A Report of the:
Children & Young People Scrutiny Committee

Listening Event – Looked After Children
May 2013

County Council of The City and County of Cardiff
CHAIR’S FOREWORD

The Children and Young People Scrutiny Committee is committed to engaging with children and young people in order to ensure effective and efficient service delivery. The participation of children and young people is enshrined in the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC). Article 12 (Respect for the views of the child) states: ‘When adults are making decisions that affect children, children have the right to say what they think should happen and have their opinions taken into account’.

The engagement of Looked After children and young people is high on the agenda for the committee due to its relationship with Tros Gynnal who helped plan, organise and facilitate the listening day. I would like to extend my thanks to the Tros Gynnal staff and the young people who helped organise the listening event. The event was a fantastic success, with a number of young people attending to engage in workshops about their experiences in care. The workshops were designed to ensure young people felt comfortable talking with staff and committee members in a relaxed and calm environment.

The Listening Event for looked after children was the first such event to be held by a scrutiny committee of Cardiff Council and the main aim was to actively listen to the opinions, concerns and suggestions of looked after children. Social workers were provided with the details of the listening day and asked to inform children and young people. The event was also publicised through posters designed by young people who attend the looked after children forum facilitated by Tros Gynnal. During the planning stage I met with some of the young people who helped organise the event and I was impressed with their commitment to the scrutiny committee and planning the listening event.
I hope that the cabinet takes on board the recommendation to regularly engage with looked after children and that this listening event is the first of many for looked after children and the Children and Young People Scrutiny Committee.

County Councillor Siobhan Corria
Chairperson of the Children & Young People Scrutiny Committee
INTRODUCTION

1. The Children & Young People Scrutiny Committee, during the development of this year’s work programme agreed to undertake a listening exercise with Looked After young people. This event was the first of its kind and was proposed to enable the Committee to help ensure that the young people’s views are heard by decision makers in the Council. Members had previously expressed their concern about the services and support provided for Looked After Children, particularly as result of the scrutiny of Children’s Services’ performance information and therefore they wished to gain an understanding from Looked After Children what concerned the young people during their care.

2. The Committee agreed at its meeting on 15th January 2013 to hold a listening event with a group of Looked After Children sometime in the spring. Following discussions with officers and voluntary organisations it was agreed that the listening event would be developed and facilitated by Tros Gynnal Plant (Advocacy Service) together with a group of Looked After Children in consultation with the Chairperson of the Committee and officers from Scrutiny Services. It was agreed that the event would be designed to enable Members of the Committee to hear the views of Looked After Children on their experiences, aspirations and concerns during their care by the Council. The young people’s views would be captured by members of the Advocacy Service and would be based around three key themes:

- School and Healthy Living
- Visiting Family and Where you Live
- Social Services
3. Tros Gynnal Plant (Advocacy Service) agreed together with a group of Looked After Children, to develop the listening event, and staff from the Advocacy Service agreed to meet with the Chairperson to help start to develop the activities to capture the young people’s views. The Chairperson met with the team of Looked After Children and Advocacy Service staff and agreed to hold the listening event on 16th March in the Pierhead Building in Cardiff Bay.
4. The Councillors, Tros Gynnal Plant Advocacy Service, officers and young people worked closely together to develop activities for the listening event to enable Looked After Children invited from across Cardiff, to provide their views on how they felt they had been supported and advised, and the services that were available to them, during their time in care. All questions were answered honestly and as fully as possible by the young people who attended the event, supported where necessary by staff from the Advocacy Service and Councillors from the Committee. A number of issues did, however, develop through the sessions from which the following key findings became evident to the Councillors and young people:

**KF1** Young people’s participation in decision making is a requirement of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC) and Welsh Government, best practice for Care and Social Services Inspectorate Wales (CSSIW) inspections and essential to crucial effective decision making by the Council.

**KF2** Participation of young people in providing advice and views to decision makers raises young people’s understanding of decision making in local government, governance arrangements of a local council, and empowers young people to become more involved in local democratic processes.

**KF3** Listening to Looked After Children is a crucial part of the improvement of social care and wellbeing outcomes for Looked After Children in Cardiff. Participation with Looked After Children is very effective. Looked After Children have an excellent understanding of what young people require whilst in the Council’s
care. They astutely reflect on their care and eloquently identify areas for improvement.

**KF4** Although the views expressed during the event could not be considered as statistically robust, the key points raised during the various activities could be of interest to the Council, senior officers and Children’s Service staff in helping to improve the social care outcomes of all Looked After Children in the Council’s Care.

**KF5** The views of Looked After Children is a key part of helping the Council to undertake its duties as a Corporate Parent.
The evidence gathered from the full day Listening Event at the Pierhead building was reviewed by officers and Members who identified a number of recommendations for the Cabinet.

