

13 February 2020

Walsall Right 4 Children (WR4C) Transformation update

Ward(s): All

Portfolios: Councillor Chris Towe - Education and Skills

1. Aim

Our WR4C Transformation is a Children's Services cross directorate change programme. It aims to support the right children, in the right place, with the right support for as long as needed and reduce the circumstances that 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.

2. Recommendations

For members to provide necessary challenge and support across our transformation programme and the associated priorities.

3. Report detail – know

3.1 Our transformation programme commenced on the 18th September 2018 with the launch of our WR4C vision. Since this launch we have made significant progress – see appendix 1 Transformation journey overview

3.2 The programme and its associated priorities has been informed by evidence derived from our performance framework, recent inspections and feedback from children and parents. Priorities for 2020 focus on 5 key areas for improvement:

- Understanding and responding effectively to the needs of children and their families in each of our four localities to enable sustainable change and contribute to the creation of resilient communities
- Developing an effective offer of support to vulnerable adolescents
- Reducing exclusions
- Effective identification of children with special education needs and disabilities (SEND) and the development of a local offer that meets these needs.
- Improving our collaboration with children and their families in the development and design of services.

Financial information

3.3 Children's Services has secured £2.6m additional funding from the DfE to support our programme of transformation. This funding will be used to develop multi-disciplinary teams as part of our locality working to effectively respond to children in need of protection where there are identified needs relating to domestic abuse, mental health and substance misuse.

- 3.4 A further £20,000 has been secured via the Police & Crime Commissioner's Early Intervention Youth Fund to pilot a project for children and young people at risk of exclusion from education, on reduced timetable and/or excluded from education.
- 3.5 School Forum endorsed the use of High Needs Block reserve of £497,300 to fund a multi-disciplinary 'Inclusion Offer' to effectively reduce exclusions.

Reducing Inequalities

- 3.6 Our WR4C vision sets out our ambition 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.

This vision and related priorities clearly contributes to the Marmot objectives with a specific focus on:

- giving every child the best start in life
- enabling all children, young people and adults to maximize their capabilities and have control over their lives
- ensuring a healthy standard of living for all
- creating and developing sustainable places and communities
- strengthening the role and impact of ill-health prevention

4. Decide

In order to respond effectively to the 5 identified areas of improvement, 5 cross-Directorate transformation priorities have been established for 2020:



5. Respond

Development of the locality model

Our locality model continues to develop with social workers who are supporting children on Child in Need plans or Child Protection plans operating on a locality footprint as of the 6 January. This means that social workers are able to link in better with local resources including schools to support this vulnerable group of children and families. In addition, following the investment through the DfE, we are working with partners to develop Family Safeguarding model as part of our locality working. The model implements multi-disciplinary teams across our 4 localities 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.

This model will allow practitioners to focus on a whole family approach and make it easier 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.

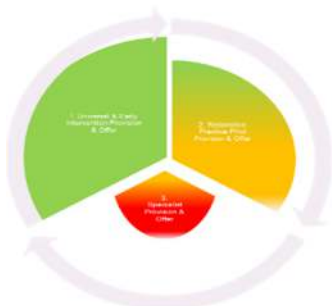
Our response to Adolescents

Our newly developed Adolescent Support Hub called 'Turning Point' by young people was launched in December 2019. The service is aimed at young people aged 10+ who are at risk of coming into care and focusses on preparing young people and their families for life, supporting family strengths and relationships and challenging and disrupting harm to children in and outside the family home. The service is developed in collaboration with young people who have experienced care and central to its success is the development of assets, capability and community in the lives of young people building both individual and social resilience.

We have commenced a programme of work internally and with partners (including education partners) to develop an effective response to young people at risk of exploitation using a contextual safeguarding approach. Contextual safeguarding, which has been developed by Dr Carlene Firmin at the University of Bedfordshire's Contextual Safeguarding Network, recognises that as young people grow and develop they are influenced by a whole range of environments and people outside of their family. For example in school or college, in the local community, in their peer groups or online. Children and young people may encounter risk in any of these environments. Sometimes the different contexts are inter-related and can mean that children and young people may encounter multiple risks. Contextual safeguarding looks at how we can best understand these risks, engage with children and young people and help to keep them safe.

