



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

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Date
Dyddiad:

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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 24 February 2020. It covers Child and Family Improvement Programme and Safeguarding.

Dear Cllr King and Cllr Pritchard,

The Panel met on 24 February to receive an update on progress on the Child and Family Improvement Programme and to discuss Safeguarding (County Lines and Child Sexual Exploitation).

We would like to thank you both and Julie Thomas, Gemma Whyley, Damian Rees and Gavin Evans 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:

Progress on Child and Family Improvement Programme

Gemma Whyley, Transformation Programme Manager attended to present an update on progress with the Child and Family Improvement Programme.

We heard that Edge of Care is a regional wraparound service, which is a flexible service 7 days a week and out of hours. We discussed and agreed that it would be good for the Panel to see case studies in terms of Edge of Care and this will be added to the future work programme.

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We heard that regarding the Staff Well-being and Engagement Strategy, agreement has been received from CMT to roll this out as a full service.

We also heard that the Staff Retention Policy has been agreed by CMT and is being implemented. We agreed that this is important to create stability in the workforce.

We were informed that Integrated Advice and Assistance (IAA) is rolling out formerly following a pilot last year and that you have seen a reduction in demand for Council statutory services.

We heard that IAA is a multi-disciplinary team with staff based at the Guildhall including a primary healthcare worker, Education Welfare Officer, Adolescent worker and Police. We also heard that they are able to share information and decide what response is appropriate. We were informed that the name of the service is changing to 'Single Point of Contact'.

We heard that there have been a number of inspections in CFS in the last two years and that you are responding to inspection action plans through the Improvement Programme. We were informed that the bulk of the work is completed, a number of tasks are in progress and six have not started. We heard that five of those not started are related to the new Community Care Information System (CCIS) which is due to be implemented in June, so systems will be standardised across Wales. We heard that you have asked if Swansea can pilot the adoption module and that education have ring-fenced access.

Regarding Priorities Moving Forward we heard you are hoping to launch a newly designed LAC team in April with an art exhibition and that you will be working with children and social workers to develop it. We also heard that it shows how the Department has embraced the Health and Well-being Act by engaging in co-production activity.

Safeguarding (County Lines and Child Sexual Exploitation)

Damian Rees, Principal Officer for Safeguarding briefed the Panel on Safeguarding in relation to County Lines and Child Sexual Exploitation (CSE).

We heard that Police intelligence from January 2020 identified the majority of County Lines operations across Wales is in Swansea, and is significantly more than any other place in Wales. We were informed that this information is very tentative at present and needs to be unpicked further. Also that the trend appears to have increased but could be due partly to better monitoring and recording in Swansea. We heard that the Council can only hypothesise at present, as it needs significant research, and that the Council needs to ensure robust safeguarding procedures are in place. We heard that as this develops, the Department will be able to bring more robust information to the Panel.

We heard that of the 20 young people who required intervention since April 2019 via the CSE protocol, six are from other local authorities.

We were informed that it is a priority in terms of the Improvement Programme and there is a strategic group driving this work.

We heard that a targeted piece of work was undertaken between the Council and police, with railway staff, to help them be proactive and know what to do if they have concerns about a young person.

We discussed that the Council is already operationally using a contextual safeguarding approach but the formal pilot is starting now.

We were informed that the other aspect of this approach is creating safe places for children to be, and that examples of a safe place include, changing some of the lighting in parks; opening up spaces children are going too; building relationships with children and diverting them into positive activities.

The Panel felt there had been a reduction in youth services. You said that you didn't think this was the case, and that the ones that were not well used have gone but the ones that are well used have remained.

We heard that the Department is looking at possibly having an adolescent strategy and that on 13 March 2020 an adolescent conference is being held for managers and front line staff.

Work Programme

At the meeting, the following items were agreed for the next meeting on 27 April 2020:

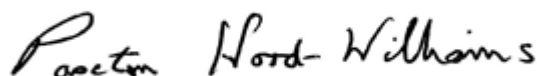
- Briefing on Carers Assessments
- WAO Report on Tackling Violence Against Women, Domestic (includes Fieldwork in Swansea amongst others)
- Performance Monitoring.

The remaining items on the work programme will to be scheduled for the new municipal year.

Your Response

We hope you find this letter useful and informative. We would welcome your views and comments on any of the issues raised but, in this instance, a formal response is not required.

Yours sincerely



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