

8 October 2019

## Right for Children Transformation programme

Ward(s) All

**Portfolios:** Councillor Chris Towe – Education and Skills

### Executive Summary:

This reports provides a further update on progress against the activities as set out in our Walsall Right 4 Children (WR4C) Transformation programme launched in September 2018

Our WR4C Transformation Programme is intended to reduce the circumstances which lead to children requiring a statutory intervention, whether this is related to keeping children safe with families, getting a child back into full time education or preventing a child from re-offending.

Key areas of progress include:

- **Our WR4C Big Conversation** – Collaboration with children, young people and families, with the aim of informing and co-designing our transformation programme.
- **Collaboration with partners** including schools to develop an evidence based locality offer that meets the needs of children in each locality and provides them and their families with the right help at the right time.
- **Internal redesign** of Children's Services – including the realignment of resources to localities, where it makes sense to do so and developing more targeted services to meet the needs of our most vulnerable children.

### Reason for scrutiny:

To provide members with a progress update of our 'Walsall Right For Children' Transformation Programme.

### Recommendations:

The report to be noted.

### Background papers:

Scrutiny reports presented on 25 September 2018 and January 2019

Appendix 1 - Transformation overview

Appendix 2 – Big conversation overview

Appendix 3 – If Walsall was 100 children

**Resource and legal considerations:**

Not applicable to this report

**Council Corporate Plan Priorities:**

The 'Right for Children' transformation programme will contribute to a number of our Council Corporate Plan Priorities:

1. People: The transformation programme will aim to work with children, young people and their families to ensure they have increased independence, improved health and can positively contribute to their communities.
2. Internal Focus: The programme is focussing on a whole system change to ensure that within Children's Services we are as efficient and effective as we can be.
3. Children: The main focus of the transformation programme is to ensure that the right support is in place so that children can have the best start and are safe from harm, happy, healthy and learning well.
4. Communities: Our transformation programme will connect and strengthen relationships with Walsall communities and ensure that they are resilient with all housing needs for children and young people being met in safe and healthy places that build a strong sense of belonging and cohesion.

**Citizen impact:**

We will listen to children, young people and their family's current experiences and understand and learn from when services make a difference and when they do not. As users of our service, children and families are best placed to tell us what it feels like to live in Walsall and to be in need of help and support. We have an ambition to work in true collaboration with children, young people and families to develop and deliver our transformation programme (this work has started through our Big Conversation programme).

**Environmental impact:**

Not applicable for this report

**Performance management:**

Project governance of the 'Right for Children' transformation programme sits within the Council's wider Proud Programme and associated corporate transformation plans.

Within the "Right for Children" programme, monthly transformation programme board meetings, chaired by the Director for Children's Services, oversee and monitor progress against key milestones and work stream plans, identify risk and take appropriate action to mitigate and unblock obstacles. The board is supported by colleagues from the corporate transformation team.

The programme lead, identifies resource requirements and ensuring they are in place at the appropriate time based on the project plan Each work stream has a lead officer with responsibility for the delivery of the work stream plan of the transformation programme. They are supported in their work by the transformation lead and appropriate stakeholder.

**Reducing inequalities:**


The aim of our 'Right for Children' Transformation programme is to ensure that all children have the right support, in the right place, at the right time, for as long as it is needed to enable them to be safe from harm, happy and learning well with self-belief, aspiration and support to be their best.

**Consultation:**

Throughout the transformation programme there has been consultation with our workforce, children, young people and their families and partners (see appendix 1).

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## Report

### 1. Our WR4C Big conversation

1.1 In February 2019 we started our programme of consultation, engagement and collaboration with children, young people and families.

As part of the first phase of the programme we asked all practitioners to have 2 conversations with children and two conversations with parents exploring what their current experience is of services received from Children Services and what changes they feel we need to consider as part of our new way of working.

Over an 8 week period practitioners across Children's Services facilitated 143 individual conversations with children, young people and parents. In addition, the lead for transformation facilitated 6 focus groups – one with young people with experience of being in care and 5 groups with parents/carers who had experienced a range of interventions from Early Help and Child Protection, right through to their children being taken into care. A specific focus group was also undertaken with fathers.

#### 1.2 Outcome from the conversations

To ensure that the collective voices of children, young people and their families are being heard and impacting on our practice and transformation programme, we have opted to create a number of visual tools to capture the themes from the conversations:

We have created **4 puzzle pieces** –visualising the things they said that we are already doing well, the things we can improve upon and their vision for our future WR4C journey. The last puzzle piece represents the things children and their families would change if they were the boss of children services.



