

CABINET PORTFOLIO SUMMARY REPORT

REPORT OF	COUNCILLOR TONY SMITH
CABINET PORTFOLIO FOR	CHILDREN AND FAMILY SERVICES
CO-ORDINATING CHIEF OFFICER	DIRECTOR OF CHILDREN'S SERVICES

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This report is an update from the Cabinet Portfolio Holder to members of the Council on matters relevant to his portfolio.

1. CHILDREN'S SERVICES PRIORITIES

The Children's Trust Board, comprising partners from different agencies working with children and young people in Wirral have confirmed the following high level transformational outcomes for children and young people. These are incorporated in the refreshed Children and Young People's Plan:

- Children are ready for school
- Young people are ready for work and adult life
- Children and young people have their needs met as early as possible
- Children and young people feel safe and are safe

These priorities will inform all work to improve outcomes for children and young people. This report will focus on two of the outcomes.

2. CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE HAVE THEIR NEEDS MET AS EARLY AS POSSIBLE

- Over 70 delegates from key partner organisations attended the 'Committing to making a difference in Wirral' strategic stakeholder event on 1st May 2014 at the Floral Pavilion, New Brighton.
- Partners were invited to commit to the principles of Early Help and endorse the Regional Integrated Early Help Strategy.
- 3 Locality Events followed at the beginning of June. Led by the Senior Locality Managers and supported by partners from each area, the events provided delegates with the opportunity for organisations to understand what early help means for Wirral.
- A steering group is now being established; a local action plan will be produced and a communication strategy developed.
- A review is also underway to advise on options for the future service delivery across Early Years and Children's Centres. A core group of multi agency partners are overseeing the review, which will be concluded by Autumn 2014.
- An interim evaluation of the Intensive Family Intervention Programme at 31 May 2014 confirmed that out of 674 families receiving intervention, improved

outcomes for families include reducing incidents of domestic violence (51%), improving parenting capacity (94%), improvements for individuals with substance misuse issues (68%), improved school attendance (88%).

- The G.I.R.L.S. project is a targeted programme across Wirral, working with 240 young women during 2014/15. The accredited programme offers an opportunity for vulnerable and at risk young women aged 13 – 19 years to participate in personal development work to increase their confidence and self esteem.

3. CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE FEEL SAFE AND ARE SAFE

The Wirral Safeguarding Children Board continues to oversee a range of partner strategies to enable children and young people to feel safe and be safe. Work during this quarter includes:

- Strengthening the Child Sexual Exploitation work through monthly operational meetings, chaired by the Police to focus on individual young people who may be at risk; wide ranging partnership training; bespoke training for schools is being developed by Wirral Youth Theatre, engagement of taxi drivers to support a 'see it, report it' strategy and awareness raising training for elected members in September 2014.
- Implementation of a new Strategy for children experiencing Neglect; to ensure that the children's workforce is able to recognise neglect and provide an effective response. Progress of the strategy's action plan will be overseen by the Stay Safe Strategic Group.
- A workshop for 154 practitioners was, entitled Who's Looking out for the Teenagers? To embed the finding of a local Serious Case Review. This focused on issues such as mental health, domestic abuse, homelessness, substance misuse, transition into adulthood, youth support and child sexual exploitation;
- Within Children's Social Care, work continues to address practice issues and raise standards via a Practice Improvement Group. All aspects of Social Work and partnership working are considered, in line with the Ofsted inspection framework.