



Children and Young People Overview and Scrutiny Committee

Date:	Tuesday, 16 November 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 - 12)

To receive the minutes of the Children and Young People Overview and Scrutiny Committee meetings held on 14 September and 4 October, 2010.

3. PRESENTATION ON SECOND QUARTER PERFORMANCE 2010/11

The Second Quarter Performance Report on activities relevant to Children and Young People Overview and Scrutiny Committee is available to view in the web library and a presentation will be made to the Committee.

- 4. YOUTH SERVICE CURRENT WORK AND ITS RELIANCE ON GRANT (Pages 13 - 18)**
- 5. CHILD PROTECTION ACTIVITY (Pages 19 - 24)**
- 6. LOOKED AFTER CHILDREN ACTIVITY (Pages 25 - 32)**
- 7. ANNUAL COMPLAINTS REPORT (Pages 33 - 40)**
- 8. WORK PROGRAMME (Pages 41 - 48)**
- 9. FORWARD PLAN**

The Forward Plan for the period November, 2010 to February 2011 has now been published on the Council's intranet/website and Members are invited to review the Plan prior to the meeting in order for the Committee to consider, having regard to the Committee's work programme, whether scrutiny should take place of any items contained within the Plan and, if so, how it could be done within relevant timescales and resources.

- 10. ANY OTHER URGENT BUSINESS ACCEPTED BY THE CHAIR**

CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

Tuesday, 14 September 2010

<u>Present:</u>	Councillor	C Meaden (Chair)	
	Councillors	T Harney P Hayes W Clements K Hayes	A McArdle C Povall T Smith
<u>In attendance:</u>	Councillor	S Clarke	
<u>Apologies</u>	Councillor	W Smith Mr R Neale	Mr M Clarke
<u>Deputy:</u>	Councillor	M Johnston (for Mrs PM Williams)	
<u>Co-opted Members:</u>		Mrs J Kearney	Mrs J Owens

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

Members 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 C Meaden declared a personal general interest because of her daughter's employment within the Children and Young People's Department.

15 MINUTES

Members were requested to receive the minutes of the meeting of the Children and Young People Overview and Scrutiny Committee held on 2 June, 2010.

In connection with minute 13, the Director of Law, HR and Asset Management informed the meeting of the position in respect of voting and non-voting co-opted members. In accordance with the Council's constitution the Committee had 4 co-opted members with the right to vote on education matters, 2 parent governor representatives together with one Church of England Diocesan representative and one Roman Catholic Diocesan representative. The co-opted member for the voluntary and community sectors did not have any voting rights.

All Overview and Scrutiny Committees were entitled to recommend to Council the appointment of a number of people as non-voting co-optees. Any change to the constitution would have to be made by a meeting of the Council.

Resolved – That the minutes of the meeting held on 2 June, 2010, be approved as a correct record.

16 PRESENTATION ON FIRST QUARTER PERFORMANCE 2010/11

Nancy Clarkson, Head of Planning and Performance, gave a presentation on the first quarter performance report and upon key activities which were relevant to the Children and Young People Overview and Scrutiny Committee.

She gave details of what was working well, including:

- The percentage of final SEN statements issued within 26 weeks had exceeded the target set and reached 100%.
- There had been an increase in placement choice for foster care. 7.0% placement stability (number of moves) was in the OFSTED “Very Good” category.
- Through effective planning and alternative provision arrangements no children had child protection plans lasting more than 2 years.
- All child protection cases were reviewed within required timescales.

In her presentation Nancy Clarkson also referred to key performance issues which had not met their targets and key risks including:

- Birkenhead University Academy project which was subject to national review, although funding for Birkenhead Girls Academy had been confirmed.
- The Learning and Skills Council (LSC) transfer of duties to the LA which was successfully completed but new government guidance had been received and funding for the Sixth Form College and Wirral Metropolitan College would now be managed by the Young Persons Learning Organisation which had implications on the recent staffing transition.

The Director elaborated on some of the points raised in the presentation and the measures being taken to address these points, including the increase in the number of children on a Child Protection Plan and those on a plan for a second or subsequent time. Also the number of 16 to 18 year olds who were not in education, employment or training (NEET).

In respect of the financial position, the current forecast was for a £900,000 overspend although the Director expressed confidence that by the year end the budget would be balanced by the year end.

Resolved – That the presentation be noted.

17 **ANNUAL UNANNOUNCED INSPECTION OF CONTACT, REFERRAL AND ASSESSMENT ARRANGEMENTS WITHIN WIRRAL COUNCIL'S CHILDREN'S SERVICES**

The Director of Children's Services submitted a report on the first unannounced inspection of Contact, Referral and Assessment arrangements within local authority children's services in Wirral Council which was conducted by Ofsted on 20 and 21 July 2010. The letter setting out the findings of the inspection was attached to the report.

The report and letter outlined the findings of the inspection and the six strengths, thirteen areas of satisfactory practice and four areas for development. The inspection was very positive and reflected the hard work by staff and managers to improve services for children and families. This was a challenging area of working requiring constant vigilance and attention, which would be sustained through a constant focus on maintaining and improving services still further, for some of the most vulnerable children in Wirral.

The provision of excellent contact, referral and assessment services for children in need, at risk of significant harm or who had experienced significant harm was an area of work demanding constant attention, monitoring and oversight. The inspection had confirmed that good systems were in place to do this; however, there could never be any room for complacency. It was an area of considerable risk.

Members expressed gratitude to the staff for the excellent report and asked that the OFSTED action plan be circulated to the Committee once available.

The Director, responding to comments from Members, stated that this key area of work was on the Corporate Risk Register.

Resolved – That the congratulations and thanks of this Committee be conveyed to all those staff involved in this area of work and the report be noted.

18 **APPROVED SCHEME OF DELEGATION - CONTRACTS EXCEEDING £50,000**

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

- Building works
- Transport of pupils to swimming baths
- Out-of-authority placements
- Residential care placements
- Extensions to existing contracts

Resolved – That the report be noted.

19 **SCHOOLS' PERFORMANCE**

Mark Parkinson, Head of Learning & Achievement, together with Marie Lawrence, Strategic Service Manager (Primary & Early Years), Stuart Bellerby, Strategic Service Manager (Secondary) and Vivian Stafford, Strategic Service Manager (Post - 16), gave a comprehensive presentation on the headline figures for the 2010 test results at Early Years, Key stages 1, 2, 4 (GCSE) and 5 (Post - 16) and for Looked After Children.

The Director and officers elaborated on the information in the presentation in response to Members' questions.

Resolved – That the presentation be noted.

20 **0-19 STANDARDS SUB-COMMITTEE MINUTES**

The minutes of the meeting of the 0-19 Standards Sub-Committee, held on 13 July, 2010, were submitted. The Sub-Committee had considered a number of issues, in particular the Ofsted reports relating to the following establishments:

Colleges

Good

Wirral Metropolitan College

Special Schools

Good

The Lyndale School
Meadowside School

Early Years Centre

Outstanding

Ganney's Meadow

Secondary School

Satisfactory

Bebington High Sports College

Primary Schools

Inadequate

Castleway Primary

Satisfactory

Hillside Primary
St John's Catholic Primary
Woodslee Primary
Heygarth Primary
Millfields Primary

Good

Eastway Primary
Park Primary
Our Lady of Lourdes Catholic Primary
St Alban's Catholic Primary
Heswall St Peter's CE Primary

A Member suggested that it would be useful to have a list of previous inspections so that they could be compared to the current inspection results and the Director responded that he would be happy to circulate a list for each of the schools.

The Chair remarked that this was the last meeting of the Committee which Marie Lawrence, Strategic Service Manager (Primary & Early Years), would be attending before taking early retirement and thanked her for all her work for the authority.

Resolved – That the minutes be noted and the thanks of this Committee be accorded to Marie Lawrence.

21 **WORK PROGRAMME**

The Committee received an update on its work programme including the reports to be scheduled for the November meeting.

A Member referred to the “Narrowing the gap” – Impact of deprivation funding’ scrutiny review and the need to continue this to a conclusion. The Chair suggested the need for the original members of the Scrutiny Review Panel to meet. Councillor Sheila Clarke, Cabinet Member for Children’s Services and Lifelong Learning, and one of the original Panel members, indicated that she would be happy to meet, together with one of the Scrutiny Officers.

It was also suggested that the work carried out previously with looked after children should be revisited and the Director commented that he would be happy to facilitate this as there had been many changes over the past couple of years, including the establishment of the Children in Care Council.

Mrs J Kearney expressed her wish to be included in the discussion of the work programme, which had previously been agreed, and the Chair apologised for her omission from previous discussions.

