



Children and Young People Overview and Scrutiny Committee

Date:	Tuesday, 2 June 2009
Time:	6.00 pm
Venue:	Committee Room 3 - Wallasey Town Hall

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AGENDA

1. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

The members of the Committee are asked to consider whether they have a personal or prejudicial interest in connection with any item on this agenda and, if so, to declare it and state the nature of that interest.

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

2. MINUTES (Pages 1 - 8)

To receive the minutes of the meetings held on 16 March (attached) and 20 April (to follow).

3. APPOINTMENT OF VICE-CHAIR

The Council has left the appointment of vice-chairs to individual committees.

4. TERMS OF REFERENCE (Pages 9 - 12)

The Committee is requested to note its revised terms of reference – those specific to this Committee, general terms of reference for overview and scrutiny committees and those of the Scrutiny Programme Board.

5. **COMMITTEE WORK PROGRAMME 2009/10 (Pages 13 - 20)**
6. **SCRUTINY REVIEW - LITERACY LEVELS AT KEY STAGE 2 - PROGRESS REPORT (Pages 21 - 26)**
7. **EDUCATION SOCIAL WELFARE SERVICE - DRAFT ANNUAL REPORT 2007/08 (Pages 27 - 42)**
8. **COMPLAINT MONITORING (Pages 43 - 46)**
9. **SCHOOL STANDARDS SUB-COMMITTEE**
 - (a) To receive the minutes of the meeting held on 1 April (to follow).
 - (b) To appoint the membership of the Sub-Committee for 2009/10. In the last year membership consisted of the three party spokespersons (with the remaining committee members serving as deputies) plus the diocesan and parent governor representatives.
10. **CO-OPTED MEMBERSHIP**

All of the new overview and scrutiny committees are being asked to consider if they wish to extend or initiate co-opted membership.
11. **EXEMPT INFORMATION - EXCLUSION OF MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC**

Under section 100(A)(4) of the Local Government Act 1972, the public may be excluded from the meeting during consideration of the following item of business on the ground that it involves the likely disclosure of exempt information as defined by the relevant paragraph of Part I of Schedule 12A (as amended) to that Act.
12. **CHILDREN'S HOMES - REPORT ON VISITS BY OFFICERS AND MEMBERS (Pages 47 - 52)**
13. **ANY OTHER URGENT BUSINESS ACCEPTED BY THE CHAIR**

CHILDREN'S SERVICES AND LIFELONG LEARNING OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

Monday 16 March 2009

<u>Present:</u>	Councillor	S Clarke (Chair)	
	Councillors	F Doyle T Anderson T Harney	T Smith W Smith
<u>Deputy:</u>	Councillors	A Pritchard	
<u>Cabinet member:</u>	Councillor	PL Davies	
<u>Co-opted members:</u>		Mrs J Kearney Mrs M Liddy	Mrs J Owens

53 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

The members of the Committee were asked to consider whether they had a personal or prejudicial interest in connection with any item on the agenda and, if so, to declare it and to state the nature of such interest. The following declaration was made:

Councillor Sheila Clarke – a personal interest in minute 59 by virtue of having served as a member of the Adoption Panel.

54 PROPOSED CHILDREN IN CARE COUNCIL

The Director of Children's Services reported on proposals for the creation of Wirral's Children in Care Council; a minimum expectation for all Children's Services authorities as outlined in 'Care Matters: Time for Change' (DfES - 2007). The Government expected each local authority to put in place arrangements for a Children in Care Council with direct links to the Director of Children's Services and the lead elected member, in order to improve the corporate parenting role and ultimately to improve the outcomes for children in care.

The precise form that the Care Council would take was not currently prescribed, but Care Matters required that the accountability and governance arrangements for the Children's Services corporate parenting structure should include a Children in Care Council. In addition the Council was required to develop a pledge which covered the services and support children in care should expect to receive. Ofsted would take account of both of those in future inspections. Local authorities had to ensure that children were involved in planning for their lives and in developing services; and they should have in place a process that demonstrated that there was visible dialogue between the Director of Children's Services and the lead elected member for Children's Services.

Two of the young people who had been involved in drawing up the pledge, Sam and Chris, attended the meeting and stressed in particular the need for children in care to

be treated the same as other children. They responded to a number of questions by members on other aspects of the pledge, such as the need to avoid delays in obtaining consents and each child in care having a qualified social worker assigned to them.

Julia Hassall, Head of Children's Social Care, stated that the issue of permissions had been raised at a national level, resulting in national guidance, but it was still necessary to ensure that individual foster parents felt sufficiently confident to act in accordance with them. The position with assigned social workers was that currently 95% of children had one; particular attention was paid to those who didn't; and action was being taken to ensure the retention of existing staff. Social workers' visits took place more regularly than required by national standards.

Resolved - That

- (1) Sam and Chris, together with all of the young people and officers involved in the process, be thanked for their work;**
- (2) the Pledge and the whole of the arrangements for the Children in Care Council be endorsed; and**
- (3) progress be reviewed in 12 months' time, with representatives of the Children in Care Council being invited to the meeting.**

55 COMPLAINTS MONITORING

The Director of Children's Services presented an analysis of complaints registered under The Children Act 1989 Representations Procedure (England) Regulations 2006. Over the period 1 October to 31 December 2008 the following complaints had been registered:

Stage 1 complaints – 17, compared with 20 complaints the previous quarter;
Stage 2 complaints – four, compared with two complaints in the previous quarter;
Stage 3 complaints – none.

It was felt that progress in the way complaints were dealt with was continuing.

Resolved – That

- (1) the report be noted;**
- (2) future reports identify any themes that might be apparent from the complaints.**

56 MINUTES

Resolved - That the minutes of the previous meeting, held on 13 January 2009, be accepted as a correct record.

57 ACTIONS RESULTING FROM THE BABY P CASE

Arising out of minute 47 (13/1/09), the Director of Children's Services reported upon measures to strengthen childcare services in the light of the findings of the Baby P case. A report, to be considered by the Cabinet on 19 March, dealt with the creation

of an additional nine social worker posts, measures for improving links between agencies and improved information/administrative systems. Nationally, additional training for directors of children's services, and aspiring directors, was being put in place, and the Director himself was a member of the team responsible for devising the programme.

The Director went on to explain progress in training professionals in the use of the Child Concern Model. With regard to complying with recommended caseloads, Julia Hassall explained that they had actually increased since 2003. The additional nine posts would alleviate that situation, especially in assessment teams. In addition, measures were being investigated with the aim of balancing caseloads in terms of complexity and the relative experience of social workers. Recruitment and retention remained a significant factor.

Resolved – That the report be noted.

58 **EARLY YEARS PROVISION IN WIRRAL**

The Director of Children's Services submitted a comprehensive report that outlined the development in Wirral's provision for young children and their families and advised of progress in key parts of the Early Years Outcomes Duty Plan. The Committee was reminded that a good start in life was essential if children were to fulfil their potential. Services available in early childhood services would result in better outcomes for young children, their families and society. All parents, from the time they are expecting a baby, should be able to access integrated child health, high quality early years provision and family support services, some free at the point of delivery. He went on to describe the new duties on local authorities and partner agencies under the Childcare Act 2006

Caroline Kerr, Principal Manager (Children's Centres), explained the implementation of the children's centres programme in more detail and how progress and outcomes were being measured. She referred in particular to how services had been targeted initially on the most disadvantaged areas.

The members of the Committee raised a number of issues including literacy levels among young children, outreach work to deal with those families with whom it was difficult to engage, relationships between children's centres and private nurseries, the input from health services. Some concern was expressed about the target date of 2020, by which time at least 90% of children were expected to be developing well across all areas of the Early Years Foundation Stage Profile by age five. Caroline Kerr stated that Wirral had made progress towards that target in each of the last five years. Mark Parkinson, Head of Learning and Achievement, added that the development of comprehensive family services through the centres, would be a key element in supporting that progress.

Resolved – That the officers be thanked for their most informative report.

59 **ADOPTION SERVICE - INSPECTION, AND REPORT OF THE ADOPTION PANEL**

The Director of Children's Services reported on the outcome of the inspection of the Adoption Service, undertaken by Ofsted in September 2008. The report also includes the Adoption Panel's Annual Report, as it had a key part to play in the performance

of the service. The Director explained that the previous inspection had taken place in July 2005. Wirral's Adoption Service undertook all statutory responsibilities associated with current legislation and regulations. Those responsibilities included the recruitment, preparation, assessment and approvals of adopters, placement support and post-adoption support. The service also undertook case management of a limited number of children's cases who had a plan for adoption. Those responsibilities reflected local authority services for adoption across the region.

The key findings of the inspection were that it was a satisfactory service, with some good aspects:

- the service had a strong commitment to improving outcomes for children and was focused on their safety and well being;
- there was a thorough approach to the preparation, assessment and support of adopters and an emphasis on achieving suitable matches based on children's needs – that was reflected in a low level of disruption of placements;
- a range of services were provided to birth families which encouraged them to be involved in planning for their children's futures;
- the manager and senior managers provided leadership and support to staff, and the whole team were committed to moving the service forward;
- the manager, senior managers and the team were aware of the areas that were in need of improvement and there were already plans in place to address those prior to the inspection.

