

Right for Children Transformation programme

Ward(s) All

Portfolios: Cllr Tim Wilson. Children's

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 that lead to children requiring a statutory intervention, whether this is related to keeping children safe with families, getting children back into full time education or preventing children 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 securing a place on the DfE Strengthening Families Protecting Children programme for the implementation of Family Safeguarding as part of our locality model
- **Internal redesign** of Children's Services –
 - o Including the realignment of social workers to localities and
 - o The development of a new Adolescent Service, named Turning Point by our young people.

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 11th December 2018 and 25th April 2019

Appendix 1 - Transformation overview

Appendix 2 – Big conversation overview

Resource and legal considerations:

Not applicable to this report

Council Corporate Plan Priorities:

The 'Right for Children' Transformation Programme contributes to a number of our Council Corporate Plan priorities:

1. People: The programme will 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 focussed 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 primary objective of the 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. Through our WR4C Big Conversation we will work in true collaboration with children, young people and families to develop and deliver our transformation programme).

Environmental impact:

Not applicable for this report

Performance management:

Project governance for 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' 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 most notably , our Big Conversation

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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 two conversations with children and two conversations with parents exploring what their current experience is of services they receive from Children Services and what changes they felt we needed 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 six 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).

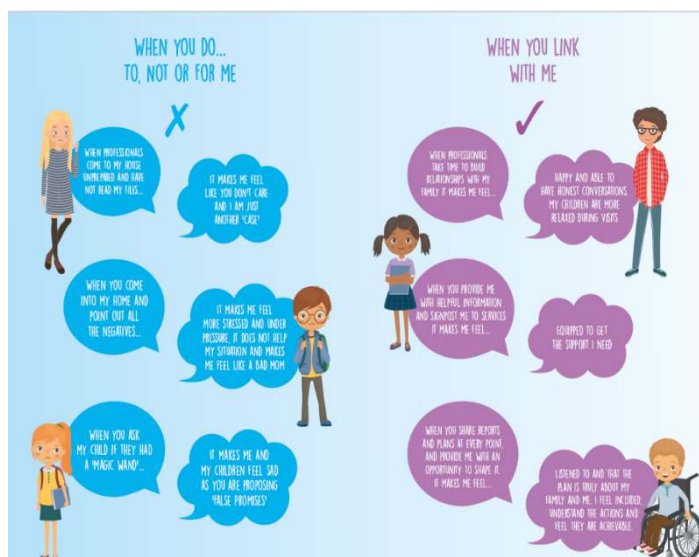
We have also created an “If I was the boss...” poster (see attachment 2) detailing what children and their families have said they would do if they were the boss of children's services. This feedback has been captured into 4 themes:

- 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 Impact of the Big Conversation to date

The WR4C parent group worked with us to develop a 'top tips' tool to support practitioners to communicate better with children and families. This tool has been distributed to all practitioners in MASH, Early Help Hub and IRS and they are using it to reflect on and improve their communication and restorative approach in working with families.



Each service across the directorate has considered children and families views and has responded through 'You Said, We Did'. Below are some examples of what action have been taken across services

| You said... | We did... |
|---|---|
| You didn't like using the phrase 'magic wand' without context or building relationships when collecting wishes and feelings | <p>We have developed our direct working tools to enable conversations about wishes and feelings in different ways.</p> <p>We are undertaking our assessments over a number of visits to ensure we can establish a relationship.</p> |
| You didn't like it when workers came unprepared or without reading the files | We provide workers with time to read the files when coming out to visit you and ensure through supervision and conversations with practitioners we support this good practice |
| You felt that practitioners were too focused on the negatives when visiting you and your family | We continue to develop our restorative practice approach. When completing a Child and Family assessment or an Early Help assessment we are focussing on your strengths as a family as well as talking to you about the areas of concerns. |
| You don't like it when we wear our ID badges, as you don't want others to know professionals are coming to visit you. | Our staff don't wear our ID badges, but have them available to show to you so you can check our ID. |

| | |
|---|--|
| You wanted practitioners to come with more information about help and support that is available | We are updating our leaflets and will ensure we make every contact count by providing you with the right information to enable you to help your family |
| Get us involved in developing our plans – so we understand it and own it. | All our staff are provided with training and support to use a restorative approach. We have started to support families leading their own meetings |

2 Collaboration with partners

2.1 As part of our WR4C transformation programme we have been co-designing our transformation journey with partners through locality events in June and September. These events brought together leaders from different organisations to learn more about what is on offer to help children, young people and families in each 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 about 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.