Reducing exclusions

Our response to exclusions has been developed with schools and is informed by evidence of good practice. As a result we have created a multi-agency 'local offer' using a stepped approach to:



- Universal & Early Intervention offer to all schools within the Walsall borough
- Restorative Practice dedicated pilot offer to those schools with high exclusions based on data available from 2018/19
- Specialist dedicated offer to CYP at risk of exclusion

On 12 November 2019, a launch event was held where all schools were invited to share the local offer, introduced to the restorative practice model and provided with an opportunity to meet with the Hull Collaborative Academy Trust who have adopted the restorative practice model and have seen exclusions reduce significantly over the past 4 years. It was pleasing to see 54 schools in attendance at the launch. All schools have received written information about the offer. Early Help Inclusion Officers have been and continue to make contact with the schools they are the key contact for, with an offer for them and the Group Manager to attend individual meeting to discuss further.

The pilot project, funded via the West Midlands Police and Crime commissioner started in August 2019 and focussed on children and young people on reduced time tables and those at risk of or already excluded from education.

A range of 'engaging' activities were developed to offer CYP opportunities to 'have fun' over the summer whilst also being provided with a safe space to talk about their experiences, worries and to receive additional help and support where appropriate.

The activities were designed in across age groups - 4 to 10 year olds and 11 to 16 year olds and delivered by Early Help Practitioners and Ryecroft Community Hub. In total 44 CYP attended the Children Missing Education (CME) project, 15 under 11's, and 29 over 11's with a mixture of referrals received by Schools, Early Help and Youth Justice.

Of the 15 children under the age of 11 since returning back to school in September

- 8 are now back in school, 2 of which are now being supported via Early Help services.

- 2 remain permanently excluded and continue to attend the 'next steps CME' programme, have also been opened to, and receiving help from Early Help services.

- 3 have returned to school on a reduced timetable

- 2 remain waiting for school placement

Of the 29 CYP over the age of 11 since starting back to school in September 2019

- None have received fixed term exclusions

- 1 has been permanently excluded

- 1 remains waiting for a school placement and is being supported by Early Help services

- The feedback from CYP, parents/carers and from schools has been extremely positive with one young person securing work experience Friday evenings and Saturday daytime to help develop further skills, one young person producing a piece of work that is being uploaded to an Android Play Store.

Collaboration with Children and families

Our 'Big Conversation' programme is continuing. Since November we have focussed on conversations with parents and children who have been permanently excluded since September 2019. The findings of these conversations will be published in February and the learning will inform our work around reducing exclusions.

6. Review

Project governance for the WR4C 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 programme lead, identifies resource requirements and ensuring they are in place at the appropriate time based on the project plan.

Different projects also link into

Background papers

Appendix 1 transformation Journey overview

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Proud Programme – Walsall Right 4 Children Update

January 2020
v1



Walsall Council

PROUD OF OUR **PAST** OUR **PRESENT** AND FOR OUR **FUTURE**

Context – Why transformation across Children's Services?

- **Our Needs Assessment** undertaken in December 2017 identified key areas of demand we needed to respond to:
 - Cost related to children in our care are going up - £23million
 - Increase in babies – including where families have had previous babies removed
 - Increase in 10-17 year olds – 52.8% of our cohort compared to 45.2% in 14/15
 - Projected demand:
 - Increase in unaccompanied asylum seeking children
 - Increase in children on child protection plans and impact of children becoming looked after
 - Increase in number of adolescents re-entering care
 - Presenting needs:
 - Abuse and neglect – as per other LAs
 - Prevalence of families in acute stress, family dysfunction and Domestic Abuse
 - More complex children across the system (Social Care, Education, Youth Justice)
 - More children missing education through exclusions, PT timetables and CME
- Focus on improving service delivery internally to the **right families** within the resources available – need for practice improvement to get the directorate in a position to enable:
 - Ofsted June 2017 – Required Improvement
 - Ofsted February 2019 - Inadequate SEND provision
 - 2 further big Ofsted inspections expected (SEND and ILACS)
- **Too much demand coming** into children Services - Secure **collaboration with partners** including voluntary sector organisations to enable to provide the right help at the right time
- **High Staff turn over** – ensure Walsall Children Services becomes 'The' place to work and staff feel proud and supported

