

10 January 2019

Right for Children Transformation programme

Ward(s) All

Portfolios: Councillor Chris Towe – Education and Skills

Executive Summary:

Since the launch Our Right 4 Children vision in September we have made significant progress delivering activities in our Transformation Programme which 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.

Four key areas of progress include:

Our partnership with the What Works Centre (WWC), a national organisation funded through the Department for Education, working with Children’s Social Care in our quest to be an evidence-minded organisation.

October, saw the WWC undertake a diagnostic, informed by staff interviews, a staff survey, observations of team meetings, panel and practice improvement forums. This approach has helped us to reflect on current practice; the feedback report and recommendations is informing our next steps in improving the use of evidence, both strategically and operationally.

WWC and Children’s Services continue to collaborate.

In October we submitted an application to the What Works Centre (funded by the DfE) to become one of their Change Programme partners and receive additional funding to pilot a new way of working which is focused on moving services closer to families and communities through **basement social workers in schools**.

Unfortunately, our application was not successful.

As part of our Walsall Right 4 Children Transformation programme we are committed to work with schools in developing and implementing a collaborative plan that enables earlier identification of vulnerable children and better support to secure sustainable positive outcomes. We want to work better together with our vulnerable pupils to understand and address the ‘root cause’ of their needs ensure that all are engage or re-engage in full time education by offering the right package of support.

In doing this we want to ensure that, we build a better relationship between Schools and Social Care and therefore are keen to explore how we can progress the principles and thinking developed as part of our bid. We know through the survey 70 Head teachers completed that they also support this development.

We will therefore explore ways in which we can take this forward as part of our transformation programme and new operating model and will keep you updated on how we are proposing to do this.

- **Our prevention work stream** is taking a whole system approach to redesigning and reorienting resources where there is evidence that it makes sense to do so—this in the interest of children and young people. This means aligning Children’s Services resources to our locality arrangements (4 locality based teams) so that practitioners.
 - connect with the communities children, young people and families live in
 - build stronger relationships with the people
 - make better use of existing resources in communities
 - develop a more strength based approach aimed at securing better sustainable outcomes for children and young people and their families.

We are seeking the views of our workforce and key stakeholders about these new ways of working throughout November and December

Our Restorative Practice work stream seeks to develop consistent and effective relationship based services and practice that inspires children, young people and their communities to shape their own futures, build resilience to face challenges and confidence to resolve problems.

To date we have trained over 200 members of staff across the directorate. Responsibility for sharing and embedding good practice and generating the collective energy and enthusiasm needed to deliver sustainable change in the way we work with families is being supported by 36 ‘restorative champions’.

A developing partnership with the private, voluntary and community sector to identify new and innovative solutions to respond to our challenges and achieve the best outcomes for children, young people and their families. Our Commissioning work stream, advised by procurement colleagues and supported by the Local Government Association is seeking to develop and test new ways to:

- provide more effective supported housing pathways for young people leaving our care or at risk of homelessness.
- reducing the need for children to become looked after.

Reason for scrutiny:

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

Recommendations:

The report to be noted.

Background papers:

Scrutiny report presented on 25 September 2018.

Appendix 1 – What Works Centre Diagnostic November 2018.

Appendix 2 – Proposed Walsall Right 4Children operating Model

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 increase 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 support is in place so children can have the best start and are safe from harm, happy, health and learning well
4. Communities: Our transformation programme will connect 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 peoples and their family's current experiences and understand and learn from when services made a difference and when not. As the user of our service, they are best placed to tell us what it feels like to live in Walsall and in being 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.

Environmental impact:

Not applicable for this report.

Performance management:

Project governance of the 'Right for Children' transformation programme sits within the wider Transformation Programme arrangements.

Within the "Right for Children" programme, are monthly Programme Board meetings, chaired by the Director for Children's Services which oversees the monitor and progress against key milestones and against the work stream plans, identifies risk and takes appropriate action to mitigate and unblock obstacles. This Board is supported by the corporate transformation team.