The Director responded to Members’ comments and sought to clarify some concerns with regard to suggested topics including the fact that Sure Start was currently funded by a ring-fenced grant but he was not aware of any intention to remove this grant. He would be reporting back to the Committee on the impact of the

Government's Comprehensive Spending Review and also on the Schools National Review.

Resolved – That the Work Programme be agreed with the addition of a report on the Governors' support service to be considered at the January or March, 2011 meeting.

22 **FORWARD PLAN**

The Committee had been invited to review the Forward Plan prior to the meeting in order for it to consider, having regard to the Committee's work programme, whether scrutiny should take place of any items contained within the Plan and, if so, how it could be done within relevant timescales and resources.

Resolved – That the forward plan be noted.

23 **ANY OTHER URGENT BUSINESS ACCEPTED BY THE CHAIR**

The Chair informed the Committee of a number of items she and members wished to raise, including:

- (1) The need for children's homes visits by Members - Julia Hassall, Head of Children's Social Care, responded that she would be inviting those Members interested to a brief introductory session prior to visits being arranged
- (2) A visit to the new Woodchurch High School – the Director responded that he would be happy to arrange this.
- (3) Funding for special needs – the Director remarked that he would bring a report on any future Government 'green' paper to the Committee on any proposed changes to the system of Special Educational Needs.

In respect of the Children and Young People's Task Force, one of four Task Forces which had been set up, Councillor McArdle then moved, seconded by the Chair, that –

"In view of the fact that this Scrutiny and Overview Committee is charged within the Council's Constitution with the task of Scrutinising Children's Services, and that this role appears to have been bypassed through the appointment of a Task Force acting outside the normal range of Council meetings and procedures, this Committee urgently requests the following:

- (i) A standing item of the regular minutes of the Children and Young People's Task Force on this agenda for the duration of its existence.
- (ii) A report which sets out the process that was followed in the selection and appointment of the Task Force members.
- (iii) A copy of any register or declaration of interests by Task Force members.
- (iv) Details of whether any vetting procedures were required as they have apparently been given access to Looked after Children, and, if so, whether or not those procedures were followed.

- (v) A presentation from Officers that mirrors the presentation that was originally given to the Task Force which has informed the questions on this area within the consultation questionnaire.
- (vi) A detailed explanation from officers on the exact meaning and implication of each question concerning Children's Services in the questionnaire. (For example, when questions talk about voluntary services stepping in to provide alternative services, are we talking about commissioning services from voluntary agencies, or just hoping they will fill a gap with no additional resources provided if we withdraw from providing services ourselves?)
- (vii) Any potential costings that may have been drawn up as part of the options being considered."

Some Members expressed the view that they would need some time to consider this motion. The Chair suggested that a special meeting of the Committee be arranged to consider this motion.

Resolved – That a special meeting of the Committee be held to consider this motion on a date to be arranged.

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CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

Monday, 4 October 2010

<u>Present:</u>	Councillor	C Meaden (Chair)	
	Councillors	T Harney P Hayes K Hayes A McArdle	C Povall T Smith P Williams Neale
<u>Deputy:</u>	Councillor	S Williams (for W Clements)	
<u>Apologies</u>		Mr M Clarke Mrs J Kearney	Mrs J Owens
<u>Co-opted:</u>		Mr R Neale	

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

Members were asked to consider whether they had a personal or prejudicial interest in connection with the 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 C Meaden declared a personal general interest because of her daughter's employment within the Children and Young People's Department.

25 CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE TASK FORCE - MOTION

Further to minute 23 (14/9/10), the Committee considered the motion which, having been moved at the last meeting, it was then agreed to consider it at a special meeting.

Councillor McArdle moved, seconded by the Chair, that –

“In view of the fact that this Scrutiny and Overview Committee is charged within the Council's Constitution with the task of Scrutinising Children's Services, and that this role appears to have been bypassed through the appointment of a Task Force acting outside the normal range of Council meetings and procedures, this Committee urgently requests the following:

- (i) A standing item of the regular minutes of the Children and Young People's Task Force on this agenda for the duration of its existence.
- (ii) A report which sets out the process that was followed in the selection and appointment of the Task Force members.
- (iii) A copy of any register or declaration of interests by Task Force members.
- (iv) Details of whether any vetting procedures were required as they have apparently been given access to Looked after Children, and, if so, whether or not those procedures were followed.
- (v) A presentation from Officers that mirrors the presentation that was originally given to the Task Force which has informed the questions on this area within the consultation questionnaire.
- (vi) A detailed explanation from officers on the exact meaning and implication of each question concerning Children's Services in the questionnaire. (For example, when questions talk about voluntary services stepping in to provide alternative services, are we talking about commissioning services from voluntary agencies, or just hoping they will fill a gap with no additional resources provided if we withdraw from providing services ourselves?)
- (vii) Any potential costings that may have been drawn up as part of the options being considered."

Committee members had also been circulated with a copy of a minute on the task forces from the Scrutiny Programme Board of 20 September (minute 28 refers) which had resolved, "That the matters referred to by the Chair in relation to the Task Forces be referred to each of the themed Overview and Scrutiny Committees and they be requested to seek information in relation to those issues which fall within their remit."

After some debate on the motion, the Director responded to the points raised and emphasised that at no point during Task Force meetings was children's safety compromised, all the Task Force members having been CRB cleared anyway. The presentations which were given to the Task Force were all available to view on the internet along with the papers which they considered and the minutes.

As members of the Task Force were not elected members, bound by a code of conduct, there was no formal requirement for a register of interests but at the first meeting of the Task Force, Mr Potter, the Chair had asked everyone to introduce themselves describing what they did and their connection with young people.

The Director remarked that, from his observations the Task Force had looked at the way services were delivered in Wirral and in some instances drew on their knowledge of other areas particularly around the work of the voluntary sector.

A Member suggested the need to be kept informed of the work of the Task Force and also suggested that Mr Potter could be invited to the next meeting of the Committee.

It was then moved as an amendment by Councillor Harney, seconded by Councillor Mrs Williams, that –

- (1) "This Committee notes the appointment of a Children and Young People's Task Force.
- (2) This Committee welcomes the involvement of young people in this.

- (3) This Committee recognises its duty to scrutinise the whole area of Children and Young People.
- (4) This Committee recognises that reports on the progress of the 2010-2011 budget and indications for the 2011-2012 budget are brought to this Committee on a regular basis.”

The amendment was put and carried (7:3) and then becoming the substantive motion, it was –

Resolved (7:3) –

- (1) This Committee notes the appointment of a Children and Young People’s Task Force.**
- (2) This Committee welcomes the involvement of young people in this.**
- (3) This Committee recognises its duty to scrutinise the whole area of Children and Young People.**
- (4) This Committee recognises that reports on the progress of the 2010-2011 budget and indications for the 2011-2012 budget are brought to this Committee on a regular basis.**

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REPORT OF DIRECTOR OF CHILDREN'S SERVICES

YOUTH SERVICE CURRENT WORK AND ITS RELIANCE ON GRANT

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This report has been requested by the Overview and Scrutiny Committee and looks at the current work of the Youth Service in the light of recent positive developments and investigates the impact of any potential reduction in funding from specific grants. The Council's deployment of General Fund is currently the subject of widespread public consultation. Members are asked to note this report.

1. YOUTH SERVICE – RECENT DEVELOPMENTS

- 1.1. The Youth Service has recently undergone a reconfiguration exercise. The reconfiguration has enabled the Service to align its youth club and outreach provision with the Children & Young People's Department (CYPD) four districts.
- 1.2. The new district model centres on the creation of four Youth Hubs, one in each of the four CYPD districts of South Wirral, West Wirral, Wallasey and Birkenhead. The Youth Service was commissioned by the CYPD to operate three of the Youth Hubs and Shaftesbury Youth Club to operate the fourth. The Youth Hubs open a minimum of five evenings per week, with enhanced staffing levels. The Youth Hubs offer a wide range of activities including, Duke of Edinburgh's Award, Youth Arts, sports and information, advice and guidance. The four Youth Hubs launched in June/July 2010.
- 1.3. Each district also operates a number of smaller, locality based Youth Clubs which are open on average three evenings per week.
- 1.4. The Youth Service makes provision through both statutory and voluntary organisations. Of the four youth hubs and eleven youth clubs, five buildings are owned by the voluntary, community and faith sector. Here the clubs operate through staff employed by the Service with the Service providing an annual rental for hosting the club.
- 1.5. Youth Outreach has been reconfigured to a district model. Each district has a dedicated outreach team, with the exception of Wallasey and Birkenhead who both have an additional team, part-financed through external funding.
- 1.6. The Duke of Edinburgh's Award Scheme has also been enhanced to enable the provision of the Award in all four districts.
- 1.7. The Wirral Youth Theatre/Youth Arts and Response have been unaffected by the reconfiguration. However, Wirral Youth Theatre has recently relocated to the site of the former Gilbrook Primary School. Investment from the capital allocation has enabled this relocation. It is envisaged that in the future the building will be maximised as a focal point for wider youth arts activities.
- 1.8. Recently discussions have taken place with Onside, who developed the Bolton Lads and Girls Club model and who are developing similar provision in North West areas such as Warrington, Wigan and Cumbria. In October elected members had the opportunity to visit Bolton Lads and Girls Club and to discuss the model with key colleagues. A group has been formed to investigate the potential for developing a similar model in Birkenhead involving the voluntary, community, faith and private sectors.

