

Adult Services / Child and Family Services Scrutiny Performance Panels Update

1. Remit of the Panels

The overarching purpose of the Panels is to provide ongoing challenge to performance in Adult Social Services, Child and Family Social Services and Poverty and Prevention to ensure that as the Service is undergoing major change, performance is maintained and that further improvements are made across all areas of the Service.

2. Key Activities

During 2020 there was disruption to the Panels' work programmes due to the Covid-19 pandemic. In October 2020 both Panels reconvened on a remote basis, recording meetings for publication online. It was also agreed at SPC that both Panels would meet 6-weekly (previously Adult Services had met monthly and Child and Family Services bi-monthly).

However, due to the ongoing crisis and the resulting increase in workload for the Social Services Directorate it was agreed that joint panel meetings be held for 3 months from December 2020 to February 2021, the situation would then be reviewed. Meetings held since October 2020 have resulted in five convener's letters to Cabinet Members. The issues covered were as follows:

- a) Performance Monitoring (AS Panel October)
- b) Sickness Levels in Adult Services (AS Panel October)
- c) Wales Audit Office: Follow up Review of Corporate Safeguarding Arrangements - Children, in Swansea Council (CFS Panel October)
- d) Update on Management of Covid-19 Pandemic (Joint SS Panel December)
- e) Performance Monitoring (Joint SS Panel January)
- f) Update on Management of Covid-19 Pandemic (Joint SS Panel January)
- g) Draft Budget Proposals (Joint SS Panel February)
- h) Update on Management of Covid-19 Pandemic (Joint SS Panel February).

3. Achievements / Impact

Performance Monitoring

In October, we heard that all Health and Social Care was under extreme pressure and that it was more problematic with the second surge. Day service support and respite had been re-established on an emergency basis only, as the service was seeing increased demand. In February, we heard that they were managing to support 150 individuals but in normal circumstances, they would be offering day service to 600 people at any given time. We were pleased to hear that as a minimum, the Service is staying in touch with these individuals and some are getting limited support at home. Compared to the rest of Wales, the position in Swansea is a very good one.

We were informed that the Welsh Government have relaxed recording of a number of measures due to Covid -19 pandemic but were reassured that monitoring and reporting of the Service's demand and flow was taking place via a variety of routes.

We heard the Department was seeing increasing complexities of inquiries through the 'front door' as people who had just about been coping were now reaching crisis point.

We were pleased to hear that the Department would increase capacity to deal with a second surge of the pandemic by the restructure of the Service and putting in resources, recruiting

to all vacancies to try and increase capacity in terms of support, focussing on statutory requirements in terms of what they have to do and being flexible.

In terms of mental health, we heard that the community mental health team is still working with people engaged with the Council's services. For people not engaged with the Council's services, the Department is working with Swansea Council for Voluntary Service (SCVS) to ensure all information on provision available in terms of open access is up to date. It was pleasing to hear that as part of regional response work, there is a group looking at the strategy for mental health going forward.

In February, with regard to Children Services, we heard that the Youth Justice System has been impacted by the pandemic but despite this, we are on track with performance measures.

We heard that there are some issues around supervision across Children Services. Officers are not sure if some teams have the right balance around staff supervision and supervision of performance. We were pleased to hear that the Head of Service is revisiting this for some teams, as a greater emphasis is needed on staff wellbeing, and that measures are in place to try and mitigate this.

Update on Management of Covid-19 Pandemic

In December, we heard that in order to support the risk of care home failure, the creation of a mobile workforce of care and community health staff was proposed, who could go into care homes that reach a point of crisis. In January, we heard that the rapid response team had to go into care homes on a number of occasions to assist, but no residents had to be moved out. In February, we heard that there is still fragility around care homes but that currently we are seeing only a small number of homes unstable. We were pleased to hear that the picture is improving.

We were pleased to hear that links between early help services, Children Services and schools is excellent and were reassured that everything that could be done for vulnerable children in the current situation is being done.

In January, we heard that Christmas and the start of January was a very difficult time. The reduction in infection rates was welcome but it was not reducing pressures on our services.

With regard to Children Services, we were informed that the Service is resilient and coping. This was a very positive sign. The balance between demand and staff absence was being managed. There was ongoing work with early help hubs and education. Assessments were much improved and although Child Protection Register numbers were slightly up, there was ongoing work to look into this.

