



To:
**Councillor Clive Lloyd, Cabinet Member for
Adult Social Care and Community Health
Services**

**Councillor Elliott King, Cabinet Member for
Children Services**

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15 February 2021

BY EMAIL

Summary: This is a letter from the Joint Social Services Scrutiny Performance Panel to the Cabinet Member for Adult Social Care and Community Health Services and Cabinet Member for Children Services following the meeting of the Panel on 26 January 2021. It covers Performance Monitoring and Update on Covid-19.

Dear Cllr Lloyd and Cllr King

The Panel met on 26 January to receive an update on the current situation regarding the management of the Covid-19 Pandemic and discuss the Performance Monitoring Report for November 2020.

We would like to thank you both and Dave Howes for attending to present the items and answer the Panel's questions at this extremely busy and difficult time. We really do appreciate your engagement and input.

We are writing to you to reflect on what we learnt from the discussion and share any views of the Panel.

Firstly, I would again like to ask you, on behalf of the Panel, to take a message back to the staff, expressing our wholehearted thanks and appreciation to all members of staff, who continue to have a huge burden placed upon them and are doing an amazing job in very difficult circumstances.

The main issues discussed are summarised below:

OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY / TROSOLWG A CHRAFFU

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Performance Monitoring

Dave Howes answered questions on the Performance Monitoring Reports for November 2020.

Adult Services

We asked about Emergency Respite and Emergency Day Support and heard that in normal circumstances we would be offering day service to 600 people at any given time. Initially we had to stop this service; it was then re-modelled to have an emergency respite offer for the most vulnerable. We also heard that the maximum we have managed to offer is a quarter of the offer and that we have had maximum take up. Approaching Christmas, we had to stop this service for a short period but started it back up again in January. Currently we are offering support to approximately 150. We were pleased to hear that as a minimum the Service will be staying in touch with these individuals and some are getting limited support at home. Compared to the rest of Wales, the position in Swansea is a very good one.

Regarding the Review of Allocated Clients, we heard that planned review work is currently extremely limited as the Department has actively de-prioritised this work. We heard that officers are pleased with the number they have still managed to do as the review process is being used, with some limitations, to identify the support offering re mental health. For reviews around older people, there is a specific team with an annual review function; focussed on the most challenging. We also heard that in Learning Disabilities, structural changes have not been made to the service; this would have been the day service offer but capacity exceeds our ability to provide this service, however individuals are being contacted on weekly/two weekly basis to check in. The Panel was informed that there are no plans to improve this during the second wave just to keep going with what is currently being done. It was good to hear that the Service is continuing to try to recruit and the additional capacity recruited will be kept on until after the current crisis to try and catch up.

In respect of Adult Services Staff Testing, we heard that there is a much lower take up of testing in our area currently, and officers are concerned this is giving an artificially low figure for cases in our area. We heard that you are not concerned about the turn-around time currently. You informed us of the dilemma about how much we will use bilateral flow tests and that the current priority is getting vaccination roll out completed.

Child and Family Services

We queried the number of Assessments Completed Within 42 Days and heard that the Service has been concerned about assessment performance but that there has been an improvement for a couple of months.

With regard to the Monitoring of Direct Work Performance, we heard that service improvement in the Paris system is currently on hold, however, implementation is planned for next month and the Service will be continuing with it, as you think we will have substantial benefit from it.

We heard that the Youth Justice System has been impacted by the pandemic. However, we are currently seeing significant improvement around timing of assessments. All

policies are in place that were missing at time of inspection; and the workforce has been upskilled. We were pleased to hear that despite the pandemic, we are on track with performance measures.

The Panel was informed that there are some issues around supervision across Children Services. You are not sure if some teams have the right balance around staff supervision and supervision of performance. We were pleased to hear that the Head of Service is revisiting this for some teams, as a greater emphasis is needed on staff wellbeing, and that measures are in place to try and mitigate this.

The Panel noted a small increase in the number of children on the At Risk Register. We queried if you expect a further increase as schools go back and how much of this is linked to domestic abuse. Officers confirmed the last time schools went back there was not a massive increase at the 'front door'. Also in terms of safeguarding, arrangements in place whilst schools are off are proving to be robust and at levels we would expect them to be. We heard that we could see a further increase for a number of reasons including domestic abuse. Officers think the ability of Children's Services to work with families is currently limited because of the pandemic, and therefore the effectiveness of some of the interventions is being compromised and children are staying on the child protection register longer, and also there are new concerns being picked up. However, numbers are still only slightly above the level we would expect.

Update on Management of Covid-19

We heard from Cllr Lloyd regarding Adult Services, that Christmas and the start of January was a very difficult time. The rapid response team had to go into care homes on a number of occasions to assist, but no residents had to be moved out. The reduction in infection rates is welcome but this is not reducing pressures on our services currently.

We heard from Cllr King regarding Children Services, that the Service is resilient and coping. This is a very positive sign. You are managing to balance the demand and staff absence. There is ongoing work with early help hubs and education. Assessments are much improved. Child Protection Register numbers are slightly up and there is ongoing work to look into this.

We heard from Dave Howes that we are still 3 times over the positivity rate when WHO recommended control measures were put in place. The Service has put in place everything learnt from first wave. Staff are exhausted – still have significant levels of staff having to isolate, many have caring responsibilities and they are dealing with more complex cases. Amazing the Service has been able to keep going. It still remains extremely fragile. Staff are having to go into care homes in a critical position, along with health, for periods of time as well as maintaining our services. We remain particularly impacted around Domiciliary Care. We are providing a Covid response, which is far from ideal. It is also a big ask on individuals in our communities who are having to take on such a lot. The target in our region is to vaccinate the top four tiers by mid-February; a challenging timetable. We have sufficient vaccine for all these cohorts. The Health Board is leading the vaccination programme but the Council is supporting it. It is a massive programme. Enormously impressed how the Health Board has worked with partners.

The Panel felt that the setting up of the Rapid Response Team signifies a change in the relationship between Health and Social Care. We queried the number of people involved in the rapid response team and requested figures be provided at a future date.

We discussed how the improvement in the relationship between Health and Social Care during the pandemic is positive. Another potential positive development in relationships would be if support programmes for staff in both organisations could be jointly negotiated, specifically counselling and related support to help staff cope with what they have seen and experienced during the pandemic.

The Panel felt there would be a need for ongoing support for Health and Social Care Staff in the future to aid recovery and wellbeing, and that this should be added as an item to the Adult Services Panel future work programme to monitor this.

We felt that looking at services post-pandemic, the integrated working undertaken during the pandemic provides a model of how we should rebuild our Health and Social Care Services.

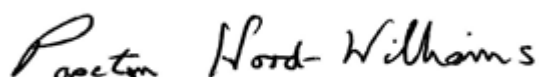
We also mentioned the new relationship that seems to have come into being where the Council has become a guarantor against service failure in the private sector. This was clearly the correct action in the circumstances. However, if this needs to become an established element of the Council's need to "manage the market" so as to avoid sudden market failure, we feel some follow up thinking on what this entails ought to be undertaken when time and circumstances allow.

A continuing concern of the Panel is the effect on Carers during the pandemic.

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, in this instance, a formal response is not required.

Yours sincerely



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