



Children and Young People Overview and Scrutiny Committee

Date:	Tuesday, 11 September 2012
Time:	6.00 pm
Venue:	Committee Room 1 - Wallasey Town Hall

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AGENDA

1. MEMBERS' CODE OF CONDUCT - DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST / PARTY WHIP

Members of the Committee are asked to declare any disclosable pecuniary or non pecuniary interests, in connection with any item(s) on the agenda and state the nature of the interest.

Members are reminded that they should also declare, pursuant to paragraph 18 of the Overview and Scrutiny Procedure Rules, whether they are subject to a party whip in connection with any item(s) to be considered and, if so, to declare it and state the nature of the whipping arrangement.

2. MINUTES (Pages 1 - 10)

To receive the minutes of the meeting held on 6 June, 2012.

3. 2012/13 QUARTER ONE PERFORMANCE AND FINANCIAL REVIEW (Pages 11 - 22)

4. REVIEW OF ATTAINMENT AND PROGRESS AT THE END OF EYFS, KEY STAGE 1 AND KEY STAGE 2 (Pages 23 - 34)

5. VALUING OUR SAFEGUARDING EMPLOYEES (Pages 35 - 46)

6. ADOPTION SCORECARD (Pages 47 - 60)

7. **FOSTERING SERVICE REPORT (Pages 61 - 66)**
8. **RESPONSE TO THE REPORT FROM THE JOINT INQUIRY INTO CHILDREN WHO GO MISSING (Pages 67 - 70)**
9. **YOUTH PARLIAMENT 2012 (Pages 71 - 76)**
10. **CHILDREN'S SERVICES COMMISSIONING (Pages 77 - 78)**

The Committee is invited to consider a letter received from Wirral Link Forum.

11. **APPROVED SCHEME OF DELEGATION - CONTRACTS EXCEEDING £50,000 (Pages 79 - 82)**
12. **BUDGET CONSULTATION - SCRUTINY WORKSHOPS**
13. **WORK PROGRAMME (Pages 83 - 86)**

The Chair and / or Director will speak to this item.

Along with the attached Work Programme the Committee's attention is also drawn to minute 7 of the Scrutiny Programme Board -18 July, 2012 (attached), in particular part (1) 1 of the resolution.

14. **FORWARD PLAN**

The Forward Plan for the period September to December 2012 has now been published on the Council's intranet/website and Members are invited to review the Plan prior to the meeting in order for the Committee to consider, having regard to the Committee's work programme, whether scrutiny should take place of any items contained within the Plan and, if so, how it could be done within relevant timescales and resources.

15. **ANY OTHER URGENT BUSINESS ACCEPTED BY THE CHAIR**

CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

Wednesday, 6 June 2012

Present: Councillor W Clements (Chair)

Councillors D Dodd C Povall
P Doughty W Smith
P Hayes P Williams
B Mooney

Deputy: Councillor C Jones (in place of J Crabtree)

Co-opted: Mrs J Owens

Apologies: Mr A Scott

1 MEMBERS' CODE OF CONDUCT - DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST / PARTY WHIP

Members were asked to consider whether they had a personal or prejudicial interest in connection with any item on the agenda and, if so, to declare it and to state the nature of such interest.

Members were reminded that they should also declare, pursuant to paragraph 18 of the Overview and Scrutiny Procedure Rules, whether they were subject to a party whip in connection with the item to be considered and, if so, to declare it and state the nature of the whipping arrangement.

Councillor C Jones declared a personal interest in the items, '2011/12 Year End Performance and Financial Review' and 'Fostering Service Report', by virtue of her employment with the Cheshire and Wirral Partnership NHS Foundation Trust (see minutes 6 and 9 post).

2 MINUTES

Members were requested to receive the minutes of the meeting of the Children and Young People Overview and Scrutiny Committee held on 21 March, 2012.

Resolved – That the minutes of the meeting of 21 March, 2012 be approved as a correct record.

3 APPOINTMENT OF VICE-CHAIR

The Committee was asked to consider if it wanted to appoint a Vice-Chair.

On a motion by Councillor Clements, seconded by Councillor Povall, it was –

Resolved - That Councillor P Hayes be appointed Vice-Chair of this Committee.

4 **ANNUAL UNANNOUNCED INSPECTION OF CONTACT, REFERRAL AND ASSESSMENT ARRANGEMENTS WITHIN WIRRAL COUNCIL'S CHILDREN'S SERVICES**

The Acting Director of Children's Services submitted a report on the second unannounced inspection of Contact, Referral and Assessment arrangements within local authority children's services in Wirral Council which was conducted by OFSTED on 1 and 2 February 2012. The letter setting out the findings of the inspection was attached to the report.

The inspectors had identified two areas of strength; it was acknowledged by inspectors that this was fewer than in the previous inspection, but that this reflected a markedly higher standard that had been set following the first round of inspections. The inspection had also found thirteen areas of satisfactory practice and five areas for development. The inspection was positive and reflected the hard work by staff and managers to improve services for children and families. This was a challenging area of working requiring constant vigilance and attention, which would be sustained through a constant focus on maintaining and improving services still further, for some of the most vulnerable children in Wirral.

An action plan had been developed to address the areas for development and also some of the more general areas for improvement and was appended to the report. The provision of excellent contact, referral and assessment services for children in need, at risk of significant harm or who had experienced significant harm was an area of work demanding constant attention, monitoring and oversight. The inspection had confirmed that good systems were in place to do this; however, there could never be any room for complacency. It was an area of considerable risk.

Responding to comments from Members, both Tracy Coffey, Strategic Service Manager and the Acting Director expanded on the work being done to improve the timescales of initial and core assessments whilst dealing with a significant increase in the referrals of children at risk; 348 children now had a Child Protection Plan. They referred to the constant challenge of staff retention with 56% of Social Workers having 2 years or less experience and the need to have a better skill mix with the retention of experienced staff. A report on this issue had been considered by the Employment and Appointments Committee at its meeting on 23 April, 2012 (minute 90 refers). For newly qualified Social Workers there was a very intensive training programme and support from a dedicated officer.

They also reported that a number of systems were now in place to address the issue of embedding equality and diversity issues in assessments, plans and reviews. A report would be going to Cabinet on a new caseload management system for both the Children and Young People's Department and the Department of Adult Social Services, although this could not be an overnight change. The idea of using some of the expertise of recently retired Social Worker staff was something that could be explored.

Resolved – That the outcome of the February 2012 OFSTED Unannounced Inspection of Contact, Referral and Assessment arrangements, be noted.

5 EARLY INTERVENTION GRANT QUARTER THREE MONITORING REPORT

The Acting Director of Children's Services submitted the third quarter monitoring report on the performance of Early Intervention Grant (EIG) commissioned services totalling £2.8million. In Wirral, the EIG had been used to drive service delivery which was prompt, appropriate, effective and planned around the family and the child.

The report gave details of the performance of providers within the three priority areas:

1. Parenting/Compromised Parenting
2. Short Breaks for Disabled Children
3. Risk taking Behaviour in Children and Young People

and in particular those services which were not delivering the expected outcomes. Financial information on the contracts was included in an exempt appendix.

Maureen McDaid, Principal Manager (Commissioning / Participation), and the Acting Director, responding to comments from Members, informed the meeting of the work being done to raise awareness amongst young people of the issue of domestic violence. In respect of the contract carer scheme the targets had been ambitious but the commissioning would be scaled back. The after school club at Barnstondale would continue to be monitored as the activities were changed in response to requests from families. Any savings made through contract variations could be reinvested in extra programmes as the first priority was to deliver the services which the Council had set out to provide.

Resolved – That the report be noted.

6 2011/12 YEAR END PERFORMANCE AND FINANCIAL REVIEW

The Acting Director of Children's Services reported upon the performance of the Council's Corporate Plan 2011-14 and Departmental Plan 2011-12 for April 2011 - March 2012, in relation to children and young people. He provided an overview of performance, resources and risk monitoring.

For the year end of 2011/12 there were 55 departmental indicators that could be reported, of these 70.9% were achieving or exceeding target. The report gave details of the corrective action being taken for those indicators missing their target.

The Acting Director further reported upon the anticipated 2011/12 budget forecast overspend which was £1 million, a reduction from £1.6 million in the quarter. This was largely due to the use of one-off funding from balances and the Schools Forum agreeing in January to fund planned preventative maintenance expenditure in schools.

Responding to comments from Members, Nancy Clarkson, Head of Planning and Performance, stated that in respect of NI 62 and the stability of placements of looked after children, Wirral compared very well with the Council's statistical neighbours being in the second quartile.

Resolved – That the report be noted.

7 CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE'S PLAN 2012-13 AND ANNUAL REPORT 2011-12

The Acting Director of Children's Services reported upon the production of the new Children and Young People's Plan (CYPP) for 2012-13 and the annual review of the 2011-12 CYPP. The CYPP was an overarching strategic plan developed by Wirral Children's Trust for all organisations providing services for the children and young people of Wirral and it was reviewed annually. The plan and associated documents were published on the Wirral Children's Trust Website (hosted by Wirral Council) and where appropriate the teenWirral website.

Quarterly performance reports were presented to Wirral Children's Trust Board along with an annual report from each strategy group.

The Acting Director, referring to the Board, commented that it was well worth keeping in its current form; supported at a high level it brought together a range of stakeholders.

Resolved – That the Children and Young People's Plan 2012-13 and the Annual Report 2011-12 be noted.

8 ADOPTION SERVICE PERFORMANCE REPORT

The Acting Director of Children's Services submitted a report which outlined performance information on the Adoption Service during 2011/12, in accordance with the requirements of the National Adoption Standards as set out in the Adoption and Children Act 2002.

The report also gave details of new national initiatives, including, Adoption Action Plan Score Cards and concurrent planning. Financial implications were spelt out both in terms of the previous year and the current year, including the reasons for higher projected expenditure than the allocated budget.

Responding to comments from Members Julia Hassall, Head of Social Care, and the Acting Director explained the payment of adoption allowances. They also reported that, along with the other Merseyside and Cheshire authorities, Wirral had played the lead role in developing a pre-proceedings protocol with the courts, which should help to reduce delay in family proceedings.

Resolved –

- (1) That this Committee agrees that the adoption service is being managed effectively and that there are good outcomes for the children and young people being adopted and their adopters.**
- (2) That recently published national score cards for local authorities performances regarding adoption, be the subject of a further report.**

9 FOSTERING SERVICE REPORT

The Acting Director of Children's Services submitted a report which provided an overview of developments and performance in Wirral's fostering service in accordance with the requirements of the Fostering Regulations and Guidance 2011 National Minimum Fostering Standards. The fostering service provided quality foster care for children who needed to be looked after in public care; this was at a much lower cost than other regulated children's placements.

Local Authorities had to ensure that they were able to provide sufficient foster care placements for those children who needed family based care in accordance with the relevant Regulations and Standards governing such services.

The report also gave details of the financial implications, both in terms of the previous year and the current year, including the reasons for higher projected expenditure than the allocated budget. In 2012/13 the budget was increased to reflect the payment of the National Minimum Fostering Allowance and the payment of fees to connected carers. The overall budget was £7,984,600 and the projected spend was £9,353,254 (based on 486 children receiving foster care allowances and 163 children receiving special guardianship and residence order allowances). The budget was sufficient for 500 children, however, the number of children in foster care, receiving special guardianship or residence allowances exceeded this by 150.

Responding to comments from Members Julia Hassall, Head of Social Care, and the Acting Director informed the Committee that there were a whole raft of initiatives to support children and to try and reduce the numbers in care. Fostering, adoption and residential care for children were three of the biggest challenges that the department, and therefore the Council faced.

Resolved –

- (1) That this Committee agrees that the fostering service is being managed effectively and that there are good outcomes for the children and young people that are fostered.**
- (2) That the financial implications arising from the payments to connected carers be reported to Cabinet.**

10 APPROVED SCHEME OF DELEGATION - CONTRACTS EXCEEDING £50,000

The Acting Director of Children's Services reported, in accordance with the Contracts Procedure Rules, on those instances where he had exercised his delegated authority to accept tenders and to appoint contractors. The contracts were in respect of a range of services, including:

- Capital contracts
- Children's Residential Care Placements

Resolved – That the report be noted.

11 **EQUALITY IMPACT ASSESSMENTS - REFERRAL FROM SCRUTINY PROGRAMME BOARD**

The Committee considered the report of the Director of Law, HR and Asset Management on Equality and Impact Assessments, which had been referred by the Scrutiny Programme Board at its meeting on 28 February, 2012 (minute 33 refers) to all five themed Overview and Scrutiny Committees.

The Acting Director informed the Committee that all reports from his department for either Cabinet or this Committee were compliant with the EIA requirements.

Resolved – That the report be noted.

12 **CO-OPTED MEMBER REQUEST**

The Committee was invited to consider a request from the Co-Chair of the Wirral Family Forum, Louise Reecejones, for a co-opted position on the Children and Young People O&S Committee for a member of their Forum to represent parent / carers of children with disabilities or additional needs.

As with co-optees on the Health and Well Being Overview and Scrutiny Committee, including one for carers, the co-option, if agreed, would be one with non-voting rights and would need to be a recommendation to Council.

The Chair suggested that as with the previous request, considered by the Committee on 16 November, 2011 (minute 42 refers), the Council was currently looking at its own corporate governance arrangements, now would not be the time to extend the numbers of co-opted members on the Committee.

A Member remarked upon the position of Mrs J Owens, co-opted member for the voluntary and community sector, who unlike co-opted parent governors and diocesan representatives did not have any voting rights. It was agreed that the Chair and Director of Law, HR and Asset Management's representative would look into this matter.

Resolved – That, in respect of the request to extend the co-opted membership of the Committee, it be agreed that as the Council was currently looking at its own corporate governance arrangements now would not be the time to extend the co-opted membership of the Committee.

13 **WORK PROGRAMME**

The Committee was requested to consider what issues should form the basis of its work programme for the ensuing municipal year.

The Acting Director informed the Committee that future items for the work programme included:

- Children with Child Protection Plan numbers
- Adoption – National Score Card Review
- Fostering – Current Service Provision and Demand
- Planning for Youth Parliament

- Sickness Absence – Children’s Social Care
- Early Years KS1 to KS4 Standards Report
- Post 16 Standards Report
- Raising Participation Age
- Performance and Financial Monitoring
- Wirral Lifelong and Family Learning Service –Update
- Family and Friends Policy

Resolved – That the work programme be agreed.

14 **FORWARD PLAN**

The Committee had been invited to review the Forward Plan prior to the meeting in order for it to consider, having regard to the Committee’s work programme, whether scrutiny should take place of any items contained within the Plan and, if so, how it could be done within relevant timescales and resources.

A Member suggested that a report be brought to a future meeting on the item, ‘Special Schools Surplus Place Funding’.

Resolved – That the forward plan and suggestion be noted.

15 **0-19 STANDARDS SUB-COMMITTEE**

The minutes of the meeting of the 0-19 Standards Sub-Committee, held on 13 March, 2012, were submitted. The Sub-Committee had considered a number of issues, in particular the Ofsted reports relating to the following establishments:

Early Years and Children’s Centres

Good

Bidston and St James’ Children’s Centre
 Eastham Children’s Centre
 Leasowe Early Years and Adult Learning Centre

Outstanding

Bidston and St James’ Children’s Centre – Miriam Place Nursery

Primary Schools

Satisfactory

Kingsway Primary School
 Castleway Primary School
 Sandbrook Primary School

Good

Devonshire Park Primary School

Sacred Heart Catholic Primary School
Millfields Church of England (Controlled) Primary School

Outstanding

Thornton Hough Primary School

Secondary School

Satisfactory

The Mosslands School

Special School

Good

Kilgarth School

The Committee was also requested to appoint the 0-19 Standards Sub-Committee for 2012/13.

