**Notes and Actions from the Children First Pioneer Areas Meeting**

**St James ICC, Lansbury Park, Caerphilly, CF83 3GT**

**17 June 2019**

**Present:**

**Children First Pioneer Areas/Partner Organisations**

Lindsey Watkins (LW), Newport, (Millbrook Primary School)

Jessica Sharma (JS), Newport, (Barnardos)

John Hilder (JH), Newport, (Barnardos)

Sarah Mutch (SM), Caerphilly, (Caerphilly County Borough Council)

Michelle Jones (MJ), Caerphilly (Parent’s Network)

Syd Dennis (SD), Cwm Taf, (Rhondda Cynon Taf County Borough Council)

Angharad Stephens (AS), Cwm Taf, (Rhondda Cynon Taf County Borough Council)

Diane Jones (DJ), Cwm Taf, (Merthyr Tydfil County Borough Council)

Noeline Thomas (NT), Carmarthenshire, (Carmarthenshire County Council)

Caryl Alban (CA), Carmarthenshire, (Carmarthenshire County Council)

Louise Davies (LD) (Save the Children)

Donna Wynne Jones (DWJ) (Newport Early Learning Community)

**Welsh Government**

Sarah Melkevik (SMe)

**Apologies:**

Wayne Warner (Welsh Government), David Pearce (Welsh Government), Catrin Thomas (Gwynedd), Caryl Lewis (Gwynedd), Joe Cudd (Carmarthenshire)

1. **Tour of Caerphilly Children First Pioneer**

Nikki Dargie, Head teacher, gave us a tour of St James Primary School and SM gave us a tour of the St James ICC.

1. **Welcome and Introductions**

SMe welcomed the group, and thanked Caerphilly for hosting. The group noted that it would be AS’s last meeting and SD would be the new lead for Cwm Taf (RCT).

Round table introductions were made.

1. **Save the Children, UK local Systems Change Network invitation**

LD made an offer to the Pioneers to join a systems change network being set up/facilitated by Save the Children. This offer is around system change approaches which change the system around early years (0 – 8 years). This may involve:

* Anyone interested in engaging with systems change thinking;
* Sharing of learning;
* Working on particular themes.

***Action 1:*** Anyone interested in joining the System’s Change Network to contact SMe.

1. **Save the Children, Newport Early Learning Community**

DWJ introduced the Newport Early Learning Community, and specifically the toolkit and evidence base which takes people through a systems change approach.

Save the Children has invested in early learning communities in Newport, Margate, Sheffield and Feltham. Their investment is for three years with a 10 year vision.

This work by Darlington’s has been developed based on a robust evidence base. The evidence shows that outcomes can be improved by improving:

* Speech, language and Communication;
* Literacy and pre-literacy;
* Numeracy and pre-numeracy.

The toolkit contains an evidence matrix, which shows you how robust the evidence is and where the factors that influence early learning outcomes affect the early learning outcomes at different ages.

The toolkit can be used to:

* Decide where more evidence is needed;
* Take a decision to implement an intervention;
* Test interventions and learn from them;
* Provide evidence for long term policy changes.

There is a strong link with the Early Years Intervention Programme and this needs to be managed on a regional and locality based approach.

A copy of the presentation is attached, which includes a link to the toolkit and evidence base.



1. **Welsh Government update**

Feedback from discussions with the Deputy Minister

* Officials met with the new Deputy Minister, Julie Morgan, in April, to give her an overview of the Children First pilot. She agreed that we would continue the pilot at least until the end of the Assembly term.
* She also asked us to explore the possibility of inviting the Non-Pioneers to put themselves forward for Pioneer status. SMe is working with Save the Children on this and will let you know how this progresses. Please keep this confidential until Welsh Government speaks to the Non-Pioneers.

Feedback from the Children’s Neighbourhoods Scotland Conference

* SMe and LW went to Glasgow at the end of April, to the Children’s Neighbourhood Conference. Overall it was useful although themed much more around the research and evaluation side.
* The biggest take away was the amount of place based work that is going on all over the UK, feedback from everyone was that they weren’t aware of all the work that was going on, and the conference organisers took away the action to set up some form of virtual network.
* Sarah Pearson from Sheffield Hallam University (who evaluated the three Save the Children, Children’s Communities) was quite honest about the limitations of evaluation of place based initiatives such as these. She made the point that often the value of this type of work can be valued more in contribution than attribution and that the focus of her evaluation had to be on robust qualitative experiences.
* Lindsey was very interested in the Reach Academy Feltham. The Academy serves children aged 4 – 18, they have a PHD student, Victoria Hirst, at the University of Manchester, as an embedded researcher. She is researching Cradle to career school designs. Feltham is also one of the Save the Children’s Early Learning Communities.
* In the Colin Early Intervention Community in Belfast, they undertake six monthly ‘turning the curve exercises’ on all of their programmes, to look at the data and evaluation and see if it is on track or needs to be re-aligned. It was an interesting way to keep the focus on the intended goal of the projects and bring it back into focus if it isn’t achieving its aim.

Deputy Ministers visit to Pioneers 9th May and 20th June

* The Deputy Minister visited the Gurnos Estate on 9th May and is visiting Millbrook on Thursday20th June.