Walsall Right for Children Vision

Our principles

- Listening and responding to the voices of children
- Restorative Practice... doing with, not for or to
- Focus on making a difference

What we will do

- We will help & support families to be their best
- We believe the best place for children is in a family home, or where this is not possible, an alternative stable and nurturing home
- We take action when children and young people need to be protected.
- We will work with our most vulnerable children and their families

Our priorities

- Locality working
- Quality of practice and support
- Improve achievement and close the gaps
- Develop a strong and stable workforce
- Review our commissioning approach

How we will do it

- Get the basics right for our children; a common sense whole system approach
- Strong leadership informed by 'what works'
- Mirror the lives and challenges of real families
- Implement evidence informed change
- Prioritise the stability of children in all aspects of their life
- Develop a culture of being proud of what we achieve

How will we know we have made a difference?

What children will tell us:

- I am protected from harm and exploitation
- Professionals know me and my family well
- I am not unnecessarily criminalised
- I am listened to and actively involved in decisions about me
- My family and I do not live in poverty, we are not hungry
- We have a home that is affordable, warm and safe
- I am supported to grow and develop and be resilient
- Education builds my confidence and prepares me for independency and adulthood

What impact we will experience from a service point of view:

- More children in full time education and less exclusions
- Reduction in reactive demand through our 'front door'
- Fewer children on a child protection plan
- Fewer children coming back for support following children's services ending support
- Reduction of children into our care
- Placement stability for our children who need to be looked after
- Reduction of children getting involved with crime
- Fewer complaints, more compliments
- Reduction in service costs
- Stable permanent workforce who feel proud working for Walsall

Our obsessions

- We develop quality connections, conversations and relationships
- We know our children and families well
- We are all champions for Walsall children



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PROUD OF OUR PAST OUR PRESENT AND FOR OUR FUTURE

18th September

Vision launch

Setting out our WR4C vision and transformation principles at our staff conference:

- Child/ / family centred
- Less assessing
- Less handovers
- More focus on supporting families rather than the process
- Relationship based support (Restorative Practice)
- Connecting with the community (strength-based approach)
- Reduced case loads
- Evidence informed approaches

Outputs:

- 392 staff members engaged
- Staff puzzle pieces
- WR4C cross directorate teams

Sept- March 19

CS Internal reflection and design

1. Mapping our current service delivery and key pressure points from a child's journey perspective
2. Design of and consultation on new way of working arrangements that supports our WR4C vision
3. What works Diagnostic on evidence minded organisation
4. Two formal consultations with Children's Services Staff going through proposals
5. Start process of working with children, young people and parents in designing our WR4C programme through our 'Big Conversation'.

Outputs:

- 400+ staff members engaged in two consultation rounds
- Snap survey on communication and authenticity
- MASH partnership 'Health Check'
- 15 WR4C Change leaders
- 143 children. Parents/carers engaged in the Big Conversation

March – June 19

CS Internal design and develop a WR4C vision with partners

Internal review:

We have:

1. Final Social Care structures and communicate you 'said we did' to staff
2. Develop the Service for Adolescents
3. Redesign of Access and Achievement
4. Develop a more effective Supported Housing pathway for young people
5. Development of Schwartz Round

Extending our WR4C journey externally

- Partnership event with schools -11th April
- Locality Partnership events during June/July (with CS, schools, health, Police)
- Strategic discussions re Family safeguarding model

Outputs:

- Big Conversation reflective tools
- 'You said we did'
- Practice tool developed with parents

June – Dec 19

Implementation of new way of working including Locality Partnership development and planning

1. Strengthen partnership working at the Front Door - Right Help, Right Time
2. Secured FS as our evidence based locality model
3. Embedding of RP through our practice lead
4. Develop WR4C locality partnership approach and offer
5. Developing a offer around school exclusion based on RP practice
6. FDAC development
7. Staff Conference – 'Building effective relationships/promoting relational systems'
8. Continue Pilot Schwartz Round as part of our culture change and looking after staff's well being
9. Big Conversation 'you said we did' and collaboration
10. Start the development of a family led decision making