



## **HEALTH, SOCIAL CARE AND WELLBEING SCRUTINY COMMITTEE – 12TH FEBRUARY 2013**

**SUBJECT: MISSING VOICES: A REVIEW OF INDEPENDENT AND PROFESSIONAL  
ADVOCACY SERVICES FOR LOOKED AFTER CHILDREN AND YOUNG  
PEOPLE, CARER LEAVERS AND CHILDREN IN NEED IN WALES**

**REPORT BY: CORPORATE DIRECTOR SOCIAL SERVICES**

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### **1. PURPOSE OF REPORT**

- 1.1 To update Health Social Care and Wellbeing Scrutiny Committee on additional work carried out to further improve advocacy services to children and young people following the Children's Commissioner for Wales review of advocacy services and the publishing of 29 recommendations in May 2012.

### **2. SUMMARY**

- 2.1 The Children's Commissioner for Wales completed a review of advocacy services for looked after children and young people, care leavers and children in need and local authorities in 2011. As a result in March 2012 he published 'Missing Voices' in which he made 29 recommendations for Local Authorities agencies in Wales and Welsh Government to improve services for children. In May 2012 Children's Services completed a response in the form of a position statement to the Children's Commissioner in Wales on the 17 recommendations that were intended for Local Authorities. The purpose of this report to provide an up date on progress.

### **3. LINKS TO STRATEGY**

- 3.1 Children's Commissioner for Wales Act 2001.

### **4. THE REPORT**

- 4.1 The Children's Commissioner for Wales has used his powers to review independent advocacy services for looked after children and young people, care leavers and children in need in Wales. The report on this review has been named 'Missing Voices'.
- 4.2 The Children's Commissioner wanted to see whether and to what extent the arrangements are effective in strengthening and promoting the rights and safeguarding the welfare of children and young people.
- 4.3 This review was undertaken as a response to the evidence the Children's Commissioner gathered during the course of interviewing young people for the report he published last year called "Lost in Care".
- 4.4 This report highlighted that many children and young people did not know that advocacy services existed or that they had an entitlement to receive advocacy if they were being looked after by a local authority, were leaving care or were a child in need.

4.5 The 'Missing Voices' document identifies 17 recommendations for local authorities, Welsh Government and other organisations. Appendix 1 of this report identifies each recommendation, provides the Local Authority position statement and progress that has been made in improving advocacy for children and young people.

4.6 Caerphilly County Borough Council performed well against many of the recommendations made and progress has been made to further extend and strengthen services.

## **5. EQUALITIES IMPLICATIONS**

5.1 This report is for information purposes, so the Council's Equality process does not need to be applied.

## **6. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

6.1 There are no financial implications for Children's Services other than the funding provided to NYAS to deliver an advocacy service for Looked After and Children In Need

## **7. PERSONNEL IMPLICATIONS**

7.1 There are currently no personnel implications.

## **8. CONSULTATIONS**

8.1 The views of those consulted have been incorporated into the report.

## **9. RECOMMENDATIONS**

9.1 That Health, Social Care and Wellbeing committee consider the report and updated information.

## **10. REASONS FOR THE RECOMMENDATIONS**

10.1 To update the Health Social Care and Wellbeing Scrutiny Committee of additional work carried out to further improve advocacy services to children and young people following the Children's Commissioner for Wales review of advocacy services and the publishing of 29 recommendations in May 2012.

## **11. STATUTORY POWER**

11.1 The Children Act 1989.

11.2 The Children Act 2004.

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Appendices:  
Appendix 1 Response To "Missing Voices" Recommendations