



Children and Young People Overview and Scrutiny Committee

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| Date: | Thursday, 21 January 2010 |
| Time: | 6.00 pm |
| Venue: | Committee Room 1 - Wallasey Town Hall |

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AGENDA

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

Members are asked to consider whether they have personal or prejudicial interests in connection with any item(s) on this agenda and, if so, to declare them and state what they are.

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

2. MINUTES (Pages 1 - 6)

To receive the minutes of the meeting held on 16 November, 2009.

3. COMPLAINT MONITORING (Pages 7 - 10)

4. PRIVATE FOSTERING (Pages 11 - 14)

5. FOSTERING SERVICE PROGRESS REPORT (Pages 15 - 26)

6. TEENAGE PREGNANCY PRIORITY ACTION PLAN - PROGRESS AGAINST NATIONAL SUPPORT TEAM FOR TEENAGE PREGNANCY RECOMMENDATIONS (Pages 27 - 36)

7. LITERACY LEVELS SCRUTINY REVIEW

The Chair will update the Committee on the review.

8A COMMITTEE REFERRAL - COUNCIL EXCELLENCE O&S COMMITTEE (Pages 37 – 38)

To consider a referral from the Council Excellence Overview and Scrutiny Committee held on 16 September, 2009.

8B COMMITTEE REFERRAL - SCRUTINY PROGRAMME BOARD (Pages 39 – 40)

To consider a referral from the Scrutiny Programme Board held on 4 November, 2009.

9. WORK PROGRAMME (Pages 41 - 52)

10. SCHOOL STANDARDS SUB-COMMITTEE (Pages 53 - 56)

To receive the minutes of the meeting held on 25 November, 2009.

The Committee's attention is drawn to minute 29 and the proposed change of name of the Sub-Committee.

11. ANY OTHER URGENT BUSINESS ACCEPTED BY THE CHAIR

CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

Monday, 16 November 2009

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|------------------|-------------|---|---------------------------------|
| <u>Present:</u> | Councillor | S Clarke (Chair) | |
| | Councillors | F Doyle T Harney K Hayes P Hayes | C Povall T Smith A Taylor |
| <u>Deputies:</u> | Councillors | A Jones (for JF George) JJ Salter (for WW Smith) | |
| <u>Co-opted:</u> | | Mr M Clarke Mrs M Liddy | Mrs J Owens |

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

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

Councillor Harney declared a personal interest in minute 43 (Special School Developments) by virtue of him being Chair of Governors at The Lyndale School.

39 CHAIR'S ANNOUNCEMENTS

The Chair informed the Committee that Maureen Cain, Parent Governor representative, had resigned her position as co-opted member on the Committee due to family commitments and the Committee recorded its thanks.

40 MINUTES

Members were requested to receive the minutes of the meetings of the Children and Young People Overview and Scrutiny Committee held on 17 September and 3 November, 2009.

A Member suggested the need for clarity on the issue of the proposed academies in Birkenhead (minute 37 (3/11/09) refers).

The Chair remarked that future meetings should be organised so that a clear distinction was made between where Committee members were seated and members of the public and that the Chair should always be provided with a microphone.

Responding to comments made in a motion by Councillor Smith, which was then withdrawn, Vicki Shaw, Group Solicitor, Department of Law, HR and Asset Management, advised the Committee that the minutes of the Call-in meeting on 3 November, including both the resolution and the alternative motion which fell, would be referred to Cabinet on 26 November.

Resolved – That the minutes of the meetings held on 17 September and 3 November, be approved as a correct record.

41 YOUNG PEOPLE AND COMMUNITY SAFETY

The Director of Regeneration submitted a report on the scale of young people's involvement in community safety issues, ranging from criminal activity to issues of anti social behaviour and the interventions available across Wirral to prevent their involvement in this type of behaviour.

Steve McGilvray, Community Safety Co-ordinator, introduced the report which gave details on the following:

- The profiles of victims and perpetrators of crime and anti social behaviour.
- The forms and scale of enforcement action being taken against young people.
- The support which was available to young people and their parents prior to, and once within, the criminal justice system.
- The range of initiatives in place to prevent young people from becoming involved in community safety issues.

Steve McGilvray responded to comments from Members and informed the Committee that there was a temporal analysis of statistics undertaken and interventions were now carried out at times of greatest demand, traditionally on a Friday and Saturday evening. He agreed that the numbers of interventions were breeding confidence in the reporting of incidents. In respect of truancy figures, analysis was being undertaken on patterns amongst schools and individuals.

He elaborated on the work of the Family Intervention Programme and the funding this attracted. The Director commented that the Authority had been invited to bid for more funding to enable work to be carried out with social housing providers.

Members commented that the use of Section 30 dispersal orders could have a 'knock on' effect in adjoining areas and that they could also have a downside in their effect on household insurance premiums.

A Member commented on the need for more analysis of the correlation between those young people arrested for alcohol misuse and those young people with a 'statement' or with ADHD and that statistics should be circulated to Area Forums.

The Director remarked that he did want to look at providing statistical data at a ward level and an Area Forum level.

Resolved – That the report be noted and that the issue of young people and community safety be agreed as a topic for a scrutiny review possibly jointly with the Sustainable Communities Overview and Scrutiny Committee.

42 THE CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE'S PLAN 2008-2013 ANNUAL REPORT

The Director of Children's Services submitted the Children and Young People's Plan Annual Report. The Plan covered all the services for children and young people in the Borough and brought together all the strategic and operational plans to improve their lives and enable them to achieve their potential. It covered every aspect of children and young people's lives from before birth to their 19th birthday and beyond that if they had a disability or had been in care.

The CYPP annual review was carried out by multi-agency strategic groups linked to the five Every Child Matters Outcomes. The groups consisted of representatives from all agencies working with children and young people in Wirral. In addition, consultation was carried out with a range of children and young people.

The annual report was both a review of progress in the first year of the CYPP (2008/09) and an opportunity to refresh the priorities in order to be responsive to national and local change. The report had been produced in two sections, Part 1 being an overview report and Part 2 a detailed delivery plan outlining progress in year one and how refreshed priorities for the next two years would be delivered. A comprehensive equality impact assessment had been carried out with the plan review, the outcome of which highlighted how the implementation of the CYPP would have a significant impact on improving equality of opportunity for children and young people.

Responding to comments from the Committee, the Director reported that it took time for people's perceptions to change with regard to the integration of services and people did not necessarily see the inter-relationship that Children's Services had with other services such as the health service, although improvements in perceptions had occurred over the last three to four years.

In respect of external providers delivering health advice in schools, the Director agreed on the need to acknowledge the teachings of faith schools and that parents, as co-educators, needed to be drawn in to the process. The relationship with both churches, although complicated at times, was valued by the Department.

Resolved - That the Children and Young People's Plan Annual Review be noted.

43 PRESENTATION ON SECOND QUARTER PERFORMANCE 2009/10

David Armstrong, Head of Planning and Resources, gave a presentation and submitted an overview of progress made against the indicators for 2009/2010 in the second quarter and key projects which were relevant to the Children and Young People Overview and Scrutiny Committee.

He gave details of what was working well, including:

- This year's GCSE and A-level results had shown that Wirral students had, once again, performed better than ever – achieving results way above the national average
- Aimed at 14-19 year olds, a brand new way of learning was underway in Wirral with the introduction of the new Diploma qualifications.

- Wirral Council had helped to pioneer an innovative new scheme, which had seen 117 new apprentice positions created in local companies.
- 85.7% of children adopted had been placed within 12 months of the decision being made.
- Targets achieved at quarter two for the stability of placements of looked after children.
- Up to 15,000 five - 14 year olds in Wirral would benefit from the launch of a 'Play in the Peninsula' programme, enabling children of all abilities and backgrounds to get together and have fun.
- A campaign aimed at lowering teenage pregnancy rates had been launched in Wirral with the aim of educating young people about contraception and lifestyle choices.
- Working in partnership with NHS Wirral, Wirral Council was leading a new national initiative, 'Aiming Higher for Disabled Children' to help disabled children and their families get the support they needed to live ordinary lives.

In his presentation David Armstrong also referred to key performance issues and key risks, including an increase in the number of safeguarding children referrals following the 'baby Peter' case. The Council had responded by allocating additional resources as part of the 2009/10 budget. He also referred to the number of children in residential placements, and outlined the reasons as to how they had reduced from 58 at the end of August to 51 by the end of October.

In respect of the financial position, the projected deficit stood at £1.4m as at 31 October, down from £3m at the end of August, following action to reduce costs, including £300,000 slippage on Sure Start.

Responding to comments from Members, both David Armstrong and the Director explained how the slippage on Sure Start had arisen and also elaborated on the success of the apprenticeship scheme. The Director also referred to the numbers of 16 – 24 year olds who were unemployed on Wirral, which in this quarter had gone down by 0.4%, which was contrary to the position in the rest of the country.

Resolved – That the presentation be noted.

44 **SPECIAL SCHOOL DEVELOPMENTS**

Peter Edmondson, Head of Participation and Inclusion gave a presentation on improving special school provision in Wirral.

Wirral currently maintained 12 special schools, many of which were now past their best in terms of building fabric and capacity to provide the best education for children and young people. A review of the provision had begun approximately 3 years ago with a focus on the Complex Learning Difficulty (CLD) sector. This had now broadened into the moderate and specific learning difficulties' sector.

