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CORRESPONDENCE FOLLOWING THE COMMITTEE MEETING

Committee CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

Date and Time of Meeting TUESDAY, 13 JUNE 2023, 4.30 PM

Please find below correspondence send by the Committee Chair following the meeting, together with any responses received.

For any further details, please contact scrutinyviewpoints@cardiff.gov.uk

Correspondence following the Committee Meeting(Pages 3 - 8)

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Date: 3 July 2023

My Ref: CYP/YJS_Q4/June23



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Councillor Ash Lister
Cabinet Member for Social Services (Children's)
County Hall
Atlantic Wharf
CARDIFF
CF10 4UW

Dear Ash,

**CHILDREN & YOUNG PEOPLE SCRUTINY COMMITTEE – 13 JUNE 2023 –
YOUTH JUSTICE SERVICE UPDATE AND 2022/23 Q4 PERFORMANCE**

Please accept my thanks on behalf of the Committee for attending the Children & Young People Scrutiny Committee to provide us with an update on the Youth Justice Service. Please also pass on our thanks to Angharad Thomas and Sarah Skuse.

The comments, observations and recommendations below were captured during the Committee's discussion at the Way Forward.

YJS Update

We wish to reiterate our thanks in relation to the report submitted to committee Members ahead of the meeting. As we stated at the meeting, directly addressing issues raised at March meeting letter was very useful, and we would request that this approach continue going forward. This would mean that no formal response to YJS issues is required (unless otherwise stated), but addressed in the quarterly updates, which we have agreed we would wish to continue to receive.

During our discussions with you and during the way forward, we agreed that we would wish to meet with the new Chair of the Youth Justice Board at our next meeting with you, which will be the 10 October 2023. Please could Angharad email Alison the Chair's contact details, so that we can ensure that he is formally invited to the meeting.

During the meeting, we asked a number of questions on the following issues and were satisfied with the responses:

- Attendance at school – pre and post Covid pandemic data
- Confidence on the operation and sustainability of demands on the service
- Whether evaluations of the projects set out in the YJS Update were being undertaken
- Whether evaluations include looking at best practice in this area
- Exclusions, particularly fixed term, and whether there were sufficient resources, a collective approach and sharing of information on this.

In the next update, please could you provide details on the following:

- Arising from questions on exclusions, Members were informed that data was available on exclusions; and we would request that, in partnership with Education colleagues, reporting on exclusions be added to the quarterly updates. Initially, Members would welcome an overall picture/profile of the situation, but also include the following:
 - Comparative data of exclusions for those in the YJS against the general school population, including the average number of days in relation to fixed term exclusions;
 - Number of pupils excluded (reported by YJS against the general population) and some data on how many of these are excluded a number of times
 - What proportion of young people within the remit of YJS have an additional learning need
 - What is the school attendance of young people within the remit of YJS compared with the general school population.
- You mentioned whilst discussing exclusions that a piece of work was being undertaken around exclusions, knife crime and other related issues. Please could you inform us on who is undertaking/leading this study, and either provide a copy of the output report (if available) or an indication of when it is likely to be available for this scrutiny committee to have a copy.
- During the Way Forward, Members raised the issue of diversionary activities proposed for the summer academic break for this cohort. Members will be considering summer provision generally at the Committee's July meeting. However, Members would welcome some information/reflection on the success/impact of diversionary summer activities for young people in the YJS at your next update in October.

2022/23 Q4 Performance

The Committee wanted to express its gratitude to Sarah Skuse for stepping up to support you at Committee. Her input was invaluable and we appreciated her responses and honesty during discussions.

We did want to flag that we recognise that many of the issues the Committee raised during this meeting have been raised before, and perhaps a discussion on addressing some of the recurring issues could be had in the coming months so that they can be reported ahead of the meeting? We also recognise the complexity “behind the figures” and in many cases, data tables and charts continuing to raise similar questions every quarter. Therefore, there may be an opportunity to review how the Committee receives data of Children’s Services performance, balanced with the need to minimise additional pressures on the service. Your agreement and support to do this would be appreciated and we would request that a discussion between myself and you be the starting point on this issue.

