



City and County of Swansea

Notice of Meeting

You are invited to attend a Meeting of the

Scrutiny Performance Panel – Child & Family Services

At: Committee Room 5 - Guildhall, Swansea

On: Monday, 18 December 2017

Time: 4.00 pm

Convenor: Councillor Paxton Hood-Williams

Membership:

Councillors: C Anderson, M Durke, K M Griffiths, Y V Jardine, S M Jones, P Jones, I E Mann, A Pugh and D W W Thomas

Agenda

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| 2 | Disclosure of Personal and Prejudicial Interests.
www.swansea.gov.uk/disclosuresofinterests | |
| 3 | Notes of meeting on 30 October 2017
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Next Meeting: Monday, 5 February 2018 at 2.00 pm

Huw Evans

Huw Evans
Head of Democratic Services
Monday, 11 December 2017
Contact: Liz Jordan 01792 637314



City and County of Swansea

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

Committee Room 5, Guildhall, Swansea

Monday, 30 October 2017 at 4.00 pm

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

Councillor(s)

M Durke
S M Jones
D W W Thomas

Councillor(s)

K M Griffiths
P Jones

Councillor(s)

Y V Jardine
I E Mann

Others Present:

Kelly Ahern	Assistant Director of Children's Services, Western Bay
Helen Davies	Partnership Manager BAYS Plus
Val Jones	Western Bay Adoption Manager

Officer(s)

Owen Davies	Performance Manager, Social Services
Liz Jordan	Scrutiny Officer
Donna Houlston	Principal Officer Permanence
Julie Thomas	Head of Child & Family Services

Apologies for Absence

Councillor(s): A Pugh

1 Disclosure of Personal and Prejudicial Interests.

No interests declared.

2 Notes of meeting on 21 August 2017

The Panel agreed the notes as an accurate record of the meeting.

3 Performance Monitoring

Performance and Progress of Western Bay Regional Adoption Service

Val Jones, Western Bay Adoption Manager presented the report and gave an overview of the performance and progress of the service during the last financial year answering the Panel's questions.

Discussion points:

- Panel informed that CSSIW will be carrying out an inspection of the service.
- Increasingly difficult to find adopters. This is a national problem. Numbers significantly dropped in 2017/18 and the service is not sure why. The numbers of children waiting to be placed for adoption is increasing and some of the children needing to be placed are more complex.
- Panel felt there needs to be a drive to increase adopters especially for sibling groups and older children, nationally as well as regionally. Panel suggests that similar mechanisms as Foster Swansea are used as this has been successful.
- Figure for average time taken to approve adopters does not reflect how successful the service is as it is taken from inquiry stage rather than take up. Intention is to change how the figure is calculated this year so it will start from when the application is taken up.
- Performance in providing Life Journey Material is a big issue for the Service. They have not performed as well as they would like. Action plan is going to be put in place to try and address this. Transition Moving On Programme being rolled out in the region, could also help make improvements.
- Regionalisation of the service continues to be challenging but is a statutory requirement. Discussions taking place about what will happen going forward with changes to the makeup of the region.
- Staffing issues – high levels of staff off with serious sickness. Measures been put in place to support the Service.
- Number of projects in place to help vulnerable families, for example, 'Turn Around' project and 'Reflect'.

Actions:

- Outcomes of survey on 'Turnaround' project to be provided to Panel for information once available.

Performance and progress on Leaving Care System

Helen Davies, Partnership Manager for BAYS Plus gave a presentation to the Panel (circulated separately). Kelly Ahern of Barnardo's and Donna Houlston also attended for this item.

Discussion points:

- Review of Single Accommodation Strategy has been undertaken internally to identify if young people's needs are being met.
- There is a move towards providing more qualitative rather than quantitative outcomes to monitor the difference BAYS Plus is making to young people. The partnership is working towards implementing a Swansea wide outcomes framework in order to provide this information.
- Panel felt Bays Plus is working effectively and to be congratulated on how much they have developed in terms of confidentiality. More information on outcomes needed.

