



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

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

Date 18 September 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 15 September 2015 to help introduce the Child Health and Disability progress report, Families First Annual Review and Quarter 1 Performance Information. I would also like to thank Tony Young and his officers, as well as Rachel Jones, Sara Payne (Barnardo's) and Eve Williams (Action for Children) 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 which they asked me to write to you.

Child Health and Disability progress report

The Committee were pleased to receive the update on the Department's progress in implementing its development plan and addressing the Committee's inquiry recommendations. Member noted that the disability team was now more stable and that the take up of direct payments had improved.

Members were however concerned that there was still a lot of partnership work to be undertaken and that the eligibility criteria had still not been developed. Members recommended that the department consult on and implement the new criteria as soon as possible.

Finally the Committee were disappointed that regular consultation meetings with children and their families or carers were not occurring. The committee recommends that these should be started straight away, so that Children's Services can ensure that the service and support provided is appropriate and effective.

Families First Annual Review

The Committee were extremely impressed with the work that the Annual Review report highlighted. Specifically impressive is the partnership working, the clear monitoring of the packages and presentation of outcomes achieved, the willingness to take difficult decisions to change providers when outcomes are not achieved and the flexibility that

enables gaps in the delivery being identified and then funding re-allocated to fill the gaps. Members noted the clear positive impact of the packages and felt that they might also be having an impact on school attendance (anti bullying and "connect" courses) and Children's Services referrals (Disability Focus).

Finally the Committee recommended that you and Officers must lobby the Welsh Government to try to ensure that the funding and packages continue to be provided after the present funding programme ends in 2017.

Quarter 1 Performance Information

The Committee welcomed the number of key improvements shown in the report's performance indicators.

The committee noted that the PI "recording decisions on referrals" performance was reported as having improved from 85.8% in Q4 to 89.8% in Q1, however the number of referrals had reduced by 16%, which should have enabled the staff to deal with considerably more cases. Therefore Members were concerned that this PI had not improved more rapidly, and would expect to see an improvement at Q2, if the number of referrals continues to fall.

Members also questioned why the indicators used by the Wales Data Unit had not been included in the corporate monitoring report as these PI's were being publically report by the Welsh Government. The Committee recommended that future corporate performance reports must include those indicators published by the Wales Data Unit, to enable them to be closely monitored.

Members also questioned the number of cases that social workers currently had, as they had been informed that some had over 25 cases whereas the average was 18.9 as reported in the corporate performance report. The Director informed the Committee that an analysis had been undertaken and some social workers did have case loads of 25 however those cases were appropriate for the social workers and he was satisfied with the level of caseloads across all social workers. Members noted that social worker case loads were now more manageable and also welcomed the development of a pool of social workers, to help reduce the need for agency workers and help to eliminate the establishment gaps, which inevitably occurs during the recruitment process.

Members also discussed the current and forecasted budget position for Children's Services for this year and requested clarification of whether the contingency budget had already been fully used in Q1.

Finally the Committee wished to inform you that they approved their work programme for the year, as required by the constitution, and I have attached, for your information, a copy of the work programme calendar so that you and your officers are aware of the issues that the Committee will be seeking to scrutinise at each meeting.

I hope that these comments, advice and recommendations, detailed above 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, requests for information and recommendations, as follows, and requires a response:

- Recommended that you consult and implement the new Child Health and Disability eligibility criteria as soon as possible;
- Recommends that regular consultation meetings are undertaken with children and their carers who use the Child Health and Disability service;
- That you and officers lobby the Welsh Government to ensure that the Families First funding and packages continue to be provided post 2017;
- That future corporate performance quarterly reports include the relevant performance indicators published by the Wales Data Unit and publicised by the Welsh Government; and
- Provide details of the use of the contingency budget for Children's Services.

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
Rachel Jones, Operational Manager - Partnerships & Citizen Focus
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: CM32215

Eich Nghyf / Your Ref:

Dyddiad / Date: 25th November 2015

Councillor 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

Children & Young People Committee September Letter

Thank you for your letter dated 18 September outlining the discussions held and recommendations made by the committee.

In relation to the recommendations, I can confirm that the first two recommendations in relation to Child, Health and Disability (CHAD) are accepted. The change manager Eve Williams was present at the committee and will continue working on the CHAD development plan which incorporates your recommendations.

