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

**Welsh Government Pavilion, Royal Welsh Showground, Llanelwedd**

**24 January 2018**

**Present:**

**Children First Pioneer Areas**

Sarah Mutch (SM), Caerphilly

Sean Rees (SR), Caerphilly

Noeline Thomas (NT), Carmarthenshire

Stefan Smith (SS), Carmarthenshire

Paul Mee (PM), Cwm Taf

Angharad Stephens (AS), Cwm Taf

Sioned Owen (SO), Gwynedd

Lindsey Watkins (LW), Newport

**Welsh Government**

Karen Cornish (KC)

Lucie Griffiths (LG)

Wayne Warner (WW)

John Hicks (JH)

**Apologies:**

Sian Lloyd Roberts, Liz Baker

1. **Welcome and introductions**

1.1 WW welcomed everyone to the meeting and attendees introduced themselves.

1. **Notes of last meeting and action points**

2.1 The notes of the last meeting were agreed.

2.2 Action by the Welsh Government:

* **Investigate using the Hwb to provide an electronic forum for Children First Pioneer areas to exchange information – by December 2017:** This work has not yet been progressed so is carried forward.
* **Set meeting dates until summer 2018:** While we have triedto set a calendar of meetings dates this has proved to be very difficult to find dates which everyone could make because of working arrangements, school holiday dates etc. We have identified potential dates for April and June and will look to set dates for the reminder of the year.
* **Distribute contact details for the Pioneer areas:** Contact details had been circulated.
* **Look into the possibility of arranging for representatives from the Pioneer areas to visits to Children’s Communities in England:** A date for the study visit to Pembury Children’s Community (Hackney) has been agreed for 8 February. WW in discussions with Save the Children about a possible date for the visit to Manchester, hopefully before the end of the financial year. WW reported that he had had and was continuing to have positive discussions with Save the Children about their possible role in Children First and what support they might be able to offer to Pioneer areas.
* **Calendar of events:** No progress.
* **Invite Alyson Francis, ACE Support Hub and Deborah McMillan, Welsh**

**Government (secondee from Bridgend CBC) to a future meeting:** WW has spoken to Alyson Francis from the Hub and she had agreed to attend a future meeting. Deborah McMillan has left the Welsh Government to take up the role of Children’s Commissioner for Jersey.

2.3 Action by Pioneer areas:

* **Pioneer areas to develop delivery plan and submit to Welsh Government:** WW thanked colleagues for submitting their draft delivery plans, which he was still working through. He will be contacting Pioneer areas individually, to discuss any issues with their plans in the next few weeks.

**3. Welsh Government Update**

* 1. The Minister for Children and Social Care has recently visited the Children First Pioneer at Maesgeirchen in Bangor, Gwynedd. SO reported that it had been a good visit. KC said that the Minister would be keen to visit other areas and meet with children and young people, parents and practitioners.

**Action point 1: Colleagues to send in any ideas for possible visits by the Minister.**

* 1. KC said that the Children’s Commissioner for Wales was very interested in supporting Children First and had already written to all Pioneer areas offering her support, especially with respect to pupil participation and engagement. The CCfW was looking forward to the Pioneer areas responses and working with them in due course.

3.3 The letters from the Welsh Government confirming indicative funding allocations for 2018-19 had been issued to local authorities. SS expressed his concerns about the allocations and the real impact which this would have on the delivery of services. KC recognised the challenges which local authorities faced but also said that the greater flexibility afforded more opportunities to work across programmes.

* 1. The ACE support hub was officially launched on 18 January in North Wales. The first year’s work had focused on building and resourcing the team. The second year (2018-19) will see the ACE support hub focus on delivering its objectives. WW reported that the success of the North Wales conference was making the Hub look at the possibility of organising two further conferences – one for Mid and West Wales and the other for South East Wales. KC reminded colleagues that the Hub was available to offer support to the Pioneer areas around ACEs.

**Action point 2: WW to circulate information on dates and venues once confirmed by the Hub**

* 1. Public Health Wales recently published its fourth report on ACEs, which includes the effects of neglect, the positive impact of resilience, sources of resilience and their moderating impact on the harm caused by exposure to ACEs on mental health.
  2. The Welsh Government has organised an ACE awareness raising event for officials, which will be held on 15 March 2018 in Cardiff.
  3. It was agreed it would be useful to invite Mark Bellis and Janine Roderick along to present at a future CF meeting.  
       
     **Action point 3: WW to invite Mark Bellis and Janine Roderick to a future CF meeting(s)**

**4. Visit to Pembury Children’s Community**

4.1 WW confirmed the arrangements for the visit to Pembury, which was being facilitated by Save the Children. They had confirmed that there would be around 30 representatives from both Pioneer and non-pioneer areas, along with colleagues from Save the Children. WW confirmed that the Welsh Government would be able to offer Pioneer areas support of up to £250 per delegate, for up to four delegates, towards travel and subsistence costs for the visit. This would be based on the reimbursement of actual costs incurred.  
  
**Action point 4: Areas to confirm the number of names of delegates going on the Pembury visit as soon as possible**

4.2 WW suggested that the Welsh Government might also be able to support a study visit to the Manchester Children’s Community, if it could be undertaken in this financial year.

