

**Annual Report
&
Business Plan
2012-13**



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Chair's Welcome

Over the last year Wirral Safeguarding Children Board has sought to consolidate and build on the positive developments achieved in previous years. There have been significant challenges with budgetary constraints, major structural changes in key organisations and a refocusing of some of the principles underpinning child protection and safeguarding children work. In order to meet these demands and expectations Wirral Safeguarding Children Board revised its structure and work plan leaving it in a healthier position to respond to these challenges.

One of the features of the Safeguarding Board partnership has been the continued commitment of all agencies to work together in maintaining and improving practice to safeguard children and young people on the Wirral. It was particularly heartening to see that a recent audit of partner agencies evidenced a very clear commitment to fulfilling their individual and corporate safeguarding responsibilities. The "outstanding" evaluation of the recent Ofsted Inspection in Wirral is testament to the achievement of the partnership.

The coming year will continue to see new challenges. The introduction of major revisions to Government Guidance in *Working Together* mean that there will be a less prescriptive approach from central Government towards safeguarding practice. We are aware that this will lead to greater responsibilities for the Safeguarding Children Board in setting the direction and standards for safeguarding children.

This Annual Report sets out the work that has been undertaken by and through the Children's Safeguarding Board in Wirral. It provides commentary on the key developments over the course of the year and the planned priorities for the coming year. I hope that both practitioners and members of the public find the Report useful and interesting.

In concluding I would like to thank members of Wirral Safeguarding Children Board for their energy and commitment over the last year. Their work has provided a framework to improve the quality of life for many children in Wirral.

Dennis Charlton

Independent Chair

The National Context for Safeguarding Children

In 2010 the Coalition Government published its Public Spending Review setting out substantial cuts in funding for public services. Reduced funding was accompanied by proposals for the reshaping of local authority partnerships, reforms to the delivery of National Health Services and the commissioning of a comprehensive review of frontline child protection services, to be undertaken by Professor Eileen Munro. The Coalition Government stated that its aim was to reduce the role of central government and enable local partnerships to adopt their own approaches to delivering local services.

For safeguarding boards the implications of these emerging developments was immediate. The previous requirement for local authorities to maintain a Children's Trust Board and produce a Children and Young People's Plan was withdrawn. Schools were encouraged to seek Academy or Free School status, allowing them to become independent from local authority oversight. Similarly the NHS was given more autonomy to direct and prioritise services in response to local need and the major responsibility for commissioning these services would lie with the local GP consortia.

With such significant changes to the delivery of services, the Coalition Government introduced the requirement for each local authority area to set up Health and Well Being Boards which will promote more integration between the NHS and social care and encourage local authorities to take a strategic approach to all service areas including safeguarding children.

While the changes to the delivery of education and health services have bearing on Safeguarding Boards the most anticipated and potentially significant reforms were expected to follow the Munro Review of Child Protection. Professor Munro presented her third and final report to ministers in May 2011. The report identified a number of inherent problems in the current child protection system such as:

- The system has been weighted towards responding to serious abuse and neglect with insufficient investment being made into preventative services;
- Bureaucratic processes drive and dominate professional practice;
- Children and young people are not sufficiently seen or heard, and that continuity of relationships is not valued highly enough.

Munro's report and recommendations mirror the Coalition Government's shift from central prescription towards individual discretion in local decision making processes. Similarly, developing and valuing professional expertise and strengthening accountabilities are common priorities.

In July 2011 the Government published its response to the review, accepting all recommendations, although some only in principle. Timescales were set and working groups established to begin implementing change to frontline services. With such substantial change planned it is not surprising that there has been slippage in the timescales originally identified. The reviewing of statutory guidance and inspection frameworks, evaluation of pilot projects, and reconfiguration of the Serious Case Review process will be revealed throughout 2012. For LSCB's nationally it will be a challenging year as we strive to put into practice the system outlined by Professor Munro: a system which learns; is dominated by direct work with children and families; which values professional judgement and feedback; is characterised by strong, accountable leadership; and is focussed strongly on providing the best outcomes for children.

The Local Response to Emerging Developments

One of the earliest decisions taken by CYPD following the Public Spending Review was to maintain both the Children's Trust Board and the Children and Young People's Plan. In Wirral the Children's Trust Board has proven successful in achieving positive results in each of the five ECM Outcome areas. The relationship between the Children's Trust Board and WSCB will continue to strengthen accountabilities throughout 2012.

Whilst 22% of schools in Wirral have achieved Academy status, partnership working between schools, the Local Authority and WSCB remains positive and is strengthened by Education Quality, the Local Authority's commissioned service and the Consultant Leads for Education employed by the Local Authority.

Wirral has initiated three GP consortia to commission health services and links with WSCB have been established with our Independent Chair, Named Professionals and Strategic Leads for health. Further development of these relationships and cultivation of communication links will be a priority for 2012.

Through WSCB, the Children's Trust Board and the Local Authority a number of key groups and committees are responding to the Munro Review of Child Protection. The aim of these working groups is to ensure that a co-ordinated and effective implementation plan is delivered, providing the best possible outcomes for Wirral children and families.

Governance

Relationship between the LSCB and the Children's Trust

The work of WSCB to safeguard children contributes to the wider goals of the Children's Trust, with particular focus on the *Staying Safe*. The Children's Trust has a role in the planning and development of services for children and young people, whereas the function of WSCB is to co-ordinate and ensure the effectiveness of these services.

The LSCB is not subordinate to or subsumed by the Children's Trust, it has a separate identity and an independent voice which allows it to challenge and scrutinise the effectiveness of the work of the Children's Trust and its partners. A *Memorandum of Understanding* exists to clarify and strengthen the relationship between the two bodies.

