



Report of the Cabinet Members for Children Services

Scrutiny Programme Committee – 11th November 2019

Key Headlines: Children Services Portfolio

Purpose: This report outlines notable activities and achievements in terms of ensuring the delivery of key priorities within the Children Services portfolio. It describes some of the improvements made and the impact of these activities in terms of delivering key activities within the portfolio. The report also identifies objectives, key challenges and decisions which are anticipated for Cabinet over the next 12 months. It also sets out how the Well-being of Future Generations Act (Wales) is being used to achieve positive outcomes.

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For Information

1. The Portfolio for Children Services

1.1 The key responsibilities within the portfolio for Children Services are as follows;

- Best Start in Life (EK),
- Flying Start (EK),
- Families First (EK),
- Play Opportunities (EK),
- CAMHS (Child and Adolescent Mental Health) (EK & SP),
- Children & Young People Board (EW & SP),
- Continuum of Care (SP),
- Corporate Parenting (EK & SP),
- Regional Adoption Service (EK),

- Safe Looking After Children (LAC) Reduction Strategy (EK & SP),
 - Safeguarding (EK & SP),
 - Apprenticeships Support (SP),
 - NEETS (Not in Employment, Education or Training) (SP),
 - Readiness for work (support) (SP),
 - Opportunities for Young People (SP),
 - Promoting Youth Inclusion & Youth Citizenships (SP),
 - UNCRC (SP)
 - Youth Services (SP),
 - Youth Offending Service (Y.O.S.) (SP),
- 1.2 In addition, the Portfolio also includes a joint responsibility with all other Cabinet Members for delivering cross cutting priorities related to Poverty Reduction and Sustainable Swansea.
- 1.3 Responsibility for Children Services is shared between Councillor Elliot King (EK) who leads on Early Years services and Councillor Sam Pritchard (SP) who leads on Young People services.
- 1.4 The Cabinet vote rotates every three months. During the months when one does not hold the vote, they act as a non-executive member in constituted meetings but maintain responsibility for the areas on which they lead.
- 1.5 This report highlights the progress made and future areas of focus in relation to key priorities within the portfolio including; the Early Years strategy, the Best Start Campaign in Life, Flying Start, Families First Play Opportunities, Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services, Corporate Parenting, Safe Looking After Children (LAC) Reduction Strategy, Safeguarding, Apprenticeship Support, Promoting Youth Inclusion and Youth Citizenship, Youth Services and the Youth Offending Service. The report also highlights other notable areas of achievement and focus for the longer term.

2 Best Start in Life Campaign

- 2.1 The Council have continued to develop its Early Years strategy through the Best Start Campaign, the Flying Start Programme, Families First the Foundation Phase, Jig-so and a range of other activities to support children, parents and their families. Working in partnership with Health and other key partners, the Council's strategy has focused on targeted interventions for children and families living in relatively high areas of deprivation, supporting children with emerging additional needs and universal provision for children and their families across Swansea.

- 2.2 During 2018-19, the Best Start Campaign has continued with further development through social media, posters and events with an estimated coverage of over 300,000 people during this year. Several Best Start engagement events have been undertaken, promoting the key messages of Best Start. The second 'Buggy Push' was held on October 28th 2019 promoting the messages across the area. The social media campaign has continued with regular posts and links to national campaigns. The "Family That Learned to Listen" story book was promoted and utilised with Foster Carers and formed part of the focus at the Primary School Big Conversation in October 2019.
- 2.3 The roll out of the integrated Jig-so project has also continued to support vulnerable young families from conception and during the child's early years. The project aims to fill the gaps between statutory services across sectors with a team of midwives, community nursery nurses, family facilitators and language development workers offering support to all young parents up to 18 yrs and vulnerable parents aged 19-24 yrs. The Penderi GP cluster model expanded into a further two areas during 2018/2019 and was nominated as a finalist in the ACADEMI Wales Awards 2019 for Innovation.

