

**WIRRAL IMPROVEMENT BOARD
MINUTES AND ACTIONS FROM IMPROVEMENT BOARD MEETING
WEDNESDAY 31ST JANUARY 2018**

Present:

Tony Crane	Chair of the Improvement Board/DfE Advisor
Cllr Phil Davies	Leader of the Council
Cllr Bernie Mooney	Lead Member for Children and Young People's Services
Cllr Phil Gilchrist	Liberal Group Councillor
Prof. Maggie Atkinson	Chair – LSCB
Julie Murphy	Chair of Wirral Primary Headteacher Consultative Group
Tony Taylor	Deputy Chair of Wirral Association of Secondary Headteachers
Paul Boyce	Director for Children's Services
Satwinder Lotay	Nursing, Therapies and Patient Partnership
Nick Gunatilleke	Chief Inspector, Merseyside Police

Officers in Attendance:

Simone White	Deputy Director for Children's Services
Kerry Mehta	Interim Head of Practice Improvement
Carly Brown	Head of Quality, Performance & Improvement
Robert Coot	Social Worker – Wallasey
Karen Lesage	Quality Assurance & Auditing Officer
Chris Hyams	Assistant Director for HR and OD
Caroline Halewood	Senior Human Resources Officer
Jo Williams	Team Leader Human Resources & Organisational Development

Apologies:

Eric Robinson	Chief Executive
Cllr Lesley Rennie	Conservative Group Councillor
Cllr Moira McLaughlin	Member of Children & Adults Overview & Scrutiny Committee
Ian Hassall	Area Commander, Merseyside Police
Lorna Quigley	Director of Policy & Patient Safety Clinical Commissioning Group
Avril Devaney	Director of Nursing, Therapies and Patient Partnership
Paula Wareing	Chair of Wirral Special Headteachers Association
Deborah Gornik	Deputy Director for Children's Services
Kevin MacCallum	Senior Manager – Marketing & Communications
Jane Clayson	Commissioning & Modernisation Lead
Mandy Williams	Social Worker – Wallasey

MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING – 20 DECEMBER 2017

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

Action for follow up: **Simone White to provide feedback directly to Cllr Gilchrist on how escalations improve practice.**

DIRECTOR FOR CHILDREN'S SERVICES IMPROVEMENT UPDATE

Paul Boyce presented an update of Wirral Children's Services. This covered the 8 areas for focusing on in order to create the right conditions for improvement:

- The vision
- Recruitment and retention
- Clarity around lines of accountability
- Stable and effective front door
- Practice being compliant and child focused
- Having the right tools, systems and support – *agile working arrangements and IT equipment roll out is in progress but has been slightly delayed from original date – Tony Crane asked Cllr Phil Davies to pick this up to improve on the deadline. Prof. Maggie Atkinson suggested visiting South Gloucestershire to see their office arrangements which she considered to be a good vision for Wirral. Cllr Phil Gilchrist asked whether Paul Boyce felt the right tools were now in the tool box to get us where we need to go, Paul replied that there were time barriers and he would need to unpick the cultural practice issues.*
- Robust and reliable quality assurance and performance management
- Proactive communication and engagement with frontline practice - There will be three staff engagement sessions held in February to do this. **Cllr Bernie Mooney expressed that there needs to be a plan in place for passing the messages on politically so that everyone receives the same messages.**

Ofsted Monitoring Visit

The monitoring letter has now been published and circulated to members of the Board further to the visit in December. The letter suggests that there has been some progress but that there is still a way to go and the need to increase pace.

The next Monitoring Visit will be 14 and 15 March and will review the Integrated Front Door. Satwinder Lotay expressed the need for the LSCB to increase the pace of change with Partners. Cllr Bernie Mooney has been in discussion with Tony Crane about the Partnership work and the future of the Safeguarding Board once the Board steps down. Carly Brown and Kerry Mehta are working on a continuous Improvement Plan.

VIEW FROM THE FRONTLINE

Robert Coot met with social workers from across the Borough to obtain the view from the frontline.

Social workers reported to Robert Coot that there are no set templates available for some of the documents social workers require. Simone White fed back that she is working on having an area set up on the Intranet to store such document templates. Kerry Mehta added that this issue is also being picked up in the Frontline Practitioners Group.

Robert Coot fed back that the current Social Work Toolkit is not a Wirral Version and expressed a wish for this to be created. **Kerry Mehta will pick this up in the Frontline Practitioners Group.**

There is a need to identify current resources available to social workers, and how to access such resource particularly in relation to working with older teenagers. A further issue was discussed in relation to recruitment, Robert Coot fed back that there have been some barriers in agency workers being made permanent as they do not meet specific criteria. **Paul Boyce and Simone White to explore the barriers in agency staff becoming permanent further.**

Social workers told Robert Coot that they felt Paul Boyce had a clear vision and was beneficial to the department. **Tony Crane asked that Robert Coot ask social workers at what point they would feel confident in consistent, stable senior management.**

Kerry Mehta commented that she is currently exploring what training packages Wirral offers staff. Cllr Phil Gilchrist suggested that we could link with colleges to inform them what our requirements are so that social workers are more experienced to start the job when they graduate.

