



Minutes

Name of meeting	POLICY AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE FOR CHILDREN'S SERVICES
Date and time	THURSDAY 29 NOVEMBER AT 5.00PM
Venue	COUNCIL CHAMBER, COUNTY HALL, NEWPORT, ISLE OF WIGHT
Present	Cllrs Vanessa Churchman (Chairman), Debbie Andre, George Cameron, Steve Hastings, John Howe, Karl Love, (Vacancy)
Co-opted Members Present	Shaun Arnold (Parent Governor Representative) Rob Sanders (Diocesan Representative)
Cabinet Members Present	Cllr Paul Brading
Officers Present	Stuart Ashley, Jennifer Beresford, Steve Crocker, Kathy Marriot.

14. [Minutes](#)

RESOLVED :

THAT the Minutes of the meeting held on 6 September 2018 be confirmed.

15. [Declarations of Interest](#)

Councillor Debbie Andre declared an interest as a member of the Adoption Panel, Councillor John Howe declared an interest as a member of the Fostering Panel and Councillor George Cameron declared an interest as Chair of the Early Years Centre in Freshwater.

16. [Isle of Wight Safeguarding Children Board \(IOWSCB\) Annual Report](#)

The committee considered the report of the Isle of Wight Safeguarding Children Board. The report provided an independent analysis of the safeguarding services provided to the Island's children and young people over 2017/18 and a summary of the work undertaken.

Key aspects of the boards work, including past and future priorities and activities provided such as drama workshops, conferences and multi-agency training, were outlined. It was noted that when the report referred to pressures it was referring to budget pressures and increased activity (children) in the system.

Concerns were raised around attendance of partners at meetings. Reassurance was provided that all partners valued the work of the board. Attendance at meetings had been impacted by staffing changes and capacity for some agencies and was not indicative of the level of commitment as agencies also attended other meetings and activities. In relation to questions regarding LGBT+ representation on the board, members were advised that there was no dedicated member as all partners were responsible for LGBT+ as part of their professional roles.

“Payment by results” in relation to the Strengthening Families programme was noted as a challenge. Measures, on which payment from the Department for Communities and Local Government were based, were very specific and the payments received did not reflect the progress a large number of families had made. A revised action plan was in place to involve more agencies in this work and provide evidence to claim more payments.

Clarification regarding the future of partnership was sought. Members were advised that safeguarding children boards were being abolished under new guidance which was expected in June 2019. Responsibility for overseeing safeguarding would then lie with the Local Authority, the Police, Health and the CCG. However, how partners worked together in practice was not expected to change significantly.

RESOLVED:

THAT the committee note that the child protection partnership is generally working effectively across Isle of Wight but there are pressure points in relation to the increased activity in the system and improvement programmes within agencies where relevant.

17. **[Autism Spectrum Disorder Update](#)**

The Deputy Director of the Hampshire and IOW CCG Partnership and Lead for Children & Maternity Collaborative working across the five Hampshire CCGs and IOW CCG, presented a report on progress made to commission an Autism Assessment service for children and young people on the Isle of Wight. The benefits of commissioning at scale and having access to a bigger pool of experts was highlighted. It was acknowledged the historical position of this service was unacceptable and it was requested an apology for the distress and suffering caused be recorded.

The committee raised concerns regarding capacity in the system to support individuals post diagnosis. It was agreed this was an area of concern and that the resource and budget envelopes available were being explored. Cultural change would be needed as there were other pathways for support, not all of which required diagnosis, such as parenting support.

There was discussion around interventions and making speech and language and occupational therapies available without the need for a diagnosis. Commissioners were working with the Trust and Council colleagues to introduce a filtering panel. The filtering panel aimed to appropriately put children on the correct pathway, without waiting for

diagnosis outcomes. There was acknowledgement that families would see the diagnosis as a means to accessing support in school through Education, Health and Care Plans. Commissioners are working to ensure they manage expectations with families, to avoid this happening. Changing the pathway pre-diagnosis should support this and encourage a more needs led model to be adopted. Need to be managed against a backdrop of national high needs funding issues.

Questions were raised in relation to the timescales proposed for undertaking assessments. Members were advised the plan for clearing the backlogs was on track. access to venues to undertake the assessments was problematic which the committee agreed look into.

Members sought reassurance regarding measuring outcomes from the service. Members were advised there would be a reporting structure, monthly contract review and that both the companies engaged had robust internal clinical quality assurance and case auditing.

RESOLVED:

THAT the update be noted and that the Deputy Director of the Hampshire and IOW CCG Partnership and Lead for Children & Maternity Collaborative working across the five Hampshire CCGs and IOW CCG be invited to return to the March 2019 committee meeting to provide a further update.

18. **Quarterly Performance Data**

Members received a presentation which provided the committee with the priorities from the Isle of Wight Children and Young Peoples plan and progress against the long term measures associated with the Corporate Plan. The key points highlighted included:

- The services improvement journey
- Embedded improvements
- Improvements post 2017
- Workforce (Vacancies/agency workers)
- Case loads
- Child Protection Plan numbers
- Children in Care Age profiles
- Timeliness of Responses
- Robust Quality Assurance
- Areas for continuous improvement
- Investment in transformation of Children's Social Care

Changes made in responses to feedback from families were outlined; for example interventions were started earlier and social workers remained with a family as they moved through the system, reducing the need for rather than having to explain their story multiple times and rebuild trust. Other improvements included the appointment of two mental health practitioners to the team and a resilience based, family focus.

Reassurance was provided in relation to the higher rate of children in care in comparison to statistical neighbours. This was to be expected due to the lack of early interventions and the age of the cohort. It was expected this would begin to decrease slowly.

The committee noted that Ofsted has been undertaking an inspection of the service, the results of which were expected in early 2019.

RESOLVED:

THAT the performance data be noted.

19. [Council's forward plan and the committee's work plan](#)

The committee's work plan was considered. Members were advised that the March 2019 meeting would have an education focus and that the June 2019 meeting would focus on Children's Services and include an item on the quality assurance framework. The results of the Ofsted report would be available in January 2019.

RESOLVED:

THAT the work plan be noted

CHAIRMAN