Within the CLD sector there were 3 primary schools – Elleray Park, Stanley and The Lyndale and 2 secondary schools – Foxfield and Meadowside. Cabinet, at its meeting on 23 April, 2009 (minute 467 refers) had agreed to the replacement of Elleray Park and Stanley schools, each co-located, also to investigate the feasibility of 2-19 provision for profound and multiple learning difficulties and to the merger of

Foxfield and Meadowside schools. Peter Edmondson reported that a progress report on the Stanley School proposal would be going to Cabinet on 26 November.

He gave details of the progress which had been made and outlined future developments with 9 special schools now being part of the review process. These were Ellera Park, Stanley, The Lyndale, Foxfield, Meadowside, Hayfield, Clare Mount, Gilbrook and Orrets Meadow.

Resolved – That the presentation be noted.

45 **YOUTH AND PLAY SERVICE ADVISORY COMMITTEE**

The minutes of the meeting of the Youth Play Service Advisory Committee of 27 October, were submitted for the Committee's information.

Peter Edmondson, Head of Participation and Inclusion, suggested that in future the minutes could be placed on the Council web library.

A Member suggested that there should still be the option for young people to put a report to the Overview and Scrutiny Committee if there was a specific item they wanted to bring to the Committee's attention.

Resolved – That the minutes be noted.

46 **WORK PROGRAMME**

The Committee received an update on its work programme, which included the proposed outline meeting schedule for the current municipal year, and progress on the two in-depth panel reviews.

The Chair stated, as previously agreed, that the matter of young people and community safety be agreed as a topic for a scrutiny review, possibly jointly with the Sustainable Communities Overview and Scrutiny Committee. She also reported that as some of the items scheduled for this meeting had slipped back to the January meeting she would discuss with the Director which reports would now be scheduled for the January meeting. The 'Literacy Levels at Key Stage 2' review was virtually complete and would be reported to the January meeting.

Resolved – That the report be noted.

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WIRRAL COUNCIL

CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE – 21st JANUARY 2010

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 July 2009 to 11 December 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 six month reporting period the following complaints were registered:

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

3. STAGE ONE COMPLAINTS (LOCAL RESOLUTION)

- 3.1 The 33 Stage 1 complaints registered in the reporting period were registered by:



- 3.2 Stage One Complaints Made by Children

2 of the children's complaints are still open. The average time taken to complete/resolve the 6 complaints made by a child/young person was 14 working days – compared to 10 days in the last reporting period.

71.2% of the complaints made by a child/young person were completed within the maximum timescale of 20 working days - compared to 83% in the last reporting period.

3.3 Stage One Complaints Made by Adults

One adult complaint was withdrawn; 3 are ongoing. The average time taken to complete/resolve the remaining 29 complaints made by adults with parental responsibility or day to day care was 15.6 working days – compared to 12.5 days in the last reporting period.

77.9 % of these complaints were completed within the maximum timescale of 20 working days – compared to 83.3% in the last reporting period.

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

One Stage 2 is ongoing. Two Stage 2 complaints have been completed:

The average time to complete the investigation was 41.5 working days - compared to 16.5 days in the last reporting period. *[One investigation was considerably delayed due to the complainant and then the Investigating Officer having their annual holidays, the timescale for this investigation to be completed was extended by mutual agreement.]*

The average time to produce a departmental response following investigation was 35.5 working days – compared to 22.5 working days in the last reporting period.

50% of Stage 2 complaints were completed within the maximum timescale of 65 working days.

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

- 5.1 One Stage 3 complaint was considered by an Independent Review Panel on 23 October 2009. The Panel upheld the Investigating Officers findings and outcomes and made three recommendations regarding communication.

The Director accepted the Panel's recommendations and responded to the complainant within the expected statutory timescale.

6. **OMBUDSMAN**

- 6.1 There have been 2 Ombudsman's enquiries during the reporting period; 1 regarding the case heard by Independent Review Panel; and 1 regarding a Special Guardianship issue. The Department has responded to the Ombudsman's initial enquiries and await her decision as to whether she is to consider these complaints any further.

7. **FINANCIAL AND STAFFING IMPLICATIONS**

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

8. **EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES IMPLICATIONS/HEALTH IMPACT ASSESSMENT**

- 8.1 None arising directly from this report.

9. COMMUNITY SAFETY IMPLICATIONS

9.1 None arising directly from this report.

10. LOCAL AGENDA 21 IMPLICATIONS

10.1 None arising directly from this report.

11. PLANNING IMPLICATIONS

11.1 None arising directly from this report.

12. ANTI-POVERTY IMPLICATIONS

12.1 None arising directly from this report.

13. SOCIAL INCLUSION IMPLICATIONS

13.1 None arising directly from this report.

14. LOCAL MEMBER SUPPORT IMPLICATIONS

14.1 None arising directly from this report.

15. BACKGROUND PAPERS

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

16. RECOMMENDATIONS

16.1 Members are asked to note this report.

Howard Cooper
Director of Children's Services

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WIRRAL COUNCIL

CHILDRENS SERVICES AND LIFELONG LEARNING OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE: 21ST January 2010

REPORT OF THE DIRECTOR OF CHILDRENS SERVICES

PRIVATE FOSTERING

Executive Summary

This report provides an update on Private Fostering activity within the Local Authority since the Ofsted Inspection in July 2008. This report outlines for members the actions which have been implemented in response to the findings and recommendations of the Ofsted inspection.

1. Background

- 1.1 Private Fostering was included in the Children and Adoption Act 2004 as an outcome from the inquiry into the death of Victoria Climbié. The Act introduced a voluntary notification scheme, where any person who intended to become a private foster carer (or who subsequently became one) should notify the local authority so that appropriate checks and an assessment could be undertaken to ensure the child's welfare. The local authority should then monitor that arrangement and take action to safeguard the child when necessary. The local authority also has the power to bar unsuitable people from being private foster carers, prosecute for failure to notify an arrangement and make requirements of a carer and parent as part of a private fostering arrangement. Minimum standards for private fostering were introduced in 2005.
- 1.2 A child is privately fostered when a parent or person with parental responsibility makes arrangements for their child to live with someone who is not a close relative and the arrangement is to last for longer than 28 days.
- 1.3 As part of the minimum standards, an annual report should be presented to the Director of Children's Services and the Local Children's Safeguarding Board.

2 Private Fostering in Wirral

- 2.1 The Private Fostering policy and procedure for Private Fostering was reviewed and re-issued in May 2008. The process by which the Children and Young People's Department continues to execute their responsibilities outlined in the Private Fostering Regulations 2008 remain as outlined within the Overview and Scrutiny Committee Report of 11th November 2008.
- 2.2 Notifications of Private Fostering arrangements, although increasing annually, remain low, this is a national trend which is being monitored by BAAF (British Association Adoption and Fostering). As a result of extensive training and awareness raising within Children's Social Care we are receiving more enquiries as to whether a case meets the criteria for Private Fostering.
- 2.3 There are currently 4 children in a Private Fostering arrangement. During the Summer 2009, the Department also assessed and approved 30 Private Fostering arrangements in relation to children visiting from Belarus. Within the last twelve

months there has also been a further 3 arrangements approved, however, these young people have now returned home.

3 Standards of Assessment and Process

- 3.1 Of the 37 arrangements reported this year, 31 were completed within the required 35 day timescale. The remaining assessments were significantly outside of the required timescales. Recognising Private Fostering arrangements and responding within timescale is an important safeguarding activity. Complying with Private Fostering Assessment timescales has been an issue within some social work teams, and this is being addressed through work with Team Managers, and through the training referred to below.
- 3.2 The current process of tracking Private Fostering notifications and ensuring that assessments are completed is that once notification is sent by the Central Advice and Duty Team to a District Social Work Team an email is also sent to the Private Fostering Officer in order to arrange a joint visit. Following completion of the assessment the social worker then forwards the assessment to the Designated District Manager through ICS (Integrated Children's System) for approval. All Private Fostering case files are audited by the designated District Manager and Strategic Service Manager, Children and Families.

4 Actions

- 4.1 In response to the Ofsted inspection in July 2008 an action plan was compiled and has now been fully implemented. Below illustrates how these actions have been met and processes to evidence continued improvement in this area.
- 4.2 A multi-agency training session has been developed and implemented by the Private Fostering Officer. The session is delivered on a bi-monthly basis. Feedback from attendees has been extremely positive, the sessions have highlighted the need for continued awareness raising and a bespoke training programme for social work staff. A specific training session for social work staff has been developed to incorporate the use of ICS (Integrated Children System) within the Private Fostering Assessment. This training session is also a compulsory component of the core training for all new members of social work staff.
- 4.3 Awareness raising continues to be a priority action; during January 2009 we worked very closely with BAAF (British Association Adoption and Fostering) in deliver their national awareness raising campaign. "Somebody else's Child". To celebrate the success of the campaign and an acknowledgement of our work we were invited to attend an event at the House of Lords in Westminster with one of our Wirral families. Our part in the awareness raising campaign from a Wirral perspective ranged from having surgeries in the Pyramids Shopping Centre, Arrowse Park Hospital and broadcasting a radio clip on Private Fostering. We continue to take advantage of local events to raise awareness about Private Fostering. We have been invited by BAAF to join this years campaign to target schools and all education staff.
- 4.4 The accountability framework for approving, auditing and reviewing all Private Fostering work is fully implemented within ICS. Quarterly data is reported on Private Fostering activity to the Local Safeguarding Board. Annual reports are submitted on Private Fostering to the Local Safeguarding Board and the Director of Children's Services.

