



Policy and Performance - Families and Wellbeing Committee

Date:	Tuesday, 8 March 2016
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 are asked to consider whether they have any disclosable pecuniary interests and/or any other relevant interest in connection with any item(s) on this agenda and, if so, to declare them and state the nature of the interest.

Members are reminded that they should also declare 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)

3. EDSENTIAL UPDATE (Pages 11 - 16)

4. HEALTHY WIRRAL - PRESENTATION

5. LOOKED AFTER CHILDREN SCRUTINY REVIEW - PROGRESS REGARDING IMPLEMENTATION OF THE RECOMMENDATIONS (Pages 17 - 66)

6. PERFORMANCE MONITORING (Q3: OCT - DEC 2015) (Pages 67 - 86)

- 7. FINANCIAL MONITORING (Pages 87 - 96)**
- 8. WORK PROGRAMME UPDATE (Pages 97 - 106)**

POLICY AND PERFORMANCE - FAMILIES AND WELLBEING COMMITTEE

Tuesday, 19 January 2016

Present:

Councillor M McLaughlin (Chair)

Councillors	D Roberts	J Williamson
	P Brightmore	W Clements
	A Davies	B Berry
	T Johnson	D Burgess-Joyce
	T Norbury	C Povall
	W Smith	A Brighthouse
	I Williams	

Also Present:

Mr M Harrison, Parent Governor
Ms K Prior, Healthwatch Wirral
Dr P Naylor, Wirral Clinical Commissioning Group
Ms S Edwards, Cheshire Wirral Partnership
Ms V McGee, Wirral Community NHS Trust

Deputies:

Councillor T Anderson (in place of Councillor P Hayes)

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

No declarations of interest were received.

37 CHAIRS ANNOUNCEMENT

The Chair welcomed all Members to the first meeting of the Policy and Performance, Families and Wellbeing Committee of 2016, and in particular Mr Mark Harrison, who had been nominated for an appointment as a Parent Governor Representative to this Committee (Minute 40 refers).

The Chair further indicated that she would be considering Item 8 – Meeting the Housing Needs of Vulnerable People up the agenda to be considered following Item 6.

38 **MINUTES**

RESOLVED:

That the Minutes of the Families and Wellbeing Policy and Performance Committee held on 1 December 2015 be approved as a correct record.

39 **MINUTES OF THE CHILDREN SUB-COMMITTEE - 16 DECEMBER 2015**

RESOLVED:

That the Minutes of the meeting of the Children Sub-Committee held on 16 December 2015 be noted.

40 **APPOINTMENT OF A PARENT GOVERNOR REPRESENTATIVE TO THE CHILDREN SUB-COMMITTEE**

The Committee was informed that Council had recently appointed Mr Mark Harrison to the vacant position of Parent Governor Representative to sit on the Family and Wellbeing Policy and Performance Committee.

In accordance with the procedure it was proposed that Mr Mark Harrison be nominated to be a member of the Children Sub-Committee.

The Chair on behalf of the Committee again welcomed Mr Harrison to the meeting and indicated that she hoped that he would enjoy his time serving as a Parent Governor Representative.

RESOLVED:

That Mr Mark Harrison be appointed Parent Governor Representative to the Policy and Performance Families and Wellbeing Committee and the Children Sub-Committee.

41 **REPORT OF THE CHAIR FROM MEETING OF THE HEALTH & CARE PERFORMANCE PANEL**

The Chair of the Health and Care Performance Panel introduced the report which provided feedback on the key issues arising from the meeting held on 12 January 2016.

The Chair introduced the report and updated Members on the following activity undertaken by the Panel.

- Macular Degeneration – Panel members would be discussing this at a future meeting

- Continuing Healthcare - Panel members would be discussing this at their next meeting

RESOLVED:

That the report of the meeting of the Health and Care Performance Panel held on 12 January 2016 be noted.

42 SAFEGUARDING ADULTS ANNUAL REPORT (14-15) AND PRIORITIES (15-16) - PRESENTATION

The Committee considered a presentation in relation to the Annual Report 2014-15 and priorities for 2015-16 from the Wirral Safeguarding Adults Partnership Board (SAPB).

Mr Bernard Walker, Independent Chair of the SAPB highlighted the statutory objectives and functions of WSAPB as detailed in the Care Act 2014; SAPB attendance and Adults Local Authority Designated Officer (ALADO) data and progress to date against the 2013-2015 objectives.

The priorities for the WSCB for 2015/16 were detailed in the presentation which included:

- Adults who may be at risk are safe, outcomes are improved and they feel safe
- Partnership arrangements for Safeguarding Adults in Wirral are improved;
- A range of responses are developed to enable earlier identification of need
- The implementation of the multi-agency Domestic Abuse Strategy ensures professionals are equipped to quickly respond to domestic abuse in all its forms.

Mr Walker indicated that the PDF version of the Annual Report was not yet complete but would be made available shortly, he highlighted a piece of work that the Board was undertaking alongside John Moores University in relation to Self-Neglect.

Mr Walker indicated that Wirral was part of a pilot scheme "Making Safeguarding Personal" following its success this now sat alongside the Care Act. The aim was to ask people what they wanted as a resolution to make them feel safe and to also ensure that outcomes were appropriately monitored.

Mr Walker further highlighted a piece of awareness raising work to be undertaken in relation to "mate-crime" in particular those with special needs who may be being exploited by those who present themselves as "friends".

In response to a Member in relation to attendances at the Board and Case Conferences, Mr Walker indicated that the Board meetings were well attended and he as Chair always tried to ensure that officers in attendance made a contribution at each meeting; he went on to highlight the contributions made by Healthwatch Wirral and the Older People's Parliament and indicated that the support given to the Board by all parties had been excellent. He further indicated that for case conferences and strategy meetings, attendance was scrutinised by the executive group to ensure that those that should attend, were actually in attendance, he reiterated that generally statutory officers were always in attendance.

In response to a Members question, Mr Walker explained that the ALADO data was monitored by the Performance and the Executive Groups, and that he felt that the significant spike referred to in March 2015 was an indication that awareness raising had worked and that more referrals were being made.

In relation to training, Mr Walker indicated that workforce data for people working in the adult social care sector were monitored by, Skills for Care the sector skills council via a minimum data set which includes staff training. The training programme was available for all providers but not generally for volunteers. Access to training, including the on-line training will be via the Safeguarding Boards' Website following its launch in April.

RESOLVED:

That the update be noted and Mr Walker be thanked for his presentation.

43 **MEETING THE HOUSING NEEDS OF VULNERABLE PEOPLE**

The Committee considered the report of the Director of Adult Social Services outlining the approach used for identified demand for housing; setting out the range of Housing Support services available for Vulnerable People in Wirral Council; the current plan for "Extra Care" in the Wirral; details of the "Supported Living" Review which had started in January 2016; details of the "Gap Analysis" for housing need and outlining the current challenges, in relation to land, legislation and delivery.

The Chair raised concern regarding the challenges to be faced in providing extra care housing given the changes to the welfare system in relation to capping of Housing Benefit, the 1% rent reduction, impacts of the Bedroom Tax and the Government's intention to extend welfare changes with social rents to be capped at local housing allowance rates.

Officers indicated that they had recently met with the HCA regarding the impacts of the changes in relation to supported housing; at present all extra care housing/supported housing schemes had been put on hold until further guidance had been received.

In relation to the funding of a domestic abuse refuge on Wirral, a funding bid had been submitted for a six bed accommodation as part of a pilot scheme.

Officers indicated that in relation to the Extra Care housing, in the event that the RSL's (registered Social Landlords) were no longer able to supply housing they were looking at suitable alternatives, officers were also lobbying the Government regarding these issues and the future of Extra Care/Support housing. Officers were awaiting the outcome of the review in relation to this as there maybe exemptions which may be applied.

Officers reiterated that discussions with partners were still on-going and that the RSL's were still keen to provide these houses and work is on-going with RSL's to get these schemes which had already received planning permission ready for development. Discussions were also being held with private developers regarding the possibility of mixed tenure schemes with an extra care scheme.

RESOLVED: That

- (1) Cabinet notes this Committee's concern regarding the challenges to be faced in providing extra care housing given the changes to the welfare system in relation to capping of Housing Benefit, the 1% rent reduction, impacts of the Bedroom Tax and the Government's intention to extend welfare changes with social rents to be capped at local housing allowance rates; and**
- (2) Officers be requested to submit an update report to this Committee in six months' time.**

44 **SAFEGUARDING CHILDREN SCRUTINY REVIEW**

The Committee considered the report of the Members of the Safeguarding Children Task & Finish Group providing background information regarding the Final Report.

The Chair and Members of the Panel expressed their thanks to all those who had assisted the review by so readily giving their time, experience and suggestions in particular Alan Veitch, Scrutiny Support Officer and Simon Garner, Corporate Safeguarding Manager. The Chair gave her personal thanks to the members of the Panel who had also given up their time and had made an excellent contribution to the review and the Final Report.

The Final Report, 'safeguarding Children in Wirral' was attached as an appendix to the report.

The Members echoed the Chair in thanking those officers who worked tirelessly to keep Wirral's children safe.

A Member commented that in relation to Recommendation 9 detailed within the report she felt it was important that Special Guardians undertook the same robust training that was given to foster carers and adoptive parents.

RESOLVED: That

- (1) the contents and recommendations of the Safeguarding Children in Wirral Scrutiny Review be noted.**
- (2) the Safeguarding Children in Wirral Scrutiny Report be referred to the next appropriate Cabinet meeting;**
- (3) an update report regarding the progress being made towards the implementation of the recommendations be presented to this Committee in six months' time; and**
- (4) Alan Veitch, Scrutiny Support Officer and Simon Garner, Corporate Safeguarding Manager be thanked for all their support and guidance in completing the review.**

45 DRAFT CHILDREN'S STRATEGY - PRESENTATION

The Committee considered a presentation from the Director of Children's Services in relation to the Draft Children Strategy.

The Director of Children's Services indicated that the strategy was still in working progress but was based on what young people and families had told them.

The presentation highlighted the strategy's clear approach to ensure that:

- Children are ready for school;
- Young people are ready for work and adulthood;
- Vulnerable children reach their full potential.

The Director of Children's Services highlighted some of the key statistics based on the information received regarding the Wirral; some of the key principles and highlighted the department's ambitions.

The presentation highlighted some of the things young people, children and families had told them and how given this information the department would

adapt to meet their requirements where possible .In relation to the key themes the Director of Children's Services highlighted the priorities for early action in relation to the three key priority areas.

She further indicated that in relation to children being 'school ready' early years played a big part in achieving this and work was being undertaken to identify those vulnerable two years olds who were not in any early years setting to ensure they too were 'school ready'.

In relation to the transition from Primary to Secondary and the sharing of information, the Director of Children's Services indicated that since September 2015 a new arrangement for providing school to school support is in place in each constituency area. This will continue to support better working arrangements between primary and secondary schools and should improve the transition process.

In response to a Members question about the role of the LA in respect of academy schools, the Director of Children's Services indicated that although these schools were not under LA control, her role along with her officers was to act as champion for children with these schools and forge good working relationships. As the Director of Children's Services she had the authority to intervene if she felt it was necessary and if needed would issue schools with a warning notice or report them to the Education Funding Agency if it was felt that the school was not doing right by a particular child in relation to their educational development, or for example in terms of governance and leadership.

In relation to the high reported turnover of Social Work staff, the Director of Children's Services indicated that this was monitored on a monthly basis. Improvements have been made to the pay grade which includes progression criteria supported by training. Work is underway to reduce the high turnover rates and fill all vacancies with permanent staff.

RESOLVED:

That the updated be noted and the Children's Services Director be thanked for her informative presentation.

46

CHILD POVERTY STRATEGY

The Committee considered a verbal presentation from the Director of Public Health in relation to the Improving Life Chances Strategy which included Child Poverty. The Strategy was currently being developed and was due to be discussed and agreed by Cabinet in the near future.

The Vision was to continue to work with partners to look at opportunities to tackle child and family poverty in Wirral communities. Sadly, 21.5% of children in Wirral currently lived in low income households. The long term ambition was to ensure that no child in Wirral lived in poverty and that the Public Health Department would work with partners to reduce this over the five years of the plan.

The Director of Public Health highlighted the strategy's scope and development; what was known so far; priorities; outcomes; impacts and next steps.

There were four key priority areas, which included:

- Improving life chances for children
- Supporting families to be financially resilient
- Tackling the immediate impacts of poverty
- Supporting parents into sustainable employment

In relation to the key priorities, the Director of Public Health indicated that she was working with the Chamber of Commerce on a project enabling young people and schools to prepare for work upon leaving education.

In relation to financial resilience, work would be undertaken on advice and guidance to ensure people could be appropriately signposted to get help where and when needed.

Work had been undertaken in relation to fuel poverty, in particular help and guidance.

In supporting parents into sustainable employment, work was being undertaken with local partners, colleges and businesses to help those that could work, to work. Further discussions were being held with Merseytravel to give people an enhanced opportunity to access work, as transport was often the biggest barrier.

In response to a Members question regarding the impacts of the Welfare Reform, the Director of Public Health indicated that National Policy impacted on all work, potential impacts had been discussed at stakeholder groups. It was recognised that the Council could not control these changes but could control its response to them.

RESOLVED:

That the Director of Public Health be thanked for her informative presentation.

47 **POLICY INFORM BRIEFING PAPER**

The Committee considered the report of the Strategic Director, Families and Wellbeing presenting Members with the January 2016 Policy Briefing papers which included an overview of ongoing and recent national legislation, bills presented to Parliament and emerging policies.

RESOLVED:

That the contents of the Policy Briefing papers be noted.

48 **WORK PROGRAMME**

The Committee considered the report of the Chair of the Committee, updating on the progress and the activity proposed for this Committee in relation to its agreed Work Programme.

The Chair updated the Committee on the following:

- Avoiding Hospital Admissions Task and Finish Group – evidence gathering was progressing well with several sessions already held. It was hoped to conclude evidence gathering by the end February.
- Budget Scrutiny – Outcomes from the Budget Scrutiny Workshop held on 11 January would be reported to the Coordinating Committee on 16 February.
- There will be a Focus on... Session with Wirral Community Trust on Wednesday 17 February at 5:30pm
- The CQC report inspection of Cheshire and Wirral Partnership Trust resulted in a rating of 'good'. This would be an item on the agenda for the next meeting of the Health & Care Performance Panel

A Member requested a future review to look at the implications of Modern Slavery Act. In particular, the Member requested that the obligations on Local Authority and partners be investigated. In response the Chair requested that a report on this issue be presented to a future meeting of the Committee.

The Chair indicated that the Ready for School Task & Finish Group had been established and the review was progressing well.

RESOLVED: That

- (1) the Work Programme be noted; and**
- (2) the work programme be amended to add a report on the implications of the Modern Slavery Act and an update report on**

the housing needs of vulnerable people, in particular the impact of rent reductions.



POLICY AND PERFORMANCE FAMILIES AND WELLBEING COMMITTEE

8 MARCH 2016

REPORT TITLE	<i>Edsential update</i>
REPORT OF	<i>Managing Director, Edsential</i>

REPORT SUMMARY

Edsential successfully launched on 1st December 2015 and has been trading in line with business plan expectations to date. Approximately 1200 people transferred into Edsential from both Wirral and CWAC councils.

The company provides schools with the following services:

- Catering
- Cleaning consultancy
- Residential/outward bound
- Learning outside the classroom support
- Safeguarding
- Music
- Governing body training and clerking
- Curriculum support, NQT support and teacher CPD
- Data analysis and support

The agreed governance structure is in place (see body of report) and the company board has established a process for identifying a chair and new directors for recommendation to the shareholder board.

A launch event was held on February 4th that was attended by head teachers and governors from all schools to meet each service team and view the innovations we are introducing for 2016/17 academic year.

Edsential has already delivered significant improvements in its services, in particular catering. Here are some example testimonials from Wirral head teachers:

"The new school meals from Edsential are excellent and have truly supported us in revolutionising the dining experience for our children and staff." **Christchurch, Birkenhead**

"Edsential are providing a very healthy and nutritional service for our children. Using quality fresh ingredients, our dedicated Edsential catering staff produce meals of the highest quality both in taste, presentation and variety. Our catering staff are backed up by a dedicated support team at Edsential who have worked in partnership with our school to create a food service we are proud of. I have no hesitation in recommending Edsential." **St Joseph's, Upton**

The key challenges faced by Edsential in 2016/17 relate to:

- the financial environment schools are now operating in may reduce spending on our services
- increasing payroll, tax & pension costs for Edsential will put upward pressure on prices, this will affect demand for our services

The company management are focused on achieving the synergies and economies of scale identified in the business plan that will help mitigate the impact on financial performance.

RECOMMENDATION/S

That the report is noted.

SUPPORTING INFORMATION

1.0 REASON/S FOR RECOMMENDATION/S

2.0 OTHER OPTIONS CONSIDERED

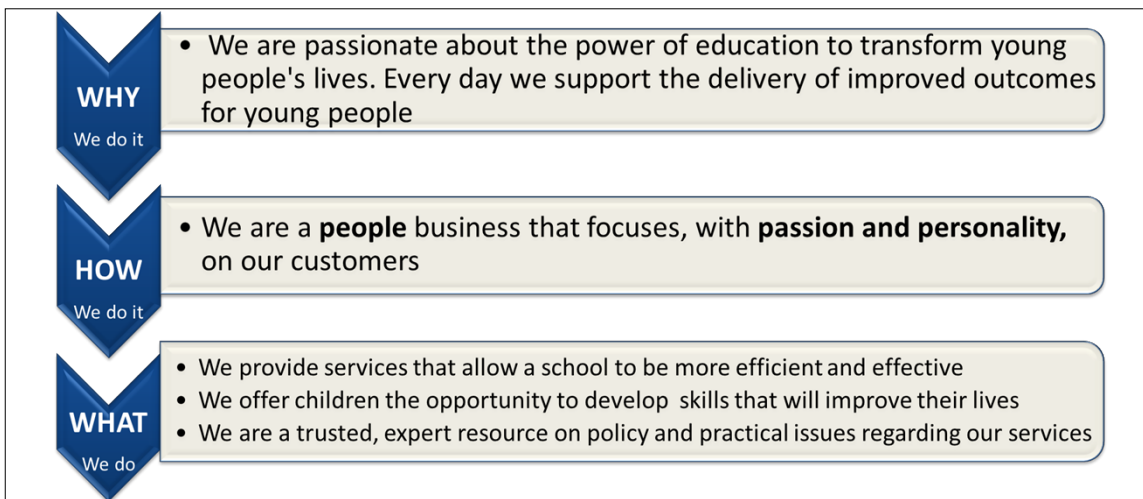
3.0 BACKGROUND INFORMATION

The Edsential Way

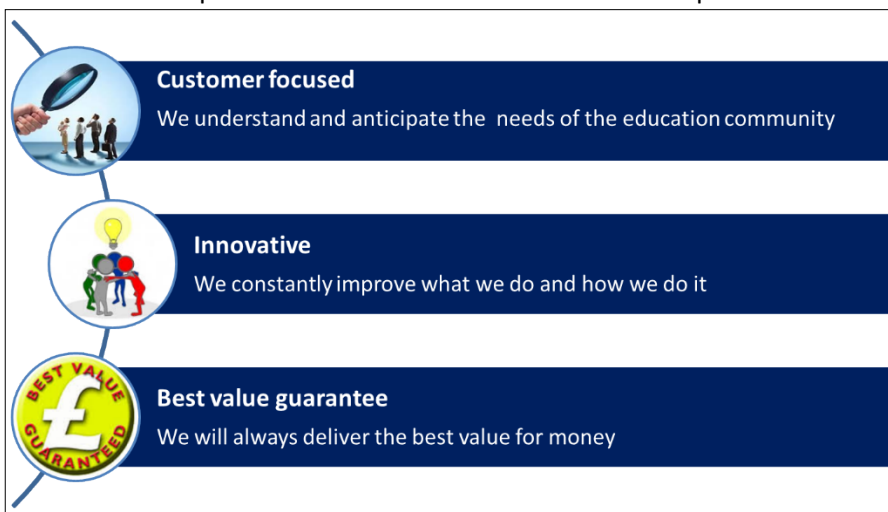
Edsential is a business on a mission, it is a mission that underpins everything we do and plan to do. We have been created for the purpose of directly and indirectly:

Improving outcomes for children and young people

To fulfil our mission we need to build a company culture that embeds it in our everyday decisions and activities. To achieve this we must clearly understand WHY we are doing this, HOW we will do it and WHAT we will do:



In order to ensure we stay relevant in the long term the company must also be founded with a set of values that ensures we place our customers at heart of how we operate. These values will be:



Governance structure

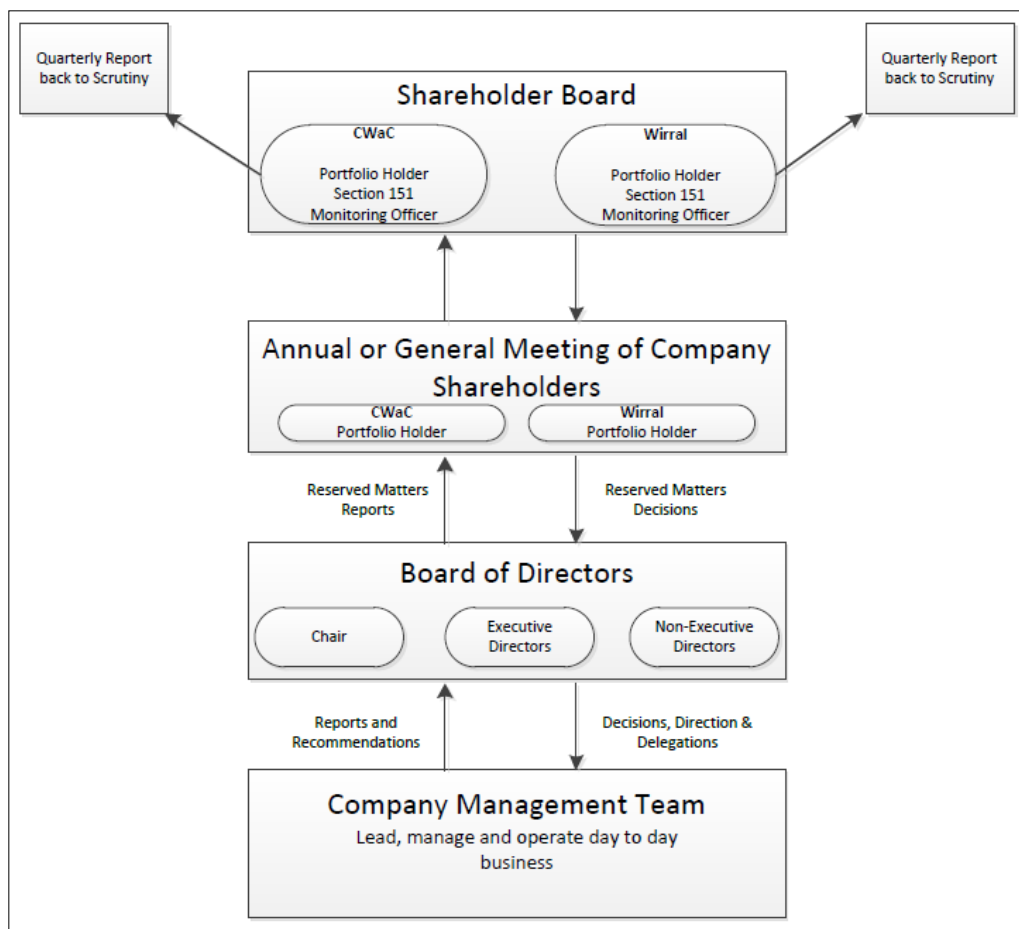
The company's governance structure

As joint owners of the Company, the Councils will exercise a level of control over the Company through a list of decisions that the board of directors must refer to the Councils as shareholders of the Company ("**Reserved Decisions**"). Reserved Decisions would only be passed if both Councils voted in favour. The Reserved Decisions will be listed in the shareholders' agreement entered into by the Councils and the Company.

