



CITY AND COUNTY OF SWANSEA

Dinas A Sir Abertawe

Councillor Christine Richards
Cabinet Member, Services for Children
& Young People
Civic Centre
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**Overview &
Scrutiny**

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CFS/03

26 November 2014

Dear Councillor Richards

Child & Family Services Performance Panel, 24 November 2014

The Panel met on 24 November to consider the Child & Family Services performance report for October 2014.

I would like to thank the officers for presenting the report to the panel. Overall, the panel was pleased with the continued and sustained performance in most areas; the reduction in the numbers of looked after children, the reduced expenditure on placement costs, 100% allocation of child protection cases to qualified social workers, the reduction in the number of children in residential care. The panel continues to support the Safe LAC Reduction Strategy and the outcomes it is delivering.

1. The panel made the following comments, observations and concerns:

- The panel supported the department's piloting of new ways of working to reduce the number of changes to social workers that service users experienced.
- The panel noted that these ways of working may have had an impact on the number of Children in Need and Core Assessments, as numbers for each were down in October. The panel will keep a close eye on this over the coming months.
- The panel was interested to know whether targets around Initial and Core Assessments will be relaxed under the Social Services & Well Being Act and this is something we will return to.
- The panel was very interested in the impact of the regional Integrated Family Support Service and the department's review into its

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effectiveness. The panel requested that the review findings were reported to it when available.

- The panel highlighted the increase in the number of children on the CPR that were re-registrations and were assured that as the Signs of Safety work continues these numbers will decrease. The panel asked for additional information on re-registrations to be included in future performance reports and this is in section 2 below.
- The panel was pleased to see that LAC numbers were continuing to reduce and acknowledged the positive impact that the Signs of Safety model had had on the numbers of looked after children and on those who were able to return home with a signs of safety plan.
- The panel discussed whether feedback was obtained from families who had worked with the Signs of Safety model and we were pleased to learn that feedback was embedded within the model and that lessons were learned from the feedback.
- The panel was very concerned about the 9 cases of looked after children that were not allocated to a qualified social worker and officers agreed to provide more information on this.
- The levels of sickness within the department concerned the panel. We understood that there were a number of factors that had affected the figures recently. The panel will make sure that it looks again at sickness levels when the performance report is next reported.
- The panel welcomed the significant reduction on spend which was attributed to the Safe LAC Reduction Strategy and it looked forward to seeing further reductions in expenditure as the strategy continued.
- The panel acknowledged the concerns of officers around the PIs that measured the CIN review process. The panel learned that this wasn't measured on a monthly basis which made it difficult to know if improvements were happening. The panel would be interested to know how you plan to address this.

In summary, officers agreed to provide the following to the panel at a later date:

- Integrated Family Support Service – review findings.
- An explanation of the reasons why a small number of looked after children cases are unallocated.

2. The panel requested that the following be added to the monthly performance report:

- Re-referral trend analysis graph
- Reasons for re-registration of children on the CPR and the percentage rate of re-registration and actual numbers over the year

I hope you find this letter useful and informative. I look forward to your response.

Yours sincerely

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