



## Children and Young People Overview and Scrutiny Committee

<b>Date:</b>	<b>Wednesday, 16 November 2011</b>
<b>Time:</b>	<b>6.00 pm</b>
<b>Venue:</b>	<b>Committee Room 2 - Wallasey Town Hall</b>

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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 - 8)**

To receive the minutes of the meeting held on 20 September, 2011.

**3. EARLY INTERVENTION GRANT - LESSONS LEARNT (Pages 9 - 18)**

Tony Gallagher, Her Majesty's Inspector, will be in attendance at the meeting and will be invited to make a contribution to the discussion on this item.

**4. OFSTED CHILDREN'S SERVICES ASSESSMENT**

Report to follow.

5. **FOSTERING SERVICE REPORT ON INSPECTION (Pages 19 - 44)**
6. **CHILD POVERTY STRATEGY - ACTION PLAN / IMPLEMENTATION**

The Chair will give a verbal report on this item.

7. **2011/12 SECOND QUARTER PERFORMANCE AND FINANCIAL REVIEW (Pages 45 - 58)**
8. **SCRUTINY REVIEW OF LITERACY LEVELS AT KEY STAGE 2 - PROGRESS REPORT (Pages 59 - 72)**
9. **SECONDARY SCHOOL PLACES - DEMOGRAPHIC UPDATE (Pages 73 - 86)**
10. **SCHOOL ANNUAL PERFORMANCE REVIEW - POST 16 STANDARDS**

Mark Parkinson, Acting Deputy Director will give a verbal update on post 16 standards.

11. **ANNUAL COMPLAINTS REPORT (Pages 87 - 96)**
12. **WORK PROGRAMME (Pages 97 - 102)**
13. **FORWARD PLAN**

The Forward Plan for the period November, 2011 to February, 2012 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.

14. **ANY OTHER URGENT BUSINESS ACCEPTED BY THE CHAIR**

## CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

Tuesday, 20 September 2011

<u>Present:</u>	Councillor	S Clarke (Chair)	
	Councillors	W Clements J Crabtree D Dodd P Hayes B Mooney	C Povall T Smith W Smith P Williams Smith
<u>Co-opted:</u>		Mrs N Smith	
<u>Apologies</u>		Mrs J Kearney Mr A Scott	Mrs J Owens

### 13 WELCOME

The Chair welcomed everybody to the meeting and in particular Mrs Nicola Smith, who was attending her first meeting as a new Parent Governor Co-opted member.

The Chair also referred to apologies received from Mrs Jacqui Kearney, whose term of office as Parent Governor Representative would finish in October and read out an email she had received from Jacqui in which she had expressed her appreciation for being involved in the Committee. The Chair had written to her to thank her for all her work with the Committee over the last four years.

**Resolved – That the thanks of the Committee be accorded to Mrs J Kearney for her work on the Committee.**

### 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 J Crabtree declared a personal interest in minute 21 (Safeguarding and Looked After Children Inspection Update) by virtue of him being a foster carer.

Councillor S Clarke declared a personal interest in minute 19 (Government's Green Paper on Special Educational Needs and Disability) and minute 22 (Adoption Service

Report on Inspection) by virtue of a personal family interest and her membership of the Adoption Panel respectively.

15 **MINUTES**

Members were requested to receive the minutes of the meeting of the Children and Young People Overview and Scrutiny Committee held on 1 June, 2011.

**Resolved – That the minutes of the meeting of 1 June, 2011 be approved as a correct record.**

16 **CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE'S BUDGET ISSUES 2012/13**

The Interim Director of Children's Services reported that as part of the 2012/13 Budget Consultation process Cabinet were asking Scrutiny Committees to consider the functions within their portfolio and offer suggestions as to how to close the estimated £25 million budget gap and limit any Council Tax increase in 2012/13. The responses would be considered along with the responses from the other engagement processes to inform the budget setting process. Further consultation would be undertaken regarding any specific service changes.

Appendices to the report were submitted which gave details of the key issues and challenges facing the Department which had an indicative departmental budget of £71.9m. Budget simulator information was also included for each service area giving a brief service description and the likely consequences of reducing the budget by 10%, 20% or 50% together with the consequences of an increase by 5%.

The Interim Director gave a presentation to the Committee on the current year budget pressures of £5.9m and the reductions identified so far which totalled £4.95m, a balance of £950,000. The Department's notional pro rata share of the £25m funding gap in 2012/13 was likely to be around £5m, with similar gaps in 2013/14 and 2014/15.

With the permission of the Chair the Leader of the Conservative Group addressed the Committee and commented that with the pressures on the residential care for looked after children budget would it not be better if this budget were held centrally because of the Council's corporate parenting role rather than being applied to the Department.

A Member suggested the need for a detailed report highlighting Cabinet proposals, including potential savings prior to the start of any consultation period. The Interim Director commented that he had not been required to produce any formal proposals for next year's budget as yet and he understood the Chief Executive would be looking at this.

It was then moved by Councillor Mrs P Williams, seconded by Councillor P Hayes and –

**Resolved (6:5 on the Chair's casting vote) –**

**(1) That this Committee will consider setting a date for a special meeting to consider Cabinet led suggestions highlighting potential savings.**

**(2) That Committee requests that any such reports are produced with the in-depth detail required to make informed decisions and that reports are produced within timescales that allows Members to raise queries before the date of a special meeting.**

## **17 RESTRICTURE OF THE CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE'S DEPARTMENT**

The Interim Director of Children's Services reported upon the changes within his Department following the Early Voluntary Retirement and Voluntary Severance exercise (EVR/VS), and the restructure of the Department. The changes also took account of the transfer of the Transport Service that was previously provided by the Department for Adult Social Services and the Technical Services Department.

The restructure of the Department from four branch service areas to three had meant that services provided by the Participation and Inclusion Branch had been transferred into the three remaining branches of Children's Social Care, Learning and Achievement and Planning and Resources.

Responding to comments from Members, the Interim Director acknowledged that the loss of 312 staff through EVR / VS had had some impact but that all statutory expectations were being met. He was grateful to those staff in the department who had taken on additional duties and responsibilities. With regard to waiting times for children to see an Educational Psychologist, these were within the prescribed statutory limits, although waiting times did of course vary according to the needs of an individual's case. All staff would have a Key Issues Exchange in which a training plan would be discussed, although a reduction in resources across the Council had dampened expectations in respect of training courses. The Department was still involved in national courses and conferences but to a lesser degree than previously.

A Member suggested the need to look at the trends of staff absences within the Department following the reduction in staff numbers.

### **Resolved –**

**(1) That the report and the re-structuring of the department from four Branch Service Areas to three Branch Service areas be noted**

**(2) That the overarching Children's and Young People's Departmental restructure be noted.**

**(3) That the transfer of the various Transport related services across the Council, including Technical Services and the Department for Adult Social Services into the new Integrated Transport Unit structure within the Children's and Young People's Department be noted.**

**(4) That a report be brought back to the November meeting on staff absence trends within the Children's and Young People's Department.**

18 **PRESENTATION ON FIRST QUARTER PERFORMANCE 2011/12**

Nancy Clarkson, Head of Planning and Performance, gave a presentation on the first quarter performance 2011/12 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 and also of key performance issues which had not met their targets including the corporate plan indicators of:

- Reducing the under 18 conception rate
- Under age sales of alcohol

Departmentally 80% of the 20 performance indicators were achieving or exceeding the target, the four which weren't were:

- Percentage of core assessments for children's social care that were carried out within 35 working days of their commencement.
- Timeliness of placements of looked after children for adoption following an agency decision that the child should be placed for adoption.
- Percentage of initial assessments for children's social care carried out within 10 working days of referral.
- Number of Early Years settings judged as inadequate.

Details were given of the corrective action being taken in each case.

The department's £39m capital budget included slippage from 2010/11 with the biggest schemes in progress including work at Birkenhead Academy, Cathcart Primary and Pensby Primary/ Stanley Special School.

Future risks and challenges included, safeguarding arrangements for children which was always a significant risk and was therefore under constant review; and, in response to the Munro Review a national review of children's social care processes was being undertaken.

**Resolved – That the presentation be noted.**

19 **THE GOVERNMENT'S GREEN PAPER ON SPECIAL EDUCATIONAL NEEDS AND DISABILITY (SEND)**

The Interim Director of Children's Services submitted a report which outlined the Government's Green Paper, 'Support and aspiration: A new approach to special educational needs and disability'. The Green Paper, on the subject of all the children and young people who were disabled, or identified as having a special educational need, was about their families and ways of supporting them, and about the training and support required by professionals who worked with them in order to improve outcomes.

The consultation period, which had ended on 30 June 2011, had been an open consultation and views were welcomed from both individuals and organisations. Wirral Council had contributed to the consultation through the Merseyside Learn Together Partnership (LPT) which had submitted a joint response which was appended to the report. Following consideration of the consultation responses, the

Government intended to publish its response later this year. This might involve proposed legislative changes beginning in the following year.

The report outlined the major proposals contained within the Green Paper and also that local authorities had been invited to 'work' as pathfinders to pilot some of the new proposed arrangements. Merseyside LPT had submitted a joint pathfinder bid.

**Resolved – That this Committee notes the Government's intention to radically change the current framework, and the work undertaken by officers preparing for possible changes.**

## 20 **CHILD POVERTY STRATEGY - ACTION PLAN / IMPLEMENTATION**

The Chair stated that this item would be deferred to a future meeting.

## 21 **SAFEGUARDING AND LOOKED AFTER CHILDREN INSPECTION UPDATE**

Further to minute 6 (1/6/11) the Interim Director of Children's Services reported upon the progress made up to 31 August, 2011 in relation to implementing the areas for development identified in the Safeguarding and Looked After Children inspection which was undertaken by OFSTED between 24 January and 4 February 2011.

On a motion by the Chair, duly seconded, it was –

**Resolved – That this Committee notes the progress made up to 31 August 2011 in addressing the area for development identified in the Safeguarding and Looked after Children inspection and thanks all the staff involved.**

## 22 **ADOPTION SERVICE REPORT ON INSPECTION**

The Interim Director of Children's Services reported upon the outcome of the announced inspection of the Wirral Adoption Service by Ofsted and updated the Committee on the work of the Adoption Service since the last report in January 2011 (minute 40 refers). This was the first report and inspection since the publication of new Adoption National Minimum Standards and updated Adoption Statutory Guidance which came into force on 1 April 2011. In addition, the Adoption Service was governed by the Adoption Agencies Regulations 2005, the Local Authority Adoption Service (England) Regulations 2003, the Adoption Support Services Regulations 2005, the Care Planning, Placement and Case review (England) Regulations 2010 and the Adoption and Children Act 2002.

The overall quality rating by Ofsted for the adoption service was 'good'; with 'outstanding' for protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe.

On a motion by the Chair, duly seconded, it was –

**Resolved – That this Committee agrees that the adoption service is being managed effectively and that there are good outcomes for the children and young people being adopted and the adopters; and thanks all the staff involved in the service.**

23 **SCHOOL ANNUAL PERFORMANCE REVIEW**

Mark Parkinson, Head of Learning & Achievement, together with Stuart Bellerby, Strategic Service Manager (Secondary), Sue Talbot, Strategic Service Manager (Early Years and Primary) and Vivian Stafford, Strategic Service Manager (Post -16), gave a comprehensive presentation on the headline figures for the 2011 test results at Early Years, Key stages 1, 2, 3 and for Looked After Children. A shorter report would be made to the next meeting of the Committee on the post-16 results.

The Interim Director and officers elaborated on the information in the presentation in response to Members' questions and reported that the Council had no direct control over the use of the Pupil Premium (PP) by schools.

**Resolved – That the presentation be noted and the officers be thanked for all their hard work in supporting young people.**

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

The Interim 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:

- Capital contracts
- Out of Authority Placements
- Children's Residential Care Placements
- Contracts for Provision of Services for Children's Centres

**Resolved – That the report be noted.**

25 **CO-OPTED MEMBER REQUEST**

The Committee was invited to consider a request from the Co-Chair of the Wirral Family Forum, Louise Reece Jones, for a co-opted position on the Children and Young People O&S Committee for a member of their Forum to represent parent / carers of children with disabilities or additional needs.

As with co-optees on the Health and Well Being Overview and Scrutiny Committee, including one for carers, the co-option, if agreed, would be one with non-voting rights and would need to be a recommendation to Council.

The Chair suggested that as there would be a vacancy for a Parent Governor Representative with the expiration of Mrs J Kearney's term in October, she would write to Ms L Reece Jones and suggest that she could put herself forward for this position.

26 **WORK PROGRAMME**

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



The Chair commented that a report on Early Intervention Grants would be coming to the November meeting and also a report on Oaklands. The January meeting would include reports on academies and the Sanderling Unit.

**Resolved – That the Work Programme be agreed with the above additions.**

27 **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.**

28 **0-19 STANDARDS SUB-COMMITTEE MINUTES**

The minutes of the meeting of the 0-19 Standards Sub-Committee, held on 26 July, 2010, were submitted. The Sub-Committee had considered a number of issues, in particular the Ofsted reports relating to the following establishments:

**Secondary School**

Outstanding

Prenton High School for Girls

**Primary Schools**

Satisfactory

Bedford Drive Primary School

Good

Lingham Primary School  
Rock Ferry Primary School  
Leasowe Primary School  
New Brighton Primary School  
Well Lane Primary School  
Mendell Primary School  
Barnston Primary School  
Heygarth Primary School  
Thingwall Primary School

Outstanding

Liscard Primary School  
St Georges Primary School

**Resolved – That the minutes be noted.**

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## WIRRAL COUNCIL

### CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE'S OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

16 NOVEMBER 2011

<b>SUBJECT:</b>	<b>EARLY INTERVENTION GRANT – LESSONS LEARNT</b>
<b>WARD/S AFFECTED:</b>	<b>ALL</b>
<b>REPORT OF:</b>	<b>ACTING DIRECTOR OF CHILDREN'S SERVICES</b>
<b>RESPONSIBLE PORTFOLIO HOLDER:</b>	<b>COUNCILLOR ANN MCLACHLAN</b>
<b>KEY DECISION</b>	NO

#### 1.0 EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- 1.1 This report presents to the Committee the lessons learnt following an evaluation of the process used to commission services funded by the Early Intervention Grant (EIG). The commissioning process was complex and a report to identify lessons learnt was requested as a means of identifying improvements in any future commissioning activities.

The main aim of the EIG activities is to effectively intervene to help children, young people and families to move down the continuum of need from high levels which require high cost interventions to a lower level of need and eventually moving to a stage using universal lower cost open access services. This approach is in line with the corporate priority of providing early intervention and support for vulnerable children and families. Although too early to be specific about the impact of the commissioned services, providers are clear about the expectations of their services and also about the way in which they will be monitored to ensure a focus on outcomes. If the required outcomes are achieved, and the level of need is reduced, it is to be expected that future costs will also be reduced for the Council and its partners.

- 1.2 This report has no exempt sections.

#### 2.0 RECOMMENDATIONS

- 2.1 The Committee is asked to note the report.

#### 3.0 BACKGROUND AND KEY ISSUES

- 3.1 The Early Intervention Grant replaced a number of former funding streams within Children's Services. Its purpose is to help improve outcomes for Children, Young People and families by Early Intervention. The grant is un-ringfenced; authorities are free to allocate funds to meet priority needs.

3.2 In February this year a commissioning round was started to commission services to provide appropriate early intervention services.

The services commissioned, costing £2.8m, ranged from targeted support for families and individuals with complex and multiple needs to services which were open access and meeting low level needs with appropriate support and information.

In preparation for the commissioning of services a robust review of relevant data was undertaken by the commissioners, the Safeguarding Quality Assurance Manager, the Children's Centres' Manager and the Link Forum Liaison worker.

Following a thorough needs analysis, three priorities were identified which would underpin decisions. These were:

- Priority Area 1 (PA1) Parenting / Compromised parenting.
- Priority Area 2 (PA2) Short Breaks for Disabled Children.
- Priority Area 3 (PA3) Risk taking Behaviour in Children, Young people and Families.

3.3 The identified priorities became the framework for the development of tender specifications and documentation describing the range of services and activities which would be required. In the 2010 commissioning round activities were undertaken separately which resulted in services being seen in isolation. In this case however, they were all part of a continuum of support which worked across age ranges and needs. Using the three priorities in one commissioning process contributed to a better understanding of the aims of early intervention and the view that there was a shared responsibility between providers and commissioners for the delivery of relevant and effective services.

3.4 A full open tendering process was used to identify providers. This was undertaken with the full support and guidance of the Corporate Procurement Unit. The approach utilised was in 3 stages 1) a Pre-Qualification Questionnaire (PQQ) 2) to identify providers to Invite To Tender stage (ITT) 3) invite providers to attend for interviews and presentations.

3.5 Organisations proceeding to the ITT stage completed full tender documents including detailed method statements and pricing schedules. Each of the 3 Priority Areas were evaluated by a panel. Each panel had a core membership with representation from:

- Children and Young People's Department.
- NHS Wirral.
- Link Forum.
- Young people or Parent/Carers.

Priority Area 3, risk taking behaviour had additional membership from Merseyside Police and Merseyside Fire and Rescue Service.

3.6 Panel members were fully involved in the evaluation of tenders. A total of 34 organisations submitted at least one tender resulting in a total of 101 tenders across all priority areas being evaluated. In **PA2** and **PA3** in addition to individual applications, consortia bids were submitted by a national and a local charity.

Included in the submissions were a large number of multiple and cross priority applications. In total 45 organisations were short-listed for interview.

- 3.7 The interview process involved a presentation on a preset topic and was followed by a number of set questions. Prior to the interviews, providers were given copies of the questions and they were allowed thirty minutes to prepare.

In the case of multiple applications in one priority area, providers were given additional time in the interview to enable them to cover all the areas for which they had applied.

- 3.8 A major change to the commissioning process was the use of the Chest to:-

- Advertise the EIG commissioning round.
- Manage all communication from and to providers during the commissioning process.
- Inform short listed, unsuccessful and successful providers of the outcome at appropriate stages of the process.

Other changes included:

- Generic questions which were used in the Method Statements with additional questions added when the area required a specific response
- Giving the providers the interview questions thirty minutes prior to interviews.
- The involvement of service users at all stages of the evaluation across all three priority areas (this was previously difficult to manage with young people during school time).

- 3.9 The assessment of Method Statements is a key part of the evaluation process. It is essential that panels understand what will meet expectations and deliver outcomes. To assist panel members in the assessment process a full set of assessment criteria was developed for each service area. In effect panel members had a full set of model Method Statements from which to start assessing the submitted documents. Whilst this was promoted as an assessment tool, panel members were actively encouraged to use their own experiences to inform their decisions.

- 3.10 A desired outcome of commissioning is that the market is stimulated and there is a mix of providers at the end of the process. In this commissioning round, the volume of applications and the range of providers are evidence that this was achieved.

- 3.11 At the outset there was a commitment to identify the lessons learnt and the areas for improvement in future commissioning rounds. To this end a number of meetings were organised with the Link Forum, Panel Chairs, Central Procurement and providers.

### 3.12 Lessons Learnt

Stage in Process	Issue	Action
Pre-tender	User friendly Tender Documents	Workshops on how to use The Chest are available through Invest Wirral ( <a href="http://www.investwirral.com">www.investwirral.com</a> )
	Possible Conflict of Interest in panel members	<p>i) Panel members to be identified prior to commissioning process. Train panel members to ensure consistency. Increase numbers of panel members.</p> <p>ii) Register all panel members' declaration of pecuniary interest with Audit in advance. (Currently this takes place at the first panel meeting.)</p> <p>iii) Produce panel member's briefing note to cover roles and responsibilities.</p>
	Developing the capacity of Panel Members	<p>i) Commissioning Panels to have mix of experienced and inexperienced members.</p> <p>ii) Training to be provided in advance of commissioning process.</p>
	Understanding the tender requirements.	Training to be provided prior to next commissioning opportunity.
	Working with The Chest system.	Central Procurement to provide training
Specification	Information on requirements.	Allow more time for preparation of documents
	Information on what is wanted from bidders	More information to be included in specification; however this has to be balanced with the need for providers to be innovative in delivery.
Invitation to Tender (Method Statement)	TUPE	Information to be included in tender documents regarding the existing providers and staff at risk of being de-commissioned.