3 Flying Start

- 3.1 The Welsh Government's grant funded Flying Start programme is based on research evidence drawn from a range of interventions across the UK and internationally. It provides support for early years (0-3yrs) and aims to establish positive behaviours in children and families, through healthy lifestyles, positive parenting, child development and raising aspirations. The programme is targeted at families living in areas of deprivation. The programme provides an enhanced health visiting entitlement, speech and language provision parenting programmes and part time childcare
- 3.2 During 2018-19, almost 3,000 children ($n=2,925$) children participated in the Flying Start programme in Swansea. The average childcare attendance for the Flying Start programme was 79%. The Flying Start programme continued to operate with the Foundation Phase Profile (FPP) adapted for pre-school children and the Wellcomm Speech and language tool. The results show that 29% of children reached or exceeded their speech and language milestones on childcare entry and 61% of children reached or exceeded their speech and language milestones on childcare exit. Just over 40% of children achieved 'Gold' in Personal & Social Development on childcare entry and 72% of children achieved 'Gold' in Personal & Social Development on childcare exit.

- 3.3 During 2018-19, 143 families attended a Flying Start Parenting group and 370 people attended a drop in session. Parent Eiklan was delivered for the first time in Birchgrove & Clase childcare settings. The uptake and feedback was very positive and it is now being offered in other settings. The annual "Get Fit Week" was held in July 2019 which involved Flying Start childcare settings engaging children and families in activities that promoted physical activity and well-being. More than 30 organisations attended the 10th anniversary of the Teddy bears picnic this year, with 355 families and a total of 750 people attending - representing an increase of about 200 people from the previous year.

4. Families First

- 4.1 The Families First programme is one of 7 grant programmes now combined into the Children and Communities Grant through the Welsh Government flexible funding programme. The Families First programme continues to provide a holistic programme of activity and support and is available to help address the support needs of the most vulnerable children and families in communities, through a range of early intervention, prevention and support. During 2018/19, the Families First programme supported 10,780 children, parents and families in Swansea with a range of targeted interventions aiming to prevent emerging needs from escalating and providing support for more complex needs. Swansea Families First led on the development of a national cost avoidance tool. This has now been adopted by Welsh Government and included in the Families First guidance. It is being utilised by all 22 local authorities in Wales.
- 4.2 Future priorities for the Families First programme include plans to integrate other funding streams now within the Children and Communities Grant and to take advantage of more joined up working, building upon the good practise already established in terms of good commissioning and efficiency savings. Commissioning reviews for areas funding via the Children and Communities Grant will be completed within the next 12 months, aiming to give assurance and provide an understanding on how these activities contribute to the de-escalation of need and help manage demand for services

5. Play Opportunities

- 5.1 The Child & Families (Wales) Measure 2010 placed a statutory duty on Local Authorities to 'secure sufficient play'. Part of the requirements is to undertake a Play Sufficiency Assessment of the local area and to develop an action plan ever 3 years. The third Play Sufficiency Assessment for Swansea was completed in March 2019. The Assessment involved ranking Swansea's play provision across 9 "matters" or areas in relation to meeting diverse needs, access to play, space, infrastructure, design, engagement and impact on key Council policies. The Assessment also incorporated the views of over 600

children and young people, parent/carers, professionals and the general public, as well as several stakeholder working groups representing people with protected characteristics. Out of 93 indicators, the Assessment showed that 51 indicators were fully met, 41 indicators were partially met and 1 area was unmet, representing a series of improvements compared to the previous Play Assessment in 2016.

- 5.2 Work is ongoing in relation to the implementation of Play Sufficiency actions and updating Swansea's Play Strategy Implementation Plan 2019-22. The Play Access Group continued to meet bi-monthly throughout 2018/19 with a cross-cutting cohort of parent/carers and representative organisations, feeding into the overall Play Network. The Play Access Group ensured issues affecting access to play for those with disabilities and their families was fed into Swansea's Play Sufficiency Assessment 2019.