Resolved –

- (1) That the minutes be noted.
- (2) That the 0-19 Standards Sub-Committee for 2012/13 comprise the following members, Councillors Wendy Clements (Chair), Walter Smith and Pat Williams, together with the diocesan and parent governor representatives and the remaining Committee members serving as deputies.

16 **EXEMPT INFORMATION - EXCLUSION OF THE PRESS AND PUBLIC**

Resolved - That, under section 100 (A) (4) of the Local Government Act 1972, the public be excluded from the meeting during consideration of the following item of business on the grounds that it involves the likely disclosure of exempt information as defined by paragraph 3 of Part I of Schedule 12A (as amended) to that Act. The public interest test has been applied and favours exclusion.

17 **EXEMPT APPENDIX**

Further to minute 5 ante, the Committee noted the exempt appendix to the Acting Director of Children's Services' report.

18 **ANY OTHER URGENT BUSINESS ACCEPTED BY THE CHAIR**

The Chair informed the Committee that this would be Mark Parkinson's, Head of Learning and Achievement, last Committee as he would be leaving the Council in 5 weeks to take up a position with Cheshire West and Chester Council.

Resolved – That the thanks of this Committee be accorded to Mark Parkinson for all his work with the Council and that he be wished well for the future in his new role with Cheshire West and Chester Council.

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WIRRAL COUNCIL

CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE'S OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY

11 SEPTEMBER 2012

SUBJECT:	2012/13 Quarter One Performance and Financial Review
WARD/S AFFECTED:	All
REPORT OF:	Acting Director of Children's Services
KEY DECISION:	No

1.0 EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

1.1 This report sets out performance of the Council's Corporate Plan 2012-13 and Departmental Plan 2012-13 for April 2012 - June 2012, in relation to children and young people and provides members with an overview of performance, resources and risk monitoring.

For Quarter one of 2012/13 25 performance indicators can be reported upon, of these 88% are achieving or exceeding target.

2.0 BACKGROUND AND KEY ISSUES

2.1 Performance Summary

This report provides an overview of 2012-13 quarter one performance including corrective action for performance issues.

2.2 What's working well?

- 100% of child protection cases were reviewed within required timescales.
- Despite the current economic climate the percentage of 16 to 18 year olds who are not in education, employment or training is 8.5%, an improvement on the 2011-12 quarter 1 position of 8.8%.
- Registrations of 0-4 year olds at Children's Centres including those from disadvantaged backgrounds has continued to improve in each quarter since recording commenced in 2011-12.
-
- Three Wirral schools get cash for rebuilds –The Council has secured funds from the Government's Priority Schools Building Programme for the rebuild of three schools. The bids for Ridgeway High School in Prenton, Bedford Drive Primary School in Rock Ferry and Foxfield Special School in Moreton were all successful. The schools will benefit from an improved environment that reflects the excellent education and care they already receive.

- Wirral Youthfest 2012 - Birkenhead Park played host to this year's Youthfest - Wirral's festival open exclusively to young people aged 13-19. The event featured eight of Wirral's best young bands battling it out for a prize including recording time with a top producer. The event saw over 350 young people attending, providing an authentic festival atmosphere and a great place to be.
- Schools' Brass band hit the high notes - The Wirral Schools' Brass Band is trumpeting its success again after bringing home a host of awards from a regional competition. The band gaining two first prizes and a second prize for their performances at the annual Whit Friday Brass Band marching competition in Greater Manchester. A further 'deportment' prize was also awarded to the band for their general demeanour and enthusiasm throughout their performances. The band is now classed as the top Youth band on the circuit.
- Free holiday activities for teenagers - Wirral Council once again made available a range of free sports activities for local teenagers during the Whit school holidays in May. The sessions, which included football, tennis and fitness classes were made possible through funding from the Early Intervention Grant and were open to both boys and girls aged between 13 and 19.

2.3 Performance against Strategic Change Projects

There are no children and young people strategic change projects.

2.4 Customer Feedback

The Children and Young People's Department (CYPD) recorded continued improved complaints response rates from 12 working days in 2011/12 to an average of 8 working days in quarter one 2012/13.

Corporate reporting indicate that CYPD responses to recorded Councillor and MP enquiries took on average 6 working days against a corporate target of 10 working days. In addition all Local Government Ombudsman contacts were dealt with in 12 working days against a Council average of 16 working days.


2.5 Performance against Corporate Plan Indicators:


The following indicator has missed the quarter one target and is therefore assessed as **red**:

Portfolio	PI no	Title	2011/12 Year End Actual	2012/2013 Quarter 1		On target	Direction of travel
				Target	Actual		
Children's Services & Lifelong Learning	1702	Reduce the under 18 conception rate per 1,000 15-17 year olds	47.3	44.9	53.5 (E)	Red	n/a
				(Lower is Better)			
Corrective Action:	The data and the effectiveness of the interventions introduced during 2012/13 will be monitored on a quarterly basis by Wirral's Teenage Pregnancy Steering Group. However, due to the timescale and nature of recording conceptions the effectiveness of the interventions will not be realised for a considerable length of time.						
Context:	<p>In 2012/13 the under age conception will be monitored through a new performance indicator based on the rate of under 18 conceptions per 1,000 15-17 year olds. This provides more transparent reporting and the ability to benchmark nationally. As birth information is not immediately available there is a time-lag of approximately 14 months in reporting; as such 2012/13 quarter 1 reporting relates to quarter 1 2011 data.</p> <p>The data indicates a quarterly rate of 53.5 (per 1,000 15-17 year olds) for Q1 2011, (an estimated 78 conceptions). As per yearly trends the rate would be expected to reduce in subsequent quarters. This data has not yet been confirmed by the Office of National Statistics (ONS) and relies on data provided by the Young Women's Antenatal Clinic at Arrowe Park Hospital so gives an estimate of quarterly performance.</p> <p>Quarterly performance figures should be treated with caution due to the small numbers involved and the significance of any changes over a short period of time.</p>						

2.6 Performance against Departmental Plan Indicators:

The following indicators have missed the quarter one target and are therefore assessed as red or amber:

Portfolio	PI no	Title	2011/12 Year End Actual	2012/2013 Quarter 1		On target	Direction of travel
				Target	Actual		
Children's Services & Lifelong Learning	60	Percentage of core assessments for children's social care that were carried out within 35 working days of their commencement	67.1%	75%	49.1% (E)	Red	
				(Higher is Better)			
Corrective Action:	The level of demand and complexity of cases in this quarter has had a significant impact on compliance with timescales. Continuous monitoring is in place in this area by senior managers. In managing this demand on resources and in particular managers' time and capacity, the procedures and guidance in this area are to be reviewed during the next quarter with the aim to increase teams capacity to manage this area of work.						
Context	This area of performance continues to be a challenge. During this quarter, referrals to social care increased significantly in May and June, with an increase from a rate of 469 per 10,000 in April to 550 per 10,000 in May and 542 per 10,000 in June. On average, 97% of these referrals converted to an initial assessment during this period. The numbers of core assessments which were subsequently completed each month was 148 in April, 174 in May and 132 in June. The nature and the level of risk and complexity of the referrals received by the assessment teams in this period is reflected in the significant increase in initial child protection conferences convened by those teams in this quarter, with 23 initial child protection case conferences in April with subsequently 56 in May and 82 in June.						

Portfolio	PI no	Title	2011/12 Year End Actual	2012/2013 Quarter 1		On target	Direction of travel
				Target	Actual		
Children's Services & Lifelong Learning	103b	The percentage of final SEN statements issued within 26 weeks (including exceptions)	100%	100%	93.3%	Amber	
				(Higher is Better)			
Corrective Action:	The volume of assessments has increased by 25% in the last 12 months. There were 75 assessment in Q1 2012/13 compared to 44 in Q1 2011/12. Reconfiguring of services is underway to increase the number of assessments completed within statutory timescales.						

2.7 Children Subject to a Child Protection Plan for a Second or Subsequent Time

The chair of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee requested an update related to children subject to a child protection plan for a second or third time. This information does not relate specifically to quarter one reporting.

During the twelve-month period ending 31 March 2012, 79 children became the subject of child protection plans for a second or subsequent time. This equates to 18.5% of the 424 children who were subject to a plan in the year, the England average was 13.3% and North West being 13.4% the previous year.

Family size contributed to the high increase in subsequent plans. 18 of the families had between 3 to 6 children, totalling 70 of the 79 children. Initial research indicates that the most noticeable common trait in the family groups was the birth of another child, resulting in the families being involved in the child protection process and ultimately becoming subject to CP Plans again. This was particularly the case for 8 children who had been subject to 3 plans.

The most common category for these children was neglect at 72% and physical harm accounting for 23% which was mainly due to the number of domestic violence incidents. 21 of the children also became looked after, 11 of which are still currently looked after children.

3.0 RELEVANT RISKS

- 3.1 The management of children's safeguarding arrangements is a high priority and is under constant review. Particular issues relating to social care operation in the Wallasey District are being addressed through the deployment additional staff and management. This area is under constant oversight by senior managers.
- 3.2 The continuing adverse economic climate placing further demand pressures on services especially children's social care creates additional challenges. The department continues to face pressures in managing within its budget.

4.0 OTHER OPTIONS CONSIDERED

- 4.1 Not applicable for this report.

5.0 CONSULTATION

- 5.1 Consultation in relation to the draft Corporate Plan engaged individuals and organisations from across Wirral's diverse communities.

6.0 IMPLICATIONS FOR VOLUNTARY, COMMUNITY AND FAITH GROUPS

- 6.1 The Corporate Plan sets out commitments and clear actions in relation to working with voluntary, community and faith sector organisations to improve outcomes for local people.

The VCF sector is a key partner within Wirral Children's Trust Arrangements and their expertise is utilised in the Early Intervention Grant (EIG) commissioning process.

7.0 RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS: FINANCIAL; IT; STAFFING; AND ASSETS

7.1 Pressures of £4.9 million have been identified by the Children and Young People's Department. The main areas of pressure relate to looked after children including residential placements and foster care allowances and home to school transport. Numbers of children in care continue to remain high compared to similar Councils. Budgetary control measures are in place and expenditure is closely monitored.

Policy options have been implemented. This includes £1 million relating to child protection and early intervention including funding additional social workers in the Wallasey Area and improving social worker retention. Work is underway with the private, voluntary and independent sector to provide work experience for 100 young people classified as NEET (not in education, employment or training).

8.0 LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

8.1 Legal implications relating to the actions set out in the Corporate Plan will be addressed by departments as appropriate.

9.0 EQUALITIES IMPLICATIONS

9.1 Has the potential impact of your proposal(s) been reviewed with regard to equality?

(c) No because this report relates to quarterly reporting on the Councils plans which have appropriate equality impact assessments in place.

9.2 The Corporate Plan has a clear focus on supporting those who are disadvantaged, including the delivery of specific services and through ensuring that all of Wirral's diverse communities are equally able to access services.

9.3 Equalities implications relating to the actions set out in the Corporate Plan will be addressed by departments as appropriate, and details set out in individual departmental plans. This work is also monitored by the Corporate Equalities and Cohesion Group and the Council Excellence Overview and Scrutiny Committee.

10.0 CARBON REDUCTION IMPLICATIONS

10.1 Carbon reduction is a specific goal in the Corporate Plan, with associated actions and measures.

11.0 PLANNING AND COMMUNITY SAFETY IMPLICATIONS

11.1 Planning and Community Safety is a specific goal in the Corporate Plan, with associated actions and measures.

12.0 RECOMMENDATION/S

12.1 That the content of this report be noted.

13.0 REASON/S FOR RECOMMENDATION/S

13.1 This report provides quarterly progress on delivering the children and young people's section of the Council's Corporate Plan and the outcomes framework of the Children and Young People's Department Plan. It includes the performance of relevant projects and indicators and the associated financial and risk monitoring information.

REPORT AUTHOR: **Nancy Clarkson**
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APPENDICES

Appendix 1: Children and Young People Performance Indicator Summary

REFERENCE MATERIAL

SUBJECT HISTORY

Council Meeting	Date
CABINET – 2011/12 Year End Performance and Financial Review	21 June 2012
CYP OSC – 2011/12 Year End Performance and Financial Review	6 June 2012
CABINET – 2012/13 Draft Corporate Plan	29 March 2012
CYP OSC – 2011/12 Q3 Performance and Financial Review	21 March 2012
CABINET – 2011/12 Q3 Performance and Financial Review	02 Feb 2012
CYP OSC – 2011/12 Q2 Performance and Financial Review	16 Nov 2011
CABINET – 2011/12 Q2 Performance and Financial Review	03 Nov 2011
CYP OSC – 2011/12 Q1 Performance and Financial Review	20 Sept 2011
CABINET – 2011/12 Q1 Performance and Financial Review	21 July 2011
CABINET - Delivering the Corporate Plan	17 April 2011
COUNCIL - Adoption of Corporate Plan 2011-14	14 April 2011
CABINET - Draft Corporate Plan for 2011-14	17 March 2011

APPENDICES



Appendix 1 Children and Young People Performance Indicator Summary






Direction of Travel Summary

% PIs	No. of PIs	
44.00%	11	Improved by more than 2.5% on previous year's performance
20.00%	5	Deteriorated by more than 2.5% on previous year's performance
28.00%	7	Stayed within +/-2.5% of previous year's performance
0.00%	0	Awaiting data
8.00%	2	Not applicable
100.00%	25	(Note: percentages rounded to 2 decimal places)

Target Summary




% PIs	No. of PIs	
80.00%	20	Green (within +10/-5% of the target)
4.00%	1	Amber (missed target by between 5% and 10%)
8.00%	2	Red (missed target by more than 10%)
8.00%	2	Over-performing (more than 10% of the target)
0.00%	0	Awaiting data
0.00%	0	Target not set
0.00%	0	Not Applicable
100.00%	25	(Note: percentages rounded to 2 decimal places)

PI No.	Title	Yr End Target	Yr End Forecast	Quarter 1 Target	Quarter 1 Actual	On Target	Direction of Travel	Corrective Action
53	Prevalence of breast-feeding at 6-8 wks from birth	35.1%	35.1%	32.1%	31.56% (A)	Green		
60	Percentage of core assessments for children's social care that were carried out within 35 working days of their commencement	75.0%	75.0%	75.0%	49.1% (A)	Red		The level of demand and complexity of cases in this quarter has had a significant impact on compliance with timescales. Continuous monitoring is in place in this area by senior managers. In managing this demand on resources and in particular managers' time

PI No.	Title	Yr End Target	Yr End Forecast	Quarter 1 Target	Quarter 1 Actual	On Target	Direction of Travel	Corrective Action
								and capacity, the procedures and guidance in this area are to be reviewed during the next quarter with the aim to increase teams capacity to manage this area of work.
61	Timeliness of placements of looked after children for adoption following an agency decision that the child should be placed for adoption	90%	80.0%	80%	83.3% (E)	Green		
62	Stability of placements of looked after children: number of placements	9.0% (Lower is Better)	9.0%	11.0%	11.3% (E)	Green		
63	Stability of placements of looked after children: length of placement	70%	70%	70.0%	67.0% (E)	Green		
64	Child Protection Plans lasting 2 years or more	4.0% (Lower is Better)	4.0%	4.0%	0% (A)	Over Performing		In quarter one no children ceased to be the subject of a child protection plan who had been the subject of a child protection plan continuously for two years or longer. Good performance is typified by a low percentage however some children will need child protection plans for longer than 2 years. It is anticipated that this figure will increase during the year.
65	Percentage of children becoming the	13.0% (Lower is	15.0%	15.0%	14.5% (A)	Green		

