

**WIRRAL IMPROVEMENT BOARD  
MINUTES AND ACTIONS FROM IMPROVEMENT BOARD MEETING:  
WEDNESDAY 22<sup>ND</sup> NOVEMBER 2018**

**Present:**

Tony Crane	Chair of Improvement Board/DfE Advisor
Eric Robinson	Chief Executive
Cllr Bernie Mooney	Lead Member for Children and Young People's Services
Cllr Lesley Rennie	Conservative Group Councillor
Cllr Phil Gilchrist	Liberal Democrat Leader
Cllr Thomas Usher	Chair of Children & Adults Overview & Scrutiny Committee
Prof. Maggie Atkinson	Chair of WSCB
Nicholas Gunatilleke	Merseyside Police
Lorna Quigley	Director of Policy & Patient Safety Clinical Commissioning Group
Satwinder Lotay	Nursing, Therapies and Patient Partnership
Julie Murphy	Chair of Wirral Primary Headteacher Consultative Group

**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	Commissioning & Modernisation Lead
Elizabeth Hartley	Senior Manager – Early Help & Prevention
Robert Coot	Social Worker – Wallasey
Mandy Williams	Social Worker – Wallasey
Alison Watson	Quality Assurance & Auditing Officer

**Apologies:**

Cllr Phil Davies	Leader of the Council
Cllr Moira McLaughlin	Member of Children & Adults Overview & Scrutiny Committee
Ian Hassall	Area Commander – Merseyside Police
Avril Devaney	Director of Nursing, Therapies and Patient Partnership
Paula Wareing	Chair of Wirral Special Headteachers Association
Deborah Gornik	Interim Director for Children's Services
Kevin MacCallum	Senior Manager – Marketing & Communications

#### **MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING – 18 OCTOBER 2017**

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

#### **DEPUTY DIRECTOR OF CHILDREN'S SERVICES IMPROVEMENT UPDATE**

Simone White provided members of the board an update on key issues such as the Council annual budget setting is in process and the number of children looked after (837), which is a significant increase on last year. There is currently a lot of pressure on the in-house fostering provision leading to children being placed with agency foster care. It is imperative that we develop a multi-agency approach as to how we deliver services to these children and how we effectively invest in Early Help Services.

Lorna Quigley queried whether the budget setting was appropriate for the Improvement Board, she would say it is for integrated services under a different forum. Simone White stated that it needs to be discussed and for the Improvement Board to monitor as partnership initiatives to enable change.

Cllr Bernie Mooney would like to note the commitment everyone has to the improvement work and the delivery of the change that is needed to improve services for our children looked after.

Cllr Phil Gilchrist commented on the number posts within the establishment filled by agency workers. Simone White stated that she continues to recruit a permanent workforce, use agency only when necessary and support agency workers who wish to convert to permanent staff.

Improved use of performance data is ongoing with data being used to support the delivery of the Improvement Plan. Performance Dashboards have been introduced to staff which are being used effectively.

A SEND Inspection is imminent, work is underway to prepare, and workshops have been organised with all partners.

The agile and mobile working proof of concept has concluded. The participating Social Workers – Robert Coot and Mandy Williams – updated the Board on their experiences including increased flexibility to work with families as well as connectivity challenges and increased need for training. Carly Brown informed the board that there will be a robust project plan to roll out the kit by the end of January 2018. Maggie Atkinson stated that mobile working will capture timeliness and deadlines improving and once working properly will start to see a drop in sickness levels. Cllr Phil Gilchrist queried whether there are areas of 'black holes' for Wi-Fi coverage. Jane Clayson stated that users can tether their device to a mobile phone which should give strength and additional coverage, but we need to monitor and report any 'black spots' back to Digital Services.

#### **JOINT TARGETED AREA INSPECTION**

Satwinder Lotay shared the experiences of the recent inspection in West Cheshire. As a partner it had a very different feel. The theme of the inspection was Neglect. It was clear that the communication process that was effective as it affected every statutory agency. There was a focus on multi-agency audits with the CQC asking for additional information on some cases – chronologies, pen portraits, etc.

Inspectors met with frontline workers from the partnership agencies and briefings were given to the practitioners. The review looked at the front door, testing how good information sharing was and the effective use of intelligence. Inspectors looked at integrated clinical record systems as well as seeking evidence of the voice of child. Satwinder recommended that main providers need to attend the key feedback meeting to enable them to hear first-hand the detail being provided.

Maggie Atkinson queried how likely is it that this will move things on for children in West Cheshire. Satwinder Lotay stated it did pick up some key issues that Cheshire Police had delays, flagged up some parts of system that people weren't currently focussed on.

Tony Crane stated that it is a whole partnership inspection, focussed on outcomes for children and Wirral still has a lot of work to do to achieve successful outcomes. Tony Crane stated that the Board needs to think about partnership deep dives through WSCB.

**ACTION:** Deep dive agreed to take place through Maggie Atkinson and be brought back to the Board.

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

Carly Brown provided the regular performance and data report which continues to use the data book as evidence and a scorecard summarising key information.

