



**Dinas a Sir Abertawe**

**Hysbysiad o Gyfarfod**

Fe'ch gwahoddir i gyfarfod

## **Panel Perfformiad Craffu - Gwasanaethau Plant a Theuluoedd**

**Lleoliad:** O bell drwy Microsoft Teams

**Dyddiad:** Dydd Mawrth, 22 Mehefin 2021

**Amser:** 4.00 pm

**Cynullydd:** Y Cynghorydd Paxton Hood-Williams

**Aelodaeth:**

Cynghorwyr: C Anderson, A M Day, M Durke, K M Griffiths, Y V Jardine, S M Jones, E T Kirchner, W G Lewis a/ac D W W Thomas

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### **Agenda**

**Rhif y Dudalen.**

- 1 Ymddiheuriadau am absenoldeb**
- 2 Datgeliadau o fuddiannau personol a rhagfarnol**  
[www.abertawe.gov.uk/DatgeluCysylltiadau](http://www.abertawe.gov.uk/DatgeluCysylltiadau)
- 3 Gwahardd Pleidleisiau Chwip a Datgan Chwipiau'r Pleidiau**
- 4 Cofnodion Cyfarfod(ydd) Blaenorol** **1 - 7**  
Derbyn nodiadau'r cyfarfod(ydd) blaenorol a chytuno eu bod yn gofnod cywir.
- 5 Cwestiynau Gan y Cyhoedd**  
Rhaid cyflwyno cwestiynau'n ysgrifenedig, cyn hanner dydd ar y diwrnod gwaith cyn y cyfarfod fan bellaf. Rhaid i gwestiynau ymwneud ag eitemau ar yr agenda. Ymdrinnir â chwestiynau o fewn cyfnod 10 munud.
- 6 Diweddaraf am y Gwasanaeth Mabwysiadu Rhanbarthol** **8 - 30**  
*Nichola Rogers, Rheolwr Mabwysiadu Rhanbarthol, Gwasanaeth Mabwysiadu Bae'r Gorllewin*
- 7 Adborth cychwynnol o Ymweliad Sicrhau Ansawdd Arolygiaeth Gofal Cymru (AGC)**  
*Julie Davies, Pennaeth y Gwasanaethau Plant a Theuluoedd*

Cyfarfod nesaf: Dydd Mercher, 11 Awst 2021 ar 4.00 pm

*Huw Evans*

**Huw Evans**  
**Pennaeth Gwasanaethau Democrataidd**  
**Dydd Mawrth, 15 Mehefin 2021**  

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**Cyswllt: Liz Jordan 01792 637314**

# Agenda Item 4



City and County of Swansea

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

Remotely via Microsoft Teams

Tuesday, 25 May 2021 at 4.00 pm

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

### **Councillor(s)**

C Anderson  
K M Griffiths  
E T Kirchner

### **Councillor(s)**

A M Day  
M H Jones  
W G Lewis

### **Councillor(s)**

M Durke  
S M Jones

### **Other Attendee(s)**

Joanne Abbott-Davies

Assistant Director of Strategy & Partnerships,  
Swansea Bay University Health Board

Isobel Davey

Consultant in Child and Adolescent Psychiatry, CAMHS

### **Officer(s)**

Julie Davies

Head of Child & Family Services

Gavin Evans

Youth Support Services Manager

David Howes

Director of Social Services

Liz Jordan

Scrutiny Officer

Jay McCabe

Principal Officer Bays+/Youth Justice Service

Helen Osborne

Principal Educational Psychologist

Helen Williams

Youth Justice Practice Manager

### **Apologies for Absence**

Councillor(s): E J King

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## **1 Confirmation of Convener**

Paxton Hood-Williams was confirmed as Convener of the Child and Family Services Panel.

## **2 Disclosure of Personal and Prejudicial Interests**

No disclosures were made.

## **3 Prohibition of Whipped Votes and Declaration of Party Whips**

No declarations of interest were made.

## **4 Minutes of Previous Meeting(s)**

The Panel considered letters and minutes from the previous meeting and agreed the minutes of the meeting on 24 March 2021 as an accurate record of the meeting.

## **5 Public Question Time**

No questions were submitted.

## **6 Update on Progress with Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services (CAMHS)**

Joanne Abbott-Davies, Julie Davies, Isobel Davey, Helen Osborne and Gavin Evans presented an update to the Panel on progress with CAMHS including the impacts of Covid, partnership initiatives and progress, performance, opportunities and challenges and answered the Panel's questions.

### **Discussion Points:**

- Joint Service elements have slowed down due to Covid.
- Impact of the last year on young people's mental health has been significant.
- Waiting time for Neurology Development Service had improved from 26 weeks. However, increase in referrals has now increased three-fold, so waiting period has increased to over 6 months. Discussions being held Wales-wide on what can be done.
- Scrutiny had previously recommended this Service had a single point of access, and is very pleased to see this now in place.
- Some of the performance indicators need to be re-developed to show what we need to know locally and to evidence the work now being done.
- New building on Kingsway is appointment only. Discussions taking place on how to link and benefit from Infonation being next door.
- Single Point of Access Telephone lines will be open five days per week Monday to Friday. It was only open two hours per week before. Crisis Service is available on the weekend.
- Cwm Taff is still providing the CAMHS service for the Swansea area.
- A new app called 'Kooth' is being made available for children. This facility is being put in place by Swansea Bay.
- A new regional website is launching in June. It will monitor the number of 'hits' and who has accessed what. There is also a 'Comments' section.
- Director of Social Services thinks the progress is very impressive and the continuum of support is much more developed. Specialist CAMHS has demand issues but more confident can have discussions now about how to try and deal with the short term increase in demand.
- Panel sought reassurance that when a child is in absolute crisis, despite the pressures, the Service is able to provide an urgent response. Officers confirmed the Crisis Team is fully staffed and would be able to respond to a child in absolute crisis, despite access to beds being at crisis point.
- Panel congratulated everyone on the good progress being made despite the pandemic and hoped this will continue.

## **7 Briefing on Youth Offending Service**

Jay McCabe, Principal Officer Bays+ and Youth Justice Services attended to brief the Panel on progress with the Youth Offending Service.

Discussion Points:

- Youth Justice Board has provided a letter of de-escalation as they are satisfied the service is working in the right direction. This is a great achievement and shows huge improvement over last year.
- Operational Manager, Helen Williams is now in post, the senior practitioner role has been developed to become Practice Lead and Asset Plus Training has been undertaken by most staff.
- Mobilisation of Speech and Language Service has been funded by further investment and led by Swansea to help young people engage and understand what is expected of them. The service is starting in July and is an effective communications system.
- Helen Williams gave an overview of the recent performance monitoring report which was very positive.
- Director of Social Services stated partnership commitment was evident. Optimistic when inspectors return they will find considerable improvement and innovation.
- Concern about young people's involvement in riots in May Hill. Word 'culture' being raised. Officers confirmed there was a huge coordinated response with 50 agencies involved.
- Panel thanked everyone including residents for all their hard work on the night of the riot and since then.
- Service is involved in working in partnership with various agencies to get messages out, for example, outreach work to engage with young people and working on a project in schools.
- Issues around violence and young people are being looked at across Swansea with partners. Will need to continue to think about this and plan. Officers believe having more of a presence in the community should make a difference.

