

CITY AND COUNTY OF SWANSEA

MINUTES OF THE ENGAGEMENT & INCLUSION CABINET ADVISORY COMMITTEE

HELD AT COMMITTEE ROOM 5, GUILDHALL, SWANSEA ON WEDNESDAY, 12 AUGUST 2015 AT 4.00 PM

PRESENT: Councillor E T Kirchner (Chair) Presided

Councillor(s)	Councillor(s)	Councillor(s)
J P Curtice Ceri F M Gordon	Y V Jardine D J Lewis H M Morris	L V Walton

ALSO PRESENT:

Councillor J E C Harris - Cabinet Member for Services for Adults and Vulnerable People

Officers:

C Gimblett - Health and Safety Manager
J Parkhouse - Democratic Services Officer

13 **APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE.**

An apology for absence was received from Councillor C R Doyle.

14 **DISCLOSURES OF PERSONAL AND PREJUDICIAL INTEREST.**

In accordance with the Code of Conduct adopted by the City and County of Swansea, no interests were declared.

15 **MINUTES.**

RESOLVED that the Minutes of the Engagement and Inclusion Cabinet Advisory Committee Meetings held on 10 June and 8 July 2015 be approved as correct records.

16 **BRIEFING - OCCUPATIONAL HEALTH.**

The Health and Safety Manager provided the Committee with a comprehensive briefing regarding Occupational Health. He added that the service area included Stress Management and Counselling, Occupation Health, Training Team and the Operational Safety Unit. He added that the Authority was unique as everything was provided in-house unlike many other local authorities who had outsourced their services.

Reference was made to Helping Hands which offers Council staff support, advice and signposting and is run by volunteers. The service had undertaken research, using ideas of good practice and had utilised these within the Helping Hands service. The service fully intended for the Helping Hands scheme to grow and further support staff.

Detailed discussions followed and centred around the following:-

- Stress provision within the Authority and the reasons why staff were absent from work due to stress;
- Breaking down the negative attitudes within the Authority towards stress and recognising that staff are the biggest asset of the Authority, it was important to support them effectively in order to reduce sickness levels;
- Details of the services provided by Helping Hands and the positive responses received from staff;
- The number of staff requesting to become volunteers for Helping Hands;
- Possible services provided to staff by the Authority, such as an exercise gym, in addition to groups formed by staff, such as a walking group and Civic Book Club;
- Use of university students in undertaking surveys on behalf of the Authority;
- Communication strategy of the service, particularly using Council buildings, e.g. notices in toilets, in order to circulate information to staff.

The Chair thanked the Health and Safety Officer for his detailed and informative presentation.

17 **DISCUSSIONS WITH CABINET MEMBER FOR SERVICES FOR ADULTS AND VULNERABLE PEOPLE.**

Councillor J E C Harris, Cabinet Member for Services for Adults and Vulnerable People highlighted some of the areas requiring additional work within her portfolio.

She commented that it was important for the Authority to find out the issues affecting staff, particularly during the continuing changes being imposed upon local government. The Authority needed to understand how to support individuals and departments must communicate information to all staff within their service area.

She added that there was currently a review of all areas within Adult Social Services. Supervision of staff was very important, particularly in managing the high levels of sickness. Changes meant that staff felt threatened and she recognised that managing this aspect was very difficult.

Reference was made to the continued need to successfully engage with staff, the medical profession and the public. The Authority was facing a huge change and the implications were massive.

She emphasised that some families had very high expectations that their family member receiving care would cope. However, this was very often not the case. Therefore, continued engagement with families, staff training and support within this complex area was very important.

She commented that it was important that carers were involved in developing plans and that the Authority needed the information available for carers and the public to be accessible. It was important that the information being provided was relevant to both carers and individuals.

Discussions followed and centred around the following:-

- The importance of communication with staff and reaching those staff who did not have access to a PC;
- Making improvements to the Council website in order to assist with and improve communication;
- Use of social media to improve communication;
- Use of a pilot scheme in Pontarddulais which provided a card informing who/where to contact;
- Partnership working with organisations, groups and individuals was very important, such as Swansea University students assisting with communication.

The Chair thanked the Cabinet Member for attending the meeting.

18 **COUNCILLOR CHAMPION UPDATE.**

The Chair, as Domestic Abuse Champion, provided the Committee with a detailed and informative update in relation to her role as Councillor Champion. She reported the Swansea Domestic Abuse Action Plan 2015-16 and added that domestic abuse was a top priority for the Swansea Local Service Board. She commented that 1 in 4 murders every week were to do with domestic abuse and there was still a huge amount of work to be undertaken. The public were more aware of the reporting procedures due to previous communications. She added that the Police had more power and they were able to act without victim consent which had been a problem in the past. She made reference to the one-stop shop that had recently opened near the Grand Theatre which had been a very positive development.

Discussions followed and centred around the following:-

- Training provided to perpetrators in prison had resulted in the majority of male perpetrators attending in order to see how they could get around issues and allow

them to deal with women better. Basically, it was educating them to get away with domestic abuse;

- Continued communication with victims was very important as they very often needed to be convinced that they did not deserve the abuse;
- Training being provided in schools which concentrated on respect and self-esteem and the need to use the UNCRC to influence and educate children;
- Concern regarding people not understanding their rights and the need to avoid children becoming entrenched with thinking that domestic abuse was acceptable and the norm;
- Funding available to families in Swansea, particularly through Families First;
- The work undertaken by the Domestic Abuse Forum;
- The need to keep values, particularly for children, very simple in order for people to understand.

RESOLVED that:

- (1) the contents of the report be noted;
- (2) the presentation regarding Families First be added to the Work Plan;
- (3) the Chair circulates the date and information relating to the next Domestic Abuse Forum Meeting.

19 **WORK PROGRAMME 2015-2016.**

The Chair presented an updated Work Programme 2015-16. The Committee discussed the possible topics for investigation.

RESOLVED that:

- (1) the contents of the report be noted;
- (2) Helping Hands presentation be scheduled for the next meeting;
- (3) a presentation regarding Families First be provided at the next scheduled meeting;
- (4) Councillor Yvonne Jardine, Councillor Champion for Race, Religion, Belief and Heritage provide an update at the next scheduled meeting.

The meeting ended at 5.40 pm

CHAIR