Formal decisions on Reserved Decisions will be made at general meetings of the Company, attended by a representative of each shareholder Council, who is authorised to vote on behalf of the representative's appointing Council or via written resolution.

Both shareholder Councils must agree Reserved Decisions. If they are unable to do so, the deadlock provisions in the shareholder agreement will apply. It is in the interests of all parties that the Councils reach a consensus on Reserved Decisions and a shareholder board, comprising the authorised representatives and supported by officers and members will be established as a forum to discuss and agree Reserved Decisions.

The Councils will also protect their interests by keeping an oversight of the performance of the Company, receiving specified reports and monitoring information and considering the wider impact of decisions regarding the Company. The Reserved Decisions would be reviewed as the Company matures.



Company board of directors

The purpose of the board is to ensure the company's strategy and operational performance will deliver the mission for the long term.

The board must therefore:

- Provide skills and knowledge to complement and challenge the executive team
- Provide links to the current and future customer base
- Ensure the business is viable and sustainable

To achieve this purpose the board will be created as follows:

Role	Member
2 Shareholder Appointed Directors	Mark Parkinson – Head of Education David Armstrong – Assistant Chief Executive
3 Executive Directors	Ian McGrady – Managing Director, Edsential Strategic HR* Strategic Finance*
4 Non-Executive Directors	Governor (Chair) x3 School Heads

The key challenges faced by Edsential in 2016/17 relate to:

- the financial environment schools are now operating in
- increasing payroll, tax & pension costs for Edsential

4.0 FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

None, current expectations are in line with business plan

5.0 LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

N/A

6.0 RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS: ICT, STAFFING AND ASSETS

In line with business plan

7.0 RELEVANT RISKS

In line with business plan

8.0 ENGAGEMENT/CONSULTATION

In line with business plan

9.0 EQUALITY IMPLICATIONS

(a) ~~Yes and impact review is attached – (insert appropriate hyperlink).~~

(b) ~~No because there is no relevance to equality.~~

(c) No because of another reason which is
Nothing has changed since original cabinet report

** Delete the two answers above which don't apply)*

REPORT AUTHOR: *Ian McGrady*
 Managing Director, Edsential

APPENDICES

REFERENCE MATERIAL

SUBJECT HISTORY (last 3 years)

Council Meeting	Date



Policy and Performance - Families and Wellbeing Committee **Tuesday, 8 March 2016**

REPORT TITLE:	Looked After Children Scrutiny Review - Progress regarding implementation of the recommendations
REPORT OF:	Director of Children's Services

REPORT SUMMARY

This report provides a final progress update on the implementation of the Recommendations made in August 2013 relating to the Scrutiny Review of Outcomes for Looked After Children. A summarised update in respect of each recommendation is detailed at Appendix 1.

The Review obtained evidence directly from children in care and care leavers, council officers and partners. The Review focused on raising aspirations, the role of foster carers, the children's social care process, post 16 support, education, housing and 16+ employability. 21 Recommendations were made in total which have been incorporated into the Corporate Parenting Group Strategy Action Plan (April 2014 to March 2016) and therefore, formed a key part of the Group's work plan over the past 2 years.

An update report was provided to this Committee on the 2nd December 2014, which set out the historical context of the review including that it had been determined that the Corporate Parenting Group with its focus on outcomes for children in care and care leavers would take the lead on implementing the recommendations. The report also included a copy of the action plan.

In line with this oversight, the 21 Scrutiny Recommendations were integrated within the Corporate Parenting Strategy Action Plan and each recommendation was linked to one of the six existing Corporate Parenting Strategy objectives. This review will take each objective and report progress against the recommendations within it. Reference to Green means the action has been completed while reference to Amber means further work is still required and the action will be carried over to the Corporate Parenting Group Strategy Action Plan 2016 – 2018. There are no red actions, indicating that no progress has been made.

The Committee is asked to consider progress against each recommendation, noting actions that have been met and actions to be carried forward into the new action plan. The majority of recommendations have been completed and for those that have not, the foundations have been put in place to enable them to be met within the next Corporate Parenting Strategy Action Plan. The reorganisation of children's social care and in particular the creation of four Children Looked After teams affords a real opportunity to improve the quality of experience and life chances for children looked after and care leavers.

RECOMMENDATION

That the Committee notes the progress made to date and further planned actions/steps outlined in the Summary Update at Appendix 1 in relation to the Looked After Scrutiny Review Recommendations.

SUPPORTING INFORMATION

1.0 REASON/S FOR RECOMMENDATION/S

To enable the Committee to comment on the progress made and make further recommendations, if required.

2.0 OTHER OPTIONS CONSIDERED

None. As indicated above, this report provides an update on a Review previously undertaken by this Committee.

3.0 BACKGROUND INFORMATION

Background information is provided above and this report provides a progress update on the implementation of the Recommendations made in August 2013 relating to the Scrutiny Review of Outcomes for Looked After Children. The first progress update was provided in December 2014.

4.0 FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

There are no financial implications arising directly from this report. The reorganisation within children's social care was costed within existing resources.

5.0 LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

The Council and its partners have obligations as a Corporate Parent of children in its care. Progress with improving children and young people's outcomes are reported on and monitored through the Corporate Parenting Group, and the safeguarding framework provided by the Wirral Safeguarding Children's Board and also considered by external bodies such as Ofsted and the Local Government Ombudsman.

6.0 RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS: ICT, STAFFING AND ASSETS

None.

7.0 RELEVANT RISKS

The Council is judged externally by Ofsted regarding outcomes for children looked after and care leavers and as part of this, considers how well the Council undertakes its Corporate Parenting responsibilities including the effectiveness of elected members at scrutinising children's services and partner's work.

8.0 ENGAGEMENT/CONSULTATION

The Scrutiny Review obtained evidence directly from children in care and care leavers, council officers and partners. As part of the reorganisation within children's social care, young people were also consulted and their feedback used to inform the reorganisation design. The Children in Care Council continues to consult with young people and provide direct feedback on the Children's Services work and informs future areas of work.

9.0 EQUALITY IMPLICATIONS

(a) Yes and impact review is attached – (*insert appropriate hyperlink*).

To find your departmental hyperlink click on:

<http://www.wirral.gov.uk/my-services/community-and-living/equality-diversity-cohesion/equality-impact-assessments/eias-2010-0>

REPORT AUTHOR: **Simon Fisher**
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APPENDICES

Appendix 1 – Summary Update

Appendix 2 – Scrutiny Report

REFERENCE MATERIAL

SUBJECT HISTORY (last 3 years)

Council Meeting	Date
Overview and Scrutiny Committee	7 th November 2012
Overview and Scrutiny Committee	21 st January 2013
Families and Wellbeing Policy and Performance Committee	2 nd December 2014

SUMMARY UPDATE

Progress against Scrutiny Review Recommendations: -

Objective 1: Listen to children and young people and demonstrate that we have taken action to respond (incorporating Recommendation 1).

This recommends that raising the aspirations of children looked after (CLA) is central to the Corporate Parenting Groups decision making. Actions taken to achieve this included providing recruitment and selection training to the Children in Care Council (CICC), enabling them to be involved in the recruitment of social workers and social work managers including the Head of Service. The CICC has also completed a number of pieces of work including what makes a good care plan and an outstanding service, contributed to the development of a life skills programme for care leavers, contributed to the foster carer recruitment campaign and participated in an online tutorial for young people on how to make a complaint.

The Right Side of Care website was created in February 2015 enabling information to be shared with young people via the use of alternative mediums. The Council's commitment to listening to children looked after and acting on their wishes and feelings has been reinforced through the "Wirral Promise" being refreshed and signed up to by key Council leaders and partners. Strong links between the social work teams and 14-19 team have been instrumental in the continued increase of care leavers in Education, Employment and Training (EET). Furthermore, a programme is now in place working with a local university who host visits for our children looked after (CLA).

Progress against Recommendation 1: Green

Objective 2: Actions to support corporate parents in carrying out their responsibilities

There are no Scrutiny Recommendations within this Objective.

Objective 3: Actions to engage the rest of the Council in corporate parenting

There are no Scrutiny Recommendations within this Objective.

Objective 4: Being Healthy

There are no Scrutiny Recommendations within this Objective.

Objective 5: Staying Safe (incorporating Recommendations 2, 4, 6, 7, 9, 10, 11, 12, 23, 24, 25)

Foster Carer Training

Recommendation 2 concerns training given to foster carers to ensure they are supported, trained and skilled to meet the needs of all children looked after in foster care as per the Regulations and national minimum standards. Payments to foster carers have now been aligned to a requirement to attend training and participate in ongoing professional development. Audits of foster carer supervision files are ongoing and discussions are underway to integrate attendance at training sessions within this.

Progress against Recommendation 2: Green

Additional Support to Foster Carers

Recommendation 4 concerns additional support foster carers may need beyond the above training. Actions to achieve this include improvements in peer to peer support within the fostering service and annual reviews to capture the support carers both identify and receive. A connected carers support group, teenage carers support group and a support group for the children of foster carers are now in operation. A weekly drop in service is also provided to foster carers and a quarterly newsletter is provided by the fostering service.

Progress against Recommendation 4: Green

Transition for Young People Leaving Care

Recommendations 6 and 9 are to ensure the organisational structures both within Children's Social Care and specifically within transitions to the Pathway Team are clear and prioritise the needs of CLA. The introduction of a new operational structure within Children's Social Care including the integration of the Pathway Team into 4 newly created Children Looked After (CLA) teams took place in June 2015 and provides a seamless transition for children looked after as they become adults and means that a transfer to another team at age 16 no longer takes place. Young people told us that at age 16 they have enough to contend with and that transferring to a new team and social worker is an unnecessary disruption. We have been able to act on this.

Progress against Recommendations 6 and 9: Green

Accessible Information and Support

Recommendations 7, 10, 11 and 12 concern the provision of timely, accurate and accessible information and support to CLA. This includes enabling young people to access information concerning financial settlements (Recommendation 7), understanding the role of the Independent Visitors Service (Recommendation 11) and the support they offer and providing additional support to young people in care following their 18th birthday

(Recommendation 10). The 'Staying Put' policy and procedures have been updated and there is good evidence that more young people are remaining with their foster carers post 18. Changes to the payments policy are planned for 2016 to reflect this and ensure the scheme is sustainable. To ensure young people are aware of their financial entitlements, the 'Care Leavers Financial Policy' and 'Guide to Foster Carer Payments' have both been revised, with child friendly versions available and both will be reviewed annually.

Progress against Recommendations 7, 10 and 11: Green

Pathway Planning

Recommendation 12 outlines that CLA should understand what is contained within their Pathway Plan. A series of actions have been completed to address this including workshops to support the CLA teams to produce more outcome focussed plans. The quality of Pathway Plans is still variable though, further ongoing work is needed to skill up all members of the CLA teams to better capture young people's participation in their plans. A Service Development plan and individual team plans are in place setting out the required development work needed and additional interim social work capacity has been provided to ensure former relevant young people have up to date pathway plans. Care/Pathway Planning, performance reporting for care leavers and CLA and increasing Personal Adviser (PA) capacity have been identified as areas of ongoing work to be continued beyond the expiry of the Scrutiny Recommendations.

Progress against Recommendation 12: Amber

Suitable Accommodation for Young People Leaving Care

Recommendations 23, 24 and 25 are to ensure care leavers have access to suitable accommodation and their own tenancies. To achieve this, the Council's Housing Division and Children's Services worked collaboratively to analyse and review existing supported living accommodation. This resulted in the reconfiguration of existing supported living accommodation and the creation of smaller 24 hour staffed supported living accommodation for this group and also for 16/17 year olds who are homeless. In September 2015 a review led by an independent consultant considered how the range of accommodation options for care leavers could be broadened. This recommended streamlining the placement request process on Liquid Logic and increasing capacity within the contracts/commissioning section, both of which are being taken forward. Finally, care leavers are now involved in visits to supported living providers and have spoken with the young people there about the accommodation. A report concerning this was provided to the Corporate Parenting Group in January 2016.

Progress against Recommendations 23, 24 and 25: Green

Objective 6: Enjoying and achieving economic wellbeing (incorporating recommendations 3, 13, 15, 17, 18, 19, 20 and 21)

This final group of Recommendations concerns preparing care leavers for further education, training and employment (Recommendations 18, 19 and 20), and increasing vocational and academic employment opportunities (Recommendation 21). This Objective advocates achieving this through the promotion of independent living skills and providing employment and training opportunities through placements (Recommendation 3), ensuring personal education plans are undertaken in line with Regulations (Recommendation 15) along with the development of stronger working relationships between schools and social workers (Recommendation 13). It encourages ensuring that support is in place to achieve this through making sure that the Personal Education Allowance (PEA) meets the identified needs of children looked after (Recommendation 17).

Supporting Care Leavers into Employment

Some actions linked to these Recommendations have achieved real success; dedicated personal coaches working with young people to engage them in vocational and academic programmes leading to employment have seen measures of EET at age 19 rising from 37% to 68% over a 4 year period. Ring-fenced places for care leavers on the 'Wirral Apprentice' programme led to 9 young people accessing this opportunity and to date 16 care leavers have accessed the Get Real programme. Further proposals are being taken forward to increase the number of internal apprenticeships and work experience opportunities for care leavers and was discussed at the December 2015 Corporate Parenting Group.

Educational Support for Children in Care

Education Progress Officers (EPO's) are now co-located with the CLA teams, improving communication between the service and social workers. The Liquid Logic children's system now enables PEP's to be completed on the system, which has streamlined the process and will shortly enable performance reports to be routinely run. This is being further enhanced from April 2016, with Designated Teachers in schools being given access to the system enabling them to complete their sections in Liquid Logic. Proposals have also been presented to the Corporate Parenting Group on progress officers spending more time tracking pupil performance rather than quality assuring PEP's, for instance, tracking all year 6 pupils entering secondary school. A further area of development is tracking progress linked to the Pupil Premium and holding schools to account for the money they receive for CLA. These areas of work will be carried over into the next Corporate Parenting Group Action Plan.

Requests for additional support via the PEA are made via the Group Manager for fostering and adoption who consults with the LACES team when agreeing requests. What is outstanding is the overall review of this funding and how it is making a difference to educational attainment/engagement for those young people receiving it.

The creation of the CLA teams affords a greater opportunity to develop closer links with schools and this work is ongoing.

Progress against Recommendations 3, 18, 19, 20, 21 Green

Progress against Recommendations 13, 15, 17, Amber

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THE OUTCOMES FOR LOOKED AFTER CHILDREN SCRUTINY REVIEW



A report produced by
**THE FAMILIES AND WELLBEING
POLICY & PERFORMANCE COMMITTEE**

***August 2013
FINAL REPORT***

WIRRAL BOROUGH COUNCIL
THE OUTCOMES FOR LOOKED AFTER CHILDREN
SCRUTINY REVIEW
FINAL REPORT

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1. INTRODUCTION

At the meeting of the former Children & Young People Overview and Scrutiny Committee held on 7th November 2012, Members agreed to undertake an in-depth Scrutiny Review to investigate the outcomes for Looked After Children in the Borough. As a result, a Task & Finish Group comprising three Members has held over twenty meetings with relevant officers and partners as well as some children in care and care leavers in order to obtain appropriate evidence.

An Executive Summary of the findings follows, together with the recommendations arising from this Review. The Report then sets out the background to the original brief, as well as the methodology adopted for gathering the evidence. This is followed by the main body of the Report which details the key findings of the Review and the evidence gathered in support of the recommendations of the Task & Finish Group Members.

2. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Context: The primary focus of this Scrutiny Review is to assess the outcomes for the Borough's Looked After Children, of which, as at 12th August 2013, Wirral Council had responsibility for 670. Central to the evidence-gathering for the Review were meetings with young people currently in care and with care leavers. This evidence has been under-pinned by the information gained from meetings with foster carers and officers. This Report aims to reflect both the positives and the concerns of the young people supplemented by the views of the service providers. There is much evidence that the Council discharges its duties well. However, some challenges remain and the recommendations included in this Report are aimed at improving the service further.

Aspiration: A recurring theme throughout the Review has been the need to provide greater aspiration for the Borough's Looked After Children. Concerns of a similar nature were expressed by young people, foster carers, teachers and officers, summarised by one care leaver who told the Members that "when you are in care, you are always put down and told that you could not achieve". Whilst the Task & Finish Group Members were told of many examples of aspirational support provided to the children in care, challenges clearly remain. There is a desire that greater aspiration for the Borough's Looked After Children becomes embedded within the practices of the Council and its partners. As well as ensuring that children in care are kept safe, there should also be a goal to inspire those children, especially those in long-term care. There was a view among Members that the Local Authority, as the Corporate Parent, should aim to deliver care that is "what you would want for your own children".

Foster Carers: The young people told the Members that they experienced very strong support from their foster carers but this was not universal. There was some anecdotal evidence of very strong relationships which had formed between carers and the young people, some continuing well beyond the time period when the young person was formally cared for by that carer. One area of development for the Local Authority is to enable foster carers to further enhance their skills in order to meet the considerable challenges which they can face.

The provision of training for carers is obviously a key role which the Council undertakes. It is proposed that greater emphasis could be placed on increasing the attendance at training sessions. An option for the future could be to change the policy so that fees will continue to be paid only if minimum training requirements are met on an annual basis. At the same time, there could be further encouragement for carers to attend sessions in other ways. This may involve holding sessions at different times of the day, at different venues, offering childcare facilities, ensuring sessions are always of high quality, offering the availability of peer mentors and so on. Specific areas where some foster carers could play an enhanced role include the teaching of life skills to the young people, such as budgeting, cookery skills and so on. Additional support and advice from foster carers in helping young people to evaluate options for training and employment is also encouraged.

The Members heard from a number of professionals who argued that foster carers and social workers should have special training if the child in care has designated special needs. As a consequence, the Members have concluded that there should be greater training and monitoring for foster carers who care for children with certain medical and behavioural needs. A programme should be put in place to identify those carers who have specific skills and enable further training to those carers who require enhanced skills. In terms of placements, it is clearly advantageous if the individual needs of the child can be best supported by foster carers who have relevant skills.

