| ISLE OF ANGLESEY COUNTY COUNCIL Scrutiny Report Template | | |
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| Committee: | Corporate Scrutiny Committee | |
| Date: | 10 th December, 2018 | |
| Subject: | Children's Services Improvement Panel | |
| Purpose of Report: | Progress update on the work of the Children's Services Improvement Panel | |
| Scrutiny Chair: | Cllr Aled Morris Jones | |
| Portfolio Holder(s): | Cllr Llinos Medi Huws | |
| Head of Service: | Caroline Turner, Assistant Chief Executive / Fôn Roberts, Head of Children's Services | |
| Report Author: Tel: Email: | Anwen Davies, Scrutiny Manager 01248 752578 AnwenDavies@ynysmon.gov.uk | |
| Local Members: | 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 all work-streams pertaining to the Service Improvement Plan appear to be on target thus far
- 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

R2 Escalate the following matter for the Corporate Scrutiny Committee to be aware:

 Although good progress has been made on implementing the revised staffing structure, a small number of social worker posts continue to be filled by agency workers. This is being addressed by appointing social workers (experienced and newly qualified) and supporting experienced support workers to qualify. The actions taken to address this should be noted

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 the recent CIW report on children's services (dated March, 2017) 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]
- 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 year 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 Panel¹ and it is intended to convene monthly Panel meetings until at least the end of the current financial year. A process is in place for quarterly progress reporting by Councillor 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 16 occasions). This report focuses on the work of the Panel for the period **September – November, 2018**:
 - Service Improvement Plan (SIP) an overview of the Service Improvement Plan was given at meetings of the Panel to ensure that the entire programme remains on target. Also, to enable the Panel to identify any early indication of 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 by the Panel against key priority areas.

¹ Corporate Scrutiny Committee convened on 4th September and 13th November, 2017

Good progress has been reported on implementation of the SIP. Also, it has again been noted that a small number of social worker posts continue to be filled by agency staff and which need to be filled on a permanent basis.

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

- ♣ 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 all aspects of performance as at Qtr1: 2018/19. Significant improvement was reported in Qtr1 compared to the same period in 2017/18. There were however some indicators requiring further attention in particular the percentage of statutory visits to children in the care of the Authority.
- ♣ RAG status of each key priority (SIP) detailed overview of the status of each key priority to ensure adequate progress. It was noted that sections of the SIP ragged Amber have now been broken down into smaller work streams in order to collate evidence and effectively measure progress. The current status of each key priority in the service improvement plan is summarised below:

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|----------------|----|
| Ambr – Amber | 2 |
| Melyn – Yellow | 6 |
| Gwyrdd – Green | 13 |

- 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. Panel Members looked at 3 aspects over the last
 quarter:
 - i. Annual report summarising Laming Visit themes during the period October, 2017 → September, 2018. A resume of the key themes is attached (APPENDIX 1)
- **ii. Monthly Laming Visits** Members reported back on the September and November Laming Visits under the strengthened governance framework. These Visits focused on:
 - ❖ Mock Case Conference (17/09/18) the September Visit in the form of a mock case conference with Members /Senior Officers

role playing participants (mother, father and friends of the family). The Conference was based on anonymised cases from the caseload of the Service. This enabled participants to get a better appreciation of the complexities of the process.

- ❖ Update on Service Priorities, Performance Indicators and Budgets (19/11/18) – briefing from Head of Service
- ❖ Early Intervention & Prevention Service (20/11/18) this will be reported in the next quarterly update by the Panel to the Committee in March, 2019.
- Partnership working a detailed discussion with the Head of Adult Services on joint working between both services focusing on:
 - i. Processes and arrangements in supporting the transition of young people from children's services to adults services
 - ii. Services to support parents of children/young people receiving services from the Authority

The Panel noted the need to further develop joint working between both services, underpinned by a strategy promoting early intervention and supporting communities and families to become increasingly more independent. A position statement was also received on progress in developing a local protocol to ensure adequate safeguards for children being tutored at home. This is an area that the Panel will monitor.

