



Report of the Cabinet Member for Children's Services
Child and Family Services Scrutiny Performance Panel –
21 September 2021

IMPROVEMENT PLAN UPDATE

Purpose	To provide an update on Child and Family Services improvement plan.
Content	This report includes the agreed priorities for the next year incorporating our recovery plan following the national pandemic as well as our ambitions to deliver improved services for children, young people and families.
Councillors are being asked to	Consider the report as part of their routine review of performance in Child and Family Services.
Lead Councillor(s)	Cllr Elliott King, Cabinet Member for Children's Services
Lead Officer(s)	David Howes, Director of Social Services Julie Davies, Head of Child and Family Services
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CFS Improvement Plan 2021

Our Vision

Doing what matters to make things better for children, young people and families.

Our Purpose

We will help people to keep safe and protected from harm and give opportunities to exercise voice, choice and control in all aspects of their lives.

Our services will focus on prevention, early intervention and enablement and we will deliver better support for people, making best use of the resources available supported by our highly skilled and valued workforce.

Our Improvement Aspirations

- Enable workers to spend more time with families.
- Reduce the burden of paperwork and processes.
- Focus on 'what matters' and the voice of the child and young people at every level of the service.
- Create a shift in leadership thinking and behaviour across the workforce.
- Have a greater sense of shared purpose and identity across the service.
- A workforce who feel empowered and trusted in their roles.
- Measures are meaningful, demonstrate how and where we are making a difference, and helps shapes practice to improve outcomes.

Our Service Priorities

The agreed priorities for the next year incorporate our recovery plan following the national pandemic as well as our ambitions to deliver improved services for children, young people and families.

Each part of the service, has their own plan on a page and each team within that part of the service similarly has their own plan on a page. These capture the purpose, value steps and principles in line with our agreed overall service vision; as well as meaningful measures to evidence what is being delivered and achieved and how this shows we understand what matters to our customers (children, young people and families), our staff and our partner agencies.

The principles of the Social Services and Well-being Act as well as the feedback obtained as part of our recent assurance check conducted by CIW have been used as a means of capturing the service's key priorities for 2021/22; along with our cross-cutting objectives of workforce, quality assurance and systems-thinking transformation.

- People Voice and Control
- Prevention and Early Intervention

- Well-being
- Partnerships
- Quality Assurance
- Workforce
- Embedding Systems Thinking

People Voice and Control

1. Consistently produce child and young person friendly narrative and support documents.
2. Supporting access to WiFi / devices for children, young people and families.
3. Supporting family engagement through creative use of physical spaces.
4. Using the voice of the child and young people in service review and re-design activity as well as corporate parenting activity.
5. Empower children and young people through an active offer of advocacy to make sure their rights are respected and their views, wishes and feelings are heard at all times.
6. Empower families as advocates and partners, promoting peer support and advocacy for those families involved in the child protection process.
7. Identify and share learning and good practice, promoting innovative, creative, practice through our own learning, reflection, research, practice reviews and what children, young people and families tell us works for them.
8. Promote and develop systems that ensure disabled children and their families have a voice, informed choice and control over their lives.

Prevention and Early Intervention

1. Embed and consistently use the signs of wellbeing framework across the early help hubs.
2. Review and implement at pace our early help hub model.
3. Support and lead on regional and local work around emotional health and well-being.
4. Launch and implement the continuum of need, indicators of support document.
5. Embed our approach to contextual safeguarding.
6. Support family short breaks and respite through creative use of premises and the workforce.
7. Proactive use of short breaks foster carers to prevent children entering care.
8. Where appropriate assess and support children with disabilities and their families within the early help arrangements.

Well-being

1. Deliver a whole service approach to diverting children from care and preventing placement breakdowns.
2. Develop a proactive and child centred practice to using SGOs, including a fit for purpose policy and financial guidance.
3. Implement the recommendations from the Public Law Working Group report.
4. Review the Safeguarding Quality Unit, develop and agree principles, purpose and value steps and roll-in agreed improvements.
5. Review current internal therapeutic services and externally commissioned provision (including expert assessments) to achieve best use of public sector resources.

