



To:
Councillor Mark Child
Cabinet Member for Health & Wellbeing

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Date 24 May 2018
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Summary: This is a letter from the Child & Family Services Scrutiny Performance Panel to the Cabinet Member for Health and Wellbeing following the meeting of the Panel on 30 April 2018. It covers Child and Family Services Complaints Annual Report 2016/17 and Performance Monitoring.

Dear Cllr Child

The Panel met on 30 April and received and discussed the Child and Family Services Complaints Annual Report 2016/17, the performance monitoring report for March 2018 and quarterly performance monitoring report for the fourth quarter 2017/18.

We would like to thank Julie Thomas, Owen Davies, Val Jones and Andrew Taylor for attending to go through the reports and answer our questions. We appreciate their engagement and input.

We are writing to you to reflect on what we learnt from the discussion, share the views of the Panel, and, where necessary, raise any issues or recommendations for your consideration and response. The main issues discussed are summarised below:

Child and Family Services Complaints Annual Report

We heard that there is a good working relationship between the Complaints team, Head of Child and Family Services and officers in Social Services.

It was good to hear that only 3 complaints went for investigation at stage 2 of the complaints process in 2016/17 and that there were no findings of maladministration by the Ombudsman in relation to Swansea Children's Services in 2016/17

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Regarding compliments, we noted that a number were received in relation to Children's Services during the period and individual staff members have been made aware of the compliments concerning them.

The Panel and Head of Child and Family Services thanked the Corporate Complaints Manager for all his hard work over the years and wished him well in his new role.

Performance Monitoring

We were informed that the report on Life Journey Materials (LJM) had been brought to the Panel following a query from the Corporate Parenting Board.

We heard that the quantity and quality of LJM is a concern but it is expected to improve with the implementation of the LJM Framework from April. We were pleased to hear that all regions in Wales shared practice and worked together to produce the Framework.

The Panel expressed its concern that this is an additional task for social workers to do when they already have a very heavy workload. Julie Thomas confirmed social workers have always had responsibility for doing this but that there is a need to ensure they have manageable caseloads so they have the capacity to do it.

We noted that the final report on the inspection of the adoption service has been received and we will be adding a briefing on this to our work programme in August 2018.

Regarding the performance reports for March 2018 and the fourth quarter of 2017/18, we noted there has not been any significant change from the previous month in terms of overall numbers. It remained a generally healthy picture of performance.

We heard that the redesign of Supportive Care had been launched and that as part of this a number of cases have been closed with the number of cases coming down to below 1600. We were pleased to hear the Department feels it is well placed to increase and improve the quality of work.

We noted that there will be new Welsh Government KPIs in 2019/20 for Adult Services and Child and Family Services.

Regarding the Front Door, we heard that the number of repeat referrals during the month has increased. We will continue to monitor this closely.

We heard that the number of assessments carried out within 10 days has markedly increased during the month and is on target. The number of assessments carried out in 42 days has improved but is still below target. We are pleased to see this improvement.

The Panel was informed that there are no timescales yet for moving over to a new management information system (Welsh Community Care Information System) instead of PARIS. The Panel feels encouraged that the development is being led by the front line in Local Authorities instead of the Welsh Government to produce the parameters for the new system.

We heard that the Department will be tracking what happens with early help services from June 2018 and will be able to report on this within this financial year. It was emphasised that it is not just about early intervention, it is about early identification and the department has to be able to work with Early Help around this with routes into early help services.

Regarding Child Protection, we were concerned that the percentage of children on the Child Protection Register that have been registered previously is high although it has come down slightly. The Panel was informed that children are not coming back for the same reason but that there is a need to monitor this closely.

We heard that information on children leaving care will be included in the next performance monitoring report on the destination of people leaving care when they reach 18 years of age. The Panel feels it is important to monitor this.

We will be asking a representative of the Western Bay Justice Board to come and present to the Panel once the end of year figures are available.

A handout was provided showing the 'Thematic Analysis of children becoming looked after'. We heard that in 2017/18 there was an increase of 8.24% in numbers of Looked After Children in Swansea. The Department did not expect such a dramatic rise in such a short space of time and therefore a thematic review was undertaken to give a better understanding of some of the factors involved in increasing the numbers and to allow them to plan and deliver services more effectively.

We noted that:

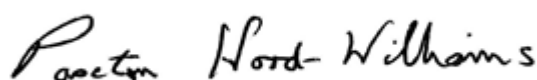
- There are issues around the amount of influence the court can have in the work of social services
- The Department has already started to implement some of the things mentioned in the report that will make a difference
- It is really important to get all services involved at a community level – integration of services – there is only so much CFS can do and only so much the Council can do. This is the only way we can be sustainable going forward.

The Panel felt that this was an excellent piece of work.

Your Response

We hope you find this letter useful and informative. We would welcome your views and comments on any of the issues raised and please note that in this instance, a formal response is required. Could we have your reply by 14 June 2018.

Yours sincerely



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