

Children's Services Overview and Scrutiny Panel, 14 July 2015

**CHILDREN'S SERVICES OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY PANEL
14 July 2015**

PRESENT:

PANEL MEMBERS:

Councillor Chris Wakefield - Chair; Councillor Susan Phillips - Vice-Chair (from 6:50pm); Councillors Malcolm Davies, Bobbie Dove, Don McQueen and Rae Stollard.

ALSO PRESENT:

Councillor Nicola Greene - Cabinet Member for Education and Children's Services.

OFFICERS PRESENT:

Jane Portman - Executive Director for Adults and Children
Carole Aspden - Service Director, Children and Young People
Lisa Green - Service Manager, Planning and Permanence
Ann-Marie Dodds - Service Manager, Family Support Services
Neil Goddard - Service Director, Community Learning and Commissioning
Heather Freeman - Team Manager, Children's Social Care
Jane White - Service Manager - Referral, Assessment & Safeguarding Service
Tom Hancock - Democratic Services & Overview & Scrutiny Officer

The meeting commenced at 6.03 p.m.

Note: To see a copy of the public reports that were considered by the Panel at this meeting please visit:

<http://www.bournemouth.gov.uk/CouncilDemocratic/CouncilMeetings/CommitteeMeetings/ChildrensServicesOverviewScrutinyPanel/2015/07/14/ChildrensServicesOverview&Scrutiny14-Jul-2015.aspx>

SECTION I - BUSINESS RECOMMENDED TO THE COUNCIL

No Items

SECTION II - BUSINESS DECIDED UNDER DELEGATED POWERS

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18. THANKS

DECISION MADE:

1. The Panel record their thanks to Councillor Coope and Councillor Malcolm Davies for their work as Chair and Vice-Chair of the Panel prior to the election.

19. APOLOGIES

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Johnson and Phillips and Non-Elected voting Members Pat Marchiori-White and Alan Hogg.

20. SUBSTITUTE MEMBERS

Councillor McQueen substituted for Councillor Johnson.

21. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were none.

22. CONFIRMATION OF MINUTES

DECISION MADE:

That the minutes of the meeting of the Panel held on 19 March 2015 be confirmed.

23. PUBLIC ITEMS

There were no public questions or requests to receive deputations and petitions under Procedure Rules 32, 37 and 40 respectively.

24. ROLE AND FUNCTIONS OF CHILDREN'S SERVICES OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY PANEL

The Chair introduced the report circulated at '6' with the agenda and asked the Panel to note the roles and functions of the Panel and the services allocated to it.

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DECISION MADE:

1. That the Panel note the report.

25. ADOPTION SERVICE - ANNUAL REPORT

The Team Manager, Children's Social Care introduced the report circulated at '7' with the agenda.

The Board asked a number of questions, and made a number of comments, including on the following topics:

Breakdown - The Panel asked what percentage of placements resulted ultimately in placement breakdown. The Team Manager, Children's Social Care informed the Panel that of 32 placements last year 1 broke down and that from 2011 to the present day there had been 3 placement breakdowns. It was explained that after a breakdown an independently chaired meeting would take place to work out what lessons could be learnt. The Panel was further told that all children who were involved in the placement breakdowns had subsequently been successfully placed.

Service Rating - The Panel asked about what had changed from when the adoption service was rated outstanding by OFSTED in 2012 to when the adoption service received a rating of good in 2014. The Team Manager, Children's Social Care told the Panel that the inspection of 2012 was a single focus inspection that was just looking at the adoption service whereas the 2014 inspection was as part of the Children's Social Care offering which offered a sub-rating of the adoption service. It was explained that the rating of outstanding was not received due to what OFSTED perceived as a lack of forward planning.

Changes - The Chair asked if the service needed to improve. The Team Manager, Children's Social Care told the Panel that improvement would always be targeted. It was also explained to the Panel that the government had signalled that it felt there were too many adoption services and that there needed to be an overhaul to a more regional setting. The Panel asked about the impacts on Bournemouth's service of this and whether there was a plan in place to deal with the changes. It was explained to the Panel that there was concern that Bournemouth's success was partly down to knowing all the families involved and that this may be down to the size of the area served. It was also explained that the Council was awaiting further information from central government about the plans to regionalise before setting into motion a course of action.

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Assessments - The Panel asked about what recompense Bournemouth received when a child from outside of the borough was placed with families who had been assessed by Bournemouth, and whether or not given the government desire to regionalise adoption services and the good performance of Bournemouth's service Bournemouth could become a centre of excellence in the field which would ultimately add an income stream to the Council. The Team Manager, Children's Social Care told the Panel that the Council received £27,000 when a child from outside of Bournemouth was placed with families assessed by Bournemouth. Although numbers around this had dipped over the past few years they were significantly picking up again.

26. OFSTED ACTION PLAN

The Service Manager, Family Support Services introduced the report circulated at '8' with the agenda. The Panel was told that the action plan was in response to the recent OFSTED inspection report on services to Children in Need of Help and Protection, Children Looked After and Care Leavers which had seen Bournemouth rated as 'requires improvement'. The Service Manager told the Panel that there were a number of actions being undertaken but that the Panel would focus on those marked as red or amber under the red, amber and green (RAG) rating system. The following actions were discussed:

2.4 Develop Clear Data Input Processes and Procedures for staff to follow

- The Panel were reminded that there had been a number of issues surrounding the RAISE software, although it was highlighted that not all the issues were down to the software and it had been identified that the information that was put into the system by staff needed to be improved. As part of this the Panel was informed that data was now put in field boxes rather than attachments which made it easier to get data outside the system. The Panel was told, in response to a Member question, that staff were able to input data remotely from personal devices.

