

WIRRAL CHILDREN'S TRUST BOARD

Minutes of the Meeting held on Tuesday, 25 September 2012

Present:

Cllr Tony Smith (Chair)	Richard Longster
Cllr Wendy Clements	Jane Owens
Cllr Chris Meaden	Julia Hassall
Val McGee	John Martin
Glenice Robinson	Linda Birch
Steve Dainty	Sarah Patterson
Bev Morgan	

In attendance:

Nancy Clarkson	Simon Garner
Julie Lamin	Yinka Alli-Balogun
Maureen McDaid	Susan Blevins

Apologies

Lyn Loughran	Debbie Mayor
Mary Kilcoyne	Kathryn Podmore
Fiona Johnstone	Sue Brown
Lisa Cooper	

1 09:00 APOLOGIES AND INTRODUCTIONS

The Chair and Lead Member for Children's Services, Councillor Tony Smith, introduced himself and asked everyone to introduce themselves, their roles and responsibilities.

New members of the Board include: Mary Kilcoyne of the Link Forum; Steve Dainty, representing Primary Heads Consultation Group; Glenice Robinson, the new Chair of Wirral Association of Secondary Headteachers (WASH); Linda Birch, the new representative of the Wirral University Teaching Hospital NHS Foundation Trust; Sarah Patterson, the new representative for Merseyside Fire & Rescue.

It was also noted that Debbie Mayor had resigned from the board as she was leaving the Primary Care Trust.

2 09:10 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest.

3 09:15 MINUTES OF THE LAST MEETING

Julia Hassall referred to Item 6 in the minutes, Peer Challenge – Family Support, regarding “expert advice from other Local Authorities”. To this end, Sue Cockerill has been engaged

to support the work. In addition, J. Hassall recommended including a review of the progress of Peer Challenge at a future meeting.

Resolved: The minutes were agreed as a true record.

4 **09:20 ELECTION OF THE DEPUTY CHAIRPERSON**

Councillor T. Smith nominated Councillor Wendy Clements as the Deputy Chairperson. Councillor Chris Meaden seconded the nomination. There being no other nominations, Councillor W. Clements was elected.

Resolved: Councillor Clements is the Deputy Chairperson.

5 **09:25 REVIEW OF THE MEMORANDUM OF UNDERSTANDING/BOARD MEMBERSHIP ANNUAL REVIEW/PROPOSED PRODUCTION OF A NEW CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE'S PLAN**

N. Clarkson explained the background of the Memorandum in relation to the governance of the WCTB, the delivery of the Children and Young People's Plan and the protocol for exchange and challenge between the WCTB and the Wirral Safeguarding Children Board (WSCB). She drew attention to the discussions that have been held regarding the roles of the Children's Trust and the Shadow Health and Wellbeing Board (HWBB).

J. Hassall observed that a report she had taken to the HWBB explaining the work of the WCTB had been well-received and that as no duplication of tasks were evident, the WCTB should continue to pursue its work. The HWBB will produce a Health and Wellbeing Strategy for Wirral ready for when its shadow status ends in April 2013.

Questions were invited and the following amendments were advised:

J. Hassall recommended at 8.5 (page 14) 'The third sector' be replaced with 'the voluntary and faith sector' with which B. Morgan, representing the voluntary and faith sector, concurred.

J. Martin drew attention to the reference to the Local Strategic Partnership (LSP) (20.2.1, page 21) as the Board had not been convened for a period of time. N. Clarkson responded by stating that the LSP was still in existence, that the Children's Trust was part of the partnership, also that the Council was supportive of partnership working and that it was her understanding from corporate colleagues that the LSP arrangements would be reviewed.

R. Longster recommended that the Health and Wellbeing Board should be referred to in the Memorandum.

Wirral University Teaching Hospital membership had reduced from two members to one. J. Hassall advised on another health representative becoming a member. B. Morgan recommended a Clinical Commissioning Group General Practitioner who has made a positive contribution to the Child Poverty Working Group.

J. Hassall concluded the discussion by suggesting she would work with N. Clarkson further on membership to link the Health and Wellbeing and Children's Trust Boards.

