group's secretariat, Voices from Care, none of this valuable work would have been possible.

### **Cross Party Group on Looked After Children**

The group meets to consider different issues of importance for looked after children in Wales and consider policy implications.

The meetings also provide opportunities for representatives from relevant organisations to meet with Assembly Members to discuss issues of concern for looked after children in Wales.

### **Membership and Secretariat**

The membership and secretariat, as of March 2014, are as follows:

#### **Members:**

- ❖ David Melding AM DPO (Chair)
- ❖ Bethan Jenkins AM
- ❖ Julie Morgan AM
- ❖ Mohammad Asghar AM

#### **Secretary:**

- ❖ Rhian Williams – Voices From Care

### **Meetings held in the past 12 months**

A total of four meetings were held from April 2013 to March 2014.

<b>DATE OF MEETING</b>	<b>ASSEMBLY MEMBERS IN ATTENDANCE</b>	<b>SUBJECTS DISCUSSED</b>	<b>IN ATTENDANCE &amp; GUEST SPEAKERS</b>
8 <sup>th</sup> May 2013	David Melding AM Dan Butler – Mark Drakeford AM Support Staff Mark Drakeford AM Julie Morgan AM Angharad Thomas – David Rees AM Support Staff Mark Isherwood AM Aled Roberts AM Suzy Davies AM	Post Adoption Support	John Wilkinson, Director, Wilkinson PR  D. Jones –Voices From Care (VFC) R. Williams - VFC D. Burns - VFC
6 <sup>th</sup> November 2013	David Melding AM Joyce Watson - AM	Children Missing From Care	Joyce Watson AM R. Williams - VFC
11 <sup>th</sup> December 2013	David Melding AM	Siblings in Care	Delma Hughes, Founder Director, Siblings Together  R. Williams - VFC

12 <sup>th</sup> March 2014	David Melding AM  Mohammad Asghar AM	How extending the Leaving Care Age to 21 would benefit young people	Jeremy Thomas, Scott Ruddock, Debra Walker, TACT Fostering Wales.  Young people - C. Kinsey, K. Lavender, L. lavender S. Richards and J. Hopkins TACT Fostering Wales  D. Jones – VFC R. Williams – VFC C. Dunn – VFC N. Mitchell - VFC
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**Financial Statement**

A total of £4.50 was paid in travel expenses across the four meetings which were met by Voices From Care and an estimation of £534.04 costs in kind for time incurred by Voices From Care staff for servicing the Cross Party Group on Looked After Children.