Evaluation	Too many organisations invited to interview. In future fewer but appropriate organisations to be included after Method Statement stage.	Introduce key questions to shortlist. More time for evaluation of tenders is needed in evaluation of tender stage. This approach can only be used when the interview is not part of process but for clarification purposes only.
Decommissioning of services	Grant is reduced, EIG budget reduced.	Build in break free clause to contracts.
Future commissioning of services	Length of time necessary to complete commissioning process is between 6-9 months. With short contracts there is not enough time to effectively evaluate existing services to establish impact before next commissioning round starts.	Consider applying roll-over option to some or all contracts to enable evaluation of impact .

3.13 Each meeting brought to the evaluation a different perspective of the process and this has been included as Appendix A. Some of the points raised have already been addressed and the outcomes are in bold type in italics.

#### **4.0 RELEVANT RISKS**

4.1 The Authority has given an undertaking to review how effectively it commissions services. This minimises risks to the commissioning process if brought into question.

#### **5.0 OTHER OPTIONS CONSIDERED**

5.1 All options for improvement in commissioning of services have been considered in preparation of this report.

#### **6.0 CONSULTATION**

6.1 A number of meetings with partners have been undertaken as part of the process.

#### **7.0 IMPLICATIONS FOR VOLUNTARY, COMMUNITY AND FAITH GROUPS**

7.1 This report seeks to improve the process whereby the Voluntary, Community and faith Groups can be more involved in future commissioning processes.

## **8.0 RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS: FINANCIAL; IT; STAFFING; AND ASSETS**

8.1 In total £2,821,828 was available to commission services for the 12 month period from 1 July 2011.

## **9.0 LEGAL IMPLICATIONS**

9.1 There are none arising from this report.

## **10.0 EQUALITIES IMPLICATIONS**

10.1 The Early Intervention Grant fund services that will tackle social inequalities and promote greater social inclusion. Work targeting vulnerable groups and individuals is a priority to be addressed by the EIG commissioned services.

10.2 Equality Impact Assessment (EIA)

- (a) Is an EIA required? Yes  
(b) If 'yes', has one been completed? Yes 10/01/11

## **11.0 CARBON REDUCTION IMPLICATIONS**

11.1 There are none in relation to this report.

## **12.0 PLANNING AND COMMUNITY SAFETY IMPLICATIONS**

12.1 There are no planning and community safety implications linked to this report.

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## **APPENDICES**

*Evaluation Report Early Intervention Grant Commissioning – Link Forum*

## **REFERENCE MATERIAL**

None

## **SUBJECT HISTORY (last 3 years)**

<b>Council Meeting</b>	<b>Date</b>
<b>Cabinet Report : Commissioning Better Outcomes</b>	<b>June 2011</b>



## Appendix A

### Response from Wirral Link Forum to the Commissioning Process for the Early Intervention Grant 2011

#### Introduction

The Early Intervention Grant brought together a number of funding streams along with a planning process for the tendering of funds to deliver services to children and young people 0 to 19. A number of Third Sector, Statutory and Private Sector organisations submitted tenders and the process for procurement was presented by Wirral Borough Council and managed by a Commissioning Panel with representatives from the Link Forum (the Third Sector Assembly sub-group for Children and Young People).

This report was principally compiled from feedback gathered at a meeting of Link Forum members on 22<sup>nd</sup> June, along with written and verbal feedback from members before and after that meeting. The purpose of the report is to consider the Framework and Processes undertaken for the Early Intervention Grant Commissioning round 2011/12.

The report was presented as a discussion document between the Link Forum Management Group on behalf of its membership and the Liaison Group (Branch Heads) from the Children and Young People's Department, Wirral Borough Council on 29<sup>th</sup> June. Some of the issues raised were addressed at that meeting and the responses are shown in ***bold in italics***.

The final report has been sent to the Principal Manager, Participation & Commissioning for submission to the Overview & Scrutiny Committee.

#### Link Forum Feedback on the Process with recommendations

##### Awareness-Raising stage

- Generally happy with the way the tender opportunity was publicised as members received the information from several sources
- It helped that members were forewarned of the need to register with The Chest, thereby receiving email notification of the tender opportunity.

##### Application Process - general

- The Workshop was well-organised and useful, giving clear guidelines
- Inexperienced organisations experienced difficulties with the language used in the paperwork
- Excessive paperwork deterred some smaller organisations from applying
- Members had concerns that they would be penalised if they did not meet the word-count
- The forms didn't suit consortia bids and they should have been allowed a greater word-count

***Link Forum representative (Link Worker) will be involved in review of paperwork***

#### Pre-Qualification Questionnaire

- As this is aimed to show that the organisation is fit and proper to deliver the service, it should be about governance and capability. Some of the questions seemed to be better suited to the Method Statement
- There should be one PQQ for all similar contracts (and all priority areas) and organisations should not have to repeat the process for the next round
- Referee issue – conflicting responses re whether they can use exiting commissioner. Contracts said yes, commissioner said no.
- Applicants queried whether referees would be contacted as no contact appeared to have been made yet
- No acknowledgement of existing quality standards/accreditation held by organisations, negating need for some of the checks

### Method statement

- Some of the questions asked were repetitive
- One method statement should have sufficed for all priority areas, with additional questions as required
- A workshop would have been welcomed

***CYPD will be working on this in partnership with Link Forum***

### Interview

- Well co-ordinated welcome
- A quiet room to prepare should be provided, rather than coffee lounge, or questions sent by email in advance
- Concerns raised over how much influence the VCF and service user representatives had on the panel
- Concerns about the balance of membership of the panel
- An independent chair should be provided
- ***The local authority feels justified in having a local authority staff member as Chair as it is the local authority's responsibility to regulate how their money is commissioned.***
- No panel member should be part of an organisation that have submitted a tender
- ***It was agreed that panel members should be identified prior to commissioning process.***
- Some confusion over the amount of time for questions
- Having supplementary questions mostly from service users was very helpful as gave opportunity to give real-life situation
- The rooms were stuffy and cramped
- Not all organisations should be interviewed. A minimum method statement score should be used to short-list

***This will be looked at with a view to shortlisting at method statement stage***

### Pricing

- Some concerns were raised that statutory organisations are not using full-cost recovery in their calculations as they are “subsidised”, causing prices to be disproportionate

### Timescales

- Happy with the timescales to complete and submit paperwork, although the process fell over several bank holidays.

- However there should ideally be a 3-month period between the notification of the contract award and commencement of contract. This gives sufficient notice for unsuccessful organisations to inform service users as well as statutory notice to staff
- TUPE issues were difficult to deal with in the timescales allowed

### **Communication of Decision**

- Other than the timescale issues mentioned above, members were generally happy with the way decisions had been communicated.
- One organisation was given incorrect information, rectified the following day
- Query over the statement that the contract is for “One year with option for 2”. How does this fit with the next round that is for 3 years?

### **The Chest**

- Happy with Q&A feature, quick responses, except for one which took 6 days
- No acknowledgement that everything has been received okay. System that Skills Funding Agency uses acknowledges/ticks each one  
***Acknowledgement of receipt of tenders are sent, applicants can also amend their application until the deadline for submission.***  
A workshop on The Chest would be useful for organisations  
***CYPD will arrange this in partnership with Link Forum***

**Lynn Loughran**  
**For and on Behalf of Wirral Link Forum**  
**1<sup>st</sup> August 2011**

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## WIRRAL COUNCIL

### CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE'S OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

16 NOVEMBER 2011

<b>SUBJECT:</b>	<b>FOSTERING SERVICE REPORT ON INSPECTION (INCLUDING 3 MONTH REPORT)</b>
<b>WARD/S AFFECTED:</b>	<b>ALL</b>
<b>REPORT OF:</b>	<b>ACTING DIRECTOR OF CHILDREN'S SERVICES</b>
<b>RESPONSIBLE PORTFOLIO HOLDER:</b>	<b>COUNCILLOR ANN MCLACHLAN</b>
<b>KEY DECISION?</b>	<b>NO</b>

#### 1.0 EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- 1.1 The report provides Elected Members with information about the outcome of the announced inspection of the Wirral Fostering Service by Ofsted and an update on the work of the Fostering Service since the last report in January 2010. This is the first report and inspection since the publication of new Fostering National Minimum Standards, updated Children Act 1989 Guidance and Regulations Volume 4: Fostering Services and Family and Friends Care: Statutory Guidance for Local Authorities which came into force on 1<sup>st</sup> April 2011. In addition the Fostering Service is governed by the Fostering Services (England) Regulations 2011, the Care Planning, Placement and Case review (England) Regulations 2010, the Care Standards Act (2000) and The Children Act 1989.
- 1.2 The overall quality rating by Ofsted for the fostering service was 'good' for the quality of care with some 'outstanding' outcomes for children and young people who are fostered.

#### 2.0 RECOMMENDATION/S

- 2.1 That
- 1) Elected members consider the information in the report and satisfy themselves that the service is being managed effectively and that there are good outcomes for the children and young people that are fostered.
  - 2) The financial implications arising from the payments to connected carers are reported to Cabinet

### 3.0 REASON/S FOR RECOMMENDATION/S

3.1 The Fostering National Minimum Standard 25.7 requires the executive side of the local authority to:

- receive written reports on the management, outcomes and financial state of the service every 3 months,
- monitor the management and outcomes of the service in order to satisfy themselves that the agency is effective and is achieving good outcomes for children

### 4.0 BACKGROUND AND KEY ISSUES

#### Ofsted Inspection

4.1 This report includes the outcome of the Inspection by Ofsted of the Fostering Service in August 2011. (Ofsted Inspection report in Appendix 1)

4.2 The inspection framework enables a judgement to be made about the quality and standard of the Fostering Service and to identify any areas for improvement. The framework focuses on outcomes according to the national minimum standards. All the standards were assessed under the five outcome areas of being healthy, staying safe, enjoying and achieving, making a positive contribution, achieving economic wellbeing and organisation.

4.3 Individual judgements were made as follows:

Overall quality:	Good
Helping children to be healthy	Good
Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe	Good
Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do	Outstanding
Helping children make a positive contribution	Outstanding
Achieving economic wellbeing	Good
Organisation	Good

4.4 This is a considerable improvement since the last Ofsted inspection of the Fostering Service in July 2008 when the provision of achieving economic wellbeing was considered to be only satisfactory and all other areas as 'good'.

The inspectors also acknowledged the action that had been taken since the last inspection to ensure that foster carers understand the information that they are expected to keep and passed to the Fostering Service.

4.5 The inspection identified that children and young people are well supported and guided by a range of healthcare services including the looked after children's nurses, and the child and adolescent mental health service. In addition children and young people benefit from a healthy lifestyle promoted by foster carers.

- 4.6. Children and young people confirmed during the inspection that they feel safe and well cared for. They felt that bullying is addressed promptly, foster carers promote safe practices and they understand how to report significant events to protect children. Young people who go missing from home are given a high priority and steps are taken to ensure their safe return.
- 4.7 The inspection highlighted the way foster carers have high expectations of children and young people they care for and promote positive behaviours. Equally they reported on the excellent opportunities young people have to develop their educational potential and improve their life chances. Young people being supported to develop independence skills and remain in their foster carer placement beyond 18 years old are reported as positive achievements.
- 4.8 The work of the Children in Care Council was seen as outstanding and it was recognised that they are making a real impact on organisational decisions. This is ensuring that needs of children and young people are heard and acted on and resulting in policy and procedural change.
- 4.9 The inspectors considered the leadership and management of the fostering service is good and that they “*deliver child-focussed services that are not compromised by resource demands*”. They were positive about the skills and experience of the fostering team and their commitment to ensuring good outcomes for children and young people and supporting foster carers.

### **Areas for improvement**

- 4.10 The inspection did identify some areas where improvements could be made and made the following recommendations to improve the quality and standards of care further:
- Ensure the policy for the protection of children provides, in particular for consideration to be given to the measures which may be necessary to protect children placed with foster parents following an allegation of abuse and neglect (Regulation (12)(3)(e))
  - Ensure that written minutes of panel meetings are accurate and clearly cover the key issues and views expressed by panel members and record the reasons for its recommendation (NMS 14.7)
  - Ensure there is an effective out of hours advice and support service for foster carers (NMS 21.3)
  - Ensure there is written guidance for foster carers and staff, which makes it clear how they will be supported during an investigation into an allegation including payment of allowance and any fee to foster carers while investigations are ongoing (NMS 22.11)
  - Ensure each person on the central list has access to appropriate training and skills development and is kept abreast of relevant changes to legislation and guidance (NMS 23.11)
- 4.11 An action plan (see Appendix B) has been developed by the Fostering Service to address the areas for improvement which will be monitored through a

Fostering Task Force which has membership of senior managers, staff from the Fostering Service, foster carers, training and development, and other professionals supporting children in care (i.e. looked after children nurses, child and adolescent mental health services).

#### **Performance Information 1<sup>st</sup> April 2010 to 31<sup>st</sup> March 2011**

- 4.12 Wirral continued to perform well against the national indicator for the number children in care experiencing a placement move. NI 62 records the percentage of Looked After Children that have 3 or more placement moves which for the last year was 8.9% or 61 children. This was an improvement on our target which was 9%.
- 4.13 The other national indicator NI 63 records the length of time a child remains in the same placement. For this, the percentage of children, under 16, who have been looked after for two and a half years and who had remained in the same placement for 2 years or more was 59.8% (159 children out of 266 children). The target for last year was 72%.

#### **Performance Information 1<sup>st</sup> April 2011 to Sept 2011**

- 4.14 Up to September 2011 the indications are that the NI 62 will be on target for 9% (62 children) of children in care having 3 or more placement moves. At the end of September this is 9.4%.
- 4.15 There is a small increase in the percentage of children that remained in placement for 2 years or more (NI 63) 62.3% (162 children out of 260 children) – this figure is for end of August. It is expected that this percentage will continue to increase towards the target for this year of 70%, as more foster carers are recruited to provide a better match for children and therefore more stable placements, and also that more children who have been looked after for a long period of time either reach 16 years or leave care by achieving permanence with their foster carers through Special Guardianship Orders, adoption, or are safely rehabilitated home.

#### **Recruitment of Foster Carers**

- 4.16 A new 'Why Me, Why You' campaign was launched by the Council's Corporate marketing team in March 2011 to generate additional interest in fostering with the aim of recruiting a new group of foster carers. This involved the design of new promotional material, on the web page, on bus stops, in one stop shops, on radio during foster care fortnight and advertising in the job section of the local paper. In order to meet the anticipated additional initial enquiries and to provide an efficient prompt service all telephone calls were directed to the council's call centre instead of directly to the fostering service.
- 4.17 The number of foster carer households approved for the period April to Sept 2011 (6 months) is as follows:
- 1 family link
  - 2 parent and child
  - 2 long term



10 short term Band 1  
1 short term Band 3,  
5 short term breaks  
17 connected person (family and friends)

Total 21 general foster carers and 17 connected persons.

In addition 3 connected persons are in the process of having a full foster carer assessment following Regulation 24 temporary approval and a further 13 connected persons who had temporary approval according to Regulation 24 who did not proceed to full assessment due to a variety of reasons such as temporary approval for holidays, the child returned to parent or usual carer, or a more suitable placement was secured for the child.

- 4.18 This compares with the total foster carer households approved for the 12 months April 10 to March 11 of 46 general carers and 36 connected persons.
- 4.19 The number of foster carer households who will have received pre approval training April to November 2011 is 42 general foster carer households and 25 connected persons (family and friends) households.
- 4.20 The number of foster carers that have withdrawn in the period of April to Sept 11 is 45 withdrawn, 13 of which are the Regulation 24 temporary approved carers that did not proceed and 8 are foster carers that have provided permanent homes to the children in their care through Special Guardianship and one through adoption.
- 4.21 The overall total number of foster carers approved by Wirral Council as of October 2011 is 309 households (196 general foster carers and 113 connected persons)
- 4.22 There are continued pressures for the fostering service to recruit sufficient foster carers to meet the needs of children in care. The impact of the marketing campaign and the new process of initial contact through the call centre are currently being reviewed.
- 4.23 Wherever possible family and friends are always considered as potential carers and viability assessments are often undertaken, on the instruction of the Court, of a number of connected persons when a child needs to be in the care of the local authority. This is putting additional pressure on the fostering service.

### **Support for foster carers**

- 4.24 A new Foster Carer Partnership Group was set up in 2010 which includes foster carers, senior managers and staff from the Fostering Team. The Partnership Group meets every 2 months and considers any concerns from foster carers and has helped to develop new policies and procedures and improve practice,

- 4.25 Foster carers are encouraged to develop their skills through attending workshops and training provided by the fostering service and to complete the CWDC designed workbook CWDC. For the last 2 years a significant number of foster carers have completed NVQ level 3 in Health and Social Care (Children and Young People). Foster carers attend joint training with staff and briefings. Drop in weekly.
- 4.26 For the last two years the local authority has recognised the contribution of foster carers by holding an annual award ceremony with presentations by the Mayor of Wirral.

## **5.0 RELEVANT RISKS**

- 5.1 It is important that Wirral Council has a Fostering Service that is able to recruit, prepare, assess and approve foster carers that meet the needs of children that are in the care of the local authority. The inspection demonstrates that the service meets the requirements of the regulations and national minimum standards and in particular provides for outstanding outcomes for children in the local authority care. The areas for improvement have been detailed above and the progress on the identified actions will be monitored through a Fostering Task Force.
- 5.2 In addition the service recognises that there are further improvements needed in both the numbers of foster carers recruited and the recruitment of foster carers from diverse backgrounds. This is being addressed as an important element of the Looked After Children Change Programme which seeks to reduce, where safe, the number of children in care.
- 5.3 The performance of the fostering service is managed by the Fostering Team Manager who monitors the progress from initial enquiry to approval of foster carers, the reviews of foster carers (including CRBs and medicals) and the case loads of the supervising social workers. The Fostering team manager also monitors the fortnightly payments of fostering allowances and the overall budget for the service.
- 5.4 The level of demand for foster care placements continues to be a challenge adding to the financial pressures on the Children and Young People's Budget (see 9.1). Added to this is a new requirement to pay connected carers (family and friends carers) the skills Band fee in addition to the fostering allowance (see 9.3). The promotion of Special Guardianship and residence orders to secure permanency for children being cared for by connected carers will reduce the numbers of family and friends as approved foster carers. Another high cost area that is being addressed is independent foster carers. The promotion of the local authority Fostering Service is reducing the reliance on independent sector foster care placements, which have recently reduced from 32 to 27.

## **6.0 OTHER OPTIONS CONSIDERED**

- 6.1 There are no proposals for consideration in this report, therefore there are no other options to consider.

## **7.0 CONSULTATION**

- 7.1 During the inspection, questionnaires were sent to children and young people and foster carers for direct return to Ofsted. The inspector held focus groups with fostering service staff, social workers in district teams, fostered children, foster carers, cultural inclusion, CAMHS, Pathway team, education and health professionals and attended a meeting of the Children in Care Council. All of this consultation informed the final outcome of the inspection.

## **8.0 IMPLICATIONS FOR VOLUNTARY, COMMUNITY AND FAITH GROUPS**

- 8.1 No implications in relation to this report.

## **9.0 RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS: FINANCIAL; IT; STAFFING; AND ASSETS**

- 9.1 The Fostering Team has a total budget of £7,671,800 for 2011-12. There is a projected overspend of £1.3m (as of 30<sup>th</sup> Sept 11).
- 9.2 The Fostering Allowances are paid to foster carers in accordance with the National Minimum Fostering Allowance.
- 9.3 According to the new statutory guidance for family and friends care, the allowance paid to connected carers must be calculated in the same way as mainstream foster carers, with any variation must relate to the child's needs, the skills of the carer or some other relevant factor that is used as a criterion for all of the service's foster carers. It states that "*where a fee is paid, it must be payable to those foster carers who meet the criteria set out for the scheme, including foster carers who are family and friends*". Currently connected carers receive the fostering allowance without any skills based fee unless they in addition foster children that are not known to them.
- 9.4 The additional cost for all connected carers to be paid an additional skills fee for each child in their care is estimated to be in the region £450,000.

It is intended that the budget implications to address a required amendment in the foster carers payments policy will be reported to Cabinet as part of the budget process.

## **10.0 LEGAL IMPLICATIONS**

- 10.1 None

## **11.0 EQUALITIES IMPLICATIONS**

- 11.1 The inspection judged that the promotion of equality and diversity is good. The inspector commented that the individual needs of children and young people are met, and their wishes and feelings are listened to.
- 11.2 An Equality Impact Assessment for Wirral's Permanency Policy was completed in February 2008. As this report has no recommendation for policy change there is no requirement for a new EIA. They recognised that equality and diversity awareness is promoted and foster carers demonstrated that equality

and diversity issues are understood and respected. One foster carer is quoted as saying:

*"We are all individual and our roots are very important, we all deserve to be treated equally and our background etcetera should always be taken into account".*

## **12.0 CARBON REDUCTION IMPLICATIONS**

12.1 There are no implications in relation to this report.

## **13.0 PLANNING AND COMMUNITY SAFETY IMPLICATIONS**

13.1 The Fostering Service ensures that children that are unable to live with their birth families are able to be looked after in a safe and supportive home environment which provides stability to children and young people and reduces the risk of anti-social behaviour.

