



CHANGE MANAGEMENT IN THE PUBLIC SECTOR



iMPOWER with Sandwell Metropolitan Borough Council

Sandwell MBC was experiencing longstanding difficulty in improving its children's services, with a high staff turnover and a requirement to save 24% of its budget. The service was stuck in a vicious cycle of over-promising and under-delivering, coming out of intervention only to go back in again. Over 11 years, the service had been overseen by nine different directors of children's services and had been subject to three periods of intervention. By 2012 there was an acceptance that something new was needed – and a willingness to try a different approach that could break the cycle of failure and deliver sustainable improvement. Since that time iMPOWER and Sandwell have worked together to deliver a range of major service improvements and more importantly improve the life chances of children and young people.

Particular highlights are a reduction in the looked after children budget of **£600k** and **£4m** less spend on agency staff. **Overall this has resulted in an underspend projection of £1.6m for 14/15.** This has been supported by a drop in inappropriate referrals, precisely **we have seen 50% less referrals entering social care.** This has also positively impacted staff retention by reducing social worker caseloads.

In the past, change had been derailed by high staff turnover and a lack of permanent managers. There was a need to create a permanent workforce to own and drive improvement and support retention of staff, enabling a stable workforce that drive improvement themselves.

In September we were joined by two new Group Heads and another took on the post on a permanent basis. In December 2013 the Service Director joined. At the start of February 2014 the final two appointments were made enabling a full management team to be in place for early 2014/15. **Staff turnover in children's social care has reduced from a peak of 25% to 11.98%.**

Finally, there has been a significant change in the working environment with Investors in People recognising the transformation in the service and a recognisable shift in culture and motivation.

The partnership has generated real results. A combination of strong and decisive leadership, real time insight generation and a unique approach to supporting change makes this change management project a continuing success.