

My Ref: AUD/DJK/WW

Your Ref:

Date: 02 February 2015



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Councillor Richard Cook
Chairperson, Children & Young People Scrutiny Committee
The City of Cardiff Council
County Hall
Cardiff
CF10 4UW

Dear Councillor Cook

Re. Internal Audit - Children's Directorate

On 28 March 2014, Tony Young, Director of Children's Services presented the Committee with the risks and challenges facing the Directorate. The Committee considered the scale and complexity of these to be extensive. The work underway within the Directorate was encouraging and highlighted the commitment to make positive improvements with some success already secured through less reliance on agency staff and the recruitment of permanent staff. The Committee was advised that the Directorate management team have shaped its strategic direction for the future based on a service review and setting a medium term business plan.

Following this on 6 June 2014, a letter was sent to the Cabinet Member, Early Years, Children's & Families expressing concerns over the risks and challenges facing the Directorate, a copy of which is appended for your information.

The Audit Committee has a remit to review and challenge the Council's financial affairs, risk management, internal control and corporate governance arrangements and on 19 January 2015, the Committee were presented a series of Executive Summary Internal Audit Reports, which had been classified with either limited or no assurance; one of which related to Safeguarding and Review (Core Group) within Children's Services. Members of the Committee were informed that the work of the Auditors had been a follow up to previous audits.

The Committee acknowledges that positive steps are evident within the Children's Directorate, however there are still significant operational pressures to be faced which are evident from the Internal Audit's follow up review of 'Safeguarding & Review (Core Groups)'. The report highlighted that some progress had been made since the previous audit with some corrective actions and improvements have been implemented but Members of the Committee expressed concern over the continuing situation, particularly surrounding the non-completion of key records within stipulated timescales. Following constructive dialogue between the Directorate and Internal Audit a way forward has been agreed and Internal Audit has been invited to attend the Children's Directorate Management Team meeting from January 2015 so audit concerns are discussed.

PLEASE REPLY TO: C/O Internal Audit, Room 357, County Hall, Cardiff, CF10 4UW. Tel: (029) 2087 2248
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The Audit Committee have ask that I raise these concerns with you on their behalf and seek assurances from your Scrutiny Committee that you are aware of these matters and scrutinising and measuring the improvement in such areas within the Children's Directorate.

If you wish to discuss this matter further, please do not hesitate to contact me.
Yours sincerely



Sir Jon Shortridge
Chairperson, Audit Committee
City of Cardiff Council

cc. Councillor Sue Lent, Deputy Leader. Early Years, Children & Families
Paul Orders, Chief Executive
Christine Salter, Corporate Director Resources
Tony Young, Director Children Services
Marie Rosenthal, County Clerk & Monitoring Officer
Derek King / Bob Jones, Audit Manager