

Children's Standing Overview Group

Recommendation(s):

- That members undertake a site visit to Children's Social Care (CSC) offices to get a perspective from staff on work undertaken to improve the service.
- To discuss at the 27 April 2016 CSOG Care First upgrades and remote work for CSC staff with the Cabinet Member for Performance & Engagement and the Head of Business Strategy & Support.

~~~~~

The Children's Standing Overview Group (CSOG) of the People's Scrutiny Committee meets bi-monthly to review performance/service matters relating to children's safeguarding and social care services respectively. At the last session on 17 February 2016 the following issues were discussed:

- There had been an error in emphasis in advising schools that Devon Assessment Framework (DAFs) 'have to happen' as opposed to schools ensuring they offer children a culture of support.
- There are currently too many referrals, significantly more than statistical neighbours, with too much work in the system overall.
- 28% of children are on Child Protection Plans (CPP) which end after only 3 months. It brings into question whether sufficient assessment and analysis has taken place prior to the child being put on a CPP, and is also a potential waste of resources having a child on a CPP for 3 months or less.
- Case Conference Chairs not always fulfilling their mandate.
- A decrease in Children in Care visits. Members were advised that there was a time lag issue with the reporting of visits; however this would be a concern to Ofsted and needed to be addressed.
- Care First is currently being upgraded to Eclipse, which is web-based and will be more accessible.
- The majority of the Looked After Children 3+ placement moves relate to 15/16/17 year olds, which is an issue given the poor outcomes for this group of young people. The stability for younger children is much better.
- Social worker case allocation has been adjusted and is now closer to 24 with teams moving towards similar sizes although there is still a wide variation in caseloads and teams that needs to continue to be addressed. The Lean Review has reduced the number of forms social workers have to complete and there is much more equity to the level of management oversight now.
- Schools report not knowing where locality forum meetings are taking place.
- Low number of Children in Need case audits and the need for practice to be refreshed.
- Effective leadership and management. Trying to measure the effectiveness of supervision.
- Concern as to the interface between Virgin Care and Devon Partnership Trust.
- Collecting much more data on children at risk of sexual exploitation. Work is underway to hold all this information together in one place through a data warehouse.
- Family Group Conferencing Service is being refreshed to allow more capacity in terms of Early Help.

**CIlr Sara Randall Johnson**  
**Chair**