



CITY AND COUNTY OF SWANSEA

Dinas A Sir Abertawe

Councillor Christine Richards
Deputy Leader, Cabinet Member,
Children and Young People

CC
Councillor Jane Harris
Chair, Corporate Parenting Board

*Please ask for:
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*Direct Line:
Llinell Uniongyrochol:*

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*Our Ref
Ein Cyf:*

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Dyddiad:*

Scrutiny

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CFS/10

07/04/2017

Summary: This is a letter from the Child and Family Services Scrutiny Performance Panel to the Cabinet Member for Services for Children and Young People following the meeting of the panel on 03 April 2017. It covers the Social Services and Wellbeing (Wales) Act 2014.

Dear Councillor Richards,

This letter is about the April meeting of the Panel.

First of all thank you for attending this meeting and for your valuable contributions. I am also grateful for your offer to comment in writing on our letter from the March meeting.

Social Services and Wellbeing Act (Wales) 2014

Please pass on our thanks to Emma Curtis for her excellent presentation and to Julie Thomas for attending and for her useful contributions.

Overall we are supportive of the approach outlined in the presentation. For your reference I note here some of the issues that we raised:

- The extent to which Signs of Safety has been embedded in all practice – we are happy that this this well on the way to being achieved
- The role of partners continues to be an important issue for us – while we were unable to explore this in detail it is something we hope can be looked at by scrutiny more fully in future
- The journey from an 'eligibility' approach to an approach centred more on a conversation that includes proportionate assessment as required

Overview & Scrutiny / Trosolwg a chraffu

City and County of Swansea / Dinas a Sir Abertawe
Guildhall, Swansea, SA1 4PE / Neuadd Y Ddinas, Abertawe, SA1 4PE

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- we were pleased to hear that this Swansea way of doing things has been influential at the national level. This is a positive reflection on the work of officers in the department
- The potential negative impact on family members when children are taken into care – particularly in respect of housing costs and eligibility
- The improved approach to dealing with timescales particularly in terms of holding up work to wait for reports from relevant professionals when this is not needed
- The respective roles of children and their carers in the direct payments process
- Progress towards implementing the Welsh Community Care Information Solution

Review of the Year

This was an opportunity for the Panel to consider what had worked well over the year and what might be improved.

I am very grateful for your positive comments about the benefits that the Panel had provided to the work of Child and Family Services and our role as a critical friend.

I also welcome your suggestions about how the work might be improved in future.

Specifically we discussed the value of building closer links with the Corporate Parenting Board. As a minimum it would seem reasonable for scrutiny to receive the annual report from the Board and this would be a good opportunity to explore other potential connections. I also note your comments about the value of the Board hearing directly from young people and carers and this is something I hope scrutiny can consider as part of its work in future.

I have copied this letter to Councillor Jane Harris for her awareness as chair of the Board.

We also noted the following topics that we hope will be useful for scrutiny councillors to consider as part of their work planning after May:

- Ongoing performance monitoring of Child and Family Services
- Youth Justice – keeping track of progress
- Adoption services
- Child Disability – this is an issue that has not been covered recently by scrutiny in a significant way
- Ongoing monitoring of services for 16+

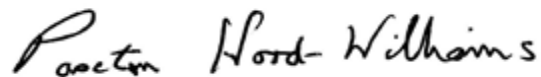
In Conclusion

As this is my final letter as Panel Convener for this Council term, I would like to place on record my thanks to you as Cabinet Member and to all of the officers from Child and Family Services who we have worked with productively over the last few years.

In addition, I would like to thank all of the scrutiny councillors who have participated in the Panel for their hard work and support as well as the officers from the Scrutiny Team as their work is invaluable in ensuring the Panel works effectively.

We hope you find this letter useful and informative. We would welcome your views on any of the issues raised but please note that in this instance, a formal response is not required.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Paxton Hood-Williams". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large initial 'P'.

PAXTON HOOD-WILLIAMS
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