The inspectors had commented that the service had made progress since 2005 in many areas, including improved staff training, preparation and assessment of potential adopters, adoption support planning and working with birth parents. The arrangements for archiving adoption files had been improved and personnel records of staff and panel members operating in the service are now largely compliant with standards. The two recommended actions from the latest report were that the service must ensure that full and correct information on children was contained in their child permanence report, and that case records for children contained the required information. Those were already being addressed prior to the inspection.

Resolved – That the report and the action being taken in response to it be noted.

60 PERFORMANCE MONITORING - THIRD QUARTER

The Director of Children's Services submitted the Department's third quarter performance monitoring report.

Resolved – That the report be noted.

61 CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE DEPARTMENT - FINANCIAL MONITORING

The Director of Children's Services submitted a financial overview of his department's budget in the current year. At the time of reporting there was no projected overspend for the department. Cost pressures had been contained by maximising grants and expenditure restrictions. He referred to particular areas of the budget including out-of-borough placements. He pointed out that, having achieved

significant reductions in numbers in previous years, it would in future be difficult to set specific targets, though continuing to reduce the total remained a long-term aim.

Resolved – That the Director and his staff be congratulated on the high standard of financial management within the Department.

62 **CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE DEPARTMENT - CAPITAL PROGRAMME MONITORING**

The Director of Children's Services reported on progress in implementing the Department's capital programme.

Resolved – That the report be noted.

63 **CONTRACTS EXCEEDING £50,000**

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

- building works
- out-of-authority placements
- residential care placements
- Connexions (Positive Activities for Young People)
- secondary school catering
- miscellaneous supplies and services.

Resolved – That the report be noted.

64 **SCRUTINY WORK PROGRAMME**

The Chair submitted an update on the Committee's work programme showing:

- (i) all items selected by the Committee for inclusion on the work programme for the current year, together with monitoring of previous recommendations;
- (ii) an opportunity for adding to the work programme
- (iii) the proposed outline meeting schedule for the municipal year;
- (iv) progress on the in-depth panel reviews.

Councillor Harney suggested the addition of a topic of the correlation between deprivation and under-achievement by pupils and how, in those circumstances, families were supported. Members discussed the content of reports and concluded that the use of case studies, for example to illustrate the extent of family deprivation, might sometimes be more helpful, rather than relying wholly on statistics. Councillor Harney was conscious of the potential workload involved in that topic and suggested that the Committee might make use of research undertaken for university qualifications.

Councillor Doyle referred to a proposal for a joint study, with the Social Care, Health and Inclusion Committee, on alcohol abuse. Councillor Tony Smith suggested the issue of surpluses in school budgets.

In relation to the earlier proposal that the Committee should look at the issue of teenage pregnancy, it was noted that the Cabinet would be considering a report on the subject on 9 April and that Wirral PCT's Teenage Pregnancy Co-ordinator had arranged a seminar for all Council members on 21 April.

Resolved – That the issues now suggested be added to the Committee's work programme.

65 SCHOOL STANDARDS SUB-COMMITTEE - MINUTES

The minutes of meetings of the School Standards Sub-Committee, held on 2 and 9 February 2009, were submitted. The Sub-Committee had considered a number of issues, in particular the Ofsted reports relating to the following schools:

Primary

Satisfactory schools

Bedford Drive
Brackenwood Junior
Castleway Primary
Holy Cross Catholic Primary
Kingsway Primary
Leasowe Primary
Liscard Primary
New Brighton Primary
St Joseph's Catholic Primary, Wallasey

Good schools

Barnston Primary
Brookdale Primary
Ladymount Catholic Primary
Mersey Park Primary
Overchurch Infant
Portland Primary
Rock Ferry Primary
St Bridget's C of E Primary
St George's Primary
St Joseph's Catholic Primary, Birkenhead
St Laurence's Catholic Primary
Somerville Primary
Stanton Road Primary

Outstanding schools

Dawpool C of E Primary
Elleray Park (Special School)
Greasby Junior
Higher Bebington Junior
Our Lady of Pity Catholic Primary

Secondary

Good schools

Park High
Rock Ferry High
Wallasey

Outstanding schools

West Kirby Grammar for Girls
Woodchurch High

Resolved – That the minutes be noted.

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CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE – Terms of reference

In support of Objective 4 of the Corporate Plan, which is:

to raise the aspirations of young people, and in particular to:

- ***raise overall educational attainment, particularly that of lower achieving young people and***
- ***safely reduce the number of looked-after children,***

the Overview and Scrutiny Committee will

(i) review and/or scrutinise decisions made or actions taken in connection with the discharge of the Council's functions;

(ii) make reports and/or recommendations to the Council and/or the Cabinet and/or any joint or area committee in connection with any policy or the discharge of any functions;

(iii) consider any matter affecting the area or its inhabitants; and

(iv) exercise the right to call in, for reconsideration, decisions made but not yet implemented by the Executive;

within the following terms of reference of the Cabinet portfolio(s) indicated:

Children's Services and Lifelong Learning

- (1) The powers and duties set out in
 - the Children Act, 1989
 - the Education Act, 1996
 - the School Standards and Framework Act, 1998
 - the Education Act, 2002,
 - the Children Act, 2004
 - the Education Act 2005
 - the Education and Inspection Act 2006 and
 - any other legislation relevant to the functions defined below.
- (2) The promotion of improvement in the outcomes for children and young people in terms of their health, their education and training, their ability to make a positive contribution, and their social and economic well-being.
- (3) Ensuring that children and young people in Wirral are safe from harm and neglect, and that their welfare is promoted.
- (4) The provision of services for children and young people including services for children and young people in care to the Council, provision for early years childcare and education, primary and secondary education, adult education, and youth and play activities.
- (5) The promotion of effective partnership working between all the statutory and non-statutory agencies which provide services for children and young people and, where feasible, to promote the integration of services.

- (6) Ensure that systems are in place to manage and scrutinise the performance of all the services for children and young people.
- (7) Ensure that resources are efficiently and effectively targeted towards the improvement of outcomes.
- (8) Liaison with the Strategic Health Authority and health trusts serving Wirral on matters relating to children and young people.
- (9) Liaison with the Learning and Skills Council on matters relating to further education and training, ensuring, in consultation with the Cabinet member for Regeneration and Planning Strategy, that the training needs of employers, employees and prospective employees are met.
- (10) Liaison with the Greater Merseyside Connexions Partnership on matters relating to young people's preparation for working life and specifically to have responsibility for the regulation of the employment of young people.
- (11) Liaison with the Police Authority, the Probation Service and the Youth Offending Service on matters relating to youth crime and disorder.

All portfolios

- (12) Those parts of the Corporate Plan within the remit of this Committee,
- (13) To seek to achieve continuing and improving performance, better value for money and customer satisfaction in respect of those services provided through these areas.
- (14) To support the Council's equal opportunity policies by promoting and monitoring initiatives to encourage equality of opportunity amongst disadvantaged groups including: the disabled, ethnic minorities, the long-term unemployed, the poor, and women;
- (15) To scrutinise Local Area Agreements that fall within the areas set out above and to hold partners to account.

OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEES – General terms of reference

The specific terms of reference for each overview and scrutiny committee are set out below. Their general functions are as follows:

(a) Policy development and review - Overview and Scrutiny committees may:

- (i) assist the Council and the Cabinet in the development of the budget and policy framework by in-depth analysis of policy issues;
- (ii) conduct research, community and other consultation in the analysis of policy issues and possible options;
- (iii) consider and implement mechanisms to encourage and enhance community participation in the development of policy options;
- (iv) question members of the Cabinet and committees and chief officers about their views on issues and proposals affecting the area; and
- (v) liaise with other external organisations operating in the area (whether national, regional or local) to ensure that the interests of local people are enhanced by collaborative working.

(b) Scrutiny - Overview and Scrutiny committees may:

- (i) review and scrutinise the decisions made by and performance of the Cabinet and committees and Council officers, both in relation to individual decisions and over periods of time;
- (ii) review and scrutinise the performance of the Council in relation to its policy objectives, performance targets and/or particular service areas;
- (iii) question members of the Cabinet and committees, and chief officers, about their decisions and performance, whether generally or in comparison with service plans and targets over a period of time, or in relation to particular decisions, initiatives or projects;
- (iv) make recommendations to the Cabinet or appropriate committees of the Council arising from the outcome of the scrutiny process;
- (v) review and scrutinise the performance of other public bodies in the area and invite reports from them by requesting them to address the overview and scrutiny committee and local people about their activities and performance; and,
- (vi) question and gather evidence from any person (with their consent).

(c) Best Value - Overview and Scrutiny Committees will:

- (i) recommend the terms of reference for best value reviews to the Cabinet;
- (ii) receive progress reports on best value reviews;
- (iii) recommend the final report and improvement plans to Cabinet.

- (d) **Finance** - Overview and Scrutiny Committees may exercise overall responsibility for any finance made available to them.
- (e) **Annual Report** - Overview and Scrutiny Committees may report annually to the Council on their workings and make recommendations for future work programmes and amend working methods if appropriate.
- (f) **Officers** - Overview and Scrutiny Committees may exercise overall responsibility for the work programme of any officers employed to support their work.