- 1.9. The reconfigured structure of youth clubs, youth hubs and youth outreach can be seen in the table below. Those marked with an asterisk are voluntary, community and faith sector units.

District	Youth Hub	Youth Clubs	Youth Outreach Teams
Birkenhead	Birkenhead Youth Hub* (Shaftesbury Youth Club)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Viking Youth Club* • Callister Youth Club • Cavendish Youth Club* • Charing Cross Youth Club* 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • North Birkenhead Outreach Team • South Birkenhead Outreach Team (part external funded)
Wallasey	Wallasey Youth Hub (Wallasey Fire Station)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • St Mary's College Youth Club • Leasowe Youth Club • Moreton Youth Club • Belvidere Youth Club* 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • North/West Wallasey Outreach Team • South/East Wallasey Outreach Team (part external funded)
South Wirral	South Wirral Youth Hub (Eastham Youth Club)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Bebington Youth Club 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • South Wirral Outreach Team
West Wirral	West Wirral Youth Hub (West Kirby Youth Club)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Greasby Youth Club • Fender Youth Club 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • West Wirral Outreach Team

2. RELIANCE ON FUNDING FROM SPECIFIC GRANTS

- 2.1. The 2010/11 core budget for the Youth Service is £2,500,800, in addition to this, this year the Service has in excess of £1,000,000 external income. A substantial amount of this income is through specific grants such as the Youth Opportunity Fund.
- 2.2. The table at Appendix 1 outlines the Youth Service's major specific grants (i.e. those above £15,000) for the 2010/11 financial year. The table also gives a brief description of each grant and examines the impact of a potential reduction or cessation of that funding.

3. GENERAL FUNDING POSITION

- 3.1. As a direct result of the reconfiguration exercise the Youth Service realised efficiency savings to its core budget of £150,000 in 2009/10. In addition, through loss of full-time posts, the Service has further reduced its core budget by some £100,000 over the past two financial years.

4. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 4.1 This report examines the potential implications of financial reductions within the Youth Service.

5. STAFFING IMPLICATIONS

- 5.1 Potential funding reductions would have implications to those staff that are on fixed term and permanent contracts.

6. EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES IMPLICATIONS

- 6.1 There are none contained in this report.

7. COMMUNITY SAFETY IMPLICATIONS

- 7.1 Potential reductions in youth provision could lead to increased anti-social behaviour in young people.

8. LOCAL AGENDA 21 IMPLICATIONS

8.1 There are none contained within this report.

9. PLANNING IMPLICATIONS

9.1 There are none contained within this report.

10. ANTI-POVERTY IMPLICATIONS

10.1 Youth work enables young people to achieve accredited outcomes and learn social skills thus enabling them to have better life opportunities and achieve their full potential. Potential reductions in funding would lessen these opportunities.

11. SOCIAL INCLUSION IMPLICATIONS

11.1 Youth work enables young people to have opportunities to be included in society and local democratic processes. Potential reductions in funding would lessen these opportunities.

12. LOCAL MEMBER SUPPORT IMPLICATIONS

12.1 This report affects all wards.

13. BACKGROUND PAPERS

- Cabinet - 27 November 2008. *Reconfigure Action of Youth Service Provision.*
- Cabinet – 23 April 2009. *Commissioning Criteria for universal, open access youth support services.*
- Children and Young People’s Overview and Scrutiny Committee – 16 March 2010. *Youth outreach scrutiny review update.*

RECOMMENDATIONS

Members are asked to note the report.

Howard Cooper
Director of Children’s Services

IMPACT OF ANY POTENTIAL REDUCTION IN FUNDING FROM SPECIFIC GRANTS

Project	2010/11 Funding Details	Project Description	Impact of potential reduction in grant
Youth Opportunity Fund & Youth Capital Fund	£424,000 & £91,050 Via: Dept for Education Current allocation expires 31/3/11	These funds have been available since 2006 to increase positive activities for young people aged 13-19. Funds are allocated by a young people's grant panel, applicants and beneficiaries also have to be aged 13-19 years. To date these funds have supported over 30 projects in both the voluntary and statutory youth sectors. Each year an average of 12,200 young people have been beneficiaries of these funds. Support costs incorporated in this fund have enabled a full-time youth worker to be employed on a fixed term contract which expires on 31/3/11.	Young people will have fewer opportunities to bid for funding to increase the range of positive activities available to them. The number of opportunities available to young people will be reduced. There are few controls to reduce the impact as this is additional funding that has contributed to the enhancement of the provision of positive activities over the past 4 years. There are still opportunities for young people's involvement in local decision making via Area Youth Forum Awards and You Decide.
Health Services in Schools	£145,000 Via: NHS Wirral Current contract expires 31/3/13	The service provides Health Clinics in all Wirral secondary schools in partnership with the School Nursing Service. 3 full-time youth workers and 1 part-time youth worker are employed on fixed term contract which expire on 31/3/11. The service is managed via the Youth Service's Response agency.	Young people would not have access to youth workers within the school health clinic settings for support. The risk to the delivery of this contract will be to the staff who have time limited funded contracts. The contract has been commissioned jointly with the School Nursing Service. Therefore, a risk to the youth work element could place the whole contract in jeopardy.
District Activity Fund	£141,000 Via: Dept for Education Contract expires 31/3/11	The Youth Service and partners have been commissioned until March 2011 to deliver a number of additional activities in each of the 4 CYPD districts. Partners include other statutory and voluntary organisation, e.g. Sports Development and Grange Baptist Church. The funding has enabled over 20 projects to take place across Wirral, particularly on a Friday and Saturday evening, e.g. talent nights, outdoor activities. This year to date over 700 young people have taken part in these activities.	Young people will have fewer opportunities to take part in a range of additional positive activities within voluntary and statutory youth provision. The number of opportunities available to young people on a Friday and Saturday evening will be reduced. There are few controls to reduce the impact as this is additional funding that has contributed to the enhancement of the provision of positive activities since Autumn 2009.
Stop Gap	£87,000 Via: Council's General Fund	The service provides intensive support to homeless young people and provides suitable and appropriate accommodation for those who are vulnerable and at risk. The service also provides	Young people with higher levels of vulnerability would be less able to access some housing providers, which in turn would lead to an increase in youth homelessness for those young people with

	Funding expires 31/3/11	support for families in crisis, including respite accommodation and/or mediation with the family to enable the young person to remain at home. 2 full-time workers are employed on fixed term contracts which expire on 31/3/11. Since April the project has prevented 33 of the most vulnerable 16 and 17 year olds from across Wirral becoming homeless. The service is located at and managed by the Youth Service's Response agency.	higher levels of need. If the project were to cease or be reduced, this could result in an increase to the Social Care section's budget as many of these cases are costly.	
Page	Specialist (Tier 3) Substance Misuse Team	£78,000 Via: DAAT (via ABG & NHS Wirral) Current contract expires 31/3/11	The specialist substance misuse team provide drug and alcohol support to the higher risk group of young people. The team links with other relevant organisations, including CAHMS. Referrals are received from Response T2 workers and many other organisations including Social Care, Schools, Hospitals etc. Last year 155 young people presented with chaotic substance misuse. 105 of who commenced treatment successfully, which lessened the risk and impact on the wider community. 2 fulltime youth workers are employed on fixed term contracts. The service is located at and managed by the Youth Service's Response agency.	This is the only specialist drug and alcohol support service for young people on Wirral, which can be accessed by self referral. If the project were to cease or be reduced, this would result in an increased demand to specialist services. As result a number of young people may not have their needs met.
	Youth Crime Action Plan – Street Work Teams	£50,000 Via: Dept for Education Current funding expires 31/3/11	This funding is for the enhancement of 2 outreach teams working in the Seacombe/South Wallasey and Rock Ferry/South Birkenhead areas. The teams target hot spot areas of anti-social behaviour particularly on a Friday and Saturday evening. Last year between them the teams contacted 4,861 young people. Funding has enabled two part-time work youth posts to be enhanced to full-time until 31/3/11.	Young people will have fewer opportunities to engage in positive diversionary activities organised by youth workers in their locality. If the project were to cease or be reduced, this could result in an increase in reported incidence of anti-social behaviour in these localities.
	Young People's Alcohol Intervention Project	£33,000 Via: NHS Wirral Pending signing, the current contract will expire on 31/3/13	The service is a source of referrals for those young people who have been arrested or stopped by the police for an alcohol related issue or offense. Alcohol Interventions take place with family members and young people in an attempt to prevent repeat arrests and a reduction in alcohol consumption. The service has provided 452 interventions to young people who had been arrested. So far, of those involved with the project, only 12 have been re-arrested. A full-time youth worker is employed on a fixed term contract which	This is the only post of its kind and is unique in its partnership work with the police and YOS. The loss or reduction of this work would weaken the holistic pathway of care for young people. In addition, there would be an increased risk of young people entering into the criminal justice system and having alcohol related health conditions.