- Partnership group established to try and develop the vision of where next for BAYS Plus.

Child and Family Services Performance Report for September 2017 and Second Quarter Performance

Julie Thomas, Head of Child and Family and Owen Davies went through the reports, highlighting the main issues and answering questions.

Discussion points:

- Panel grateful to the department for incorporating all of its requests into the Performance Report.
- Looked after children in residential care – Concern raised that more are being placed out of county than in. Informed this is usually 50/50 but a sexual exploitation case meant some children had to be placed out of county. Panel assured only children who need to be placed out of county are.
- Assessments – Panel is concerned about the timeliness of assessments. This is still an issue. Panel informed there are a number of issues causing this and that there is an imminent structure change to try and alleviate some of the issues.
- Panel pleased to hear that the department is improving communications with its staff and wellbeing strategy going to be developed.
- Also there has been a reduction in costs for management and senior staff of approximately £200,000 within the department.

Actions:

- Send a letter to the Cabinet member covering the main points and seeking a response.

4 Work Programme Timetable 2017-18

Work programme received and considered by the Panel.

5 Letters

Letters received and considered by the Panel.

The meeting ended at 6.45 pm

Agenda Item 4



Report of the Cabinet Member for Health and Wellbeing Child and Family Services Scrutiny Performance Panel – 18th December 2017

ADVOCACY

Purpose	To provide a briefing requested by the Board about advocacy for children and young people open to Child and Family Services and in particular the implementation of the National Approach to Statutory Advocacy.
Content	This report includes a summary of the issues that have led to the implementation of the National Approach to Statutory Advocacy.
Councillors are being asked to	Endorse the decision to implement the National Approach.
Lead Councillor(s)	Cabinet Member for Health and Wellbeing
Lead Officer(s)	Julie Thomas, Head of Service for Child and Family Services
Report Author	Christopher Francis Christopher.francis@swansea.gov.uk 01792 637 630

1. In 2000, a report was published investigating the abuse of looked after children in North Wales, the Waterhouse Report, 'Lost in Care'. Among its key recommendations was the establishment of independent advocacy services to help ensure the voice of vulnerable children is heard.
2. Amendments were subsequently made to the Children Act 1989 – more recently incorporated into the Social Services and Wellbeing Act 2014 – introducing statutory duties for local authorities to provide independent advocacy services for looked after children, care leavers and children in need (now children in need of care and support).
3. Despite the presence of independent advocacy services, there continued to be concerns that the voices of vulnerable children were still going unheard. Take-up of advocacy was reported as being poor and eligible groups of children were said to have limited knowledge of the service.
4. Efforts to develop an improved national model have been ongoing since at least 2007. Over the last decade Welsh Government and other stakeholders have been actively exploring how this could be best realised. This has included aborted efforts to introduce Statutory Guidance, the publication of best practice guidance; several reports by various Children and Young People Committees of the National Assembly, the establishment of a number of specialist advisory boards, and at least three reports by the Children's Commissioner. Reports by the latter were highly critical of Welsh Government for their lack of strong strategic leadership.
5. The culmination of all this activity and consternation being the formation of a Ministerial Expert Group on Advocacy in 2014 for the development of a National Approach to Statutory Advocacy Services.
6. The National Approach devised by the Group essentially means commissioning a regional (i.e. Western Bay) service which adheres to the following elements:-
 - a. The National Standards and Outcomes Framework.
 - b. A standardised national service specification, which includes the concept of an Active Offer to ensure children subject to child protection or looked after procedures are systematically informed of their rights, including their right to an advocate.
 - c. A common performance reporting tool.
 - d. The range and level tool that calculates: (a) the level of need for advocacy in each authority; and (b) the associated levels of funding required.
7. In December 2016, the Welsh Local Government Association wrote to the Cabinet Secretary to confirm that agreement for the National Approach had been gained from senior officers and Leaders for all 22 local authorities in Wales. The letter also stated that all authorities were committed to implement the National Approach by June 2017.

