



City and County of Swansea

Notice of Meeting

You are invited to attend a Meeting of the

Scrutiny Performance Panel – Child & Family Services

At: Remotely via Microsoft Teams
On: Wednesday, 9 March 2022
Time: 4.00 pm
Convenor: Councillor Paxton Hood-Williams

Membership:

Councillors: C Anderson, A M Day, M Durke, K M Griffiths, Y V Jardine, S M Jones, E T Kirchner, W G Lewis and D W W Thomas

Agenda

Page No.

- 1 Apologies for Absence**
- 2 Disclosure of Personal and Prejudicial Interests**
www.swansea.gov.uk/disclosuresofinterests
- 3 Prohibition of Whipped Votes and Declaration of Party Whips**
- 4 Minutes of Previous Meeting(s)** 1 - 13
To receive the minutes of the previous meeting(s) and agree as an accurate record.
- 5 Public Question Time**
Questions must be submitted in writing, no later than noon on the working day prior to the meeting. Questions must relate to items on the agenda. Questions will be dealt with in a 10-minute period.
- 6 Presentation - Briefing on Independent Inquiry into Child Sexual Abuse (IICSA) Report: Child Sexual Exploitation by Organised Networks**
Julie Davies, Head of Child and Family Services
Damian Rees, Principal Officer Safeguarding and Performance Quality
- 7 Presentation - Youth Justice Inspection Report**
Jay McCabe, Principal Officer Adolescent and Young People Services
- 8 Verbal Update on Emergency Staffing**
Elliott King, Cabinet Member – Children Services

Huw Evans

**Huw Evans
Head of Democratic Services
Wednesday, 2 March 2022**

Contact: Liz Jordan 01792 637314

Agenda Item 4



City and County of Swansea

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

Remotely via Microsoft Teams

Tuesday, 25 January 2022 at 4.00 pm

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

Councillor(s)

C Anderson
K M Griffiths
D W W Thomas

Councillor(s)

A M Day
Y V Jardine

Councillor(s)

M Durke
W G Lewis

Other Attendees

Elliott King Cabinet Member - Children Services

Officer(s)

Julie Davies Head of Child & Family Services
Liz Jordan Scrutiny Officer

Apologies for Absence

Councillor(s): E T Kirchner

1 Disclosure of Personal and Prejudicial Interests

No disclosures of interest were made.

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 13 December 2021 as an accurate record of the meeting.

4 Public Question Time

No questions were submitted.

5 Performance Highlight Report and Emergency Staffing Plan

Julie Davies, Head of Child and Family Services attended to brief the Panel on this item.

Discussion Points:

- Performance Monitoring - More families are being supported through early help hubs which is indicative of them being more proactive in their approach. Continuing to have higher number of children registered on child protection register at birth which continues on an upward trend. Noticeable reduction in average number of days children on child protection register.
- Officers confirmed the figure for Number of Days on Child Protection Register indicated a more driven proactive approach to support families so children are not on the Child Protection Register any longer than they should be.
- Panel noted the increase in unborns being taken into care and queried how much explanation is given to the mother. Officers stated the Directorate looks at every case individually, the focus always is on working with parents to try and enable the baby to stay in the family unit.
- Panel concerned about support for refugees and asylum seeker families as many families are placed temporarily and are then moved to a different part of the city. Panel queried if any special provision is made and what the support system is for them. It was confirmed that if they meet the statutory threshold or come through the Early Help Hub, the Directorate works together with the Council's services and local services to offer support to families they are aware of.
- Panel stated that the figures are impressive in terms of the way the numbers of looked after children have been reducing, especially in current circumstances, which is a credit to the Department. Department is satisfied that in terms of re-referrals and registrations, they are still comparatively low.
- Emergency Staffing – Directorate has still not recruited to vacant social worker posts in locality teams. Had more success in Front Door as able to appoint support workers which is easing some of the pressure in the locality teams. Department continues to pull in support from across the Service to ensure key statutory duties are met and independent social workers if needed for key tasks.
- there are not sufficient placements available, so the Department is having to use a lot of its own staff to provide care and support for children in unregulated placements and more children are being placed in England. Part of the problem is the Welsh Government initiative to eliminate profit from children's social care resulting in some providers deciding to stop future plans to move into Wales to develop placements or deciding they are not going to continue offering placements to children in Wales.
- The Directorate continues to work with local universities so that for newly qualified social workers it can get a more direct feed into the Service to work on lower-level cases.
- Officers confirmed that the current pandemic has not affected staffing as much as feared and that the Covid contingency plan had been re-introduced.
- Panel sought confirmation that independent fostering companies are looking at stepping away from Wales and heard that some providers are stepping away because of uncertainty in terms of what the programme will mean in terms of elimination of profit from children's residential care.
- Panel queried if Welsh Government are thinking along the lines of re-investing the profit into education of looked after children in order to help fund this type of provision for the most vulnerable young people. Cabinet Member stated