1.3 These puzzle pieces will go alongside the 4 already created by our staff to form part of our Walsall Right 4 Children journey map (see attached).

We have also created an “If I was the boss...” poster (see attachment 2) detailing what children and their families have said they would do if they were the boss of children’s services. This feedback has been captured into 4 themes:

- Things they would do around communications
- Things they would do around relationships
- Things they would do about the people providing help
- Things they would do about the type of help

## 1.4 Actions and next steps

The big conversation is not stopping here... we want to ensure that we continue to listen and act on what children and families are saying as well as seek opportunities to develop a much more collaborative relationship with them in our day to day practice and transformation journey.

So we are taking following actions:

- We are collating our collective response on actions we have taken as a result of the first phase of our Big Conversations and will feed this back in a 'you said we did' tool to all children and families who have taken part in the Big Conversation.
- We are establishing a WR4C parent group to work with us, to help us develop a number of areas of transformation. The first priority is to work with us to improve communication. The parent group are developing some practical tools to support practitioners to communicate better with children and families.
- We are developing the Big Conversation into a sustainable tool that we can use as part of our ongoing practice across the directorate.

## 2 Collaboration with partners

2.1 As part of our WR4C transformation journey, on the 11<sup>th</sup> April, we started a process of co-designing future support for those vulnerable pupils who are at risk of missing out of education (e.g. those who have been excluded or on reduced timetables). The workshop was attended by 89 schools leaders (Head Teachers, Academy Trust CEO's and Governors) representing early years, primary, secondary and special school settings. The information gathered through the workshop is being taken forward by an operational design group (comprising representatives from Schools, Local Authority and Health) to develop our Inclusion and Wellbeing offer - see section 3.2.

2.2 This event with schools was followed by locality events in June and September. Which brought leaders from different organisations across the localities together to learn more about what is on offer to help children, young people and families in the locality and to reflect if the offer is meeting the needs of the children in this locality.

The events included a 'market place' where practitioners could network and gather lots of information of what different organisations have on offer for children and young people they are working with this includes school health, CAHMS, voluntary sector providers, Early Help, Community Safety, Housing, etc.

The market place was followed by a workshop reflecting on the needs of children in each locality (see appendix 3) and considering whether the offer across the partnership was sufficiently meeting the localities needs and the actions needed across the partnership to address gaps, overlaps, etc.



### 3 Internal redesign of Children Services

#### 3.1 Social Care new way of working:

Following two rounds of whole service consultations and a series of briefing sessions, a briefing pack was distributed across Children's Social Care and an Expression of Interest pack to those staff directly impacted by the redesign. Closing date for EOI was 13<sup>th</sup> September. During the EOI we have provided opportunities for people to go and visit localities to get a feel for the places they will be working in and talk to existing practitioners they will be working with.

We are aiming to have confirmed new areas of work with all social workers by October half term and adopt a phased implementation.

The Asset business case was approved at CS Capital Board and due for consideration at Corporate Asset Strategy Group in October. See business case attached

We were informed on 18 September that our bid to the Department of Education to develop the Family Safeguarding Model as part of our Locality model in Walsall has been successful and will bring investment of £ 2.4 m.

Family Safeguarding (originally developed in Hertfordshire) is designed to improve how services are provided for children in need and children in need of protection by establishing multi-disciplinary teams with children's social workers, probation officers, adult recovery workers and mental health practitioners coming together to resolve the main family problems that cause harm to children's health and development.

The new arrangements will focus on a whole family approach and make it easy for parents to access all the support they need from within one team, to help them deal with the complex issues of domestic abuse, mental health and drug/alcohol abuse that harm their lives and those of their children. By using motivational practice to enable many more parents to accept help, Family Safeguarding provides specially designed individual and group work programmes to change abusive behaviours, improve parental mental health and reduce harmful substance misuse. It was shown to keep many more children safely within their families, drastically reducing their exposure to harmful parental behaviours, admissions into public care, improving their school attendance and their life chances.

Evaluation report can be accessed using following link:  
<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/family-safeguarding-hertfordshire-an-evaluation>

**3.2 Development of an Inclusion and Wellbeing offer (funded through School Forum)** – aligned to our Inclusion Strategy, the team will be offering support to all schools to better meet the needs of vulnerable children and avoid the need to exclude.