SCRUTINY PROGRAMME BOARD

The Scrutiny Programme Board will:

- (i) approve and co-ordinate the work programme for the five themed overview and scrutiny committees including resolving any conflict between such committees;
- (ii) allocate work to (or remove work from) any of the five overview and scrutiny committees
- (iii) review or scrutinise decisions made or other actions taken in relation to any executive functions, particularly (but not exclusively) in relation to cross-cutting issues or matters not within the terms of reference of any of the five themed overview and scrutiny committees.
- (iv) consider any call-in notices in relation to any executive functions and determine such notices or allocate them to one or more of the five themed overview and scrutiny committees as it considers most appropriate.
- (v) be responsible for the development and monitoring of an annual scrutiny work programme;
- (vi) undertake scrutiny in its own right with regard to cross-cutting or strategic issues not covered by other overview and scrutiny committees;
- (vii) identify and share good scrutiny practice across all overview and scrutiny committees.

UPDATE ON WORK PROGRAM : CHILDREN'S SERVICES AND LIFELONG LEARNING OSC

POSITION AT THE END OF THE 2008/09 MUNICIPAL YEAR

New Reports to assist in monitoring the Committee's work programme

It was agreed by the Scrutiny Chairs Group in September 2008 to use the following reports to monitor the work programme for each Scrutiny Committee. The last item on each Scrutiny Committee agenda should be 'Review of the Committee Work Programme'.

Report 1 - Monitoring Report for Scrutiny Committee Work Programme

This report will list all items that have been selected by the Committee for inclusion on the work programme for the current year.

It will also include items, such as previous Panel Reviews, where recommendations have been made to Cabinet. It is important that the implementation of these recommendations is monitored. Otherwise there is no measure of the success of scrutiny.

For each item on the work programme, the report will give a description, an indication of how the item will be dealt with, a relative timescale for the work and brief comments on progress.

Report 2 - Suggestions for Additions to Work Programme

The Work Programme for the Committee should be reviewed at each meeting. This will include members having the opportunity to ask for new Items to be added to the programme. This report will list any newly suggested items. Committee will then have the opportunity to agree (or not) for them to be added to the programme.

Report 3 - Proposed Outline Meeting Schedule for the Municipal Year

The report will, for each scheduled Committee meeting, list those items which are likely to be on the meeting agenda. This will give the opportunity for Committee members to take a greater lead in organising their work programme.

Report 4 - Progress Report on In-Depth Panel Reviews

This report will give a very brief update on progress / timescales for in-depth panel reviews which are in the 'ownership' of the Committee.

REPORT 1
MONITORING REPORT FOR SCRUTINY COMMITTEE WORK PROGRAMME
CHILDREN'S SERVICES & LIFELONG LEARNING SCRUTINY COMMITTEE : 2008 / 2009

Date of New item	Topic Description	How the topic will be dealt with	Estimated Complete Date	Comments on Progress	Complete?
2006	Report on the Support Given to Schools Pre- and Post-Ofsted Inspections	Panel Review		Final Report produced April 2007. Implementation of recommendations to be monitored by Standards sub-committee.	
2006	Fostering Service Review	Panel Review		Final Report produced March 2008. Report discussed by Cabinet on 10th December. Implementation of recommendations to be monitored at a later date.	
Oct 2007	Youth Outreach Review	Panel Review	Report agreed Nov 2008	Final Report to Scrutiny Committee on 11th Nov. Report discussed by Cabinet on 10th December.	
July 2008	Update on Special Schools	Officer reports		Report to Committee 11th Nov. OSC members to visit schools.	
July 2008	Transition from Children's to Adult Social Services	Officer Report		Report to Committee 16th March. Item deferred until meeting in June 2009	
July 2008	NEET rates (Not in education, employment or training) - in particular, what has been the impact of specific projects aimed at NEETs?	Officer Report		Report to Committee 13th Jan.	Complete
July 2008	Behavioural Issues and Exclusions	Officer Report		Report to Committee 11th Nov.	Complete
July 2008	Committee Structure and Governance Arrangements in Children's Services	To be agreed	Report due June 2009	Report being produced to detail all committees / panels / working parties / outside bodies for Children's Services. Data being gathered.	
July 2008	Literacy Levels in schools at the end of Key Stage 2	Panel Review	Report due June 2009	Draft scope form agreed by Committee on 11th Nov. Data gathering has commenced with visits to schools.	
July 2008	School Funding	To be agreed		Notice has been given that the Committee intend to scrutinize School Funding during the 2009 / 10 municipal year.	

Date of New item	Topic Description	How the topic will be dealt with	Estimated Complete Date	Comments on Progress	Complete?
Oct 2008	Wirral Music Service	Officer Report		Committee requested a further report during a budget savings debate on the Wirral Music Service on 28th October 2008. Item on agenda for 13th Jan 2009.	(13/01/09) Agreed that Annual report on Music Service to be produced - for a future meeting.
Nov 2008	Early Years Education	Officer Report		Item requested by Sheila Clarke (11th Nov meeting). Item on agenda for 13th Jan 2009. Item deferred until 16 th March.	Complete
Nov 2008	Private Fostering	Officer report		Item discussed by OSC on 11th Nov 2008. Members requested another report in one year's time. As a result of the Ofsted Annual Performance Letter, it was agreed on 13/01/09 that a report would be produced for the March meeting. However, this report will now be deferred until a future meeting.	
Nov 2008	Wirral Adoption Service	Officer Report		Item discussed by OSC on 11th Nov 2008. Further reports to be produced on the Adoption service in the future, including Special Guardianship.	
Jan 2009	Teenage Pregnancy	Panel Review??		Item requested by Sheila Clarke (13 th Jan meeting). The OSC meeting on 16/03/09 agreed to receive an officer report at the June meeting. (A similar report will go to Cabinet on 09/04/09).	
Jan 2009	Child protection	Officer report		As a result of the verbal report on 'The Impact of the Baby P Case' given by Howard Cooper (13/01/09), it was agreed that a further update report would be produced in the future.	
March 2009	Proposed Children in Care Council	Officer report		A future progress report will be produced on the Children in Care Council	

REPORT 2
SUGGESTIONS FOR ADDITIONS TO WORK PROGRAMME
CHILDREN'S SERVICES & LIFELONG LEARNING SCRUTINY COMMITTEE : END OF 2008/09

Topic Description	Topic suggested by	How the topic will be dealt with	Estimated Completion Date
The identification of deprivation and the impact on learning outcomes	Tom Harney and supported by OSC meeting on 16/03/09	Consider for inclusion on the work programme for the 2009/10 municipal year	
Impact of alcohol on children	Frank Doyle and supported by OSC meeting on 16/03/09	Possible joint scrutiny work with Social Care and Health Scrutiny Committee	
Surplus in school budgets (held by some schools)	Tony Smith	Consider for inclusion on the work programme for the 2009/10 municipal year	
Member's visits to Children's homes (see report from 13/01/09 meeting)	Item deferred from the meeting on 16/03/ 09.	Officer report	

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REPORT 3
PROPOSED OUTLINE MEETING SCHEDULE FOR THE MUNICIPAL YEAR
CHILDREN'S SERVICES & LIFELONG LEARNING SCRUTINY COMMITTEE : 2008 / 2009

Meeting Date	Topic Description
02/06/08	Committee Work Programme for 2008 / 9 Consultation on Informal Adult Learning Performance Monitoring Report for 2007 / 8 Children's Complaints - Evaluation and Monitoring Assessing Children's Social Care
16/0908	School Standards - Presentation on headline results Committee Work Programme 2008/9 Q1 Performance Monitoring Report Children's Services - Complaints Procedures
11/11/08	Final report from the Youth Outreach Scrutiny Panel Update on Special schools Behavioural Issues and Exclusions Children in Care Private Fostering Fostering and Adoption Services Inspection Reports Financial Monitoring Report Performance Management Report
13/01/09	Secondary School Review NEET rates (Not in education, employment or training) - in particular, what has been the impact of specific projects aimed at NEETs? Update on Music Service Actions resulting from the Baby P case Annual Performance Assessment

Meeting Date	Topic Description
16/03/09	Member's visits to Children's homes (see report from 13/01/09 meeting) Early Years Education - Update on Sure Start Children in Care Council Adoption service Contracts report Complaints Monitoring Capital Programme Financial Monitoring Report Performance Management Report – Quarter 3

REPORT 4
PROGRESS REPORT ON IN-DEPTH PANEL REVIEWS
CHILDREN'S SERVICES & LIFELONG LEARNING SCRUTINY COMMITTEE : END OF 2008/09

Title of Review	Members of Panel	Progress to Date	Date Due to report to Committee
Literacy Levels at Key Stage 2	Councillors Sheila Clarke (chair) Frank Doyle Tony Smith	Draft scope agreed at OSC meeting on 11th Nov. Data gathering has commenced. Visits to three primary schools have taken place; one further visit is due to take place later in March. 'Interviews' with key officers have also commenced; others are due to take place during March / April.	June 2009

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WIRRAL COUNCIL

CHILDREN'S SERVICES AND LIFELONG LEARNING OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE - 2nd JUNE 2009

REPORT OF THE COMMITTEE CHAIR - Cllr Sheila Clarke

'LITERACY LEVELS AT KEY STAGE 2' SCRUTINY REVIEW - PROGRESS REPORT

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This report provides an update on progress for the 'Literacy Levels at Key Stage 2' Scrutiny Review.