2.2 Our collaborative work with the Safeguarding Partnership and Walsall Together has been rewarded. On 18 September, we were informed that our bid to the Department for Education to develop the Family Safeguarding model as part of our locality model been successful.

This means that we will receive a significant investment and it could have not come at a better time as we launched this week our 'Right Help Right Time' guidance and will enhance current Walsall Right 4 Children Social Care locality model

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

Colleagues from Hertfordshire, on behalf of the DfE, visited us on the 14th October to start the planning process. We will be launching the programme on 1st April 2020.

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 13th 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 the end of October 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.

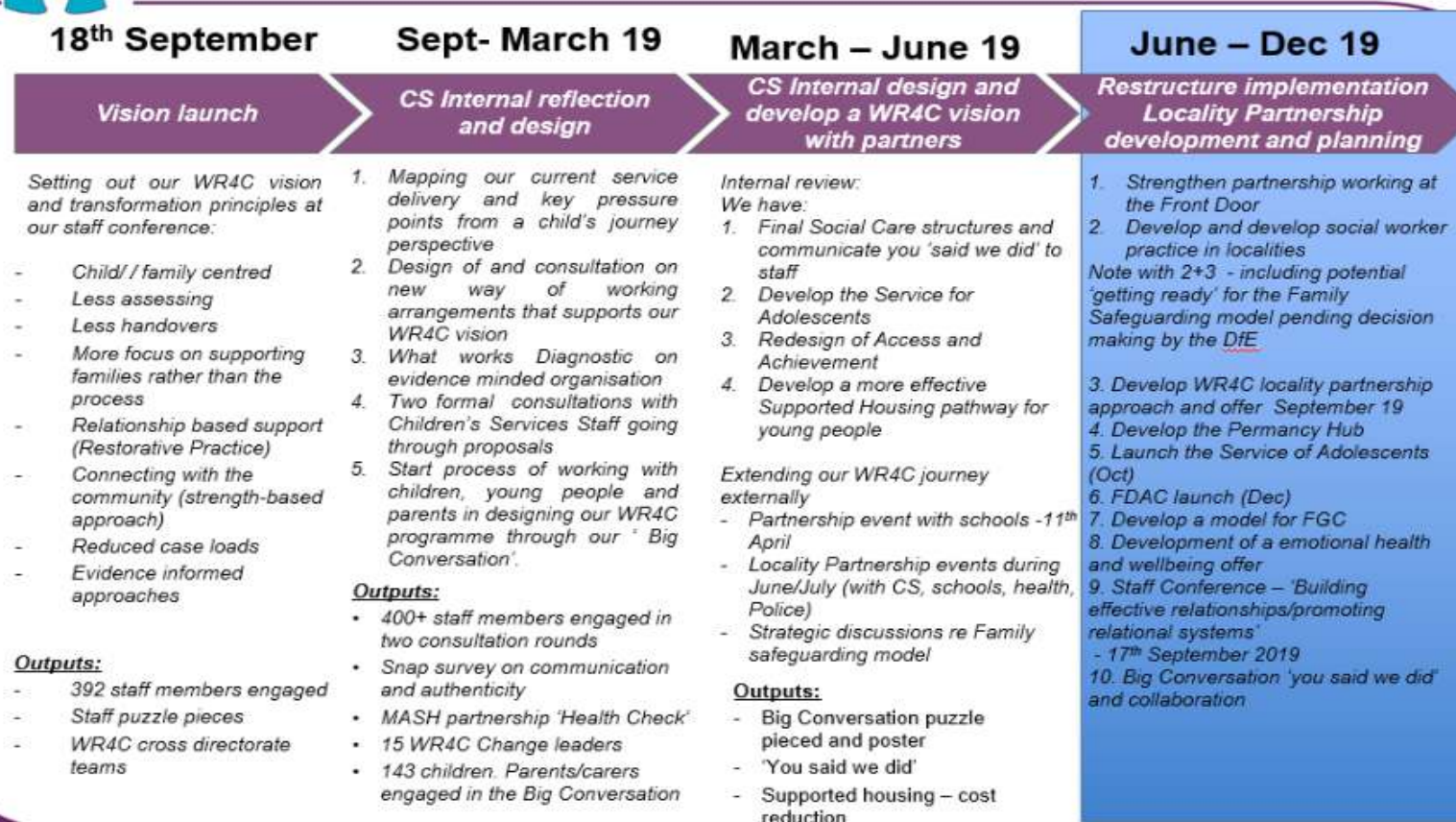
3.2 The development of an Adolescent Support Hub named 'Turning Point' by our young people. The service is aimed at young people at risk of coming in to care.