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## **APPENDICES**

*Appendix A: Fostering Service Ofsted Inspection report 12/8/2011*  
*Appendix B: Fostering Service Action Plan from Ofsted report.*

## **REFERENCE MATERIAL**

[Family and Friends Care: Statutory Guidance](#)

[The Fostering Services \(England\) Regulations 2011](#)

[Fostering Services: National Minimum Standards](#)

[Care Planning, Placement and Case review \(England\) Regulations 2010](#)

## **SUBJECT HISTORY (last 3 years)**

<b>Council Meeting</b>	<b>Date</b>
Children and Young People's Overview and Scrutiny Committee	21 <sup>st</sup> January 2010
Cabinet	18 <sup>th</sup> March 2010
Cabinet	15 <sup>th</sup> April 2010

# Wirral Metropolitan Borough Council Fostering Service

Inspection report for LA Fostering Agency

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<b>Unique reference number</b>	SC041234
<b>Inspection date</b>	12/08/2011
<b>Inspector</b>	Jacqueline Malcolm / Stephen Smith
<b>Type of inspection</b>	Key

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<b>Setting address</b>	Conway House, Conway Street, Birkenhead, CH41 4FD
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<b>Registered person</b>	Wirral Borough Council
<b>Registered manager</b>	Sheila Khan
<b>Responsible individual</b>	Simon Garner
<b>Date of last inspection</b>	25/07/2008

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## About this inspection

The purpose of this inspection is to assure children and young people, parents, the public, local authorities and government of the quality and standard of the service provided. The inspection was carried out under the Care Standards Act 2000.

This report details the main strengths and any areas for improvement identified during the inspection. The judgements included in the report are made in relation to the outcomes for children set out in the Children Act 2004 and the relevant National Minimum Standards for the service.

### The inspection judgements and what they mean

Outstanding:	this aspect of the provision is of exceptionally high quality
Good:	this aspect of the provision is strong
Satisfactory:	this aspect of the provision is sound
Inadequate:	this aspect of the provision is not good enough

## Service information

### Brief description of the service

Wirral Metropolitan Borough Council provides a fostering service for Wirral local authority. The service recruits, approves and supports a range of carers. These include recruited carers, family and friends carers, respite carers for children with complex needs and therapeutic carers who look after young people engaged in a multi-disciplinary support programme.

### Summary

The overall quality rating is good.

This is an overview of what the inspector found during the inspection.

This announced full inspection was undertaken to examine the outcomes for children and young people who are currently living with foster carers approved and supervised by the fostering service.

Children and young people receive good quality care with some outstanding outcomes. Children and young people's needs are central to their care and welfare and all aspects of their lives are well promoted. Children and young people benefit from good health and are well supported and guided by a range of healthcare services. Children and young people feel safe and foster carers are aware of their responsibility to keep them safe. Education and leisure activities are promoted to a high quality and children and young people are encouraged to aspire in life. Children and young people are enabled to develop their self-esteem, identity and social inclusion. They are supported to develop independence skills and can remain in foster placements beyond the age of 18 years old. Children and young people are actively engaged in decisions about their care and their wishes and feelings and can influence the organisation at the highest level; this is an example of exceptionally high quality practice. All adults working for the fostering service are subject to rigorous vetting and young people are on the recruitment panel. The fostering service is well led and managed and both staff and foster carers are well trained and knowledgeable about the children and young people placed. The fostering panel is good and there is a child in care representation among the members; this is valued. The promotion of equality and diversity is integral to the services provided to children and young people. This ensures that their individual needs are well nurtured and met.

However, the fostering service has not included in the policy for the protection of children, information about the measures to be taken to protect them following an allegation of abuse or neglect against a foster carer. There is no information relevant to foster carers, which makes clear how they will be supported in the event that an allegation is made against them. Fostering panel minutes do not routinely include panel members discussion of the positive and negatives of the applications and



assessments. Panel members have not had an opportunity to further enhance their awareness by attending relevant training. The current out of hours service does not effectively meet foster carers requirements when they need support in relation to placements. These aspects of practice fall short of the required standard but have no impact on outcomes for children and young people's experiences.

### **Improvements since the last inspection**

The registered provider was asked to ensure that foster carers understand what information they are expected to keep and what information needs to be passed on to the fostering service. Positive action has been taken to address this matter. This practice ensures that foster carers have a clearer understanding of expectations and promotes transparent child care practices.

### **Helping children to be healthy**

The provision is good.

Children and young people benefit from good physical, emotional and psychological support. Primary and specialist healthcare services meet children and young people's individual needs and they have a good insight into their health issues. Foster carers have medical consents, which enable them to ensure children and young people receive the health services they need. A large percentage of children have current health needs assessments and health plans are followed and reviewed. The services provided by the looked after children's nurses are integral to this process. They promote positive engagement with young people to ensure their health needs are addressed. Services for children and young people with a disability are well organised and ensure their individual needs are met and that foster carers are appropriately trained and supported. Children and young people who are cared for outside of the area benefit from very good co-ordinated arrangements made between the local authority and health authorities. This ensures that children can access health services without undue delay.

The support that children and young people receive from the looked after children's child and adolescent mental health service is valued and their involvement has a direct impact on improving mental health outcomes. Children and young people confirm they are supported to be healthy. One young person said 'I get support and advice off my carers and my social workers.' Young people may access a range of other services in relation to sexual health, drug and alcohol and teenage pregnancy issues.

Foster carers are sufficiently trained about health and hygiene issues; these include medication administration and first aid. Foster carers confirm the benefits of this training. Foster carers routinely record medicines they administer to children and young people. This practice is closely monitored by the fostering service. Children and young people benefit from good health because foster carers promote healthy, balanced diets and encourage them to live healthy lifestyles. Children and young people said 'I have learned to eat lots of different things and I love corn on the cob

and pineapple' and 'I get healthy eating advice from my foster carers.' Children and young people are encouraged and supported to participate in a wide range of physical exercise that they enjoy. All foster families receive leisure passes to enable them to access community leisure facilities within the area including free access to swimming pools in the area. Children and young people have improved health, gained or lost weight, ceased bed wetting and have developed improved sleeping patterns. The fostering panel has health representation and health issues are actively explored in this arena.

Young people live in safe, healthy environments. Foster carers' homes are suitable and can comfortably accommodate all who live there. Regular checks are carried out by the fostering service to ensure the environments are safe and free from hazards.

### **Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe**

The provision is good.

Children and young people confirm that they feel safe and are always well cared for. Some children and young people said that they have been bullied in school. This is promptly addressed by foster carers and they are supported by the fostering service. Information about bullying is routinely followed up in foster carer and childcare statutory reviews. This information is maintained by the safeguarding department and is a good safeguarding measure that protects children and young people. Foster carers clearly understand their safeguarding responsibilities. They take their role seriously and promote safe practices. This is particularly well demonstrated in the safe practice involving parent and child placements. Good and effective early planning for unborn children ensures their protection. Creative support packages are developed to ensure each child's safety enabling support to be given to parents to help them learn how to care for their child effectively. Clear recording and decision making, through supervision and legal gate keeping, ensures that placement plans are monitored. Safeguarding training is mandatory for all foster carers. They also have related training, such as working with young people who display sexually harmful behaviour or self-harm and internet safety training; this training raises their awareness of these issues and promotes the protection of children and young people.

Safe care plans are implemented in foster families. Children and young people's behavioural activities are risk assessed. However, they do not always clearly identify risk reduction strategies. There has been no impact on outcomes for children and young people and the fostering service is addressing this issue.

Foster carers understand the procedure for reporting significant incidents to protect children. Management systems are in place to collate, respond to and investigate information about complaints, allegations and disclosures of abuse. Child protection concerns are promptly reported to the local safeguarding team and action is taken to ensure the safety of children and young people. Children and young people know how to complain. They have access to the complaints procedure and are supported to make a complaint. The children in care council, with senior management support,

is working on raising awareness about how to complain. This enables children and young people to feel confident about making complaints and compliments without facing any negative consequences.

Young people who go missing from home are protected by clear systems that promote their safe return. The fostering service has a protocol with the local police force which underpins the agreed expectations. Foster carers are familiar with the action to take when children and young people are missing. Children and young people missing for more than 24-hours are offered a return to foster care interview. This is carried out by an independent person on behalf of a voluntary childcare organisation. Young people who present with risky behaviours are subject to multi-disciplinary agency risk management meetings. The outcome of these meetings are reported to senior management. This ensures that missing children and young people are given high priority and positive steps are taken to reduce the risk to their safety and well-being.

### **Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do**

The provision is outstanding.

Foster carers have high expectations of the children and young people they care for and promote positive role models. Foster carers have specific training which supports them with the appropriate knowledge and skills. They promote positive behaviour to enable effective management of challenging and anti-social behaviours. Children and young people have developed excellent, positive relationships with their foster carers. These are based on very good matching processes and the development of positive attachments. Young people said that they enjoy life with their foster carers. Typical comments from children and young people include, 'because people don't fight and don't swear' and 'I thank social services for putting me with my foster carers.' Foster carers are well informed about the needs of the children and young people they care for and effectively liaise with relevant professionals. This includes support from the children and adolescent services that helps them understand and manage children and young people's behaviours. Foster carers have developed clear boundaries that children and young people understand. Children and young people are actively informed about their rights and responsibilities; this ensures that children and young people's rights are promoted and they learn that there are consequences to their behaviours.

Children and young people who encounter bullying behaviour and discrimination are well supported. Foster carers are well attuned to these issues and, in conjunction with other agencies, strive to protect children and young people when they are subjected to this treatment. These practices help children and young people develop personal confidence and emotional resilience.

Children and young people have opportunities to participate in risk assessed activities; these are arranged through the children in care council, the foster carers and community organisations. Children and young people lead active lives. They are taking part in leisure activities and hobbies of interest to them, such as holidays,

outdoor pursuits and a range of school holiday activities. Foster carers receive leisure passes, which enable young people to benefit from a range of sports and leisure activities. Children and young people have developed friendships within their own social circles. They are provided with a broad range of experiences, that promote social inclusion and are improving their social skills.

Children and young people benefit from excellent opportunities to develop their educational potential and significantly improve their life chances. Education is highly valued and is strategically supported by the Director for Children's Services. The director has written to the head teacher for each looked after child to enquire about their progress. This demonstrates how seriously the director takes the issue. Foster carers encourage school attendance and attainment. Children and young people have 100% school attendance and no permanent exclusions. Foster carers attend personal education planning meetings and liaise directly with schools and the looked after children education services. This means that they are fully involved in education planning for the children and young people they foster.

The looked after children's education services has delivered a range of support services in schools that enhance the education of looked after children. Examples include, volunteer reading scheme for younger children, a letterbox club and training for designated teachers. Children and young people confirm that they are helped to be successful in their education. One said 'My foster carer helps me with my reading and writing.' Another said their carer 'helps me when I have problems at school, (their carer) helps me with my homework. At home I have to try on my own.' A number of children and young people are making significant improvements in their academic achievements, from their starting points, particularly when they are in stable foster placements. A number of young people have completed their formal education and are looking to extend their educational attainment by applying to attend college, university or training schemes; some are already attending further education. Children and young people's achievements, educational or otherwise, are positively celebrated at annual award ceremonies. This positively enhances children and young people's self-esteem and confidence.

### **Helping children make a positive contribution**

The provision is outstanding.

The children in care council is strategically supported and led by the children's participation officer and cultural inclusion officer. It provides a highly effective and stimulating means for children and young people to make representations about life in foster care. Children and young people's wishes and feelings are listened to, are taken seriously and are respected. Children and young people are making a real impact on organisational decisions. They actively work with the social care workforce and partner agencies to develop services and oversee the arrangements. This ensures the needs of children and young people are heard and acted on. For example, young people are involved in policy and procedure changes in the fostering service, including the complaints process. Young people, including care leavers, are members of: the local safeguarding children's board; the fostering panel central list

and the corporate parenting group. They also undertake presentations at social care conferences and lecture student social workers. Children and young people have also been involved in the production of a DVD, My Ideal Social Worker and My Ideal Foster Family, as a training resource for staff and foster carers. The children in care council have also made representations to the Member of Parliament with respect to the pupil premium agenda. Children and young people in the council are currently looking into how they can better engage with children and young people from minority communities and children and young people who have a disability.

Individual children and young people are regularly consulted by foster carers who may also advocate on their behalf and listen to what they have to say. Children and young people's views are ascertained in other ways. For example, by independent reviewing officers before their statutory reviews, foster carer reviews, independent visitors and the children in care council. Children and young people say that their foster carers listen to them. One said 'My foster parents are like my mum and dad. I have lived with them for two years and they are amazing and have helped me though so much. If you need to speak to them, they are always there for you.'

Children and young people are aware about their contact arrangements and foster carers are actively supportive. Contact arrangements are clearly defined and appropriately facilitated. Foster carers are aware about the impact that contact may have on children and young people and communicate this information to the fostering service.

Children and young people benefit from very good matching arrangements that take into account their needs, views and foster carers ability to meet these. The fostering team has in-depth knowledge about foster carers with respect to their experience and skills and ensure that they are appropriately informed. Young people are encouraged and supported to have a positive self-image, make a positive contribution in the community and foster carer treat children and young people as their family. One carer said 'My supervising social worker always fills me in with information about young people she is wanting to place with me. I have a very good rapport with her and can ring her anytime, day or night.'

The local authority is actively monitoring emergency placements.

### **Achieving economic wellbeing**

The provision is good.

Young people benefit from good arrangements that promote their independence. Young people say that they are helped to think about their future, irrespective of their age and ability. One young person said 'carers help me to understand and make my decisions with my room and clothes. They tell me to be good in school and if I don't I will not get the job I want because I want to work with children.' The fostering service has positive links with the pathway team. This team is moving into the same building as the fostering service which has potential to further enhance their working relationship. Pathway plans for young people, including young people



with a disability, are implemented and foster carers are well informed and trained. This ensures that they can appropriately support and advocate on behalf of young people.

The local authority is committed to reducing the high number of young people who are not in education, employment, or training. A recent multi agency development day profiled this issue and managers have responded positively; a young person has secured an apprenticeship as a result of these interventions. However, this is in its early stages but there is positive potential. A number of young people are remaining with their foster carers post eighteen years old. This provides them with stability and reduces the pressure for young people to move on when they are not, for whatever reason, ready.

## **Organisation**

The organisation is good.

Leadership and management are good. The fostering service is aware about its strengths and acts on areas for improvement through monitoring and reflection on practice. The fostering service demonstrates the delivery of child-focussed services that are not compromised by resource demands. For example, as previously noted, matching of children and young people with foster carers is a strength of the service. This has resulted in high levels of placement stability and children, and a number of young people, are making positive improvements from their starting points. The fostering service has clear systems to monitor children and young people who are waiting for placements and does not compromise by making a placement just because there is a vacancy.

The Statement of Purpose has been recently reviewed. It contains factual information about the service provision and includes Ofsted's contact details. The Children and young people's guide has been developed in consultation with the children in care council. This ensures that stakeholders, children and young people are well informed about the services that they can expect to receive.

The promotion of equality and diversity is good. Children and young people's individual needs are well met by foster carers. Their wishes and feelings are listened to and some of their views are represented at a strategic level and these inform policy and practice. Equality and diversity awareness is promoted through activities, such as e-learning and a recent equality and diversity event which led to the development of a draft equality and diversity strategy and pledge. This ensures that children and young people continue to have equal access to positive experiences and opportunities to develop to their full potential and minimise further disadvantage, irrespective of their identity, ability and background. The area of Wirral is predominantly white British and there is a small and increasing number of minority ethnic and unaccompanied asylum seeking children and young people who need placements. Children and young people who are not placed with foster carers who reflect their cultural and ethnic background are matched with foster carers who can meet their needs. Foster carers are resourceful and ensure that the quality of care

provided by them supports children and young people's cultural, ethnic and religious heritage. Foster carers demonstrate, in their care practices, that equality and diversity issues are understood and respected. One foster carer said 'We are all individual and our roots are very important, we all deserve to be treated equally and our background etcetera should always be taken into account'.

The fostering service recruitment strategy is clear and targeted. It has participated in recruitment campaigns in recent months and has moved to a call centre model to enhance the quality of service to callers who enquire about fostering. This is an effective means of recruiting new foster carers. Foster carers who have experienced the assessment process describe it as positive and thorough. While they understand the reasons for the high levels of scrutiny, they felt the approach of the fostering social worker assessors placed them at ease. All appropriate checks are carried out prior to approval and assessments are presented to panel without undue delay.

The fostering panel is efficiently operated and is quorate. It provides a good quality assurance mechanism and carries out reviews of foster carers. The panel chair is experienced and the central list of panel members includes two members who were children in care. The fostering panel has access to medical and legal advice and approval recommendations are appropriately specific in terms of ages and numbers. Approval minutes contain a detailed summary of the case. However, they do not consistently include panel members discussion of the positive and negatives of the applications and assessments. It is not clear how recommendations can be understood by the agency decision maker when these are not recorded. Panel members have not had an opportunity to further enhance their awareness by attending relevant training.

The fostering service is suitably managed by a child focussed person who understands their role and responsibilities. They have good experience and knowledge of legislation and are committed to driving up improvements in the fostering service. The fostering team is well established and staff retention is good. Staff are made up of a diverse, very experienced, skilled and qualified social work professionals who have a range of transferable skills and abilities. Fostering social workers are well supported by their immediate and senior managers, are regularly supervised and experience good morale. The fostering team is highly valued by foster carers. They are committed to ensuring positive outcomes for children and young people.

The fostering service is highly committed to the development of foster carers prior and post approval. This helps them to effectively care for children and young people. Foster carers have attended a range of training courses and drop in training sessions. Some foster carers have completed national vocational qualifications and some have completed or are commencing the Children's Workforce Development Council's standards. Some foster carers are proactive with respect to their training and development and some are resistant. Fostering social workers continue to support foster carers and explore creative engagement, helping them to make positive associations with their learning and practice. Foster carers are supervised at the required intervals and more frequently if required, including unannounced visits.

Foster carers feel very well supported and respected as part of the team around the child. Foster carers are invited to attend support groups and foster carer representatives attend the partnership group with senior managers. However, some foster carers do not feel that the out of hours service is responsive or effective. Payments to foster carers are clearly linked to each foster carer's skills level.

Allegations against foster carers are thoroughly investigated. The fostering service proactively works with the Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO) and strategy meetings are appropriately convened. These practices safeguard children and young people. However, the allegation policy does not fully support practice. For example, it does not set out what measures are to be considered to protect children and young people when an allegation of abuse or neglect is made against foster carers; whether or not independent support is provided; who supports carers during an investigation into an allegation; whether children need to be removed or if placements should be suspended or if future learning and future reviews are needed for foster carers who are the subject of an allegation. Although there is no known negative outcome for children and young people, the current system is not clear.

Records provided by the fostering service are securely stored. Children's records are in particularly good order. Foster carers, children and young people's files are held electronically and are regularly updated. This provides an ongoing record and a clear understanding of children and young people's progress.

Family and friends as foster carers are well supported. They are competently assessed and approved and are provided with the appropriate training and information. This enables them to meet the needs of children and young people and to promote their potential and worth.

Children and young people's placement plans are compatible with their needs. They are made available to foster carers. Any delays in the receipt of these documents are pursued by the fostering service. Foster carers confirm that they are actively involved in the review of placement plans. Children and young people are actively encouraged to express their wishes and views or be represented by an advocate. Information is promptly updated following statutory reviews, which supports effective planning for children and young people.