1. Background

- 1.1 At the meeting of Children's Services & Lifelong Learning Overview and Scrutiny Committee held on 16th September 2008, the Work Programme for the Committee was agreed. One item on the programme was Literacy levels at the time of the children leaving primary schools (end of Key Stage 2).
- 1.2 It is recognised that the 2008 Key Stage 2 SAT results for English (including Reading and Writing) in Wirral are above the national average. Clearly, there are many examples of good practice in Wirral, which is contributing to the attainment of these results. However, there remain a number of children who do not achieve the recognised standard of Level 4 in reading and writing.
- 1.3 At the meeting of Children's Services & Lifelong Learning Overview and Scrutiny Committee held on 11th November 2008, the Scope Document for the review was agreed. A copy of the scope document is attached as Appendix 1. The three spokespersons (Councillors Sheila Clarke, Frank Doyle and Tony Smith) were also appointed as the members of the Literacy Level scrutiny panel.
- 1.4 This report provides an update on the progress of the review and, in particular for new members to the Committee, provides the background to the review.

2. Evidence Gathering

The Panel members are using a number of methods to gather evidence for the review:

- 2.1 School visits
Four primary / junior schools have been visited to discuss relevant issues with head teachers, teachers, school governors and school councils. Each of the visits took half a day. All of the visits were very constructive and highlighted issues relevant to the review.
- 2.2 School questionnaire
Panel members want to enable other schools to have an input into the review. Therefore a short questionnaire has been sent to the head teachers of all remaining primary and junior schools in the borough. Responses are currently awaited, with the deadline being early June.

- 2.3 Meetings with officers
Individual meetings have taken place with a number of key officers within the Children's Services Department of Wirral Borough Council. Prior to the meeting, each officer prepared a short briefing paper. A meeting has also taken place with an officer from Wirral NHS specifically to discuss the Speech and Language therapy service.
- 2.4 Relevant documents
Information is also being gathered from SAT results, previous committee reports and relevant reports into literacy issues.
- 2.5 Comparative information
Comparative information is being gathered from national data and from statistical neighbours.
- 3. Plans for the remainder of the review**
- 3.1 It is envisaged that the evidence gathering stage for the review is coming to a close. The draft report from the review will be produced during the summer and the final report will be presented to the Children and Young People Overview and Scrutiny Committee meeting on 17th September 2009.

RECOMMENDATIONS

- (1) That the Committee note the progress of the 'Literacy Level at Key Stage 2' Scrutiny Review.

Sheila Clarke, Frank Doyle, Tony Smith
Panel Members
'Literacy Levels at Key Stage 2' Scrutiny Panel
Children and Young Peoples Overview and Scrutiny Committee

Appendix 1 : Scope Document for the Literacy Levels (Key Stage 2) Scrutiny Review

Date: 27th October 2008
 Review Title: Literacy Levels at Key Stage 2

Scrutiny Panel Chair: Cllr Sheila Clarke	Contact details: 0151 608 1154 mobile:
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Other Key Officer contacts:	
<p>1. Which of our strategic corporate objectives does this topic address?</p> <p>1.1 To raise the aspirations of young people - Raise overall educational attainment, particularly lower achieving young people</p>	
<p>2. What are the main issues?</p> <p>2.1 The review will include both reading and writing.</p> <p>2.2 Why are levels of achievement so much lower in writing than in reading?</p> <p>2.3 Why are there a number of primary schools below the national average for % of children reaching Level 4 for reading at Key Stage 2?</p> <p>2.4 Why are there a larger number of primary schools below the national average for % of children reaching Level 4 for writing at Key Stage 2?</p> <p>2.5 What interventions are in place in schools where a significant number of children do not reach Level 4?</p> <p>2.6 What interventions are in place in schools where only one or two children do not normally reach Level 4?</p> <p>2.7 Are schools satisfied with the support that is available?</p> <p>2.8 Is there a gender issue regarding attainment levels?</p> <p>2.9 How do deprivation levels affect the attainment levels of children?</p>	
<p>3. The Committee's overall aim/objective in doing this work is:</p> <p>3.1 To ensure that as many children as possible leave primary school with adequate reading and writing skills.</p>	

4. The possible outputs/outcomes are:

- 4.1 Better understanding by members of the issues relating to literacy levels at Key Stage 2.
- 4.2 Agreement that adequate interventions are available and are used by schools.
- 4.3 Determination that underachieving individuals and groups have access to the appropriate support.
- 4.4 Confirmation that the Council achieves value for money from the current intervention plans.

5. What specific value can scrutiny add to this topic?

- 5.1 To recommend any changes which would lead to the outcomes listed in section 4 above.
- 5.2 To raise the overall standards of literacy in primary schools.

6. Who will the Committee be trying to influence as part of its work?

- 6.1 Cabinet
- 6.2 Other councillors
- 6.3 Primary school head teachers / governors

7. Duration of enquiry?

Final report to be submitted to Children Services and Lifelong Learning Overview and Scrutiny Committee during the current municipal year (that is, by 16th March 2009)

8. What category does the review fall into?

- | | | | | |
|------------------------------|---|--------------------------|------------------------|--------------------------|
| Policy Review | Y | <input type="checkbox"/> | Policy Development | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| External Partnership | Y | <input type="checkbox"/> | Performance Management | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Holding Executive to Account | | <input type="checkbox"/> | | |

9. Extra resources needed? Would the investigation benefit from the co-operation of an expert witness?

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.

10. What information do we need?	
<p>10.1 Secondary information (background information, existing reports, legislation, central government documents, etc).</p> <p>10.1.1 Need KS2 SAT results for 2003-8 for each primary school (reading and writing) in order to track where improvements have occurred.</p> <p>10.1.2 Ofsted reports - How do other councils compare?</p> <p>10.1.3 Comparative information with the national average and with Statistical Neighbours</p> <p>10.1.4 Relevant reports into literacy issues</p> <p>10.1.5 Previous Committee / Cabinet reports regarding literacy levels / strategies</p> <p>10.1.6 Scrutiny reports from other councils into similar issues</p>	<p>10.2 Primary/new evidence/information</p> <p>10.2.1 Briefing paper to cover the major issues</p> <p>10.2.2 Interviews with key officers</p> <p>10.2.3 Interviews with head teachers, teachers, governors at selected schools</p> <p>10.2.4 Feedback from parent governors.</p> <p>10.2.5 Feedback from school councils.</p>
<p>10.3 Who can provide us with further relevant evidence? (Cabinet portfolio holder, officer, service user, general public, expert witness, etc). council officers to include:</p> <p>Marie Lawrence, Early Years & Primary Education Strategic Service Manager, WBC.</p> <p>Bridie Sharkey, Primary Manager for English 0 - 19, WBC.</p> <p>Jenny Richmond, English consultant for Key Stages 1 and 2, WBC.</p> <p>Catherine Kerr, Principal Manager for Early Years, WBC.</p> <p>Pauline Cunningham, Communications Language & Literacy Development for Early Years, WBC.</p> <p>Bev Greathead, Head teacher / Coordinator of the Poulton Lancelyn Writing Network (initially a written report)</p> <p>Deirdre Smith, Principal Manager, Study Support, WBC (possible)</p> <p>Sarah Howarth, Lifelong Learning Advisor (+ Family Literacy project), WBC (possible)</p> <p>Statistical Neighbours</p> <p>Head teachers / governors of four selected primary schools</p>	<p>10.4 What specific areas do we want them to cover when they give evidence?</p> <p>10.4.1 What lessons can be learned from the many examples of good practice that already exist? Does the authority have the processes in place to facilitate the spread of good practice?</p> <p>10.4.2 What intervention packages are available to schools?</p> <p>10.4.3 What else can be done to help improve literacy levels in primary schools?</p>

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 Individual meetings with key officers listed in 10.3 above

11.2 Visits to a number of primary schools (head teacher, teachers, governors)

11.3 Desk research

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).

12.1 School councils will be invited to comment

12.2 Parent governors will be included in the review

12.3 There is no plan to involve public meetings or Area Forum meetings.

WIRRAL COUNCIL

CHILDREN'S SERVICES AND LIFELONG LEARNING OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE –2 JUNE 2009

REPORT OF THE DIRECTOR OF CHILDREN' S SERVICES

EDUCATION SOCIAL WELFARE SERVICE – DRAFT ANNUAL REPORT 2007/2008

1. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- 1.0 This report outlines some of the work carried out by the Education Social Welfare Service in the Academic Year 2007/08. Its release was delayed because national and regional attendance data was not made available by the Department Of Children, Schools and Families [DCSF] until 26 February 2009.
- 1.1 The report identifies that school attendance fell slightly in Wirral primary schools from **94.73%** in 2006/07 to **94.68%** in 2007/08 **[-0.05%]**, in line with national trends, but improved markedly in Wirral secondary schools from **92.18%** in 2006/07 to **93.23%** in 2007/08 **[+1.05%]**. Special school attendance also improved considerably from **91.26%** in 2006/07 to **92.39%** in 2007/08 **[+1.13%]**.
- 1.2 The report outlines some of the achievements of the Service over the year including:
- Implementing the Persistent Absence Agenda. Pupils with attendance below 80% are defined as Persistently Absent [PA]. Wirral was one of the most improved Local Authorities in the country, reducing the proportion of Persistently Absent pupils in secondary schools from **7.1%** in 2006/07 to **4.9%** in 2007/08.
 - Supporting multidisciplinary Area Teams.
 - Improving the attendance and achievement of Children In Care as part of the Virtual School. The proportion of Children In Care who missed 25 days or more at school was reduced from **13.96%** [against a national figure of 13.0%] in 2006/07 to **9.35%** in 2007/08 [against a national figure of 11.9%].
 - Raising awareness of the risks relating to Child Employment.
 - Identifying and tracking children not receiving a suitable education.
 - Working in partnership with Merseyside Police on Truancy Sweeps.
 - Contributing to the Anti-Social Behaviour Team.
 - Providing an outreach service to children out of school in partnership with the Youth Service through the Konnecta Bus Project.
 - Supporting families at times of greatest need through the Pressure Point Support Project.
- 1.3 The report also seeks to analyse the effectiveness of the Service and gives details of Fixed Penalty Notices issued and parents prosecuted for failing to ensure their children attend school regularly.

