

WIRRAL CHILDREN'S TRUST BOARD – 20th May 2014

Report to the Children's Trust Board on Safeguarding Arrangements

1.0 Background and Introduction

1.1 This report forms part of a regular safeguarding update from the WSCB to the Children's Trust Board on key developments locally and nationally. These include regulatory reforms; updates on the progress of local Serious Case Reviews; work being undertaken locally; and key challenges for the partnership and agencies.

2.0 National Reform and Safeguarding Developments

2.1 Child Sexual Exploitation Strategy

The Child Sexual Exploitation (CSE) multi-agency sub committee continues to focus on awareness raising strategies for CSE. Recent progress includes:

- Establishment of monthly operational meetings managed by Merseyside police to establish plans for children identified as at risk of being sexually exploited
- Completion of awareness raising training with police, Response, health and youth workers in schools, foster carers and residential providers
- Commissioning of Catch-22 to deliver 10 multi-agency CSE sessions. First session was delivered on 31st March 2014
- Design of a CSE e-learning module which will be available on the website, following quality assurance
- Develop awareness raising training for multi-agency professionals about the effects of CSE
 - Commissioning of Wirral Youth Theatre to develop a CSE drama vignette for schools
 - Engagement of the taxi workforce to support a 'see it, report it' strategy including training and advertising material in taxis and taxi offices, and awareness raising training for drivers
 - Planned awareness raising training for elected members in June 2014

2.2 Critical Incident Reviews (CIR) and Serious Case Reviews (SCR)

CIR – The findings from the CIR of Child 2 have been presented to the WSCB's Serious Case Review committee. The recommendations from the overview report have been translated into actions for agencies and progress against the actions will be monitored by the Performance Committee of the WSCB. Learning from CIR's and SCR's is embedded in the WSCB's multi-agency training and promoted through materials for agencies such as reports and posters.

A learning from reviews poster has been developed by the WSCB and distributed to agencies and is included in appendix 1.

The WSCB currently has 1 open SCR action plan which is 90% complete. One of the outcomes from the action plan was the practitioner's development day held on the 7th March and detailed below. The WSCB estimate all actions will be completed by the end of Spring 2014.

2.3 WSCB Practitioners Development Day 7th March 2014

In January 2013 the WSCB published the Child G Serious Case Review. Child G was an older teenager who had considerable vulnerabilities. One of the recommendations from the overview report was for the WSCB to improve agencies understanding of the complexity of risks faced by older teenagers. This is reflected in research undertaken by the House of Commons Education Select Committee in 2012 which identified that within the child protection system the two most vulnerable groups of children were babies less than one year old and teenagers aged from 14-19. The review commented that the complexity and range of risk factors facing teenagers including alienation from family, school difficulties, accommodation problems, abuse and neglect, mental health difficulties and others meant that professionals often struggled to develop an effective plan and the corrosive effect of years of neglect and abuse were not understood.

In response the WSCB organised a development day for frontline practitioners who routinely work with teenagers. 11 sessions were delivered throughout the day to 154 practitioners which focused on issues such as mental health, domestic abuse, homelessness, substance misuse, transition into adulthood, youth support and child sexual exploitation. The feedback from the day was extremely positive and a legacy meeting will be held to plan dissemination of the learning and information from the day.

2.4 Neglect Strategy

Neglect is the most common reason for a child to be the subject of a child protection plan or on a child protection register in the UK. 43% of all children subject to a child protection (CP) plan in England in 2012 were under the category of neglect. In Wirral (Sept 2013) the figure is a little higher with 47% of children on a CP plan for neglect.

The challenge for all local children's services in the UK is to develop a coherent, integrated and effective response to neglected children and young people.

The WSCB and partners have developed a Wirral neglect strategy to ensure our children's workforce are able to recognise neglect and provide an effective response which will improve outcomes for children, young people and their families. Integral in the strategy is the identification and engagement of families at the earliest opportunity by preventative services including effective assessment and development of a clear action plan.

Progress on introducing the strategy with commensurate multi-agency training will be reported into the Children's Trust Board

2.5 Development of a Single Assessment

The Munro Review of Child Protection (2011) recommended reducing statutory guidance on safeguarding children in order to promote local autonomy and increase the scope for practitioners to exercise their professional judgement. One of the recommendations later prescribed in Working Together to Safeguard Children 2013 was to introduce a Single Assessment to replace the Initial Assessment and Core Assessment within the Children and Young Person's Assessment Framework.

The Single Assessment in Wirral was introduced in Spring 2014 and it aims to:

- Reduce prescription on timescales to allow Social Workers to specifically respond to that child and family's specific need.

- Allow greater opportunities for the Social Worker to engage with children to explore their wishes and feelings, focussing upon the child's journey and the impact of the concern upon their safety and wellbeing from the child's perspective.
- Create increased opportunity and expectation for the Social Work Practitioner to reflect upon the assessment and the daily lived experiences of the child.
- There is a greater focus on analysis and less expectation of "filling the boxes".
- Reducing the need for families to repeat their story

3.0 Recommendations:

3.1 The Wirral Children's Trust Board notes the report.

4.0 Appendix

4.1 Appendix One – Learning from Wirral SCR Poster

Report Authors:

Simon Garner
Corporate Safeguarding Manager

David Robbins
WSCB Business Manager

Contact:

Phone 0151 6665576
Email simongarner@wirral.gov.uk

Phone 0151 6664314
Email davidrobbins@wirral.gov.uk

Learning from Serious Case Reviews



Recent Teenager Case Reviews undertaken in Wirral tell us we must:

- Share information across agencies to ensure services are targeted and co-ordinated
- Be aware of the corrosive effects of long term neglect on young people
- Don't underestimate the vulnerabilities of teenagers, particularly those who have moderate learning difficulties
- Don't assume older teenagers are more resilient than younger children and therefore need less support
- Have a clear understanding of the Wirral thresholds of need and know where and how to access the WSCB multi-agency safeguarding procedures
- Ensure the views of young people are understood and recorded and where appropriate influence service design
- Always balance optimism with objective evidence

Safeguarding is Everyone's Responsibility....

For more information please visit the WSCB website:

<http://www.wirral.gov.uk/my-services/childrens-services/local-safeguarding-childrens-board>