**Action point 5: WW will follow-up with Save the Children and let areas know as soon as possible whether a visit this year would be feasible**

4.3 WW mentioned another initiative, operating in England, which had been brought to his attention – ‘Opportunity Areas’

**Action point 6:**

**WW to send a note to colleagues on the UK Government’s ‘Opportunity Areas’ initiative**

**5. Updates from Children First Pioneers (including development plan update)**

* **Newport**

LW provided a presentation on the Newport Children First Pioneer area, which is centred on Millbrook Primary School in Bettws, and explained the positive impact which adopting a partnership approach was having. Their intention is to expand the approach being taken in Millbrook to **Pillgwenlly** Primary School, in the initial phase and then city wide eventually. LW explained how the school was working closely with the local authority’s children services and two anchor organisations Barnardo’s (a commissioned service) and Save the Children, which provides its support free of charge and actually supports work at the school through its ‘Play, Learn, Grow’ fund. The school has developed a co-located multi-agency approach around cluster areas. Within the cluster there are areas of poverty and affluence and the approach is for a team around the cluster. Funding from the Police and Crime Commissioner had supported training in restorative approaches. There are a range of other services being offered to the families including a well-being café, drop in services and a food bank. LW noted that in-work poverty was an issue within the community. The school is also working with the Children’s Commissioner on children’s rights and Children in Wales on participation.

LW also mentioned that Dr JoAnne Ferrara of Manhattanville College, USA was due to visit Wales in June 2018 to present at a global learning conference in Cardiff. This might provide an opportunity to meet with JoAnne to learn more about her work in the area of community schools and how a whole child approach can help to redress the impact of poverty and other barriers to learning.

* **Carmarthenshire**

NT was pleased to report that, since the last meeting, the PSB had met in November and have now secured broader buy-in to supporting Children First. The team had focused its attention on the principles underpinning its work and agreed that the ‘voice of the child’ was crucial in developing the Children First area. Films were being created which would focus on what children in the area want to change, what they like and what matters to them. This work would finish towards the end of March 2018. Additional work was being considered on the redevelopment of Station Road. Despite the positive progress being made, the team was still grappling with the concept of Children First.

* **Gwynedd**

SO explained that work to develop Children First is still in its relative infancy. The area is focused on a geographically isolated estate in Bangor. A steering group had been established, which had met a few times before Christmas. There is a new school on the estate, but room is very limited, so consideration is being given to whether a new build centre will be required. They have appointed an external consultant, Caryl Lewis until the end of March 2018, to undertake a data gathering and needs assessment to map the services available on the estate and identify the gaps in services. SO was confident that they would have a much clearer picture of what is needed by April/May after which they will be able to set their priorities, outcomes and plans for their Children First area.

WW stressed the importance of identifying the communities’ ‘perception’ of itself and the issues which were important to them and that this might not necessarily align with what the data identifies as being the issues.

* **Bro Taf**

AS reported that separate community engagement events had been held in November in the two Children First communities of Gurnos in Merthyr Tydfil and Ferndale/Maerdy in Rhondda Cynon Taff. The purpose was to ask children and the wider communities what they liked and what they would like to change. Over 60 people attended the Ferndale/Maerdy event. The feedback from the events was being collated and this information would be used to inform the development of services and their delivery.

The Gurnos engagement event had identified a particular issue for the community. The 3G Centre, which could act as an anchor organisation and hub for the Children First community, has lost its funding from Communities First. There is no similar centre in the Rhondda, so working with the third sector to identify a suitable base. Consideration is being given to the old primary school in Ferndale, which could allow the co-location of core services alongside the third sector anchor organisation. Further consultation on the proposals will be conducted in February, after which it would be presented for cabinet approval in March or April.

RCT are reconfiguring their three team around the family services in one integrated service; using a single provider and focus on vulnerability. These changes will take effect from April. They are also considering expanding into the Mountain Ash area, linking in to the development of the new primary care hub.

* **Caerphilly**

The coalition board met on 22 January 2018, during which there had been a workshop on co-production, sharing power and decision making. SM emphasised that the ethos of the Children First approach in Caerphilly was about changing behaviour. A Pulse wellbeing survey was being conducted and the authority was keen to get as many people as possible taking part in it.

The team had been working with Professor David Egan from Cardiff Metropolitan University, on how it could work with Newport and introduce a targeted regeneration programme. SM suggested that an accreditation process, perhaps working towards a ‘quality mark’ for Children First, might be a better model to explore than that currently being pursued. Other points to note:

* There was now an increased community police presence in Lansbury Park;
* Coleg Gwent was doing some excellent work in raising the aspirations of young people, which was in turn having a positive effect on parents; and
* Although most parents don’t know what Children First or Flying Start is, they are interested in the help and support the programmes bring to the community.

1. **Evaluation update**

6.1 Although evaluating the approach was likely to be a challenge in the short term, LG suggested that it might be more realistic to consider any baseline data around elements that existing research shows are important to Children’s zones – partnership, data, community engagement etc. to enable measurement in the short term. This would also support development of a theory of change for each project which can measure longer term progress. This could be supplemented with case studies of how it had a positive impact in communities. Together, this should provide enough evidence that the approach is having the desired effect and is on the right path.

WW explained that David Egan was helping Pioneer areas to link up with their local universities to explore how they might be able to support evaluation, and linking the universities with each other to look at the development of a consistent model of evaluation.

1. **Dates for next meetings**

25 April 2018

27 June 2018

1. **AOB and Finish**

None