

WIRRAL CHILDREN'S TRUST BOARD

Minutes of the Meeting held on Friday, 19th March 2010

Present: Councillor Phil Davies (Chair)

Councillor Sheila Clarke

Peter Brandrick
Howard Cooper
John Davies (representing Emma Dodd)
Paula Dixon
Sue Drew
Adrian Hughes
Debbie Mayor (representing Tina Long)
Richard Longster
Bev Morgan
Kathryn Podmore
Shanila Roohi
Andy Styring

In attendance: Officers Nancy Clarkson
Rose Curtis
Simon Douglas
Sheila Lynch
Julia Hassall
Peter Wong

1. APOLOGIES

Tina Long (represented by Debbie Mayor)
Hazel Thompson
Thelma Wiltshire
Emma Dodd (represented by John Davis)
Councillor Jean Quinn

2. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

None.

3. MINUTES OF THE LAST MEETING

Resolved: That the minutes of the meeting on the 15th January 2010 be confirmed as a correct record.

4. SAFEGUARDING UPDATE QUARTER 3

The existing Safeguarding Board's last meeting is in March 2010. A new Board will be formed based on the new requirements and arrangements include a new independent

Chair replacing the Director of Children's Services. Councillor Phil Davies will be a 'participating observer'. New guidance separates the executive and scrutiny role.

Howard Cooper outlined some of the national high profile cases including Doncaster, Birmingham and Sheffield. In Wirral the quality of working together is better than it has ever been. Locally we have two Serious Case reviews (SCRs) at different stages. One at the end of the process and one at the beginning. Howard Cooper has recently commissioned a new SCR not related to a child death. The Chloe Fletcher SCR has been evaluated and the report received two days ago.

Howard Cooper reported that the nature of the report has changed from a brief letter to a longer report style letter. The SCR evaluates submitted agency reports that contribute to the overall report; each individual report is now graded. The letter picks up areas of inter-agency working that are missing from the report. Once received by the Safeguarding Board, there will be full analysis. The Ofsted Inspector will meet representatives from all agencies involved to go through the findings. The Executive summary will be published, not the full report, as per the law.

Howard Cooper commented that in SCRs agencies involved write a management report, some agencies do not do this often e.g. Housing Associations. Good practice would be development of expertise in organisations in writing reports. There is now an independent officer who will be reviewing how reports are written and scrutinised.

Kathryn Podmore asked about the action plan and how it will be progressed. Howard Cooper informed the Board that an action plan was submitted with the report and Local Safeguarding Children Board (LSCB) will monitor the delivery of the action plan. Some actions will fall to organisations within the Children's Trust.

Shanila Rhooi noted an issue for Health Care professionals regarding how the public can access appropriate mental health help. Howard Cooper agreed and stressed the importance of role of the GP in safeguarding children and the relationship of children's services with adult mental health.

Julia Hassall noted the LSCB and Staying Safe Strategy Group were carrying out an audit of the quality of information sharing which would be shared with the Board.

Councillor Phil Davies asked if GPs know the appropriate pathways. Shanila Roohi said that healthcare professionals understood the pathways but other agencies involved may not understand the correct triggers and contact the right people to raise concerns. Shanila Roohi noted extensive safeguard training has been carried out through GP practices including reception staff.

Bev Morgan noted that most organisations understood the pathways and would use them. However the extent of mental health issues is a difficult area to evaluate and judgements are difficult to make as to when it is appropriate to contact agencies.

Julia Hassall informed the Board that the LSCB website will be updated with new information which will be circulated organisations to ensure information is shared fully. The Social Care Area Teams co-location project in development will also enhance multi-agency approaches.

Julia Hassall circulated performance information. Referrals to Children's Social Care show a sustained increase compared to previous year, an increase of 18%. Analysis has led to work with the Police on referral appropriateness and social worker placement to reflect need. Regarding referrals going to initial assessment (NI 68) the number has increased and is in line with achieving the LAA indicator of 72% by March 2011.

Nancy Clarkson and Caroline McKenna are developing a protocol to outline the arrangements between the LSCB and the Children's Trust which will be presented at a future board.

Resolved: That the report be noted.