The support will consist of:

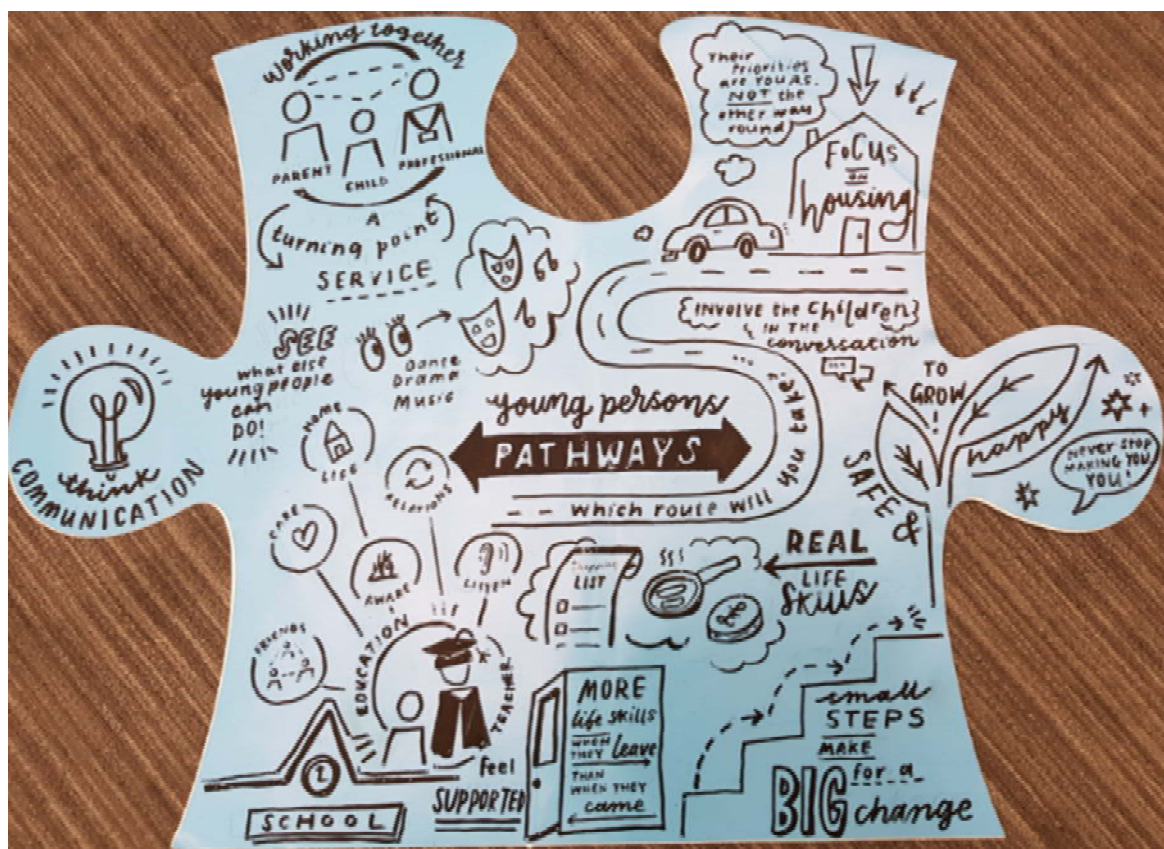
- A universal offer to all schools to enable them to be more inclusive – this will include a training offer (prioritising Restorative Practice) and sharing good practice and guidance)
- A targeted offer to those schools with a high exclusion rate last academic year – support will include support to leaders to review related policies and procedures, support to staff teams including one-to-one support conversations' along with opportunities for a whole school approach to develop social and emotional skills and resilience including supporting



children and young people to build positive relationship with peers and adults.