## **What must be done to secure future improvement?**

### **Recommendations**

To improve the quality and standards of care further the registered person should take account of the following recommendation(s):

- ensure the policy for the protection of children provides, in particular for consideration to be given to the measures which may be necessary to protect children placed with foster parents following an allegation of abuse or neglect



(Regulation (12)(3)(e))

- ensure that written minutes of panel meetings are accurate and clearly cover the key issues and views expressed by panel members and record the reasons for its recommendation (NMS 14.7)
- ensure there is an effective out of hours advice and support service for foster carers (NMS 21.3)
- ensure there is written guidance for foster carers and staff, which makes clear how they will be supported during an investigation into an allegation including payment of allowance and any fee to foster carers while investigations are ongoing (NMS 22.11)
- ensure each person on the central list has access to appropriate training and skills development and is kept abreast of relevant changes to legislation and guidance. (NMS 23.11)

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No	RECOMMENDATIONS	ACTIONS	WHO?	TIME SCALE/ REVIEW DATE	PROGRESS AT .....25/10/11.....
1	Ensure the policy for the protection of children provides, in particular for consideration to be given to the measures which may be necessary to protect children placed with foster carers following an allegation of abuse or neglect (Regulation (12) (3) (e))	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The new safe caring policy for each foster child in the household is to be implemented immediately. The policy for each household will be updated when a new child is placed and at a minimum, annually, at the foster carers review.</li> </ul>	SSW	Reviewed annually. Next review 31 <sup>st</sup> March 2012	The new safe caring policy was implemented during the Inspection and is now in use.
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Clear guidance is needed as to when a foster carer needs to be taken back to Fostering panel for review following an allegation. A clear distinction needs to be made between investigation into allegations of harm and discussions over standards of care, which, should be treated separately. New policy and procedure online, needs to be amended to cover issues raised. See recommendation 4</li> </ul>	LADO Sheila Khan Ann Bannister	Dec 2011	Meeting scheduled to confirm guidance
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The NMS state: a senior manager within the Fostering Service is identified to be the Designated Person who liaises with the LADO in all cases to which this procedure applies and manages the allegations process. This person needs to be identified.</li> </ul>	Sheila Khan	Review in Dec 11	Completed

No	RECOMMENDATIONS	ACTIONS	WHO?	TIME SCALE/ REVIEW DATE	PROGRESS AT .....25/10/11.....
2	Ensure that written minutes of Panel meetings are accurate and clearly cover the key issues and views expressed by panel members and record the reasons for its recommendation (NMS 14.7)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The Panel Administrator is given clear instruction on recording the minutes.</li> </ul>	Sheila Khan	Monitor following each Panel	Completed
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Following consultation with panel on 25/10/11, the manner in which the minutes are checked is to be changed to panel members receiving the minutes at the same time as the Panel Chair. Panel members will inform the Panel Chair of any amendments or if minutes are agreed. Panel chair will complete all amendments and give reasons for the decisions and return to panel administrator to send to Agency Decision Maker.</li> </ul>	Sheila Khan	Review in Dec 11	Completed
3	Ensure that there is an effective out of hours advice and support service for foster carers (NMS 21.3)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Peer mentoring has been identified as a way of providing additional support. A group of foster carers and SSW's will meet to discuss what should be involved in the contract between foster carer, mentor and the Department re: boundaries and conditions etc.</li> </ul>	Sheila Khan	1 <sup>st</sup> April 2012 implementation date	Draft policy complete d. Meeting to consult with carers booked for 1/11/11
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Staff Development team will be involved in training of mentors</li> </ul>	Kathy Kinnear	By April 2012	

No	RECOMMENDATIONS	ACTIONS	WHO?	TIME SCALE/ REVIEW DATE	PROGRESS AT .....25/10/11.....
4	Ensure there is written guidance for foster carers and staff, which makes clear how they will be supported during an investigation into an allegation including payment of an allowance and any fee to foster carers whilst investigations are ongoing (NMS 22.11)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Clear guidance regarding the payment of allowances and fees during an investigation is already provided in the Guide to Foster Carer Payments which is updated annually.</li> </ul>	Sheila Khan Simon Garner	Review in April 2012	Completed
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>In addition to the Departmental Policy there is a need for a specific allegation against foster carers' policy.</li> </ul>	LADO Sheila Khan Ann Bannister	March 2012	
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Guidance is needed to inform carers of what support is available to them, to include information to buy in, independent support from an outside agency such as Fostering Network</li> </ul>	Sheila Khan Ann Bannister	By Jan 2012	
5	Ensure that each person on the 'central list' has access to appropriate training and skills development and is kept abreast of relevant changes to legislation and guidance (NMS 23.11)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>A central list of panel members needs to be recruited.</li> </ul>	Simon Garner Sheila Khan	By April 2012	
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>There is already a policy in place to ensure that Panel members are aware of the necessity for them to attend appropriate training and joint training at least annually with Fostering Staff.</li> </ul>	Sheila Khan	Review in April 12	Sheila Khan to arrange training for panel members with Fostering Service early next year. Schedule for 2012 training to be issued in January 2012.
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Panel members to be provided with a copy of the Fostering Regulations, Guidance &amp; NMS 2011 booklet from Fostering Network.</li> </ul>	Sheila Khan	Completed 31 <sup>st</sup> Dec 12	Agreement given to purchase BAAF Guide to Effective Panels for all panel members.

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## WIRRAL COUNCIL

### CHILDREN & YOUNG PEOPLE - OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY

16<sup>TH</sup> NOVEMBER 2011

<b>SUBJECT:</b>	2011/12 Second Quarter Performance and Financial Review
<b>WARD/S AFFECTED:</b>	All
<b>REPORT OF:</b>	David Armstrong, Acting Director of Children's Services
<b>RESPONSIBLE PORTFOLIO HOLDER:</b>	Councillor Ann McLachlan
<b>KEY DECISION:</b>	No

#### 1.0 EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

1.1 This report sets out performance of the Council's Corporate Plan 2011-14 and Departmental Plan 2011-12 for July to September 2011 (Quarter 2), in relation to children and young people and provides members with an overview of performance, resource and risk monitoring.

#### 2.0 RECOMMENDATION/S

2.1 That the content of this report be noted.

#### 3.0 REASON FOR RECOMMENDATION/S

3.1 Council approved the Corporate Plan on 18<sup>th</sup> April 2011. This report provides a quarterly progress on delivering the children and young people's section of the Council's Corporate Plan, including performance of relevant projects and indicators and associated financial and risk monitoring information.

#### 4.0 BACKGROUND AND KEY ISSUES

##### 4.1 **Performance Summary**

This report provides an overview of quarter two performance including corrective action for performance issues.

#### 5.0 Your FAMILY: CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE

##### 5.1 **What's working well**

- Wirral primary schools continue to perform well, 77% of all pupils gained a Level 4 or above in both English and Maths, compared to 74% nationally and 76% for the North West.
- This year's provisional GCSE results show that Wirral students have once again achieved the best ever results. 58% of Wirral students in maintained schools achieved the national benchmark of 5+ A\*-C including English and mathematics, which is up from last year's result of 54%. 80% achieved 5 or more A\*-C GCSE results, which again was up on last year's figure of 73%.

- The percentage of looked after children reaching level 4 at Key Stage 2 were 65.7% in English and 62.9% in Maths, exceeding the targets set and improving on last year's performance of 52% and 56%.
- A series of free fitness activities are now available for local teenagers at five Council-run sports centres. The sessions are open to boys and girls, aged between 13 and 19 and are designed to provide diversionary activities, as well as contributing to the health and wellbeing of our younger residents.
- The percentage of 0 - 5 year olds from disadvantaged backgrounds registered at a Children's Centre is 56%, exceeding its 50% target.
- A successful awareness raising and recruitment event has led to a further 8 young people joining the Children in Care Council, double the set target of four children.

## **5.2 Performance against Strategic Change project(s)**

To date the Looked After Children's SCP Project has made a £1 million reduction in expenditure with the majority of milestones and action for the year to date being met. The project was based upon a predicted reduction in expenditure of £2 Million in order to balance the budget and a further £2 Million reduction in expenditure to declare as savings between September 2010 and March 2014. The final overspend in 2010/11 was greater than predicted, due to a number of factors which created additional need in this area. Work is underway to identify additional actions for 2012/13 and 2013/14 and to quantify what these actions may produce in further reductions in expenditure.


## **5.3 Customer Feedback**


Compared to quarter one there has been a reduction in complaints received. In quarter two the figure of 24 complaints per quarter can be reported which matches the quarterly average reported in 2010/11. Compared to quarter one the number of contacts by Councillors and MPs has also reduced. In this quarter all complaints and contacts were resolved within timescales.





#### 5.4 Performance against Corporate Plan Indicators:


The following indicators have missed their quarter one target and are therefore assessed as red or amber:

Portfolio	PI no	Title	2011/2012		On target	Direction of travel
			Q2 Target	Q2 Actual		
Children's Services & Lifelong Learning	NI 102a	Achievement gap between pupils eligible for free school meals and their peers achieving the expected level at Key Stages 2	17.9%	20.8% (P)	Red	
<b>Corrective Action:</b>	The gap between the Free School Meals and the Non Free School Meals groups is lower than the previous year. Though improvements have been made the gap has fallen short of the target. This issue has been raised with primary Head teachers and as a result the School Improvement Team has identified target schools to support to deliver improved academic outcomes for those children eligible for Free School Meals.					
<b>Performance Analysis:</b>	This is a provisional figure for the 2010/11 academic year, which may be subject to minor change when the actual figure is released. The annual target has not been met, however the gap is narrowing based on previous year's performance 21% (2010/11) and 24.5% (2009/10).					

Portfolio	PI no	Title	2011/2012		On target	Direction of travel
			Q2 Target	Q2 Actual		
Children's Services & Lifelong Learning	NI 102b	Achievement gap between pupils eligible for free school meals and their peers achieving the expected level at Key Stages 4	30.2%	34.5% (P)	Red	
<b>Corrective Action:</b>	A review is currently underway to examine the results of the identified FSM pupils who were targeted with additional resources. The review has will focus in identifying the impact and actual improvement in achievement were made by this group of young people. From this analysis it will be determined whether to run a similar intervention programme to impact on the 2012 gap and how this may be delivered to ensure that the correct cohort of young people are selected.					
<b>Performance Analysis:</b>	This is a provisional figure for the 2010/11 academic year, which may be subject to minor change when the actual figure is released. The annual target has not been met, however the gap is narrowing based on previous year's performance 36% (2010/11) and 36.9% (2009/10).					

Portfolio	PI no	Title	2011/2012		On target	Direction of travel
			Q2 Target	Q2 Actual		
Children's Services & Lifelong Learning	NI 104	The Special Educational Needs SEN/ non-SEN gap – achieving Key Stage 2 English and Maths threshold	46%	52.1% (P)	Red	
<b>Corrective Action:</b>	School Improvement Associates are working with schools to identify the reasons why SEN pupils have not made the expected progress. The SEN Green Paper will focus senior leaders in ensuring that the correct provision is in place to move pupils' learning forward.					
<b>Performance Analysis:</b>	This is a provisional figure for the 2010/11 academic year, which may be subject to minor change when the actual figure is released. Year end performance against this indicator was 47.7% at 2010/11, illustrating that the gap is wider for 2011/12. However, both the SEN and the non SEN groups have made progress since the 2010/11 figures. The non SEN group of children have increased 2.6% in last year's outturn, whilst the SEN group have increased by 0.2%.					

Portfolio	PI no	Title	2011/2012		On target	Direction of travel
			Q2 Target	Q2 Actual		
Children's Services & Lifelong Learning	NI 105	The Special Educational Needs (SEN)/non-SEN gap – achieving 5 A*- C GCSE inc. English and Maths	47%	50.3% (P)	Amber	
<b>Corrective Action:</b>	School Improvement Associates are working with schools to identify the reasons why SEN pupils have not made the expected progress. The SEN Green Paper will focus senior leaders in ensuring that the correct provision is in place to move pupils' learning forward.					
<b>Performance Analysis:</b>	This is a provisional figure for the 2010/11 academic year, which may be subject to minor change when the actual figure is released. The annual target has not been met, however the gap is narrowing based on previous year's performance 52.6% (2010/11).					

Portfolio	PI no	Title	2011/2012		On target	Direction of travel
			Q2 Target	Q2 Actual		
Children's Services & Lifelong Learning	NI 63	Stability of placements of looked after children: length of placement	66.0%	62.3% (E)	Amber	
<b>Corrective Action:</b>	A number of children in settled long term placements, and therefore in this cohort, have reached 16 years and this has reduced the performance of this indicator. A review of the foster care recruitment process has been conducted by the Fostering Network and an implementation plan is in place, more foster carers recruited, particularly for teenagers, should improve placement choice and result in an increase in older children living in longer term more settled placements. We are working to reduce the overall number of children looked after for more than 2.5 years, through more children leaving care through Special Guardianship Orders, Adoption, or where safe, being rehabilitated home. This work is part of the LAC Change Programme and is monitored through the quarterly LAC Performance Board. It is projected that performance will improve throughout the remainder of the year.					
<b>Performance Analysis:</b>	2010/11 performance against this indicator was 59.8%. Performance is forecast to achieve 65% for 2011/12; this will not achieve the year end target (70%) by 5 percentage points.					

Portfolio	PI no	Title	2011/12 Q2 Target	2011/12 Q2 Actual	On target	Direction of travel
Children's Services & Lifelong Learning	NI 70 a	Reduce emergency hospital admissions caused by unintentional and deliberate injuries in 0-4 years	113 Lower= Better	120 (E)	Amber	N/A
<b>Corrective action:</b> The safety equipment scheme is still in existence but there has been a reduction in the number of safety equipment vouchers being issued to parents in receipt of healthy start vouchers who are eligible to redeem free safety equipment. However there has been an increase in the uptake of parents accessing free, fitted safety equipment though the children centres. The Child Safety Implementation Group is monitoring uptake of both schemes. In addition, a needs assessment is to be undertaken during the next quarter, within Children's A&E dept to determine the main reasons and causes for unintentional injuries in the 0-4 group. The results of this along with other data sources will help to inform the future direction of child safety interventions in Wirral.						

## 5.5 Performance against Departmental Plan Indicators:

For the first quarter of 2011/12 there are 39 departmental indicators that can be reported, of these 66.7% are achieving or exceeding target. The remaining 33.3% (13 indicators) are failing to meet targets and are listed below:

Portfolio	PI no	Title	2011/2012 Q2 Target	2011/2012 Q2 Actual	On target	Direction of travel
Children's Services & Lifelong Learning	NI 53	Prevalence of breast-feeding at 6-8 wks from birth	35.1%	32% (E)	Amber	Improved

**Corrective action:** A number of planned project to increase breastfeeding rates including:

1. Workforce development planned for midwives to receive training in the 'Solihull' approach (planned for October, November and January) to improve motivational interviewing skills to encourage women to initiate breastfeeding thereby increasing breastfeeding at 6 – 8 weeks.
2. Homestart DVD to be produced December 2011 to be used to promote breastfeeding peer support.
3. Additional investment agreed to extend the 'breastmilk it's amazing' publicity campaign to include further radio coverage and advertising on buses for up to 12 months.
4. Generic maternity dashboard being produced to ensure consistent approach to breastfeeding promotion and data requirements across all maternity providers.
5. Additional post appointed in community trust to support UNICEF BFI implementation (achieved Stage 2 BFI in August 2011 – ahead of target).

Portfolio	PI no	Title	2011/2012 Q2 Target	2011/2012 Q2 Actual	On target	Direction of travel
Children's Services & Lifelong Learning	NI 60	Percentage of core assessments for children's social care that were carried out within 35 working days of their commencement	75%	48.4% (P)	Red	Deteriorated

**Corrective action:** As expected this indicator remains below target. Children have been seen and assessed. Delays in updating the electronic records are being monitored regularly. Progress against this indicator is monitored on a team by team basis and areas of under performance are being identified and addressed. Despite these efforts it is expected that the year end target will not be achieved.

Portfolio	PI no	Title	2011/2012 Q2 Target	2011/2012 Q2 Actual	On target	Direction of travel
Children's Services & Lifelong Learning	NI 61	Timeliness of placements of looked after children for adoption following an agency decision that the child should be placed for adoption	80%	64% (P)	Red	Improved

**Corrective action:** A total of eleven adoptions have taken place up to the end of the second quarter. Of the four cases that were out of timescale, delay was due to specific matching requirements to meet the needs of the children involved. It is expected that as more children are adopted throughout the year that the year end outturn will be in the region of 74%.

Portfolio	PI no	Title	2011/2012 Q2 Target	2011/2012 Q2 Actual	On target	Direction of travel
Children's Services & Lifelong Learning	NI 65	Percentage of children becoming the subject of Child Protection Plan for a second or subsequent time.	15.0% Lower=Better	20.0% (E)	Red	Deteriorated

**Corrective action:** A comprehensive study is underway to examine the case circumstance surrounding the children who are subject to a CP plan for a second or subsequent time. The results of this study will be used to identify the children most at risk of becoming subject to a further plan and to ensure that preventative measures are employed. In addition, a child may become subject to a CP plan for a subsequent time whilst legal proceedings for a Care Order are being instigated.

Portfolio	PI no	Title	2011/2012 Q2 Target	2011/2012 Q2 Actual	On target	Direction of travel
Children's Services & Lifelong Learning	NI 66	Looked after children cases which were reviewed within required timescales.	100.0%	94.1% (E)	Amber	Improved

**Corrective action:** A team audit has been completed to ensure all children have timetabled statutory reviews within regulatory timescales. This exercise will be repeated on a bi-monthly basis.

Portfolio	PI no	Title	2011/2012 Q2 Target	2011/2012 Q2 Actual	On target	Direction of travel
Children's Services & Lifelong Learning	LOCAL 1405	Percentage of initial assessments for children's social care carried out within 10 working days of referral	65.0	55.2 (P)	Red	N/A

**Corrective action:** As expected this indicator remains below target. Children have been seen and assessed. Delays in updating the electronic records are being monitored regularly. Progress against this indicator is monitored on a team by team basis and areas of under performance are being identified and addressed. Despite these efforts it is expected that the year end target will not be achieved.

Portfolio	PI no	Title	2011/2012 Q2 Target	2011/2012 Q2 Actual	On target	Direction of travel
Children's Services & Lifelong Learning	LOCAL 1503	Number of Early Years settings judged as inadequate	0 Lower=Better	2 (A)	Red	N/A

**Corrective action:** This figure includes one childminder and one pre-school playgroup. Foundation stage consultants are working with the pre-school play group to address improvement strategies. Support is offered to childminders although this group are not obliged to work with the Local Authority.

## **6.0 RELEVANT RISKS**

- 6.1 Safeguarding arrangements for children remains under constant review. In response to the Munro review and the Delivery of Social Work Reform Board recommendations; a national review of children's social care processes is being undertaken.
- 6.2 The current economic climate has the potential to put additional pressure on services for children, young people and their families.
- 6.3 Potential strike action may result in temporary closure of services. Strike action contingency plans will be activated in affected areas.
- 6.4 The Department continues to maintain a regularly reviewed Department risk register which is provided to the Corporate Risk Manager on a monthly basis.
- 6.5 The successful implementation of actions to deal with issues arising from the recent report into Corporate Governance issues is a key priority for the Council.

## **7.0 CONSULTATION**

- 7.1 Consultation in relation to the draft Corporate Plan engaged individuals and organisations from across Wirral's diverse communities and this is reflected in the Corporate Plan.

## **8.0 IMPLICATIONS FOR VOLUNTARY, COMMUNITY AND FAITH GROUPS**

- 8.1 The Corporate Plan sets out commitments and clear actions in relation to working with voluntary, community and faith sector organisations to improve outcomes for local people.

The VCF sector is a key partner within Wirral Children's Trust Arrangements and their expertise is utilised in the Early Intervention Grant (EIG) commissioning process.

## **9.0 RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS: FINANCIAL; IT; STAFFING; AND ASSETS**

- 9.1 There are significant pressures within the Children and Young People's revenue budget which are in excess of £5m. Those that are within Children's Social Care for looked after children and within the Integrated Transport Unit are likely to be ongoing requirements, at least in the short term. A number of "one off" reductions have been identified, such as an uncommitted income balance in Children's Centres that had accumulated over a number of years and a surplus within the 14-19 Wirral Wise schemes. Other uncommitted resources have also been included - from within the Early Intervention Grant. These are helping to contain cost pressures; the projected deficit at the end of September was £2m. Work is ongoing with the aim of improving this position where possible. In the longer term the Strategic Change program for Looked After Children will help to stabilise the Social Care budget.
- 9.2 The Children and Young People's capital programme is £31 million (over 50% of the Council total). A number of schemes are in progress including work at Birkenhead Academy, refurbishment of Cathcart Primary and satellite Children's Centre, Pensby Primary/ Stanley Special School and the Short Breaks Provision.



## **10.0 LEGAL IMPLICATIONS**

10.1 Legal implications relating to the actions set out in the Corporate Plan will be addressed by departments as appropriate.

## **11.0 EQUALITIES IMPLICATIONS**

11.1 The Corporate Plan has a clear focus on supporting those who are disadvantaged, including the delivery of specific services and through ensuring that all of Wirral's diverse communities are equally able to access services.