## **8 Work Programme Timetable**

The Panel considered items for the next meeting.

The meeting ended at 6.15 pm



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

**BY EMAIL**

*Please ask for:* Scrutiny  
*Gofynnwch am:*  
*Scrutiny Office* 01792 637314  
*Line:*  
*Llinell*  
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*e-Mail* [scrutiny@swansea.gov.uk](mailto:scrutiny@swansea.gov.uk)  
*e-Bost:*  
  
*Date* 14 June 2021  
*Dyddiad:*

**CC Cabinet Members**

**Summary:** This is a letter from the Child & Family Services Scrutiny Performance Panel to the Cabinet Member for Children Services following the meeting of the Panel on 25 May 2021. It covers CAMHS and Youth Offending Service.

Dear Cllr King,

The Panel met on 25 May to receive an update on progress with the Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services (CAMHS) and a briefing on the Youth Offending Service.

We would like to thank Joanne Abbott-Davies and Isobel Davey from the Health Board, together with officers Dave Howes, Julie Davies, Helen Osborne, Gavin Evans, Jay McCabe and Helen Williams for attending to present these items and answer the Panel's questions. We appreciate their engagement and input.

We are writing to you to reflect on what we learnt from the discussion, share the views of the Panel, and, where necessary, raise any issues or recommendations for your consideration and response. The main issues discussed are summarised below:

### **Update on Progress with CAMHS**

Joanne Abbott-Davies, Julie Davies, Isobel Davey, Helen Osborne and Gavin Evans presented an update to the Panel on progress with CAMHS including the impacts of Covid, partnership initiatives and progress, performance, opportunities and challenges and answered the Panel's questions.

**OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY / TROSOLWG A CHRAFFU**  
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We were not surprised to hear that joint Service elements have slowed down due to Covid and that the impact of the last year on young people's mental health has been significant.

We queried the waiting time for the Neurology Development Service that had previously improved from 26 weeks. We heard it improved initially with 80% completed in 6 months, however, referrals have now increased three-fold, so the waiting period has increased to over 6 months. We heard that discussions are being held Wales-wide on what can be done and that it is being kept under review but it definitely needs improvement.

Mary Jones who had previously chaired the scrutiny inquiry on CAMHS attended for this update and stated that Scrutiny had previously recommended this Service had a single point of access, and was very pleased to see this now in place.

We heard that as a result of this single point of access being in place, some of the performance indicators need to be re-developed to show what we need to know locally and to evidence the work now being done. We noted that we would eventually see performance on CAMHS coming through in Performance Monitoring Reports to the Panel.

We heard that the new building on the Kingsway is by appointment only. We felt this is not as accessible as Infonation but noted that discussions are taking place on how to link and benefit from Infonation being next door.

We were pleased to hear that the Single Point of Access Telephone lines will be open five days per week Monday to Friday (it was only open two hours per week before) and that the Crisis Service is available on the weekend.

We discussed how Cwm Taff is still providing the CAMHS service for the Swansea area.

We heard about a new app called 'Kooth' that is being made available for children and that this facility is being put in place by Swansea Bay.

We also heard that a new regional website is launching in June. It will monitor the number of 'hits' and who has accessed what and there is also a 'Comments' section.

We heard the Director of Social Services thinks progress with CAMHS is very impressive and the continuum of support is much more developed. He feels specialist CAMHS has demand issues but is more confident they can have discussions now about how to try and deal with the short term increase in demand.

We sought reassurance that when a child is in absolute crisis, despite the pressures, the Service is able to provide an urgent response. Officers confirmed the Crisis Team is fully staffed and would be able to respond to a child in absolute crisis, despite access to beds being at crisis point. We were very pleased to hear this.

We congratulated everyone on the good progress being made despite the pandemic and hoped this would continue.

## **Briefing on Youth Offending Service**

Jay McCabe, Principal Officer Bays+ and Youth Justice Services attended to brief the Panel on progress.

We were very pleased to hear that the Youth Justice Board has provided a letter of de-escalation as they are satisfied the Service is working in the right direction. This is a great achievement and shows huge improvement over the last year. We also heard the Service is continually focussing on the improvement journey and the Improvement and Action Plan is reviewed on a six-monthly basis.

We noted the Operational Manager, Helen Williams is now in post and the senior practitioner role has been developed to become Practice Lead and that Asset Plus Training has been undertaken by most staff.

We heard that the Mobilisation of Speech and Language Service has been funded by further investment and is led by Swansea to help young people engage and understand what is expected of them. The service is starting in July and is an effective communications system.

Helen Williams gave us an overview of the recent performance monitoring report, which was very positive.

The Director of Social Services stated that partnership commitment was evident and the evidence shows improvement. We heard that he is optimistic that when inspectors return they will find considerable improvement and innovation.

We raised our concerns about young people's involvement in the riots in May Hill and the word 'culture' being raised. Officers confirmed there was a huge coordinated response with 50 agencies involved. They are aware of issues and are trying to get ahead of the game and identify where problems are and what could be done differently to start intervening. We thanked everyone including residents for all their hard work on the night of the riot and since then.

We heard the Service is involved in working in partnership with various agencies to get messages out, for example, outreach work to engage with young people and working on a project in schools.

We heard that issues around violence and young people are being looked at across Swansea with partners and that there is a need to continue to think about this and plan. Officers believe having more of a presence in the community should make a difference.

## **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, we do not require a formal written response.



Yours sincerely

*Paxton Hood-Williams*

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

# Agenda Item 6



## Report of the Cabinet Member for Children's Services

### Child and Family Services Scrutiny Performance Panel – 22<sup>nd</sup> June 2021

#### Western Bay Adoption Service update and Bi-Annual Quality of Service Review

<b>Purpose</b>	To inform scrutiny on the progress of the Western Bay Adoption Service including last year's performance data.
<b>Content</b>	<p>This report provides Councillors with an update on the progress of Western Bay Adoption Service and a review of its performance in 2020-21.</p> <p>The report includes the Regulation 39 Quality of Service Report.</p>
<b>Councillors are being asked to</b>	Consider and comment on the progress of the Service.
<b>Lead Councillor(s)</b>	Councillor Elliott King
<b>Lead Officer(s)</b>	David Howes (Director of Social Services) Julie Davies (Head of Child and Family Services)
<b>Report Author</b>	Nichola Rogers, Regional Adoption Manager

# NATIONAL ADOPTION SERVICE



Gwasanaeth  
**Mabwysiadu**  
Cenedlaethol

National  
**Adoption**  
Service

Achieving More Together /  
Cyflawni Mwy Gyda'n Gilydd

## QUALITY OF SERVICE REVIEW

For Period 1<sup>st</sup> October 2020 to 31<sup>st</sup> March 2021



**GWASANAETH MABWYSIADU**  
**Bae'r Gorllewin**  
**Western Bay**  
**ADOPTION SERVICE**



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9. Policies and Procedures .....
10. CSSIW .....
11. Local Governance and Monitoring Arrangement .....
12. Consultation and Engagement .....
13. Quality Assurance, Compliments, Comments, Complaints, Safeguarding issues,  
Whistle blowing and representation .....
14. Agenda for Change and Future Challenges.....
15. Conclusion .....