I can confirm that officers are in conversation with the Welsh Government in respect of funding for Families First post 2017. I have copied in the Operational Manager Rachel Jones in to this letter who will keep me updated of any developments or challenges.

I can also confirm that future performance reports will include the relevant performance indicators published by the Welsh Data Unit, though I must emphasise that these indicators are likely to change in light of the Social services and Wellbeing Act (2014).

The £950,000 contingency budget was allocated as part of the Council's 2015/16 Budget. It was set aside to reflect the potential for additional costs to be incurred in supporting looked after children in external residential and fostering placements. At month 4 the projected expenditure was above budget in this area and therefore the drawdown of the contingency sum was put forward for approval. The allocation of the contingency budget was therefore in line with the purpose of the budget as approved by Council in February 2015 and was approved by Cabinet as part of the Month 4 Monitoring Report. If the monitoring

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

100% recycled paper
100% o bapur a ailgysbwyd



position in this area were to improve during the year then an adjustment to the contingency allocation can be made, however at this stage there is no indication that this will be the case.

Yn gywir / Yours sincerely

Susan J. Lent.

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

My Ref: Scrutiny/Correspondence/MJH

19 October 2015

Suzanne Griffiths
Director of Operations
National Adoption Service
County Hall
Cardiff



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

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

Dear Suzanne

I would like to thank you, Rachel Evans, Head of Children's Services for the Vale of Glamorgan Council, Angela Harris, Vale, Valleys and Cardiff Regional Adoption Service Manager, for attending the Children and Young People Scrutiny Committee on 13th October 2015 to present the **National and Regional Adoption Service briefing updates**. I would also like to thank Councillor Sue Lent, as Board Member and Tony Young, Board Member, for their contribution to the report and the full and honest answers that were provided at the meeting. Following consideration of the report presented at the meeting and answers to Members' questions, the Committee has asked me to write to you with the following comments, concerns and recommendations.

The Committee was pleased to receive the National Adoption Services first Annual Report together with a briefing on the Governance and Operation of the National Adoption Service. The Members were really impressed with the work that had achieved since the service had been set up. The Members also appreciated the briefing on the Vale, Valleys and Cardiff (V V C) Regional Adoption Service. Members welcomed the additional performance data as well as the positive picture it was now showing.

The Committee did however express some concern that the VVC region was not as yet performing consistently at the same level as the other regions and looked forward to seeing steady improvements in performance in future reports. Members did also request that future reports should have some comparative information from relevant English Authorities.

The Members considered that the scrutiny of the National and Regional Adoption Service should continue, to enable the Committee to be assured that the services are providing an appropriate service for Cardiff's Looked After Children. The Committee recommended that the Annual Report should therefore be presented to Committee, at this time each year, together with an additional Regional Annual Report, to allow the Committee to fully scrutinise the work of the VVC Regional Adoption Service.

I hope that the comments, advice and recommendation, detailed above, will be of use and support in the adoption of children across Wales and in particular in Cardiff, and I look forward to a positive response to this letter within a month.

Yours sincerely

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

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

CC Rachel Evans, Head of Children's Services for the Vale of Glamorgan Council,
CC Angela Harris, Vale, Valleys and Cardiff Regional Adoption Service Manager
CC Councillor Sue Lent, Board Member
CC Tony Young, Board Member



Gwasanaeth
Mabwysiadu
Cenedlaethol

National
Adoption
Service

COUNTY COUNCILLOR RICHARD COOK
Chairperson – Children and Young People Scrutiny Committee
City of Cardiff Council
County Hall
CARDIFF
CF10 4UW

November 13th 2015

Dear Councillor Cook,

Re: City of Cardiff Council - Children and Young People Scrutiny Committee

Thank you for your letter which followed my attendance at the above committee on October 13th 2015. Can I also thank you for the warm welcome and interest shown in the overarching 'national' elements of the National Adoption Service alongside those pertaining to the Vale Valleys and Cardiff Regional Adoption Service which is now primarily responsible for the adoption service to the City of Cardiff Council.