8. Elements a. - c. of the National Approach are welcomed and not controversial. However, there are potential risks attached to element d. which were highlighted to Welsh Government at the design stage.
9. The range and level tool makes a series of assumptions to guesstimate the level of demand for advocacy and the associated funding each local authority is required to provide. The calculations anticipate significantly higher levels of take-up (regionally and nationally) and funding. For Swansea it means funding for advocacy will have to increase from £62,000 per annum to £184,777.
10. A proportion of the additional money required is to be provided via a discreet Welsh Government grant (Swansea is expecting £42,111 in 2017/18). The expectation is that local authorities will find the rest of the required funding from their existing resources. For Swansea this means having to potentially find an additional £80,666 for advocacy.
11. If the calculations within the tool prove to be inaccurate and children do not take-up advocacy as anticipated then local authorities will pay too much for the service. To balance the need to adhere to the range and level tool with the principle of value for money, the three authorities in Western Bay have committed to fund up to the levels calculated by the tool but on the basis that:
 - 80% of the funding is provided via guaranteed core funding, and
 - the additional 20% is available on a spot purchase should take-up exceed certain pre-prescribed levels.
12. Other options were considered to ensure we secure value for money. These were all dismissed by those delegated responsibility by Welsh Government for the implementation of the National Approach, on the basis that Welsh Government would deem them to be inconsistent with the range and level tool and, by extension, the National Approach. The local authorities in the mid-Wales Region encountered this difficulty. Initially they sought an alternative option that would have delivered greater savings, but they were then forced to undertake a second procurement exercise in order to be deemed compliant.
13. The Council is the lead authority in the Region and undertook a full procurement exercise earlier this year. While we were unable to implement by June 2017, the new contract commenced on 1st August 2017. The slight delay was due to a change in the lead authority, issues complying with the different Contract Procedural Rules across the Region, and the implications of Purdah.
14. The National Approach is still at a very early stage. Various activities - communications and training – are being rolled out in order to promote awareness of the National Approach. Hopefully this will help take-up to increase to the levels envisaged by Welsh Government. We continue to

work with the successful provider, Tros Gynnal Plant, to closely monitor performance as the service establishes itself.

15. If, however, there continues to be a significant gap between the real level of demand (as opposed to the calculated) then we will make representations to Welsh Government on the basis that they need to revise the National Approach in so far as it concerns the range and level tool. The contract is due to conclude on 31st July 2018, with the option of extending by a further 2 years.

Agenda Item 5

CHILD & FAMILY SERVICES SCRUTINY PERFORMANCE PANEL WORK PROGRAMME 2017/18

<p>Meeting 1 21 August 2017</p> <p>10am</p>	<p>Overview of Child and Family Services in Swansea (including key priorities and challenges and first quarter performance report)</p> <p><i>Presentation by Julie Thomas, Head of Child and Family Services</i></p> <p>Role of the Child and Family Services Scrutiny Performance Panel including Terms of Reference and Draft Work programme</p> <p>Letters to / from Convener</p>
<p>Meeting 2 30 October 2017</p> <p>4pm</p>	<p>Performance Monitoring including</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Quarter 2 performance report (including adoption and YOS; absenteeism, vacancies and agency workers) • Performance and progress on Leaving Care System <p><i>Julie Thomas, Head of Child and Family Services; Kelly A’Hearne and Helen Davies, Barnardos</i></p>
<p>Additional Meeting 14 November 2017</p> <p>10am</p>	<p>Pre-decision Scrutiny: Family Support Services Commissioning Review – Focusing on Children with Additional Needs and Disabilities (Report of the Cabinet Member for Health & Wellbeing)</p>
<p>Meeting 3 18 December 2017</p> <p>4pm</p>	<p>Advocacy update</p>
<p>Additional meeting (Jan?)</p>	<p>Commissioning review – Under 11s and over 11s ?</p>
<p>Additional meeting 5 February 2018</p> <p>2pm</p>	<p>Draft budget proposals for Adult Services</p>
<p>Meeting 4 26 February 2018</p>	<p>Performance Monitoring</p> <p>Prevention and Early Intervention</p>

