

ECONOMIC WELL BEING STRATEGY GROUP REPORT TO THE BOARD

1.0 Introduction

The Economic Well Being outcome area within Wirral's Children and Young People's plan aims to increase the number of young people achieving social and economic well being through the following priority areas:

- Increase the number of young people who are participating and achieving their potential.
- Reduce the numbers of 16-18 year old young people NEET (particularly the most vulnerable) in line with the LAA targets and PSA 2010 trajectory.
- Contribute to the reduction in levels of child poverty and minimise the number of children and young people living in poor housing.

The Economic Well Being Strategy Group is chaired by the Connexions Assistant Director for the Wirral area. Membership is drawn from multi-agency representation relating to these priority areas and key representatives who can make a difference in this outcome area from across the Children's Trust. There is active membership although this requires regular review. Meetings are held every 6 weeks and an annual programme of focus for each meeting has been agreed. The Strategy Group is closely aligned with the 14-19 team and 14-19 Strategic Partnership.

One of the main functions of the Economic Well Being group is to monitor and report on the progress in this element of the Children and Young People's plan relating particularly to the National Indicators, LAA target areas and any other areas of focus agreed by the Partnership. Other functions of the group include:

- The co-ordination of activities relating to the priority areas to ensure synergy.
- To respond to requests for information or action such as the Equality Impact Assessment.
- To provide information to other groups across the Trust including the Children and Young People's Dept.
- To seek effective arrangements to consult with children and young people, to act on the results and to provide feedback.

2.0 Relevant Performance Indicators

The following National Indicators (NIs) are monitored by the Economic Well Being Strategy Group:

- NI 79 – Achievement of a Level 2 qualification by the age of 19.
- NI 80 – Achievement of a Level 3 qualification by the age of 19.
- NI81 – Inequality gap in the achievement of a Level 3 qualification by the age of 19.
- NI 82 – Inequality gap in the achievement of a Level 2 qualification by the age of 19.
- NI 91 – Participation of 17 year olds in education or training.
- NI 116 – Proportion of children in poverty.
- NI 117 – 16 to 18 year olds who are not in education, employment or training (NEET).
- NI 118 – Take up a formal childcare by low-income working families.

3.0 Overview of Progress March 2010

Key recent achievements	1. Priority: Increase the number of young people who are participating and achieving their potential. Wirral participated in National Test and Trial for Foundation Learning at KS4 and post 16 to develop positive progression pathways 14-19 <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Approx 200 learners engaged• Providers engaged – 5 secondary, 2 special schools, 1 FE college and 3 E2E providers Delivered engagement opportunities through ESF WirralWise and KS4
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Engagement programme.

ESF highlights:

- 464 young people engaged on the programmes
Learn Wise- 195, Stay Wise- 65, Work Wise-204
- 18 partner organisations worked with us to support the learners
- Retention on the courses was 98%
- 97 young people on Learn Wise re-engaged in learning.
- 102 young people have progressed into an EET destination.

KS4 Engagement highlights

- 48% of Year 11 learners achieved a L1 qualification by July 2009 and 11% achieved a L2 qualification.
- 17 Secondary Schools and 8 learning providers work in partnership with Wirral on KS4EP.
- Feedback from 8 providers reveals improvements in learners: Attendance and motivation (from below average to good) and English and maths skills (from poor to average) between the start and end of Year 11.
- 86% of learners had moved to positive destinations by November 2009.
- Survey feedback reveals 100% of parents believe the KS4EP has had a positive impact on their children and 78% of learners would like to continue their training beyond year 11.

Developed and trialled 14-19 QA Framework with 16 off-site learning providers.

Developed and trialled School Sixth Form Quality Monitoring and Evaluation Framework with 14 Secondary Schools.

Therapeutic programmes delivered by the third sector (TCP) successfully re-engaging young people into mainstream education. Programmes also delivered specifically for Young Mums.

Roll out of eight Diploma lines in September 2009 – Society Health & Development, Construction, Engineering, Creative & Media, Hospitality, IT, Business, Administration and Finance, Hair & Beauty. Approximately 180 learners participating.

Diploma survey reported satisfactory progress in the implementation of diplomas with good teaching and learning and leadership and management.

IAG Self assessment tool against the IAG National Standards has been developed and implemented in Wirral and learning providers supported in developing action plans to ensure the quality of provision is improved consistently. Briefings have also been delivered in relation to the publication of Quality Choice and Aspiration – A strategy for young people's information advice and guidance.

