



City and County of Swansea

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

Committee Room 5 - Guildhall, Swansea

Monday, 26 February 2018 at 4.00 pm

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

Councillor(s)

C Anderson
Y V Jardine
A Pugh

Councillor(s)

M Durke
P K Jones

Councillor(s)

K M Griffiths
I E Mann

Officer(s)

Owen Davies
David Howes
Brij Madahar
Rachel Moxey
Julie Thomas

Performance Manager, Social Services
Chief Social Services Officer
Scrutiny Team Leader
Head of Poverty & Prevention
Head of Child & Family Services

Apologies for Absence

Councillor(s): S M Jones

1 Disclosure of Personal and Prejudicial Interests.

Disclosure of interests – Alyson Pugh.

2 Notes of previous meetings

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

3 Public Question Time

No questions were asked.

4 Prevention and Early Intervention

Rachel Moxey, Head of Prevention and Early Intervention went through the report highlighting the main issues.

Panel was interested in how this work impacts on Child and Family Services and supported improvement.

Work was highlighted to tackle poverty and focus on prevention which would reduce demand for specialist services. Examples were given of close working with Child

and Family Services, including joint working on Family Support Commissioning Review. Referred to specific activities to support children and families including young parents (Jigso), such as Flying Start and Team Around the Family in Schools, and support for young people not in education, employment or training.

Family Support Continuum was mentioned and different tiers of support depending on needs and plans to develop a performance framework around that which will help to measure impact of interventions.

A data set will be available in the future which could usefully supplement and support the Panel's monitoring of Child and Family Services. This would enable the Panel to see a bigger picture beyond just the activities that are under the control of Child and Family Services.

Chair acknowledged things were at an early stage and that the impact of this would be included as an item in next year's work programme.

Some of the other aspects discussed included for example:

- Support for children with mental health issues, and role of Special Education Needs Coordinators and CAMHS
- The importance of early intervention to prevent problems from escalating.
- Likely future funding levels to support early intervention and early help services – as a Welsh Government priority it was envisaged that such services would continue to be supported not cut nevertheless it would help if funding is committed on a more long-term basis than annually
- Leaving care services – support for children leaving residential care at 18 and transition to independent living or supported accommodation
- 'Evolve' services which cover all early help and support to young people and families between ages of 11 and 24, including NEETS.

Actions:

- Add 'Impact of Early Intervention and Prevention as it relates to Child and Family Services' to future work programme.

5 Performance Monitoring

Julie Thomas, Head of Child and Family Services, Owen Davies, Performance Manager and Dave Howes, Chief Social Services Officer attended to present the monthly performance report for January 2018 and third quarter performance for 2017/18 and to answer the Panel's questions.

Panel noted there has not been any significant change from the previous month in terms of overall numbers. It remained a generally healthy picture of performance.

Positives:

- Still concerns over timeliness of assessment completion, but pleased to see improvements around assessment activity – 100% children seen, and a high

number seen alone – showing that the Signs of Safety practice framework is embedded

- All children subject to a child protection plan and those children experiencing care are allocated to a qualified worker
- Improved performance in the reviewing service
- Numbers of Looked After Children decreasing.

Concerns:

- Rise in the number of children being registered under the category of emotional harm
- Number of children placed in residential care reduced but more are being placed further afield
- Unusual trend in supervision in some of the case managing teams that will require investigation
- High level of re-referrals
- Young People transitioning to adulthood - high number of young people presenting as homeless.

A handout was provided showing 5 year caseload trend. It is a challenge every year to reduce demand. It was recognised that figures had plateaued to a manageable number since 2014/15.

Another handout was provided showing Looked After Children rates per 10,000 5 year trend – comparison with 4 other authorities. It shows how Swansea has improved over last 5 years. Swansea is doing reasonably ok though numbers have plateaued. Engagement with early help services is key to sustainability of services for children and families and avoid people needing to come through the front door unless necessary.

Child and Family Services in Swansea are recognised as innovative, such as Signs of Safety work, work done to upskill the workforce and the vision for CFS and the model. There are innovative approaches in CFS such as employment of therapists, clinical psychologists within the service to better address needs and support children at home. Too early to say if new approaches work.

Panel only touched on the quarterly report due to time pressures. Discussed Youth Offending Service performance – although performing well some concern about 2 custodial sentences occurring. Also discussed placement of Looked After Children – noted there are more out of county than in but robust arrangements in place to track and avoid drift.

Actions:

Information on absenteeism rates for CFS staff and information on LAC population by age and age ranges of new children becoming looked after to be included in performance monitoring report for next meeting in April.

6 Work Programme Timetable 2017-18

Noted final meeting this municipal year on 30 April to discuss latest performance report and Panel's end of year review

7 Letters

Letters received and considered by the Panel. No issues arising.

The meeting ended at 5.52 pm