

WIRRAL IMPROVEMENT BOARD MINUTES AND ACTIONS FROM IMPROVEMENT BOARD MEETING WEDNESDAY 17 APRIL 2019

Please note these are draft minutes

Present:

Linda Clegg	Chair of the Improvement Board
Prof. Maggie Atkinson	Chair – WSCB
Paul Boyce	Director for Children’s Services
Cllr Bernie Mooney	Cabinet Member-Children and Families/Deputy Leader of the Labour Party
Cllr Phil Gilchrist	Leader of the Liberal Democrat Group
Cllr Phil Davies	Leader of the Council
Cllr Lesley Rennie	Deputy Leader of the Conservative Group
Cllr Tom Usher	Chair of Scrutiny Committee
Lorna Quigley	Director of Quality & Safety, Wirral CCG
DCI Rachel Wilson	Merseyside Police
Jo Chwalko	Divisional Manager – Integrated Children’s Services
Wendy Beedie	Regional Lead North West, Department of Education

Officers in Attendance:

Simone White	Deputy Director for Children’s Services
Eifion Burke	Head of Service, Permanence
Lynn Campbell	Head of Service, Assessment & Intervention
Alex Kaitell	Head of Service, Assessment & Intervention
Joe Banham	Head of Practice Improvement
Julia Batters	Independent Reviewing officer
Hannah Myers	Performance & Improvement Manager - Improvement
Helen Hayes	Principal Performance & Improvement Officer

Apologies:

Eric Robinson	Chief Executive
Jill Pearson	Chair of Wirral Primary Headteacher Consultative Group
Victoria Peach	Associate Director of Nursing and Therapies Physical Health, Cheshire and Wirral Partnership NHS Trust
Carly Brown	Assistant Director – Modernisation & Support

1. MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING – 27 FEBRUARY 2019

The minutes were agreed as a true record.

2. DIRECTOR FOR CHILDREN’S SERVICES UPDATE AND OVERVIEW OF SELF-VIEW

Paul Boyce, DCS, delivered a presentation which covered:

- Recent developments in Children’s Services
- Update on Ofsted inspection preparation
- Workforce overview
- Summary of self-view

The following queries and comments were raised:

- Prof. Maggie Atkinson queried if the move to Cheshire Lines Building has created a positive environment. Paul Boyce responded that although some employees do not like it, the vast majority view it as a positive move. The relocation to Cheshire Lines Building is a part of a greater Improvement Journey; the benefits outweigh the downsides.
- Lorna Quigley, Wirral CCG agreed that the presented self-view is an accurate assessment; we have data and evidence to demonstrate this.
- Cllr Bernie Mooney praised the progress that has been made. She noted that the SFEF model is working, and agreed that the self-view is an accurate reflection of our current practice.
- Prof. Maggie Atkinson echoed the above comments and commended the Councillors commitment, and the tightened governance and accountability which are now evident in Children's services.
- Cllr Phil Gilchrist recalls that there was an atmosphere of defensiveness and unclear priorities which has now changed and improved.
- Linda Clegg also commented that she had noticed improvements in the culture and governance. The test is now in the casework and if the improvements have made a difference to Children and Families.
- Jo Chwalko stated that historically work felt disjointed, but it now feels much different.
- Cllr Tom Usher has recently visited MASH, Health and various agencies and noted that he saw a commitment to bridging the gap between partners, and sharing priorities. He also explained that in a recent Scrutiny session, which was attended by Team Managers, Social Workers and IRO's, there was unanimous agreement that the move to Cheshire Lines was positive.

3. IMPROVEMENT BOARD PERFORMANCE & DATA

Simone White, Deputy Director for Children's Services, shared an update on Children's Services performance data from the information and commentary provided in the Databook. The Children's Services Analysis Tool (ChAT) was also shared with members. The following points were highlighted:

- Referral & contacts numbers have stabilised. However the ChAT shows that our referrals are higher than our statistical neighbours; this should decrease as Early Help and prevention services develop.
- Assessment times have greatly improved
- There is 3 months evidence of zero children subject to a subsequent Child Protection Plan – this is positive evidence which demonstrates the difference we are making to children and keeping them safe.