Roles and Responsibilities

Statutory guidance on the role of the Lead Elected Member and Director of Children's Services was issued by the Coalition Government in March 2012. This new guidance updates and strengthens that previously contained within *Working Together to Safeguard Children* (2010).

The Director of Children's Services and the Lead Elected Member for Children's Services have crucial roles in improving outcomes for children and young people in Wirral: the Director of Children's Services has lead organisational responsibility and the Lead Member is politically accountable for ensuring that the local authority fulfils its legal responsibilities for safeguarding children. The Director of Children's Services is a member both of Wirral Children's Trust and of the LSCB. The Lead Member is Chair of Wirral Children's Trust and is a 'participant observer' of the LSCB.

All members of the LSCB are accountable to its Independent Chair for their contribution to the work of the Board, whether they are local authority officers, professionals or lay members. Professional members of the Board both represent and 'hold to account' their own organisations.

WSCB's annual report will be presented to the Children's Trust and Safeguarding Adults Partnership Board for information, and to the Chief Executive of Wirral Council and the Safeguarding Reference Group for sign off.

Progress and Achievement 2011-12

Since the publication of the 2011-12 Annual Report significant progress has been made in a number of areas. Both WSCB and Ofsted have scrutinised developments made over the previous twelve months.

Ofsted guidance released in April 2011 explained that the annual assessment of children's service would be derived from the performance profile of the quality of services for children and young people in each local area. This performance profile includes findings from Ofsted inspections and regulation of services for which the local authority has strategic or operational responsibilities, either alone or in partnership with others.

In November 2011 Wirral Children's Services was assessed as 'performing excellently':

"Children's services in Wirral Metropolitan Borough Council perform excellently. In 2010 services were assessed as performing well. Good performance has been sustained and further improvement has been achieved in a number of areas. The vast majority of services, settings and institutions inspected by Ofsted are good or better and most provision effectively helps children and young people to learn and to stay safe."

In terms of WSCB and multi-agency working, Ofsted stated that:

"Services for safeguarding and looked after children are good with some outstanding features. Leadership and management are outstanding, as are partnership arrangements."

The February 2012 unannounced inspection noted that:

"The areas of development identified at the previous contact, referral and assessment arrangements in July 2010 and the Safeguarding and Looked After Children Inspection in January and February 2011 have been subject to a robust action plan to deliver improvements. Marked progress has been made in the majority of areas."

The following section of this annual report reflects on the priorities set out in the 2011-12 business plan and highlights the progress and achievements which contributed to the assessment made by Ofsted.

Priority 1a: Continue to improve the functioning of WSCB

Rationale	What WSCB has achieved	What remains to be done
<p>In September 2010, WSCB received the <i>Review of Wirral LSCB Committees</i> from an Independent Consultant. The report made 12 recommendations as to how the effectiveness of the board could be enhanced by formalising the structures and arrangements for the sub-committees. Recognising the increase in the number of committees, the vital role of the Executive Group and the need for clarity of purpose, the recommendations were accepted by WSCB and an implementation plan undertaken.</p>	<p>WSCB has succeeded in strengthening the role of the Executive Group, providing direction to its committees and through formal induction processes supported members to undertake their roles more effectively.</p> <p>Two-way communication between the Executive Group and the sub-groups allows greater connection and engagement of the committees in the WSCB Business Plan. Committee work plans now derive from, and support, the board’s priorities and there is greater co-ordination and understanding as to how individual groups are working together to meet shared objectives.</p> <p>A thorough review of membership was undertaken for each group. Membership has been revised to accord with the recommendations of <i>Working Together to Safeguard Children</i> (2010), ensure an equitable spread of resources across committees and provide the correct skills, knowledge and experience required to deliver better outcomes.</p> <p>A significant finding of the <i>Review of Wirral LSCB Committees</i> was that both board and committee members were in some cases unsure of their role, expectations of them and the overarching purpose of WSCB. In response to this a formal induction process for all members was introduced. During 2011, 52 board and committee members attended the inductions.</p>	<p>WSCB will continue to refresh work plans, priorities and terms of reference on an annual basis. Committees will continue to provide quarterly reports to the Executive Group and receive direction in response. The induction sessions will be delivered on a regular basis and will be available to both new and existing members. As WSCB’s priorities change and relationships with new groups, such as the Health and Well-Being Board emerge, the inductions will be integral to ensuring that there is clarity of purpose for those involved.</p>

Priority 1b: Continue to improve the accountability of WSCB		
Rationale	What WSCB has achieved	What remains to be done
<p>WSCB is the key statutory mechanism for co-ordinating and ensuring the effectiveness of arrangements to safeguard and promote the welfare of all children in Wirral. The scope of its activity covers 3 main areas:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Activity that affects all children and aims to identify and prevent maltreatment or impairment of health or development, and ensure that children are growing up in circumstances consistent with safe and effective care • Proactive work that aims to target particular groups • Responsive work to protect children who are suffering, or likely to suffer, significant harm <p>It is the duty of WSCB to hold agencies to account in terms of their safeguarding arrangements and practices.</p>	<p>Section 11 audit- All WSCB member agencies, 66 schools, 2 Further Education institutions and 10 voluntary sector organisations completed the Section 11 Safeguarding Audit. Having submitted their audits, WSCB member organisations were invited to an accountability meeting with the Independent Chair and WSCB Manager to discuss their response, identify areas of good practice and agree actions where development was required. A moderation panel was established to review and provide feedback and action points to all other agencies who participated in the audit.</p> <p>A quality assurance framework has been established which includes a number of accountability testing activities.</p> <p>Annual appraisals for the Independent Chair, LSCB Manager and Lay Members.</p> <p>Quarterly Performance Management Reports are scrutinised at each WSCB meeting.</p> <p>Regular multi-agency audits are completed by committees with learning shared and recommendations implemented.</p> <p>Themed audits in child protection and Looked After Children services.</p> <p>Multi-agency quality assurance and reporting of CAF and TAC processes.</p> <p>Implementing toolkits for improving the quality of CAF and TAC processes.</p>	<p>WSCB aim to establish a robust quality assurance framework. The framework will be designed to encourage and stimulate organisational reflection</p> <p>It will focus on a wide range of content areas including governance, reporting, training, accountability, regular/themed audits, annual ‘Deep-Dive’ reviews of a specific content area, annual ‘Turning the Curve’ exercises, and external peer reviews.</p> <p>The end product should allow both member agencies and the board collectively to establish an improving picture of the quality and impact of safeguarding services.</p>