		expires on 31/3/11. The worker operates in partnership with Merseyside Police and the Youth Offending Service (YOS). The service is located at and managed by the Youth Service's Response agency.	
Tier 2 Substance Misuse Team	<p>£31,000</p> <p>Via: DAAT (via ABG & NHS Wirral)</p> <p>Current contract expires 31/3/11</p>	The funding contributes towards supporting the substance misuse outreach team. The team provides essential drug and alcohol services to those young people who are harder-to-reach and who are considered a hidden cohort of young people. Targeted at those who have significant substance misuse issues on streets. The service also delivers workshops in schools, colleges, training agencies etc. Last year the team provided 5,501 young people with credible drug and alcohol information. The team are also a main referral source for the specialist services within Response. The team consists of 2 full-time staff and 3 part time staff. The service is located at and managed by the Youth Service's Response agency.	If contributory funding was reduced the team would have to reduce staff levels, targets and the breadth of operations, including partnership work. This would result in an increase of young people not assessing the services they need as well as creating potential referral problems to other services. Preventative work would also be reduced, which in effect would create a barrier to young people's learning on how to keep themselves safe, healthy and where to go for help and support.
Alcohol Worker	<p>£31,000</p> <p>Via: DAAT (via ABG & NHS Wirral)</p> <p>Current contract expires 31/3/11</p>	The funding provides a designated alcohol specific post which delivers targeted intervention to young people who abuse alcohol. The worker takes referrals from across Wirral including schools, parents, police and young people themselves. The worker is also placed at Arrowse Park Hospital Accident and Emergency Department (A&E) where they deliver 'on the spot' alcohol interventions to parents who are collecting their intoxicated child and offer on going support. Last year the service provided 249 interventions to young people who were intoxicated. The service is located at and managed by the Youth Service's Response agency.	<p>This post is innovative in its delivery of alcohol services to young people at risk by using a variety of approaches and settings where the most young people 'turn up drunk '. The partnership work with both A&E and others, including social care, enables young people to have direct links and referral pathways into alcohol services.</p> <p>The loss of this work would prevent a holistic pathway of care and referrals for young people at risk. It may also increase alcohol related admissions into Arrowse Park Hospital. Preventative work is integral to the post and would likely to be reduced. This would create a barrier to young people's learning on how to keep themselves safe, healthy and where to go for help and support.</p>

WIRRAL COUNCIL

CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE 16 NOVEMBER 2010

REPORT OF THE DIRECTOR OF CHILDREN'S SERVICES

CHILD PROTECTION ACTIVITY

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This report, requested by members of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee, outlines the statutory framework and the current level of child protection activity in Wirral.

1 Statutory Framework

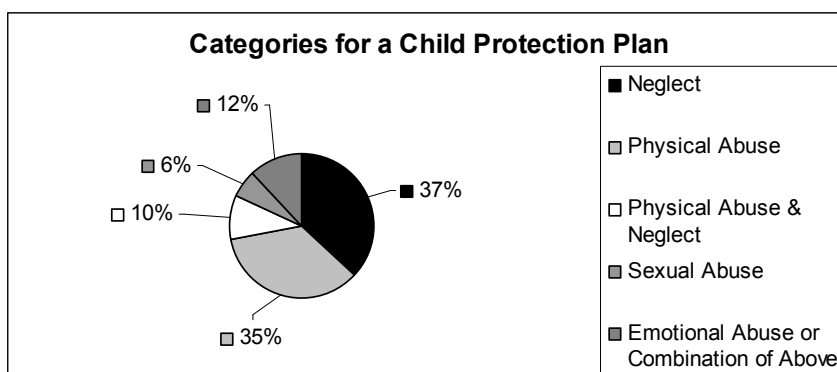
- 1.1 The statutory framework for children is governed by the Children Act 1989 which outlines the legal basis under which child protection activity is undertaken. In accordance with Section 47 of the Act, the local authority should make enquiries where it is believed that a child is at risk or is likely to be at risk of significant harm.
- 1.2 Working Together to Safeguard Children (DCSF 2010) provides the statutory guidance for how these enquiries should be undertaken, who should be involved and the arrangements for children in need of a child protection plan.

2 Context

- 2.1 Social workers in Wirral are based in 4 Assessment Teams and 9 Care Management Teams (including children with disabilities). These teams are based in four Districts – 2 Assessment Team and 4 Care Management Team in Birkenhead, 1 Assessment and 2 Care Management Teams in Wallasey and 1 Assessment and 1 Care Management Team in South/West Wirral. There is a staffing complement of 115 social workers.
- 2.2 In addition to working with children with a child protection plan, social workers are also currently working with over 1,000 “children in need” under s17 of the Children Act 1989 and 647 Looked After Children. “Children in Need” are defined as children whose development may be delayed without the provision of services to them. These children are children on the edge of having a child protection plan or becoming looked after; who need the specialist input of a social worker to assess and co-ordinate a plan, involving all appropriate agencies, to meet their needs.

3 Wirral Child Protection Activity

- 3.1 Since the Baby Peter case there has been an increase in the number of children with a child protection plan. The reasons for this are complex and include: better awareness of safeguarding issues across all agencies; a high uptake by these agencies in the use of the Common Assessment Framework and Team Around the Child mean that issues are being identified earlier. The impact of the Baby Peter case nationally has also meant that agencies are more cautious about managing cases where there is a level of risk without the security of a child protection plan
- 3.2 Referrals have increased during this period with a higher number of referrals leading to an assessment – in the last quarter 90% of referrals received an assessment, which shows that generally the thresholds for determine which children should receive a service are correct.
- 3.3 Wirral's activity has increased from 228 children with a child protection plan in April 2009 to 337 in September 2010. This rise is not unique to Wirral and is reflected in local authorities across the country. At the end of March 2010, north-west authorities reported an average 14% increase in children with child protection plans. Wirral had a particular increase in plans in June, July and August this year.
- 3.4 The categories for a child protection plan are set out in Working Together. At the end of September 2010, 37% were under the category of neglect, 35% physical abuse, 10% physical abuse and neglect, 6% sexual abuse with the remainder emotional abuse or a combination of the other categories. Domestic Violence is not a separate category but is included under the category of physical abuse.



- 3.5 The highest numbers of children with a child protection plan are in Birkenhead (53%), followed by Wallasey (25%) and South and West Wirral (20%). 7.2% are with the Children with Disabilities Team – this figure includes siblings of a disabled child.

- 3.6 The majority of children are aged under 5 (44%), followed by age 6-12 years (39%) and 13-17 years (17%).
- 3.7 Managing child protection plans is intense and resource demanding for social workers, with children requiring a minimum of weekly visits for the first three months and a minimum of fortnightly visits thereafter. Core group meetings with partner agencies and parents, to manage and monitor the child protection plan, are required every 6 weeks. Additional time is required to prepare for the child protection conference, such as the production of reports; completing ongoing assessment and the production of evidence of progression of the child protection plan at each review.
- 3.8 In accordance with Working Together, the Local Safeguarding Children's Board (LSCB), has a duty to set and thresholds monitor the safeguarding system across all agencies who work with children or who provide a service that impacts on children. The LSCB receives quarterly performance information on all areas of safeguarding activity. This includes the number of referrals that went on to be lead by CYPD, those that were deemed to be requiring no action, or another agency to lead on action such as Team Around the Child.

4 Financial Implications

- 4.1 The total budget is £8,397,700 (including CIN, Court Costs, Legal & Medical Costs, Area Teams and Assessment & Care Management).

5 Staffing Implications

- 5.1 Wirral has been successful in recruiting social workers, since we have a good reputation for support, supervision and training in this complex and challenging area of work. The workload is demanding and presents challenges for staff and Managers. The authority ensures that where there is long-term sickness or where staff are absent through maternity leave agency social work cover is provided, to manage the demands on the staff and also to ensure that children are still supported.
- 5.2 Adverts are placed monthly, to ensure social workers are continuously recruited to replace any vacancies. Recruitment to the posts which were established by Cabinet in March 2009, such as extra social workers, Advanced Social Work Practitioners, Practice Managers and Principal Team Managers, are part of the strategy to increase front line social work capacity and increase the level of supervision and oversight. This is making a positive impact, and a further recruitment drive is currently underway to fill the remaining vacancies on a permanent basis.