Development of FE provision with increased entry points to meet learner needs and respond to the January Guarantee.

Expanded the Young Apprenticeship offer to include Health & Social Care, Engineering and Construction.

- Construction 100% achieved BTEC first Diploma and 85% the full apprenticeship framework;
- Health and Social Care 36% achieved BTEC first certificate, 27% BTEC first Diploma and 36% unit accreditation.

Delivered the LDD Brokerage project by an enhanced local college offer - in support of developing local provision which meets the needs of LDD learners with complex needs who might otherwise attend out of area specialist residential colleges and/or be at risk of becoming NEET.

- Reduction in Out of Borough LDD placements - since 2007/08 with the support of our partners we have reduced the number of out of borough placements from 18 in 07/08, to 9 in 08/09, 10 in 09/10 and provisionally 6 in 10/11.

Progress towards achieving 14-19 National Indicators

Indicator	RAG RATING	
	2007-08	2008-09
NI 79	A	R
NI 80	R	G
NI 81	R	G
NI 82	R	R
NI 91	G	A
NI 117	R	A

Priority: Reduce the numbers of 16-18 year old vulnerable young people NEET in line with LAA targets and the PSA target trajectory.

- The IYS Strategy has been refreshed and approved by the Children’s Trust.
- The EET Strategy has been reviewed and will be presented to the Trust in March.
- In recognition of the particular issues facing us in the current economic climate a NEET Tiger Team has been established as a task and finish group to seek to increase the pace of NEET reduction in Wirral (see further detail in area of reporting focus below)
- Targeted intervention with specific groups has resulted in a year on year increase in EET progression for 17 year olds and care leavers.
- The Activity Agreement Pilot and Positive Activity for Young People programmes have been extended for a further year to Mar 2011.
- The Wirral Apprenticeship Programme ‘initial 100’ has been delivered and a further 50 apprenticeships agreed (to be targeted for NEET young people).
- A Memorandum of Understanding has been agreed with The National Apprenticeship Service.
- Third sector delivery of employability programmes (e.g. Acceler8 and Moving On) to increase participation.

Priority: Contribute to the reduction in levels of child poverty and minimise the number of children and young people living in poor housing.

- Housing has a major impact on children’s lives, affecting everything from their health and educational achievement, to their emotional well being and life chances. Significant improvements in housing standards have been made in Wirral through the work to ensure all social housing meets the decent homes standard by December 2010.