Priority 2: Improve learning from serious case reviews and critical incidents by making use of and developing the Social Care Institute of Excellence (SCIE) model as a review framework.

Rationale	What WSCB has achieved	What remains to be done
<p>Over previous years concerns regarding the process and outcomes of traditional SCRs have risen and the government have accepted Professor Munro's call for change. The <i>Learning Together</i> approach developed by SCIE, in partnership with Professor Munro, uses systems methodology similar to that already in existence within health and engineering. The goal of a systems case review is not limited to understanding why specific cases developed in the way that they did, rather the case is made to act as a 'window' on the system identifying what works as well as areas for improvement.</p>	<p>WSCB has completed 2 critical incident reviews using revised versions of the SCIE framework and having participated in both SCIE's <i>Learning Together</i> projects. Having completed a total of 4 systems reviews it is evident that there have been a number of benefits and that learning for WSCB has been improved. This includes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Learning has been immediate. Unlike traditional SCRs which take a 'top-down' approach, the systems review begins from the perspective of the frontline practitioner working with the child and family. Engaging with those who deliver services, and encouraging them to critically review their practice in a safe environment, gives the opportunity for professionals to make positive changes to their practice immediately. • Time has been made for reflection. An important benefit of this approach is that reflection is encouraged and developed within the multi-agency group as well as with individuals. This promotes better understanding of roles, greater communication and will support improved future practice. • Identifying lessons has been a collaborative venture. The multi-agency group of frontline workers who contribute to the review are invited to discuss with the Lead Reviewers the emerging themes, the lessons to be learned and the recommendations to be made to WSCB. Not only does this promote positive multi-agency working but it encourages practitioners to 'own' the findings and the actions required to improve practice. 	<p>With 4 reviews completed using systems approaches, WSCB has gained sufficient experience to evaluate the processes and devise an effective procedure for conducting future CIRs. Cultivating a learning culture will remain at the centre of this task. With regard to SCRs, further guidance will be made available to safeguarding boards in July 2012 when WSCB will be prepared to respond appropriately.</p>

Priority 3: Evaluate the extent to which lessons identified in previous or current reviews have been learnt in practice; specifically relating to issues of parental mental ill-health, child sexual abuse, domestic abuse and neglect.

Rationale	What WSCB has achieved	What remains to be done
<p>Learning from SCRs are an essential function for WSCB and the four priority practice areas have been identified by recent case reviews as in need of further development.</p>	<p>Parental Mental Ill Health- Early in 2011 WSCB commissioned the Performance Committee to undertake a multi-agency audit of cases with parental mental health concerns. Additional training on parental mental health has been commissioned. Most significant to the progress made in this area has been the launch of a joint protocol between Wirral’s Children and Young People’s Department, Department of Adult Social Services and Cheshire and Wirral Partnerships.</p> <p>Neglect- WSCB invested in this area through the re-launch of the Graded Care Profile. Training in the Graded Care Profile was accessed by 81 practitioners during 2011 and delivery was enhanced by co-presenting provided by social workers who routinely use the tool. Targeted briefings were delivered by Senior Managers to health professionals and social workers.</p> <p>Domestic Abuse- Wirral’s Children and Young People’s Department have continued to second an advanced social work practitioner within Wirral Family Safety Unit which ensures that all cases involving children are reviewed to identify immediate actions needed to safeguard and promote their welfare. Since April 2011, the safety and support needs of 764 children have been reviewed by MARAC.</p> <p>Child Sexual Abuse- A case of alleged sexual abuse was chosen as the subject for the SCIE <i>Learning Together</i> project. The review involved approximately 20 frontline practitioners. The review was completed and reported to WSCB where a number of key actions have been identified to improve the effectiveness of safeguarding children who have suffered sexual abuse.</p>	<p>WSCB is satisfied that it has made substantial progress in the 4 key practice areas but recognises that this is the first step in a much longer process. Foundations have been set to improve understanding, expertise and ultimately to improve outcomes for children but there is much to be undertaken in terms of awareness raising, training and improved joint working throughout 2012-13. Thus, these areas of practice will remain key priorities for WSCB in 2012-13.</p>

Priority 4: Continue to monitor thresholds across the partnership for Common Assessment Framework, Child in Need, Team Around the Child and Child Protection.

