

## **WIRRAL COUNCIL**

### **CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE - 2 JUNE 2010.**

#### **REPORT OF DIRECTOR OF CHILDREN'S SERVICES**

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#### **AIMING HIGH FOR DISABLED CHILDREN**

##### **Executive Summary**

This report provides an update on progress in delivering the Wirral Local Area Implementation programme for Aiming High for Disabled Children in relation to Short Breaks provision. The approach seeks to transform services across sectors to provide support to achieve the best outcomes for children and young people with disabilities and enable children and their families to live ordinary lives. The Government are requiring the Council and Primary Care Trust to provide a stepped change to the delivery of short break services and to deliver on what is termed the Full Service Offer, designed to meet the needs of all groups of disabled children. The report advises on action taken in meeting the programme requirements set out by Together for Disabled Children, who are administering the Short Breaks programme on behalf of the DCSF; to date and the further steps required ahead of March 2011.

The report briefly notes results from NI 54 Survey of Parental Satisfaction and progress on the Parent Participation strand of Aiming High for Disabled Children.

#### **1. Background**

1.1 With the Aiming High for Disabled Children programme, the Government expects local authorities to realise the ambition that:

- Disabled children will have the same opportunities to develop and fulfil their potential as all other children.
- Families with disabled children will get the support they need, when they need it.
- Universal children's services will be more genuinely inclusive of disabled children, including those with complex needs.
- Disabled children will be at the heart of the ongoing change programme for children's services.

The programme has strands on Short Breaks – Parent Participation – Transitions – with a new strand this year on Child Care. This report covers the Short Breaks and notes parental involvement within the programme. A separate report is presented on Transition.

#### **1.2 National Indicator 54**

National indicator, NI 54 on services for disabled children is designed to measure the experience of families with disabled children, against the 5 Core Offer areas of Information, Assessment, Transparency, Participation and Feedback. The Council and NHS Wirral, has now received its results for 2009-2010: the headline results are

that 63% of parents are generally satisfied with the services they receive from the Council and PCT locally. (See Appendix 2 for further detail).

### **1.3 Parent Participation**

- 1.3.1 The Council and Primary Care Trust are required to report on how they are developing Information, Consultation and Participation. *Contact a Family*, are the agency which lead on this strand of development on behalf of the Government. During the autumn a self evaluation exercise was conducted to compare the views of professionals with those of parents to indicate whether our performance was, *in development* or *well embedded*. There was a consensus between services and parents that in the areas of Information provision and consultation that we were *in development* – however in the area of participation parents rated services as performing higher than the professionals did, rating it as *well embedded*. This seems to be a positive reflection of work being done to improve participation with the Wirral Family Consultation Forum, and in the commissioning of Short Breaks and its working groups.
- 1.3.2 The Wirral Family Consultation Forum has been supported to secure a £10,000 grant from the Government for each year of the programme to support its development in Wirral. An Engagement & Involvement Group provides opportunity for parents and professionals to work together in developing Participation. A feedback report has been produced identifying areas in which parental views have shaped service developments in the previous period.
- 1.3.3 The new SEN Parent partnership service came into service in July 2009, and a Steering Group has been confirmed including 4 parents. The service brings together all of the information and participation activity under one service level agreement, and a clear remit to provide impartial advice. A training programme for Independent Parental Supporters has been delivered and will provide for a number of parents; who will be able to assist parents of young people with SEN who might want support in dealing with schools and statutory services.

## **2.0 Short Breaks Delivery Programme**

### **2.1 Reporting requirements**

The Short Breaks programme is the major delivery programme at this time, which is dealt with in this report. In addition, an update is provided on two other programme strands.

The Together for Disabled Children reporting requirements is called the Staged Progression Framework, which sets out expectations about how the Council and NHS will evidence progress in working towards meeting the Full Service Offer for Short Breaks.

This sets out 4 key objectives with 4 stages to be met, in terms of:

- Completing an Initial Needs assessment and embedding consultation
- Evidencing via the Delivery Plan and effective data management, increased levels of provision

- Producing revised eligibility criteria for short breaks provision which parents feel are fair, and are consistently communicated and applied
- Providing a Workforce Plan which addresses the needs of universal service providers and specialist service providers

Together for Disabled Children wrote to each Director of Children Services in April, they confirmed that they assess Wirral Council as needing low support at this time. This means they are highly confident the authority is delivering in line with the aims and timescales and therefore requires 'low' support from them. There will be a 6 monthly Health Check visit conducted to review progress against all Aiming High strands. There will be a reporting requirement to submit the Local Area Implementation Plan quarterly to provide statistical feedback on increased service take up patterns and progress against service objectives. We now have robust and accurate systems for collecting and collating the data to demonstrate clearly the progress made.

## **2.2 Parental involvement**

The views of children, young people and parents/carers are at the heart of the funding proposals. Members requested that parents were involved in the presentation of this report

A group of parents have been involved in the commissioning of new services:

- within the major tendering exercise for services reported to Cabinet in October 2009 for a range of new services
- within the community based grant process for voluntary groups
- within the capital small grant processes
- within the Executive Group and 3 working groups on Capital – Workforce Development and Developing Services.
- Recruitment of project posts.

In addition:

- The Wirral Family Consultation Forum has been give regular feedback and consulted on key decision points
- Transparency on parental involvement has been maintained by ensuring requests for parents to join groups has been made through the Forum
- Further consultation has been undertaken with groups of young people – across the range of special schools and youth groups. A further series of consultations are planned across several mainstream schools in May 2010.
- Detailed Feedback reports have been produced for all programmes that have been delivered through the project team, e.g. Fun Day, Christmas breaks. Easter breaks, consultation, universal services development.
- The newsletter is currently being produced every 2 months to keep parents up to date with developments.
- A DVD has been produced to share the successes of the programme and to encourage parents to take up services

### **3.0 Commissioning of services**

#### **3.1 Commissioning update**

New services were commissioned using the Joint Strategic Commissioning Framework and reported to Cabinet in October 2009. Further work has been undertaken to commission service to meet gaps in relation to sitting services, developing a leisure link scheme – and emergency support scheme these were reported to Cabinet in March 2010.