The Committee recommends that:

R1. The Cabinet must ensure that decisions makers regularly engage with Looked After Children, wherever possible to ensure that their views are heard during the development and implementation of all social care strategies, policies and plans.

R2. The Children & Young People Scrutiny Committee should hold regular listening events with different groups of Looked After Children to help gain their perspective on areas for improvement in social care.

R3. That the Corporate Parenting Panel undertakes regular listening events with Looked After Children to hear their views on the care provided by the Council.
Scope of the Looked After Children Listening Event

5. To enable the Committee to help ensure that Looked After Children’s views are heard by decision makers in the Council, Members agreed as part of its work programme for the year to hold a listening event with a group of Looked After Children from across Cardiff.

6. The Committee agreed at its meeting on 15th January 2013 that the Looked After Children listening event would be held in the spring. The event would be developed and facilitated by Tros Gwynal Plant’s Advocacy Service together with a group of Looked After Children in consultation with the Chairperson of the Committee and officers from Scrutiny Services. The listening event would enable Members of the Committee to hear the views of looked after children on their social care experiences. The views would be captured by staff from the Advocacy Service and were based around three key themes:

- School and Healthy Living
- Visiting Family and Where you live
- Social Services

7. The Advocacy Service - following discussions with a group of Looked After Children - agreed to develop, support and facilitate the Looked After Children listening event in December 2012 and also agreed to meet with the Chairperson to help start to develop the activities to provide the young people’s views. The Chairperson, the Advocacy Service and a group of Looked After Children agreed after considering numerous venues to hold the event on 16th March 2013 in the Pierhead Building, Cardiff Bay.
8. Ken Skates AM (Clwyd South) agreed to sponsor the event due to his interest in ensuring Looked After Children are provided with the support and services they need, and most recently his involvement in the development of the consultation document that addresses the issues facing care leavers and a new scheme to support young people as they make the important transition from care to adult life.

**Why it is important to hear from young people**

**The United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child**


10. Article 12 of the Convention states: “parties shall assure to the child who is capable of forming his or her own views the right to express those views freely in all matters affecting the child, the views of the child being given due weight in accordance with the age and maturity of the child. For this purpose, the child shall in particular be provided the opportunity to be heard in any judicial and administrative proceedings affecting the child, either directly, or through a representative or an appropriate body, in a manner consistent with the procedural rules of national law.”

11. The Children’s Commissioners’ Report to the UN Committee on the Rights of the Child concluded that in respect of Article 12 (respect for the views of the child - participation in decision making): “Since 2002, there has been a general improvement in the recognition, level and quality of children’s participation in decision making across the UK. Nonetheless, there remains significant variation in legislation and practice. While we are encouraged by pockets of good practice, a
considerable amount of progress is yet to be made to fully achieve children’s participation rights in all aspects of their lives, regardless of the setting or the subject matter.”

12. There are a number of barriers that limit children’s participation in decision making. Some of those barriers are strategic (such as complaints policies that are unsuitable for use by children or that specifically exclude children from making a complaint), while others are attitudinal.

13. Particular groups of children and young people may experience additional barriers to enjoying their participation rights. For example, there continues to be resistance to seeking the views of younger children at a strategic level and a failure to implement law and policy when it comes to involving disabled children or Looked After Children in decisions about their care. Children with non-verbal means of communication and those with other communication difficulties experience particular problems with regard to participation and often do not have the necessary communication aids that would facilitate their right to a voice.

**Welsh Government**

14. The Children Act 2004 Guidance for Wales states: “The Assembly Government has adopted the UN Convention as the foundation for all its dealings with children and young people, local authorities and their relevant partners should have regard to its principles in providing services.” In addition in January 2011 the Welsh Government introduced the “Rights of Children and Young People (Wales) Measure 2011” which requires Welsh Ministers to have due regard to the rights and obligations enshrined in the UNCRC when exercising their powers.

15. In addition the Welsh Assembly Government working in Partnership with the Wales UNCRC Monitoring Group published its Priorities for
Wales- United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child, which aims at taking forward the UNCRC in Wales. This document states at Key Priority 8 – Participation in Decision Making: “Build on what has already been achieved by those of you already involved in decision making. Bringing together and protecting what has been created for the future to make sure you have a say on decisions that affect you”.

16. The recently published guidance on the Welsh Government’s “Local Government (Wales) Measure” was published in April 2011, and includes provision to “enhance the role of non-executive (“backbench”) local authority councillors in the scrutiny of local services and make further provision in relation to overview and scrutiny committees”. The subsequent guidance published in June 2012 details within Chapter 5 - Taking Into Account The Views Of The Public, that the guidance document links with two key principles:

- **Citizens at the Centre**: services more responsive to users with people and communities involved in designing the way services are delivered.

- **Public Engagement**: every person to have the opportunity to contribute, and connect with the hardest to reach.

