

Councillor Paxton Hood-Williams
Convenor
Child & Family Services Scrutiny Panel

Please ask for: Councillor Mark Child
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Date: 26th September 2017

Dear Councillor Hood-Williams

SCRUTINY PANEL – 21ST AUGUST 2017

Thank you for your letter of September 11th 2017 regarding the overview of Child and Family Services (CFS) in Swansea and the performance report for July 2015. My response to your questions and comments are set out below.

Overview of Child and Family Services

Child and Family Services are currently reviewing their improvement plan and have identified five priorities for the service;

- Early help and prevention
- Safety for children
- Achieving Permanence
- Workforce
- Partnership/collaboration

The completed plan will be presented to Scrutiny in December 2017, following the necessary sign off arrangements. This will assist the Panel by more structured reporting of progress within the service. The changes being made within supported care planning (SCP), with the redesign of the service, will be of particular interest to Panel.

The challenges of safely reducing the numbers of children who experience care in Swansea are well rehearsed, particularly given the increasingly complex landscape of social care. However I can report that following a short period where numbers increased - January to June (465 to 487 respectively), we are seeing a return to a downward trend for July and August (483 to 478).

In November 2017, the Corporate Parenting Board will be agreeing the reporting cycle, which includes a timescale for the annual report. I will update Scrutiny to this effect and ensure the annual report is included in Scrutiny Panel's work plan.

Performance report July 2017

Front Door

The level of activity at CFS front door is an area which receives careful monitoring and an action plan is in place to manage demand and divert children and families to the right service. This work is in collaboration with Early Help services.

Assessment activity sits within the supported care planning (SCP) service area, rather than the front door, but performance in this area is a concern, although the quality indicators are improving, commented on by CSSIW in a recent meeting with Inspector's. The purpose of the SCP redesign is to reduce caseloads and improve performance in this key area.

Expanding Local Area Coordination (LAC) into work with children is being actively explored by initially identifying best practice in other areas.

Child Protection Summary

The department has seen an unprecedented high level of child protection activity over recent months. This has impacted on some performance figures but not on the ability of the department to work with parents and partners to achieve safety for children. Often the number of exceptions is very small but this does result in figures being skewed. Nevertheless it is accepted that there is room for improvement and the action plan to improve performance in this crucial area is being progressed. This includes addressing concerns recording accurate data capture.

The revised Signs of Safety (SOS) implementation framework will be completed at the end of October 2017 and this will support further development of a risk sensible approach within the service.

Staff Supervision

Panel was advised that caseload supervision will be added to the next quarter's performance report in addition to information relating to vacancies, agency workers and sickness levels. I can confirm the department has not used agency workers for a number of years.

Finally can I thank you for your continued interest and support in the work of Child and Family Services. Your scrutiny supports the delivery of a high quality, child focused, efficient service, fit for purpose.

Yours faithfully



**COUNCILLOR MARK CHILD
CABINET MEMBER FOR HEALTH AND WELLBEING**