



City and County of Swansea

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

Multi-Location Meeting - Gloucester Room, Guildhall / MS

Teams

Tuesday, 5 December 2023 at 4.30 pm

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

Councillor(s)

E T Kirchner
S Joy

Councillor(s)

M S Tribe

Councillor(s)

V A Holland

Other Attendees

Louise Gibbard
Hayley Gwilliam

Cabinet Member for Care Services
Cabinet Member for Community

Officer(s)

Julie Davies
Liz Jordan
Linzi Margetson
Kelli Richards
Kathryn Sillman

Head of Child & Family Services
Scrutiny Officer
Principal Officer Safeguarding, Quality & Performance
Principal Officer Early Help and Single Point of Contact
Peripatetic Manager

Apologies for Absence

Councillor(s): K M Griffiths, S M Jones and W G Lewis

Other Attendees: Cllr A Anthony

1 Disclosure of Personal and Prejudicial Interests

No disclosures of interest were received.

2 Prohibition of Whipped Votes and Declaration of Party Whips

No declarations were made.

3 Minutes of Previous Meeting(s)

Panel agreed the Minutes of the meeting on 24 October 2023 as an accurate record of the meeting.

4 Public Question Time

No questions were received.

5 Performance Monitoring (including session on qualitative auditing)

Julie Davies, Head of Child and Family Services gave an overview of performance for September 2023. Kathryn Sillman, Peripatetic Manager briefed the Panel on how qualitative auditing works and areas being focussed on currently within the Directorate.

Discussion Points:

- Panel discussed how qualitative auditing is basically looking at the processes and techniques being used to make sure they are working in the best way possible. Informed the Directorate looks at work across the board and the Academy is part of this.
- Panel feels satisfied from the performance report that things looked reasonably settled.
- Panel aware Welsh Government is planning to move away from the current computer system.

Actions:

- Panel to receive further information on new computer system.

6 Update on Child and Family Improvement Programme

Julie Davies, Head of Child and Family Services and Linzi Margetson, Principal Officer Safeguarding, Quality and Performance attended for this item and answered the Panel's questions.

Discussion Points:

- In relation to Residential Care, Panel believes the Service is still struggling to find appropriate properties to purchase and modify and queried current capacity and if the Council is still having to send children out of county to get appropriate accommodation. Informed the Service is seeing an increase in numbers of children in residential care, partly linked to insufficient foster care placements available. Currently have four in-house beds, looking to increase to 15 over next three years.
- Panel asked Cabinet Members / officers to take back to staff its thoughts and gratitude for the work they have done - very pleased with performance within the Department and look forward to it continuing for the next 12 months and thereafter.
- Panel requested an update on the current position with recruitment and agency staffing. Informed recruitment of social workers continues to be a challenge. The Service has continued to expand the alternatively qualified workforce. There are currently five agency social workers across the Service, which is low compared to other Local Authorities. Department successful recruiting into the Council's social work academy with 11 newly qualified social workers currently.

7 Update on 'Contextual Missing Exploited & Trafficked (CMET)'

Kelli Richards, Principal Officer attended to brief the Panel including an overview of the CMET Team, a summary of recent developments and progress and examples of activity undertaken.

Discussion Points:

- Panel very impressed with the Team's commitment and hard work.
- Heard from Cabinet Members how proud they are that the Team was highly commended in Wales Safer Communities Awards 2023 for its progressive and innovative work.
- Panel queried how often the 'pop up' youth club in Mayhill is held and what happens the rest of the time. Heard Mayhill is held once a week but there are five Local Authority youth clubs altogether, all held on different nights in different areas. There are also a few independent youth clubs running in the area.

8 Work Plan 2023-24

Panel considered the work plan and noted items for the next meeting.

The meeting ended at 5.35 pm