that it is a Welsh Government desire to remove profit from children's social care but believes investment from Welsh Government will be in the long term.

Work Programme Timetable 2021-22

Panel noted items on the work programme for the remainder of this municipal year.

The meeting ended at 4.45 pm.



To:
**Councillor Elliott King, Cabinet Member for
Children's Services**

BY EMAIL

Please ask for: Scrutiny
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Date 21 February 2022
Dyddiad:

CC Cabinet Members

Summary: This is a letter from the Child & Family Services Scrutiny Performance Panel to the Cabinet Member for Children's Services following the meeting of the Panel on 25 January 2022. It covers Performance and Emergency Staffing.

Dear Cllr King,

The Panel met on 25 January to receive a briefing on the Performance Highlight Report for December 2021 and the Emergency Staffing Plan.

We would like to thank you and Julie Davies for attending to present these items and answer the Panel's questions. We appreciate your engagement and input.

We are writing to you to reflect on what we learnt from the discussion, share the views of the Panel, and, where necessary, raise any issues or recommendations for your consideration and response. The main issues discussed are summarised below:

Performance Highlight Report and Emergency Staffing Plan

Performance Monitoring –

We heard that more families are being supported through early help hubs which is indicative of them being more proactive in their approach. We also heard that the number of children on the child protection register remains at 200 which is in line with where it should be. However, there continues to be a higher number of children registered at birth and you are seeing more unborns in Swansea, in circumstances that give cause for concern and it continues to be on an upward trend. We heard that there has been a noticeable reduction in the average number of days children are on the

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child protection register and that the Directorate is undertaking some analysis of this to be assured children are moving on in the right way.

We queried if the figure for 'Number of Days on Child Protection Register' indicated a more driven proactive approach to support families, so children are not on the Child Protection Register any longer than they should be. Officers confirmed that it is exactly as it should be, and it is about robustness of plans and timeliness of responses to progress.

We noted the increase in unborns being taken into care and queried how much explanation is given to the mother. We heard that the figure in the report is for unborns on the child protection register and not necessarily who have come into the Authority's care. We were informed that the Directorate looks at every case individually and that the focus always is on looking at the positives and working with parents to try and enable the baby to stay in the family unit. We heard that parents have the option of having their own advocate to help them understand what is happening.

We expressed concern about support for refugees and asylum seeker families as many families are placed temporarily and are then moved to a different part of the city. We queried if any special provision is made and what the support system is for them. It was confirmed that if they meet the statutory threshold or come through the Early Help Hub, the Directorate works together with the Council's services and local services to offer support to families they are aware of.

We felt that the figures are impressive in terms of the way the numbers of looked after children have been reducing, especially in current circumstances, which is a credit to the Department. We queried if you are satisfied that in terms of re-referrals and registrations, they are still comparatively low. We were informed that you are satisfied.

