

Child and Family Services Scrutiny Performance Panel Update

1. Remit of the Panel

The overarching purpose of the panel is to: provide ongoing challenge to child and family social services performance 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. Key Activities

The Panel discussed and agreed their work plan for the year in April and is currently meeting on a bi-monthly basis. Since the last update the panel has looked at the following:

- a) Child and Family Services Complaints Annual Report 2016/17 (April)
- b) Performance Monitoring report (April)
- c) Impact of Prevention and Early Intervention on Child and Family Services (under 11 and over 11 services) (June)
- d) Update on Regional Adoption Service (August)
- e) Advocacy update (August)
- f) Bright Spots Survey (August)
- g) Update on Youth Offending Service (October)
- h) Performance Monitoring report (October)
- i) Feedback on Inspection Reports (October).

3. Achievements / Impact

We have sent 4 letters to the Cabinet Member for Health & Wellbeing since March in order to give our views, raise concerns and make recommendations, for example:

Positives:

- Complaints Annual Report 2016/17 - only 3 complaints went for investigation at stage 2 of the complaints process in 2016/17 and there were no findings of maladministration by the Ombudsman in relation to Swansea Children's Services in 2016/17
- Number of assessments carried out - number of assessments carried out within 10 days markedly increased during the month and is on target. Number of assessments carried out in 42 days improved but is still below target.
- Thematic Analysis of children becoming looked after - In 2017/18 there was an increase of 8.24% in numbers of Looked After Children in Swansea. The Department did not expect such a dramatic rise in such a short space of time and therefore a thematic review was undertaken to give a better understanding of some of the factors involved in increasing the numbers and to allow them to plan and deliver services more effectively. Some of the things mentioned in the report that will make a difference have already been implemented. Panel felt this was an excellent piece of work.
- Bright Spots Survey – this highlighted some bright spots for Swansea and where improvements need to be made and this will be included in the Corporate Parenting Board Plan.
- Care Inspectorate Wales Inspection reports – CIW undertook two inspections in July 2018, a full inspection of Children Services within the Authority and an inspection of Foster Swansea. Panel felt that overall these were excellent reports and they were very positive about the Service. However there is still room for improvement so it is good to see an improvement plan has been put in place. The Panel was also pleased to see the positive comments about scrutiny in the reports - 'There are robust scrutiny arrangements in place to hold senior officers of the local authority to

account. These are supported by comprehensive dashboard data and reporting arrangements, which facilitate analysis and challenge.’

Issues / Concerns:

- Life Journey Materials – quantity and quality of LJM is a concern but is expected to improve with implementation of the LJM Framework from April. Also concern that this is an additional task for social workers to do when they already have a very heavy workload.
- Child Protection – concern the percentage of children on the Child Protection Register that have been registered previously is high, although it has come down slightly. Most children are not coming back for the same reason but that there is a need to monitor this closely.
- Family Support Continuum – concern work on this is too high level and there is a need to talk to the people who are affected in order to work out the best way to try and solve issues.
- Advocacy – Dave Howes now chairs the national board. Panel concerned there is still an issue over costs and future funding. Panel offered to help, if they can, to progress the issue.

4. Future Work Programme

The programme for the remainder of this municipal year is as follows:

Meeting date	Item to be discussed
Meeting 4 18 Dec 2018	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Corporate Parenting Board update • Performance Monitoring
Additional Meeting 11 Feb 2019	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Draft budget proposals for Child and Family Services • Cabinet Members presentation and Q and A session
Meeting 5 25 Feb 2019	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Update on Impact of Prevention and Early Intervention on Child and Family Services • Safeguarding – Child Sexual Exploitation • Child Disability update
Meeting 6 29 April 2019	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Performance Monitoring • Child and Family Services Complaints Annual Report • End of Year Review

5. Action for the Scrutiny Programme Committee

None.