



City and County of Swansea

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

Multi-Location Meeting - Gloucester Room, Guildhall / MS

Teams

Tuesday, 24 January 2023 at 4.00 pm

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

Councillor(s)

A M Day
S M Jones
M Jones

Councillor(s)

C L Philpott
E T Kirchner

Councillor(s)

K M Griffiths
W G Lewis

Other Attendees

Michelle Davies

Head of Strategic Planning, Swansea Bay University Health Board

Louise Gibbard

Cabinet Member for Care Services

Officer(s)

Michelle Apthorpe
Julie Davies
David Howes
Liz Jordan
Helen Williams

Hub Manager, Child and Family Services
Head of Child and Family Services
Director of Social Services
Scrutiny Officer
Principal Officer, Adolescent and Young People Services

Apologies for Absence

Officers: D Howes

1 Disclosure of Personal and Prejudicial Interests

No disclosures of interest were received.

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 5 December 2022 as an accurate record of the meeting.

4 Public Question Time

No questions were received.

5 Presentation - Update on progress with Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services (CAMHS)

Michelle Davies, Head of Strategic Planning, Swansea Bay University Health Board presented an update on progress and answered the Panel's questions.

Discussion Points:

- Panel queried how CAMHS measures up against the original Scrutiny Inquiry recommendations and noted the Inquiry's recommendation that Cwm Taf should come in house was now being taken forward. Inquiry had raised the issue of transition from children to adults and how children had felt that one minute they had access to CAMHS and then when they reached 18 they felt they were left without the support they needed. Panel heard it is one of the key areas CAMHS have been exploring but needs to do more on and they see the transfer of CAMHS back into Swansea Bay as one of the key drivers for this. CAMHS are also looking at recruiting a transitional nurse and have got a new regional transitional policy. Inquiry had also raised the issue that there was no interaction with the Youth Justice Service and they were not part of any decision making by CAMHS. Panel heard there is now a designated regional CAMHS nurse linked to the Youth Justice Service, and they have a good relationship with CAMHS overall. Panel also queried if CAMHS was now fully staffed as there had previously been a problem with trying to get access to psychologists and schools were struggling trying to find different ways to get help for children. Panel pleased to see CAMHS now access all young people and sign post them to the right place for help and support and they have appointed a senior psychologist so they can build the structure from there. Panel acknowledged a lot of progress had been made but noted there are still areas that need improvement, but that CAMHS is trying to improve.
- Panel queried what support mechanisms would be available to a youngster in crisis and if they would be referred through to CAMHS in the first instance. Panel heard CAMHS has a crisis service which operates between 9am and 9pm and is accessed via the single point of access number and the plan is to increase this service to 24-7 by June 2023 at the latest.
- Panel queried if for youngsters on CAMHS casebooks there is an average time they would be supported and heard that it is not time limited and depends on the initial assessment.
- Panel asked if funding from Welsh Government was increasing or decreasing and heard it is on an upward trend from 2018/19. Since 2019/20 Welsh Government has specified CAMHS is to get a share of the allocation money, so it is in now more on a par with Adult Services.
- Panel queried if as a result of covid, there has been significant changes in mental health requirements and heard that there has not been a large increase. They have not seen the 30% increase that was anticipated but acuity levels have been higher.

6 Update on Child Disability Services

Helen Williams, Principal Officer, Adolescent and Young People Services attended to brief the Panel which included an overview of the Child Disability Team and recent changes and developments that have taken place. Michelle Apthorpe, Hub Manager, Child and Family Services also attended for this item and answered the Panel's questions.

Discussion Points:

- Panel asked about eligibility criteria mentioned in section 2.5 of the report and queried to what extent this has changed and if the number of people who come into the service is limited or increasing. Informed it is not about limiting demand but about ensuring the right level of support is available. Informed the Team is far more focussed because they are dealing with children with higher needs that need specialist provision. Also heard there is lots of work going on with children and families where disability is an issue and that is responded to appropriately at that level. Panel pleased to hear there is far more flexibility now.
- Panel asked about assessments specifically for carers and queried if these are being carried out routinely and if there are any problems getting the assessments done. Panel heard in Children Services there are two groups to carers assessments, carers have the right to request an independent assessment and in the Child Disability Team there is an option for the carers assessment to be incorporated into the child's assessment if the family want that. Reassessments are done when there is a change of circumstances and the situation needs to be looked at again. They also have care plans which are reviewed very regularly.
- Panel queried if there is much happening in terms of day services. Heard day care is offered for children during school holidays which runs alongside Local Aid and Interplay, who will support and provide activities set in schools. Also heard Action for Children is generally set in Ty Laura and will support children who go there and are generally the children who cannot manage community services or community settings or require a specialist service in terms of day care.
- Panel mentioned direct payments and felt that in Adult Services there is a degree of pressure to try and increase people's choices and wanted to know if the same was true for Child and Family Services. Informed direct payments need to be looked at very carefully. A lot of direct payments are offered in the Child Disability Team but they recognise it is not necessarily providing the outcomes for children they would want.

7 Work Programme Timetable 2022-23

Panel considered the work programme and noted the items for the next meeting.

The meeting ended at 5.10 pm