The Project Board monitors progress, with the Project Lead, identifying resource requirements and ensuring they are in place at the appropriate time based on the project plan Each work stream has a lead responsible 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:

18 consultation sessions on our proposed new operating model took place during November and December engaging workforce and key stakeholders including Education, Public Health and Safeguarding Board.

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Report

1. Our Partnership with the What Works Centre

1.1 Walsall was chosen by the What Works Centre to be one of 21 Local Authorities partner to develop a pioneering partnership in becoming an Evidence Informed Organisation.

Our Transformation principles align with the aims and objectives set out by the What Works Centre and therefore this was a timely and exciting opportunity to work in partnership to both support and accelerate our transformation journey and enable us to become an evidence informed local authority.

Getting it right for children will rely on us having a confident and skilful workforce, in the right place, working with the right people to address the 'root causes' of children, young people and their family's needs.

Our ambitious vision will only be achieved if we make strategic and operational decisions that are consistently informed by evidence.

Our transformation programme will rely on evidence from a number of sources:

- national and international research
- through our knowledge and experience in Walsall (our needs assessment)
- through the relationship we have built with children, young people and families.

Using these sources of evidence strategically will ensure that throughout our transformation journey we will secure buy in from partners from the start, we make good decisions on resource allocation and the development of a menu of interventions which will make a difference to children and young people into care where it is the right thing to do, is critical going forward.

1.2 During October, The What Works Centre has spent time with us to complete a diagnostic. They conducted 20 interviews, a staff survey and observed a unit meeting, panel and practice improvement forum to help us to reflect on current practice and inform next steps in improving use of evidence strategically and operationally.

The Centre presented their findings and recommendations on 1 November 2018. See appendix 1.

1.3 The recommendations and their Evidence Minded framework will inform the next phase of our Right for Children transformation journey and ensuring that it is shaped by evidence which in turn will ensure we are delivering better outcomes for children and their families.

2. Prevention work stream update

2.1 Our 'Right for Children' 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.

Informed by our forensic needs assessment, our prevention strand is focussing in particular on developing effective response to:

- Babies who are at risk coming into care (especially those parents who have had previous children removed)
- Young people aged 10- 15 with complex needs (including Special Educational Needs and Disability and behaviour)
- Supporting children who are missing education, who are neglected, who have experienced or witness domestic abuse
- Supporting Families in acute stress.

2.2 Capacity to track, investigate, understand, and respond to the root causes associated with demand, identifying the preventative services required to help families to care for their children at home and to safely stop children from coming into care, where it is the right thing to do, is critical aim of this work stream.

2.3 Following the staff conference on the 18th September and consultation with key stakeholders we have developed a proposed Walsall Right 4 Children Operating Model (appendix 2). The proposed operating model is developed using following principles:

- Children and their family at the centre of what we do
- reducing the number of assessments and handovers
- Focus on support and help and move away from process driven.
- Relationship based support
- Connecting with our communities
- Evidence informed practice

2.4 The model is proposing following changes/ developments:

- Work with schools through our Inclusion Strategy to develop an aspirational entitlement and a robust prevention offer for all children so they can be happy, safe and learning well. We will work with leadership in schools to drive forward the Walsall Right 4 Children vision and good education standards.
- The development of a strong, well-coordinated Early Help Locality offer responding to the needs of children, young people and their families in each of the 4 localities. This work will be informed by the Insight programme.
- Remodelling of our 'Front Door' to strengthen our partnership arrangements, reduce inappropriate demand, reduce the number of assessment leading to no further actions and ensure children and families only have to tell their story once.
- Align Children's Services resources to locality working, where this is the right thing to do for children and families – this is including moving social workers from our Initial response team and safeguarding family support team to our 4 locality buildings.
- Develop a Walsall Right for Children Permanency Hub creating specialist social work knowledge and expertise in working with our legal colleagues and court for children and young people for who we think coming into care is the right decision. This will include a therapeutic Contact Service, development of a Family and Drugs Court and a specialist team supporting parents in preventing repeat removal of babies into care.
- A complete review of our Edge of Care Services and our Spindletree Residential Home is proposed to develop a more proactive and efficient response to our young people aged 10-15 with complex needs and families in acute stress with a focus on supporting families to stay together safely and sustainably. It is proposed that this service is closely aligned with Youth Justice and the Education Nurturing provision to develop an integrated approach in supporting this group of young people.