The Social Care Process: Key to the outcome for children in care is the stability in placement and in contacts. The Members were informed that, in recent years, the Council has been able to retain more children in stable placements. However, there were a significant number of comments related to the importance of continuity of social worker contact for the children in care. One young person told the Members that "there are so many people in and out of your life". There was anecdotal evidence that, for a number of young people, social workers had changed more often than they would have preferred. One professional agreed when saying "for many Looked After Children, their stories are fragmented with different schools and different social workers".

Members have been informed of the steps that are being taken by the Strategic Directorate to hopefully address the high level of turnover in some teams, including the enhancement of the role, improved training opportunities, reduced manager to social worker ratios as well as remuneration. However, in addition, the organisational structure can contribute to the stability of care for a child. Therefore, the Members request that further consideration be given to organisational changes that could be made with the aim of keeping transitions for the child to a minimum.

Communication between social workers and the young people was highlighted on a number of occasions. The ability of young people to contact their social worker was repeatedly emphasised. The availability and consistency of information relating to financial entitlements for the young people was also stressed. Consideration should also be given to enhancing the modes of communication by considering the use of Apps and texts as well as the Internet, in order to consolidate information flow.

Post-16 Support: A number of witnesses expressed concern regarding the timing of the transition of the transfer of Looked After Children to the Pathways Team in preparation for leaving care. For 16 and 17 year olds, there is a lot of change when they are doing GCSEs and looking for further education, training or employment. In the case of Looked After Children, they are also expected to prepare for leaving care by transferring to the Pathways Team once they are 16 years old. Members have, therefore, concluded that it would be beneficial for there to be greater flexibility around the timing of transition to the Pathways Team, based on each young person's individual needs.

Although there was positive feedback from young people regarding the role of the Pathways Team, there was also a strong message from a number of young people of a desire to have someone available to provide additional support if needed. "It is silly that at 18 years old, they assume that you are OK to be on your own"; "in a normal family, you do not get told to go when you are 18" and "not having a family to turn to is very hard" were comments from three young people. Perhaps the pointer towards improving the service is emphasised by further comments from two young people: "we need someone to listen and to come to your flat if necessary" and "I am unusual because I want to be on my own. However, there is still a need for someone to be available if you need them".

Members warmly welcome the proposals to support payments based on the Staying Put principles that are now being developed for Wirral. This should enable those young people who wish to stay with their foster parents post-18 to do so. However, the Task & Finish Group Members urge that, although personal advisers are available post-18, further options be considered in order to provide young people with access to more one-to-one support and opportunities for "drop in" facilities for Care leavers. This could include a greater use of peer mentoring for Care leavers or further use of the independent Visitor Service.

Education: The value of educational outcomes to any young person is clearly important. This is no different for Looked After Children. However, at both national and local levels, there is a dramatic difference between the educational attainment of Looked After Children and non-Looked After. In Wirral in 2012, 64.8% of all children achieved 5 or more GCSEs at A*-C including English and Maths. The equivalent attainment for Looked After Children was 12%. For many of these young people, there are so many significant events taking place in their young lives.

During this Review, the Members visited both the Observatory and Woodchurch High School. The ethos and the extensive support provided to support Looked After Children at both schools was hugely impressive. However, among the wider cohort of young people attending schools across the Borough with whom the Members met, there was a very mixed response regarding the relationship with the Designated Teacher at their school. Some young people had a supportive relationship whereas some young people did not know who their Designated Teacher was and others had a poor relationship.

Evidence arose that partnership working was not always strong and that improved mutual understanding of the roles of teachers and social workers would be beneficial. The Members heard observations that a closer working relationship between schools and social workers, in the interests of the children in care, would be beneficial. Therefore, in order to strengthen the relationship between schools and social care, the Members recommend that lines of communication are strengthened, commencing with regular meetings between Designated Teachers and District Managers.

In order to enhance the educational outcomes of Looked After Children, it is expected that a Personal Education Plan (PEP) will be prepared for each child in care. The PEP is a record of what needs to happen for Looked After Children to enable them to fulfill their potential and reflects any existing education plans, such as a statement of special educational needs. Members urge that a greater emphasis should be placed on raising the profile of the PEP and ensuring that the value of the plan is better understood by all those responsible for the welfare of a young person.

The attention of Members was also drawn to the need to identify children who require additional support at the earliest opportunity and subsequently to provide the appropriate early interventions. Looked After Children are at high risk of having missed out on early years provision. There is recognition that a greater emphasis should be placed on ensuring that screening is improved to ensure that all vulnerable children, including Looked After Children, are identified and receive appropriate interventions to make sure that children are more able to communicate and to promote emotional literacy at an early age.

16+ Employability: Members heard from several sources of the excellent work being carried out by the Employability Team in order to encourage Care leavers in their journey through education, training and employment. Despite that, some challenges remain. As at April 2013, the proportion of care leavers aged 16–19 in Wirral being in employment, education or training was 62%.

The importance of building self-confidence in Looked After Children was heard repeatedly throughout the Review. One way of achieving increased confidence levels is to provide relevant experiences in order to prepare a young person for further training and eventually for work. It is understood that there is an offer of one week's placement to Looked After Children to work with the Inclusion Team based at Moreton Family Centre. However, a similar process is not repeated across other parts of the Council. It is suggested that, as the Corporate Parent, the Council could provide greater opportunities for internships and job experience across all Departments, in addition to apprenticeships. It is also suggested that procurement arrangements could be used to encourage companies to offer work experience, internships and apprenticeships to care leavers.

Housing: Some of the young people reported low expectations about finding “somewhere nice to live in the future”, while other Care leavers highlighted instances of concern regarding the quality of accommodation. The Members, therefore, stress the importance of Care leavers needing a safe and suitable place to live of their choosing.

In considering the evidence found during the Review, the Panel Members have formulated the recommendations identified on pages 7 to 10.

RECOMMENDATIONS

It is anticipated that the Strategic Director for Families & Wellbeing will be responsible for delivering all of the approved recommendations. As a result, this is not specified individually for each recommendation.

Aspiration

Recommendation 1 – Aspiration for Wirral's Looked After Children

As part of its role as a Corporate Parent, Wirral Council will place aspiration for the Borough's Looked After Children at the heart of its decision-making processes. The Council will work with all relevant partners to encourage them to adopt the same principle.

(Reference Section 6.1, page 16)

Foster carers

Recommendation 2 – Incentivising Attendance at Training Sessions for Foster Carers

In order to ensure the continuous professional development of foster carers, consideration should be given to amending the policy so that fees for foster carers will continue to be paid only if minimum training requirements are met on an annual basis. A revised training strategy and coordinated programme should be put in place to support this proposal.

(Reference Section 6.2, page 17)

Recommendation 3 – Promotion by Foster Carers of Independent Living Skills and Employment / Training Opportunities

Greater emphasis should be placed on assisting foster carers to promote independent living skills to Looked After Children who are approaching the time of leaving care. Foster carers should also be encouraged to become more aware of the employment and training opportunities available to young people and provide appropriate support.

(Reference Section 6.2, page 18)

Recommendation 4 – Enabling Foster Carers to Support Each Other

Further consideration should be given to ways in which foster carers can be empowered to support each other, either through face-to-face discussions or the greater use of the online environment, such as the development of an online Forum.

(Reference Section 6.2, page 18)

Recommendation 5 – Care Placements for Looked After Children with Special Educational or Behavioural Needs

When care placements are being considered, it is important that potential carers have the appropriate skills to support children with special needs or behavioural issues. Suitable training and support should be made available to relevant carers and placements should be made with those carers who have the specific skills.

(Reference Section 6.2, page 19)

Social Care

Recommendation 6 – Organisational Structure and Stability of Social Worker Contact

Consideration should be given to whether the realignment of Social Care teams can contribute towards greater stability of care for a child with regard to social worker contact so that transitions from one team to another are kept to a minimum. It is hoped that the current re-modeling and realignment of the social care workforce will contribute towards this aim.

(Reference Section 6.3, page 21)

Recommendation 7 – Financial Entitlements for Looked After Children

Advice to Looked After Children regarding financial entitlements should be available, consistent and timely. The North West Regional initiative on financial support and entitlements is welcomed.

(Reference Section 6.3, page 21)

Recommendation 8 – Communication with Looked After Children

In order to improve the provision of information to the Borough's Looked After Children, Wirral Council is encouraged to further develop the 'Right Side of Care' website alongside the introduction of new forms of communication such as Apps and texts.

(Reference Section 6.3, page 22)

Post-16 Support

Recommendation 9 – Transfer to the Pathways Team

Recognising the educational importance of Year 11, an assessment should be carried out regarding the merits of providing a gradual transition to the Pathways Team focused on both the school year and the needs of the young person rather than on the 16th birthday of the care leaver.

(Reference Section 6.4, page 24)

Recommendation 10 – Post-18 Support

The reduction of support for Looked After Children at 18 years old represents, to some care leavers, a "cliff-edge". Whilst the planned introduction of a 'Staying Put' policy in Wirral is warmly welcomed and although personal advisers are available post-18, the Strategic Director for Families & Wellbeing is asked to consider options for the ability of young people to access more one-to-one support and opportunities for "drop in" facilities for Care leavers.

(Reference Section 6.4, page 24)

Recommendation 11 – Independent Visitor Service

The profile of the Independent Visitor Service should be raised in order to provide additional support for young people and to present opportunities for greater continuity in support.

(Reference Section 6.4, page 25)

Recommendation 12 – Ownership of the Pathway Plan

In order to remove the sentiment held by some young people that the Pathway Plan is targeted at them rather than with them, more attention is needed to ensure that the young person 'owns' the Pathway Plan, with enough support being provided by the social worker to enable that to happen. It is suggested that development work is undertaken with the Pathway Team to enable this transformation.

(Reference Section 6.4, page 25)

Education

Recommendation 13 – The Relationship between Schools and Social Workers

More emphasis should be placed on developing stronger working relationships between schools and social workers, enabling better lines of communication. In particular, regular meetings between Designated Teachers and District Managers would provide a basis for progress.

(Reference Section 6.5, page 27)

Recommendation 14 - Raising the Profile of the Personal Education Plan (PEP)

A greater emphasis should be placed on raising the profile of the Personal Education Plan (PEP) and ensuring that the value of the plan is better understood by all those responsible for the welfare of a young person.

(Reference Section 6.5, page 28)

Recommendation 15 – Consistency of Reviews for Looked After Children

Consideration should be given to holding the PEP Review and the LAC Review at the same time wherever possible. The Task & Finish Group welcomes the work underway to improve the PEP in line with best practice in other Authorities and recommends ways are found to enhance sharing of the data required between school and social worker.

(Reference Section 6.5, page 28)

Recommendation 16 - Attendance at Parents' Evenings

The expected arrangements for attendance at Parents' Evenings ought to be specified in the Personal Education Plan (PEP).

(Reference Section 6.5, page 29)

Recommendation 17 – Personal Education Allowance

Alongside Pupil Premium, the Personal Education Allowance (PEA) represents a valuable resource to help Looked After Children achieve the educational results of their peers. The Looked After Children Education Service (LACES) team is encouraged to both analyse the effectiveness of the PEA funding and seek to ensure the funding is accessed by all of the Looked After Children who would potentially benefit.

(Reference Section 6.5, page 29)

16+ Employability

Recommendation 18 – Increasing the Capacity of the Employability Team

As the statutory duty to provide support to 20 and 21 year old Care leavers is introduced, the proposal to increase the capacity of the Employability Team with a peer mentor and an apprentice is fully supported.

(Reference Section 6.6, page 31)

Recommendation 19 – Opportunities for Work Experience

Wirral Council, as a Corporate Parent, is encouraged to identify and promote opportunities for internships and work experience for Looked After Children and Care leavers within the Council. Consideration should also be given to the Council's procurement arrangements in order to encourage similar opportunities in other companies.

(Reference Section 6.6, page 31)

Recommendation 20 – Higher Education

Greater emphasis should be placed on inspiring more Care leavers, for whom it is the appropriate route, to attend Higher Education. Consideration should be given to the opportunities that there may be to provide Care leavers with appropriate experiences early in the sixth form (or before).

(Reference Section 6.6, page 32)

Recommendation 21 – Employment Opportunities for All

The principle of seeking the right opportunities for individual Care leavers is supported, with an equal emphasis being placed on vocational avenues as well as academic learning.

(Reference Section 6.6, page 32)

Housing, Health and Youth Support

Recommendation 22 – Screening for Vulnerable Children

Consideration ought to be given to ways in which screening can be improved to ensure that all vulnerable children, including Looked After Children, are identified and receive appropriate interventions to make sure that children are more able to communicate and to promote emotional literacy.

(Reference Section 6.7, page 34)

Recommendation 23 – Supporting Care leavers in obtaining tenancies

Models of good practice from elsewhere should be explored in order to further support care leavers in obtaining tenancies.

(Reference Section 6.7, page 34)

Recommendation 24 – Sharing Accommodation

The feasibility of using the 'Right Side of Care' website to include the facility for offering opportunities for sharing accommodation should be investigated.

(Reference Section 6.7, page 34)

Recommendation 25 – Monitoring of the Quality of Accommodation

The process for housing young people who are leaving care should ensure that adequate monitoring and checking is taking place with young people to make sure that reasonable expectations of accommodation are being met.

(Reference Section 6.7, page 35)

3. **MEMBERS OF THE TASK & FINISH GROUP**

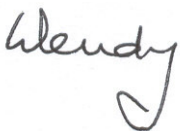
Councillor Wendy Clements (Chair)



As we began this Review, we were conscious that every Councillor is a Corporate Parent to the children and young people who are in the care of Wirral Council. This responsibility is not only to keep them safe, but to ensure that their lives are better than they would have been if not Looked After. Those of us who are parents know how much we strive to give our children opportunities to thrive and make their way in the world.

This Scrutiny Panel has spent a great deal of time to discover how that works for our Looked After Children. Thank you to all the people who gave so generously of their time, including Children and Young People. In particular, we are very grateful to the following young people who gave us their time and shared their views so powerfully: Kim, Katie, Beth, Dawn, Amy, Liam, Chantelle, Matt, Sarah, Shannon, Davina, Liam and Steven.

We have heard about excellent work and we've found areas to celebrate, but also have recommendations as to how things could be better. In reading our recommendations please remember that the whole Council is the Corporate Parent and our call to each Member and Officer of the Council is that the work of the Corporate Parent should affect every area of operation in order to care properly for our children.



Other Panel Members were:

Councillor Walter Smith



Councillor Pat Williams



4. BACKGROUND AND ORIGINAL BRIEF

At the meeting of the former Children & Young People Overview and Scrutiny Committee held on 7th November 2012, Members discussed the possibility of commencing an in-depth Scrutiny Review regarding the outcomes for Looked After Children.

An in-depth Scrutiny Review had been previously undertaken regarding the Outcomes for Children in Foster Care. A report of the work done by a Members' working group was produced in April 2008. Subsequent reports have been provided to the former Children & Young People Overview and Scrutiny Committee in November 2008 and January 2010 giving an officer response on the progress towards implementing the recommendations from the Members' Report.

By November 2012, it was considered appropriate to undertake a follow-up review on this related issue. The three Party Spokespersons volunteered to form a Task & Finish Group to undertake the Review. The Scope Document for the Scrutiny Review, attached as Appendix 1 to this Report, was agreed by the meeting of the former Children & Young People Overview and Scrutiny Committee held on 21st January 2013. It was intended that the new Review will investigate the steps which the Council and other partners are already taking and consider further actions that may be feasible in order to improve the outcomes for Looked After Children.

5. METHODOLOGY FOR THE REVIEW

The Panel has employed a number of methods to gather evidence:

5.1 Meetings with Young people and carers

- Care leavers (Children in Care Council) at Moreton Family Centre
 - A group of Care leavers at the Conway Centre
 - A group of Looked After Children at the Observatory School
 - A group of Foster Carers plus Sheila Khan (Team Manager, Wirral Fostering Service)
- In addition, a short questionnaire was completed by 11 members of the Children in Care Council.

5.2 Visits to Schools

The following schools were visited:

- Woodchurch High School
Rebekah Phillips (Headteacher, Woodchurch High School)
Dan Heydon (Designated Teacher, Woodchurch High School)
Elaine Reeve (Teaching Assistant / Learning Mentor for Looked After Children, Woodchurch High School)
- The Observatory School
Elaine Idris (Headteacher, Observatory School)
Tom Harney (Chair of Governors, Observatory School)
Suzanne Furlong (Designated Teacher, Observatory School)
Ann Baird (Pastoral Manager, Observatory School)
A group of Looked After Children

During these visits, issues have been discussed with Headteachers, Designated Teachers, Governors and some Looked After Children. Both of the visits were very constructive and highlighted issues relevant to the Review.

5.3 Meetings with Officers

A series of individual meetings has taken place at which the Task & Finish Group Members could discuss relevant issues with key officers from Wirral Borough Council. In addition, Simon Garner, Acting Head of Children's Social Care Branch) provided advice to the Panel Members during both the initial planning stage and the closing phase of the Review. Those interviewed during the course of the Review were:

- Tuesday 8th January 2013
Vivian Stafford (Strategic Service Manager: Post-16 Commissioning and Economic Generation, Wirral Borough Council)
- Tuesday 8th January 2013:
Brian Ronson (Team Manager, Pathway Team, Wirral Borough Council)
- Monday 14th January 2013:
Fiona O'Shaughnessy (Inclusion Manager, Children's Inclusion Service, Wirral Borough Council)
Dave Walker (Inclusion Officer, Children's Inclusion Service, Wirral Borough Council)
Jeanette Geary (Inclusion Officer, Children's Inclusion Service, Wirral Borough Council)
- Monday 21st January 2013:
Simon Garner (Acting Head of Children's Social Care Branch, Wirral Borough Council (and Chair of the North West After Care Forum)

- Tuesday 5th February 2013:
Anne Patterson (Acting Service Manager, Quality Assurance & Safeguarding Unit, Wirral Borough Council)
Deborah Caulfield (Independent Reviewing Officer)
Joanne Leighton (Independent Reviewing Officer)
Rebecca Hardy (Independent Reviewing Officer)
- Tuesday 5th February 2013:
Pat Rice (Head of Response, Wirral Borough Council)
Joanne Day (Operations Manager, Response Team, Wirral Borough Council)
Pat Manning (Specialist Substance Misuse Worker, Response Team, Wirral Borough Council)
- Wednesday 20th February 2013:
Pat Jones (Head of Targeted Youth Support Services, Children & Young People's Department, Wirral Borough Council)
Kathy Gill (YISP - Youth Inclusion Support Panel Manager, Children & Young People's Department, Wirral Borough Council)
Steve Pimblett (Strategic Service Manager, Integrated Youth Support, Children & Young People's Department, Wirral Borough Council) – Part meeting only
- Monday 4th March 2013:
Phil Sheridan (Virtual Headteacher – Secondary, Children & Young People's Department, Wirral Borough Council)
Steve Dainty (Virtual Headteacher – Primary, Children & Young People's Department, Wirral Borough Council)
- Tuesday 12th March 2013:
Paula Basnett (Manager, Invest Wirral and Foster Carer)
- Tuesday 12th March 2013:
Julie Webster (Deputy Director of Public Health, NHS Wirral)
Gareth Hill (Public Health Manager, NHS Wirral)
Lucy Tomlinson (Public Health Manager, NHS Wirral)
- Monday 18th March 2013:
Sheila Jacobs (Supported Housing Manager, Wirral Borough Council)
- Wednesday 27th March 2013:
Simon Fisher (Service Manager Children with Disabilities, Wirral Borough Council)
Graham Teare (Residential Homes Manager, Children & Young People Department, Wirral Borough Council)
Debbie Pearce (Children with Disabilities Team Manager, Children & Young People Department, Wirral Borough Council)
- Tuesday 23rd April 2013:
Hazel Griffiths-Jones, (Clinical Lead for Looked After Children, Wirral Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services - CAMHS, Cheshire & Wirral Partnership NHS Foundation Trust)
- Tuesday 23rd April 2013:
Gareth Jones (Apprenticeship and Skills Manager, Children & Young People Department, Wirral Borough Council Manager)
Paul Arista (16 – 19 Manager, Children & Young People Department, Wirral Borough Council)

5.4 Written Evidence

The Review was also informed by written evidence including committee reports, Government documents and briefing papers from officers.

6. EVIDENCE AND RECOMMENDATIONS

6.1 Aspiration for the Borough's Looked After Children

What the young people said....

- "There is a stereotype about Looked After Children and there are few positive messages."
- "Tell a Looked After Child that they will do bad and they will do bad". "When you are in care, you are always put down and told that you could not achieve."
- "There should be more aspiration for Looked After Children. A friend went to College but was kicked off the course because she did not work. She did not work because she was told that she could not do it."

What the Members welcomed....

