



Minutes

Name of meeting	POLICY AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE FOR CHILDREN'S SERVICES, EDUCATION AND SKILLS
Date and Time	THURSDAY 3 DECEMBER 2020 COMMENCING AT 5.00 PM
Venue	MS TEAMS
Present	CLLrs V Churchman (Chairman), G Cameron, R Downer, P Fuller, S Hendry, K Love, M Price and S Arnold
Officers Present	S Ashley, S Crocker, K Marriot, B Pope, C Sadler, S Smith, P Thistlewood
Cabinet Members	CLlr P Brading

1. **Minutes**

RESOLVED :

THAT the Minutes of the meeting held on 23 July 2020 be confirmed.

2. **Declarations of Interest**

No declarations were received at this stage.

3. **Public Question Time - 15 Minutes Maximum**

No public questions were received.

4. **IW Safeguarding Children's Board Annual Report**

The Strategic Partnerships Manager was in attendance to present the report. The reporting period of the report was from April 2019 to March 2020. The report highlighted that safeguarding arrangements on the Isle of Wight continued to improve and there were many areas within child protection with positive progress with strong and integrated front-line services.

The business plan in the report outlines three strategic priorities:

- To further embed and evaluate Isle of Wight Safeguarding Partnership initiative.
- To strengthen assurance programmes

- Leadership and transformation

There are key themes running through the three priority areas:

- The voice and lived experience of the child
- Multi-agency partnership working
- Lessons learned from case reviews and multi-agency audits

The key successes to date:

- The Isle of Wight Safeguarding Children's Partnership with local safeguarding Hampshire / Southampton / Portsmouth partnerships launched the Family Approach protocol and toolkit
- 6 multi-agency workshops were held across the Isle of Wight to introduce the protocol and toolkit in 2019 and 2020
- The Isle of Wight Safeguarding Children's Partnership with local safeguarding Hampshire / Southampton / Portsmouth partnerships set up the icon project in order to reduce abusive head trauma in babies and this is now a national project
- The Isle of Wight Safeguarding Children's Partnership supported the development and launch of the every sleep counts campaign at the safeguarding partnerships event

Current work in progress:

- The evaluation of Icon and Every Sleep Counts campaign will be undertaken in 2021
- The Isle of Wight Safeguarding Children's Partnership in collaboration with Hampshire / Southampton / Portsmouth local safeguarding partnerships in supporting their Lurking Trolls online safety campaign. The Lurking Troll campaign will be rolled out to schools in 2021.
- The revised neglect strategy and toolkit is also due to be launched in February 2021

It was concluded that the Annual Report provides evidence Safeguarding remains a firm priority for all partner agencies across the Isle of Wight and has been demonstrated by consistently good levels of attendance and effective engagement in sub-groups and a strong culture of constructive challenging debate.

Questions were invited from members. A member asked if in future the report could be brought to an earlier committee as they felt it was important if there were to be any issues identified that it be brought to members attention as soon as possible. The director of Children's Services explained that the report requires a lot of data and it takes time to be analysed therefore the report could not be brought to the committee before September. A member asked why all staff are not utilising the toolkit available as the data in the report shows? The Head of Strategy and Operations explained that the strategy is being revised and more resource has been added to the improvement of the toolkit guided by a survey done showing the toolkit not being used in practise. It was highlighted that the toolkit received 17,000 hits

online and the feedback has been positive and said to have improved practise in identifying neglect. A member showed concern regarding the figures showing that 28% of children do not feel safe in school which is 3,000 children. The Director for Children Services explained that each time children are asked why they do not feel safe in school the answer is always bullying. It was asked what can be done to reduce these numbers? and has COVID-19 made it worse? The Director for Children Services suggested that there is always more to be done around bullying but is a very broad topic so suggested that it is brought back to committee to be looked at in more detail. The chairman noted this suggestion and agreed for it to be brought back to be explored in more detail.

5. Performance and Budget Update

The Head of Strategy and Operations presented the report. The key points of the report were highlighted to members and a power point presentation was shown. Key priorities of the service plan were:

- To support families to help them to look after their children, preventing escalation into statutory services
- To lead the work to keep children safe and protect them from harm, abuse and neglect. To support families to help them to look after their children, preventing escalation into statutory services.
- Where children cannot safely stay at home, provide permanence through a range of other alternatives.

Key business activities were:

- Deliver the Children and Families Branch Transformation programme.
- Ensure that children are assessed and receive appropriate services in a timely manner.
- Ensure that children receive services from suitably experienced and qualified staff and that their case loads are appropriately managed.
- Ensure that children archive permanence and experience stability of care arrangements without undue delay, with reunification planned where this is safe to do so.
- Ensure that children, parents and carers have the opportunity to fully participate in the way the service is developed and the way their individual needs are addressed.
- Ensure effective and robust performance management and quality assurance of children and families branch is in place and informs strategic management of services.
- Deliver robust management oversight of budget and savings strategy

Key areas of the transformation phase:

- Hampshire and Isle of Wight Approach
- Multi-disciplinary working – RAFT
- Facilitating effective social work
- Replacement ICS (Case management System)

Key areas of performance:

- Maintained vacancy rate at 12% below England average of 16%
- Maintained turnover rate at 7.1% below England average of 16%
- Maintained agency worker rate at 12%, below the England average of 16.4%

Areas for continuous improvement:

- Enhancing consistency of analysis in assessments
- Increasing placement choice-including number of foster carers.
- Health of children in care, assessments and use of health information including mental health
- Education attendance and attainment for all vulnerable children, including children in care
- Continued focus on recruitment and retention of social workers
- Increase evidence of reflective supervision

The conclusion to the presentation:

- Continued multiple layers of management oversight-robust management grip
- Robust Covid / lockdowns response to safeguard children
- Increased focus on quality of practice and services as well as performance with Key Performance Indicators (KPI)
- Culture change for transformation-strengths based, family focused.
- Annual self-evaluation and annual conversation. We know ourselves the next steps to improve.
- We are in a continuous readiness state for inspection and ambitious to be outstanding

Questions from members were then invited. A member asked that the budgetary pressures are taken to the cabinet sooner rather than later to try and alleviate them as best as soon as possible. The Director of Children Services explained that this is already in motion and are currently well positioned for it. The cabinet member for Children Services explained to the committee that the budget this year is looking better than it has in other years and assured the committee as cabinet member he will fight hard for the budget.

Report was noted.

6. **Workplan 2020-21**

7. **Members' Question Time**

There were no members questions received.

CHAIRMAN