5. PERFORMANCE MANAGEMENT QUARTER 3

Nancy Clarkson outlined the report which provides an overview of the progress made against the national indicators relevant to Wirral Children's Trust. Overall Wirral is doing well but there are some red or amber areas which were outlined with the corrective action in place in each area.

Resolved: That the report be noted.

6. LOCAL AREA AGREEMENT QUARTER 3 REPORT

Nancy Clarkson outlined the position of LAA indicators at Quarter 3. Although good progress is being made in NEET and teenage conceptions this is not in line with achieving the very challenging nationally set targets.

Resolved: That the report be noted.

7. ANNUAL REVIEW OF THE CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE'S PLAN

Nancy Clarkson presented the annual review of the CYPP. Each year an annual review is produced. Bev Morgan requested adding information about the Third Sector. Councillor Phil Davies thanked Nancy Clarkson for her work in co-ordinating the review.

Resolved – That with the addition of information about the Third Sector the annual review be approved.

8. WIRRAL CHILDREN'S TRUST COMMISSIONING STRATEGY

Howard Cooper introduced the report as an important item; a step change is required in developing the Board's role as commissioners. The purpose of the paper is to identify key steps required to be in place to make a transition.



Peter Wong and Rose Curtis presented to the board. A Children's Trust is, in part, a commissioning partnership, commissioning services for children and young people and their families. Strategic Commissioning is a key means by which the Children's Trust partners come together to make a reality of the duty to co-operate and drive cultural change. Components of successful commissioning include:

- Clear leadership
- Effective governance
- Understanding of commissioning
- Ability to commission workforce development leading to behavioural change amongst frontline staff
- Clarity about the difference between commissioning and provider functions at all levels
- Able to demonstrate 'contestability' e.g. 'make or buy' decisions
- An agreed vision for the shape of the Children's Trust system
- Capacity for change

Howard Cooper suggested that the emphasis should be change for more effective outcomes and added value.

The role of the Children's Trust Board and Executive were outlined. The Children's Trust Board undertakes a governance role:

- Setting strategic direction and priorities for services to children, young people and their families.
- Joint planning, commissioning and alignment of resources at a strategic level.
- Responsible and accountable for the performance and commissioning decisions made by all planning and commissioning groups in children's services.

The Children's Trust Executive undertakes the executive role, taking responsibility for:

- Advising the Board to support decision-making.
- Performance management.
- Implementing agreed strategies and plans.
- Preparing and reviewing the Children and Young People's Plan.
- Developing improvement priorities and strategies to meet expectations of CYPP

The paper provided three options to the board:

Option 1 Virtual Joint Commissioning

Option 2 Joint Commissioning – targeted areas

Option 3 Joint Commissioning – whole system

In addition three recommendations were presented to the Board to assist in defining the option for Wirral:

- That the newly established Children's Trust Executive is not changed and that further development of its executive role is explored.
- That the Board resolves not to seek pooling of all budgets at this stage, rather that piloting of pooled budgets in no more than three key priority areas is taken forward.
- That partners provide details and clarity on how appropriate separation of commissioning and providers responsibilities is managed and maintained.

Howard Cooper suggested that the Council could learn from NHS Wirral in the separation of commissioning and provider responsibilities.

Adrian Hughes referred to the continuum of children with complex needs and how important it is to work together early at neo natal stage.

Andy Styring raised the issue of resources being required for new structures and Adrian Hughes suggested there was currently duplication in the system so additional resources were not necessarily a pre-requisite.

Debbie Mayor outlined that the paper did not suggest a new remit but that the proposed mapping work would outline the next steps.

Peter Wong believes that the appropriate functions are within the current system but they are not being co-ordinated and not necessarily working on identified priorities.

Sue Drew suggested that for budget pooling probity was required to ensure standards are appropriate. Section 75 of the Health Act allows budget pooling for the Council and NHS and provides a legal framework for pooling.

Howard Cooper noted that after the election there will be pressure to reduce back office costs and that NHS Wirral and the Council have been investigating where joint working can produce savings and that a step change in commissioning would assist this.

Peter Brandrick asked how much of the Wirral compact and the better together guidance has influenced the findings and Peter Wong responded that the compact has influenced the paper.

