

**MINUTES OF A MEETING OF THE HEALTH, CARE AND HOUSING SCRUTINY
COMMITTEE HELD AT COUNCIL CHAMBER - COUNTY HALL, LLANDRINDOD
WELLS, POWYS ON WEDNESDAY, 4 JULY 2018**

PRESENT

County Councillor

County Councillors J Charlton, G I S Williams, S C Davies, D E Davies, J Gibson-Watt, H Hulme, E Jones, D Rowlands, A Williams and R Powell

In attendance:

County Councillor Ms R Powell (Portfolio Holder for Children's Services)
Mr D Johnston (Interim Head of Children's Services), Mr S Howell (Area Manager), Ms A-M Davies (Professional Lead – Business Support Resources) and Ms L Patterson (Scrutiny Officer)

1.	APOLOGIES
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Apologies for absence were received from County Councillors Ms A Jenner, Ms M Mackenzie, Ms C Mills, Mr P Pritchard, Ms K Roberts-Jones, Mr E Vaughan, Ms A Williams and Mr M Williams.

2.	DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST
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No declarations of interest were received.

3.	DECLARATIONS OF PARTY WHIPS
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No declarations of party whips were received.

4.	CHAIR'S BRIEFING
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The Chair explained that this meeting would focus on Children's Services performance as the Adult Social Care performance reports were at an earlier stage of preparation and needed further work before they could be shared with scrutiny. The Complaints report again only relates to Children's Service as this was requested by the pre-May 2018 Children's Services Scrutiny Group.

5.	CHILDREN'S SERVICES PERFORMANCE REPORTS
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Documents considered:

- Children's Services Performance Report – May 2018

Discussion:

- There are no minutes of the twice weekly team manager performance meetings (Executive summary – point 2), but there are action points arising from matters raised at the meeting. Audits have been undertaken and will be made available to the Improvement and Assurance Board. These could be provided to scrutiny. (Outcome 1)

- There has been a considerable increase in approaches to the service during May and these have been referred to the locality teams rather than being referred to the Team around the Family (TAF). There has been no increase in workforce and therefore this will impact on performance over the coming months
- There is no lack of capacity in TAF but Powys People Direct (PPD) are not referring cases to TAF and Social Workers are not stepping down cases to TAF where appropriate. A review of PPD is being undertaken at present. TAF comes under the Start Well programme (previously known as the Children and Young Peoples Partnership (CYPP)).
- Start Well is co-chaired by the Director of Education and Senior Manager of the Health Board and includes senior officers from health, public health and housing. A report on the Start Well programme could be brought to scrutiny. (Outcome 2)
- The biggest increase in referrals has come from the Police and secondly from individuals. Usually referrals come from schools, health colleagues and then individuals.
- The increase is due to domestic violence cases and child sexual exploitation cases which are very serious and time consuming. Some teams are showing the strain and are reporting heavy workloads and increased sickness absence
- The increase in cases has meant the planned reduction in agency staff has had to be reconsidered and the Head of Service has met with the Finance Director and Chief Executive. Staffing will not drop below safe levels.
- In the short term there will be financial pressures which will be addressed by focussing on
 - appointing permanent staff rather than agency staff (who cost 30-35% more)
 - looking to appropriately reduce expensive residential placements – the Resource Panel is examining expensive placements to see if they are still meeting the need of the child or if different provision would be more appropriate. A report is being prepared for the Improvement and Assurance Board which could be shared with scrutiny (Outcome 3)
- Overall performance in May has held up with some small dips but not so far as to cause concern
- The improving trend has been affected by the increase in demand and it may be necessary to move people between teams to meet demand
- Fluctuations in demand are to be expected until the workforce is stabilised. A new Director is in post and a new Head of Service due to be appointed shortly who will address the workforce issue
- There are six children not included within the Looked After Children statistics due to the high level of protection needed in these cases. Members should be assured that they are receiving all the support that they need
- The number of children without a care and support plan has dropped from 161 to 120. Care and support plans are in place but for technical reasons the report is not recording this. The technical reasons need to be addressed (Outcome 4)
- It is difficult to compare the cost of placements with other authorities as their information is published less frequently. The aim is for more children

to be cared for by Powys foster carers. A Resources Panel has been set up to ensure that those children coming into care are placed in the correct placement

- An analysis of the children who have become looked after over the last twelve months is nearing completion and can be made available to scrutiny. (Outcome 5)
- A pilot in north Powys to create a separate Assessment Team has been successful and it is intended to replicate this in south Powys. The childcare team in Newtown has had problems. Management capacity has been supplemented and the team now feels more successful and settled
- The service are meeting with the Police to explore closer working after incidents of domestic violence where information needs to be sensitively shared with school and health colleagues
- The national IT system is still causing problems and it can take hours to upload a report. The system is still developing as health colleagues join

Outcomes:

1. Scrutiny to receive a summary of the findings resulting from the audit of the twice weekly team manager performance meeting
2. Scrutiny to receive a report on the Start Well programme
3. Scrutiny to receive the report on the Placements project
4. The technical reasons behind the incorrect figures for those open cases without a care and support plan to be addressed promptly to ensure that Members can be properly assured that all children have care and support plans in place
5. Scrutiny to receive the report analysing the Looked After Children population in Powys