- Work to raise the aspiration of Looked After Children towards higher education is taking place in schools and in the Employability Team. However, more remains to be done.
- Aspiration towards educational attainment for Looked After Children is a high priority in those schools that were visited.
- The successful Takeover Day which gives children, including those Looked After, the opportunity to get involved with decision-making and to aspire to become future leaders for their community.

What the Members suggest for future developments....

One of the recurring themes throughout the evidence-gathering stage of the Review has been the need to provide greater aspiration for the Borough's Looked After Children. In addition to the comments received from the young people, as highlighted above, other comments were received from a variety of sources:

"It is important to give them positives and to give them confidence". Foster Carer

"There needs to be greater aspiration among partners for these children". Social Care Professional

"The numbers going to university are increasing but are still relatively small. It is an issue that is discussed at the Children in Care Council in order to spur on other young people. However, there are still young people who believe that they cannot go to university because they are in care". Social Care Manager

"In some cases, although there is good care provided by the foster carer, some carers do not have aspirations for education". Teacher

Whilst the Task & Finish Group Members were told of many examples of aspirational support provided to the children in care, challenges clearly remain. A teacher at one school described the opportunities for some Looked After Children to undertake a visit to Liverpool John Moores University in order to raise aspirations. At an individual level, there were very positive examples of foster carers encouraging young people to succeed.

In October 2012, the Department for Education issued the Charter for Care leavers. In particular, the Charter focuses upon aspiration in the following statement:

To believe in you

☐ We will value your strengths, gifts and talents and encourage your aspirations. We will hold a belief in your potential and a vision for your future even if you have lost sight of these yourself. We will help you push aside limiting barriers and encourage and support you to pursue your goals in whatever ways we can. We will believe in you, celebrate you and affirm you.

Wirral Council has responded by agreeing to sign up to the principles of the Charter. The delivery of these principles into a practical Action Plan remains a challenge for the Council as is the measurement of the future impact of the Charter. However, the Panel Members stress that, in particular, greater aspiration for the Borough's Looked After Children should be embedded within the practices of the Council and its partners. As well as ensuring that children in care are kept safe, there should also be a goal to inspire those children, especially those in long-term care.

Recommendation 1 – Aspiration for Wirral's Looked After Children

As part of its role as a Corporate Parent, Wirral Council will place aspiration for the Borough's Looked After Children at the heart of its decision-making processes. The Council will work with all relevant partners to encourage them to adopt the same principle.

6.2 The impact of foster carers

What the young people said....

- Some young people experienced very strong support from their foster carers but this was not universal.
- “My foster carer spoilt me rotten”.
- Some care leavers were still with their foster carer post-18. Others were able to stay only if they paid weekly lodgings.
- Priority and additional resources being given to foster carers’ own children were seen as unfair. “Foster carers treat us far from their own”.
- “The foster carer used to lock the kitchen door at night”
- Attendance of foster carers at training sessions could be improved. This was particularly noted for connected carers.

What the Members welcomed....

- There were very clear demonstrations of appreciation towards their Foster Carers shown by some of the children in care.
- The numbers of foster carers attending training sessions has improved, although it is recognised that further work remains to be done.

What the Members suggest for future developments....

Training for foster carers

Training for foster carers is delivered by a number of different providers. Each foster carer is expected to complete ‘core’ training as a part of their registration. Currently, all registered foster carers receive a ‘skills’ based fee, which is separate from the fostering allowance.

Although the numbers of foster carers attending training sessions has improved it was reported that there is a significant shortfall in attendance. This is most pronounced among connected or kinship carers (extended family members) among whom there is a particular reluctance to participate in formal training sessions as the child is viewed as part of the family. In the period between July 2012 and July 2013, of the total of 536 foster carers, only 154 (approximately 29%) had attended formal training sessions. However, of the 154, many had attended a number of different sessions. Therefore, it is clear that there is good engagement in the training process from that minority of carers.

An option for the future could be to change the policy so that fees will continue to be paid only if minimum training requirements are met on an annual basis. At the same time, there is also a strong case to provide further encouragement for carers to attend sessions in other ways. This may involve holding sessions at different times of the day, at different venues, offering childcare facilities, ensuring sessions are always of high quality, offering the availability of peer mentors and so on. It is important that the Council reinforces the importance of training to all foster carers.

Recommendation 2 – Incentivising Attendance at Training Sessions for Foster Carers

In order to ensure the continuous professional development of foster carers, consideration should be given to amending the policy so that fees for foster carers will continue to be paid only if minimum training requirements are met on an annual basis. A revised training strategy and coordinated programme should be put in place to support this proposal.

Preparation for Independence

Some of the young people reported their uncertainty regarding life skills, such as budgeting, cookery skills and so on. Further comments from young people are documented later in Section 6.4 (Post-16 Support) particularly with regard to money management and budgeting. Although the provision of life skills training is available from providers such as the Youth Offending Service, additional support would be beneficial. Foster carers have an opportunity to help prepare young people for greater independence. As an example, one care leaver has reported that the strangest experience was being in a room on their own for the evening, as in a busy foster home you were rarely alone. Such experiences could be prepared for in advance. The Members suggest that carers are in an ideal position to provide additional support to promote and develop independent living skills in those young people approaching the time to leave care.

There was also evidence that increased engagement with the Employability Team may enable foster carers to become more aware of employment and training opportunities that may be available to Looked After Children. Additional support and advice from foster carers could help young people to evaluate options for training and employment. A regular network, parents' evenings and newsletters for foster carers would provide the basic information for the carers to undertake that role more fully.

Recommendation 3 – Promotion by Foster Carers of Independent Living Skills and Employment / Training Opportunities

Greater emphasis should be placed on assisting foster carers to promote independent living skills to Looked After Children who are approaching the time of leaving care. Foster carers should also be encouraged to become more aware of the employment and training opportunities available to young people and provide appropriate support.

Enabling Foster Carers to Support Each Other

As outlined above, there is obviously a major role for a formal training programme in order to enhance the skills of foster carers. However, there was also evidence that some foster carers may benefit from greater empowerment in the form of learning from other carers. It has been proposed greater networking and the development on a local online forum, available only to foster carers in Wirral, could help to provide additional support to carers. One foster carer explained:

"Fostering can be lonely and the Forum will enable foster carers to swap ideas. Although there is supervision available from the social worker every six weeks it would be very helpful, in addition, to talk to other foster carers".

Although the Fostering Network provides an online forum, it is understood that, as the annual fee is £86, many foster carers do not subscribe. Members, therefore, support the principle of developing a localised online Forum which has already been proposed by a group of foster carers in Wirral. It is anticipated that company sponsorship could offset the costs of the Forum.

Recommendation 4 – Enabling Foster Carers to Support Each Other

Further consideration should be given to ways in which foster carers can be empowered to support each other, either through face-to-face discussions or the greater use of the online environment, such as the development of an online Forum.

Looked After Children with Special Needs

A significant number of the children placed into care have special needs or behavioural issues.

Referring to foster carers, one witness who works with children with such requirements explained:

"If they understood the trigger points and the special needs of the young people it would make my job so much easier".

The Members heard from a number of professionals who argued that foster carers and social workers should have special training if the child in care has designated special needs. As a consequence, the Members have concluded that there should be greater training and monitoring for foster carers who care for children with certain medical and behavioural needs. A programme should be put in place to identify those carers who have specific skills and enable further training to those carers who require enhanced skills. In terms of placements, it is clearly advantageous if the individual needs of the child can be best supported by foster carers who have particular skills.

Recommendation 5 – Care Placements for Looked After Children with Special Educational or Behavioural Needs

When care placements are being considered, it is important that potential carers have the appropriate skills to support children with special needs or behavioural issues. Suitable training and support should be made available to relevant carers and placements should be made with those carers who have the specific skills.

6.3 The Social Care process

What the young people said....

- Some difficulties in contacting social workers were experienced.
- Contact with all social workers was not a positive and supportive experience.
- “The level of support varies depending on the social worker”.
- “There needs to be better social worker contact. The social workers always have other things to do”.
- “If a young person is not rebellious they are not seen as a priority. There needs to be a way of contacting the social workers and being treated as a priority”.
- Social workers have been changed too often.
- “There are so many people in and out of your life”.
- “Over time, we have contact with so many social workers”. One care leaver had been in care for approximately ten years. During that time she has had 6 or 7 social workers.
- Being cared for out-of-borough resulted in one young person feeling isolated.
- Foster care is definitely not the solution for all children in care. Residential Care has been far more suitable for some young people.
- There was some positive feedback regarding the continuous relationship provided by the Independent Reviewing Officers (IRO).
- Confidentiality was a big issue for some of the young people. “Lots of stories about why you are in care are made up”.
- “It would be good if Looked After Children got a travel card”
- The questionnaire showed that only some of the young people do discuss their future plans with social workers and foster carers.
- There was some negative feedback regarding young people being told what they are entitled to, including financial support.
- “The Inclusion Service is brilliant”
- The Children in Care Council is a very positive experience for those who participate. “It shows that the professionals are now listening to the young people”.

What the Members welcomed....

- There is a high level of engagement with the Children in Care Council.
- The successful implementation of the ‘Right Side of Care’ website for the use of Wirral’s children in care.
- The Inclusion Team is able to build strong relationships with young people over a long period of time.
- In recent years, the Council has been able to retain more children in stable placements.
- There is recognition of the strong challenge that is provided by the Independent Reviewing Officers (IROs) in Wirral.
- Staffing levels among the Independent Reviewing Officers has been increased in order to further support the challenge which they are able to provide.
- The successful Residential Providers Forum has become a template for other Local Authorities.
- Although there needs to be more joined up thinking between health, education and social care, it is anticipated that the new organisational structure for Special Educational Needs will assist in this process.

What the Members suggest for future developments....

Stability of Social Worker Contact

During the Review, there were a significant number of comments related to the importance of continuity of social worker contact for the children in care. The availability of social worker time to individuals when required was equally highlighted. One young person summarised the comments of several others when he told the Members that:

“There are so many people in and out of your life”.

A professional reinforced the point by stating:

“Some Looked After Children have a large turnover of social workers. As a result, some of those children see themselves as inconvenient baggage”.

And another added:

“For many Looked After Children, their stories are fragmented with different schools and different social workers”

Members have been informed of the steps that are being taken by the Strategic Directorate to hopefully address the high level of turnover in some teams, including the enhancement of the role, improved training opportunities, reduced manager to social worker ratios as well as remuneration. However, in addition, the organisational structure can contribute to the stability of care for a child. For example, if there is a separate assessment unit from the care management team, then due to the transfer to the new team, the child will be subject to a change of social worker. Therefore, the Members request that further consideration be given to organisational changes that could be made with the aim of keeping transitions for the child to a minimum.

Recommendation 6 – Organisational Structure and Stability of Social Worker Contact

Consideration should be given to whether the organisation of Social Care teams can contribute towards greater stability of care for a child with regard to social worker contact so that transitions from one team to another are kept to a minimum. It is hoped that the current re-modeling and realignment of the social care workforce will contribute towards this aim.

Financial Entitlements

The Parliamentary Under Secretary of State for Children and Families wrote to all Local Authorities in October 2012 requesting that Councils consider increasing the care leavers' grant to at least £2000 and review the figure annually with the Children in Care Council. At that time, the rate in Wirral was £1500 and approval is now being sought to raise it to £2000. The Members support this approach.

Comments emerged during the Review from the young people and from some professionals to suggest that there is a lack of clarity regarding the financial entitlements for children in care and care leavers. It is acknowledged that work is taking place among Local Authorities in the North West Region to review guidance to financial support and entitlement. It is understood that a local guide will be produced based on the regional model. Again, this approach is welcomed. However, it is suggested that further work is required to ensure that consistent information is available and is actually received by the young people. It is also interesting to note that the previous Scrutiny Review, entitled 'Scrutiny of the Outcomes for Children in Foster Care, produced in 2008, included a recommendation to "Ensure that looked-after children are aware of their financial entitlement"'.

Recommendation 7 – Financial Entitlements for Looked After Children

Advice to Looked After Children regarding financial entitlements should be available, consistent and timely. The North West Regional initiative on financial support and entitlements is welcomed.

Communication with Looked After Children

Linked to the previous recommendation is a more general point on communication to the children in care and to care leavers. It was suggested that there should be a greater emphasis placed on monitoring and evaluating the information that Looked After Children are actually receiving. Much of the information to carers and young people is currently delivered by email, telephone and written communication. It is perhaps timely to consider the use of Apps and texts as well as the Internet, in order to consolidate information flow.

Recommendation 8 – Communication with Looked After Children

In order to improve the provision of information to the Borough's Looked After Children, Wirral Council is encouraged to further develop the 'Right Side of Care' website alongside the introduction of new forms of communication such as Apps and texts.

6.4 Post-16 Support

What the young people said....

- Those who had already left care recorded that they had very little money at that time.
- Care leavers should be better prepared, for example, in budgeting.
- There was some very positive feedback regarding the Leaving Care Team. “The Leaving Care worker was brilliant”; “The social worker from the Pathways Team has been great”.
- When leaving care, one young person felt isolated and without any emotional support. “There was no help with money or support”
- “It is silly, that at 18 years old, they assume that you are OK to be on your own”.
- There is a perception of a “cliff-edge” at 18 years old for some young people. “We have to move out at 18 even if you’re not ready. We’re still kids”.
- “In a normal family you do not get told to go when you are 18”.
- More support should be available post-18. There were requests for more financial support to be available until the age of 21.
- “Not having a family to turn to is very hard”.
- Some young people welcomed the First Home Grant (also known as care leavers’ grant).
- “There should be a benefit for care leavers”.
- “We need someone to listen and to come to your flat if necessary”.
- “I am unusual because I want to be on my own. However, there is still a need for someone to be available if you need them”.

What the Members welcomed....

- There was positive feedback towards the work of the Pathways Team, not only from some young people, but from Foster Carers too.
- There was evidence of strong partnership working between different agencies. This was apparent in the work taking place between the Pathways Team and the Social Landlords and also with the Youth Offending Service.
- The Pathways Team has worked alongside Job Centre Plus to develop the Care Leaver’s protocol, which aims to support care leavers into work.
- Positive outcomes from the Independent Visitor Service were reported.

What the Members suggest for future developments....

Timing of Transfer to the Pathways Team

In October 2012, the Department of Education issued the Care leavers in England Data Pack alongside the Charter for Care leavers. This documentation states that, nationally, too many young people are leaving care at age 16, particularly from children’s homes. Although many go home, 26% move to independent living. The government expects all Local Authorities to support and prepare young people for adulthood in a measured and flexible way so that young people move to independence when they are ready.

A number of contributors expressed concern regarding the timing of the transition of the transfer of Looked After Children to the Pathways Team in preparation for leaving care. One professional who works closely with care leavers explained:

“The age of 16 is a time of massive uncertainty for all children regarding exams, etc.. For Looked After Children, we add to that by them leaving care. The timing of transition is not that flexible”.

The case was made strongly that there was a need for additional support for Looked After Children through the period around 16/17 years old when they are doing GCSEs, looking for further education, training or employment and, for many, leaving foster care to become more independent. A huge amount of change is taking place simultaneously. In fact, some of the foster carers with whom the Members met suggested whether earlier contact with the Pathways Team may help. Members were also informed that as the Pathways Team get involved with a Looked After Child, at their 16th birthday, for some children, depending on their date of birth, that is not early enough to provide support to the young person in making their post-16 applications.

Members have, therefore, concluded that it would be beneficial for there to be greater flexibility around the timing of transition to the Pathways Team, based on each young person's individual needs.

Recommendation 9 – Transfer to the Pathways Team

Recognising the educational importance of year 11, an assessment should be carried out regarding the merits of providing a gradual transition to the Pathways Team focused on both the school year and the needs of the young person rather than on the 16th birthday of the care leaver.

Post-18 Support

The care leavers in England Data Pack released by the Department of Education (in October 2012) stresses the importance of ensuring that the young person has a network of support so that they do not feel alone and experience loneliness. Comments from both young people preparing to leave care and from others who have been through the process (see 'What the Young People said....' above) suggest that more could be done in this regard. Indeed the point was made that, once a child in care is 16 years old, the system assumes that planning starts for them to leave care. Members warmly welcome the proposals to support payments based on the Staying Put principles that are now being developed for Wirral. This should enable those young people who wish to stay with their foster parents post-18 to do so. However, concerns remain among professionals:

"There is a need to ensure that back-up is available to Looked After Children if "they have had a bad day" to prevent them giving up on opportunities".

"There are real concerns about what will happen to some of the young people when they leave school and have less day-to-day support. What will stop them going off the rails?"

Members were informed that those children in care who are under 18 years of age are unable to claim benefits. Therefore, they tend to maintain contact with the Pathway Team in order to maintain financial support. However, once they reach 18, "they have to live in the adult world" and contact is often lost.

Recommendation 10 – Post-18 Support

The reduction of support for Looked After Children at 18 years old represents, to some care leavers, "a cliff-edge". Whilst the planned introduction of a 'Staying Put' policy in Wirral is warmly welcomed and although personal advisers are available post-18, the Strategic Director for Families & Wellbeing is asked to consider options for the ability of young people to access more one-to-one support and opportunities for "drop in" facilities for Care leavers.

Independent Visitor Service

The Independent Visitor Service is a statutory service providing volunteers who befriend, support, advise and guide children or young people (aged 6-21) who are in the care of the Local Authority and who have little, irregular, poor quality or no contact with parents or where an appointment is seen to

be in the child's best interests. The Service is independent of professionals involved in the care of the young people and anything discussed during the visits remains confidential subject to safeguarding practices. Referrals can be made from carers, social workers, Independent Reviewing Officers, other professionals and from the young people themselves. Referrals are made usually because the young person is isolated or they are experiencing a number of changes in their lives and an Independent Visitor is someone who can provide consistent support over a long term basis. The service in Wirral is currently provided by Wired and is supporting 20 young people. The youngest currently supported is 11; the oldest is 20. Young people are in a variety of settings such as foster placements or residential care and can be in Wirral or out of Borough.

The service is promoted through a variety of means such as the distribution of information leaflets, Wired's website and attending foster carer forums. However, particularly given the evidence presented in Section 6.4 (Post-16 Support) it is suggested that the Independent Visitor Service may be able to play a greater role in reducing some of the concerns expressed by the young people at the time of leaving care.

Recommendation 11 – Independent Visitor Service

The profile of the Independent Visitor Service should be raised in order to provide additional support for young people and to present opportunities for greater continuity in support.

Ownership of the Pathway Plan

During meetings, Members heard that there was a perception that for a significant number of Looked After Children, the Pathway Plan was "targeted at them rather than with them". The Department of Education stresses that there should be sufficient focus on the young person's Pathway Plan to ensure it clearly maps out the needs and ambitions of the young person. Based on the evidence available to the Members, it is suggested that further work is required in this area.

Recommendation 12 – Ownership of the Pathway Plan

In order to remove the sentiment held by some young people that the Pathway Plan is targeted at them rather than with them, more attention is needed to ensure that the young person 'owns' the Pathway Plan, with enough support being provided by the social worker to enable that to happen. It is suggested that development work is undertaken with the Pathway Team to enable this transformation.

6.5 Education

What the young people said....

- Some young people experienced strong support from their school but this was not universal.
- There was a very mixed response regarding the relationship with the Designated Teacher. Some young people had a supportive relationship whereas some young people did not know who their Designated Teacher was and others had a poor relationship.
- “Additional money goes to the school but you don’t see it”.
- Some young people received support from the school in the form of equipment such as laptops.
- There was evidence from the questionnaire that young people do feel encouraged to do well at school by their carers, although this was not universal.
- Attendance by some foster carers at Parents’ Evenings was limited.
- Some care leavers felt that they were not encouraged to succeed at school as they would not be able to cope with the academic stream. For example, “they picked my career for me at that age”.
- Being treated equally in school and not being stigmatised would help.
- “A Looked After Child in school is seen as problem child.”
- There was evidence of some bullying related to young people being in care.
- Referring to the instability in her life, one young person commented “How can they expect you to be stable at school when all that is going on?” followed by “Why do they want to move you when you are expecting exams?”

What the Members welcomed....

- The ethos and the extensive support provided towards Looked After Children at both the Observatory and Woodchurch High School was hugely impressive. The staff at the school clearly know the children very well, trying to understand individual needs and making reasonable adjustments. The schools act as very strong advocates for their children in care.
- The re-alignment of the Looked After Children Education Service (LACES) has led to the monitoring of data on a pupil by pupil basis. This has enabled detailed conversations with schools which, hopefully, will facilitate the effective targeting of resources and lead to improved attainment.
- The new working methodology of the LACES Team will hopefully encourage long-term planning for individual Looked After Children in schools.
- There were reports that Independent Reviewing Officers are now regularly asking how the Pupil Premium is being spent.
- There is some evidence that the additional support, including mentoring, is leading to improved results for Looked After Children at GCSE (Key Stage 4). This is demonstrated by the table below. In 2012, 4 LAC (Year 11) achieved 5 A*-C (including English and Maths) out of a cohort of 33, that is 12%. The target for 2013 is to increase this performance to 20%. However, attainment levels remain well below the average for non-Looked After Children.

