

**Councillor Chris Holley**  
**Convener – Service Improvement and**  
**Finance Scrutiny Performance Panel**

**BY EMAIL**

*Please ask for:* Councillor Andrew Stevens  
*Direct Line:* 01792 63 7428  
*E-Mail:* [cllr.andrew.stevens@swansea.gov.uk](mailto:cllr.andrew.stevens@swansea.gov.uk)  
*Our Ref:* AS/KH  
*Your Ref:*  
*Date:* 23 October 2020

Dear Councillor Holley

Thank you for your letter dated 2<sup>nd</sup> October 2020

In answer to your questions, I respond as follows.

**Q1. AS13a –Number of carers (aged 18+) who received a carer's assessment in their own right during the financial year. The Panel raised concerns over the quality of such services after the initial assessment. Can you please provide further information on this point?**

Adult Services provides a range of internal and external services to Carers in Swansea. These services include help provided directly to people who are cared for in order to indirectly help Carers. These include;

- Domiciliary care services to help provide care to people in their own homes. These services can significantly reduce the burden on people with caring responsibilities.
- Domiciliary care respite services (sitting at home services). These services do not provide regular substitute personal care, but are designed to enable Carers to take a break as and when needed.
- Residential respite services at internal and externally commissioned care homes which offer temporary residential care for the cared for to enable Carers to receive a break.
- Day Centres and other day opportunities for the cared for to relieve pressure on Carers.
- Repair and adaptation services which can offer changes and improvements to the cared for, or Carers home to make it more suitable.
- Counselling and other therapeutic services aimed at relieving stress and improving wellbeing.

- Financial advice services, including welfare benefits advice to ensure Carers are receiving their full entitlements and able to make best use of potential resources.
- Young Carers Support via a contract with YMCA.
- Assistive technology services, for example;
  - **Telecare**  
Telecare alarm systems allow the person being cared for to remain somewhat independent and give peace of mind to the carer when they cannot be around. Telecare can allow the Carer to go out, reassured in the knowledge that if the person they care for needs assistance that they will be informed.
  - **CareAssist**  
The CareAssist is a portable telecare alarm that can receive telecare alerts and display not only the type of sensor activated but also either the location of the sensor or the name of the person the sensor has been assigned to. This means that onsite Carers can be quickly made aware of any incidents allowing them to provide a high level of care whilst maximising their efficiency.
  - **Just Checking**  
Just Checking is an activity monitoring system that helps people stay independent in their own home. *Just Checking* provides activity monitoring services that help care professionals complete objective, evidence based assessments. The system provides a better understanding of when support is needed puts the focus on maximising independence and autonomy without compromising quality of care. Just Checking can also provide a summary of daily living activity, viewed by a Carer securely, online.

Adult Services provide a small grant scheme for Carers and also provide a small grant scheme administered by Swansea Carers Centre.

People eligible for support via Social Services may purchase and manage their own support via Direct Payments and this could include different forms of respite that best suit the needs of the individual and / or Carer.

Examples of other services which are partially funded by Social Services via the Swansea Carers Centre include;

- Young Adult Carers (YACs) project for young people aged 16-25 who provide unpaid care for a loved one. The service offers one to one practical and emotional support, trips and activities as well as two youth clubs per month all to give the YACs a break from their caring roles.
- Mind, Body and Spirit programme which aims to improve the health and wellbeing of Carers through a mix of feel-good and practical training sessions which include mindfulness, singing, yoga and creative sessions such as painting and drawing.
- Parent Carer Support – offering free support, information, advice and advocacy to parent Carers of children with a disability or additional need. The service aims to

- ensure that parent Carers are fully aware of their rights and entitlements, are supported to continue in their caring role, maintain their emotional and physical wellbeing and build relationships with others in similar situations.
- Provision of volunteering opportunities and volunteer services –which enable people and Carers to get work experience, training and job references, meet new people and stay active.
- Provision of holistic therapies which are offered every month to Carers and former Carers to reduce stress and promote wellbeing.
- Hospital worker to provide information and support directly to Carers in hospital settings across Swansea; to promote access to Carers services and promote Carers participation in the hospital discharge process.
- GP outreach services which run community help desks and support GP surgeries to be carer friendly by offering staff training, information for Carers via notice boards and referral forms and information for Carers' services.

Limitations on resources mean that contact monitoring of some of these services is more limited than in other higher risk service areas. However, commissioning staffing structures are being reorganised to enable a greater focus on services to Carers. This will enable increased quality monitoring. A number of other activities also take place to ensure Carers services are appropriate and effective. These include 'Carers Rights' events to provide information to help develop a regional strategy and action plan for Carers, creation of a Parent Carer Forum to help develop our understanding of the needs of Carers and help shape future services, and development of regional and local commissioning objectives for Carers services. This will require collaboration with Carers to review current provision and make recommendations for change to ensure that services are fit for purpose now and into the future.

From legislative and practice guidance, when Carers are identified, they are offered an assessment which considers individual circumstance, carers ability and wishes, alongside their right to access a reasonable break to sustain their caring role. Information and advice, including an awareness of resources available to them within their own community is offered in the first instance; those that require more support are offered an opportunity to revisit, discuss and review their situation, in line with Local Authority statutory responsibilities. The Social Work new team arrangements provide opportunities to revisit the offer of a Carers assessment, as this function is built into each teams' responsibility.