Emergency Staffing -

We heard that you have still not recruited to vacant social worker posts in the locality teams but have had more success in the Front Door as you were able to appoint support workers which is easing some of the pressure in the locality teams. We also heard that the Department continues to pull in support from across the Service to ensure key statutory duties are met and independent social workers if needed for key tasks. We were informed that the ability to recruit permanent social workers is still a concern across Wales and that you hope to give some feedback at the next meeting on the advertisement, which is currently out for social workers, offering additional benefits to social workers in front line teams.

We heard that a key pressure currently is that there are not sufficient placements available, so the Department is having to use a lot of its own staff to provide care and support for children in unregulated placements and more children are being placed in England. We heard you are looking to return placements to Wales if and when placements become available. We also heard that part of the problem is the Welsh Government initiative to eliminate profit from children's social care resulting in some providers deciding to stop future plans to move into Wales to develop placements, or deciding they are not going to continue offering placements to children in Wales. We

heard you were already struggling to offer placements, and this is putting extra strain on staffing across the whole Service.

We were informed the Directorate continues to work with local universities so that for newly qualified social workers you can get a more direct feed into the Service to work on lower-level cases.

We heard that the current pandemic has not affected staffing as much as feared and that the Covid contingency plan had been re-introduced.

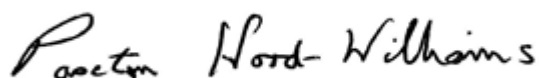
We sought confirmation that independent fostering companies are looking at stepping away from Wales and heard that it is true that some providers are stepping away because of uncertainty about what the programme will mean in terms of elimination of profit from children's residential care. We heard that together with Foster Wales and Foster Swansea the Authority is looking at more targeted campaigns for foster carers for teenagers.

We queried if Welsh Government are thinking along the lines of re-investing the profit into the education of looked after children, in order to help fund this type of provision for the most vulnerable young people. You stated that it is a Welsh Government desire to remove profit from children's social care but you believe investment will be in the long term. You confirmed that as a Service you are looking forward at ways you can deliver things differently to deliver some of these challenges.

Your Response

We hope you find this letter useful and informative. We would welcome your views and comments on any of the issues raised, but in this instance a formal written response is not required.

Yours sincerely



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



To:
**Councillor Elliott King, Cabinet Member for
Children's Services**

BY EMAIL

Please ask for: Scrutiny
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Date 10 January 2022
Dyddiad:

CC Cabinet Members

Summary: This is a letter from the Child & Family Services Scrutiny Performance Panel to the Cabinet Member for Children's Services following the meeting of the Panel on 13 December 2021. It covers Matters Arising, Performance Report and Emergency Staffing Plan and Update on Ty Nant.

Dear Cllr King,

The Panel met on 13 December 2021 to receive a briefing on the Performance Highlight Report for October 2021 and the Emergency Staffing Plan and an update on Progress with the Action Plan following the CIW Inspection of Ty Nant Children's Home.

We would like to thank Dave Howes, Julie Davies, Chris Francis and Mike Repetti for attending to present these items and answer the Panel's questions. We appreciate their engagement and input.

We are writing to you to reflect on what we learnt from the discussion, share the views of the Panel, and, where necessary, raise any issues or recommendations for your consideration and response. The main issues discussed are summarised below:

Minutes of Previous Meeting

Under matters arising I raised a query. Following the meeting on 21 September we had requested data on the progress of looked after children in education compared to others. Your response stated that this information was not available, as an analysis of the data was not currently being carried out. I sent a follow up email stating that I

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To receive this information in alternative format, or in Welsh please contact the above

believed the Authority must hold the relevant information and requested a response at this meeting.

Officers responded that following discussion with Education colleagues they could confirm that the Welsh Government run system that would normally provide the data has been paused due to the pandemic, and that the Education Department did not have the resources to do this manually at present in a way that could be shared to be able to see the comparison. However, for individual children, this would be done as part of the Looked After Children statutory reviews. We heard that the department hope to be able to provide some analysis in the new year and this will be shared with the Panel.