6. Re-brand and re-structure Foster Swansea in line with local need and national expectations.
7. Develop and implement an improvement plan for Ty Nant, including a staffing restructure.
8. Work with partners to transform the care and support available for our most complex children and young people so that the right accommodation is provided at the right time.
9. Complete a strategic, service wide review of services and support offered to children with disabilities and their families and carers.

Partnerships

1. Work proactively locally and regionally to ensure children and young people are able to access the right emotional health and mental health support at the right time.
2. Sustain tenancies for young people and provide more accommodation choice through the strategic Swansea Accommodation Pathway, and engagement at a national level.
3. Review and develop an improved accommodation offer for 16+ young people in partnership with young people.
4. Promote and support a whole system approach to using trauma informed approaches and a risk sensible way of working.
5. Review child to adult transition processes ensuring utilisation of regional transition strategies and governance arrangements.
6. Develop and implement actions in line with the agreed priorities for the Corporate Parenting Board, led by young people
7. Contribute to the development and implementation of the regional strategic plan and programme for children and young people.
8. Challenge Welsh Government to reduce the bureaucracy and processes associated with the grants they award and to trust local areas to spend the funding on what matters to children, young people and families.

Quality Assurance

The quality assurance and learning framework sets out the methodology we will use with a focus on qualitative and quantitative auditing including service user feedback, performance data, peer reviews, serious case reviews, weekly, monthly and annual reporting as well as multi-agency auditing. The framework includes mechanisms to promote quality, such as policy documents and procedures as well as service plans, team plans, and staff training, supervision and appraisal designed to ensure staff have the necessary skills, support and expertise to meet the required standards.

The priority actions to be implemented to embed the quality framework are:

1. Focusing on lived experience of our children, young people and families
2. Expanding qualitative and quantitative data capturing
3. Identifying good practice through child protection and crisis work
4. Building in assurance relating to providing the right service at the right time
5. Evidencing our ambitions to prevent escalation of needs
6. Ensuring our safeguarding action is proportionate and timely
7. Continuing to strive for high standards of service delivery
8. Developing a culture committed to continual learning and development.

Workforce

Our workforce vision is “*To recruit, support, develop and nurture a talented and passionate workforce across Child and Family Services*”. Our priorities for the next 12 months are to:

1. Maintain a consistent focus on staff morale through engagement and wellbeing work.
2. Accelerate the pace of implementing our partner engagement and communications plan
3. Implement a service wide approach to returning to office working to support social interaction across front-line teams, including agile working and promoting a healthy work-life balance.
4. Develop and implement a recruitment and retention strategy.
5. Review and revise the induction plan for workers and managers.
6. Develop coaching and mentoring approaches for leaders and managers.
7. Enable and develop workforce thinking to be driven by the voice of the child/young person not by processes and systems.
8. Review the supervision policy, ensuring it supports an approach to personal supervision that consistently evidences reflective conversations.
9. Develop a culture based on trust, empowerment and accountability across the workforce and with our children, young people and families.
10. Develop a service-wide progression pathway from apprenticeship through to Head of Service/Director
11. Develop a dynamic training plan that supports all workers in better identifying barriers/risks to accessing provision due to disability or ethnicity.

Embedding systems thinking

As a result of the service’s use of systems thinking methodology over a number of years, the method is being scaled-up to support more sustainable, whole system change. This will mean:

1. Leaders within the service will understand the systems they are driving and will trust their staff to do the right thing for the right people at the right time.
2. Leaders will be challenging their own ideas and helping each other understand assumptions and the impact they have on realising our ambition as a service.
3. Staff will be working in a system that both supports and empowers them to do what is best for the people they work with.
4. Staff will be able to undertake their role in an efficient and effective manner whilst enabling to meet their own wellbeing goals.