# Western Bay Adoption Service

## Quality of Service Review

Date 1<sup>st</sup> April 2020-30<sup>th</sup> September 2020.

### 1. Introduction

The requirement to provide six monthly reviews of the Adoption Service is set out in Regulation 39 of The Local Authority Adoption Services (Wales) Regulations 2019. The aim of this report is to bring into one document a presentation and analysis of the activity of each of the local authority adoption agencies, operating as a regional service. In addition, Section 15 (c) of The Adoption and Children Act 2002 (Joint Adoption Arrangements) (Wales) Directions 2015 sets out the responsibilities of regional collaboratives to report to the Director of Operations for the National Adoption Service on a quarterly and annual basis.

The report and information within it will be used for:

- The Review of Service (Regulation 39 report).
- Given the broad content of this report it will be used for informing senior managers, cabinets and scrutiny committees.
- Quarterly and annual reports to NAS.

This report is in respect of the period 1<sup>st</sup> October 2020 to 31<sup>st</sup> March 2021. Every effort has been made to ensure that the information presented is an accurate record of the activity and quality of the Adoption Service and consider targets for the forthcoming year. The performance information provided is for the full year.

### 2. Current Position

2020 has been a very challenging year and saw the service having to consider how it could continue to operate during the Global COVID pandemic. Staff within the service have worked tirelessly to ensure that it has very much continued as business as normal and have adapted all the work that is needed to be completed via Virtual means. All staff are now fully agile and have lap-tops that enable them to work at home. Panel, Assessments, family finding and adoption



support tasks have continued via virtual means with risk assessments in place for limited face to face work when it has been needed. The work that this report highlights is testament to the commitment and drive of the staff group. The service initially adapted well to the ever changing situation and managed to maintain this throughout the year. Despite the challenges that this has brought the service has continued to deliver on both local and national objectives and maintain many aspects of performance.

### **3. Staffing**

Staffing has remained fairly stable throughout the year and vacancies have been filled without difficulty. A new recruitment and Assessment Team manager has now commenced in post. Staff are now enjoying working in small cross function working groups to consider revising the existing processes and how the good practise guides will be implemented across the service.

For future development the service is currently looking at the potential to use the apprenticeships scheme this year running locally to support business support this would be utilising maternity savings within business support. The development of practise and performance measures and panel activity has taken the current experienced staff away from basic business support tasks such as managing the mail, admin tasks associated with the letterbox and supporting the duty system. These are very much roles that could be undertaken by an apprentice.

There was also a large underspend on staff this year due to maternity and short term periods when vacancy filling was in process. Regional manager will be meeting with the finance officer to maximise the staffing budget.

### **4. Adoption Panel**

#### **Membership**

The support of both Medical Advisors Dr Peter Barnes and Dr Emily Payne continues with both joining the service in regular interface meetings aimed at improving quality and timeliness of documentation used for panel. This has been an effective venture, utilising the expertise of the Medical Advisors to shape practice in the service. WBAS recognises that the support and service both provide to the service is considerable.

#### **Panel Training and Development**

Panel were offered a training session on the implementation of the Good practise Guides. The panel chair and Vice chairs were also invited to attend the GPG AFA Cymru workshops.

For the first time all panel members have been offered an appraisal this year. It has been hugely beneficial to hear from members their experience of panel and feedback in respect of how panel can be improved. A number of changes are being implemented in panel arrangements following these appraisals.

## Adoption Panel Activity

Panel continues to have a central list of members. Panel has now moved across to use Microsoft Teams as a virtual platform. To Panel's credit no panels were disrupted or cancelled due to COVID or lockdown. The service are grateful to panel members for their flexibility in adapting to the new arrangements. As part of the implementation of the virtual boardroom to share panel documents panel members have been provided with tablets which is far more efficient and safe in terms of document sharing.

Quarterly business meetings have now been arranged for 2021-22 in order that panel members can consider quality assurance issues, performance and learning from disruptions.

### *Number of Panels held*

	Period 2020/21
Number of Planned Panels held	50
Number of extra, replacement or emergency panels	2 1 panel was for a termination of approval the first WBAS has undertaken
Number of Panels cancelled due to lack of quoracy	0
Number of Panels cancelled for other reasons*	4 – No cases And on two of these sessions panel appraisals were undertaken.

Table 1 – Number of Panels held 2020/21

The service has referred one set of adopters back to panel who recommended that the couple's approval was terminated. This case highlighted a number of learning points for the service and as a result the following has been undertaken:

- Implementation of the annual review of adopters process
- Strengthening of the interface between the service and the three LA front door teams (this work had started just prior to Lockdown)

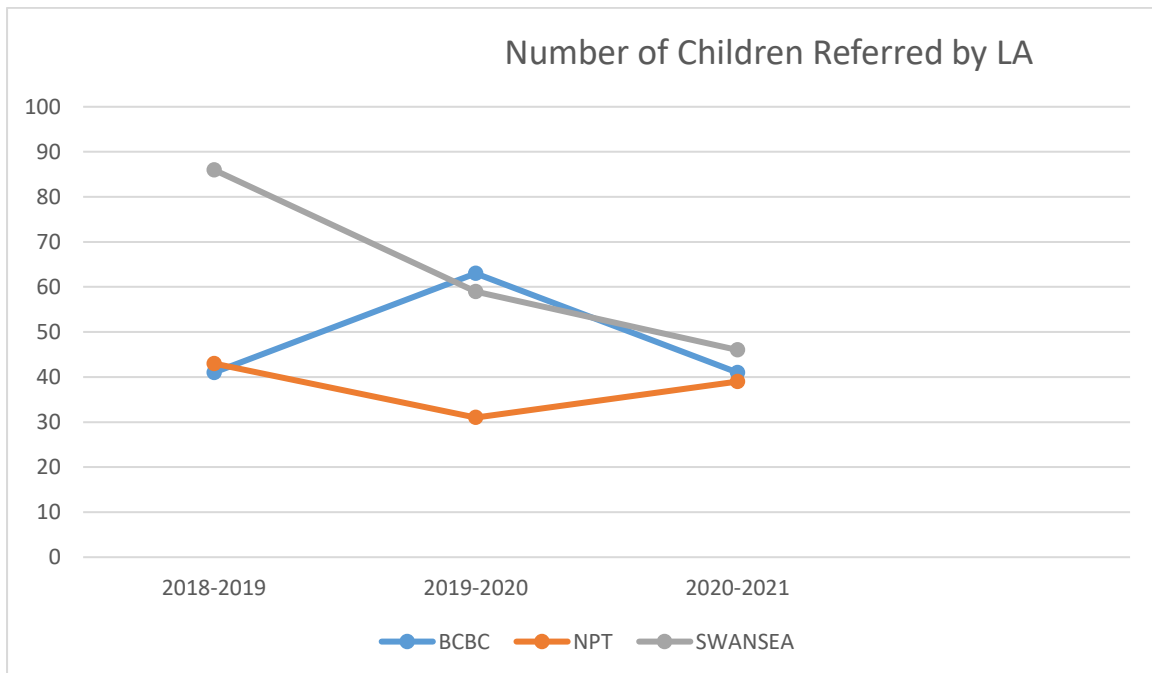
## 5. Children

### Performance in relation to Twintracking/matching and Placement

The service performance in the first two quarters has been maintained despite the significant challenges of COVID in the majority of performance indicators.