4pm	
Meeting 5 30 April 2018 4pm	Performance Monitoring End of year review

Agenda Item 6



To:
Councillor Mark Child
Cabinet Member for Health & Wellbeing

Please ask for: Scrutiny
Gofynnwch am:
Scrutiny Office 01792 637314
Line:
Llinell
Uniongyrochol:
e-Mail scrutiny@swansea.gov.uk
e-Bost:
Date 06 December 2017
Dyddiad:

Summary: This is a letter from the Child & Family Services Scrutiny Performance Panel to the Cabinet Member for Health and Wellbeing following the meeting of the Panel on 30 October 2017. It covers Western Bay Regional Adoption Service, the Leaving Care System, the Performance Report for September 2017 and second quarter 2017.

Dear Cllr Child

The Panel met on 30 October and looked at the performance and progress of Western Bay Regional Adoption Service, the performance and progress on the Leaving Care System, the Performance Report for September 2017 and the second quarter performance 2017.

We would like to thank Julie Thomas, Owen Davies, Val Jones, Helen Davies, Kelly Ahern and Donna Houlston for attending. We appreciate their engagement and input.

For your reference, I note here some of the issues that were raised:

Monitoring Performance and progress of Western Bay Regional Adoption Service

Val Jones, Western Bay Adoption Manager presented the report and gave an overview of the performance and progress of the Service during the last financial year answering our questions.

We were informed that CSSIW will be carrying out an inspection of the service and that I will be interviewed as part of this process. I am pleased to be involved in the inspection and to have the opportunity to comment on behalf of the Panel.

OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY / TROSOLWG A CHRAFFU

SWANSEA COUNCIL / CYNGOR ABERTAWE

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I dderbyn yr wybodaeth hon mewn fformat arall neu yn Gymraeg, cysylltwch â'r person uchod
To receive this information in alternative format, or in Welsh please contact the above

We heard that it is increasingly difficult to find adopters and that this is a national problem. We also heard that numbers significantly dropped in 2017/18 and the service is not sure why. We heard that the numbers of children waiting to be placed for adoption is increasing and that some of the children needing to be placed are more complex.

The Panel felt that there needs to be a drive to increase adopters especially for sibling groups and older children, nationally as well as regionally. We suggest that the service uses similar mechanisms to what Foster Swansea used, as this has been successful.

We felt that the figure for average time taken to approve adopters does not reflect how successful the service is, as it is taken from inquiry stage rather than take up. We heard that the intention is to change how the figure is calculated this year, so it will start from when the application is taken up. We support this move.

We heard that performance in providing Life Journey Material is a big issue for the service and that they have not performed as well as they would like. We were pleased to hear that an action plan is going to be put in place to address this and that the Transition Moving On Programme being rolled out in the region, could also help make improvements.

We were informed that regionalisation of the service continues to be challenging but that it is a statutory requirement. We also heard that discussions are taking place about what will happen going forward with changes to the makeup of the region. We would like you to keep us updated about this.

We were concerned to hear about staffing issues with high levels of staff off with serious sickness. The Panel was content that measures have been put in place to support the service and address this.

We requested information about projects that are in place to help vulnerable families, and were pleased to hear that there are a number of projects including the 'Turn Around' project and 'Reflect'. The Panel would like to see the outcomes of the survey on the 'Turnaround' project once they are available.

Performance and Progress on Leaving Care System

Helen Davies, Partnership Manager for BAYS Plus gave a presentation to the Panel. Kelly Ahern of Barnardo's and Donna Houlston also attended for this item.

We heard that a review of the Single Accommodation Strategy has been undertaken internally to identify if young people's needs are being met.

We were told that there is a move towards providing more qualitative rather than quantitative outcomes to monitor the difference BAYS Plus is making to young people. The partnership is working towards implementing a Swansea wide outcomes framework in order to provide this information. We felt that BAYS Plus appears to be working effectively and that they are to be congratulated on how much they have developed in the last few years in terms of confidentiality. However the Panel need to see more information on outcomes in this area.