	<p>However, access to decent, affordable housing continues to be a key element in assisting to increase the number of young people achieving social and economic well being.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The links between poor and unsuitable housing, education, health and poverty, are clearly demonstrated when looking at the information at geographical ward level. The wards with the highest NEET levels, also reveal how demand and poor quality housing, houses in multiple occupation, poor health, and Indices of Multiple Deprivation (IMD). • Housing market interventions such as the high profile Housing Market Renewal Initiative (HMRI) which has spent over £90m since 2003 focus on these areas. Further work is being undertaken to target improving property standards and removing health hazards from homes, with the focus on the health and well being of residents. • A range of work has been completed to address enabling young people to access and accommodation and support including incorporating access by young people to social housing into the Wirralhomes review, the housing priority panel facilitating access into housing and coordinating support provision for young vulnerable people, and the housing priority panel working in partnership with Wirral Bond Scheme to improve access into the private rented sector for young people.
<p>Key Issues</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Continue the momentum and improvement in attainment at L2 and L3 for those aged 19 and in particular those with disadvantage. • To continue to develop provision for LLDD learners by identifying and resourcing appropriate routes and reducing the numbers of young people in residential provision through the Brokerage Project. • Securing sufficient volumes of any future pre-apprenticeship provision and participants. • ESF investment on the Wirral will reduce by 75% in the period 2010-2013 compared to 2008-2010. ESF currently funds delivery of NEET prevention, reduction and reengagement activities for up to 1260 learners. It will therefore be essential to consider how providers can embed good practice from these programmes and to begin to develop an effective response to NEET, given the reduction in available resources in future years. • To ensure the mix and balance of education provision takes account of 16-18 cohort decline. • Wirral's housing strategy statement 2005-10, is to be reviewed during 2010. The review will enable the current housing related actions within the CYPP to be refreshed, and further strengthen future joint working.
<p>Key Challenges Ahead</p>	<p>The Government has set out a clear vision for eradicating Child Poverty by 2020, and have established four aspirations to achieve this:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • more families in work that pays, and with the support they need to progress; • financial support that is responsive to families' situations; • environments in which children can thrive; • poverty in childhood no longer translating to poor experiences and outcomes. <p>Success in tackling child poverty requires the delivery of services tailored to local needs across a range of policy areas.</p> <p>The Child Poverty Bill places duties on partners:</p>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A duty on local authorities and partners to co-operate to reduce, and mitigate the effects of child poverty in their area. • A duty to conduct a child poverty local needs assessment. • A duty to produce a joint local child poverty strategy. • A duty to take child poverty into account in the production and revision of their Sustainable Community Strategy (SCS). <p>To increase the pace of NEET reduction in line with other areas across the LCR (see reporting focus area below).</p> <p>To support the Government's intention to raise the participation age (RPA) in 2013 for those young people aged 17 and by 2015 for those aged 18.</p>																																
<p>Risks to Outcome Delivery and Proposed Actions</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Note the resource required to assess all out of borough applications for LLDD learners. This was done by LSC Regional Staff but from March 2010 it will be done by LAs. LSC staff transferring to the LA will have some experience of this and for 6 months will have the support of expertise from an LSC staff member transferring to St Helens LA. • The Apprenticeship, Skills, Children and Learning Act will see the end of Programme-led Apprenticeships (PLAs). The transition arrangements between now and 2011 will see a reduction in PLA opportunities. The table below highlights the potential impact of the withdrawal of Programme-led opportunities. <p>Table 1 – Apprenticeship Opportunities in the Liverpool City Region.</p> <table border="1"> <thead> <tr> <th>Area</th> <th>Total level 2 Apprenticeship starts 2008/9</th> <th>% PLAs</th> <th>Number of PLAs.</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>Halton</td> <td>306</td> <td>27.5</td> <td>84</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Knowsley</td> <td>593</td> <td>40.5</td> <td>240</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Liverpool</td> <td>1367</td> <td>50.3</td> <td>687</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Sefton</td> <td>628</td> <td>35.5</td> <td>223</td> </tr> <tr> <td>St Helens</td> <td>472</td> <td>29.7</td> <td>140</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Wirral</td> <td>783</td> <td>27.3</td> <td>214</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Greater Merseyside</td> <td>4149</td> <td>38.27</td> <td>1588</td> </tr> </tbody> </table> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The 14-19 Partnership should work closely with NAS to develop apprenticeship opportunities in growth sectors. • 14-19 Reforms – IAG Activity – It will be essential to ensure that young people receive impartial advice and guidance and that IAG standards are embedded across all sectors. 	Area	Total level 2 Apprenticeship starts 2008/9	% PLAs	Number of PLAs.	Halton	306	27.5	84	Knowsley	593	40.5	240	Liverpool	1367	50.3	687	Sefton	628	35.5	223	St Helens	472	29.7	140	Wirral	783	27.3	214	Greater Merseyside	4149	38.27	1588
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<p>Areas Requiring Further Partnership Involvement</p> <p>Equalities Impact Assessment Areas for Development and Progress Made</p>	<p>As we move towards 2013, the LA needs to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Plan with our partners the learning, training and support offer available to all young people to support participation and progression. • Review membership of the group particularly representation from the full range of learning providers to ensure the prevention, intervention and sustainability aspects of the EET strategy are explored and addressed. <p>Areas for Development</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Access arrangements for disabled young people and effective arrangements for young parents across all learning providers. • Inclusion of 'young dads' in the focus on teenage parents. • Insufficient social accommodation for the under 25 demographic. 																																

<p>Areas for promotion/publicity/ Communication/ engagement</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Difficult to engage with young people re energy efficiency. <p>Progress Made</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Brokerage project implemented supporting the redesign of the local learning offer for those with LDD. • Greater Merseyside SESS Service established. • Housing panel operational and meets monthly. • Energy project plus has been facilitated as part of the Winter Warmer initiative – this reports in April 2010. • Apprenticeship opportunities • Positive case studies of NEET young people progressing • 14-19 Diploma developments.
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4.0 Areas for Reporting Focus

4.1 National Indicator (NI) 117 – Not in education, employment or training (NEET)

This area is reported for information and partnership support in increasing the pace of reduction required. Reducing the number of young people aged 16-18 that are not in education, employment or training (NEET) is a key cross-departmental government priority and a Wirral PSA (6.9% by 2010) and Local Area Agreement target. NEET, as a partnership priority is also reflected in the Children and Young People's Plan and Integrated Youth Support Strategy.

