



County Hall
Cardiff
CF10 4UW
Tel: (029) 2087 2000

Neuadd y Sir
Caerdydd
CF10 4UW
Ffôn: (029) 2087 2000

CORRESPONDENCE FOLLOWING THE COMMITTEE MEETING

Committee CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

Date and Time of Meeting TUESDAY, 8 DECEMBER 2015, 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

10 **Correspondence** (*Pages 1 - 6*)

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My Ref: Scrutiny/Correspondence/MJH

10 December 2015

Clive Phillips
Assistant Director
Estyn
Anchor Court
Keen Road
Cardiff
CF24 5JW



County Hall
Cardiff,
CF10 4UW
Tel: (029) 2087 2087

Neuadd y Sir
Caerdydd,
CF10 4UW
Ffôn: (029) 2087 2088

Dear Clive

On behalf of the Members of the Children & Young People Scrutiny Committee, I would like to thank you and your colleague, Huw Davies for attending the Committee meeting on 8 December to present the Estyn Significant Improvement visit (5-9th October 2015) letter.

We greatly appreciated your attendance, and that you continue to value your engagement with this Scrutiny Committee and we hope to further develop this engagement in the future. The Committee also wished to reiterate its commitment to continue to monitor and challenge education performance, schools causing concern and review the development of education policies.

The Members also welcomed the opportunity to be presented with the letter and hear your explanation of the positive outcome from the inspection visit and your comments on Recommendation 2 – Reduce exclusions and reduce the proportion of young people who are not in education, employment or training post-16 and Recommendation 4 – Improve the effectiveness of joint planning across the range of partnership working. I understand that the comments were captured by staff from the Education Department and will be taken into account as they continue to improve educational standards across Cardiff.

Finally the Committee looks forward to receiving the final Estyn Significant Improvement visit letter following the visit in January 2016.

Yours sincerely

COUNTY COUNCILLOR – RICHARD COOK
Chairperson of the Children and Young People Scrutiny Committee.

CC Nick Batchelar, Director of Education and Lifelong Learning

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Date 10 December 2015

My Ref SS/CYP/MJH
Your Ref:

Councillor Sue Lent
Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Families, Children and Early Years
County Hall
Atlantic Wharf
CARDIFF
CF10 4UW

Dear Sue

Thank you for attending Children and Young People Scrutiny Committee on 8 December 2015 to help introduce the **Quarter 2 Performance Information**. I would also like to thank Tony Young and Irfan Alam for their full and honest answers that were provided at the meeting. During the consideration of the reports and answers to Members' questions, the Committee identified a number of comments, concerns and recommendations, as follows:

The Committee welcomed the many improvements shown in the report's performance indicators and wished to ask that you pass on the Committee's thanks to the Departments staff for all their hard work in improving performance across the service. The Committee noted that many of the performance indicators were now consistently moving in the right direction, and that this had been helped by the stability of the management structure and the appointment of an Assistant Director for Children's Services.

The Committee did however, in the way forward section of the meeting, express their continued concern around the low performance in completing the Personal Education Plans (PEP) for children who were being looked after. The Members were aware of some of the reasons why the timeliness of the completion of PEP's is slipping, however Members did express their disappointed that quality had not yet improved. Can you please provide the Committee with the action plan and targets for the improvement of PEP's, so that progress can be monitored.

The Committee noted that there had been some delay in the development of the Cardiff and Vale Child Sexual Exploitation Strategy, by the Local Safeguarding Board. Members wish to reiterate their concern that the Council must to have the Strategy in place as soon as possible, and that it be made available for pre-decision scrutiny. The Members also noted that the Assistant Director had produced a "Campaign briefing paper" and the service had developed a "Safer Families" scheme. Member requested that copies of these to be made available, as they were very interested in both initiatives.

Finally the Committee agreed to undertake a "Deep Dive" investigation into the procurement process and due diligence around the Payment by Results contract, with Core Assets. Members would be pleased if you could liaise with scrutiny officers to facilitate this investigation.

I hope that these comments, advice and requests for information, will be of use and support in improving outcomes for children. The Committee looks forward to receiving the requested information listed above together with a positive response to this letter within the next month.

To recap, this letter requests several actions, and copies of briefings and documents as follows, and requires a response:

- Provide a copy of the action plan and targets for the improvement of Personal Education Plans for children who are looked after.
- Copies of the Campaign briefing paper and details of the “Safer Families” scheme, for Members.
- A draft copy of the Child Sexual Exploitation Strategy for pre-decision scrutiny as soon as it is available.
- Provide support for the Deep Dive investigation into the procurement process and due diligence of the payment by results Core Assets contract.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Richard Cook', with a horizontal line underneath it.

COUNTY COUNCILLOR RICHARD COOK
Chairperson – Children and Young People Scrutiny Committee

CC: Tony Young, Director of Children’s Services
Melanie Jackson - Personal Assistant to Deputy Leader
Irfan Alam – Assistant Director of Social Services

**SWYDDFA'R DIRPRWY ARWEINYDD
DEPUTY LEADER'S OFFICE**

Fy Nghyf / My Ref: CM33027

Eich Nghyf / Your Ref:

Dyddiad / Date: 4th January 2016

Cllr Richard Cook
Cardiff Council
County Hall
Cardiff
CF10 4UW



County Hall
Cardiff,
CF10 4UW
Tel: (029) 2087 2087

Neuadd y Sir
Caerdydd,
CF10 4UW
Ffôn: (029) 2087 2088

Annwyl / Dear Richard

CYP Scrutiny 8th December - Qtr 2 Performance

Thank you for your letter dated 10 December 2015.

I am pleased to enclose the draft Child Exploitation Strategy and the details in respect of the Safer Families initiative. The draft CSE strategy is due to be discussed at the forthcoming cabinet meeting in January 2016, however I can confirm that work has commenced in relation to the implementation plan.

In your letter you refer to a "campaign briefing paper" and I am sorry but I do not recall such a paper. Whilst talking about Safer Families, I advised that Irfan had initiated a pilot project called Rapid Response and that this pilot had achieved some excellent outcomes for children who otherwise would have become looked after. I have enclosed a report in relation to this initiative for your information.

You have asked for an action plan in relation to the improving the Personal Education Plans. The service will aim to have a written action plan to share with you in quarter 1 of 2016 as this action plan will need to be jointly developed with colleagues in Education. However, I would like to reiterate that whilst performance on compliance with PEP requires improving, you have recently heard from the CSSIW inspector Mr McDonald that outcomes for looked after children in Cardiff are good, furthermore Irfan informed the committee that there have not been any permanent exclusions in the last 4 years in relation to looked after children.

Officers will be very happy to support the Deep Dive Investigation into the procurement process and due diligence of the payment by results Core Assets contract in liaison with Martyn Hutchings.

Yn gywir / Yours sincerely

**Councillor / Cynghorydd Sue Lent
Deputy Leader / Dirprwy Arweinydd
Cabinet Member for Early Years, Children & Families
Aelod Cabinet Dros Y Blynnyddoedd Cynnar, Plant a Theuluoedd**

ATEBWCH I / PLEASE REPLY TO:

Swyddfa'r Dirprwy Arweinydd, Ystafell 525, Neuadd y Sir, Glanfa'r Iwerydd, Caerdydd CF10 4UW
Ffôn (029) 2087 2501
Deputy Leader's Office, Room 525, County Hall, Atlantic Wharf, Cardiff CF10 4UW
Tel (029) 2087 2501



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