### Number of Children Referred for Twin Tracking

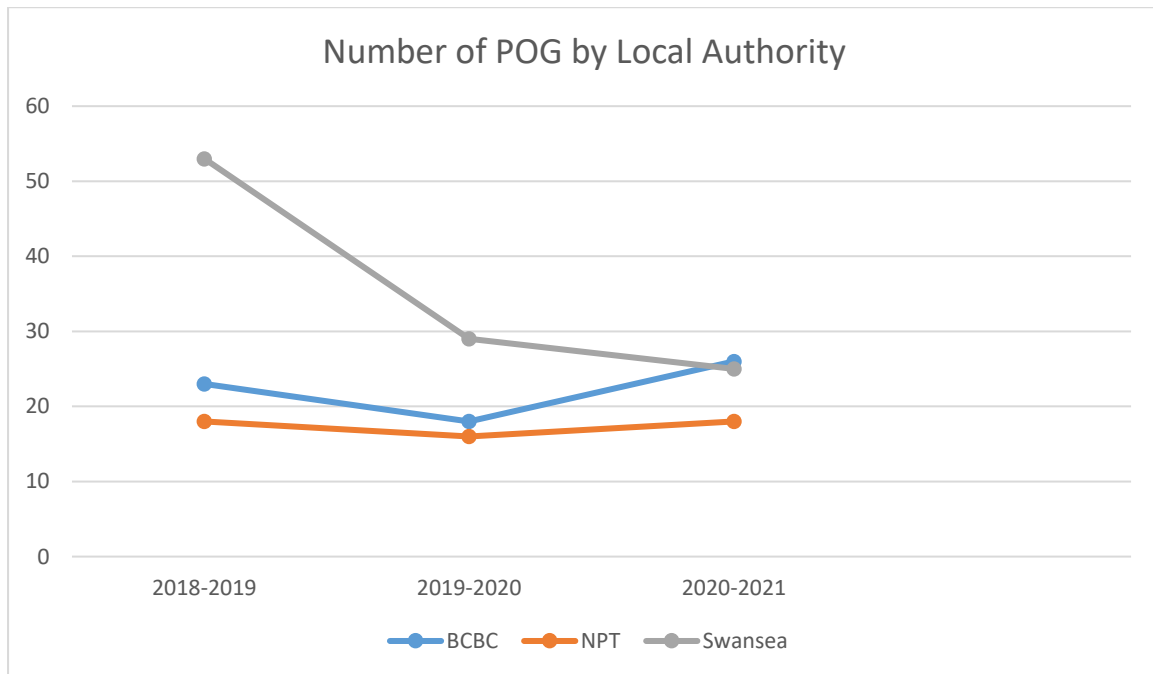
Number of children referred to adoption for twin tracking	Regional Total
2020/2021	129
2019/2020	153
2018/2019	170





**Number of POG in the Region**

Number of children made subject to a Placement order	Regional Total
2020/2021	69
2019/2020	63
2018/2019	94



It is hard to predict the number of referrals and placement orders that are likely to be achieved this forthcoming year. The impact of COVID, the extended periods of lockdown and closure of schools for significant periods is not yet known. It could be likely that there is an increase in referrals during this recovery year.

**Number of Children Matched for Adoption**

Number of children placed for adoption	BCBC	NPT	Swansea	Regional Total
2020/2021	23	19	37	79

2019/2020	22	22	36	80
2018/2019	26	13	31	71

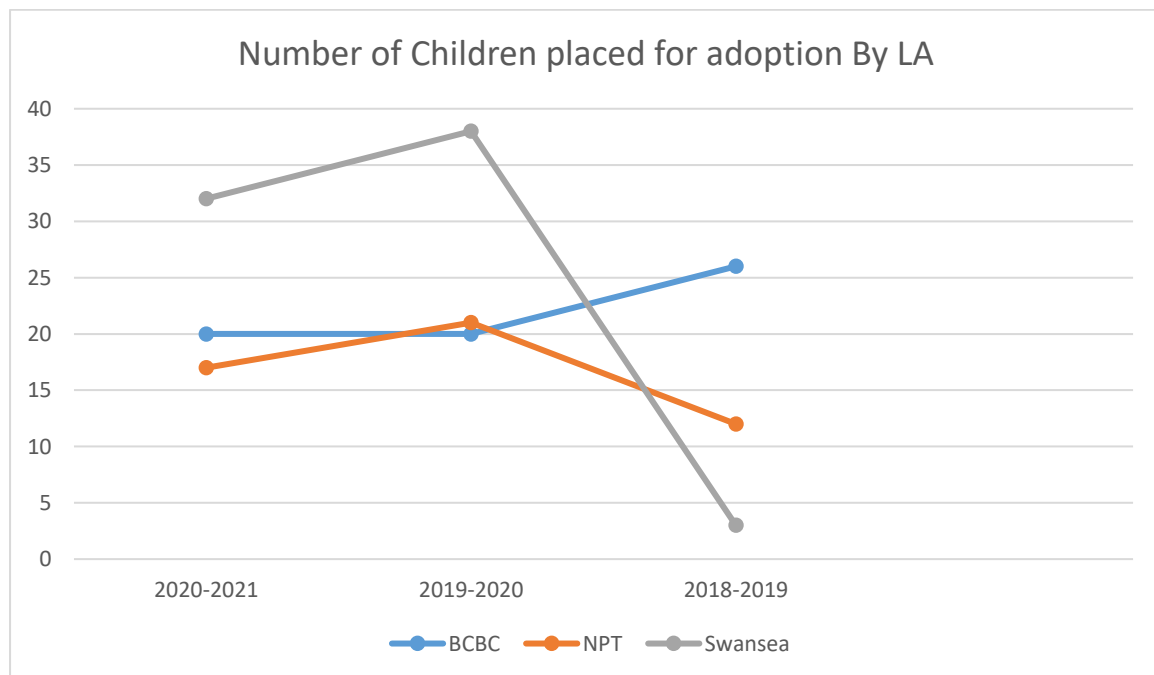
**Table 3 - Number of Children matched for Adoption**

One area which has been impacted by COVID is the placement of children, this is due to so few children achieving placement in the first months of the quarter. Once the risk assessment process was established the children waiting were placed and there has been no repeat of these early months although COVID did pose additional challenges in terms of timescale. 12 children were matched but not placed at the end of the year, these children were three sibling groups and 5 single children.

