

**WIRRAL IMPROVEMENT BOARD  
MINUTES AND ACTIONS FROM IMPROVEMENT BOARD MEETING  
THURSDAY 29<sup>TH</sup> NOVEMBER 2018**

**Present:**

Linda Clegg	Chair of the Improvement Board
Cllr Phil Gilchrist	Leader of the Liberal Democrat Group
Cllr Lesley Rennie	Deputy Leader of the Conservative Group
Cllr Bernie Mooney	Cabinet Member-Children and Families/Deputy Leader of the Labour Party
Lorna Quigley	Director of Quality & Safety, Wirral CCG
Victoria Peach	Associate Director of Nursing and Therapies Physical Health, Cheshire and Wirral Partnership NHS Trust
Paula Simpson	Director of Nursing, Wirral Community NHS Trust
Nick Gunatilleke	Merseyside Police
Paula Wareing	Chair of Wirral Special Head Teachers Association
Greg Edwards	Head Teacher, The Priory

**Officers in Attendance:**

Paul Boyce	Director for Children's Services
Simone White	Deputy Director for Children's Services
Joe Banham	Head of Practice Improvement
Carly Brown	Assistant Director – Modernisation & Support
Eifion Burke	Head of Permanence Service
Andy Tutte	Social Worker – Assessment & Intervention Team 3
Hannah Myers	Performance & Improvement Manager - Improvement
Helen Hayes	Principal Performance & Improvement Officer

**Apologies:**

Eric Robinson	Chief Executive
Elizabeth Hartley	Assistant Director – Early Help and Prevention
Jill Pearson	Chair of Wirral Primary Headteacher Consultative Group
Tony Taylor	Representative of Wirral Association of Secondary Head Teachers

**1. MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING – 24<sup>TH</sup> OCTOBER 2018**

The minutes were agreed as a true record.

However, the following points were raised:

- Cllr Gilchrist would like visibility of the “Stocktake of progress” letter that was sent to the Children’s minister at the end of October. Linda Clegg was unsure on the protocol with regards to sharing the letter. Paul Boyce confirmed that the letter indicates that things are going in the right direction and there is nothing in the content that has not yet been shared in previous meetings.
- Cllr Gilchrist queried what progress had been made in relation to the work shadowing programme between Health, Social Care and Police – Carly Brown confirmed that a Health Engagement event has been organised for Tuesday 4<sup>th</sup> December 2018.

## 2. IMPROVEMENT UPDATE

Paul Boyce delivered a presentation which provided an overview of the Children's Service's improvements. He highlighted the following points:

- There is still more work to do around engagement with staff.
- There are still some Team Manager developmental issues to ensure they are consistently "good".
- Positive relationships built around front door arrangements between Police and Wirral.
- Police Improvement Plan is visible.
- Early Help internal realignment is now in consultation.
- Appointed new recruit for Contextual Safeguarding new role – supported by Linda Clegg.
- Jobs Go Public has generated a lot of interest from newly qualified Social Workers. We have managed to recruit 3 experienced Social Workers. The campaign closes on the 14/12/18 and we will then review the recruitment strategy.
- There is work to be done to develop skills in dealing with complex cases.
- Manager away day on 30/11/18 will focus on what we can do differently for sustainable improvement and adopting a "getting to good" approach.

The following points and queries were raised:

- Cllr Gilchrist asked if any trends have been identified amongst practitioners that are resulting in the variable practice. Paul Boyce responded that it is dependable upon previous experience and leadership, level of skills and confidence. We are trying to create an environment where ability is good or better. Capability issues are being formally addressed with HR. We are changing culture and as some people have been around for a long time, this is more noticeable to them.
- Cllr Gilchrist queried how many employees need extra support and how quickly can we develop them. Paul Boyce explained that he wants all Social Care staff to be employed on a permanent basis so that they can be developed with certainty. No confirmation on timescales
- Cllr Rennie expressed concerns around the capability and competency of Team Managers. How long do we tolerate the Wirral Culture and mind-set? Paul Boyce responded that Joe Banham will be delivering a presentation shortly which will highlight how we are supporting and developing Team Managers. He offered assurance that capability issues are being addressed.
- Cllr Rennie asked for clarity on complaints and whether there has been an increase or decrease in the number of complaints received. Paul Boyce explained that whilst we are very good at dealing with complaints, we are not so good at learning from them. Simone White also provided statistics which demonstrated improvements in stage 1 complaints progressing to stage 2 complaints, but summarised that we need to be able to resolve complaints before they reach stage 1.

## 3. PREPARING FOR OFSTED MONITORING VISIT

Eifion Burke provided a verbal account of the progress made in preparing for the Ofsted monitoring visit on 12<sup>th</sup> & 13<sup>th</sup> December 2018, which will focus on Children Looked After. The main challenges and progress that he detailed include:

- There are no regular reviews of Children Looked After which results in children being left in care that may be inappropriate.

- There is a stable Team Manager team with only 1 Team Manager who is agency and is keen to convert to permanent member of staff.
- There has been a positive movement of agency staff converting to permanent employees.
- The group of Team Managers are relatively inexperienced, so a lot of coaching and development is required to ensure that they are challenging capability issues on their teams.
- Staff retention has improved.
- Movement from “Children Looked After” to “Permanence” is a culture change for employees and some are resisting this change.
- Tracked cases for Ofsted Monitoring visit are varied. Some are demonstrating good practice and others are inadequate.
- The biggest challenges are the completion of Personal Education Plans and Pathway Plans. Practitioners are not taking responsibility for completing and meeting statutory requirements.