Rationale	What WSCB has achieved	What remains to be done
<p>Well-co-ordinated and effective child protection practice relies heavily on consistent thresholds of intervention. The thresholds for the partnership are coherently illustrated within the <i>Guide to Integrated Working</i>, which is updated by WSCB on an annual basis. WSCB has a key role in ensuring that thresholds are appropriate, well-communicated and applied consistently as this is fundamental to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children in Wirral.</p>	<p>Reports on Common Assessment Framework (CAF) and Team Around the Child (TAC) activity have been produced and disseminated across the partnership on a quarterly basis. This information has been reported to WSCB, with the Child in Need (CiN) and Child Protection data through the quarterly performance management report, which remains a standing agenda item. The information is scrutinised by WSCB and appropriate action taken in response to the findings.</p> <p>A review of the CiN process was initiated in 2011 and good progress has been achieved. The first aim of the review is to improve the quality of the CiN plans by ensuring the underpinning system and process is fit for purpose and that multi-agency quality assurance mechanisms are in place. A second aim is to ensure the process for the appropriate transfer of cases between CiN and TAC is well understood and happens smoothly. Work began in March 2011 and the first stage of the project was focussed on making sure the CiN underpinning system and process was fit for purpose.</p> <p>A clear procedure has been developed for the transfer of cases from CiN to TAC and this has been adopted by all social care teams. A briefing has also been developed to explain the procedure and this has been delivered in each district.</p>	<p>The CiN Review will continue throughout 2012 and will focus on strengthening risk management processes and providing a toolkit for collecting the views and wishes of the children and families involved.</p> <p>WSCB will continue to receive quarterly performance management reports on all areas of intervention and will commission reviews as required.</p> <p>An annual update of the Guide to Integrated Working will continue as will the annual review of thresholds undertaken by the Staying Safe Strategy Group.</p>

Priority 5: Monitor closely the effects of budgetary pressures and potential organisational restructuring of services, acting as necessary to continue to effectively safeguard and promote the welfare of children.

Rationale	What WSCB has achieved	What remains to be done
<p>WSCB is supported financially by its member organisations and, when available, government grants. In light of the Public Spending Review and the significant cuts experienced across service areas, there were serious concerns that contributions to WSCB, both financial and in terms of representation, would be reduced and thus have an impact on the effectiveness of the board.</p>	<p>WSCB maintained financial contributions from partners in 2011-12 and anticipated the same for 2012-13. In relation to boards in neighbouring authorities who have experienced dramatic financial reductions, this is a significant achievement and reflects the value placed on safeguarding children by member organisations.</p> <p>Organisational restructuring and budget cuts were focal areas at WSCB's annual development day in 2011. Senior Managers from each partner agency presented an update on how their organisation planned to respond to the Public Spending Review. This activity provided clarity to the board in terms of what changes were imminent and how this could be responded to in order to maintain an effective safeguarding board.</p> <p>The budget has been monitored on a quarterly basis by the Executive Group and reported to WSCB at every meeting.</p>	<p>WSCB will continue to monitor budgetary pressures throughout 2012-13 and will ensure that contingency plans are in place in order to minimise any impact on services.</p>

Priority 6: To improve communication processes between WSCB, its committees, the wider workforce and the general public.

Rationale	What WSCB has achieved	What remains to be done
<p>WSCB is charged with the responsibility of co-ordinating safeguarding arrangements across the partnership. Fostering effective communication channels is key to achieving this. Disseminating learning from case reviews and implementing procedures relies on robust links between the board and its member organisations. As the number of WSCB sub-groups, committee members and related boards has increased so too has the need to develop and strengthen mechanisms for communication.</p>	<p>Functional Improvements The Executive Group of WSCB, formed in 2010, was set up to provide a link between the board and its increasing number of sub-committees. This two-way communication flow between the board and its committees has enabled more effective information sharing and co-ordination of safeguarding activity. The WSCB Induction sessions were attended by 52 board and committee members in 2011. In addition to gaining a better understanding of the purpose and function of the board, the induction provides participants with an overview of each committee, its role and responsibilities. Having commissioned an external company to develop an on-line safeguarding children manual, access to procedures and guidance has improved greatly.</p> <p>Reaching a Wider Audience The first WSCB newsletter was produced and distributed in October 2011. Produced in electronic format, the WSCB newsletter can be easily shared with professionals at all levels across the partnership. WSCB contributed to the School Governor’s Newsletter. At a time when many schools were becoming academies, this gave the board the opportunity to update governing bodies on the 2011-12 Business Plan and share the priorities for safeguarding children. In partnership with the Local Authority and Children’s Social Care a consultation was undertaken with children and families in order to produce a series of information leaflets on care proceedings, the role of Independent Reviewing Officers and other child protection related interventions.</p>	<p>Plans to further develop the WSCB website were initiated in 2011. The structural model was agreed and the underwriting has commenced. In 2012 a refreshed website will be launched providing more information and support not just for professionals but for children and families too. The website will be a key driver in addressing issues which are important to parents and children alike such as e-Safety and bullying.</p>

Priority 7: To strengthen joint working arrangements between WSCB and the SAPB.

Rationale	What WSCB has achieved	What remains to be done
<p>The purpose of the Safeguarding Adults Partnership Board (SAPB) is to ensure that vulnerable adults are protected from abuse or the threat of abuse through effective inter-agency working. Vulnerable adults include persons suffering, or at risk of, domestic abuse, persons with a physical or learning disability and those with a long-term mental disorder. Within each of these categories there are a significant number of parents, therefore it is imperative that a co-ordinated approach is taken by both the adults' and children's boards to safeguard and promote the welfare of the family.</p>	<p>Strategic Leadership- Early in 2011, Wirral Local Authority established a Head of Safeguarding post with oversight of both children's and adults' safeguarding services. As the benefits of this shared strategic leadership became apparent it was agreed that there would be merit in further enhancing the connectivity by having a shared Chair. After 18 months chairing WSCB, Dennis Charlton was appointed as Independent Chair of the SAPB.</p> <p>Learning and Development- WSCB introduced formal induction sessions for members which cover the role and functions of the SAPB as well as the LSCB. Facilitated by both Board Managers, the inductions provide members with an overview of how the two boards will work in partnership to better safeguard vulnerable people in Wirral. Two of the Critical Incident Reviews completed in 2011 involved both Senior Managers and practitioners from adults' services. Relationships and links between services have been strengthened as a direct outcome of these reviews.</p> <p>A significant development initiated in 2011 has been planning the merger of the Training sub-committees and the safeguarding training calendar.</p> <p>Joint Practice- A number of activities have brought together professionals from both services in order to improve local practice. This includes an audit of cases where there were known parental mental health issues, working groups which developed local protocols for mental health and joint working with housing providers, and bringing together a committee to lead on the development of a localised procedure for Domestic Homicide Reviews.</p>	<p>The first joint development day for WSCB and SAPB will be held in 2012. This will provide an important opportunity to align activity, pool resources and set joint objectives to further improve safeguarding practice across Wirral.</p>