***Number of Children Placed for Adoption in the Region.***

Number of children placed for adoption	Regional Total
2020/2021	69
2019/2020	80
2018/2019	67

**Table 3 - Number of Children Placed for Adoption in the region**



**Location of children Placed for Adoption**

	BCBC	NPT	Swansea	Regional Total
Placed in Western Bay Region 2018/19	19	10	20	49
Placed in Western Bay Region 2019/20	11	15	18	44
Placed in Western Bay Region 2020/21	17	12	26	55
Placed outside of Western Bay region in 2018/19	7	2	9	18
Placed outside of Western Bay Region in 2019/20	9	6	21	36
Placed outside of Western Bay Region in 2020/21	3	5	6	14

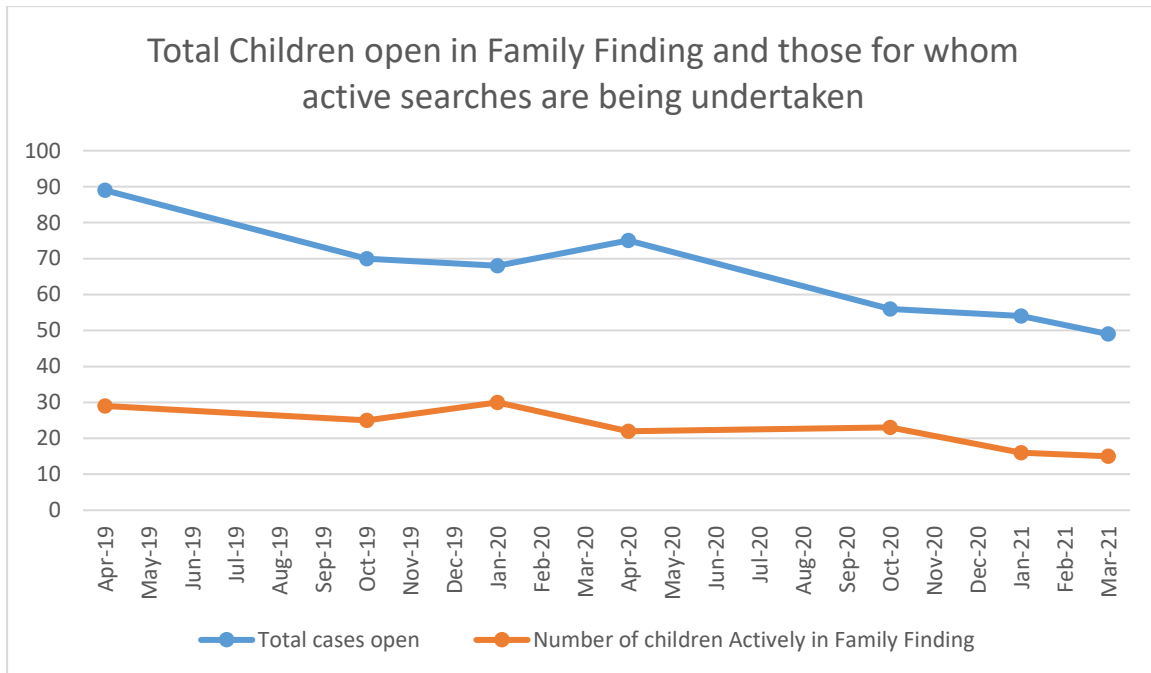
A move away from the reliance on out of county placements has been seen in this year, there has been a steady flow of adopters approved each month and the service intends to build on placing children with regional adopters where at all possible. Monthly linking meetings have been reintroduced and strengthened to ensure that children can be matched where appropriate with Western Bay adopters. Interagency fees are only considered for children with complex needs where there are no potential links with WB adopters. Two virtual profiling events have taken place this year which have been successful in linking children.

In relation to the 14 children placed out of the region, 12 were placed in England, the location/provider of these placements were as follows:

Sibling group of three children	Adoption East Midlands
Single child	Croydon Local Authority

Single child –Birth mother significantly drank alcohol in pregnancy	Adoption Focus - Leicester
Single child, genetic condition and had undergone heart surgery at birth	Barnardos South west
Single child placed with siblings	St Davids- South Wales
Sibling group of two –unable to be – placed in south Wales due to birth father	Adopters for Adoption -Kent
Single older child – significant attachment behaviours	St Davids Cardiff
Single older child	Adopt south west -Devon
Single older child	Barnardos south west - Somerset
Single older child	Adoption for Adopters - Surrey
Single older child	Adoption Focus - Midlands

The number of children open to family finding has also reduced considerably over the last two years which is shown below:



As of the 1<sup>st</sup> April there are 49 children within the family finding function, these can be broken down into the following categories

	Strong link	Matched booked into panel	Change of plan (awaiting final court outcome)	No links –active family finding
BCBC	5	0	5	9
NPT	4	2	0	5
SWANSEA	6	6	5	2
Total				16

The service is currently looking actively for placements for 16 children (this was 29 in March 2020 and 33 in March 2019).

Of these 16 children there is one sibling group of three children all who have significant developmental delay and are undergoing genetic testing, three sibling groups of two children and 7 single children. One of the single children requires a placement out of South Wales due to birth parents involvement with the forced adoption groups. Four of the other single children have complex medical issues. Referrals to the Adopting Together Service have been made for these children at a very early stage to maximise their potential for a placement to be identified.

### ***Number of Adoption Order's granted***

Number of AOG	BCBC	NPT	Swansea	Regional Total
2020/2021	20	14	29	63
2019/2020	17	14	31	62
2018/2019	24	18	30	72

**Table 3 - Number of Adoption Orders granted**

Despite lockdown the Court have continued to manage the Adoption Hearings without any impact in performance.

49 children were placed in their adoption placement with no AOG (BCBC 16, NPT 12 and Swansea 24) as at 1<sup>st</sup> April 2021

Number of applications before the court or in process	26
Number of children placed in Q4 (not eligible for the application to be made)	21
Children eligible for application but application not yet made	2 – two older children adopters not yet ready to make application

### **Disruptions & Breakdowns of Placement**

Within Western Bay in the reporting period there has been no placement disruptions post formal placement. There has however been one disruption during the introductions phase prior to formal placement. Regional manager who had not been involved in the matching process has met all involved staff and undertaken a review of what happened. This will be made available to Management Board and panel.

### ***Priorities for improvement in respect of Children during 2021-22***

The forthcoming year will see the launch of the Marketshare project. The purpose of this pilot is to test the impact of implementing an upfront agreement on placement numbers between the Regional Collaborative and the VAAs. It is hoped that by establishing closer partnership relationships between the two sectors (statutory and voluntary) this will make a positive difference to the length of time children wait for an adoption placement, reduce the number of children remaining in foster care or having their Placement Order revoked and see more Welsh children placed within Wales.

Development of the understanding the child day as part of the transition service is a key priority, developing a small team to lead on the implementation (using core budget and maternity savings creatively) will support this being embedded across the service.

In this recovery year coming out of Lockdown the service will aim to place as many children as this year.

## **6. Adopters**

### **Performance/Enquiries/Stage Two Model**

Western Bay Adoption Service has been in the fortunate position to continue to attract a number of prospective adopters who have enquired from both word of mouth and through accessing the Website. Despite the challenges posed by COVID there is real evidence that both the advertising on radio and our improved website are having an impact as referenced by enquirers.



### ***Number of adopter enquiries and approvals***

	2018/19	2019/20	2020/21
Number of adopter enquiries	134	166	257
Number of adopter approvals	42	54	53
Number of Placements Generated	44	62	64

The service is starting to address the issue of ensuring that adopters for siblings are approved with a continued increase in the number of placements that are generated by the approvals.

It is also pleasing to see the increase in enquiries to the service as a result of the focused marketing activity, enhanced website, social media campaigns and radio advertising.

An audit of the 53 approved adopters has been undertaken and the following identified:

Locality	Total Number of Adopters
Bridgend	9
Swansea	25
Neath Port Talbot	8
Cardiff and Valley areas	7
Carmarthenshire and Tenby	3
England (adopters originally from Wales)	1

The location of the adopters does prove problematic as a larger number of children come through Swansea as the larger LA which does make it difficult to place children in Swansea who are also the larger producer of adopters and this is an area that will need to be addressed by the marketing officer this year.