You will recall from the discussions at the committee that the scrutiny of the National Adoption Service in its entirety is conducted through other mechanisms including the Governance Board and ultimately by Welsh Ministers. I am however very willing to attend future committee meetings where you are exercising your role in scrutinising the performance of the regional service, to assist the committee to put this into the wider national context and to provide you with any information you may seek as to how the Council is fulfilling its role as 'host' to the national functions.

Your letter makes some comments about the performance of the VVC region. From my perspective the National Adoption Service is in the very early stages of having comparative data available for its use; the annual report that the committee saw, published in July 2015, was the very first time that such information had ever been available for adoption services in Wales. From my perspective no region is yet performing consistently and improving upon this across the board is a national priority. My perspective on VVC's performance is that in the areas which are the current priorities nationally namely timely placement of increased numbers of children and effective recruitment of adopters; the region was amongst the better performing regions for 2014/15 despite this being against a backdrop of re-organising itself into what has become 'VVC'.

c/o City of Cardiff Council/ d/o Cyngor Dinas Caerdydd,
Room 327 County Hall/ Ystafell 327 Neuadd y Sir Caerdydd,
Atlantic Wharf, Cardiff CF10 4UW/ Glanfa'r Iwerydd, Caerdydd CF10 4UW
Tel/Ffon: 029 2087 3927
E-mail/Ebost: contact@adoptcymru.com

There was also a request that in future there was comparative data with relevant English authorities. The benchmarking the National Adoption Service does is against the other UK administrations and particularly the performance of 'England' as a whole which is also closely monitored through its Leadership Board. This is set to continue to be made available to the Governance Board for consideration at relevant points of the year. I can certainly use this to inform discussions whether or not this is ultimately published in our reports.

The response from VVC will address directly your points about the service to Cardiff.

I trust this is helpful.

Yours sincerely



Suzanne Griffiths
Director of Operations
National Adoption Service for Wales

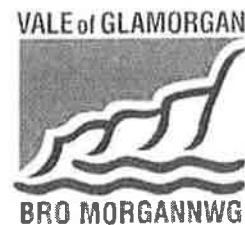
CC Rachel Evans, Head of Children's Services for the Vale of Glamorgan Council,
CC Angela Harris, Vale, Valleys and Cardiff Regional Adoption Service Manager
CC Councillor Sue Lent, Board Member
CC Tony Young, Board Member

Date/Dyddiad 10th November 2015
Ask for/Gofynwch am Rachel Evans
Telephone/Rhif ffôn 01446 704864
Fax/Ffacs
Your Ref/Eich Cyf
My Ref/Cyf
e-mail/e-bost

The Vale of Glamorgan Council, Social Services
Dock Office, Barry Docks, Barry CF63 4RT

Cyngor Bro Morgannwg, Gwasanaethau Cymdeithasol
Swyddfa'r Doc, Dociau'r Barri, Y Barri CF63 4RT

www.valeofglamorgan.gov.uk
www.bromorgannwg.gov.uk



County Councillor Richard Cook
Chairperson – Children and Young People Scrutiny Committee
City of Cardiff Council
County Hall
CARDIFF
CF10 4UW

Dear Councillor Cook

Re: City of Cardiff Council - Children and Young People Scrutiny Committee

Thank you for your letter dated 21st October 2015 which followed our attendance at the above Committee on October 13th. Angela Harris and I were pleased to be able to share with you the progress that has been made since the Vale, Valleys and Cardiff Regional Adoption Collaborative went live on 1st June 2015, and we appreciated the welcome we received.

I have discussed your comments about the performance of our region in the context of the performance across Wales with Suzanne Griffiths, Director of Operations. She has confirmed that no region is yet performing consistently and that our region was amongst the better performing regions despite this being against a backdrop of re-organising ourselves into what has become our Regional Collaborative. Maintaining our performance in areas where we performed well in quarter one and addressing areas for improvement remains a high priority for the region and we are looking forward to opportunities to analyse the emerging data for quarter two.

With regard to future reporting to each of the Scrutiny Committees across the region, provision is made for this in our Collaborative Agreement signed by each of the partner authorities. An Annual Review of the Collaborative will be undertaken within three months of the end of the financial year and this Review will be forwarded to the Joint Committee, which includes nominated elected member representatives from each local authority. The Regional Adoption Manager will prepare an Annual Report following the Annual Review for submission to the partners' respective Scrutiny Committees.

