



City and County of Swansea

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

Committee Room 3A - Guildhall, Swansea

Wednesday, 26 June 2019 at 4.00 pm

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

Councillor(s)

C Anderson
Y V Jardine
E T Kirchner

Councillor(s)

M Durke
S M Jones

Councillor(s)

K M Griffiths

Other Attendees

Elliott King
Sam Pritchard

Cabinet Member - Children Services
Cabinet Member - Children Services

Officer(s)

Liz Jordan
Julie Thomas

Scrutiny Officer
Head of Child & Family Services

Apologies for Absence

Councillor(s): P K Jones, W G Lewis and D W W Thomas

1 Disclosure of Personal and Prejudicial Interests.

No disclosures of interest were made.

2 Prohibition of Whipped Votes and Declaration of Party Whips

No declarations were made.

3 Appoint/Confirm Convener of the Panel and Confirm Co-optees

Paxton Hood-Williams was confirmed as Convener of the Panel.

4 Notes of previous meeting

The Panel agreed the notes of the meeting on 29 April 2019 as an accurate record of the meeting.

5 Public Question Time

No members of the public were present at the meeting.

6 Cabinet Member Presentation and Question and Answer Session

Elliott King and Sam Pritchard, Cabinet Members for Children Services attended to present to the Panel on what the main problems are facing the department and what is being done to address them, and to answer the Panel's questions.

Discussion points:

- Corporate Parenting Board as well as the Panel will be looking at CAMHS this year.
- The biggest group of looked after children (LAC) is the 10 – 15 age group. The proportion is about 50/50 for children coming in at the age of 10 – 15 and children that have come up from the lower age group 5 – 9. This information will be included in performance data going forward.
- For LAC per 10,000 of population, best performing Welsh council is way above the English average. There are a number of different reasons for this. This is a priority for the Minister.
- There is a Child and Family Improvement Programme in Swansea. Panel concerned about lack of resources to carry out these plans.
- Eventually hope to get to a point where the plan is co-produced with children.
- Swansea has the highest number of unaccompanied asylum seeker children after Cardiff. This has increased our LAC numbers.
- On Corporate Parenting Board, it will be important to build the confidence of members sitting on the Board to drive the strategy forward and meet with lead officers regularly, to support identified actions to be completed, and prepare the objective update reports for the Board.
- New Community Care Information System is due in February 2020. Expect this date to be pushed back.
- Need to ensure we are openly and honestly listening to the voice of the child, the family and community.
- Social workers need to listen to children and children need to be encouraged to speak up. We have UNCRC in Swansea that is encouraging children to speak out more. Department is talking to social workers all the time about how important the relationship is but there is tension to get paperwork done. It demands a cultural change and this is the direction the Council is moving in.
- Department has links with university. Would like to have more influence over the programme.
- Organisations like 'Women's Aid' sometimes have placements for university students for 3 months. This gives them the opportunity to get some experience of what it is like in the real world.
- Working hard to develop the work force and on the impact of secondary trauma.

Actions:

- Add 'Progress on Child and Family Improvement Programme' to the Work Programme 2019/20.

7 Panel Review of the Year 2018/19 and draft Work Programme 2019/20

Panel members reviewed their year on the Child and Family Services Panel and discussed the following question:

1. What has gone well?

- Good to see detail in performance reports. Have to drill down through it but officers have been very informative.
- Officer support great
- Debate has been good and response from officers
- Relationship with officers good and very open.

Panel Members agreed the Work Programme for 2019/20.

Actions:

- Invite senior politicians from Welsh Government to attend a Panel meeting to hear and respond to the Panel's issues and concerns. (Children's Commissioner to be invited also?).

8 Letters

Letter received and considered by the Panel.

The meeting ended at 5.25 pm.