2.5 During November and December 17 consultation sessions are taking place engaging with 320 staff and stakeholders. This consultation, alongside evidence of national good practice will result in the development of detailed proposals and staffing structures with implementation starting in January 2019.

2.6 In July we launched our Mocking Bird Programme. We were the first in the West Midlands to develop this ambitious and innovative programme set to grow our community of foster carers and the children and young people they care for. The programme sets out to extend the network of family support, empowering families to support each other, overcome challenges and offer children a positive, consistent and secure experience of care. We now have 2 Mockingbird constellations up and running in Walsall, one in Bilston, and the other in Willenhall. Each constellation is composed of 7 satellite fostering households.

The carers in each constellation are meeting up once a month at the Hub carer's home for a coffee morning style meeting, with the opportunity to discuss specific topics, challenges they face, and to support each other.

Each constellation is also meeting up once a month for social activities including all the children and carers. So far trampolining, park visits, afternoon tea at the Hub carers home, RAF Cosford museum, and bonfire excursions have taken place. The adults and children are getting to know each other, and relationships forming. The children are benefitting from having a number of adults sharing an interest in them, and some are spending individual time with the hub carers.

We are supported by and accountable to The Fostering Network. We have also passed our second fidelity check, with Fostering Network being assured by our progress. The next monitoring meeting is planned for January 2019.

We are intending to develop 2 more constellations in 2019, one in the Spring and one in the Autumn, and are in the process of recruiting new Hub carers for these.

3. Restorative practice work stream update

3.1 A restorative Practice Steering group is established with key managers across the directorate taking responsibility for driving forward and embedding Restorative Practice across all teams.

3.2 To date 202 staff members have been trained and from this pool of trained staff 36 champions have been identified across the services and teams to help share and embed good practice.

3.3 Our Restorative Summer provided an 8 week programme of thought-provoking activities to promote, develop and celebrate our commitment to working restoratively with children, young people and families, partners and professionals. Activities included:

- Hearing directly from children about their views on use of Restorative language and approaches
- Interactive 'light bite' workshops across all teams
- Opportunity to build relationships and connect with other professionals
- Opportunity to reflect and share good practice
- Chance to develop practitioners direct work toolkit

3.4 The Steering group has developed a Restorative Practice Maturity matrix. This will enable each service area to reflect on how well restorative practice is embedded and identify the areas for development needed to ensure we have a consistency in practice and can demonstrate the difference this is making to children, young people and families.

4. Commissioning work Stream update

4.1 Within Children's Services we believe that working with our external organisations in a co-production model and services is critical in our pursuit to deliver the Walsall Right 4 Children vision.

We recognise the importance of working with our providers who will bring perspectives and solutions, adding additional knowledge and expertise through their closer proximity to our communities and or the evidence based models which they operate.

Through the development of closer relationships with providers we want to develop an approach that enables you to put forward solutions and stimulate innovative responses and opportunities for co-production of services that supports our children, young people and their families to be their best.

4.2 We are piloting an integrated approach between Children and Money, Home Job to commission a range of accommodation that will provide the right young people with the right place and the right support to acquire the skills to live independently, and make successful transition to independent living. The local authority will be working with the successful providers to ensure clear referral pathways and communication protocols are in place to ensure young people are placed appropriately and issues are resolved proactively reducing placement breakdowns.

