

Cynulliad Cenedlaethol Cymru | National Assembly for Wales

Y Pwyllgor Plant, Pobl Ifanc ac Addysg | Children, Young People and Education Committee

Y 1,000 diwrnod cyntaf | First 1,000 Days

FTD 54

Ymateb gan: Dinas A Sir Asertawe

Response from: City and County Of Swansea

The City and County of Swansea welcomes the invitation to provide evidence to the National Assembly's Children, Young People and Education Committee in relation to the First 1000 Days Consultation.

In Swansea we have made a commitment within the Local Authority and also across partner agencies through the Healthy City Board and the Public Services Board to prioritise Early Years. Working collaboratively with the Health Board and other partners is crucial to achieving transformational change as this is a cross cutting policy area.

We have recognised the considerable research and evidence which emphasises these crucial early days in determining children's future outcomes. In addition we are very interested in the "invest to save" perspective to achieve future savings which could be made across the Public Sector.

We therefore support the focus of the First 1000 Days however would like to see a greater national emphasis on this across all departments of the Welsh Government so that there is a collective ownership throughout a wider range of policy areas. In addition we feel that further thought is required into how a diverse multi-agency and multidisciplinary "sector" could be resourced so that this diversity can be brought together in order to bring about real change.

In terms of the key areas cited we feel that the focus on poverty during this important stage needs to be enhanced to ensure and secure the rights and entitlements to benefits. As we know a child has huge financial implications on personal budgets and securing income is an important start especially

where there are other issues that need to be dealt with.

Increasing/maintaining a family's income can assist in removing or reducing other issues and can be the starting point for family's to look at addressing other aspects of their life.

We thought it would be useful for you to be aware of some of the activities that we are progressing in Swansea in relation to Early Years / Best Start and that relate directly to the First 1000 Days and the themes being explored by the Committee. These activities and services are all complementary of WG policies and Programmes and some are directly funded by Welsh Government Programmes.

- We have worked with the Marmot Team to develop an approach to tackling health inequalities. Early Years was identified as a priority area by the Healthy City Board in order to close the gap in children's school readiness via an universal approach complemented via targeting support in proportion to needs.
- Following advice from the Marmot Team we have developed a public campaign "Best Start Swansea" to promote the key messages. These messages were coproduced with parents and partners relating to children's development. Children were instrumental in bringing the campaign characters to life.
- These messages, which are attached, are being promoted by PSB members across their collective workforces, via social media, posters and multi-agency events and are accompanied by more information or access to services, advice and activities.
- To complement the targeted Flying Start Programme we have utilised the Families First Programme to provide a Swansea wide service to target the First 1000 days to complement core health and local authority services with an initial focus on young and first time parents with additional vulnerabilities. The Jig-so Project integrates midwifery and evidenced based positive parenting and early language development to provide a holistic service to build skills and resilience within the family unit from conception and throughout the infant years.

This Project was presented at the Bevan Foundation Conference in September 2016 and has been chosen to be presented at the Healthy City International Conference in Hungary in March 2017. A summary of the Project has been attached.

- Early Years and Speech and Language development are identified in Swansea's Children and Young People's Strategic Plan.
- We are piloting a new partnership with a GP Network via an exemplar project for 12 months to deliver parenting skills and interventions to young children and their parents referred by the GPs as a direct response to the ACEs agenda.
- The production of the ABC guide which covers benefits from pregnancy up until the child leaves education – and is a very useful tool /guide for families with children.
- Up until the present we have been utilising a small element of Flying Start and Families First to provide a Home Health and Safety scheme to enable professionals to access basic equipment health and safety equipment and bed clothes and children's clothes to respond directly to assessments of need undertaken by Health Visitors; Parenting Officers and Team Around the Family Co-ordinators. These items have proven to make a big difference in achieving change in families particularly during the Child's earliest years.
- We are working with Trinity University St Davids to rollout the Sustained Shared Thinking Evaluation tool to support our early years settings to be "Child ready" and of the highest quality in order to make a difference on children's future outcomes.
- We are developing a multi-agency Continuum of need for Family Support which will align to the Social Services and Well-being Act in terms of a focus on intervening appropriately at the earliest point possible. There is a clear emphasis on the important role of universal midwifery and health visiting services in identifying needs and providing the right support at the right time.