

**Wirral Improvement Board**  
**Minutes and Actions from Improvement Board Meeting**  
**Wednesday 27 June 2018**

**Present:**

Linda Clegg	Chair of Improvement Board
Cllr Phil Davies	Leader of the Council
Cllr Bernie Mooney	Lead Member for Children and Families
Cllr Phil Gilchrist	Leader of Liberal Group
Maggie Atkinson	Chair WSCB
Ian Hassall	Merseyside Police
Cllr Tom Usher	Chair of Children and Families Scrutiny Committee
Julie Murphy	Primary Headteacher

**Officers in Attendance**

Paul Boyce	Corporate Director for Children
Simone White	Deputy Director for Children's Services
Joe Banham	Head of Practice improvement
Juliet Blackburn	Performance and Improvement Lead
Andrew Tutte	Social Worker
Gill Mackie	Childrens Services administration

**Apologies**

Eric Robinson	Wirral Council Chief Executive
Carly Brown	Assistant Director Modernisation & Support

**1. MINUTES FROM 23 MAY 2018**

Noted that Ian Hassall was in attendance.

On page 2 Cllr Gilchrist requested that Improvement Board members are sent Ofsted letters from monitoring visits once they are finalised and in advance of them being made public on the Ofsted website.

The minutes were agreed as a true record.

**2. DIRECTOR'S UPDATE**

Paul Boyce presented his Directors Update and Board members discussed key points:

- It was agreed that having a clear demand management strategy was a priority for the service and work on this is underway
- Having good quality team managers in place is the foundation of achieving practice improvement. Recruitment at this level is underway for temporary posts, supported by a development

programme and performance management processes. Frequency of supervision is meeting monitored, and Liquid Logic has been improved to record supervision notes.

- Feedback from Headteachers is that they are keen to be more involved in the improvement work, particularly providing support for vulnerable children. It was agreed that there were opportunities to use schools as hubs for early help work with children and families, and this was part of the development of the new Early Help and Prevention service under Elizabeth Hartley
- Schools are also keen to be able to use Liquid Logic more. Paul outlined the development work underway with Liquid Logic (and other systems), particularly to simplify processes which have been developed in an over-complicated way.
- Board members acknowledged the importance of the whole council becoming child-focused and ensuring service “wrap around” child and family support eg housing provisions and investment, economic regeneration, training and skills, and leisure and health services.
- Cllr Mooney addressed the group to say that St Albans School Governors meeting were complimentary about the Safeguarding service and the dedicated social workers supporting the school to ensure quick turnaround with issues.

The Chair thanked Paul for his update and noted that the pace of improvement has increased in the last few months. We are showing a good level of ambition and not just a focus on the basics.

### **3. VIEW FROM FRONT LINE**

Andy Tutte provided an update on the improvement programme from a frontline social worker perspective. The following points were noted:

- It is important to have consistent approaches, policies and documentation are used across the different teams. This is being addressed through the practitioners’ forum, Liquid Logic User Group and Joe Banham’s practice improvement work. It was agreed that taking stock of SFEF roll-out and use would also help to embed consistency.
- Caseloads are at a manageable level, albeit challenging for the team who is on duty for a week.
- Agile working is proving to be very popular and makes the work run a lot more smoothly. Also the co-location of social care and early help and prevention has made a noticeable difference to communication and joint-working between the services, and is one of the most positive recent changes.
- The importance of recognising and thanking staff for good work was noted. Paul and Simone explained about a recent Wirral event called “Listen to Me” where children nominated adults to be thanked for times they had listened to and helped them.

### **4. PERFORMANCE REPORT**

Simone White introduced the performance report and directed Board Members to the overview commentary at the front of the Data-tracker. It was noted that overall case levels are steady, with child in need numbers decreasing, but Children Looked After numbers being consistent this year at approximately 835 – 840.

The following actions were agreed:

- **Data on incidents of children missing to be monitored over coming months to ensure that the recent increase was just a spike due to changes in recording definitions, and not a trend. Simone to report to future meetings.**
- **An update on IRO escalations to be brought to a future meeting – Simone.**
- **More detailed information on numbers of Special Guardianship Orders and Adoptions to be reviewed at a future Board meeting as part of wider discussion on demand management - Simone**

#### **5. PRACTICE IMPROVEMENT UPDATE**

Joe Banham was introduced to the Board as the new Head of Practice Improvement. He introduced his paper outlining the immediate priorities for practice improvement as:

1. New starter induction – to improve the quality and impact of the new starter and induction process
2. Improved supervision – consistent, high quality practice. An audit of supervision has recently been undertaken and will inform improvements.
3. Assessed and Supported Year in Employment (ASYE) programme – this is has not been managed effectively in Wirral and requires more structure and quality support to ensure the individuals receive the development and training required
4. Supporting Families Enhancing Futures Model – to evaluate the impact of the programme so far and ensure it is embedded across all partners
5. Quality Assurance – to continue to provide audit and quality assurance processes which clearly target the practice improvements needed.

These priorities were endorsed by the Board. It was also agreed that having good advanced practitioners in social work teams was crucial to providing a high-quality service. The Board agreed it would be useful to keep a mixture of case studies and data to provide a rounded picture of the progress being made.

#### **6. UPDATE FROM WIRRAL SAFEGUARDING CHILDREN BOARD**

Maggie Atkinson presented the update from the Board which was focused on a partnership discussion on safely reducing the numbers of Children Looked After. It was noted that this was a very well attended event and a thorough, positive discussion and that reducing numbers of children looked after is a partnership issue, not just the responsibility of the Council. Regular updates on progress will be made to the WSCB, and the Wirral Improvement Board

#### **7. AOB**

None

#### **8. DATE OF NEXT MEETING**

Wednesday 25<sup>th</sup> July 2018