We heard that a partnership group has been established to try and develop the vision of where next for BAYS Plus. We felt that this was a good idea.

Performance Report September 2017 and Second Quarter Performance 2017

Julie Thomas and Owen Davies went through the reports, highlighting the main issues and answering questions. We are grateful to the department for incorporating all of our requests into the Performance Report.

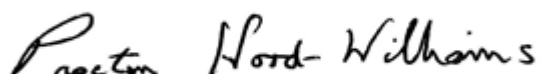
We are concerned that more looked after children in residential care are being placed out of county than in. We understand that this is usually 50/50 but that a sexual exploitation case meant some children had to be placed out of county. We were assured that only children who need to be placed out of county are, however, we will want to monitor this.

We continue to be concerned about the timeliness of assessments and that this is still an issue. We heard that there are a number of issues causing this and that there is an imminent structure change to try and alleviate some of the issues. We plan to keep a close eye on this to monitor improvement.

We were pleased to hear that the department is improving communications with its staff and that a wellbeing strategy is going to be developed. Also, that there has been a reduction in costs for management and senior staff of approximately £200,000 within the department.

We hope you find this letter useful and informative. We would welcome your views on any of the issues raised and please note that in this instance, a formal response is required. Could we have your reply by 11 December 2017.

Yours sincerely



PAXTON HOOD-WILLIAMS
CONVENER, CHILD & FAMILY SERVICES SCRUTINY PANEL
CLLR.PAXTON.HOOD-WILLIAMS@SWANSEA.GOV.UK

Cllr Paxton Hood-Williams
Convener
Child & Family Services Scrutiny Panel

BY EMAIL

Please ask for: Councillor Mark Child
Direct Line: 01792 63 7441
E-Mail: cldr.mark.child@swansea.gov.uk
Our Ref: MC/HS
Your Ref:
Date: 1 December 2017

Dear Cllr Hood-Williams

Child and Family Services Scrutiny Performance Panel – 30 October 2017

Thank you for your letter of November 21st, 2017 and the positive comments made about the presentations and information provided to panel. I will address the particular areas noted for development or comment in turn.

Monitoring performance and progress of Western Bay Regional Adoption Service
Placing children with complex needs and sibling groups is an ongoing issue not only within WB but nationally. This is despite the work of the National Adoption Service in raising awareness and the profile of adoption. There is a two year recruitment strategy in place in WB and the National Adoption Service is monitoring progress in this area.

Performance around life journey work has been poor across the region. The following actions have been undertaken to influence improvements to performance related to life story work:

- Within the Local Authorities, life story work project groups have been established with representatives from a range of teams taking part including staff from Fostering, LAC teams, and children's community/safeguarding teams. To date the group has developed a set of minimum standards for life journey work for children who are looked after and for children whose plan is adoption. The standards for children who are/will be placed in adoptive placements follow those set by the National Adoption Service.
- Standards for life journey work have been approved by the Children's Services Senior Management Group. The standards have been shared with WBAS and have been/will be disseminated to staff and are available for staff in the Local Authority via their interactive practice guide/staff manual.
- Training has been delivered to all practitioners who are involved in undertaking life journey work with children. It is recognised that across the region, different models of completing life journey work are used.
Consideration was given to streamlining the model used; however was felt that there was no *right* model and that a range of tools to support life journey work was valuable in meeting the differing needs of different children.

- 'Champions' have been identified within each Local Authority to be the links with WBAS for Life journey work and Fostering. The Champions will be the interface on the front line between the Adoption Service and the Local Authority practitioners.
- WBAS has developed a Transition/Moving on programme which aims to standardise and provide guidance for practitioners and foster carers who are moving children on to adoptive placements. The programme has been agreed by the PO/WBAS interface group and is starting to be rolled out across the Local Authorities.
- Local Authority Fostering Team Managers and Local Authority training managers have met with WBAS to discuss the programme and agree a plan for implementation,
- Staff from the 3 Local Authorities attended the National Adoption Service Conference in March 2017 where there was a focus on transition to adoption. WBAS staff delivered a workshop to the conference on their transition/moving on programme which was well received.
- Funding has been made available for Fostering Services to purchase resources to support the transition/moving on programme.
- Senior Managers from the POWBAS interface group have agreed to provide management oversight of life journey work while performance requires improvement. PO's will be notified by WBAS of those children who are due to be presented at matching panel and will liaise with the relevant team manager to ensure that the minimum standards are being applied.