11.2 Equalities implications relating to the actions set out in the Corporate Plan will be addressed by departments as appropriate, and details set out in individual departmental plans. This work is also monitored by the Corporate Equalities and Cohesion Group and the Council Excellence Overview and Scrutiny Committee.

## **12.0 CARBON REDUCTION IMPLICATIONS**

12.1 Carbon reduction is a specific goal in the Corporate Plan, with associated actions and measures as set out in the agreed Interim Carbon Budget 2011-12.

## **13.0 PLANNING AND COMMUNITY SAFETY IMPLICATIONS**

13.1 Planning and Community Safety is a specific goal in the Corporate Plan, with associated actions and measures.

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## **APPENDICES**

### **Appendix 1 Performance Indicator Summary**

# Appendix 1: Departmental Performance Indicator Summary

Report: Wirral Council's Performance Report 2011/2012

Period: Quarterly - Q2 Report Date: 21/10/2011



Scrutiny: Children and Young People

## Direction of Travel Summary








% PIs	No. of PIs	
28.21%	11	Improved by more than 2.5% on previous year's performance
25.64%	10	Deteriorated by more than 2.5% on previous year's performance
23.08%	9	Stayed within +/-2.5% of previous year's performance
0.00%	0	Awaiting data
23.08%	9	Not applicable
<b>100.00%</b>	<b>39</b>	(Note: percentages rounded to 2 decimal places)

## Target Summary

% PIs	No. of PIs	
53.85%	21	Green (within +10/-5% of the target)
12.82%	5	Amber (missed target by between 5% and 10%)
20.51%	8	Red (missed target by more than 10%)
12.82%	5	Over-performing (more than 10% of the target)
0.00%	0	Awaiting data
0.00%	0	Target not set
0.00%	0	Not Applicable
<b>100.00%</b>	<b>39</b>	(Note: percentages rounded to 2 decimal places)

PI No.	Title	Yr End Target	Yr End Forecast	Quarter 2 Target	Quarter 2 Actual	On Target	Direction of Travel	Corrective Action
NI 51	Effectiveness of child and adolescent mental health (CAMHS) services	16	16	16	16 (A)	Green		
NI 53	Prevalence of breast-feeding at 6-8 wks from birth	35.1%	44.0%	35.1%	32% (E)	Amber		<p>A number of planned project to increase breastfeeding rates including:</p> <p>Workforce development planned for midwives to receive training in the 'Solihull' approach (planned for October, November and January) to improve motivational interviewing skills to encourage women to initiate breastfeeding thereby increasing breastfeeding at 6 – 8 weeks.</p> <p>Homestart DVD to be produced December 2011 to be used to promote breastfeeding peer support.</p> <p>Additional investment agreed to extend the 'breastmilk it's amazing' publicity campaign to include further radio coverage and advertising on buses for up to 12 months.</p> <p>Generic maternity dashboard being produced to ensure consistent approach to breastfeeding promotion and data requirements across all maternity providers.</p> <p>Additional post appointed in community trust to support UNICEF BFI implementation (achieved Stage 2 BFI in August 2011 – ahead of target).</p>



PI No.	Title	Yr End Target	Yr End Forecast	Quarter 2 Target	Quarter 2 Actual	On Target	Direction of Travel	Corrective Action
NI 60	Percentage of core assessments for children's social care that were carried out within 35 working days of their commencement	75%	65%	75%	48.4% (P)	Red		As expected this indicator remains below target. Children have been seen and assessed. Delays in updating the electronic records are being monitored regularly on a team by team basis and areas of under performance are being identified and addressed. Despite these efforts it is expected that the year end target will be missed.
NI 61	Timeliness of placements of looked after children for adoption following an agency decision that the child should be placed for adoption	80%	74%	80%	64% (P)	Red		A total of eleven adoptions have taken place up to the end of the second quarter. Of the four cases that were out of timescale, delay was due to specific matching requirements to meet the needs of the children involved. It is expected that as more children are adopted throughout the year that the year end outturn will be in the region of 74%.
NI 62	Stability of placements of looked after children: number of placements	9.0% (Lower is Better)	9.0%	9.0%	9.4% (E)	Green		
NI 63	Stability of placements of looked after children: length of placement	70%	65.0%	66.0%	62.3% (E)	Amber		A number of children in settled long term placements, and therefore in this cohort, have reached 16 years and this has reduced the performance of this indicator. A review of the foster care recruitment process has been conducted by the Fostering Network and an implementation plan is in place, more foster carers recruited, particularly for teenagers, should improve placement choice and result in an increase in older children living in longer term more settled placements. We are working to reduce the overall number of children looked after for more than 2.5 years, through more children leaving care through Special Guardianship Orders, Adoption, or where safe, being rehabilitated home. This work is part of the LAC Change Programme and is monitored through the quarterly LAC Performance Board. It is projected that performance will improve throughout the remainder of the year.
NI 64	Child Protection Plans lasting 2 years or more	4.0% (Lower is Better)	4.0%	4.0%	4.2% (P)	Green		
NI 65	Percentage of children becoming the subject of Child Protection Plan for a second or subsequent time.	15.0% (Lower is Better)	15.0%	15.0%	20.0% (E)	Red		A comprehensive study is underway to examine the case circumstance surrounding the children who are subject to a CP plan for a second or subsequent time. The results of this study will be used to identify the children most at risk of becoming subject to a further plan and to ensure that preventative measures are employed. In addition, a child may become subject to a CP plan for a subsequent time whilst legal proceedings for a Care Order are in being instigated.
NI 66	Looked after children cases which were reviewed within required timescales.	100.0%	96.0%	100.0%	94.1% (E)	Amber		A team audit has been completed to ensure all children have timetabled statutory reviews within regulatory timescales. This exercise will be repeated on a bi-monthly basis.

PI No.	Title	Yr End Target	Yr End Forecast	Quarter 2 Target	Quarter 2 Actual	On Target	Direction of Travel	Corrective Action
NI 67	Percentage of child protection cases which were reviewed within required timescales	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	99.5% (P)	Green	↔	
NI 68	Percentage of referrals to children's social care going on to initial assessment	90%	90.0%	90%	90.0% (E)	Green	↔	
NI 70 a	Reduce emergency hospital admissions caused by unintentional and deliberate injuries in 0-4 years	212 (Lower is Better)	212	113	120 (E)	Amber	n/a	The safety equipment scheme is still in existence but there has been a reduction in the number of safety equipment vouchers being issued to parents in receipt of healthy start vouchers who are eligible to redeem free safety equipment. However there has been an increase in the uptake of parents accessing free, fitted safety equipment through the children centres. The Child Safety Implementation Group is monitoring uptake of both schemes. In addition, a needs assessment is to be undertaken during the next quarter, within Children's A&E dept to determine the main reasons and causes for unintentional injuries in the 0-4 group. The results of this along with other data sources will help to inform the future direction of child safety interventions in Wirral.
NI 72	Achievement of at least 78 points across the Early Years Foundation Stage with at least 6 in each of the scales in Personal Social and Emotional Development and Communication, Language and Literacy	57%	%	57%	58% (P)	Green	↔	
NI 73	Achievement at level 4 or above in both English and Maths at Key Stage 2	79%	77%	79%	77% (P)	Green	↑	
NI 75	Achievement of 5 or more A*-C grades at GCSE or equivalent including English and Maths	60.7%	63.3%	60.7%	63.3% (P)	Green	↑	
NI 92	Narrowing the gap between the lowest achieving 20% in the Early Years Foundation Stage Profile and the rest	27.6% (Lower is Better)	28.3%	27.6%	28.3% (P)	Green	↓	
NI 93	Progression by 2 levels in English between Key Stage 1 and Key Stage 2	87%	86%	87%	86% (P)	Green	↔	
NI 94	Progression by 2 levels in Maths between Key Stage 1 and Key Stage 2	85%	85%	85%	85% (P)	Green	↔	
NI 99	Looked after children reaching level 4 in English at Key Stage 2	18.0%	65.7%	18.0%	65.7% (P)	Over Performing	↑	
NI 100	Looked after children reaching level 4 in maths at Key Stage 2	15.0%	62.9%	15.0%	62.9% (P)	Over Performing	↑	
NI 101	Looked after children achieving 5 A*-C GCSEs (or equivalent) at Key Stage 4 (including English and maths)	5.0%	5.5%	5.0%	5.5% (P)	Green	↓	
NI 102a	Achievement gap between pupils eligible for free school meals and their peers achieving the expected level at Key Stages 2	17.9% (Lower is Better)	20.8%	17.9%	20.8% (P)	Red	↑	The gap between the Free School Meals and the Non Free School Meals groups is lower than the previous year. Though improvements have been made the gap has fallen

PI No.	Title	Yr End Target	Yr End Forecast	Quarter 2 Target	Quarter 2 Actual	On Target	Direction of Travel	Corrective Action
								short of the target. This issue has been raised with primary headteachers and as a result the School Improvement Team has identified target schools to support to deliver improved academic outcomes for those children eligible for Free School Meals.
NI 102b	Achievement gap between pupils eligible for free school meals and their peers achieving the expected level at Key Stages 4	30.2% (Lower is Better)	34.5%	30.2%	34.5% (P)	Red	↔	A review is currently underway to examine the results of the 100 identified FSM pupils who were targeted with additional resources. The review will focus on identifying the impact and actual improvement in achievement that was made by this group of young people. From this analysis it will be determined whether to run a similar intervention programme to impact on the 2012 gap and how this may be delivered to ensure that the correct cohort of young people are selected.
NI 103a	Percentage of final SEN statements issued within 26 weeks (Excluding exceptions).	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0% (A)	Green	↑	
NI 103b	Percentage of final SEN statements issued within 26 weeks (Including exceptions)	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	99.0% (A)	Green	↑	
NI 104	The Special Educational Needs SEN/non-SEN gap – achieving Key Stage 2 English and Maths threshold	46% (Lower is Better)	52.1%	46%	52.1% (P)	Red	↓	School Improvement Associates are working with schools to identify the reasons why SEN pupils have not made the expected progress. The SEN Green Paper will focus senior leaders in ensuring that the correct provision is in place to move pupils' learning forward.
NI 105	The Special Educational Needs (SEN)/non-SEN gap – achieving 5 A*- C GCSE inc. English and Maths	47% (Lower is Better)	50.3%	47%	50.3% (P)	Amber	↑	School Improvement Associates are working with schools to identify the reasons why SEN pupils have not made the expected progress. The SEN Green Paper will focus senior leaders in ensuring that the correct provision is in place to move pupils' learning forward.
NI 113	Prevalence of Chlamydia in under 25 year olds	30.00%	28%	11.00%	10.5% (E)	Green	↓	
LOCAL 117	16 to 18 year olds who are not in education, employment or training (NEET)	7.9% (Lower is Better)	7.9%	8.6%	8.8% (E)	Green	↔	
LOCAL 1400a	Number of looked after children	645 (Lower is Better)	645	645	660 (P)	Green	↔	
LOCAL 1400b	Looked After Children - Placed Out of Borough in Residential Placements	39 (Lower is Better)	39	39	39 (E)	Green	↓	
LOCAL 1405	Percentage of initial assessments for children's social care carried out within 10 working days of referral	70.0	65.0	65.0	55.2 (P)	Red	n/a	As expected this indicator remains below target. Children have been seen and assessed. Delays in updating the electronic records are being monitored regularly on a team by team basis and areas of under performance are being identified and addressed. Despite these efforts it is expected that the year end target will be missed.
LOCAL 1406	Number of Foster Carers	20	40	20	20 (E)	Green	n/a	

PI No.	Title	Yr End Target	Yr End Forecast	Quarter 2 Target	Quarter 2 Actual	On Target	Direction of Travel	Corrective Action
LOCAL 1407	Increase the number of Children in Care Council	16	20	16	20 (P)	Over Performing	n/a	
LOCAL 1503	Number of Early Years settings judged as inadequate	0 (Lower is Better)	0	0	2 (A)	Red	n/a	This figure includes one childminder and one pre-school playgroup. Foundation stage consultants are working with the pre-school play group address improvement strategies. Support is offered to childminders although this group are not obliged to work with the Local Authority.
LOCAL 1504	Number of EY settings delivering flexibility in relation to the 15 hour free entitlement	40.0%	40.0%	40.0%	38.3% (P)	Green	n/a	
LOCAL 1505a	Percentage of 0 - 5 year olds registered at a Children's Centre	70.0	70.0	50.0	50.0 (P)	Green	n/a	
LOCAL 1505b	Percentage of 0 - 5 year olds registered at a Children's Centre (Disadvantaged Backgrounds)	70.0	70.0	50.0	56.0 (P)	Over Performing	n/a	
LOCAL 1507	Percentage uptake of schools receiving School Improvement Services.	80	94.0	80.0	94.0 (A)	Over Performing	n/a	

## WIRRAL COUNCIL

### CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE'S OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

16 NOVEMBER 2011

<b>SUBJECT:</b>	<b>SCRUTINY REVIEW OF LITERACY LEVELS AT KEY STAGE 2 (PROGRESS REPORT)</b>
<b>WARD/S AFFECTED:</b>	<b>ALL</b>
<b>REPORT OF:</b>	<b>ACTING DIRECTOR OF CHILDREN'S SERVICES</b>
<b>RESPONSIBLE PORTFOLIO HOLDER:</b>	<b>COUNCILLOR ANN MCLACHLAN</b>
<b>KEY DECISION?</b>	<b>NO</b>

#### 1.0 EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- 1.1 In 2009 members of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee expressed concern regarding the number of young people who start secondary school without the apparent literacy skills to adequately further their learning. There was anecdotal evidence from the secondary school community which suggested that a significant and stubborn percentage of young people failed to reach the expected level. That anecdotal evidence was felt at the time to be substantiated by the Borough's SATs results which consistently showed that almost 20% of children were not attaining Level 4 in literacy at Key Stage 2.
- 1.2 It was therefore decided that members of the committee would undertake a scrutiny of literacy levels at Key Stage 2 in order to identify the key issues affecting literacy levels of children during their years in primary education.
- 1.3 The bulk of the evidence for the review was gathered from visits to five schools in the Borough plus from a questionnaire which was sent to the head teachers of all other primary and junior schools in the Borough. The evidence from the schools was supplemented by meetings with relevant officers and by written submissions/reports.
- 1.4 The initial brief for the Scrutiny Review was to review literacy levels at Key Stage 2. However, the resulting report in October 2009 commented that it very quickly became apparent to the Panel members that key issues arise not only when a child is in Years 5 or 6 but much earlier in their development. The scrutiny therefore also included an investigation of issues from babyhood to Early Years to Foundation Stage to Key Stage 1 and finally to Key Stage 2.

- 1.5 The Scrutiny Panel has made a total of 24 recommendations in their scrutiny report.
- 1.6 This report provides an overview of the progress made since the publication of the original scrutiny report.

## **2.0 RECOMMENDATION/S**

- 2.1 That the report is noted and endorsement is given for the further actions indicated in the table under section 4.0.

## **3.0 REASON/S FOR RECOMMENDATION/S**

- 3.1 This report is a response to a request for a progress report following the Scrutiny Review of Literacy Levels at Key Stage 2 undertaken by members of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee in October 2009.

## **4.0 BACKGROUND AND KEY ISSUES**

- 4.1 The table in Appendix 1 attached outlines the actions that have been taken since the scrutiny report was written, the impact so far and proposals for further action.
- 4.2 Moving forward, Wirral Children's Trust partnership and the Council's Children and Young People's Department (CYPD) will address the ongoing recommendations through actions in the Children and Young People's Plan (CYPP) and will ensure that they are embedded in the refresh of the CYPP for 2011-12. They will also be addressed through the delivery of the Council's Strategic Objectives through the Corporate and CYPD Department Plan.

## **5.0 RELEVANT RISKS**

- 5.1 None.

## **6.0 OTHER OPTIONS CONSIDERED**

- 6.1 None applicable.

## **7.0 CONSULTATION**

- 7.1 None applicable.

## **8.0 IMPLICATIONS FOR VOLUNTARY, COMMUNITY AND FAITH GROUPS**

- 8.1 There are no specific implications for voluntary, community and faith groups arising from this report at present.

## **9.0 RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS: FINANCIAL; IT; STAFFING; AND ASSETS**

- 9.1 There are no specific implications arising from this report at present.

## **10.0 LEGAL IMPLICATIONS**

- 10.1 There are no legal implications arising from this report at present.

## 11.0 EQUALITIES IMPLICATIONS

11.1 There are no specific equalities implications from this report at present. However, improved levels of literacy can support improved outcomes for children and families and thereby play a part to reduce inequalities. There are actions and progress reports for work with children from minority ethnic groups and children with special educational needs within the table in section 4.0.

11.2 Equality Impact Assessment (EIA)

- (a) Is an EIA required? No  
(b) If 'yes', has one been completed? Not applicable.

## 12.0 CARBON REDUCTION IMPLICATIONS

12.1 There are no carbon reduction implications arising from this report.

## 13.0 PLANNING AND COMMUNITY SAFETY IMPLICATIONS

13.1 There are no implications for planning or community safety arising from this report.

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## APPENDICES

Appendix 1 – Table which outlines the actions that have been taken since the scrutiny report was written, the impact so far and proposals for further action.

## REFERENCE MATERIAL

None.

## SUBJECT HISTORY (last 3 years)

Council Meeting	Date

	<b>Recommendation</b>	<b>What actions have been taken in response to the recommendation</b>	<b>What has been the Impact of those action</b>	<b>What do we propose to do next</b>
1	A Children and Young People Departmental Review should be carried out to ensure that easy access and an appropriate offer of service is provided in all Children's Centres.	A review of the provision of Children's Centres was undertaken.	<p>There was a re-configuration of Children's Centre footprints using Super Output Area &amp; Index of Multiple Deprivation data resulting in 16 designated Children's Centres with 3 identified Satellite Centres and a further 8 outreach bases. This was agreed by Government Office NW and adopted by Ofsted in March 2010.</p> <p>A staffing re-structure has ensured management cover at all 16 Centres and prioritised resources in the 30% most deprived geographical areas</p> <p>The Wirral Children's Centre Network is now clustered into 4 geographical areas, following the Social Care District Teams and the Health Visiting Team boundaries. There is greater consistency across the Network and Clusters and a coordinated approach to service delivery, depending on local need.</p>	<p>Continue to strive to achieve the corporate target of 70% registrations before 31<sup>st</sup> Dec 2011.</p> <p>Engage as one of 27 Trial Authority's across England for the DfE Payment by Results Pilot., which will support the further development of data and monitoring systems.</p> <p>Complete a full Sustainability Report on Children's Centres with recommendations by March 2012.</p>
2	In order to ensure that more families engage with Children's Centres, information available through websites should be improved and be timely. There should be better promotion of specific activities available at each Centre. Publicity could also	<p>The Family Information Service website has been established which includes information on Children's Centres' activities</p> <p>Publicity appears in Health Watch magazine, Maternity Magazine, Wirral Champion and Let's Go</p>	Electronic data systems are in place, enabling monitoring and evaluation of local and national data. Over 50% of children under the age of 5 yrs registered between Nov 2010 – Sept 2011.	<p>Working with marketing department to further develop the website and marketing materials</p> <p>Some information is in doctor's surgeries but this needs to be expanded to include all surgeries. Discussions underway with new GP</p>