17. The Guidance continues to state that the local government scrutiny role is integral to helping people feel they are able to influence what goes on in their locality. Scrutiny has an important role in stimulating connections between different individuals and groups, and channelling community intelligence into the improvement processes of the council and its partners. In this respect, the scrutiny function can be regarded as helping to both build and represent democratic capacity. Before this can happen however, people need to know about their options to make their views known when they want to.

18. Engaging the public more deeply in scrutiny activity may be regarded as a hall-mark of healthy democracy. Better communication about local
decision making processes and greater representative participation will help ensure more direct experiences of community life inform strategic thinking and operational practice.

19. The Council’s Policy Review and Performance Scrutiny Committee at its meeting on 17 April 2013 agreed a Task & Finish Inquiry report into Public Engagement in Scrutiny. This inquiry used as its framework the Welsh Government’s Local Government (Wales) Measure, and identified at recommendation (R4) that:

“Scrutiny Services should take advantage of the full range of methods available to ensure effective and accessible public engagement with different audiences”.

Corporate Parenting

20. A Councillor’s Guide to being a good corporate parent to children in care and care leavers was jointly published in 2009 by the then Welsh Assembly Government and Welsh Local Government Association. The guidance was based on original work by the Department of Education and Skills and the Local Government Information Unit.

21. The Guidance explains that the role of corporate parent is to seek for children in public care the outcomes every good parent would want for their own children. The local authority has a legal and moral duty to provide such support to the children it looks after.

22. The Guidance includes a section on “Listening to Children” which states the following: “Communications between children, their carers, the Council and councillors can be complicated. There are issues of confidentiality and respect, and the needs and interests of the child must always come first. It is particularly challenging to find appropriate ways to ensure the voices of very young children are heard and to develop effective dialogue with children in foster care. On the other
hand, some contact and communication is important, both for councillors and the children and young people themselves. For councillors it can help them understand why they must take their responsibilities seriously. For the children and young people, it is an opportunity to express their views and concerns directly to those with ultimate policy-making authority”.

23. Local authorities need to consider ways in which councillors and the children in their council’s care can communicate with each other sensitively and appropriately. Ideas commended to councils include:

- Meetings between lead members and young people and carers about issues chosen by the children and young people themselves, to their agenda.
- Inviting young people’s representatives to sit on relevant committees or working groups.
- Work with a voluntary sector partner, to provide an independent advocate and intermediary between children and the council.

**Wales Audit Office**

24. The Wales Audit Office published in June 2012 its findings from a study examining whether public engagement undertaken by councils in Wales enables citizens to help shape what local government does. The Wales Audit Office considered that councils in Wales can derive particular benefit from effective public engagement as it plays an important role in the democratic process.

25. In part the report concludes that: “A critical factor influencing the development of an effective and meaningful approach to public engagement is the degree to which leaders demonstrate a commitment towards a more open and participatory organisational culture”. As such the report recommended that:
R2 – Council’s should establish and mainstream a culture which empowers citizens to co-produce services, as well as develop their own responses to opportunities and challenges facing their communities.

Care and Social Services Inspectorate Wales

26. The Care and Social Services Inspectorate Wales (CSSIW)’s role is to make professional inspections and judgments about social care, early years and social services, and so encourage improvement by the service providers. The CSSIW inspects, reviews and evaluates local authority social services, and regulates and inspects care settings and agencies using the regulations and national minimum standards made by the National Assembly for Wales and the Welsh Government. The regulations enable CSSIW to regulate the conduct of establishments and agencies in Wales.

27. In October 2012, the CSSIW published its Annual Review and Evaluation of Performance in Cardiff for 2011 – 2012. The CSSIW inspectors evaluated the authority’s performance in relation to each of the following areas:

- Shaping Services
- Getting Help
- The Services Provided
- The Effect on People’s Lives
- Capacity
- Providing Direction.

Social care providers are required to provide CSSIW with information on their service on a regular basis (for most services this is annually). The CSSIW provides self assessment packs to help capture the information they require to ensure that children are benefiting from services, have a good quality, safe service with positive outcomes. The
section on Fostering and Adoption includes under the part “Quality of Life” a request for details of how the Council ensures that children are benefiting from services, have a good quality of life, and or a good experience when using the service. This information is to be captured using three key questions:

- Children have a voice and are encouraged to speak up
- Children’s rights are protected and they experience being treated with dignity and respect
- Children feel they have choice and influence.

Children & Young People Scrutiny Committee’s Engagement with Young People

28. Committee has regularly engaged with children and young people while developing its work programme, providing advice to Task & Finish inquiries, seeking views on certain issues and helping secure children and young people’s engagement in the governance arrangements of the Council.

29. The Committee also agreed that Members wished to help ensure that the views of children and young people could be heard by decision makers whenever possible, and that they would consider which issues would be most effective for children and young people’s views to be most effectively heard.
Organisation and Development of the Event

30. The Committee agreed, in January 2013, to undertake a pilot listening exercise with young people to help ensure that their views can be heard by decision makers, enable young people become more involved in the democratic processes of the Council, and improve the Committee’s engagement with young people.