Priority 8: To maintain representation and contribution to Multi Agency Public Protection Arrangements (MAPPA).

Rationale	What WSCB has achieved	What remains to be done
<p>Multi Agency Public Protection Arrangements (MAPPA) are a mechanism by which agencies discharge their responsibility to protect the public from sexual and violent offenders in a co-ordinated way. As Responsible Authorities, the Police and Probation Service lead the arrangements working with a number of agencies, including Children’s Services, who have a duty to co-operate. Ensuring that there is a robust link between WSCB and MAPP panels will promote effective safeguarding of children who may be at risk from known offenders.</p>	<p>WSCB recognised that the need to maintain representation at MAPPAs and to promote clear lines of information sharing and thus identified the Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO) as its representative at meetings. The LADO works closely with the Responsible Authorities to identify children linked to offenders who may be at risk of harm on their release from prison. In addition to providing appropriate information the LADO has contributed to comprehensive risk assessments completed by the panel. The LADO’s focus relates specifically to the needs and safety of the child(ren) related to the case. Where a child or family have been known to Children’s Social Care, the LADO has liaised with the allocated Social Worker to ensure that appropriate representation is maintained.</p> <p>During 2010-11 over 800 MAPPA meetings were held across Merseyside. During that period no serious further offences were recorded against MAPP cases. This positive statistic demonstrates that the arrangements in place are working well to protect children and the general public.</p>	<p>WSCB will maintain representation at MAPPA through the LADO and will continue to support effective information sharing and risk management procedures.</p>

Serious Case Reviews

Working Together to Safeguard Children (2010) sets out the criteria for conducting SCRs; the procedural requirements and timescales which should be adhered to when a case is being considered. SCRs are undertaken when a child dies or is significantly harmed, and neglect and/or abuse are known or suspected to be a factor in the case. Additionally WSCB will always consider whether a SCR should be conducted in other significant circumstances. The purpose of SCRs is to establish whether lessons can be learned from the case about the way in which local professionals and organisations work together to safeguard and promote the welfare of children, to act upon these lessons and as a consequence improve inter-agency working.

In 2011 WSCB completed 2 SCRs: *Children ABCD* and *Child E*. Both received an Ofsted evaluation grading of 'adequate'.

Lessons Learned

SCRs are of little value unless lessons are learned from them. Themes from the 2 SCRs completed in 2011 are as follows:

- **Keeping Child-Focussed-** In complex cases where families present multiple problems there is a danger that professionals can become distracted by domestic needs, particularly those of the parents, and thus lose sight of the child. Planning and decision making processes must centre on the needs of the child and for this to be effective workers must invest time in getting to know children better. This requires more than just seeing or hearing the child. The challenge for practitioners is to be able to empathise with the child, to see the world from their perspective and to fully appreciate what life is like for them.
- **Grouping-** Despite sharing parents, homes, events or environments, all children are individuals with individual needs. Outcomes for children in cases involving sibling groups or other close relationships are often hindered by the tendency to group them together. Assessments, plans, interventions, observations and conversations need to be undertaken for each individual child and should reflect their particular needs, feelings and wishes.
- **Fixed Mindset-** Practitioners working with children and families need to remain open to challenge and change. There is a risk that if practitioners hold views or preconceptions about a child/family that they may ignore evidence which contradicts their existing viewpoint. To assist practitioners in retaining an open-mind multi-agency colleagues must be willing to offer healthy challenge and managers need to ensure that good quality supervision allows frontline staff to examine cases from a number of angles.
- **Resistant Families-** Disguised compliance is a term familiar to practitioners yet identifying it in practice is not always straight-forward. Often perpetrators of

harm are skilled in drawing attention away from allegations and onto other areas such as themselves or difficult domestic circumstances. It is therefore vital that individual practitioners and multi-agency groups continue to bring the focus of the intervention back to the initial allegation and to use the assessment tools available to consider the evidence that they are met with.

Responding to Lessons Learned

In order to maximise the opportunity to improve safeguarding arrangements, an action plan is produced for each SCR and is monitored by WSCB's Executive Group. The following list provides examples of some of the positive changes which have been implemented since completing the *Children ABCD* and *Child E* SCRs:

- Reviews have been completed in these areas:
 - barriers to effective inter-agency challenge
 - child protection cases which end at the first review
 - children who are subject to a second child protection plan
 - arrangements for undertaking *Achieving Best Evidence* interviews
 - safeguarding supervision arrangements across the partnership
- Procedures have been revised for the following:
 - Domestic Violence
 - Working with Sexually Active Under-18s
 - Revision of assessment and working with children who have been sexually abused
- Training and development has been facilitated in the areas of:
 - Working with Sexually Active Under-18s
 - Neglect and the Graded Care Profile
 - Working with Resistant Families
 - Critical Analysis and Risk Assessment
 - Achieving Best Evidence interviews (evidence gathered in criminal investigations)
- Changes to practice include:
 - Reviewing provision for parents to promote safe cultures in terms of sex education and relationships
 - Identifying a Senior Officer Strategy Group to provide operational direction in instances where multiple investigation processes are invoked

Learning from SCRs is disseminated in many ways including briefing sessions, multi-agency safeguarding training, Director's Briefings and publication of Executive Summaries. Learning from the *Children ABCD* and *Child E* SCRs will be further examined throughout 2012-12 by means of sampling, themed audits and reviews.

