

WIRRAL IMPROVEMENT BOARD
MINUTES AND ACTIONS FROM IMPROVEMENT BOARD MEETING
WEDNESDAY 29 AUGUST 2018

Present:

Linda Clegg	Chair of Improvement Board
Eric Robinson	Wirral Council Chief Executive
Cllr Phil Davies	Leader of the Council
Cllr Bernie Mooney	Cabinet Member for Children and Families
Cllr Phil Gilchrist	Leader of the Liberal Democrat Group
Cllr Leslie Rennie	Deputy Leader of the Conservative Group
Maggie Atkinson	Chair Wirral Safeguarding Children Board
Nick Gunatilleke	Merseyside Police
Cllr Tom Usher	Chair of Children and Families Overview and Scrutiny Committee
Tony Taylor	Chair of Wirral Association of Secondary Headteachers

Officers in Attendance

Paul Boyce	Corporate Director for Children
Simone White	Deputy Director for Children's Services
Joe Banham	Head of Practice improvement
Andrew Tutte	Social Worker
Carly Brown	Assistant Director Modernisation and Support
Elizabeth Hartley	Assistant Director Early Help and Prevention
Tom Carroll	Performance and Improvement Officer

Apologies

Lorna Quigley	Director of Policy and Patient Safety Clinical Commissioning Group
Paula Wearing	Chair of Wirral Special Headteachers Association
Jill Pearson	Chair of Wirral Association of Primary Headteachers

1. MINUTES FROM 23 JUNE 2018

It was noted that Cllr Rennie had given apologies for the last meeting.

In regards to page 4, Cllr Gilchrist requested an update on IRO escalations, which Simone White provided, stating that a fuller written or verbal report can be provided. Two levels were identified initially in order to attract the best candidates, but it has now been decided that Band 1s will move onto Band 2 after gaining experience.

There was no meeting in July to the high number of apologies that were received.

The minutes were agreed as a true record.

2. DIRECTOR'S UPDATE

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

- Structure change has led to increased stability and clearer accountability, with greater management oversight. There is now a dedicated HR resource in place within Children's Services, to assist in areas such as the conversion of agency staff to Council staff, and streamlining staff suspension practices.
- Social Workers and managers workflow management practice needs improvement. Recruitment of social workers remains a challenge, and agency workers can only plug the gap.
- An accurate and affordable staffing structure is now in place, with two Heads of Service posts soon to be recruited to. There is also a significant recruitment drive for newly-qualified social workers. A lot of this work is also being replicated in Early Help.
- There is an ambition to make partnerships more integrated, and we are currently creating an integrated Complex Investigation Service, alongside the police.
- The Troubled Families Programme is in recovery. In response to this, Cllr Gilchrist asked for an update on what the 'sticking points' are. Elizabeth Hartley stated that was a lack of upscaling of resources from Phase 1 to Phase 2 in terms of data and reporting, but now new mechanisms are in place, and there is improved information sharing with partners.
- We are starting to look at safeguarding risks outside of the family e.g. in the wider community/social media etc.
- Joe Banham stated that the number of those coming into care has slowed down; 33 so far this year have gone forward to court, compared to 47 at this time last year. Many cases have been identified for possible discharge applications.
- Cllr Rennie requested an update on the effectiveness of co-location in Cheshire Lines Building. Paul Boyce responded by saying that the majority of staff are positive, and that there is improved communication and team working. However, there are some issues around reasonable adjustments and car parking.

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:

- There is now increased stability within the department, with a duty rota in place.
- There is less negativity within the department.
- A practitioner's forum has been set up, and training opportunities are now in place.
- Social worker relations are being built with Early Help.
- Elizabeth Hartley stated that a Duty Early Help worker is now in post.

4. PERFORMANCE REPORT

Simone White introduced the performance report and directed Board Members to the overview commentary at the front of the Data-tracker. The following points were noted:

- July was exceptionally busy, with up to 130 new referrals per week.
- Caseloads rose over the summer period.
- Simone stated the importance of a quality, efficient assessment. These now take 18 days on average.
- There has been an increase in CPPs. These high numbers can be in relation to large families that we have in Wirral.
- Escalations – 46 resolved in July, which is an improvement on June. Numbers aren't rising significantly.
- All IRO posts are filled, with 7 of the 21 being agency. This ratio is reducing, however.
- Cllr Gilchrist suggested that sickness levels in the data do not show significant progress, to which Simone White responded that levels are reducing, but this is not reflected in the data due to there being a time lag. Long-term sickness is reducing, and short-term is largely static. The HR resource is working on this pro-actively.

5. PRACTICE IMPROVEMENT UPDATE

Joe Banham, Head of Practice Improvement gave an update on practice improvement to the Board which highlighted areas of focus over the coming month. This included:

- Team Manager Forum: The restructure has shown how crucial the team manager level is, with practice improvement to be principally delivered at this level. Team manager forums will begin in September and run monthly thereafter. They will cover supervision, performance management etc. It was recognised that they will improve professional accountability.
- ASYE: ASYE co-ordinator now in-post. 30% of social workers will be ASYEs as of September.
- New starters: All new staff have been surveyed in order to gauge their experience of starting in their new role.
- Stakeholder and Partnership work: Research in Practice will run two supervision masterclasses in October which will involve all Team Managers. A Team Manager workshop will be held on 17th October which will focus on implementation of learning.
- SFEF: The new SFEF co-ordinator has now come into post and her role will be to assess the SFEF model.

6. UPDATE FROM WIRRAL SAFEGUARDING CHILDREN BOARD

Maggie Atkinson presented the update from the Board which was focused on CLA progress since the last Board meeting, and updates on SFEF and the WSCB Learning Event to be held in the Floral Pavilion on September 27th.

7. AOB

Linda Clegg stated that the current updates and work seem very focussed on the local authority and that there needed to be greater involvement of partners. The Board agreed that the next steps on the improvement journey need to include partners.

8. DATE OF NEXT MEETING

Thursday 27 September 2018