2. BACKGROUND

- 2.0 The Education Social Welfare Service seeks to ensure that every child/young person receives the maximum benefit from the education opportunities provided by the Local Authority. The Service utilises a range of strategies and interventions, working in partnership with children and young people, parents and

families, school staff and other agencies to overcome barriers to education and achieve improved outcomes. The Service also collects, collates and analyses attendance data from schools and supports and challenges school staff in their efforts to improve attendance.

- 2.1 The Education Social Welfare Service works within a legal framework and is directly concerned to enable the Local Authority to discharge its legal obligations. Particularly, the Service is concerned to ensure that the various relevant Acts of Parliament are applied for the benefit of children fairly and equally. Relevant legislation includes Children's and Young Person's Act (1969), Education Acts (1981, 1996 and 2002), Children's Acts (1989 and 2004).
- 2.2 The Service provides a named Education Social Worker to support each school in improving attendance. The amount of time allocated to each school is dependent on need taking into account authorised and unauthorised absence, number of pupil sessions missed, proportion of Free School Meals, number of pupils with Special Educational Needs, and other relevant factors. Each school receives an annual audit on attendance and is supported in producing an Action Plan to improve attendance.
- 2.3 The Service is involved in a number of strategies which impact on school attendance. These include:
 - Engaging all schools in the Persistent Absence Agenda, which is a national strategy aimed at reducing the proportion of pupils whose level of school attendance falls below 80%.
 - Contributing to the Wirral's eleven multidisciplinary Area Teams, assisting in the delivery of the Team Around The Child Model [formerly known as the Child Concern Model] and ensuring school attendance remains a priority within developing services.
 - Managing the collection, collation, and analysis of school attendance data.
 - Coordinating Truancy Sweeps and liaising with Merseyside Police.
 - Contributing to the Antisocial Behaviour Team, Respect Panels, Anti-Social Behaviour Governance Group and Multi-Agency Risk Assessment Committee [MARAC].
 - Contributing to the Local Safeguarding Children Board and working with other agencies to ensure children are protected.
 - Improving the attendance of Children In Care and contributing to the Virtual School Staff Group.
 - Safeguarding children and young people against the dangers of illegal employment and raising awareness of the risks of child employment.
 - Identifying and tracking children not receiving a suitable education.
 - Contributing to the resolution of school exclusion issues.
 - Assisting in the assessment of children who may have special educational needs.
 - Contributing to the multidisciplinary Solutions Team to support the behaviour and attendance of pupils in our special schools with social, emotional and behavioural difficulties [SEBD].
 - Contributing to Wirral's Youth Offending Service in the assessment, support and supervision of young offenders and those at risk of offending.
 - Contributing to the Integrated Youth Support Strategy.
 - Contributing to the Department's five Every Child Matters Outcome Groups, particularly the Staying Safe and Enjoy and Achieve Groups.
 - Contributing to the monitoring of children who are educated at home.
 - Contributing to the Local Authority's work on bullying.

- Liasing with Wirral Magistrate's Courts, issuing Fixed Penalty Notices and prosecuting parents who fail to ensure their children attend school regularly.
- The Pressure Point Support Project which provides flexible early intervention to support children and families in need in some of Wirral's most deprived wards.
- The Konnecta Bus Project is operated in partnership with the Youth Service and a number of other partner agencies and provides outreach support to young people out of school, helping them to overcome barriers to education.

2.4 Although average attendance in Wirral primary schools fell slightly the DCSF's Public Service Agreement Target of reducing school absence levels by 8% of the 2002/03 figure by 2008 has been achieved both locally and nationally.

2.5 New targets for school attendance involve the concept of Persistent Absence which is discussed further in Section 7.

3. PRIMARY SCHOOL ATTENDANCE

3.0 Primary attendance fell both locally and nationally and this is believed to be because of an increase in levels of sickness during the year. Wirral's primary school attendance deteriorated slightly from **94.73%** in 2006/07 to **94.68%** in 2007/08 and remains marginally below the national average of **94.74%** [see **Table 6.1**]. By comparison with geographical neighbours Wirral's primary school attendance ranks as fourth of six, 0.28% behind the highest ranking authority of Sefton [see **Table 6.2**]. By comparison with statistical neighbours, Wirral's primary school attendance ranks tenth of eleven, 0.39% behind the highest ranking authority of Bury [see **Table 6.3**].

3.1 Analysis of primary school attendance during 2007/08 shows that:

- Dawpool Primary School had the highest attendance at **97.12%**.
- The four primary schools with most improved attendance by comparison with 2006/07 were Leasowe Primary [**+1.81%**], Portland Primary [**+1.64%**], St Peter's RC [Noctorum] [**+1.63%**], and Manor Primary [**+1.41%**].
- 41 primary schools had attendance above the national average of **94.74%**.
- 13 primary schools had attendance below 93% compared with 16 primary schools in 2006/07.
- Three primary schools had attendance below 92% compared with six schools in 2006/07.
- One primary school had attendance below 90%, as was the case in 2006/07 and this had improved attendance.

4. SECONDARY SCHOOL ATTENDANCE

4.0 Secondary school attendance improved from **92.18%** in 2006/07 to **93.23%** in 2007/08 and has moved significantly above the national average of **92.66%** [see **Table 6.1**]. By comparison with geographical neighbours this ranks as second of six behind only Sefton where secondary attendance was **93.24%** [see **Table 6.2**]. By comparison with statistical neighbours Wirral secondary school attendance ranks as fourth of eleven although only 0.29% behind highest ranking Darlington. The improvement in secondary school attendance is believed to be largely a consequence of the introduction of the Persistent Absence Agenda which is outlined in some detail in Section 7.

- 4.1 Analysis of secondary school attendance during 2007/08 shows that:
- Wirral Girls Grammar had the highest attendance at **96.13%** and five secondary schools had attendance of above 95%.
 - The three secondary schools with most improved attendance by comparison with 2006/07 were Wallasey High [**+3.93%**], Park High [**+2.07%**] and Rock Ferry High School [**+1.55%**].
 - 14 secondary schools had attendance above the national average of **92.66%**.
 - Nine secondary schools had attendance below 93% compared with fifteen schools in 2006/07.
 - Five secondary schools had attendance below 92% compared with eight schools in 2006/07.
 - One secondary school had attendance below 90% compared with three in 2006/07 and this had improved attendance.

5. SPECIAL SCHOOL ATTENDANCE

5.0 Special school attendance improved from **91.26%** in 2006/07 to **92.39%** in 2007/08. National and regional comparisons are not currently available. The improvement in special school attendance reflects much improved attendance in some of our schools for pupils with Social, Emotional and Behavioural Difficulties [SEBD]. It is believed the work of the multidisciplinary Solutions Team has contributed to this.

5.1 Analysis of special school attendance during 2007/08 shows that:

- Orrets Meadow had the highest attendance at **94.61%**.
- The two special schools with most improved attendance were Observatory School [**+10.43%**] and Kilgarth School [**+5.46%**].
- Five special schools had below 93% attendance compared with seven schools in 2006/07.
- Four special schools had below 92% attendance compared with five schools in 2006/07.
- Two special schools had below 90% attendance compared with three schools in 2006/07. One of these had improved attendance.