Of the 53 approved adopters 10 were in a same sex relationship and 4 were single adopters. Three of the approved adopters were the child's foster carers.

## **Priorities for improvement during 2021-22**

In relation to the forthcoming year the service aims to build on the number of approved adopters achieving at least the same amount as the last two years. Identifying placements which will be a match to the children we have referred to the service will be the focus of work. The target set for adopter approvals this forthcoming year is 55, maintaining the performance of the previous two years whilst coming out of COVID 19.

## **7. Advertising and Marketing**

Marketing activity continued to be focused on digital activity and radio advertising into the final months of 2021 - peaking with National Adoption Week (12 – 18 October) and the launch of Western Bay's video series, the national podcast and our new advert on Nation FM.



National activity during National Adoption Week (NAW) consisted of a series of webinars under the 'Lets Talk Adoption' campaign title covering a range of subjects - such as LGBTQ+ adoption using a variety of welsh adopters and workers.

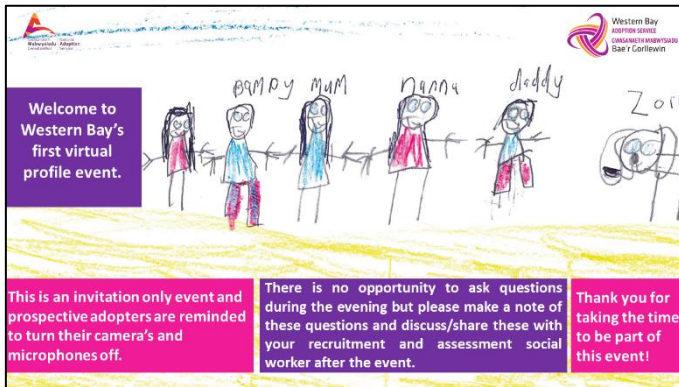
The podcast 'Let the truth be told' was also launched during NAW featuring one of Western Bay's couples. The podcast has

been received successfully by our audiences, available on all the major streaming sites and has actually been entered and shortlisted into the British Podcasting Awards 2021, where the national team are hopeful of some recognition in the welsh spoken category



Western Bay experienced some positive results on the back of the national activity and regional activity with 400 visitors to our website and almost 30 new followers to our Facebook page. More on this can be seen in the digital marketing performance page.





During October we launched our first ever virtual profiling event which again in line with the above digital activity was received well and was a success.

A number of matches were made as a result of the event and it is a practice we are currently continuing and developing.

Expanding on the theme of #LetsTalkAdoption recently approved

Western Bay adopters talked about their experience of the profiling event – they have actually recently been placed with a little boy as a result of the event! They are very active on social media and keen to work with as advocates for adoption.



Our regular advertising campaign with Nation FM resumed first week of November following NAW ensuring that Western Bay was kept in the front of our audiences mind's following all the discussion during October.

Ensuring that we had integrated marketing activity to really get the most mileage out of such a busy month in October, Western Bay's 'Our Family' video series was launched on our social media and website. Engagement and reception was exceptional with the choice of featured adopters resonating with staff and potential adopters alike.



None of the featured adopters have had what could be called a smooth experience/journey, so their stories of joy and success carried even more weight. The videos will be used more heavily on our website and YouTube going forward - providing Western Bay with valuable marketing content for our adopters, with a focus on each of the key adoption stages.

December has historically seen a large decrease in enquiries over the last few years as people's minds are occupied with the festivities. Desiring to address we started a Christmas social media campaign early, at the end of November called #FirstFamilyChristmas.



Using a variety of media releases via the local authority communications teams and colourful, emotional social media the aim was to really tap into the spirit of the season and use that emotion as a vehicle for driving enquiries.

We ended up with almost 20 enquiries for December and our most ever in January at almost 40.

As we've entered into 2021 increased marketing cross working with the various WBAS teams has fostered a development of our

marketing messages, adding more adoption support elements and sensitivity to the wider picture of adoption with regards to birth parents. This will continue to develop.

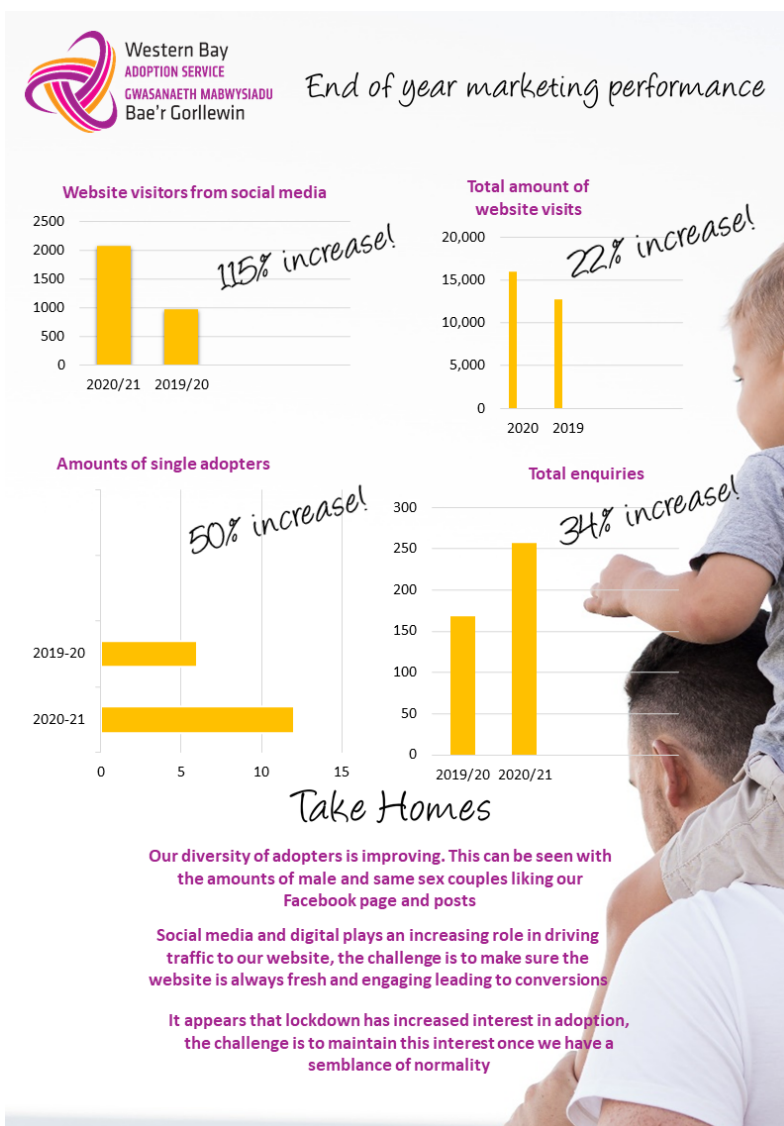
As restrictions loosen, businesses become more flexible and foot fall increases Western Bay will increase its visibility in key public areas and presence with local employers, this coupled with our strong digital capabilities should hopefully keep our high rates of enquiries consistent.

