

**Wirral Improvement Board Meeting**  
**13<sup>th</sup> September 2016**

**Present:**

Eric Robinson	Chief Executive, Chair
Cllr Wendy Clements	Conservative Spokesperson, Children
Cllr Phil Gilchrist	Liberal Democrat Leader
Ian Hassall	Area Commander – Wirral, Merseyside Police
Lorna Quiqley	Director of Quality and Patient Safety, Wirral CCG
Mike Forber	Chair of Wirral Primary Head Teacher Consultative Group
Lisa Ayling	Chair of Wirral Association of Secondary Head Teachers
Paula Wearing	Chair of Wirral Special Head Teachers Association
Annette Roberts	CEO Community Action Wirral
Tracey Hayes	Merseyside Police – Vice Chair WSCB.

**Officers in Attendance:**

Julia Hassall	Director of Children’s Services
Gladys Rhodes-White	Strategic Lead for Improvement & Head of Children’s Social Care
Deborah Gornik	Head of Early Help & Prevention
Kerry Crichlow	Interim Head of Performance, Quality & Improvement
Matthew Humble	Business & Transformation Manager
Alison Watson	Quality Assurance & Auditing Officer
Kevin MacCallum	Senior Manager – Marketing & Communications

**Apologies:**

Cllr Tony Smith	Cabinet Member for Children and Family Services
Lisa Cooper	Deputy Director Quality and Safeguarding NHS England

**Welcome and Introductions**

The Chief Executive, Eric Robinson, welcomed members of the Board and set out the purpose of the Board which is to address the findings from the Ofsted inspection of both children’s services and separately the LSCB, which took place within the same time frame at the end of July 2016. The core purpose of the Improvement Board will be to monitor, challenge and oversee progress against a robust improvement plan that will address the recommendations in the Ofsted report, to ensure that vulnerable children and young people in Wirral are safe, protected and supported so that they can achieve the best possible outcomes.

The DfE will be appointing an independent Improvement Advisor, who once appointed will be the chair of the Improvement Board. Until this appointment is made Eric Robinson will chair the Board.

The Chair made members of the Board aware that the Ofsted findings are under embargo until 20<sup>th</sup> September.

### **Ofsted finding and key recommendations**

Julia Hassall provided a PowerPoint presentation on the findings from the Ofsted inspection and the recommendations.

#### *Questions from the Board following the 19 Ofsted recommendations for the Council*

Cllr Phil Gilchrist – in preparation for the meeting Cllr Gilchrist had considered a report by Ofsted into Birmingham local authority which also resulted in an overall inadequate judgement. Cllr Gilchrist noted that this report puts a lot of stress on performance management. Do we have any strengths? Did we provide training in the preparation for the inspection, and did the inspectors look at what we had?

Julia Hassall – A full copy of report will be provided to Board members on Tuesday 20<sup>th</sup> September. There are strengths noted within the report, such as the strength of the Children in Car Council. Inspectors noted that the local authority was aware of and taking action against the majority of the issues raised in the report. However, Ofsted judged that it is too soon to see the impact of these improvement actions. Gladys Rhodes-White joined in the department in May with a brief to drive rapid improvement, and had devised the action plan Ofsted recognised as a strength.

Gladys Rhodes-White – We could say categorically that this is not where we want to be. We are clear as a senior team what good looks like, but at the time of the Ofsted inspection it was too early to see measurable outcomes from our action plan.

Julia Hassall reported that for example, services for early years and Children's Centres were judged by Ofsted as now edging into good. This is particularly positive as two years ago the Children's Centres were judged as requires improvement and in one case inadequate. There are therefore pockets of significant improvement, however, overall there are many changes we need to make to improve services and outcomes.

Tracey Hayes commented on child protection strategy meetings and timeliness. She noted that the Police have a vital part to play. 1 Police officer works in the MASH attending 10 to 12 strategy meetings per week. Sometimes they have not been able to uphold timeliness but this has been highlighted to the Chief Executive and Area Commander and a commitment made to address. The police are currently restructuring the Protecting Vulnerable People services and a new manager will be in post to take this forward.

Eric Robinson – highlighted that a quarter of all authorities inspected are inadequate and we are not alone in this. It has been a very rigorous process and we fully accept the findings and are not in denial about the fact that services are not good enough, and we need to rapidly improve. The improvements that have happened over the last year have not been quick or deep enough, so we now need to escalate progress across the partnership in Wirral. This Improvement Board needs to ensure that the actions arising from recommendations are being taken, and that they are leading to measurable improvements. It is likely to be a two year plan.