The following questions and comments were raised:

- Linda Clegg asked what the key priorities are before the Ofsted visit. Eifion Burke explained that the priority is now case auditing. The Social Workers and Team Managers are reviewing the tracked cases. Simone White added that Eifion Burke has recently facilitated a workshop with all Team Managers and Social Workers on the permanence teams. The purpose of the workshop was to demonstrate what good practice looks like. They focused on key areas of information that needs to be recorded.
- Cllr Rennie stated that she cannot understand why practitioners do not record information. Linda Clegg explained that it is not unusual; as practitioners work so closely with the children and know them so well they do not see it as a priority to update records.
- Paul Boyce asked if there had been any changes in Social Workers for the Ofsted sample cases. Eifion Burke responded that there had. He also explained that this is a key area of focus for the future to ensure children have a stable social worker. Simone White provided some statistics for stability factors for Children Looked After. The figures indicate that we are in line with the national average in comparison.
- Cllr Gilchrist asked for some clarification on placement breakdowns due to emotional and behavioural issues. Simone White discussed the challenges with offering Children therapeutic support as they need to be in stable care before they can access this provision. A CAMHS learning workshop is arranged to look at Children’s journey and how we can share risk and make changes.

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

Simone White shared an update on Children’s Services performance data from the information and commentary provided in the Databook. The additional points and queries were discussed:

- Cllr Gilchrist referred to the ICPC timescales within the databook. Simone White noted an improvement since August 2018 which is due to a drop in caseload numbers leading to more timely conferences.
- Cllr Gilchrist queried the size of the average IRO caseload. Simone White explained that this service is under pressure due to the volume of cases needing an IRO. However, this service is fully staffed.
- Cllr Rennie highlighted the good relationships with Care Leavers, and asked for progress on the Wirral Care Leavers Apprenticeship scheme. Paul Boyce provided some detail in relation to

internal and external opportunities for Care Leavers. Simone White added that 9 new Care leavers have gone to University this year, which equates to a total of 17 currently in Higher Education, which is very positive.

- Linda Clegg asked for information about partner involvement with Care Leavers. Simone White explained that there was a Care Leaver conference in November that was strongly attended by partners.

## 5. IMPROVEMENT PLAN – UPDATE NOVEMBER 2018

Carly Brown delivered a presentation highlighting updates for the 5 work streams for the Improvement plan along with key priorities for next 6 months. She highlighted some key improvement activities:

- 4/12/18 – meeting for Contextual Safeguarding Framework with a decision to be made in New Year.
- 4/12/18 – Health Engagement session.
- Head of Complex Investigations to start in post at end of January 2019.
- Early Help restructure – 180 posts affected.
- January 2019 – Peer Challenge session which will feed into discussions with Ofsted.
- Define the Improvement Plan for 2019 which will link into full inspection readiness.

Lorna Quigley suggested that changes to Safeguarding partnerships should be added to the list of priorities.

## 6. PARTNERSHIP WORKING

Presentations were delivered by Lorna Quigley, Paula Simpson and Victoria Peach. The key points were raised and discussed:

- Positive relationships between Health and LA are being formed; such as attendance at Ofsted planning meetings, 1-2-1 meetings and the Health Engagement Event.
- There are challenges in getting the right person at strategy meetings and often short notice is provided for these meetings. Joe Banham is working on a document to support Social Workers to identify the right person to attend strategy meetings.
- Solutions were provided to support working together more effectively; such as co-location of employees.
- Hannah Myers enquired as to what the main challenges are around the completion of SDQ's. Simone White explained that practitioners are not routinely sharing SDQ scores with Health colleagues unless they need to escalate. She recognised that we need to share these scores for the best interest of the child.
- Discussion around blending services and providing provision within schools. Paula Wareing questioned if Speech and language would be embedded in schools. Lorna Quigley responded that it would depend if this would achieve better outcomes for the child.
- Referrals to CAMHS have increased by 65% nationally in the last 5 years.
- Andy Tutte stated that it is impractical having to go to a building to engage with CAMHS. He suggested that it would be more effective to have an outreach team. Victoria Peach responded that Health is committed to finding other ways of working which are in the best interest of the child.
- Linda Clegg summarised that the presentation was positive and reassuring.

## 7. VIEW FROM FRONT LINE

Andy Tutte (Social Worker) provided a verbal account of some of the positives and challenges that he is experiencing currently.

### Positives:

- Good Social Workers
- Agile working is productive
- Manager is confident
- Caseloads are manageable
- Training and development opportunities are offered
- Improved communications

### Challenges:

- Still a long way to go to embed SFEF practices
- Conference reporting – need multiagency input to get balanced assessments to ensure that correct decisions are being made. There has been a glitch on the Portal but this is now resolved
- Family Support Workers are thin on ground

Cllr Rennie questioned what makes Andy Tutte's team a success. He replied that it is down to the members of his team who are embracing change, having a professional and dynamic team and a good Team Manager.

## 8. UPDATE ON PRACTICE IMPROVEMENT

Joe Banham delivered a presentation to outline updates on practice improvement activity (attached).

## 9. ANY OTHER BUSINESS

None noted.

## 10. DATE OF NEXT MEETING:

Wednesday 30<sup>th</sup> January 2019, 2.00pm to 4.30pm at Wallasey Town Hall, Committee Room 1