Within the programme requirements we have been able to evidence due rigour with regards to establishing the principles of contestability and stimulating the market, and have been commended by the Programme advisors.

#### **3.2 Capital**

- 3.2.1 As part of the Aiming High for Disabled Children's Project (short breaks element) the grant award to the authority included a capital element. The capital grant for 2009/10 is £252,200 and for 2010/11 is £588,500. To oversee the capital plans a Capital and Transport working group was established, with a wide membership of professionals across a range of services and with 2 parental representatives.

There is a key requirement that any offers to enhance service provision in universal services must be over and above Disability Discrimination Act requirements. The group has been instrumental in reviewing small grant bids and making recommendations via the Aiming High Executive Group for expenditure under delegated decision making.

Spend in the first round amounted to £99,836.15 and in the second round was £165,037.07 details of the grants are attached in Appendix 3.

A further round of bids is currently available with a closing date of 12<sup>th</sup> July 2010.

- 3.2.2 At this stage a number of potential options are still being evaluated by the Capital group, and firmer proposals will be submitted to the Executive Group, ahead of a further Cabinet report in late June 2010.

#### **3.3 Community Grants**

Within the programme a first round of community grants has been provided to community organisations and parent led groups who wanted to provide short breaks for disabled young people and their families. These grants were reviewed by our commissioning group including four parents and were reported under delegated decision making to the Cabinet Lead in February 2010.

Spend in the first round amounted to £64,856.34, details of these are detailed in Appendix 4.

Following the first round of applications it was decided to offer a further application process but splitting the funding into 2 sections: comprising another community grants allocation which would be the same as the first round but also another allocation for 'family based activities'. Some of the applications submitted in the first

round did not meet the criteria of a 'short break' as parent/carers were required to stay with the young person for the activity. However consultation with parent/carers has identified that even if they are required to stay they still value the activity and do think of it as break as the child is engaged in a positive activity which relieves them from the primary caring role. They also find it useful to spend time with other parent/carers. The deadline for these applications was 10th May.

#### **4.0 The Short Breaks Duty**

4.1 The Government published new guidance in March 2010 that identifies that there will be a duty placed on Councils from April 2011 to provide a short breaks service. The Council has been required to develop a Short Breaks Development Strategy as part of the Aiming High programme to bring together our needs assessment, vision and key objectives and strategic direction. This initial framework will help the Council fulfilling its new duties. Key principles underpinning this being:

##### **Early intervention and prevention**

We know that disabled children do best when they and their families are enabled to lead as ordinary lives as possible; and that for some families that regular and reliable short breaks from caring, make a significant difference in their ability to cope.

##### **Personalisation**

Social policy has been moving in the direction of enabling disabled people to manage their own care, choose how they lead their own lives and control the services they need.

##### **Engagement and Involvement**

These principles permeate all strands of the Aiming High programme.

##### **Financial sustainability**

Meeting the needs of disabled young people is a three-way responsibility between universal services for all children, specialist disability services and parents. Increasing choice by removing the barriers to universal services for all disabled children and young people can be a more cost-effective, as well as child-centred, way of supporting families.

#### **5 Financial implications**

5.1 The Aiming High for Disabled Children programme is grant funded. The revenue and capital allocations for 2009-10 and 2010-11 are:

	2008/9	2009/10	2010/11
Capital	0	£252,200	£588,500
Revenue	£60,000	£510,900	£1,615,700

5.2 There are no definitive indications of the level of funding from 2011-12 onwards. Together for Disabled Children as programme leads have given an early indication of an expectation that funding from year 2012 will match that of 2011, so that Councils can meet their new Short Breaks duties.

## **6 Staffing Implications**

- 6.1 The programme has required increased Project Management capacity within years 2 and 3 to drive the Delivery Plan forwards. It is expected that continued capacity will be required to maintain the commissioned activity.
- 6.2 The programme requires the Council to ensure it has a Workforce Development programme which supports Short Breaks providers.

## **7 Equal Opportunities Implications**

- 7.1 The changes are driven by the imperative that disabled youngsters should have personal and developmental opportunities and be supported to lead an ordinary life as valued members of their community.
- 7.2 Short breaks should therefore not just be used as a crisis intervention, but should also be used routinely to help parents and carers to maintain and improve the quality of care they naturally wish to provide.
- 7.3 Involving parents and young people in the design of services is a critical part of this programme and the delivery of the Core offer.

## **8 Human Rights Implications**

Decisions on all aspects of the proposed changes will be informed by the Convention on Human Rights to ensure that the rights of children in our care and our employees are protected.

## **9 Local Agenda 21 Implications**

No specific implications emerging from this report.

## **10 Community Safety Implications**

Improved commissioning of care provision should reduce the vulnerability of disabled young people to bullying and for some young people to being engaged in or subject to crime.

## **11 Planning Implications**

None at this time.

## **12 Local Member Support Implications**

Disabled young people live in all wards.

## **13 Background Papers**

Aiming High for Disabled children

Updates on these and other measures are available at

**[www.everychildmatters.gov.uk/ahdc](http://www.everychildmatters.gov.uk/ahdc)**

For copy of Disabled children's services national indicator 2009-10: Local authority (LA) reports

**<http://www.dcsf.gov.uk/everychildmatters/resources-and-practice/IG00667/>**

## **Recommendations**

1. To note and comment on the content of this report.

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