31. The Committee discussed a number of areas where Members felt that as well as improving engagement with young people they could seek young people’s views to help improve services. Members noted that they had previously expressed their concern about the services and support provided for Looked After Children, particularly as result of their analysis of Children’s Services performance information. As a result the Committee agreed to gain an understanding from Looked After Children what worked well and what could be improved during their care.

32. The Committee agreed at its meeting on 15th January 2013 that a listening event with a group of Looked After Children would be held in the spring. Following this decision the Members agreed that the event would be developed and facilitated by Tros Gynnal Plant Advocacy Service and a group of Looked After Children in consultation with the Chairperson of the Committee and officers from Scrutiny Services. The event would enable Members of the Committee to hear the views of Looked After Children on their experiences, aspirations and concerns during their care by the Council. The views would be captured by members of the Advocacy Service and would be based around three key themes:
• Visiting Family and Where you live
• School and Healthy Living
• Social Services.

33. Tros Gynnal Plant Advocacy Service agreed that in partnership with Looked After Children they would develop the listening event, and staff from the Advocacy Service agreed to meet with the Chairperson of the Committee to help start to develop the activities to capture the young people’s views. The Chairperson met with the team of Looked After Children and Advocacy staff and agreed to hold the listening event on 16th March at a location chosen by the group of Looked After Children.

34. Tros Gynnal Plant Advocacy staff following a number of meetings with a group of Looked After Children put forward the following proposal:

**Listening Event with Looked After Children**

**Proposal with Tros Gynnal Plant**

**Purpose of the Event**

For the Cardiff Children and Young People’s Scrutiny Committee to provide a forum for Looked After Children age 11+ to express their views on different aspects of being looked after by the local authority. As part of this process children and young people will be able to give their views on how they think services to Looked After Children can be improved by the Council.

**Participants**

We propose participants are Looked After Children and young people aged 11+. Whilst we recognise the importance of involving younger children we do not see it as feasible to hold an event which would cater for such a wide age range. We advise that a separate event should be
held to ascertain younger children’s views. We will seek to ensure that all groups of Looked After Children and young people are involved including disabled children and unaccompanied asylum seeking children. We will also seek to include children and young people placed out of county though the logistics of involving this group will prove more difficult.

**Format/structure of the event**

The event will ideally planned by Looked After young people themselves. It is envisaged that young people who are part of Cardiff Advocacy Team’s Newsletter/ Looked After Consultation Group will take a lead in this work. Advocates from the Cardiff Advocacy Team will support children and young people in the planning of this event as well as the coordinator of the Care Leavers Group who is a former looked after young person/care leaver of Cardiff Local Authority. However, additional funds will be needed for him to undertake this role as he is only currently employed by the project to facilitate the group 10 hours a month.

The event will take place at a location chosen by young people. There are two possible options available to young people. They can chose a venue which incurs a cost and where an activity is included such as “Techniquest” or bowling.

The event will centre around having workshops for young people to participate in, each workshop will be have a theme relating to being Looked After (for example “contact”, “placement”, “education”). Cardiff Advocacy Team will facilitate these workshops which will be participative in nature, using a variety of group work methods to engage young people. Several comfort breaks will be factored in for young people.
Workshops will then be followed by fun activities which either form part of the venue or are bought in. Food will also be provided in the form of a buffet, chosen by young people.

**Promotion of event**

Tros Gynnal Plant will jointly promote the event alongside Children’s Services. Social Workers, LAC Review Chairs, the Children’s Complaints Officer, residential staff and foster carers will be informed of the event, and the Cardiff Advocacy Team will liaise closely with Children’s Services staff to secure young people’s attendance. The Cardiff Advocacy Team will also make contact with a range of organisations that work with Looked After Children and young people such as Voices From Care and Fairbridge as well as private foster care agencies and residential homes. Tros Gynnal Plant will also seek to raise awareness and profile of the event with the Children’s Commissioner’s Office.

Children’s Services have agreed to help promote the event with social workers, fostering groups and Looked After Children.

**Findings and dissemination**

The Cardiff Advocacy Team will collate the findings of the day and make these available to the Children and Young Person’s Scrutiny Committee. It is our understanding that the Committee will then write a report and this will be used to inform the Council in relation to monitoring its services to Looked After Children as well as making recommendations on how these can be improved from a young person’s perspective.

35. The Chairperson and the Advocacy Service, following a number of meetings agreed to invite all Looked After Children and seek the support of foster carers and social workers for the young people to
attend the Listening Event. The young people also considered that the Pierhead Building in Cardiff Bay would be an excellent venue for the event.

