

Family Support Commissioning Review Focusing on Children with Additional Needs and Disabilities

Consultation and Engagement Plan

1 Purpose

To outline the plan for consulting with stakeholders and service users on the proposals set within the Family Support Commissioning Review – Child Disability Team Gateway 2 report.

2 Background

As a group, disabled children, and their families, are among the most vulnerable people in our community. The needs of these children are highly complex, and they, along with their parents and siblings, are at high risk of poor outcomes (social isolation, and economic disadvantage etc.). Secure, loving family units are key to achieving positive outcomes, but caring for a disabled child can be a stressful experience that places considerable pressure on a family. It is for this reason that we need to ensure we have an effective range of family support services.

With the commencement of the Social Services and Wellbeing Act 2014 in April 2016, the expectations upon the Council (and health board) regarding the manner it supports disabled children and their carers has changed considerably. Our support must now ensure it adheres to the following fundamental principles of the Act:-

Voice and control – putting the individual and their needs, at the centre of their care, and giving them a voice in, and control over reaching the outcomes that help them achieve well-being.

Prevention and early intervention – increasing preventative services within the community to minimise the escalation of critical need.

Well-being – supporting people to achieve their own well-being and measuring the success of care and support.

Co-production – encouraging individuals to become more involved in the design and delivery of services.

At the same time, the Council is facing significant reductions in its budgets during the coming years. Based on our budget assumptions and the experience of councils in England, the Council will have to undergo radical change in terms of the services it continues to deliver and how it delivers them. While this Review is not being asked to meet any saving targets, it must clarify whether it is possible to spend our money more efficiently and/or effectively. Moreover, should the Review achieve its stated outcomes then it will, in the medium and long-term, ease financial pressures by helping the authority to avoid costs attached with late intervention.

The Gateway 2 Report completed as part of this Review has identified a series of options for three service areas which will require consultation: (i) play and leisure opportunities; (ii) parent carer participation; and (iii) home care /

domiciliary care. It is now recommended that we undertake further consultation and engagement around the options and the principles behind them with key stakeholders and service users to inform the decision-making required to complete the Review.

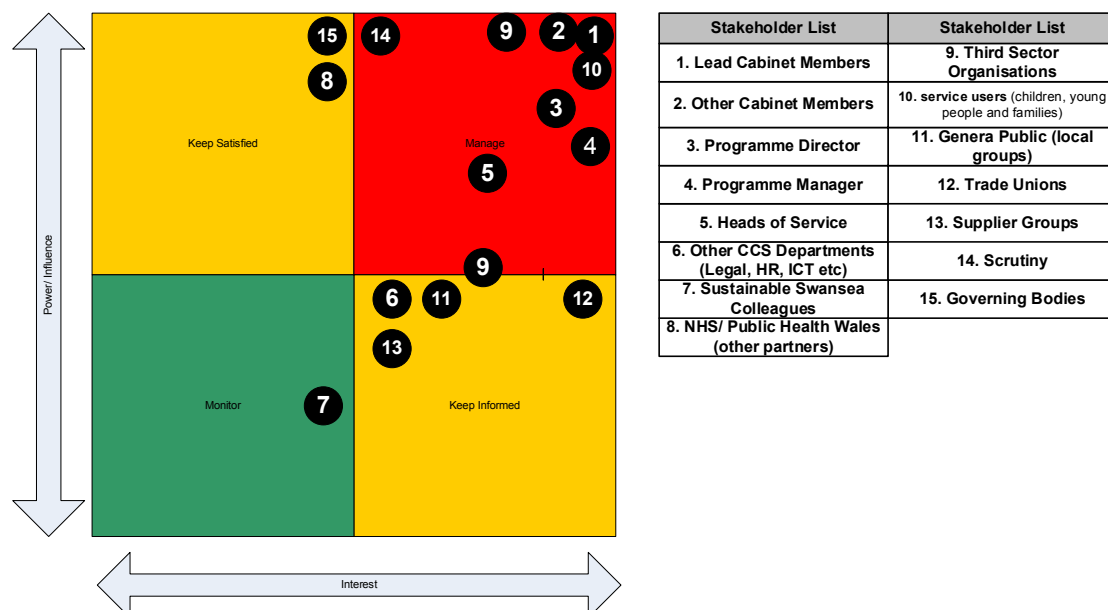
3 The Consultation Principles

We have followed the Government Consultation Principles 2016, Consultation should:

- **Be clear and concise** – using plain language and avoiding acronyms. Make questions easy to understand and easy to answer.
- **Have a purpose** – ensure you take consultation responses into consideration when taking plans forward and ask for consultation at a formative stage of the process.
- **Be informative** – give enough information to ensure that those consulted understand the issues and can give informed responses.
- **Last for a proportionate amount of time** – Take into account the nature and impact of the proposal. Ensure that there is the right balance to get the quality of responses.
- **Be targeted** – Consider the full range of people, business and voluntary bodies affected by the proposal and whether representative groups exist. Ensure they are made aware and can access it. Consider how to tailor consultation to the needs and preferences of particular groups that may not respond to traditional consultation methods.
- **Take account of groups being consulted** – Consult stakeholders in a way that suits them. Charities may need more time to respond than businesses, for example.
- **Be agreed before publication** – Seek collective agreement before publishing a written consultation.
- **Facilitate scrutiny** – Explain consultations that have been received and how these have informed the proposals going forward.