In 2009 we experienced the impact of the global recession. A number of target areas deemed to be impacted upon by the change in the economic climate were adjusted accordingly. The NEET target was not included amongst those adjusted. The critical measuring point is taken as the mean of November, December and January. For 2010 this was 8.89% which was a 'standing still' comparison to 2009 when the mean was 8.90%. The Wirral NEET percentage for January 2010 (latest baseline data) is 8.89%.

- This is a 'stand still' in a year on year comparison
- The target trajectory for the NEET PSA (7.10%) to reach 6.9% has not been met.
- The pace of reduction is slow and achievement of the target is extremely challenging in the current economic climate.
- In terms of the age breakdown a significant number of our NEET young people are in the upper age bracket and for January 2010 15.4% are 16, 34.2% are 17 and 50.3% are 18 years old.
- The data demonstrates that initial participation by the cohort is possible and the issue remains one of sustainability.

Churn

Government statistics suggest that only 1% of the NEET cohort remains NEET for the period between ages 16 and 18.

During January there were 183 joiners to the NEET cohort in Wirral and 158 leavers.

Our tracking capacity has improved and is better than regional and national benchmarks so the evidence we have is more accurate and compelling than ever. Currently we have the lowest ever levels of 16-18 young people not known to the Connexions Service at 2.96%.

NEET levels and the challenges ahead

- N.E.E.T. is reducing in Wirral in a year-on-year comparison.
- However the pace of reduction is still a significant challenge.
- Our NEET group are predominantly 18 and over.
- In terms of the 2009 Activity Survey there are more young people in Wirral continuing in learning beyond Year 11 than ever before.

- The healthy high profile that the September Guarantee brings to Year 11 transition has significantly improved data exchange, particularly between the Learning and Skills Council, Local Authorities, F.E. Colleges and Connexions.
- Whilst outcomes for the Year 11 group as a whole are improving results for the most vulnerable young people are not improving at the same rate. This group has been hit hard by the reduction in the number of jobs with no training element.

NEET and vulnerable groups

- Progress has been made via the focus on 17 year olds and vulnerable groups. The numbers of 16-18 year olds in learning is increasing (85.15% January 2010 compared to 82.60% January 2009), the number of 17 year olds NEET has been decreasing and whilst the impact on more vulnerable young people in these challenging times is noted above the number of Care leavers aged 19 who are in Education Employment or Training (EET) has increased to 44.26% compared to 34.72% at the same time last year. However the number of LDD young people EET has reduced in a year on year comparison 70.15% (compared to 72.70%) and the situation for this group is likely to worsen.

Challenges remaining

The challenge remains to increase the pace of the reduction in line with the trajectory toward the 2010 PSA target of 6.9% which gives us considerable distance to travel. There are also significant priority groups within the NEET group, including those with LDD, care leavers, young offenders and teen mums for whom opportunities often contract more adversely than for their peers at times of economic pressure.

Risks Identified

- Changes in economic climate impacting on availability of opportunities for the NEET group whilst target levels set before the recession are not adjusted.
- The change in the age profile of the NEET group and the challenges presented to Employers and Learning Providers of responding to the needs of the 'older' NEET group.
- Adult employment rates rising.
- The Apprenticeship, Skills, Children and Learning Act will see the end of Programme-led Apprenticeships (PLAs.) The transition arrangements between now and 2011 will see a reduction in PLA opportunities (currently 214 in Wirral).

Continuing action

- The Borough EET Strategy has been refreshed which outlines partner responsibilities and contributions to achieving the NEET target. A task and finish group has now been formed to seek to increase the pace of NEET reduction.
- The Activity Agreement pilot is a programme that focuses on structured activities and incentive payments for NEET young people and is delivered through Greater Merseyside Connexions. Confirmation was received in December that the Activity Agreement Pilot would continue through to 2011.
- The Wirral Wise Programme, supported by ESF, is embedding as part of the Wirral Learning offer.
- The Wirral Apprentice programme is continuing to have a positive impact on opportunities for young people. This programme has been able to offer positive choices for young people. All apprentices appointed are Wirral residents and 22% were previously NEET. Recruitment is underway for a further 50 further apprenticeships.
- The September Guarantee thresholds have been met in Wirral this year, for 16 and 17 year olds and arrangements in place around the January Guarantee.
- Targeted action with vulnerable young people and within NEET hotspot areas continues with enhanced GIS mapping capability.
- Teenagers can now receive text alerts for job vacancies by registering for the Job scan service via www.connexionslive

4.2 Achievement of a Level 2 qualification by the age of 19

Improving attainment at level 2 is a key cross-departmental government priority. The percentage of Wirral young people attaining a level 2 qualification at aged 19 improved by 3.5% between 2007 and 2008, although this rate of change is slower than that seen nationally and regionally.

