



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/05

20 January 2015

Dear Councillor Richards

Child & Family Services Performance Panel, 19 January 2015

The Panel met on 19 January to consider the implications for the Council which have arisen from the independent review into child sexual exploitation (CSE). The panel also had the opportunity to examine the Western Bay Children's Safeguarding Board action plan which included details on the Council's current position. The panel would like to thank officers for attending and discussing this important and sensitive matter with us.

The panel was pleased to hear that the police did not have any evidence that the type of child sexual exploitation that was perpetrated by gangs in Rotherham was happening here in Swansea. However, there were still cases of CSE being reported in Swansea which necessitated 2 to 3 strategy meetings each week. Although the number of cases appeared low, the panel felt that any incidence of CSE was unacceptable but understood that identifying the victims of this crime was difficult.

Related to the identification of victims, the panel welcomed the CSE conference held last year. It agreed that this was a good start at raising awareness and training professionals to identify children and young people at risk of CSE or victims of CSE.

The panel welcomed and supported the development of Western Bay Safeguarding Board's training strategy for professionals to identify children and young people at risk of CSE or victims of CSE. The panel felt that this training should be available to councillors, especially as many are school governors.

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The panel also supported the development of the Western Bay Safeguarding Board's prevention strategy and felt that this was key to preventing future CSE.

The panel was keen to stress that it acknowledged the importance of confidentiality between children and young people and the professionals they come into contact with. It also stressed the need for sensitive communication between agencies on this particular issue to ensure that victims and potential victims were identified and not missed.

The panel was pleased to hear that the Western Bay Safeguarding Board received monthly reports on CSE from each of the authorities in the region and that the Board was working with authorities to achieve consistency of data across the region. The panel would like to request that data on CSE be added to the monthly performance reports so that we can monitor performance in this area.

The panel would like to know the number of looked after children in residential placements, including those out of county as this could increase the risk of CSE of young people. The panel was keen that all children identified as at risk, or as victims of CSE should remain, where possible in Swansea. If they were placed in out of county placements then the aim should be, where appropriate, to return them to Swansea as soon as possible.

The panel was very concerned about the victims of CSE who were unknown to the Council and other agencies and the availability of CSE services in the area. The panel understood that the Western Bay Safeguarding Board shared the panel's concerns on this. The panel was interested in the Crime Commissioner for Wales' report in respect of CSE services in Wales and would ask that it is forwarded onto the panel for information.

This was a wide ranging and interesting discussion. There were a larger than usual number of things that the panel agreed needed further follow-up and these are summarised below.

In summary the panel agreed the following:

- To request that CSE data be added to the Child & Family Services monthly performance report
- That the link for the SERAF assessment tool is sent to the panel
- Officers to provide the panel with the numbers of looked after children in residential placements, including out of county
- Officers provide data on looked after children who become sex workers
- That the Crime Commissioner for Wales' report in respect of CSE services in Wales is forwarded to the panel for information
- That representatives from the Western Bay Safeguarding Board be invited to the panel's next meeting
- The CSE Prevention Strategy be added to the panel's work plan

- That councillors should have access to the CSE training developed by the Western Bay Safeguarding Board

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

Yours sincerely

Paxton Hood-Williams

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