- Workforce strategy the Panel at its October² meeting received an update on progress in developing a revised workforce strategy, as medium term strategy. The revised workforce strategy will concentrate on creating the conditions to enable the Service to plug gaps in the staffing structure. It is anticipated that the Panel will scrutinise the draft revised workforce strategy in the Spring, 2019
- Strategic partnership working at its November³ meeting, the Panel looked at the significant contribution made by partners (both internal and external) to Children's Services. A number of key partners will be considered by the Panel over the coming months, as part of the forward work programme –

Internal

- i. Learning Service
- ii. Housing Service
- iii. Leisure Service

External

- iv. North Wales Police
- v. Betsi Cadwaladr University Health Board
- vi. Third Sector
- 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

² Meeting of the Children's Services Improvement Panel convened on 23rd October, 2018

³ Meeting of the Children's Services Improvement Panel convened on 26th November, 2018

Inspectorate Wales Inspection Process; demonstration of the WCCIS Information System and causes of harm to children.

3. INSPECTION OF CHILDREN'S SERVICES BY CARE INSPECTORATE WALES (OCTOBER, 2018)

- **3.1** The Panel received a verbal progress report at its October⁴ meeting on the inspection of children's services by Care Inspectorate Wales (CIW). It was noted that the fieldwork took place over a 2 week period, coming to an end on 19th October, 2018.
- **3.2** The CIW report recommendations of March, 2017 included reference to senior leader support:
 - The Council should continue to support senior leaders to improve their knowledge and understanding of the complexities and risks involved in delivering children's services to assure themselves, partners, staff and communities that their responsibilities are discharged to maximum effect [Recommendation 4]
 - Strong political and corporate support for children's services must continue to ensure the service improvements needed are prioritised and the pace of improvement accelerated and sustained [Recommendation 8]

Positive feedback was received following the Panel's interview with CIW regarding the role and contribution of the Panel towards the improvement journey in children's services.

The draft inspection report inviting comments on factual accuracy was received in November and the final version of the report will be available in a few weeks' time.

4. MATTERS TO BE ESCALATED FOR CONSIDERATION BY THE PARENT COMMITTEE

The following matters be escalated for consideration by the Corporate Scrutiny Committee:

- 4.1 Although good progress has been made on implementing the revised staffing structure, a small number of social worker posts continue to be filled by agency workers (which has been previously reported to the Committee by the Panel). This is being addressed by appointing social workers (experienced and newly qualified) and supporting experienced support workers to qualify. The actions taken to address this should be noted.
- 4.2 The Corporate Scrutiny Committee is requested to come to a view about the robustness of the Panel's monitoring thus far.

| 6 - Equality Impact Assessment [including impacts on the Welsh Language] | | |
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| N/A | | |
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N/a

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⁴ Meeting of the Children's Services Improvement Panel convened on 23rd October, 2018

8 - Appendices:

Resume of Laming Visits for the period October, 2017 → September, 2018

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

Anwen Davies, Scrutiny Manager, Isle of Anglesey County Council, Council Offices, Llangefni. LL77 7TW