- 4.5 Information leaflets have been produced and circulated throughout Wirral which describe what Private Fostering means to both children and adults.
- 4.6 The Private Fostering Officer continues to meet with all social work Team Managers and Area Teams/Area Team Leaders quarterly to discuss any matters regarding Private Fostering.

5. Financial and Staffing Implications

There are no additional staffing requirements.

6 Equal Opportunities / Equality Impact Assessment

The provision of this service will ensure that Privately Fostered Children are not disadvantaged in any way due to their circumstances.

7 Human Rights Implications

Privately Fostered children are a vulnerable group, and the provision of this service will ensure that their human rights are safeguarded.

8 Local Agenda 21 Implications

None

9 Community Safety Implications

None

10 Planning Implications

None

11 Local Member Support Implications

Children who are privately fostered may live in all wards across Wirral.

12 Background Papers

- Private Fostering Policy May 2008
- Ofsted Inspection Report July 2008
- The Children (Private Arrangements for Fostering) Regulations 2005
- National Minimum Standards for Private Fostering 2005
- The Children Act 2004

13 Recommendations

It is recommended that members note the findings of the OFSTED inspection and the work undertaken to meet the requirements identified. Members are in particular asked to note the governance arrangements now in place through the Local Safeguarding Children's Board, the strengthening of policy and procedural requirements, and the ongoing dissemination and public awareness raising activity across the Children's Trust.

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WIRRAL COUNCIL

**CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE -
21 JANUARY 2010**

REPORT OF DIRECTOR OF CHILDREN'S SERVICES

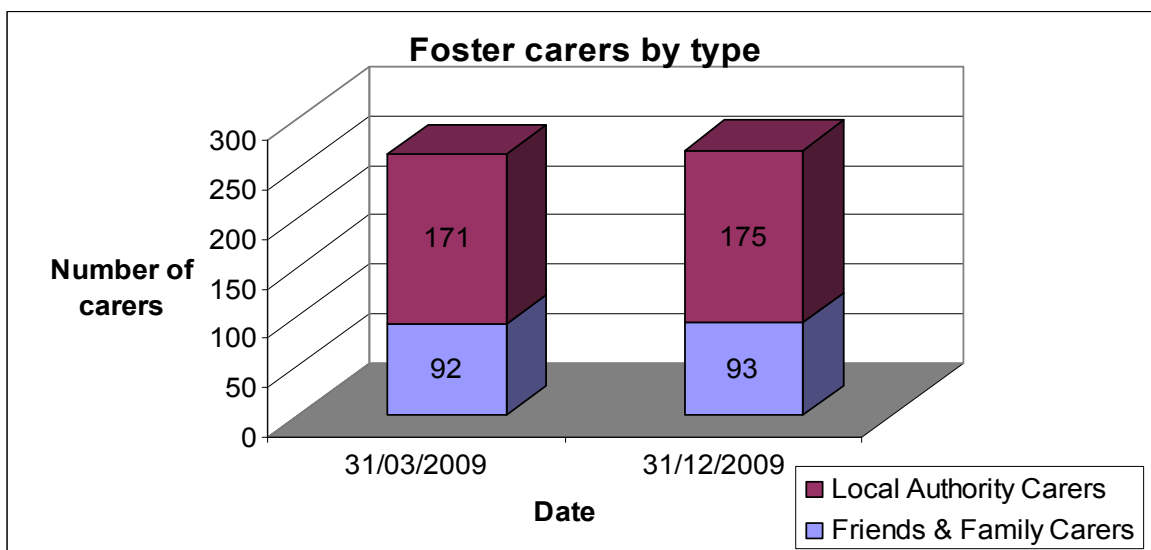
FOSTERING SERVICE PROGRESS REPORT

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This report is to update members on the business of the Fostering Service during 2009/10. More specifically the report will focus on further progress made in implementing the recommendations of the Scrutiny report into the Fostering Service; it follows an interim report received by this Committee in January 2009.

1. Background

- 1.1 On 31st March 2009 there were 263 registered Foster Carers within the service. Figures from the 1st April 2009 to 31st December 2009, show that there have been 55 new Foster Carers approved, of which 39 were friends and family (kinship) Foster Carers and 16 were general carers.
- 1.2 Figures also show that 50 Foster Carers have left the service during this period. Of these, 13 Foster Carers chose to seek a Special Guardianship order or a Residence Order for the children they were caring for and one of the Foster Carers became an adoptive parent. There were, 35 Foster Carers who chose to end their registration when children left placement, these were however mostly friends and family carers. Only one Foster Carer was deregistered by the Fostering panel. None of the Foster Carers who left chose to join independent fostering agencies.
- 1.3 At the 31 December 2009 there were 268 registered foster carers making an overall increase of 5 foster carers so far this financial year.
- 1.4 The above information is summarised in the chart below, which also highlights the split between friends and family (kinship) Foster Carers and general carers within the service.



- 1.5 In addition to the above there are 9 families currently being assessed as general Foster Carers. The assessments are due to be presented to the fostering panel in either January or February 2010.
- 1.6 There is a training event planned this month, for prospective general Foster Carers and 8 families have confirmed their attendance.
- 1.7 Alongside recruitment, the Fostering Service has managed to retain several experienced Foster Carers. This currently includes families who have been fostering for 33 years, 28 years, 24 years, 22 years and 21 years respectively.
- 1.8 During 2009 the Fostering Service has received several messages praising the work of their Foster Carers. Most recently an e-mail was received from a Social Inclusion Manager in a school. The e-mail commented about the compassion shown by a one of the Foster Carers for the children placed with her and spoke positively about the Foster Carers involvement with the School.
- 1.9 The Fostering Service has continued to roll out the Children's Workforce and Development Council (CWDC) training and development standards. Many of the Foster Carers are now working towards completing their portfolio of evidence.
- 1.10 Developments are also taking place in relation to the Mother and Baby Fostering Scheme. A small task group has been meeting to develop the scheme into a Parent and Child Fostering scheme which involves the Foster Carer actively contributing to Social Work assessments.
- 1.11 The work of the Fostering Service has been assisted by there having been a stable staffing establishment throughout 2009. There were some gaps in strategic management due to the Service Manager for looked after children post being vacant between January 2009 and August 2009. The new Service Manager is now in post and strategic planning for the fostering service has returned to the forefront.
- 1.12 Despite the positive work with Foster Carers, new Service developments and the stable staffing establishing, it is however fair to say that the Fostering Service is facing increased pressure. This pressure is due in part to an increased request for Foster Placements for teenagers who often have a range of complex needs. In addition the Fostering Service is receiving a high volume of requests for assessments of prospective Family and Friend's Foster Carers from the Family Courts. These assessments often have to be completed within a very short timescale.
- 1.13 The Service Manager is however planning to relaunch the Fostering taskforce in the New Year. The taskforce will focus on enhancing the recruitment strategy to strengthen the service to respond to demand.

2. SCRUTINY OF THE FOSTERING SERVICE

- 2.1 The original actions from the Overview and Scrutiny Committee scrutiny of the Fostering Service are listed below, followed by comments concerning the progress against each action.

3. RECOMMENDATIONS FOR CHILDREN IN FOSTER CARE

The authority should continue to try to improve the stability of placements. This will be achieved by better matching of children and carers, which in turn is made possible by increased recruitment of foster carers

As outlined in this report progress has continued in recruiting Foster Carers and retaining Foster Carers which clearly impacts on placement stability. It is important to note that Wirral has performed well against the national indicators relating to placement stability (NI 62 and NI 63). At October 2009 only 9.3% of looked after children in Wirral had experienced 3 or more placement moves on one year and 69.9% of children looked after in Wirral for 2.5 years have remained in the same placement for 2 years. A significant proportion of children looked after in Wirral (86%) are placed with foster carers or awaiting adoptive placements. The figures relating to placement stability are also a clear indicator of the stability of fostering placements.

Ensure that foster children have ready access to their social workers and are able to maintain good communications, so that they are aware when the social worker might not be available and will know how to contact any alternatives

Implementing this action continues to be assisted because the department has been able to recruit Social Workers and the staffing establishment has been relatively stable throughout the year. All Social Workers now have work mobile phones and an e-mail address which clearly assists in making communication more effective.

Encourage social workers to be more proactive in their dealings with looked after children. Looked after children perceive them as the statutory decision makers but they should also be able to look on them as a friend

All Newly Qualified Social Workers (NQSWS hereafter) within Social Care have benefited from attending training in relation to working with looked after children, as part of their induction process. More experienced Social Workers have been able to develop their knowledge further through attending formal Post Qualifying Training. Social Workers are therefore, developing a more secure knowledge base in relation to working with looked after children. In addition the Fostering Service are aware of numerous examples of where the Social Workers have been able to befriend children/young people living with Foster Carers. This has included Social Workers taking the child/young person for a meal out or to the park rather than restricting their meetings to formal settings. Several Social Workers have nominated children living with foster carers for a looked after children's award and attended the awards ceremony to offer their support.

Give as much flexibility as possible to foster carers in relation to permissions for the involvement of looked after children in extra curricular activities.

In relation to consent for looked after children to be involved in extra curricular activities, there has been some revision of the current policy.

The change in the policy allows for foster carers and social workers to give permission for looked after children to be involved in hazardous extra curricular activities, provided the activities are organised by Wirral local authority schools. This is because the risk assessments for such activities are scrutinised by the Children and Young People's Department's Health and Safety Officer routinely.

A fuller review of the policy is taking place following, the consultation exercise the Children in Care Council have recently undertaken on this issue.

