

Social Care Services Board

12 May 2016:

Report from Interim Head for Children's Services

Purpose of report:

To update the Board on the key areas of focus for the Interim Head for Children's Services.

1. My prime task is to raise the quality of the social work service in Children and Family Services as part of the improvement programme. I have identified six key priorities that are interdependent. I propose now to expand on them.
2. As you will all be acutely aware the service has been under the spotlight of scrutiny and challenge for over 18 months.
3. To state what you already know, the primary purpose of the service is to protect and ensure the welfare of children and their families. Most social workers come to work each day with that as their key goal; they are dedicated and committed professionals.
4. To paraphrase Virginia Bottomley, 'social work is like firefighting. When there's a fire the natural response is to run away from it, firefighters go in the opposite direction. Social workers are similar. When a child describes what is happening to them at the hands of their parents, the normal reaction is to put your hands over your ears and walk away, social workers say tell me more.'
5. At present, the social work staff do that against the backdrop of a reduced workforce which will not be substantially improved in the near future, and the constant challenge and oversight of what they do.
6. There needs to have more proportionality in what we are doing and a greater focus on specific areas. To this end I have six prime targets at this time:
 - To ensure clarity of purpose.
 - To harness the talent of the organisation.
 - To obtain greater focus.
 - To strip out the non-productive.
 - To support SAFER SURREY.
 - To introduce meaningful Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) and Quality Assurance (QA) Systems.

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Sources/background papers: None

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