36. Ken Skates AM (Clwyd South) agreed to sponsor the event to enable the Pierhead to be made available to the young people at no charge. His support for the event is due to his interest in ensuring Looked After Children are provided with the support and services they need and most recently his involvement in the development of the consultation document that addresses the issues facing care leavers and a new scheme to support young people as they make the important transition from care to adult life.
Listening Event

37. The group of young people developing the workshops held meetings to discuss and develop various activities to enable Looked After Children aged 11+ to provide their views, comments and concerns around the three key themes, in a friendly, fun and interactive way. The group finally agreed and published the following event agenda for the day.

Looked after children’s Listening event

Agenda

March 16, 2013

10.30 Until 4.30

10.30 Arrive & refreshments
10.45 Introduction and icebreaker
11.00 Workshop 1 School & healthy living
11.30 Workshop 2 Visiting family & where you live
12.00 BREAK
12.15 Social services workshop
12.45 Conclusion
1.15 Lunch
2.00 Bowling
4.00 Evaluations
4.30 Finish

Workshops

School and healthy living
This workshop you will be asked to share your views on school and what support you receive whether this be good or bad. We also want to hear your views on health services you receive such as seeing the LAC nurse or visiting the dentist

Visiting family and where you live
This workshop will be discussing issues around contact and visiting family. We want to hear your experiences and how we can make it better for you in the future. We also want to hear your views on where you live. Such as if you live with foster parents or live in a residential home.

Social services
This workshop will be your chance to speak up about the issues affecting you such as LAC reviews, Social workers, Pathway planner and things like getting consent to do school trips etc
The young people also felt that they needed to ensure that as many Looked After Children as possible should be made aware of the event. As a result the Looked After Children designed a poster to publicise the event.

**Listening Event**

If you are aged 11-18 and in Care. The Scrutiny committee really want to hear what you have to say about being looked after and the service you receive from Cardiff Social Services.

Saturday 16th March 2013

10.30 until 4.30

Pierhead Building
Cardiff Bay,
Cardiff
CF99 1NA

This event is for you to have a say and share your opinions on the things that affect you. So we can listen to your experience of being in foster care or residential care and help make things better.
39. The young people actively engaged with all the activities and provided full and honest responses to all the questions raised during the workshops. Full details of the views expressed as captured in each of the workshops is attached at Appendix A.

Output from the Listening Event

40. Workshop one – School and Healthy Living.
This activity focused on capturing the views of the young people using a “Thermometer” to identify the level of concern that they have around school and healthy living. A summary of the issues for each category is listed below, details of the full list of the concerns is attached at Appendix A.
• Friends are important in school.
• Young people want to move up and improve in school.
• Young Peoples want to be in full time education – but they need support in school especially with emotional issues. It is important not to push them to do things they do not want to do.
• Social workers don’t always signpost young people to activities that they could access – this relates to affordability and entitlements.
• Most young people said they didn’t like having a LAC nurse as it makes them feel different and sometimes they don’t like the personal questions they are asked.
• Some of the group thought it was good to have a LAC nurse because it was someone to make sure they stayed healthy.

41. **Workshop two – Visiting Family and where you live**

This activity focused on capturing the views of the young people using a “Hot air balloon framework”. A summary of the issues for each category is listed below details of the full list of the list of issues is attached at **Appendix A**.

• Visiting family –
  • young people thought it was positive when they had family contact.
  • Most young people wanted more family contact and they would like it to be better quality – i.e. unsupervised and in the family home / community.
  • Young People felt worried they wouldn’t get / wouldn’t be allowed contact.
• Foster Placements –
  • Most young people said they had nice foster carers – they felt happy and included and listened to by foster carers. They enjoy spending time with them.
  • Some young people waned to stay with their foster carers / others wanted to go home to live with family.
  • Some young people felt the distance they lived from family was holding them back.
42. **Workshop three - Social Service**

This activity focused on capturing the views of the young people with a picture of a wonderful social worker and a picture of a poor social worker. Young people then placed their views on what would make a wonderful social worker and what makes a poor social worker. Details of the top issue that was identified as good and that which was identified as bad are listed below, details of the full list of the list of issues is attached at **Appendix A**.

- Overwhelmingly young people have raised concerns over the issue of reliability of their social worker e.g. keeping to agreed appointments and cancelling visits.
- They were concerned about the time required to deliver agreed actions.
• Young people raised that they did not feel that their social workers were trustworthy.
• “Rich and powerful / deliverers of action” – This view came from the perception of social workers being unable to deliver the needs of young people and to hear what young people need / want.

43. **Evaluation of the Listening Event by those attending**

The final session was designed to enable the young people to feedback their views on the listening event using both a dart board framework and comments board. The dart board was based around three main themes; what to save, what to bin, and what to change. All comments are detailed below along with all the comments posted on the “Comments Board”.

![Dart board diagram](image)
Dart Board - Save it, Bin it, Change it!

Save it – what should we keep from the event?

