

AT A MEETING of the CHILDREN AND FAMILIES ADVISORY PANEL of HAMPSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL held at The Castle, Winchester on 7 FEBRUARY 2012.

**Chairman:**  
**p Councillor M.J. Tucker**

Councillors:

p A. Evans

p Mrs Charlotte Bailey

p R. Bolton

a B.D. Dash

p D. Keast

p Roz Chadd

p Mrs Pamela Mutton

p Mrs Jackie Porter

In attendance at the invitation of the Chairman:

Councillor Roy Perry (Executive Lead Member for Children's Services)

**57. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

Apologies were received from Councillor: A. Evans.

**58. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

Members were mindful that where they believed they had a personal or prejudicial interest in any matter considered at the meeting declared that interest at the time of the relevant debate and, having regard to the circumstances described in paragraphs 9, 10, 11 and 12 of the County Council's Code of Conduct, considered whether to leave the meeting whilst the matter was discussed, save for exercising any right to speak in accordance with paragraph 12 of the code.

**59. MINUTES**

The Minutes from the meeting of 4 October 2011 were considered by the Panel, agreed to be a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

**60. CHAIRMAN'S ANNOUNCEMENTS**

The Chairman welcomed everyone to the meeting and highlighted both the forthcoming Hampshire Fostering Network AGM and the Swanwick Lodge Rock Challenge, encouraging Members to attend.

**61. MEMBERS FEEDBACK ON VISITS TO CHILDREN'S HOMES**

Councillor Bolton reported that he had recently visited Godbey House. He had the opportunity to speak with many of the staff and children and

was particularly impressed with the range of trips that children were involved in.

**62. INDEPENDENT REVIEWING SERVICE (IRS) AND SAFEGUARDING UNIT**

The Panel considered the report of the Director of Children's Services (Item 6 in the Minute Book) regarding the independent reviewing service and the safeguarding unit.

The status, role and functions of the service were outlined to Members and the background to the report, in particular the positive recent Ofsted inspection was detailed. It was noted that Ofsted had encouraged a review of capacity especially in light of a rise in the number of children being looked after. Team structures had recently been adjusted to facilitate this and a small increase in capacity was expected from April 2012.

Members discussed the specific officer role in the service, in particular the frequency of contact with a child, typical workload and details of child protection conferences. Officers were thanked by the Panel. It was resolved:

That the Panel note the report and the work of the IRS and Safeguarding Unit.

**63. INSPECTION OF ADOPTION SERVICES**

The Panel considered the report of the Director of Children's Services (Item 7 in the Minute Book) regarding a recent Ofsted inspection of adoption services.

Members were informed that inspectors visited in December 2011 and the inspection consisted of pre-questions, self assessment and interviews with officers, social workers and adoptive families. It was reported that the outcome was good in all areas and the Deputy Director highlighted key strengths and potential improvements. The Panel noted that the changing framework for adoption meant that an Outstanding rating was unlikely, however the small number of recommendations made by Ofsted reflected the strength of the service.

The issue of improving BME representation on fostering and adoption panels was discussed. It was explained that work was underway to match BME children with parents from a similar cultural background where possible. It was hoped that BME representation on panels would improve in the future.

Concerns around timescales were raised and it was reported that a six month limit was due to be introduced. A national review of process was

underway as the checks required for an assessment were very time consuming.

Officers were thanked for their hard work and congratulated on the outcome of the Ofsted inspection.

It was resolved:

That the Panel note the report and praise the direction of travel on this issue.

64. **OFSTED IMPROVEMENT PLAN: SAFEGUARDING AND SERVICES FOR CHILDREN IN CARE 2011/12 - UPDATE**

The Panel considered the report of the Director of Children's Services (Item 8 in the Minute Book) regarding the Ofsted improvement plan.

The Deputy Director updated Members on progress made against the Ofsted improvement plan. The colour coding in the report was explained in order to identify the areas in which progress was made. The respective areas were discussed in detail and some delays were explained. The IT plan for children was discussed and the Panel was pleased to see that improvements were being made.

An update on work with the CAMHS service was given to the Panel. It was noted that the service was jointly commissioned with the Health Service and it was agreed that arrangements be reviewed.

It was resolved:

That Members note the progress achieved against the inspection improvement plan.

65. **SEN GREEN PAPER PATHFINDER**

The Panel considered the presentation of the Director of Children's Services (Item 9 in the Minute Book) regarding the implementation of the SEN Green Paper as a pathfinder authority.

The Deputy Director explained that although labelled SEN, this was a whole approach, covering health, education and social care. The pathfinder was due to finish in March 2013 and was therefore set on an ambitious timescale.

The presentation introduced the key features of green paper and demonstrated the joint working arrangement with the South East 7 authorities, which made Hampshire part of the largest consortium in the country. It was noted that Hampshire County Council was also a case study authority for the implementation of the single assessment.

The measurement of outcomes were discussed and Members were interested in key milestones and the process of implementation. It was noted that the pilot group was limited to 20 families. Members were also interested in levels of additional support and of the question of buy-in from health partners. It was reported that health partners were being drawn into the process at an early stage and that support locally had been good.

It was resolved:

That the Panel note the update.