

WIRRAL CHILDREN'S TRUST BOARD

Minutes of the Meeting held on Friday, 28th May 2010

<u>Present:</u>	Councillor	Sheila Clarke (Chair)
	Councillor	Phil Davies
	Councillor	Tom Harney
		Marie Armitage
		Jo Beet (representing Gillian Thomas)
		Howard Cooper
		Emma Dodd
		Bob Gittins
		Tina Long
		Bev Morgan
		Kathryn Podmore
		Shanila Roohi
		Andy Styring
		Hazel Thompson
<u>In attendance:</u>	Officers	Nancy Clarkson
		Mark Ellis
		Julia Hassall
		Maureen McDaid
		Eileen Newman
		Peter Wong

1. Apologies

Paula Dixon
Richard Longster
Thelma Wiltshire
Gillian Thomas (represented by Jo Beet)

Councillor Sheila Clark thanked Councillor Phil Davies both personally and on behalf of the Board for his service as an excellent Cabinet member for Children's Services and Chair of Wirral Children's Trust; he will be a hard act to follow.

Councillor Phil Davies thanked colleagues for all their work to support him.

Councillor Chris Meaden will be the new Labour representative for Children's Services. Councillor Sheila Clarke also welcomed Councillor Tom Harney who is the new Liberal representative on the Board.

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2. Declarations of Interest

None declared.

3. Minutes of the last meeting

Resolved: That the minutes of the meeting on the 19th March 2010 be confirmed as a correct record.

4. Contact Point Update

Mark Ellis updated on Contact Point. Four organisations have been accredited, Children and Young People's Department, Wirral University Teaching Hospital, NHS Wirral and Homestart Wirral. There are now 40 practitioners using the system. In Health four trainers have been accredited to roll out the training and plans are in place to train 30 additional trainers, however this has been put on hold. The national audit requirements have been fulfilled and the accreditation certificate has been achieved. Data cleansing of data feeds from local systems has also been carried out.

The new Government has led to some potential changes, full information is not yet available; a Bill and a new Act is required. The Bill may be in the current session in June/July 2010. There is uncertainty as Conservatives favour a more focused Contact Point and Liberal policy was removal of the system and additional funding for front line services. It is not clear as yet which direction will be progressed. Locally decisions will be taken to ensure we are in a position to continue if required. Further national guidance is now required.

Tina Long asked on the links between the Integrated Children's System (ICS) and Health Systems. Currently there are no links but developments are in progress through Adult Social Care regarding future links with the health systems.

Shanila Roohi asked if there were links between the Wirral ICS and other local authorities systems. Mark Ellis responded that they are individual stand alone systems. Julia Hassall noted that when children move local authorities have processes in place. In Wirral the Central Advice and Duty Team (CADT) pass information between local authorities.

Andy Styring noted the importance of keeping children safe within national changes to systems and asked if locally we should put a system in place to ensure we are sharing the appropriate data between organisations to ensure children are kept safe within the law. The Board agreed there is scope for local activity once the proposals for national changes were known.

Resolved: That a further update be provided to the next Board meeting.

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5. Performance Management Year End

Nancy Clarkson presented the year end performance review outlining progress against children's services indicators. Performance headlines were outlined. Progress against targets was discussed and performance issues and corrective action in a number of areas were discussed by the Board.

Resolution: That the report be noted.

6. Local Area Agreement Quarter Four

Nancy Clarkson presented the LAA quarter four report. For the specific LAA indicators detailed monitoring data was presented including national and statistical neighbour benchmarks. A positions statement from each quarter was provided as context for the indicators and an overall summary report was provided.

Resolution: That the report be noted.

7. Annual Review of the Children's Trust Board Membership

The membership of the Board is reviewed on an annual basis. As the Board was reformed in 2009 no significant changes were suggested. Two members were proposed; a probation representative and the Chair of the Wirral Governor Forum.

Alan Stennard the Head of Regeneration has retired and Council Regeneration is being restructured by the Council so a replacement is not currently sought. Marie Armitage has replaced Sue Drew as the Public Health representative.