4 Stakeholder Engagement

At the beginning of the process a stakeholder engagement exercise identified the key groups of people who had a visited interest in this review. A copy of the findings is below.



During the course of the Review there have been various engagement exercises undertaken to capture the views of stakeholders. It is important that when we undertake this round of consultation, we provide feedback that the previous exercises have not been ignored and have influenced the options we are now putting forward for their consideration. Should we fail to acknowledge their past input then there is a risk that many will feel disenfranchised.

5 Approach to Engagement

Those individuals impacted by this Review the most are disabled children, young people and their families. Former and current service users have a particularly useful insight into how we can improve existing services. However, this is not a generic cohort of individuals, and they will all have vastly different experiences of using the services depending on the nature of their needs and disability. It is important to give this critical group of stakeholders an equal opportunity to take part in consultation to shape future delivery of services so that we can learn from their experiences.

Both corporately and within the Departments leading this Review (Child & Family Services and Poverty and Prevention), there is a strong commitment to listen and learn from the views of the service users especially around the needs of children and young people. As a Council we are committed to embedding the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC). Therein, Article 23 specifically states that a child or young person with a mental or physical disability should enjoy a full and decent life, in conditions which ensure dignity, promote self-reliance and facilitate their active participation in the community. We therefore recognise that the participation of children and young people is key to improving the quality of our services.

Some groups and individuals in Swansea have expert knowledge to contribute to certain subjects, whilst others have strong opinions on certain issues they would like to make known. There are already several different means for stakeholders to have a say in the way services are provided and developed and these will now be accessed to comment on the Review.

A wide range of methods can and will be used to engage with stakeholders. It is suggested that a combination of methods are utilised to provide a rounded and robust set of results that properly acknowledge the issues of accessibility for hard to reach groups and individual preference.

6 Stakeholders and engagement methods

The methods and groups of consultation have been outlined below:-

Stakeholders	Engagement methods
Cabinet and Councillors	Briefings, officer meetings and email updates
Senior Managers	CMT, DMT, officer meetings and email updates
Unions	Options Appraisal Workshops, Briefings and online survey*
All staff	Staffnet, CEO blog, team meetings, C&FS Staff Day and online survey
AMs, MPs	Email updates and online survey

ABMUHB and partners	Email updates, ABMU Children and Young People Emotional and Mental Health Planning Group and online surveys
Providers and third sector organisations	Email updates (and the sub-group for local providers), online survey and provider contract liaison meetings
General Public	Website, social media and online survey
Media	CCS communication and press releases (where required)

While the most important group of stakeholders are the children, young people and families who use the services in question, many are difficult to reach and require a considered and tailored approach.

Stakeholders	Engagement methods
Parent / Carers	<p>Online survey. A range of approaches will be taken to encourage take-up by as many parent / carers as possible:-</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Information on how to access the survey will be circulated via relevant social media groups. • Emails asking parent / carers to complete the survey will be sent to all those registered on the Child Disability Index. • Professionals and parent carer representatives on the Child Disability Strategy Group, play network and other pertinent groups will be asked to promote the survey amongst parents. • The Special Schools will be asked to circulate the information and reminders. • Social workers in the Child Disability Team will follow up with parent carers during visits to families.
	<p>Focus groups completed with parents whose children access the following short breaks or play activities: (i) the Diversity Group (this will also allow us to capture the views of siblings; many of whom will be impacted by the disability), (ii) Swansea Short Breaks, (iii) Interplay and/or Buddies groups; and (iv) Stepping Stones parent group (to capture the views in respect of younger children). Separate briefing notes will be required for these groups</p>
	<p>A focus group on behavioural support for parents attending the Facing the Challenge parents group. Separate briefing notes will be required for these groups.</p>
	<p>The SCVS Parent Carer Representative Group.</p>
	<p>Carer and Young Carer Event</p>
	<p>ASD Parent Carer Group</p>
Children and Young People	<p>Online survey.</p>
	<p>We will work in partnership with both Special schools and specialist teaching facilities in Swansea to ensure the views of children with a range of severe and profound disabilities are heard. This will be completed via small focus group discussions that are facilitated with the use of various communication tools</p>

	(Makaton, PECS, and sign language) and professionals skilled in their use to ensure views are accurately captured.
	We will run a focus group / workshops at some of the Special Teaching Facilities in Swansea.
	We will run focus groups with a range of children and young people at events for families accessing (i) play and leisure services and (ii) Interplay or Buddies groups . This will be conducted utilising appropriate consultation tools, e.g. Tops and Pants.

7 Conclusion and Issues to Consider

This is an important piece of work and there is a detailed programme to ensure engagement. Public consultation / engagement is expected to take place over a 12 week period.

The plan has been put together on the basis that Senior Managers in both Departments are committed to releasing staff resources to participate in the consultation where required.

The role of Scrutiny: Discussions will take place at an early stage with the Service Improvement and Budget Performance Scrutiny Panel to agree Scrutiny's role.

Responding to feedback: We will need to be clear at the outset how we will respond to stakeholder feedback. By using the channels mentioned above we will proactively respond to feedback gathered throughout the consultation period.