The Chair of the Education Policy Development Committee informed the meeting that the Committee currently has a strong focus on vulnerability and if any relevant information is received there, he will pass it on to the Panel.

Performance Highlight Report and Emergency Staffing Plan

We heard that the Panel is receiving a shortened performance monitoring report due to the transition and issues with the new computer system and a shortage of staff. We were informed that to offer a level of assurance the Directorate has introduced manual tracking systems to capture the most important data. We also heard that you hope to provide data on time limited assessments and conferencing reviews from November 2021 and hope to resume full performance reporting from February 2022 onwards.

We were informed that the outcomes from the inspection of the Youth Offending Service will be brought to a future CFS Panel meeting.

We raised the recent tragic case in Solihull and asked officers to give an idea of what went wrong. We also sort reassurance that this would not happen to children in this local authority area.

We heard that the Directorate had had worries about being able to recruit social workers for two to three months. In this time, staff have been brought in from other areas of the Service to assist and support so that looked after children and those on the child protection register continue to be seen when they need to be and visits that need to be taken, and statutory reviews take place on time. We also heard that risks have been managed well by Social Services and their partners by ensuring core groups happen when they need to happen for children on the register and that the right partners attend when they need to. We were informed that dialogue with Education has been improved and strengthened with weekly safeguarding meetings held with Education, Health and Police to ensure you keep in contact with children you are most worried about. We heard that this was one of the challenges raised in the case in Solihull – keeping in contact with children Authorities are most worried about, “having eyes on them” - and that this has been a real worry for Social Services across the UK but officers in Swansea believe you are doing everything you possibly can.

We asked about the difficulty in recruiting to the Service and stated that in the past the Authority had tried raising salaries to attract people, but it did not work as everyone

else did the same. We queried if there were longer term strategies, what the supply of students was like and if there were any links with universities to potential students. We heard that local authorities across Wales recognise they are searching in the same pool and have spoken to the Welsh Government about medium-and long- term strategies such as a pay scale for social workers, and how the agency market can be monitored. Officers confirmed that you are very keen on and are pursuing 'growing your own' and stated that Swansea has a good intake of newly qualified social workers into CFS but that numbers of students qualifying as social workers are down overall in Wales and England. We heard that the Authority is strengthening links with universities and supporting staff to pursue qualifications. We commented that it is also a question of caseload and not just pay and asked if there are any measures the Council can look at in terms of addressing workload for social workers. We heard that there is a model in Swansea that you work to, but this has been challenged recently and some of the senior social workers may be holding higher caseloads than usual. However because additional family support worker posts have been appointed, you are confident this will make a difference in the new year as they can hold some of the non-statutory cases. We were informed that there is also a strong wellbeing support programme in Swansea which is available to the whole team.

We requested a breakdown of the total CFS staff team including the number of social workers, length of service, what they do, where they are and what roles are statutory roles that only a qualified social worker can do. Panel Members feel we need people with skills, knowledge and aptitude and should be encouraging these people into key roles and not just looking for people with degrees. We also felt the Authority should consider having a conversion process worked out with the universities. We heard that you very much recognise the value of all staff and the contribution they make, including individuals who are not qualified social workers. We also heard that you are looking at how you can support these individuals across the Service to progress their careers and are pursuing with universities the possibility of conversion courses. We heard that the job of a social worker is not currently attractive in the UK and is not helped by the poor press the profession receives.

The Director stated that you value all staff and all staff contributions, that Social Services have hundreds of differently qualified staff, and that they are the bulk of the workforce, however there are some statutory requirements about having qualified social workers in particular roles and it is for these roles that there is a shortage of social workers. He agreed it would be good if people coming into the profession were drawn from the cohort of individuals who had worked in those other settings or differently qualified roles and confirmed that some do but the majority coming through are newly qualified social workers.

