

Wirral Improvement Board Meeting

Wednesday 28 June 2017

Present:

Tony Crane	Chair of Improvement Board/DfE Advisor
Eric Robinson	Chief Executive
Cllr Phil Davies	Leader of the Council
Cllr Bernie Mooney	Lead Member for Children & Family Services
Cllr Lesley Rennie	Conservative Group, Deputy Leader
Cllr Phil Gilchrist	Liberal Democrat Leader
Prof. Maggie Atkinson	Chair of WSCB
Lorna Quigley	Director of Policy & Patient Safety Clinical Commissioning Group
Dee Davies	NHS England
Satwinder Lotay	Nursing, Therapies and Patient Partnership
Lisa Ayling	Chair of Wirral Association of Secondary Headteachers
Paula Wareing	Chair of Wirral Special Headteachers Association
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 Performance, Quality & Improvement
Matthew Humble	Business and Transformation Manager
Alison Watson	Quality Assurance & Auditing Officer
Michael Nugent	Consultant in Social Care Performance
Elizabeth Hartley	Senior Manager – Early Help & Prevention
Vicky Powell	CSE Co-ordinator

Apologies:

Cllr Moira Mclaughlin	Member of Children and Families Overview and Scrutiny Committee
Ian Hassall	Merseyside Police – Area Commander
Philippa Malcolm	Chair of Wirral Primary Headteacher Consultative Group
Kerry Mehta	Head of Children's Safeguarding
Kevin MacCallum	Senior Manager – Marketing & Communications

Minutes of Previous Meeting

Tony Crane welcomed everyone to the meeting, outlined his experience with chairing Lancashire and Leicester Improvement Boards and his previous experience as the Wirral's DfE Advisor.

It was requested that it be recorded in the minutes the Boards appreciation and thanks to Julia Hassall, Cllr Tony Smith and Eleanor Brazil and for the improvements that they had made to date.

An outstanding action from the minutes of the previous meeting was discussed. Philippa Malcolm had raised issues from the Consultative Group regarding accessing early help and referring to the Integrated Front Door. Elizabeth Hartley had responded to these concerns providing a report and also a verbal update to the board. The assessment tool is currently being reviewed and Early Help Social Workers have been allocated to each school. Cllr Phil Gilchrist queried the accessibility of Early Help Social workers. Elizabeth Hartley stated that the lead social worker will meet with schools once/twice a term and frequency will be negotiated with schools individually. Deborah Gornik suggested that it may be worth having a presentation on the new delivery model for early help at a future meeting.

Action – A presentation on the new delivery model for early help will be scheduled for a future meeting.

Action Tracker

The progress of completing actions captured in the 'Action Tracker' was noted.

Directors Update

Deborah Gornik provided a presentation on the latest improvement progress which included senior leadership recruitment, the Ofsted Monitoring Visit and Workforce Development.

The Chair asked members of the Board for their comments regarding the Ofsted Monitoring Visit Letter. Lorna Quigley queried whether the comment of 'slow' progress was a surprise for the team. Deborah Gornik responded that it was not a surprise as there is a recognition that this is common for any local authority that has a notice to improve as it takes a considerable period of time to embed the improvements to evidence the long term sustainability. Simone White stated that Ofsted look to see has any change and difference been evidenced in individual cases of children. With regards to the comment in relation to the huge variability in cases, Ofsted did observe cases that were 'Good', 'Requires Improvement' and 'Inadequate' – this is an unusual profile for an authority in this position. There are people doing good things, but consistency is key to improvement. Lorna Quigley stated that the letter was helpful in identifying how Health can contribute to the improvement journey.

Satwinder Lotay commented that she felt the letter was fair. A lot of process changes had been made but now it is about implementation. It feels that there is a long way to go and that we are at the start of the journey, which all agencies need to get on board. Lisa Ayling commented that she was not overly surprised by language used in

the letter as she is used to Ofsted School Inspections. There is the need to start seeing impact and to make sure we make change at pace. Cllr Lesley Rennie was disappointed with the Ofsted comments; however felt the planning workshop on 12 June was extremely useful in providing the required impetus and pace.

The Directors Update concluded with a video produced by Young People's Reference Group on leadership and management. Cllr Phil Gilchrist requested that the PowerPoint presentations from today's meeting be circulated and a link to the young people's video be provided.

Action – PowerPoint presentations from today's meeting to be circulated and a link to the young people's video be provided to members of the Improvement Board.

Wirral Safeguarding Board Update

Prof. Maggie Atkinson provided an update on the work of the Wirral Safeguarding Board. The financial resourcing of the Safeguarding Board remains an issue and she would continue to lobby partners regarding contributions.

An overview of the 'Supporting Families Enhancing Futures' model was provided. Two launch events have been held with full attendance across the partnership bodies – schools, health, faith sector, social care, police, and voluntary service. The materials outlining the model are available and published on the WSCB website.

Cllr Phil Davies asked what the top priority for the Safeguarding Board was. Prof. Maggie Atkinson responded by stating reaching consistency through good management and supervision for every staff members concerned.

