

Child & Family Services Scrutiny Performance Panel Update

1. Remit of the Panel

The overarching purpose of the panel is to:

Receive and request relevant performance reports to monitor and challenge assessments on service performance and quality in respect of children's social services

On behalf of the Panel, the convener will write to the relevant Cabinet Member raising issues of concern, comments and recommendations as appropriate following Panel meetings.

2. Introduction

The reformed Child & Family Services panel met for the first time on 29th September. The panel agreed to appoint Councillor Paxton Hood-Williams as convener. .

3. Key Activities

The panel received the Child & Family Services Performance Report and highlighted the following areas as concerns: referrals trending upwards; improved/increased use of the Regional Integrated Family Support Service; drop off in the number of Initial Assessments and Core Assessments completed within timescale; staff supervision; numbers of children ceasing to become Looked After Children has dropped compared to previous year; approval rates for foster carers and adopters.

The panel received its second follow-up report on the scrutiny review of leaving care services. The panel remained concerned about the effectiveness of the Barnardo's contract/partnership to provide leaving care services and requested that a further report be brought back to the panel in 3 months on this issue. The panel felt unable to sign off the review as completed until it is satisfied that the services provided by Barnardo's are effective.

4. Achievements / Impact

The convener's letter to the Cabinet Member raised the points highlighted in section 3 above and the response will be reported back to the Committee at the next available opportunity.

5. Future Work Programme

The Panel is currently meeting on a monthly basis and is in the process of agreeing its work plan. A draft will be taken to the next meeting.

6. Action required by the Scrutiny Programme Committee

None