The situation regarding regional arrangements is being managed by the Regional Partnership Board.

Performance and progress on the Leaving Care Team

I would agree that information on measuring actual outcomes for children is essential moving forward. It is important we understand how services are making a difference to improving children's lives. This is not an easy task, however a distant travelled tool is being developed to measure outcomes across the continuum of need, including Bays +. This will be a focus of work in the New Year but it is unlikely that information will be made available to Panel until the new financial year.

There are challenges to all partnership arrangements but by reviewing the vision for the service with staff, a more cohesive and effective service will develop.

Performance report September and second quarter performance 2017

It is important to monitor the numbers of children placed in residential care in its totality; there are a variety of reasons why children are placed in out of area residential placements. This may be due to risks within the community in Swansea in terms of CSE or risk taking behaviours such as access to legal highs or indeed risks posed by parents or family members. In addition, due to the current position around placements for children with complex needs generally i.e. a chronic shortage of placements nationally, choice of placements is limited. Sometimes it is better to place a young person out of area if the other factors, such as education on site and a nurturing therapeutic environment can better meet the needs of that particular child. However careful

monitoring of any out of area placements takes place via weekly Y Siarad meetings attended by HOS and all Principal Officers.

The timeliness of assessment activity continues to be a challenge for us as is under-reporting around statutory visits. There is an action plan in place to address these issues but it is unlikely that any significant improvement will be achieved until the New Year, when the redesigned SCP service will be in place.

I hope this information is helpful.

Yours faithfully

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'M Child', written in a cursive style.

Councillor Mark Child
Cabinet Member for Health & Wellbeing



**To/
Councillors
Mark Child, Cabinet Member for Health
and Wellbeing
Jen Raynor, Cabinet Member for
Children, Education and Lifelong
Learning**

*Please ask for:
Gofynnwch am:*

*Direct Line:
Llinell Uniongyrochol:*

*e-Mail
e-Bost:*

*Date
Dyddiad:*

Scrutiny

01792 637256

scrutiny@swansea.gov.uk

11 December 2017

BY EMAIL

Summary: This is a letter from the Child and Family Services Performance Panel to the Cabinet Members for Health and Wellbeing and for Children, Education and Lifelong Learning following the meeting of the Panel on 14 November 2017. It is about the Family Support Services Commissioning Review focussing on Children with Additional Needs and Disabilities.

Dear Councillors Child and Raynor

Child and Family Services Performance Panel – 14 November 2017

The Panel would like to thank you and the officers for providing the report and attending our meeting to discuss the Family Support Services Commissioning review that is focussing on children with additional needs and disabilities.

We are writing to you to share the views of the panel, and where necessary, raise any issues or recommendations for your consideration and response. Find below the issues the panel would like to highlight to you and Cabinet on the 16 November arising from the discussion.

1. It is good to see inclusion and a detailed consultation exercise to gain views of disability services from children and young people although we appreciate the difficulty in getting large numbers to participate in this.
2. We recognise that there are two commissioning reviews looking at additional needs, the family support aspect but also the Additional Learning Needs review being led by Education. We were pleased to hear that the departments are working closely together and that these two pieces of work have been aligned to ensure a co-ordinated and joined up outcome.