	<p>be improved through a variety of outlets such as GP surgeries, local organisations and community groups.</p>	<p>publications.</p> <p>Individual Centres produce termly What's On's and a central data base is shared with partnering agencies (including schools, health teams and local community groups) showing all activities in Centres.</p> <p>Publicity events have been held to raise awareness and a press campaign is in place to celebrate achievements.</p> <p>Public access computers are in most of the Centres (where room allows) and the public are encouraged to use them as much as possible.</p> <p>Children's Centre Outreach staff are in the Registry Office to raise awareness and provide information for parents registering births.</p>		Consortia
3	<p>Health Visitors are a key contact for many families with young children. Wirral NHS and Wirral Borough Council are encouraged to enhance the role of Health Visitors in providing early identification of 'hard to reach' families and subsequent signposting to other services, particularly in Children's Centres. The delivery of the Healthy Child Programme in Wirral provides an opportunity for agencies to work together.</p>	<p>Wirral's Health Visiting service is one of 20 'Early Implementer' sites (Nationally) to deliver a new model of health visiting. As part of the local delivery of the Healthy Child programme, Wirral health visitors have been providing a comprehensive health and development review for all children (95% uptake) at 2 to 2½ years since July 2009. This has substantially increased the early identification of social and communication difficulties, with referral to SLT services and Children's Centres for those children identified as having difficulties. SLT services have implemented a service redesign providing a timely response</p>	<p>Both Paediatricians and SLT report a fall in the number of children with difficulties who are not identified until school entry at 5 years.</p>	<p>Continue to monitor outcomes from the implementation of the 2 year review. Review and revise the tools used in the review to ensure best practice. Maintain high uptake; share information as appropriate where children have not received a review.</p> <p>Ensure children identified with difficulties receive appropriate support and interventions from Children's Centres prior to nursery entry at 3 years.</p>

		to referrals and systems to ensure vulnerable children do not get 'lost' in the system. In addition, to manage the increased number of early referrals, have provided training to Early Years practitioners in the HV teams to undertake initial interventions to promote social and communication skills prior to entry into nursery.		
4	Professional barriers need to be broken down. Multi-agency services should be provided in Children's Centres, for example, Health Visitors, Social Workers, Dental Service, Speech and Language Therapists, School Nurse, Hearing and Sight Specialists, Paediatricians, Early Years Specialists, and so on.	<p>The Children's First Strategic Board is multi-agency and oversees the work of Early Years and Children's Centres.</p> <p>Every Children's Centre cluster has at least one Advisory Board, which supports and guides the work of the Centre and includes, head teachers, health visitors, social care and parents</p> <p>A pathway has been developed with local dentists, enabling staff to support parents to access dental services.</p> <p>A wide range of multi agency services are delivered in Children's Centres, including mental health services, 1:1 counselling, ante-natal services, post-natal services, child health clinics, domestic violence drop-ins, speech &amp; language screening.</p>	Co-location of staff teams has supported closer working arrangements and information sharing between teams.	<p>Joint training and planning sessions take place regularly between health, voluntary organisations, Area teams and Centre staff; these will be extended to include others e.g. social care staff when they are available.</p> <p>Advisory Boards are continually developing and including new partners; this will continue with a priority on engaging parents and local community groups.</p>
5	The Local Authority should create a scheme to encourage greater involvement of parents,	Training programmes such as Family Works and Family Wise to support the empowerment of parents and	Reports presented to the Enjoy and Achieve Strategy group on Family Works and Family Wise have	Retain the literacy support in place through letterbox and VRO. Training is planned to be delivered

	businesses and older people in providing one-to-one reading support in schools.	<p>grandparents to support literacy developments.</p> <p>We have done a trial deployment of volunteers through the Volunteer Reading Organisation (VRO) in pilot schools to support vulnerable pupils develop reading skills and behaviours are in operation.</p>	<p>demonstrated that those children and families who have participated in those programmes have made improved progress in literacy and numeracy. These programmes also provide training for Teaching Assistants to be able to carry on this work so it becomes embedded in with way the school works.</p> <p>The Volunteer Reading Organisation (VRO) and the rollout of letterbox have contributed the improvement in results at KS2. KS2 English level 4+ has improved by 14% between 2010 and 2011. The gap between all Wirral pupils and LAC pupils has narrowed by 12% for K2 English level 4+ between 2010 and 2011.</p>	on the Successful Reading Partnership as part of the Education Quality (EQ) offer.
6	The Local Authority is encouraged to build on the moderation work that has already been carried out at the transition from Key Stage 1 to Key Stage 2. This consistent approach should also be applied to the transition from Foundation Stage to Key Stage 1.	<p>A minimum of 25% of schools and settings are moderated every year. Clear and constructive feedback is given to schools and settings.</p> <p>Schools with low CLLD and PRN scores have been identified and support given from the Early Years Team.</p>	<p>Moderation processes and practices have been judged by QCDA as exemplary.</p> <p>We have met National Indicator NI72 which shows our performance of 57% is in line with the national average.</p>	<p>A headteacher consultation group has been set up to determine agreed best practice.</p> <p>The Early Intervention Manager for Early Years will monitor the impact of training and support on identified schools.</p> <p>Training is planned to be delivered to identified target schools.</p>
7	The Local Authority should evaluate the success of the Communications, Language and Literacy Development (CLLD) programme and plan ahead to, if appropriate, enable funding for the existing schools to continue with the programme and to	CLLD remains a priority. There has continued to be dedicated training on speaking, listening reading and writing.	The focus on CLLD and the dedicated training continues to show a positive impact on EYFSP results. 57% of targeted schools showed increase of 6+ across all aspects of CLL.	We will continue to identify vulnerable groups at risk of language and literacy delay through scrutiny of EYFSP data and contextual factors to provide appropriate interventions.

	extend the programme to other schools.			
8	The Local Authority is encouraged to provide further in-school training in phonological awareness.	<p>Orrets Meadow Outreach provide training and support for schools with pupils (with specific language issues)</p> <p>A seconded teacher from Orrets Meadow supports pupils and schools with specific issues.</p> <p>Training on phonics has been delivered by the Early Years Team and the early Intervention Manager for English.</p> <p>All CLLD targeted schools continue to receive bespoke phonic training. Universal training available through school focus requests.</p>	<p>Impact of increased focus on the implementation of Phase 1 is evident on CLL baseline assessment on entry to Foundation 2 which show improvements in pupil progress.</p> <p>Targeted schools show an increase in reading at the end of key stage 1</p>	<p>Early Intervention Manager for English is planned to provide training for Advisory Teachers and subject leaders on phonics and reading strategies.</p> <p>Dedicated phonic training for Year 1 practitioners is in preparation for the phonic checklist in June 2012.</p> <p>We continue to support schools to implement a consistent approach over the phonic programme.</p>
9	Extended Services should be encouraged to give a higher priority to literacy-based activities.	<p>Clusters of schools have worked with Tranmere Rovers on a Journalism Project which was planned to engage boys and fathers and include interviewing players, attending a match and writing a match report.</p> <p>Six schools took part in a pilot project with Key Stage 1 pupils to look at physical development and links with literacy-based activities over a six week period.</p> <p>A conference on Narrowing the Gap took place which showcased various strategies and initiatives undertaken by individual and clusters of schools.</p>	<p>Schools measured the impact against end of Key stage results and also attitude of boys to writing and found the results positive.</p> <p>Analysis of the impact showed a direct correlation between physical development and progress in Literacy specifically in reading with pupils making significant progress.</p>	<p>Although Extended Services development support from the LA has ceased as a consequence of the grant ending, clusters do continue to share good practice via cluster meetings work with Tranmere Rovers to further develop projects. Where schools have continued to work on Extended Services activities, there is always the need to ensure there is impact on improved outcomes for children and young people.</p> <p>Sharing of findings reported at cluster meetings via a full analysis and shared with all schools via the extended services page on the Virtual Learning Environment.</p>
10	The impact of the Family Learning Service is welcomed.	Family Learning continues to be funded by Skills Funding Agency	In 2009-10, there were 897 adult learners were on Family Learning	In 2011-12 we will continue to target SFA courses at adults with low skills

	With the forthcoming changes to Learning Skills Council arrangements, the Local Authority should consider how the service could be made more universally available.	(SFA) for targeted families. Additional courses have been offered where other funding has been available.	courses with a 95% achievement rate. In 2010-11, there were 839 adult learners on Family Learning courses with a 96% achievement rate. There is ongoing and additional impact on economic prospects for families, support for children, aspirations of families and children as a result of improved skills following their engagement with Family Learning programmes.	but offer paying courses for other people.
11	Greater emphasis should be given to the provision of a consistent link between schools and Children's Social Care Services. A Social Worker should be allocated to either a Children's Centre or a School Cluster Group, wherever is most appropriate.	The Area Teams each have social worker and the majority are co-located in children's centres. The Area Social Worker and Area Team Leader each have formal contact with the schools in their area, offering consultations.	Schools are more supported with responding to children with needs at Level 2 and 3 of the threshold and see the benefit of an early multi-agency response at an early stage	This work is continuing as part of the plan for each Area Team
12	The Council is encouraged to promote more multi-agency working, specifically by improving protocols for the sharing of information between health, social care and education professionals. This should apply particularly to 'hard to reach' families.	Area Teams are now co-located in Children's Centres. There is an information sharing protocol in place with the midwifery services and the health visiting services to There is an information sharing agreement in place between the MARAC (Multi-agency Risk Assessment Conference) and the Family /safety Unit, The electronic database (Estart)	There is now greater sharing of information, expertise and experience across teams. Children are included in decisions about service delivery at an appropriate level. There are now more swift and easy responses to domestic violence cases. Improved data enables Children's Centres to target specific streets and	More work is needed to develop partnerships between front line workers and Children's Centres – joint training and staff meetings will support this. We will explore the development of a Partnership Protocol between key agencies and staff teams to enable closer joint working. Continuing to develop multi-agency and integrated working remains ongoing work and a priority.

		<p>enables the monitoring of families who are not engaged with the service through postcode tracking.</p> <p>The Guide to Integrated Working has been updated with the thresholds for service, the role of the areas team, Common Assessment Framework (CAF) and Team Around the Child (TAC) processes fully outlined.</p> <p>The Information Sharing Protocol is also contained within the guide.</p> <p>Training has been refreshed and is delivered on a monthly basis to all professionals working with children.</p>	<p>geographical areas.</p> <p>The level of activity for children receiving a service via CAF and TAC continues to increase (950 children at 31 March 2011).</p> <p>A multi-agency group quality assures CAF and TAC processes on a monthly basis, leading to improvements in the quality of assessments and plans and overseeing the yearly review of the training and the Guide to Integrated Working.</p> <p>In the last quarter July-September 2011, "attainment" was one of the top five reasons for undertaking a CAF or TAC and consultation.</p>	
13	<p>A review of the statementing process should take place with a view to the system becoming more flexible and quicker, whilst maintaining integrity. There is a need to identify children at a younger age. Consideration should be given to the development of guidelines which would enable children to be allocated places at Orrets Meadow without having to go through the full statementing process.</p>	<p>There is a National Consultation about the SEN framework and the place within that of 'statementing'.</p> <p>Locally we have set up a working group of that focused on the second and third elements of this action. The group consisted of representation from the CYPD, Orrets staff and governors, and Primary HTs Consultation Group.</p> <p>A process has been developed that:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- identifies pupils with the most severe literacy difficulties using NC data;</li> <li>- offers 25 places at Orrets Meadow for one year without a statement;</li> <li>- sees pupils dual rolled for the</li> </ul>	<p>At this stage it is too early to identify impact.</p>	<p>An evaluation process with a time line has been set up to inform next steps. e.g. How successful has the pilot been? What have we learnt? Should it be repeated? etc.</p>

		<p>pilot year with the host school contributing to transport costs.</p> <p>The first cohort began attending in September 2011 and these children will be monitored carefully.</p>		
14	<p>The funding arrangements for the Orrets Meadow Outreach Services should be reviewed to ensure consistent opportunity of provision to every child in need.</p>	<p>Places on the pilot outlined above do not require schools to have purchased outreach or part-time places. Part-time places, which were dependent on the schools' willingness or ability to pay, are no longer used.</p>	<p>There are now consistent opportunities of provision for pupils to benefit from the pilot.</p>	<p>As above.</p>
15	<p>At the next School Funding Review (2011-14), the Schools Forum should be requested to look again at the funding formula for SEN provision, with a view to provision being based on need rather than FSM (Free School Meals).</p>	<p>National Consultations about SEN, and about School Funding are underway. The latter has very detailed questions about the future of SEN funding.</p> <p>The Authority has responded to the SEN consultation, and is working with the Schools Forum to respond to the Funding Consultation.</p>	<p>This is future work and is reliant on national policy.</p>	<p>Further work may be identified as a result of these consultations.</p>
16	<p>The Panel welcomes the current review of the Speech and Language Therapy service and encourages greater use of therapists in training and consultancy roles.</p>	<p>Speech and Language Delivery has been reviewed. The Speech and Language service will now involve greater use of therapists in training and consultancy roles</p> <p>The Wellcom package has been launched to all primary schools and Early Years settings.</p> <p>Training has been delivered for SENCOs.</p> <p>Speech therapists are now allocated to geographical cluster providing</p>	<p>The Early Communication Strategy arose from the impact of the CLLD Programme, reflected in EYFSP outcomes and the ECaT programme data monitoring tool. These showed a decrease of 5% of children at risk of language delay and an increase of 2% of children with above expected language development.</p>	<p>There will be ongoing training as necessary on the Wellcom toolkit for schools and settings.</p> <p>Speech therapists will provide consultancy to schools and settings.</p> <p>Children needing specialist Speech &amp; Language support will have it delivered in school settings with parents.</p> <p>We will continue to commission Speech and Language Therapists to deliver early language development</p>

		targeted support.		training to practitioners and act in consultancy roles within schools and settings
17	The Panel strongly supports the principle of the Speech and Language service being available either in Children's Centres or School Cluster Groups, whichever is most appropriate.	<p>Following the review of the Speech and Language service and in conjunction with Early Communication programme, therapists will provide a core offer of termly visits; a school/centre based service to discuss individual children (on caseload or not); updates communication targets; and they will discuss interventions and identify children requiring further assessment.</p> <p>Specialist intervention will remain clinic based.</p> <p>Emily McArdle has delivered pilot findings to primary headteachers and leaders in early years settings</p> <p>Emily has agreed to allocate speech therapists to clusters.</p>	<p>Early indicators suggest Head teachers, Children Centre managers and PVI sector welcome the revised level of on-site speech and language service.</p> <p>80 schools are engaged in the Early Communication programme to aid early identification of potential language delay.</p> <p>16 Children Centres are engaged in the Early Communication Programme.</p> <p>91 PVI settings are participating in Early Communication programme to support early language development.</p>	<p>New system for speech therapy will be rolled out in January 2012.</p> <p>We will monitor and evaluate the actions.</p> <p>We will make use of Report Wizard to establish the levels of speech and language development for all children within the authority.</p> <p>Case studies will provide qualitative evidence.</p> <p>We will monitor the amount of appropriate referrals to Speech and language therapy</p> <p>We will continue the use of monitoring tools to identify children's language development in terms of listening and attention, speech sounds and social communication.</p>
18	Consideration should be given to joint funding (between Wirral NHS and Children and Young People Department of Wirral Borough Council) of the specialist Children's Speech and Language Therapists. The day-to-day management of the Speech and Language Therapists should be within the Children and Young People Department of Wirral Borough Council.	<p>As above.</p> <p>The Early Communication Programme is providing the model for the development of working protocols between CYPD and the Speech and Language service to produce a more effective service.</p>	<p>As above.</p> <p>The development of a more coordinated approach between CYPD and Speech and Language Therapy is supporting early identification of children at potential risk of language delay.</p> <p>There is now more accessible local based support to schools and Children Centres from Speech and Language therapists.</p>	<p>As above.</p> <p>We will continue to monitor and evaluate the Early Communication Programme to provide evidence to support the financial commitment to the future of children's speech language and communication skills.</p>



19	Among Foster Carers, Social Workers and in Residential Homes a higher priority should be given to literacy. The Child's Annual LAC (Looked After Children) review should emphasise the importance of literacy progress	The Personal Education Plan (PEP) process has been reviewed and included targets for KS2 literacy. Literacy support is a priority when allocating the Personal Education Allowance (PEA).	KS2 English level 4+ has improved by 14% between 2010 and 2011. The gap between all Wirral pupils and LAC pupils has narrowed by 12% for K2 English level 4+ between 2010 and 2011	Implement a robust quality assurance process to audit the quality of PEPs. Deliver training to Foster Carers, Social Workers and staff in residential settings to emphasis the importance of literacy and the significance of achieving high outcomes for LAC.
20	Foster Carer training courses should include a module on literacy and raising standards.	Consultation has been undertaken with Children Social Care Staff Development and the Family Learning Service about a short course programme to be devised.	This is still to be implemented.	Delivery of training will take place from Feb 2012.
21	The Panel recognises the growing number of pupils with 'English as an Additional Language' (EAL). Wirral Council should enable schools to build additional capacity to further improve knowledge and expertise.	The MEAS team ran a Building Capacity Project (BCAP) in 8 targeted primary schools from 2009-11. These schools are now HUB schools offering support and good practice sharing with other Wirral schools.  EAL training programme offered for all schools.	Staff across BCAP schools more confident and skilled in EAL.  OFSTED reports for these schools in 2010-11 all mention excellent support for EAL pupils.	We continue to support HUB schools to enable them to share good practice with other teachers and other schools.  We continue, through training and support to build the capacity of all schools and children's centres to enable the achievement of the growing number of EAL pupils.  MEAS target s additional support for schools with EAL children identified as under achieving.  EAL training programme and support network has been extended.

22	<p>Greater access to refresher training for established teachers in speaking, listening and reading skills should be provided. Particular support could also be given to newly qualified teachers and Teaching Assistants. This additional training could be provided through twilight sessions organised in School Cluster Groups.</p>	<p>Orrets Meadow runs training sessions for Teaching Assistants (TAs) on supporting reading. Training has been organised and delivered around phonics EQ schools are having training delivered in schools. Target schools are also receiving training on phonics and the teaching of reading.</p>	<p>Over 100 TAs attended training run by Orrets Meadow in September. Impact of work through the outreach project indicates improved progress for children in pilot schools.</p>	<p>Orrets Meadow is in discussion with EQ about providing similar support on reading for NQTs. Training will be delivered on phonics and Successful Reading Partnership. The revised OFSTED framework (January 2012) will inspect the teaching of reading in primary schools.</p>
23	<p>The Local Authority is encouraged to provide further evidence regarding the success of specific Intervention techniques.</p>	<p>Regular reports have been provided to various committees and groups within the governance structure of the Children's Trust. We have reported on various interventions such as National Strategies, National Challenge, Narrowing the Gap, CLLD projects, etc. The work of School Improvement Partners and now School Improvement Associates have monitored and challenged schools over the effectiveness and impact of various strategies and interventions.</p>	<p>These have demonstrated improved outcomes for children and young people. Performance in 2010 and 2011 show improvements at Early Years, Key Stage 2 and Key Stage 4. The profile of schools in terms of inspection outcomes continues to improve. Recent OFSTED inspections and recent OFSTED rating of Children's Services have demonstrated improved outcomes.</p>	<p>We continue to monitor and challenge schools over the effectiveness and impact of various strategies and interventions through the Schools Causing Concern process and through entitlement SIAs.</p>
24	<p>Consideration should be given by the Local Authority to using the Deprivation Funding to pilot a scheme to assess the success of small class sizes in raising literacy attainment.</p>	<p>This recommendation has not progressed. The Schools Budget Settlement has been maintained as "flat cash" over the funding period and with no growth. This limits the resources available for new initiatives.</p>		

## WIRRAL COUNCIL

### CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE'S OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

16 NOVEMBER 2011

<b>SUBJECT:</b>	<b>SECONDARY SCHOOL PLACES – DEMOGRAPHIC UPDATE</b>
<b>WARD/S AFFECTED:</b>	<b>ALL</b>
<b>REPORT OF:</b>	<b>ACTING DIRECTOR OF CHILDREN'S SERVICES</b>
<b>RESPONSIBLE PORTFOLIO HOLDER:</b>	<b>COUNCILLOR ANN MCLACHLAN</b>
<b>KEY DECISION?</b>	<b>NO</b>

#### **1.0 EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

1.1 At its meeting of 1<sup>st</sup> June 2011 Committee asked the acting Director for a further update report on current and projected changes in the roll of Wirral's secondary schools. This report also discusses the potential implications of the falling roll, with particular reference to budgetary and staffing implications in the current year.

#### **2.0 RECOMMENDATION/S**

2.1 That Committee note the new demographic information in relation to Wirral secondary schools.

#### **3.0 REASON/S FOR RECOMMENDATION/S**

3.1 Information requested by Committee.

#### **4.0 BACKGROUND AND KEY ISSUES**

4.1 There are four elements in looking to plan future secondary school requirements across the Borough. These are, firstly, the numbers of children expected to enter school over the next seven years; secondly the capacity of the current stock of secondary schools, individually and in areas, thirdly the impact of school size on standards, and finally a series of factors with implications for place provision. These include developments within the Education System: for example, those arising from the Children Act and Extended Schools, availability of capital funding and the need for diversity in school provision, the duty to respond to parental preference, and external factors which impact on secondary school numbers; for example, Housing

Market Renewal and new housing developments.