PI No.	Title	Yr End Target	Yr End Forecast	Quarter 1 Target	Quarter 1 Actual	On Target	Direction of Travel	Corrective Action
	subject of Child Protection Plan for a second or subsequent time.	Better)						
66	Looked after children cases which were reviewed within required timescales.	100.0%	98.0%	95.4%	95.4% (A)	Green	↔	
67	Percentage of child protection cases which were reviewed within required timescales	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0% (E)	Green	↔	
68	Percentage of referrals to children's social care going on to initial assessment	80%	95%	95%	97.5% (A)	Green	↑	
70 a	Reduce emergency hospital admissions caused by unintentional and deliberate injuries in 0-4 years	240 (Lower is Better)	240	246	230 (A)	Green	↓	
103a	Percentage of final SEN statements issued within 26 weeks (Excluding exceptions).	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0% (A)	Green	↔	
103b	Percentage of final SEN statements issued within 26 weeks (Including exceptions)	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	93.3% (A)	Amber	↓	The volume of assessments has increased by 30% in the last 12 months. There were 75 assessment in Q1 2012/13 compared to 44 in Q1 2011/12. Reconfiguring of services is underway to increase the number of assessments completed within statutory timescales.
	Prevalence of	30.00%	30.00%	4.25%	4.25%	Green	↔	

PI No.	Title	Yr End Target	Yr End Forecast	Quarter 1 Target	Quarter 1 Actual	On Target	Direction of Travel	Corrective Action
113	Chlamydia in under 25 year olds				(E)			
117	16 to 18 year olds who are not in education, employment or training (NEET)	9% (Lower is Better)	9.0%	8.5%	8.5% (P)	Green	↑	
1400a	Number of looked after children	615 (Lower is Better)	650	660	681 (P)	Green	↔	
1405	Percentage of initial assessments for children's social care carried out within 10 working days of referral	75.0	70	70	68.6 (A)	Green	↑	
1406	Number of Foster Carers	35	35	10	11 (P)	Green	↑	
1411	Percentage of children ceased to be Looked After who become adopted	15 %	15%	15%	14.3% (P)	Green	n/a	
1503	Number of Early Years settings judged as inadequate	0 (Lower is Better)	0	0	0 (A)	Green	↑	
1504	Number of Early Years settings delivering flexibility in relation to the 15 hour free entitlement	42.0%	50.0%	42.0%	50.0% (A)	Over Performing	↑	Increased interest in flexibility from parents has encouraged more pre-schools and day nurseries in particular to consider offering this approach. Therefore, an increased number of pre-schools and day nurseries are now offering flexibility. The Early Years funding formula incorporates a flexibility payment to providers which incentivises delivery of flexible provision.

PI No.	Title	Yr End Target	Yr End Forecast	Quarter 1 Target	Quarter 1 Actual	On Target	Direction of Travel	Corrective Action
1505a	Percentage of 0 - 4 year olds registered at a Children's Centre	80.0%	80.0%	80.0%	77.5% (E)	Green		
1505b	Percentage of 0 - 4 year olds registered at a Children's Centre (Disadvantaged Backgrounds)	80.0%	80.0%	80.0%	80.0% (E)	Green		
1702	Reduce the under 18 conception rate per 1,000 15-17 year olds	44.9 (Lower is Better)	44.9	44.9	53.5 (E)	Red	n/a	The data and the effectiveness of the interventions introduced during 2012/13 will be monitored on a quarterly basis by Wirral's Teenage Pregnancy Steering Group. However, due to the timescale and nature of recording conceptions the effectiveness of the interventions will not be realised for a considerable length of time
7031	Percentage of under-age sales of alcohol during test purchase exercises	15% (Lower is Better)	15%	0%	0% (A)	Green		

WIRRAL COUNCIL

CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE'S OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY

11 SEPTEMBER 2012

SUBJECT:	REVIEW OF ATTAINMENT & PROGRESS AT THE END OF EYFS, KEY STAGE 1 & KEY STAGE 2
WARD/S AFFECTED:	ALL
REPORT OF:	ACTING DIRECTOR OF CHILDREN'S SERVICES
KEY DECISION?	NO

1.0 EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

PLEASE NOTE THAT ALL DATA FOR 2012 INCLUDED IN THIS REPORT IS UNVALIDATED AND IS THEREFORE PROVISIONAL UNTIL DECEMBER 2012.

- 1.1 This report provides a summary of the standards attained at the end of the Early Years & Foundation Stage, Key Stage 1 and Key Stage 2 for 2012. Priority 2 of the Corporate Plan 'My Family' states the objective "Support schools and other settings to improve educational provision and attainment maintaining a specific focus on addressing the impact of poverty. This analysis links with the Enjoying & Achieving outcome area of the Children & Young People's Plan 2012-13 – in particular area 2 "Improve the educational outcomes for children and young people affected by poverty and disadvantage including children in care."
- 1.2 In particular success is measured by:-
- i) the attainment gap between the lowest achieving 20% in the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) and the rest (National Indicator 92)
 - ii) the achievement gap between pupils eligible for free school meals and their peers at Key Stage 2 (PI 102a)
 - iii) the achievement of pupils with English as an Additional Language (EAL) at the end of Key Stage 2 in English & Maths Level 4+
 - iv) the attainment of Children Looked After (CLA) at the end of Key Stage 2 in English Level 4+ (PI 99) the attainment of Children Looked After (CLA) at the end of Key Stage 2 in Maths Level 4+ (PI 99)
 - v) the attainment of children with Special Needs statements at Level 4 + in English and Mathematics at Key Stage 2 (PI 1600)
- 1.3 Through the implementation of the new School Improvement Strategy to ensure statutory duties are met the following performance indicators will be evaluated as key milestones in the Learning & Achievement Branch Plan:-

- i) achievement at Level 4+ in both English and Mathematics at the end of Key Stage 2 (PI 73)
- ii) attainment at the end of EYFS for Communication, Language & Literacy (CLL) (PI 72a)
- iii) the attainment gap between pupils eligible for free school meals and their peers at the end of EYFS, Key Stage 1 as well as Key Stage 2

2.0 BACKGROUND AND KEY ISSUES

Glossary of Terms

Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) – attainment is measured for rising 5 year old children

Key Stage 1 – attainment is measured for the rising 7 year old pupils

Key Stage 2 – attainment is measured for the rising 11 year old pupils

National Expectation at the end of EYFS – 6+ points in all areas.

The national indicator is a total of 78+ points across the 6 areas of learning and 6+ points in Communication Language & Literacy (CLL) and Personal and Social Education (PSE).

National Expectation at the end of Key Stage 1 – all pupils should attain Level 2+. In order for pupils to have the best possible chance to achieve a Level 4 + at the end of Key Stage 2 pupils need to attain Level 2b+.

National Expectation at the end of Key Stage 2 – all pupils should attain Level 4+

Floor Targets – The Department for Education introduced a floor target last year. The floor target is divided into 3 parts:-

English AND Maths Level 4+ - a minimum of 60 % of pupils to attain

2 levels progress in English - a minimum of 87% of pupils to make 2 levels progress from their Key Stage 1 SAT level

2 levels progress in Maths - a minimum of 86% of pupils to make 2 levels progress from their Key Stage 1 SAT level

2.1 The attainment gap between the lowest achieving 20% in the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) and the rest (National Indicator 92)

NI 92	Percentage		
	2010	2011	2012
Wirral	27.6	29.9	28.2
Boys	28.4	29.2	27.1
Girls	25.1	26.7	26.9
National	32.7	31.4	N/A

The attainment gap for all pupils has narrowed from 2011 – 2012. The boys' attainment gap has narrowed whereas the girls' attainment has remained similar to last year. The attainment gap is smaller than the national indicating that the Wirral gap is narrower. This is attributable to the focus by schools providing learning experiences aimed at raising boys' attainment in Communication, Language & Literacy and Personal and Social Education.

2.2 The achievement gap between pupils eligible for free school meals and their peers at Key Stage 2 (PI 102a)

PI 102a	FSM Wirral 2011	FSM Wirral 2012	Non FSM Wirral 2011	Non FSM Wirral 2012	Gap 2011	Gap 2012	Gap National 2011
English L4+	71.3	74.2	89	88.5	17.7	14.3	19
Maths L4+	71.5	72.9	86.9	87.4	15.4	14.5	16.9
English & Maths L4+	62.3	65.1	83	83.4	20.7	18.3	21.3

The attainment gap has narrowed in English L4+, Maths Level 4+ and in the combined measure English & Mathematics L4+. When compared to the national data available (2011) the attainment gap is narrower than the national in all areas, with the biggest differential being in English attainment. Reducing the FSM gap has been a focus of school improvement for all schools. Close, regular monitoring of pupil progress has resulted in pupils who are off track to meet targets for attainment being identified earlier. Interventions and the use of Pupil Premium have resulted in schools narrowing the gap.

2.3 The achievement of pupils with English as an Additional Language (EAL) at the end of Key Stage 2 in English & Maths Level 4+

PI 102a	EAL 2011	EAL 2012	All Wirral Pupils 2011	All Wirral Pupils 2012	Gap 2011	Gap 2012
English L4+	70	78.3	84	85.4	14	7.1
Maths L4+	81	90.4	83	84.2	2	+ 6.2
English & Maths L4+	63	74.7	77	79	14	4.3

The achievement of EAL pupils has increased in all areas. The gap between the achievement of all Wirral pupils and EAL pupils has narrowed significantly. Most significant is the attainment in Mathematics which is 6.2% higher than the Wirral average for all pupils, indicating that pupils have been well supported in the learning.

2.4 The attainment of Children Looked After (CLA) at the end of Key Stage 2 in English Level 4+ (PI 99) the attainment of Children Looked After (CLA) at the end of Key Stage 2 in Maths Level 4+ (PI 99)

At the time of writing this report the data was unavailable. This data will be presented at the Overview and Scrutiny Committee as a Power Point presentation.

2.5 The attainment of children with Special Needs statements at Level 4 + in English and Mathematics at Key Stage 2 (PI 1600)

PI 1600	SEN St 2010	SEN St 2012	SEN St 2012	National 2010	National 2011
English L4+	22.4	20.9	21.7	17	20
Maths L4+	30.6	23	22.5	20	22
English & Maths L4+	17.2	14.4	14.7	13	15

The data collected here includes pupils with a statement of special needs who have attended mainstream primary schools. The trend over 3 years for English Level 4+ has fluctuated but continues to be above the national average. Attainment for Mathematics Level 4+ has declined slightly but is above the national average. Attainment in 2012 increased in all areas, however the focus for improvement is on the number of pupils attaining English and Mathematics Level 4+.

2.6 Achievement at Level 4+ in both English and Mathematics at the end of Key Stage 2 (PI 73)

PI 73	Wirral	Wirral	Wirral	National 2011
English L4+	82	84	85.4	82
Maths L4+	82	83	84.2	81
English & Maths L4+	75	77	79	74

The data shows that attainment in all 3 areas has increased year on year. Both boys and girls attainment in English has increased from 2011 and the gender gap has narrowed.

2.7 Attainment at the end of EYFS for Communication, Language & Literacy (CLL - PI 72a)

CLL 6+	Percentages		
	2010	2011	2012
All	59.7	60.5	62.6
Boys	50.6	51.5	53
Girls	69.2	70.5	73
FSM	47	43	45.5
Non FSM	63.4	66.3	67.7
CLA	27.6	50	36.8
BME	54.1	49.2	53.3
EAL	53.5	35	46.9

The data shows a year on year increase in communication, language and literacy. Both boys' and girls' attainment has increased with the gender gap narrowing slightly. Free school meals pupils' and non free school meals pupils' attainment has increased and the gap has narrowed by 1%. BME and EAL pupils' attainment has increased. Children Looked After (CLA) attainment has fluctuated over 3 years. Attainment has declined in 2012.

2.8 The attainment gap between pupils eligible for free school meals and their peers at the end of EYFS, Key Stage 1 as well as Key Stage 2

	FSM 2011	FSM 2012	Non FSM 2011	Non FSM 2012	Gap 2011	Gap 2012	Gap National
Reading L2+	71.8	79.1	89	91	17.2	11.9	15
Writing L2+	65.2	72.2	85.9	87.7	20.7	15.5	18
Maths L2+	78.4	83.6	91.6	92.5	13.2	9.9	11

EYFS and Key Stage 2 results have already been mentioned in the report. The chart focuses on attainment at the end of Key Stage 1. Free school meal pupils' attainment has increased significantly in reading, writing and mathematics, whilst non free school meal pupils' attainment increased slightly. The attainment gap has narrowed in all 3 areas. Whilst the gap was higher than the national average in 2011 it is anticipated that when the national data is available (December 2012) the position for Wirral will show considerable improvement.

2.9 CONCLUSIONS

To conclude the following areas are focus for development:-

- To continue to narrow the attainment gap for the lowest achieving 20% in EYFS
- To continue to improve the levels of early language development through the implementation of the Welcom programme
- To continue to raise attainment at all key stages with a particular focus on those schools where underperformance has been identified.
- To continue to reduce the attainment gap between children eligible for free schools in all key stages
- To continue to raise the attainment of Children Looked After at all key stages
- Implementing and evaluating the new School Improvement Strategy; ensuring we meet our statutory duties is a key action within the Corporate Plan.

2.10 The following challenging milestones outlined within the Corporate Plan will be used to monitor and evaluate impact:-

- Improve Early Years foundation stage profile achievement to 60% and reduce the gap between the lowest achieving 20% in the Early Years Foundation Stage Profile and the rest by 27%
- Improve achievement at Level 4 and above in both English and Maths to 80% of pupils
- Increase the numbers of children looked after achieving Level 4 at Key Stage 2 to 50% in English at Key Stage 2 to 50% in Mathematics
- Increase the attainment of children with Special Educational Needs statements at Key Stage 2 to 18% of pupils (Level 4 and above in both English and Maths)

3.0 RELEVANT RISKS

3.1 The School Improvement Team needs to continue to work with schools (in particular vulnerable & underperforming schools) to ensure that pupil attainment is monitored and evaluated regularly so that progress is maintained and improved upon.

- 3.2 Children Looked After to be provided with targeted support particularly in communication, language and literacy so that they have every opportunity to make accelerated progress.
- 3.3 Where schools do not meet the DfE floor targets, so appearing in the lowest attaining 1.1% of schools nationally, the DfE will want to seriously consider these schools moving from the Local Authority to Academy status. The Director of Children and Young People's Department is likely to issue a warning notice to any school whose results have been below the floor target for a consecutive number of years.

4.0 OTHER OPTIONS CONSIDERED

- 4.1 Not applicable.

5.0 CONSULTATION

- 5.1 Initial discussions have taken place with Children Centre Managers to determine strategies which could be used to further support harder to reach families with pre-school speech and language development.
- 5.2 There is regular consultation with schools to determine future plans and strategies to raise standards further.

