

WIRRAL IMPROVEMENT BOARD

**MINUTES AND ACTIONS FROM IMPROVEMENT BOARD MEETING:
WEDNESDAY 18TH OCTOBER 2017**

Present:

Tony Crane	Chair of Improvement Board/DfE Advisor
Cllr Phil Davies	Leader of the Council
Cllr Bernie Mooney	Lead Member for Children & Family Services
Cllr Moira McLaughlin	Member of Children & Adults Overview & Scrutiny Committee
Cllr Phil Gilchrist	Liberal Democrat Leader
Prof. Maggie Atkinson	Chair of WSCB
Julie Murphy	Chair of Wirral Primary Headteacher Consultative Group
Satwinder Lotay	Nursing, Therapies and Patient Partnership
Deborah Gornik	Interim Director for Children's Services

Officers in Attendance:

Simone White	Deputy Director for Children's Services
Gani Martins	Interim Head of Practice Improvement
Carly Brown	Head of Quality, Performance & Improvement
Jane Clayson	Interim Programme Manager Children's Transformation Programme
Ian Godfrey	Senior Manager – Children Looked After
Elizabeth Hartley	Senior Manager – Early Help & Protection

Apologies:

Eric Robinson	Chief Executive
Cllr Lesley Rennie	Conservative Group Councillor
Avril Devaney	Director of Nursing, Therapies and Patient Partnership
Dee Davies	NHS England
Lisa Ayling	Chair of Wirral Association of Secondary Headteachers
Paula Wareing	Chair of Wirral Special Headteachers Association
Emily Harland	Social Worker – Birkenhead Locality

MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING – 20TH SEPTEMBER 2017

Ian Godfrey asked to amend page five of the document as he is incorrectly recorded. This should read "a third of children enter care under S20". Changes made and minutes agreed.

CHILDREN'S SOCIAL CARE: SITE VISITS

Tony Crane has met staff in the locality offices to gauge morale and seek their views. In Pensby and Rockferry the environment was calm, a sense of progress made was felt, staff felt that things were better in general. Rockferry are experiencing some instability in their management workforce with two managers recently leaving. Positive comments from staff were received with ideas for improvement. MASH was positive and there is a clear purpose and plan for going forward.

The feedback from frontline staff is they would like more agile working arrangements, immediate support from Liquid Logic when required, a timely process for new starters and legal advice was noted as an issue.

Simone stated that at the time of Tony's visit there had been a loss of agency staff in the First Response and Children in Care teams. The impact on the service was the CIN/CP teams had to pick up more work and this caused slightly increased caseloads. In addition further staff left the children in care teams which prevented work transferring from the CIN/CP service.

Cllr Phil Gilchrist stated that Ofsted had criticised the lack of children's voice in case files and that outcomes are not followed through. It was agreed that there is more of this now occurring as identified in audits.

Satwinder Lotay asked if the sense from Tony's visit was that there were multi-agency constructive relationships. Tony agreed that there were constructive relationships but social workers will always strive for more effective ways of working.

DIRECTOR OF CHILDRENS SERVICES IMPROVEMENT UPDATE

Deborah Gornik presented recent developments and feedback from the recent ADCS conference. Cllr Mooney shared her experience of the ADCS conference and how there were pleas from all councils to the government to help effect change and provide financial support to ease the implications of reducing financial expenditure in other areas of the council. Cllr Mooney confirmed she has written to a number of professionals asking to lobby the government in support.

Deborah confirmed the Ofsted Monitoring visit will take place 11th/12th December and will focus on:

- **Looked after children – permanence planning**
- **Advocacy – voice of child**
- **Personal Education Plans/Strengths & Difficulties Questionnaires**
- **Independent Reviewing Officers – their work and escalations**

- **Public Law Outline processes**

The arranged peer challenge on the 12th December will be rearranged due to the monitoring visit

In addition, Simone White confirmed there is an offer of a pay increase for managers as they progress in their development. The proposal is currently with the Unions for review and feedback.