The attainment of Looked After Children achieving 5+ GCSE A*-C, including English and Maths is demonstrated by PI 101:

PI 101	Wirral LAC 2010	Wirral LAC 2011	Wirral LAC 2012	National 2010	National 2011
5+ A*-C including English and Maths	8	9	12	12	13
5+ A*-C	29	26	42	26	31

Source: 'Review of Attainment & Progress at the End of Key Stage 4', Children and Young People's Overview and Scrutiny Committee 21st January 2013

As a comparator, the equivalent data for all Children is demonstrated by PI 75:

PI 75	Wirral 2010	Wirral 2011	Wirral 2012	National 2010	National 2011	National 2012
5+ A*-C including English and Maths	58.7	64.1	64.8	53.5	58.9	58.3

Source: 'Review of Attainment & Progress at the End of Key Stage 4', Children and Young People's Overview and Scrutiny Committee 21st January 2013

What the Members suggest for future developments....

Relationships between Schools and Social Care

It was clear during the course of the Review that many of the social care and educational professionals have a great desire to meet the needs of the children in care. However, evidence arose that partnership working was not always strong and that improved mutual understanding of the roles of teachers and social workers would be beneficial. The Members heard observations that there needs to be a closer working relationship between schools and social workers in the interests of the children in care. There were requests for faster response times to queries and a better way of contacting social workers. It is interesting to note that the Scrutiny Review of Literacy Levels at Key Stage 2, which reported in January 2010 found similar evidence. That report concluded:

"With respect to the care of vulnerable children, there was evidence of some frustration regarding the relationship between schools and the Children's Social Services Department of Wirral Borough Council. This frustration could be heard in the words of one head teacher, who commented that "There is a desire for people from different departments (education, social care and health) to work together but there are still barriers. Sometimes people can be reluctant to open out and work together. There are lots of little islands"".

The Literacy Scrutiny Review included the following two recommendations:

"Greater emphasis should be given to the provision of a consistent link between schools and Children's Social Care Services. A Social Worker should be allocated to either a Children's Centre or a School Cluster Group, wherever is most appropriate".

"The Council is encouraged to promote more multi-agency working, specifically by improving protocols for the sharing of information between health, social care and education professionals. This should apply particularly to 'hard to reach' families".

Therefore, in order to strengthen the relationship between schools and social workers, the Members recommend that lines of communication are strengthened, commencing with regular meetings between Designated Teachers and District Managers.

Recommendation 13 – The Relationship between Schools and Social Workers

More emphasis should be placed on developing stronger working relationships between schools and social workers, enabling better lines of communication. In particular, regular meetings between Designated Teachers and District Managers would provide a basis for progress.

The Personal Education Plan (PEP)

In order to enhance the educational outcomes of Looked After Children, a Personal Education Plan (PEP) should be prepared for each child in care. The PEP is a record of what needs to happen for Looked After Children to enable them to fulfil their potential and reflects any existing education plans, such as a statement of special educational needs. The PEP is the joint responsibility of the Local Authority and the school, although the process should be led by the child's social worker.

The Members heard a number of suggestions from professionals that the completion and value placed upon the PEP needs to be improved, with greater emphasis on ensuring that the PEP has identified where additional support is required and that the support is actually provided. It was also suggested that the process requires greater consistency. Although positive work is taking place to further develop the plans in consultation with foster carers and social care teams, more progress is needed. One Manager concluded that:

“Whilst the social worker’s major focus is on the safety of the child, there are challenges to ensure that the PEP is not seen as a low priority”.

In terms of the process, there was a proposition that the PEP process works better if there is continuity in attendance at meetings and that the process will only be successful if fully supported by social work managers, social workers and Designated Teachers. It was also emphasised that the success of the PEP in schools can rely on the relationship between the Designated Teacher and the class teachers.

Recommendation 14 – Raising the Profile of the Personal Education Plan (PEP)

A greater emphasis should be placed on raising the profile of the Personal Education Plan (PEP) and ensuring that the value of the plan is better understood by all those responsible for the welfare of a young person.

Consistency of Reviews for Looked After Children

An LAC Review is held a minimum of every six months. In Wirral, the PEP Review is a separate process, although many of the same people are involved. It is understood that in some Local Authorities, for example, Bristol City Council and Norfolk County Council the PEP Review takes place in conjunction with the LAC Review. The purpose is to ensure that these two strands of the child’s care plan are in alignment.

This was also a recommendation of the 2008 Scrutiny Review, ‘Scrutiny of the Outcomes for Children in Foster Care’:

“Consideration should be given to combining, to a greater or lesser extent, joint care meetings – LAC Reviews and PEP meetings – in order to make more effective use of professional’s time”.

However, the Officer response reported in the Fostering Service Progress Report for the Children and Young People Overview and Scrutiny Committee, 21st January 2010, is also noted:

“Wherever possible, LAC Reviews and PEP meetings are combined. Social workers and Independent Reviewing Officers do consider whether this is possible when LAC reviews are booked. It does however remain the case that combined reviews are not always an option. For example, statutory timescales cannot be changed to enable a combined review. In addition, some LAC Reviews are called to consider specific issues other than education. It would not be appropriate to combine such a review with a PEP meeting”.

Recommendation 15 – Consistency of Reviews for Looked After Children

Consideration should be given to holding the PEP Review and the LAC Review at the same time wherever possible. The Task & Finish Group welcomes the work underway to improve the PEP in line with best practice in other authorities and recommends ways are found to enhance sharing of the data required between school and social worker.

Engagement of Foster Carers in the education of children in care

The previous Scrutiny Review, referred to earlier, which investigated Literacy Levels at Key Stage 2 again commented upon importance of education and, in particular, literacy skills for children in care. At that time, the Panel Members sought to encourage the Authority to raise the profile of literacy specifically for Looked After Children in order to enhance their life chances. It was suggested that foster parents should be given greater support specifically to help them assist their fostered children in improving their literacy skills. The Literacy Review recommended:

“Training courses for Foster Carers and staff in Residential Homes should include a module on literacy and raising standards”.

In addition, the ‘Scrutiny of the Outcomes for Children in Foster Care’ Report (2008) included a recommendation:

“There should be strong encouragement for foster carers to attend schools’ Parents evenings and PEP meetings and provide the means for doing so through additional childcare arrangements. Carers should have regular contact with the Designated Teacher”.

During the current Scrutiny Review, concerns were again raised among professionals regarding the role of foster carers in emphasising the importance of education. There were calls for some foster carers to become more aspirational towards education. Evidence emerged that attendance at school parents’ evenings by foster carers was partial. One way in which greater emphasis could be placed on education is by providing clarity regarding the responsibility for attendance at parents’ evenings, whether it be the foster carer or the social worker. It was also suggested that more could be done to give foster carers the confidence to go into schools and ask questions.

Recommendation 16 - Attendance at Parents’ Evenings

The expected arrangements for attendance at Parents’ Evenings ought to be specified in the Personal Education Plan (PEP).

Personal Education Allowance

Funding for Looked After Children is available to schools via a number of streams:

- Pupil Premium - £900 per Looked After Child per year is payable to the school (2013/14 rate).
- “First 500” – The Wirral School Forum has agreed that an addition £500 per Looked After Child is payable to the school for each Wirral child in care (although not Looked After Children from other Local Authorities).
- Personal Educational Allowance – Schools can apply for specific amounts of funding to support individual Looked After Children for activities such as additional tuition, educational equipment and educational trips. This fund is administered by the Social Care Branch.

The Members suggest that further emphasis is given, by working effectively with the schools, to ensure that this additional funding is used as effectively as possible to improve the educational outcomes for the Borough’s Looked After Children.

Recommendation 17 – Personal Education Allowance

Alongside Pupil Premium, the Personal Education Allowance (PEA) represents a valuable resource to help Looked After Children achieve the educational results of their peers. The LACES team is encouraged to both analyse the effectiveness of the PEA funding and seek to ensure the funding is accessed by all of the Looked After Children who would potentially benefit.

6.6 16+ Employability

What the young people said....

- In several cases, college has been very supportive.
- Several care leavers recognised the importance of apprenticeships as they provide experience. "Apprenticeships set you up for a proper job."
- There were several examples of young people struggling to settle into a job.

What the Members welcomed....

- Within the Employability Team, it is a big asset to have a former Looked After Child acting as a peer mentor. "The issue is not about throwing money at it. It's about getting the right people to work with the children". The use of peer mentors is now being replicated by other Local Authorities.
- The percentage of Looked After Children at the age of 19 who are in education, employment or training (Performance Indicator NI148) continues to improve. The last three years has seen an increase from 36% (2010/11) to 52% (2011/12) to 61% for NI148 in Wirral for 2012/13.
- The Inclusion Service aims to create work experience for Looked After Children.
- The Brathay Project, and subsequently the use of Oaklands as the partner organisation in delivering the NEET Participation Programme. This programme received excellent feedback and was recognised as being superb for building confidence in Looked After Children.
- The work that is taking place to achieve the FromCare2Work Kitemark.

What the Members suggest for future developments....

The Employability Team is responsible for providing support to both Looked After Children who are still in education post-16 in addition to those who are NEET or on the edge of NEET. Comparative information is available in the following table regarding the activities of 19 year olds.

	Cohort of 49 young people who were 19 in Wirral as of November 2012	Activities of 19 year old care leavers in 2011 (England)
Percentage in education, employment or training	61%	65%
Percentage not in education, employment or training (NEET)	31%	30%
Percentage not in education, employment or training (NEET) because of disability or illness	8%	5%

Source: Care leavers in England Data Pack released by the Department of Education (Oct 2012 and 2012 Care leaver in Education, Employment and Training (Wirral) Briefing paper

It is also interesting to note that the Care leavers in England Data Pack reports that young people in education at age 19 are more likely to have had stable care periods than those in other activities. 80% of the young care leavers in higher or other types of education had a single period of care compared with 72% of those in training or employment and 69% of those who were NEET.

The Local Authority has set a target of 65% of care leavers aged 16–19 being in employment, education or training in 2012 / 2013. As at April 2013, the level was 62%, with a caseload of 105 Care leavers in the 16–19 age group. A challenge for the future is the extension of the duty to ensure that support is also in place for 20 and 21 year olds. On current figures, this will increase the caseload to 179. In order to maintain the level of service, there is a proposal for additional capacity to be provided by peers who have been through the care system in order for the team to cope with the expected additional demand.

Recommendation 18 – Increasing the Capacity of the Employability Team

As the statutory duty to provide support to 20 and 21 year old Care leavers is introduced, the proposal to increase the capacity of the Employability Team with a peer mentor and an apprentice is fully supported.

Opportunities for Work Experience

The importance of building self-confidence in Looked After Children was heard repeatedly throughout the Review. Members were informed that, for some children in care, there is a need to improve self-esteem and confidence levels, for example, to help with interview skills. This can be a significant problem at the age of transition (16–17 years old) when the young person is moving to semi-independence; a period which can be particularly difficult when there is no parental input.

One way of achieving increased confidence levels is to provide relevant experiences in order to prepare a young person for further training and eventually for work. One foster parent commented:

“Work experience is very important for Looked After Children as a confidence builder”

It was noted that there is an offer of a one week’s placement to Looked After Children to work with the Inclusion Team based at Moreton Family Centre. However, it appears that this process is not replicated across other parts of the Council. It was suggested that, as the Corporate Parent for these young people, the Council could provide greater opportunities for internships and job experience across all Departments. Furthermore, it was also suggested that procurement arrangements could be used to encourage companies to offer work experience, internships and apprenticeships to care leavers.

Recommendation 19 – Opportunities for Work Experience

Wirral Council, as a Corporate Parent, is encouraged to identify and promote opportunities for internships and work experience for Looked After Children and Care leavers within the Council. Consideration should also be given to the Council’s procurement arrangements in order to encourage similar opportunities in other companies.

Apprenticeship Scheme

The past success of the Wirral Apprentice scheme has been widely recognised. Members were informed that the previous scheme, in order to support the needs of the Borough’s Looked After Children, was able to ensure ring-fenced interviews for care leavers as part of the Council’s Corporate Parenting responsibilities. As the Apprentice scheme is now being offered on a Liverpool City Region basis, Members welcome the news that the principle of ring-fencing interview opportunities for Looked After Children has been retained. The report, Wirral Apprentice Programme, supporting a delegated decision made by the Portfolio Holder for Economy and Regeneration on 29th July 2013, includes the following statement:

“To open up apprenticeship places for care leavers a limited number of £500 premium payments will be available to businesses recruiting via the Wirral Apprentice programme. The purpose of the premium is to enable officers to incentivise employers and secure ring-fence interviews for care leavers”.

The Financial Planning Assumptions in the report show that, in the current financial year, it is assumed that four Looked After Children will benefit from this premium payment. This approach is warmly welcomed by the Members undertaking this Scrutiny Review.

Higher Education

It is recognised that the Employability programme, delivered by the Looked After Children Employability Team, arranges for the provision of academic mentoring support to those still in full-time education. As an example, Liverpool John Moores University provides mentors from among the undergraduates, for example, to improve exam techniques. University visits are also arranged to show children in care that university is within their range. Nevertheless, in 2012, three Looked After Children progressed to higher education. In September 2013, it is hoped that six former children in care will go on to higher education with a further four identified as potential university entrants in September 2014, with there being potential for the latter figure to be higher. As a comparator, the Care leavers in England Data Pack released by the Department of Education (in October 2012) reported the activities of 19 year old care leavers in 2011. Nationally, 7% were reported to be in higher education. The report also noted that young people who were in foster placements immediately before leaving care are the most likely to be in higher education aged 19.

It is recognised by the Members that a lot of work is taking place to raise aspirations among this cohort. Nevertheless, as Corporate Parents, it is reasonable to aim to raise aspirations even further. It is noted that Local Authorities have a duty to pay a higher education bursary of £2000 to any care leaver who started a course after September 2008.

Recommendation 20 – Higher Education

Greater emphasis should be placed on inspiring more Care leavers, for whom it is the appropriate route, to attend Higher Education. Consideration should be given to the opportunities that there may be to provide Care leavers with appropriate experiences early in the sixth form (or before).

Employment Opportunities For All

The Department for Education has been funding the FromCare2Work Programme run by the National Care Advisory Service which provides care leavers with employment opportunities. The Department is encouraging all Local Authorities to actively work with the programme. It is encouraging to note that Wirral Council is actively engaged in working towards achieving the From Care2Work Kitemark. Although Members in the previous recommendation have stressed the importance of aspiration towards higher education, they also heard evidence of the importance to support the aspirations of all children in care, whether that be on an academic or vocational basis.

Recommendation 21 – Employment Opportunities for All

The principle of seeking the right opportunities for individual Care leavers is supported, with an equal emphasis being placed on vocational avenues as well as academic learning.

6.7 Housing, Health and Youth Support

What the young people said....

- The Council should take more care about where they let young people move to. For example: “There was no central heating or double glazing. It was very cold”.
- Semi-supervised living is a good way to prepare for leaving care.
- There were low expectations about finding “somewhere nice to live in the future”.
- In some cases, the social worker provided little support towards care leavers finding accommodation.

What the Members welcomed....

Housing

- The floating support model enables care leavers to have some independence but with some support being available.
- The Supporting People Programme provides support to vulnerable young people. Currently there are 289 units of supported accommodation for young people, some of whom will be care leavers.
- Wirral Supported lodgings, provided by Local Solutions, is recognised as a cost-effective way of providing supported accommodation to those moving towards independent living.
- The establishment of the Homelessness Gateway has been a very positive development. Since August 2012, the Response team has been the lead agency on the Homelessness Gateway for young people aged 16 /17yrs. The Gateway ensures that young people are given the support they need to prevent homelessness and also encourages young people to stay with their families if possible and safe to do so.

Health

- There were only three definite matches of recorded pregnancies among Looked After Children in Wirral between 2007 and 2012. No national data of the incidence of teenage pregnancy among Looked After Children is available to be used as a comparator.
- The Healthier Homes Programme resulted in all residential homes in Wirral becoming accredited. Other Local Authorities are now implementing similar programmes using the Wirral scheme as a model.
- The successful Health Challenge Champions Programme has been devised to support young people on the edge of care.
- Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services (CAMHS) have recently produced an assessment of gaps in training for foster carers. This has resulted in the production of a training pack aimed specifically at foster parents.
- There is recognition of the need for more detailed screening for vulnerable children with regard to the early identification of communication issues and the promotion of emotional literacy.

Youth Support

- The impressive work of the Response Team supports some of the most vulnerable young people in the Borough, which includes some Looked After Children.
- Preventative services, such as those provided by the Response Team, are vital for vulnerable young people.
- The successful introduction of a protocol to prevent Looked After Children obtaining a criminal record has, since 2008, led to the reduction in the numbers of Looked After Children offending.

What the Members suggest for future developments....

Screening for Vulnerable Children

It has been recognised, over the years, how quickly young children fall behind in school, for example, when they miss out on early years provision. Therefore, without adequate early years provision the child is behind when they start school and they tend to stay behind. Due to their background circumstances, there is a greater risk of Looked After Children not succeeding at school. In 2012/13, an application was made for health funding to employ a Speech & Language Therapist to work with three geographical clusters of Looked After Children aged between 4 years and 7 years in Wirral. The views of foster carers were sought and an assessment of gaps in training for foster carers was produced. Of 15 children in one cluster, three of the children had not previously been identified by the normal screening. The outcome was recognition of the need for more detailed screening for vulnerable children. As a consequence, a training pack for foster carers has been developed.

Recommendation 22 – Screening for Vulnerable Children

Consideration ought to be given to ways in which screening can be improved to ensure that all vulnerable children, including Looked After Children, are identified and receive appropriate interventions to make sure that children are more able to communicate and to promote emotional literacy.

A Guarantor for Private Landlords

It was reported during the Review that, initially, care leavers are likely to move to some form of supported accommodation. There is a limited supply of single room accommodation in Wirral. Therefore, it can be difficult for clients to move on from supported accommodation. As a result, some care leavers will approach the private sector for accommodation requirements. However, Members were informed that as most private landlords require a guarantor and the Local Authority is not able to act as a guarantor, care leavers are disadvantaged. It is suggested that the extent of this problem may be an issue worthy of further investigation on which the Corporate Parenting Group may be well placed to lead.

Recommendation 23 – Supporting Care leavers in obtaining tenancies

Models of good practice from elsewhere should be explored in order to further support care leavers in obtaining tenancies.

Prospects for Sharing Accommodation

It was suggested during the Review that, in order to enhance the opportunities for care leavers to find suitable housing, sharing accommodation with fellow care leavers may be an appropriate option. In order to facilitate this alternative, it may be feasible to extend the 'Right Side of Care' website to provide a forum for placing online advertisements.

Recommendation 24 – Sharing Accommodation

The feasibility of using the 'Right Side of Care' website to include the facility for offering opportunities for sharing accommodation should be investigated.

Monitoring the Quality of Accommodation

Some concerns were raised by care leavers regarding the quality of accommodation that they were expected to move to. This argument was supported by one professional who argued:

“The process for housing young people who are leaving care should ensure that adequate monitoring and checking is taking place to make sure that reasonable expectations are being met”.

Members are concerned that checks should be adequate to ensure that reasonable expectations are being met.

Recommendation 25 – Monitoring of the Quality of Accommodation

The process for housing young people who are leaving care should ensure that adequate monitoring and checking is taking place with young people to make sure that reasonable expectations of accommodation are being met.

This Report was produced by the Looked After Children Scrutiny Task & Finish Group
(which reports to The Families and Wellbeing Policy & Performance Committee)

Appendix 1: Scope Document for the Looked After Children Scrutiny Review

Date: 6th December 2012 (Draft 4)

Review Title: Outcomes for Looked After Children

Scrutiny Panel Chair: Cllr Wendy Clements	Contact details:
Panel members: Cllr Walter Smith Cllr Pat Williams	
Scrutiny Officer: Alan Veitch	Contact details: 0151 691 8564
Departmental Link Officer: Simon Garner	Contact details:
Other Key Officer contacts:	
1. Which of our strategic corporate objectives does this topic address? The Council's Corporate Plan 2012/13 includes the following statements: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• We will continue to work with our partners to protect children and young people from harm and improve the lives of the children and young people already in our care.• We will ensure that children in care and care leavers have appropriate support which best suits their needs, including fostering and adoption. Specific targets quoted in the Corporate Plan include: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Increase the numbers of looked after children achieving Level 4 at Key Stage 2 to 50% in English and to 50% in Maths) and those achieving 5+ GCSE A*-C (including English and Maths) to 20%• Increase the numbers of care leavers in education, employment and training to 65%	
2. What are the main issues? How well are Looked After Children prepared for adult living, with particular reference to outcomes including the following: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Educational attainment• Employment and training (as opposed to NEET)• Home / accommodation circumstances• Social / emotional development• Rate of entry to the Justice System (Note: Children, under the age of 18, in custody or on remand are deemed to be Looked After Children)• Problems relating to drugs and alcohol• Incidence of teenage pregnancy• Transition for children with disabilities Note: Reference will be made during the review to the impact of welfare reforms on care leavers.	