- Bowling
- Keep the bowling because we all enjoyed it.
- Workshops x 3
- The venue
- Staff
- Brownies
- Everything
- Food / Staff / Workshops / Winning tickets
- Everything x 2

Bin it – what should we get rid of from the event?

- Food x 2

Change it - what would you change?

- Better range of food
- Better food
- Nothing
- Make it longer
- Arcades
- Theme park
- Bowling

Comments Board

- Staff were nice and friendly
- Today was lovely and thanks a lot all
- Everything was good and I hope we can do this again
- Amazing
- Thanks for having me. I hope I can do it again it was really, really, really fun. Thanks.
- Winning the tickets (in the bowling alley)
Dot voting

What did you think of the following?
Food – 5 votes for great, 1 vote for awful
Workshops – 5 votes for great, 1 for good.
Staff – 5 votes for great,
Venue – 3 votes for great, 1 for good.

Outcome from Listening to Looked After Children

44. Listening to Looked After Children is a crucial part of the improvement the social care and wellbeing outcomes for Looked After Children in Cardiff.

45. Young People’s participation in decision making is a requirement of the UNCRC and Welsh Government, best practice for ESTYN inspections and crucial effective decision making by the Council.

46. Participation of young people in providing advice and views to decision makers raises young people’s understanding of decision making in local government, governance arrangements of a local council and empowers young people to become more involved in local democratic processes.

47. Although the views expressed during the event could not be considered as statistically robust, the key points raised during the various activities could be of interest to the Council, senior officers and Children’s Services staff in helping to improve the social care outcomes of all Looked After Children in the Council’s Care.

48. The views of Looked After Children is a key part of helping the Council to undertake its duties as a Corporate Parent.
49. To enable the Committee hear the views of young people as part of the Committee work to improve support and services for children in Care, Members agreed to hold a listening day with Looked After Children from across Cardiff. The listening event would focus on the young people’s views on their experiences whilst in care.

50. The Committee requested assistance from Tros Gynnal Plant Advocacy Service to help develop and facilitate a full day listening event. The Advocacy Service along with a group of Looked After Children agreed to support, develop and facilitate the listening event with the Committee and agreed to meet with the Chairperson to help start to develop the activities to provide the young people’s views. The Chairperson and Advocacy Service also agreed to hold the event on the 16th March at the Pierhead Building in Cardiff Bay.

51. Ken Skates AM (Clwyd South) agreed to sponsor the event to enable the Pierhead to be made available to the Young People at no charge. His support for the event is due to his interest in ensuring Looked After Children are provided with the support and services they need and most recently his involvement in the development of the consultation document that addresses the issues facing care leavers and a new scheme to support young people as they make the important transition from care to adult life.

52. Although the full Committee was committed to hearing the views of Looked After Children at the listening event and ensuring that the young people’s views are heard by decision makers, due to the timing of the event at the Pierhead Building, the following Councillors took an active part in the various sessions as facilitators and observers:
53. The Committee is grateful to Tros Gynnal Plant Advocacy Services for their time, enthusiasm advice and commitment to this event:

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Advocacy Service</th>
<th>Council Officer</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Elly Jones</td>
<td>Angela Bourge</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Claire Palmer</td>
<td>Debbie Martin-Jones</td>
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<tr>
<td>Spenser Lewis</td>
<td>Gladys Hingco</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sue Welpton</td>
<td>Chris Pyke</td>
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</table>

54. The Councillors also appreciated the help and support of Children’s Services that helped to make the event a success.
55. The Scrutiny Committee is empowered to enquire, consider, review and recommend but not to make policy decisions. As the recommendations in this report are to consider and review matters there are no direct legal implications. However, legal implications may arise if and when the matters under review are implemented with or without modification. Any report with recommendations for decision that goes to Cabinet / Council will set out any legal implications arising from those recommendations. All decisions taken by or on behalf of the Council must (a) be within the legal power of the Council; (b) comply with any procedural requirement imposed by law; (c) be within the powers of the body or person exercising powers on behalf of the Council; (d) be undertaken in accordance with the procedural requirements imposed by the Council e.g. standing orders and financial regulations; (e) be fully and properly informed; (f) be properly motivated; (g) be taken having regard to the Council's fiduciary duty to its taxpayers; and (h) be reasonable and proper in all the circumstances.

56. The Scrutiny Committee is empowered to enquire, consider, review and recommend but not to make policy decisions. As the recommendations in this report are to consider and review matters there are no direct financial implications at this stage in relation to any of the work programme. However, financial implications may arise if and when the matters under review are implemented with or without any modifications.
CHILDREN & YOUNG PEOPLE SCRUTINY COMMITTEE TERMS OF REFERENCE

CHILDREN & YOUNG PEOPLE SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

To scrutinise, measure and actively promote improvement in the Council’s performance in the provision of services and compliance with Council policies, aims and objectives in the area of children and young people, including the following:

- School Improvement
- Schools Organisation
- School Support Services
- Education, Welfare and Inclusion
- Early Years Development
- Special Educational Needs
- Governor Services
- Children’s Social Services
- Children and Young Peoples Partnership
- Youth Services and Justice
- Play Services

To assess the impact of partnerships with and resources and services provided by external organisations including the National Assembly for Wales, Assembly Sponsored Public Bodies and quasi-departmental non-governmental bodies on the effectiveness of the Council’s service delivery.