*Questions from the Board in relation to the 7 Recommendations for the LSCB.*

Cllr Phil Gilchrist – What happens when placing out of borough? Previously received lots of information from Simon Garner – do other authorities let us know when they have placed in our area?

Julia Hassall – There is a formal notification process – we need to be more rigorous ensuring these processes are followed.

Gladys Rhodes-White – The department is having regular meetings to review our out of borough children. There is a strong principle that our most vulnerable children need to be in Wirral so that we can give them wraparound support and keep a close eye on their progress. We need to develop more residential and foster care provision in Wirral, and it is important that we have good relationships with providers.

Lisa Quigley – There is a common thread around data, with a need for more confidence in the data being provided and better understanding of when data becomes information becomes intelligence. The Board will oversee and grip improvement by using this data and analyses.

Cllr Wendy Clements – It reads as though the reports provided have not been adequate enough for the LSCB.

Julia Hassall – the LSCB has not been sufficiently sighted on the key performance issues, so plans developed are not focussed on what we need to do to move forward.

Eric Robinson – The overall message is that the LSCB lacks grip, tenacity, challenge. The right kind of leadership is now needed.

*Questions from the board relating to Improvement actions taken so far*

Cllr Phil Gilchrist – Specific and measurable – what are we measuring – how do we prioritise?

Julia Hassall – we need to look at the data Ofsted require alongside the intelligence that will provide assurance that the actions we take are having the impact we want.

Ian Hassall – there is a balance between management information and intelligence leading on from data. Audits and reviews will drill down into the data to scrutinise what this means on the ground.

Gladys Rhodes-White – both qualitative and quantitative data needs to come to the board.

Eric Robinson – There are some issues around culture that we will need to work together to change. We need to all be working to the same high, consistent view of what good looks like for children and young people in need of help, support and protection across Wirral.

### **Terms of Reference**

Eric Robinson asked that members of the Board consider the terms of reference and asked for comments.

It was confirmed that the Improvement Board would also oversee the Improvement of the LSCB.

**Action:** Agreed that an amended version of the Terms of Reference will be sent out, to be agreed at next meeting.

### **Next Steps**

The report will be formally published Tuesday 20<sup>th</sup> September 2016.

On Monday 19<sup>th</sup> September 2016 the report will be sent out to members of the Improvement Board by First Class Recorded Delivery.

## Key Dates

DATE	ACTION
20 September	9.30am – Ofsted publish findings
20 September	Wirral Council receives the Improvement Notice from DfE
Week commencing 20 September	Meeting of the Leader, Lead Member, CEX, DCS and Strategic Improvement Lead with the DfE Intervention and Improvement Team
18 October	DfE appoint Intervention and Improvement Advisor / Chair
By 4 November	Workshop with Ofsted (lead inspector and regional HMI) to inform the development of the Improvement Plan
By 30 December	Wirral Council submit a 'Written Statement of Proposed Actions' (Improvement Plan) to the Secretary of State
By 23 January	Ofsted undertake the 1 <sup>st</sup> quarterly monitoring visit.

The DfE Intervention and Improvement Adviser will spend up to four days each month in the Children and Young People's Department. Their role will be to monitor, support, challenge and scrutinise progress towards addressing the Ofsted recommendations.

Ofsted will complete a monitoring visit each quarter, after each visit a letter will be published on their website setting out their judgements on the progress made in respect of the required improvements. Each visit from Ofsted will involve around 4 inspectors over a week, and will include case audits, tracking and sampling. It will in effect be a 'mini' inspection.

Cllr Phil Gilchrist – Throughout the process, staff will have been interviewed by inspectors – what is the reaction from the staff?

Julia Hassall – Gladys and I will be visiting frontline staff on Friday 16th September 2016 on a range of sites. We want to take the information out to staff and hear their responses directly. We need to establish a strong supportive culture where we cannot hide from unacceptable practice, we need to give workers the right tools for

the job, the right support and training and be clear that social workers need to be accountable for their work.

Julia Hassall – During the inspection, meetings took place on a daily basis with senior and middle managers, by week 3 a considerable number of cases of concern were picked up by Ofsted. We audited these, along with an independent auditor and in all cases we agreed with concerns raised by the inspectors. This level of concern was not consistently shared and understood by some managers, which illustrates the points made in the report about inconsistent judgements and application of thresholds. We are setting up a substantial training programme for managers and staff, as we all need to have a shared understanding of what good looks like and where practice needs to improve.

Ian Hassall – A mechanism is needed for frontline staff to provide feedback to senior managers. The improvement programme needs to be shaped and challenged by feedback from staff at the sharp end. In the Police the Transformational Change Programme developed 'Challenge Panels' which engaged directly with officers at the most senior level important.