Recruitment of adopters in NPT and Bridgend remains lower in comparison to Swansea, which whilst to be expected, is something that marketing attempts to address with extra paid for advertising on Facebook and local publications targeting these areas



### ***Priorities for improvement during 2021-22***

The Marketing Officer will have a focus of activity in NPT and BCBC areas to bring the number of adopters recruited from these areas up. The use of social media and online advertising will continue as it has been positive however with Lockdown easing the Marketing officer will also look for other events or face to face opportunities.



## 8. Development of Adoption Support

Embedding adoption support within the service has remained a key priority. Lockdown posed additional challenges for some families who were already struggling, for others the pressure of school being taken away from them alleviated some stress and anxiety within their home. Those families open to adoption support continued to receive weekly intervention during lockdown via virtual means.

Key highlights from adoption support:

- No waiting list for initial assessment of adoption support needs, all cases are responded to, signposted or allocated within the week of being received,

- 25 families have been referred to the TESSA project between October 1<sup>st</sup> and 1<sup>st</sup> March 2021. Three families have since been withdrawn or not engaged with the programme.
- 11 families have had a psychological consultation during the reporting period. Three families have been able to access the group work. Following their initial meeting 22 families referred have been offered parent partner support. The TESSA coordinator has maintained intensive support to 4 referred families supporting with education issues. One family is also receiving support from the in house therapy team (NVR) in conjunction with the TESSA intervention due to the young person displaying high levels of aggression.
- From September until Lockdown in December the CYP worker provided an afterschool youth club to 5 adopted children who were really struggling at home. This was received extremely positively. The plan is for this group to restart now that lockdown arrangements are easing. Contact was maintained with the young people via virtual means during lockdown. A Halloween themed workshop was held in half term at the wellbeing centre and attended by 5 young people aged 7-11 years old. This included mindful crafts, mindful meditation and fun building activities.  
The CYP worker continued to offer one to one intensive support to 6 young people who were struggling with school and their wellbeing. As part of that work she was beginning to talk to them about becoming young ambassadors which is something we are seeking to develop this year. The CYP worker has supported 10 schools during the reporting period on training and support in trauma, attachment and relationship based play. This work was integrated with the work undertaken with the school and young person so as to ensure a consistent approach to the young person.
- The service has in excess of 900+ open letterbox cases and approximately 57 contact investigations ongoing and there are 5 cases which have direct face to face contact supported by the team. Parents are now able to be referred for support by the family finding social worker to ensure that they receive support to maintain contact with their adopted children. Despite the challenge of lockdown staff have maintained the running of the letterbox system.
- The LJW project continues to support the timely completion of Life journey materials at matching and second review

### ***Priorities for improvement during 2021-22***

- Embedding the adoption support Core offer
- Implement drop in sessions and workshops in respect of LJ work
- Provide training to CSW's in undertaking direct work with Looked after children
- Develop adopter champions and Young ambassadors
- Work with reflect to develop birth parent support and co-produce birth parent support sessions
- Offer holiday and afterschool activities to adopted young people.



## **9. Policies and Procedures**

The Service will be working with NAS to review of all policies and procedures across the Welsh regions and VAA's.

## **10. CSSIW**

The service was last inspected during 2018-19 and an appropriate subsequent plan drawn up which has been reviewed at the Management Board with actions completed.

## **11. Local Monitoring and Governance**

The Management Board is fully compliant with the Directions Powers Regulations, the Adoption and Children Act 2002 (Joint Adoption Arrangements) (Wales) 2015 - with health and education representatives having now joined the Board. There are terms of reference in place.

Monitoring and governance of the service is the responsibility of the Management Board, which initially met every two months and during the latter part of the year moved to quarterly meetings. The Board members interrogate data provided on a monthly, quarterly and annual basis. Strategic decisions are shared with the board for approval whereas, in the main, operational decisions are overseen by the Regional Manager who is supervised by the 'Host' authority Head of Service. The service is measured on both the service plan and the national performance indicators through regular reports, presenting the achievements of the service compared to previous years and where data is available, with other regions across Wales.

An annual report is presented to Scrutiny Committees in all three local authorities. Periodically, reports are submitted and shared with Cabinet, Scrutiny Panels and Corporate Parenting Cabinets/Committees.

In addition the regional adoption service has a management by exception route to the Western Bay Programme Team/Leadership Group if there is ever a need to resolve issues at a regional strategic level. Performance indicators are reported to the National Adoption Central team on a quarterly basis, this information is provided to the Advisory Group and the Governance Board of the National Adoption Service.

## **12. Consultations and engagement of those who use the Service**

The use of survey's and qualitative data has been developed during this period with survey's being used to collect feedback with the following pertinent points:

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## Closure

At the point of closure following the granting of an AO adopters are sent a closing survey about their experience of working with the service. 18 responses have been received in this time frame. All 18 respondents rated the service either good or excellent. They used words such as reliable, empathetic, knowledgeable and timely. All those who completed the survey advised that they would recommend WBAS to others considering adoption.

## Therapeutic Parenting Support

Following adopters attending this group they are asked to complete a survey, 9 responses were received from the cohort who attended the training which ran into the new year. All those who attended found the sessions useful and really benefitted from meeting and hearing from other adopters in similar situations.

## Future Developments 2021-22

The therapeutic parenting course has now been split into two different course, the adoption support service are now running a course for adoptive parents who have had their child placed for under 12 months (early identification and support before issues become established) and a course for adoptive parents whose children have been placed longer than 12 months.

## 13. Quality Assurance, Compliments, comments, complaints, safeguarding issues, whistleblowing and representation.

Attempts are made to address any complaints received by the service at the informal stage but registered with the relevant local authority within the region. Fortunately complaints remain very low with many issues being resolved informally before reaching the formal process. Five complaints have been received in this reporting period, two in relation to requests for exceptional adoption allowances being denied, one in relation to the provision and timeliness of adoption support being provided to a child placed in England, one in relation to a second time adoption assessment and finally one from a birth parent who was not in agreement to the service sharing any information about him with prospective adopters. All of these were resolved informally.

Audits were undertaken in Q1 and Q2 in line with the Quality Assurance Framework which was developed in the early part of the year. A audit of staff supervision was undertaken in Q4. This indicated that staff were well supervised on case issues but there was less of a focus on staff development and training. The use of the supervision template was not widely used and measures are in place to address this.

A selection of some of the recent compliments received by Western Bay from service users and stakeholders is below.



## 14. Overall assessment of the Service

The overall assessment of the service during these difficult times is good, new ways of working have been identified for all aspects of the work of the service and performance has very much remained on target in the majority of areas. The service has continued to develop significant

areas of the service and a growing number of adopters have agreed to support marketing activity. The use of virtual media necessitated by COVID has also supported new ways of training and learning which will be continued after COVID is over.

## 15. Future recommendation

The service are very aware that this year has been a very different due to the Pandemic and the forthcoming year will be very much recovery. Areas and priorities for future development for the forthcoming year have been considered within the body of the report, however the key priorities for the service are:

- Embedding the Good practise Guides within current practise
- Learning from cases that have not gone as well as we would have liked, these will be considered at whole service events, panel business meetings and a summary provided to the interface meetings and management Board.
- Supporting the development of the WCCIS adoption module
- Development of adopter champions across the LA's and young people's ambassadors to support service development.