Child Death Overview Panel

Introduction

This chapter provides an overview of the work of the Wirral CDOP from the period of April 2010 to March 2011. It provides a high level summary of the cases that were reviewed by the panel during that time.

This will be the last annual report from the dedicated Wirral panel, which has now been running for a total of three years. In future, Wirral's child death cases will form part of the caseload of the new Pan Mersey CDOP.

Wirral CDOP is responsible for reviewing information on all child deaths (from birth up to the age of 18 years) that occur in the WSCB area. The purpose is to:

- Identify any 'modifiable factors' that may have contributed to a child's death.
- Collect information so that local patterns/trends can be identified.
- Compare statistical data with other neighbouring areas, and the North West.
- Make recommendations and monitor actions and where possible prevent future child deaths.

The panel is committed to learning from any such death where possible, in order to identify modifiable factors at both national and local level, and to inform action that can be taken to reduce the number of child deaths in the future. Four principles underpin the CDOP work:

1. Every child death is a tragedy.
2. Learning lessons to prevent future child deaths.
3. A multi-agency approach.
4. Possible action to safeguard and promote the welfare of children.

Scope of cases considered by CDOP

The CDOP will gather and assess data on the deaths of all children and young people from birth up to the age of 18 years. This will include neonatal deaths, expected and unexpected deaths in infants and in older children. This process excludes babies who have been stillborn and planned terminations of pregnancy which have been carried out under the law (Abortion Act 1967).

Cases Reviewed by Wirral CDOP April 2010-March 2011

Twenty-six deaths were reported to the Wirral CDOP during this time period. Of these deaths:

- 13 child death reviews were completed (i.e. with a final categorisation to 'close' the review) within the reporting period. The remainder were carried over into

the following year owing to a variety of mortem reports and other missing information.

- 18 were male and 8 were female.
- 14 were neonatal cases i.e. babies aged less than 1 month
- Excluding the 14 neonatal cases, 7 from the remaining 12 deaths were to children under the age of 5 years

The cause of death categorisations for the 13 completed cases were as follows:

Category	Number of children
Malignancy	1
Chronic Medical Condition	0
Chromosomal, genetic and congenital anomalies	3
Perinatal/neonatal event	8
Infection	0
Sudden Unexpected Unexplained death	0
Acute medical or surgical condition	1
TOTAL	13

- Only 1 of the completed 13 cases was judged by the panel to have potentially modifiable factors. This case was categorised as 'Infection'. (need to check this with Jane as 0 in infection!)

Key Activities 2010-11

The findings of the CDOP panel during this period fed into the following public health work programmes:

- Smoking cessation
- Domestic violence
- Drug/alcohol misuse
- Weight management
- Teenage pregnancy
- Safe sleeping

Multi-Agency Safeguarding Training

Training Calendar

The Learning and Development Committee of WSCB is responsible for co-ordinating the multi-agency safeguarding training calendar; ensuring that courses are high quality and meet the diverse needs of the workforce. In 2011 the training calendar offered 26 different courses. Throughout the year the training calendar was regularly updated to integrate and respond to learning emerging from SCRs and CIRs. This included providing sessions on *Working with Resistant Families*, *Risk Assessment and Critical Analysis*, *Learning from Serious Case Reviews* and *Effects of Domestic Abuse* which were delivered by external trainers with relevant expertise. A multi-agency audience has been achieved at all courses which enhances learning across the partnership. Over 1,000 attendances were recorded in 2011.

"Promoting multi-agency working is very high on the Housing Options agenda. It was very refreshing therefore to find a diverse mix of staff from very different backgrounds, all with their own points of view, opinions and experiences to share."

Housing Options Manager

Quality Assurance

A priority area for the Learning and Development Committee in 2011 has been quality assurance, in terms of both single and multi-agency safeguarding training. A tool was developed which evaluates the presenter's knowledge, course content, appropriateness of aims and objectives and audience interaction. Committee members observed and completed the quality assurance process for a wide range of courses and feedback was used to further improve delivery.

Whilst observation and evaluation of course delivery reassures WSCB of the quality of the training it is limited in terms of measuring the impact which training has on outcomes for children and families. The Learning and Development Committee have initiated an impact assessment process based on the framework developed by Professor John Carpenter. The impact assessment tool asks participants to score their knowledge and understanding at 3 stages: before, immediately after, and three months later. The approach was piloted with the *Risk Assessment and Critical Analysis* course. Early indications are that this will provide a better understanding of the difference that training can make to practice. Responses from participants include:

- Understanding of the 'garden path' concept rose from 1 (lowest score) to 10 (highest score)

- An increase in evidence-based recording
- More reflective in their supervision sessions
- Less likely to accept, without question, information presented by parents

The trial of the impact assessment tool will continue and be evaluated in 2012-13 with a view to agreeing a formal process which will link directly to WSCB's performance management reporting structure.

"I fell that by attending all WSCB courses which are relevant to my role I have been able to improve my knowledge base around vulnerable children, a greater awareness of risks to children and put this knowledge into practice when working with clients."