In addition our commissioned providers will be required to provide a good service with a Restorative Practice/relationship based approach and within a Psychologically Informed Environment enabling young people to better understand the relationship between their emotions and behaviours in a nurturing rather than a transactional setting.

4.3 We are also piloting a new way of work to prevent children from becoming looked after or reducing the amount of days they spent into care by securing an individualised package of support addressing 'root causes' and meeting the needs of the whole family enabling them to sustainably live together. A workshop has been organised for current providers and the LA on 7th December to test out what a package of support would look like for 5 young people and their families identified. This workshop will be delivered by the Local Government Association who has experience and knowledge in developing this approach.

Walsall Right For Children Transformation Journey

Becoming a Evidence-Minded Organisation

November 2018

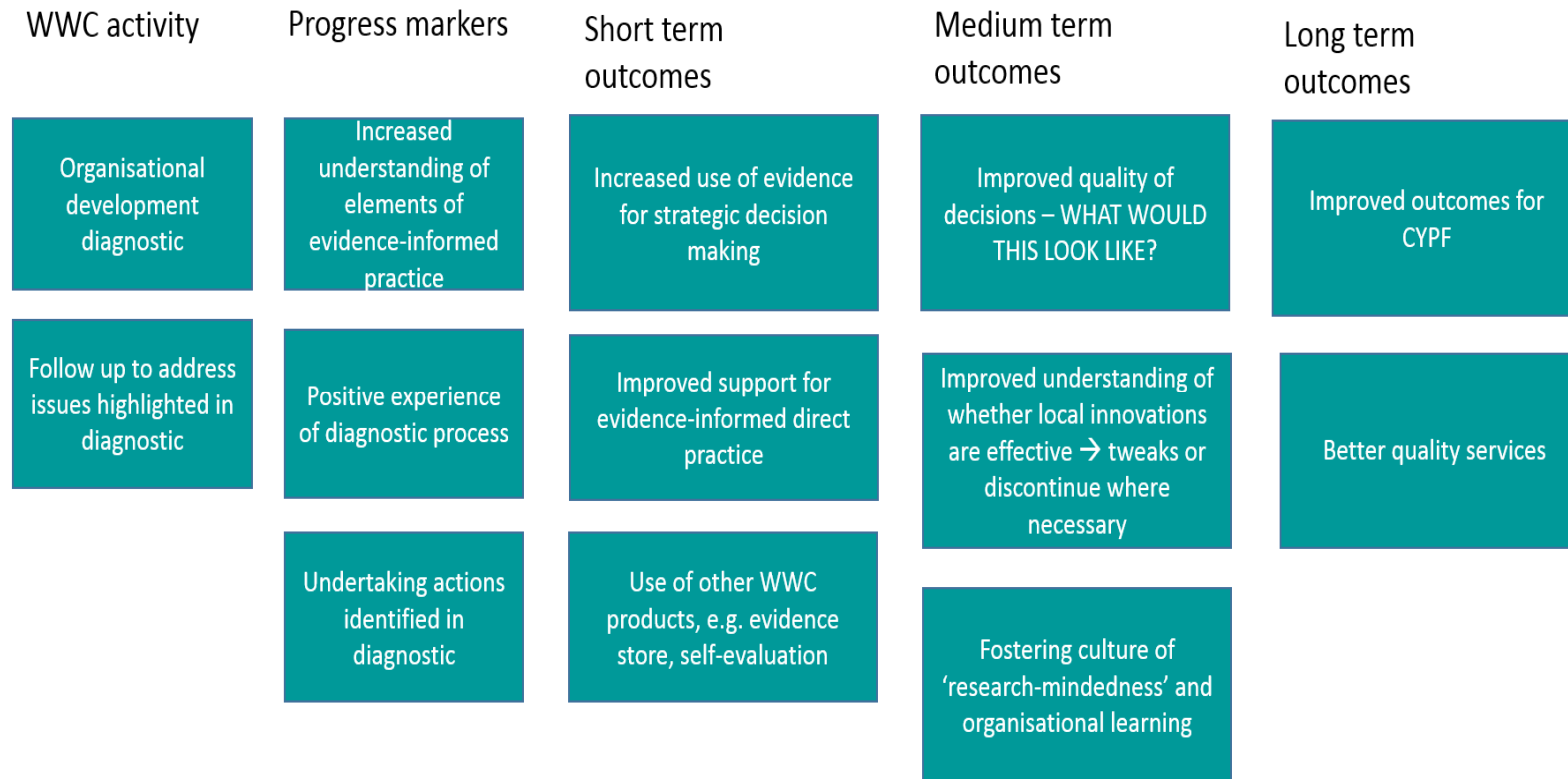


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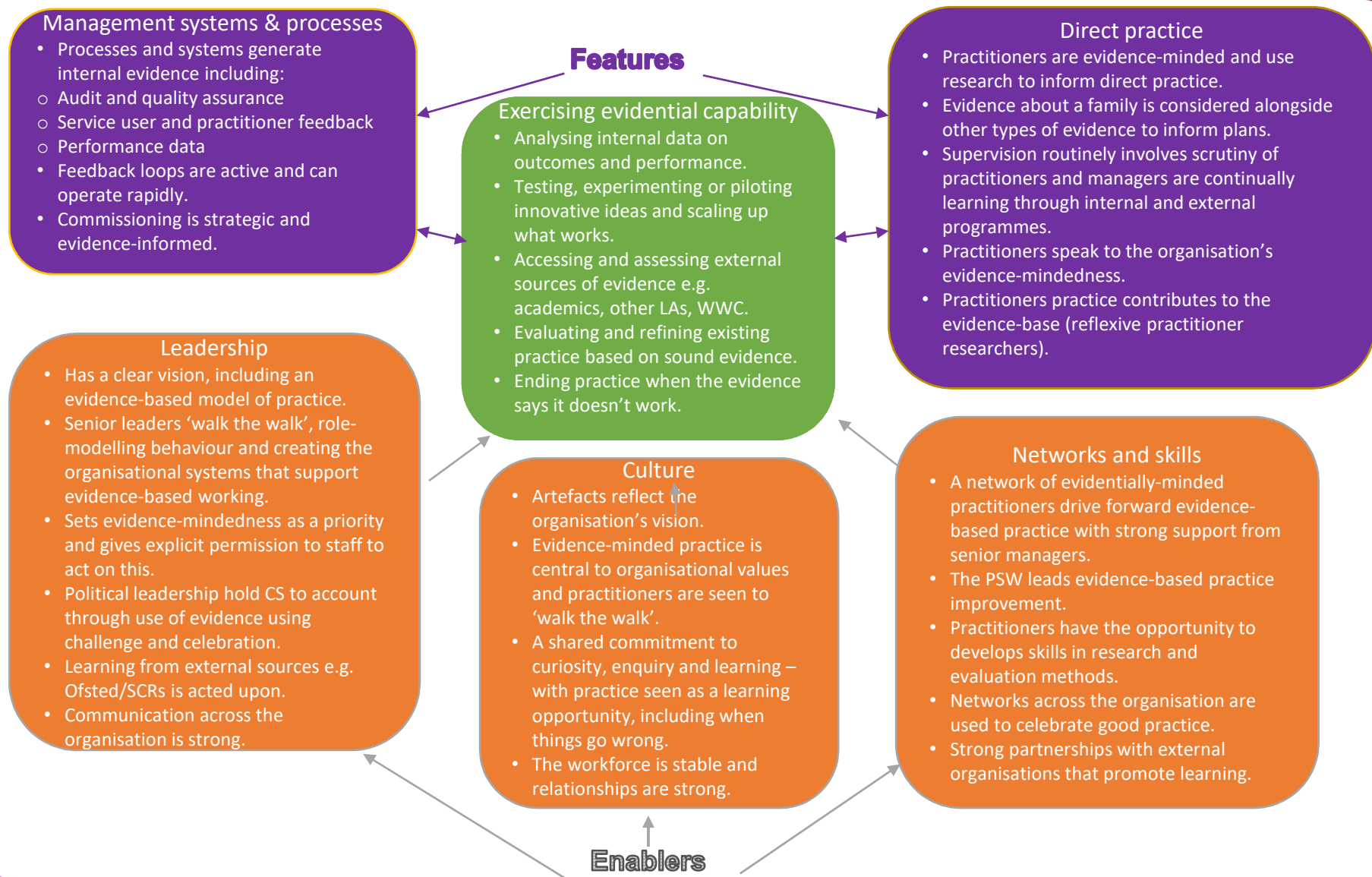
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WWC – Theory of change – logic model