To report to an appropriate Cabinet or Council meeting on its findings and to make recommendations on measures which may enhance the Council’s performance in this area.
CHILDREN & YOUNG PEOPLE SCRUTINY COMMITTEE MEMBERSHIP

Councillor Siobhan Corria
(Chairperson)

Councillor Paul Chaundy

Councillor Jonathan Evans

Councillor Andrew Graham

Councillor Bill Kelloway

Councillor Sue Lent

Councillor Chris Davis

Councillor Phil Hawkins

Councillor Cecelia Love

Co-opted Members:

Mrs P Arlotte
Roman Catholic Representative

Mr Bill John
Church in Wales Representative

Mrs Catrin Lewis
Parent Governor Representative

Mr H Jukes
Parent Governor Representative
Workshop 1: School and Healthy Living:

Ideas the group came up with – School

- Phone calls from social worker when in lessons – difficult with GCSEs coming up. Means they are singled out as other young people (who aren’t looked after) are not allowed a mobile phone in school. Also, could get the young person in trouble, answering phone in class.
- School work suffers because of being in foster care.
- One child in special school and statemented. They get extra support for only three days out of five days. The view of this looked after person’s carer was that child needs more care to avoid being left out as he is a quiet child that needs one-to-one care. Child has forthcoming educational review.
- Changing foster placements made travel to school longer – had to change school and lots of friends were left behind.
- ‘Some kids bullied me’ – but it was sorted out and now made new friends.
- Young people said they had been bullied because of being in care.
- ‘Don’t like having to get up early for school’.
- Some Young People liked having social worker support them at school but others didn’t.
- One Young Person felt there school offered them good support because they knew they were looked after.
- Having lots of social workers can affect education – you get to know someone and then they leave (some Young People said they had had 13 / 50+ social workers).
- One young person said they need someone to chat to about things that made them angry.
- Young People would like to move to another class but school / authorities aren’t sorting it out.
- Positive: One Young Person moved from a lower level to high level.
- One Young Person liked school
- One Young Person was moved down in Maths and Science and is not doing well.
- Young People felt more support is needed for children around school work and about their families.
• Friends are important in school.

Health: Doctors / Dentists / Nurse

• Looked After Children (LAC) Nurse – all young people had seen the LAC nurse one in the year – 1 Young Person said it made they feel different – they don’t like it. Young Peoples understood that the purpose was to make sure they were being looked after well.
• Issue of privacy was brought up with LAC nurse – having to discuss weight etc – made Young People feel uncomfortable having to be weighed.
• 1 Young Person said that they felt the questions asked by the LAC nurse regarding contraception were inappropriate. They felt that there was a presumption that because they were in care they would engage in promiscuous sexual activity.
• 1 Young Person said they didn’t like having the doctor see their private parts.
• Some Young People said they were healthy because they enjoy playing sport.
• Young People felt social services did not encourage participation in sporting activities due to difficulties with consent etc.
• 1 Young Person said they felt unhealthy because they ate a lot of chocolate.
• 1 Young Person had people in their LAC reviews they didn't know.
• 1 Young Person said their social worker gave them a choice so they could write down who they want / don’t want in their LAC review.
• Young People felt pushed into doing sports they didn’t want to do.
Workshop 2: Visiting Family and where you live

Visiting Family –

What’s going well?
- Seeing mum
- Seeing my family: mum, dad, brother, sister
- Sleeping over my Nan’s.
- Seeing my mum – we go bowling: me and my brother and my sister.
- No contact at all (young person saw this as a good thing).
- Seeing Mum & Dad at contact centre
- Enough contact sessions
- I sleep over my sister’s house fortnightly
- My brothers stopped fighting (they used to fight in contact sessions)

What could be improved?
- Not seeing my new baby brother
- Don’t cancel contact!
- My annoying sister.
- Doesn’t see brother – letterbox contact only.
- Being able to see mum without supervision
- Grandparents stop my contact.
- My brother doesn’t go sometimes
- Same place all the time
- I see my mum once a month – it was twice a week before!

Who are the important people who need to be involved?

The group chose to focus on who they would like to see in this section
- I’d like to see my brother
- Like to see my baby brother
- Like to see my uncle
- Wants to see cousins and friends
- Want to see dad and brothers and sisters but doesn’t at the moment.