Further development of Carer engagement is acknowledge and will be addressed in more detail over the coming months with Carer groups. During the pandemic period Social Services has been involved in monthly Carer groups and developed closer links with Carers services, which has provided an opportunity to engage with Carers in a co-productive meaningful way, to explore what is important to them. Identifying barriers impacting on engagement with Social Services and what has been learned from a Carers experience during COVID19 will inform current and future planning.

**Q2. EDU15a and EDU15b - The percentage of final statements of Special Education Need (SEN) issued within 26 weeks including and excluding exceptions. Can you provide more information on why these target times that are being missed.**

The performance indicator results for statements issued within 26 weeks is extremely low. The first quarter of this financial year will show a 0% result. This is wholly down to the situation with Covid-19. Staff were unable to access the office for hard copy files. As a result, digitalising of pupil records has taken place. Transmedia has scanned formal assessment files which are parked in a cloud, awaiting transfer to our hard drive.

The other main factor is due to medics not providing advices during this period. Medical advice is one of the core statutory advices needed as part of the statutory assessment process.

The new Additional Learning Needs and Inclusion Team (ALNIT) having undergone restructure is now proactively addressing the current issues in preparation for new legislation being implemented in less than a calendar year.

During the last year processes and systems have improved. Key to further success will be more proactive discussions with parents and schools through new ALNIT caseworkers will allow us to realise more efficient case work management and better outcomes for children and young people in Swansea.

From the beginning of the academic year 2020-2021, the statement writer attends all ALN panel meetings. When draft statements are discussed at ALN panel, these can now be converted into proposed statements immediately after the panel, signed and sent out to all stakeholders. This is a change to the ways of working and one which will have a positive impact on the 26 week performance indicator.

Whilst the first few quarters of this financial year are likely continue to show weak performance, given the restructure and changes in processes, performance is likely to improve during the course of the current academic year.

**Q3. POV10 - Number of people gaining employment through Employability Support. The Panel would like to explore this indicator data further and request further written information on this data set along with the indicator definition.**

The definition of the above indicator is to measure the number of Swansea residents gaining employment (excluding apprenticeships with Swansea Council) through the following Employability Support schemes:

Workways Plus  
Workways Plus Short Term Unemployed  
Communities for Work  
Communities for Work Plus  
Cam Nesa

An 'Into Employment' outcome is measured across these programmes as an individual who enters employment for 16 or more hours a week.

- In quarter 1, (from April 1<sup>st</sup> 2020 to 30<sup>th</sup> June 2020) 82 people gained employment through employability support, (by enrolling on one of the above programmes and entering employment as a result).
- During the previous year (from April 1<sup>st</sup> 2019 to 31<sup>st</sup> March 2020) 354 people gained employment through employability support, (by enrolling on one of the above programmes and entering employment as a result).
- Employability related training outcomes are also key in moving individuals into employment. During the previous year (from April 1<sup>st</sup> 2019 to 31<sup>st</sup> March 2020), across the four employability programmes mentioned above, the Councils Lifelong Learning Service and through its Swansea Working approach the Council supported 1000 employability training related outcomes.

**Q4. CHR002 (PAM001) - The number of working days/shifts per full time equivalent lost due to sickness absence. Can you please provide the Panel with a breakdown of sickness and type across the Council departments?**

Please find attached a chart showing the breakdown of the Sickness and type across the Council Directorates and a further breakdown into departments.

**Q5. PAM39 - Percentage of rent lost due to properties being empty. Can you provide further information on the numbers of empty council properties? The Panel would also like your thoughts on introducing an indicator giving the number of empty council properties**

The existing PAM39 indicator links to provisions made within the HRA Business Plan around forecasts for rental income which is closely monitored to ensure income targets are met. Empty property(void) data is collected on a weekly basis to manage performance against the various stages/activities associated with the void process. Updates are provided to the Head of Service, Director and myself on a regular basis so it is felt that the introduction of an additional indicator is not currently needed.

In relation to the end of year data for 2019/2020, the number of empty (void) properties was 213 against a target of 215. As at the end of September 2020 (end of quarter 2) there were 272 empty properties. The number of empty properties has inevitably increased since March due to Covid-19, disruption to supplies and the workforce working to safe social distancing guidelines. Housing and Building Services are working closely to ensure any delays are minimised.

**Q6. PAM45 – Number of additional dwellings created as a result of bringing empty properties back into use. Have these properties been brought back to use by using the Empty Properties Grant?**

No, these properties have been brought back into use through the Welsh Government Landlord loan funding. The Valleys Taskforce Empty Property Grant Phase1 programme only commenced in January this year and a number of applications are currently being processed to enable works to commence in the next few months.

The Panel also made reference to performance in relation to PAM15, i.e. the average number of calendar days taken to deliver a Disabled Facilities Grant and that they wished to keep a watching brief to see the impact over the next quarter. This is subject

to close monitoring by the service area on which I will be having more detailed discussions with the Head of Service in due course.

If you have any further requests then please do not hesitate to contact me.

Yours sincerely



**Y Cyngorydd/Councillor Andrew Stevens**  
**Aelod y Cabinet dros Trawsnewid Busnes a Pherfformiad**  
**Cabinet Member for Business Improvement & Performance**