Children and Families Divisional meeting 13 June

* The Children and Families Division held an away day last Thursday. We invited Caryl and Gaynor Price and Joe Cudd to come along and talk about the work they have been doing with children to listen to their views and experiences. Feedback from the day was how grateful everyone was for you sharing their work and how important it is for us to hear the real life, lived experiences of these children.

Information sharing repository

* SMe set up the Object Connect system as a way to share and store information collectively, all of you have had an invite. It doesn’t seem to be used very much, SM would be grateful for your feedback on keeping it as a resource? The group agreed to keep it for the time being and review later.

Finally

* Our next meeting is 17 September in Netwown, but we need a host for our December meeting (w/c 9th). Gwynedd are due to host, but in the meantime any other volunteers?
* We have invited the Wellbeing of Future Generations commissioner to attend for a few meetings now, Bonnie Navarra was due to attend today but had to pull out at the last minute.
* Do you have any other suggestions for speakers/guests at forthcoming meetings, and are these meetings working for you,
* Are these meetings still working for you? SMe would be grateful for feedback on their frequency, duration, location, any feedback welcomed?

***Action 2:***Pioneers to suggest speakers/guests for future Pioneer meetings.

DJ suggested inviting Data Cymru to the next meeting to discuss the work Cwm Taf have been doing on their logic models and evaluation of measures of success.

**6. Strategic updates**

**Cwm Taf Children First Pioneer update**

Rhondda Cynon Taff

* Syd introduced herself and her role, she will be taking over as lead for Rhondda Cynon Taf from AS.
* The community hub is due to launch in July.
* Workforce development training is taking place with staff based at the hub.
* Some of the families are struggling to attend their health care appointments, health sessions are planned to be run from the hub so that families can attend locally.
* CAMHS are running a session per week from the hub.
* NRW funding has been used to purchase community based activities, bug hotels, litter picking kit etc.
* A Facebook page and website has been set up for the Ferndale hub.
* 10 community hubs are planned for RCT.

Merthyr

* NRW funding of £20k has been used for significant investment in the environment, for example planting cherry trees in Cherry Lane etc.
* A natural play park has been set up which has ignited interest in the area.
* A play scheme, delivered by Torfaen Play has been set up which will work in connection with SHEP.
* Young people are being trained in helping skills, with an aim of creating a group of community activists.
* Within the Gurnos MVH building an information, advice and assistance person will be available to support families to the services they need.
* Through 21st Century grant funding it is planned to build a community café and develop a learning hub in the Gurnos MVH building.

**Newport Children First Pioneer update**

* The Save the Children work is the next step for the Newport Pioneer. LW is one of the founding partners of the Newport Early Learning Community.
* Newport have been working with Barnardo’s to develop a *Finding your voice* toolkit. The toolkit is for primary schools in Gwent in the first instance to facilitate engagement between children and the local community. It includes 10 lesson plans for primary school teachers.
* The toolkit will be launched on 18 July.
* It can be made available electronically for use by other local authorities and pupil participation leads, though if they wanted the additional support provided by Barnardo’s it would have to be paid for separately.

**Carmarthenshire Children First Pioneer update**

* Carmarthenshire has been working to integrate Children First with the EYIP pathfinders work.
* In Tyisha, a community consultation exercise has been undertaken on physical regeneration. The master planners are just about to be brought in and they are working with them to ensure the community voice is still being represented.
* Work has taken place with a bid to the healthy and active fund at Sport Wales, to increase physical and mental health in the Children First area. The bid was linked to the proposed Wellness centre. Unfortunately the bid was turned down, so consideration is being given to alternative opportunities to do this work.
* Work has taken place with three primary schools and one secondary school and NAWR Arts and Education Network to develop a training package for staff within schools about wellbeing and resilience though the creative arts.
* Work has taken place with People Speak Up: Llanelli, recording stories and experiences of people living in the communities. This work is about creating community involvement to realise some of the actions that are identified through the stories.
* Work is being piloted with PCSOs sitting in Team around the Family allocation meetings, to improve intelligence and information sharing.
* Swansea University are developing some training around a community of enquiry through the story telling sessions.
* Work with children on a vocalised digital democracy tool app is taking place, where children input their ideas about what they would like to see change, children can then vote to take forward the top actions.
* In partnership with the police a Heddlu Bach scheme is being set up in Glanymor and Tyisha outside of the school day, with a view to the children progressing to junior cadets then full cadets.

**Caerphilly Children First Pioneer update**

* SM laid out the demographics of the Caerphilly Children First area.
* Through targeted work, 26 families have been given family support in Lansbury.
* The SHEP provision this summer is being run by the local authority.
* Work has been undertaken to run play sessions and forest school sessions.
* Parent groups in the form of kinship carers and parents of children with ALN have been set up.
* Community led groups have also been set up, e.g. Lansbury’s got talent
* Resilience workshops are being run following on from work with Boing Boing to implement community based training on resilience and the resilience framework to embed new approaches and ways of engaging with children, young people and their families in the community.
* A Lansbury Community Carnival is being held in Lansbury on 29 June.

**Gwynedd Children First Pioneer update**

* No update given.

**7. AOB and Finish**

None

**Dates for next meeting: 17 September 2019 in Newtown**

**Summary of Action points:**

**Action 1:** Anyone interested in joining the System’s Change Network to contact SMe.

**Action 2:** Pioneers to suggest speakers/guests for future Pioneer meetings.