

Children's Standing Overview Group

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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 the 12 July 2016, with Councillors Randall Johnson (Chair), Dewhirst, Hannaford, Hannan and Mathews in attendance, the following issues were raised:

### **Early Help Development**

- The need to strengthen the strategic ownership of the Early Help system. There is a clear principal and driver for Early Help, as well as strong strategic guidance but there remains a distance to go to ensure all partners are working together in a coordinated way.
- Currently district council involvement in Early Help is better in some areas than others, so it is vital consistency is improved.
- The Children, Young People and Families Alliance now has the responsibility for improving the Early Help offer to families. Officers advised that the join is not yet right between the strategic structure of the Alliance and the frontline.
- Need to ensure there is a strong multi-agency workforce offer so staff are confident in terms of risk.
- Multi-agency sharing of information should improve now there is a firm agreement in place.
- The need to analyse school exclusions in terms of a wider social care need.

### **CAMHS**

- Currently in the pre-procurement phase with the Virgin contract ending in 2018. Need to ensure much stronger outcomes focus on the CAMHS contract and be able to more effectively hold the provider / commissioner to account.
- There are serious concerns with the CAMHS referral to treatment time and the provision of a timely service to treat young people's needs. CAMHS waiting times are improving; this is however from a low base.
- The importance of measuring outcomes from CAMHS interventions and how effective the service is in treating children to make them better.
- Virgin Care are commissioned for tiered services right across the spectrum but they have not been able to release capacity for work in the earlier part of the system.
- The need for a more detailed CAMHS dashboard in People's Scrutiny performance reporting.
- Officers to develop a proposal for scrutiny involvement in the CAMHS pre-procurement phases and report back to main People's Scrutiny Committee alongside provider.

## **Performance Report: Children's Social Work and Child Protection**

- Performance management is under development.
- Need for greater consistency in performance across Devon, as this remains an issue and the County Council will not move from Requires Improvement to Good unless this variability ceases.
- Concern about the number of children in inadequate provision. Officers advised that they will not move children from a placement unless there is an emergency. The Corporate Parenting Board (CPB) has an important role here, and the need for People's Scrutiny having a strong link with the CPB.
- The current model of case auditing is under review.
- The most critical stability factor for Children in Care is their school placement, along with consistency of social worker. It is important also to keep a young person close to family and friends wherever possible.
- Concern as to the vulnerable group of children in the care of other LAs who are placed in Devon.
- The opportunity with the growth in Family Group Conferencing to link in with youth workers.

## **Devon Children's Improvement Plan 2016/17**

- Need to include supervision in the Improvement Plan.
- The REACH model was a good one, but issues around recruitment had necessitated a restructure.
- There are currently approximately 700 Children in Care in Devon, which is below the national average and the County Council's statistical neighbours. The plan is to reduce this number by 100 over the next 5 years.

**Cllr Sara Randall Johnson**  
**Chair**