CIIr Richard Griffiths

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

Date: 07/11/18

| Date and Area: | Officers in Attendance: | Comments: |
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| 19/09/18 | Dr. Gwynne Jones | The purpose of this meeting was to ensure that the Elected Members and members of |
| | Dr. Caroline Turner | the Senior Management team are aware of the Children's Services management |
| Meeting with | Cllr. Aled Morris Jones | arrangements. Fôn gave a PowerPoint presentation explaining the staffing situation, |
| Fôn Roberts | Cllr. Llinos Medi | sickness levels and development work that is happening regionally and nationally. The opportunity to ask questions was available throughout the meeting. |
| (Session to | | opportunity to ask questions was available infoughout the meeting. |
| discuss the | | What are the main priorities for 2018-19 out of what is listed on the slide? |
| staffing | | Action is required on every element of the slide in order to ensure further |
| situation, | | improvements. |
| sickness and | | |
| the regional and | | Note: It would be useful to group the priorities and to show which are strategic and which |
| national | | are achievable in a short space of time. Doing this would make it easier to understand |
| development | | what the main priorities are for the Service. |
| work) | | What needs to be developed further out of the SIP? |
| | | There are currently three elements which are amber and require further development: |
| | | Improvement in the quality of practice; |
| | | - improvement in the quality of practice, |
| | | Review all children in care to ensure that care and support plans are based |
| | | on results to ensure that they have long term stability; |
| | | Develop the performance framework for Children and Family Services. |
| | | There has been a significant improvement since the last review. |
| | | Any other comments / suggestions? |
| | | • It would be useful to know the % of complaints rather than numbers in order to reflect |
| | | the percentage as there has been a change in the number of children that are open |
| | | to the Service. A % would give a clearer picture. |
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| | | There is a significant increase in the performance of the Service with regard to sickness levels and in the % of staff accepting corporate policies. |
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| | | Following a presentation from Fôn Roberts, the group went around the office to talk to the staff and then had information about the way the office has been set out as regards the teams and structure. |
| 17/09/18 Safeguarding and Quality (Mock Case Conference with a role for the Elected Members) | Dr. Gwynne Jones Cllr. Llinos Medi Cllr. Peter Rogers | The Process The purpose of the visit was to enable us to experience a Case Conference, through an experiential exercise. A briefing note was provided in advance, so that the four of us knew what to expect, as well as explaining the role that each of us were expected to play during the Conference (ie mum, dad and two family friends). The Chair of the Case Conference met us as we arrived, and took us to a separate room to explain the Process. We then followed her into the meeting room, where there were a number of professionals from different agencies present. We discussed the situation of the family for nearly an hour, before agreeing on next steps. At the end of the Case Conference we had an opportunity to discuss the experience, and offered suggestions that might be useful for Children's Services in improving the arrangements. Observations The meeting was Chaired well – firm but friendly. All of the staff who took part played their roles well: • We saw how challenging it is to get the right balance between the rights of the parents and the responsibility to safeguard children • It was quite daunting for us to walk into a room with so many professionals; their presence emphasised the gravity of the situation, but also gave us the feeling of helplessness in the face of authority |

| | | This was a new experience for all of us, and helped us to understand the complexities of the work of Children's Services, and the importance of working effectively with partners. We asked about the behaviours of families in such circumstances, and it was explained to us that there are often strong feelings in these meetings. Any Comments It's important to ensure that the family understand all of the paperwork and reports before them – quite a bit to read, and it's possible that some may require assistance to go through them. |
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| 19/06/18 Integrated Specialist Children's Service | Dr Gwynne Jones Cllr. Llinos Medi Cllr. Bryan Owen | The purpose of the visit – receive more information regarding the work of the Service as well as any other matters which require attention for improvement. Information was shared regarding the structure of the Team, which is a combination of County Council and Health Service staff. It appeared that the team members work together closely. It was reported that Health Service staff work across Gwynedd and Anglesey. It was noted that the WCCIS system is proving a challenge as has each aspect of the wider Service. It was said that paper copies of the work must be kept of the work carried out with the Health Service and that storing all the documents is currently challenging. In response to a question regarding restructure, the staff noted that this had been a success and that everyone was ready to help and support each other. It was also noted that the development of a Strategy for pupils with disabilities was being prepared. Matters requiring attention Deal with the additional requirements arising from the introduction of the Act and keep an eye on the workload of staff as a result. |