Councillor Tom Harney suggested that he thought there was a lack of awareness concerning the Children's Trust at governor level within schools and a lack of communication concerning governors in schools.

The new government may remove the requirement to have a Children's Trust. Howard Cooper would advocate strongly for maintaining a children's strategic trust as it has great benefit for Children's Services in Wirral.

Councillor Sheila Clarke would like to see the Children's Trust Board continue in the future and believes that strengthening the youth justice area is a positive step. She also suggested that it may be beneficial to evaluate the communication of the Children's Trust at a future meeting.

Howard Cooper would like the Board members to consider if chairs of the other Local Strategic Partnership Blocks would be beneficial attending the Children's Trust Board meeting as a member or an observer.

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Resolution: That the Board approve the addition of two new members to the Board.

8. Wirral Children's Trust and LSCB Safeguarding Protocol

Using recent government guidance a protocol has been developed by Nancy Clarkson and Caroline McKenna to enable clarity regarding local accountability. The board was asked for comments regarding the protocol.

Tina Long requested a change in 6.1 reflecting services that safeguard children and young people.

Councillor Tom Harney requested additional information regarding the roles of the Chief Executive and the Lead Member and the general public. Howard Cooper suggested that a paragraph should be added as how the Chief Executive and Lead Member fulfil their responsibilities.

Howard Cooper reported that he and Julia Hassall meet with the Chief Executive monthly to scrutinise Children's Social Care. This includes detailed performance data, human resources information and Safeguarding.

There is a requirement from this year to produce a Safeguarding annual report and for the Leader of the Council to sign off this report. The previous Cabinet agreed for a group to be set up to strengthen safeguarding activity. This group has been established and includes three political leads and the Chief Executive. The group will keep an overview of safeguarding performance of the Council's agencies so that the Council as a body can scrutinize this area.

Julia Hassall reported that in the case of the general public two new lay members will join the LSCB. There is information on the website for members of the public regarding the public's role.

Marie Armitage noted the Public Health view of Safeguarding in the broader context not just children at severe risk of injury. The role of the citizen in protecting children and how to shift the balance back to the community rather than agencies. In bringing lay members on board to the LSCB this can help with a cultural shift.

Councillor Phil Davies noted that executive summaries of Serious Case Reviews (SCRs) were reported to Cabinet to ensure that this significant area is reported in a public forum. Reporting of SCRs may change with the new government. Regarding the protocol he has concern that the Children's Trust does not duplicate the work of the LSCB.

Howard Cooper noted that this is a complex area. He suggested that it is incumbent on Children's Services Lead Member and the Director of Children's Services to ensure that Cabinet members have sufficient training and support to evaluate this area.

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Howard Cooper also expanded on proposed publication of full SCRs. The purpose of SCRs is learning and improvement. One concern is that if full reports are published there is a danger that writers will amend the content of the report which may impact on lessons to be learnt. Howard Cooper's view is that this change will make children less safe.

Councillor Phil Davies does not support publication of full SCR, but wants to ensure that there is confidence from the public that the lessons are being learnt.

Councillor Sheila Clarke noted that if elected members are to be held accountable then they need to have the full understanding to ensure improvements. It is incumbent on the Lead Member of Children's Services to ensure that Cabinet members understand this. She suggested that opening cases up to the public may build public trust.

Resolutions:

That subject to the changes outlined Wirral Children's Trust Board endorse the protocol.

That the protocol will be reviewed by the LSCB and the final version returned to Wirral Children's Trust Board.

9. JobCentre Plus Presentation

Jo Beet of JobCentre Plus gave an overview of the work of the organisation and how it supports the Every Child Matters outcomes. JobCentre Plus is part of the Department of Works and Pensions and is a large organization with 50,000 adviser interviews a day.

In Wirral at March 2010 there were 9,410 people receiving job seekers allowance. At November 2009 there were 19,020 people receiving incapacity benefit and employment support allowance. Of these 42% have mental health issues. Statistics indicate that people who have been on incapacity benefit for 7 years or more are likely to be on it for life. The national economic cost of sickness allowance is £100 billion which is greater than the annual NHS budget. On Wirral this is an area of high spend.

