



City and County of Swansea

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

Multi-Location Meeting - Gloucester Room, Guildhall / MS

Teams

Tuesday, 23 January 2024 at 4.30 pm

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

Councillor(s)

A M Day
V A Holland
E T Kirchner

Councillor(s)

M S Tribe
S M Jones
W G Lewis

Councillor(s)

K M Griffiths
S Joy
M Jones

Other Attendees

Louise Gibbard
Claire Norman

Cabinet Member – Care Services
Lead Nurse, Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services

Officer(s)

Louise Beckett
Julie Davies
David Howes
Liz Jordan
Josh Price

Policy and Strategy Officer, Child and Family
Head of Child & Family Services
Director of Social Services
Scrutiny Officer
Participation and Children's Right Officer, Child and Family

Apologies for Absence

Councillor(s): Y V Jardine

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 5 December 2023 as an accurate record of the meeting.

4 Public Question Time

No questions were received.

5 Presentation - Update on Progress with Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services (CAMHS)

Claire Norman, Lead Nurse CAMHS, Swansea University Health Board attended to update the Panel on progress over the last year stating there has been a more focussed attempt to work more within the community and with reorganisation of the Service there is one pathway route for interventions.

Discussion Points:

- Panel asked if there is a link between the increase in referrals among certain age groups and school absence during the pandemic. Heard it is difficult to know but they would be surprised if there was not a link.
- In terms of the graph on page 11, Panel felt that referrals are beginning to drop off from the peak and asked if this is likely to continue. Informed they do not expect there to be a big peak again.
- Panel queried the routes for referral, who can refer and if it has remained fairly constant. Heard it has remained fairly constant because there have not been any significant changes in terms of referral access routes over the years. However, in November 2023 they extended it so school-based counsellors can refer in as well.
- In terms of the graphs on page 13 and 14, the Panel felt they are showing the improvement they would like to see but they do not understand how the trajectories are developed, as they do not seem to make sense compared with the actual figures. Heard when CAMHS moved over to the Health Board it was agreed that a conservative approach be taken in terms of trajectory.
- Panel made an observation about the second graph on page 13. They acknowledged the improvements in the general trend of the curve but felt it would be helpful if both axes started at zero so the true trajectories can be seen. Heard they will take this point forward and make sure they are accurate moving forward.
- Cllr Mary Jones who chaired the original scrutiny inquiry on CAMHS congratulated the HB on all their work. She feels it is a different service now to what it was when it started out, was pleased to hear there are now referrals through Education professionals but felt the one negative issue is access to the actual service which is difficult because of where it is located in the centre of Swansea. Panel agreed it has seen a massive increase in improvement in CAMHS and is hopeful to see it continue.
- Panel informed on 9th February 2024 there will be a children's mental health event. They hope some of the Panel will want to attend and will provide further information.

Actions:

- Further information on children's mental health event to be circulate to the Panel.

6 Corporate Parenting Board Update

Louise Gibbard, Cabinet Member for Care Services and Julie Davies, Head of Child and Family Services attended to provide an update and answer questions.

Discussion Points:

- Panel heard Welsh Government launched a Corporate Parenting Charter in September 2023. Swansea was one of the first to sign up to this.
- Panel heard young people have shared their thoughts in a series of podcasts which will be available on the Council website. The links to these will be shared with Panel Members.
- On page 22 paragraph 1.4, Panel noted there were 479 looked after children but could not get the numbers to add up to 479. Informed the numbers do not add up because only some of the main categories of where children are living have been included.
- Panel queried how many out of county placements there are and were pleased to hear that less than a handful are living in England.
- Panel noted the number of looked after children in November 2023 was 479 and asked if this was going up or down. Informed it has stayed roughly the same.
- Regarding the Destination of Care Experienced, Panel asked if Department is happy they are going on to something which is supported. Heard every child and young person up to the age of 21 has an allocated young person advisor, and up to age 18 has a social worker as well, so will have a pathway plan in place. Full report to be brought to the Panel.
- Panel stated it had concerns previously about outcomes looked after children are achieving and asked when it could see further information on this. Officers agreed to check with Education when a presentation on 'virtual schools' can be brought to the Panel in the new municipal year.

Actions:

- Link to podcasts to be circulated to Panel Members
- Item on 'Destination of Care Experienced' to be added to future work plan.
- Presentation on 'Virtual Schools' to be added to work plan for next municipal year.

7 Work Plan 2023-24

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

The meeting ended at 5.15 pm