N. Clarkson commented on section 4.0: Production of the new Children and Young People's Plan as a strategic document, drawing attention to the Executive's recommendations, namely:

- A three-year plan allows a more strategic approach.
- The annual report should continue to ensure the work is fully reviewed.
- The timeframe allows for the new Plan to be reviewed by the Children's Trust Board in March 2013.
- In relation to the Memorandum, the Executive will ensure the various Boards are well-structured and reduced if appropriate.

J. Martin questioned whether the impending reductions in public spending would make it necessary to have yearly reviews. N. Clarkson responded by stating that the issues in producing a three year plan had been discussed in full by the Executive and their suggestion was that it offered more continuity and allowed more scope for forward planning. The reduction in spending would be taken into account and the likelihood was that the plan would be more streamlined than previous years.

J. Owens requested a copy of the final version of the Memorandum to follow up with school governors. N. Clarkson advised it would be available on the Children's Trust link on the Council website.

Resolved:

- The board endorsed the revised Memorandum subject to amendments.
- The reduction in WUTH membership was noted and further health membership would be progressed.
- The proposals put forward by the Executive for the production of a new CYPP were agreed.

6 09:45 COMMISSIONING UPDATE

M. McDaid presented her report on the Early Intervention Grant (EIG) commissioning. She highlighted how targets had been met by providers, such as no re-offending in targeted young people and reduction in anti-social behaviour incidents. In addition one provider, Barnardo's, returned £45,000 for failing to deliver their expected units on Domestic Violence 16-17 year-olds.

The Chair remarked on the positive outcomes and invited questions.

M. McDaid reminded the Board that new tendering opportunities were available on the CHEST. Interested organisations should register interest through The CHEST which was attracting an increasing number of applicants, including charities from the North-West.

Learning from previous tendering was that the Pre-qualifying Questionnaire (PQQ) had been slimmed down and that there was greater clarity in what was being sought.

There was general agreement that contracts needed to be for more than a year to have maximum impact, following Councillor Clements' observation that through the Overview and



Scrutiny Committee she noted a lot of effort was put into the early stages of planning and more time was essential for effective delivery. J. Owens strongly endorsed this view, adding that a three year plan also allowed for effective monitoring to inform further effective commissioning.

Resolved: That the Board noted the report.

7 **10:00 CHILD POVERTY UPDATE**

B. Morgan informed the Board that following the issues noted at the last meeting clarity had been established regarding the Wirral Child and Family Poverty Working Group's remit, role and governance. The Children's Trust would now be involved in the governance with links to both the Executive and the Board. This would also ensure that the Poverty Strategy would be aligned with the new CYPP.

The Group did not wish to take on a commissioning role, rather, its role is to challenge and uphold governance. The Council's allocation of £400,000 to tackle intergenerational poverty will remain within the remit of the Council as the decision-making body.

J. Hassall reported that £300,000 of the funding is to be allocated to the Springboard Project, with £50,000, governed through the Foundation Years Trust, used to develop the Business Plan for 30 families, starting with women who are three months pregnant and ensuring every child has the best start in life. The Business Plan will go back to Cabinet for review and approval before the remaining £250,000 would be allocated to the Project to assist a further 100 families, reaching 130 families in total.

B. Morgan commented that the 30 families had not been mentioned previously, to which J. Hassall responded that this information had only emerged very recently.

R. Longster noted that the Project would be very much under the spotlight which met with general agreement.

J. Hassall added that the remaining £100,000 would be available to link to the current CYPD commissioning mechanism to bridge any gaps not covered by the Springboard Project and that the Child Poverty Working Group would make recommendations in this respect.

The Chair drew the discussion to a close, affirming the commitment of Cabinet to the success of the initial £50,000 being effectively used with the 30 families.

Resolved: The board noted the update.

8 **10:40 HELP SURVEY**

N. Clarkson presented the report and explained that in previous years the views of primary and secondary students had been sought in the Tellus Survey which had been useful to benchmark views against National Indicators. Following the demise of the national survey, the Children's Trust had agreed to continue with a Wirral version based on previous

questions. It was noted that a question on alcohol appeared in both primary and secondary surveys but a question on drugs only appeared in the secondary version.