JobCentre Plus personal advisors offer a range of services including

- 'Better off' calculations
- Pathways to Work – help with confidence, skills, condition management
- Access to free training, financial help and mentoring
- Help for those with alcohol/drug issues, ex-offenders or those who are homeless
- Voluntary work
- Access to partners services and provision
- Tax free in work credit of £40 per week for a year for those eligible
- Access to Work – help with equipment, adaptations, support worker, travel, communications

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A number of programmes are in partnership including community linked initiatives with the Third sector and drug strategy and mental health co-ordinators are employed by JobCentre Plus.

In looking ahead there are challenges but also opportunities to ensure a joined up approach to ensure partners work together effectively through the 'Think Family' approach and joint targeting resources.

Andy Styring thanked Jo Beet for the presentation and was impressed with the JobCentre Plus approach to mental health. He suggested that there are ways to improve how organisations work together and he would like to investigate closer working with JobCentre Plus.

Marie Armitage noted that Public Health deliver intervention management and what is found is that there is often a mental health aspect. Being out of work has an impact on mental well-being, and there can be specific communities where this is an issue. Mental well-being in families is an issue for deprived areas in Wirral.

Howard Cooper asked if lone parents were encouraged to claim child maintenance. A high proportion of Children in Need (CIN) were part of lone parent families and joint working through JobCentre Plus and Children's Social Care may be possible in order to maximize the income of families with CIN.

Resolution: That the presentation be noted.

10. Wirral Children's Trust Commissioning Update

At the previous meeting a regular commissioning update was requested. Peter Wong updated the Board on progress. The progress is predicated on the appointment of a post. The job description has been drafted and further discussions need to take place.

The Children's Trust Executive has a continuing focus on developing the commissioning executive role and clarity over items that should be discussed at the executive. The draft project plan for preparing a new Children's and Young People's Plan (CYPP) has been discussed and is being developed from a commissioning angle.

The Children's Trust has some Commissioning Support Programme (CSP) support days available. Potential areas to be investigated are mapping of funding for services to support the CYPP and a facilitated workshop to analyse speech and language therapy.

Resolution: That the report be noted.

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11. Commissioning of Activity Fund Plus

Maureen McDaid presented the report which focused on commissioning to fill the outstanding gaps from the previous commissioning road. The key areas for development were 'Big Nights'. Big Nights are large scale events including Battle of the Bands or DJ and Disco Nights. They would provide a new experience in a safe environment for young people.

A new provider RDPO Enterprises were identified from the criteria. They have experience in Lancashire in organising large scale events and work in partnership with appropriate authorities. A Steering Board has been set up including partners such as the Police, Technical Services and Cultural Services to ensure effective development of the activities.

Resolution: That the Board approve the allocations as set out in the report.

12. Activity Fund Monitoring Report

Eileen Newman, Senior Lecturer, Liverpool John Moores University led the external monitoring of the Activity Fund. The purpose of the Activity Fund was linked to Aiming High for young people and tackling disadvantage. Young people were given opportunities for personal development and to engage with communities through activities.

The social and emotional benefits of the activities were outlined. The activities carried out through the activity fund also link to the Integrated Youth Support Strategy to focus on targeted activity and deliver the CYPP objectives.

The external monitoring provided a very positive assessment of the programme. Administration of the events was excellent and all standards were met. Integrated working and effective planning was in evidence, and evaluation of the impact on the social and emotional development of young people was rated outstanding.

Resolution: That the Board note the report.

13. Staying Safe Strategy Group Annual Report

Due to time constraints this report was deferred to the next meeting.

Resolution: That the report is deferred to the next meeting.

14. Key Stage 2 Literacy Overview and Scrutiny Report

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Councillor Sheila Clarke requested that the Board review the literacy report and to contact her if there were any queries regarding the report.

Resolution: That the Board note the report.

15. Any other Business

Nothing to report.

16. Date and time of next meeting:

The meeting has been re-arranged from the 2nd July 2010, 9:00 – 12:00 to the 13th July 13:30 – 16:30.