

Health and Care Scrutiny Committee

29 November 2019

Children's Services Working Group

Purpose of Report: Summary

The Group's meetings are split between a Member Development session and Scrutiny of the Children's Services Improvement Plan.

Independent Reviewing and Quality Assurance was the first topic considered with the Group taking particular interest in the role of the Independent Reviewing Officer which had changed since the CIW Inspection. The Group also acknowledged the significant culture change which had taken place within the service as a whole and the greater recognition of roles and responsibilities.

Unfortunately, the second development session regarding Children Subject to a Care Protection Plan had to be postponed and will be considered at the December meeting.

The Group also had a detailed briefing on how the budget was constructed to enable more effective scrutiny to be undertaken at future meetings. At their most recent meeting, the Group undertook scrutiny of placements for children who are looked after. The Group were pleased to note that the number of children who are looked after has dropped from 246 in March 2019 to 235 in October 2019 which was against the trend nationally of increasing numbers. The commissioning process was explained to Members.

The Health and Care Committee were aware of the proposals to develop in-county provision and the Working Group was brought up to date with progress on recruitment of foster carers and provision of suitable accommodation for children's homes.

Arising from a previous meeting the Group were briefed on the current situation regarding Personal Education Plans. Improvements will be in place by the start of the next school term and a progress report would be brought back for the Group's consideration.

Laming visits continue – one to the Care and Support Team (North) on 24 October 2019 and the second to the Family Support and Edge of Care Team on 14 November 2019. A programme of visits for 2020 is currently being developed.

Topics for scrutiny have been added to the work programme and consideration will be given to whether these are to be included on the Health and Care Committee agenda or the Children's Services Working Group work programme.

Report contact: Lisa Richards, Legal, Scrutiny and Democratic Services

Contact details: lisa.richards@powys.gov.uk, 01597 826371

Background papers: Notes of meetings held on 15 October and 13 November 2019

Group Membership: County Councillors A Jenner (Lead Member), S McNicholas, D Rowlands, E Vaughan, G Williams, J M Williams and R Williams