<p>3. The Committee's overall aim/objective in doing this work is:</p> <p>The Council has a responsibility, as corporate parents, for the Borough's Looked After Children. Data consistently shows that outcomes for Looked After Children are poorer than the national average. As an example, the percentage of Looked after Children achieving 5 A*-C GCSEs (or equivalent) at Key Stage 4 (including English and Maths) in 2012 is 12%. This equates to 4 out of 33 children in the cohort.</p> <p>This review will investigate the steps which the Council and other partners are already taking and consider further actions that may be feasible in order to improve the outcomes for Looked After Children.</p>																		
<p>4. The possible outputs/outcomes are:</p> <p>4.1 Understand the current issues for both Looked After Children and the service providers.</p> <p>4.2 Identify ways in which outcomes for Looked After Children, as listed in section 2 of this document, can be improved.</p>																		
<p>5. What specific value can scrutiny add to this topic?</p> <p>Scrutiny will give members the opportunity to assure themselves that the Council and partners are taking all possible steps to ensure that the outcomes for Looked After Children are improved. Scrutiny will enable the experience of those directly impacted by the reforms to help identify any recommendations for changes. These recommendations will be referred to Cabinet.</p>																		
<p>6. Who will the Committee be trying to influence as part of its work?</p> <p>6.1 Appropriate Cabinet members and Directors, Wirral Borough Council.</p> <p>6.2 Partners of the Council, for example, Housing partners, schools and NHS Wirral.</p>																		
<p>7. Duration of enquiry?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Scope document will be reported to the meeting of the Children & Young People Overview and Scrutiny Committee to be held on 21st January 2013. • Evidence-gathering will take place between November 2012 and February 2013. • A progress report will be presented to the meeting of the Children & Young People Overview and Scrutiny Committee to be held on 18th March 2013. 																		
<p>8. What category does the review fall into?</p> <table border="0"> <tr> <td>Policy Review</td> <td>X</td> <td><input type="checkbox"/></td> <td>Policy Development</td> <td><input type="checkbox"/></td> </tr> <tr> <td>External Partnership</td> <td></td> <td><input type="checkbox"/></td> <td>Performance Management</td> <td><input type="checkbox"/></td> </tr> <tr> <td>Holding Executive to Account</td> <td></td> <td><input type="checkbox"/></td> <td></td> <td></td> </tr> </table>				Policy Review	X	<input type="checkbox"/>	Policy Development	<input type="checkbox"/>	External Partnership		<input type="checkbox"/>	Performance Management	<input type="checkbox"/>	Holding Executive to Account		<input type="checkbox"/>		
Policy Review	X	<input type="checkbox"/>	Policy Development	<input type="checkbox"/>														
External Partnership		<input type="checkbox"/>	Performance Management	<input type="checkbox"/>														
Holding Executive to Account		<input type="checkbox"/>																
<p>9. Extra resources needed? Would the investigation benefit from the co-operation of an expert witness?</p> <p>The review will be conducted by councillors with the support of existing officers. However, the panel are looking for advice from people with expertise on this topic.</p>																		

10. What information do we need?	
10.1 Secondary information (background information, existing reports, legislation, central government documents, etc). <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Relevant Government Departmental reports • Relevant national documents • Previous Cabinet / Scrutiny Committee reports • Scrutiny Reports from other Councils into similar topics, for example, Haringey, Hartlepool, Cheshire East • Care leavers Data Pack, published by Department of Education, October 2012 • Educational Achievement Performance Data for Wirral and statistical neighbours • Evaluation of the Staying Put: 18 Plus Family Placement Programme - Final report (Department of Education) 	10.2 Primary/new evidence/information <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Interviews with key officers • Interviews with current and former Looked After Children as well as foster providers • Examples of best practice from other Local Authorities • Information relating to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Access to leaving care grants • Access to bursaries for those staying in education and higher education • Pathway Plan
10.3 Who can provide us with further relevant evidence? (Cabinet portfolio holder, officer, service user, general public, expert witness, etc). <p>Potential witnesses include the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Julia Hassall, Acting Director of Children's Services, Wirral Borough Council • Simon Garner, Acting Head of Children's Social Care Branch, Wirral Borough Council (and Chair of the North West After Care Forum) • Fiona O'Shaughnessy / Dave Walker / Jeanette Geary, Children's Inclusion Service, Wirral Borough Council • Brian Ronson, Leaving Care Service— Pathway Team Manager • Simon Fisher, Transition Team, Wirral Borough Council • Anne Patterson, Independent Reviewing Officer (IRO), Wirral Borough Council re. What are children saying about the leaving care process? • Vivian Stafford, Strategic Service Manager: Post 16 Commissioning and Economic Generation, Wirral Borough Council (Also to cover the Apprenticeship scheme) 	10.4 What specific areas do we want them to cover when they give evidence? <p>How well are Looked After children prepared for adult living, in particular with reference to the outcomes listed in section 2 earlier?</p> <p>Do care leavers have access to information about their care leaver entitlements?</p> <p>How does the Council work with the FromCare2Work programme run by the National Care Advisory Service?</p>

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Phil Sheridan, Consultant Headteacher (Secondary) and Virtual Headteacher, Wirral Borough Council. To also include the Looked After Children's Education Service (LACES) team, Wirral Borough Council • Anne Tattersall, NHS Wirral and Head of Being Healthy Outcome Group (regarding health and teenage pregnancy issues plus funding arrangements and commissioning arrangements with CCGs) • Housing Team, Wirral Borough Council – Sheila Jacobs, Supported Housing Manager plus Catherine Green, Rehousing Services Manager • Pat Rice, Response, Wirral Borough Council (Lead for 16-17 Protocol Group) • Patricia Jones, Youth Offending Service • Sue Brown, Assistant Chief Officer, Merseyside Probation Trust (or nominee) • Members of the Children in Care Council (Contact: Fiona O'Shaughnessy) • Former Looked After Children (Contact: Brian Ronson) • Foster carers (Contact: Sue Leedham) • Private Foster Carer (if possible) • Teachers / staff from schools, for example, Observatory School, Woodchurch High School, Wirral Alternative School Programme (WASP) (Role of Designated Teacher re. LAC in schools) • Job Centre Plus re. guidance for supporting care leavers • Residential Providers Forum 	
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11. What processes can we use to feed into the review? (site visits/observations, face-to-face questioning, telephone survey, written questionnaire, etc).

11.1 Meetings with officers listed in 10.3 above

11.2 Meetings / Focus groups with current and former Looked After Children and with foster carers

11.3 Desk-top research / analysis

11.4 Possible survey of members regarding their role as Corporate Parents, including training opportunities

11.5 Possible questionnaire of potential and former care leavers

12. In what ways can we involve the public and at what stages? (consider whole range of consultative mechanisms, local committees and local ward mechanisms).

Meetings / Focus groups with current and former Looked After Children and with foster carers (as described in section 11.2 above). This will include the Children in Care Council



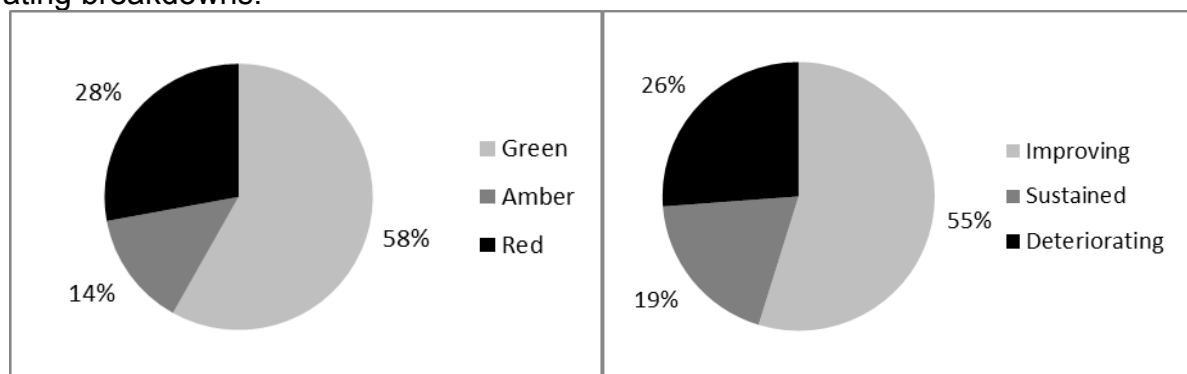
Policy and Performance - Families and Wellbeing Committee Tuesday, 8 March 2016

REPORT TITLE:	Families and Wellbeing Directorate Plan Performance Monitoring 2015/16 Quarter 3 (Oct - Dec 2015)
REPORT OF:	Strategic Director: Families and Wellbeing

REPORT SUMMARY

This report sets out Quarter 3 (October – December 2015) performance against delivery of the Families and Wellbeing Directorate Plan. The Directorate Plan was reported to this committee on 23 March 2015. The performance report is attached as Appendix 1 and sets out progress against a suite of agreed key indicators and performance measures.

Of the 43 reportable indicators, 25 are rated Green, 6 are rated Amber and 12 are rated Red. For indicators rated Amber and Red, the responsible officer has indicated the corrective action being put in place to get performance back on track. Of the measures where it is possible to indicate the Direction of Travel, 23 are improving, 11 are deteriorating and 8 are showing performance being sustained. The charts below show the breakdown in terms of the RAG and Direction of Travel rating breakdowns:



RAG Rating Breakdown

Direction of Travel Breakdown

RECOMMENDATION/S

Members are requested to note the contents of this report and highlight any areas requiring further clarification or action.

SUPPORTING INFORMATION

1.0 REASON/S FOR RECOMMENDATION/S

To ensure Members have the opportunity to review delivery of the Families and Wellbeing Directorate Plan.

2.0 OTHER OPTIONS CONSIDERED

2.1 As this report follows a standard format, no other options considered.

3.0 BACKGROUND INFORMATION

3.1 The Families and Wellbeing Directorate Plan performance is reported through a set of agreed performance measures aligned to priorities identified in the plan. Performance is monitored against the targets set at the start of the year.

3.2 For each measure, a Red, Amber or Green (RAG) rating is assigned depending on the performance level against the target. A number of measures are annual, and these will only be reported when the data is available. The report (Appendix 1) also shows the direction of travel for each measure to illustrate whether performance is improving, deteriorating or being sustained.

3.3 Whilst the Corporate Plan 2015/16 (and supporting Directorate Plans) have been superseded by the Wirral Plan: A 2020 Vision, they still form the basis of the in-year performance management framework. A new Performance Management Framework is being developed for the Wirral Plan which will be reported from April 2016.

4.0 FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

There are none arising from this report.

5.0 LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

There are none arising from this report.

6.0 RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS: ICT, STAFFING AND ASSETS

There are none arising from this report.

7.0 RELEVANT RISKS

The performance management framework is aligned to the Council's risk management strategy and has been considered as part of the Directorate planning process.

8.0 ENGAGEMENT/CONSULTATION

N/A

9.0 EQUALITY IMPLICATIONS

The report is for information to Members and there are no direct equalities implications at this stage.

REPORT AUTHOR: **Mike Callon**

Team Leader – Performance and Scrutiny

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APPENDICES

Appendix 1 – 2015/16 Quarter 3 Families and Wellbeing Directorate Plan Performance Report.

REFERENCE MATERIAL

N/A

SUBJECT HISTORY (last 3 years)

Council Meeting	Date

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2015-16 Families & Wellbeing Performance Indicators		Year End Target 2015/16	Quarter 3 2015				Year End Fore-cast	DoT	Corrective Action (Red or Amber) <i>Context (Green/where provided)</i>
PI Ref	PI Title		Target	Actual	Period	RAG			
Children & Young People									
CSC001	Rate of Referrals to Children's Social Care (per 10,000 population)	575.0	575.0	732.0	Apr - Dec 15	Red	752.4	↑	<p>The number of referrals remains high. The single point of entry for referrals continues to have an impact on the overall contacts received in relation to Early Help and Children in Need (CIN)/Child Protection (CP) . There had been an increase in domestic abuse referrals from the police, however the implementation of a joint triage has assisted in reducing the number of referrals through to social care from the previous quarter.</p> <p>The following actions being undertaken to improve performance:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. A series of multi-agency workshops have being arranged in March to improve understanding of the Multi Agency Safeguarding Hub (MASH) and threshold for referral. 2. We continue to quality assure decision-making within Multi Agency Safeguarding and auditing of repeat referrals.

2015-16 Families & Wellbeing Performance Indicators		Year End Target 2015/16	Quarter 3 2015				Year End Fore-cast	DoT	Corrective Action (Red or Amber) <i>Context (Green/where provided)</i>
PI Ref	PI Title		Target	Actual	Period	RAG			
CSC003	Rate of Children in Need per 10,000	350.0	369.0	388.8	Apr - Dec 15	Amber	399.7	↑	<p>There has been a slight improvement in the rate of Children in Need since the previous quarter; however the high number of referrals into social care has had an impact.</p> <p>The following actions are being taken to improve this measure:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Continuing to ensure the Threshold of Need is understood internally and externally and associated correct intervention is applied rigorously. A series of multi-agency workshops are scheduled to take place in March to increase understanding of roles, responsibilities and thresholds. • A review of Children In Need cases that have been in place longer than 6 months remains ongoing. • The Multi-Agency Safeguarding Hub screening process for domestic abuse referrals has been strengthened through a joint triage with social care and police. • Work continues to ensure we consistently utilise where appropriate the early help offer. This will ensure that cases are stepped down to early help with clear plans reducing the re-referral rate.

2015-16 Families & Wellbeing Performance Indicators		Year End Target 2015/16	Quarter 3 2015				Year End Fore-cast	DoT	Corrective Action (Red or Amber) Context (Green/where provided)
PI Ref	PI Title		Target	Actual	Period	RAG			
CSC004	Rate of Child Protection Plans per 10,000 (0-17)	44.4	43.5	62.7	Apr - Dec 15	Green	52.1	↑	<p>The rate of child protection plans reduced in 2014/15 and was too low in comparison with statistical neighbours. A number of actions have taken place to ensure that children at risk of or likelihood of significant harm are being identified. These have included:</p> <p>(i) Revised Strategy Discussions being held at MASH in order for greater consistency</p> <p>(ii) Training & briefings regarding revised protocol & risk assessment regarding Child Sexual Exploitation</p> <p>(iii) Training & workshops regarding S47 investigation including understanding thresholds and International Child Protection Certificate (ICPC) requirements.</p> <p>(iv) Review of Child in Need plans over 12 months with a number of children meeting threshold for ICPC.</p>
CSC008	Rate of Looked After Children per 10,000	96.2	97.2	99.0	Apr - Dec 15	Green	99.8	↑	<p>The number of children in care is high and we are seeking to safely reduce the overall number of children in care by strengthening and supporting families, this is the focus of the Children in Care Task Force. Children in care need support from a dedicated team of social workers who can provide stable and enduring relationships, so that all children in care can achieve permanence. The reorganisation of Specialist Services supports these aims through the Children in Care teams. Decisions for a child to become looked after are taken by senior managers to ensure consistency in the application of thresholds. Legal Advice and Action meetings ensure that assessments and plans are clear as to the reasons for the child becoming looked after . Wirral uses a number of options to secure permanence which are tracked to ensure drift and delay is minimised.</p>

2015-16 Families & Wellbeing Performance Indicators		Year End Target 2015/16	Quarter 3 2015				Year End Fore-cast	DoT	Corrective Action (Red or Amber) Context (Green/where provided)
PI Ref	PI Title		Target	Actual	Period	RAG			
CSC010	The Percentage of Children in Care who have had 3 or more placements	<10.0%	<10.0%	5.8%	Apr - Dec 15	Green	5.5%	↔	
CSC011	The Percentage of Children in Care who have been in placement for 2 or more years	73.0%	73.0%	76.5%	Apr - Dec 15	Green	76.1%	↔	
CSC012	Average time (days) between child entering care and moving in with adoptive family, for children who have been adopted	628.0	628	456.7	Apr - Dec 15	Green	433.0	↓	
CSC014	Family Intervention Service engagement with families	600	450	450	Apr - Dec 15	Green	600	↑	
CSC015	Percentage of Children leaving care through Special Guardianship Order (SGO) or Adoption	35.0%	35.0%	45.2%	Apr - Dec 15	Green	42.4%	↑	

2015-16 Families & Wellbeing Performance Indicators		Year End Target 2015/16	Quarter 3 2015				Year End Fore-cast	DoT	Corrective Action (Red or Amber) Context (Green/where provided)
PI Ref	PI Title		Target	Actual	Period	RAG			
CSC016	Family Intervention Service positive outcomes with families	400	200	37	Apr - Dec 15	Red	400	N/A	Current performance indicates that the Year End target will be reached and performance in this area will be rated as 'Green'. Performance is based on number of claims submitted to Department of Communities and Local Government (DCLG). There was a significant impact on cumulative performance in Quarter 3 due to DCLG not allowing claims to be processed. Positive outcomes achieved in Quarter 3 will be carried forward and claimed in the next quarter.
CSC017	Number of specialist targeted services early help assessment and intervention	1000	750	810	Apr - Dec 15	Green	1000	↑	
EDU002	The gap between the proportion of pupils achieving a Good level of development (in the Early Years Foundation Stage Profile)	18%	18%	32.7%	Sep 14 - Jul 15	Red	32.7%	↑	The gap between the lowest achieving children and their peers in the Foundation Stage Profile narrowed by 2.4% from the previous year. Work continues with schools with largest gap to improve performance.
EDU008	Key Stage 4 5+ A*-C (incl Eng & Maths)	65.0%	65%	61.2% (P)	Sep 14 - Jul 15	Amber	61.2%	↑	Attainment has improved by 1% which goes against the national trend where standards have dipped. The Teaching Schools have been commissioned to support where school attainment has decreased. Analysis has been undertaken to determine issues in schools where pupils attained English and maths but not 3 other subjects.

2015-16 Families & Wellbeing Performance Indicators		Year End Target 2015/16	Quarter 3 2015				Year End Fore-cast	DoT	Corrective Action (Red or Amber) <i>Context (Green/where provided)</i>
PI Ref	PI Title		Target	Actual	Period	RAG			
EDU009	The achievement gap between pupils eligible for free school meals and their peers achieving at KS4 (5 or more A*-C inc EM)	26.0%	26.0%	32.6% (P)	Sep 14 - Jul 15	Red	32.6%	↑	The gap has narrowed by 3%. There is only one secondary school which has an achievement gap wider than the national average of 27%. One school has a gap of 26%. Pupil Premium reviews are planned for schools identified with some of the largest gaps, support by the Teaching Schools.
EDU011	The % of Looked after children achieving expected levels at Key Stage 4 (5 or more A*-C including English and Maths)	18%	18%	13% (P)	Sep 14 - Jul 15	Red	13.0%	↑	The 13% gap is in line with the national average. Targets set by schools indicated that a higher percentage of Children Looked After (CLA) would attain 5 or more A*-C incl English and Maths. Two CLA pupils attained a D in mathematics which was totally unexpected. The Looked After Children Education Service (LACES) and 14-19 teams are working to support the current Year 10 & 11 cohorts.
EDU014	The % of young people aged 16-18 who are not in Education, Employment or Training (NEET)	4.5%	4.3%	4.4%	Apr - Dec 15	Green	4.3%	↔	<i>The percentage of young people in the 16-19 year old cohort with a destination classified as 'not known' has reduced by 2.3% since December 2014. This illustrates that the data is significantly more robust and accurate</i>
EDU015	the % Care Leavers in Employment, Education or Training	49.0%	49%	51.0%	Apr - Dec 15	Green	50.0%	↔	

2015-16 Families & Wellbeing Performance Indicators		Year End Target 2015/16	Quarter 3 2015				Year End Fore-cast	DoT	Corrective Action (Red or Amber) Context (Green/where provided)
PI Ref	PI Title		Target	Actual	Period	RAG			
CSC018	% of families with an under 5 living in the most 0- 20% most deprived SOA's that are registered with a Children's Centre	90%	87%	76.0%	Apr - Dec 15	Red	80.0%	↓	This area has underperformed largely due to disruption through restructuring of the service and lack of external data to target activity. Work has been undertaken with the Wirral Community Trust to sign off an Information Sharing Agreement, with the service beginning to receive child health information in March/April 2016 . This will allow us to identify gaps and where staff should be deployed to encourage registration. In addition a pilot with the Registrar Service whereby babies are registered with a children centre at the point when they register the baby's birth is proposed to be extended. The restructure of the team is currently taking place and will be completed by March 2016. The new service will be launched in April 2016.
CSC019	% of families with an under 5 living in the 0 - 20% most deprived SOA's who have sustained contact with a Children's Centre	50%	40%	21.7%	Jan - Dec 15	Red	30.0%	↓	Disruption to the service during re-structuring and access to external data has impacted on performance in this quarter. The new structure will enable more effective deployment of staff time to undertake targeted outreach support and raising awareness of universal and targeted early education entitlements. We are strengthening working arrangements with partners such as health visiting teams and childcare providers to increase sustained contact is made with the most vulnerable families. This can be evidenced by the launch of the '2-2 1/2 year old Integrated Review' in March 2016 which the Local Authority has contributed to.

