

# WIRRAL COUNCIL

## CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE.

26<sup>TH</sup> JANUARY 2011

<b>SUBJECT:</b>	<b>WIRRAL SURE START SERVICE PROVISION</b>
<b>WARD/S AFFECTED:</b>	<b>ALL</b>
<b>REPORT OF:</b>	<b>INTERIM DIRECTOR OF CHILDREN'S SERVICES.</b>
<b>RESPONSIBLE PORTFOLIO HOLDER:</b>	<b>COUNCILLOR SHEILA CLARKE</b>
<b>KEY DECISION</b>	<b>NO</b>

### **1.0 EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

- 1.1** This report, which was requested by the Children and Young People's Services Overview and Scrutiny Committee, outlines development in Wirral's Sure Start provision for children and their families. It informs members of the statutory duties within the Early Year developments.

### **2.0 RECOMMENDATION/S**

- 2.1** Committee note the scope of the Sure Start service delivery across Wirral for Children and Families

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

- 3.1** To ensure the Local Authority is in a position to deliver statutory responsibilities and is able to maintain or improve the Sure Start service provision

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

- 4.1** Funding from the Sure Start Early Years and Childcare Grant (SSEYCG) has supported the duties set out in the Childcare Act 2006 and as amended by the Apprenticeships, Skills, Children and Learning Act 2009. Local authorities and their partners in health services and Jobcentre Plus are required to:

- Improve outcomes and close gaps at age five through the provision of integrated early years services (the Government currently agrees annual statutory targets with each authority to support this); Wirral has an upward trend in outcomes and continues to close the gap between the lowest 20% and the rest;

- Provide and maintain sufficient children's centres and ensure they each have an advisory board;
- Ensure there is sufficient childcare available for parents with children 0-14 (or 18 for children with a disability) who want to work and train, including an expanded and where possible, more flexible free entitlement for three and four year olds;
- Provide a comprehensive information service for families, making available any information parents and carers might need to support their children up to the age of 20.

**4.2** The key priorities and challenges which the SSEYC grant supported in 2010-11 included:-

- Delivering a Sure Start Children's Centre for every community in 2010 (national target for at least 3,500 centres by March 2010). Ensuring that these achieve value for money and a fair distribution of resources to support services for all children under five while concentrating the greatest level of resource to meet the needs of the most disadvantaged families. As we have achieved universal coverage with children's centres, it is important that Wirral ensures that Sure Start Children's Centres sustain a fully operational position, delivering their 'full core offer' within two years of designation; currently we have 16 designated centres with a range of delivery points. The full core offer includes support for:-
  - Childcare
  - Family support
  - Health services
  - Employment advice from Job Centre Plus
  - Access to the local authority's information, advice and assistance service.
- Continuing to fill the gaps between demand and supply identified in the Childcare Sufficiency Assessment to secure, as far as reasonably practicable, sufficient childcare for working parents of children up to the age of 14 (18 for disabled children) supported by the delivery of a high quality information service for local families, parents and carers.

This duty came into force in April 2008, and applies to all working parents, and parents preparing for work but with particular attention being paid to the needs of lower income parents and those who have disabled children. The duty also directly supports plans to promote the take up of formal childcare (including both the free early education entitlement and paid - for childcare supported through tax credits), in particular amongst lower income families.

- Focusing sharply on continuing to raise the standard of early learning and care provision by excellent delivery of the Early Years Foundation Stage, to secure a strong foundation for children's learning and development throughout other key stages. Providing strong performance management of early years settings across the PVI and maintained sectors through teams
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of Foundation Stage Consultants (FSCs); the Quality Improvement Strategy is having a positive impact on provision.

- Delivering a reduction in the achievement gap between the lowest achieving children and the rest, in the context of securing better results for all 5 year olds. Where local authorities have been successful in achieving improvements in these results, there is a challenge to sustain the momentum of improvement.
- Continuing to professionalise the early year's workforce by encouraging investment in, and equal access to, staff qualifications, particularly in the PVI sector and for childminders. Priorities for the Children's Centres workforce, such as leadership and outreach, necessary for providing integrated services, should also be met.

### **4.3 Wirral Sure Start Achievements**

- Improved outcomes at the end of Foundation 2 (children aged 5) across Wirral. The number of children achieving age related outcomes has improved by 10% since 2008. The overall outcomes are exceeding national figures and demonstrate that Wirral has sustained a year on year improvement since the implementation of the Early Years Foundation Stage Framework, which has been achieved through bespoke training and support in both the maintained and non-maintained sectors and robust nationally accredited moderation practises;
  - The gap between the lowest performing children and the rest is continuing to close. The gap has reduced by 4% from 2008. This is a more rapid improvement than the national picture and is a consequence of the successful strategies detailed above;
  - Successful implementation of Children's Centres OFSTED framework following statutory designation. Two Centres out of 16 have so far been inspected by OFSTED; both were judged to be "Good, with many outstanding features";
  - Development of an evidence – based performance management framework for Children's Centres building on learning from successful OFSTED inspections. This has been endorsed by the national organisation, Together for Children;
  - Implementation of e-Start database to support monitoring and evaluation of Children's Centres. This has significantly improved the level of measurable data available to support service evaluation and consequently, service development and delivery;
  - Implementation of Early Years Quality Improvement Support Programme with private, voluntary and independent providers of early education and care. Currently, there are no early year's settings with a less than satisfactory OFSTED judgement. Action plans are in place with settings to
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support a cycle of continuous improvement, contributing to Wirral's successful and sustained achievements in the Foundation Stage;