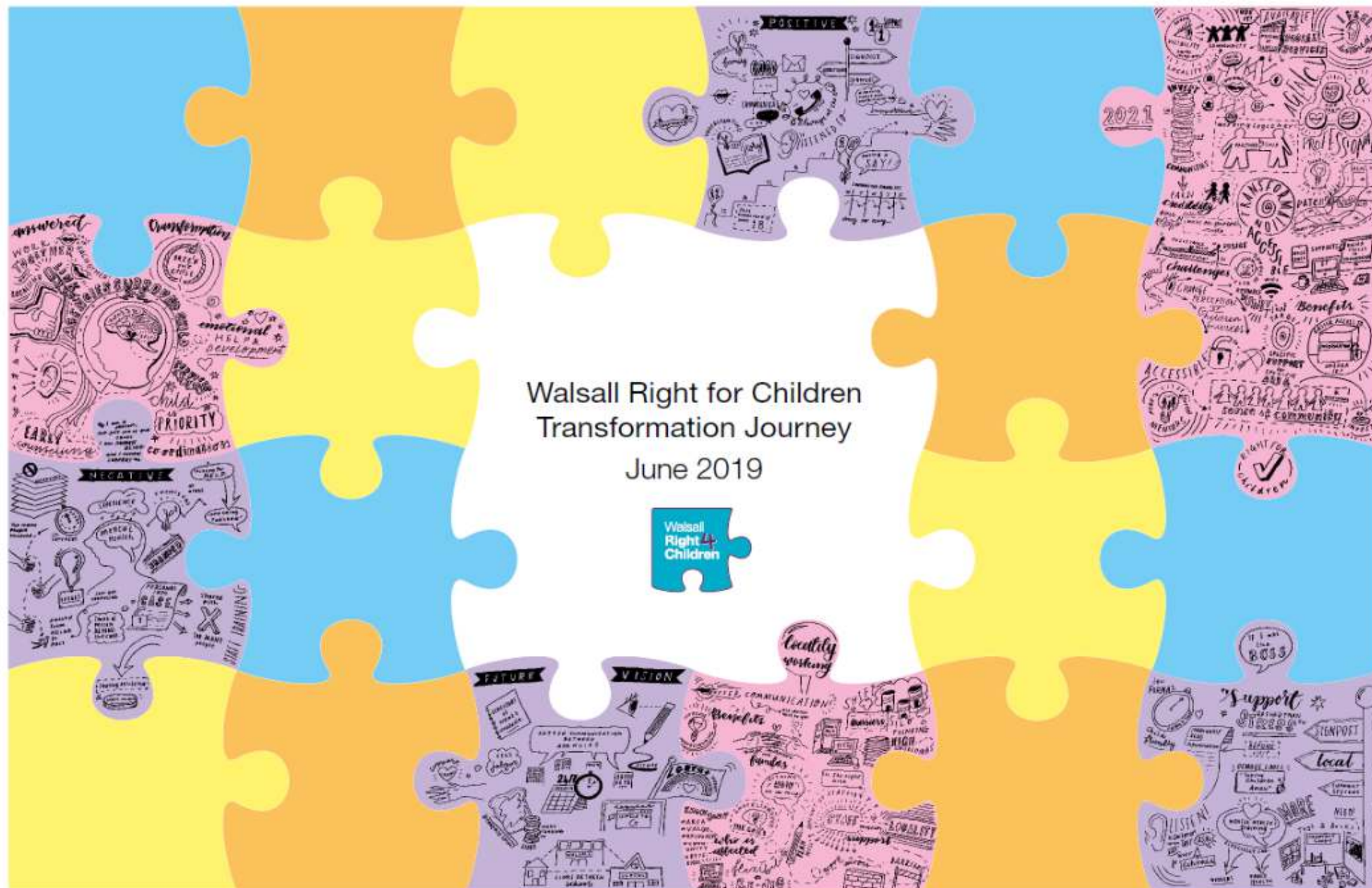
- Specialist one to one support for children who have had more than two fixed term exclusion or are at risk of permanent exclusion. Support will include a 'temporary pathway to a 'Team Around the Child,' approach, introducing detailed individual/bespoke agreed actions forming 'My Inclusion Plan', utilised where any CYP whose needs require a different type of support and delivered at their school or appropriate agreed alternative setting.

**3.3 The development of an Adolescent Support Hub named 'Turning Point' by our young people.** The service is aimed at young people at risk of coming in to care. The below 'puzzle piece' has been designed by young people who have been involved in the development of the service and provides an overview of what the service will be delivering:



18 <sup>th</sup> September	Sept- March 19	March – June 19	June – Dec 19
Vision launch	CS Internal reflection and design	CS Internal design and develop a WR4C vision with partners	Restructure implementation Locality Partnership development and planning
<p>Setting out our WR4C vision and transformation principles at our staff conference:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Child/ / family centred</li> <li>- Less assessing</li> <li>- Less handovers</li> <li>- More focus on supporting families rather than the process</li> <li>- Relationship based support (Restorative Practice)</li> <li>- Connecting with the community (strength-based approach)</li> <li>- Reduced case loads</li> <li>- Evidence informed approaches</li> </ul> <p><b>Outputs:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- 392 staff members engaged</li> <li>- Staff puzzle pieces</li> <li>- WR4C cross directorate teams</li> </ul>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Mapping our current service delivery and key pressure points from a child's journey perspective</li> <li>2. Design of and consultation on new way of working arrangements that supports our WR4C vision</li> <li>3. What works Diagnostic on evidence minded organisation</li> <li>4. Two formal consultations with Children's Services Staff going through proposals</li> <li>5. Start process of working with children, young people and parents in designing our WR4C programme through our 'Big Conversation'.</li> </ol> <p><b>Outputs:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 400+ staff members engaged in two consultation rounds</li> <li>• Snap survey on communication and authenticity</li> <li>• MASH partnership 'Health Check'</li> <li>• 15 WR4C Change leaders</li> <li>• 143 children, Parents/carers engaged in the Big Conversation</li> </ul>	<p>Internal review: We have:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Final Social Care structures and communicate you 'said we did' to staff</li> <li>2. Develop the Service for Adolescents</li> <li>3. Redesign of Access and Achievement</li> <li>4. Develop a more effective Supported Housing pathway for young people</li> </ol> <p>Extending our WR4C journey externally</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Partnership event with schools - 11<sup>th</sup> April</li> <li>- Locality Partnership events during June/July (with CS, schools, health, Police)</li> <li>- Strategic discussions re Family safeguarding model</li> </ul> <p><b>Outputs:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Big Conversation puzzle pieced and poster</li> <li>- 'You said we did'</li> <li>- Supported housing – cost reduction</li> </ul>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Strengthen partnership working at the Front Door</li> <li>2. Develop and develop social worker practice in localities</li> </ol> <p>Note with 2+3 - including potential 'getting ready' for the Family Safeguarding model pending decision making by the DiE</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>3. Develop WR4C locality partnership approach and offer September 19</li> <li>4. Develop the Permanency Hub</li> <li>5. Launch the Service of Adolescents (Oct)</li> <li>6. FDAC launch (Dec)</li> <li>7. Develop a model for FGC</li> <li>8. Development of a emotional health and wellbeing offer</li> <li>9. Staff Conference – 'Building effective relationships/promoting relational systems' - 17<sup>th</sup> September 2019</li> <li>10. Big Conversation 'you said we did' and collaboration</li> </ol>





Staff Conference 18/09/2018

The Big Conversation Feb 2019

**Title** WR4C Staff consultation overviewInternal ☒ External ☐ Confidential ☐**Prepared by** Isabel Vanderheeren**Date** June 2019

## Big Conversation overview

## 1. Overview

In February we started our programme of consultation, engagement and collaboration with children, young people and families.

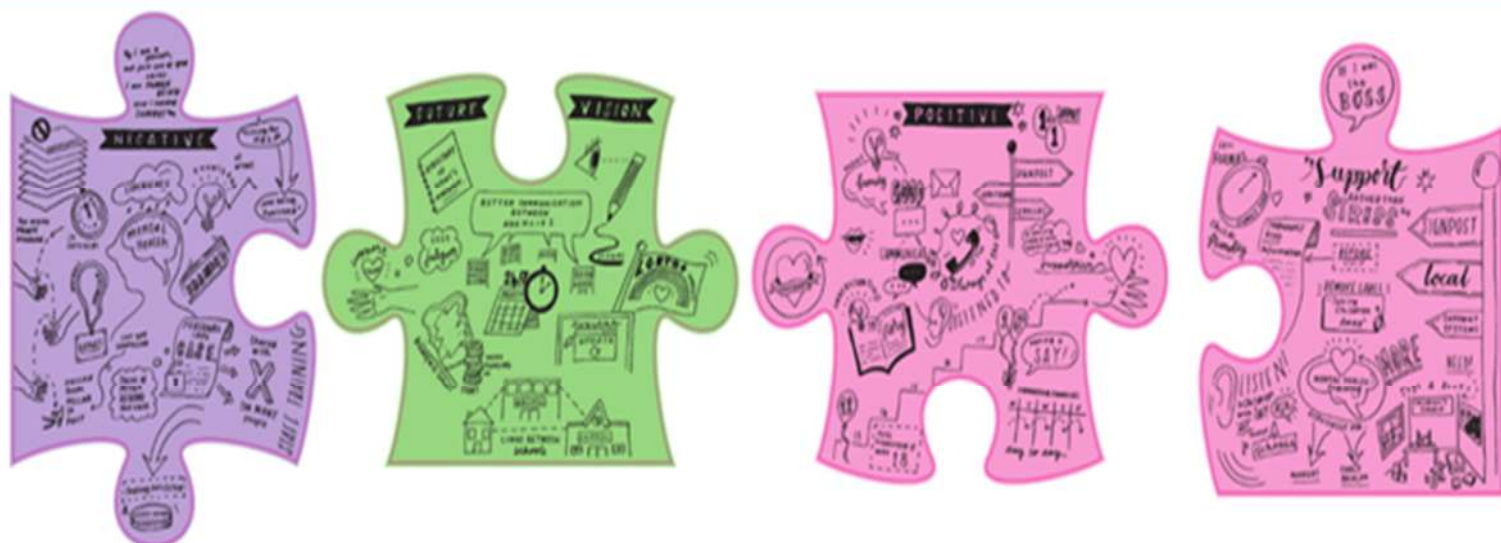
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## 2. Outcome from the conversations

