

## **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 4 meetings between August and November. This has involved speaking to the Head of Child and Family Services and senior officers from the department; engagement with the Head of Poverty and Prevention; 4 convener's letters to the Cabinet Member.

The main issues covered were as follows:

#### **10 August**

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

#### **28 September**

- Assessing the effectiveness of prevention services to reduce demand for Child & Family Services

#### **26 October**

- Development and implementation of the Post-16 Service

#### **23 November**

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

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

- **Changes to the performance monitoring data –**
  - the Social Services and Well Being Act will have implications on performance reporting. The Panel has agreed to provide its views and opinions on the development of the new performance report.

- The panel requested that data be added to the performance report on the number of children who cease to be looked after and went on to become looked after again
- **Performance** – A number of key issues/questions have been raised over the last 4 months and these include the numbers of Children in Need cases, numbers of unborn and under 3-month babies on the Child Protection Register, sickness absence and management, supervision, inconsistent performance in Core Assessments, how Western Bay will address the reduction in the number of Adoption Orders granted, staff supervision. Action taken has included the Cabinet Member providing a detailed response to the panel's concerns and on action taken within the department to address the concerns.
- **Engagement with the Head of Poverty and Prevention**
  - The Panel wanted to understand how effective early intervention services were in reducing the demand for child and family services. Overall the panel felt that so far, the impact was positive and that children and families were being diverted away from social services interventions (where safe and appropriate) and into other non-statutory support services.
  - The panel raised 2 concerns – i)children living just outside postcode areas could miss out on vital Flying Start services, ii)the number of 3 year olds not achieving their developmental norm.
- **Development of a Post-16 Service**
  - The panel has been engaged in scrutinising the development of the Post-16 Service over the last 2 years. It has been able to give its views on important aspects of the development, such as the contract and tender process, the importance of the service user voice in service development, robust performance management and appropriate oversight of the new service. The panel is pleased that the new contract has been awarded and it has agreed to engage with Barnardo's once the service is up and running. It will continue to receive monitoring reports on the new service.

## 5. Future Work Programme

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

## 6. Action required by the Scrutiny Programme Committee

None.