



To:
Councillor Elliott King, Cabinet Member for
Children's Services (Early Years) /
Councillor Will Evans, Cabinet Member for
Children's Services (Young People)

Please ask for:
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Date
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19 March 2019

Summary: This is a letter from the Child & Family Services Scrutiny Performance Panel to the Cabinet Members for Children's Services following the meeting of the Panel on 25 February 2019. It covers impact of Prevention and Early Intervention, Safeguarding: Child Sexual Exploitation and update on Child Disability.

Dear Cllr King and Cllr Evans,

The Panel met on 25 February and received an update on the impact of Prevention and Early Intervention on Child and Family Services, was briefed on Safeguarding: Child Sexual Exploitation and received an update on the Child Disability service area.

We would like to thank Julie Thomas, Rachel Moxey, Gavin Evans and Chris Francis for attending to discuss the reports and answer our questions. We appreciate their engagement and input.

We are writing to you to reflect on what we learnt from the discussion, share the views of the Panel, and, where necessary, raise any issues or recommendations for your consideration and response. The main issues discussed are summarised below:

Update on Impact of Prevention and Early Intervention on Child and Family Services

Rachel Moxey and Gavin Evans updated us on progress since they attended the Panel meeting in June 2018.

We were very interested to hear that, on behalf of Welsh Government, Wavehill Consultancy have built a cost avoidance tool, in partnership with all 22 Local Authorities in Wales, which the Department is using to estimate cost avoidance to the

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Authority of early intervention and prevention. We queried whether more needs to be invested into early intervention to further increase the amount of cost avoidance for CFS. We were informed that it is too early in the IAA process to identify if resource needs to shift.

The Panel offered a standing invitation to representatives of Poverty and Prevention to come back to the Panel when they have something to evidence it is making a difference. We hope that they will take up this offer.

We heard that the Department needs to tap into the right level of resource at the right time and that integration with qualified social workers is important. We were informed of the saying, 'The right person at the right time for the right service.'

Safeguarding: Child Sexual Exploitation (is there a problem in Swansea? What is happening to prevent it?)

This item was referred to the CFS Panel from the Scrutiny Programme Committee.

Julie Thomas briefed the Panel on this issue and informed us that vulnerable children are most at risk. We heard that less Child Sexual Exploitation (CSE) cases have been identified in the last 12 months. However there has been an increase in recent months.

We also heard that young people at risk of CSE have been identified across all areas of Swansea and that most CSE cases have been girls.

We were informed that some of the young people have been Looked After Children placed in Swansea by other authorities (Cardiff, Wiltshire, Rhondda Cynon Taff).

We were pleased to hear that CSE is a key priority area for the Local Safeguarding Board this year.

We heard that the Authority is taking a contextual safeguarding approach going forward and that as well as CSE, criminal exploitation is also included in contextual safeguarding.

We were informed that the Authority has successfully bid for a grant following the successful piloting of this approach in Hackney and was one of only 3 sites in the UK selected and the only one in Wales. We were very pleased to hear this news.

Child Disability Update

Chris Francis provided us with an overview of the Child Disability Service area and updated on recent developments.

We heard that when the Parent Carer Forum is established, it will be used to obtain views on using a system like direct payments for support. We also heard that Flexi home support service is an alternative to direct payments and that it is up to parents which they choose for their child's care package.

We were informed that an initial meeting has been held to discuss the Local Offer, that some parents/carers attended and that there was discussion about third sector organisations bidding for Welsh Government monies to get a website up and running.

We heard that a great deal of time has gone into improving services for child disability in last few months but that it takes time as there is a need to consult with parents and carers throughout the process.

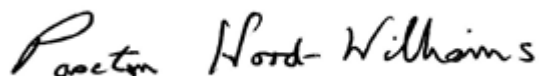
We raised the issue that vocal parents often take the lead in group meetings and it is difficult to get the views of the quiet ones. We were pleased to hear that training is now being provided and a new forum established to try and move away from this.

We heard that a plan is now in place which gives an opportunity to engage more with third sector.

Your Response

We hope you find this letter useful and informative. We would welcome your views and comments on any of the issues raised but please note that in this instance, a formal response is not required.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Paxton Hood-Williams". The signature is written in a cursive, slightly slanted style.

PAXTON HOOD-WILLIAMS
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