



**To/
Councillors
Mark Child, Cabinet Member for Health
and Wellbeing
Jen Raynor, Cabinet Member for
Children, Education and Lifelong
Learning**

*Please ask for:
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Scrutiny

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BY EMAIL

Summary: This is a letter from the Child and Family Services Performance Panel to the Cabinet Members for Health and Wellbeing and for Children, Education and Lifelong Learning following the meeting of the Panel on 14 November 2017. It is about the Family Support Services Commissioning Review focussing on Children with Additional Needs and Disabilities.

Dear Councillors Child and Raynor

Child and Family Services Performance Panel – 14 November 2017

The Panel would like to thank you and the officers for providing the report and attending our meeting to discuss the Family Support Services Commissioning review that is focussing on children with additional needs and disabilities.

We are writing to you to share the views of the panel, and where necessary, raise any issues or recommendations for your consideration and response. Find below the issues the panel would like to highlight to you and Cabinet on the 16 November arising from the discussion.

1. It is good to see inclusion and a detailed consultation exercise to gain views of disability services from children and young people although we appreciate the difficulty in getting large numbers to participate in this.
2. We recognise that there are two commissioning reviews looking at additional needs, the family support aspect but also the Additional Learning Needs review being led by Education. We were pleased to hear that the departments are working closely together and that these two pieces of work have been aligned to ensure a co-ordinated and joined up outcome.

OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY / TROSOLWG A CHRAFFU

SWANSEA COUNCIL / CYNGOR ABERTAWE

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3. We were interested to hear about the co-production with parents in developing services and welcome the development of a consultation mechanism with parents that will include a wide group of parents of children with additional needs. We did however emphasise the importance of ensuring we reach out to get views of those parents who may be less vocal or for whatever reason, find it difficult to engage.
4. We heard that there are a growing number of children with additional needs, which is an ongoing challenge for both local authorities and health authorities alike. Consequently we support the increase in funding going towards the Early Help Service, We support the need to develop better prevention services in conjunction with health and also support the authority in the strive to engage health in future developments.
5. The report details that 11% of overall funding is made up of grants which in itself must be seen as a risk when moving forward. We did emphasise the importance of contingency planning should these grants stop or be reduced.
6. We understand that the introduction of a voucher scheme for play and leisure for children with additional needs is being considered. We would like to emphasise the importance of recognising the potential implications of this type of scheme for providers and parents. We were encouraged to hear that you plan to look at how this is working in other local authorities and to work closely with parents when considering this as an option.
7. We were pleased to see and were supportive of the recommendation around specialist services for young carers. We recognise that currently it is in its early stages but feel it is a positive move.
8. We note that only 3 of the 6 recommendations required assessment of potential alternative supply mechanisms and indeed 2 of them were purely internal development. We also note the intention to seek to resource external facilities for overnight short breaks with the aim of reducing the cost of the service by £50k, and this will hopefully result in an improved service. We need to guard against a poorer service. We were also a bit disappointed that where assessments had been carried out for (recommendations 1, 2 and 3) that we only had the final score and not the breakdown of that score into its separate elements.

Your response

We recognise that our comments will be discussed at Cabinet on the 16 November but would also ask for you to provide us with a written response to our issues raised by 5 December 2017.

Yours sincerely,

COUNCILLOR PAXTON HOOD WILLIAMS

Convener, Child and Family Scrutiny Performance Panel

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