Theory of change – logic model



The evidence-minded CSC organisation: WWC framework (demo)



WWC – Diagnostic

The team

Greg Wilkinson, Programme Director

Anna Bacchoo, Practice Development Manager

Diagnostic included:

- Attendance Staff Conference
- Consideration of Transformation needs analysis and plans
- Consideration of Health Check
- 20 interviews including group managers, principal Social Worker, NQSW and social workers, DMT members, Early Intervention and social care academy, commissioning lead, WPC partners and LSCB Chair, HR and finance
- observed unit meeting, PLO and PIF
- undertaken a staff survey.

How the Diagnostic will influence our transformation programme:

- Although WWC focussed on Social Care their findings are applicable across the system WR4C will be taking apply most of the recommendation across the system as part of transformation
- Some social care specific ones will be taken forward through Social Care management structure



Summary: WWC key messages

You have...	We think you need to...
1. A compelling vision (R4C) and practice model (RP), underpinned by a commitment to evidence-based working	1a. Guard against ‘initiativitis’ 1b. Be evidence-minded in the implementation of your vision and model
2. A group of practitioner-leaders with the capability and motivation to help you follow through on this commitment	2a. Bring these leaders together in a Champions network and empower them to drive change across the directorate 2b. Further build capability in and around these leaders through an Evidence-Minded Practitioners Development Programme
3. Some powerful examples of evidence-based initiatives in place	3a. Build on these examples by picking a small (3-4) number of key problems for which evidence champions can run trials, pilots and experiments 3b. Consider how senior leaders can ‘walk the talk’ around evidence-based working
4. Plans to develop management systems and processes – notably around an outcomes and performance framework (OPF) - to support change	4. Ensure that the OPF includes measures to capture the voice of children and families, and integrate directorate QA and audit processes into the OPF’s design

Findings (1): Exercising Evidential Capability

- Strengths
 - Importing effective practice with rigour and under conditions of fidelity
 - Involvement in external research projects
 - Willingness to experiment – e.g. RP conferencing
 - Openness to further experimentation
- Areas for improvement
 - Explore opportunities for ‘doing it yourself’ more - pick some high-priority strategic and operational issues to test via experimentation
 - Edge of care
 - Strategic commissioning
 - SW retention
 - Preventative initiatives
 - Understanding effective practice in relation to working with fathers
 - Use hubs as a test bed for piloting and experimentation (try things out on one hub, compare results with others that serve as the control group)
 - Strengthen links between external research projects and WMBC practice, including raising profile across your organisation.
 - Consider whether the WWC insight communities initiative might offer WMBC opportunities to draw further insight from its own and comparator authorities’ performance data

