

# WIRRAL CHILDREN'S TRUST BOARD – 21<sup>st</sup> July 2015

## Report to the Children's Trust Board on Safeguarding Arrangements

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### 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 on regulatory reform, updates on progress of local Serious Case Reviews and work locally and key challenges for the partnership and agencies.

### 2.0 National Reform and Safeguarding Developments

#### 2.1 Priority areas for the WSCB (2015-16)

Priorities of the WSCB for 2015-16. The WSCB agreed the four priority areas for the WSCB in 2015-16. The priorities form the basis of the work of the safeguarding board in addition to its statutory duties. The day to day work is largely undertaken by the multi-agency sub groups of the WSCB. An action plan is developed for each of the priority areas and the plan is published in the WSCB Business Plan within the Annual Report. This document is published in September 2015. The agreed priorities for 2015-16 are:

- Priority One – ***Children and young people feel safe and are safe***. A key element of this priority is the promotion of safeguarding beyond organisations who directly deliver services to children and young people to the wider community and other organisations who may be able to support safeguarding. Through this priority the WSCB are promoting the message that safeguarding is everyone's responsibility. An example is taxi drivers who may be able to support the fight against Child Sexual Exploitation by perhaps identifying repeat journeys involving young people to the same location. The WSCB is continuing to work with such organisations to ensure children are safeguarded.
- Priority Two - ***Children and young people are engaged in positive relationships, which are not exploitative***. Partnership work undertaken to combat Child Sexual Exploitation will continue to be a priority in 2015-16. The focus of the priority is to ensure that children and young people at risk of, or victims of child sexual exploitation are identified at the earliest opportunity and receive the appropriate help and support, and also to ensure that in Wirral the community has a zero tolerance to CSE. The WSCB will continue to audit the effectiveness of the multi-agency response to CSE and will also work closely with Merseyside Police and the Crown Prosecution Service to record operations to disrupt activity, the number of prosecutions of perpetrators and patterns of activity. The WSCB will also continue to promote the [www.listentomystory.co.uk](http://www.listentomystory.co.uk) campaign and to raise awareness of CSE with children and young people.
- Priority Three – ***The needs of children, young people and their families are identified and responded to early***. The WSCB has a statutory duty to ensure that the early help offer is effective. The Board is working closely with the Early Help strategic group to develop a robust multi-agency performance dataset and will be testing how the Early Help offer supports other priority areas of the WSCB including combatting domestic abuse and child sexual exploitation. The WSCB will also work

with partners to implement the Neglect Strategy (the WSCB have revised the policy, procedure, practice guidance, multi-agency training and graded care profile neglect assessment tool) and to test how Early Help contributes to identifying and responding to neglect at the earliest opportunity.

- **Priority Four – *Fewer children and young people witness or experience domestic violence, and consequently, more children and young people are living in family homes where they feel safe.*** This was also a priority for 2014-15 and is overseen by the joint children and adult's safeguarding board's Domestic Abuse sub group. The work for 2015-16 will include the roll out of the revised multi-agency training, publication of the new procedure and referral pathway for children and adults, completion of a needs assessment and auditing of the effectiveness of the multi-agency response to domestic abuse. We will know we are making progress when children, young people and their parents tell us what works and that services and support are provided at the right time and in the right way, and when professionals and people in the community know what to look for and know what to do.

## **2.2 Feedback from the WSCB Meeting 9<sup>th</sup> June 2015**

The full WSCB meets once a quarter to discuss safeguarding items of local and national significance including those the WSCB holds a statutory duty for. The WSCB does not publish the minutes publicly due to the sensitive nature of some of the content. The following topics were discussed at the meeting held on the 9<sup>th</sup> June 2015:

- Presentation by young people from the Creative Youth Development group (formerly Wirral Arts Theatre). Ten young people presented part of a dance performance they are developing on the subject of Child Sexual Exploitation. The group have worked with the Safeguarding Board, Office of the Police and Crime Commissioner, Merseyside Police and Children's Services to research how young people are sexually exploited, what makes them vulnerable, the effects it has on them and the support available to help them. The performance was very well received by the Board and the full performance will be performed at the Wirral Youth Conference in the Autumn. The WSCB will work with the group to help ensure the performance is then rolled out to schools and other youth settings.
- Multi-agency Performance Information. The Performance Committee of the WSCB following work originally undertaken by the Greater Manchester authorities has developed a multi-agency dataset of 155 safeguarding performance indicators. The dataset was presented at the WSCB meeting in June where it was approved. It now replaces the previous dataset which was dominated by local authority children's services performance information. The WSCB is developing a 'windscreen' to be able to present key information and to drill down into the data 'behind the data'. The information will help direct the WSCB to areas of safeguarding which may be causing concern.
- Priority areas for the WSCB (2015-16). As described in item 2.1 above the four priority areas for the WSCB were agreed.
- Managing Allegations Report. Suzanne Cottrell, the Local Authority Designated Officer for Allegations (LADO) presented the annual report from the LADO service. The LADO is a statutory role which sits within the WSCB and is defined in Working Together 2015 as the role which oversees cases where allegations are made against a professional who works with children and young people. Agencies are

