

**CABINET PORTFOLIO SUMMARY REPORT**

<b>REPORT OF</b>	Councillor Bernie Mooney
<b>CABINET PORTFOLIO FOR</b>	Children and Families
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**EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

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

**1 VULNERABLE CHILDREN REACH THEIR FULL POTENTIAL**

I want to use my report to Council to provide Members with an update on our Improvement programme within children's services. We have been unequivocally clear – delivering excellent children's services for every young person in our borough is hugely important, it is our number one priority.

It is for this reason that we invested £20 million into our services last year – during a time of prolonged austerity, where every penny is squeezed, we made sure we found the money to deliver the services and support our youngest and most vulnerable residents deserve.

I am delighted to say this investment, this absolute unerring focus on improving social work practice and service, is having an impact. Ofsted continue to work with us regularly and their latest feedback shows just how far we have come.

The letter which Ofsted have published shows there is a clear and decisive movement towards an improved service to ensure the safety of our most vulnerable young people. There is still much work to be done on areas such as working with partner agencies, but in a relatively short space of time we have seen a significant change for the better in Wirral Children's Services.

Members can read the full monitoring letter [here](#).

I am proud of the work we have done, I am pleased it has been recognised by Ofsted, but I am under no illusions that there is still work to do. We will deliver, and I promise to keep all Members informed as we continue to improve.

The inspectors also recognised the work the council has done to recruit more permanent social workers and highlighted "improved stability" within the department. Their letter also said feedback gathered from parents and professionals about conferences that they had attended were "overwhelmingly positive" and that parents "felt listened to".

During their visit on September 4 and 5 the inspectors found that areas where the department had faced criticism in the past were also improving. In the letter they said: "Children's electronic files are up to date and well recorded. Case notes, case

summaries, descriptions of activity and analyses are generally clear and give a good picture of case progress.” They also highlighted that “files show increasingly robust management oversight”.

You can read more about these developments in [Wirral View](#) and the [Wirral Globe](#).

I was also delighted recently to be able to launch a new service aimed at supporting the most vulnerable young people in the borough. The Adolescent Edge of Care Team will help teenagers deal with specific issues they may face in what can be a difficult time of their lives.

It can be a difficult time for a young person, and their family, and we are aiming to provide help tailored to their specific needs, and wherever possible allowing them to remain with the families and communities.

The effects of physical, emotional and hormonal development combined with a growing desire for independence and peer approval, can often be confusing for them and can in some cases lead to risk taking behaviour and even family breakdown.

The new service is offered seven-days-a-week, including evenings, and provides one-to-one support, group work, family mediation, respite, and placement support. To get support call 606 2008 and ask for the Adolescent Edge of Care Team.

Read more about this new service in the [Wirral Globe](#).

We also continue to invest in our services, and I want to highlight the excellent work by our Early Help services all across the borough. Over the past year, we have seen a surge in use of our children’s centres. One recent development I was delighted to attend was the revamped garden area at Brassey Gardens, a centre loved by many hundreds of local families.

More about that in [Wirral View](#) and I would also encourage all Members to look at our Early Help activities online at [facebook.com/mychildcan](https://facebook.com/mychildcan).

Finally, Members will be aware that we continue to do all we can to recruit families to become foster carers and adopters. I am pleased to inform Council that 12 new families have now become approved Foster Carers in just the past two months, following our extensive campaigns.

I want to thank those families for giving up their time and their homes to support a vulnerable young person, and encourage every Member in this Chamber to help us as we make sure every child in our care has the chance to live in a safe, loving, supportive home.