6. COMPARATIVE ATTENDANCE DATA

6.0 Comparisons are based on Census Returns and are still provisional for 2007/08.

Table 6.1: National Comparison

Primary Attendance	2002/03	2003/04	2004/05	2005/06	2006/07	2007/08
	%	%	%	%	%	
Wirral	94.51	94.54	94.37	94.11	94.73	94.68
National	94.19	94.51	94.57	94.24	94.82	94.74
Secondary Attendance						
Wirral	92.24	92.24	92.45	92.11	92.18	93.23
National	91.72	91.95	92.18	92.08	92.14	92.66
Special Attendance						
Wirral	91.69	91.43	91.12	90.42	91.26	92.39

Table 6.2: Geographical Neighbour Comparison

Primary Attendance	2002/03	2003/04	2004/05	2005/06	2006/07	2007/08
	%	%	%	%	%	
Sefton	94.32	94.46	94.65	94.21	94.87	94.96
St Helens	94.28	94.34	94.39	94.02	94.4	94.90
Halton	94.18	94.56	94.64	94.22	94.68	94.78
Wirral	94.51	94.54	94.37	94.11	94.73	94.68
Knowsley	93.55	93.63	93.77	93.55	93.94	93.99
Liverpool	93.4	93.6	93.77	93.49	93.97	93.94
Secondary Attendance						
Sefton	92.19	92.42	92.64	92.57	92.68	93.24
Wirral	92.24	92.24	92.45	92.11	92.18	93.23
Halton	89.95	89.79	90.48	90.63	91.9	92.46
St Helens	91.48	91.82	91.72	91.88	91.34	92.40
Liverpool	89.67	89.87	90.29	90.33	91.2	91.60
Knowsley	88.7	90.21	90.69	90.17	90.26	90.05

Table 6.3: Statistical Neighbour Comparison

Primary	2007/08	Secondary	2007/08
	%		%
Bury	95.07	Darlington	93.52
Lancashire	95.07	Bury	93.43
Stockton-on-Tees	95.02	Sefton	93.24
Telford & Wrekin	95.02	Wirral	93.23
Sefton	94.96	Lancashire	92.89
St Helens	94.90	Stockton-on-Tees	92.82
Darlington	94.80	Tameside	92.59
Halton	94.78	Halton	92.46
Tameside	94.75	St Helens	92.40
Wirral	94.68	Telford & Wrekin	92.31
Leeds	94.67	Leeds	91.66

7. PERSISTENT ABSENCE

7.0 In December 2006 the Department Of Children, Schools and Families introduced the concept of Persistent Absence [PA]. Pupils with below 80% attendance are defined as Persistently Absent. Secondary schools with more than 10% of their population within this category in the first two terms of 2005/06 were defined as Priority Schools for 2006/07. Wirral had eight such secondary schools.

7.1 Priority Schools were required to:

- Produce an individual action plan with each child whose attendance was below 80%. The action plan would include an attendance target and outline how they would improve attendance. It would be reviewed at least each half term [in practice schools reviewed them every 3 or 4 weeks].
- Report on the attendance of each pupil whose attendance drops below 80% to the Local Authority each half term and this information would be anonymised and passed on to the DCSF.
- Complete a self-assessment relating to systems for improving attendance and produce a short term school action plan and review these each half term.

- 7.2 The Education Social Welfare Service provided additional support to the eight secondary schools with a focus on strategic advice. We also facilitated half-termly Attendance Leaders Network Meetings with a focus on sharing good practice.
- 7.3 Seven of the eight schools showed a reduction in the number of pupils who were Persistently Absent during the year and five of these schools reduced the level of Persistent Absence to below 10%.
- 7.4 For 2007/08 the threshold for Persistent Absence [attendance below 80%] in defining Priority Secondary Schools was reduced from 10% to 9% of the pupils on roll, with a target of **5%** across secondary aged pupils by 2011. For 2007/08 there were seven secondary schools with PA above 9% in Wirral.
- 7.5 All seven schools showed a reduction in PA in the range 35% to 67% compared with baseline figures. In fact the DCSF judged us as among the most improved of the 55 Local Authorities taking part nationally. Overall PA in secondary schools was reduced from **7.1%** in 2006/07 to **4.9%** in 2007/08, over-achieving our target of **6.4%**.
- 7.6 The Service also worked in partnership with the Primary Behaviour Manager and the Education Psychology Service in setting up half-termly Attendance Leaders Network Meetings with a focus on sharing good practice for seven identified primary schools. All seven showed improved attendance.

8. MULTIDISCIPLINARY AREA TEAMS

- 8.0 The Every Child Matters Agenda and the Children's Act 2004 gave a strong focus to the following five outcomes for children and young people:
- Be healthy
 - Stay Safe
 - Enjoy and achieve
 - Make a positive contribution
 - Achieve economic well-being
- 8.1 On Wirral this legislation also led to the formation of the Department of Children and Young People and the setting up of eleven multidisciplinary Area Teams which were set up across Wirral's 22 wards. Each Team contributes to one of the four districts.
- 8.2 The Teams were initially set up as Virtual Teams, meeting each fortnight with a view to eventual co-location. Each Team has a Social Worker, Family Support Worker, Education Psychologist, Education Social Worker, Extended Schools Coordinator, Connexions Personal Advisor, School Nurse, and Faith And Voluntary Sector Representative. A number of other agencies also link in to the Team.

- 8.3 The Education Social Welfare Service contributes to all eleven Area Teams with the amount of time given to each Team based on the needs of the schools within the area. This has assisted in raising awareness of the issue of school attendance amongst colleagues and in developing a multidisciplinary approach to improving attendance. Education Social Workers are fully trained and experienced in the use of the Team Around The Child Model.
- 8.4 The Service currently seconds two workers [1.5 posts] as Area Team Leaders and has also contributed to the Remodelling Social Work Pilot Programme in the Birkenhead/ Tranmere/ Rock Ferry Area where the Area Team is co-located with Social Care's Assessment Team.

9. SCHOOL ATTENDANCE OF CHILDREN IN CARE

- 9.0 The level of school attendance of Wirral's Children In Care [CIC] is monitored by the Department Of Health alongside a range of other comparative data in the annual OC2 return, which is submitted each November. The measure used is the proportion of Children In Care [Looked after for twelve months or more on 30 September] who have missed more than 25 days of education during the previous academic year. After a very disappointing outcome in 2006/07 when IT software problems disrupted our ability to track pupils closely and intervene early, the figure for 2007/08 is very much improved. A comparison with national data is given below:

	2002/03	2003/04	2004/05	2005/06	2006/07	2007/08
Wirral	16.4%	16.3%	13.85%	12.6%	13.96%	9.35%
National	12.4%	12.3%	12.6%	13.3%	13.0%	11.9%

- 9.1 This represents a considerable improvement and reflects the hard work of a number of people including foster carers, the Virtual School Staff Team, school staff, the CIC Attendance Officer, Children In Care Education Team, social workers, and of course the children themselves. Analysis of the absence codes used and underlying reasons for the poor attendance reveals the same factors identified in previous years. These include sickness, emotional and behavioural issues, mental health issues, disaffection, exclusions, and family problems. Each of these issues are addressed in the Virtual School Development Plan.
- 9.2 We believe the most powerful factor in improving the attendance of Children In Care in 2007/08 was the improvement in systems for tracking their attendance using a software product called ONE Attendance. Monthly meetings involving the Head Teacher of the Virtual School, the CIC Attendance Officer, and others were used to review the attendance of all Children In Care. If a pupil's attendance dropped below 90% we were able to review the details and intervene if necessary. The intervention might be as simple as a telephone call to set a date for a meeting following a pupil's exclusion or to arrange transport for a pupil who had moved to stay with his aunt or to ask for work to be sent home to a girl who had broken her leg. In many cases this early intervention was enough to ensure that the pupil's attendance did not drop below 87% [or 25 school days missed].

9.3 Other measures to improve the attendance of Children In Care include:

- The deployment of a CIC Home School Attendance Officer working with a caseload of up to 20 pupils. She has established close links with schools which have a high proportion of Looked After Children and has also been involved in setting up improved monitoring systems and support for pupils resident in Children’s Homes.
- Using a system of standard letters to carers of pupils with excellent and improved attendance and expressing concern when attendance drops below 90%. Also implementing a system of rewards and certificates for pupils with excellent and improved attendance.
- Ensuring the issue of attendance is highlighted in training to foster carers and designing and distributing a leaflet to support this. Also providing additional training to foster carers to enhance their skills in managing children’s emotional and behavioural difficulties through the Protective Behaviours Programme funded through the Children’s Fund.
- Continuing to develop excellent links with the Child And Adolescent Mental Health Service and adopting a multidisciplinary approach to meet the needs of Children In Care with emotional and behavioural utilising the support of Response, Learning Mentors, Education Social Workers, School Nurses and other agencies as appropriate.
- Reducing the number of exclusions by putting in place multidisciplinary meetings to devise and implement Action Plans for Children In Care whose behaviour in school is presenting behaviour management problems.
- Addressing the problems created by placement disruption by initiating a recruitment drive to increase the number of suitable foster carers on Wirral. It is envisaged that with more foster carers available we will be able to improve our matching of the needs of Children In Care including placing them near to where they already attend school.
- Education Social Welfare Service liaising with schools and other agencies to ensure the needs of Children In Care are prioritised [for example, for Learning Mentor support or for an alternative curriculum for pupils who have become disaffected].
- Implementing a Multidisciplinary Panel System to support and challenge Children In Care and carers when attendance does not improve following intervention.

9.4 Our target was to reduce the proportion of Children In Care who miss 25 days or more to 11% by September 2009 and having already achieved this we need to continue to work together to further improve the attendance and achievement of Children In Care.

10. CHILD EMPLOYMENT

	No of Permits Issued 06/07	No of Permits Issued 07/08	Yr on Yr % +/-	Comments
Work permits	287	223	-22.3%	Reduction in the number of employment permits issued reflects a greater focus on raising awareness of the issues in schools.

10.0 All young people of compulsory school age who work are required to have a work permit. It is the employer’s responsibility to obtain this from the Local Authority.