N. Clarkson praised the 'fantastic response' to this year's survey which produced a wealth of valuable information directly from Wirral children and urged the continued and further support of governors and headteachers as this would strengthen the data further. There was also the potential to use the data at postcode and school level. J. Owens commented that the survey is of great interest to school governors and urged they be informed of when the survey will take place to maximise support.

S. Dainty proposed that the item be included on the Termly Governors' Meeting Agenda as a Director's Item to encourage wide participation which was widely agreed.

J. Hassall advised some of the details could be sensitive in nature.

T. Smith commented on the high percentage (46% in primary; 54% in secondary) of children who said other children disrupted their lessons, something not generally picked up by OFSTED. Councillor Clements added that as a governor she was aware a school's internal review revealed children were intolerant of disruptive behaviour.

J. Owens expressed surprise regarding the high level of young people that didn't appear to know about Youth Service activities.

G. Robinson commented on the strength of feeling from girls regarding body image, especially with regards to eating disorders being on the increase amongst girls.

J. Hassall asked about the support provided for young people around anorexia. V. McGee responded that Pine Lodge in Chester serves all Merseyside but the preferred option with regards to anorexia would be intensive support in the community.

J. Hassall noted that the Executive had produced an initial action plan in response to the survey which would be delivered through strategy groups and would be included in the CYPP.

Other issues of girls' body image were raised. J. Owens questioned whether activities in some schools added to pressure, citing how primary school 'Proms' could encourage a 'spray tan and ball gown' culture amongst young girls.

Resolved: The report was noted.

9 10:55 STAYING SAFE STRATEGY GROUP ANNUAL REPORT

S. Garner tabled the report. Focus was drawn to the area of early intervention where a Peer Challenge had been carried out in June 2012. Peer Challenge recommended early, more focused intervention to support the most vulnerable children and young people and to find ways of engaging 'hard to reach' families more quickly.

S. Garner drew attention to the involvement of Looked After Children in improving the service, such as the launch of the website 'The Right Side of Care'. Care leavers provided

content as well as the name. He stressed the importance of listening to what young people say in developing services which is also noted by OFSTED.

Further improvements include: support and monitoring of care leavers in education or training; reducing delays in adoption whilst ensuring systems remain robust; and improvements for pre-birth assessment by identifying family risk from three months of pregnancy. Further challenges would relate to forthcoming economic pressures, responding to the Munro Review and changes in schools.

Regarding the Troubled Families Project J. Owens enquired whether the 300 troubled families had been identified. S. Garner explained that overall there were 900 families and that 300 would be worked with in the first year. J. Owens suggested that all partners contribute in identifying families to which J. Hassall responded by explaining that with regards to the 300 families selected, a number of partners had been involved including the Department of Work and Pensions. There would be further discussion with all partners once identification criteria were agreed.

V. McGee asked for further clarification of the project to which S. Garner responded by explaining that the solution intended through the programme was about intensive, targeted support early on.

The Chair thanked S. Garner for the report and invited questions, stating that the Peer Review had been extremely helpful for the Council.

S. Garner confirmed the helpfulness of the Peer Review in showing ways through the barriers of reaching some families, to which J. Hassall added that, although the Intensive Family Intervention Project (IFIP) attracted significant funding, it should be developed in tandem with a review of all services especially around prevention. There needs to be a sharper focus on exactly which families must be reached. Wirral has the fourth highest number of children in care in the North-West. She advised that wise thought be given to preventing current families producing the next generation of Looked After Children. The Acting Director pointed out that a successful key worker could often achieve more with a family than a whole raft of different people and this would be the thinking behind the IFIP.

B. Morgan enquired what the role of the voluntary sector would be to which J. Hassall responded that a Steering Group would be formed to determine participation.

Resolved: The board endorsed the report.

10 **11:20 CHILDREN'S WORKFORCE STRATEGY AND ACTION PLAN**

S. Blevins and Y. Alli-Balogun presented the completed strategy and action plan. Regarding the action plan areas were on track and some targets had already been achieved.