6.0 IMPLICATIONS FOR VOLUNTARY, COMMUNITY AND FAITH GROUPS

- 6.1 There are no plans to formally consult with other partners at this stage.

7.0 RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS: FINANCIAL; IT; STAFFING; AND ASSETS

- 7.1 There are no direct financial implications in terms of finance, IT, staffing and assets.
- 7.2 The resources of the School Improvement Team are used to review attainment and achievement. Schools /settings who are underperforming are identified and support is provided by the Early Years Team and Early Intervention Managers. The School Improvement Strategy has resulted in schools being identified as causing the Local Authority concern. Regular monitoring meetings and support from the principal managers has been effective in preventing schools going into an Ofsted category. The identified schools have demonstrated improvement as a result of the targeted support.

8.0 LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

- 8.1 None identified.

9.0 EQUALITIES IMPLICATIONS

- 9.1 Has the potential impact of your proposal(s) been reviewed with regard to equality?
- (a) Yes and impact review is attached.

<http://www.wirral.gov.uk/my-services/community-and-living/equality-diversity-cohesion/equality-impact-assessments/eias-2010/children-young-people>

10.0 CARBON REDUCTION IMPLICATIONS

10.1 None identified.

11.0 PLANNING AND COMMUNITY SAFETY IMPLICATIONS

11.1 None identified.

12.0 RECOMMENDATION/S

12.1 The Overview & Scrutiny to note the report.

13.0 REASON/S FOR RECOMMENDATION/S

13.1 N/A

REPORT AUTHOR: Sue Talbot
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APPENDICES

None

REFERENCE MATERIAL

None

SUBJECT HISTORY (last 3 years)

Council Meeting	Date

Equality Impact Assessment Toolkit (from May 2012)

Section 1: Your details

EIA lead Officer: Sue Talbot

Email address: suetalbot@wirral.gov.uk

Head of Section: Vivian Stafford

Chief Officer: Julia Hassall

Department: Children & Young People's Department

Date: August 8th 2012

Section 2: What Council proposal is being assessed?

The review of standards at the end of Early Years Foundation Stage, Key Stage 1 and Key Stage 2

Section 2b: Will this EIA be submitted to a Cabinet or Overview & Scrutiny Committee?

Yes

September 11th 2012

<http://www.wirral.gov.uk/my-services/community-and-living/equality-diversity-cohesion/equality-impact-assessments/eias-2010/children-young-people>

Section 3: Does the proposal have the potential to affect..... (please tick relevant boxes)

- Services**
- The workforce**
- Communities**
- Other** (Schools and Early Years Settings)

If you have ticked one or more of above, please go to section 4.

- None** (please stop here and email this form to your Chief Officer who needs to email it to equalitywatch@wirral.gov.uk for publishing)

Section 4: Does the proposal have the potential to maintain or enhance the way the Council (please tick relevant boxes)

- Eliminates unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation
- Advances equality of opportunity
- Fosters good relations between groups of people

If you have ticked one or more of above, please go to section 5.

- No** (please stop here and email this form to your Chief Officer who needs to email it to equalitywatch@wirral.gov.uk for publishing)

Section 5: Could the proposal have a positive or negative impact on any of the protected groups (race, gender, disability, gender reassignment, age, pregnancy and maternity, religion and belief, sexual orientation, marriage and civil partnership)?

You may also want to consider socio-economic status of individuals.

Please list in the table below and include actions required to mitigate any potential negative impact.

Which group(s) of people could be affected	Potential positive or negative impact	Action required to mitigate any potential negative impact	Lead person	Timescale	Resource implications
Gender	A negative impact is the gender attainment gap widens. Close monitoring and evaluation of attainment at all key stages will have a positive impact in raising attainment	School Improvement Associates to monitor and evaluate both boys' and girls' attainment and report on improvement with a focus on narrowing the attainment gap	Sue Talbot	September 2012 - August 2013	None
Race	A negative impact is the attainment of BME and EAL pupils decreasing or staying the same. Close monitoring and evaluation of attainment at all key stages will have a positive impact in raising attainment for BME and EAL pupils	School Improvement Associates to monitor and evaluate BME and EAL pupils' attainment and report on improvement	Sarah Howarth	September 2012 - August 2013	None
Socio-economic status	A negative impact is that free school meals pupils attain lower than their non free school meals peers. Close monitoring and evaluation of attainment at all key stages will have a positive impact in raising attainment	School Improvement Associates to monitor and evaluate pupils eligible for free school meals and non free school meal pupils' attainment to continue to narrow the attainment gap	Sue Talbot	September 2012 – August 2013	None

Section 5a: Where and how will the above actions be monitored?

Actions will be monitored by the Principal Managers in the School Improvement Team each term with a report completed in the Autumn and Summer term in the academic year.

Section 5b: If you think there is no negative impact, what is your reasoning behind this?

The School Improvement Team focuses on raising attainment for all pupils. In particular the focus is to narrow attainment and achievement for vulnerable groups.

Section 6: What research / data / information have you used in support of this process?

Data from the Local Authority Information Section and the National Statistics Gateway has been compared and analysed.

Section 7: Are you intending to carry out any consultation with regard to this Council proposal?

No - This is a report that is in the Learning & Achievement Branch annual work plan which reports to the Overview and Scrutiny Committee in the Autumn term each year.

(please stop here and email this form to your Chief Officer who needs to email it to equalitywatch@wirral.gov.uk for publishing)

Section 8: How will consultation take place and by when?

Before you complete your consultation, please email your preliminary EIA to equalitywatch@wirral.gov.uk via your Chief Officer in order for the Council to ensure it is meeting it's legal requirements. The EIA will be published with a note saying we are awaiting outcomes from a consultation exercise.

Once you have completed your consultation, please review your actions in section 5. Then email this form to your Chief Officer who needs to email it to equalitywatch@wirral.gov.uk for re-publishing.

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WIRRAL COUNCIL

CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE'S OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY

11 SEPTEMBER 2012

SUBJECT:	VALUING OUR SAFEGUARDING EMPLOYEES
WARD/S AFFECTED:	ALL
REPORT OF:	ACTING DIRECTOR OF CHILDREN'S SERVICES
KEY DECISION?	NO

1.0 EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

1.1 This report is in response to the Notice of Motion "Valuing our Safeguarding Employees" approved by the Council on 16 July 2012.

2.0 BACKGROUND AND KEY ISSUES

2.1 The Childrens Social Care service provides a front-line social work service to children in need and at risk in Wirral. By its nature, the service works with children who are exposed to varying levels of harm and stress. The Performance Report which is presented to members of the committee on a quarterly basis outlines the key performance areas and some of the demands on the service.

2.2 The service has had a number of inspections in the last two years. The outcomes of these inspections have been previously reported to members but in summary the service continues to deliver a good and in parts an outstanding service to children and young people.

2.3 In response to the Notice of Motion:

Point 1: "(the Council) is firmly committed to safeguarding vulnerable children in our care. Council notes that, at present, almost 700 children are looked after in Wirral, and according to the Wirral Children and Young People's Plan 2012-13, over 2,200 children have been allocated a social worker and around 360 have a child protection plan. Average caseloads for social workers in Wirral are between 25-30 children."

2.4 In the quarter from 1 April to 30 June 2012, a total of 909 children were referred to children's social care. Of these, 886 received an initial assessment and for those with complex needs or where there was a child protection assessment, a more in-depth core assessment was undertaken for 424 children. For children at risk of significant harm, a multi-agency initial child protection case conference was held for 82 children, and for 59 children, this was their first child protection plan.

2.5 On 15 August 2012, there were 3,093 children open to a social worker, of which 351 have a child protection plan and 691 were looked after, and the remaining 2,051 were

children in need of intervention to prevent them from impaired outcomes in terms of their health and overall wellbeing.

- 2.6 The above provides a snapshot of the complexity and level of demand faced by the service. The teams referred to include 1 central advice and duty team, 4 assessment teams, 8 care management teams, the pathway (leaving care) team, the children with disabilities team and the Safeguarding and Quality Assurance unit and will refer to qualified social workers.
- 2.7 Caseloads in Wirral will vary across teams, and in each team dependant on its role and function. The definition of a case is by an individual child, not family. It will also depend on the level of experience of the social worker. Newly qualified social workers will have a reduced and protected caseload for the first 3 months and for the remainder of their first year as 10% of their time is protected for learning and development. There are also part-time social workers who have an appropriate caseload. We have also put additional 6 agency social worker resources into Wallasey district to manage the level of demand in that area. The average caseload currently across 116 staff is 26 cases.
- 2.8 There are higher and lower numbers in individual teams; if a member of staff has a caseload that is higher than 30, that would be an area where managers would be expected to take action to put in place a plan to reduce that caseload in a timely and appropriate manner. If required, additional agency social workers have been agreed for a time-limited period to provide capacity to meet our statutory requirements while plans are implemented to reduce caseloads. There is no statutory guidance on the number of cases that a social worker should have. It is essential that there is effective management and supervision to ensure the allocation of work and the management of each case to support social workers in managing their caseload.
- 2.9 There is no “light-touch” work in the service. Following our changes to the Central Advice and Duty team and clear guidance on thresholds through the Integrated Working guide, all work that progresses to assessment and services are at the top level of the threshold and is appropriate for specialist social care intervention. This does mean, as evidenced in the organisational health check which was presented to members on 21 March 2012, that this creates demands of time and pressure for social workers to ensure that statutory requirements are met.

Point 2: (The Council) believes that one of the key ways to secure the best possible outcomes for these children is to affirm its commitment to maintaining a highly skilled, professional, well motivated and caring workforce and providing a working environment and terms and conditions in which they can consistently give their best;

- 2.10 As was evidenced in the Organisation Health Check which was presented to members on 21 March 2012, staff highly value the professional training and development that they receive through the council and also through the Local Safeguarding Childrens Board, and this area of spend has thus far been protected. Staff have laptops, 3G cards and digital pens to aid them with their work. Staff in South and West Wirral have moved from office accommodation in Moreton, which was not fit for purpose, to spacious and comfortable accommodation in Pensby. Staff receive praise on the quality of their work from their managers, colleagues in other services, the courts and children and young people directly. Health and safety and risk assessments for the

role are in place, and where staff face particular risks, individual risk assessments are undertaken .On rare occasions where a threat to the home address is possible, we work with the police to agree appropriate responses and have provided additional security measures at the worker's home address. The Employee Assistance Programme is well promoted and informal feedback from staff indicates this service to be responsive and of great benefit.

- 2.11 Wirral is still valued by those qualifying as social workers as having a reputation as a good place to work. In the recent round of interviews, over 100 people applied for social worker posts for six posts. The standard of applicants was very high and we have been able to appoint excellent future social workers. We have a staffing officer in the training section who delivers and co-ordinates training and support for all our newly-qualified staff. However, when we recruit social workers, they will be newly-qualified staff; a challenge for us is to retain our skilled and experienced staff to manage the complexity and risk of the work we have.

Point 3: In particular, (the council) welcomes the partnership work across `Cheshire and Merseyside to deliver the 'Step up to Social Work' scheme to deliver Masters level social work training in Children's Social Care (Cabinet minute 198, 1st September 2011 refers);

- 2.12 Wirral took 8 people in the first cohort of the Step Up programme; 7 successfully completed the qualification and are now employed by Wirral as social workers. We have also been part of the second cohort and have again taken 8 people to support through their training. The quality of the people in the first cohort was excellent and we have benefited in recruiting high calibre social workers who will contribute to the ongoing development of the workforce.

Point 4: (The Council) notes the recent extension of short term market rate supplement payments to Children's Social Care Posts to improve recruitment and retention, agreed at Employment and Appointments Committee 23rd April 2012 (minute 90 refers);

Point 5 ...and notes that it was incorrect that market rate supplement payments have been delayed pending the outcome of the job evaluation exercise. Where applicable, market supplement rates have been paid to social workers who qualify for such a payment since June 2012. The job evaluation report is due towards the end of this year and will clarify the position with regard to salaries for our social work staff;

Point 6: ...and accepts the principle that social workers in Wirral should enjoy pay and conditions on a par with comparable authorities. However, this may have significant budgetary implications which should be clearly quantified and considered as part of the budget-making process;

- 2.13 A report presenting the particular challenges facing childrens social care in recruiting and retaining qualified social workers and managers was presented to Employment and Appointments Committee on 23 April 2012. It was agreed to implement a retention payment for those groups of staff, and a recruitment or market supplement for manager recruitment until job evaluation was completed.

- 2.14 The first advert including the market rate supplement has been published. Unfortunately this did not attract a wide range of high calibre external applicants for vacant Practice Manager and Principal Manager posts. 2 Practice Managers have been appointed internally. 3 Practice Manager vacancies, and 1 Principal Team Manager vacancy remain and continue to be covered by agency. A further advert will be issued in September.
- 2.15 The retention supplement has been positively received by staff and will assist us in retaining their skills and experience. Unfortunately, it did not dissuade three social workers who had job offers elsewhere from leaving us.
- 2.16 With regards to Job Evaluation, the pay-modeling phase of the process was time-tabled for June and July and has progressed according to timescales. Consultation regarding pay-line options commenced in August and will continue into early September. Work continues towards achieving an outcome during September, this is of course is subject to the ongoing consultation process. Part of the process is to examine comparator information and benchmark with comparator authorities. Once this phase is completed, feedback and consultation will take place to staff and a report on the budgetary implications of any changes will be presented to Cabinet as part of the budget process.

Point 7: notes that Wirral has recently joined the “Learn together Partnership” and is committed to exploring all avenues including the idea of a shared pool of peripatetic workers as a way of increasing capacity and resources;

- 2.17 Wirral has been a long-standing member of the Learn Together Partnership which previously had a largely education focus. The Step Up programme is an example of successful partnership working in this area and all local authorities in the partnership are keen to explore effective ways to work together. A shared pool may prove problematic because of the different terms and conditions and pay of each authority but the possibility of the region developing, managing and running its own social work agency is worth further exploration and will be taken to the Learn Together Partnership in the autumn for consideration.

Point 8: (The Council) notes that Wirral is working towards a significant reduction in the use of agency social workers and to that end has recently employed nine social workers on temporary contracts. This will begin the process of reducing agency staff costs;

- 2.18 These temporary social workers should all be in post by September when most of them, who newly-qualified, receive confirmation of their qualification. Following our recent interviews, we have a number of high calibre staff who were not appointed to permanent positions, and some of the temporary workers have now secured permanent jobs with us or elsewhere. We intend to offer a further 6 temporary contracts, bringing the total to 15. It is our intention that by January 1 2013, the only agency staff will be for manager posts and short-term sickness absence. This investment will bring stability to the workforce and commitment from staff who have a long-term aim of securing permanent employment with us, as they will be able to apply via internal adverts to permanent posts, thus shortening the current external recruitment process. It will also reduce our costs significantly.

Point 9: (the Council) notes that Exit interviews are undertaken for social work staff leaving the service of the Department and the Borough. Whilst any specific issues are addressed directly, the production of aggregate reports to capture trends/themes would be useful;

- 2.19 Exit interviews are undertaken but the collation of the themes and trends needs to be more systematic. The Local Government Association has issued “Standards for Employers of Social Workers” which provides a clear framework for monitoring social work supervision, training and development, workforce planning and caseloads. The branch has established an Employer Standards group with representation from the full range of social workers, teams and managers, with representation from Unison and HR. The first meeting of this group has agreed its terms of reference and outlined its priorities for its first year, including the monitoring of supervision and caseloads. It is part of the work plan for this group will receive themed reports produced on a quarterly basis analysing themes and trends in staff leaving the service. This will inform workforce planning for the service and steps to be taken to improve the retention of staff.