The table shows a reduction in the number of work permits issued by comparison with 2006/07. This reflects at least two factors. Firstly there has been a greater focus on working with schools to raise awareness of the risks involved in child employment both via Personal Social and Health Education and via leaflets for pupils, parents and staff. Secondly there has been significant growth in the monitoring of performances [see below].

- 10.1 In November 2007, the NNCEE lobbied parliament regarding the legislation covering child employment and entertainment and a new DVD was launched by the NNCEE and ITV. The DVD was introduced to the Local Authorities and regions in January 2008. The 15 minute DVD was made in conjunction with ITV to help raise awareness/support at local government level and to influence the need for change in the current legislation most of which was written in the 1960's and is still applicable in 2008. Contributors to the DVD included Sir Trevor McDonald, GMTV Presenters, William Roach and numerous cast members of Coronation Street and Emmerdale along with some young people who had suffered horrific injuries at work and a parent who son had died delivering newspapers.
- 10.2 A consultation took place in February 2008 in which LEAs and industry were asked about what improvements they wanted to see. The primary aim is to bring the legislation into the 21st Century and to improve consistency by LEAs in the interpretation of the existing regulations. This push by the NNCEE and industry including ITV, Stagecoach etc. resulted in the DCSF promising to update the guidance in 2009.

	Number Issued 06/07	Number Issued 07/08	Yr on Yr % +/-	Comments
Performance Licences	310	268	-13.5%	59 licences issued for broadcast performances inc TV/Film. 138 licences issued for modelling 71 licences issued for theatre performances
Exemptions from Licence	1201	2194	+83%	2194 children from Wirral performing but exempt from licence requirement. 50 Performances given over 48 days.
Body of Persons Performance Approval	15 applications 381 children	15 applications 516 children	+35%	516 children were involved in 15 productions (65 performances)
Chaperone/Matron Approval	25	21 With 15 pending.	+31%	18 chaperones/matrons have received Child Protection Training.

- 10.3 Depending on the circumstances, young people of school age performing in public, may require a licence to do so. This includes singing, dancing, acting, modelling, etc. particularly if the event is organised for profit. There have been significant increases in the numbers of children's performances and chaperones/matrons approved. Working in conjunction with local groups and performance venues we have been able to increase awareness of the issues of safeguarding children.

11. PUPILS MISSING FROM EDUCATION

11.0 The Service fulfils the Local Authority's responsibility to track pupils who are missing from education. When a pupil leaves a school their school file is usually transferred on to his or her next school. If a pupil leaves a school without the parents giving details of their next school, the school is required to upload the file onto the national Missing Pupil Database. The Service uses a number of methods to locate the child and to ensure they are receiving appropriate education. The Service also tracks pupils who move into Wirral from other areas. Data for the last three years is given in the table below.

YEAR	Missing Pupils From Wirral schools or Out of Area pupil found missing in Wirral	Missing Pupils who have re-entered education or who are being monitored into education	Missing Pupils not yet located (Destination School not established)
2005/2006	91	79	8 *
2006/2007	96	69	8*
2007/2008	59	53	6*

* In these cases tracking procedures are ongoing to establish the whereabouts of the missing pupils. We have some idea of the likely whereabouts of many of them e.g. moved to a new local address; moved out of area or abroad; or the new school has failed to notify the previous school of a new pupil joining their school, etc. For example, two children are believed to have returned to Poland and another to Ireland but addresses are as yet unknown. We have tracked pupils as far a field as Canada, Saudi Arabia, Belgium, USA, Australia and New Zealand.

- 11.1 The table above shows a reduced number of pupils missing from education. This may be partly due to an improved response from schools in tracking pupils who leave without needing to define them as missing.
- 11.2 The Missing Pupil Policy and Procedures were reissued to all schools in January 2007 incorporating a new checklist designed to assist schools in the referral process along with the revised procedures and referral form.
- 11.3 The procedure also applies to children who attend independent schools in the area as they could also become missing from education. All independent schools have been provided with a copy of the missing pupil procedures, resulting in several enquiries and referrals, which have resulted in our monitoring a number of pupils into other independent schools.
- 11.4 Information regarding Children Missing From Education is fed into Local Safeguarding Board systems on a quarterly basis.

12. TRUANCY SWEEPS

12.0 Although Truancy Sweeps are no longer a mandatory requirement, the ESW Service has continued to work in partnership with Merseyside Police utilising these as an effective means of getting the message across that children should be in school unless there is a very good reason. In line with DCSF guidance we have continued to develop our local arrangements as part of the fight against truancy and antisocial behaviour. Although the table below shows a reduction in the number of Truancy Sweeps from the previous year, the comparison is not like for like as some sweeps were half-days and others were full days. The sweeps have been increasingly focused on areas where young people have been seen truanting or there has been antisocial behaviour based on reports from police, the local community and other agencies.

12.1 <u>Outcomes</u>	<u>2005/06</u>	<u>2006/07</u>	<u>2007/08</u>
Total number of sweeps	7	17	13
Total number of pupils stopped	116	215	129
Pupils accompanied by an adult	37	138	50
Total pupils stopped with valid reason	36	94	50
Primary pupils with valid reason	5	28	7
Secondary pupils with valid reason	31	66	43
Boys stopped with a valid reason	27	59	32
Girls stopped with a valid reason	9	35	18
Total pupils stopped without a valid reason	80	121	79
Primary pupils without valid reason	12	37	13
Secondary pupils without a valid reason	68	84	66
Boys stopped without a valid reason	55	64	49
Girls stopped without a valid reason	25	57	30

<u>Reasons Given</u>	<u>2005/06</u>	<u>2006/07</u>	<u>2007/08</u>
Truancy	38	38	50
Shopping	2	5	1
Awaiting school transfer	3	1	0
Overslept	14	9	14
Ill (with parent)	12	34	18
Medical or dental appointment	0	34	19
Birthday	1	0	1
Late	2	0	0
No Uniform	2	0	0
Problem at school	1	2	1
Inset day or study leave	0	17	19
Excluded	0	6	2
School closed	0	5	2
Religious observance	0	1	0
Bereavement	0	2	2
No school place	0	1	1
Other valid reason	1	36	1
Other invalid reason	0	24	9

13. ANTI-SOCIAL BEHAVIOUR TEAM

- 13.0 Wirral Education Social Welfare Services second an Education Social Worker for 17.5 hours per week to the Wirral Anti-Social Behaviour Team. The secondment continues to be beneficial to both parties through providing a direct information exchange link.
- 13.1 The secondment enables ESW representation at a number of multi-agency groups which usually meet monthly. These include:
- The Antisocial Behaviour Governance Group which reviews crime and anti-social behaviour statistics and can be used to target Truancy Sweeps and/or identify venues for the Konnecta Bus.
 - The Multi Agency Risk Assessment Committee which reviews cases involving Domestic Violence seeking to ensure victims and children are supported and safeguarded. Information is shared with those who need it. There were 446 such incidents last year.
 - Problem Solving Group Meetings consider how different agencies can work together to address and reduce antisocial behaviour in particular areas. We have successfully engaged a number of secondary schools in this process and again Truancy Sweeps and/or the Konnecta Bus may form part of the response.
 - Antisocial Behaviour Case Conferences discuss individual cases and may lead to the use of an Acceptable Behaviour Contract or to an Antisocial Behaviour Order via court.
- 13.2 A very innovative part of this work has been the Respect Programme For Primary Schools Project which was nominated for a national Local Government Chronicle Award. The aim of the course is to promote children's understanding of the harm caused by antisocial behaviour and of the work done by the partner agencies. Various members of the Team and other agencies contribute to a six week course in schools. Last year eleven primary schools involving 560 pupils took part. The project gives an opportunity for the children to visit a magistrates court and has provided opportunities to enhance magistrates' and clerks' understanding of ESW procedures which sometimes lead to prosecutions. The children also benefited from a trip to Cheshire Lines to learn about the use of CCTV cameras and to work alongside Merseyrail and Arriva staff.

14. KONNECTA BUS

- 14.0 The Konnecta Bus Project is operated in collaboration with the Youth Service and a number of other partner agencies and provides outreach support to young people out of school, helping them to overcome barriers to education. Partner agencies include Brooke Advisory Service, Connexions, Maritime Housing, Pentra Training Services, PPS Impact Project, Regenda, Response, Wirral Housing Partnership, and Wirral Wardens. It began operating in September 2002. The project operates over the whole of the Wirral and visited all 22 wards during 2007/08. The total number of contacts made was 616 compared with 668 in 2006/07. This may reflect a period of staff sickness when the bus was used less.
- 14.1 The Konnecta Bus provides young people with an opportunity to discuss any issues or problems they are experiencing in a safe, welcoming, non-threatening environment. This enables them to access services and support. Feedback is given to school staff as appropriate. The Team have also worked with schools in

providing group work focusing on a number of issues including transition from primary to secondary school and improving attendance and punctuality.

- 14.2 Most contacts have been made with Year 10 [184] and Year 11 [141] pupils although there have also been significant contacts with Year 8 [60], Year 9 [79], Sixth Formers [97] and those not in education, employment or training [42]. Feedback from service users has been very positive. One young person commented: "I can get into school more now that my Year Head knows about my family problems".

