



CITY AND COUNTY OF SWANSEA
DINAS A SIR ABERTAWE

Councillor Mary Jones
Chair, Scrutiny Programme Committee

BY EMAIL

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Our Ref / Ein Cyf: CR/SH
Your Ref / Eich: SPC/2006-17/3
Cyf:
Date / Dyddiad: 3 August 2016

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Dear Mary

Cabinet Member Question Session – 13 June 2016

Thank you for your letter of the 14 July 2016 which follows on from my attendance at the Scrutiny Programme Committee on 13 June 2016. I will respond using the headings outlined in your letter.

Corporate Safeguarding

As you say 'safeguarding vulnerable people' is one of the Council's five Corporate Plan Priorities and one which remains highly visible within the authority. I note the committee's focus on extending responsibilities in this area to external organisations carrying out work for the council. I can report that considerable progress has been made in terms of Safeguarding in contracts; there is a new standard form contract for Community and Adult/Children Services with specific clauses in relation to safeguarding, all new contracts within Social Services have specific safeguarding clauses. A Safeguarding Policy is in the process of being drafted for providers which will clearly state their duties in terms of safeguarding. Before the Council enters into contracts with providers a number of checks are undertaken and these include DBS checks and ensuring staff receive appropriate safeguarding training and refresher training.

I would also like to take the opportunity to encourage scrutiny members to complete the safeguarding training. Records show that less than half the Members present had completed both the training for adults and for children.

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Children and Young People's Partnership

The Partnership Board last met on 13 July 2016. The meeting was very well attended by representatives of all the key agencies with a focus on speech and language. This is a vital area and key to improving outcomes for our most vulnerable children. Work around children's rights has been ongoing in Swansea for a number of years, starting with the concept of restorative practice. The UNCRC provides the opportunity to embed the value base of children's rights and participation in all the work we do. It will also provide the opportunity to ensure we promote evidence based models of intervention that are compatible with this value base. The Signs of Safety (SOS) practice framework adopted by Child and Family services and Rights Respecting Schools would be good examples of this work in practice.

Youth leaders

We currently have 29 full time Lead Worker roles within the Young People Services who work intensively with Young People and their Family. They are a referral only service with referrals coming from social services, schools and careers.

These posts operate in approximate geographical areas and are based at centres in Townhill, Cockett, Blaen-y-maes, Llansamlet, Gorseinon and Central Swansea. Their location is based on need, demand and funding restrictions. The posts are funded by a combination of sources including Communities First, Families First, Welsh Government Youth Work Strategy Grant and Core funding. The team are currently supporting 254 young people and their families from pre 16 referrers and 75 post 16 young people and their families.

In addition to the lead work teams the service also has 7 part time Youth Club leadership posts operating across a range of clubs across the city.

The service also operates a NEETS Team and a Targeted and Specialist Team, which includes the running of the Info-nation Service on the Kingsway in the City Centre.

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Youth offending service

The Western Bay Youth Offending Service (YOS) has been operating since 2014. The transition to a regional service has worked well, with performance sustained and in some areas improved, within a context of efficiencies being made. In summary there has been a reduction in first time entrants to the Criminal Justice System (CJS), a reduction in reoffending, a reduction in the use of custody and in 2015/16 savings of £130,000 were made. In Swansea last year, 7 young people received a custodial sentence, a reduction from 8 the previous year. The current Youth Offending Service Plan has been presented to Western Bay Youth Offending Service Board, Corporate Management Team and will be presented to Corporate Briefing on Thursday 4 August 2016. A presentation of the performance of the service was provided to Scrutiny Performance Panel on Monday 25 July 2016. Performance information relating to YOS will be included in Child and Family Service monthly report.

Flying Start

Following the Scrutiny Planning Conference, the committee agreed to establish further Scrutiny Panels / Working Groups. One of these being **Preparedness for School**, which will look at how support for 0-3 year olds can be improved so that they arrive at school ready to learn. An inquiry will explore the success and performance framework of Flying Start and other initiatives, during the evidence gathering stages.

Children Educated at Home

There is nothing further to report on this other than to reassure that Welsh Government continue to be lobbied to address this issue, which has been a concern for a number of years. In the interim, close working arrangements between the Education department and Child and Family services will continue.

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Budget

Significant savings were made in 2015/16 within Child and Family Services, performance was sustained and successful implementation of the Safe LAC Reduction Strategy continued. Robust financial management continues, however the challenges this year are significant due to uplifts in contract costs and allowances.

Yours sincerely

Christine Richards

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DEPUTY LEADER & CABINET MEMBER FOR
SERVICES FOR CHILDREN & YOUNG PEOPLE

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