



City and County of Swansea

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

Committee Room 5, Guildhall, Swansea - Guildhall, Swansea

Tuesday, 14 November 2017 at 10.00 am

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

Councillor(s)

Y V Jardine
D W W Thomas

Councillor(s)

P Jones

Councillor(s)

A Pugh

Other Attendees

Mark Child

Cabinet Member - Health & Wellbeing

Officer(s)

Chris Francis
Julie Thomas

Adult Social Services Contracting Officer
Head of Child & Family Services

Apologies for Absence

Councillor(s): C Anderson, M Durke, K M Griffiths, S M Jones and I E Mann

1 Disclosure of Personal and Prejudicial Interests.

None

2 Family Support Services Commissioning Review - Focusing on Children with Additional Needs and Disabilities

The Panel thanked the Cabinet Member and officers for providing the report and attending the meeting to discuss the Family Support Services Commissioning review that is focussing on children with additional needs and disabilities.

The panel highlighted the following issues:

1. It is good to see inclusion and a detailed consultation exercise to gain views of disability services from children and young people although they appreciate the difficulty in getting large numbers to participate in this.
2. The Panel recognise that there are two commissioning reviews looking at additional needs, the family support aspect but also the Additional Learning Needs review being led by Education. They were pleased to hear that the departments are working closely together and that these two pieces of work have been aligned to ensure a co-ordinated and joined up outcome.
3. They were interested to hear about the co-production with parents in developing services and welcome the development of a consultation mechanism with

parents that will include a wide group of parents of children with additional needs. We did however emphasise the importance of ensuring we reach out to get views of those parents who may be less vocal or for whatever reason, find it difficult to engage.

4. We heard that there are a growing number of children with additional needs, which is an ongoing challenge for both local authorities and health authorities alike. Consequently we support the increase in funding going towards the Early Help Service, We support the need to develop better prevention services in conjunction with health and also support the authority in the strive to engage health in future developments.
5. The report details that 11% of overall funding is made up of grants which in itself must be seen as a risk when moving forward. They did emphasise the importance of contingency planning should these grants stop or be reduced.
6. The Panel understand that the introduction of a voucher scheme for play and leisure for children with additional needs is being considered. They would like to emphasise the importance of recognising the potential implications of this type of scheme for provider and parents. They were encouraged to hear that you plan to look at how this is working in other local authorities and to work closely with parents when considering this as an option.
7. The Panel were pleased to see and were supportive of the recommendation around specialist services for young carers. They recognise that currently it is in its early stages but feel it is a positive move.
8. They did note however that only 3 of the 6 recommendations required assessment of potential alternative supply mechanisms and indeed 2 of them were purely internal development. They also note the intention to seek to resource external facilities for overnight short breaks with the aim of reducing the cost of the service by £50k, and this will hopefully result in an improved service. The panel though it need to guard against a poorer service was important. They were also a bit disappointed that where assessments had been carried out for (recommendations 1, 2 and 3) that we only had the final score and not the breakdown of that score into its separate elements.

3 Discussion and Questions

The Convener of the Panel will attend Cabinet on the 16 November and a letter will follow to the Cabinet Member outlining the Panels views.

The meeting ended at 11.10 am

Chair