6 Equal Opportunities Implications/Health Impact Assessment

6.1 It is essential to promote safeguarding of children throughout all communities in Wirral.

7 Community Safety Implications

7.1 Members of the public have also had their awareness of safeguarding raised and are more willing to refer to children's social care if they are worried about a child.

8 Local Agenda 21 Implications

8.1 There are no Local Agenda 21 implications

9 Planning Implications

9.1 There are no planning implications

10 Anti-Poverty Implications

10.1 The high numbers of children with a child protection plan because of neglect and physical harm are more prevalent in areas where there is high socio – economic deprivation, where for example, more families are in receipt of benefits or low incomes, live in social or private rented housing and where together with other factors such as drug or alcohol misuse; this contributes to children experiencing poor outcomes for their education, health and emotional well being.

11 Social Inclusion Implications

11.1 Many of the children subject to child protection plans, are vulnerable to social exclusion; their child protection plans, as well as mitigating specific risk of harm, are focused on supporting vulnerable children and families to be more socially included.

12 Local Member Support Implications

12.1 There are no local member support implications

13 Background Papers

13.1 Children Act 1989 (HMSO)
Working Together to Safeguard Children (DCSF 2010)

RECOMMENDATIONS

It is recommended for members to note this report.

David Armstrong
Interim Director Children and Young Peoples Department

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WIRRAL COUNCIL

CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE 16 NOVEMBER 2010

REPORT OF THE DIRECTOR OF CHILDREN'S SERVICES

LOOKED AFTER CHILDREN ACTIVITY

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This report, requested by members of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee, outlines the statutory framework and the current level of Looked After Children activity in Wirral.

1 Statutory Framework

- 1.1 The statutory framework for children is governed by the Children Act 1989 which outlines the legal basis under which a child becomes looked after. Children may become looked after under section 20 (a voluntary agreement with the person with parental responsibility or if a person with parental responsibility is unable to exercise it); section 38 Interim Care Order (ICO) and Section 31 full Care Order (CO). The latter two sections arise where the local authority, based on legal advice, believes the threshold criteria that a child has, or is likely to suffer significant harm as outlined in the Act, is met and makes an application to court. The court can also make an ICO of its own volition in private law proceedings where it believes a child may meet the threshold and it will invite the local authority to undertake an assessment and report under Section 37 of the Children Act 1989.

2 Context

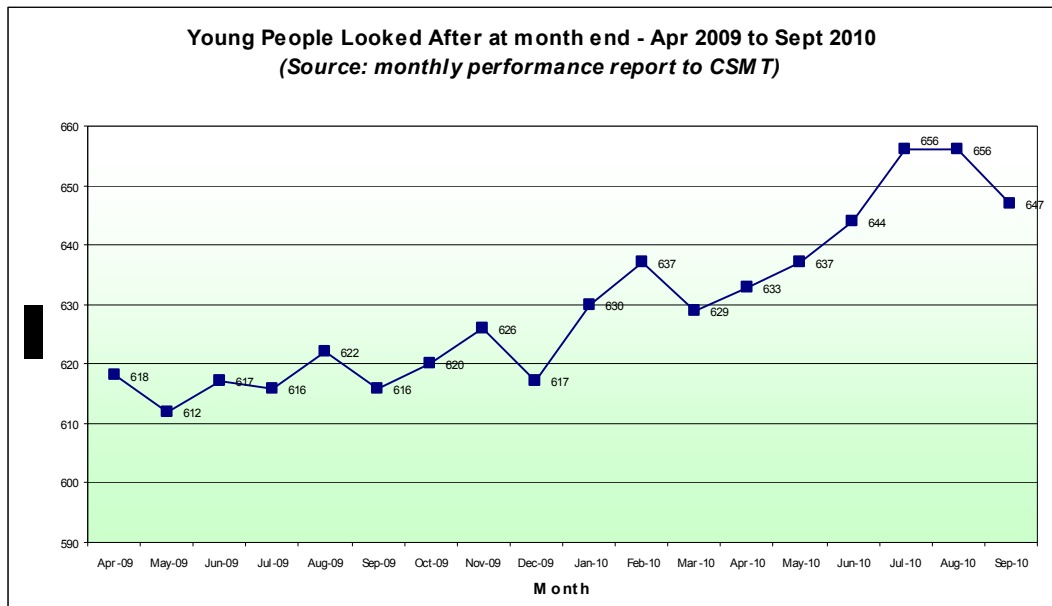
- 2.1 Looked After Children are supported by a range of services. Social workers are the key workers for children in care, family support workers, engage with children to support contact with their families, or to undertake specific pieces of work with children in care, the Family Placement Team recruit, assess and support foster carers, the Adoption and Permanence Team recruit, assess and support Adopters and Special Guardians, the Looked after Children Education Service tracks and monitors the attainment and progress and the Pathway Team work with young people who are leaving care under the Leaving Care Act 2000.

CAMHS also provide specialist advice and support to children in their placement, and provide a specialist intensive treatment and therapeutic

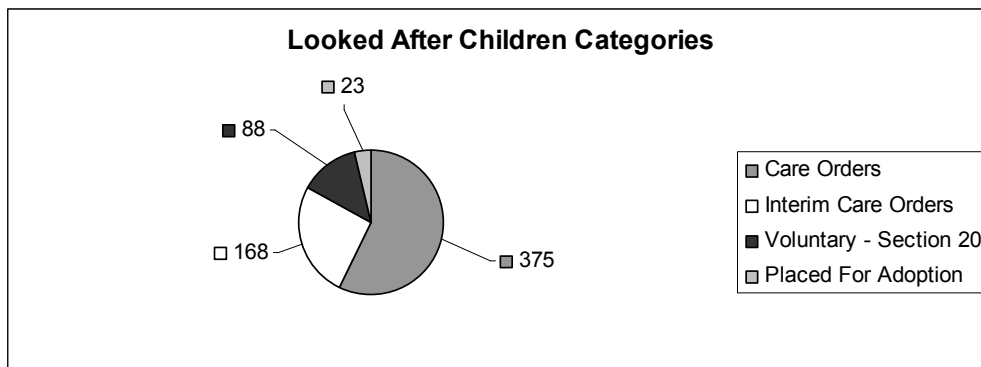
fostering scheme. In addition, Independent Reviewing Officers (IROs) in accordance with the Children Act 2004 and statutory guidance regarding care planning; provide independent oversight of each child's plan to ensure it meets the child's needs, statutory requirements, and there is no drift.

3 Looked After Children Activity

3.1 Since the Baby Peter case, there has been an increase in the number of children looked after. In April 2009 the number was 618 and the number is currently 647.



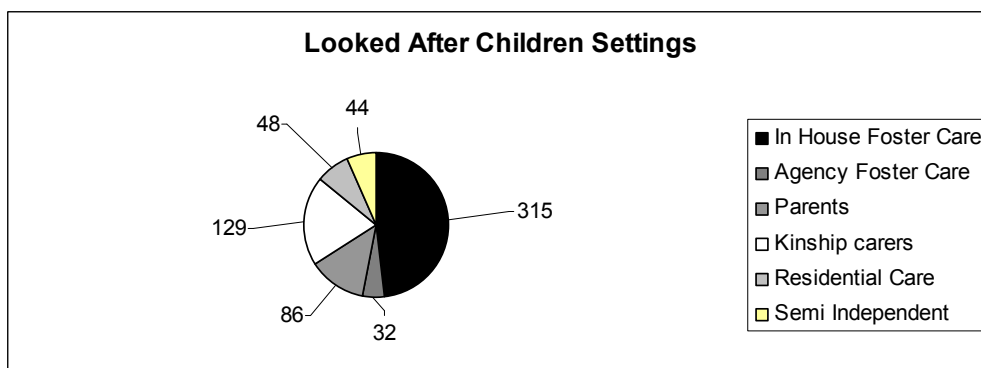
The numbers of children in care by legal category are: 375 Care Orders, 168 Interim Care Orders, 88 children in care under s20 and 23 children placed for adoption. The rise in numbers is common across all Local Authorities; at the end of March 2010 north-west authorities reported an average 5% increase from the previous year. Wirral's rate at that point was a 0% increase, but numbers have risen since that date.



3.2 The reasons behind the increase are complex; increasing numbers of children with a child protection plan (for the reasons referenced in the Child Protection Activity report) means that there are families for whom the plan does not achieve the needed improvement and reduction of risk for children in a timely way and hence there has been an increase in the number of applications to court. The court is also making more orders of its own volition in Private Law cases (where parents are disputing issues of residence and contact for their children).

