

**WIRRAL IMPROVEMENT BOARD  
MINUTES AND ACTIONS FROM IMPROVEMENT BOARD MEETING:  
WEDNESDAY 20 DECEMBER 2018**

**Present:**

Tony Crane	Chair of Improvement Board/DfE Advisor
Cllr Phil Davies	Leader of the Council
Cllr Bernie Mooney	Lead member for Children and Young People's Services
Cllr Lesley Rennie	Conservative Group Councillor
Cllr Phil Gilchrist	Liberal Group Councillor
Prof. Maggie Atkinson	Chair – WSCB
Ian Hassall	Area Commander – Merseyside Police
Lorna Quigley	Director of Policy & Patient Safety Clinical Commissioning Group
Tony Taylor	Deputy Chair of Wirral Association of Secondary Headteachers
Andy Davies	Deputy Chair of Wirral Primary Headteacher Consultative Group
Paul Boyce	Director for Children's Services

**Officers in Attendance**

Simone White	Deputy Director for Children's Services
Jane Clayson	Commissioning & Modernisation Lead
Robert Coot	Social Worker – Wallasey
Mandy Williams	Social Worker – Wallasey
Alison Watson	Quality Assurance & Auditing Officer

**Apologies**

Eric Robinson	Chief Executive, Wirral Borough Council
Cllr Moira McLaughlin	Member of Children & Adults Overview & Scrutiny Committee
Avril Devaney	Director of Nursing, Therapies and Patient Partnership
Julie Murphy	Chair of Wirral Primary Headteacher Consultative Group
Paula Wareing	Chair of Wirral Special Headteachers Association
Deborah Gornik	Deputy Director for Children's Services
Carly Brown	Head of Quality, Performance & Improvement
Kevin MacCallum	Senior Manager – Marketing & Communications
Ian Godfrey	Senior Manager – Children Looked After

**MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING – 22 NOVEMBER 2017**

The minutes of the previous meeting were agreed by members of the Improvement Board.

## **DIRECTOR FOR CHILDREN'S SERVICES IMPROVEMENT UPDATE**

Paul Boyce presented an update on his observations of Wirral Children's Services so far. A number of actions have been taken to establish the foundations for improvement however they are not yet embedded. The need for quality, permanent practitioners and strong leaders and managers remain to improve the quality of practice.

The programme of recruitment is beginning to have some impact; for example, 20 agency workers have expressed an interest in converting to permanent roles. Caseload management appears to be good but caseloads over 20 cases per social worker needs to be explored. Resources need to be focussed on doing the right thing and the basics well. This would include:

- **A stable and permanent workforce who have regular supervision and oversight of their work to evidence quality assurance**
- **Reducing 'hand off points' throughout the child's journey**
- **Recruit critical management roles**
- **Share best practice and raise performance standards**
- **Create and support a learning culture**

### **Ofsted Monitoring Visit 11/12 December 2017 - Update:**

Ofsted reviewed 6 cases of children aged over 11 in long term care. A Self-Assessment was completed prior to the visit with recognition that we are not yet in the position where we would want to be. Ofsted judged the cases- 3 'Inadequate', 2 'Requires Improvement' and 1 'Good'. Verbal feedback was provided, and the draft letter will be provided in January 2018.

Ofsted acknowledged the acceleration of improvement in Wirral, however, problematic areas remain such as care plans and re-assessments. Such areas will be discussed with Ofsted during the Annual Conversation meeting on 11 January 2017.

In addition, there will be a NWADS Peer Challenge meeting on Wednesday 10 January and a DfE 6-month review visit on Wednesday 24 and Monday 29 January 2018.

### **VIEW FROM THE FRONTLINE**

Robert Coot and Mandy Williams presented findings of a review that captured the current thinking around the improvement journey to date. Not all localities responded and so findings were representative of the Wallasey locality.

Feedback included:

- Caseloads are currently manageable with the right requests for assessment coming through.
- MASH is recognised as having a positive impact on the front line - seeing the right things coming through in lesser amounts with signposting to early help as well as changes in the understanding of thresholds.
- However, caseloads do contain significant complexity. Cllr Mooney requested some work to be undertaken to measure complexity of cases and to define a 'complex case'.
- The 'Supporting Families, Enhancing Futures' model has been well received however some Social Workers still hadn't attended training sessions when the model went live. This will be investigated to understand why there was non-attendance.
- There was recognition that the progression programme that was being implemented was good but existing permanent staff feel that there is not enough being done to recognise the commitment of those staff who have been a permanent member of the workforce for some time.
- Templates and forms require reviewing to ensure consistency across the localities. Simone White confirmed that this would happen over the coming months.

Paul Boyce thanked Robert and Mandy for a powerful and helpful presentation.

#### **IMPROVEMENT BOARD PERFORMANCE AND DATA UPDATE**

The monthly Performance and Data report was presented with no significant changes since November.

Cllr Phil Gilchrist queried the update on IRO's reporting and the use of formal escalations. **Simone White to provide feedback direct to Cllr Gilchrist on how escalations improve practice.**

The purchase of 150 mobile Microsoft pro-surface devices has been fully approved with an additional 150 requested through Capital Receipt funding. To support the increase in agile working, approval has also been given to purchase 2 new apps Liquid Logic – the Group Work app and the Mobile Access app. At this stage it is anticipated that there will be a 12 week roll out from January 2018 with the last set of kit by implemented by the end of March. To support the implementation of digital solutions, a role as a Digital Champion has been identified with approval from technical Social Workers who want to provide support to colleagues during the rollout of new technology.

#### **PRACTICE IMPROVEMENT AND QUALITY ASSURANCE**

The monthly report on Practice Improvement and Quality Assurance was presented with a focus on repeat plans. There was recognition that this is an area that required improvement and the areas of focus during the monitoring visit were – the completion of PEPs, the work with Health to complete SDQ, the process of PLO's and Permanency Planning.

Tony Crane commented that themes are emerging but there is a need to recognise and have confidence when did things start to improve.

#### **WIRRAL SAFEGUARDING CHILDREN'S BOARD UPDATE**

Following the Improvement Board on 22 November, it was agreed to hold a session during the December meeting to discuss the role of partnerships. A questionnaire was circulated with a minimal response and it was agreed that this would be revisited in Spring.

Comments during the session included:

- **Maggie Atkinson providing a definition of partnership, stating that it is “interchangeable, collaboration and real joint working”.**
- **Lorna Quigley confirmed that the completion of the questionnaire was a useful exercise however it was difficult to gain an organisational viewpoint. Can the question be rephrased - how do we as partners keep children safe?**
- **Tony Crane queried attendance at strategy meetings and discussed the need for all partners to increase the quality of the approach to the joined-up agenda that places the child at the centre.**

#### **ANY OTHER BUSINESS**

None noted.

#### **DATE OF NEXT MEETING:**

31 January 2018, 2-4.30pm, Birkenhead Park Function Room.