

## **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 3 meetings between December and March. This has involved speaking to the Head of Child and Family Services; engagement with the Western Bay Youth Justice and Early Intervention Service Manager; 3 convener's letters to the Cabinet Member.

The main issues covered were as follows:

#### **21 December**

- Progress on bringing together the 3 youth justice services in Bridgend, Neath Port Talbot and Swansea into a single Western Bay Youth Justice and Early Intervention Service.

#### **18 January**

Progress on the development and performance of the Domestic Violence Hub

#### **15 February**

- Quarterly performance monitoring of Child & Family Services and Service Quality Assurance and Regional Performance and Quality reporting frameworks

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

#### **• Performance monitoring –**

- From April performance monitoring data for the regional Youth Justice Prevention and Early Intervention Service will be included in the monthly performance reports that the panel scrutinises on a quarterly basis
- Revised sickness and absence data reporting will be included in the next report to the panel

**Performance** – A number of key issues/questions have been raised over the last 3 months and these include access to mental health services for young people in the youth justice service; the general trend for contacts at the Child & Family Services front door is up; performance in Core Assessments has dipped. 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. The Social Services and Well Being Act could be impacting on some of these areas of performance but overall the implementation of the Act in April should support improvement in the areas highlighted by the panel.

The panel has been keen to highlight good performance and it was particularly pleased with the reduction in first time entrants into the youth justice system from 533 in 2009/10 to 103 in 2014/15.

The panel welcomed the recent positive inspection of the Western Bay Youth Justice Early Intervention and Prevention Service and was confident that the areas identified for improvement would be addressed quickly and successfully.

- **Engagement with Domestic Violence Hub**

- The Panel wanted to examine performance on the multi-agency domestic violence hub and consider its impact on children and families. The panel supported the genuine multi agency approach of the hub which had plans to bring in a health visitor, an adult services social worker and a substance misuse social worker. The panel also supported the RAY project which worked with schools and the Equilibrium Programme which was successfully working with the perpetrators of domestic violence to change their behaviour.
- The panel was concerned however that some schools had not engaged with the RAY project and the panel conveyed to the Cabinet Member the importance of all schools being on board with this project, ii)the number of 3 year olds not achieving their developmental norm. The Cabinet Member in her response pointed to the recently published Welsh Government guidance and best practice on a whole school approach to tackling domestic violence and gave detailed how the Act places new obligations to report on the Local Authority's response to violence against women and domestic and sexual abuse.

## **5. Future Work Programme**

- The Panel will continue to meet on a monthly basis.
- The Panel will develop a new work plan for 2016/17.

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

None.