3.3 Of particular note are the number of applications for children who have suffered neglect and also physical injury and sexual abuse. There are increasing applications to Court for children aged 0-4 years; these are situations where local authority is intervening earlier to address the harm for this group of children by placing children in foster care, placing children with family members or seeking permanent new families for children through adoption.

3.4 Looked After Children live in a variety of settings; foster care (315 in-house, 32 agency foster care), 86 with their parents, 129 with kinship carers, 48 in residential care and the remainder are older young people aged 16 plus, in a variety of semi-independent settings.



- 3.5 Children's plans are tracked and monitored in a number of ways; the IROs have a statutory duty to report any concerns about children they review, and each team has to report the progress of children's plans via a permanency tracker, specifying timescales and highlighting any blocks which are preventing the plan from moving forward.
- 3.6 To ensure we have the right type of placements for children, the Fostering and Adoption Taskforces have focused on advertising and recruiting foster carers and potential adopters. This ensures children remain in their local area but also improves placement stability and timeliness of placements for children. There remain challenges in recruiting sufficient foster carers, from diverse backgrounds, who have the skills and capacity to provide suitable placements for children who need substitute family care. This is particularly the case for adolescents.
- 3.7 Some children's needs are so complex and they present so many risks to themselves and others; that they cannot be cared for in foster care. Residential care is expensive, but can meet children's needs at particular crisis points in their lives; there are also a small number of children who have experienced such difficulties living within their families that they cannot cope with close family relationships, and for whom residential care is the most appropriate placement. The Independent Placement Panel oversees all requests for this provision and reviews all placements made throughout the year to confirm if they are still required or if the child has made sufficient progress makes recommendations for them to move to a foster family.

4. Outcomes for Looked After Children

- 4.1 The Council has a clear priority to safely reduce the numbers of looked after children This area is part of the Strategic Change plan and is an area of intense monitoring and development.
- 4.2 The number of children who are placed with parents at home on a care order is reducing and currently is 86. These children are being reviewed on a monthly basis to check the progress for discharging the orders but also where the placement is no longer safe ensuring plans are in place for alternative care.
- 4.3 A permanency tracker which details all looked after children, their plans and the timescale for discharge from care to parents, family members or via special guardianship and adoption is reviewed on a 6-weekly basis with all managers. The aim is to ensure appropriate urgency is involved for these children in ensuring their plans meet their needs and that any difficulties or barriers to progress are identified and addressed.

- 4.4 On 31 March 2010, 24 children had been adopted during the previous twelve months and a further 24 children had achieved permanence through special guardianship in the same period.
- 4.5 For children who remain in care, it is important for their education, health and emotional well-being that they are in stable placements. Wirral achieves well in this with only 7% of children experiencing 2 or more placement moves in the twelve month period up to 31 March 2010. All authorities also monitor the number of children who have been looked after for more than two and a half years, who have lived in the same placement for two years, the percentage of children for the twelve month period up to 31 March 2010 was 64.5% which was a slight reduction on the previous year's reporting.
- 4.6 Recruitment of foster carers is important to further improving this area, as well as reducing the need for children to be placed out of borough in independent fostering or residential placements. The fostering service has 266 approved fostering households with 517 placements, but 94 placements are currently vacant as these provide respite placements or capacity when a foster carer needs a break. In view of this, the service is at full capacity which makes matching children with carers with the skills to meet their needs challenging for the fostering service. The Fostering Taskforce, which includes current foster carers, is working to address areas such as recruitment of new foster carers and retention of existing foster carers by training and support. Wirral has also participated in a recent regional fostering campaign.
- 4.7 In 2010, KS1 (levels of progress in reading, writing, maths and science) children in care performed below the 2009 national average for children in care and less well than their peer group overall. At KS2 (levels of progress in maths and English) pupils performed better than the national average for Children in Care in 2009 and as estimated by their FFT B targets. Performance at KS4 exceeded 2009 national averages for pupils achieving 1 GCSE (A*-G), 5 GCSEs (A*-G), 5 GCSEs (A*-C) and 5 GCSEs (A*-C including English and Maths).

5 Financial Implications

- 5.1 The total Looked After Children budget is £14,490,500 and there are current budget pressures of £2,513,000. The change programme plans to reduce the budget for looked after children by 2 Million as well as removing the current projected overspend by 2014.

6 Staffing Implications

- 6.1 Wirral has been able to recruit social workers as we have a good reputation for support, supervision and training in this complex and challenging area of work. However, the workload is demanding and presents challenges for staff and Managers. We ensure that where there is long-term sickness or staff absent through maternity leave that agency social work cover is provided to manage the demands on the staff and also to ensure that children are still supported.
- 6.2 Adverts are placed monthly, to ensure social workers are continuously recruited to replace any vacancies. Recruitment to the posts which were established by Cabinet in March 2009, such as extra social workers, Advanced Social Work Practitioners, Practice Managers and Principal Team Managers, is part of the strategy to increase front line social work capacity and increase the level of supervision and oversight. This is making a positive impact, and a further recruitment drive is currently underway to fill the remaining vacancies on a permanent basis
- 6.3 Equally critical services are provided by family support, pathway team, family placement, adoption and permanence teams and Independent Reviewing Officers.

7 Equal Opportunities Implications /Health Impact Assessment

- 7.1 It is essential to promote safeguarding of children throughout all communities in Wirral.

8 Community Safety Implications

- 8.1 Members of the public have also had their awareness of safeguarding raised and are more willing to refer to childrens social care if they are worried about a child.

9 Local Agenda 21 Implications

- 9.1 There are no Local Agenda 21 implications.

10 Planning Implications

- 10.1 There are no planning implications

11 Anti-Poverty Implications

- 11.1 Looked After Children may have experienced disadvantage before coming into care which may have a long-term impact on their future outcomes.

12 Social Inclusion Implications

- 12.1 Looked After Children need support in a number of areas as outcomes for their education, health and well-being are lower than children who are not in care.

13 Local Member Support Implications

- 13.1 Members chair and lead the Corporate Parenting Group which aims to raise the profile and support better outcomes for children in our care.

14 Background Papers

- 14.1 Children Act 1989 (HMSO)

RECOMMENDATIONS

It is recommended for members to note this report.

David Armstrong
Interim Director Children and Young Peoples Department

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WIRRAL COUNCIL

CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE -
16 NOVEMBER 2010

REPORT OF THE DIRECTOR OF CHILDREN'S SERVICES

ANNUAL COMPLAINTS REPORT

Executive Summary

This report provides information on compliments, representations and complaints received by the Social Care Branch of the Children and Young People's Department for the year 1st April 2009 to 31st March 2010.

The report gives an overview of complaint trends, performance and areas for development.

1. Background

- 1.1 The Children Act 1989 Representations Procedure (England) Regulations 2006 and associated guidance "Getting the Best from Complaints" came into force on 1st September 2006 and underpins the Branch's Complaints Procedure.
- 1.2 The Regulations stipulate that an Annual Report is produced and presented to staff and appropriate Local Authority Committees. The report should also be available to the Regulator and the general public.
- 1.3 The Regulations provide a statutory framework for dealing with representations relating to statutory social services functions under Part 3 of the Children Act 1989; and certain functions under the Adoption Support Regulations 2005 and Special Guardianship Support Regulations 2005.
- 1.4 The Regulations stipulate who may make a complaint; this is generally the young person themselves or an adult with either parental responsibility or day to day care of the child. For any other person the Department has the discretion to decide whether they 'qualify' to make a complaint.
- 1.5 For representations regarding functions outside of the Regulations; or for a person who does not qualify to make a statutory complaint the Branch operates within the remit of the Corporate Complaints Policy and Procedure.

2. Applying the Regulations

- 2.1 The Customer Resolution and Information team have ensured that only those complainants who 'qualify' under the Regulations and wishing to make

a complaint regarding statutory services under Part 3 of the Children Act 1989 have been given access to the Children and Young People's Departmental Representations and Complaints Procedure.

- 2.2 During the reporting period 6 complainants wanting to register a formal Stage 2 complaint under the Representations and Complaints Procedure have been given information and advice as to why they do not qualify and were relevant have been signposted to other procedures/processes.

3. Resolved at First Contact

- 3.1 9 complainants had their complaint resolved at first contact by the Customer Resolution and Information Team without the need to formally register a complaint. These cases were generally about difficulties in contacting workers or receiving the outcome of a decision; and the Customer Resolution and Information Team were able to facilitate a response within the same day.