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3. We were interested to hear about the co-production with parents in developing services and welcome the development of a consultation mechanism with parents that will include a wide group of parents of children with additional needs. We did however emphasise the importance of ensuring we reach out to get views of those parents who may be less vocal or for whatever reason, find it difficult to engage.
4. We heard that there are a growing number of children with additional needs, which is an ongoing challenge for both local authorities and health authorities alike. Consequently we support the increase in funding going towards the Early Help Service, We support the need to develop better prevention services in conjunction with health and also support the authority in the strive to engage health in future developments.
5. The report details that 11% of overall funding is made up of grants which in itself must be seen as a risk when moving forward. We did emphasise the importance of contingency planning should these grants stop or be reduced.
6. We understand that the introduction of a voucher scheme for play and leisure for children with additional needs is being considered. We would like to emphasise the importance of recognising the potential implications of this type of scheme for providers and parents. We were encouraged to hear that you plan to look at how this is working in other local authorities and to work closely with parents when considering this as an option.
7. We were pleased to see and were supportive of the recommendation around specialist services for young carers. We recognise that currently it is in its early stages but feel it is a positive move.
8. We note that only 3 of the 6 recommendations required assessment of potential alternative supply mechanisms and indeed 2 of them were purely internal development. We also note the intention to seek to resource external facilities for overnight short breaks with the aim of reducing the cost of the service by £50k, and this will hopefully result in an improved service. We need to guard against a poorer service. We were also a bit disappointed that where assessments had been carried out for (recommendations 1, 2 and 3) that we only had the final score and not the breakdown of that score into its separate elements.

Your response

We recognise that our comments will be discussed at Cabinet on the 16 November but would also ask for you to provide us with a written response to our issues raised by 5 December 2017.

Yours sincerely,

COUNCILLOR PAXTON HOOD WILLIAMS

Convener, Child and Family Scrutiny Performance Panel

✉ Cllr.paxton.hood-williams@swansea.gov.uk



Cllr Paxton Hood-Williams
Convener
Child & Family Services Scrutiny
Performance Panel

Please ask for: Councillor Mark Child
Direct Line: 01792 63 7441
E-Mail: cllr.mark.child@swansea.gov.uk
Our Ref: MC/JW
Your Ref:
Date: 04 December 2017

BY EMAIL

Dear Cllr Hood-Williams

CHILD AND FAMILY SERVICES PERFORMANCE PANEL – 14 NOVEMBER 2017

Thank you for your letter of 14th November 2017 and for your interest in this important area of work.

The element of the Family Support Services Commissioning Review which focuses on children with disabilities and additional needs will be instrumental in supporting and co-producing innovative services, better able to meet the needs of this most vulnerable group of children.

There has been a concerted effort to ensure the voices of children and parents/carers are heard within the review and lessons have been learnt for the future. The plan is to commission out the work of developing the parent/carer forum, jointly with Education, as there are overlaps with the Additional Learning Needs (ALN) review. This will provide further opportunities to give parents a stronger voice in decision-making, reaching out and including those in the past who may have found it more difficult to find their voice, encouraging them to engage.

The comment on grant funding is noted however 11% is a relatively small percentage of the overall budget and when contracts are awarded the uncertainty of future funding will be clarified. As with all other projects the opportunity to seek additional grant monies will continue. The WG have awarded an additional grant for the development of support to young carers, which is recurring. It will be important for this grant to be ring fenced when included in the RSG next year.

The voucher scheme is an aspiration at this point, and something which will require careful development with parent/carers. This scheme will only become an option when there is confidence in the maturity of the newly established Forum to deliver on the scheme.

The appraisal workshop considered five options. The young carer's option was already being driven through the regional and local arrangements so this would have been duplication. Between the October workshops and Cabinet in February two of the five options i.e. overnight respite and early help were taken out of the review due to concerns about meeting the review timescale. These were reinstated as further information became available to confirm that the work could be completed without delaying the review. These areas had however been considered at the options appraisal workshop. Just one of the recommendations is a purely internal development as there is an internal registered service with very good inspection reports available to deliver.

Detailed information on scoring the separate elements is attached to this letter. I hope this information is helpful and I look forward to reporting progress on the implementation of the review recommendations in due course.

Yours sincerely



**COUNCILLOR MARK CHILD
CABINET MEMBER FOR HEALTH & WELLBEING**