The overall 2008 level 2 attainment of Wirral residents at the age of 19 is comparable with the overall percentage for the North West region at 74%. These increases reflect the considerable improvement in FE success rates over this period. Wirral FE college overall 16-18 success rates in the 2007/08 academic year improved by +7.8% compared to 2006/07. Full level 2 qualification success rates improved by +8.1% between 2006/07 and 2007/08.

Early indications are that FE has made a further significant improvement in success rates for YP in 2008/09, which will take them too or above National benchmarks. Apprenticeship provision is generally satisfactory or above benchmark with some sector areas performing particularly well. Apprenticeships and advanced apprenticeships framework completions have been increasing year on year and in 2008/09 it was not necessary to remove any provision under the criteria for minimum levels of performance.

4.3 NI 80 – Achievement of a Level 3 qualification by the age of 19.

Level 3 at 19 performance in the borough also improved by 4.5% between 2006/07 and 2007/08; however, the attainment levels are below the regional average.

Although there are many high performing school sixth forms, sixth form success rates show a considerable variation across the borough (LSC 2007/08 data). Work continues through partnership groups and the support and challenge process to develop an appropriate framework to underpin the identification of any areas of weakness and to support schools to deliver a high quality and viable sixth form offer.

Wirral FE college overall 16-18 level 3 success rates in the 2007/08 academic year improved by up to 7.5% compared to 2006/07. Full level 3 qualification success rates improved by +2.6% between 2006/07 and 2007/08.

Early indications are that FE has made a significant improvement in level 3 success rates for young people in 2008/09, which will take them too or above National benchmarks. Unverified 2008/09 level 3 full qualification FE College success rates have improved by +19.3%. This positive increase in level 3 attainment will have a significant positive impact on the proportion of LA residents in 2009 reaching a level 3 threshold at age 19.

4.4 NI 82 – Inequality gap in the achievement of a Level 2 qualification by the age of 19.

There has been significant progress in reducing the gap in level 2 attainment for those young people from disadvantaged backgrounds, an 8% improvement between 2006/07 and 2007/08. Level 2 at 19 achievement for those Wirral young people who are eligible for free school meals (FSM) has improved to a position above that of the North West and National rate. The attainment gap between those FSM eligible and not FSM eligible closed significantly between 2006/07 and 2007/08. The gap in 2007/08 was 23% compared to a gap of 31% in 2006/07. This is an overall 8% improvement in narrowing the attainment gap.

4.5 NI81 – Inequality gap in the achievement of a Level 3 qualification by the age of 19.

There has also been significant progress in reducing the gap in level 3 attainment for those young people from disadvantaged backgrounds, a 5% improvement between 2006/07 and 2007/08. Level 3 at 19 achievement for those Wirral young people who are eligible for free school meals (FSM) has improved to a position above that of the North West and National rate. The attainment gap between those FSM eligible and not FSM eligible remained the same between 2006/07 and 2007/08. The gap in 2007/08 and 2006/07 was 33%.

5.0 Brief SWOT Analysis of the Outcome Area

STRENGTHS	WEAKNESSES
<ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Active committed members with clear areas of responsibility and accountability.2. Synergy with 14-19 Strategic Partnership.3. Significant progress made across key priority areas.	<ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Constant flux in key partner organisations impacting on continuity of membership.2. Potential overlapping agendas and duplication of effort.3. Radically changing 14-19 landscape and volume of priority areas impacting on capacity to deliver.
OPPORTUNITIES	THREATS
<ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Potential for alignment of resources/budgets to achieve outcomes.2. Collaborative approaches leading to improved offer for learners.	<ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Time-limited funding (e.g. ESF) and potential significant reductions in public sector funding impacting on available 'pool'.2. Taking 'partnership' through to true collaborative provision.

6.0 Summary

Across the Economic Well being area positive progress is being made in delivering outcomes for our young people and meeting relevant national indicators. Self assessment, robust monitoring and action plans in response are embedded into practice.

7.0 Recommendations

7.1 That Wirral Children's Trust Board endorse the report.

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