The Service for Adolescents will support young people aged 10 + who are at risk of coming into care. The service will work will be focus on work with young people and their families on preparation for life, supporting family strengths and relationships, 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 is developed on a strong core belief in the development of assets, capability and community in the lives of young people building both individual and social resilience.

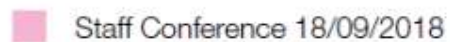
The 'puzzle pieces' over page has been designed by young people who have been involved in the development of the service and provides an overview of what the service will be delivering:



8



June 2019



The Big Conversation Feb 2019

| | |
|--------------|---|
| Title | WR4C Staff consultation overview |
|--------------|---|

Internal ☒ 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.

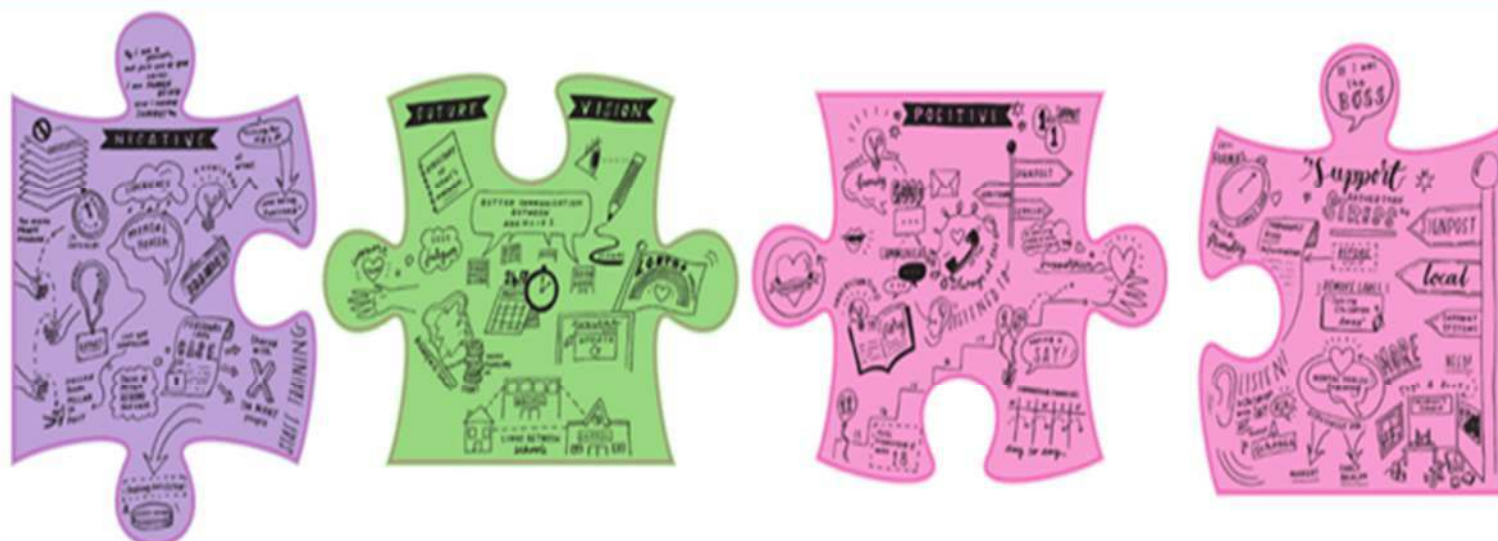
As part of the first phase of the programme we asked all practitioners to have 2 conversations with children and two conversations with parents exploring what their current experience is of services delivered by Children services and what changes they feel we need to consider as part of our new way of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

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

2. Outcome from the conversations

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

We have created **4 puzzle pieces** –visualising the things they said we were already doing well, the things we could 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.



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:

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

These reflection tools have been issued to all staff.

3. 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 collaborative approach 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
- Establishing a WR4C parent group to work with us, and help us to develop a number of areas as part of our transformation. The first priority is to work with us to improve communication. They 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 will be able to be used as part of ongoing practice across the directorate.

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

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

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

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)

Make sure everyone communicates to get the big picture

Liked to be listened to



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

Be told when you are leaving

Listen to the whole story "more understanding"

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, its embarrassing

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

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

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



Walsall
Right 4
Children

What children, young people & parents told us when asked

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

Make the review form more fun

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

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

About the type of help
HEL P

Give people chances

Change the way kids get excluded

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

Visits accordingly to circumstances not just the same for everyone

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

Make sure I could have a sleepover at my moms house

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

Make sure the children were safe

Employ the best staff

Work closer with parents

Work harder for children

Social workers to treat children well

Get more people to work there

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

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More work on Safeguarding young people online

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

About the people providing help