Additional queries were raised, which included:

- Cllr Phil Gilchrist enquired about our ability to capture Early Help data. Simone White explained that we now have more Early Help data in the Databook but we are still working to move all the data from paper based to electronic. In 12 weeks the data will be robust and valid and completely electronic.
- Cllr Gilchrist noted that the HR data is missing from the data book this month. Simone White clarified that some workforce information was covered in the DCS presentation. Due to today's Improvement Board being earlier in the month than usual, HR data was not available in time to be included in the Databook.
- Prof. Maggie Atkinson highlighted that abuse and neglect is apparent in the data. This strengthens our reasons for improving Early Help and preventative services.
- Cllr Phil Gilchrist drew attention to the 71% of Initial Child Protection Conferences (ICPC) completed within timescales from the databook. This figure used to be a lot lower.
- Julia Batters, IRO, explained that historically there was an issue with late notifications of ICPC's, but this has now improved. The reasons that an ICPC may be out of timescale currently are due to parents being absent or assessments being inadequate. This has encouraged better practice.

4. PRACTICE IMPROVEMENT UPDATE AND VIEW FROM THE FRONT LINE

Joe Banham, Head of Practice Improvement, delivered a presentation covering the following areas:

- An overview of Quality Assurance activity; including supervision orders and Children with Disabilities
- A planned "mini-inspection" of the 3 Assessment & Intervention services, and Permanence Service Areas.
- Good practice examples
- Current and planned Improvement activity

The following comments were raised:

- Prof Maggie Atkinson spoke about the pending SEND Local Area inspection. We need to replicate our improvements with SEND.
- Cllr Phil Gilchrist recalled that we spoke about Legal Services at the previous Improvement Board in February and he asked for an update. Simone White explained that there is a meeting scheduled with Legal Services which will focus on re-writing a new SLA to improve relationships.

Julia Batters, Independent Reviewing Officer, offered her view from the front line. She provided the following account to the board:

- IRO caseloads has improved and is now a lot more stable and is comparable with the region.
- Julia explained that she was an agency member of staff and she has converted to a permanent employee.
- Senior management are open to challenge and can have good conversations about the child.
- The impact of the SFEF model has been positive

5. CHILDREN LOOKED AFTER DISCHARGE UPDATE

Eifion Burke, Head of Service Permanence Service, presented a report which was supplied to the board. The report provided information to the board about plans to discharge children from care. The report detailed:

- Background
- Statistics on length of time in care
- Forecasting tools
- Children entering care
- Long-term Children Looked After expected planned discharges
- Key actions

The following comments were raised:

- Linda Clegg commended the report and stated that it provided a clear picture of how things are coming together.
- Paul Boyce also praised the report findings. He highlighted that there are 242 children who would have been in care, but are not due to practice improvements.

6. RE-REFERRAL REPORT

Alex Kaitell and Lynn Campbell, Heads of Service Assessment & Intervention, ran through a report which detailed the outcomes of a recent dip sample audit into Children's Social Care re-referrals from the previous 6 months. The report covered:

- Findings from the audit
- What was good?
- Areas for development
- Next steps

The report was supplied to the board members and the following points were raised:

- Linda Clegg asked if there were any cases that had been open too long and could have been stepped down earlier. Alex explained that this is being picked up in further audit activity.
- Jo Chwalko identified 2 issues which have now improved: 1. Cases used to be closed without sharing the reasons with partners, 2. There was confusion around the 3-month re-referral process. She commented that processes and thresholds are much clearer now. Jo also suggested that case analysis could be shared with Health who could support with dip sampling; which would provide rich learning and strengthen audit activity.
- Cllr Gilchrist queried the proportion of the dip sample that was adult focussed rather than representing the voice of the child. Lynn explained that they the dip samples were relatively small and cannot be evidenced to a particular team or area. However there are structured conversations happening with staff as a result of the dip sampling.

7. EDT REPORT

Simone White, Deputy Director for Children's Services, provided an update on the service developments for the Emergency Duty Service. A report was supplied to the board, and the main points covered were:

- Overview of the Service
- Recent service improvements
- Next steps including the full service review

Linda Clegg stated that the improvements were positive as it provides a faster response for children and families.

8. ANY OTHER BUSINESS

- Linda Clegg advised that we now need to focus on the "so what?" for children. It is important to evidence the difference that the improvements have made for the individual child.
- Cllr Phil Gilchrist, Cllr Phil Davies, Cllr Tom Usher and Cllr Lesley Rennie all recognised the improvements that have been made and how we have all pulled together to achieve this. They thanked Paul Boyce and his team, and praised Cllr Bernie Mooney for her tenacity and support.
- Wendy Beedie commented that she was struck by the positive partnerships around the table.

9. DATE OF NEXT MEETING:

Wednesday June 26th, 2019, 2-4.30pm in Birkenhead Town Hall.