

My Ref: Scrutiny/Correspondence/JointScrutinyJuly19

5 July 2019

Councillor Susan Elsmore

Cabinet Member Social Care, Health & Well-being

Councillor Graham Hinchey

Cabinet Member Children & Families

County Hall

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Dear Susan and Graham,

JOINT CYPSC/CASSC MEETING – 26 JUNE 2019 – LOCAL AUTHORITY SOCIAL SERVICES ANNUAL REPORT 2018-19

As Chair of the joint meeting of the Children & Young People and Community & Adult Services Scrutiny Committee, I wish to thank you and officers for attending Committee and providing Members with an opportunity to scrutinise the Local Authority Social Services Annual Report 2018/19, prior to its consideration by Cabinet on the 11th July.

Overall, Members were pleased with the progress outlined in the Annual Report and agreed to **commend the report to Cabinet and Council**. The Joint Committee's considered that the report clearly referenced many of the issues, concerns and progress that both committees have identified throughout the year, and agreed that the report was an accurate reflection of the Directorate. Members wish to echo your gratitude to the work done by yourselves, senior officers and the overall workforce in its bid for continuous improvement. Following consideration of the Annual Report, Members of the Committee have requested that I feedback the following comments, observations and requests for further information to you.

Format and content of the report

Members note that the format of the report is nationally prescribed however wish to reiterate that some areas were repetitive. Members felt the report would benefit from refinement, which in turn would improve its impact and deliver messages more robustly.

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.

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The Committee also expressed their surprise at the length of the Director of Social Services Introduction to the report, and considered that an introduction should be more concise.

The Committee also agreed that additional comparative data, for previous years, should be included for Learning Disability Support Living (page 25).

Children's services

Following consideration of the report and information provided at the meeting, Members wish to highlight a number of issues, which they felt required further information, or will be considering as part of their work programming discussions to request further briefing reports, these included:

Additional information to be included with the response letter:

- An assessment of the reasons for the low response rate for 18+ (page 24)
- A briefing on Families First identifying its impact on families over the last year (page 85)

Issues that the Committee's will be considering during their discussions on the items to include in the 2019-2020 work programme:

- That the Committee will include the pre-decision scrutiny of the children's commissioning strategy (Page 20) at its September 2019 meeting, as members would appreciate the opportunity to influence the contents of the report prior to its consideration at Cabinet.
- The report clearly sets out as key challenge for the directorate its future budget, especially at a time of increasing demand (Page 20). The Members agreed that they would be requesting a briefing paper on the financial planning proposals, together with an update on the transformational bid proposals and further bids and transformation grant.
- Members noted that the Directorate was undertaking a review the Corporate Parenting Strategy, by December 2019 (page 59) and the Committee wished to be actively involved in the review, as it had been involved in the original review.
- The Committee has previously been concerned at the impact that the Early Help service. Members requested that a briefing report to cover; the alignment of the 'preventative' and early help services; governance for the Welsh Government; Families First Programme alignment with Supporting People, Flying Start and other

preventative grant funding streams; as well as the impact and outcome from the work of the Early Help service, to a future meeting of the Committee.

- Finally the Committee welcomed the a briefing to members on the implementation and success of the signs of safety model that was now being implemented across children's services together with the work to embed the Strength Based model in Adult Services. The Committee requested a briefing not necessarily at Committee of the impact of the two models together with some case studies highlighting the clear impact the models were having.

Adult Services

- A key achievement is stated as “the implementation of the recommendations of the Community Services Review in collaboration with the University Health Board, regarding the future model of Community Mental Health Services in order to effectively support and deliver community based mental health services by March 2020”. Members were informed that this was work in progress and requested a progress report at a future meeting of the Community and Adult Services Committee.

Across Social Services

- Within the meeting, questions were raised in terms of the statistics surrounding complaints, with particular reference to the sharp increase of complaints in children's services. Members were advised that although the numbers for children service stage one complaints have risen, they are resolved at any early stage. Although Members are pleased with the effective resolution rate, Members of Children and Young People Scrutiny Committee wish to request a briefing note (*in line with Community and Adults Services request – Chair's letter 18 June 2019*) which provides a breakdown of the complaints received during 2018/19.
- With regard to the recruitment and retention of social workers, which is a recurring area of concern across both Committees, Members wish to emphasise the importance and possible connection of the cultural change within the workforce and staff retention. Members would advise that this intention of a cultural change requires an intent focus and continuous monitoring with an awareness that it may help inform the continuous challenge of staff retention and recruitment. The Committee agreed to request in response to this letter, an assessment on how the cultural changes being brought in are impacting on the retention of staff.

To summarise, this letter requests:

- A briefing note which provides a breakdown of the stage one Children Services complaints received during 2018/19
- A briefing on Families First identifying its impact on families over the last year (page 85)
- With regard to staff retention, an assessment on how the cultural changes currently being embedded across the workforce may be affecting the retention of staff.
- A meeting with the director to discuss items for CYPSC's work programme for the next 12 months.

Thank you again to you and officers for attending. I hope you find our comments and recommendations useful.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'L. BRIDGEMAN', with a long horizontal line extending to the right.

COUNTY COUNCILLOR LEE BRIDGEMAN
Chairperson – Joint Meeting of CYPSC and CASSC

CC: Cllr Shaun Jenkins, Chair of CASSC
Claire Marchant – Director, Social Services
Louise Barry – Assistant Director, Adult Services
Deborah Driffield – Assistant Director, Children Services
Jo Watkins – Cabinet Business Manger
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