3.0 RELEVANT RISKS

- 3.1 A stable and experienced permanent workforce is critical in meeting the demands of safeguarding children in Wirral. Agency cover is used as and when appropriate to ensure statutory requirements are met but this can bring with it instability as there is a short notice period of a week. This can cause difficulties in re-allocating work and create additional pressures on existing staff as well as being disruptive for children and their families.
- 3.2 Failing to ensure that there are sufficient qualified social work staff, and managers to support and supervise their work, leads to a risk that cases will not be allocated or responded to in line with our statutory duties and places the authority at risk of a serious incident to a child, with the resultant negative publicity and increased oversight and monitoring by Ofsted and the Department for Education, who can ultimately place an improvement notice on the council.
- 3.3 However, we have a robust and tightly managed approach to the recruitment of staff and ensuring that all teams have a manager and the likelihood of this risk is low.

4.0 OTHER OPTIONS CONSIDERED

- 4.1 There are no other options.

5.0 CONSULTATION

- 5.1 The Employer Standards group will be the vehicle for consultation with staff and union representatives.

6.0 IMPLICATIONS FOR VOLUNTARY, COMMUNITY AND FAITH GROUPS

- 6.1 There are no implications.

7.0 RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS: FINANCIAL; IT; STAFFING; AND ASSETS

7.1 The cost of continuing to advertise posts for managers with the market supplement attached while still covering with agency managers is a major cost implication, as is the cost of agency cover for medium sickness absence. Long-term sickness will be covered by the temporary contracts.

8.0 LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

8.1 There are no legal implications.

9.0 EQUALITIES IMPLICATIONS

9.1 Has the potential impact of your proposal(s) been reviewed with regard to equality?

(a) Yes and impact review is attached and can be found via the following link.

10.0 CARBON REDUCTION IMPLICATIONS

10.1 There are no implications.

11.0 PLANNING AND COMMUNITY SAFETY IMPLICATIONS

11.1 There are no implications.

12.0 RECOMMENDATION/S

12.1 Members are asked to note the report.

13.0 REASON/S FOR RECOMMENDATION/S

13.1 The report is in response to the Notice of Motion.

REPORT AUTHOR: Tracey Coffey
Acting Head of Branch
telephone: (0151) 666 4330
email: traceycoffey@wirral.gov.uk

REFERENCE MATERIAL

[Local Government Association: Standards for Employers of Social Workers](#)

SUBJECT HISTORY (last 3 years)

Council Meeting	Date
Council	16 July 2012
Children and Young People Overview and Scrutiny - Sickness	29 January 2012
Children and Young People Overview and Scrutiny – Organisational Health Check Presentation	21 March 2012

Equality Impact Assessment Toolkit (from May 2012)

Section 1: Your details

EIA lead Officer: Vivian Stafford

Email address: vivianstafford@wirral.gov.uk

Head of Section: Tracey Coffey

Chief Officer: Julia Hassall

Department: CYPD

Date: 20/8/2012

Section 2: What Council proposal is being assessed?

Report to overview and scrutiny on valuing safeguarding employees.

Section 2b: Will this EIA be submitted to a Cabinet or Overview & Scrutiny Committee?

Yes If 'yes' please state which meeting and what date

Children and Young People Overview and Scrutiny 11 September 2012

<http://www.wirral.gov.uk/my-services/community-and-living/equality-diversity-cohesion/equality-impact-assessments/eias-2010/children-young-people>

Section 3: Does the proposal have the potential to affect..... (please tick relevant boxes)

- Services**
- The workforce**
- Communities**
- Other** (please state eg: Partners, Private Sector, Voluntary & Community Sector)

If you have ticked one or more of above, please go to section 4.

- None** (please stop here and email this form to your Chief Officer who needs to email it to equalitywatch@wirral.gov.uk for publishing)

Section 4: Does the proposal have the potential to maintain or enhance the way the Council (please tick relevant boxes)

- Eliminates unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation
- Advances equality of opportunity
- Fosters good relations between groups of people

If you have ticked one or more of above, please go to section 5.

- No** (please stop here and email this form to your Chief Officer who needs to email it to equalitywatch@wirral.gov.uk for publishing)

Section 5:

Could the proposal have a positive or negative impact on any of the protected groups (race, gender, disability, gender reassignment, age, pregnancy and maternity, religion and belief, sexual orientation, marriage and civil partnership)?

You may also want to consider socio-economic status of individuals.

Please list in the table below and include actions required to mitigate any potential negative impact.

Which group(s) of people could be affected	Potential positive or negative impact	Action required to mitigate any potential negative impact	Lead person	Timescale	Resource implications
All	Exit interviews will be collated to identify themes and trends that lead to staff leaving the authority which will assist in workforce planning. This will contribute to the effective recruitment and retention of staff and ensure that identified needs for support are met through revised training and support to managers. Staff may be concerned that negative feedback will affect any future reference and do not request or attend exit interviews with their immediate manager.	Staff are given the choice whether to participate in an interview with a different or more senior manager and also have the choice to complete and submit the exit interview form without an interview directly to HR. This will allow the monitoring across the 9 characteristics of reasons for social workers leaving the department.	Sue Blevins/ Tracey Coffey	January 2013	Briefing to managers regarding exit interviews. Officer time in HR to collate the figures, themes and trends and report to employer standards group.

Section 5a: Where and how will the above actions be monitored?
Exit interview themes and trends to be reported to Employer Standards Group on quarterly basis for response and action as required.

Section 5b: If you think there is no negative impact, what is your reasoning behind this?

Section 6: What research / data / information have you used in support of this process?

Sickness absence data

Section 7: Are you intending to carry out any consultation with regard to this Council proposal?

Yes– (please delete as appropriate)

If 'yes' please continue to section 8.

If 'no' please state your reason(s) why:

(please stop here and email this form to your Chief Officer who needs to email it to equalitywatch@wirral.gov.uk for publishing)

Section 8: How will consultation take place and by when?

Workforce monitoring and planning with social work staff to be undertaken by the Employer Standards Group. Staff representation from across the service with representation from the union and HR.

Before you complete your consultation, please email your preliminary EIA to equalitywatch@wirral.gov.uk via your Chief Officer in order for the Council to ensure it is meeting it's legal requirements. The EIA will be published with a note saying we are awaiting outcomes from a consultation exercise.

Once you have completed your consultation, please review your actions in section 5. Then email this form to your Chief Officer who needs to email it to equalitywatch@wirral.gov.uk for re-publishing.

WIRRAL COUNCIL

CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE'S OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY

11 SEPTEMBER 2012

SUBJECT:	ADOPTION SCORECARD
WARD/S AFFECTED:	ALL
REPORT OF:	ACTING DIRECTOR OF CHILDREN'S SERVICES
KEY DECISION?	NO

1.0 EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to outline the Government's approach to addressing delays in the adoption system which is detailed in *An Action Plan for Adoption: Tackling Delay* (published by the Department for Education in March 2012).
- 1.2 One of the government's measures is the publication of the Adoption Scorecards for each local authority. The report shows Wirral Council's performance for the Adoption Scorecard for the 3 year average (2008-09 to 2010-11) as published in May 2012, and specifies the steps that are being taken to improve performance.
- 1.3 In addition this report details the action being taken by Wirral in response to the measures relating to reducing delays in the court process and the implementation of the Adoption Agencies (Panel and Consequential Amendments) Regulations 2012 which prohibits adoption agencies from referring cases to an adoption panel before making a decision whether a child should be placed for adoption where they intend to apply to court for a Placement Order.
- 1.4 The report outlines the importance of using additional contextual information to make comparisons of local authorities' performance as the time taken for adoption can be longer for some children and may be dependent on other agencies such as the family court justice system.
- 1.5 It should be noted that previous Inspections of Adoption Services have not specifically focused on delay and Wirral's performance in relation to the Adoption Standards and Regulations was assessed by Ofsted in 2011 as 'Good' with 'Outstanding features'.

2.0 BACKGROUND AND KEY ISSUES

The Adoption Scorecard

- 2.1 The purpose of the Adoption Scorecard is to publish the minimum expectations on local authorities for timeliness in the adoption
- 2.2 The Department for Education published in May 2012 the adoption scorecard for the 3 year average period April 2008 to March 2011 which measures all local authority's performance against three key indicators:

- A1 Average time between a child entering care and moving in with its adoptive family, for children who have been adopted. The national threshold set by government for 2010 to 2013 is 21 months (639 days).
- A2 Average time between a local authority receiving court authority to place a child and the local authority deciding on a match to an adoptive family. The national threshold set by government for 2010 to 2013 is 7 months (213 days).
- A3 Children who wait less than 21 months between entering care and moving in with their adoptive family (number and %). There was no national threshold set by government in May 2012 for this indicator.

- 2.3 The first key indicator A1 relates to the overall experience of a child who is adopted. It will measure the average time it takes for a child who goes on to be adopted from entering care to moving in with his or her adoptive family. The local authority leads this process, working with the child, the birth parents and the prospective adopters, but they share the responsibility for parts of this process with the other agencies in the family justice system, including the courts and Children and Family |Court Advisory and Support Service (Cafcass).
- 2.4 The second key indicator A2 tests the speed and effectiveness of family-finding. Family-finding is a part of the adoption process which is the sole responsibility of the local authority so this indicator will always give an undiluted picture of their performance. Family-finding should begin as soon as a child is identified as needing adoption, and runs in parallel with other parts of the adoption process. In many cases, prospective adopters should be ready and waiting for the child when the placement order is made.
- 2.5 The third key indicator A3 looks at the same period as A1, but identifies the proportion of children who wait longer for adoption than 21 months. It will help ensure the scorecard takes account of children still waiting, as well as those who have already been adopted. The government has said they will intervene if a large number of children seem to be waiting too long in a particular local area.
- 2.6 The national performance thresholds will be changed by government incrementally over the next four years until they reflect the levels set out in statutory guidance. This means that the threshold in 2013-16 will be 426 days for A1 and 121 days for A2.
- 2.7 To aid effective comparison between local authority areas, and give a more contextualised and rounded picture of a local authority's performance, additional information is included in the Adoption Scorecard, such as the timeliness of the local family justice system, and the numbers of older children being adopted.
- 2.8 The current data within the scorecard are based on a three year rolling average (2008-09 to 2010-11). The government have stated that the key indicators will be updated in late 2012 with data for 2011-12.
- 2.10 The government will use the Adoption Scorecard along with other performance information, including whether poor performance against the indicators reflects the complex needs of the children being placed for adoption, to determine if intervention is necessary. The government has acknowledged in [An Action Plan for Adoption: Tackling Delay](#) that indicators alone do not give a full and authoritative picture of local authority performance.

Wirral's Adoption Scorecard

A1. Average time between a child entering care and moving in with its adoptive family, for children who have been adopted (days)

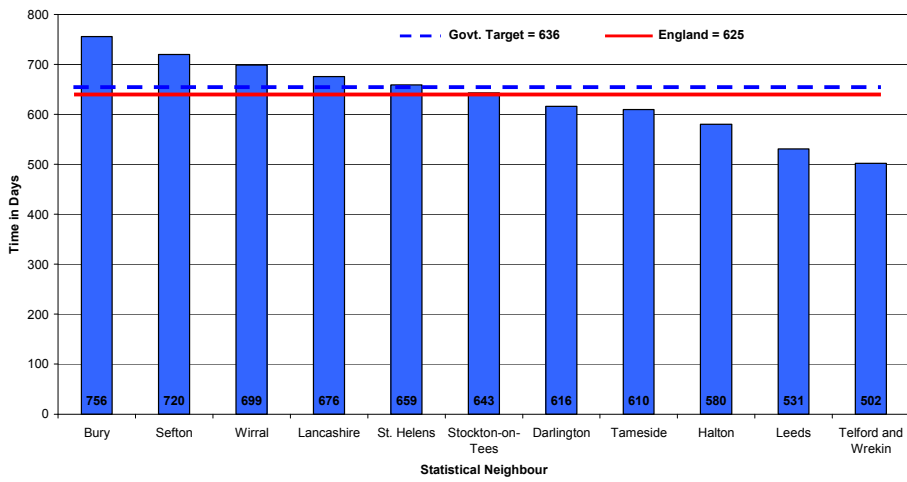


Chart 1 – lower is better

A2. Average time between a local authority receiving court authority to place a child and the local authority deciding on a match to an adoptive family (days)

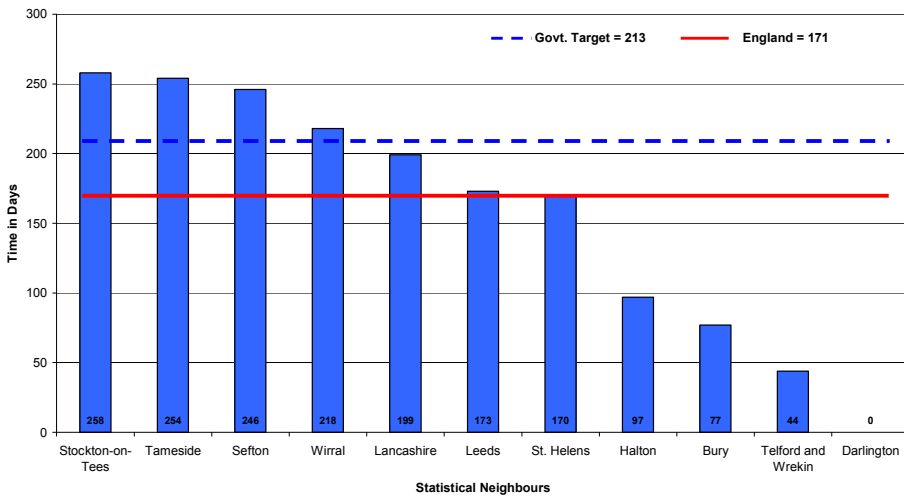


Chart 2 - Lower is better (note information from Darlington is not recorded)

A3 Children who wait less than 21 months between entering care and moving in with their adoptive family (%)

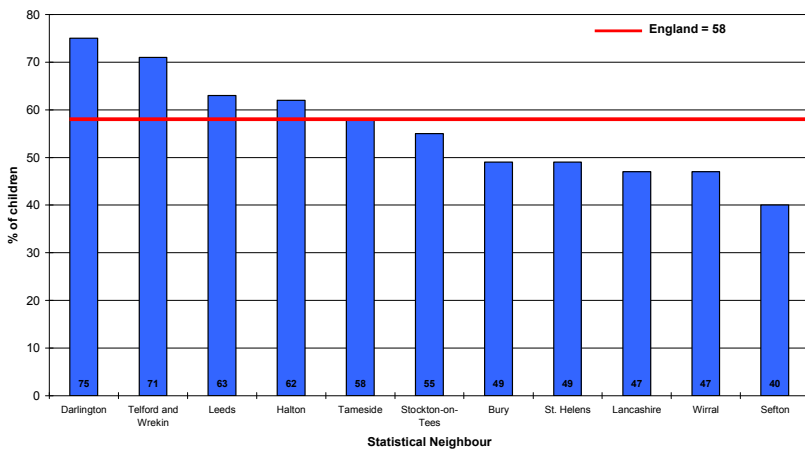


Chart 3 - higher is better

- 2.11 Chart's 1 to 3 illustrate that Wirral does not perform as well as the England average for all 3 indicators. In addition for indicators A1 and A2 Wirral does not meet the government set threshold/target for 2010-13. In Wirral on average it takes 60 days longer between a child entering care and moving in with its adoptive family than the government set threshold, and on average 5 days longer than the threshold for the local authority to receive court authority to place a child and for the child to be matched with a family. According to the Adoption Scorecard Wirral's performance is "very close" to the performance of Wirral's statistical neighbours. This is also illustrated in Charts 1 to 3.
- 2.12 Whilst the Adoption Scorecard does provide some further contextual information relating to older children and the timeliness of the court process it is important that the focus is not purely on timeliness. Local authorities such as Wirral will continue to plan for adoption for older children, large sibling groups and children with complex needs which may result in delay for adoption for a small number of children and consequent underperformance in the Adoption Scorecard.
- 2.13 Improvements in timescales are not dependent on the Adoption Service alone but will require the joint intervention of the field social workers, the courts, Cafcass, Legal Services, and expert advisors such as Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services (CAMHS), and other medical advisors.
- 2.14 An adoption task force made up of key stakeholders from the service areas that can influence change in practice relating to adoption have carried out a review of the Adoption Scorecard and the implications of the changes following the Family Justice Review (see below) and have put in place a model of practice to make improvements to timescales of key stages in the adoption process (see Appendix for action plan).