Clinical Co-ordinator, Cheshire and Wirral Partnership

Future Developments

As part of the arrangements to strengthen links with the SAPB, the Learning and Development Committees for adult and children's services will merge in April 2012. A single committee will produce and oversee a joint multi-agency safeguarding training calendar. SCRs have routinely highlighted the need to avoid working in silos; that practitioners must see adult's issues when working with children and children's issues when working with adults. In training areas such as domestic abuse, parental mental health and sexual abuse, it is clear that there will be great benefit to bringing colleagues together to consider the family rather than the individual.

Following an evaluation of training delivered in 2011, the Learning and Development Committee have chosen to prioritise a number of 'core' courses for 2012-13. This includes Working Together Level 2, neglect, the Graded Care Profile and sexual abuse. These courses will be provided more regularly and there will be an expectation that front-line practitioners have core competencies in these areas. The committee will be exploring opportunities for e-learning to further support the work undertaken in multi-agency sessions. In order to meet the demand for training the committee are implementing plans to develop a 'pool' of trainers from partner organisations who hold relevant and local expertise.

Common Assessment Framework (CAF)

CAF Activity

Support for agencies and families involved in the CAF and TAC (Team Around the Child) process is provided by the 11 multi-agency area teams located across Wirral and shown on the map below. Typical support provided by the Area Teams includes advice and guidance with completing the CAF form, signposting to agencies, provision of training and attendance at TAC meetings if requested.

Each Area Team monitors the CAF and TACs initiated in their area and collects information about each episode which is updated monthly. This data is used to produce a monthly activity report for WSCB.

Collected data tells us that the majority of CAF activity is concentrated in the built up urban north and east part of Wirral with Birkenhead, Tranmere and Rock Ferry being the busiest area. CAF activity is lowest in West Wirral which only accounts for 4% of activity.

CAF data for 2011 reveals that schools undertake the majority of CAFs (45%) with secondary schools authoring slightly more than primary schools. Transfers from social care into TAC (22%) are also very significant as are the number of CAFs authored by health agencies (17%). The profile of agencies is very similar to last year, the biggest differences being fewer transfers taking place from social care in 2010 (17%) and primary schools completing slightly more CAFs than secondary schools. In both 2010 and 2011 the data illustrates the wide variety of agencies from across the children's workforce engaged in the CAF and TAC process.

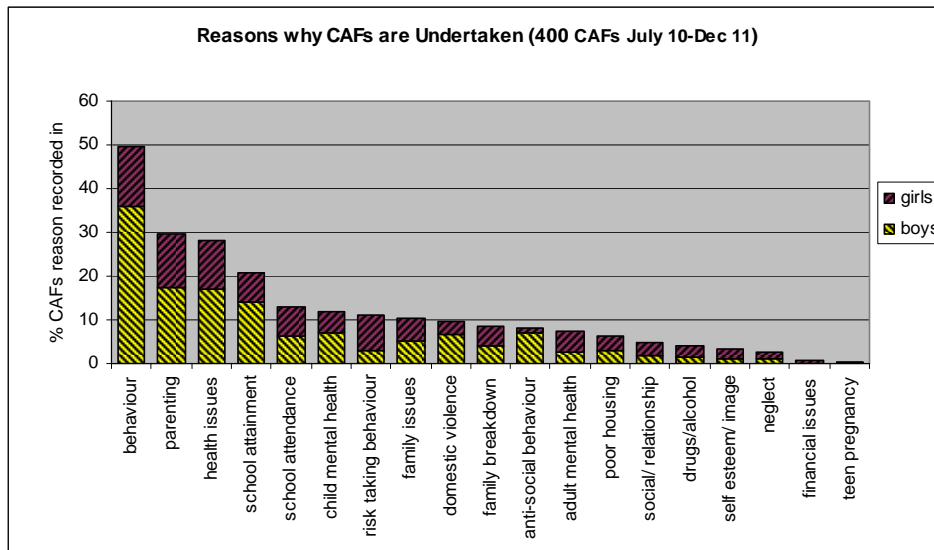
CAF Data

The headline CAF data for Jan-Dec 2011 drawn from the available datasets:

- 814 CAFs undertaken (55% on boys; 38% on 11-15 year olds; 13% on child with a disability; 97% on a white British child). The number of CAFs produced has fallen a few % in Wirral over the past 12 months reflecting the trend across the north west authorities.
- 1325 TAC meetings held
- 3875 consultations held with area teams
- 779 cases closed (56% closed with needs met, 36% referred to social care, 3% disengaged, 5% moved out of area)
- 440 practitioners trained in CAF and TAC process

Identified Needs

As part of the Wirral CAF quality assurance (QA) process a sample of completed CAFs is audited by the CAF QA group each month. As well as being reviewed for quality each submitted CAF is also audited for two important pieces of information; the reasons why the CAF was undertaken and the services requested. The former data is presented in the graph below and is based on an audit of 400 CAFs.



The information provides very clear evidence about the nature of need which is dominated by behavioural concerns, parenting issues, health issues and attainment at school.

CAF Quality

The established multi-agency CAF QA group have evidenced, through the monthly QA report, a significant improvement in the quality of CAFs between January and December 2011, as shown in the graph below.

