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Improvement and Assurance Board - Social Care Thursday, 19 December 2019

MINUTES OF A MEETING OF THE IMPROVEMENT AND ASSURANCE BOARD - SOCIAL CARE HELD AT PENYFAN ROOM - COUNTY HALL, LLANDRINDOD WELLS, POWYS ON THURSDAY, 19 DECEMBER 2019

PRESENT:

Cllr Rosemarie Harris, Council Leader
Jack Straw (Chair)
Phil Hodgson, Independent Member
Dr Gwynne Jones, Independent Member
Alison Bulman, Corporate Director (Children's and Adults)
Lynette Lovell, Interim Chief Education Officer
Ness Young, Corporate Director (Resources and Transformation)
Emma Palmer, Head of Transformation and Communication
Geraint Rees, Education Advisor
Caroline Rees, Education Advisor

Apologies for absence were received from Caroline Turner, CEO

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| 1. | 12:30 MINUTES OF THE LAST MEETING (SOCIAL CARE) |
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- 1.1 The minutes were accepted as a true record but would be presented to the next formal IA Board meeting on 10 January for formal sign off.
- 1.2 PH requested an update on the CIW Monitoring visit on case management and governance arrangements for children in the Public Law Outline (PLO) AB reported that service was aware of need for some improvement in the relationships and the CIW review only looked at a very small number of cases (4). AB and Jan Coles were due to meet the CAFCASS CEO in January and AB would provide an update to the IA Board at the end of January. IAB meeting. PH said that PLO arrangements were an issue not just in Powys but across Wales and he had chaired an all Wales workshop in North Wales last week at which Jan was present and spoke well. PH suggested that AB reference the national workshop in her update to the Board.

ACTION: AB to provide an update on the meeting with the CAFCASS CEO re the PLO process to the IA Board at the end of January 2020

ACTION: AB to provide a short narrative to accompany future CIW reports when they are circulated to IAB Members

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| 2. | 12:35 RESPONSE TO ACTIONS FROM THE LAST MEETING |
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- 2.1 AB gave a commitment to share the outline of January workshop with the IA Board Chair by the end of day, 19 December 2019. The plan was to look at discharge pathways with a focus on tackling operational obstacles.
- 2.2 AB updated Board on the CHC pathway joint work with Powys Teaching Health Board (PTHB) and a meeting has taken place with another scheduled for mid-January. AB to keep Board advised of progress in monthly Director reports.
- 2.3 Benchmarking data: EP had met Owen Davies, Welsh Government who had advised that the information requested was probably not available at a national

level. It was agreed that this action needed to be concluded, but a letter should be the Welsh Government from the IAB Chair about the benefit of national benchmarking data around our top five indicators for the whole of local government. Suggestion that CEO should also write to other 21 CEOs to request data and for Portfolio Holder to raise the issue at the next WLGA Cabinet Member network meeting.

ACTION: IAB Chair to write to Welsh Government to express disappointment about the absence of national benchmarking data and potential benefit to be gained from collecting this data set across Wales

ACTION: CEO to write to other local authority CEOs to request data from individual authorities

ACTION: Adult and Children's Portfolio Holders to raise benchmarking data at the next WLGA Social Services Cabinet Member Network meeting in 2020.

2.3 PH asked what the arrangements were for the CIW Improvement Conference on 17 February and how Council was planning to manage the session and what key messages that the Council wanted to communicate – he suggested a 5-10 minute statement might be helpful. AB explained that the service was in the process of forensically reviewing the current position against the original CIW recommendations, subsequent monitoring visits and the annual performance meeting and providing a clear evidence base for the position the service currently finds itself in as well as providing absolute clarity on the things that are outstanding and how we are taking these forward. In addition to this she wanted to provide information on the Council's aspirations for the service and the route map to achieve them. Board members agreed the Council should have a clear agenda for the meeting and recommended that AB structure the session so that the focus was on what has been achieved so far and the short term, medium and long term actions being taken and the impacts expected. The session should include case-studies to show client impact, balanced with written evidence for CIW to take away. AB would be working with NY and EP in January as critical friends and an outline for the session would be shared with the IA Board at the end of January for comments.

2.4 Children's Services report showed only 3 complaints, but the number was actually 6 which may be due to a reporting lag. This is being reviewed and will be addressed.

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| 3. | 12:40 DIRECTOR TO OUTLINE ANY CONCERNS/RISK/ISSUES (SOCIAL CARE) |
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3.1 AB presented her highlight reporting drawing particular attention to:

- Recruitment for both services which remains a challenge and continues to impact on supervision performance which whilst there is improved performance in relation to supervision of staff this is still not where it needs to be, but expected to be at target for December;

- The number of Children Looked After (CLA) has increased to 238 (from 234) in the main due to a large sibling group coming in to the care of the LA.
- Performance in relation to the statutory visits for CLA is at target
- Statutory visits to Children on the Protection register currently sits at 94% against a target of 95%.
- There has been a positive reduction in the number of Children who have experienced 3 or more placement within 12 Months and this performance currently sits at 8% which is below the Welsh Average of 10%;
- Assessments completed within statutory timescales remains an area of concern but expecting to be on target for December and compliant for Q4.

3.2 GJ asked about the quality of assessments and AB agreed to meet with him to explain the arrangements that are in place and of which the Board is already aware.