Ensure that looked after children are aware of their financial entitlement

The Fostering Service has written to all Foster Carers to advise them of the importance of informing children placed with them of their financial entitlements. In addition to this work has been undertaken to ensure that Independent Reviewing Officers routinely raise the question of children's financial entitlements as part of the review process. A further role of the new fostering taskforce will be to consider the development of placement information packs for Foster Carers and it is intended that financial information will be included within these packs.

4. RECOMMENDATIONS FOR FOSTER CARERS

The authority should aim to widen the geographical area in which foster carers are recruited and ensure that the necessary network of support is in place to achieve that aim (and consider providing financial support for house extensions)

This recommendation was made in view of the fact that the majority of foster carers had been located in the Wallasey and Birkenhead areas. A recruitment campaign was held earlier this year. This campaign was successful and resulted in Foster Carers being recruited from the Bebington and Eastham areas.

Foster carers should be treated and accepted as fellow professionals. That would involve showing more trust in terms of information that is shared with them within legal limits they should have all the information necessary to ensure the welfare of the foster child, especially medical information

Work continues within the Service to develop the role of Foster Carers as professionals. As referred to above, the Fostering Service has now rolled out the CWDC Training Support and Development Standards. As a result, Foster Carers are now evidencing their own professional competence. In addition there have been two other significant developments. Firstly those Foster Carers who receive a band three fee are receiving support from the Fostering Service to enable them to take on additional roles such as the supervision of contact. Secondly Foster Carers on the Mother and Baby scheme (soon to become Parent and Child Scheme) are receiving additional training to enable them to contribute to Social Work assessments.

Also they should be made to feel valued, possibly by means of an annual awards ceremony or mayoral reception.

The second 'Listen to Me' awards are due to be held this year. The first award ceremony in 2008 provided an opportunity for young people to nominate professionals who have listened to them. A number of Foster Carers were nominated and commended for the work they had undertaken.

Plans are now being progressed with the Mayor's office to hold a reception for Foster Carers. It is anticipated that this event will take place early in 2010.

Access to training for foster carers should be improved with courses specific to their requirements (via an individual improvement plan) and convenient in terms of times, location and crèche facilities.

The Fostering Service continues to run a monthly 'drop in' facility for Foster Carers. This offers the opportunity for Foster Carers to discuss issues relating to their training/development with a member of the Fostering Service. A crèche is provided as part of the 'drop in' facility.

Foster Carers continue to benefit from attending the general training provided by the department. In particular Foster Carers have attended training about permanency planning alongside Social Workers. Feedback confirmed that both groups benefited significantly from working alongside each other.

The Fostering Service will assist Foster Carers with the cost of childcare should this be required in order for them to attend a course.

As highlighted above, the CWDC pilot has now been rolled out across the service. This has resulted in Foster Carers identifying their own training needs and as a result specific courses are being delivered to meet those needs.

Training should include health issues, as they affect both the child and the carer

The issue of health is integral to the CWDC standards and as a result several Foster Carers have identified a need for health related information / support. Generally this has been responded to on an individual basis through links with the LAC Health Nurses. In addition the LAC Health Nurses continue to deliver health related training at the Foster Carer's 'drop in'. There are currently plans to deliver Sexual Health training to Foster Carers in conjunction with Brook Advisory Service.

The foster carer's handbook should be updated on a regular basis

The foster carer's handbook needs to be updated on an ongoing basis and is due to be fully reviewed and reissued in 2010.

Ensure that payments to foster carers in particular Christmas allowances are paid promptly

The Fostering Service continues to benefit from the SWIFT payments system. Following initial 'teething problems'; there have been no difficulties with payments and Christmas allowances for 2009 were paid promptly.

There should be a strong encouragement for foster carers to attend school parents' evenings and personal education plan meetings and provide the means for doing so through additional childcare arrangements. Carers should have regular contact with the designated teacher.

Foster Carers continue to be clear about their responsibilities in relation to the education of children placed with them. Through meetings with their supervising Social Worker and through using the CWDC portfolio they are required to evidence their attendance at parents' evening and contact with the designated teacher. A group of Foster Carers have recently contributed to an OFSTED 16-19 strategy inspection

during which they gave a good account of the support they offer children placed with them in terms of their education.

Whilst it is accepted that they may be necessary in an emergency in which case additional support should be provided, exemption placement should be avoided

The number of exemptions (more than three children in one placement) within the Fostering Service has remained stable at around 20 throughout 2009. Each exemption requires the completion of both a risk assessment and matching exercise before being presented to the Service Manager for approval. The majority of the exemptions currently in place are to enable siblings to remain together or are in place temporarily to enable the Foster Carer to provide a time limited respite placement. The level of exemptions is currently high and this is why there is a need to develop the strategies to enhance the capacity of the service. In the meantime the exemptions that are in place are subject to regular review.

Provide departmental support for the foster carers association in order to help it to represent all carers in the borough, including taking over production of their newsletter.

Unfortunately the Foster Carers Association ceased to operate during the Summer of 2009. The Association had been run by several long serving Foster Carers who all concluded that the time had come for some of the newer Foster Carers to take over. This decision may well have been prompted by the sad death of one of the Association members. It is now proposed to plan a 'relaunch' event in early 2010, with support from the Fostering Service it is hoped that the Association can become active again.

Measures should be put in place to ensure that an individual contract (placement agreement) is always signed and in place in respect of each new placement.

Significant improvements have been made in highlighting any gaps in LAC documentation within Foster placements. The LAC Service Manager receives information from the Independent Reviewing Officer who undertakes Foster Carer reviews concerning missing LAC documents (including placement agreements). This information is then shared with the District Managers who are ultimately responsible for the children's Social Workers. Ensuring signed placement agreements for each new placement will become another focus for the new fostering taskforce.

**The position of kinship carers should be clarified to ensure the correct level of support is provided for the child
Foster carers should attend hearings of the fostering panel where appropriate**

The Fostering Service continues to approve and support kinship Foster Carers in relation to the national minimum standards in the same way that non related Foster Carers are approved and supported. At the same time however the Fostering Service recognises that Kinship Foster Carers may have unique needs arising from their Kinship status. As such the Fostering Service continues to identify one of the Team Leaders as having particular responsibility for Kinship Foster Care. Kinship Foster Carers are encouraged to attend and participate in training. There are currently several Kinship Foster Carers working to complete their CWDC portfolio.

5. RECOMMENDATIONS FOR PROFESSIONAL STAFF

The staffing complement for social workers should be kept under review

The Children's Social Care Branch continues to manage recruitment of Social Workers effectively. There continues to be a rolling programme of advertisements and recruitment events for District Social Workers which ensures that any vacancies are filled promptly. As mentioned elsewhere the staffing complement within the Fostering Service continues to be relatively stable. One Social Worker is currently acting into a Team Leader post; interviews for the Team Leader post are due to take place shortly.

The effectiveness of financial incentives should be reviewed in terms of both attracting staff and retaining them, taking into account of comparisons with other local authorities

As highlighted above the Branch has been successful in attracting Social Workers and where appropriate, incentives such as 'golden hellos' are used. In terms of retaining staff the NQSW pilot continues which provides a programme of additional support and training. It is intended that this pilot will be rolled out to offer support beyond NQSW status culminating in the Advanced Social Work professional status.

Social workers concerns about the adequacy of administrative support should be addressed in a review of respective duties. The findings could be reported to the Overview and Scrutiny Committee

The Branch continues to implement the Remodelling Social Work Delivery Pilot. This Pilot has focused on opportunities to maximise Social Work time spent with children and families, which has in part been enabled through greater clarity about the role of operational support. The findings from the Remodelling pilot, are informing future developments. The Transformational Change Team is also providing business analyst capacity to support the review of operational systems and processes.

Consideration should be given to reviewing the system for weighting of social workers caseloads

A system of caseload management for Social Workers is being considered, following a review of local and national schemes. This will be piloted, before being rolled out across all Teams in 2010.

Full availability of information technology as a key element of communications and for effective case management should be a key priority for social work staff

All Social Workers now have access to their own computer, this includes social workers in the Fostering Service. In addition all Social Workers are benefiting from continued support and training in relation to fully implementing the Integrated Children's System (ICS). The pace of change is accelerating now that an ICS Project Manager is in post, and four Data Officers have recently been temporarily recruited to support fieldwork teams in particular. The ICS Project Board is leading this work.

Improve communications between the family placement team and social work teams including a better understanding of each team's role

Significant improvements have been made in the communication between the Fostering Service and the District Teams. For example the Service Manager meets regularly with the District Managers as a means of ensuring information is shared

between the two service areas. In addition the Team Manager for the Fostering Service regularly attends the Social Care Team Managers meetings. In early 2010 the Fostering Service Team Manager will be giving a presentation to the Team Manager's meeting concerning developments around parent and child fostering. The new Fostering Taskforce will draw its membership from both the Fostering Service and the Districts.

Social workers relationships with foster carers and looked after children should be a key element of their training

Permanency Planning training continues to be rolled out across Social Care. There are a number of Newly Qualified Social Workers (NQSW) and it is an expectation that they attend training in working with looked after children (to include children placed with Foster Carers) and permanency training. These training events have involved Social Workers working alongside Foster Carers allowing them to learn from each other's perspective.

Social workers should be contactable mobile phone in the same way as family placement team members

As outlined above all Social Workers continue to have work mobile phones. The Social Worker's mobile phone number is shared with Foster Carers and with children placed with Foster Carers.

