

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

Fy Nghyf / My Ref: CM31836

Eich Nghyf / Your Ref:

Dyddiad / Date: 3rd September 2015

Richard Cook
Cardiff Council
County Hall
Cardiff
CF10 4UW

Annwyl / Dear Richard

**Joint Children & Young People and Community & Adult Services Scrutiny
Committee Meeting - 29 July 2015**

Thank you for your letter of 31st July following our attendance with the Director at the Joint Scrutiny Committee on 29th July to consider the Annual Report of the Director of Social Services. We also welcome your recognition of the picture presented in the Report.

In reply to your comments, observations and recommendations we have consulted with the Director and agreed the following joint responses to each issue in the order in which you set them out in your letter.

Overarching Issues

The Director has indicated that he fully agrees with the need to ensure that next year's report is more outcome focused and that this will be facilitated by the new performance framework developed to support the implementation of the Social Services and Wellbeing (Wales) Act 2014 (SSWB). We fully agree with this approach.

The Director is unable, however, to agree with your recommendation in full that the report be 'amended to include a statement about how the areas for development will lead to improved performance'. Consistent with the committee's view, it is recognised that some of the 'areas for development' are too general and where this is clearly the case these have been strengthened; others that were simply repeated in several places have been removed. The Director is of the view however, that in the remainder of cases, the intended improvement is either self-evident or is included in the specific wording, or is a development that is necessary simply because of an external requirement to introduce it. A meaningful explanation of intended outcome in relation to every development area, would in too many cases require lengthy text and burden the report without adding commensurate value.

Similarly the Director is unable to agree your recommendation that each development area identifies 'how many performance indicators it is expected will be improved'. This would entail a significant risk of oversimplifying the relationship between development and P.I.s since it is rare for a service development to impact in a linear way to a single P.I. or indeed for any given P.I. to be improved by a single area of development alone.

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Social Services delivery and any given P.I. is inherently a reflection of a multi-faceted whole system. It is very important to recognise in this context that P.I.s as currently constructed are process measures and are at best a poor proxy for outcomes; indeed this is the very point made by members of the committee about the need to focus on outcome measures. Attempting to reduce development to a P.I. or even several, risks focusing on the P.I. at the expense of the development itself. Finally it remains as yet very unclear whether all or any of the current P.I.s will in fact remain in place beyond April 2016 given that a new outcome based performance framework is to be introduced as part of the SSWB Act 2014.

In terms of monitoring areas for development, you will be aware that in relation to both of the last two Annual Reports, the Director has advised committee that these are integrated, together with the improvements identified by the CSSIW's Annual Evaluation, into the respective Directorate Business Plans for the subsequent year; as you know these plans are considered by scrutiny. In addition overall progress in relation to development areas is integrated into the quarterly Cabinet performance reports that are also considered by Scrutiny. We are of the view that it is important to maintain fidelity with this as an effective vehicle for ongoing monitoring and note that this will be further enhanced as a result of establishing a single Directorate and a unified business plan in 2016-17.

Please note that the other changes recommended in the overview section are agreed and are being actioned as we write.

Children's Services

We are unable to agree that *'little progress.....has been made'* over the year with regard to female genital mutilation (FGM), Honour Based Violence, Forced Marriage, Human Trafficking or Radicalisation and remain unclear as to what committee's expectations in this regard are or what level of realism they reflect. The Annual Report offered no comment on progress in relation to these issues because it is outside of its scope (see below concerning statutory duties). Based on the report therefore, we cannot see how the committee evidences its claim that there has been 'little progress'. We would remind committee that these issues were incorporated into the 2015-17 Corporate Plan with specific timeline targets that have not yet expired.

It is also important to remember that the Annual Report of the Director of Social Services is concerned with reporting performance against Statutory Social Services duties, not duties that fall largely outside of this definition. As the Director advised the committee, the inclusion of a development area in the report relating to Human Trafficking etc., was merely a constructive attempt to ensure that this boundary is clarified and understood more effectively so that confusion about areas of responsibility is minimised. Whilst your letter accurately reflects the discussion around this development issue, we were disappointed that that the committee was unable to share the constructive spirit in which it was approached and that this was at the expense of a discussion about the key safeguarding issues.