6 CAMHS (Child and Adolescent Mental Health)

- 6.1 The Council is working in partnership with Health and other partners to review the effectiveness of Emotional Health and Well Being Services for Children and Young People in Swansea. The Children and Young People's Emotional and Mental Health Planning Group (led by Health) are overseeing developments and have agreed key areas of joint work and a strategic action plan. This group is also responsible for the ongoing joint scrutiny of the performance of Regional CAMHS (Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services).
- 6.2 The Regional CAMHS Prevention and Wellbeing Sub Group (led by Health) has been established to review and reconfigure support. The group have agreed to align a new Primary CAMHS Liaison Role to sit within Swansea's IIAA (Integrated Information, Advice and Assistance) Team within Child and Family Services, align a new Primary CAMHS School's Liaison Role to work across Primary and Secondary schools in Swansea and align 3 new Emotional Health and Wellbeing Workers (primary age focussed) and 5 new Emotional Health and Wellbeing Workers (secondary age focussed) to sit within the proposed Early Help Hub Structure in Child and Family Services.
- 6.3 A Regional CAMHS Service Model Task and Finish Group (led by Health) has also been established to develop a new hub and spoke model of delivery. Although the location for the main hub and single point of entry into the service will be located in the Neath Port Talbot Hospital, the group are responsible for ensuring that there is an effective 'spoke' for Swansea and there is access to face to face services in Swansea. The group are leading on the transfer of existing provision from the Cefn Coed site to a new 'spoke' site on the Kingsway.

- 6.4 A Swansea focused Emotional and Psychological Wellbeing Group is responsible for scrutinising the Children and Young People's Counselling Service contract and performance. The group are also undertaking a mapping exercise of services, reviewing pathways, identifying gaps in provision and contributing to the commissioning of wider services.

7. Corporate Parenting

- 7.1 Work is ongoing in relation to Corporate Parenting to ensure that all Councillors and Officers of the Council, as corporate parents, understand their collective responsibility to ensure that looked after children and care leavers can have the outcomes every good parent would want for their children. This means ensuring they are safe and providing opportunities to help them achieve their potential. Corporate parents have responsibility for the child's education, training and employment, health, welfare, leisure, housing and cultural opportunities.
- 7.2 Swansea's Corporate Parenting Forum is driving the Council's improvement programme to achieve these outcomes. All forum members have direct contact with the children and young people in order to understand their views, and what matters most to them, and support events involving looked after children.

8 Safe Looking After Children (LAC) Reduction Strategy

- 8.1 Swansea's Child & Family Services supported 3035 children during 2018-19 (3428, last year), and 1841 families (2085, last year). The number of children who are looked after to ensure their safety and well-being was 554 at the end of 2018-19. The Council's approach to Safe LAC reduction became the subject of a review by both Care Inspectorate Wales and the Ministerial Advisory Group for Looked After Children and the Council received positive feedback on the proactive approaches it could demonstrate. Child and Family Services developed an Edge of Care team this year as part of an Improvement Programme which aims to ensure that vulnerable children are safeguarded, live within permanent, stable, secure and loving families (cared for by their birth family and within their community of origin whenever possible).

9 Safeguarding

- 9.1 The Council is continuing to proactively safeguard and protect vulnerable people from harm, abuse and neglect. Safeguarding is 'everyone's business', which is supported by a cross-Council Corporate Safeguarding Group. Work is underway to implement a new Corporate Safeguarding policy which aims to address a wider range of issues of potential concerns, such as child sexual exploitation, financial abuse, modern slavery, County Lines, hate crimes, bullying in schools

and, through a local PREVENT strategy, radicalisation and possible terrorist related activities. The Council is taking steps with partner organisations to tackle the full range of new and emerging concerns ie 'Contextual Safeguarding.' Following a successful bid, the Council has become the first in Wales to develop Contextual Safeguarding with a three year project involving the University of Bedfordshire. This will help Swansea address some of the wider, social issues such as County Lines, Child Sexual Exploitation and School Exclusions and Bullying.

- 9.2 The Council's entire workforce, Councillors, Officers of the Council, partners, and those working on behalf of the Council are required to complete the newly updated Safeguarding training. This promotes awareness of the issues to look for and a duty to report concerns. During 2018-19, all Councillors received safeguarding training. With the success of the focus on promoting mandatory safeguarding training for all staff, the majority of staff have now undertaken a proportionate level of mandatory safeguarding. The Council also supports a range of campaigns and well attended events, in particular during National Safeguarding Week to raise awareness across staff and partners of issues such as child sexual exploitation, County Lines, and Modern Slavery.

