



City and County of Swansea

Notice of Meeting

You are invited to attend a Meeting of the

Scrutiny Performance Panel – Child & Family Services

At: Committee Room 5, Guildhall, Swansea

On: Monday, 30 October 2017

Time: 4.00 pm

Convenor: Councillor Paxton Hood-Williams

Membership:

Councillors: C Anderson, M Durke, K M Griffiths, Y V Jardine, S M Jones, P Jones, I E Mann, A Pugh and D W W Thomas

Agenda

Page No.

- 1 **Apologies for Absence.**
- 2 **Disclosure of Personal and Prejudicial Interests.**
www.swansea.gov.uk/disclosuresofinterests
- 3 **Notes of meeting on 21 August 2017** 1 - 2
To receive the notes of the previous meeting and agree as an accurate record.
- 4 **Performance Monitoring**
Including:
 - Quarter 2 performance report (including adoption and YOS; absenteeism, vacancies and agency workers) **PAPER TO FOLLOW**
 - Performance and progress on Leaving Care System **PAPER TO FOLLOW**

*Julie Thomas, Head of Child and Family Services;
Kelly A'Hearne and Helen Davies, Barnardos*
- 5 **Work Programme Timetable 2017-18** 3 - 4
- 6 **Letters** 5 - 10
 - a) Convener's letter to Cabinet Member (21 August 2017 meeting)

b) Response from Cabinet Member (21 August 2017 meeting)

Next Meeting: Tuesday, 14 November 2017 at 10.00 am (additional meeting for pre-decision scrutiny of commissioning review)



Huw Evans
Head of Democratic Services
Monday, 23 October 2017

Contact: Liz Jordan 01792 637314

CITY AND COUNTY OF SWANSEA

NOTES OF THE SCRUTINY PERFORMANCE PANEL – CHILD & FAMILY SERVICES

HELD AT COMMITTEE ROOM 5, GUILDHALL, SWANSEA ON MONDAY,
21 AUGUST 2017
AT 10.00 AM

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

Councillor(s)

M Durke
A Pugh

Councillor(s)

P Jones
D W W Thomas

Councillor(s)

I E Mann

Officer(s)

Liz Jordan
Julie Thomas

Scrutiny Officer
Head of Child and Family

Apologies for Absence

Councillor(s): C Anderson, K M Griffiths, M H Jones and S M Jones

1 **DISCLOSURE OF PERSONAL AND PREJUDICIAL INTERESTS.**

Disclosure of interests – Mike Durke and Alyson Pugh

2 **OVERVIEW OF CHILD AND FAMILY SERVICES IN SWANSEA (INCLUDING KEY PRIORITIES AND CHALLENGES AND FIRST QUARTER PERFORMANCE REPORT)**

Julie Thomas, Head of Child and Family, gave a presentation to the Panel (circulated separately). Owen Davies also attended for this item.

Discussion points:

- Positive that a Plan is in place with an emphasis on being more efficient leading to better outcomes
- Internal specialist services being developed but more can be done
- Reduction in number of children in care is positive.

Actions:

- Cost of senior staff salaries in C&FS to be provided to the Panel.
- Corporate Parenting Board report to be brought to the Panel annually. Add to Work Programme

Hard copies of Child and Family Services Performance Report for July 2017 were handed out to the Panel at the meeting. Owen Davies went through the Report and a number of comments were raised.

Actions:

- Report on absenteeism and vacancies and agency workers to be added to performance data set.

3 **ROLE OF THE PANEL INCLUDING TERMS OF REFERENCE AND DRAFT WORK PROGRAMME**

Agreed:

- Proposed Work Programme for 2017/18 agreed
- Panel agreed the Terms of Reference for 2017/18
- Timings of meetings – Panel agreed to look for an alternative time for future meetings after 4pm Monday to Thursday

Actions:

- Find new dates and times for future Panel meetings
- Send a letter to the Cabinet Member covering the main points.

