



## **SOCIAL SERVICES SCRUTINY COMMITTEE**

### **MINUTES OF THE DIGITAL MEETING HELD VIA MICROSOFT TEAMS ON TUESDAY 27TH APRIL 2021 AT 5.30 P.M.**

PRESENT:

Councillor L. Binding - Chair

Councillors:

A. Angel, J. Bevan, D. Cushing, M. Evans, A. Gair, J. Gale, V. James, L. Jeremiah, A. Leonard, S. Skivens, W. Williams.

Cabinet Member: S. Cook (Social Care).

Together with:

D. Street (Corporate Director - Social Services and Housing), J. Williams (Assistant Director - Adult Services), G. Jenkins (Assistant Director - Children's Services), C. Forbes-Thompson (Scrutiny Manager), S. Hughes (Committee Services Officer) J. Lloyd (Committee Services Officer), and C. Evans (Committee Services Officer).

A. Rawlings (Care Inspectorate Wales (CIW))

Users and Carer – Mrs M. Jones and C. Luke.

### **RECORDING AND VOTING ARRANGEMENTS**

The Chair reminded those present that the meeting was being filmed but would not be live streamed, however a recording would be available following the meeting via the Council's website – [Click Here To View](#). He advised that decisions would be made by Microsoft Forms.

### **CHAIRMAN ANNOUNCEMENT**

The Chair reminded Members that this would be his last meeting and thanked the Committee for their continued support during his term. Members and Officers thanked the Chair for his dedication and support and wished him all the best for the future.

#### **1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

Apologies for absence had been received from Councillors C. Thomas and C. Bezzina (Vice Chair).

#### **2. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

There were no declarations of interest received at the commencement or during the course of the meeting.

**3. MINUTES – 16TH MARCH 2021**

RESOLVED that the minutes of the meeting of the Social Services Scrutiny Committee held on 16th March 2021 (minute nos. 1 - 8) be approved and signed as a correct record.

**4. CONSIDERATION OF ANY MATTER REFERRED TO THE SCRUTINY COMMITTEE IN ACCORDANCE WITH THE CALL-IN PROCEDURE**

There had been no matters referred to the Scrutiny Committee in accordance with the call-in procedure.

**5. SOCIAL SERVICES SCRUTINY COMMITTEE FORWARD WORK PROGRAMME**

The Scrutiny Officer introduced the report that informed the Committee of its Forward Work Programme planned for the period April 2021 to January 2022.

Following consideration and discussion the recommendation in the report be approved. By way of electronic voting this was unanimously agreed.

RESOLVED that the Forward Work Programme as appended to the meeting papers be published on the Council's website.

**6. CABINET REPORTS**

None of the Cabinet reports listed on the agenda had been called forward for discussion at the meeting.

**REPORTS OF OFFICERS**

Consideration was given to the following reports.

**7. CARE INSPECTORATE WALES (CIW) ASSURANCE CHECK 2021: CAERPHILLY COUNTY BOROUGH COUNCIL SOCIAL SERVICES – FEEDBACK**

The report informed the Social Services Scrutiny Committee of the outcome of the recently completed CIW Assurance Check. It was noted that the purpose of the assurance check was to review how Caerphilly's Social Services Directorate continues to help and support adults and children with a focus on safety and well-being.

The report included a letter from CIW (Appendix 1) which summarised the findings of their assurance check which took place between 15th and 19th March 2021. In March 2020, Care Inspectorate Wales (CIW) suspended its inspection programme in response to the COVID-19 pandemic to enable local authorities and providers to focus fully on responding to the challenging circumstances. It was noted that a revised programme with local authorities recommenced in September 2020 to provide assurance about how people had been safeguarded and well-being promoted during the pandemic.

The Scrutiny Committee thanked the Officer for the report and welcomed A. Rawlings from CIW who provided an overview of Quality Assurance review, outlining key areas such as the Local Authority's discharge of statutory functions promotion of well-being of staff and the processes for which children are taken into care or returned to their families. It was noted that discussions were undertaken with a selection of staff and partner agencies, as well as the

third sector and voluntary sector, young people leaving care and young carers. Surveys considered engagement and it was noted that there was good evidence of open communication and that business as usual continued in support services during the pandemic.

The Committee thanked Mrs Rawlings for the detailed presentation and discussion ensued. Members were pleased with the overall positive report and thanked all staff within Social Services, in particular the management team for their hard work.

Queries were raised around confidentiality during the review. Officers confirmed that cases are selected at random and confidentiality maintained. However, service users were assured that the review is being undertaken by an independent agency and that their answers are provided in confidence and were encouraged to raise any concerns.

A Member queried the process for safeguarding issues being conducted virtually via Microsoft Teams or Zoom. Officers confirmed that interviews were undertaken via Teams or whatsapp, feedback from young people was positive however, and attendance rates had increased during the pandemic. There are concerns with the use of virtual meetings in that it is difficult to ensure that the conversation was entirely confidential, however Members were assured that where necessary, face to face appointments were provided.

Following consideration and discussion, it was moved and seconded that the recommendation in the report be approved. By show of hands this was unanimously agreed

RESOLVED that the content and findings as detailed within the report be noted.

The meeting closed at 7.22pm

Approved as a correct record, subject to any amendments agreed and recorded in the minutes of the meeting held on the 15th June 2021.

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CHAIR