Children in Care and Adoption Performance tables (league tables)

- 2.15 In addition to the scorecard the Department for Education publishes Children in Care and Adoption Performance tables which show how each local authority is performing, against 15 key indicators with ranking. The 2 key indicators for adoption are the percentage of looked after children adopted during the year who were placed for adoption within 12 months of the decision and the percentage of children who ceased to be looked after who were adopted. These performance tables were updated in May 2012.
- 2.16 Wirral's average performance as reported in May 12 for the three year period 2009, 2010, 2011 is that 74% of looked after children who were adopted during the year were placed for adoption within 12 months of the decision. Wirral is ranked 76th out of 152 local authorities. The percentage of children who ceased to be looked after who were adopted was 14% (rank 50 out of 152).

Implementing the Family Justice Review recommendations

- 2.17 The government is also addressing delay in adoption by removing the requirement for Adoption Panels to advise local authorities on the decision as to whether adoption is the best option for a particular child before applying to the family court for a placement order. This is a response to the Family Justice Review recommendation that it was unnecessary for the adoption panel to duplicate the court's role in providing independent scrutiny of the evidence in each individual case. From 1st September as a

result of the implementation of the Adoption Agencies (Panel and Consequential Amendments) Regulations 2012 the adoption agency is prohibited from referring cases to an adoption panel before making a decision whether a child should be placed for adoption where they intend to apply to court for a Placement Order. Where the court is not involved, the function of the adoption panel will remain in place.

- 2.18 In addition to the above the Family Justice Review recommended a reduction in the time taken for care proceedings. Cheshire and Merseyside local authorities and Family Courts have agreed a [pre-court proceedings protocol](#) which sets a time for completing proceedings within 26 weeks.
- 2.19 The Children and Young People's Department together with colleagues from legal services have developed a model of practice to address delay and implement revised arrangements for decision making in relation to children having a plan for adoption.
- 2.20 The model of practice is based on the court timescales being set at 26 weeks for care proceedings to conclude. There will be much greater emphasis on the period before instigating care proceedings to assess families and put the plans in place that can support them to meet their children's needs. This will have much closer monitoring of each stage of the child's journey through care, with closer management oversight. Issues and risks have been identified at each stage and a plan to address them. Staff briefings have been organised, but for cases imminently requiring a decision there are arrangements in place to respond to them. Social workers have attended training in relation to the new pre-court proceedings protocol, training that was led by a partnership between Merseyside Family Justice Council and Wirral Children and Young People's Department. The objective of the Pre-Court Proceedings Protocol is to reduce delay and achieve a conclusion to care proceedings within 26 weeks.
- 2.21 The implementation of the relevant parts of the model of practice is detailed in the action plan in the Appendix.

3.0 RELEVANT RISKS

- 3.1 The implementation of the Family Justice Review to reduce delay in court proceedings and adoption requires change in social work practice and the implementation of new processes within a short timescale. The Adoption Team Manager Post is currently vacant which reduces the resources available to manage the required changes. However other managers and key staff have been involved in developing the local authority's response to the changes and social workers and managers have been briefed about the new requirements before September.
- 3.2 Retention and stability of social work staff will also impact on improving the time taken for adoption as continual changes in social worker for an individual child can delay some of the processes.
- 3.3 The number of children adopted each year are relatively small (20-25) compared to the number of looked after children. This means that a small number of cases that go outside the threshold timescale can significantly affect Wirral's performance. The government have acknowledged this within [An Action Plan for Adoption: Tackling Delay](#) and will take account of other factors such as the number of children being adopted that are 5 and over (for Wirral this was 7% for 2008 to 2011, compared to the average for England of 5%) and the average length of care proceedings (for Wirral this is 57 weeks, compared to the England average of 52 weeks).

- 3.4 In order to minimise the above risks key stages of the process from instigation of care proceedings to adoption will be monitored closely over the next 3 months and a report produced to review the implications of the changes and any further work required.
- 3.5 The risks for children in not addressing delay is that adoption may not be achieved for some children where it is the plan or that children experience drift and delay causing further emotional harm to them.
- 3.6 The risk to the Authority is that the Department for Education may intervene if performance falls below the threshold. Wirral will learn from other local authorities in the region that have been subject to intervention.

4.0 OTHER OPTIONS CONSIDERED

- 4.1 There are no other options to consider at this stage. Wirral will take account of the lessons learnt from local authorities where government intervention takes place.

5.0 CONSULTATION

- 5.1 Consultation has taken place with, the Safeguarding Unit, Social Work Managers, colleagues in legal services, other Authorities in the region and with the Merseyside Family Justice Council.

6.0 IMPLICATIONS FOR VOLUNTARY, COMMUNITY AND FAITH GROUPS

- 6.1 There are implications for wider community support for children post adoption.

7.0 RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS: FINANCIAL; IT; STAFFING; AND ASSETS

- 7.1 There are no resource implications arising at this stage from these changes.

8.0 LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

- 8.1 There is a clear expectation that the Authority works to the new Cheshire and Merseyside Local Authority Pre-Court Proceedings Protocol and Adoption Agencies (Panel and Consequential Amendments) Regulations 2012.

9.0 EQUALITIES IMPLICATIONS

- 9.1 An equality assessment has been completed for the impact of these changes.

<http://www.wirral.gov.uk/my-services/community-and-living/equality-diversity-cohesion/equality-impact-assessments/eias-2010/children-young-people>

10.0 CARBON REDUCTION IMPLICATIONS

- 10.1 None.

11.0 PLANNING AND COMMUNITY SAFETY IMPLICATIONS

11.1 There is a need to have a clear strategy to recruit sufficient adopters for the children who need an adoptive family.

12.0 RECOMMENDATION/S

12.1 Members of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee note the report and accept the proposed actions.

13.0 REASON/S FOR RECOMMENDATION/S

13.1 To inform members of the government approach to addressing delays in the adoption system and the local authority's response to the changes.

REPORT AUTHOR: Simon Garner
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APPENDICES

Appendix 1 - Implementation of new models of practice for decision making for adoption action plan

REFERENCE MATERIAL

[An Action Plan for Adoption: Tackling Delay](#) (published in March 2012), Department for Education

[Adoption Scorecards](#), Department for Education, May 2012

[Children in care and adoption performance tables](#) Department for Education, May 2012

SUBJECT HISTORY (last 3 years)

Council Meeting	Date
Children and Young People Overview and Scrutiny	6 th June 2012
Children and Young People Overview and Scrutiny	21 st March 2012
Children and Young People Overview and Scrutiny	20 th September 2011
Children and Young People Overview and Scrutiny	26 th January 2011
Children and Young People Overview and Scrutiny	2 nd June 2010
Children and Young People Overview and Scrutiny	17 September 2009

Appendix 1 Implementation of new models of practice for decision making for adoption action plan

Objective	Change required	Actions	Start date	Lead	Perform measure	RAG
Reduce time taken from a child entering care to being adopted	New process for decision making for adoption	Review current process and develop new process with clear timescales	1/7/12	SG		G
		Process and timescales agreed with key stakeholders	1/8/12	SG		G
		Staff are briefed about the new model process	1/9/12	SG		G
	Permanency plan to be identified before proceedings instigated	Child Permanence Report introduced for all children entering care	1/10/12	TC	A1/A3	A
		Implement new process for Independent Reviewing Officers confirming permanency plan	1/9/12	CMcK	A1/A3	G
	Agency Decision Maker (ADM) makes a decision that child should be placed for adoption within 15 weeks of instigation of care proceedings	Children's social care staff implement the Cheshire and Merseyside local authorities and Family Courts pre-proceedings protocol	1/9/12	TC	A1/A3	G
		New process from core assessment to placement order (including timescales) are disseminated to all relevant staff	1/9/12	SG	A1	G
	Preparation for family finding starts prior to Placement Order	Social workers from adoption team to work alongside child's social worker in all cases where the plan is adoption	1/9/12	SG	A2	G
	Revised quality assurance and monitoring system introduced to ensure timescales are met.	New process introduced for the Agency Advisor, and all practice and principal managers to quality assure all documentation required for decision making	1/9/12	SG	A1/A2/A3	G
		New tracking system is introduced to monitor timescales at key stages of the process	1/9/12	SG	A1/A2/A3	G
		Performance is reported quarterly.	1/12/12	SG	A1/A2/A3	A

Equality Impact Assessment Toolkit (from May 2012)

Section 1: Your details

EIA lead Officer: Ann Bannister

Email address: annbannister@wirral.gov.uk

Head of Section: Simon Garner

Chief Officer: Julia Hassall

Department: Children and Young People

Date: 23rd August 2012

Section 2: What Council proposal is being assessed?

Addressing delay in Adoption – the Adoption Scorecard and implementation of a new process for deciding if a child should be placed for adoption

Section 2b: Will this EIA be submitted to a Cabinet or Overview & Scrutiny Committee?

Yes Children and Young People's Overview and Scrutiny Committee 11th September 2012

<http://www.wirral.gov.uk/my-services/community-and-living/equality-diversity-cohesion/equality-impact-assessments/eias-2010/children-young-people>

Section 3: Does the proposal have the potential to affect..... (please tick relevant boxes)

- Services**
- The workforce**
- Communities**
- Other** (please state eg: Partners, Private Sector, Voluntary & Community Sector)

If you have ticked one or more of above, please go to section 4.

- None** (please stop here and email this form to your Chief Officer who needs to email it to equalitywatch@wirral.gov.uk for publishing)

Section 4: Does the proposal have the potential to maintain or enhance the way the Council (please tick relevant boxes)

- Eliminates unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation
- Advances equality of opportunity
- Fosters good relations between groups of people

If you have ticked one or more of above, please go to section 5.

- No** (please stop here and email this form to your Chief Officer who needs to email it to equalitywatch@wirral.gov.uk for publishing)

Section 5:

Could the proposal have a positive or negative impact on any of the protected groups (race, gender, disability, gender reassignment, age, pregnancy and maternity, religion and belief, sexual orientation, marriage and civil partnership)?

You may also want to consider socio-economic status of individuals.

Please list in the table below and include actions required to mitigate any potential negative impact.

Which group(s) of people could be affected	Potential positive or negative impact	Action required to mitigate any potential negative impact	Lead person	Timescale	Resource implications
Race, religion and belief	The intention is to find families quicker for children from black and minority communities. However this could lead to unsuitable matches and later disruption of the adoption.	Wirral will continue to find families that best meet the needs of individual children	SG	Current practice continues	None
Race, religion and belief	By focusing on reducing delay in adoption children may be matched with carers from different cultures, religions and traditions from the children's background which may lead to children and young people losing their cultural identities	Potential adopters will be provided with information about the child's heritage and encouraged to support children to explore their culture and do life journey work.	SG	Current practice continues	None
Race	The Adoption Scorecard records "Adoptions of children from ethnic minority backgrounds (number adopted and % of BME children leaving care who are adopted)" as related information to provide a context to the performance data.				
Disability	The focus on timeliness for adoption could mean that children with complex needs would not be considered for adoption	Wirral will continue to propose children with complex needs for adoption if it is in the best	SG	Current practice continues	None

		interest of individual children even if it means it will affect the performance indicators in a negative way.			
Disability	The requirement for all medical and other expert assessments to be completed prior to instigating court proceedings will ensure that the individual needs of children will be better met	The new model of practice will be briefed to staff to ensure this is embedded in social work practice	SG	1 st October 2012	
Age	It is more difficult to find suitable adopters for older children which could influence decisions about placing older children for adoption	Wirral will continue to propose older children for adoption if it is in the best interest of individual children even if it means it will affect the performance indicators in a negative way.	SG	Current practice continues	
All protected characteristics	In order to find suitable families within the required timescales Wirral will need to have a diverse pool of adopters.	Recruitment campaign for adopters that targets people from black and minority communities, single carers, same sex couples, older people.	SG	1 st December 2012	To be part of corporate marketing campaign within identified resources.

Section 5a: Where and how will the above actions be monitored?

Through a CYPD adoption task force of key stakeholders

Section 5b: If you think there is no negative impact, what is your reasoning behind this?

Section 6: What research / data / information have you used in support of this process?

National publications and performance data.

[An Action Plan for Adoption: Tackling Delay](#) (published in March 12), Department for Education

[Adoption Scorecards](#), Department for Education, May 12

[Children in care and adoption performance tables](#) Department for Education, May 2012

Section 7: Are you intending to carry out any consultation with regard to this Council proposal?

Yes

If 'yes' please continue to section 8.

If 'no' please state your reason(s) why:

(please stop here and email this form to your Chief Officer who needs to email it to equalitywatch@wirral.gov.uk for publishing)

Section 8: How will consultation take place and by when?

Consultation has taken place with, the Safeguarding Unit, Social Work Managers, colleagues in legal services, other Authorities in the region and with the Merseyside Family Justice Council.

The timescale for implementation set by government has not given time for further local consultation with adopters, potential adopters, children in care or children and young people that have been adopted. However the government carried out extensive consultation prior to implementation

Before you complete your consultation, please email your preliminary EIA to equalitywatch@wirral.gov.uk via your Chief Officer in order for the Council to ensure it is meeting it's legal requirements. The EIA will be published with a note saying we are awaiting outcomes from a consultation exercise.

Once you have completed your consultation, please review your actions in section 5. Then email this form to your Chief Officer who needs to email it to equalitywatch@wirral.gov.uk for re-publishing.

WIRRAL COUNCIL

CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE'S OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY

11 SEPTEMBER 2012

SUBJECT:	FOSTERING SERVICE REPORT
WARD/S AFFECTED:	ALL
REPORT OF:	ACTING DIRECTOR OF CHILDREN'S SERVICES
KEY DECISION?	NO

1.0 EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to provide a quarterly update on developments and performance in Wirral's fostering service in accordance with the requirements of the Fostering Regulations and Guidance 2011 National Minimum Fostering Standards.
- 1.2 The fostering service provides quality foster care for children who need to be looked after in public care; this is at a much lower cost than other regulated children's placements.
- 1.3 Local Authorities must ensure that they are able to provide sufficient foster care placements for those children who need family based care in accordance with the relevant Regulations and Standards governing such services.