- 4.2 A report on the demographic projections for secondary schools in Wirral was taken to Cabinet on 29<sup>th</sup> November 2007. At this point in time the falling roll in primary age pupils had already begun to impact on secondary schools, with 1,300 fewer pupils in 2007 than there had been in 2003. Projections indicated a reduction of approximately 3,000 pupils aged 11 to 16 over the next seven years (to 2014). The impact of rising numbers of surplus places, and on the financial and educational implications of the falling roll and school size were discussed. Cabinet instructed officers to begin a review of secondary school provision, beginning with Phase 1 comprising schools in Birkenhead and Wirral South.
- 4.3 A demographic update on secondary schools in the Phase 1 Review area was provided to Cabinet on 26<sup>th</sup> June 2008.
- 4.4 Following an extensive period of consultation, reporting and scrutiny, the culmination of Phase 1 of the Secondary Places Review was that on 2<sup>nd</sup> September 2010 Cabinet gave conditional approval to proposals for the closure of Park High School and Rock Ferry High School in order that an Academy should be established on 1<sup>st</sup> January 2011. Following Secretary of State approval, the University Academy of Birkenhead has now been established, initially located on both existing sites, moving to occupy solely the former Park High site by September 2011. The University Academy is sponsored by the University of Chester (lead), University of Liverpool, Birkenhead Sixth Form College, Wirral Metropolitan College and Wirral Council.
- 4.5 An amendment to the previously indicated 2007 and 2008 projections is the introduction of state funded/maintained secondary (and primary) school places from September 2009 at Birkenhead High School Academy for Girls, formerly a fee-paying independent selective school for girls.
- 4.6 On 27<sup>th</sup> July 2010, the Academies Bill was passed announced changes to the previous administration's Academy programme, removing the requirement for a sponsor. All schools with an Ofsted outcome of "outstanding" were initially invited to apply to become what is generally known as a "new-style" Academy, an offer which has now been extended to all schools. Any primary, secondary or special school can apply to become an Academy. A number of Wirral primary and secondary schools expressed an interest initially, and so far six secondary schools have converted to Academy status, two are on track to becoming academies in the next few months, and a further three secondary schools have expressed an interest in becoming an Academy. Appendix A provides a list of schools and their stage in the process.
- 4.7 Projections indicate a falling secondary school roll across the Borough until at least 2016, followed by a projected partial recovery. However, there are still expected to be 4,008 fewer 11 to 16 pupils in 2018 than in 2004. The levels of reduction are not evenly distributed between areas, or between individual schools within areas. Post 16 numbers in mainstream schools peaked in 2010. This has, to an extent, provided some protection to the overall roll in those schools with sixth forms, but as rolls falls this protection will reduce. The Office for National Statistics are projecting a pattern where the number of 10 to 19 year olds in Wirral will fall to 2017, then rise gradually to 2025/26, reaching a

level approximately equivalent to the position in 2011 at that time. After 2026, the number of 10 to 19 year olds in Wirral is then expected to fall again up until 2033 where projections currently end.

- 4.8 The reduction in pupil numbers and funding will lead to a reduction in teachers and support staff in schools and a consequent increase in redundancy and severance costs. The financial implications in the current year were described in a report to the Schools Forum on 12th April 2011. In addition there are an increasing number of secondary schools that are discussing deficit recovery plans.

## 5.0 PROJECTIONS

- 5.1 The projection method for Years 7 to 11 in secondary schools is as follows. In order to calculate the Year 7 intake for each future year, the actual number of pupils in Wirral primary schools in the Spring Census is rolled forward to their equivalent Year 7 intake year, then multiplied by 101.7 to reflect a historical increase at this transition point which is related to movement to the maintained sector from independent schools. Individual school Year 7 intakes are then based on the previous three years Year 7 intake figures. Years 8 to 11 at each individual school are simply rolled forward.
- 5.2 For post-16 projections, Year 12 pupil numbers are calculated from Year 11 actual numbers at individual schools (excluding schools without sixth forms), to which the individual school's historical staying on rate is applied. In a similar manner, Years 13 and 14 are calculated from the actual number on roll for the previous year, using the historical staying on rate. It should be noted that the Young People's Learning Agency use standard learner numbers obtained annually from the Autumn Census for funding purposes.

	Year	11 to 16	Change	Post-16	Change	Overall Change
<b>ACTUAL</b>	2004	21717		3510		
	2005	21313	-404	3479	-31	-435
	2006	20926	-387	3410	-69	-456
	2007	20384	-542	3633	+223	-319
	2008	19757	-627	3718	+85	-542
	2009	19055	-702	4053	+335	-367
	2010	18573	-482	4283	+230	-252
	2011	18444	-129	4022	-261	-390
<b>PROJECTED</b>	2012	18116	-328	3874	-148	-476
	2013	17763	-353	3859	-15	-368
	2014	17377	-386	3858	-1	-387
	2015	17260	-117	3811	-47	-164
	2016	17278	+18	3765	-46	-28
	2017	17464	+186	3717	-48	+138
	2018	17709	+245	3688	-29	+216

The numbers set out above are for secondary age and post-16 pupils in mainstream schools, e.g. not including pupils in special schools or non-school based post-16 provision. Actuals are as at the January 2011 Census. Academies are included in all years (including backdated data for Birkenhead High School Academy (BHSA)).

5.3 The above figures illustrate a falling secondary school roll across the Borough until at least 2016, followed by a projected partial recovery. However, there are still expected to be 4,008 fewer 11 to 16 pupils in 2018 than in 2004. The levels of reduction are not evenly distributed between areas, or between individual schools within areas. The table below shows 11 to 16 numbers on roll at January 2011, and projected to 2018, by area.

	<b>2011</b>	<b>2018</b>	<b>% Projected Fall from 2011 to 2018</b>
Birkenhead	3471	3271	6%
Wallasey	4828	4481	7%
South Wirral	4424	4396	<1%
West Wirral	5727	5561	3%

The numbers set out above are for secondary age pupils (11 – 16 only) in mainstream schools, e.g. not including pupils in special schools or maintained sixth form provision. Actuals and Wirral areas are as at the January 2011 Census.

5.4 Pupils attending Wirral secondary schools over the next seven years already exist in Wirral primary schools. Migration is minimal, and while individual school rolls may vary, it seems reasonable to conclude that by 2018 about 4,000 fewer pupils will require 11 to 16 mainstream school provision than in 2004.

5.5 Post 16 numbers in mainstream schools peaked in 2010. This has, to an extent, provided some protection to the overall roll in those schools with sixth forms, but as rolls fall and smaller cohorts move through the school system this protection will reduce.

## 6.0 South Wirral area

6.1 There are five 11 to 18 secondary schools located in this area – two are single sex selective Foundation grammar schools, one is a Voluntary Aided Catholic school, and two are Foundation secondary schools, one of which is a Trust school (Bebington High School). Wirral Grammar School for Girls and Wirral Grammar School for Boys are now new-style Academies.

6.2 The following table shows the current position in terms of capacity, number on roll and surplus places, as well as the pupil projections to 2018. Schools with 25% surplus places are shaded.

	<b>Bebington</b>	<b>St John Plessington</b>	<b>South Wirral</b>	<b>Wirral Boys</b>	<b>Wirral Girls</b>
<b>School type</b>	Trust	Aided	Foundation	Academy	Academy
<b>2011 Net Capacity</b>	1244	1361	1217	1140	1149
<b>2011 NOR</b>	869	1400	1131	1031	1093

<b>2011 Surplus place %</b>	<b>30.1</b>	-2.9	7.1	9.6	4.9
<b>2018 NOR (projected)</b>	816	1462	960	1057	1119
<b>2018 Surplus place % (projected)</b>	<b>34.4</b>	-7.4	21.1	7.2	2.6

Number on roll (NOR) includes all pupils (11 to 18). 2011 actuals are as at the January 2011 Census. NOR at St John Plessington exceeds capacity due to appeals admitted over published admission number.

- 6.3 Bebington High School is already demonstrating high levels of surplus places, and this is not projected to improve over the next few years. The sixth form at Bebington High is relatively small.
- 6.4 Surplus places at South Wirral High School are expected to treble. South Wirral also has a relatively small sixth form department, with the post-16 pupils comprising 13% of the total school, compared with the Wirral non-grammar school average of 20% (22% with grammar schools).
- 6.5 As reported in Section 4 of the November 2007 Cabinet report, the Wirral working group agreed that a definite size beyond which a school was no longer viable was impossible to determine in Wirral. However, the discussion group did agree that compromises became increasingly difficult for cohorts approaching 100 pupils. National research on secondary school size has been scarce, but a study carried out in 2002 suggests that the optimum cohort size for a comprehensive school is between 175 and 200 pupils. For an 11 to 16 secondary school, this would result in between 875 and 1000 total pupils. The current and projected average cohort size at each school is shown in the table below.

<b>Average Cohort size</b>	<b>Bebington</b>	<b>St John Plessington</b>	<b>South Wirral</b>	<b>Wirral Boys</b>	<b>Wirral Girls</b>
<b>2011 11 to 16</b>	147	228	198	152	160
<b>2018 11 to 16 (projected)</b>	147	243	171	156	163
<b>Difference</b>	0	+15	-27	4	+3

- 6.6 In terms of size, South Wirral High School is projected to experience the greatest fall in average cohort size over the next seven years in this area. Bebington High School is projected to remain below the optimum cohort size for a comprehensive school.

## 7.0 Birkenhead Area

- 7.1 Within this area there are three 11 to 16 secondary schools (one girls Foundation, one mixed Foundation, one mixed Academy), and two 11 to 18 secondary schools (one girls and one boys). The boys 11 to 18 grammar school is St Anselm's, formerly a Voluntary Aided selective grammar school, is

now an Academy. The girls 11-18 school is an all-through Academy, formerly a fee-paying independent school. Prenton High School for Girls is also now an Academy, while Ridgeway High School has applied to become a new-style Academy.

7.2 The following table shows the current position in terms of capacity, number on roll and surplus places, as well as the pupil projections to 2018. Schools with 25% or more surplus places are shaded.

	<b>Birkenhead High Academy</b>	<b>Prenton Academy</b>	<b>Ridgeway Foundation/ Academy</b>	<b>St Anselms Academy</b>	<b>University Academy Birkenhead</b>
<b>2011 Net Capacity</b>	866 *	790	825	1006	1145
<b>2011 NOR</b>	498	661	686	845	1097
<b>2011 Surplus place %</b>	42.5	16.3	16.8	16.0	4.2
<b>2018 NOR (projected)</b>	666	752	619	851	750
<b>2018 Surplus place % (projected)</b>	23.1	4.8	25.0	15.4	34.5

Number on roll (NOR) includes all pupils (11 to 18). 2011 actuals are as at the January 2011 Census. \* BHS is subject to a £10.5 million refurbishment of the primary and secondary school provision which is expected to significantly increase the capacity for future years once completed.

7.3 Several schools are expected to demonstrate high levels of surplus places. All four non-selective schools are below the optimum cohort size (see para 6.5).

<b>Average Cohort size</b>	<b>Birkenhead High Academy</b>	<b>Prenton</b>	<b>Ridgeway</b>	<b>St Anselms</b>	<b>UAB</b>
<b>2011 11 to 16</b>	74	132	137	131	219
<b>2018 11 to 16 (projected)</b>	100	150	124	130	150*
<b>Difference</b>	+26	+18	-13	-1	-69

\* University Academy of Birkenhead (UAB) was formed by the amalgamation of two schools. The projected decline in the cohort size is related to the admission number for the combined school (see below).

7.4 Over the next seven years, average cohorts at Prenton High and Birkenhead High School Academy are projected to grow in size, while average cohorts at the remaining schools are likely to experience a significant fall. The expected average cohort size of 150 at University Academy of Birkenhead is based on the Academy's admission number, which was set in line with expectations for the falling roll. Proposals to absorb the surplus places at the former Park site



with co-located services are currently under discussion with the Academy Trust.

- 7.5 It should be noted that the admission number of 100 at Birkenhead High School Academy has been set by the Academy Trust and does not attempt to match the Net Capacity of the building (now or following the upcoming redevelopment).
- 7.6 The projected increase in take-up of places at all-girls schools, without a matched boys school (St Anselms being a selective grammar), is expected to further increase existing gender disparities in the remaining mixed sex secondary schools in this area.
- 7.7 Two schools in this area are “old-style” academies with sponsors, two are new-style academies without sponsors, and the remaining school has indicated they wish to pursue Academy status. If followed to conclusion, all secondary schools in the Birkenhead area will be academies within the next year.

### 8.0 Wallasey Area

- 8.1 Five 11 to 18 secondary schools are located in this area. Two are mixed sex community schools, one is a mixed sex Catholic Aided school, and the remaining two are a boys Community school and a girls Foundation school. Oldershaw School is now a new-style Academy, Weatherhead High School (girls Foundation) is in the process of applying to become an Academy.
- 8.2 The following table shows the current position in terms of capacity, number on roll and surplus places, as well as the pupil projections to 2018. Schools with more than 25% surplus places are shaded.

	<b>Mosslands</b>	<b>Oldershaw</b>	<b>St Marys</b>	<b>Wallasey</b>	<b>Weatherhead</b>
	Community	Academy	Aided	Community	Foundation /Academy
<b>2011 Net Capacity</b>	1542	1102	1818	1482	1669
<b>2011 NOR</b>	1107	747	1679	1047	1531
<b>2011 Surplus place %</b>	28.2	32.2	7.7	29.4	8.3
<b>2018 NOR (projected)</b>	866	631	1670	773	1549
<b>2018 Surplus place % (projected)</b>	43.8	42.7	8.1	47.8	7.2

Number on roll (NOR) includes all pupils (11 to 18). 2011 actuals are as at the January 2011 Census.

8.3 Both community mixed schools and the community boys school are expected to demonstrate high levels of surplus places. These three schools are also expected to experience a significant drop in the average cohort size, to below the optimum cohort size for a comprehensive school (see para 6.5).

Average Cohort size	Mosslands	Oldershaw	St Marys	Wallasey	Weatherhead
2011 11 to 16	177	121	267	172	228
2018 11 to 16 (projected)	147	107	266	135	241
Difference)	-30	-14	-1	-37	+13

8.4 In terms of post 16 provision, Oldershaw has the smallest sixth form in terms of number of pupils, but as a proportion of the total roll (19%) this is close to the average for non-selective schools.

## 9.0 West Wirral Area

9.1 Six 11 to 18 secondary schools and one 11 to 16 secondary school (Woodchurch High) are located in this area. West Kirby Grammar School is now an Academy. The Governing body at Woodchurch High School are intending to convert to Academy status later in 2011, and are also intending to expand the school's age range to 18. Calday Grange Grammar School and Hilbre High School are investigating Academy status.

Three are single sex selective grammar schools (one boys, one girls, one Catholic Aided girls). Two are single sex federated community schools, and one is a mixed sex Trust school.

9.2 The following table shows the current position in terms of capacity, number on roll and surplus places, as well as the pupil projections to 2018.

	Calday Grange	Hilbre	Pensby Boys *	Pensby Girls *	Upton Hall	West Kirby	Woodchurch
	Trust/ Academy	Trust/ Academy	Community	Community	Aided	Academy	Trust/ Academy
2011 Net Capacity	1580	1048	879	883	954	1226	1520**
2011 NOR	1456	1044	536	732	954	1150	1334
2011 Surplus place %	7.8	0.4	39.0	17.1	0	6.2	12.2
2018 NOR (projected)	1273	1034	347	625	1009	1175	1391
2018 Surplus place % (projected)	19.4	1.3	60.5	29.2	-5.8	4.2	8.5

Number on roll (NOR) includes all pupils (11 to 18). 2011 actuals are as at the January 2011 Census. \* Pensby Boys and Pensby Girls are in a "hard federation" under a single governing body. \*\* Net capacity based on new building, opened in September 2010.

9.3 The greatest impact in this area is on the two Pensby schools. Both are also individually below the optimum cohort size for a comprehensive school. These two schools entered into a hard federation under a single governing body in May 2010. Whilst having no impact on surplus places, federation should enable the two schools to maximise budgetary and staffing efficiencies to reduce the impact of the falling roll on teaching and learning.

Average Cohort size	Calday	Hilbre	Pensby Boys	Pensby Girls	Upton Hall	West Kirby	Woodchurch
2011 11 to 16	181	178	89	122	143	166	266
2018 11 to 16 (projected)	165	179	61	108	149	173	278
Difference	-16	+1	-28	-14	+6	+7	+12

9.4 In post-16 terms, the largest is 38% of the total roll at Calday Grange Grammar School, partly because this boys school accepts substantial numbers of girls at post-16. In 2011, a quarter of sixth form pupils were girls, comprising 10% of the total school population. Surplus places at Calday are expected to more than double over this period. Pensby Boys, Pensby Girls and Hilbre operate collaborative arrangements for sixth form provision which enhance course viability and therefore choice as well as value for money and other benefits of co-operation.

9.5 Woodchurch High School has indicated that as part of the application to become an Academy, the governors would wish to extend the age range to include a sixth form. If approved, this is likely to have implications for other schools with sixth form provision, and also for Birkenhead Sixth Form College.

## 10.0 RELEVANT RISKS

10.1 The growth of Academies among Wirral's school provision has a potentially significant impact on the Authority's ability to produce full and accurate demographic projections for Wirral pupils. Academies are independent maintained schools who submit census and other pupil information directly to the Academies and Specialist Schools division of the DfE, rather than via the Local Authority. Officers are in the process of drawing up a data sharing agreement for use with schools converting to Academy status which will allow the Authority access to pupil data in line with all other school types.

10.2 So far, there have been no formal applications to the DfE for "free schools" in Wirral. Officers have received an informal enquiry from a private provider who wishes to establish a 14 to 19 free school offering a reduced academic curriculum with vocational subject choices located in the Birkenhead area. If approved, the implications of this additional provision could increase pressure on secondary school rolls.

- 10.3 As rolls fall, there is likely to be increased competition between neighbouring schools for their share of the smaller cohort with implications for existing collaborative arrangements between Wirral schools which will need to be monitored. There are financial pressures as reported to 1<sup>st</sup> June Committee which are already resulting in reductions in staffing at some Wirral schools. Some schools will need to consider how their curriculum will be maintained and improved with a smaller budget as rolls fall.
- 10.4 As well as reductions in funding for 11 to 16 pupils, school sixth form funding is expected to reduce by 20% over the next three years to bring it in line with sixth form college and further education college funding levels. This coincides with a projected fall in the number of pupils attending school sixth forms.

## **11.0 OTHER OPTIONS CONSIDERED**

- 11.1 None required.

## **12.0 CONSULTATION**

- 12.1 None required.

## **13.0 IMPLICATIONS FOR VOLUNTARY, COMMUNITY AND FAITH GROUPS**

- 13.1 None arising from this report.

## **14.0 RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS: FINANCIAL; IT; STAFFING; AND ASSETS**

- 14.1 School funding is pupil led. The falling roll will continue to impact on secondary schools over the medium term until 2016. Over the 6 year period from 2010 the total pupil numbers may decline by 1,860 (about 7%). Each pupil attracts Dedicated School Grant (or 6<sup>th</sup> Form funding) of about £5,000. This change therefore may result in a grant reduction in excess of £9 million. A typical secondary budget is £5 million.
- 14.2 In addition to the above, the indications are that funding for school sixth forms will reduce by a further £3 million over the next three years.
- 14.3 The reduction in pupil numbers and funding will lead to a reduction in teachers and support staff in schools and a consequent increase in redundancy and severance costs. The financial implications in the current year are described in the report to the Schools Forum on 12<sup>th</sup> April 2011 and were reported to the 1<sup>st</sup> June 2011 Committee. In addition there are an increasing number of secondary schools that are discussing deficit recovery plans.
- 14.4 Land and asset implications in general terms of schools changing status are included in the Cabinet report of 13<sup>th</sup> March 2008.

## **15.0 LEGAL IMPLICATIONS**

- 15.1 None arising directly from this report.

