
EARLY YEARS, CHILDREN & FAMILIES STATEMENT

Child Sexual Exploitation (CSE)

The “Not in our city, Not to Our Children” campaign continues to be pushed out across all social media platforms and is now supported by visual awareness raising posters which I’d encourage all councillors to display around their wards.

Unaccompanied Asylum Seeking Children (UASC)

Due to the closure of the Camp in Calais and the displacement of unaccompanied children, the Council arranged accommodation for 11 children who arrived in the UK to be reunited with their families (Dublin scheme). 10 of these have now been reunited and 1 will remain in our care for the short term before he is placed in the care of a West Midlands authority. The council has also made a commitment to accommodate 2 children who fall under the Dubs Amendment. These children do not have any family links in the UK and are assessed to be more vulnerable. They become long term looked after children. The UK Government has agreed financial assistance to local authorities looking after UASC. The Council has been widely commended for the leadership and professionalism of its approach to this challenging issue.

Multi Agency Safeguarding Hub (MASH)

The Cardiff Multi Agency Safeguarding Hub, also known as MASH, is made up of [police officers](#), social workers, nurses, and probation officers who will all operate from the capital’s Bay Police Station. The 45 staff within the MASH team are the first point of contact for their frontline colleagues who take thousands of referrals from professionals with safeguarding concerns. MASH will enhance information sharing between organisations and reduce delays in responding to concerns for safety and welfare. The launch of the MASH took place on 7th November at the Bay Police Station and was well attended by very senior stakeholders from across all agencies. Attendees were provided with a good insight into how the service operates and the effectiveness of the model was demonstrated. This is only the second MASH to be established in Wales and was delivered at pace over an impressively short timeframe thanks to the determined efforts of a highly professional group of staff and managers from across the safeguarding community and all agencies concerned.

Members' Safeguarding Workshop

A workshop was provided for all members concerning this essential topic. Members were provided with an opportunity to discuss and explore the support that the members' safeguarding protocol is designed to provide.

There was also an opportunity to hear from our newly appointed Operational Manager for Safeguarding concerning the implications of the Social Services and Well-Being Act 2014 in terms of its impact for vulnerable adults. In relation to children's safeguarding issues, an SSIA guide to safeguarding provided a basis for exploring some of the fundamental features of national policy and this was supported in addition by a brief insight into the new model being introduced in Children's Services – 'Signs of Safety'.

The role of the Corporate Safeguarding Board in promoting awareness amongst non-social services or schools staff was illustrated by a training video made for the purpose and based on real case scenarios.

Both Councillor Elsmore and I would hope that all members recognise the importance of attending this training when it is provided again in the first quarter of 2017-18.

Scrutiny Members' Workshop – The Role of Scrutiny After the Implementation of the Social Services and Well Being Act 2014 (SSWB)

Councillor Elsmore and I were pleased to join with the chairs and members of Children and Young Peoples Scrutiny Committee and the Community & Adult Services Scrutiny Committee at a workshop designed to look at the implications for performance, measurement and accountability of the new national outcomes framework for Social Services. Members may recall that this framework follows implementation of the Social Services and Well-Being Act in April 2016.

The workshop was led by the Director of Social Services supported by the Head of Performance and Partnerships Joe Ray, Social Services Performance Manager Kim Brown and expert WLGA Independent Advisor, Graham Williams. The workshop provided a stimulating insight into the new Act in terms of the role of scrutiny and enabled a constructive debate in relation to the following:

- The Council's approach to performance improvement in the context of the
- The SSWB Act / National Outcomes Framework including:
 - National wellbeing outcomes
 - Links with the Well-Being & Future Generations Act
 - Personal outcomes for citizens
 - Quality standards and how we will be measuring our performance against them
- Role of the Director of Social Services
 - Statutory responsibilities / core accountabilities
 - The approach to the Director's Annual Report
 - Role of Scrutiny to support the Director whilst also holding him to account in developing strategic direction for services and securing continuous improvement

Members reflected on their role as Scrutiny members, what supports them / what barriers they face. The reliance on performance information was noted and lay members in particular commented that they found Committee pre-meetings useful.

Members also gave consideration to what might they might be able to do differently. One of the issues discussed in relation to this was the possibility of the structure of the Committees changing, so they would become a Social Services Committee. It was noted that this would require a change to the terms of reference of the Committees as it would not be feasible for them to merge and retain all their existing “non-Social Services” responsibilities. It was agreed that this would be fed into the ongoing review of Scrutiny for consideration.

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Deputy Leader

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23rd November 2016