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 Head of Social Services for Children
 Pennaeth Gwasanaethau Cymdeithasol I Blant



Your Ref/Eich Cyf

Our Ref/Ein Cyf CS/FB

Date/Dyddiad 5 March 2014

Ask for/Gofynner am Carol Salmon

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Ann Jones, AM
 Children, Young People and Education Committee
 National Assembly for Wales
 Cardiff Bay
 CARDIFF
 CF99 1NA

Dear Ms. Jones,

RE: INQUIRY INTO CHILD AND ADOLESCENT MENTAL HEALTH SERVICES (CAMHS)
 (Your letter of 24.01.14. refers)

As Head of Social Services for Children for this local authority I was tasked with responding to your letter and intended to respond by the target date of 28.02.14. but unfortunately I was absent from work last week.

Mindful of the timeframes I hope this general response is acceptable to you as I believe my colleague Heads of Children's Services across North Wales will have provided a more detailed response in accordance with some of the debates and discussions we have had about CAMHS services in the North Wales area and its sub-regional delivery.

We are aware that funding has been made available historically to improve CAMHS services but I am afraid to say that as Heads of Children's Services we have not been able to see an improved level of service delivery for children and families on the ground. This message and these concerns have been shared both historically and more recently with the relevant managers within BCUHB.

In Particular the following points are crucial:

- Service delivery models which prompt case closure when families fail to attend pre-booked sessions do not reflect the practice wisdom of the need for robust engagement techniques with this group of young people.
- Early intervention services are available sub-regionally but are short term in nature leading to a chasm of intervention levels between early intervention and Tier 4 services. This chasm is in the main currently plugged by the voluntary sector provision and funded from local authority, health and grant allocation. They provide excellent services upon which we depend heavily but we are all too aware of the fragility of these funding streams due to the drive for efficiencies in health and local authority budgets and, from the health perspective – to meet the requirements of the Mental Health Measure.

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- There has been a stance taken by some CAMHS teams that they will not provide therapeutic services for looked after children who are not in stable placements. This has been the subject of challenge over the years, management agreement obtained that this approach is unhelpful and it is those young people who are in crisis who need specialised interventions but still we hear the same approach being delivered at the front line.
- With the drive to seek permanent placements for our looked after children, support for adopters is crucial to prevent adoption breakdown. We have recently had an undertaking from our Health Board colleagues to prioritise the needs of this group, and we hope this is achievable in practice.
- Some years ago the 6 North Wales Head's of Children's Services agreed to fund a social work post at the North Wales Adolescent Unit. One of the main areas was to ensure appropriate links between the unit and the home authority. Despite many meetings we were unable to see the benefit of the ongoing funding for this post so it has been withdrawn. We were interested in developments to have more outreach services from the NWAU but as yet have seen no evidence of how this is working in practice.

I hope this response note assists the Committee in their enquiries.

Yours sincerely



Carol Salmon
Head of Social Services for Children

Copy: Neil Ayling, Director, Community Services
Craig Macleod, Service Manager, Commissioning and Performance
Lisa Parsonage, PA to the CEO

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