Cllr Phil Davies asked Cllr Mooney to confirm how we ensure the £25 million investment for 2018/19, on top of £10 million already invested, is going to be used to support early help and make the changes needed in social care. Cllr Bernie Mooney gave assurances that everyone is working as hard as they can and the dilemma for Children's Services is the impact of mental health, criminal behaviour and drug and alcohol misuse.

PERFORMANCE AND DATA UPDATE

An overview of performance and improvement was provided and confirmation that workshops had been held to move forward the requirements for the Improvement Board and the Wirral Safeguarding Children's Board (WSCB) in terms of reporting however, in the short term, the data book will continue to be used.

Gani Martins stated that the decrease in assessment completion within timescales was due to ongoing sickness and changes in staff. Rockferry does have some performance issues but has the largest intake rate. The First Response team also had similar difficulties due to staff shortages. Simone White confirmed there are changes being made in the First Response team and permanent staff have now been recruited.

Councillor Moira McLaughlin asked what process is in place to manage staff who are not performing to required standards. Gani Martins confirmed that agency managers have left and that permanent managers are going through the capability process. Simone confirmed that, as long as there is no delay in the consultation, this will assist in recruiting permanent managers to post.

Simone White commented that the role of the Lead Practitioner is challenging across Early Help to Child Protection which impacts the development of the service. Elizabeth Hartley stated that challenges on partners taking such role and delivering TAF. All agreed that this was understandable. Schools were pleased that following return to school from holidays they will now know which children have become involved with social care.

Simone confirmed that additional resources have been given to prioritise Personal Education Plans completion and quality. This additional resource is also being used to

educate other staff in producing quality documents where the actual impact for children can be measured.

Tony asked that for the next meeting there is a report provided which establishes the impact of this provision.

PRACTICE IMPROVEMENT AND QUALITY ASSURANCE

There have been discussions regarding the need to reduce the number of children currently looked after and entering the care system. The overall approach must be whole system across the Children's partnership. There is a clear strategy in place to address this which includes:

- **Working with parents where there are multiple pregnancies and previous court intervention**
- **Working with families where children are aged 0-5.**
- **Restructure of Youth Services with a consultation document out with staff. Anticipated to complete between January to April 2018.**
- **Review of children placed at home with their parents for over 12 months who are under a care order.**
- **Explore the use of Special Guardianship Orders - There are ten children in settled foster care placements where the carers have expressed an interest in this area and these are being progressed.**
- **Review the current PLO process.**
- **Consider models of working and resources to achieve successful rehabilitation plans for children.**

Tony confirmed that the key message for Wirral is that there are too many children in care. Councillor Mooney stated that Councillors need to know potential blockages to the progression of this strategy as soon as possible so every support can be given. Councillor Davies asked that the three year plan has a reduction figure that we are working towards.

Gani Martins confirmed that themes pulled from the current audit included:

- **Lack of analysis in assessment to effectively collate the information**
- **Inconsistencies in how case summaries are recorded**
- **Variable quality in children's care plans**
- **Child's voice is becoming more evident but again there is inconsistency.**

A training plan is being produced to support managers with audit.

WIRRAL SAFEGUARDING CHILDREN'S BOARD – UPDATE

Maggie Atkinson provided an update on the work of partnerships to the Board.

TERMS OF REFERENCE

Gani Martins noted that the front line practitioner group is not multi agency. Councillor Gilchrist queried how key actions from meeting will be shared with the public. All agreed that the Terms of reference were to be signed off

FORWARD PLAN

Tony asked that a report is provided on how do children's centres align with the preventative agenda to the next meeting

CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE'S REFERENCE GROUP – PRESENTATION

A very well received presentation was provided by members of the Children and Young People's Reference Group. Attendees recognised the significant effort that had been put into the presentation by the Group. The Group have been asked to agree on their attendance at future meetings.