

## ISLE OF ANGLESEY COUNTY COUNCIL Scrutiny Report Template

<b>Committee:</b>	Corporate Scrutiny Committee
<b>Date:</b>	19 <sup>th</sup> March, 2019
<b>Subject:</b>	Children's Services Improvement Panel
<b>Purpose of Report:</b>	Progress update on the work of the Children's Services Improvement Panel
<b>Scrutiny Chair:</b>	Cllr Aled Morris Jones
<b>Portfolio Holder(s):</b>	Cllr Llinos Medi Huws
<b>Head of Service:</b>	Alwyn Jones, Interim Director of Social Services / Fôn Roberts, Head of Children's Services
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<b>Local Members:</b>	Not applicable

### 1 - Recommendation/s

**R1** The Corporate Scrutiny Committee is requested to note:

- Progress made to date with the work of the Children's Services Improvement Panel in terms of achieving its work programme
- That the current Service Improvement Plan has now been brought to a close with the 2 remaining priority areas yet to be fully implemented being transferred to the new Service Development Plan
- Areas of work covered during Laming Visits, as a means of further strengthening accountability and knowledge & understanding of Panel members
- The ongoing development programme for Panel members much of which is delivered in-house

### 2 – Link to Council Plan / Other Corporate Priorities

Direct link with the Council Plan / transformation priorities. The Panel's consideration of the service improvement plan for children's services will provide assurance to the Executive that the Council are responding in a robust manner to the recommendations of two CIW reports on children's services<sup>1</sup> and that steps are in place to mitigate any risks.

### 3 – Guiding Principles for Scrutiny Members

**To assist Members when scrutinising the topic:-**

- 3.1** Impact the matter has on individuals and communities [**focus on customer/citizen**]
- 3.2** A look at the efficiency & effectiveness of any proposed change – both financially and in terms of quality [**focus on value**]
- 3.3** A look at any risks [**focus on risk**]
- 3.4** Scrutiny taking a performance monitoring or quality assurance role [**focus on performance & quality**]

<sup>1</sup> Dated March, 2017 and December, 2018

**3.5** Looking at plans and proposals from a perspective of:

- Long term
- Prevention
- Integration
- Collaboration
- Involvement

**[focus on wellbeing]**

**4 - Key Scrutiny Questions**

At the request of the Panel:

1. Does the Committee have any views on the priority of the work streams included in the Panel work forward programme?
2. Are the actions of the Panel thus far sufficiently robust and at an appropriate pace?

**5 – Background / Context****1. CONTEXT**

As previously reported, Members will be aware that scrutiny has developed over the past 18 months through the work of 3 scrutiny panels. This report summarises progress made to date as regards the **Children’s Services Improvement Panel**.

**Panel Governance Arrangements**


Members will be aware of the robust governance arrangements in place to underpin the work of the Panel<sup>2</sup> and it is intended to convene monthly Panel meetings until at least the end of the Summer, 2019. A process is in place for quarterly progress reporting by Cllr Richard Griffiths, as the Corporate Scrutiny Committee representative on the Panel.

**2. FOCUS OF WORK OF THE CHILDREN’S SERVICES IMPROVEMENT PANEL**

2.1 The Children’s Services Improvement Panel has been meeting on a monthly basis since July, 2017 (having now met on 19 occasions). This report focuses on the work of the Panel for the period **December, 2018 – February, 2019**:

- **Service Improvement Plan (SIP)** – an overview of the Service Improvement Plan was given at Panel meetings to ensure that the entire programme remains on target. Also, to enable the Panel to identify slippage or lack of progress. The Panel requested a progress report on the RAG status of each section of the SIP to ensure tracking of progress against key priority areas. Good progress has been reported on overall implementation of the SIP.

Detailed consideration has been given by the Panel to the following aspects of the Service Improvement Plan:

-  **Development Areas Ragged Amber** – at its January meeting<sup>3</sup> the Panel gave detailed consideration to the status of the development areas ragged as Amber, namely:

<sup>2</sup> Corporate Scrutiny Committee convened on 4<sup>th</sup> September and 13<sup>th</sup> November, 2017

<sup>3</sup> Meeting of the Children’s Services Improvement Panel convened on 21 January, 2019

- i. **Section 2.1 – improve the quality of practice.** This has now been split into 8 individual sections with the following Rag status:

Amber 1                      Yellow 5                      Green 2

- ii. **Section 3 – quality assurance and performance framework that supports the local authority in effectively managing its responsibilities towards children.** Now split into 3 individual sections with the following Rag status:

Amber 0                      Yellow 1                      Green 2

Any aspects focusing on quality are deemed to be more of a challenge and hence more likely to take time to achieve satisfactorily.