We asked about the market supplements mentioned in the report and if they are only to be offered to social workers and senior social workers in the three locality teams and heard that no other financial incentives are planned for CFS currently but there is a big focus on wellbeing.

I stated that progress with the Department over the last 10 years has been remarkable and it gives me confidence that the Head of Child and Family Services came from a safeguarding background.

The Panel then went into closed session to discuss the following item:

Ty Nant – Update on Progress with Action Plan

We heard that going forward the Directorate wants to go much further than what was in the action plan and that a number of checks and mini reviews will be taking place to check on impact.

We were reminded that the inspection highlighted several areas where the process was positive including management.

We heard that officers who work at the Home felt the inspection gave an unfair reflection on their practice in some areas as there were periods of crisis management throughout that time due to the pandemic. Also, with regards to quality assurance, we heard that there were fantastic examples of good practice, however these were not documented anywhere. Therefore, when the inspection was held the inspectors could not see what had happened to achieve the outcomes. We also heard that training deficiencies were mentioned in the inspection report and officers felt this was unfair as their practice was underpinned by really good training but as it was not captured in the training matrix, it was not readily identifiable to inspectors.

We queried if the deputy manager was still having to undertake a working role as well as managing. It was confirmed that in the new structure this member of staff is 'off rota' when undertaking the managerial function.

We stated that if there is anything we can do as a scrutiny panel, in terms of the performance element, to help officers with their job to let us know. We heard that an annual report will be produced in April 2022 and it could come to the Panel to check out the findings.

We were interested to hear any ideas for the Panel to see exactly how this Service works. Officers responded that they could think about producing a 'Life in the day of' video of children in Ty Nant, for some time in the future. We agreed that this would be useful.

We discussed school exclusions and officers stated that they have been talking to Education about school exclusions with regards to looked after children and different ways of dealing with this and that you would like to bring a report on this to the Panel in the future.

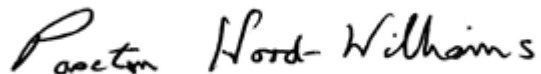
We were pleased to see a lot of thought going into the report received from Care Inspectorate Wales and that you are dealing with the issues. We informed officers that if there is anything Panel Members can do to support officers they will, not to criticise but to understand what they are going through and to help out if they can.

Your Response

We hope you find this letter useful and informative. We would welcome your views and comments on any of the issues raised, but on this occasion please provide a formal written response by Monday 31 January 2022 to the following:

- Information on breakdown of CFS workforce to be provided to Panel.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Paxton Hood-Williams". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large initial 'P'.

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

Cllr. Councillor Paxton Hood-Williams

(By Email)

Please ask for: Councillor Elliott King
Direct Line: 01792 63 7438
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Our Ref: EK/JG
Your Ref:
Date: 26 January 2022

Dear Councillor Paxton,

Re: - Convener's letter following the CFS Panel Meeting on 13th December 2021

Thank you for your Convener's letter following the CFS Panel meeting held on 13th December 2021. With regard to the request for information on the breakdown of the workforce in Child and Family Services, I am pleased to provide this below. The first table gives an overview of the staffing across the service. As you can see of the total workforce, 220 are qualified social workers with 39 of these being newly qualified social workers.

Table 1: Headline Figures	
Total C&F staffing numbers (headcount)	574
Total number of Social Workers within C&F (headcount) *figure includes Newly Qualified Social Workers	220
Total number of Newly Qualified Social Workers within C&F (headcount)	39

The length of service in each post unfortunately is not captured within Oracle as a reportable period, therefore the only length of service which can be identified is from the start date with the Council as opposed to in post. However, it might be helpful to understand the age profile of the Newly Qualified Social Worker workforce within Child and Family Services, which is shown in Table 2. The majority of our newly qualified social workers are aged 30-59 years.