10. Apprenticeships Support

- 10.1 During 2018-19 the Council continued to implement its Apprenticeship Strategy aiming to help raise vocational aspirational and skills levels in the work place. Over 200 young people have benefited from the Council's apprenticeship programme in Corporate Building Services over the last ten years, learning trades such as carpentry, plastering, bricklaying, plumbing and electrics. The Council's Corporate Building services employed 15 apprentices in September 2019. Over 800 training weeks were provided via Welsh Housing Quality Standard (WHQS) contracts, 27 people were employed from local communities and the building trade apprentices were engaged on WHQS work.
- 10.2 Work is also under way to increase apprenticeship opportunities in other areas of the Council's work. The Council has recently signed an agreement with Gower College to develop a wider apprenticeship strategy aiming to offer other opportunities in Council departments such as IT, Waste, Highways, Economic Regeneration and Parks. The Council have also developed a Creative Apprenticeship programme for digital marketing and technical work with Gower College to support the Grand Theatre's new digital ambitions. The Council are also part of a regional collaboration with Creative & Cultural Skills offering work placements in Heritage Skills for young people who are not in employment, education or training (NEETs), hosted at our Galleries and Museums; the first cohort began their placement in September 2018.

11. NEETS (Not in Education, Employment or Training) and Readiness for Work

- 11.1 During 2018-19 work with NEET (Not in Education, Employment or Training) has continued to take place under the Council's Youth Progression & Engagement Plan. Good progress has been made with the implementation of Swansea's Keeping in Touch Strategy and the Welsh Government's Engagement and Progression Framework. Young people who are most at risk of becoming NEET (not in employment, education or training) are identified and provided with the personal support they require to remain engaged with education, employment and training. Regular meetings take place between, schools, careers, Evolve and partner organisations to regularly track those at risk during year 11.
- 11.2 The Council and its partners have made good progress in term of reducing the number of young people who are NEET since 2008, until fairly recently. The proportion of Year 11 school leavers who were NEET in Swansea fell from 5.8% in 2008 to 2.2% in 2017. However, the numbers have remained fairly static since and have not decreased any further due to the complex needs of a core group of NEETs who are either 'not available' or 'not ready' to enter employment or training and require a personalised package of support.
- 11.3 Support for young people who are already NEET, or at the greatest risk of becoming NEET, has been provided by Cynnydd (a regional project for young people aged 11-24 yrs at greatest risk of becoming NEET), the Council's Education Other Than At School (EOTAS) Strategy, Cam Nesa (a regional engagement, learning and training programme for young people aged 16-24 yrs), Communities for Work and Swansea Working. Swansea's allocation of Cam Nesa funding has supported the expansion of the recently established Evolve lead work team within our Young People Services. This team has worked intensively with young people and their families to develop individual well-being and NEET focussed plans, supporting them to overcome complex barriers that can prevent their progress.
- 11.4 Plans are currently being finalised to provide specific support to our Looked After Children to help them find and secure work under the umbrella of Swansea Working – an emerging programme that aligns employment support to ensure the right support is in place at the right time. This includes ring-fenced opportunities through our apprenticeships programme.

12. Promoting Youth Inclusion & Youth Citzenships and the United Nations Conventions on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC)

12.1 Work is ongoing to ensure that Children and Young People have the opportunity to be involved in decisions which affect them. The Council adopted the United Nations Conventions on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC) in 2014. This means the Council must perform all its functions in a manner that is consistent with the interests of local children. Children and young people must be provided with meaningful opportunities to influence decisions concerning their lives (Art. 12). The UNCRC teaches young citizens to respect rights, understand responsibilities and be globally aware and responsible citizens.

12.2 During 2018-19, 9 Big Conversations took place involving 476 Children and Young people. This year, the age range of participants in the Big Conversations was extended from 11-18 yrs to 50yr +, including older people at Intergenerational Forums. In September 2019, the Council undertook a contract with UNICEF UK that allows schools to receive assessments of their Rights Respecting Schools (RRS) status, at Silver and Gold level, for free at point of contact for schools. Several Head Teachers and Officers are trained to undertake assessments, saving schools on average £450.00 per assessment.

