

By: Sarah Hohler, Cabinet Member, Children, Families and Education

To: Cabinet Scrutiny Committee – 19 January 2011

Subject: Inspection of Safeguarding and Looked After Children Services

Classification: Unrestricted

Summary: This report updates Committee on the improvement plan and provides historical data on social worker vacancies and patterns of referrals to children's social services

Introduction

1. (1) This report addresses the recommendations and responses raised by Members at the Cabinet Scrutiny Committee on 8 December 2010.

Improvement Plan and outcome of meeting with the Minister for Children

2. (1) Following the meeting with Tim Loughton, Minister for Children on 14 December, an Improvement Notice was issued in draft to Kent County Council on 23 December. The final version will be issued by the end of January. The notice requires a number of detailed actions to be incorporated into an improvement programme. The final improvement plan is to be in place by the end of February and will be monitored by an Improvement Board, chaired independently. The draft improvement plan presented to Cabinet on 10 January is being amended to incorporate the requirements of the improvement notice.

Social worker vacancies

3. (1) Information on the number of social worker posts and number of vacancies in children's social services since April 2009 is attached as appendix 1. The situation gradually improved during 2010. 20 more European social workers will join the service in January, and a further 20 will start in March. The most pressing need now is recruitment of principal social workers.

Safeguarding referrals

4. (1) Information on safeguarding referrals since April 2009 is attached as appendix 2. The main referring agency is the police, and most of the referrals relate to domestic abuse. A new process for dealing with these referrals has been agreed between Kent Police and Children's Social Services; it will be implemented in January 2011.

Recommendation

5. (1) Cabinet Scrutiny Committee notes the report.

Background Documents:

Cabinet Report – 10 January 2011

Other Useful Information:

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