



**To/
Councillor Rob Stewart
Chair of Swansea Public Services
Board**

*Please ask for:
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Overview & Scrutiny

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20th April 2018

BY EMAIL

Summary: This letter is from the Public Services Board Performance Panel meeting which took place on 29th March 2018. This letter relates to the Scrutiny of the Early Years Work Stream.

Dear Councillor Stewart,

We are grateful to Sian Bingham and Gary Mahoney for coming to deliver information on the Early Years Work Stream.

We heard that an audit of need informed the Early Years Strategy and this identified that there was a lack of services for those who were pregnant, and for families with children up to the age of 3.

We heard about the work being undertaken in relation to Early Years. We were impressed by the two projects which have been set up;

1. Jig-so
2. Penderi Primary Care Early Years Pilot Project

We were particularly impressed by the health outcomes in the Jig-so project – the cessation of smoking and the uptake in breastfeeding.

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The Panel were encouraged to hear that the Penderi Primary Early Years Pilot Project has received funding for another year.

We welcomed the news that many of the service users accessing this service were both highly likely to re-engage with the project and less likely to see the GP. This implies that people are comfortable with the staff and getting valuable and worthwhile support from the project which is alleviating their need to see their GP.

This benefits both the health service and the service user and is a good example of joined up working in line with the aims of the Public Services Board.

We were very pleased to hear that these projects aim to get to the root of problems and this includes a look at mental health issues. We feel that this is vital to making lasting differences and that appropriate resources should be allocated to mental health support for all ages.

Following on from this, the Panel does have concerns that the Public Services Board is not putting the resources which are required into mental health services in general. This relates both to the identification of issues and treatments thereof. We feel there is substantial under resourcing in this area.

Can you give your views on this?

It was good to hear that the Team Around the Family in Schools project won a Guardian Public Service award. Again it highlights how early intervention is crucial for a child's wellbeing and that the joined up and multi-agency approach is a successful one.

It is encouraging that the service is aiming to enhance the core pathway from midwives, to health visitors to schools so issues can be identified early and accurately by the right teams of people. We hope that if there are enough targeted resources in this pathway then the people who need extra support won't fall through the gaps in existing services and get the help they need. Again this is in line with the ethos of the Wellbeing and Future Generations Act and should be built upon.

We would like to see more multiagency projects around Swansea with the same approaches of prevention and early intervention. The successful engagement of parents shows it is needed and wanted. Being able to access a variety of resources such as mental health support, midwives, speech therapy etc is a much more efficient and responsive way of supporting people, especially parents with multiple or complex needs.

The Panel recognises that although the work being undertaken is very positive, there is still a substantial amount of work which needs to be done to make a dent in the demand. There needs to be continued resources and targeted effort into prevention and early intervention.

We are pleased that there are successes to build on, but we should not become complacent, the issues are vast and there is still much to do.

I would be grateful if you could reply to this letter by 11th May 2018

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read 'Mary Jones', written in a cursive style.

Councillor Mary Jones

Convener, Public Services Board Scrutiny Performance Panel

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