

Child Poverty Update

1.0 Background

Wirral is producing a Child Poverty Strategy and Action Plan. To support this, the local authority established a local advisory group to review the evidence and make recommendations to the Council and its partners about local action to tackle child poverty. Representation on this group (the Wirral Child and Family Poverty Working Group) is drawn from the local authority, voluntary, community and faith, housing, health, and education, employment and skills sectors.

2.0 Progress Update

Milestones regarding the development of the strategy and action plan since the last report to the Children's Trust Board:

- The discussions of the Working Group, and wider consultation with partners, have informed the development of the draft 'Roots and Wings' strategy and action plan which is set out at **Appendix 1**. Central to these discussions have been the need for all partners to work with each other to add value to existing provision and the need to utilise the positive assets of local communities in raising the aspirations of children and families.
- This draft strategy and action plan has been approved by Wirral Council Cabinet and further consultation and a work is ongoing to produce a final version in consultation with partners. Comments on any aspect of the draft are welcomed.
- Work is also underway to develop a new Children and Young People's Plan (CYPP) for 2012-13 overseen by the Children's Trust Executive. Through this process projects and activities are being developed related to the child poverty agenda. These key projects will be included in the action plan.
- Child poverty is included as a key theme in Council planning for 2012-13 in respect of draft Corporate and Department Plans.
- The consultation to develop Neighbourhood Plans for Wirral's Area Forum areas which took place at the end of last year questions which will supplement evidence about child poverty issues and inform actions in the final strategy and plan. The information will help us to better understand the services and characteristics local neighbourhoods should have in terms of successfully supporting family life and addressing issues of poverty within communities.
- The Council's budget for 2011-12 includes £10,000 to support targeted engagement in respect of developing the strategy. A project has been commissioned to evaluate the impact of existing local initiatives and programmes on families in poverty with a particular focus on identifying what interventions have been most successful in supporting parents into sustainable employment. The outcomes of this evaluation will be circulated widely to all partners and used to inform the development of action plan.

- Once the plan is finalised, clear governance arrangements will need to be in place to ensure that the strategy and action plan are delivered effectively and that links continue to be made with the work of key partnerships. Work is underway to develop these governance arrangements in line with the review of the Local Strategic Partnership.
- Development work is also underway regarding a performance framework for monitoring outcomes achieved from the delivery of the action plan.
- The work to develop Wirral's strategy and action plan is closely aligned with the Liverpool City Region (LCR) child poverty and life chances strategy, which has now been launched and is available at www.liverpoolcitystrategyces.org.uk
- The Children's Trust agreed that the child poverty training module be compulsory for all staff and volunteers working with children and young people. The development of the module is almost complete and will be added to the Children's Workforce common induction programme to ensure all staff are trained in this area. An e-learning module is also planned.
- Under the 'roots and wings' banner, pilot work is underway regarding approaches to supporting teenage mothers from conception onwards.

Appendix 1 – Draft Child Poverty Strategy and Initial Action Plan

3.0 Recommendations:

3.1 Wirral Children's Trust Board notes the progress made.

3.2. Wirral Children's Trust Board reviews the draft strategy and action plan and makes recommendations regarding future development.

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