Councillor Phil Davies reported that this area has not been discussed with the Council Cabinet and other organisational boards. As the Children's Trust Board is answerable to the Local Strategic Partnership if the Board decides it wants to move forward then a report would go to Cabinet and the NHS Wirral Board.

The strength of a decision by the Children's Trust Board is that all partner organisations including political leads on the board have reached agreement, with a purpose to provide better outcomes for children.

Councillor Phil Davies requested a standing item on the Board regarding commissioning.

Resolved: The Board is in agreement with the suggested step change in commissioning and Option 2 was agreed.

9. SOCIAL AND WELLBEING STRATEGY GROUP

Sheila Lynch presented the Strategy Group Report. Key Achievements were outlined and include:

- Therapeutic programmes delivered by the third sector (TCP) successfully re-engaging young people into mainstream education. Programmes are also delivered specifically for young mums.
- Roll out of eight Diploma lines in September 2009 with approximately 180 learners participating.
- Development of FE provision with increased entry points to meet learner needs and respond to the January Guarantee.
- The Wirral Apprenticeship Programme 'initial 100' has been delivered and a further 50 apprenticeships agreed (to be targeted for NEET young people).

The NEET information was presented in detail including February monthly NEET figures indicate 8.78% (937 young people). NEETs are the lowest they have been in February for 4 years which is significant progress. The aspiration is 6.9% so there is still significant distance to travel.

In addition to increasing the pace of NEET reduction other key challenges outlined include the Child Poverty Bill and the associated new duties and to support the raising of the participation age in 2013. Areas for further partnership involvement include reviewing the membership of the SEWB Group.

Sue Drew asked about linkage to other blocks including WEDS. Shelia Lynch the strategy lead for SEWB is a member of the WEDS board. Cross LSP Block working is being developed related to the new Child Poverty Bill including development of a needs assessment and a strategy.

Kathryn Podmore reported that due to economic situation there could be a decrease in university places.

Councillor Sheila Clarke asked about NEET children in care and Sheila Lynch reported that through targeted initiatives good progress has been made with this group.

Resolved – That the report be noted.

10. EDUCATION, EMPLOYMENT AND TRAINING STRATEGY

Sheila Lynch outlined the refreshed EET Strategy.

Resolved: That the Board endorse the strategy.

11. STEPPING UP TO SOCIAL WORK

This is a national pilot programme offering an employment based route to qualifying as a social worker related to a career change. A consortium of local authorities through the Learn Together Partnership led by Wirral was successful in their bid, the only partnership in the north-west of England to be successful. The programme will commence with assessment centres in May 2010. Wirral is aiming to engage with up to seven of the candidates as part of the programme.

Resolved: That the report be noted and the Board would promote awareness of the programme.

12. AIMING HIGH COMMISSIONING REPORT

A national scheme for providing short breaks for children with disabilities through commissioning VCF sector involved in providing a number of the services. Three areas were not able to be commissioned:

- Sitting Services
- Enablement Support Scheme
- Emergency Support Scheme

As funding is time limited recommendations have been made in these areas to ensure services are provided, the report outlines these. Richard Longster and Andy Styring commented on the positive aspects of the proposals.

Resolved: That the Board recommends the Stage 2 commissioning proposals.

13. GETTING TO THE CORE – WIRRAL CHILDREN’S TRUST AND LINK FORUM CONFERENCE

Peter Brandrick provided the board with a flyer for a joint Link Forum and Children’s Trust ‘Getting to the Core’ Event on the 1st July 2010. The event would celebrate and develop the links between the Children’s Trust and the Link Forum.

Resolved: That the Board would promote awareness of the event.

14. ANY OTHER BUSINESS

Councillor Phil Davies expressed the thanks of the Board to Sue Drew as she moves to a new post as Director of Public Health in Knowsley.

Howard Cooper expressed the thanks of the Board to Chris Batman and Alan Stennard who are retiring in March. Both have contributed to outcomes for children and young people in Wirral.

15. DATE AND TIME OF NEXT MEETING

Friday 28th May 2010, at the Professional Excellence Centre, Acre Lane.