2015-16 Families & Wellbeing Performance Indicators		Year End Target 2015/16	Quarter 3 2015				Year End Fore-cast	DoT	Corrective Action (Red or Amber) Context (Green/where provided)
PI Ref	PI Title		Target	Actual	Period	RAG			
CSC020	Take up of 2 year old offer by eligible families as identified by the DWP	85%	80%	74.0%	Apr - Oct 15	Amber	85.0%	↔	Performance in this area is based on the October 2015 Census data and is therefore reported as static from the previous quarter moving performance into an amber rating due to a more challenging quarter 3 target. The January 2016 Census data will not be available until the end of February and will be reflected in the next quarter. We are forecasting to reach the year end target following work undertaken to follow up eligible families who have not taken up the offer and improve awareness amongst partners (Voluntary sector, schools, health) to promote the online application process for families.
Page 78 CSC021	Increase take-up of Children's Centre services for Children Looked After, Children in Need and Children subject to a Child Protection Plan	95%	85%	75.2%	Oct 15- Dec 15	Red	85.0%	↓	Current information sharing and joint working pathways with Specialist Services are being reviewed as part of the remodelled Early Childhood Services. This will enable more effective targeting of staffing resources, increase take up of early education entitlements and improved monitoring of the impact of shared objectives. Greater clarification of the offer as well as shared objectives will address under performance in this area. Recruitment processes are currently underway and the new service will be launched on the 1st April 2016.
CSC022	% children's social work staff receiving monthly supervision	85%	85%	80.0%	Oct 15 - Dec 15	Amber	86.0%	↓	We are aware that performance has declined on the previous quarter, this relates to sickness and absence within specific teams which are being addressed with Managers.

2015-16 Families & Wellbeing Performance Indicators		Year End Target 2015/16	Quarter 3 2015				Year End Fore-cast	DoT	Corrective Action (Red or Amber) Context (Green/where provided)
PI Ref	PI Title		Target	Actual	Period	RAG			
Adult Social Services									
ADDP02	Increase the number of apprenticeships / traineeships available within the company (LATC)	10	2	6	Jul - Sep 15	Green	10	↔	
ADDP03	Increase the number of people with learning disabilities who have access to employment and training opportunities	4%	3.7%	3.6%	Apr - Dec 15	Green	4%	↓	
ADDP04	Increase access to services to include non-Fair Access to Care Service eligible customers	25	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	N/A	<i>This measure is related to the development of Wirral Evolutions in terms of its business development to widen its customer base. This will be managed through the on-going contract management arrangements with the Company.</i>
ADDP05	Proportion of adults with a learning disability who live in their own home or with their family	88%	87%	85%	Apr - Dec 15	Green	85%	↑	
ADDP06	Permanent Admissions of younger adults (18-64) to residential and nursing care homes, per 100,000 population	15.4	15.4	15.6	Apr - Dec 15	Green	15.6	↓	

2015-16 Families & Wellbeing Performance Indicators		Year End Target 2015/16	Quarter 3 2015				Year End Fore-cast	DoT	Corrective Action (Red or Amber) Context (Green/where provided)
PI Ref	PI Title		Target	Actual	Period	RAG			
ADCP07	Permanent Admissions of older people (65+) to residential and nursing care homes, per 100,000 population	696.9	710.9	738.3	Apr - Dec 15	Green	780	↑	
ADDP08	Average monthly bed days lost due to delayed transfers of care per 100,000 population	75	75	89	Apr - Dec 15	Red	90	↓	Intermediate Care / Transitional Bed capacity has now increased to 105 beds from the original 70 beds commissioned. The Multi Disciplinary Team is now operating 8 to 8 Mon - Fri and 9 to 5 Sat - Sun. Ongoing work is being undertaken to develop a comprehensive 7 day service. The Emergency Care Improvement Plan (ECIP) has now been agreed and an Integrated Discharge Team (IDT) improvement plan has also been drawn up with a number of quick wins identified which will be implemented by December and longer term redesign work has also begun. The number of lost days spiked dramatically in October attributed in the main to the availability of care packages, an analysis of the individual cases will be undertaken to understand specific issues. Following the SAFER week undertaken at Wirral University Teaching Hospital a weekly report will now be produced to evidence provider responsiveness thereby helping to address underperformance in a timely fashion.
ADCP11	Proportion of new requests for support resolved by advice and information	50%	50%	58%	Apr - Dec 15	Green	57%	↑	

2015-16 Families & Wellbeing Performance Indicators		Year End Target 2015/16	Quarter 3 2015				Year End Fore-cast	DoT	Corrective Action (Red or Amber) Context (Green/where provided)
PI Ref	PI Title		Target	Actual	Period	RAG			
ADDP12	Proportion of new requests for support resulting in long term services	10%	10%	3.4%	Apr - Dec 15	Green	3.5%	↑	
ADDP13	Improving people's experience of integrated care (service user experience questionnaire)	95%	95%	64.8%	Apr - Dec 15	Red	70%	↑	There is a high non-response rate for this question (32%) which suggest a potential lack of clarity / understanding. A review of the question in conjunction with an overall review of the survey is currently underway with the intention to create a revised survey which can be used across the Rapid Community Response Team. This will have the added benefit of significantly increasing the pool of potential respondents therefore providing an improved evidence base to support decision making. Monthly performance continues to be discussed at the Multi-disciplinary team meetings. Contract officers in Adult Social Services also monitor survey responses and will address any areas of concern / issues with service providers during monthly contract monitoring meetings.
ADDP14	Reduction in unplanned admissions	3.5%	3.5%	3.5%	Apr - Dec 15	Green	3.5%	↔	
ADDP15	Number of people referred to the ICCTs with integrated care recorded	95%	95%	-	-	-	-	N/A	Performance data not yet available

2015-16 Families & Wellbeing Performance Indicators		Year End Target 2015/16	Quarter 3 2015				Year End Fore-cast	DoT	Corrective Action (Red or Amber) Context (Green/where provided)
PI Ref	PI Title		Target	Actual	Period	RAG			
ADCP16	Proportion of people who have received short term services to maximise independence requiring no ongoing support	75%	75%	74%	Apr - Dec 15	Green	75%	↓	
ADDP17	Percentage of people discharged from hospital into reablement/ rehabilitation still at home after 91 days	90%	90%	86%	Apr - Dec 15	Green	87%	↑	
ADDP18	Number of episodes of Reablement /intermediate care intervention for clients aged 65 and over, per 10,000 population	480	472.3	457.6	Apr - Dec 15	Green	470	↑	

2015-16 Families & Wellbeing Performance Indicators		Year End Target 2015/16	Quarter 3 2015				Year End Fore-cast	DoT	Corrective Action (Red or Amber) Context (Green/where provided)
PI Ref	PI Title		Target	Actual	Period	RAG			
Public Health									
PHCP01	Rate of attendance at A&E for injury and assault where alcohol was a factor. PHOF 2.18: Alcohol-related admissions to hospital.	820	820	710.18	Jan-Dec 2015	Green	820	↑	Performance continues on a positive downward trajectory, one that it has generally sustained for the last two years. Work is planned that will look at achieving a better understanding of the factors that may be driving this downward trend so that it can be sustained.
Page 83 PHCP02	NHS Health Check programme by those eligible – Health Check offered (PHOF 2.22i)	20%	10%	14.7%	Apr - Sept 15	Green	20%	↑	Numbers of invitations issued by practices is on target. Uptake of invitations offered however, is currently below target (although similar to C&M average) and improving performance for this programme continues to be a challenge. Factors that are likely to have contributed to this are as follows: - Data quality: All but 2 practices have now switched over to EMIS (data holding), this has increased the data quality and simplified data collection. - GP Confidence in NHS Health Check programme: Core group of practices remain unconvinced as to its value Actions taken to address performance issues update: - Point of Care testing pilot has now been completed and data is currently being analysed -Training for frontline staff to be revamped during February and March will take into account any changes as directed by Public Health England - Re-issuing comparative GP performance profiles - All publicity materials have now been distributed. A video will be shown in various settings, including screens in GP practices, dentists etc.
PHCP03	NHS Health Check programme by those eligible – Health Check take up (PHOF 2.22ii)	55%	55%	30.6%	Apr - Sept 15	Red	55%	↑	

2015-16 Families & Wellbeing Performance Indicators		Year End Target 2015/16	Quarter 3 2015				Year End Fore-cast	DoT	Corrective Action (Red or Amber) <i>Context (Green/where provided)</i>
PI Ref	PI Title		Target	Actual	Period	RAG			
PHCP04	Proportion of opiate drug users that left drug treatment successfully who do not re-present to treatment within 6 months	10%	10%	8.60%	Jun 14 - Nov 15	Amber	10%	↓	<p>Reporting period Jun 14 to May 15 (completions) and Jun 14 - Nov 15 (re-presentations)</p> <p>The reporting period now includes the data from the first 4 months of the new service when the system went through considerable re-organisation and mobilisation, resulting in some major disruption, with a consequence impact on performance. Analysis of the performance data for this period does show a reduction in the numbers completing treatment so it has been anticipated that, as this worked through the monitoring system it would be reflected in a drop in performance. A drop in performance has now continued for some months. However this is the 3rd month when performance has levelled out so at this time this drop off has not been substantial. Commissioners and provider are monitoring these trends closely, and there are some encouraging indications that performance will begin on an upward trajectory over the next 3 or 4 months. The current Wirral performance is higher than the national average of 7.3% (currently in the Top Quartile range for Comparator Local Authority's).</p>

2015-16 Families & Wellbeing Performance Indicators		Year End Target 2015/16	Quarter 3 2015				Year End Fore-cast	DoT	Corrective Action (Red or Amber) Context (Green/where provided)
PI Ref	PI Title		Target	Actual	Period	RAG			
PHCP05	Proportion of non-opiate drug users that left drug treatment successfully who do not re-present to treatment within 6 months	53%	53%	41.8%	Jun 14 - Nov 15	Amber	53%	↓	Reporting period Jun 14 - May 15 (completions) and Jun 14 - Nov 15 (re-presentations) The performance of this indicator has shown a further reduction since the previous month. Performance has been interrogated at contract review meetings (see above) and although the reduction has been noted by both commissioner and provider, analysis of factors influencing this performance provide cause for some confidence that this will now level out and begin to move to an upward trajectory. This will continue to be monitored closely but still remains above the national average of 38.7%. (currently in the top quartile range for comparator Local Authorities). As above, this performance will continue to be affected by transitional factors for several more months.
PHDP06	% of women who smoke at time of delivery: per 100 deliveries	11.5%	11.6%	10.5%	Apr - Dec 15	Green	11.5%	↑	<i>This indicator has now sustained improvement in performance throughout 2015/16 and has now achieved a green rating. A whole system approach to support women at the time of delivery to give up smoking has now been put into practice. Q3 has seen a 0.7% decrease in the smoking at time of delivery rate. This equates to a relatively small number of pregnant women but is nonetheless movement in the right direction. The numbers of women whose smoking status' are unknown is the biggest achievement for this quarter. Q2 n=200 women had status' recorded as unknown in Q3 this number has dropped significantly to n= 42, a 79% decrease. This decrease reflects an increase in accurate data reporting on behalf of Wirral University Teaching Hospital. It is expected that this change will be sustained for Q4. The new smoking cessation provider, ABL Health, will work with maternity services to ensure there is continued support for pregnant smokers.</i>

2015-16 Families & Wellbeing Performance Indicators		Year End Target 2015/16	Quarter 3 2015				Year End Fore-cast	DoT	Corrective Action (Red or Amber) Context (Green/where provided)
PI Ref	PI Title		Target	Actual	Period	RAG			
PHDP07	Smoking quitters (4 weeks)	1285	634	674	Apr - Dec 15	Green	1285	↑	<i>The system as a whole has now met this target for 3 consecutive months. This is to be welcomed. A new provider, A Better Life (ABL) Health, will commence on the 1st April 2016 to deliver Wirral Nicotine and Smoking Cessation Service. Quarter 4 is the mobilisation period for the new service and ABL are working closely with current providers to ensure service continuity. Current activity for Apr- Nov stands at 746, this is monitored on a proxy basis and the next target for quarter 3 is 928.</i>
Public Health Financial Management	Projected Public Health net expenditure for 2015-16	£28.9m	£22.5m	£21.8m	Apr - Dec 15	Green	£29.4m	↔	<i>There has been an in year reduction in the Public Health grant of £1.9m which is being managed using in year underspend and PH reserves. Forecast year end overspend of £500k to be funded from PH reserves.</i>
Direction of Travel (DoT) Key		↑	Performance Improving			↓	Performance Deteriorating		↔ Performance Sustained



Policy and Performance - Families and Wellbeing Committee Tuesday, 8 March 2016

REPORT TITLE:	FINANCIAL MONITORING 2015/16 QUARTER 3 (OCTOBER - DECEMBER 2015)
REPORT OF:	ACTING SECTION 151 OFFICER

REPORT SUMMARY

This report sets out the financial monitoring information for Families and Wellbeing in a format consistent across the Policy and Performance Committees. The report aims to give Members the detail to scrutinise budget performance for the Directorate. The financial information is for Quarter 3 (October-December 2015) and was reported to Cabinet on 22 February 2016.

RECOMMENDATIONS

1. That the forecast year end overspend of £5.48 million in the Families and Wellbeing 2015/16 Revenue Budget and actions taken during quarter 3 be noted.
2. That capital expenditure at the close of quarter 3 totalling £8.0 million against a revised Capital Programme of £16.1 million be noted
3. Members are requested to review the information presented to determine if they have any specific questions relating to the budget for the Families and Wellbeing Directorate.

SUPPORTING INFORMATION

1.0 REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATIONS

- 1.1 To ensure Members have appropriate information to review the budget performance of the directorate.

2.0 OTHER OPTIONS CONSIDERED

- 2.1 This is a monitoring report but any options to improve the monitoring and budget accuracy will be considered.

3.0 BACKGROUND INFORMATION

3.1 CHANGES TO THE AGREED BUDGET

- 3.1.1 The 2015/16 Budget was agreed by Council on 24 February 2015 any increases to the Budget have been agreed by full Council. Changes to the Budget since it was set are summarised in Table 1.

Table 1: 2015/16 Original & Revised Net Budget by Directorate £000's

	Original Net Budget	Approved Budget Changes Prior Qtrs	Approved Budget Changes Qtr 3	Revised Net Budget
FWB - Adult Social Care	68,305	2,934	-173	71,066
FWB – Children & Young People,	67,964	4,816	-322	72,458
FWB - Further Areas: Safeguarding, Schools, Leisure, Public Health	7,956	831	619	9,406
Net Cost of Services	144,225	8,581	124	152,930

Note: £9.6 million Quarter 1 change was ratified by Council on 12 October 2015

- 3.1.2 The main budget movements in quarter three relate to the transfer of Adult Social Care Safeguarding to FWB Further Areas for reporting purposes and an adjustment within the support services budget. Both of these adjustments have no effect on the net bottom line of the council as a whole.

3.2 PROJECTIONS AND KEY ISSUES

- 3.2.1 The projected outturn position as at the end of December 2015, key issues emerging and Directorate updates are detailed in the following sections.

Table 2: 2015/16 Projected Budget variations by Directorate £000's

Directorates	Revised Budget	Forecast Outturn	(Under) Overspend Quarter 3	RAGBY Class	Change from prev
FWB - Adult Social Care	71,066	73,478	2,412	R	2
FWB – Children & Young People	72,458	75,143	2,685	R	885
FWB - Further Areas: Safeguarding, Schools, Leisure, Public Health	9,406	9,791	385	R	135
TOTAL	152,930	158,412	5,482		1,022

The report classifies the forecast under/overspends for the above areas using a colour RAGBY rating. The ratings are defined as follows:

- Extreme: Overspends **Red** (over +£301k), Underspend **Yellow** (over - £301k).
- Acceptable: **Amber** (+£141k to +£300k), **Green** (range from +£140k to - £140k); **Blue** (-£141k to -£300k).

3.3 DIRECTORATE UPDATES

Families and Wellbeing: Adult Social Care

3.3.1 The forecast has been contained at a £2.4 million overspend. The overspend is mainly due to demand pressures within Community Care. Saving plans and profiles are continuously under review and a number of projects are being supported by the Improvement and Transformation Team. Actions include:

- A programme of targeted reviews of care packages is being undertaken, including joint reviews with NHS colleagues.
- A new 'asset based' assessment framework has been implemented to determine need.
- The Liquid Logic case management system has been implemented and the support structure agreed. This is streamlining working processes and increasing efficiency.

3.3.2 The Local Authority Day Services Company commenced trading on 1 December 2015.

Families and Wellbeing: Children and Young People

3.3.3 The forecast overspend has increased by £0.8 million to £2.69 million. This reduces to a net £2.55 million once £140,000 additional Educational Services Grant confirmed in November is factored in. The overspend position is mainly due to an increase within residential placements and increased costs following the re-profiling of agency staff.

3.3.4 Actions being taken to reduce the overspend include:-

- A detailed review of all residential care and independent fostering placements
- A weekly Access to Resources Panel to consider and approve all new care packages for children.
- Assessments to determine entitlement to SEND transport. A programme of recruitment to vacant Social Work positions. The Social Worker Progression Framework has been implemented. Agency numbers are reviewed on a monthly basis.
- Implementation of new Children's Centres structures and Early Help model.

3.3.5 The Youth Justice Board grant has been reduced by £70,000 in year which has been mitigated through the non-filling of vacant posts. In the longer term a review of structures and where possible further integration across the wider youth provision will be utilised to match the resources available.

Families and Wellbeing: Other

3.3.6 Leisure Services: The forecast overspend is currently £305,000. This figure reflects slippage in budget savings. There are ongoing discussions and plans with regard to savings in 2016/17.

3.3.7 Public Health: The Chancellor's proposals to reduce in year the Public Health Budget have been confirmed and there has been a grant reduction of £1.9m. This had been anticipated in commissioning decisions earlier in the year and has been managed from savings within retendered contracts.

3.3.8 Safeguarding: An overspend of £80,000 is forecast within this area relating to agency costs

3.4 IMPLEMENTATION OF SAVINGS

3.4.1 The delivery of the agreed savings is key to the Council's financial health and is tracked at both Council and Directorate level. The Budget for 2015/16 originally included £38 million of efficiency measures and it was recognised that the delivery of the savings, particularly within Adults and Children's Services was challenging being more of a transformational / change nature. Cabinet in July agreed the reprofiling of £9.6 million of savings funded from earmarked reserves (£5.4 million) and General Fund Balances (£4.2 million) which was confirmed by Council 12 October.

Table 3: Budget Implementation Plan 2015/16 (£000's)

BRAG	Number of Options	Approved Budget Reduction	Amount Delivered at Dec 15	To be Delivered
B - delivered	6	6,785	6,785	0
G – on track	7	2,770	1,815	955
A - concerns	10	5,609	1,619	3,990
R - high risk/ not achieved	1	10	0	10
Total at Dec 2015-16	24	15,174	10,219	4,955

3.4.2 The savings tracker contains an assessment of the 2015/16 savings. Cabinet 27 July agreed that £9.6 million of savings be moved into 2016/17 with funding from earmarked reserves and General Fund balances.

3.5 PERFORMANCE AGAINST CAPITAL BUDGETS QUARTER 3

3.5.1 Capital Programme 2015/16 at end of Quarter 3 (31 December)

	Capital Strategy	Revisions Since Budget Cabinet	Revised Capital Programme	Actual Spend December 2015
	£000	£000	£000	£000
Families – Children	8,517	2,287	10,804	5,404
Families – Adults	8,263	-5,386	2,877	1,062
Families – Sport & Rec	1,865	599	2,464	1,531
Total expenditure	18,645	-2,500	16,145	7,997

3.5.2 Families and Wellbeing - Children

Fender Primary School – completion of a 2 classroom and resource extension. Elleray Park Special School – works on the four new classroom extension and welfare facilities were completed in October. Devonshire Park – a range of projects have been undertaken to support the increase in pupil numbers. The contract for the classroom extensions at Stanley school has been awarded (£0.590m); alterations at Lingham primary (£0.130m) have commenced; extension at Town Lane infants (£0.5m) is on hold pending a feasibility study for new classrooms and dining hall.

3.5.3 Families and Wellbeing – Adults

The project at Girtrell Court has been deferred. The outcome of the savings option will dictate whether this continues to be included in any future capital programme.

Transformation of Day Services is ongoing. The current year's programme includes £0.615 million which will help to support Wirral Evolutions to provide centres of excellence.

Community Intermediate Care Service - work on a dedicated integrated care facility to support the avoidance of hospital admission is progressing.