4. Alternative Resolution

- 4.1 Two complainants who initially wanted to register a formal Stage 2 complaint agreed that the proactive involvement of the Complaints Manager via alternative resolution would expedite a more timely resolution. These cases included were the outcome of a previous complaint set a precedent and the issue could be resolved without the need for a formal investigation; and a request for the Complaints Manager to review the response to a Stage 1 complaint and offer an independent view.

5. Registered Complaints

- 5.1 Throughout the 12 month reporting period the following complaints were registered:

78 Stage 1 Complaints - Local Resolution	<i>[compared to 90 in 08/09]</i>
5 Stage 2 complaints - Investigation	<i>[compared to 10 in 08/09]</i>
1 Stage 3 complaint - Independent Review Panel	<i>[compared to 0 in 08/09]</i>

- 5.2 The Local Government Ombudsman undertook complaint investigation into one complaint; the complaint was concluded without publishing a report as the Ombudsman found no maladministration.

The Local Government Ombudsman is undertaking enquiries regarding two further complaints, these enquiries are ongoing.

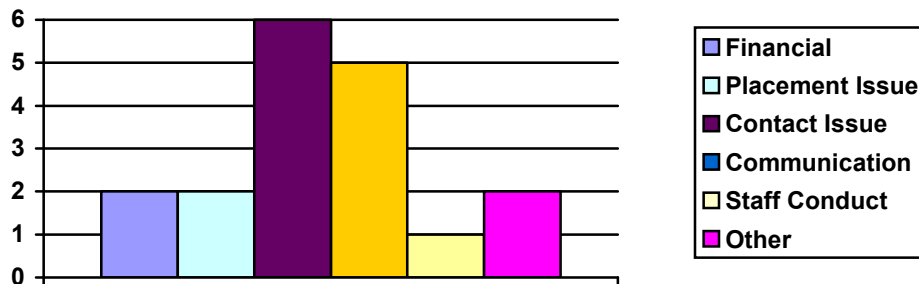
6. Stage 1 Complaints

- 6.1 Of the 78 complaints registered at Stage 1 of the complaints procedure 18 were made by the child/young person . A breakdown of the 18 complaints made by the child/young person is shown below:-

District/Service with case responsibility

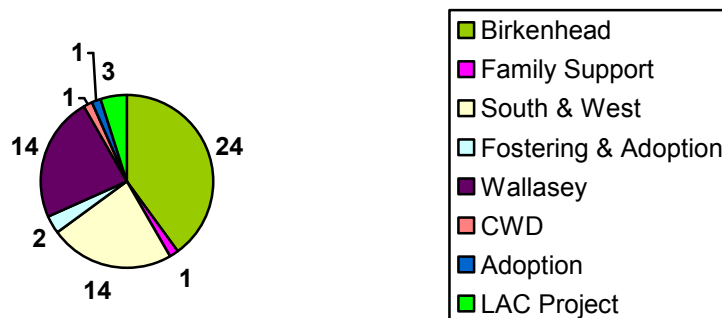


Reason for Complaint

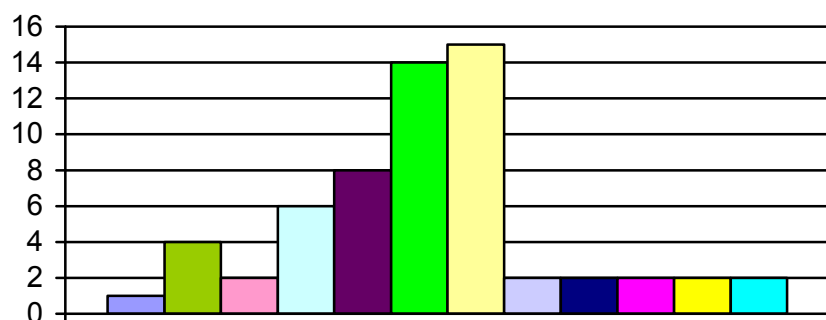
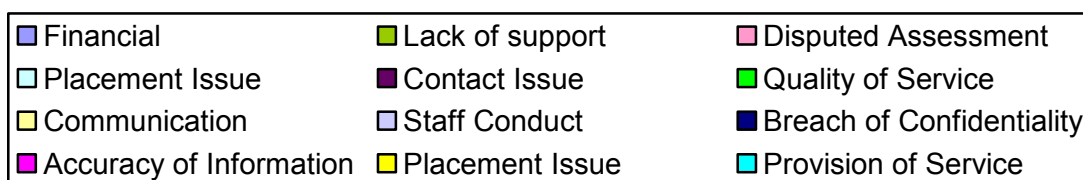


- 6.2 Stage 1 complaints made by the child/young person are handled by the Children’s Complaints Officer with a focus on achieving resolution by working with the child/young person and the relevant manager.
- 6.3 Independent Advocacy Services are available to all children/young people who make a complaint via the Department’s contracts with Wired and Safeguarding Children.
- 6.4 The average time taken to complete/resolve the 18 complaints made by the child/young person was 14.6 working days.
- 6.5 Of the 78 complaints made at Stage 1 of the complaints procedure 60 were made by adults with either parental responsibility or day to day care of the child. A breakdown of the 60 Stage 1 complaints made by an adult are shown below:-

District/Service with case Responsibility



Reason for Complaint



6.6 Stage 1 complaints registered by an adult are dealt with by an appropriate manager within the District with case responsibility. The average time taken to complete/resolve these complaints was 15 working days.

7. Stage 2 Complaints

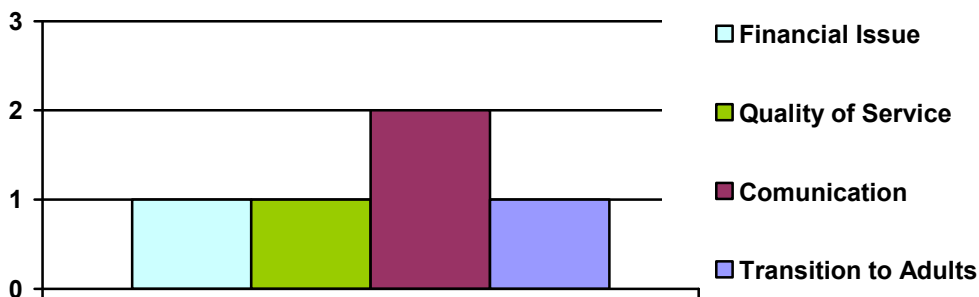
All of the 5 Stage 2 complaints registered were made by adults with parental responsibility or day to day care of a child/young person receiving a service.

A breakdown of the 5 complaints registered is below:-

District/Service with case responsibility



Reason for Complaint



- 7.1 The ethnicity of all complainants who registered a complaint at stage 2 of the complaints procedure was white.
- 7.2 One of the complainants at Stage 2 of the complaints procedure were regarding young people with a disability.
- 7.3 The average time taken to complete the Stage 2 complaint investigations and provide a Departmental response was 82 working days.
- 7.4 Two of the Stage 2 complaints were completed within the expected timescale of 65 working days; one complaint was delayed in agreement with the complainant; one complaint was affected by staff availability; one complaint was very complex and required a joint adjudication by both Heads of Branch for CYPD and DASS.
- 7.5 All recommendations from Stage 2 investigations are action-planned by the Principal Managers Group to ensure the Department learns from complaints and to effect service improvement.
- 8. Stage 3 Complaints (Independent Review Panel)**
- 8.1 One Independent Review Panel has been held during the reporting period.

8.2 The Panel upheld the Investigating Officer's findings but made two recommendations regarding communication and planning for future contact at Christmas time.

8.3 The Director responded to the Panel's recommendations within the expected timescale.

9. Learning from Complaints

9.1 Within the 5 Stage Two investigations, there were 23 individual complaints, outcomes of these complaints were:-

- 7 were upheld (30%)
- 11 were not upheld (48%)
- 2 were partially upheld (8%)
- 2 were undeterminable (8%)
- 1 was determined as no grounds for complaint (4%)

9.2 Recommendations made following Stage 2 investigations have included:-

- Producing a protocol with Merseyside Police regarding the sharing of information with a parent who is subject to a criminal investigation – **work ongoing**
- Producing information leaflets for parents/carers regarding child protection investigations and assessments etc. – **work ongoing**
- Transition checklist to be drawn up with named person who holds responsibility for completing the task. Application for and follow up of CICA, DLA & EMA to be placed on the checklist – **work completed**.

10. Review of Effectiveness

In order to continue to strive to offer a good service to our users the Customer and Resolution Team will in the coming year:-

- Continue to monitor the effectiveness of the adjudication system and its impact on timescales.
- Continue to monitor action planning to ensure recommendations from Stage 2 complaints are completed.
- Undertake a user survey and consultation exercise to ensure users views are heard and have an impact on how the complaints system is operated.

11. Compliments

The Customer Resolution and Information Team received 20 compliments during the reporting period about a cross section of staff within the Department. Those compliments have been forwarded to the managers of the individuals concerned.

