



To:
Councillor Elliott King, Cabinet Member for
Children Services

BY EMAIL

Please ask for: Scrutiny
Gofynnwch am:
Scrutiny Office 01792 637314
Line:
Llinell
Uniongyrchol:
e-Mail scrutiny@swansea.gov.uk
e-Bost:
Date 14 June 2021
Dyddiad:

CC Cabinet Members

Summary: This is a letter from the Child & Family Services Scrutiny Performance Panel to the Cabinet Member for Children Services following the meeting of the Panel on 25 May 2021. It covers CAMHS and Youth Offending Service.

Dear Cllr King,

The Panel met on 25 May to receive an update on progress with the Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services (CAMHS) and a briefing on the Youth Offending Service.

We would like to thank Joanne Abbott-Davies and Isobel Davey from the Health Board, together with officers Dave Howes, Julie Davies, Helen Osborne, Gavin Evans, Jay McCabe and Helen Williams for attending to present these items and answer the Panel's 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:

Update on Progress with CAMHS

Joanne Abbott-Davies, Julie Davies, Isobel Davey, Helen Osborne and Gavin Evans presented an update to the Panel on progress with CAMHS including the impacts of Covid, partnership initiatives and progress, performance, opportunities and challenges and answered the Panel's questions.

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We were not surprised to hear that joint Service elements have slowed down due to Covid and that the impact of the last year on young people's mental health has been significant.

We queried the waiting time for the Neurology Development Service that had previously improved from 26 weeks. We heard it improved initially with 80% completed in 6 months, however, referrals have now increased three-fold, so the waiting period has increased to over 6 months. We heard that discussions are being held Wales-wide on what can be done and that it is being kept under review but it definitely needs improvement.

Mary Jones who had previously chaired the scrutiny inquiry on CAMHS attended for this update and stated that Scrutiny had previously recommended this Service had a single point of access, and was very pleased to see this now in place.

We heard that as a result of this single point of access being in place, some of the performance indicators need to be re-developed to show what we need to know locally and to evidence the work now being done. We noted that we would eventually see performance on CAMHS coming through in Performance Monitoring Reports to the Panel.

We heard that the new building on the Kingsway is by appointment only. We felt this is not as accessible as Infonation but noted that discussions are taking place on how to link and benefit from Infonation being next door.

We were pleased to hear that the Single Point of Access Telephone lines will be open five days per week Monday to Friday (it was only open two hours per week before) and that the Crisis Service is available on the weekend.

We discussed how Cwm Taff is still providing the CAMHS service for the Swansea area.

We heard about a new app called 'Kooth' that is being made available for children and that this facility is being put in place by Swansea Bay.

We also heard that a new regional website is launching in June. It will monitor the number of 'hits' and who has accessed what and there is also a 'Comments' section.

We heard the Director of Social Services thinks progress with CAMHS is very impressive and the continuum of support is much more developed. He feels specialist CAMHS has demand issues but is more confident they can have discussions now about how to try and deal with the short term increase in demand.

We sought reassurance that when a child is in absolute crisis, despite the pressures, the Service is able to provide an urgent response. Officers confirmed the Crisis Team is fully staffed and would be able to respond to a child in absolute crisis, despite access to beds being at crisis point. We were very pleased to hear this.

We congratulated everyone on the good progress being made despite the pandemic and hoped this would continue.

Briefing on Youth Offending Service

Jay McCabe, Principal Officer Bays+ and Youth Justice Services attended to brief the Panel on progress.

We were very pleased to hear that the Youth Justice Board has provided a letter of de-escalation as they are satisfied the Service is working in the right direction. This is a great achievement and shows huge improvement over the last year. We also heard the Service is continually focussing on the improvement journey and the Improvement and Action Plan is reviewed on a six-monthly basis.

We noted the Operational Manager, Helen Williams is now in post and the senior practitioner role has been developed to become Practice Lead and that Asset Plus Training has been undertaken by most staff.

We heard that the Mobilisation of Speech and Language Service has been funded by further investment and is led by Swansea to help young people engage and understand what is expected of them. The service is starting in July and is an effective communications system.

Helen Williams gave us an overview of the recent performance monitoring report, which was very positive.

The Director of Social Services stated that partnership commitment was evident and the evidence shows improvement. We heard that he is optimistic that when inspectors return they will find considerable improvement and innovation.

We raised our concerns about young people's involvement in the riots in May Hill and the word 'culture' being raised. Officers confirmed there was a huge coordinated response with 50 agencies involved. They are aware of issues and are trying to get ahead of the game and identify where problems are and what could be done differently to start intervening. We thanked everyone including residents for all their hard work on the night of the riot and since then.

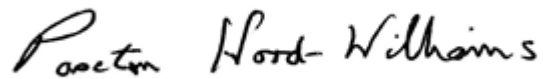
We heard the Service is involved in working in partnership with various agencies to get messages out, for example, outreach work to engage with young people and working on a project in schools.

We heard that issues around violence and young people are being looked at across Swansea with partners and that there is a need to continue to think about this and plan. Officers believe having more of a presence in the community should make a difference.

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, we do not require a formal written response.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Paxton Hood-Williams". The script is cursive and fluid, with the first name "Paxton" starting with a large 'P' and the last name "Hood-Williams" following in a similar style.

PAXTON HOOD-WILLIAMS
CONVENER, CHILD & FAMILY SERVICES SCRUTINY PANEL
CLLR.PAXTON.HOOD-WILLIAMS@SWANSEA.GOV.UK