2.0 BACKGROUND AND KEY ISSUES

Performance Information 1st April 2012 - 30th June 2012

- 2.1 The overall total number of foster carers approved by Wirral Council as of 30th June 2012 is 336 households and the total number of looked after children placed with Wirral foster carers is 474.
- 2.2 There are two key performance indicators that relate to the fostering service which are about placement stability.
 - PI 62 is the percentage of children looked after who have experienced three or more placements during the year
 - PI 63 is the percentage of looked after children aged under 16, who have been looked after continuously for at least 2.5 years and who have lived in the same placement for at least 2 years, or are placed for adoption and their adoptive placement together with their previous placement have lasted for at least 2 years

- 2.3 It should be noted that the performance indicators relate to all children in local authority care not just those placed with Wirral foster carers. Therefore any changes in placement stability in other placements such as residential care and foster care by independent providers will influence this performance indicator.
- 2.4 At the 30th June 2012 the provisional figure for PI 62 is 11.3% or 77 children for this period. This is above the target of 9% and is a poorer performance from last year (1st April 2010 to 31st March 2011) which was 8.9%. Further progress in this area will be made by improving placement choice by continuing efforts to recruit more foster carers, so that there is sufficient choice and capacity to make sure children's placements meet their needs, and therefore reduce the need for children to move in an unplanned way. There has also been work to secure earlier intervention to support placements of teenagers at risk of disruption.
- 2.5 The percentage of children who have remained in placement for 2 years or more (PI 63) was 66.9% (184 children) by 30th June 2012. This is an improvement from last year's (1st April 2010 to 31st March 2011) 59.8% of children and is expected to increase to the target for this year of 70%, as more foster carers are recruited from a wider pool that are more able to match the needs of children in care.

3.0 RECRUITMENT OF FOSTER CARERS

- 3.1 Newspaper advertising has continued throughout Spring and Summer. The North West television recruitment campaign ran in May 2012 which Wirral supported. A strategy has been developed to launch a new campaign over the autumn which it is anticipated will enhance the present steady stream of calls from people who are interested in fostering.
- 3.2 The number of new foster carer households approved for the period 1st April 2012 - 30th June 2012 is 11 new general foster carers and 15 new fully assessed connected persons.

The breakdown for the assessment of the 11 new general foster carers is as follows
2 Family Link
2 Short term breaks
3 Short term
1 Long term
3 Short and Long term combined

- 3.3 The number of foster carer households who received pre approval training April 2012 – June 2012 was 14 general prospective foster carer households. There are 30 prospective carer households presently being assessed. There are in addition 24 connected persons (family and friends) households being assessed, which are largely directed through care proceedings.
- 3.4 12 foster carers have ceased to foster during the period of April 2012 to June 2012, this is where the children either returned to their parents or placed elsewhere for connected carers (2 foster carers), or permanence was secured via Special Guardianship (5 foster carers) or residence orders (2 foster carers) or the foster carers resigned or otherwise became inactive (3 foster carers).

- 3.5 There has been an improvement in the take up of training by foster carers in the last twelve months which has been achieved by the emphasis put on training by the Fostering Panel, close monitoring by the Supervising Social Worker, and better communication about training events. The Operational Support Team Leader sends reminders each week about the training coming up in the “Drop In” for Foster Carers for the following Monday. The “Drop in” is held each Monday during term time. The fostering service is currently looking at ways of restoring a crèche facility recently lost for those carers with young children who want to attend this training. New Foster Carers are also supported to attend training through their peer mentor, with whom they are linked with as they are approved. Mentors will attend training with their mentee if required until they gain the confidence to attend by themselves.
- 3.6 Wherever possible family and friends are always considered as potential carers for children known to them. Viability assessments (to provide an initial assessment of their suitability) are often undertaken in respect of a number of potential connected persons, on the instruction of the Court, when a child needs to be in the care of the local authority. The number of Court directions for viability assessments is currently putting additional pressure on the fostering service to focus on the recruitment and assessment of non connected foster carers.

4.0 New service developments

- 4.1 The service has newly developed a fact file which each foster carer completes on their family to share with children before they are placed.
- 4.2 Wirral fostering service has developed a new service for ‘Parent and child placements’. There are currently eight families providing this service which includes one to one assessment and support to parents and their children. The service provides an alternative to more expensive residential facilities. It has also given more families the opportunity to stay together, whilst being assessed, rather than separated from their children.
- 4.3 In the next 18months the fostering service is looking to develop a ‘Supported’ Care Scheme which will extend foster care support to families in their own home, by supporting parents with parenting skills and routines and with the opportunity for the children to stay with foster carers for short periods for respite.
- 4.4 The fostering service is also looking at developing services to meet the needs of children that are currently placed with independent providers due to the placement requiring particular expertise such as sexual abuse, or self harm, or engaging in criminal activity, or school refusal

5.0 FOSTERING PANEL

- 5.1 The newly appointed Independent Chair of Fostering Panel has now taken up her post. The Chair has a clear job description which includes undertaking annual reviews of panel members and has responsibility for supporting the development of panel members. In addition recruitment of social workers and lay members has been taking place, to increase the central list of panel members, available to be called upon to ensure that the panel can meet as often as required to respond to the

demands of the service. Fostering Panel are scheduled to meet every 3 weeks, but can hold an extra ordinary panel if needed between dates.

6.0 RELEVANT RISKS

- 6.1 There is a risk that the Fostering Service will not have sufficient foster carers for the number of children needing a placement and that can also meet the particular needs of individual children in the local authority's care.
- 6.2 The service recognises that there are improvements needed in both the numbers of foster carers recruited and the recruitment of foster carers from diverse backgrounds. This is being addressed as an important element of the Sufficiency Plan and the recruitment campaign. The performance of the fostering service is managed by the Fostering Team Manager who monitors the progress from initial enquiry to approval of foster carers, the reviews of foster carers (including CRBs and medicals) and the case loads of the supervising social workers.
- 6.3 At any time the local authority can be notified by Ofsted of an inspection of the fostering service. If there is an inadequate outcome from a fostering inspection this could lead to further intervention by Ofsted, including an unannounced inspection of child protection. The performance of the fostering service is continually monitored by senior managers to ensure that there is a programme for continual improvement against the national minimum standards for fostering services.

7.0 OTHER OPTIONS CONSIDERED

- 7.1 There are no proposals for consideration in this report, therefore there are no other options to consider.

8.0 CONSULTATION

- 8.1 The fostering service consults with children in foster care about the care they are receiving from their carers and the service, at least annually as part of the Foster Carers review, and when they move back home or to another placement.
- 8.2 The Fostering Service consults with parents of the children in foster care at least annually for the Foster Carers review.
- 8.3 The Fostering Service consult with foster carers at least annually for their review, but also about specific changes and developments of the service and training they need to be provided, via the Partnership Group, support groups and the drop in.
- 8.4 The Fostering Service consults with Social Workers and Independent reviewing officers about the care the service provides for individual children.

9.0 IMPLICATIONS FOR VOLUNTARY, COMMUNITY AND FAITH GROUPS

- 9.1 No implications in relation to this report.

10.0 RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS: FINANCIAL; IT; STAFFING; AND ASSETS

- 10.1 The budget for Fostering Services in 2011/12 was £7,661,800 and the spend for that period was £9,108,300. This includes the Fostering Team budget of £1,345,100 (including staffing of 21.3 FTEs) and a total allowances budget of £6,316,700. The overspend of £1,446,500 relates to the number of allowances paid during the year. At the end of 2011/12, 486 foster carers received fostering allowances, 24 children were in agency fostering and 162 children received Special Guardianship or Residence Order allowances.
- 10.2 In 2012/13 the budget was increased to reflect the payment of the National Minimum Fostering Allowance and the payment of fees to connected carers. The overall budget is £7,984,600 and the projected spend (as of 31st July 12) is £9,426,800 (based on 486 children receiving foster care allowances and 163 children receiving special guardianship and residence order allowances). The budget is sufficient for 500 children. The number of children in foster care, receiving special guardianship or residence allowances exceeds this by 150. There is a CYPD plan to reduce the overall costs and the number of children in foster care, however this continues to prove challenging.
- 10.3 The foster care service is being maintained at a full staffing compliment of social workers and support workers, and has recently recruited to the 1.5 vacant posts, with the new staff starting 29th August 12 and the second person expected by the end of September 12. One agency worker began working 21 hours per week at the beginning of August 12, and another full time Agency worker is expected to be recruited for 6 months in the near future. This is to ensure the service can manage the rising number of connected carer's assessments.

12.0 LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

- 12.1 None relevant to this report.

13.0 EQUALITIES IMPLICATIONS

- 13.1 As this report has no recommendation for policy change there is no requirement for an EIA.

14.0 CARBON REDUCTION IMPLICATIONS

- 14.1 There are no implications in relation to this report.

15.0 PLANNING AND COMMUNITY SAFETY IMPLICATIONS

- 15.1 The Fostering Service ensures that children that are unable to live with their birth families are able to be looked after in a safe and supportive home environment which provides stability to children and young people and reduces the risk of anti-social behaviour.

16.0 RECOMMENDATION/S

That:

- 1) Elected members consider the information in the report and satisfy themselves that the service is being managed effectively and that there are good outcomes for the children and young people that are fostered.
- 2) The financial implications arising from the payments to connected carers are reported to Cabinet.
- 3) The overview and scrutiny committee continue to receive an annual report about the fostering service, but the 3 month report will in the future be presented to the Corporate Parenting Group.

17.0 REASON/S FOR RECOMMENDATION/S

- 17.1 The Fostering National Minimum Standard 25.7 requires the executive side of the local authority to:
- receive written reports on the management, outcomes and financial state of the service every 3 months,
 - monitor the management and outcomes of the service in order to satisfy themselves that the agency is effective and is achieving good outcomes for children

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APPENDICES

REFERENCE MATERIAL

Family and Friends Care: Statutory Guidance
The Fostering Services (England) Regulations 2011
Fostering Services: National Minimum Standards
Care Planning, Placement and Case review (England) Regulations 2010

SUBJECT HISTORY (last 3 years)

Council Meeting	Date
Children and Young People Overview and Scrutiny	6 th June 2012
Children and Young People Overview and Scrutiny	16 th November 2011
Cabinet	21 st June 2012
Cabinet	18 th March 2010
Cabinet	15 th April 2010

WIRRAL COUNCIL

CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE'S OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY

11 SEPTEMBER 2012

SUBJECT:	RESPONSE TO THE REPORT FROM THE JOINT INQUIRY INTO CHILDREN WHO GO MISSING
WARD/S AFFECTED:	ALL
REPORT OF:	ACTING DIRECTOR OF CHILDREN'S SERVICES
KEY DECISION	NO

1.0 EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

1.1 The purpose of this report is to advise members of the Government's response to the concerns raised about the care received by children who go missing from care, highlighted by the Derbyshire and Rochdale criminal cases of men who were convicted of abusing and exploiting young girls in care. The report also sets out the process and timescale for producing a local response.

2.0 BACKGROUND AND KEY ISSUES

2.1 An All-Party Parliamentary Group (APPG) for Runaway and Missing Children and Adults called a parliamentary Inquiry to examine these issues more closely. The Inquiry heard from children, professionals, national agencies such as Ofsted and Minister who all agreed that urgent action was need to safeguard children who go missing and run away from care.

2.2 The APPG reported in June 2012 and made 31 recommendations (report can be viewed via the link provided under appendices at the end of this report) and on 3rd July Tim Loughton, the Children's Minister responded stating that he would set up a task and finish group on placement planning on out of borough placements to report in September 2012. There would also be an action plan to drive up quality and safety.

2.3 In Wirral the Local Safeguarding Children Board have brought together key agencies such as the Police, Public Health, Barnardo's, Independent Provider representation and other key partners to consider the APPG report and begin to bring together data on the extent of the issues contained within the recommendations.

2.4 This group will report back to the LSCB in December 2012 on key issues identified locally and a work plan that seeks to make improvements in the analysis and data management between agencies. Following this the Head of Safeguarding will report to this Committee on the plans agreed by the LSCB.

2.5 Children and Young People's Department have commissioned Barnardos locally to respond to children who run away since 2003. This service ensures that each child has an interview with Barnardos on their return from running through a reporting system developed with Merseyside Police. The LSCB receive quarterly information on the number of children missing, the length of time they were missing, the homes from which they ran (either from their foster, residential or family home). This service will continue to be offered whilst the review described above is being conducted.

3.0 RELEVANT RISKS

3.1 The APPG describes in detail the risk to children and young people who are placed away from their home authority and family. Wirral agencies, community groups and members of the community should be aware how to report concern about children who run away and the possibility of exploitation.

4.0 OTHER OPTIONS CONSIDERED

4.1 None.

5.0 CONSULTATION

5.1 Consultation has taken place with a wide range of partners within the LSCB.

6.0 IMPLICATIONS FOR VOLUNTARY, COMMUNITY AND FAITH GROUPS

6.1 None specifically identified.

7.0 RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS: FINANCIAL; IT; STAFFING; AND ASSETS

7.1 Finance for the commissioning has been met by CYPD budget.

8.0 LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

8.1 None identified.

9.0 EQUALITIES IMPLICATIONS

9.1 Has the potential impact of your proposal(s) been reviewed with regard to equality?

No because the APPG report has been carried out by a Parliamentary working group which will be subject to equality impact assessments.

10.0 CARBON REDUCTION IMPLICATIONS

10.1 None Identified.

11.0 PLANNING AND COMMUNITY SAFETY IMPLICATIONS

11.1 None Identified.

12.0 RECOMMENDATION/S

12.1 Members note the APPG report and agreed to a further report once the local assessment is completed under the auspices of the LSCB

13.0 REASON/S FOR RECOMMENDATION/S

13.1 The issues were identified by an All-Parliamentary Working Group

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APPENDICES

The report *Recommendations from the APPG on children who go missing from care-2012* can be found via the following link:

http://www.childrenssociety.org.uk/sites/default/files/tcs/u32/joint_appg_inquiry_-_report...pdf

REFERENCE MATERIAL

SUBJECT HISTORY (last 3 years)

Council Meeting	Date

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WIRRAL COUNCIL

CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE'S OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY

11 SEPTEMBER 2012

SUBJECT:	YOUTH PARLIAMENT 2012
WARD/S AFFECTED:	ALL
REPORT OF:	ACTING DIRECTOR OF CHILDREN'S SERVICES
KEY DECISION?	NO

1.0 EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- 1.1 This report has been produced at the request of the Committee and provides a progress report on planning arrangements for the next Youth Voice Conference and Youth Parliament. These annual events provide young people with the opportunity to present their views to councillors on matters that are important to them. This year they will take place at Wallasey Town Hall on 9th October.
- 1.2 This report has no exemptions.