4 **LETTERS**

Noted.

The meeting ended at 12.15 pm.

CHILD & FAMILY SERVICES SCRUTINY PERFORMANCE PANEL WORK PROGRAMME 2017/18

<p>Meeting 1 21 August 2017</p> <p>10am</p>	<p>Overview of Child and Family Services in Swansea (including key priorities and challenges and first quarter performance report)</p> <p><i>Presentation by Julie Thomas, Head of Child and Family Services</i></p> <p>Role of the Child and Family Services Scrutiny Performance Panel including Terms of Reference and Draft Work programme</p> <p>Letters to / from Convener</p>
<p>Meeting 2 30 October 2017</p> <p>4pm</p>	<p>Performance Monitoring including</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Quarter 2 performance report (including adoption and YOS; absenteeism, vacancies and agency workers) • Performance and progress on Leaving Care System <p><i>Julie Thomas, Head of Child and Family Services; Kelly A’Hearne and Helen Davies, Barnardos</i></p>
<p>Additional Meeting 14 November 2017</p> <p>10am</p>	<p>Pre-decision Scrutiny: Family Support Services Commissioning Review – Focusing on Children with Additional Needs and Disabilities (Report of the Cabinet Member for Health & Wellbeing)</p>
<p>Meeting 3 18 December 2017</p> <p>4pm</p>	<p>Child Disability briefing</p> <p>Advocacy update</p>
<p>Additional meeting (Jan?)</p>	<p>Commissioning review – Domestic violence hub ?</p> <p>Commissioning review – Under 11s and over 11s ?</p>
<p>Additional meeting 5 February 2018</p> <p>2pm</p>	<p>Draft budget proposals for Adult Services</p>
<p>Meeting 4 26 February 2018</p>	<p>Performance Monitoring</p> <p>Prevention and Early Intervention</p>

4pm	
Meeting 5 30 April 2018 4pm	Performance Monitoring



To:
Councillor Mark Child
Cabinet Member for Health & Wellbeing

Please ask for: Scrutiny
Gofynnwch am:
Scrutiny Office 01792 637314
Line:
Llinell
Uniongyrchol:
e-Mail scrutiny@swansea.gov.uk
e-Bost:
Date 11 September 2017
Dyddiad:

Summary: This is a letter from the Child & Family Services Scrutiny Performance Panel to the Cabinet Member for Health and Wellbeing following the meeting of the Panel on 21 August 2017. It covers the key priorities and challenges for Child & Family Services in Swansea, the Performance Report for July 2017 and the Work Programme for the Panel.

Dear Cllr Child

The Panel met on 21 August and looked at the key priorities and challenges for Child & Family Services, the Performance Report for July 2017 and the Role of the Panel including the Terms of Reference and proposed Work Programme.

Overview of Child & Family Services in Swansea

The Panel would like to thank Julie Thomas and Owen Davies for the presentation which gave an overview of the Service and for answering questions on the key priorities and challenges and the performance report for July 2017. The Panel appreciates their engagement and input.

For your reference, I note here some of the issues that were raised:

The Panel was pleased to see that a plan is now in place which has the emphasis on being more efficient which should lead to better outcomes. The Panel was pleased to hear that internal specialist services are being developed but noted officers comments that it could be done better. The Panel welcomed the news that the number of children experiencing care is safely reducing. The Panel will monitor this during the year.

OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY / TROSOLWG A CHRAFFU

SWANSEA COUNCIL / CYNGOR ABERTAWE

GUILDHALL, SWANSEA, SA1 4PE / NEUADD Y DDINAS, ABERTAWE, SA1 4PE

www.swansea.gov.uk / www.abertawe.gov.uk

The Panel felt the essential role of the Council as corporate parent was of interest to this Panel and would expect the Corporate Parenting Board report to be brought to the Panel annually.