Members asked whether there had been enough investment in the software and enquired as to the support from partner organisation involved with the software and IT. The Service Director - Community Learning and Commissioning explained that historically there had been underinvestment in the software but that had changed and there was now investment in both supporting the current software and for procuring a new piece of software. The Panel was told that there were a lot of different actors involved in the software when taking into account data hosting, licensing et al so it was a complicated picture of organisations that had to be navigated to make changes.

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5.3 - Establish Recording and Monitoring Mechanisms to Report on the Number and Changes of Social Workers Children Experience -

The Panel was told that there was no solution to this problem as yet. It was explained to the Panel that the only way to track the issue was via pen and paper as the software RAISE did not facilitate it.

9.3 - Recruit To Two Permanent Posts -

The Panel was told that the service was surprised by the OFSTED recommendation that the service needed further service management capacity. Recruitment to additional posts had proved successful in one case and a substantial challenge to the second post as it had been attempted 4 times.

10.7 - Raise Aspirations and Support for 16+ LAC

The Panel was told that progress had been held up in relation to this item in respect to long term sickness leave. It was also mentioned that the Council did go out to recruit a post 16 Educational Lead but the recruitment exercise had been unsuccessful.

27. CHILD SEXUAL EXPLOITATION (CSE)

The Service Manager, Family Support Services introduced the report circulated at '9' with the agenda. The Panel was reminded that the issue of CSE was of high national prominence in the wake of various high profile investigations and scandals. It was explained to the Panel that the risk of CSE would not be mitigated by the Children's Social Care team alone and would only be mitigated as part of a whole-Council and partner agency effort. The Panel was told that an action plan for CSE was being prepared and would be shared with the Panel as soon as it was ready.

The Panel was informed that the numbers of Children being risk assessed for CSE had increased vastly which was the result of a pro-active approach.

The Panel had a number of questions and made a number of comments including on the following topics:

Pan- Dorset CSE and Return Home Interview Support Service - The Service Director, Family Support Services was asked whether the commissioned organisation, Barnardo's, had made the expected progress with the Pan-Dorset CSE and return home interview support service. The Panel was told

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that there had been delays around recruitment but that once those were sorted the Council would still see great value from the arrangement.

Intelligence Sharing - The Panel asked about the challenge involved in intelligence sharing between all the agencies and partners involved in tackling the issue. The Panel was told that that issue had been recognised and there was a 6-weekly meeting where all partners would come together to talk and share information. It was also emphasised to the Panel that an awareness campaign would be started that would seek to set people questioning things they saw or heard with CSE in mind.

Taxis - The Panel asked about any issues of CSE and taxis as vulnerable people sometimes travel by taxi. It was explained that there had been no pattern of behaviour with taxis involved in Bournemouth but that part of the action plan tackling CSE would look at training for drivers to spot the signs of CSE.

28. YEW TREE INVESTIGATION UPDATE; POLICY FOR VISITORS TO CHILDREN'S RESIDENTIAL ESTABLISHMENTS (Items 10 & 11 on agenda taken together)

The Service Manager - Referral, Assessment and Safeguarding introduced the reports circulated with the agenda at '10' and '11'. The Panel was told that the Council had received an allegation of sexual abuse at the hands of Jimmy Saville, a prolific sex offender, in Bournemouth. It was explained that the investigation was not able to substantiate the allegations. The Panel was told that as a result of the allegation the Council decided to create a new visiting policy which was agreed by the Council's Corporate Management Team last month and covered visits by all visitors to residential establishments in the Borough.

The Panel made a number of comments and asked a number of questions including on the following topics:

DECISION MADE:

1. That the Panel notes the new policy.

29. SERVICE PERFORMANCE

The Executive Director, Adults and Children introduced the report circulated at '12' with the agenda. The Panel was told that the report covered the final quarter of the year and as such presented a good opportunity for the

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Panel to consider what they would like to feature in future as part of the review of service performance driven by data that comes to the Panel. It was explained that 2 measures that were 'Red' on the Red, Amber and Green (RAG) rating system with 4 amber and 10 green. The following measures marked as red were discussed:

COSP10 - Primary: Difference in 2 Levels Progress from Key Stage 1 to KS2 in Mathematics between Pupils with SEN and non-SEN.

The Panel was told that significant attention was being paid to the measure and that support was being provided to pupils with SEN. It was also noted that the results data was from 2014.

COSP12 - Children looked after rate, per 10,000 children aged under 18.

The Panel was told that the Council had a plan and strategy to safely reduce the numbers.

DECISION MADE:

1. The Chair/Vice Chair liaise with Officers to review the use of performance management data.

30. UPDATE ON THE WORK OF THE CORPORATE PARENTING PANEL

The Vice-Chair informed the Panel that following the last meeting of the Corporate Parenting Panel - CPP- members of CLICK, the group representing looked after children and care leavers, had expressed concerns around the language being used at CPP and its inaccessibility for young people. The Panel was told that officers and Members would take the feedback on board and look at ways to improve the operation of the CPP.

31. TRAINING AND DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMME

The Democratic and Overview and Scrutiny Officer introduced to the Panel the report circulated at '14'. It was explained to the Panel that the training and development programme would be responsive to Members views.

DECISION MADE:

1. That the Panel endorse the training and development programme.

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32. WORK PROGRAMME

The Chair explained to the Panel that the work programme would be reviewed and developed over the weeks.

The meeting closed at 8.25 p.m.

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