



Minutes of the CHILDREN'S QUALITY ASSURANCE PANEL of the CHILDREN'S AND YOUTH COMMITTEE held on MONDAY 28 FEBRUARY 2000 at 4.30 pm

Present: Councillors Turnbull (in the Chair), Long, Monk and Seymour

Officers: P Sutton (Head of Children's Services), A Farr (Children's Services Manager), A Caldric (Children's Services Manager (Conferences, Reviews and Services Development)) and J Marshall (Committee Manager)

QA25/00 MINUTES

RESOLVED -

That the Minutes of the meeting of the Panel held on 31 January 2000 be approved as a correct record.

QA26/00 CHILD PROTECTION PROCESSES INFORMATION

The Panel considered information on child protection processes in Milton Keynes. The Panel noted the figures for the total number of children on the Child Protection Register in Milton Keynes and the number of unallocated child protection cases. It was noted that lower age groups had a higher incidence on the Child Protection Register.

Officers reported that there was an ongoing problem that staff were not completing ethnic origin information which led to less helpful data, however it was further reported that this was a lessening problem.

QA27/00 LOOKED AFTER CHILDREN INFORMATION

The Panel considered information on the numbers of children looked after by Milton Keynes Council. With regard to the distribution of Looked After Children by age group the Panel noted that patterns were fairly static. However it was felt that this should be examined for a longer period.

With regard to the Legal Status of Looked After Children it was reported that statistics were not in line with the national average. For example 80% of Looked After Children in Milton Keynes are on care orders as opposed to the national average of 66%. It was felt that further investigation to discover the reasons behind this difference was warranted.

Officers highlighted the need to avoid conflictual relations with parents, and to examine the way in which staff approach families and how much support is offered.

The Panel discussed the tension between virtues of having low numbers of Children on the Child Protection Register and provision of services.

QA28/00 INFORMATION ON REFERRALS AND ASSESSMENT

The Panel considered data on referrals to Children's Services. It was noted that there had been a fall in numbers referred in December 1999 and January 2000. This was attributed to the prolonged holiday period, and the new telephone system in Children's Services.

Officers reported that with regard to Quality Protects Performance Indicators terms had not been defined by the Department of Health, which meant it was not possible to set up computer reporting systems.

CQA 29/00 ANY OTHER BUSINESS

The Panel expressed the view that an additional Agenda item should be tabled for the next meeting to consider the place of the Panel within the Council's new democratic structures.

CQA 30/00 DATES OF FUTURE MEETINGS

The Panel noted that a future meeting of the Panel would be held on 27 March 2000 (Room 35, Civic Offices).

THE CHAIR CLOSED THE MEETING AT 5.20 PM