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These puzzle pieces will go alongside the 4 created by staff to form part of our Walsall Right 4 Children Journey map (see attached).

We have also created an “If I was the boss” poster (see attached 2) detailing what children and their families have said they would do if they were the boss of children’s services. The feedback has been captured into 4 themes:

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These reflection tools have been issued to all staff.

### 3. Actions and next steps

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- We are developing the Big Conversation into a sustainable tool that will be able to be used as part of ongoing practice across the directorate.





## About relationships



The children need to get to know the social worker as much as they know the children

Child should respect the worker and good relationships to be built and trust each other

Ask social worker to spend more time with the families.

To tell me things about my family

Old carers made to keep in touch with

Be honest

Try and get closer with children and help them get what they want

## About communication



Explain to children the reason they come into care

Get back to me – If I ask you something get back to me, I know you're busy but this is my life, just send me a text

Be more supportive and listen... Explain more and not scare children

Make sure everyone communicates to get the big picture

To make sure all staff listen to the child to get their point of view

My worker to be patient and listen to me

Workers to listen well and care for the child and be respectful to the child

Be more down with the common person (Don't talk down and remember they are human)

Get more out there so people don't think the worst when they hear social care

Be told when you are leaving

Liked to be listened to

Listen to the whole story "more understanding"

## What children, young people & parents told us when asked

Walsall Right4Children

### If I was the boss of Children's Services, I would....



Children enable to make their own decisions

Make sure kids are being good

Get professionals in! And they are able to do their job

Don't tell me 'you can't tell me' – this is my life I have a right to know what's going on

Carers to have back-up carers, and support in case anything happens

Contact workers should not wear their council badge, it's embarrassing

Be able to choose your social worker incase you don't get on with them

I would also make sure all children were happy with their social workers

Get more people to work there

Social workers to treat children well

Work harder for children

I would make sure that all social workers has experience of working with lots of different families and young people as we are all different. I would make sure they understand different cultures as sometimes when we look different, we are treated differently

Explain more about yourself

Make sure staff are trained, and don't cause a risk to children

Make sure carers know how to do their job

Make sure all the people have a home

Work closer with parents

Employ the best staff

Make sure the children were safe

Change how schools work with kids because personally some kids get put in pru's for the easier option...

I would make sure all parents has as many chances as possible to take care of their kids

More youth provision

There should be monthly reviews about whether a kid should be put in foster care and main stream school

Make the review form more fun

## About the type of help



Make children more aware of what we do to help children and what's set in place for children who need us

This is because I has a positive outcome while working with social service

Invest more funding into Mental Health issues for young people

Give all the children in foster care and the ones out of care an opportunity to come together to discuss ideas of how their experience in care was. I would also have a group where everyone living in Walsall who have been in care or left foster care and take them out to the cinema or a meal

Make sure no one has to wait to get help

Make sure all kids get a choice in where they want to be placed (area wise) and if they weren't happy with who they lived with move them as soon as they can

Give people chances

Change the way kids get excluded

Workers need to support children to help them to achieve their opinions and thoughts

More work on Safeguarding young people online

I would make sure that all social workers has experience of working with lots of different families and young people as we are all different. I would make sure they understand different cultures as sometimes when we look different, we are treated differently

Visits accordingly to circumstances not just the same for everyone

Make sure I could have a sleepover at my moms house

Make sure family look as normal as possible. This includes contact workers being the same race and colour as me. They should not carry a sheet around or write on paper or books