15. PRESSURE POINT SUPPORT PROJECT

- 15.0 The Pressure Point Support Project is funded by the Children's Fund and provides flexible early intervention to support children and families in need in some of Wirral's most deprived wards. The project has been operating for more than five years. In 2007/08 the project supported 195 families from 45 different primary schools compared with 193 families the previous year. Since its inception in April 2003 the project has helped 788 families and 897 children. Although most referrals were from schools, referrals were also accepted from Social Care, Health Visitors, Child And Family Service, Community Paediatricians, School Nurses, Education Psychologists and other agencies. Self-referrals were also accepted.
- 15.1 Issues addressed included work on parenting skills, reducing risk-taking behaviour, managing aggressive or unacceptable behaviour, self-esteem, mental health, bereavement, relationships, bullying, transition to secondary school, and alcohol and drug misuse. The project worked in partnership with a wide range of agencies including Social Care, Child And Family Service, School Nurses, Housing Associations, Police, Wirral Autistic Society, Catholic Children's Society, Citizens Advice Bureau, Leonard Cheshire Homes, Victim Support, Youth Inclusion Support Programme, Multi-Cultural Centre and the Leapfrog Project. The fast, flexible and practical response was valued by service-users. Feedback from children, parents, and other agencies has been extremely positive.
- 15.2 Service users, Head Teachers and other professionals have been very complimentary about the service provided. One Head Teacher commented: "I hold the service in the highest regard. It provides an invaluable link in the support chain between school and families." Another Head Teacher said: "The teachers and myself are very impressed by the availability of the service, the response to referrals, and the type of work undertaken."

16. EFFECTIVENESS OF SERVICE

16.0 Referral statistics.

	<u>2005/06</u>	<u>2006/07</u>	<u>2007/08</u>
Total Number of Referrals	1386	1410	1461
Primary	448 (32%)	478 (34%)	464 (32%)
Secondary	949 (68%)	932 (66%)	997 (68%)

16.1 Effectiveness of Intervention

	<u>2005/06</u>	<u>2006/07</u>	<u>2007/08</u>
Number of cases where attendance improved	723 (52%)	755 (54%)	766 (52%)
Number of cases where attendance fell	292 (21%)	296 (21%)	203 (14%)
Number of cases where no change was effected [including insufficient attendance data collected].	371 (27%)	359 (25%)	492 (34%)

16.2 Prosecution Procedure Outcomes

	<u>2005/06</u>	<u>2006/07</u>	<u>2007/08</u>
Number of cases where ESW visited home	1262	1302	1305
Number of cases involving Team Leader Interviews	391	377	361
Number of Prosecutions (including pending)	75	73	52

<u>Disposals</u>	<u>2005/06</u>	<u>2006/07</u>	<u>2007/08</u>
Cases dealt with by courts	60	56	37
Number pending	15	17	15
Withdrawn	2	5	5
Conditional Discharge	12	8	1
Fines ranging from £25 - £400	43	35	31
Parenting Orders	2	2	0

16.3 The number of referrals to the Service has increased steadily over recent years and showed an 18.5% increase on the figure for 2003/04 of 1190. Around two thirds of our referrals come from secondary schools. Our intervention was successful in improving attendance in 52% of cases. 27.7% of cases involve Team Leader Interviews at which parents are asked to discuss the situation in detail and sign an Action Plan / Parenting Contract. Prosecution of parents is seen as a last resort and happens in less than 5% of the cases we deal with. The majority of prosecutions are dealt with by fines between £25 and £400. The Service believes Parenting Orders can be effective in some cases and is working with magistrates and clerks of court to convey this.

16.4 Cases which are prosecuted are routinely tracked for 12 months. Last year 63% of such cases showed an improvement in attendance with 29% showing a deterioration in the level of attendance.

17. FIXED PENALTY NOTICES

17.0 In September 2007 new legislation came into force which required Local Authorities, schools and Police Authorities to work together to agree revisions to existing Fixed Penalty Notice Protocols. The ESW Service took the leading role in this process, consulting with primary and secondary Head Teachers, Merseyside Police, Local Authority colleagues and other stakeholders. The revised protocol was agreed by Cabinet in June 2008.

17.1 The protocol enables police and schools to refer requests for Fixed Penalty Notices to the ESW Service in specific circumstances. These are in relation to:

- Parents of pupils stopped by police in a public place during the first five days of any school exclusion.
- Parents of pupils repeatedly stopped by police on Truancy Sweeps.
- Parents of pupils who fail to cooperate with School Attendance Panels and Parenting Contracts.
- Parents of pupils taking unauthorised holidays during term time.

17.2 During 2007/08, 16 Warning Letters and 10 Fixed Penalty Notices were issued by the ESW Service compared with 21 Warning Letters and 18 Fixed Penalty Notices the previous year. It should be noted that the new protocol was only introduced in June 2008, however, and greater numbers of Warning Letters and Fixed Penalty Notices are now being issued. The ESW Service sees this as a very useful strategy in improving attendance, particularly for its deterrent impact.

18. FINANCIAL, STAFFING, EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES, HUMAN RIGHTS, LOCAL AGENDA 21, COMMUNITY SAFETY, PLANNING AND LOCAL MEMBER SUPPORT IMPLICATIONS

There are none arising from this report.

19 BACKGROUND PAPERS

There are none with this report.

20. RECOMMENDATION

20.0 That the committee accepts and approves this report.

HOWARD COOPER
DIRECTOR OF CHILDREN'S SERVICES

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WIRRAL COUNCIL

CHILDREN'S SERVICES AND LIFELONG LEARNING OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE -2 JUNE 2009

REPORT OF THE DIRECTOR OF CHILDREN' S SERVICES

COMPLAINT MONITORING

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This report provides members with an analysis of complaints registered under The Children Act 1989 Representations Procedure (England) Regulations 2006 from 1 January 2009 to 31 March 2009.

1. BACKGROUND

- 1.1 This report has been compiled following members consideration of the Children's Services Annual Complaints Report (see minute 61 Children's Services and Lifelong Learning Overview and Scrutiny Committee 18.03.2008).
- 1.2 Ongoing quarterly reports will be submitted for members' consideration following a recommendation made by the Local Government Ombudsman (see minute 60 18.03.2008).

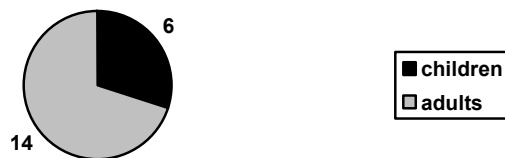
2. REGISTERED COMPLAINTS

- 2.1 During the three month reporting period the following complaints were registered:

20 Stage 1 complaints *[compared to 17 complaints the previous quarter]*
4 Stage 2 complaints *[compared to 4 complaints in the previous quarter]*
0 Stage 3 complaints

3. STAGE ONE COMPLAINTS (LOCAL RESOLUTION)

- 3.1 The 20 Stage 1 complaints registered in the reporting period were registered by:



- 3.2 Stage One Complaints Made by Children

The average time taken to complete/resolve the 6 complaints made by a child/young person was 10 working days – compared to 19 days in the last reporting period.

83.3% of the complaints made by a child/young person were completed within the maximum timescale of 20 working days - compared to 66.6% in the last reporting period.

3.3 Stage One Complaints Made by Adults

The average time taken to complete/resolve the 14 complaints made by adults with parental responsibility or day to day care was 12.5 days – compared to 12.6 days in the last reporting period.

83.3 % of these complaints were completed within the maximum timescale of 20 working days – compared to 85.7% in the last reporting period.

4. **STAGE TWO COMPLAINTS (FORMAL INVESTIGATION)**

- 4.1 Two Stage 2 investigations, registered toward the end of the quarter, are ongoing.
- 4.2 One Stage 2 investigation has been completed and the complainant is awaiting a Departmental Response. (The investigation was completed in 36 working days)
- 4.3 One Stage 2 investigation has been suspended at the request of the complainant.

6. **STAGE 3 COMPLAINTS (INDEPENDENT REVIEW PANEL)**

- 6.1 There are no outstanding Stage 3 complaints.

7. **OMBUDSMAN**

- 7.1 There are no Ombudsman's investigations currently being undertaken.
- 7.2 There have been no Ombudsman's enquiries during the reporting period.

8. **FINANCIAL AND STAFFING IMPLICATIONS**

There are no direct financial and staffing implications arising from this report.

9. **EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES IMPLICATIONS**

None arising directly from this report.

10. **HUMAN RIGHTS IMPLICATIONS**

None arising directly from this report.

11. **LOCAL AGENDA 21 IMPLICATIONS**

None arising directly from this report.

12. COMMUNITY SAFETY IMPLICATIONS

None arising directly from this report.

13. PLANNING IMPLICATIONS

None arising directly from this report.

14. LOCAL MEMBER SUPPORT IMPLICATIONS

None arising directly from this report.

15. BACKGROUND PAPERS

The Children Act 1989 Representations Procedure (England) Regulations 2006
Getting the Best from Complaints 2006

16. RECOMMENDATIONS

Members are asked to note this report.

Howard Cooper
Director of Children's Services

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By virtue of paragraph(s) 1 of Part 1 of Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972.

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