Findings (2): Management systems and processes

- Strengths
 - Change-leadership and analytical resources
 - A commitment to developing an integrated outcomes and performance framework (OPF), incorporating audit and QA
 - Promising use of data to drive 'myth-busting' – e.g. around disproving the hunch that CP demand was related to previously stepped-down cases
 - Scope to involve WMBC commissioning expertise to assist with the improvement of CS commissioning operations
 - An awareness of key HR issues
- Areas for improvement
 - A tendency towards initiativitis - which might be addressed through a programme office and a qualification method
 - How to get the voices of children and families reflected in outcomes framework
 - How to bring evidence to bear more effectively on management problems – for example, how to use insights from exit interviews to better understand the reasons for retention difficulties and to develop approaches that would address these difficulties
 - Add staff satisfaction data – perhaps via more regular surveys – to WMBC's data infrastructure
 - How to make commissioning less reactive and micro-focused – and better connected to the outcomes framework
 - How to integrate QA and audit functions into the OPF
 - Making audit more thematic, developing a systematic approach to pulling out wider learning points from individual cases

Findings (3): Direct Practice

- Strengths
 - Evidence-based tools are used effectively
 - Workers are positive about the in-house training offer and talked about it impacting positively on their work.
 - Some workers and teams are using a restorative approach in all aspect of practice.
 - Some workers and teams are using unit meetings as a learning opportunity and create space to think in depth about families and practice development.
 - Staff survey demonstrated that workers resoundingly agree that their teams are reflective, they strive for best practice and are supported to take risks.
- Areas for improvement
 - Workers understanding of evidence-based practice is underdeveloped. This could be improved so workers are more aware and able to think critically about types of evidence. 79% of people surveyed felt decisions were informed by evidence from research and other sources, but this wasn't corroborated in interviews or observations.
 - Explore scope to make development sessions more rigorously evidence-based by, for example, directing discussion towards the published evidence on practice issues.
 - Managers could be supported to be more evidence-minded in their supervision and decision-making, including at unit meetings and in decision-making panels, to bring published evidence into discussions along with evidence gathered by practitioners
 - Some teams have not fully adopted restorative practice and it can be seen as additional work they haven't got time for.
 - Creating stronger links to universities could help build practitioners capability to critically reflect on different types of evidence and apply it to the families they work with.



Findings (4): Leadership

- Strengths
 - Right for Children vision, and commitment to evidence-based working therein
 - Commitment to Restorative Practice
 - Not just DCS and ADs: programme leadership and analytical capabilities, and an impressive group of practitioner-leaders
- Areas for improvement
 - Be evidence-minded in the implementation of RP, locality hubs, the shift to preventative working etc. – both tracking effectiveness/cost-effectiveness of reforms (whether things are working) and understanding the contextual factors that underpin success (why it's working)
 - Following through on the R4C commitment to evidence-based working – how to challenge, permit, celebrate and lead by example
 - Consider how we use critical roles to embed restorative practice at all levels of the organization, particularly in teams where it hasn't gained traction yet.



Findings (5): Culture

- Strengths
 - Encouraging staff survey results - some 76% of staff feel the directorate has a 'learning, not blaming' culture
 - Palpable enthusiasm of staff at the Right 4 Children conference - suggesting a directorate that's ready, willing and able to change
 - Powerful visualisation of data – e.g. 'if Walsall were 100 children'
 - Artefacts around restorative practice - e.g. 4 quadrant model, e.g. PLATE acronym
 - Restorative practice as an example of culture change – we were told that practitioner language and behaviour is increasingly influenced by key RP concepts (high support/high challenge), with staff 'calling each other out' in relation to RP principles
- Areas for improvement
 - A need for examples of evidence-based working to become more numerous and evidence-informed practice to become more frequent before WMBC can say that evidence-based working really is 'the way we do things round here'
 - No plan for how to bring about the cultural change that the Right for Children vision requires – and no means of tracking progress via a series of metrics
 - Linked to both of the above, an evaluation of Restorative Practice would help steer where further efforts are needed to embed the model.
 - Networks not yet in place to develop and spread insights around this agenda