12. Access To Records

The Customer Resolution and Information Team are also responsible for overseeing Subject Access Requests under the Data Protection Act 1998.

During the reporting period 90 Subject Access Requests were completed.

76% of requests were completed within the statutory timescale of 40 working days.

13. Freedom of Information

The Customer Resolution and Information Team are also responsible for co-ordinating the Social Care Branch's response to Freedom of Information Requests.

During the reporting period 34 Freedom of Information Requests were dealt with; 85% of requests were completed within the statutory timescale of 20 working days.

14. FINANCIAL AND STAFFING IMPLICATIONS

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

15. EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES IMPLICATIONS

None arising directly from this report.

16. HUMAN RIGHTS IMPLICATIONS

None arising directly from this report.

17. LOCAL AGENDA 21 IMPLICATIONS

None arising directly from this report.

18. COMMUNITY SAFETY IMPLICATIONS

None arising directly from this report.

19. PLANNING IMPLICATIONS

None arising directly from this report.

20. LOCAL MEMBER SUPPORT IMPLICATIONS

None arising directly from this report.

21. BACKGROUND PAPERS

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

22. RECOMMENDATIONS

Members are asked to note this report.

Howard Cooper
Director of Children's Services

Updated Work Programme for Children and Young People Overview and Scrutiny Committee.

BEGINNING OF THE MUNICIPAL YEAR 2010 /2011

It was agreed at the Overview and Scrutiny Chairs meeting to adopt the following procedure to allow the committee members to monitor their work programme. It is felt that the work programme should be a 'living' document and as such is intended to act as a guide for the Committee throughout the year, while providing the degree of flexibility needed to respond to any emerging or pressing issues as they arise. Committee members, and particularly the Chair, should have a major role in owning and managing the work programme.

The final item on the agenda for each Scrutiny Committee will be 'Review of the Committee Work Programme'.

It is suggested that there should be four short reports. I have attached the following reports:

REPORT 1 - Lists all the issues the committee agreed to include in their Work Programme:

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

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

For each item on the work programme, the report gives a description, an indication of how the item will be dealt with, a where possible 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 lists those items which are likely to be on the meeting agenda. This will give the opportunity for Committee members to take a greater lead in organising their work programme.

REPORT 4 - Progress Report on In-Depth Panel Reviews

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

Report 1

MONITORING REPORT FOR CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE WORK PROGRAMME 2010/2011

(UPDATES IN RED)

Date of item	Topic Description	How the topic will be dealt with	Comments on Progress	Complete
OCT 2008	Wirral Music Service	Officer Report	Committee requested a further report during a budget savings debate on the Wirral Music Service on 28.10.08. At OSC on 13.01.09 a request for further statistics was made. An annual report has been requested – March 2010. A further request for an Options report to be brought to SEPT 2010 OSC.	14 Sept 2010
JAN 2009	Safeguarding - Child protection Statutory Annual Report	Officer Report	As a result of the verbal report on 'The Impact of the Baby P Case' given by Howard Cooper (13.10.09). It was agreed that a further update report would be produced in the future.	SEPT 2010
2 ND JUNE 2010	The Committee received an update on its work programme and the Chair circulated a draft work programme for 2010/11 based on an overarching theme of, 'Preparing for the Future and Protecting our Priorities'. The draft included suggestions for officers to draw up a detailed report on what the new national priorities concerning academies, free schools and pupil premiums would mean for Wirral. Resolved – That the Chair, Spokespersons and one co-opted member meet to consider the work programme for 2010/2011	Member Meeting		
2 ND JUNE 2010	The Director to inform all Members of the effect of the Academies Bill once the position had become clearer.	Officer Report		

2 ND JUNE 2010	Resolved – the Review Panel on ‘Narrowing the Gap’ to continue.	Panel Review		
14 TH SEPT. 2010	<p>The Committee received an update on its work programme including the reports to be scheduled for the November meeting.</p> <p>Resolved – That the Work Programme be agreed with the addition of a report on the Governors’ support service to be considered at the January or March, 2011 meeting.</p>			
14 th SEPT. 2010	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Look at the current work of <u>the Youth Service</u> in the light of recent positive developments and investigate the impact of any potential reduction in funding either from possible cuts in specific grant like the Youth Opportunity Fund, or from general funding reductions . ■ Consider the whole area of <u>Looked After Children</u>, the work being done now, and any likely impact of future decisions on funding. It was also suggested that the work carried out previously with looked after children should be revisited and the Director commented that he would be happy to facilitate this as there had been many changes over the past couple of years, including the establishment of the Children in Care Council. ■ Consider the <u>whole area of Child Protection</u>, the work being done, the relationship with outside partners and investigate ways to ensure partners work together with the same priorities and inequities don’t develop because of different budget strategies in the different organisations. 	<p>Officer report back to November Meeting.</p> <p>Officer report back to November Meeting.</p> <p>Officer report back to November Meeting.</p>		<p>November Meeting.</p> <p>November Meeting.</p> <p>November Meeting.</p>
14 th SEPT. 2010	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Draw up a detailed report on what the new national priorities concerning academies, free schools and pupil premiums will mean for Wirral. 	Officer Report		After the Comprehensive Spending Review.

<p>14th SEPT. 2010</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Draw up a list of specific grants which will lose their ring fencing and set out which services they cover and the consequences of any potential redistribution of resources either this year or in future years and consider ways of mitigating this. 	<p>Officer Report</p>		<p>After the Comprehensive Spending Review</p>
<p>14th SEPT. 2010</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ A report on the Governors' support service. 	<p>Officer Report</p>		<p>To report to Jan meeting</p>
<p>14th SEPT. 2010</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Draw up a list of any capital resources or programmes that might be affected in the future, and consider whether there might be any knock on to Children's Services from any programmes elsewhere in the authority or with external partners that might also be under threat. 	<p>Officer Report</p>		<p>After the Comprehensive Spending Review</p>
<p>14th SEPT. 2010</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Look at the work carried out by Sure Start, and the relationship between Sure Start and primary schools, and later consequences between primary and secondary schools on learning age intakes, in order to have a clear rationale to present should Sure Start lose its protection in the future 	<p>Officer Report</p>		<p>To January 2011 Meeting</p>

Report 2

SUGGESTIONS FOR ADDITIONS TO WORK PROGRAMME FOR CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE WORK PROGRAMME 2010/2011

Topic Description	Topic suggested by	How the topic will be dealt with	Est. Completion Date

Report 3

PROPOSED OUTLINE MEETING SCHEDULE FOR THE MUNICIPAL YEAR CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE SCRUTINY COMMITTEE 2010/2011

Meeting Date	Topic Description
16 th NOVEMBER 2010	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Look at the current work of <u>the Youth Service</u> in the light of recent positive developments and investigate the impact of any potential reduction in funding either from possible cuts in specific grant like the Youth Opportunity Fund, or from general funding reductions .
16 th NOVEMBER 2010	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Consider the whole area of <u>Looked After Children</u>, the work being done now, and any likely impact of future decisions on funding. It was also suggested that the work carried out previously with looked after children should be revisited and the Director commented that he would be happy to facilitate this as there had been many changes over the past couple of years, including the establishment of the Children in Care Council.
16 th NOVEMBER 2010	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Consider the <u>whole area of Child Protection</u>, the work being done, the relationship with outside partners and investigate ways to ensure partners work together with the same priorities and inequities don't develop because of different budget strategies in the different organisations.
26 TH JANUARY 2011	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Look at the work carried out by Sure Start, and the relationship between Sure Start and primary schools, and later consequences between primary and secondary schools on learning age intakes, in order to have a clear rationale to present should Sure Start lose its protection in the future
26 TH JANUARY 2011	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ A report on the Governors' support service.

Report 4

PROGRESS REPORT ON IN-DEPTH PANEL REVIEWS CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

END OF MUNICIPAL YEAR 2009/2010 - START OF MUNICIPAL YEAR 2010/2011

Title of Review	Members of Panel	Progress to Date	Date Due to report back
<p>'Narrowing the Gap'. Impact of Deprivation Funding Review CONTINUING REVIEW</p>	<p>tba</p>	<p>Draft Scope 17.09.2009 Initial Review Panel held November 2009 First round of school meetings January 2010 Further school meetings February 2010</p>	
		<p><u>Sept Meeting</u> A Member referred to the “Narrowing the gap” – Impact of deprivation funding’ scrutiny review and the need to continue this to a conclusion. The Chair suggested the need for the original members of the Scrutiny Review Panel to meet. Councillor Sheila Clarke, Cabinet Member for Children’s Services and Lifelong Learning, and one of the original Panel members, indicated that she would be happy to meet, together with one of the Scrutiny Officers.</p>	

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