required to report allegations to the LADO within 24 hours. The LADO will ensure the correct procedures are followed, including involvement by the police and children's services and will direct organisations to undertake investigations and report on findings when appropriate. Suzanne reported that 229 allegations had been reported to her in 2014-15, a 28% increase on the previous year. The increase has happened because agencies are much clearer about their responsibilities to report rather than because the number of incidents has increased. Suzanne leads and contributes to a wide number of safeguarding training courses and in the last 12 months over 500 professionals have received training. The WSCB also has an awareness raising strategy and a poster distributed to all partner agencies is included at Appendix Two.

- Quality of CAF/TAF episodes. Vicky Palmer, the Quality Assurance Manager for the WSCB presented a report about the quality assurance of early help CAF assessments and Team Around the Family (TAF) episodes. Vicky reported that quarterly auditing of the quality of CAF/TAF episodes is undertaken by the multi-agency CAF QA group. To support continuous improvements to the quality of the episodes the QA group oversees the CAF/TAF training, publishes a quarterly QA report, has published a model CAF and guidance and has published a quality assurance framework including tools for professionals to use in supervision. The group has also developed a distance travelled tool for families to use and is planning to introduce a CAF Champion programme to partner organisations.
- HELP Domestic Abuse Perpetrators Programme. Roy Cook, from the Merseyside Community Rehabilitation Company - CRC (formerly part of the Probation Service) delivered a presentation about the HELP (Healthy Relationships Group Work Programme) which is designed for men with identified relationship difficulties with partners or ex-partners. It is usually used where there has been a domestic abuse related conviction but this is not a pre-requisite. Roy reported that the programme has been successful and its positive impact was evidenced in an evaluation by Liverpool John Moores University in 2014. The CRC aim to deliver sessions in Wirral and to extend the programme into a HELP for young people programme in partnership with local secondary schools.

### **2.3 WSCB Case Review- Process for Learning Reviews**

The WSCB has published an updated Learning and Improvement Framework – this is the document which sets out the process for undertaking reviews of cases. The framework includes a new process for reviewing cases which do not reach the threshold for a statutory Serious Case Review but which would benefit multi-agency learning by being reviewed. The WSCB is currently completing one learning review and will be undertaking two others over the summer.

### **2.4 WSCB Learning Review- Child K**

The WSCB's Serious Case Review committee are currently leading a multi-agency learning review in regards to the case of Child K. The case includes elements of possible forced marriage, intention to remove a child from the country, cultural and communication issues. The case was nominated for review as the WSCB felt it would highlight an issue most professionals would rarely come across and will create learning for the partnership which can inform the handling of future cases.

The committee convened a multi-agency Case Review group drawn from the agencies and professionals who had had direct contact with Child K and other members of the

family. The Case Review group met at the end of June to consider five identified key Practice Episodes from the case where there were missed opportunities for agencies to intervene more effectively. The group identified several themes from the case which will be used as the basis of recommendations. These are:

- The lack of awareness amongst agencies of key documents; specifically the Government multi-agency guidance: Handling Cases of Forced marriage (2009). The guidance in this document for agencies and practitioners was not consistently followed or applied and consequently there were missed opportunities to apply the 'one chance rule' to keep the young person safe.
- Multi-agency information sharing and coordination of approach was not as 'joined up' as it needed to be to ensure a robust multi-agency response and at times during the course of the episode agencies were involved in dual processes which were not effectively communicating with each other
- Throughout the 18 months of the episode there is little evidence that the emotional impact on Child K was adequately addressed. It is not evidenced that she was offered any counselling until right at the end of the episode and no assessment of her mental health was undertaken.

The WSCB is currently compiling the final report and recommendations and this will be published at the end of July. Learning from the review will be shared with the partnership and will be included in the WSCB's training programme. Child K is safe and well.

## **2.5 Evaluation of the Impact of Training**

The WSCB and SAPB are introducing this month a revised evaluation strategy which aims to evaluate the effectiveness of attendance at multi-agency WSCB and SAPB safeguarding training at improving practice and outcomes for children and young people. The evaluation has three stages:

- Stage One – at the end of the training course participants will agree what actions/ information they will take back to their agencies following attendance at the course
- Stage Two – three months after attendance at the course participants will be required to provide evidence of the impact of training (to policies, procedures, practice) on a questionnaire from the WSCB/SAPB
- Stage Three – six months after attendance a sample of participants will attend a facilitated focus group and will bring evidence of impact on outcomes. The focus group will inform a review of the training.

## **3.0 Recommendations:**

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

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