Table 2: Age Profile of Newly Qualified Social Workers	
20-29	13
30-39	15
40-49	9
50-59	2

In respect of statutory roles that only a qualified and registered Social Worker can do these are:

- Undertaking a child protection investigation
- Being the allocated worker for children on the Child Protection Register
- Being the allocated worker for children who are looked after
- Completing fostering assessments
- Completing adoption assessments

I hope this information is of assistance to the Scrutiny Performance Panel for Child and Family Services.

Yours sincerely



Y Cynghorydd/Councillor Elliott J King

Aelod Y Cabinet dros Wasanaethau Plant/ Cabinet Member for Children's Services

Agenda Item 9

Report of the Convener

Child and Family Services Scrutiny Performance Panel – 9 March 2022

Child and Family Services Scrutiny Review of the Year 2021-22

Purpose:	As the municipal year ends, it is good practice to reflect on the Panel's work, experience, and effectiveness over the past year.
Content:	Summary of the Year's work 2021-22.
Councillors are being asked to:	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Reflect on the past year's work• Share ideas to improve the effectiveness of Child and Family Services Scrutiny.
Lead Councillor:	Paxton Hood-Williams, Convener Child and Family Services Scrutiny Performance Panel
Lead Officer & Report Author:	Liz Jordan, Scrutiny Officer Tel: 01792 637314 E-mail: liz.jordan@swansea.gov.uk

1.0 Background

- 1.1 As this is the final meeting of this municipal year, the Panel is invited to reflect on this year's scrutiny work, experience and effectiveness. Any ideas that will improve the effectiveness of the scrutiny of Child and Family Services are welcome.
- 1.2 Some of the questions the Panel may want to consider:
- What went well?
 - What did not go so well?
 - Has the Panel's work focused on the right things?
 - What have we learnt that will help us with future CFS scrutiny?
- 1.3 To aid Panel Members, a summary of the year's work has been included at 3.0.

2.0 Overview

- 2.1 The purpose of the Panel is to provide ongoing challenge to performance in Child and Family Social Services and Poverty and Prevention to ensure that as the Service is undergoing major change, performance is maintained and that further improvements are made across all areas of the Service.
- 2.2 Possible lines of enquiry - To regularly review performance in Child and Family Services including asking questions about performance and improvement,

focusing on outcomes, provision and leadership. To look at relevant data, commissioning reviews and anything that impacts on Child and Family Services in Swansea.

2.3 The Panel has a core membership of 10 councillors.

2.4 There have been 7 Panel meetings and 1 Joint Social Services Panel Meeting, with 7 Conveners letters sent to Cabinet Members to date. Overall Councillor attendance at the Panel for the year has been 80% to end of February 2022.

3.0 Child and Family Services Work Programme 2021-22

Date	Items Discussed
25 May 2021	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Update on progress with CAMHS 2. Briefing on Youth Offending Service
22 June 2021	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Update on Regional Adoption Service 2. Initial feedback from CIW Assurance Visit 3. Draft Work Programme 2021/22
11 August 2021	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Performance Monitoring 2. CIW Assurance Visit Full Report 3. Outcome from Ty Nant CIW Inspection
21 September 2021	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Progress on Child and Family Improvement Programme 2. Corporate Parenting Board Update 3. Appreciative Inquiry Video (in closed session)
13 December 2021	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Performance Highlight Report and Emergency Staffing Plan 2. Ty Nant – Update on progress with action plan (in closed session)
25 January 2022	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Performance Highlight Report and Emergency Staffing Plan
14 February 2022 Joint Social Services Meeting	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Draft Budget Proposals for Adult Services / Child and Family Services 2. Update on Management of Covid-19 Pandemic and Staffing Issues
9 March 2022	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Briefing on IICSA Inquiry Report: Child Sexual Exploitation by Organised Networks (Presentation) 2. Youth Justice Inspection Report (Presentation) 3. Verbal Update on Emergency Staffing

4.0 The Future Work Programme

4.1 The future work programme will be discussed at the first Child and Family Services Scrutiny Performance Panel in the new municipal year.