

**WIRRAL IMPROVEMENT BOARD  
MINUTES AND ACTIONS FROM IMPROVEMENT BOARD MEETING  
WEDNESDAY 30 JANUARY 2019**

**Present:**

Linda Clegg	Chair of the Improvement Board
Prof. Maggie Atkinson	Chair – WSCB
Cllr Phil Davies	Leader of the Council
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 Wareing	Chair of Wirral Special Head Teachers Association
Paul Boyce	Director for Children’s Services

**Officers in Attendance:**

Simone White	Deputy Director for Children’s Services
Carly Brown	Assistant Director – Modernisation & Support
Joe Banham	Head of Practice Improvement
Tony Kirk	Head of Service, Complex Investigations
Liam Murphy	Social Worker – IFD
Hannah Myers	Performance & Improvement Manager - Improvement
Natalie Jarmay	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
Cllr Phil Gilchrist	Leader of the Liberal Democrat Group
Paula Simpson	Director of Nursing, Wirral Community NHS Trust
DCI Rachel Wilson	Merseyside Police

**1. MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING – 29 NOVEMBER 2018**

The minutes were agreed as a true record.

- An informal Improvement Board was held on 9<sup>th</sup> January 2019. Notes were taken and will be circulated.

**2. DIRECTOR FOR CHILDREN’S SERVICES IMPROVEMENT UPDATE**

Paul Boyce, DCS, delivered a presentation which provided an overview and update regarding Children’s Service’s.

- Paul discussed the recent feedback from the Ofsted Monitoring visit letter, peer challenge and Annual Conversation with Ofsted. Linda Clegg commented that the external challenge, scrutiny and feedback has all come at a good time, with no issues and challenge that could not be rectified.
- Maggie Atkinson stated that fewer children would require specialist social work involvement if there was a better Early Help Offer and asked if it was felt this could be an option for Wirral. Paul replied positively stating that there is a focus on working towards that ideal. The Early Help restructure is underway, and the Community Matters providers have been appointed which reflects positive progress in this area.
- Cllr Rennie raised the concern regarding poor recording as highlighted by the Monitoring visit, as it implied poor practice. Paul explained that historically issues have been centred around lack of recording including no chronology, genogram or case summary. This has greatly improved; however, the issue now is that recording needs to be more analytical rather than detailed and social workers need to be given the confidence to do this.
- Cllr Davies asked if we had a date for the reinspection. Paul responded stating that Ofsted don't provide an exact date but had indicated late April.

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

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 additional points and queries were discussed:

- There has been a change to some data as a result of realigning some of our formulas to match nationally.
- Cllr Gilchrist had raised queries in advance of the board via email as he was unable to attend; Paul Boyce had offered to meet with Cllr Gilchrist to address his points at a separate time.
- A brief overview of the responses to the queries were as follows:
- Cllr Gilchrist queried social work agency cover and the number of staff leaving the department. Simone White explained that the presentation of HR data within the databook did not allow for a clear understanding of the current picture and created a more negative picture than reality. It was agreed that a further overview of the social work workforce would be provided at the next Improvement Board.
- Cllr Gilchrist highlighted an area of concern regarding IRO escalations. Simone explained that the numbers last year were artificially low as matters weren't being escalated appropriately; which itself is an area of concern. This was targeted which has then led to an increase in numbers, which is a more realistic figure and means that matters are being addressed correctly and appropriately.

### **4. OFSTED READINESS UPDATE**

Carly Brown, Assistant Director - Modernisation and Support, discussed each slide in her presentation regarding preparation and readiness for the next Ofsted visit. Carly also stated that this is now a priority for the whole council and not just Children's Services and thus was looking forward to the collaborative support from across the council.

All members agreed there was a robust and sound structure and plan in place.

## 5. PRACTICE IMPROVEMENT UPDATE

Joe Banham, Head of Practice Improvement, talked through his presentation covering the following areas:

- Ofsted Feedback and post visit focus on Permanence
- Positive progress on all ASYE progress
- Further implementation of SFEEF
- Team Manager support and improvements
- Launch of new Parenting Assessment
- QA Activity and the restructure to improve the Quality Auditing service

Paul Boyce added that improving the support and coaching offered to our staff is part of our dedicated offer to help mentor staff.

## 6. NEW MULTI-AGENCY SAFEGUARDING ARRANGEMENTS

Lorna Quigley, Director of Quality & Safety, Wirral CCG, gave a brief update on the ongoing work in preparation for the new Multi-Agency Safeguarding Arrangements (MASA):

- The work around the new MASA arrangements has been ongoing since Summer 2018. The arrangements have been subject to scrutiny and vigour and the consultation period closes at midnight on 31<sup>st</sup> January 2019.
- MASA will be subject to independent scrutiny and there will be a focus on how the services are wrapped around to offer good levels of support and good practice.
- The proposal is that transition will begin with shadow arrangements being in place from April 2019, to be wholly in place from September 2019.
- There still needs to be exploration from a Pan Merseyside agreement perspective. This will also allow for reciprocal peer reviews with specific areas of focus, for example CSE.
- Paul Boyce added to the discussion that the requirement to update the Department for Education with arrangements to obtain approval had taken place and there had been no negative responses received.

## 7. VIEW FROM FRONT LINE

Liam Murphy, Social Worker, spoke about his experience of working for Children's Service in Wirral since he joined as part of the step-up programme in 2012. Liam spoke about the pace of change currently resulting in Wirral feeling like it is the most safe and secure working environment to date. Liam also detailed the other changes that have had a positive impact:

- Changes in technology has been highly beneficial in conjunction with being co-located; this allows for safe and precise work thus referrals are dealt with in a clear and consistent manner.
- Good working relationships with partners are now in place, including a specialist nurse who can obtain specific information from their systems when necessary and within timescales which is invaluable.
- Consistent management is now in place, so this now needs to lead into consistent social work practice to ensure all assessments are of an equally good standard.
- Paul Boyce asked if there were any actions could be taken to ensure improvements continue; to which Liam stated that colleagues that had joined Wirral with him in 2012 had left mainly due to

the chaotic nature of the service at the time. Financial motivation had very little to do with their choice to leave Wirral. Therefore, ensuring a positive and nurturing culture and workplace will attract and retain good staff.

**8. ANY OTHER BUSINESS**

None noted.

**9. DATE OF NEXT MEETING:**

Wednesday 27<sup>th</sup> February 2019, 10.00am to 12.30pm at Birkenhead Town Hall, Mayor's Parlour.