2.0 BACKGROUND AND KEY ISSUES

- 2.1 At the Overview and Scrutiny Committee of 26th January, the Committee were briefed on proposals for the planning arrangements for the Youth Voice Conference and Youth Parliament. Included in the report was information on how schools had been engaged in the planning for previous Youth Voice Conferences and Youth Parliaments (YVC and YP). The report proposed that for 2012 schools would be approached earlier with the aim of identifying if additional support would be required from the Children and Young People's Department to assist with preparing the young people for the YVC and YP.
- 2.2 A number of tasks to be undertaken by the Principal Manager (Participation/Commissioning) were outlined in the previous report to Overview and Scrutiny. These included the following:
1. Timeline prepared
 2. Schools to be contacted to identify their willingness to be involved in both events
 3. Planning meetings with schools to take place in January/ February
 4. Roles and responsibilities documents to be prepared for all parties, schools, young people, teachers and organisers
 5. Training for elected members
 6. Role of Executive Youth Board to be defined
 7. Progress report to Overview and Scrutiny mid May

8. Induction training for newly elected councillors to support them in their engagement with young people.
- 2.3 Tasks 1-4 have been completed. In respect of points 5 and 8, the training for elected members and newly elected members will take place later in the year. It has had to be re-scheduled to accommodate training required as part of the new corporate governance arrangements. Training on engaging with young people is also planned and a briefing on youth engagement will take place as part of elected member briefings on 25th September at Birkenhead Town Hall.
- 2.4 In respect of task 6, a new Executive Youth Board has still to be recruited and this will not be completed before the YVC and YP. Plans are currently in hand to ensure that young people from different youth settings will have active roles at both the YVC and YP.
- 2.5 The progress report due in May had to be delayed due to staff illness and is replaced with this report.
- 2.6 For 2012, preparation started early with briefing meetings and early notification to schools. The response has been positive with sixteen schools confirming their participation before closing for the summer holidays. A target of engagement by 20 schools has been set as a performance measure and it would appear that this target will be met. In addition, other youth agencies such as training providers and youth workers are invited to nominate young people to attend.
- 2.7 To ensure as broad a reach as possible is achieved at the Youth Parliament; young people from District Youth Forums are invited to attend. As with last year young people are being asked to identify a number of areas to cover in the debate. This will result in a number of motions being presented prior to the Youth Parliament. This is an area that will require further work with the schools on their return in September.
- 2.8 In addition to the briefings for schools, the Youth forum meetings in June/ July were used to promote the opportunities for participation to young people. Councillors were invited to attend and a number of members took part in the meetings. Unfortunately some of the forum meetings clashed with corporate member training and this restricted the number of councillors who could take part.

3.0 RELEVANT RISKS

- 3.1 This year the early meetings have increased the level of take up by schools; this could still be affected by a school related incident that may result in a non attendance.

4.0 OTHER OPTIONS CONSIDERED

- 4.1 Contact will be made with each school in early September to retain support for participation in both events and to ensure the debate speakers are clearly briefed regarding roles.

5.0 CONSULTATION

5.1 Consultation meetings were organised with schools in January/ February. There was a presentation to WASH and young people were consulted at the Area Youth Forums during June and July. Information from these meetings has been used to shape the proposals.

6.0 IMPLICATIONS FOR VOLUNTARY, COMMUNITY AND FAITH GROUPS

6.1 There are no implications for Voluntary, Community and Faith groups.

7.0 RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS: FINANCIAL; IT; STAFFING; AND ASSETS

7.1 There are none arising from this report.

8.0 LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

8.1 There are none arising from this report.

9.0 EQUALITIES IMPLICATIONS

9.1 Has the potential impact of your proposal(s) been reviewed with regard to equality?

An equality Impact Assessment was undertaken on 20/12/11 and is still relevant to this report and can be found via the link below.

<http://www.wirral.gov.uk/my-services/community-and-living/equality-diversity-cohesion/equality-impact-assessments/eias-2010/children-young-people>

10.0 CARBON REDUCTION IMPLICATIONS

10.1 There are none arising from this report.

11.0 PLANNING AND COMMUNITY SAFETY IMPLICATIONS

11.1 There are none arising from this report and planning permission is not required.

12.0 RECOMMENDATION/S

12.1 The Committee note the report

13.0 REASON/S FOR RECOMMENDATION/S

13.1 The report is for information and does not require action by the Committee.

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APPENDICES

Appendix 1 List of schools registered for Youth Voice Conference and Youth Parliament

REFERENCE MATERIAL

SUBJECT HISTORY (last 3 years)

Council Meeting	Date
Children and Young People's Overview and Scrutiny	26 January 2012

**LIST OF SCHOOLS REGISTERED FOR
YOUTH VOICE CONFERENCE AND YOUTH PARLIAMENT**

Bebington High School
Birkenhead Academy for Girls
Calday Grange Grammar
Claremount Specialist sports college
Foxfield
Hilbre High School
Kilgarth School
Meadowside School
Moreton Family centre
Mosslands School
Oldershaw Academy
Pensby High School for Boys
Pensby High School for Girls
Prenton High School for Girls
Ridgeway High School
South Wirral High School
St Anselms College
St John Plessington
St Mary's College
The Observatory School
University Academy Birkenhead
Upton Hall School
Wallasey School
WASP
West Kirby Grammar School
Wirral Grammar School for boys
Wirral Grammar School for girls
Wirral Hospital school
Weatherhead
Woodchurch High School

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Wirral Link Forum

30 July 2012

Councillor Wendy Clements
Chair
Children and Young People Overview
& Scrutiny Committee
Wirral Council

Dear Wendy

Re: Children's Services Commissioning

As you are aware, Wirral Link Forum is basically an umbrella organisation for voluntary, community and faith sector organisations that work with children, young people and families in Wirral, offering them a voice through representation on the Children's Trust Board, Local Safeguarding Children Board and Every Child Matters Outcome Groups. We also act as a conduit between the statutory and voluntary sectors, cascading information through our website, weekly bulletins and at our monthly meetings. Link Forum was set up in 2005 because existing infrastructure organisations were unable to provide the services/support/information needed for those voluntary organisations that were working with children, young people and families. We work closely with Wirral's Children & Young People's Department, who have funded a paid worker for us for several years now, and are committed to doing so for the foreseeable future.

At a recent meeting of Link Forum members, concern was expressed regarding the plans for commissioning of children's services from April 2013. A representative of Link Forum plays an active part in the planning meetings for the commissioning process, and it is apparent that Commissioners are restricted from meaningful forward planning due to the uncertainty around the Council budget.

The impact on the voluntary sector of this lack of clarity around the budget planning process and the apparent necessity of issuing 12-month contracts only means that:

- Valued, experienced staff can only be offered short-term employment contracts, which can result in low staff morale and the loss of highly skilled staff.
- Lack of certainty of continued service provision can affect the confidence that vulnerable children, young people and families have in services, and their willingness to engage with a service on a short-term basis.

- Frustration amongst statutory partners who are unsure of service availability and who to make referrals to.
- Organisations are unable to enter into long-term tenancy agreements with local landlords, adversely affecting the local economy.

We recognise the difficult situation that the Council face in the current financial climate but would like to offer some suggestions for consideration as a way forward:

- Commissioning of services on a minimum 3-year basis to ensure continuity of workforce and development of sustainable services to meet the needs of Wirral children, young people and families/council priorities
- Commissioners able to focus on effective monitoring of commissioned services, with the authority to alter or terminate contracts if agreed outcomes are not being achieved
- An annual review of commissioned services based on performance, outcomes, value for money, budgetary constraints, and meeting local and national indicators.

As a Sector, we feel we can offer an alternative approach to delivering effective and professional children's services in Wirral and would value the opportunity to explore this further with you.

Yours sincerely

Lynn Loughran

Lynn Loughran
Link Forum Co-ordinator
On behalf of Wirral Link Forum

c.c. David Armstrong
Julia Hassell
Maureen McDaid

Ref:

Department for Communities and Local Government
<http://www.communities.gov.uk/news/corporate/2188300>

Peer challenge Wirral



Wirral Presentation
MMD.ppt

WIRRAL COUNCIL

CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE'S OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY

11 SEPTEMBER 2012

SUBJECT:	APPROVED SCHEME OF DELEGATION – CONTRACTS EXCEEDING £50,000
WARD/S AFFECTED:	All
REPORT OF:	ACTING DIRECTOR OF CHILDREN'S SERVICES
KEY DECISION?	NO

1.0 EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to provide an update to Members, in accordance with the Constitution of the Council, of those instances where delegated authority has been used by the Acting Director of Children's Services with respect to the acceptance of tenders and to the appointment of Contractors.

2.0 BACKGROUND AND KEY ISSUES

- 2.1 The following tenders and appointment of contractors have been accepted by the Acting Director of Children's Services under delegated authority.

Out of Authority Placements

This budget makes education provision for a number of children with Special Educational Needs (SEN) whose needs cannot be met in maintained schools. The placements not previously reported costing in excess of £50,000 per annum are listed below.

Start Date	School	Ref	Cost
25/04/12	Chaigeley	AM	£64695
03/09/12	Peterhouse School	JC	£264510

Children's Residential Care Placements

This budget makes provision for Independent Residential Care of Looked After Children. The placements not previously reported costing in excess of £50,000 per annum are listed below.

Start Date	Provider	Swift Reference	Annual Projected Cost
13/12/11	Independent Supported Living	155488	£68868
19/03/12	Supporting Futures	180491	£52592
25/05/12	Horizon Care	2322	£200200
10/05/12	Quality Protects Children	157770	£109200

06/06/12	Nugent Care		
22/06/12	Quality Protects Children		
25/06/12	Building Bridges		
06/06/12	European Lifestyles	156895	£209707
18/06/12	Considerate Care	189067	£114140
06/07/12	Pebbles Care	144995	£140398
10/07/12	Care Today	149995	£129999
10/07/12	Good Foundations	159286	£116740
13/07/12	Progressive Futures Care Ltd	116632	£103998
20/07/12	Eastfield Group	52393	£114139
25/07/12	Core Assets	487799	£51433

Supply of School Milk Contract – Contract with Fresh Pastures - £166,666 (approximate value for 5 months)

Supply of Bread and Morning Goods Contract – Contract with Morris Quality Bakers Ltd - £18750 (approximate value for 5 months)

The 2 contracts above were awarded following a procurement exercise undertaken in June 2012 using the TUCO Framework. Both contracts were awarded for 5 months to ensure that both providers satisfied the review requirements which would be considered every year in January. Based on this review the contract could be extended annually until January 2016. The current annual contract value is approximately £400,000 per annum for Milk and £45000 per annum for Bread and Morning Goods

School Transport to Swimming Baths Contract – contract with Al’s Coaches - £150000

It has been agreed to enact the option to extend for a further year the existing contract to transport pupils from various schools to 6 swimming venues across Wirral. The extension will be from September 2012 to July 2013.

3.0 RELEVANT RISKS

- 3.1 The number of independent residential care placements increases the financial pressure on this budget, which has in previous years significantly overspent.

4.0 OTHER OPTIONS CONSIDERED

- 4.1 Decisions taken following tendering process or consideration of child’s individual needs to identify the most cost effective response.

5.0 CONSULTATION

- 5.1 Consultation has taken place with the appropriate bodies/partners before the decision is made.

6.0 IMPLICATIONS FOR VOLUNTARY, COMMUNITY AND FAITH GROUPS

- 6.1 Voluntary, community and faith organisations are involved where appropriate.

7.0 RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS: FINANCIAL; IT; STAFFING; AND ASSETS

7.1 The financial implications are included in the regular monitoring reports to members.

8.0 LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

8.1 Contractual agreements.

9.0 EQUALITIES IMPLICATIONS

9.1 Has the potential impact of your proposal(s) been reviewed with regard to equality?

No – However all procured services are subject to equality impact assessment at the point of procurement.

10.0 CARBON REDUCTION IMPLICATIONS

10.1 Taking into consideration the needs of the child wherever possible the placements are made within the authority or as close to the authority as possible.

11.0 PLANNING AND COMMUNITY SAFETY IMPLICATIONS

11.1 Any planning permission would have been completed prior to capital contracts being accepted.

12.0 RECOMMENDATION/S

12.1 That the report be noted.

13.0 REASON/S FOR RECOMMENDATION/S

13.1 To inform members of significant items of expenditure in accordance with the Council's Constitution

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APPENDICIES

There are no appendices for this report.

REFERENCE MATERIAL

Reference material not required for this report.

SUBJECT MATERIAL

Council Meeting	Date
CYPD OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE	6 th June 2012
CYPD OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE	21 st March 2012
CYPD OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE	26 th JANUARY 2012
CYPD OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE	20 th SEPTEMBER 2011
CYPD OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE	1 st JUNE 2011
CYPD OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE	15 th MARCH 2011
CYPD OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE	26 th JANUARY 2011
CYPD OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE	14 TH SEPTEMBER 2010
CYPD OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE	2 nd JUNE 2010

CHILDREN & YOUNG PEOPLE OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

SUGGESTED ADDITIONS TO WORK PROGRAMME - 2012/2013

Topic Description	“Task & Finish” Review Group	Future Agenda Reports	Other	Complete / remove from suggested additions
Special Educational Needs - an update requested 21/03/12.		X		
Serious Case reviews and the relationship with Safeguarding Board			Training Sessions	
Scrutiny Review with a focus on work undertaken in Year 7 (due to secondary schools reporting poor literacy skills at transition)	X			
Children with Child Protection Plan numbers		X		
Sickness Absence – Children’s Social Care		X		
Post 16 Standards Report		X		
Raising Participation Age		X		
Wirral Lifelong and Family Learning Service –Update		X		
Family and Friends Policy		X		
Tackling Sexual Exploitation/Children missing from Care		X		
Childminding and the private sector		X		

CHILDREN & YOUNG PEOPLE OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

REPORT ON “TASK & FINISH” SCRUTINY REVIEWS

Title of Review	Completed	Review of report recommendations	Requested update / review date
Report on the support given to schools pre and post Ofsted Inspection	2007	Implementation of recommendations to be monitored by Standards subcommittee.	
Scrutiny of Youth outreach	2009	03/2010	
Scrutiny of the outcomes of Children in Foster Care	2008	01/2010	
Literacy Levels in schools at the end of Key Stage 2	2009	11/2011	11/2012

**SCRUTINY PROGRAMME BOARD
18 JULY 2012**

7. WORK PROGRAMMES OF OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEES

Resolved -

(1) That:

- 1. Every Overview and Scrutiny Committee Chair shall meet, as soon as possible, with the other two party spokespersons of their Committee and:
 - a. Review the work programme of their Overview and Scrutiny Committee (whether planned or being undertaken) for this Municipal Year, and prioritise the work (with assistance of relevant Council officers) consistently with the Council's Corporate Plan approved by Council on 16 July 2012;**
 - b. Consider the work programmes of all other Overview and Scrutiny Committees and identify (with assistance from relevant Council officers) areas of work that involve (or may involve) cross-cutting issues and/or clear synergies (whether in law, fact or issue) with areas of work falling within their own Overview and Scrutiny Committee work programme.**
 - c. The Acting Director of Law, HR and Asset Management (or his nominee) shall report the outcome the meeting(s) referred to above to the Scrutiny Programme Board at its next meeting.****
- 2. The Improvement Board be reminded and asked to note that:
 - a. the Scrutiny Programme Board offers its assistance with regards to taking forward any improvement action, initiative or area of work that the Improvement Board considers appropriate; and**
 - b. the Scrutiny Programme Board is, as part of its work programme, reviewing the Council's Forward Plan (which includes its structure and any work undertaken to date) to it to ensure the Plan is effective in delivering its objectives and purpose.****
- 3. Relevant Council Officers involved in overview and scrutiny work shall review all the work programmes of Overview and Scrutiny Committees and identify any areas of duplication (or**

potential duplication) whether in relation to the work that is planned (or already being undertaken) or in relation to the resources being expended (or likely to be expended) in undertaking the work programmes.

The Acting Director of Law, HR and Asset Management (or his nominee) shall present the findings of the review to the next meeting of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee.

- (2) That training be delivered to Members from the Centre of Public Scrutiny.