## 16.0 EQUALITIES IMPLICATIONS

16.1 None arising from this report.

16.2 Equality Impact Assessment (EIA)

(a) Is an EIA required? No

## 17.0 CARBON REDUCTION IMPLICATIONS

17.1 None arising from this report.

## 18.0 PLANNING AND COMMUNITY SAFETY IMPLICATIONS

18.1 None arising from this report.

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## APPENDICES

Appendix A – Progress towards Academy conversion list as at 1<sup>st</sup> October 2011

## REFERENCE MATERIAL

Annual School Census January 2011

Demographic projections – CYPD and Office for National Statistics

NHS birth data

[www.education.gov.uk/schools/leadership/typesofschools/academies](http://www.education.gov.uk/schools/leadership/typesofschools/academies)

[readingroom.lsc.gov.uk/lsc/National/School\\_Sixth\\_Form\\_Guidance\\_2009\\_10.pdf](http://readingroom.lsc.gov.uk/lsc/National/School_Sixth_Form_Guidance_2009_10.pdf)

## SUBJECT HISTORY (last 3 years)

Council Meeting	Date
Committee - SECONDARY SCHOOL PLACES – DEMOGRAPHIC UPDATE	1 <sup>st</sup> June 2011
Cabinet - OUTCOME OF PROPOSALS FOR THE CLOSURE OF TWO SECONDARY SCHOOLS	2 <sup>nd</sup> September 2010
Cabinet - REVIEW OF SECONDARY SCHOOL PLACES: REPORT ON OUTCOME OF CONSULTATIONS ON PROPOSAL TO CLOSE ROCK FERRY HIGH SCHOOL AND PARK HIGH SCHOOL IN ORDER TO ESTABLISH AN ACADEMY	27 <sup>th</sup> May 2010
Cabinet - REVIEW OF SECONDARY SCHOOL	15 <sup>th</sup> April 2010

PLACES: PROVISIONAL REPORT ON OUTCOME OF CONSULTATIONS ON PROPOSAL TO CLOSE ROCK FERRY HIGH SCHOOL AND PARK HIGH SCHOOL IN ORDER TO ESTABLISH AN ACADEMY	
Cabinet - REVIEW OF SECONDARY SCHOOL PLACES PHASE 1 – MIXED ACADEMY	14 <sup>th</sup> January 2010
Cabinet - REVIEW OF SECONDARY SCHOOL PLACES PHASE 1 – SITE FOR A POSSIBLE ACADEMY	9 <sup>th</sup> December 2009
Cabinet – CALL IN OF CABINET MINUTE 143 (01/10/2009) REVIEW OF SECONDARY SCHOOL PLACES PHASE 1	26 <sup>th</sup> November 2009
Cabinet – REVIEW OF SECONDARY SCHOOL PLACES PHASE 1	1 <sup>st</sup> October 2009
Cabinet - SECONDARY SCHOOL REVIEW: AMENDED CONSULTATION OPTION FOR PHASE 1 SCHOOLS AND SCHOOL STATUS UPDATE	19 <sup>th</sup> March 2009
Cabinet - REVIEW OF SECONDARY SCHOOL PLACES PHASE 1 - UPDATE	6 <sup>th</sup> November 2008
Cabinet - REVIEW OF SECONDARY SCHOOL PLACES PHASE 1: AREA REVIEWS OF BIRKENHEAD AND BEBINGTON	26 <sup>th</sup> June 2008
Cabinet – SCHOOL CATEGORIES AND CHARACTERISTICS	13 <sup>th</sup> March 2008
Cabinet - PROVISION OF SECONDARY SCHOOL PLACES – FUTURE STRATEGY	29 <sup>th</sup> November 2007

APPENDIX A Progress towards conversion, as of 1 October 2011

DfE Number	Name of School	Phase	Ofsted Status	Application approved	Funding Agreement Entered Into	Explanation
3444010	Prenton High School for Girls	Secondary	Outstanding	Yes	Yes	Schools now open as new-style Academies
3445900	St Anselm's College	Secondary	Outstanding	Yes	Yes	
3444067	The Oldershaw School Business and Enterprise College	Secondary	Good with Outstanding features	Yes	Yes	
3444056	West Kirby Grammar School	Secondary	Outstanding	Yes	Yes	
3445401	Wirral Grammar School for Boys	Secondary	Outstanding	Yes	Yes	
3444052	Wirral Grammar School for Girls	Secondary	Outstanding	Yes	Yes	
3444012	Woodchurch High School Engineering College	Secondary	Outstanding	Yes		Approved but not yet converted to Academy
3444069	Weatherhead High School Media Arts College	Secondary	Good	Yes		Expressed an interest in becoming an Academy
3444018	Ridgeway High School	Secondary	Outstanding			
3444060	Hilbre High School	Secondary	Good with Outstanding Features			
3445400	Calday Grange Grammar School	Secondary	Good with Outstanding features			
<b>Schools with Academy status with a sponsor ("old-style")</b>						
3446905	Birkenhead High School Academy for Girls	Secondary	Formerly independent	Yes	Yes	Sponsored by Girls Day School Trust
3444798	University Academy of Birkenhead	Secondary	New school	Yes	Yes	Formed from amalgamation of Park High School and Rock Ferry High School

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## WIRRAL COUNCIL

### CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE'S OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

16 NOVEMBER 2011

<b>SUBJECT:</b>	ANNUAL COMPLAINTS REPORT
<b>WARD/S AFFECTED:</b>	ALL
<b>REPORT OF:</b>	ACTING DIRECTOR OF CHILDREN'S SERVICES
<b>RESPONSIBLE PORTFOLIO HOLDER:</b>	COUNCILLOR ANN MCLACHLAN
<b>KEY DECISION</b>	NO

#### 1.0 EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- 1.1 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 1<sup>st</sup> April 2010 to 31<sup>st</sup> March 2011.

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

- 1.2 This report contains no exempt information.

#### 2.0 RECOMMENDATION/S

- 2.1 Members are asked to note this report.

#### 3.0 REASON/S FOR RECOMMENDATION/S

- 3.1 The Children Act 1989 Representations Procedure (England) Regulations 2006 stipulate that an Annual Report is produced and presented to appropriate Local Authority Committees.

#### 4.0 BACKGROUND AND KEY ISSUES

- 4.1 See report at appendix 1.

#### 5.0 RELEVANT RISKS

- 5.1 There are none arising from this report.

#### 6.0 OTHER OPTIONS CONSIDERED

- 6.1 Not applicable.

## **7.0 CONSULTATION**

7.1 Consultation has taken place with the Children in Care Council.

## **8.0 IMPLICATIONS FOR VOLUNTARY, COMMUNITY AND FAITH GROUPS**

8.1 There are none arising from this report.

## **9.0 RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS: FINANCIAL; IT; STAFFING; AND ASSETS**

9.1 There are none arising from this report.

## **10.0 LEGAL IMPLICATIONS**

10.1 There are none arising from this report.

## **11.0 EQUALITIES IMPLICATIONS**

11.1 There are none arising from this report.

11.2 Equality Impact Assessment (EIA)

(a) Is an EIA required? No

(b) If 'yes', has one been completed?

## **12.0 CARBON REDUCTION IMPLICATIONS**

12.1 There are none arising from this report.

## **13.0 PLANNING AND COMMUNITY SAFETY IMPLICATIONS**

13.1 There are none arising from this report.

**REPORT AUTHOR:** Dawn Stanley-Smith  
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## **APPENDICES**

*Appendix 1 – Annual Complaints Report 2010/2011*

## **REFERENCE MATERIAL**

The Children Act 1989 Representations Procedure (England) Regulations 2006

## **SUBJECT HISTORY (last 3 years)**

<b>Council Meeting</b>	<b>Date</b>
------------------------	-------------

<b>Annual Report to Overview and Scrutiny Committee</b>	<b>Last report presented on 16/11/2010</b>
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## **ANNUAL COMPLAINTS REPORT**

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 1<sup>st</sup> 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 4 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 12 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 2 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.

**5. Registered Complaints**

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

- 66 Stage 1 Complaints - Local Resolution *[compared to 78 in 09/10]*
- 5 Stage 2 complaints - Investigation *[compared to 5 in 09/10]*
- 1 Stage 3 complaint - Independent Review Panel *[compared to 1 in 09/10]*

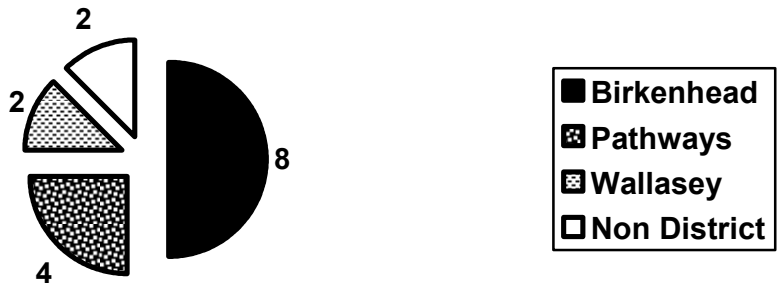
5.2 The Local Government Ombudsman undertook enquiries into one complaint; the Ombudsman found no injustice or maladministration and closed the complaint without an investigation.

**6. Stage 1 Complaints**

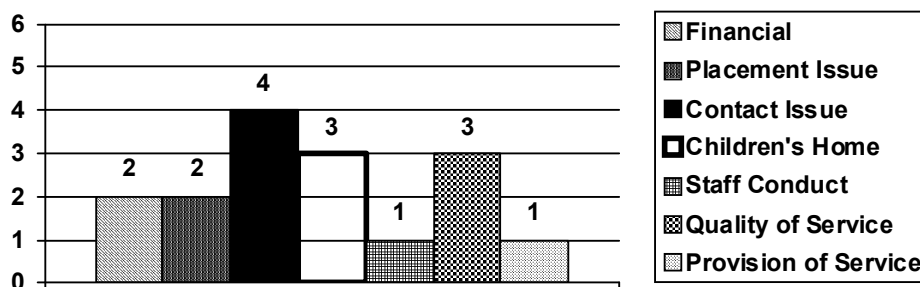
6.1 Of the 66 complaints registered at Stage 1 of the complaints procedure 16 were made by a child/young person (*compared to 18 in 09/10*) and 50 by an adult parent/carer (*compared to 60 in 09/10*). A breakdown of the stage 1 complaints is below:

**6.2 Stage One complaints made by a child or young person:**

**District/Service with case responsibility**

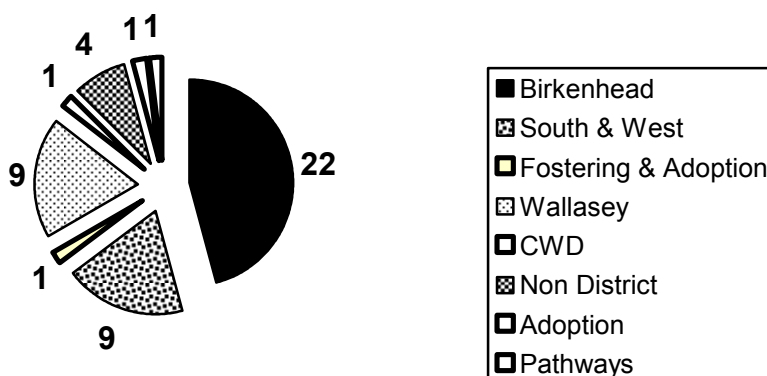


### Reason for Complaint

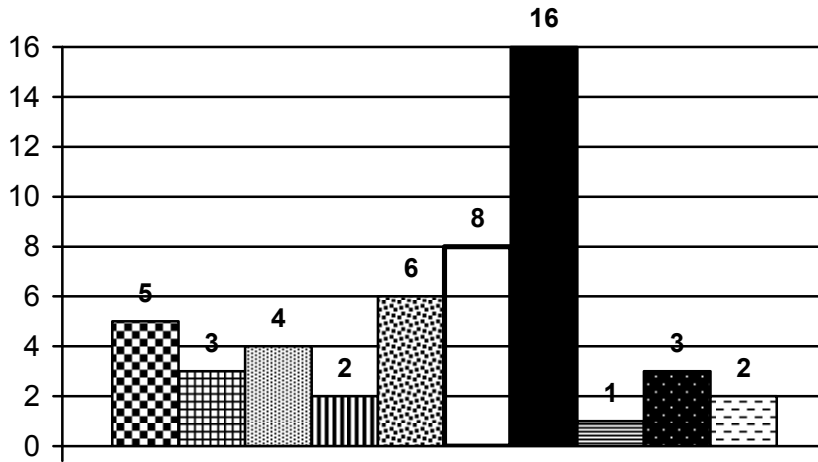
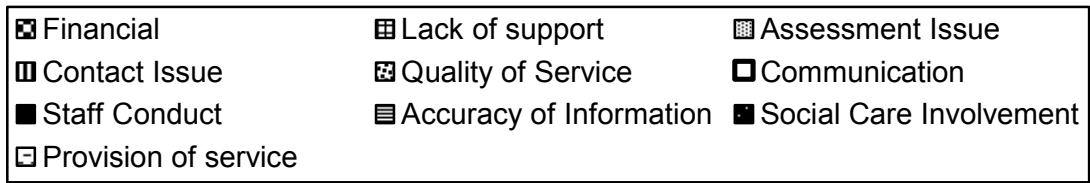


- 6.3 Stage 1 complaints made by the child/young person are handled by the Children's Complaints Officer with a focus on achieving resolution by working with the child/young person and the relevant manager.
- 6.4 Independent Advocacy Services are available to all children/young people who make a complaint via the Department's contracts with Wired and Safeguarding Children.
- 6.5 The average time taken to complete/resolve the 16 complaints made by the child/young person was 10.3 working days (*compared to 14.6 working days in 09/10*).
- 6.6 **Stage One complaints made by an adult parent/carer:**

### District/Service with case Responsibility



### Reason for Complaint



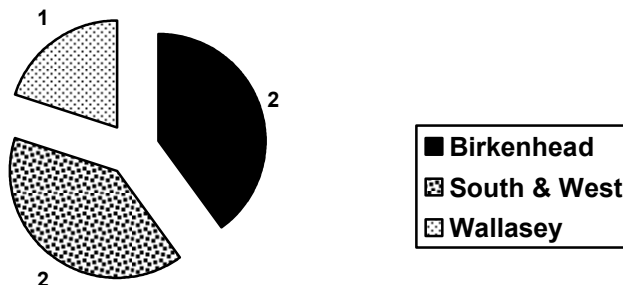
6.6 Stage 1 complaints registered by an adult are dealt with by an appropriate manager within the District with case responsibility. The average time taken to complete/resolve these complaints was 14 working days (*compared to 15 working days in 09/10*).

### 7. Stage 2 Complaints

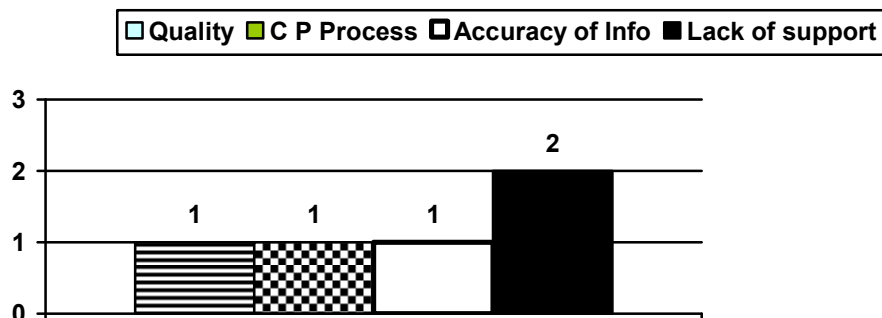
All of the 5 Stage 2 complaints registered were made by adults with parental responsibility or day to day care of a child/young person receiving a service.

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 British, European, Irish or white other.
- 7.2 One of the complainants at Stage 2 of the complaints procedure was registered disabled.
- 7.3 The average time taken to complete the Stage 2 complaint investigations and provide a Departmental response was 97 working days (*compared to 87 in 2009/10*).
- 7.4 One of the 5 Stage 2 complaint investigations is ongoing. Of the four completed investigations two were completed within the expected timescale of 65 working days.
- 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.
- 8.3 The Director responded to the Panel's findings within the expected timescale.

### 9. Learning from Complaints

- 9.1 Within the 4 completed Stage Two investigations, there were 16 individual complaints, outcomes of these complaints were:-
  - 4 were upheld (25%%)
  - 8 were not upheld (50%)
  - 2 were partially upheld (12.5%%)
  - 2 were undeterminable (12.5%)



9.2 The majority of recommendations made following these Stage 2 investigations were individual to the complaint, recommendations for Departmental action have included:-

Providing complaints training for all managers responsible for responding to complaints – *to be included in 2011/12 training plan*

Staff to be reminded of the importance of communicating effectively with families regarding the procedures they are subject to – *incorporated into Safeguarding Training*

## 10. Review of Effectiveness

The number of complaints received by children and young people themselves has remained lower than I would expect given the number of children in the care of the Council. The Complaints Manager has worked with the Children in Care Council to examine this issue; the Children in Care Council undertook a consultation exercise and offered the following recommendations to the Department:

- A redesign of the children's complaints leaflet – *new leaflet produced in consultation with children and young people to be circulated 1 November 2011.*
- A freephone telephone number for children and young people to use if they want to make a complaint - *Freephone number set up which will be publicised to children and young people in care in a mail shot on 1 November 2011.*
- More proactive role for the Children's Complaint Officer making sure that every child who makes a complaint is offered a one to one visit – *to be incorporated into the restructure of the children and adult social care complaints team.*

The timescales for Stage 2 investigations are below the high standard we have come to expect, this is due to staffing issues within the complaints team with both investigating officers currently absent from work. External investigation officers are currently being commissioned to undertake stage 2 investigations and it is hoped that this will improve timescales.

## 11. Compliments

The Customer Resolution and Information Team received 36 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.

**David Armstrong**  
Acting Director of Children's Services

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## UPDATE ON WORK PROGRAMME : CHILDREN & YOUNG PEOPLE OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY COMMITTEE – 16.11.2011

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

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

#### Report 1 - Monitoring Report for Scrutiny Committee Work Programme

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

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

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

#### Report 2 - Suggestions for Additions to Work Programme

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

#### Report 3 - Proposed Outline Meeting Schedule for the Municipal Year

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

#### Report 4 - Progress Report on In-Depth Panel Reviews

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

**REPORT 1**  
**MONITORING REPORT FOR SCRUTINY COMMITTEE WORK PROGRAMME**  
**CHILDREN & YOUNG PEOPLE: 2011 / 2012**

<b>Date of New item</b>	<b>Topic Description</b>	<b>How the topic will be dealt with</b>	<b>Estimated Complete Date</b>	<b>Comments on Progress</b>	<b>Complete?</b>
20/9/11	Report on staff absence trends within CYPD	Report to Committee	Jan 12	This item was proposed by members for inclusion on the work programme at the committee meeting on 20/09/11	
1/06/11	Progress on Oaklands Residential	Report to Committee	Jan 12	This item was proposed by members for inclusion on the work programme at the committee meeting on 01/06/11	
1/06/11	Early Intervention Grants – ‘Outcome of Commissioning’ – lessons learnt	Report to Committee	Nov 11	This item was proposed by members for inclusion on the work programme at the committee meeting on 01/06/11	
1/06/11	Planning for 2012 Youth Parliament	Report to Committee	Nov 11	This item was proposed by members for inclusion on the work programme at the committee meeting on 01/06/11	
01/06/11	Green Paper on SEN – Authority’s response	Report to Committee	Sept 11	This item was proposed by members for inclusion on the work programme at the committee meeting on 01/06/11.	
01/06/11	Literacy Scrutiny Review – recommendations and progress review	Report to Committee	Nov 11	This item was proposed by members for inclusion on the work programme at the committee meeting on 01/06/11.	

**REPORT 2**  
**SUGGESTIONS FOR ADDITIONS TO WORK PROGRAMME**  
**CHILDREN & YOUNG PEOPLE OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY COMMITTEE – 2011/2012**

<b>Topic Description</b>	<b>Topic suggested by</b>	<b>How the topic will be dealt with</b>	<b>Estimated Completion Date</b>

**REPORT 3**  
**PROPOSED OUTLINE MEETING SCHEDULE FOR THE MUNICIPAL YEAR**  
**CHILDREN & YOUNG PEOPLE: 2011 / 2012**

Meeting Date	Topic Description
20/09/11	Budget – Key Issues Department Restructure Performance & Financial Monitoring Q1 SEN Green Paper Safeguarding & LAC Insp Report Action Plan update Child Poverty Strategy – Action Plan Adoption Inspection School Annual Performance – Early years and primary
16/11/11	Performance & Financial Monitoring Q2 Literacy Review – recommendations and progress report Childrens Annual Complaints Report EIG & Commissioning – lessons learnt Secondary Schools Places - Demographic update Fostering Service Report on Inspection Ofsted Children’s Services Assessment School Annual Performance – Post 16 Child Poverty Action Plan/Implementation
26/01/11	Sickness Absence Scheme of Delegation Child Poverty Strategy – Action plan YSAC 2012 Youth Parliament planning report Oaklands planning CYPD department staff absence trends Sanderling Places 100 Club Academies Report
21/03/12	Performance & Financial Monitoring Q3 Approved Scheme of Delegation Child Poverty Strategy – Action Plan

**REPORT 4**  
**PROGRESS REPORT ON IN-DEPTH PANEL REVIEWS**  
**CHILDREN & YOUNG PEOPLE OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY COMMITTEE – 16/11/11**

<b>Title of Review</b>	<b>Members of Panel</b>	<b>Progress to Date</b>	<b>Date Due to report to Committee</b>

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