Consideration should be given to combining to a greater or lesser extent joint care meetings LAC reviews and PEP meetings in order to make more effective use of professional's time.

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

Every effort should be made to reduce the time taken for assessment of foster carers

On average assessments continue to be completed within six months of the prospective Foster Carer wishing to be assessed. The Fostering Service has however experienced greater difficulty with some of the timescales in relation to assessment of family and friends carers. For example, for those children placed with unapproved family and friends carers, it is a statutory requirement that the assessment be completed within six weeks. In other cases the Courts impose tight timescales on the Fostering Service to ensure assessments of family and friends' carers are completed. Some of these difficulties will be resolved with the introduction of the new Care Planning, Placement and Case Review Regulations 2010, which propose more realistic timescales for the completion of family and friends foster care assessments.

The team manager for family placement should not have to carry an individual case load in order that she can have a proper overview of the service and to be able to ensure that assessment deadlines are met.

Currently the Team Manager for the Fostering Service has one fostering family still allocated to her. This case had remained with the Team Manager on the understanding that the Foster Carers were planning to retire soon, as there are plans for the children placed with them to move into a long term placement. The Service Manager has agreed to review this allocation with the Team Manager in January 2010 and if the Foster Carer's plan for retirement is still no further on then the case will be reallocated to another Supervising Social Worker. This represents a significant improvement from the position at the time of the original Scrutiny Report, which quite appropriately raised concerns about a Managers capacity to manage when they were holding a caseload.

There should be no reason why the social worker or family placement worker does not attend hearings of the fostering panel or if they are not available are represented by a senior fellow professional who has a full understanding of the case in question

The Service Manager regularly meets with the Chair of Fostering Panel and is made aware of any concerns in relation to panel attendance. No concerns have been reported in relation to supervising Social Workers attending panel. Some concerns were however reported in relation to Social Workers not attending panel. When aware of this concern the Service Manager sent a memorandum to the District Managers outlining the importance of Social Workers attending panel. There has been one fostering panel following the memorandum, at which concerns were still apparent in relation to Social Workers not attending panel. The Service Manager plans to attend the District Manager's meeting in January when the issue of Social Workers attendance at panel will be addressed.

Every effort should be made to continue the improvement in the quality of reports to the fostering panel

This continues to be a focus for the service. Both the Fostering Team Manager and Service Manager undertake a quality assurance role prior to reports being accepted onto the Fostering Panel Agenda. In addition as outlined above, the Service Manager meets with the chair of the Fostering Panel, who continues to hold a view that the quality of reports to the Panel are generally good.

The family placement team should provide a regular report to the panel that brings its attention to any breakdowns on placements in a format that is acceptable to panel

This recommendation has not been implemented. It is however intended that the Service Manager will raise this with the Chair of the Fostering Panel. This issue will also be addressed by the new Fostering Taskforce.

6. RECOMMENDATIONS FOR THE EDUCATIONAL ACHIEVEMENT OF LOOKED AFTER CHILDREN

There should be tighter and more robust controls on school attendance of looked after children supported by timely and accurate information.

Information on school attendance by looked after children, continues to be discussed at both the PEP meetings and LAC reviews. In addition the Service Manager is a member of the Enjoy and Achieve Strategy group through which plans are progressed to provide the strategic monitoring of looked after children's attendance.

Emphasis should be given to identifying what skills looked after children might have in relation to extra curricular activities such as sports and music

Information concerning looked children's extra curricular activities continues to be discussed as part of the placement planning meeting and at each LAC review. The Fostering Service is aware of several young people who are involved in activities such as martial arts, horse riding and army cadets. Each looked after child continues to receive a free leisure pass and several have benefited from holiday and weekend activities organised by the Social Inclusion officer. The recent LAC awards evening enabled the dance and drama talents of several looked after children to be showcased.

7. RECOMMENDATIONS FOR THE VIRTUAL SCHOOL

That the profile of the virtual school be raised in order to ensure that all members of the council are aware of their role as corporate parents

Information relating to the Virtual School is now clearly available to all council members via a dedicated website. Members of the virtual school have been visiting Social Work teams to share information about the role and function of the virtual school. In addition the Service Manager meets with the Head of the Virtual school to ensure effective service planning.

That governors continue to act as a driving force in improving standards for looked after children

The virtual school encourages involvement of School Governors. There is information available on the Virtual School website aimed specifically at School Governors, this includes the DFES guidance for Governors 'Supporting LAC Learners'.

8. RECOMMENDATIONS FOR WELFARE

That procedures for the provision of all necessary medical information to named nurses and other professionals including foster carers be reviewed.

Information concerning the health of looked after children, continues to be shared both at placement planning meetings and LAC review meetings. As mentioned above one of the roles of new Fostering Task Force will be to ensure that foster carers always receive detailed LAC documents at the time of placement. Clearly the LAC documents should include health information. In addition the Service Manager meets with the named nurses, this provides an opportunity to raise concerns when there have been difficulties around information sharing.

9. Conclusion

The Scrutiny of the Fostering Service has provided a very useful framework for the continued development of services and partnership arrangements to improve outcomes for children placed in Foster Care. As outlined above, considerable progress has been made; areas where a specific and sharpened focus is still required will form the basis for the Fostering Task Force development plan.

10. Financial Implications

There are no financial implications associated with this report.

11. Staffing Implications

There are no particular staffing implications associated with this report.

12. Equal Opportunities Implications/Equality Impact Assessment

Foster Care continues to be made available to all children and young people looked after, where family based care is the most appropriate way of meeting their needs. Equality Impact Assessments are being undertaken in relation to all policies and procedures relating to looked after children.

13. Community Safety Implications

The aim of providing stable and secure Foster Placements is consistent with the aims of reducing offending and diverting young people from anti social behaviour.

14. Local Agenda 21 Implications

The continued development of locally based Foster Placements reduces the need for travel by parents, carers and social workers.

15. Planning Implications

There are no planning implications.

16. Anti-poverty Implications

Full implementation of the national minimum fostering allowance now means that Foster Carers are properly remunerated for the care they provide to vulnerable children and young people.

17. Social Inclusion Implications

Children placed with Foster Carers benefit from a placement in a family setting where they can develop trusting relationships with adults, who promote their inclusion in school leisure and community activities.

18. Local Member Support Implications

Children placed with Foster Carers come from all wards within Wirral. Foster Carers live in all wards within Wirral.

19. Background Papers

- Inspection Report Wirral Fostering Service 27th February 2008
- Inspection Report Wirral Fostering Service 25th July 2008.
- Report To Overview and Scrutiny Committee January 2009

RECOMMENDATIONS

That members note and comment on the attached update on the Scrutiny of the Fostering Service.

Howard Cooper
Director of Children's Services

WIRRAL COUNCIL

CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE - 21ST JANUARY 2010

JOINT REPORT OF THE DIRECTOR OF PUBLIC HEALTH AND DIRECTOR OF CHILDREN'S SERVICES

TEENAGE PREGNANCY PRIORITY ACTION PLAN - PROGRESS AGAINST NATIONAL SUPPORT TEAM FOR TEENAGE PREGNANCY RECOMMENDATIONS

1. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

1.1. This report provides evidence of further progress made against the recommendations and priority actions to be implemented following the visit in July 2008 of the Department of Health's National Support Team for Teenage Pregnancy. The Overview and Scrutiny Committee are asked to consider progress made to date.

2. BACKGROUND

The National Teenage Pregnancy Strategy was launched in 1999 with two specific objectives:

- To reduce the number of teenage conceptions by 50% by 2010 (by teenager we mean those becoming pregnant under the age of 18).
- To increase the number of teenage parents in education, employment or training

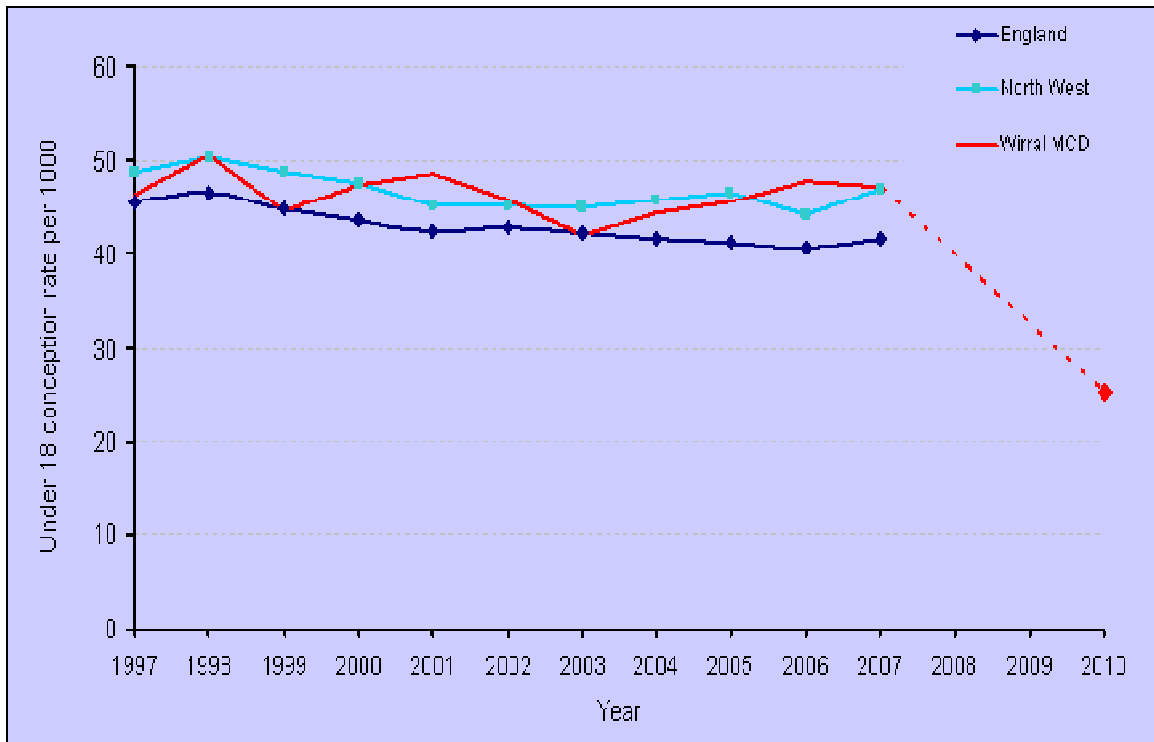
2.1. In Wirral, having previously fallen between 1998 and 2002, under-18 conceptions increased between the years 2003 to 2006. Data relating to teenage conceptions is produced annually and is released by the Department of Health two years behind, so that we can expect annual data for 2008 to be released in February 2010. Data for 2007 has shown a slight decrease in overall conceptions for the year (i.e. a reduction overall of 9 conceptions). However, early indications for the most recent data relating to 2008 (i.e. up to quarter three of 2008) are indicating a greater decrease in reducing teenage conceptions and as such we are hopeful that initiatives relating to this area of work are beginning to have an impact.