6.	CHILDREN'S SERVICES INSPECTION REPORT
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Documents considered:

- CIW Inspection Report on Golwg Camlas/Bannau May 2018
- Bannau/Camlas Action Plan 5th June 2018
- CIW Inspection Report on Powys County Council Fostering Service

Bannau/Camlas

Discussion:

- CIW made an unannounced visit in January 2018 to Golwg Camlas/Bannau. Bannau cares for pupils with autism and Camlas offers short break respite care for children with complex disabilities
- There are approximately 100 regulations to comply with and the inspection also looks at living conditions, care and staff meetings
- No compliance notices were made after the inspection and the findings that were made were those the service already knew about
- The service are on track with the timescales within the action plan except for those that relate to staffing and senior managers are having to cover some shifts.
- The Inspection found that there were still found to be short falls in the system for recording medication which had been raised at a previous inspection. Officers confirmed that medication was taken seriously and it was thought that it related to infrequent occasions where a second staff

member had failed to sign the medication register. A move to an electronic medication record is being investigated which would alert the shift leader to recording omissions

- It is on occasion necessary to close Camlas but this is a difficult decision to take as it is acknowledged that routine for young people is important as is respite for carers. It is essential that the correct level of staffing is available and as young people are resident in Bannau full time it is on occasion necessary to move staff to ensure Bannau is fully staffed. If it is necessary to close Camlas alternative support or respite is offered
- Recent staffing changes have resulted in five members of staff leaving and eight joining. A recent recruitment event in Ystradgynlais was not as successful as had been hoped and it had been necessary to rearrange an event in Merthyr
- There have been retention issues with staff wanting more hours but to enable sufficient cover for shift patterns it has been necessary to offer a mixture of 16, 22 and 37 hour patterns. Some staff find other hours elsewhere and may end up leaving the unit to concentrate on their other job
- The Senior Manager visits the unit regularly and whilst there is a positive feeling there is a level of frustration and tiredness as staff have to work additional hours
- Although the service have insufficient qualified staff to meet the requirements of the regulation those staff who are unqualified are all working towards qualification
- Although not all staff are registered with Social Care Wales this is because they are working through a comprehensive induction programme prior to registration

Cllr Jon Williams left 3.45pm

- The Portfolio Holder advised she regularly visited Bannau/Camlas and invited Members to accompany her on a visit
- It was acknowledged that the unit was unable to offer care through the medium of Welsh but noted that the young people in the unit often used other forms of communication
- It was acknowledged that there were a number of shortcomings as highlighted in the report which the service acknowledged and were being addressed within the action plan. It should be noted however that the staff worked extremely hard and Members wished to thank staff for their commitment
- The Portfolio Holder noted that it is intended to raise the profile of the unit as a support system to Penmaes so that parents and carers could learn coping strategies for use before crises developed and respite was needed

Outcomes:

- Members who wish to visit Bannau/Camlas to discuss this the Portfolio Holder for Children's Services
- That an update on progress against the action plan be brought back to scrutiny in six months

Cllr D Rowlands left 4.15pm

Discussion:

- There are a shortage of foster carers both in Powys Fostering Services and in the Independent sector
- There were 25 foster carers appointed last year of which the majority were connected persons (family or friends)
- The Foster Carer Strategy looks to increase the number of generic foster carers by 40. This year 13 have already been approved and a further 7 assessments are in progress. A high number of new enquiries continues to be received
- The majority of foster carers are based in Radnorshire and it will be necessary to map where foster care is projected to be needed
- The authority is looking to be a foster friendly council with offers such as free access to leisure centres and access to the staff benefits scheme
- Foster carers feedback shows that the position has improved since the inspection although more progress needs to be made
- The aim is to process applications within four months as it is a long and detailed process. It was brought to the attention of the service that other organisations were able to process applications faster than Powys.

Outcomes:

- **The report was noted**

7.	COMPLAINTS REPORT - CHILDREN'S SERVICES
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Documents considered:

- Children's Services Complaints, Compliments and Representations

Discussion:

- The number of complaints has increased significantly in Powys but remain low in comparison to other authorities
- Communication remains a theme in complaints across all teams
- Complaints are accepted in hard copy, online or by telephone and Social Workers all carry complaints leaflets
- There are no targets in relation to complaints as complaints are viewed positively as an opportunity for learning
- A second complaints officer has been appointed and surgeries are being held across Powys and management teams are attended to go through learning from complaints. The complaints officer works with operational managers and Quality Assurance Manager to check actions identified during the complaints process are undertaken
- The unit has a busy caseload but it is manageable. There is one permanent and one fixed term complaints officer. The workload will be monitored

Outcomes:

- That an Annual Complaints Report is brought to scrutiny which covers Adults and Children's Social Care

8.	WORK PROGRAMME
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The next meeting of Health, Care and Housing Scrutiny Committee is scheduled for the 20th July 2018 where Access Arrangements will be subject to pre-Cabinet scrutiny.

9.	EXEMPT ITEMS
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RESOLVED to exclude the public for the following item of business on the grounds that there would be disclosure to them of exempt information under category 3 of The Local Authorities (Access to Information) (Variation) (Wales) Order 2007).

10.	IMPROVEMENT AND ASSURANCE BOARD NOTES
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The notes of the meeting of the Improvement and Assurance Board for May 2018 were received.

County Councillor Gwilym Williams