We asked questions around the following issues, and we were satisfied with responses.

- Timelines and targets of KPIs
- Recruitment and retention targets
- Timeliness of care and support assessments
- Capacity of teams in areas of Children’s Services
- Quoracy of Child Protection Conferences
- Young persons advisors
- Covid-fatigue of social workers and impact of this

The following issues we raised, and we would appreciate a follow-up or response on.

We asked about the number of well-being assessments and differences in results between Q3 and Q4 as well as targets. We were assured that this area is a priority for yourself and the service going forward and you would wish to report back to us on this. Therefore, we will continue to monitor this closely going forward and continue to ask questions on performance in this area during 2023/24.

A question was asked on de-registration and re-registration of individual children and young people on the child protection register. It was stated that this has been flagged by the service area already and something the service is reviewing and monitoring. If agreeable, we would request that you report back to this committee in 6 months to report impact of this.

A question was asked about any savings arising from increasing permanent staff and decreasing agency staff. We acknowledge that there will be a period of time where new staff are being bedded into their roles and the sharing of knowledge, and hand over of current agency staff etc. However, if you are able to supply some figures around expected savings from a decrease in agency staff, it would be appreciated.

At the meeting, Members asked a question Intervention Hub/Think Safe Result, and the reasons as to why there has been a decrease in numbers accessing it. Please could you supply some narrative on this result?

To recap, the Committee is requesting the following:

Youth Justice Service

- Contact details of the new Chair of the Youth Justice Board so that he can be invited to the October meeting of this Scrutiny Committee.
- To agree that information on exclusions be added to the quarterly YJS Update and to include the following:
 - an overall picture/profile of the situation (next meeting only). Further updates to report:
 - Comparative data of exclusions for those in the YJS against the general school population, including the average number of days of fixed term exclusions;
 - Number of pupils excluded (reported by YJS against the general population) and some data on how many of these are excluded a number of times
 - What proportion of young people within the remit of YJS have an additional learning need
 - What is the school attendance of young people within the remit of YJS compared with the general school population?
- Provide details of a piece of work that is being undertaken around exclusions, knife crime and other related issues. Please could you inform us on who is undertaking/leading this study, and either provide a copy of the output report (if available) or an indication of when it is likely to be available for this scrutiny committee to have a copy.
- The next update to include some information/reflection on the success/impact of diversionary summer activities for young people in the YJS at your next update in October.

Children's Services Q4 Performance

- Agree that myself and yourself meet informally to reflect on how performance is reported to CYPSC to decrease the number of repeated questions on the same issues, with an aim to get a better understanding of the complexities behind the data and explanations of perceived “dips” or “highs” in performance.
- Return to this scrutiny committee in 6 months (December 2023) to update the committee on issues around de-registration and re-registration of individual children and young people on the child protection register.
- To supply some figures around expected savings from a decrease in agency staff.
- To provide a narrative and update on why there has been a decrease in the Q4 result relating to the Intervention Hub/Think Safe KPI, and the reasons as to why there has been a decrease in numbers accessing it.

There are no formal recommendations arising from this letter.

Once again, on behalf of the Committee, please pass my sincere thanks to all who attended Children & Young People Scrutiny Committee.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'L. BRIDGEMAN', written over a light grey rectangular background.

COUNCILLOR LEE BRIDGEMAN

Chairperson – Children and Young People Scrutiny Committee

CC: CYPSC Members

Sarah McGill, Corporate Director, People and Communities

Deborah Driffield, Director of Children's Services

Angharad Thomas, Operational Manager, YJS

Sarah Skuse, Operational Manager – Assessment and Care Planning

Liz Williams/Debra Willis, PA to the Corporate Director

Jennifer Goss, Cabinet Support Office

Kim Thorpe, PA to the Director of Children's Services

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