



City and County of Swansea

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

Multi-Location Meeting - Lilian Hopkin Room, Guildhall / MS

Teams

Monday, 24 June 2024 at 4.00 pm

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

**Councillor(s)**

A M Day  
S M Jones

**Councillor(s)**

M S Tribe  
S Joy

**Councillor(s)**

Y V Jardine  
W G Lewis

**Other Attendees**

Louise Gibbard

Cabinet Member for Care Services

**Officer(s)**

Julie Davies  
Chris Griffiths  
David Howes  
Liz Jordan

Head of Child & Family Services  
Principal Officer - Residential Services  
Director of Social Services  
Scrutiny Officer

**Apologies for Absence**

Councillor(s): K M Griffiths, V A Holland and E T Kirchner

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**1 Confirmation of Convener**

Councillor Paxton Hood-Williams was confirmed as Convener of the Child and Family Services Panel for 2024-25.

**2 Disclosure of Personal and Prejudicial Interests**

No disclosures of interest were received.

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

No declarations were made.

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

Panel agreed the minutes of the meeting on 12 March 2024 as an accurate record of the meeting.

**5 Public Question Time**

No questions were received.

## **6 Role of the Panel and Review of the Year 2023-24**

Panel Members were asked for comments on the work of the Panel in 2023-24.

Panel feels one area it must continue to monitor is Mental Health, particularly transition from Child and Family Services (CFS) to Adult Services (AS) mental health and the length of time taking for referrals. Agreed to discuss with officers outside of the meeting.

[Following the meeting Panel decided to have two separate items – Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services item to CFS Panel, and Regional Partnership Board's Mental Health Strategy to AS Panel.]

## **7 Care Inspectorate Wales (CIW) Inspection Report on Ty Nant and Heol Tir Du**

Louise Gibbard, Cabinet Member for Care Services, Julie Davies, Head of Child and Family Services and Chris Griffiths, Principal Officer Residential Services attended to feedback on the CIW inspection reports.

Discussion Points:

- Panel informed these are two very positive inspection reports with no priority notices, only a few areas for improvement over the next 12 months and action plans are in place in both Homes to address these.
- Heard staffing and recruitment is an ongoing challenge across Child and Family Services, however they have had an aggressive recruitment drive and managed to increase staffing significantly in these Homes to improve staff consistency.
- Heard Ty Nant's model of care is changing to a Trauma Informed Home and is in transition at the moment.
- Panel queried if in terms of residential care, the department is satisfied there are sufficient places available in Swansea. Heard that in terms of residential children's places, there are not enough places at the moment, in Swansea or neighbouring Authorities, so still having to use residential children's homes further afield.

## **8 Delivery of Corporate Priorities / Policy Commitments in relation to Child and Family Services**

Louise Gibbard, Cabinet Member for Care Services, David Howes, Director of Social Services and Julie Davies, Head of Child and Family Services attended for brief the Panel on this item and answered the Panel's questions.

Discussion Points:

- Heard in terms of safeguarding, the Early Help model is working really well; a lot of work is going on to recruit more foster carers; accommodation continues to be a challenge. Also heard in terms of workforce, recruitment has been a challenge, but the Department is working hard to tap into different sources and the Academy is helping to nurture and develop their own staff.

- Panel feels that in terms of Prevention and Early Intervention, the people best placed to identify potential problems are Health Visitors. Informed the department has a strong working relationship with the health visiting service throughout the Early Help Hub model.
- Panel queried if the Single Point of Entry is working well and heard it is.
- Panel discussed how in a media article that day, Neath Port Talbot Council had been praised, claiming to have reduced looked after children by 50%. Panel feels Swansea has a sensible approach of reducing the numbers over a number of years. Panel asked if there is anything Swansea Council can learn from Neath Port Talbot and heard the two Local Authorities use every opportunity to learn from each other, however, given the context and environment of both Local Authorities is different they have to be cautious how far that learning can go.

## **9 Draft Work Plan 2024-25**

Panel discussed and agreed its work plan for 2024-25 with the following addition:

- Update on Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services (including Transition to Adult Mental Health) added.

The meeting ended at 5.00 pm