2.2. The table below refers to data from 2006 up to and including provisional data for quarter three of 2008.

| | Number of conceptions | Rate per 1,000 young women under 18 years | % ending in termination |
|-------------|------------------------------|--|--------------------------------|
| 1998 | 314 | 50.6 | 43% |
| 2006 | 312 | 47.8 | 48% |

| | | | |
|------------------------|---------------------------|------|-----|
| 2007 | 303 | 47.2 | 53% |
| Jan – Sept 2008 | 191 (provisional DH data) | 42.6 | 42% |

2.3. The recent reduction for teenage conceptions in Wirral is against the national and regional trend and Wirral has been recognised recently as an area of good practice by Government Office North West. However, the graph below shows the extent of the challenge if targets for 2010 are to be met.



2.4 The nationally recognised risk factors for a young person becoming a teenage parent include:

- Early first sex – girls having sex under 16 are 3 times more likely to become pregnant than those who delay first sex. High quality sex and relationship education is associated with young people delaying their first sexual experience and being able to resist peer pressure.
- Involvement in crime – teenage boys and girls who are in trouble with the police are 3 times more likely to become a teenage parent.
- Alcohol and substance misuse – many young women report going further than they intended, or not remembering whether they have had sex because they were drunk.

- Educational attainment – among girls leaving school at 16 with no qualifications one in 3 will have a birth under 18 (compared with 1 in 100 for girls leaving school at 17 or over). However even areas with high deprivation scores can have lower levels of teenage conceptions, if school attainment is higher.
- Children in Care – teenage motherhood is 3 times higher amongst Children in Care
- Poor mental health – confidence and self esteem enable young people to make informed choices, young people who are unhappy at school or excluded for behavioural issues are more likely to become teenage parents.
- Health inequalities begin from birth. In the first year of life a child born to a teenage mother has a 60% higher risk of death than those of a child born to parents aged 18 or over. The longer term outcomes for a child born to a teenage mother are also not as good in terms of poverty, health and education. Indeed they are more likely to become a teenage parent themselves and perpetuate the cycle of deprivation.

2.5 The four wards of Birkenhead, Bidston, Tranmere and Seacombe continue to account for one in three of all teenage conceptions. This is associated with the relationship between deprivation and teenage pregnancy.

3 Strategic Action Plan Implementation

3.1 The National Support Team (NST) visited Wirral in July 2008 and interviewed a range of stakeholders including the Chief Executives of NHS Wirral and the Local Authority, the Lead Member for Children's Services, Director of Children's Services, Joint Director of Public Health and Heads of Branch within the Children and Young People's Department. In their conclusions they identified overall strengths within Wirral, including having teenage conceptions included in the LAA and Children and Young People's Plan, and commented on the enthusiasm and commitment to improve performance within the LA and NHS Wirral. However, they also highlighted evidence that adults needed to be more bold and confident when talking about sexual health and wellbeing across Wirral children's services and emphasised the need for us to be less cautious when discussing sexual health and wellbeing with young people in order to significantly reduce the number of teenage conceptions. Acting upon the key recommendations arising from the NST visit a Teenage Pregnancy Strategic Action Plan has been developed, driven by the Teenage Pregnancy Steering Group. The following is a summary of the key recommendations and actions taken so far to implement them.

4 Strategic Recommendations

4.1 National Support Team Recommendations

The National Support Team recommended that a Strategic Leadership Group should drive forward the agenda, and for the Local Authority and NHS Wirral to foster a philosophy of Teenage Pregnancy Prevention being everyone's responsibility.

4.2 Action taken so far

The Strategic Leadership Group has identified 'Accountable Leads' with responsibility for driving forward the NST recommendations and priority actions. Each Accountable Lead takes responsibility for reporting on their area of the action plan at every Teenage Pregnancy Steering Group meeting and ensuring timely progress against each recommendation.

4.3 The Teenage Pregnancy Steering Group, chaired by the Head of Branch, Children's Social Care, commissioned bespoke 'Turning the Curve' training for steering group members, (March 2009), using an 'outcomes based accountability' framework to reduce the number of teenage conceptions and raise young people's aspirations. This has resulted in the development of a pilot project to develop specific action plans using the framework within communities with high teenage pregnancy rates.

4.4 In April 2009, with the support of the NST, we hosted an event for Elected Members to raise awareness of the teenage pregnancy strategy and explore the potential for members to assist in the strategic delivery of this target. This has resulted in some Members agreeing to take on the role of Teenage Pregnancy Strategy Champion. In April 2009, the Teenage Pregnancy Strategy Coordinator left NHS Wirral to take up a post in another authority. The role was covered on a part time basis until December 2009 when the new Teenage Pregnancy Coordinator took up post.

4.5 Future action planned during 2010/11

Future plans include: inducting the new Teenage Pregnancy Coordinator into the role, and consolidating the strengthened reporting arrangements and the role of accountable leads in delivering the action plan; embedding teenage pregnancy developments within the overall joint commissioning framework and hosting regular Teenage Pregnancy Strategy Champions forums to empower champions to take forward the strategy within their own area of responsibility. In addition we plan to hold media training for all 'accountable leads' and key stakeholders to ensure they are empowered to react appropriately to any potential media interest.

5. **DATA RECOMMENDATIONS**

5.1 National Support Team Recommendations

The NST recommended a more intelligent use of data analysis to monitor performance outcomes and investment of resources and for ongoing and routine data sharing processes across agencies to be established and facilitated by a Performance Management Sub Group.

5.2 Action taken so far

The Accountable Lead for Data has responsibility for chairing the Teenage Pregnancy Performance Management Sub Group and having taken action to refine and update the teenage pregnancy monitoring data set, key performance indicators are now in the process of being agreed by the TPSG to ensure all identified gaps are resolved. An information sharing agreement has been established between NHS Wirral and Children and Young People's Department to enable this to happen.

5.3 Future action planned during 2010/11

Regular reviews of the data set and performance management arrangements are planned to take place through the Performance Management Sub Group with regular reports to TPSG.

6. **COMMUNICATION RECOMMENDATIONS**

6.1 National Support Team recommendations

In order to foster a philosophy of teenage pregnancy prevention being everyone's responsibility, the NST recommended the development of a specific Teenage Pregnancy Communication Strategy and Action Plan, linked to a broader Children and Young People's Communication Strategy using the Health and Wellbeing Charter. They also suggested a thorough review of current publicity and branding to include internal and external communication, media handling protocols and young people's publicity with explicit and consistent branding. In addition they advised that we identify and train media spokespeople, including young people.

6.2 Action taken so far

Having identified an Accountable Lead for Media and Communication, a sub group was reconvened and additional resources allocated within the Teenage Pregnancy budget to develop a communication strategy to link into the broader Children and Young People's communication strategy and to raise awareness amongst staff groups of the links between low aspirations and teenage pregnancy. In addition a marketing campaign aimed at vulnerable young people has been developed entitled 'Be You' to include five key strands specifically designed to target each area of the Teenage Pregnancy strategy:

| | |
|----------------|-----------------------------|
| Be Positive: | Raising aspirations |
| Be Safe: | Promoting contraception |
| Be Clued-Up: | Dispel myths |
| Be Strong: | Peer pressure / self esteem |
| Be in Control: | Drugs and alcohol |

The campaign utilises six main communication channels including a website, www.beyou.me.uk, a Facebook page for those over the age of sixteen, advertising on bus interiors, bus stops and train stations, and printed media to include posters and flyers as part of a travelling exhibition to be taken around schools, colleges, clinics, libraries and youth settings. The campaign was launched in September 2009 at Wirral Metropolitan College, during Fresher's Fayre and will run again for one month during December to coincide with Christmas festivities.

6.3 Future action planned during 2010/11

Internal communications are to be strengthened by holding a yearly themed update on teenage pregnancy for all key stakeholders and young people are to be trained as media spokespeople for teenage pregnancy and positive sexual health and wellbeing.