Paul Boyce asked Robert Coot to find out what social workers deem to be the 3 most important things to help improve practice over the next 3 months.

IMPROVEMENT BOARD PERFORMANCE AND DATA UPDATE

Carly Brown presented the Data and Performance Update. There is a focus on reducing the number of Children Looked After (CLA). It was reported that adoption rates have increased in the last quarter. There will be a revised Edge of Care Service, an Edge of Care Panel by the end of February, and a Reducing CLA Strategy Group. **Prof. Maggie Atkinson asked whether the Reducing CLA Strategy Group could also analyse the CIN and CP numbers reducing and whether this is helping to push up the number of CLA.**

Nick Gunatilleke expressed a wish to explore issues around Children Missing From Care with Simone White.

Carly Brown reported that CP Plans have decreased and the timeliness of assessments has improved. Cllr Bernie Mooney asked what current vacancy rates are; Carly Brown stated that

they were 37%. Long term sickness continues to be an issue but HR are providing targeted support. Paul Boyce would like further work to be carried out around AYSE's average caseloads.

PRACTICE IMPROVEMENT AND QUALITY ASSURANCE

Kerry Mehta presented the Practice Improvement and Quality Assurance Update. A questionnaire went out to 500 Children Looked After aged 8+ in September and only 39 responses were received. Prof. Maggie Atkinson queried whether this was the best way to obtain children's views, Kerry Mehta assured her that this was being done in a variety of ways. The Integrated Front Door is now being overseen by Elizabeth Hartley. Kerry Mehta feels that practice is improving compared to 12 months ago. Prof. Maggie Atkinson asked for analysis around the referrals ending in No Further Action; Kerry Mehta replied that some are information given to CAFCASS and Elizabeth Hartley is doing a piece of work to get more information on this.

WORKFORCE UPDATE

Chris Hyams presented the Workforce Update; she stated that there has been good progress but that significant challenges still remain. Tony Crane queried the sickness levels; Chris Hyams has a Workforce Plan to look at Absence Management and Wellbeing Support. This will include working with Wirral Mind, and desk based Manager training sessions. Carly Brown commented that the Agency staff are not currently recorded in the full number of staff reported on but that this will be changing to reflect these workers.

Prof. Maggie Atkinson asked whether Wirral buy in to a staff advice and wellbeing scheme; Chris Hyams stated that we do, and that she may be able to analyse data to see numbers around social worker use. Paul Boyce added that current sickness levels are reflective of staff morale, and that the figures should improve as confidence improves. Cllr Bernie Mooney suggested that social workers could have a debrief session following difficult work and Satwinder Lotay asked whether we have looked at any resilience training and suggested skilled debriefers could be available. Chris Hyams replied that she has been in discussion with Simone White around this.

Nick Gunatilleke talked about the strategies being used by Merseyside Police including 'Time to Talk' sessions, Circuit Training and Mental Health Awareness Days. He expressed that members of the Board were welcome to drop in to see what these sessions entailed. Paul Boyce suggested that we could link up to do Multiagency Wellness Sessions in the future.

Tony Crane asked about caseloads; Simone stated that the current highest caseload was 27, but that this is being addressed. Birkenhead is currently under pressure and demand is being monitored.

Prof. Maggie Atkinson suggested that HR begin discussions with Universities now around recruitment for students graduating this summer.

Kerry Mehta asked whether there had been any learning from exit interviews. Chris Hyams said that this was still an issue due to inconsistent recording or lack of completion. Tony Crane asked how many staff are currently in Formal and Informal Capability; Caroline Halewood reported that there were none in Formal, and 4 in Informal.

WIRRAL SAFEGUARDING CHILDREN'S BOARD UPDATE

Prof. Maggie Atkinson presented the Wirral Safeguarding Children's Board Update, including the proposal to replace the LSCB with new multi-agency arrangements led by 3 statutory safeguarding partners: Local Authority, Merseyside Police and Wirral CCG. Working Together (April 2018 Draft) provides detailed requirements for the new arrangements. There is a deadline of September 2019 for implementation but Prof. Maggie Atkinson advised aiming a lot sooner for completion. There are also changes to Learning from Serious Case Reviews replacing the SCR Framework.

ANY OTHER BUSINESS

None noted.

DATE OF NEXT MEETING

28th February 2018 from 2.00pm to 4.30pm at Wallasey Town Hall, Committee Room 2.