I trust this letter responds to your queries and I look forward to meeting with you again soon.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'R Evans'.

Rachel Evans
Head of Service
Vale of Glamorgan Council

My Ref: Scrutiny/Correspondence/MJH

16 November 2015

Councillor Sarah Merry
Cabinet Member - Education and Skills
County Hall
Atlantic Wharf
CARDIFF
CF10 4UW



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

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

Dear Sarah

Thank you for attending the Children and Young People Scrutiny Committee on 10th November 2015 to provide an opening statement and answer questions on the agenda item **School Performance Monitoring – School Inspection and Literacy and Numeracy report**. I would also like to thank Nick Batchelar and Angela Kent for their presentation of the report and answers to Members questions. During the way forward section of the meeting the Members' considered the information in the report and answers to their questions, and identified a number of comments, concerns and recommendations for your consideration, as detailed below.

The Committee welcomed the opportunity to be presented with these sections of the Schools Annual Report as the Members consider that they are able to focus more directly on these areas, rather than in the full Annual Report in January.

In respect of the School Inspections the Members initially questioned the lessons learnt from the June 2015, Eastern High School Inspection report. Members reflected on the comments made by Estyn in the report, and wished to be assured, that lessons would be learnt from the merger and opening of Eastern High and addressing the Estyn inspection report's recommendations, will be used to aid in the merger of Glyn Derw and Michaelston High Schools, when the merger is next reported to Committee.

Members also noted that the consultation on the merger of Glyn Derw and Michaelston High Schools is currently being undertaken and welcomed the Directors commitment to provide a further report on the merger, following the completion of the consultation on 23 November.

The Members were pleased to hear that all school assessments were now in line with Estyn inspections as this had previously been a concern of the Members as they had heard that some schools were being informed that they were performing well, but then received a disappointing Estyn assessment.

In respect of the report on the Literacy and Numeracy results for 2014/15, Members were pleased to hear that schools had access to the improving teacher programme and the outstanding teacher programme, as Members had previously recommended that a pool of expert teachers should be developed to support teachers across Cardiff.

The Committee recommended that future reports, including the Schools Annual report should present where possible a graphical representation of the results rather than the long list of tables that had been included in the report.


Finally the requested that the Annual Schools report presented to Committee in January 2016, should include a breakdown of the results using Free School Meal, looked after children and English as an Additional Language data, to enable members to assess the Councils progress in addressing the attainment issues in each of these groups.

I hope that these comments, advice and recommendations, detailed above will be of use and support in improving outcomes for Cardiff's pupils. The Committee looks forward to receiving the requested additional information listed above together and as such does not require a formal response to this letter.

To recap, this letter requests several actions, requests for information and recommendations, as follows and requires:

- A further report on the merger of Glyn Derw and Michaelston High Schools in the near future
- That future reports, including the Schools Annual Report should present where possible a graphical representation of the results.

Yours sincerely



COUNTY COUNCILLOR LYNDA THORNE
For the Chair of the Children and Young People Scrutiny Committee

CC: Nick Batchelar – Director of Education and Lifelong learning
CC: Angela Kent, Head of Attainment and Inclusion
CC: Cheryl Cornelius – Cabinet Support Manger
CC: Nichola Hayward – Resources Manager

My Ref: Scrutiny/Correspondence/MJH

16 November 2015

Hannah Woodhouse
Interim Managing Director
Tŷ Dysgu
Cefn Coed
Parc Nantgarw
Cardiff
CF15 7QQ



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

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

Dear Hannah

Thank you for your letter dated 27 October entitled "A common scrutiny work programme and sharing best practice". I decided that it would be more appropriate for the full Committee to consider it at their next meeting on 10 November. The Committee considered your letter at the meeting and discussed at length the proposals put forward by the Joint Committee.

The Committee agreed with the proposal to hold termly meetings with the Scrutiny Chairs with a view to sharing best practice, and Councillor Richard Cook is looking forward to attending the first meeting in the near future.