7. **IMPLEMENTATION RECOMMENDATIONS**

7.1 Contraception and Sexual Health Services

7.1.1 National Support Team Recommendations

The NST recommended the need for a clear Contraception and Sexual Health Joint Commissioning Plan, which feeds into the 0-19 year's joint commissioning framework, developed in partnership and informed by an up to date sexual health needs assessment for young people. They also highlighted the need for designated young people's services with an emphasis on positive sexual health and wellbeing, to be delivered in a variety of settings, including outreach and domiciliary settings, available 7 days a week and to target 'hotspot' areas.

7.1.2 Action taken so far

Brook was commissioned through the 0-19 year's joint commissioning process earlier in the year to deliver outreach sexual health services to vulnerable groups, including young men. In addition, John Moores University was commissioned by NHS Wirral to undertake a Comprehensive Sexual Health Needs Assessment to examine the needs of Wirral young people. This is now reaching its conclusion and the findings and recommendations will be reported to the TPSG in the New Year. Furthermore, the first phase of the Health Services in Schools initiative was implemented in twelve Wirral Secondary Schools in November 2009, with a further twelve schools anticipated to participate by April 2010 and an additional service for young people engaged with Wirral Youth Offending Service to be established. Discussions between NHS Wirral and the Catholic Secondary Schools have resulted in the development of a specific model to take account of faith issues within the programme for these participating schools. This initiative has been funded by NHS Wirral as part of their Sexual Health Programme and involves the commissioning of Youth Service and School Nursing Service to deliver the programme in partnership and includes the delivery of a 'Bitesize Brook' programme in all non-faith participating schools.

7.1.3 Future action planned during 2010/11

Additional contraception services will be commissioned and condom distribution will be developed to become a requirement within all commissioned health outreach services for young people.

7.2 Sex and Relationship Education

7.2.1 National Support Team recommendations

The National Support Team recommended that there should be senior strategic level leadership and direction of Sex and Relationship education (SRE) in the LA and NHS Wirral and the development of a borough-wide Sexual Health Policy for Young People Under-19 years of age to enable staff working with young people to offer basic sexual health advice and sign posting with confidence.

7.2.2 Action taken so far

A permanent SRE Policy and Curriculum lead was recruited in April 2009 as part of the Healthy Schools Team within NHS Wirral to focus solely on SRE within school and non school settings. The postholder is currently undertaking an audit of SRE within Wirral schools to ensure the development of a Borough wide approach to SRE. Two local secondary schools (Oldershaw and South Wirral High) were involved in the North West SRE Key Stage 3 Pilot, with 4 teaching staff trained in delivery of this new resource and curriculum and an SRE resource to include lesson plans and delivery framework has since been produced for use in all Secondary Schools.

7.2.3 Future action planned during 2010/11

Teenage Pregnancy Strategy Champions are to be identified through the Champions Forum to work with School Heads and Governors to further develop the SRE and PSHEE curriculum.

7.3 Workforce and Targeted Recommendations

7.3.1 National Support Team recommendations

The NST recommended the need for workforce training to be established as part of the corporate Children's Workforce Strategy, and the need for risk factors related to Teenage Pregnancy to be explicitly included in holistic risk assessments.

7.3.2 Action taken so far

Accountable Leads have been identified to drive these areas of work forward and basic Sexual Health Training has been offered to all Area Team members and associated teams working with children and young people in Wirral, to provide staff with the basic knowledge and skills required to offer advice, support and signposting in relation to young people's sexual health and wellbeing. The TPSG has conducted regular

monitoring of staff groups attending this training to ensure consistency in attendance across all workforce disciplines. In addition, the Teenage Pregnancy Pathway and Health Visitor Protocol and Care Package were updated earlier in 2009 and the underlying risk factors surrounding teenage pregnancy has been included within the Common Assessment Framework 'quick reference' leaflets. Speakeasy training has been rolled out to targeted schools across Wirral to increase the number of professionals trained to deliver this training to parenting groups to ensure parents are encouraged and empowered to talk to their children about issues relating to sexual health and healthy relationships.

7.3.2 Future action planned during 2010/11

Having carried out an evaluation of the basic sexual health training programme the option of delivering similar training to complete Area Teams has been considered for future training events. We continue to develop and deliver a rolling programme of training as part of the overall Workforce Development strategy and Sexual Health programme and aim to involve young people in the design and delivery. Training will include those working with specialist groups of young people.

7.4 Children in Care Recommendations

7.4.1 National Support Team recommendations

The NST recommended that we specifically improve access to sexual health services for Children in Care and Care Leavers and for the role of the Corporate Parent to explicitly include the promotion of positive sexual health and wellbeing.

7.4.2 Action taken so far

Children in Care (CiC) and Care Leavers have been included as part of the young people's sexual health needs assessment and the awareness of foster carers regarding their role in preventing teenage conceptions has been strengthened through the inclusion of sexual health training within the foster carer recruitment programme. In addition, all children in care are referred to the CiC Nurses to ensure health plans are in place and the Members event held in April 2009 further strengthened the role of Members as Corporate Parent when considering CiC as vulnerable and at risk of early sexual activity.

7.4.3 Future action planned during 2010/11

We are currently exploring the potential for increased access to sexual health services for children in care and care leavers through the development of the risk assessment toolkit and increased access to services at the Care Leavers drop in centre.

7.5 Supporting Teenage Parents

7.5.1 National Support Team recommendations

NST recommendations in this area focussed on the re-launch of the reintegration guidance for schools to support school age parents to remain in education training and employment and to offer structured and coordinated support given the high rate of teenage parents who feature in the local NEET register.

7.5.2 Action taken so far

The revised reintegration guidance was approved by the TPSG in May 2009 and disseminated to key stakeholders. Connexions receive funding through TPSG to employ a personal adviser for teenage parents and this role is monitored through the Better Support Sub Group with teenage parents NEET data regularly presented to TPSG.

7.5.3 Future action planned during 2010/11

Guidance is to be developed for FE settings to support young parents to remain in education training or employment along with the development of targeted work with young parents to improve specific health outcomes in conjunction with the Being Healthy Children's Trust outcome group.

8. **SUPPORT REQUIRED FROM MEMBERS**

8.1 The prevention of teenage conceptions is a sensitive and complex issue that attracts considerable attention as a result. One of the key challenges highlighted through the NST visit was the need to be more bold and confident when talking about sex and relationships. With this in mind, we have introduced some sensitive initiatives in Wirral over the past twelve months, including the implementation of health services in twelve secondary schools, which were advertised Wirral wide. However we are mindful that we still have some way to go if we are to achieve the government target of halving teenage conceptions by 2010 and it is vital that we have the continued commitment and support from members in this challenge.

9. **STAFFING IMPLICATIONS**

9.1 There are none as a direct consequence of this report.

10. **EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES / EQUALITY IMPACT ASSESSMENT**

10.1 There are none as a direct consequence of this report.

11. **COMMUNITY SAFETY IMPLICATIONS**

11.1 There are none as a direct consequence of this report.

12. **LOCAL AGENDA 21 IMPLICATIONS**

12.1 There are none as a direct consequence of this report.

13. **PLANNING IMPLICATIONS**

13.1 There are none as a direct consequence of this report.

14. **ANTI –POVERTY IMPLICATIONS/SOCIAL INCLUSION IMPLICATIONS**

14.1 Babies born to teenage mothers have an increased risk of poverty and achieving less well at school.

15. **LOCAL MEMBER SUPPORT IMPLICATIONS**

15.1 See 8 above.

16. **BACKGROUND PAPERS**

- DH (2008) Feedback to Wirral from Teenage Pregnancy National Support Team – 15 July 2008
- Teenage Pregnancy Priority Action Plan
- Cabinet Report of the Joint Director of Public Health and Director of Children’s Services - Teenage Pregnancy Priority Action Plan Progress and National Support Team for Teenage Pregnancy Recommendations – 9th April 2009

17. **RECOMMENDATIONS**

17.1 Overview and Scrutiny Committee are asked to note the continued progress made in implementing the recommendations of the National Support Team, and the continued challenging agenda if Wirral is to meet the 2010 target of a 50% reduction.

MARIE ARMITAGE, JOINT DIRECTOR OF PUBLIC HEALTH

HOWARD COOPER, DIRECTOR OF CHILDREN’S SERVICES

This report was prepared by Anne Tattersall, Head of Health and Wellbeing, Children and Young People, NHS Wirral. This is a joint appointment between NHS Wirral and Wirral Council.

Council Excellence Overview and Scrutiny Committee – 16 September, 2009

Minute 25 – Financial Monitoring Statement

The Director of Finance provided a summary in tabular format of the position of the revenue accounts and General Fund balances at 31 July 2009. He also circulated a copy of the position as at 31 August 2009 and reported that at this stage of the financial year there were reports of pressures in Adult Social Services, Children and Young People and Regeneration. If the overspends were realised, the balance at 31 March 2010 would reduce by £4.1m (from £6m down to £1.9m).

In response to a question from a member, he reported that despite significant pressures, the Directors were confident of addressing the projected overspends by the year end.

Resolved –

(1) That this Committee registers its serious concern with regard to the projected overspend in CYPD and Adult Social Services.

(2) That the Children and Young People and Health and Well Being Overview and Scrutiny Committees be requested to consider the concerns expressed and to keep this Committee informed of actions to address each departments projected deficit.

(3) That the serious concerns of this Committee in relation to the projected overspend be referred to the Cabinet for consideration.

