

Date: 8 March 2022

My Ref: SS/CYP/NAS_YJS_Q3



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Councillor Graham Hinchey
Cabinet Member for Children & Families
County Hall
Atlantic Wharf
CARDIFF
CF10 4UW

Dear Graham,

CHILDREN & YOUNG PEOPLE SCRUTINY COMMITTEE – NATIONAL ADOPTION SERVICE HOSTING ARRANGEMENTS, YJS UPDATE AND Q3 PERFORMANCE – 1 MARCH 2022

Please accept my thanks for attending the Children & Young People Scrutiny Committee to present the National Adoption Service (NAS) Hosting Arrangements Proposal, the Youth Justice Service bi-monthly update and Quarter 3 Children's Services performance. Please also pass on our thanks to Sarah McGill, Graham Robb, Deborah Driffield and Angharad Thomas. The comments, observations and recommendations below were captured during the Committee's discussion at the Way Forward.

We commend the NAS report to Cabinet for consideration.

In relation to specific issues, Members would like to comment on the following:

National Adoption Service Hosting Arrangements

Members asked a question on the role and responsibilities for Cardiff as the host authority, particularly whether there were any worries regarding costs. Members noted that a cost recovery model was in place and that an annual review will be undertaken as part of the joint committee's responsibilities. You suggested that you could return in six months (September 2022) to update the Committee on the new arrangements, and we would welcome that update and will add to our work programme accordingly.

Youth Justice Service Update

Members welcomed the bi-monthly YJS update from yourself, Graham Robb and officers and would again commend you all in progress to date and the continued involvement of this Committee in your work. We look forward to receiving details of the output from the latest HMIP inspection in due course.

Members asked you a number of questions in relation to first-time entrants into the system; CSE/CE; diversity and proportionality of those in the YJS; reoffending rates; safeguarding; sharing of information; the role of partners (particularly Education) within and outside of the Council; early thematic issues; and the Service restructure.

Through the responses, we heard lots of examples of work currently being undertaken across the Service at both a strategic and operational level, such as a partnership operational subgroup on child sexual exploitation and criminal exploitation; the work of the Bureau; the work with Education looking at diversity and proportionality, and another piece of proportionality/diversionary work looking at girls in the system; work being done at Board level in relation to improving the evidence base, benchmarking and diversity of the Board; and mapping work being undertaken within the SAFE Model.

Angharad talked around some of the prevention work that is in its infancy with schools in partnership with probation and Cardiff City Football Club, particularly in primary to secondary transition. The Committee supports this work and looks forward to hearing more about it in due course.

We came to the conclusion that much of the issues we raised would also be addressed by HMIP during its inspection, and therefore, we will look forward to receiving an update following the inspection at the next meeting of this Committee (June/July 2022), and not request any further information at this time.

We will continue to champion Youth Justice Services being everyone's business and working with you all on this in the future.

Quarter 3 Performance

Members asked a range of questions around the pressures on the service, including the recruitment and retention of social workers; risks of returning to business-as-usual work, such as face-to-face meetings; and potentially losing some of the working efficiencies gained during the pandemic.

Members were pleased to hear about the new OM who will be responsible for overseeing team building, contract monitoring, quality assurance etc, and also the continued developments more widely in relation to systems reviews. Members have

requested to be informed of the new target for retaining social workers going forward into 2022/23; and would welcome the workforce data Deborah suggested at the meeting to be reported back.

Members raised the issue of long-term agency staff and the implications of this. Members have requested information on why some staff remain on long-term agency contracts, rather than working directly for the Council. An overview on how many long-term agency staff work for the Council, and their reasons for doing this would be welcomed.

Following the consideration of KPI YOS2, Members asked for data in relation to the number of children and young people reoffending after 12 and 24 months, and Deborah stated that she would supply that data.

Members asked questions around qualitative as well as quantitative indicators and ensuring that the Service is able to monitor the impact of decisions made for individual children & young people – those “so what” questions, and journey travelled by individual young people. We have previously requested this information, and would therefore welcome data and information on these issues.

To recap, the Committee **is requesting:**

1. An agreement to return to the Committee in six months (September 2022) to update the Committee on the new NAS arrangements.
2. The next YJS Update to this Committee (in June/July 2022) include outputs from the HMIP inspection.
3. The new target for social work vacancies (KPI Staff1) for 2022/23.
4. Wider workforce data to be reported back to the Committee when it next meets.
5. An overview on how many long-term agency staff work for the Council, and their reasons for doing so be provided
6. Linked to KPI YOS2, data in relation to the number of children and young people reoffending after 12 and 24 months.
7. Data and information in relation to qualitative indicators – what these are, and how the Service monitors the impact of decisions made for individual children & young people – those “so what” questions, and journey travelled by individual young people.

There are no formal recommendations arising from this letter

Once again, on behalf of the Committee, please pass my sincere thanks to all who attended Children & Young People Scrutiny Committee. I look forward to a response.

Yours sincerely,

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

COUNCILLOR LEE BRIDGEMAN

Chairperson – Children and Young People Scrutiny Committee

CC: CYPSC Members
Graham Robb, Independent Chair, Youth Justice Board
Sarah McGill, Corporate Director, People and Communities
Deborah Driffield, Director of Children's Services
Angharad Thomas, OM, Youth Justice Service
Liz Williams/Debra Willis, PA to the Corporate Director
Alison Taylor, Cabinet Support Office
Kim Thorpe, PA to the Director of Children's Services
Tim Gordon & Jeremy Rhys, Media and Comms
Cllr Adrian Robson – Group Leader
Cllr Rhys Taylor – Group Leader
Cllr Keith Parry – Group Leader
David Hugh Thomas – Chair Governance & Audit Committee