



City and County of Swansea

Minutes of the **Scrutiny Performance Panel – Child & Family Services**

Remotely via Microsoft Teams

Tuesday, 21 September 2021 at 4.00 pm

Present: Councillor P R Hood-Williams (Chair) Presided

Councillor(s)

C Anderson
Y V Jardine

Councillor(s)

A M Day
W G Lewis

Councillor(s)

M Durke
D W W Thomas

Other Attendees

Elliott King

Cabinet Member - Children Services

Officer(s)

Julie Davies
Tom Jones
Liz Jordan
Kate Ronconi
Gemma Whyley

Head of Child & Family Services
Participation & Childrens' Rights Officer
Scrutiny Officer
Principal Social Worker
Transformation Programme Manager Child & Family Services

Apologies for Absence

Councillor(s): K M Griffiths, S M Jones and E T Kirchner

Officer(s): David Howes

1 Disclosure of Personal and Prejudicial Interests

No disclosures of interest were made.

2 Prohibition of Whipped Votes and Declaration of Party Whips

No declarations were made.

3 Minutes of Previous Meeting(s)

Panel agreed the minutes of the meeting on 11 August 2021 as an accurate record of the meeting.

4 Public Question Time

No questions were submitted.

5 Progress on Child and Family Improvement Programme

Julie Davies, Head of Child and Family Services and Gemma Whyley, Transformation Programme Manager attended to brief the Panel on this item.

Discussion Points:

- Officers stated that the Service has revisited its vision.
- Panel felt it all sounded very exciting – freeing up staff to do the real work rather than paperwork.
- Panel queried if the Service is starting to blur the line between senior social workers and other highly experienced staff. Panel heard that social workers have to do certain tasks but work around that can be done by staff with alternative qualifications.
- Discussion took place regarding conversations with Welsh Government about the volume of information they require, for example, the new performance data that is being asked for.

6 Presentation - Corporate Parenting Board Update

Gemma Whyley, Transformation Programme Manager and Tom Jones, Participation and Children's Rights Officer attended to present this item, which included a video made with looked after children, the Corporate Parenting Board's response to the video and resulting pledges by members of the Corporate Parenting Board.

Discussion Points:

- Panel felt issues come across better when listen to children speaking for themselves. It makes you sit up and listen.
- Every councillor is a governor of a school and this gives them opportunity to question the Head and senior management team on what education and care is being provided for looked after children in schools.
- Panel stated that in the past they had received information on the progress of young people, particularly in education, as part of the update from the Corporate Parenting Board. Panel requested comparison data on the attainment of looked after children compared to others to see where they are now.
- Officers stated that work needs to be done on how to improve the learning opportunity for looked after children. The pledges made by Corporate Parenting Board members have got some accountability attached.
- Panel noted that the work of Education and Skills Policy Development Committee has a strong focus on vocational education and an alternative/appropriate curriculum. It will be discussing what works for looked after children who do well in education.
- Panel pleased about the good working relationship between Social Services and Education.

Actions:

- Data to be provided to Panel on progress of looked after children in education compared to others.

7 Work Programme Timetable 2021-22

Panel considered the work programme.

8 Exclusion of the Public

Panel voted and agreed on exclusion of the public from the meeting during consideration of item 10, as it involves likely disclosure of exempt information. Relevant paragraph of Public Interest Test is 12.

9 Appreciative Inquiry Video

Panel discussed the item in closed session.

The meeting ended at 5.45 pm