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Scrutiny Programme Board – 4 November, 2009

Minute 25 – Work Programmes of Overview and Scrutiny Committees

Members received reports outlining the work programmes of the following overview and scrutiny committees, which included an indication of the way in which each scrutiny topic would be dealt with and a relative timescale for the work to be completed:

- (a) Children and Young People
- (b) Council Excellence
- (c) Economy and Regeneration
- (d) Health and Well Being
- (e) Sustainable Communities

Members expressed their concern over the financial position of the Wirral Music Service, which had been included as a scrutiny topic within the Children and Young People Work Programme. The service was the subject of an annual review and a report would be presented to the overview and scrutiny committee on its completion.

Resolved –

(1) That the reports be noted.

(2) That the concern of this Committee in relation to the funding of the Wirral Music Service be drawn to the attention of the Children and Young People Overview and Scrutiny Committee.

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UPDATE ON WORK PROGRAMME: CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE

OSC –
21 January 2010

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.

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.

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REPORT 1

MONITORING REPORT FOR SCRUTINY COMMITTEE WORK PROGRAMME

CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE: 2009 / 2010

| Date of New item | Topic Description | How the topic will be dealt with | Estimated Complete Date | Comments on Progress | Complete/ Review date |
|------------------|---|----------------------------------|-------------------------|--|-----------------------------|
| 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. | Complete |
| 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. | Review /update January 2010 |
| 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 08. | 16 March 2010 |
| 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 | June 2010 |
| July 2008 | NEET rates - in particular, what has been the impact of specific projects aimed at NEETs? | Officer Report | | Report to Committee 13th Jan 2009. OSC to receive further report on preventative measure at key stage 4 and Knowsley apprentice programme | |
| July 2008 | Behavioural Issues and Exclusions | Officer Report | | Report noted at OSC – 11 Nov 08 | |

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|-----------|---|----------------|--|--|---------------|
| 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. | |
| Oct 2008 | Wirral Music Service | Officer Report | | Committee requested a further report during a budget savings debate on the Wirral Music Service on 28.10.08. At OSC on 13.01.09 a request for further statistics was made. An Annual report has been requested. | 16 March 2010 |
| Nov 2008 | Early Years Education | Officer Report | | Item requested by Sheila Clarke (11th Nov meeting). Report noted at OSC 16.3.09 | 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. | January 2010 |
| 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). | January 2010 |
| Jan 2009 | Child protection – STATUTORY ANNUAL Safeguarding REPORT | 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. | June 2010 |
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|------------|---|-----------------------------|--|---|-------------|
| March 2009 | Proposed Children in Care Council | Officer report | | A future progress report will be produced on the Children in Care Council (CCC) and reps from CCC are to be invited in 12 months time | 16 March 09 |
| | Aiming High | Officer report | | Officer report presented at Sept 09 OSC – Committee a further report in the future with an invitation to parents. | March 2010 |
| | Members visit to Eddison Learning in Essex | Report by Cllr Harney | | Members report to OSC on 17.9.09 | Complete |
| | LINK Forum review of Procurement process for Parenting and Prevention Commissioning | | | Officer report | |
| | Members visit to Children Homes | Issue discussed at 02.06.09 | | Lead officer presented options for member visits at OSC 17.09.09 – Future Member visits to submitted to OSC for information. | Complete |
| | | | | | |

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REPORT 2

SUGGESTIONS FOR ADDITIONS TO WORK PROGRAMME

CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE: 21/01/10

| 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 | Cllr 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 | Cllr 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) | Cllr Smith | Consider for inclusion on the work programme for the 2009/10 municipal year | |
| One to one tuition | | | |
| LINK Forum review of the Procurement process for Parenting and Prevention Commissioning. | Agreed by the Children Services OSC meeting to discuss Call-In on 20/04/09 | A report will be presented to a future meeting – | |
| Children's Centres | Cllr Doyle | Proposed at 17.09.09 OSC – poss panel review | |
| Young People and Community Safety | Cllr Clarke Supported by OSC – 16.11.09 | Poss. Joint review with Sustainable Communities OSC. | |

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REPORT 3

PROPOSED OUTLINE MEETING SCHEDULE FOR THE MUNICIPAL YEAR

CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE: 21/01/10

| Meeting Date | Topic Description |
|--------------|---|
| 21 Jan 2010 | Literacy Levels Scrutiny review – Scrutiny Panel review 09/10 final report |
| | Special Guardianship |
| | Private Fostering – Officer Report |
| | Fostering Service Review (Scrutiny Panel review 06/07)– Recommendations progress report |
| | Teenage Pregnancy – Officer Report |
| | Complaints Report |
| | |

| Meeting Date | Topic Description |
|---------------|--|
| 16 March 2010 | Youth Outreach (Scrutiny panel review 09/10) – Recommendations progress report |
| | Children in Care Council – Officer progress report and CCC representatives to attend |
| | Extended Schools |
| | Parenting Strategy |
| | Aiming High |
| | Music Service – Officer report |
| | Q3 performance monitoring – Officer report |
| | Q3 Financial monitoring – Officer report |
| | |

| Meeting Date | Topic Description |
|--------------|---|
| June 2010 | Transition from Children to Adults – Officer Report |
| | Safeguarding (Child Protection) – Annual Officer Report |
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REPORT 4

PROGRESS REPORT ON IN-DEPTH PANEL REVIEWS

CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE: 21/01/10

| Title of Review | Members of Panel | Progress to Date | Date Due to report to Committee |
|--|---|---|---------------------------------|
| Literacy Levels at Key Stage 2 | 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. Report finalised during July/August 09 | 21 Jan 2010 |
| "Narrowing the gap" – Impact of deprivation funding review | Shelia Clarke (Chair) Frank Doyle Tony Smith Tom Harney Cherry Povall Paul Hayes | Draft scope agreed 17.09.09. Initial Review panel meeting held Nov 09. First round of school meetings – Jan 2010 | |
| | | | |

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SCHOOL STANDARDS SUB-COMMITTEE

Wednesday, 25 November 2009

Present: Councillor S Clarke (Chair)

Councillors T Smith
A Taylor (In place of F Doyle)

M Liddy (Diocesan Representative)

Apologies J Kearney M Clarke

23 MEMBERS' CODE OF CONDUCT - 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 the interest. No such declarations were made.

24 PRIMARY SCHOOLS OFSTED INSPECTIONS - JUNE - OCTOBER 2009

The members received a summary of the outcomes of recent Ofsted inspections of Primary Schools. The various schools had been graded as follows:-

Special Measures Schools

Manor Primary School

Good Schools

St Peters Catholic Primary School

Outstanding Schools

Orrets Meadow School

Marie Lawrence described the various actions taken in support of Manor Primary, the school in special measures. She noted that the school had not yet had its first monitoring visit and that a report would be out shortly. Other schools had been inspected but reports had not yet been published. This term, owing to the new Ofsted framework, members of the Primary Team had been very active in supporting schools leading up to their inspections, even in their own time. This included meeting with senior leaders late into the evening and weekends. Marie Lawrence wanted to acknowledge the dedication of the team.

Resolved –

(1) That the reports be noted and the Sub-Committee records its appreciation of the hard work being undertaken.

(2) That the Sub-Committee records its congratulations in respect of an outstanding Ofsted in the case of Orrets Meadow and that a letter be sent to the recently retired Headteacher – Sandra Blythe noting the thanks of the Sub-Committee for all her hard work.

25 SECONDARY SCHOOL OFSTED INSPECTIONS MAY - OCTOBER 2009

The members received a summary of the outcomes of recent Ofsted inspections of Secondary schools.

The schools had been graded as follows:

Good Schools

South Wirral High School

The Mosslands School

Satisfactory Schools

Pensby High School for Boys

Foxfield School

Mark Parkinson remarked upon the various actions taken in support of the schools, where necessary.

Resolved –

(1) That the reports be noted and that the Sub-Committee record its congratulations to both South Wirral High and Mosslands schools.

(2) That the Sub-Committee notes the good progress made at Pensby High School for Boys and looks forward to future progress.

(3) That the Sub-Committee thank Foxfield for the excellent work undertaken at the school.

26 DATES OF FUTURE MEETINGS

The Sub-Committee discussed the suggestion that future meetings be held once per term.

Resolved – That the next meeting of the School Standards Sub-Committee be held on Tuesday 23 March 2010.

27 ANY OTHER URGENT BUSINESS - SCHOOLS IN OFSTED CATEGORIES

The Sub-Committee was asked to note that there was nothing further to report other than that reported under minute 24.

28 **ANY OTHER URGENT BUSINESS - NATIONAL CHALLENGE INITIATIVE**

Mark Parkinson provided further details of Wirral's National Challenge Programme. The Programme was aimed at ensuring that at least 30% of pupils in every Secondary school achieved at least 5 A*-C grades, including English and Maths, at GCSE by 2011. The Local Authority, working with the schools, had drawn up detailed plans to ensure that, by 2011, no Wirral school would be in the National Challenge Category. It was reported that 4 out of the 6 schools identified remained at just below the floor target. It was reported that all 6 schools had a trajectory to be above the floor target by August 2011.

Resolved – That the National Challenge report be noted.

29 **ANY OTHER BUSINESS**

The Chair referred to the suggestion that the name of the School Standards Sub-Committee be changed to reflect the range of schools discussed including Sure Start Centres.

Resolved – That the proposed change of name from School Standards Sub-Committee to 0-19 Standards Sub-Committee be referred to the Children and Young People's Overview and Scrutiny Committee.

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