

Third Sector Development Report for the Children's Trust Board

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For the Children's Trust Board
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Overall aim of the report

To set out the progress of the Development Officer role from its start date 01 September 2016, with recommendations for its wider scope.

The role

The role is part-time; two days per week to focus on third sector development work and a further day each week to carry out engagement work for Wirral's Local Offer.

The aim of the role is primarily to support increased involvement of the third sector in the planning, policy development, commissioning and delivery of services for children and young people. This is to be achieved through better information, resources, skills and management. The plan has been to build on and further develop the previous work of Link Forum and other examples of collaboration.

Summary

The Linked-up network is becoming firmly established and the organisations and groups engaged with report that its main benefit is having a designated go-to place where they can be connected to the rest of the sector and the local authority. They report reassurance around being part of a larger network and the continuation of this work will further aid this reassurance.

Outcomes will continue to be developed in-line with feedback from the sector and other organisations. Key to this will be the relationships built and maintained with the third sector, local authority, health, social care and education and the promotion of the Linked-up network. It is essential that all Children's and Young People's organisations across Wirral know of the Linked-up network so that they can disseminate information to the third sector in a straight forward way.

From 31 August 2016 Local Offer will be moved back to the Local Authority and there will be a designated Local Offer worker. There will be a hand over period to ensure a smooth transition.

Key Achievements to Date

- The Linked-up Network is now operational with a named Linked-up worker, bi-monthly meeting, monthly bulletin and a section on Community Action Wirral's website for services working with children, young people and families, with frequent updates.
- A feedback link has been created between third sector organisations and the Hive. Community Action Wirral is a channel for this.
- Third sector representation has been increased on 6 boards, networks and CAF related groups.
- Communication between the safeguarding board and third sector has been facilitated through the circulating of safeguarding updates, promotion of the new safeguarding website and co-ordination of a safeguarding themed Linked-up meeting.
- Sentinel child death reporting to the third sector is operational.
- The University of Chester research project commissioned by the Youth Federation is supported by Community Action Wirral's links with both the third and public sector.
- Focus testing and feedback sessions carried out with a range of stakeholders, including young people, for the Local Offer site.
- The Local Offer site has been developed in-line with the feedback received.
- Local Offer continues to be promoted across Wirral

Recommendations

1. Review the role of children and young person development officer with a view to increasing the hours and capacity. This could be achieved through funding from a number of sources.
2. Consider increased working with groups to identify ways of gaining essential data to feed into other boards and funding bids.
3. Produce a co-ordinated schedule of key board meetings identifying specific parties involved and planned meeting dates and times. This is essential to ensure full representation and information collection and dissemination.
4. Move forward on an initiative to develop a young person's volunteering hub based on local need and national best practice.

Detailed Progress

Below is an amalgamation of the outcomes for the development officer post, and a detailed update about the progress to date.

1. Children and young people third sector organisations and groups are supported with increased communication, appropriate information sharing and partnership working

Linked-Up

A campaign called “Have your Say” was launched and third sector organisations and groups were invited to share their views about what worked well in the previous Link forum and what they would like to be done differently. Information was given to over 200 organisations and groups, 54 responded by on-line survey, postal survey, email and telephone. One to one meetings were arranged and qualitative data was gathered.

The aim was to establish a good baseline of feedback around the overall needs of the sector. Based on this feedback the Linked-Up network was developed, the core components of which are a named Linked-up worker, a monthly bulletin, a bi-monthly meeting and a page on Community Action Wirral’s website for services working with children and young people which is frequently updated.

In response to the feedback a bi-monthly meeting is held at St James centre, with a key speaker and pertinent theme such as safeguarding. There is a time-managed issues and challenges section where key themes are noted and communicated to the appropriate individual or group. The feedback has been that the sector needs to feel listened to, understood and also responded to and it was agreed this is a productive way to do that. There is now a need for formalising the feedback and response process in a clear way that can be disseminated to the whole Linked-up network.

The bulletin is sent monthly to third and public sector organisations, groups and partners. It is a round-up of key articles from the web page. All parties are encouraged to communicate promotions and service changes to be shared. The local CYP third sector vacancies links have the most clicks per open in the bulletin. The bulletin is monitored and the links and articles that are of most interest to services are recorded and used to inform future bulletins.

The bulletin is currently running at a 30% average open rate on a list of 232 contacts. Mail Chimp (2016) report the average for a third sector bulletin of its kind is 20.3%. It is likely the open rate will increase as understanding and awareness of the Linked-up network grows. The traffic on the web page is also monitored. The month of April showed 85 hits to the page. The figures show that there is interest being generated and with on-going promotion of the Linked-up network and continued feedback on content from the sector, this figure is also set to increase.

The Hive

A formal feedback channel between the third sector youth organisations and the Hive has been established. Organisations have a way to find out information and raise questions or issues around the new youth zone coming to Wirral. Organisations also have the opportunity to become involved in the Hive's travel consultations. All updates from the Hive are included in the monthly bulletin.