| | | Ensure that WCCIS meets the requirements of the Service. |
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| 29/05/18 Integrated Family Support Service | Annwen Morgan Cllr. Ken Hughes Cllr. Peter Rogers | Honest comments. Plan on the basis of data, trends. LlapRh + CJ very clear about the vision and expected outcomes for IOACC. The Officers realise the importance of data and comparison with Councils across North Wales. The old system's weakness has been identified, where children / young people / families weren't receiving the necessary support (the windscreen) A lot is learnt from the Laming visits e.g. only courts have the right to remove children from their families. |
| 30/04/18 Integrated Family Support Service | Dr. Caroline Turner Cllr. R. Meirion Jones | a) How can the service be improved? It would be beneficial if an Early Intervention service could be provided, assisting some families before a crisis happens (acknowledging that it is easier to work with some when they are in the middle of an emergency). The aim is to train the Social Workers and Education Officers of both Councils as well as staff in the Health Service and Youth Justice Service so that they are able to use some of their IFSS processes, Training for three groups has been arranged for the Summer. |
| | | Any comments / other suggestions? Families have to be referred to IFSS by Children's Services. It was noted that Social Workers in both Counties continue to hold the cases upon which they are working with the IFSS. IFSS staff accompany families in order to support them in formal meetings when their children are on the Risk Register. It was noted that the caseloads of IFSS staff are quite low and enable them to work intensively with families. |
| | | It was noted that things have improved in Children's Services in Anglesey recently and that everything has changed, it is a happier place with everyone concentrating on their work, staff morale has improved and they have more time to talk when IFSS staff visit. It was also noted that the manager is invited to all Anglesey County Council meetings |

| | | (including Legal Gatekeeping) and a monthly Staff Conference. Even so, fewer cases have been referred to IFSS from Anglesey recently and the Manager will be giving a presentation on the work of the team in the next Staff Conference. If more cases came from Anglesey, a vacant post would have to be filled in order to ensure that there are sufficient staff resources to be able to work with families. It would be beneficial to commission an evaluation of IFSS work, maybe as part of a Regional or National Evaluation. |
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| 16/02/18 Bryn Hwfa (Support Service for Children) | Dr Caroline Turner Cllr. Richard Griffiths Cllr. Peter Rogers Cllr. Ken Hughes | It was noted that the Support Workers were busy with the young people therefore it was not possible to have a full discussion with them but they were offered the opportunity to join us in the kitchen at the end of the visit if they wished to discuss anything with us. The visit brought the work to life – it would be beneficial to hold other visits in locations where Children's Services staff are working but it may not be appropriate to meet with children and their families. For example, perhaps we could discuss the work of Support Workers in locations where Contact takes place (unless there is a confidentiality issue in those locations). |
| 23/01/18 Quality Improvement and Safeguarding Unit | Cllr. Llinos Medi Huws Cllr. Bryan Owen | The Leader noted that it was obvious that huge steps had been taken with regard to the development of the Unit and the quality improvement work which had begun. Everyone in the Unit felt that they were now working as a team and that Anwen trusted every member of staff to do their work. Flexible working is working well for the team. Supervision is taking place and support is provided as required between sessions. They have the support of excellent designated Administrative Officers with regard to arranging the safeguarding meetings but there is little capacity for support for other administrative matters. Therefore, they are looking into methods of working more effectively with technology using the 'Dragon' software. The team are now together in the same room since the restructure of the office space. |

| | | Councillor Bryan Owen noted that there was consistency between what was said during this visit and what was said in the Children's Panel the same morning. In future, it is hoped that the recommendations from audits will decrease although we accept that there will always be actions to be taken. Next Steps: Next staff conference will be for qualified Social Workers in order to agree on 'Practice Standards' and the priorities in the Service's Improvement Plan will need to be examined in order to formulate a Practice Improvement Plan. |
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| 19/12/17 Resilient Families | Annwen Morgan Cllr. Ken Hughes | Strong leadership in the team Actions based on the range of experiences of the team members and also on research. The team are positive, they will not give up and they hold out every hope that the families will become resilient families. The team acknowledge the challenge they face and will not rest on their laurels with regard to further training required: a) Brief Solution Focused Therapy. b) Development of action guidelines. c) Familiarize themselves more with the use of the Assessment Tool. d) Ensure that they assess their work honestly and thoroughly, e.g. that they assess the effect of the current training before moving on to something else. e) The team obviously work well together. PROPOSAL It was proposed that more emphasis be placed during the next visit on the number of families and children involved and to gain an understanding of the complexity of the cases (without divulging any facts) and also the projected number of families and children that this team will be working with during the next year. |