12.3 Future plans include the agreement and implementation of the Rights Respecting Schools Assessment RRSA model and the development of support for schools, the publication of the Children and Young People's Rights Scheme Annual Report 2018/19 and the 5th Anniversary of Swansea's Children's Rights Scheme to take place on November 19th 2019.

12.4 The Council has also co-produced a new Participation and Co-production Strategy for Vulnerable Children and Young People April 2018 – March 2021. This Strategy describes how Child and Family Services will support the UNCRC and Article 12. Plans include implementing the 'This Is Me' framework, which is being rolled out across Wales and supporting 'Supper Club' an existing 16+ participation group.

13. Youth Offending Service (Y.O.S.)

13.1 In April 2019, Swansea Youth Justice Service (SYJS) was formed as a result of the disaggregation of Western Bay Youth Justice Service (WBYJS) in March 2019 as a result of concerns relating to the effectiveness of the Regional Service. The Council formed its own Youth Justice Service within Child and Family services. Swansea Youth Justice Service is currently focused on implementing its strategic improvement plan. This plan seeks to address and rectify the actions and recommendations resulting from Western Bay's most recent inspection and the service focuses on improving the quality of

service to this very vulnerable group of young people. The focus is concentrating on developing robust assessments, quality assurance processes and reviewing its interventions to ensure the aims and objectives of the service are met and good outcomes are achieved with young people. The plan also focuses on developing good practice in all areas of service delivery from early intervention, prevention work and diversion through to the bureau, resettlement and reintegration.

- 13.2 Swansea's Annual Youth Justice Plan for 2019/20 was approved by the Youth Justice board and will be ratified at the next Youth Justice Management board on the 7th November 2019.

14. Youth Services

- 14.1 Evolve is Swansea Council's young people's service, offering a range of services for young people, and their families. This includes support from a lead worker, in times of difficulty, specialist support in areas such as sexual health, domestic abuse, risk taking behaviour, safety online and opportunities for young people that require additional support to get in, and stay in, employment, education or training. The services contributes to the reduction in numbers of young people and families identified as Child in Need, on Child Protection Register or Looked After.

15. The Well-being of Future Generations Act

- 15.1 The sustainable development principle's five ways of working underpin how the portfolio operates. In terms of prevention, support in the early years of a child's life can help support families and mitigate the effects of deprivation on future life chances and prospects. Early Years provision at the earliest possible stage in a child's life can help prevent the escalation of need into more costly statutory services, support children to achieve at school and break the cycle of poor future outcomes.
- 15.2 In terms of involvement, work in relation to the UNCRC and the participation of Children and Young People in decisions which affect them are embedded in Council Policy. The Big Conversation and Pupil Voice, in addition to other participation mechanisms built into services for Children and Young People ensure that they have a voice. The involvement of vulnerable Children and Young People Services seeks to promote a wider range of participation and involvement opportunities for Looked After Children, which is supported by Swansea's Corporate Parenting Board.

- 15.3 In terms of long term planning, the Best Start Campaign, Flying Start and Families First programme are based on the premise of early intervention and support aiming to improve long term outcomes for children and their families. The Council's approach to working with young people who are not in education, employment or training (NEET) also have a long term focus in terms of supporting young people access and remain in education, training or employment.
- 15.4 In terms of integration, close links have been developed between Flying Start, Education and Health in order to ensure children's readiness for school and to prevent educational disadvantage in later school years. Support for Young People through Evolve (the Youth Service) and Schools has become more integrated through collaborative working and the development of the IIA service in Child and Family Services.
- 15.5 Collaboration underpins the Council's strategy to work with children in their early years and support for young people. Work with partners such as Health and other key stakeholders is an integral part of the support offered to children, young people and their families.

16. Legal Implications

- 16.1. There are no legal implications.

17. Financial Implications

- 17.1 There are no specific financial considerations arising through this report. Any future decisions around the funding of the services covered in this report will be considered in accordance with the budget priorities of the Council and its budgetary approval processes.