Cllr Lesley Rennie said that Councillors need to get a better grip of the voice of the child and lives of children. She asked if there was advice on how this might be achieved. Prof. Maggie Atkinson responded that children are also our citizens, if you have the opportunity to talk to school councils or young reference group they would be delighted to talk to you.

Cllr Bernie Mooney stated that children are our residents, they have rights and we have responsibilities to them. Children should be treated with dignity and respect.

Action – A link to the Supporting Families, Enhancing Futures documentation on the WSCB website is to be sent to members of the Improvement Board.

Improvement Monitoring

Carly Brown presented an update of progress on the improvement plan. Key areas of focus remain with regards to sickness absence in the workforce, recruitment for Children's Social Care.

Cllr Phil Davies asked how do we keep our best social workers. Simone White stated there are attractive posts out in the region that unfortunately we have lost some experienced staff to. An enhanced recruitment offer for Wirral will be available shortly for new and existing staff.

Cllr Phil Davies questioned the competency of social workers. Simone White stated that it is work in progress; there are Social Work Standards, which will use performance management standards to hold staff to account using performance management data, quality assurance data and complaints.

Cllr Phil Gilchrist enquired about the high proportion of agency for the IRO role. Tony Crane stated the recruitment of experienced IRO's was a national problem.

Cllr Bernie Mooney asked how we promote a positive environment for our social workers. Deborah Gornik stated that this happens by management leadership, communications, training programmes, consistency in supervision and acknowledging good work.

Michael Nugent provided commentary on Section 3 of the report. Tony Crane asked what 'Good' would look like for Wirral. Research has been completed on Good/Outstanding authorities and stated that you need to think about more than statistical neighbour on what you want the authority to be.

Tony Crane commented that demand has not increased, assessments timeliness have dipped, and he would like to see more detail on the Wirral's Children in Care population which looks to have increased by 10% in the past year. Simone White commented that there have been changes in referral data within the last couple of months so makes it difficult to compare trends and refer back to previous data.

Prof. Maggie Atkinson stated that all departments within the council and partners need to be mindful of their role in providing services for children and young people. Cllr Bernie Mooney stated the importance of a child centred council.

An overview of Quality Assurance activity for May was provided. The focus was on Child Sexual Exploitation. 228 case records were audited and 24 deep dive audits completed. The findings have been shared with Children's Social Care and improvement actions produced. Work is continuing to support the WSCB at developing multi-agency audits.

Age as a variable in Social Care interventions

Michael Nugent presented an update how age may affect the response provided for interventions. There appears to be a predisposition to refer to Social Care for younger children rather than making a referral for Early Help intervention. In addition

children in Wirral stay in care longer than others in the England population as a whole.

Deborah Gornik commented that Children's Services are doing a number of things to address this including pre-birth liaison meeting to understand issues earlier on, engaging through children ready for school pledge and adding a new priority looking at safeguarding. Simone White stated that permanency is a major strand to work on. Children's Services are in the process of appointing a Permanency Officer to track the journey of children. Wirral currently has a high number of care episodes ending through the use of Special Guardianship Orders, which is positive, but we would want to review this practice and ensure we are focusing on the range of support to those families. There is the need to focus more on adoption in order to provide children with a permanent home. Prof. Maggie Atkinson commented that if adoption increases there will be the need to provide more post adoption support.

Satwinder Lotay asked if effective work is being undertaken with Health Services. Elizabeth Hartley responded that pre-birth pathway taking place out of social care and has been made universal. Any concerns in pregnancy are discussed and appropriate levels of support are provided. There has already been an increase in the number of TAF plans for unborn, with the pre-birth pathway going up to the age of two.

Improvement Plan Update

Matthew Humble presented the proposed update of the Improvement Plan. In order to develop the refreshed improvement plan it is proposed that thematic groups be created from members of the Improvement Board, WSCB and Children's Services to produce the refreshed plan.

Members of the Board agreed, noting that the workshop held on the 12th June had been valuable in validating the approach. Tony Crane asked that a draft refreshed improvement plan be provided to the next meeting of the Improvement Board.

Action – A draft of the refreshed Improvement Plan is to be provided to the next meeting of the Improvement Board.

Child Sexual Exploitation (CSE)

Simone White provided a presentation on Child Sexual Exploitation including finding from national research undertaken by Ofsted. Vicky Powell, CSE Co-ordinator outlined the context of Operation Corzola which was the recent Wirral CSE joint operation.

Prof. Maggie Atkinson stated that CSE training is provided every month, however it is not very well attended. Prof. Maggie Atkinson will write to all agencies who do not attend. A Serious Case Review is currently also in progress.

Forward Plan

The Forward Plan was noted, no new items were identified for the forward plan.

Any Other Business

No other items of business were discussed.

Actions arising from this meeting:

Action
Action – A presentation on the new delivery model for early help will be scheduled for a future meeting.
Action – PowerPoint presentations from today's meeting to be circulated and a link to the young people's video be provided to members of the Improvement Board.
Action – A link to the Supporting Families, Enhancing Futures documentation on the WSCB website is to be sent to members of the Improvement Board.
Action – A draft of the refreshed Improvement Plan is to be provided to the next meeting of the Improvement Board.