Findings (6): networks and skills

- Strengths
 - An impressive collection of evidentially minded practitioners at different levels of the directorate – with the potential to form a powerful guiding coalition to take forward a commitment to greater evidence-based working
 - Some embryonic networks within the directorate – e.g. Right 4 children change groups, e.g. RP champions
 - Some networks between WMBC and other LAs, particularly in relation to the RIA and also the idea to twin with a RP team in Leeds.
- Areas for improvement
 - Strengthening the embryonic networks – nurturing the R4C change groups, activating the Restorative Practice Champions Group (staff observed that ‘this isn't quite there yet’)
 - Considering ways in which some of your large number of NQSWs might become a knowledge champions group
 - Developing the new teaching partnership and using it to lever in academic and research expertise that will help WMBC
 - Linking leading practitioners and other interested staff in an evidence-minded practitioners academy – a 6-12 month programme of action learning, coaching, knowledge sharing and external instruction (to be co-designed and facilitated with the WWC) that would build a collective capability to assess, generate and use good evidence to improve practice
 - Making more of the opportunity for cross-regional collaboration around implementation of Restorative Practice – Dudley, Wolverhampton, Warwickshire



WR4C - Making it happen

- 1. Share findings and recommendations and consider implementation plan with wider workforce**
 - Senior leadership team on 13th November
 - Practice improvement forum on 21st November
 - Unit meetings/service meetings/WR4C 'team' meetings between 13th November and 23th November – feedback to the WR4C inbox
- 2. Produce a development plan as part of transformation programme**
 - Informed by conversations above
 - Performance Board on Tuesday 27 November – closing the loop on the development plan ensuring all group manager have sight of how we are taking forward the agreed recommendation, priorities and who will lead and support what.
 - Transformation Board on 6th December – sign off of development plan.
- 3. Agree with the WWC a package of support to assist with your agreed agenda**
 - Deployment of up to a further 5 days support from WWC staff
 - Accessing other WWC products and services – e.g. insight communities programme, DIY evaluation guidance, fellowships, masterclass offering – will help our transformation programme
- 4. Develop, with support of WWC, a set of KPIs that allow you to track activity and impact over a 12 month period, covering:**
 - Attitudes (repeat opinion surveys of all staff, more in-depth survey of staff participating in the EMPP)
 - Behaviours – evidence to assess whether WMBC is making greater use of evidence in relation to the overall change programme, the priority areas of focus for WMBC-run trials etc, and to the use of evidence from external sources – including the WWC
 - Consequences – an assessment of the impact that a more evidence-minded approach is having on costs, performance and outcomes for children and families
- 5. Transformation Board through lead and Head of QA will be overseeing the portfolio of change activities across the directorate and with providing periodic updates to DMT on progress**
 - Use of logic model as part of business cases when new change activities are being proposed – including clear problem profiling, hypothesis, proposals on resolutions and benefit/outcome analysis linked to our WR4C will be expected



**Walsall Right for Children draft proposed New Operating Model
Consultation – November**

Our WR4C Toolkit: Informed by commissioning

PARENTING PROGRAMMES

FGC

TARGETTED YOUTH WORK

PACE

FREEDOM

PAUSE

DA VICTIM SUPPORT

FRIENDS

SPECIALIST ADOLESCENT SUPPORT

TARGETTED PLAY

WR4C YOUTH JUSTICE SERVICE

- Alignment to specialist adolescent service

ASPIRATIONAL ENTITLEMENT FOR ALL CHILDREN SO THEY CAN BE: HAPPY, SAFE AND LEARNING WELL

- PUPIL VOICE IS CRUCIAL AND AT THE CENTRE OF TRANSFORMATION
- CONSISTENT LANGUAGE ACROSS ALL SERVICES
- USE OF DATA AND INFORMATION SHARING TO TAKE THE RIGHT ACTIONS
- GOOD LEADERSHIP IN SCHOOLS, DRIVING WR4C VISION AND STANDARDS (INCL. GOVERNORS)
- EVIDENCE-BASED INTERVENTIONS TO ADDRESS NEEDS