The proposal to have a Joint Scrutiny Model for all five Authorities, in which the Joint Committee suggests that the Consortium attends all five Scrutiny Committee's once a year in January, Members considered this proposal at some length, particularly the need to have a consistent approach across all five scrutiny committees, however the Committee considered that at this time, when the Council is still in Estyn Monitoring, it would be unwise to reduce the number of times the Committee scrutinises the work of the Consortium in respect of its support for Cardiff's schools.

The Committee agreed to continue the current practice of inviting the Consortium to three Committee meetings a year, in January, June, and November, until this Council has improved and been removed from Estyn Monitoring.

Finally I would like to thank you for the opportunity to comment on these proposals and look forward to your attendance at the Committee's meeting on 12 January 2016.

Yours sincerely

COUNTY COUNCILLOR - LYNDA THORNE

On behalf of the Chairperson of the Children and Young People Scrutiny Committee.

CC Nick Batchelar, Director of Education and Lifelong Learning

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



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

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

Fy Nghyf / My Ref: CM32545

Eich Nghyf / Your Ref:

Dyddiad / Date: 2nd December 2015

Richard Cook
Cardiff Council
County Hall
Cardiff
CF10 4UW

Annwyl / Dear Richard

Cyp Scrutiny - Budget Monitoring

Further to your letter of 21st October regarding the above, I would respond as follows:

Firstly, I think that it is extremely important that any consideration of budget savings or the overall financial position of Children's Services always be considered in the context of the relatively high risk nature of the service. Clearly the consideration of the cabinet budget monitoring reports via a dedicated panel provides opportunities for focus and rigour in relation to a single dimension – in this case budget – and this enables effective and appropriate challenge.

That said, there are dangers in disconnecting this from the consequences for safeguarding or for the welfare of children and their families and I am sure that scrutiny members would be the first to be concerned if cost or budget reductions incurred greater risks for the welfare of children that were otherwise avoidable. In this context it is always worth reminding ourselves of the obligations on members, as set out in the Victoria Climbié Report recommendations, to satisfy themselves that sufficient resources are available to enable children's social services to function safely in relation to prevailing need.

It is also very clear to me from my own direct observations of the Children's Services Management Team that they robustly engage on an ongoing basis, in exploring new alternatives for reducing costs and spend. This does not mean of course, that all such options will deliver in full or in part, against targeted expectations and the relatively likelihood of delivery is of course reflected in the risk ratings for each saving. Equally, when they fail to do so, it is not always possible to simply identify another alternative which balances the books. I would

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



also remind you, above context notwithstanding, that in 2014-15 Children's Services saved £2.516m with further savings of £1.867m projected for 2015-16.

None of these comments enable Children's Services to escape their responsibilities to steward resources well and wherever possible at reduced spend, but I make the following comments in relation to your specific concerns, with the above context always in mind.

1. Line 203 Payments by Results – the barriers to this saving are a direct consequence of a clear failure by the procured provider to deliver on their promises in terms of placements or timeliness. Although the Director's intervention at Chief Executive level produced an initially positive response, subsequent delivery has continued to be very unsatisfactory and virtually non-existent, despite an appropriate improvement plan being put in place. The Director is now considering the viability of the partnership and actively examining alternatives. Unfortunately, these alternatives will not enable the service to meet the consequent shortfall, given the time remaining in the financial year.
2. Line 212 Lean Review – it is acknowledged that this saving was less well evidenced. It is also clear however, that the uncertainty of this saving was spelled out by the Director at the time it was submitted and that this was reflected in the risk rating accordingly. No specific alternatives have been identified to close the gap created as a result, bearing in mind that the savings were always challenging in a service where a significant proportion of the overall budget is committed to direct care for looked after children.
3. Line 217 Market Demand – predictions about what could be saved, in effect by undertaking a challenge exercise with individual residential providers, were based on challenge exercises that had been successfully conducted elsewhere in the UK so to this extent the estimate of likely savings was always speculative. In the event, the analysis as to predicted demand and the extent to which we could realistically demand cost reductions, proved disappointing. This could not have been known at the outset since it is not until the negotiations are completed that the result is known.
4. Budget Realignment – I will obviously be interested in knowing the outcome of any further work that committee decides to undertake in this respect and would very much hope that your enquiries reveal tangible and realistic opportunities not previously identified, for finding savings.

Yn gywir / Yours sincerely



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