- Implementation of the extended free entitlement for 3 and 4 year olds to 15 hours per week with increased opportunity available for parents to take free entitlement more flexibly;
- Capital funding made available through the Quality Improvement Grant has so far enabled 123 PVI settings to improve outdoor learning environments, IT provision and resources to implement quality in EYFS. Of these, 5 PVI settings based on school sites have benefitted from having their premises replaced or refurbished. These were identified in areas where provision needed to be maintained and where the condition of the building was having a serious impact on the quality of experience for young children;
- Successful 2 year old funding initiative with case study evidence of impact. Wirral reached more than the Government target of 142 by reducing administration costs and diverting this saving into increasing the number of places available;
- Successful Every Child a Talker Cohort 1 with demonstrable impact and successful introduction of programme to Cohort 2. 37 private and voluntary sector providers are involved in the programme. Wirral rated as Outstanding in most recent ECaT RAG meeting with Primary National Strategy Advisors. The children from Cohort 1 have shown 5% improvement in terms of those ahead in Speech Language and Communication with a 3% decrease in children at risk of delay.
- The targeted Communication Language and Literacy Programme in the most disadvantaged areas has resulted in an increase in children achieving expected levels in communication, language and literacy outcomes from 42% in 2008 to 53% in 2010. The implementation of the programme has consistently been ragged as outstanding by the Primary National Strategy Regional Advisors.

## **5.0 RELEVANT RISKS**

- 5.1 Removal of ring-fencing may make the budget vulnerable
- 5.2 Changes to central Government priorities

## **6.0 OTHER OPTIONS CONSIDERED**

- 6.1 Awaiting detail of priorities to accompany the comprehensive spending review, specifically the detail relating to the early intervention grant.

## **7.0 CONSULTATION**

- 7.1 Not applicable at this stage
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## **8.0 IMPLICATIONS FOR VOLUNTARY, COMMUNITY AND FAITH GROUPS**

8.1 Sure Start works across voluntary, private, independent and maintained sector providers.

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

9.1 Details of the Comprehensive Spending Review settlement not yet clarified in terms of priority areas for spend, including the Early Intervention Grant

9.2 Staff re-shaping as a consequence of voluntary severance and early voluntary retirement.

## **10.0 LEGAL IMPLICATIONS**

10.1 The Local Authority needs to maintain its responsibilities under statutory duties defined in the childcare act 2006 and as amended in the Apprenticeships, Skills, Children and Learning act 2009.

## **11.0 EQUALITIES IMPLICATIONS**

11.1 None applicable for the purposes of this report.

11.2 Equality Impact Assessment (EIA)

(a) Is an EIA required?      Undertaken as policies are developed/ reviewed

## **12.0 CARBON REDUCTION IMPLICATIONS**

12.1 None identified at this time.

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

13.1 Not applicable at this time.

**REPORT AUTHOR:**            **Mark Parkinson**  
Head of Branch, Learning and Achievement  
Telephone: (0151 666 4297)  
Email: [markparkinson@wirral.gov.uk](mailto:markparkinson@wirral.gov.uk)

## **APPENDICES**

None.

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## REFERENCE MATERIAL

National Strategies evaluations – detail held on file by Catherine Kerr, Principal Manager, Early Years and Children's Centres

## SUBJECT HISTORY (last 3 years)

<b>Council Meeting</b>	<b>Date</b>
Employment and Appointments – Children's Staffing Structure	19 <sup>th</sup> January 2008
Cabinet – Developing Integrated Services for Young Children and Families	22 <sup>nd</sup> May 2008
Cabinet – Children's Centre developments at Eastway/Lingham	12 <sup>th</sup> June 2008
Overview and scrutiny – Early Years Provision	16 <sup>th</sup> March 2009
Cabinet – Allocation of Early Years Quality and Access Capital Grants	23 <sup>rd</sup> April 2009
Cabinet – Early Years Entitlement and funding update	25 <sup>th</sup> June 2009
Cabinet – Children's Centres roll out	9 <sup>th</sup> December 2009
Cabinet – Early Years Capital Grants	18 <sup>th</sup> March 2010
Cabinet – Early Years Quality and Access Grants	26 <sup>th</sup> November 2010