

## **Child & Family Services Scrutiny Performance Panel Update**

### **1. Remit of the Panel**

The overarching purpose of the Panel is to ensure that performance in Child & Family Services is effectively monitored and challenged.

### **2. Introduction**

The Panel is focused on contributing to good performance in child & family services by providing a critical friend for the Cabinet, and helping to ensure accountability. This is particularly important because of the need to safely reduce the numbers of looked after children and ensure good delivery of support to children and their families, all within an increasingly reduced budget.

### **3. Key Activities**

The Panel held 6 meetings between January and July. This has involved speaking to the Cabinet Member, senior officers from within the authority and officers from the Western Bay partnership; 6 convener's letters to the Cabinet Member.

The main issues covered were as follows:

#### **19 January**

- Implications for the authority of the independent review into child sexual exploitation in Rotherham

#### **16 February**

- Update on the development of the Western Bay Safeguarding Board
- Quarterly performance monitoring of Child & Family Services (December 2014)

#### **16 March**

- Development and implementation of a Permanence Service

#### **13 April**

- Review of the Integrated family support service (IFSS).

#### **11 May**

- Quarterly performance monitoring of Child & Family Services (March 2015)

#### **8 June**

- Agreement of work plan

#### **6 July**

- Performance and effectiveness of Signs of Safety practice framework

#### **4. Achievements / Impact**

- **Changes to the performance monitoring data** - The panel has made a number of changes to the performance monitoring report. It has requested that the following data be added so that it can improve its understanding of performance in these areas:
  - Data on child sexual exploitation
  - Children looked after who have left care
  - Length of time cases spent as unallocated
  - Trended data on adoption analysis
  - Geographical information on residential care placements
  - Re-registered children on the child protection register
  
- **Performance** – A number of key issues/questions have been raised over the last 6 months and these include the length of time cases remain unallocated, sickness levels, re-referral rates, children seen alone – what the Cabinet Member has agreed with and acknowledged. Action taken has included adding performance information to the monthly monitoring report (as detailed above), the Cabinet Member responding with details on action taken within the department to address the panel’s concerns
  
- **Engaging with regional partners**
  - The Panel had a question and answer session with Nick Jarman, Chair of the Western Bay Safeguarding Board and addressed concerns around governance, strategic priorities and scrutiny of regional services
  - The panel examined the findings of the review of the regionally provided Integrated Family Support Service and held a question and answer session with Nicola Echnais, Head of Service at Bridgend County Borough Council and Julie Thomas, Principal Officer, City and County of Swansea. It was agreed that a cost/benefit analysis be presented to the panel towards the end of 2015.

#### **5. Future Work Programme**

- The Panel will continue to meet on a monthly basis.
- The Panel’s work plan for 2015/16 has been agreed

#### **6. Action required by the Scrutiny Programme Committee**

None.