| 19/12/17 Children's Specialist Services | Annwen Morgan Cllr. Ken Hughes Cllr. Llinos Medi | a) What needs to be improved? Answer: a) Work more closely with: i) Teulu Môn ii) 3rd Sector For Families: b) Develop a wider range of short respite opportunities and develop ways for families to express their opinions. Children c) Ensure that more opportunities are available for disabled children and young people. d) Internally as a team: i) look at the capacity of the interview rooms ii) look at duties and specialisms – but not stated why? or by when? Comments: a) Enthusiastic leadership. b) The team are passionate and positive about their work. c) Health and Social Services have a good working relationship. RECOMMENDATION a) Since reference was made on 19/12/2017 to what needs to be developed, it would be beneficial to have an update on progress regarding the recommendations and to see how the team plan ahead. b) It would be beneficial to have a more detailed discussion regarding the data |
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| 15/11/17 Teulu Môn | Dr. Gwynne Jones Cllr. Gwilym O Jones | It was noted that there was a need to continue to improve processes in order that the service can take proactive steps in order to ensure that fewer families are referred; fewer families requiring intensive intervention; problems being solved sooner. |

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| | | Next steps? Improving the quality of the information which is available on-line. In addition, improve access to support information available on the website in an attempt to reduce the number of telephone calls. |
| | | Engage with families and agencies. |
| | | Explain the new referral processes to agencies. Make use of the family link developed by the Play Co-ordinator – it was noted that approximately 1000 contacts had been transferred. |
| | | Encourage all agencies to have the 'what's important' conversation. |
| | | Noted – the need for all partners to improve the standard of referrals. Support and guidance will be provided in order to ensure consistency across all partners. It was reported that capacity and capability had improved. The increase in the number of practice leads and engagement officers has had a positive influence on the work. |
| Workforce/Child Clli | Dr Caroline Turner Cllr. Aled Morris Jones Cllr. Richard Griffiths Llŷr Bryn Roberts | The team had prepared well for the meeting, and we were presented with two Powerpoint presentations, and a hand-out. Some of the resources used by the team were also on display on the table. |
| | | The team were able to explain how the nature of their work had changed: Shift to Kinship Carers. |
| | | That families were much more complex these days. The needs of some children are very high, which means that local Foster Carers are not always suitable for them. |
| | | Those interested in becoming Foster Carers were increasingly obtaining information and getting in touch through Social Media (70%) rather than the Anglesey Show. The way that the Independent Fostering Agencies had distorted the "market" for Foster Carers, |

costing the public sector significantly more, though fees for Carers weren't necessarily higher.

The team also outlined the training available for Foster Carers — through Y Bont, and directly by team members (Dorian and Llinos). On-line training is available, as well as cooperation between the six North Wales authorities.

Anglesey has a Payment for Skills scheme.

Dawn noted that the new National Fostering Framework will bring about significant changes, and that the 2003 Fostering Regulations are being revised as well as new Codes of Practice are being developed.

Llyr explained that the Service is registered as a Fostering Agency with CSSIW, and are therefore inspected on an annual basis (though this did not happen this year). Cllr Aled Morris Jones asked how many Social Worker vacancies there are within the Service. Llyr explained that there are five, but that these are covered by Agency Social Workers. Llyr explained that the vacancies had arisen due to four people being promoted, and one member of staff moving away from the area for family reasons. There is a continual recruitment process, with an advertisement soon to be placed in the Guardian. Llyr noted that we've recruited seven Social Workers in recent months, and that we will gradually reduce the number of Agency Social Workers. This will give more continuity for children and families.

At the end of the meeting, Cllr Richard Griffiths asked how Elected Members could help the team. A suggestion was made that it would be useful for all Councillors to become more knowledgeable about the work of the team so that they could encourage local people to become foster carers. Llyr noted that we need to consider how to support Cllr Griffiths in his role as Champion of children who are looked after by the local authority.