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Annwyl Gomisiynnydd,

We are writing to you in relation to the recent inspection of Cardiff Youth Offending Service, carried out by Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Probation (HMIP) in 2019 and reporting in July of this year.

You will be aware of the findings of that Inspection, which considered 12 aspects of the service and ranked every one of those 'Inadequate', the lowest possible performance rating.

Whilst the service and its management board have published a new improvement and performance strategy, we feel it important that we also understand how it was possible for such service failures to go unnoticed, seemingly left unaddressed by the Service and not raised with elected councillors.

In the July meeting of Cardiff Council, the Welsh Liberal Democrat Group called for an independent investigation to consider, in detail, the journey of the Service from its 2016 Inspection report to the inspection undertaken in 2019. The aim of such a process would be to ensure that proper checks and balances exist elsewhere in order to prevent harm and promote the wellbeing and rights of those children engaged with council services.

We understand, from comments made in the 2019 inspection report, that staff had been raising concerns for some time regarding capacity, performance, support, and vacancies in the service. This ultimately contributed to the poor inspection performance. This is particularly pertinent in light of those findings relating to the inability of the Service to ensure that the wellbeing needs of the children engaged in the service were met, and there was sufficient capacity and insight to ensure their safety, and to be able to plan positively for their futures.

We would be grateful for your insight and guidance with regards to how an independent panel could be convened to investigate this and whether your office could act as an 'anchor' organisation for such a process, as per the powers afforded to your office in the Children's Commissioner for Wales Act 2001. As a multi-agency process we feel it is essential that all partners take part in such a process to ensure that lessons are learnt for both the Youth Justice Service and other services which children and young people rely.

It is our view that an independent process should consider the:

- Response to the 2016 HMIP Inspection, the implementation of its findings, and ongoing review of performance against its findings leading to 2019;
- Points at which senior officers, across all partners, were aware of potential failings in the service and each partners' processes to respond and monitor progress;
- The suitability of, and partners' engagement with, the Strategic Management Panel and Management Board and improvement practices to ensure robust management.

#### GWEITHIO DROS GAERDYDD, GWEITHIO DROSOCH CHI

Mae'r Cyngor yn croesawu gohebiaeth yn Gymraeg, Saesneg neu'n ddwyieithog. Byddwn yn cyfathrebu â chi yn ôl eich dewis, dim ond i chi roi gwybod i ni pa un sydd well gennych. Ni fydd gohebu yn Gymraeg yn arwain at oedi.

#### WORKING FOR CARDIFF, WORKING FOR YOU

The Council welcomes correspondence in Welsh, English or bilingually. We will ensure that we communicate with you in the language of your choice, as long as you let us know which you prefer. Corresponding in Welsh will not lead to delay.



- Approach to the engagement, involvement and oversight of Council scrutiny committees and Corporate Parenting Advisory Committees and the Police and Crime Commissioner;
- The response of all partners to reviews commissioned by Cardiff Council Children's Services by the Youth Justice Cymru Board and Silver Bullet.

A copy of this letter is also being sent to the Chair of the Audit Committee of Cardiff Council.

Yn gywir,

Cllr. Rhys Taylor  
Leader, Welsh Liberal Democrat Group

Cllr. Adrian Robson  
Leader, Welsh Conservative Group

Cllr. Keith Parry  
Leader, Welsh National Party Group

Cllr. Fenella Bowden  
Heath and Birchgrove Independents