



City and County of Swansea

Minutes of the **Scrutiny Performance Panel – Child & Family Services**

Multi-Location Meeting - Gloucester Room, Guildhall / MS

Teams

Tuesday, 7 March 2023 at 4.30 pm

Present: Councillor P R Hood-Williams (Chair) Presided

Councillor(s)

W G Lewis
E T Kirchner

Councillor(s)

C A Holley

Councillor(s)

Y V Jardine

Co-opted Member(s)

T Beddow

Other Attendees

Louise Gibbard

Cabinet Member for Care Services

Officer(s)

Julie Davies
Phillipa Elliott
Amy Hawkins
Liz Jordan
Kelli Richards
Helen Williams

Head of Child & Family Services
Youth Justice Practice Manager
Head of Adult Services & Tackling Poverty
Scrutiny Officer
Principal Officer – Early Help and Single Point of Contact
Principal Officer – Adolescent and Young People Services

Apologies for Absence

Councillor(s): A M Day, K M Griffiths, S M Jones and C L Philpott

1 Disclosure of Personal and Prejudicial Interests

No disclosures of interest were received.

2 Prohibition of Whipped Votes and Declaration of Party Whips

No declarations were made.

3 Minutes of Previous Meeting(s)

Panel agreed the minutes of the meeting on 24 January 2023 as an accurate record of the meeting.

4 Public Question Time

No questions were received.

5 Update on Support for Carers

Cabinet Member and relevant officers attended to update the Panel on this issue and answer questions.

Discussion Points:

- Officers suggested Panel receive a presentation by young carers in the future.
- Panel queried geographic spread across Swansea of caring need and how it links to facilities and accessibility of services. Heard in terms of young people, geographical data is not currently available but would be beneficial to collect. However, there is a young carers ID scheme and looking to create some sort of list or register within each school which will help the service understand geographically if there is any difference between one part of Swansea and another. In terms of adults, geographical spread of caring needs is not currently mapped.
- Panel noted 96 assessments currently open, and queried what stage these assessments are at and if the same assessments are available for adults. Heard the timescale for a carers assessment in CFS is the same as a single assessment, that is 42 days from point of referral. Adult Services is very similar to CFS in terms of questions in carers assessment but no requirement for timescales.
- Panel queried if Service is satisfied the majority of carers is being picked up. Heard in Adult Services a high number of carers are being identified but a high number of these do not take up the offer of a carers assessment. In terms of CFS, they do not think they have identified the majority, but it is something they are continuing to progress.
- In terms of respite, Panel wanted to know if the Service is able to provide as much as it would like, and how it is provided. In terms of adults, heard they have not been able to catch up with the backlog from the pandemic but they are providing residential respite and since the pandemic have been able to provide more and more weeks of availability in internal care homes. For CFS, there are also a range of different options available for carers and parents.
- Panel queried is there is a definition of a carer. Definitions will be shared with the Panel following the meeting.

Actions:

- Presentation by young carers to be scheduled on future work programme.
- Definitions of carer to be shared with the Panel.

6 Performance Monitoring

Julie Davies, Head of Child and Family Services briefed the Panel on the Performance Monitoring Report for December 2022 and answered the Panel's questions.

Discussion Points:

- Numbers of looked after children are likely to rise due to concerns with some children being able to remain safely at home and it is becoming harder to recruit foster carers due to the cost of living crisis and Welsh Government's Eliminate Programme causing disruption.
- Regarding staff vacancies, two areas continue to present concerns – Early Help and Care and Support Services. Area teams have a high number of social work vacancies, some of which are covered by alternatively qualified staff. The Service currently has a low number of agency workers and there is a growing interest in the social work academy.
- Panel queried if there was concern about an increase in the numbers registered previously on the child protection register and heard it is normally due to circumstances having changed.
- Panel noted number of adoptees is increasing. Heard there has been an increase in number of children getting placement and care orders and being adopted, and an increase in number of unborns who have then been placed for adoption.

7 Briefing on Youth Offending Service

Officers updated the Panel on progress since the inspection in October 2021, when the service required improvement, recommendations have now been actioned and the Service has a full complement of staff.

Discussion Points:

- Panel queried if a young person's journey might be seen as the transition to adulthood problem. Heard a huge focus of the Service's work is thinking about the future and what it will look like for an individual post-18 as they do not want a young person to stay in a cycle of offending. In order to understand this, any young person who comes through the Service has a holistic assessment undertaken.
- Panel asked when the transition to adulthood begins and was informed can't know when the transition to adulthood starts as different for every child, but the Service can learn lessons from what it knows and can maybe avoid for lots of young people.
- Currently some wards have problems with off road bikers and Panel wanted to know what can be done. Heard that if a young people cannot be identified it is difficult to work directly with them. If the police are aware of who they are, there are avenues to refer them to the Youth Justice Service on a prevention basis.
- Panel noted there is funding for more training for staff to work with youngsters who are committing sexually violent behaviours. Informed the funding mentioned is not specifically to deliver training around this issue but if the Service identified a young person who is presenting behaviours they are concerned about, they would look to support that young person in the best way possible.
- Panel felt overall things are moving forward and will look at performance figures more closely next time it receives an update so the Service can demonstrate this.

8 Work Programme Timetable 2022-23

Panel considered the work programme and noted items for the next meeting.

The meeting ended at 6.10 pm