A presentation illustrated the new online survey which had been developed to identify the skills of the Children's Workforce and further training needs. The Workforce Survey launches in October for two months. Information will be available to present to WCTB in January. Full participation is urged.

L. Birch complimented the usefulness of the survey but asked that non-academic qualifications also be included in question 7 as the current wording gave the impression that professional qualifications weren't relevant. She advised a 'save' button be included to capture the relevant data as survey results were often lost when respondents did not want to complete the Equality and Diversity data section.

R. Longster also complimented the survey as a sensible way of getting information with questions specific to working with children, young people and families.

V. McGee commented that the information would be valuable in helping to integrate work plans which J. Hassall agreed with, adding that a future workforce would need a range of competences to engage with families whatever their initial professional background is.

S. Blevins commented that if people have the skill sets, they will be able to work more widely across sectors. J. Hassall reiterated the point that this would be the way of the future especially in reduced circumstances.

S. Blevins explained that the data from the survey would identify people, their skills, their workplace and how people could work together.

T. Smith reiterated that the Survey would be launched on 1 October for two months, and S. Blevins confirmed a report on the findings would be presented at the January WCTB with actions determined by April 2013. The survey would be emailed to the WCTB following changes discussed at the meeting.

Resolved:

- Wirral Children's Trust approved the Children's Trust Workforce Development Strategy and Action Plan for 2012-15.
- With the suggested amendments, Wirral Children's Trust Board approved the proposed on-line Training Needs Analysis and workforce planning framework.
- Wirral Children's Trust Board agreed to strongly encourage full participation from all staff/volunteers engaged in working with children and young people in Wirral, to complete the training needs analysis.
- On receipt of the final letter Wirral Children's Trust Board members agreed to forward a copy of the letter outlining the purpose/benefits and electronic link to the training needs analysis to staff/volunteers in their agency, and review levels of participation within their agency.

11 11:45 2012-13 QUARTER ONE PERFORMANCE REPORT

N. Clarkson presented the report and drew attention to features of note such as Child Protection Plans all renewed within their timelines, fewer young people not in education, training or employment compared to the same point in the previous year and increased registration at Children's Centres. Of particular success were the Youth Fest in Birkenhead Park and the Youth Band.

Areas for concern in quarter 1 were highlighted which included the under-18 conception rate. It was hoped that the effect of the Teenage Pregnancy Team's new interventions should become evident in the next quarter. Core Assessments for children's social care had not been met due to increased demand and complexity of the cases.

The Chair invited questions and commented on the difference between Wirral and other local authorities regarding statementing; in other authorities the number had reduced whereas it had risen in Wirral. He questioned as to whether this was a result of a fear that the statutory support would decline.

N. Clarkson responded that on Wirral there was a complex situation regarding statements including fears that there may be reductions in services related to austerity measures and anxiety regarding the impact of changes to the national SEN framework. In addition, health services may diagnose more social communication difficulties and autistic spectrum disorders as identifying statutory needs as perhaps one way of ensuring job security. The emphasis on standards in OFSTED inspections works against an inclusive approach to admit more children with SEN into mainstream schools.

T. Smith commented that Wirral has a high proportion of Special schools. Manchester by comparison provides support but parents don't perceive the need to pursue a statement.

S. Dainty commented that from a primary perspective parents' perceptions were that the statement guaranteed support.

V. McGee agreed with the early intervention through Special schools, giving personal evidence that a short-term intervention had life-changing impact.

R. Longster summarised the discussion by stating that the right kind of support and the certainty of parents that they would receive the right kind of support would address their concerns.

Resolved: The report was noted.

12 **11.55 ANY OTHER BUSINESS**

There were no notifications of any other business.

It was announced that Scrutiny workshops would be held at Wallasey Town Hall on 4 October.

There was a reminder that the next meeting of the WCTB had been moved from its original date of 20 November to 27 November 2012.

DATE AND TIME OF NEXT MEETINGS

Tuesday, 27th November 2012 (Rearranged from 20th November)

Tuesday, 22nd January 2013

Tuesday, 26th March 2013 (Rearranged from 19th March)

Tuesday, 21st May 2013

Tuesday, 16th July 2013

