

Meeting of the Cross Party Group for

Looked After Children

WEDNESDAY 29 JUNE 2015

12.00–1.30

AMs present:

David Melding AM DPO—Chairperson

Aled Roberts - AM

Tomos Davies—Angela Burns AM Support Staff

In attendance:

Rhian Williams, PA / Administrative Secretary, Voices From Care

Christopher Dunn, Development Coordinator, Voices From Care

Apologies received from:

Janet Haworth - AM

Janet Finch Saunders - AM

Menna Thomas, Research and Policy Officer, Barnardo's

Hywel Ap Dayfdd—Policy Officer, Children's Commissioner for Wales Office

Deborah Jones, Chief Executive Officer, Voices From Care

Dr. Emily Warren, Director, The Fostering Network Wales

Maria Boffey, Business Development Manager, Wales, The Fostering Network Wales

WELCOME AND INTRODUCTION FROM THE CHAIR

DM opened the meeting and welcomed those present.

MINUTES

Minutes of the meeting held on 25th February 2015 were noted and approved.

MATTERS ARISING

There were no matters arising.

THE ELECTION OF A CHAIR AND SECRETARY

Aled Roberts AM proposed and Angela Burns AM seconded the re-election by affirmation of DM as chair and R. Williams as Secretary of the Cross Party Group on Looked After Children.

FUTURE MEETINGS

Further to a recent event at the Senedd; as part of their Foster Care Fortnight Campaign and in response to Dr. Warren's offer for The Fostering Network Wales to present at a future CPG on LAC meeting or to submit an information briefing to the group, it was agreed that the group would be happy to keep in touch, as AM's from the group had attended the Breakfast Meeting Event.

ANY OTHER BUSINESS

CD informed, that Voices From Care were currently working with their 5 Nations partners; including The Republic of Ireland, and as part of a national event were hoping to hold an event on Friday 19th February 2016, celebrating the successes and positive side of being looked after and a care leaver. CD clarified the event would very much be a young person's event. DM agreed to sponsor Voices From Care in holding the event at the Pierhead Building.

ACTION: CD TO DRAFT UP TANGIBLE AND PRACTABLE IDEAS FOR THE EVENT.

ACTION: S. SHARPE AND RW TO LIAISE RE – BOOKING THE PEIRHEAD

CD continued adding that all the 5 nations would be holding an event on the same day, with young people sharing good practice. DM felt this was a terrific idea and stated there was a tendency too often, to emphasise on the negative parts of being looked after and we should also focus on the positives; for example, what works, to bring in some balance. AR felt that some of the positives were not resource related.

ACTION: AR TO FEEDBACK DETAILS AND LOCATE FORMER APPRENTICES OF A LOCAL SCHEME WHO COULD POSSIBLY ATTEND THIS EVENT.

DM recapped on reviewing what the group had looked at in terms of Government Strategy, specifically the Educational Attainment being something the group could focus on, leaving a legacy for the new Assembly. A question arose of the outcome of there being a chairperson of the CPG on LAC.

ACTION: DM PUTTING IN PLACE A CONTINGENCY PLAN AND A SUCCESSOR

DM confirmed he had responded to the consultation on behalf of the CPG on LAC, emphasising the important parts.

AR reported there was confusion around the Additional Needs Bill; which is expected to be introduced as a draft Bill and the draft Code of Conduct and when it would actually be released. AR continued stating there were big issues where the Government were resistant to go down the same path as

England and Scotland in terms of plans and duties on local authorities, adding that to date no costings have been completed, which raised the question of it being a planned process.

DM reported that to date, no call for evidence has gone out and emphasised the need to watch this and stressed the importance of feeding back into any consultation, adding the importance for Voices From Care to contribute and liaise with him.

A short discussion took place around projects in north Wales, especially the Wrexham Warehouse project and its success rate in creating opportunities and work experience for young people. The Warehouse project; which is run by a former care leaver/foster carer, provides training in for example bricklaying, plastering, joinery, mechanics etc.

DATE OF NEXT MEETING

ACTION: RW TO LIASE WITH S. SHARPE FOR DATE OF AUTUMN MEETING