



To:
Councillor Elliott King, Cabinet Member for
Children Services (Early Years) / Councillor
Sam Pritchard, Cabinet Member for
Children Services (Young People)

Please ask for:
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Date
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30 September 2019

Summary: This is a letter from the Child & Family Services Scrutiny Performance Panel to the Cabinet Members for Children Services following the meeting of the Panel on 28 August 2019. It covers Performance Monitoring, Feedback on CIW Inspection Report and CIW Performance Review and Letter.

Dear Cllr King and Cllr Pritchard,

The Panel met on 28 August to discuss the Performance Monitoring Report for June, receive an update on the action plan following the CIW Inspection in August 2018 and to receive a briefing on the CIW Local Authority Performance Review and Letter.

We would like to thank Cllr King, Head of Service, Julie Thomas and Strategy and Performance Improvement Officer, Simon Jones for attending and answering questions. We appreciate your 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:

Performance Monitoring

Julie Thomas briefed the Panel on the Performance Monitoring Report for June 2019.

Page 15 - Number of Missing Children – We heard that information is going to be disaggregated to identify how many are from Swansea.

Page 16 - Looked After Children Population – We heard that the numbers reduced in June and again in July and that re-referral rates are also going down. We noted that

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there has been a significant increase in Looked After Children in the last 12 months. We were informed that looking at trends it appears to have levelled off and that we are bucking the trend in Swansea with figures going up elsewhere.

The Panel queried how many children are in residential homes in Swansea and the Head of Service agreed to provide us with this figure.

We asked to see figures on staff absenteeism and it was agreed that these will come to the next meeting in October.

We were pleased with the figures in the Performance Report which are very good. We were informed that the Department expects to be busier in September as schools will be busy and that there is likely to be an increase in activity at the front door but nothing specific is expected to happen in the next few months.

Page 23: Signs of Safety Metrics – We noted that all areas of performance for Signs of Safety are low and we were informed that team meetings are going to be held to discuss the importance and impact of this. We heard that June is the first month of collating this data and that there are issues with recording of this work and picking up information from PARIS, however, the Department will be moving over to the Welsh Community Care Information System (WCCIS) and recording of data should improve.

We informed you that there are often many acronyms in the Performance Monitoring Report and we requested a glossary is attached in future.

We asked about the scope for us to see reverse mentoring in Swansea and Wales particularly in courts. We heard that the Department has a mentoring scheme and senior officers still sit on some boards, including the Permanence Board, to ensure what they do is rooted in practice. We also heard that the Department has a good relationship with the courts and that only cases that need to go to court go, and therefore the number of cases going to court are reducing.

Feedback on Care Inspectorate Wales Inspection Report - Update on Action Plan

Julie Thomas updated us on progress made on the five main areas for improvement identified in the CIW Inspection Report of August 2018.

We expressed concern that some of the timescales have slipped substantially. We heard that this is a big piece of work which requires a cultural change whilst still maintaining a safe service. The Head of Service agreed to circulate the newsletter to the Panel for information.

Care Inspectorate Wales Local Authority performance Review

Simon Jones briefed us on this item including an overview of the annual review of performance carried out by CIW, and the letter to the Director of Social Services which summaries the evaluation of performance of Social Services during 2018/19.

We heard that there are new arrangements within the CIW annual performance review plan for 2019/20. We also heard that within Child and Family Services, CIW will be piloting a joint inspection of child protection arrangements and will be focussing on

following up areas for improvement following inspection, learning outcomes for children with focus on partnership working and the first point of contact service.

We felt that as an Authority, we need to consider succession. We were informed that there is some succession planning in place within Social Services and the Department is trying to future proof it to provide a stable future workforce.

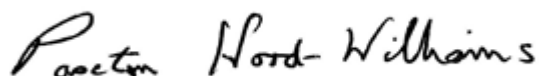
We expressed some concern about the reference in the inspection report to the morale in the Youth Offending Service. We heard that the Swansea element of YOS is coming back to Swansea and that there is a new board and action plan in place. This item will be discussed at the 28 October Panel meeting.

We informed you that we have very few questions on this issue which reflects that we are happy with the performance review and letter.

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 in this instance please provide a formal response by 21 October 2019.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Paxton Hood-Williams". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

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