2. Third sector representation and involvement in the shaping of services, being delivered for the benefit of children and young people on Wirral, is increased

Representation is a high priority. Ensuring Wirral's third sector has quality and appropriate representation across boards, steering groups and meetings is key to their involvement in how services are being shaped.

The Linked-up worker currently attends;

Children's Trust Board
Early Help Strategic Board
All Age Disability Strategy Partnership
NEET action group
Youth Reference Group
Barnardo's Northwest Meeting

There is new representation on the Safeguarding Board due to commence at the next meeting.

The Staying Safe group and Improving Life Chances Group representation will continue and through the Linked-up network new organisations have come forward for the CAF Quality Assurance Group. The Linked-up network was used to reach third sector groups and organisations to promote MASH training attendance, additional training dates were added to manage the demand. The network was also used to promote the role of the CAF champion and the previous Linked-up meeting had a CAF champion theme. There was a suggestion for a CAF champion as part of the Linked-up network that organisations could access for support in a straight forward way. This is still under discussion, an update will be given in the next report.

Organisations are encouraged to think about how they can get involved at strategic level where appropriate by emphasising the importance of good representation and talking about the benefits for both service and sector this has.

Third sector board members are asked to attend Linked-up meetings to share information with other organisations and groups whilst gathering sector feedback to inform future board meetings.

3. Children and Young Peoples third sector groups compliance with Wirral Safeguarding Children's Board standards is increased

This outcome is to be supported by training from the safeguarding board. In the interim, the safeguarding board attended January's Linked-Up meeting to up-date the sector on changes taking place and plans for the future. Their presentation was well received.

Through the Linked-up network the third sector CYP organisations and groups have been informed how they can access safeguarding training. The Safeguarding up-date has been circulated and the new safeguarding site promoted. The response to the new site has been positive, particularly around the ease of use and simplicity of booking training.

The Sentinel system for child death reporting is operational. When a child on Wirral dies this anonymous information is communicated to relevant and appropriate third sector organisations, by the Linked-up worker, they are then directed to the Sentinel system to complete the standardised forms.

4. Future need, gaps in provision and funding opportunities are identified

At the last Linked-Up meeting it was highlighted that some organisations have long waiting lists for essential services being delivered, such as programmes for children affected by domestic abuse. Continuing to identify areas of need and feed back to the Children's Trust Board, and other relevant parties, helps to ensure there is full awareness of what is happening at a service delivery level within the children and young people's third sector organisations. It will be on the next Linked-up agenda to discuss how we can formalise this and make it more effective by capturing and reporting on specific waiting list data.

A research project commissioned by the Youth Federation and being undertaken by the University of Chester is now in progress. The project is the mapping of youth provision on Wirral covering public, private and third sector services. The research will show any overlaps and gaps in service provision. It will make recommendations built on the findings and based on similar projects carried out by the same research team in other areas.

This is an excellent opportunity to identify areas for partnership working as a result of the evidence generated. The research has been keenly promoted in 1:1 meetings with groups; it was touched upon at the Early Years Strategy board and is on the agenda for the next Linked-up meeting. The University of Chester will also attend May's Locality Events to promote this further. The data from Community Action Wirral's database has facilitated links between the University of Chester and both the public and third sector.

5. Children and Young Peoples third sector organisations have increased awareness and understand the influence of the Children and Young Peoples Plan

This outcome is a focus for development. The main theme for July 2016 Linked-up meeting is Wirral Borough Council's Twenty Pledges and what these mean for third sector children's services. Based on the outcome of this meeting, ways to promote the pledges will be explored. Meeting with the relevant pledge champions will be a good place to start. This progress will be reported to the Children's Trust Board at the next board.

6. All stakeholders, including young people, are engaged with around the development and promotion of Wirral's Local Offer

The initial stages of the local offer development work were based around gathering feedback from the new website. In-depth focus testing with a class of young people with SEND from Wirral Met College was carried out. Various schools, parents groups, youth groups, and community groups have given feedback not only on the visuals and mechanics of the site but also around the content and how helpful and informative it is. This feedback is published on the local offer site www.localofferwirral.org.

The youth theatre is producing a video for the Local Offer site created around the feedback given in focus groups. The video is an overview of who the site is for and how to use it. It is currently being translated into BSL. The video will be live on the site by the end of May.

A wider youth participation group is currently being formed. The focus of the group will be the content of the Local Offer and the wider SEND reforms. The group will meet quarterly and the information gathered will feed directly into the All Age Disability Strategy Partnership Board and other relevant boards.

The Local Offer promotion and marketing campaign is being carried out, this includes demonstrations of the site to various schools, community groups and third sector organisations. Schools will continue to be targeted for this promotion and it is now being extended to reach job centre plus staff, one stop shops, libraries and other services that will benefit from a working knowledge of the Local Offer site.