

WIRRAL CHILDREN'S TRUST BOARD – 22nd January 2013

Wirral Safeguarding Children Board (WSCB) report to the Children's Trust

1.0 Background

1.1 This report forms part of a regular update from the WSCB to the Children's Trust Board on key developments locally and nationally on regulatory reform, updates on progress on local Serious Case Reviews and key challenges for the partnership and agencies.

2.0 National Drivers and reform

2.1 The Government announced, through the Children's Minister, a revision of the national framework for protecting children and Professor Eileen Munro was commissioned to undertake this national review. The work was complete over a two year period and concluded in May 2012 with a revision of Working Together to Safeguard Children which was concluded in September 2012 following consultation with LSCB's and other bodies. The Government signalled its intention to reduce the length of statutory guidance and to reform evaluation of statutory Serious Case Reviews by terminating Ofsted evaluation of these and a move towards systems learning as an alternative model of learning. LSCB's are still awaiting the final response from the Government on Working Together which has not as yet been re-issued. In the meantime Wirral LSCB has left the procedures in place whilst full consideration is given to changes anticipated through Working Together.

One of the significant implications anticipated in the new guidance is the ending of many of the existing child protection procedures and processes. There are, for example, no set timescales for assessments to be completed, leaving any timescales and processes subject to local arrangements. Whilst this local flexibility is welcomed, it will mean that there will need, to be in place, a clear understanding of the standards that all workers are following.

2.2 Child Sexual Exploitation work

2.3 The Government required LSCB's to develop a local action plan and review the arrangements for children at risk. WSCB developed an action plan for CSE work locally and across Merseyside where the police have a broad footprint covering five LSCB's. Whilst work is developing in this area Wirral CYPD have been commissioning Barnardos for several years to work with young people who have been identified as being sexually exploited. In terms of promotional and preventative work the action plan outlines the development of leaflets and materials, already used by Barnardos nationally, for parents, young people and professionals. Agencies within the CSE sub-group are reviewing the current service model for children who run away and those at risk of sexual exploitation in order for intelligence to be shared more immediately through the development of a Multi-Agency Safeguarding Hub, known as MASH, and the availability of front line staff to respond more flexibly outside of traditional office hours.

Serious concerns emanating from large-scale sexual exploitation, as evidenced in the Savile disclosures and the Rochdale investigations, are likely to have a significant impact on how agencies respond to sexual abuse allegations, particularly when there is

systematic grooming. There are likely to be a number of formal Reviews undertaken in relation to both of these scenarios that will impact on intelligence gathering and sharing of information, as well as forms of intervention.

2.3 Multi-Agency Safeguarding Hub (MASH)

The MASH development for Wirral is being considered through initial discussions lead by Merseyside Police. Considerable capacity is required by agencies to shift resources to facilitate improved information sharing and analysis at point of contact and referral. In addition the Intensive Family Intervention Project (IFIP) is developing a similar model of data sharing and this work needs to be developed alongside that of the MASH. The LSCB will be required to agree the MASH model and the Children's Trust will need to enable agencies to review current information sharing protocols and anticipate changes and challenges associated with this development. Once the LSCB has agreed a model of MASH for Wirral the Children's Trust will be presented with a work plan.

2.4. Serious Case Review- Child G

The submission date for this review has been moved to the 31st January 2013, two months extra than the six months required. This has been due to the significant work required and the capacity of two agencies to allocate Individual Management Review authors. The LSCB will need to consider how to improve release of senior staff to complete SCR's within the nationally prescribed timescales and inform the Children's Trust if there are commissioning issues that requires these to be addressed. An action plan will be agreed on the learning required from this review and published.

2.5 There is a requirement that LSCB's publish their completed Serious Case Review in full (in redacted form). This is intended to ensure that there is accountability for agencies working with children and their families in these cases. Recent statements from Government Ministers suggest that this requirement will be more robustly monitored by the Department of Health and that very few exceptions to full publication will be permitted.

3.0 Recommendations:

That Wirral Children's Trust Board notes the report.

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