- ✚ **RAG status of each key priority (SIP)** – detailed overview of the status of each key priority (21 in total) to ensure adequate progress. The current status of each key priority in the service improvement plan is summarised below (as at November, 2018):

<b>Coch – Red</b>	<b>0</b>
<b>Ambr – Amber</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>Melyn – Yellow</b>	<b>6</b>
<b>Gwyrdd – Green</b>	<b>13</b>

The current Service Improvement Plan has now been brought to a close and the Service are preparing a 3 year Service Development Plan (2019/22) incorporating the following priority areas:

- i. 2 actions ragged Amber from the Service Improvement Plan (detailed above)
  - ii. 14 development areas following the re-inspection of Children's Services by Care Inspectorate Wales during the latter part of 2018
  - iii. Local priorities – how the voices of children and young people are heard in Children's Services.
- **Laming Visits** – a robust reporting process is in place for Laming Visits with the objective of bringing the Panel closer to cases, creating the conditions for Members to appreciate the complexity and challenges of the responsibilities of the Service eg by meeting front line staff to discuss casework in general. Members reported back on the January Laming Visits under the strengthened governance framework. These Visits focused on:
    - ❖ **Resilient Families Team (10/01/19)** – a new way of working was introduced during 2018 as part of the transformation of

children's services. In moving forward, it was reported that a data system needs to be established as a tool to identify trends

- ❖ **Staff Conference (30/01/19)** – the second January Visit was in the form of attendance at a Staff Conference. This enabled Members to further develop their appreciation of the complexities of Children's Services, meet front line staff and demonstrate their Corporate Parenting role.

- **Performance management data** – ensuring a performance framework that supports the local authority in effectively managing its responsibilities towards children. This included looking in detail at performance as at Qtr2: 2018/19. Measurable improvement was reported against 5 national performance indicators eg PM C-24 – percentage of assessments completed within statutory timescales (42 working days).- 67.57% (2017/18) → 91% (Qtr1&2 2018/19). It was also reported that the percentage of children re-registered on the Child Protection Register had fallen to 6.80% which was a positive outcome and a measure of the quality of interventions in place to support children.
- **Children and Families' Services Budgets** – in January<sup>4</sup>, the chair of the Finance Scrutiny Panel reported on the Panel's work with regard to monitoring revenue expenditure in Children's Services (aim→ ensure alignment between the 2 scrutiny panels). It was noted that significant budget pressures continued in the Service and that the mitigating measures being introduced to bring expenditure down would need time to fully materialise.
- **Quality assurance: casework** – the Panel<sup>5</sup> considered the key messages from a recent audit completed of re-referred cases which had been commissioned at the Panel's request. The objective of the audit was to reach a conclusion regarding the adequacy of decisions and interventions and also whether they were of a good standard and met the child's needs at the time. Progress was reported to the Panel and a number of strengths identified. The Service quality assurance team will continue to work with social work teams to ensure consistency of practice across the Service.
- **Elective Home Education** – the Panel<sup>6</sup> also considered the current legislative framework and limitations upon the Council in endeavouring to monitor the quality of elective home education provision and also ensuring adequate safeguarding arrangements in place. The Panel have requested an update on national developments in 6 months
- **Training / awareness raising sessions** – incorporated into the Panel work programme, these sessions are convened at the beginning of each Panel meeting. Topics covered over the last few months included – Care Inspectorate Wales Inspection Report (December, 2018); care leavers and quality assurance (including the role of the Independent Reviewing Officer).

### 3. MATTERS TO BE ESCALATED FOR CONSIDERATION BY THE PARENT COMMITTEE

The Corporate Scrutiny Committee is requested to come to a view about the robustness of the Panel's monitoring thus far.

<sup>4</sup> Meeting of the Children's Services Improvement Panel convened on 21<sup>st</sup> January, 2019

<sup>5</sup> Meeting of the Children's Services Improvement Panel convened on 18<sup>th</sup> December, 2018

<sup>6</sup> Meeting of the Children's Services Improvement Panel convened on 27<sup>th</sup> February, 2019

**6 – Equality Impact Assessment [including impacts on the Welsh Language]**

N/A

**7 – Financial Implications**

N/a

**8 – Appendices:****9 - Background papers (please contact the author of the Report for any further information):**

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**Cllr Richard Griffiths**

**Corporate Scrutiny Committee representative on the Children's Services Improvement Panel / Children in Care Champion**

**Date: 05/03/19**