We heard the Service had put in place everything learnt from the first wave. We also heard that staff are exhausted, how amazing it is that the Service has been able to keep going and that it still remained extremely fragile. The Service remained particularly impacted around Domiciliary Care. We heard how we are providing a Covid response, which is far from ideal. It is also a big ask on individuals in our communities who are having to take on such a lot. A continuing concern of the Panel is the effect on Carers during the pandemic.

We discussed how the improvement in the relationship between Health and Social Care during the pandemic is positive and that another potential positive development in relationships would be if support programmes for staff in both organisations could be jointly negotiated.

We heard about the vaccination programme and the challenges involved in this.

In February, we heard that, in the past two weeks, there had begun to be some stabilisation across Health and Social Care Services, that this appeared to be linked to the continued decrease in rates of infection and that it had taken some time to have an impact on our Services.

We heard that Domiciliary Care had been operating at 50% of workforce but that this was down to 20% absent, and all Health and Care services are seeing this increase in staff presently.

With regard to vaccinations, we heard that the majority of older people in care homes, care home staff and front line care staff had been vaccinated, and that mechanisms were in place to pick up new staff and new care home residents.

We expressed our concern about people with learning disabilities accessing the vaccine and were informed that it is not a straightforward position. We heard that the expectation is that a number of individuals will have met the criteria for one of the top four priority groups. For those that did not, the expectation is the majority will meet the criteria for group six. Officers will get regional clarification that all of these individuals are being picked up.

We were also concerned about disturbing reports that people with learning disabilities are often the subject of 'do not resuscitate' orders. We were informed there weren't any of these arrangements in place and that officers will clarify this again with the Safeguarding Board to ensure nothing has been overlooked.

Draft Budget Proposals

In February, we discussed the draft budget proposals for Adult Services, Child & Family Services and Poverty and Prevention. We were pleased to hear that there was a real cash increase of £4 million to this year's Social Services budget and that there are a host of transformation plans for the coming year.

We heard that it was extremely difficult to plan for the coming year and that a number of assumptions had to be made. We acknowledged there are a number of uncertainties such as Welsh Government no longer protecting Social Care; and the outcomes of the Senedd elections, and heard that from discussions with WG there is a reasonable expectation that additional funding will be allocated to local authorities due to the pandemic.

We discussed how working with partners during the pandemic has been essential and is a step forward for the Council. We heard that this year and going into next year, the Council and Health Board have pooled funding more effectively, and some has been built into planning assumptions for this year. For example, Council and Health Board will see a benefit from the shared Head of Service role; and lots of regional funding which supports integration, and which was due to come to an end, has been extended for the coming year.

The Panel agreed the following views and recommendations on the budget proposals in relation to Social Services it would like to make to Cabinet:

- The Panel feels it is vitally important we ensure there is sufficient money allocated in the budget to provide additional health and wellbeing support to staff following the pandemic. The Panel is keen to see a joint venture with the Health Board in terms of support for staff.
- Very pleased to see the budget situation for Social Services this year, with an increase in the overall budget and very little in terms of cuts. However, the Panel is aware that there is a great deal that needs to be achieved with this money.

- The Panel is concerned that it only sees the net budget. It would be useful to see details of the income streams as well as expenditure. Officers have agreed to work with Cabinet Members to provide this information.
- The Panel would like to support the budget process in any way it can and therefore intends to revisit the budget again later in the year to closely monitor progress.

4. Future Work Programme

From March, the Panels return to separate meetings for Adult Services and Child and Family Services and plan to follow the scheduled timetable unless they hear differently from CMs/officers. The programme for the remainder of this municipal year is as follows:

Adult Services

Meeting date	Item to be discussed
9 March 2021	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Update on West Glamorgan Transformation Programme • WAO Report on Integrated Care Fund
20 April 2021	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Performance Monitoring • Update on how Council's policy commitments translate to Adult Services • Actions from WAO report 'Front door to Adult Social Care' – Recommendation: Impact of Preventative Services

Child and Family Services

Meeting date	Item to be discussed
24 March 2021	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • WAO report: Tackling Violence Against Women, Domestic (includes fieldwork in Swansea amongst others) (include briefing on the increase in domestic violence over the pandemic and a breakdown of collaboration between CFS and AS in terms of domestic abuse) • Performance Monitoring • Safeguarding Quality Unit Annual Report
5 May 2021	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Briefing on Youth Offending Service • Update on progress with CAMHS

5. Action for the Scrutiny Programme Committee

None.