Are there any potential future problems / worries
- My social worker doesn’t think it will be good for me to have contact with my brother but I don’t agree.
- Staying in contact room all the time

What are your future hopes / dreams for contact?
- For contact not to be supervised
- Going home
- To go home with my two brothers
• I want more contact with my family
• To see everybody in future
• Have contact sessions at home

Where you live / foster placement

What’s going well?
• My foster carers’ are nice
• I see my foster carers as my mum and dad
• Happy where I am x 2
• I love my foster mum. I love it when she picks me up from school.
• My foster carer acts as my voice (written by the foster carer of a young person with a disability and no verbal communication skills)
• I do lots of things
• IPod, X-Box, PS3, 720, a tablet, laptop
• Dog
• A nice placement
• I live with my sister
• I’ve got nice foster carers
• Being reunited with my sister, but she puts so much foundation on her face!
• I have a lovely sister (who I live with) but sometimes she is horrible.
• Seeing Mum & Dad at contact centre
• Having equipment for leisure activities
• Having a nice home / place to stay while in care.
• Being able to maintain contact with family.

What could be improved?
• My carer nags a lot.
• I live a long way from family.
• Not getting a phone
• Not going home till I’m 18
• Arguing with Mum
• No internet
• Arguments
• My annoying Sister
• I can’t wait to leave foster care
• Access to I.T./mobile phones
• Arguments with others
• Access to family members
• Not going home
• Annoying social worker – she doesn’t speak to us only my foster carer.

Who are the people you want to be there?
• I don’t want to be there in foster care
• My dog
• My foster carers
• Foster carers and my little sister live with me – I want my brothers to be there too.
• My family, dog, and friend – doesn’t currently live with them
• My nephews and other sister – doesn’t currently live with Young People
• Friends
• Feel they need more contact with social workers
• More contact with family / friends.
• The foster carers are valued by Young Peoples.

Potential future problems
• Mum not letting us go on holiday
• Would like my sister to start attending school
• Not going home just yet
• Phone should be free

Future hopes / dreams
• Want to stay in placement.
• I want to live with my brothers – go back home
• Free from foster care x 3
• To go home to see mum, baby brother, dad
• Being able to go home
• Being in full time education
• Go on holiday.
Workshop 3: Social Services

What makes a good social worker? What would your ideal social worker be like?

- Nice – Kind and nice
- Trustworthy
- Visits and activities – Stay longer when they visit / visit me at home / do things with them that others get to do/ do activities with them.
- Powerful / rich / helpful
- Good to talk to and a good listener – someone good to talk to / understands you points and opinions / listens to your views and opinions
- Reliable – they should do what they say they will.
- Gets things for young person – pay for school trips / get a TV.
- They shouldn’t be ugly.

What makes a bad social worker?

- Takes a long time to get things done
- Horrible personality and attitude.
- Ugly / dumb
- Not kind
- Horrible
- Does not visit
- Untrustworthy
- Unknown
- Unreliable.

What do you think are the biggest issues with social services?

- Consent: Not allowed to go on TV / not allowed pictures to be taken/ overnight stays / Not allowed to go anywhere without my mum or dad’s consent/ don’t let us go out with friends for shopping / trouble with consent with social workers.
- Can’t get what you want! For example – a phone
- Not knowing the full reasons why I am in care. Not knowing who I am.
- Contact: More contact x 2 / I want to see my cousins/ not knowing why it is supervised – it shouldn’t be supervised!
- LAC Reviews: I want my dad to attend my LAC reviews / I don’t want my LAC reviews in school / school doesn’t come to LAC reviews
- Social workers: are always late / not there when you need them / always out / don’t do what they say they are going to do / they don’t visit enough
- Good social workers: give you money / you can rely on them / they are trustworthy / helpful / they want to help you! / They discuss things with
you / they ask the right questions! / They are nice and kind and helpful to young people.
• Not letting me go home.
Evaluation of the Listening Event 2013 - Young People’s Feedback

Comments Board

- Staff were nice and friendly
- Today was lovely and thanks a lot all
- Everything was good and I hope we can do this again
- Amazing
- Thanks for having me. I hope I can do it again it was really, really, really fun. Thanks.
- Winning the tickets (in the bowling alley).

Save it, Bin it, Change it!

Save it – what should we keep from the event?

- Bowling
- Keep the bowling because we all enjoyed it.
- Workshops x 3
- The venue
- Staff
- Brownies
- Everything
- Food / Staff / Workshops / Winning tickets
- Everything x 2

Bin it – what should we get rid of from the event?

- Food x 2

Change it - what would you change?

- Better range of food
- Better food
- Nothing
- Make it longer
- Arcades
- Theme park
- Bowling
Dot voting

*What did you think of the following?*
- Food – 5 votes for great, 1 vote for awful
- Workshops – 5 votes for great, 1 for good.
- Staff – 5 votes for great,
- Venue – 3 votes for great, 1 for good.