



City and County of Swansea

Minutes of the **Scrutiny Performance Panel – Child & Family Services**

Multi-Location Meeting - Council Chamber, Guildhall / MS

Teams

Wednesday, 13 September 2023 at 4.30 pm

Present: Councillor P R Hood-Williams (Chair) Presided

Councillor(s)

M S Tribe

Councillor(s)

V A Holland

Councillor(s)

S Joy

Other Attendees

Egija Cinovska

Louise Gibbard

Young Carers Coordinator, YMCA

Cabinet Member – Care Services

Officer(s)

Julie Davies

Gavin Evans

Helen Howells

Liz Jordan

Helen Williams

Head of Child & Family Services

Principal Officer Family Support Services

Team Manager for Pupil Support

Scrutiny Officer

Principal Officer Adolescent and Young People Services

Apologies for Absence

Councillor(s): K M Griffiths, S M Jones, E T Kirchner, W G Lewis and C L Philpott

1 Disclosure of Personal and Prejudicial Interests

No disclosures of interest were received.

2 Prohibition of Whipped Votes and Declaration of Party Whips

No declarations were made.

3 Minutes of Previous Meeting(s)

Panel agreed the Minutes of the meeting on 2 August 2023 as an accurate record of the meeting.

4 Public Question Time

No questions were received.

5 Presentation by Young Carers

Gavin Evans, Principal Officer Family Support Services, Helen Howells, Team Manager Pupil Support and Egija Cinovska, Young Carers Coordinator at the YMCA, attended to present a video made by Young Carers on the Young Carers Forum who have helped shape a Plan to support Young Carers.

Discussion Points:

- Panel queried how the Service finds out how many young carers there are and what percentage they are reaching. Heard the statistic matches the national statistic ie three young carers in every single classroom in the UK. Informed young carers are identified through PSE sessions held in schools. The Service is growing as it is receiving so many referrals and would benefit from more workers.
- Officers confirmed the YMCA supports any age, gender, any person who needs support within our communities.
- Panel queried who the presentation is going to be shared with. Informed the Plan has been to a number of strategic partnerships to get agreement and has been positively met. Heard that from young carers feedback, one of the main things is to ensure all schools are on board and that there is a champion for every school.
- Panel commented on the language used in the presentation and thought it was quite grown up. Panel feel if it is going to be used in schools with younger children it needs to be made age appropriate.
- Panel queried how long the YMCA Carers has been set up and where they are in the journey. Heard it was set up seven years ago. Officers feel it has been successful because young carers have shaped it and told the Service exactly what they need.

6 Adolescent Strategy and Action Plan

Julie Davies, Head of Child and Family Services and Helen Williams, Principal Officer Adolescent and Young People Services attended to brief the Panel on this issue including actions and achievements to date and ambitions for the future.

Discussion Points:

- Panel queried why advocacy was not mentioned in the report. Officers provided reassurance that all children they deal with are given the offer and encouraged to take it up.
- Panel queried if position of Independent Reviewing Officer (IRO) still falls within Social Services, (officers confirmed it does), and if the Service feels it has enough staff in those areas currently. Heard in Adolescent Services starting to see challenges recruiting social workers. Alternatively qualified staff are being recruited to help with increased demand for support. Staffing levels for IROs are quite healthy.
- Panel noted more talk about the Youth Justice System in the report and asked if this is an indication that more youngsters are beginning to present with problems. Heard in terms of accommodation, more young people are

presenting needing additional support and it is difficult to know the cause specifically. Informed in terms of youth justice, not seeing significantly more numbers of young people coming through at the statutory end but the prevention offer within youth justice is growing significantly in terms of exploitation.

- Panel queried if the Service is satisfied with the way Barnardo's deliver on contracts. Heard there are no issues with Barnardo's in terms of quality of provision.

7 Work Plan 2023-24

Panel considered the work plan and noted items for the next meeting.

The meeting ended at 5.45 pm