3.5.4 Families and Wellbeing – Sport and Recreation

The new fitness suite at Guinea Gap is still seeing an increase in usage. Membership at West Kirby Leisure Centre has increased following the improvements to the fitness suite there.

Improvements at West Kirby Marine Lake have commenced.

4.0 FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

4.1 In respect of the Revenue Budget the Families and Wellbeing Directorate is projecting a £5.48m over spend as at the 31 December 2015.

4.2 There are no IT, staffing or asset implications arising directly out of this report.

5.0 LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

5.1 There are no implications arising directly from this report.

6.0 RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS; ICT, STAFFING AND ASSETS

6.1 There are no implications arising directly from this report.

7.0 RELEVANT RISKS

7.1 There are none relating to this report.

8.0 ENGAGEMENT/CONSULTATION

8.1 No consultation has been carried out in relation to this report.

9.0 EQUALITIES IMPLICATIONS

9.1 This report is essentially a monitoring report which reports on financial performance.

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ANNEXES

Annex 1 Revised Capital Programme and Funding 2015/16

SUBJECT HISTORY

Council Meeting	Date
Regular financial monitoring reports for Revenue and Capital have been presented to Cabinet since September 2012.	

Annex 1 Revised Capital Programme

Families and Wellbeing - CYP	Revised Programme £000	Spend to Date £000	Council Resources £000	Revenue/ Reserves £000	Grants £000	Total Funding £000
Elleray Park Special School redevelopment	1,050	971	850	-	200	1,050
School remodelling/additional classrooms (Primary Places)	2,050	347	1,800	-	250	2,050
Condition/Modernisation	4,458	2,643	-	-	4,458	4,458
Basic Need allocation	1,897	702	-	-	1,897	1,897
Children's centres	53	14	-	-	53	53
Aiming Higher	24	58	-	-	24	24
Youth Capital	149	-	98	-	51	149
Birkenhead High Girls Academy	80	159	-	69	11	80
Funding for 2 year olds	18	2	-	-	18	18
Universal Free School Meals	209	139	-	-	209	209
Somerville Mobile Replacement	366	262	366	-	-	366
Family Support Scheme	200	63	200	-	-	200
Youth Zone	100	42	100	-	-	100
Stanley Special - additional classrooms, medical/hygiene provision	150	2	150	-	-	150
	10,804	5,404	3,564	69	7,171	10,804

	Revised Programme £000	Spend to Date £000	Council Resources £000	Revenue/ Reserves £000	Grants £000	Total Funding £000
Families and Wellbeing - DASS						
Citizen and Provider Portal for Social and Health Services	617	-	-	-	617	617
Transformation of Day Service	615	185	-	-	615	615
Integrated IT	645	444	560	-	85	645
Community Intermediate Care Services	1,000	433	-	-	1,000	1,000
	2,877	1,062	560	-	2,317	2,877
Families and Wellbeing - Sports & Recreation						
West Kirby/Guinea Gap/Europa Pools	2,024	1,332	2,024	-	-	2,024
Refurb of Artificial Turf Pitch & perimeter fence repairs at the Tennis & Sports Centre	240	188	240	-	-	240
West Kirby Marine Lake – Integrated accommodation and service delivery	100	11	100	-	-	100
Bidston Tennis Centre re-roofing	100	-	100	-	-	425
	2,464	1,531	2,464	-	-	2,464

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Policy and Performance - Families and Wellbeing Committee Tuesday, 8 March 2016

REPORT TITLE:	WORK PROGRAMME UPDATE REPORT
REPORT OF:	THE CHAIR OF THE COMMITTEE

REPORT SUMMARY

This report updates members on progress towards delivering the work programme for the Families and Wellbeing Policy & Performance Committee as agreed for the 2015/16 municipal year. There is also an opportunity for members to review the work programme.

The Families and Wellbeing Policy & Performance Committee is responsible for proposing and delivering an annual work programme. This work programme should align with the corporate priorities of the Council and be informed by service priorities and performance, risk management information, public or service user feedback and referrals from Cabinet or Council.

In determining items for the Scrutiny Work Programme, good practice recommends the following criteria could be applied:

- Public Interest – topics should resonate with the local community
- Impact – there should be clear objectives and outcomes that make the work worthwhile
- Council Performance – the focus should be on improving performance
- Keeping in Context – should ensure best use of time and resources

The current work programme is made up of a combination of scrutiny reviews, standing items and requested officer reports. This provides the committee with an opportunity to plan and regularly review its work across the municipal year. The current work programme for the Committee is attached as Appendix 1.

RECOMMENDATION/S

Members are requested to approve the updated Families and Wellbeing Policy & Performance Committee work programme for 2015/16 as shown in the appendix, making any required amendments.

SUPPORTING INFORMATION

1.0 REASON/S FOR RECOMMENDATION/S

To ensure members of the Families and Wellbeing Policy & Performance Committee have the opportunity to regularly review and update the annual work programme.

2.0 OTHER OPTIONS CONSIDERED

Not Applicable

3.0 BACKGROUND INFORMATION

3.1 SCRUTINY REVIEWS - UPDATE

3.1.1 Safeguarding Children Scrutiny Review

The report of the Safeguarding Children task & finish group was approved by the previous committee meeting on 19th January. The report is expected to be referred to a Cabinet meeting in the near future.

3.1.2 Avoiding Admissions Scrutiny Review

Committee has previously agreed to undertake a task & finish group review of the impact of enhanced community-based care provision on the level of admissions to acute hospital settings. Members of the task & finish group are Councillors Moira McLaughlin (Chair), Bruce Berry, Alan Brighthouse, Treena Johnson and Denise Roberts. Evidence-gathering sessions have progressed well and are nearing completion. It is planned for a report to be produced by the task & finish group members in readiness for the first Committee meeting of the new municipal year.

3.1.3 Children Ready for School Scrutiny Review

It is proposed that a new review relating to children being ready for school will commence shortly. The task & finish group members will be Councillors Alan Brighthouse, Wendy Clements (who will be replacing Paul Hayes on the group), Angela Davies, Treena Johnson and Moira McLaughlin. It is now hoped to hold an initial meeting in early March to consider the scope of the review.

3.1.4 Budget Scrutiny

Workshops were held to enable members of each of the three Policy & Performance Committees to consider relevant items which form part of the 2016/17 budget proposals. The well-attended Families and Wellbeing workshop was held on 11th January 2016. The outcomes from all of the workshops formed the basis of a single report which was presented to Coordinating Committee on 16th February.

3.2 'FOCUS ON.....' SESSIONS

- 3.2.1 It is proposed that only one further 'Focus On' sessions will be held during the current municipal year. That session was held on 17th February at which Wirral Community Trust (WCT) provided an update regarding the services delivered by the Trust and their plans for future delivery.

3.3 REPORTS DISTRIBUTED TO MEMBERS SINCE THE LAST COMMITTEE MEETING

- 3.3.1 In order to reduce the number of agenda items at meetings, some reports will be distributed to Committee members outside the committee schedule. In order to maintain public transparency, all reports dealt with in this way will be highlighted in this report.
- 3.3.2 Since the last Committee meeting on 19th January 2016, no reports have been distributed to members in this way.

3.4 CHILDREN SUB-COMMITTEE

- 3.4.1 The next meeting of the Children Sub-Committee is scheduled for 30th March 2016.

3.5 HEALTH & CARE PERFORMANCE PANEL

- 3.5.1 The next meeting of the Health & Care Performance Panel is scheduled for 16th March 2016. The agenda will include an update from Cheshire and Wirral Partnership Trust regarding the outcomes and response to the recent publication of the CQC inspection report.

3.6 CARE QUALITY COMMISSION (CQC) – INSPECTIONS OF LOCAL HEALTH PROVIDERS

- 3.6.1 As previously reported, an announced inspection of Wirral University Teaching Hospital Foundation Trust took place in September 2015. To date, no report has been published by the CQC.
- 3.6.2 Weekly bulletins are now received from the CQC providing updates relating to the outcomes of inspections of social care providers and GP practices and dental surgeries. The inspection results for Wirral-based providers are being forwarded to Committee members on a regular basis.

3.7 PROGRESS IMPLEMENTING PREVIOUS RECOMMENDATIONS

- 3.7.1 The outcomes from the recommendations arising from the Looked After Children scrutiny review are due to be reported to this committee as a separate item to this agenda. A similar report for the Care Homes scrutiny review is due to be reported to a meeting of the Health & Care Performance Panel in March 2016.

4.0 FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

Not Applicable

5.0 LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

Not Applicable

6.0 RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS: ICT, STAFFING AND ASSETS

Not Applicable

7.0 RELEVANT RISKS

Not Applicable

8.0 ENGAGEMENT/CONSULTATION

Not Applicable

9.0 EQUALITY IMPLICATIONS

This report is for information to Members and there are no direct equality implications.

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APPENDICES

Appendix 1: Families and Wellbeing work programme

REFERENCE MATERIAL

SUBJECT HISTORY (last 3 years)

Council Meeting	Date

2015-16 Families and Wellbeing Policy & Performance Committee - Work Programme

Updated - 10/02/2016

(including Children Sub-Committee and the Health & Care Performance Panel)

Key Activities	Lead Member / Officer	Reason for Review	May 2015	June 2015	July 2015	Aug 2015	Sept 2015	Oct 2015	Nov 2015	Dec 2015	Jan 2016	Feb 2016	Mar 2016	April 2016	Outcome
Committee Dates				Tues 30th			Tues 8th		Mon 2nd	Tues 1st	Tues 19th		Tues 8th		
Scheduled Reviews															
Safeguarding Children	Cllr Moira McLaughlin	Agreed by P&P Committee on 5th Dec 2013									Committee report due				19/01/16 Report approved by Committee and referred to Cabinet.
Reducing hospital admission and dependency on nursing and residential home for older people (To be known as the Avoiding Admissions review)	Cllr Moira McLaughlin	Agreed by P&P Committee on 2nd February 2015													12/08/14 - Spokespersons agreed to prioritise this review for early 2015. 02/02/15 - Committee agreed to establish a Task & Finish Group to work during the 2015/16 municipal year.
Children ready for school		Agreed by P&P Committee on 20th March 2015													
Budget options	Cllr Moira McLaughlin	Part of the Council's budget process													Workshop held in January 2016. Report to Coordinating Committee on 16th February 2016.
Wirral Plan - Development of delivery plan	Cllr Moira McLaughlin	Proposed by Spokespersons, 21st July													Workshops held in November 2015. Report to Coordinating Committee on 10th December 2015.
Impact Report from previous In-depth Reviews															
Looked After Children Review															Committee (02/12/14) requested future progress report in Dec 2015
Implications of the Francis Report for Wirral															12/08/14 - Spokespersons agreed to refer this item to the Health & Care Performance Panel. A report was presented to the Panel on 20/10/14. Future updates will be provided.
Quality Assurance and Standards in Care Homes															12/08/14 - Spokespersons agreed to refer this item to the Health & Care Performance Panel. A report was discussed by the Panel on 19/11/14. Future updates will be provided.
Reports Requested to Committee															
School Traded Services - proposed changes to service delivery (Edsential)	Clare Fish / David Armstrong														Committee (02/12/14) requested future progress updates, which will be provided in 2015/16 municipal year.
Safeguarding Children Annual Report 2014/15	Simon Garner														Complete
All-age Disability Strategy	Julia Hassall / Graham Hodgkinson														
Child Poverty Strategy - update	Julia Hassall														Committee (02/02/15) requested future updates re effectiveness of the child poverty strategy. Complete
Disability service for children: budget option - progress report	Julia Hassall	Agreed by Spokespersons, 24th Feb 2015													Deferred from 2014/15 municipal year

Key Activities	Lead Member / Officer	Reason for Review	May 2015	June 2015	July 2015	Aug 2015	Sept 2015	Oct 2015	Nov 2015	Dec 2015	Jan 2016	Feb 2016	Mar 2016	April 2016	Outcome
CRI - Follow-up from Spotlight session on 21st Jan 2015															01/10/15 - Spokespersons agreed to refer this item to the Health & Care Performance Panel.
Public Health Annual Report - 2014	Fiona Johnstone	Agreed by Spokespersons, 4th June 2015													Complete
Draft protocol to promote more effective working between Health & Wellbeing Board, Healthwatch and health scrutiny	Clare Fish	Agreed by Spokespersons, 4th June 2015													Draft protocol approved by F&W P&P on 30/07/15. Also approved by Healthwatch board. Awaiting approval from Health & Wellbeing Board
Healthwatch Wirral - update (including Annual Report)	Karen Prior														
Day centres and the establishment of Wirral Evolutions - progress report	Chris Beyga	Agreed by P&P Committee, 8th Sept 2015													Complete
Childcare Bill - update	Julia Hassall	Agreed by Spokespersons, 3rd Sept 2015													01/10/15 - Spokespersons agreed to remove this item from the work programme.
Adults Safeguarding Annual Report	Bernard Walker / Simon Garner	Agreed by Spokespersons, 1st October 2015													Complete
Meeting the housing needs of vulnerable people	Graham Hodgkinson / Ian Platt	Agreed by Spokespersons, 1st October 2015													19/01/16 - Committee requested a follow-up report in 6 months (July 2016) re the implications of Gov't policy on future plans for Extra Care housing
Impact of the reduction in funding for public health	Fiona Johnstone	Agreed by Spokespersons, 1st October 2015													This issue will be reflected upon as part of the budget workshop (11/01/16)
Draft Children Strategy	Julia Hassall	Agreed by Spokespersons, 9th December 2015													Complete
Healthy Wirral programme	Clare Fish	Agreed by Spokespersons, 9th December 2015													
Local implementation of the Modern Slavery Act 2015		Agreed by P&P Committee, 19th Jan 2016													A position statement report was requested in advance of possible review work in the 2016/17 municipal year
Reports to be distributed to Members for information															
Fostering Annual Report	Julia Hassall / Simon Fisher														Outstanding
Adoption Annual Report	Julia Hassall / Simon Fisher														Outstanding
Health & Wellbeing Strategy	Fiona Johnstone														
Local Government Declaration on Tobacco Control - update	Julie Webster	Agreed by Spokespersons 7th January 2014													Complete

Key Activities	Lead Member / Officer	Reason for Review	May 2015	June 2015	July 2015	Aug 2015	Sept 2015	Oct 2015	Nov 2015	Dec 2015	Jan 2016	Feb 2016	Mar 2016	April 2016	Outcome
Referrals from other Committees															
NOM - Local Government Declaration on Tobacco Control	Fiona Johnstone	Agreed by P&P Committee 28th Jan 2014													Member's briefing produced. Complete
NOM - Becoming a 'Dementia-friendly' Council	Proposed: Cllr Tom Anderson; Seconded: Cllr Tracey Smith	Referred from Council, 14th July 2014													Complete
NOM - Mental Health Challenge	Proposed: Cllr Tom Anderson; Seconded: Cllr Lesley Rennie	Referred from Council, 6th July 2015													Complete
Standing Items															
Performance Dashboard															
Financial Monitoring															
Policy Inform - Update															
Budget scrutiny															
Focus On.....' Sessions															
Vanguard Project	John Develing / Jo Goodfellow / Clare Fish	Proposed by Spokespersons 4th June 2015			20th										Complete
All-age Disability Service	Clare Fish / Julia Hassall / Graham Hodgkinson	Proposed by Spokespersons 4th June 2015													01/10/15 - Spokespersons agreed to remove this item from the work programme.
Walsall Community Trust: update on service delivery	Karen Howell / Sandra Christie	Agreed by Spokespersons, November 2015										17th			
Mental Health	Clare Fish	Proposed by Spokespersons 4th June 2015													Deferred to 2016/17 municipal year
Proposed implementation of the Care Act 2014	Graham Hodgkinson	Proposed by Spokespersons 4th June 2015													Deferred to 2016/17 municipal year
Health Inequalities	Fiona Johnstone	Proposed by F&W P&P Committee 8th July 2014													Deferred to 2016/17 municipal year

Key Activities	Lead Member / Officer	Reason for Review	May 2015	June 2015	July 2015	Aug 2015	Sept 2015	Oct 2015	Nov 2015	Dec 2015	Jan 2016	Feb 2016	Mar 2016	April 2016	Outcome
Children Sub-Committee															
Sub-Committee meetings							23rd			16th			30th		
Early Years and Children's centres / 'Giving Wirral children the best start in life'	Julia Hassall / Deborah Gornik	Officer report prior to possible task and finish work													
School standards report regarding outcomes for Key Stage 1, Key Stage 2, GCSE and A Levels, including impact on 'narrowing the gap'	Deborah Gornik / Sue Talbot	Officer report requested													
Children social care reorganisation	Julia Hassall / Lisa Arthey	Officer report requested													
Exception reports highlighting positive and negative aspects arising from school Ofsted inspection reports	Deborah Gornik / Sue Talbot														
Complaints report for Children's Services	Julia Hassall / Simon Garner	Agreed by Spokespersons, 1st October 2015													To be retained for the 2016/17 work programme (and to include comparators with other Local Authorities)
School standards report - attainment at GCSE and A Level: 2015	Sue Talbot	Agreed by Spokespersons, 1st October 2015													
Page 104 Part 6 qualifications and the impact on NEETs	Julia Hassall	Agreed by Spokespersons, 1st October 2015													
Outcomes of the Wirral Council Ofsted inspection (if available)	Julia Hassall	Agreed by Spokespersons, 1st October 2015													
Visits to both high performing and under-performing schools in terms of attainment.		Proposed by Children Sub-Committee , 23/09/15													Visits to be arranged
Special Guardianship Orders		Proposed by Chair, 30/11/15, as a result of the Safeguarding scrutiny review													
Governance arrangements and role of scrutiny in safeguarding		Proposed by Chair, 30/11/15, as a result of the Safeguarding scrutiny review													Deferred to 2016/17 municipal year
Children Centres - Performance Indicators (CSC018 - CSC021) - further explanation		Proposed by Children Sub-Committee , 16/12/15													
Devolution of the Further Education budget and the apprenticeship framework		Proposed by Children Sub-Committee , 16/12/15													To be considered for the 2016/17 work programme

Key Activities	Lead Member / Officer	Reason for Review	May 2015	June 2015	July 2015	Aug 2015	Sept 2015	Oct 2015	Nov 2015	Dec 2015	Jan 2016	Feb 2016	Mar 2016	April 2016	Outcome
Health & Care Performance Panel															
Panel meetings						20th	28th		25th		12th		16th		A meeting to review the draft Quality Accounts of health partners is scheduled for Tues 10th May 2016
Care home and domiciliary care – performance report (Amanda Kelly)	Amanda Kelly	Proposed by H&CPP, 19/11/14													
The impact of changes to Out of hospital services	Jacqui Evans	Proposed by H&CPP, 01/04/15													
Preparations for winter pressures	Jacqui Evans	Proposed by H&CPP, 01/04/15													
Quality framework and performance measures for the health sector in Wirral	Lorna Quigley	Standard agenda item													
Feedback from Quality Surveillance Group	Lorna Quigley	Standard agenda item													
Francis Scrutiny review – review of recommendations	Lorna Quigley, Jill Galvani, Alan Veitch	Proposed by H&CPP, 20/10/14													Deferred to 2016/17 municipal year
Care Homes Scrutiny Review – review of recommendations	Amanda Kelly	Proposed by H&CPP, 19/11/14													
Social care complaints report, to include domiciliary care	David Jones	Proposed by H&CPP, 04/02/15													Follow-up report - Deferred to 2016/17 municipal year
WUTH: Follow-up report relating to issues arising from the CQC action plan (Sept 2014)	Jill Galvani, Evan Moore, Jean Quinn	Proposed by H&CPP, 01/04/15													
WUTH: Follow-up report relating to issues arising from the Best Improvement Plan	Anthony Hassall	Proposed by F&W P&P Committee, 02/02/15													P&P Committee (02/02/15) requested future updates
WUTH: Follow-up report relating to issues arising from A&E targets		Proposed by F&W P&P Committee, 02/02/15													
The implementation of the Better Care Fund (H&CPP, 01/04/15)	Jacqui Evans	Proposed by H&CPP, 01/04/15													01/10/15 - Spokespersons agreed to remove this item from the work programme.
CQC inspection report for Cheshire & Wirral Partnership Trust (Inspection of June 2015)		Proposed by H&CPP, 20/08/15													
Drug and alcohol service / CRI - performance update	Julie Webster / Gary Rickwood + CRI	Agreed by Spokespersons, 1st October 2015													
CQC inspection report for WUTH (Inspection of Sept 2015)		Agreed by Spokespersons, 1st October 2015													To be arranged - once the report is available
WUTH: incidents of infection rates		Proposed by H&CPP, 25/11/15													
Macular degeneration / sight impairment		Agreed by Chair, 25/11/15													
Continuing Healthcare funding	Karen Prior - Healthwatch	Proposed by F&W P&P Committee, 01/12/15													
Improving people's experience of integrated care (service user experience questionnaire) - Performance Indicator ADDP13		Proposed by F&W P&P Committee, 01/12/15													Complete
Member visits to CRI services		Proposed by H&CPP, 25/11/15													Visits to be arranged

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