Performance Report July 2017

Page 3 – Front Door

The Panel is concerned that both the figures for assessments completed in 42 days and for assessments completed in 10 days continue to be well below target. This concern was previously raised in my letter to you following the Panel meeting on 27 February 2017.

We support the department's approach to remedying this by developing an assessment dashboard and providing written guidance and training workshops on assessment triggers. Nevertheless, as we have stated previously, a fully functioning front door is an essential part of the service and we expect that proper attention will be paid to this issue over the coming months to ensure it improves. We will continue to carefully monitor progress.

The Panel is concerned that the Communities First Programme is coming to an end and how the lack of this provision impacts on Child & Family Services. We understand that the department is looking at how Local Area Coordination (LAC) can help mitigate some of this and we support this approach.

The Panel also notes that the volume of work at the Front Door is a worry for the department. We understand that C&FS is working with Prevention and Early Intervention about diversion and that there are a number of partners involved including Flying Start, EVOLVE, TAF plus universal services. We will monitor progress on this.

Page 5 – Child Protection Summary

The Panel noted officers' comments about the Child Protection process. Specifically that the department is not maximising opportunities from Signs of Safety. We were pleased to hear that this should improve now that a new manager and coordinator have been appointed who are enthusiastic and have new ideas.

The Panel is concerned that a number of the indicators around child protection are significantly lower than the target. We note officers' comments that the figures are not accurate due to recording error however the figures are still lower than the department would like. We suggest that implementation of the system that has been developed to improve performance in this area is undertaken at the earliest possible opportunity. We will monitor progress on this.

Page 6 – Child Protection – Additional Data

On the table - Child Protection Register – Time Registered by Gender – the Panel was pleased to see low numbers over the year and hopes that this trend continues.

Page 11 – Staff Supervision

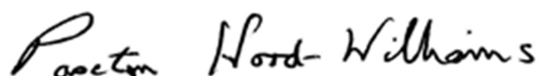
The Panel feels that a report on absenteeism and vacancies and agency workers would be useful and this needs to be added to the performance data set.

Role of the Panel

The Panel discussed the role of the Panel and the Convener and the Terms of Reference for the Panel. We also agreed the work programme for 2017/18 and this is attached (Appendix 1) for your information. We would welcome any comments you wish to make.

We hope you find this letter useful and informative. We would welcome your views on any of the issues raised and please note that in this instance, a formal response is required. Could we have your reply by 2 October 2017.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Paxton Hood-Williams". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large initial 'P'.

PAXTON HOOD-WILLIAMS
CONVENER, CHILD & FAMILY SERVICES SCRUTINY PANEL
CLLR.PAXTON.HOOD-WILLIAMS@SWANSEA.GOV.UK

Appendix 1

Terms of Reference

Child & Family Services Scrutiny Performance Panel

1. Name:

Child & Family Services Scrutiny Performance Panel

2. Why this topic is important?

- Given the importance of, and past focus on Child & Family Services and, as it is potentially still an area of high risk, this warrants attention
- The service has made good progress but it is vital this is maintained and that further improvements are made across all areas of the service
- Continues to be an area of high demand and high spend - there are significant financial pressures in this service area
- Corporate Priority Area – Improvement Objective to ensure that people are safe, well and supported to live independently (Child & Family Services)

3. What is the purpose of the panel?

The Panel will receive and request relevant performance reports to monitor and challenge assessments on service performance and quality in respect of children's social services

On behalf of the Panel, the convener will write to the relevant Cabinet Member raising issues of concern, comments and recommendations as appropriate following Panel meetings.

4. Meetings:

The Panel will be expected to meet on an ongoing basis, 4-6 times a year.

The Panel will report periodically on progress to the Scrutiny Programme Committee.

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

Please ask for: Councillor Mark Child
Direct Line: 01792 63 7441
E-Mail: clr.mark.child@swansea.gov.uk
Our Ref: MC/CM
Your Ref: ref
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**