June 2021



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# Agenda Item 8

## Report of the Convener

Child and Family Services Scrutiny Performance Panel - 22 June 2021

### Child and Family Services Scrutiny Review of the Year 2020/21 and Draft Work Programme 2021/22

<b>Purpose:</b>	To reflect on the Panel's work, experience, and effectiveness over the past year, and to develop a work programme going forward that will provide ongoing challenge to Child and Family Services performance, to ensure that as the service is undergoing major change, performance is maintained and that further improvements are made across all areas of the service.
<b>Content:</b>	Summary of the Year's Activities 2020/21; Draft Work Programme 2021/22
<b>Councillors are being asked to:</b>	Reflect on the past year's activities; Share ideas to improve the effectiveness of Child and Family Services Scrutiny; Agree the work programme for the Council year 2021/2022.
<b>Lead Councillor:</b>	Paxton Hood-Williams, Convener Child and Family Services Scrutiny Performance Panel
<b>Lead Officer &amp; Report Author:</b>	Liz Jordan, Scrutiny Officer Tel: 01792 637314 E-mail: <a href="mailto:liz.jordan@swansea.gov.uk">liz.jordan@swansea.gov.uk</a>

#### 1.0 Review of the Year 2020-21

- 1.1 The Panel is invited to reflect on the year's scrutiny work, experience and effectiveness. Any ideas that will improve the effectiveness of the scrutiny of Child and Family Services are welcome.
- 1.2 To aid Panel Members, a summary of the year's work 2020/21 has been included at 1.3.
- 1.3 Child and Family Services Work Programme 2020-21:

Date	Items Discussed
<b>Meeting 1</b> 28 Oct 2020	1. WAO report: Follow-up review of corporate arrangements for the safeguarding of children – City and County of Swansea 2. Draft Work Programme 2020/21
<b>Meeting 2 - Joint Social Services Meeting</b> 16 Dec 2020	1. Update on Managing Covid-19 pandemic 2. Performance Monitoring

<b>Meeting 3 - Joint Social Services Meeting</b> 26 Jan 2020	1. Update on Managing Covid-19 pandemic 2. Performance Monitoring
<b>Meeting 4 - Joint Social Services Meeting</b> 15 Feb 2021	1. Draft Budget Proposals for Child and Family Services / Adult Services 2. Update on Managing Covid-19 pandemic
<b>Meeting 5</b> 24 Mar 2021	1. WAO report: Tackling Violence Against Women, Domestic Abuse and Sexual Violence (includes fieldwork in Swansea amongst others) 2. Performance Monitoring 3. Safeguarding Quality Unit Annual Report

1.4 Some of the questions the Panel may want to consider:

- What went well?
- What did not go so well?
- Has the Panel's work focused on the right things?
- What have we learnt that will help us with future CFS scrutiny?

## 2.0 The Future Work Programme 2021-22

2.1 The Panel agrees the Child and Family Services Scrutiny Work Programme in May/June each year for the coming council year. The work programme can now be discussed and agreed for the 2021-22 Council year.

2.2 The draft Work Programme 2021-22 is attached at Appendix 1. This work programme is a combination of issues outstanding from last year, items the Panel looks at annually or has chosen to keep a watching brief on, and items highlighted to the Panel as key issues by the Child and Family Services Department/Cabinet Member.

2.3 The Panel is asked to consider and discuss the draft Child and Family Services Scrutiny Work Programme attached, to make any additions/amendments as required and then to agree its contents.

## Appendix 1

### CHILD & FAMILY SERVICES SCRUTINY PERFORMANCE PANEL WORK PROGRAMME 2021/22

<p><b>Meeting 1</b> Tuesday 25 May 2021</p> <p><b>4pm</b></p>	<p><b>Confirmation of Convener</b></p> <p><b>Update on progress with CAMHS</b> <i>Joanne Abbott-Davies, Assistant Director of Strategy &amp; Partnerships, West Glamorgan University Health Board</i> <i>Julie Davies, Head of Child and Family Services</i></p> <p><b>Briefing on Youth Offending Service</b> <i>Jay McCabe, Principal Officer Bays+ and Youth Justice Services</i></p>
<p><b>Meeting 2</b> Tuesday 22 June 2021</p> <p><b>4pm</b></p>	<p><b>Update on Regional Adoption Service</b> <i>Nichola Rogers, Regional Adoption Manager, Western Bay Adoption Service</i></p> <p><b>Initial feedback from CIW Assurance Visit</b> <i>Julie Davies, Head of Child and Family Services</i></p> <p><b>Draft Work Programme 2021/22</b></p>
<p><b>Meeting 3</b> Wednesday 11 August 2021</p> <p><b>4pm</b></p>	<p><b>Performance Monitoring</b> <i>Julie Davies, Head of Child and Family Services</i></p> <p><b>CIW Assurance Visit Full Report</b> <i>Julie Davies, Head of Child and Family Services</i></p> <p><b>Outcome from Ty Nant CIW Inspection</b> <i>Julie Davies, Head of Child and Family Services</i></p>
<p><b>Meeting 4</b> Tuesday 21 September 2021</p> <p><b>4pm</b></p>	<p><b>Progress on Child and Family Improvement Programme</b> <i>Julie Davies, Head of Child and Family Services</i> <i>Gemma Whyley, Child and Family Services Project Manager</i></p> <p><b>Corporate Parenting Board Update</b> <i>Gemma Whyley, Child and Family Services Project Manager</i></p> <p><b>Update on Child Disability Services</b> <i>Julie Davies, Head of Child and Family Services</i> <i>Christopher Francis – Principal Officer, Child and Family Services</i></p>

<b>Meeting 5</b> Wednesday 3 November 2021  4pm	<b>Performance Monitoring</b> <i>Julie Davies, Head of Child and Family Services</i>  <b>Adolescent Strategy and Action Plan</b> <i>Jay McCabe, Principal Officer Bays+ and Youth Justice Services</i>
<b>Meeting 6</b> Monday 13 December 2021  4pm	<b>Update on Support for Carers (including assessments)</b> <i>Dave Howes TBC / Julie Davies TBC / Amy Hawkins TBC</i> <b>AS Panel Members to be invited for this item</b>
<b>Meeting 7</b> Tuesday 25 January 2022  4pm	<b>Delivery of Corporate Priorities in relation to Child and Family Services</b> <i>Elliott King, Cabinet Member for Children Services</i> <i>Dave Howes, Director of Social Services</i>  <b>Performance Monitoring</b> <i>Julie Davies, Head of Child and Family Services</i>
<b>Additional Meeting Budget</b>  Date TBC February 2022	<b>Draft Budget Proposals for Child and Family Services</b>
<b>Meeting 8</b> Wednesday 9 March 2022  4pm	<b>Safeguarding Quality Unit Annual Report (item to include briefing on safeguarding issues in relation to forced marriages)</b> <i>Damian Rees</i>  <b>Update from Regional Safeguarding Board on how regional arrangements are working TBC</b> <i>Invite representative</i>

**Future work programme items:**

- Complaints Annual Report 2020/21 for Child and Family Services / Adult Services **Scheduled to go to AS Panel on 20 October 2021 – CFS Panel Members to be invited**
- Wales Audit Office Reports (dates to be confirmed)
- Why children become looked after (TBC)
- Examples of tools and techniques employed by front line staff in family engagement (TBC)
- Case Studies on Edge of Care (date TBC)