Work is ongoing with regards to the Children Looked After performance, timeliness of assessments remains static but is still a key area of focus. Sickness rates continue to improve – now reduced from 18 to 16.1 days. Workforce strategy is now becoming embedded and a detailed update will be brought to the Improvement Board in January 2018.

The recruitment microsite is being soft launched and will go live 1 December 2017. The website is [www.wirral-social-work-jobs.com](http://www.wirral-social-work-jobs.com)

Maggie Atkinson queried that we should review what we are measuring and ensure it is aligned to change and new activity.

Satwinder Lotay asked whether partner agencies are feeding into assessments and are helping by providing information to enable workers to complete assessments in time. Simone White confirmed the process works well at front door, but district compliance is more sporadic. Simone has asked workers and managers to challenge and highlight where appropriate.

Cllr Gilchrist queried why there is different data in February than shown in this report. It was confirmed that a drop has happened, and we knew that we would have issues in particular teams. This is now being monitored much more closely and will present an improving picture over time.

**ACTION:** Quality of Assessments will be reviewed at a future meeting.

The number of Children subject to a CP Plan is decreasing but children looked after numbers are increasing. Maggie Atkinson queried how to move the culture of the service to believe we can step down from CP to Early Help if safe to do so.

Children subject to a second or subsequent Child Protection Plan - Cllr Phil Gilchrist wants to understand pressure prior to school holidays and its relevance to the figures reported. Tony Crane requested that a briefing note to be sent out to the Board providing an appropriate explanation.

Significantly increase in IRO capacity, caseloads now down to mid 70's caseloads, IRO can now meet with children and monitor cases more effectively. A number of agency IRO's have requested to convert to permanent staff. Cllr Lesley Rennie queried the conversion incentives. Simone White stated it is a combination of factors not just remuneration but a good place to work, positive morale and the right resource in place.

Eric Robinson stated that it now feels we are now gaining traction and grip on knowing what we need to and how things link in. The level of grip has significantly improved from previous months.

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

Gani Martins updated on practice improvement activity including the improvements to Public Law Outline. Policy and Procedures have also been approved to support and increase the understanding of permanency for Social Workers. Back to basic training has been taking place – with positive feedback and an associated improvement in the quality of assessments. Tony Crane confirmed that activities are underway and evident across the Service.

Tony Crane also stated we need to celebrate success in Wirral. Monthly practitioner groups have been held and feedback is being used from this group to improve services.

#### **EARLY HELP DEVELOPMENTS AND CURRENT CHALLENGES**

Elizabeth Hartley provided a presentation on the current developments and challenges utilising data to evidence the indicative view. There has been:

- An increase in uptake of Children's Centres but not seeing outcomes achieved yet. The current CIN Population is approximately 2600 excluding care leavers.
- Early Help Social Work consultations are linked closely to school and health with an increased amount of consultation taking place across the partnership.

Tony Crane stated that there is lots of activity in the right areas but would like to know the impacts of this. He also stated the need to return to the Dashboard at future meetings to assess what qualitative measures will make a difference.

It was agreed that a broader focus on the role of partnerships be the focus of the next meeting of the Improvement Board to explore the collective impact our partnerships are having.

#### **THE ROLE OF SCRUTINY**

Cllr Tom Usher, Chair of Children and Young People Overview and Scrutiny updated the Board on the role of Scrutiny covering key areas:

- Organisational structure
- Procedures and process
- Staffing arrangements

- Governance

Tony Crane recognised the significant amount of activity and asked Cllr Usher what is the view on progress. Cllr Usher confirmed that from updates and 'reality check' visits progress has been demonstrated with confidence rising, greater awareness of thresholds and all staff aware of challenges.

Cllr Usher was asked to present the priorities for Scrutiny at a later meeting and discuss how they align with the Improvement Board.

**ACTION:** Cllr Usher to present the priorities for Scrutiny at a future meeting

**WSCB UPDATE**

Maggie provided presentation providing Board with an update on the Safeguarding Children's Board activities.

The launch of the Supporting Families Enhancing Futures model has been a key focus. Police have completed training for community staff. PCSO's have better understanding due to their proximity of the Early Help work. Lorna Quigley questioned how will we test the impact of the model? The WSCB will need to analyse and help improve the uptake. Julie Murphy confirmed that the SFEF model is working well and schools have had access to the training and have started to use it. The parents have confirmed they have a more positive experience. EHSW access has increased significantly. Tony Crane confirmed that there are significant amounts of activity underway and partnership working is starting to improve.

**FORWARD PLAN**

Tony Crane suggested there is a partnership 'deep dive' workshop at the December meeting. The consensus from the board was that this was a good idea. Cllr Bernie Mooney suggested this could start the development of a story board showing the progress of the improvement journey.

Cllr Phil Gilchrist requested that the Director's update includes feedback from the Ofsted visit in December.

Gani Martins requested that the review of Integrated front door is presented at the January meeting.