ACTION: AB to share the quality assurance frameworks with JG and them to meet in January

3.3 AB notified Board members the next few months would be extremely busy for the service with a joint inspection of MH services, a monitoring visit and the improvement conference, while also dealing with business as usual, transformation and winter pressures.

3.4 Finally AB advised Board members of an internal review of the Out of Hours Service which AB will bring to be Board in February 2020.

ACTION: AB to present a SWAP report on the Out of Hours Service to the IA Board in February 2020.

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| 4. 12:55 UPDATE ON CHILDREN SOCIAL WORKER RECRUITMENT |
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4.1 NY highlighted the progress that had been made since the last meeting particularly around building relationships with Cardiff and Swansea Universities and developing plans around overseas recruitment. The Council was looking at learning and experience beyond Wales but had started with Social Care Wales. PH commented that there were specialist agencies for overseas recruitment that should be explored.

4.2 The Chair raised the risk to the morale of the existing workforce from the introduction of a supplement for hard to fill posts and this was acknowledged by officers. The plan to pay the supplement had taken this risk into account which was why it was being applied to existing posts as well as vacancies which it was hoped would mitigate the risk of lower staff morale.

4.3 The Leader suggested that officers contact further education institutions about opportunities for health and care apprenticeships.

4.4 NY reported that a detailed implementation plan was being developed which would be shared with the Board at the end of January 2020. Monthly updates would be provided to the Board going forward.

ACTION: NY to contact specialist agencies and FE institutions to explore opportunities for supporting the Council's aim of increasing the number permanent Qualified Social Workers over time.

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| 5. | 13:00 MINUTES OF THE LAST MEETING (EDUCATION) |
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- 5.1 Minutes were accepted as a true record but would presented to the next formal IA Board meeting on 9 January for formal sign off.

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| 6. | 13:05 RESPONSE TO ACTIONS FROM THE LAST MEETING |
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- 6.1 All actions were all complete.

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| 7. | INTERIM CHIEF EDUCATION OFFICER - OUTLINE ANY CONCERNS/RISK/ISSUES AND UPDATE ON ESYTN CONFERENCE |
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- 7.1 LL presented her report highlighting that:

- Officers praised for their work in formulating the draft PIAP;
- PIAP was too detailed;
- PIAP needs to concentrate on the recommendations and focus on the most important actions that will have the most effect;
- Estyn will be writing formally to the Council summarising the outcomes from the improvement conference, but it will not be published as intended as a guidance document for officers to improve the clarity of the PIAP.

- 7.2 LL said officers were candid with Estyn and in particular shared concerns about ALN and have since appointed an internal candidate to operate and the interim senior manager. Estyn's written report has not yet arrived but will circulate to the IAB when it does.

ACTION: LL to circulate Estyn Conference report to IA Board members when it arrives

- 7.3 Since the conference officers have been through the schools' transformation data with Estyn and have met a huge number of stakeholders (excluding parents due to purdah) to go through the data. LL was due to go through this in more detail in the workshop later that day.
- 7.4 Estyn comments on specific recommendations were included in LL's written report.
- 7.5 Board members discussed officers' concerns about proposed reductions in funding / staffing in ERW as the Council currently has ERW supporting 11 Powys schools which was expected to be impacted by the proposed ERW reductions. Chair suggested the Council had a conversation with Welsh Government about the need for support for this specific area of improvement support.
- 7.6 NY explained that the CEO, Geraint and NY had been in discussion about what support the Council would be seeking from Welsh Government in respect of the PIAP delivery and the wider schools' transformation programme. A meeting had been arranged with Steve Davies, Welsh Government for the end of January and

Board were supportive of a request being made to Welsh Government for improvement support that may be lost due to the ERW funding reductions.

ACTION: Council officers to include a request for funding for improvement support for schools in their discussion with Welsh Government around financial support (Geraint Rees / Ness Young)

- 7.7 Chair asked for an update on the ERW structural debate and was advised that discussions are ongoing, but not resolved. The Chair asked for a short paper to be presented to the January Board on the issues around ERW to give an IAB view on 10 January Board meeting

ACTION: Short paper to be presented to 10 January IA Board on the issues around ERW to seek a formal IAB view (Lynette Lovell)

- 7.8 There was a discussion about recommendation 5 and the challenge of managing schools' budgets and deficits while the Council's transformation plans were developed and implemented which would take a number of years. GR explained the Cabinet has approved tweaks in the formula this week. The Council budget, which would set the delegated schools' budget for 2020-21 was due to be published in January 2020, with the Final Budget being considered by Council in February 2020.
- 7.9 Independent Board Members were supportive of stabilising the schools' budget over the next couple of years to create the headroom to enable the schools' transformation to take place, while also recognising the range of pressures on the council's overall budget and the Council's budget setting process.
- 7.10 In terms of items for the Board's forward work programme, the Chair highlighted ALN, leadership and learner entitlement driven transformation.

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| 8. 13:30 DRAFT 2020 IAB WORKSHOP PROGRAMME |
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- 8.1 Board Members were happy with the programme proposed but recognised there would need to be flexibility to recognise external factors may require changes to be made from time to time. It would be presented to the IAB meetings on 9 and 10 January for formal sign off.

**Jack Straw
Chair**

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