By way of further clarification we would add that social services duties do not include a prior duty towards victims of crime, unless the crime in question causes significant harm to children as defined by the Children Act 1989. In this sense, the Director in discharging his statutory social services duties, which is the subject of the Annual Report, has no statutory responsibility for Honour Based Violence, Human Trafficking or Radicalisation. FGM is the only one of the issues cited, that self-evidently requires social services to respond as a matter of statutory duty because it is practised on children. Even here however, it is important to note that the Director can only report on performance where FGM is reported by others to Children's Services and cannot be held accountable if it is not reported, which is currently the case.

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We believe that the committee's own Human Trafficking enquiry was a major first step in attempting to navigate an effective way through a very complex set of socio economic inter-relationships but we remain conscious that it is this very complexity that makes progress particularly challenging. We therefore, acknowledge, as does the Director, that the wider obligations on the Council as part of its community leadership role include the need for a stronger approach to all of these very important issues and we welcome the role that Councillor De'Ath is playing in this regard. They are not however, matters for scrutiny in relation to the discharge of statutory social services.

In relation to learning from children's complaints the Director has already established arrangements for all children's complaints and learning outcomes to be reported to the Corporate Parenting Advisory Committee and he is happy to make these reports available to the Children and Young People's Scrutiny Committee for consideration.

Adult Services

It is agreed that the area for development to 'improve collaborative working' is not useful and will be amended to reflect something more meaningful and concrete.

In relation to the request for a breakdown of services received by 7,626 people, we are sorry that we are unable to fully meet this request due to the fact that this would necessitate an onerous manual audit of casefiles; some illustrations of the types of services provided will be included. The Director agrees that this inability to capture this information more effectively is a significant weakness of the current management information system which he is keen to address.

In relation to the questions raised concerning Day Centres, we believe that these have been addressed in full. We attach a copy of Cllr Elsmore's letter concerning this issue for information.

We have attached a summary of our responses to the list of recommendations and requests, many of which were helpful and relatively straightforward as an appendix to this letter.

Yn gywir / Yours sincerely



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



Councillor / Cynghorydd Susan Elsmore
Cabinet Member for Health, Housing & Wellbeing
Aelod Cabinet dros Iechyd, Tai a Lles

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Appendix 1
Summary of Responses to List of Recommendations and Requests

Recommendation	Response
Recommend that the report be amended to include a statement about how the areas for development will lead to improved performance and how many performance indicators it is expected will be improved in 2015-16 as a result of the work undertaken.	Partially agreed – please see page 1 above
Recommend that the Future Challenges for Adults Services be amended to include the need to improve performance in the care planning pathway, given that there has been underperformance in this area for 2014/15, and note Tony Young’s commitment to do this.	Agreed and amended
Recommend that the role scrutiny committees are playing in supporting improvement in social services is acknowledged and detailed in the report.	Agreed and amended
Recommend that the Adult Services areas for development are amended to articulate the specific improvements that are proposed for each area they relate to.	Report amended
Use of percentages – recommend that also include actual numbers in brackets, so that readers can understand the scale of performance change.	Agreed and amended
Graphs / Tables – recommend amend to include target lines, so that readers can easily see whether performance is on track or adrift from performance targets.	Agreed and amended
Page 7 – recommend that correct the use of English in the first and fourth bullet points.	Agreed and amended
P31 – recommend that the wording of the second paragraph be improved to make it clearer what support is provided to the 7,626 people cited in this paragraph.	Report amended
P38 – recommend that expand the area for development ‘Improve collaborative working with partners’.	Agreed and amended
P40 - recommend that the wording will be amended regarding ‘Ensure no further growth in the number of children entering the looked after system’.	Agreed and amended
Request details of how progress in delivering the areas for development will be regularly monitored.	Please see page 2 above
Request a breakdown to show the services received by the 7,626 people cited as receiving support (second paragraph, page 31).	Report amended

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Request details of the changes to policy and / or practice that have happened as a consequence of using complaints as a learning opportunity.	Please see page 3 above
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