

Meeting of the Cross Party Group for

Looked After Children

WEDNESDAY 25TH FEBRUARY 2015

12.00–1.30

AMs present:

David Melding AM DPO—Chairperson

Joyce Watson AM

Tomos Davies—Angela Burns AM Support Staff

Fiona Openshaw—Joyce Watson AM Support Staff

George Rudebusch, David Melding AM Support Staff—Minute taker

In attendance:

Menna Thomas, Research and Policy Officer, Barnardo's

Hywel Ap Dayfdd—Policy Officer, Children's Commissioner for Wales Office

Apologies received from:

Deborah Jones, Chief Executive Officer, Voices From Care

Rhian Williams, PA / Administrative Secretary, Voices From Care

WELCOME AND INTRODUCTION FROM THE CHAIR

DM opened and welcomed those present.

MINUTES

Minutes of the meeting held on 7th May 2014 were noted and approved.

MATTERS ARISING

There were no matters arising.

CHILD SEXUAL EXPLOITATION IN ROTHERHAM

DM introduced the report by Professor Alexis Jay OBE on Child Sexual Exploitation in Rotherham; a briefing note on the report was enclosed in the meeting agenda. The report reveals findings of an estimated 1,400 children who were sexually exploited from 1997 to 2013. The briefing note also summarised a parliamentary debate held on 2 September 2014 regarding the report.

It was noted that this report and the ensuing debate are getting people to take the situation of looked after children seriously. The recent evidence uncovered is concerning, especially given that awareness of this problem started mounting in the 1950s and 1960s.

ANY OTHER BUSINESS

There was discussion about the upcoming summer meeting of the cross party group. DM suggested inviting representatives from the inquiry, possibly even a judge, to attend the meeting to facilitate a discussion about the Rotherham report. JW agreed that doing this would also have broad appeal to several AMs. Not only would this increase meeting attendance, but such a meeting may also spur debate or questions to ministers about this issue in the National Assembly for Wales.

MT also suggested the group explore creating a charter. DM agreed, adding that the charter should be comprehensive. JW contributed that narratives—both good and bad—about looked after children should be included. The goal of the charter would be to present something to the National Assembly that contextualises and adds colour to the issues surrounding looked after children. By showing a full spectrum of the outcomes looked after children have later in life, the group would present corporate parenting without actually pitching it to the National Assembly.

DATE OF NEXT MEETING

The date of the next meeting is to be determined; however, it is tentatively scheduled for summer 2015.