

**Annual General Meeting and Meeting of the Cross Party Group for Looked  
After Children**

**Tuesday 4<sup>h</sup> June 2019**

**12.30–1.30**

**AMs present:**

David Melding AM – Chairperson (DM)

Helen Mary Jones AM (HMJ)

**In attendance:**

Ann Bell – Adoption UK (AB)

Elizabeth Flowers – Children’s Commissioner for Wales Staff

Paula Foley – Jenny Rathbone AM Support Staff

Deborah Jones – CEO, Voices From Care Cymru (DJ)

Heidi Keiser – NSPCC

Mared Llwyd – Social Care Wales

Emma Phipps-Magill – NYAS Cymru

Hugh Russell – Llamau (HR)

Elaine Speyer – Barnardos

Charlotte Wooders – The Fostering Network Wales

Tim Crahart – Business Support Manager, Voices From Care Cymru – (minute taker) (TC)

**Apologies received from:**

Dan Willis – Stepping Stones

Bethan T James – Carmarthenshire County Council

Reverend Philip Manghan - Catholic Education Service

Iwan Williams – Social Care Wales

Councillor Ash Lister – Cardiff Council

Sean Oneill – Children in Wales

Sian Thomas – National Assembly Research Service

Sharon Lovell – NYAS Cymru

**1. Welcome and introduction from the Chair**

DM welcomed the group

Apologies were read and DM welcomed new members to the group.

## **2. Annual General Meeting (AGM)**

DM explained that the group is required to have an AGM and to receive the annual report. The report is a summary of the topics discussed over the course of the year, who has attended and any associated costs.

DM asked if the group was happy to receive the report and all agreed.

The AGM also required the election of a chair.

HMJ nominated DM and the group re-elected him to continue in the role.

## **3. Minutes**

The minutes were considered by the group and accepted as a true record.

There were no matters arising.

## **4. Public Accounts Committee (PAC)**

DM fed back that the PAC report is gaining attention.

A conference will be held in the autumn covering the outcomes of the PAC report.

One of the recommendations was that the work of the Ministerial Advisory Group (MAG) should be more transparent and outward facing. The MAG website is being amended to reflect the recommendation.

## **5. Ministerial Advisory Group (MAG)**

Corporate parenting was discussed in the last group and there is momentum to strengthen statutory guidance in this area. There is a particular focus on agencies that have not always seen corporate parenting as a requirement such as health, police, emergency services, education, housing, etc. Corporate parenting needs to be fully adopted by all services.

There is also a commitment to legislate on the issue of corporate parenting if statutory guidance is not sufficient.

Education attainment is the next main priority for MAG as the three year strategy ended in March.

After this the group would focus on housing.

DJ stated that corporate parenting won't have real teeth until it is incorporated in to legislation.

DM felt that there was political will for this if necessary.

## **6. End Youth Homelessness Campaign (EYHC)**

Hugh Russell (HR) from Llamau attended the group to talk about the progress of the EYHC in relation to care experienced people.

He began by explaining that the EYHC is a collation of organisations.

HR stated that there is a drop off between systems i.e. between children and adult services, which can result in young people failing to access the necessary services. There were around 8,000 homeless presentations by young people last year, however the data doesn't identify individuals only the number of times they have presented as homeless, which is likely to involve double counting. Young people don't always know that they are owed a duty and therefore don't present as homeless but end up sofa surfing, etc. Earlier intervention is needed.

A number of EYHC working groups have been set up of which Care Experience is one. There has also been positive support from the Welsh Government.

HR went on to say that there are clear links between care and homelessness, which is backed up by research and live examples.

- 25% of young people in Llamau services are care experienced.
- Crisis estimate that in the UK 33% of the homeless people have a care background.
- Also 25% of single homeless people are care experienced.

Under the EYHC a number of working groups have been set up. Sharon Lovell (NYAS) chairs the Care Experienced working group. Young people have been consulted and have identified challenges, barriers and systematic problems. This feedback was then taken to the group and also to the Leaving Care Forum. A list of calls for action have been developed from this. They include:

- Lack of accommodation options
- Being forced into statutory homelessness
- Corporate parenting i.e. acting as guarantors
- Distribution of assistance; setting up home allowance, St David's fund
- No care experienced young person should face eviction from social housing
- Data collection – data sets are often merged i.e. care experienced and young people at risk of exploitation
- Data sharing within Local Authorities i.e. proof of care experienced status

A research proposal is being out together and the aim is to work with care experienced young people as peer researchers. The plan is to tighten up the list of priorities. HR said he would be happy to update the group on progress.

DM welcomed the concrete policy proposals, which the EYHC work has highlighted. He also stated that it was great for peer researchers to be involved in the work.

DJ stated that the campaign highlights the discrimination that care experienced young people face when they are homeless. HR added that there is a lot of labelling of young people in general.

DM reflected that it was burdensome to expect young people to have to prove their care status in order to access priority need support.

HMJ highlighted the issue of safety around homeless young women and the kind of accommodation, which is available to them. She also advised that it would be good to get AMs on board when some quick wins are identified, especially before the data is published. HMJ then left the group.

HR finished by saying that homeless care leavers are being placed in appropriate accommodation but what is deemed as appropriate?

DM thanked HR for the presentation.

## **7. Any other business**

### **Lost in Care: 20 years on conference**

DM explained that he is hoping to have a conference to commemorate twenty years since the publication of the Lost in Care report. He has applied to host it in the Pierhead on the morning of the 11<sup>th</sup> December.

He is working on inviting a range of speakers and DJ will update on how Wales has progress with the recommendations that were set out within the report.

### **Topics for future meetings**

DM said he would invite a representative from the Public Accounts Committee to speak at the next meeting.

He also felt it would be good to get a representative from Who Care Scotland to talk about their work around corporate parenting.

Edge of care was a topic that was also highlighted, dependent upon identifying a speaker.

A representative from the Children's Commissioner could also attend a future meeting to discuss the Rights bill.

DM suggested that one of the above topics be covered at the next meeting dependent upon identifying speakers.

## **8. Date of next meeting.**

12.30 on the 12<sup>th</sup> November 2019 in Conference Room B, ground floor, Ty Hywel.