Throughout 2011 there has been a steady fall in the number of CAFs rated as inadequate over the course of the year from over 35% at the start of the year to under 20% (and as low as 4%) at the end of the year. Strategies were developed in the latter part of 2010/ early 2011 to help improve the quality of CAFs. These included:

- Updated Integrated Working Guide and Summary Guide
- Page by page guidance to completing the CAF
- Reviewed and updated training
- Establishment of CAF webpage containing guidance
- Model CAFs

CAF Quality Assurance Framework

The CAF Quality Assurance Framework (QAF) is a strategy to improve the quality not only of the CAF form but of the whole CAF and TAC process. The framework sets out how individual authors of CAFs, agencies, Area Teams and families involved in the process can be part of the process to monitor and record the quality of the experience. A key part of the framework is the toolkit which includes a checklist for CAF authors, a supervision tool for agencies, audit tools, feedback forms and the family distance travelled tool.

CAF Distance Travelled Tool

The distance travelled tool was developed and initially trialled in the Spring. The tool allows families to indicate how seriously they feel issues are affecting them and whether the TAC process is successfully addressing those needs. The first trial revealed that on average the seriousness of needs reduced by over 30% between the 1st and 2nd TAC meeting and needs continued to improve in subsequent TAC meetings. The tool now forms part of the quality assurance framework and is available for all Lead Professionals to use with families.

Early Help Offer

The Munro review of Child Protection and subsequent response by the Government highlighted the need for local authorities and statutory partners to secure the sufficient provision of local early help services for children, young people and families. It is recommended that each local authority should specify: the range of help on offer; how staff from universal services such as teachers and health visitors could access social work and expertise; and the level of resourcing to be devoted to early intervention services.

In Wirral resources are already in place to support this recommendation. Each of the 11 area teams support all agencies working with children and offers a consultation service for practitioners from the moment issues are first identified. The consultation service includes access to an area social worker and signposting to appropriate services as well as support through the CAF and TAC processes where needed. Area teams have developed close relationships with all their local agencies and are strengthened by their multi-agency nature which allows them swift access to support services. Wirral has invested in the area teams to deliver the early intervention help to children and families and prevent issues escalating before statutory social care involvement is needed.

Child Protection Performance Data

Referrals

A referral is taken by children's social care when a parent, professional or a member of the public either expresses concern about a specific child's welfare or makes a request for a service on behalf of a child.

For 1 April 2010 – 31 March 2011 Wirral recorded 14,539 contacts. The recorded contacts were predominately around information being received and information and advice given.

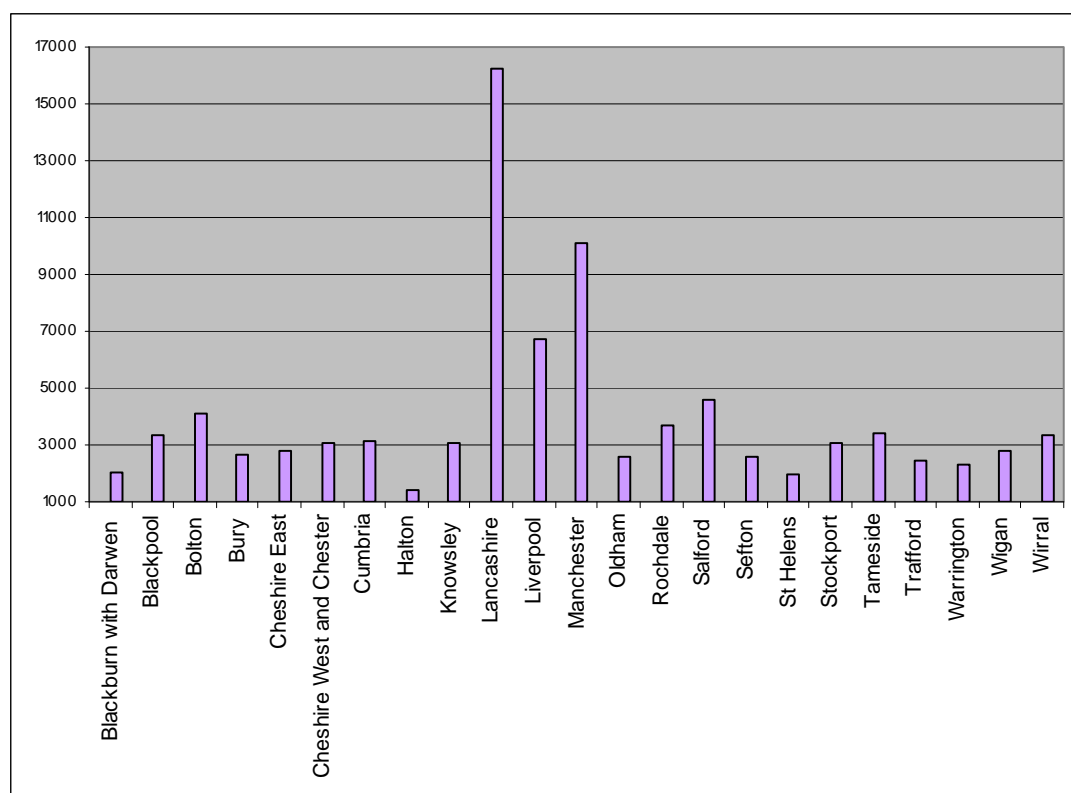


Figure: Represents the total number of referrals by local authorities in the North West for year ending 31 March 2011.

During the year ending 31 March 2011, Wirral children's social care recorded 3,351 referrals. For the year ending 31 March 2010 a total of 3,503 referrals were recorded. Therefore the current year ending 31 March 2011 had 489 less referrals than for the year ending 31 March 2010, thus 14% less referrals have been recorded since 31 March 2010

It can be seen that the rate of referral in Wirral is similar to the rate of most local authorities in the North West. Whilst comparisons against geographically neighbouring authorities allow Wirral Council to measure itself and examine any variations against those authorities, the government have identified specific benchmarking groups.

The population figures used for each local authority have been provided by the Government for ages 0 – 17.

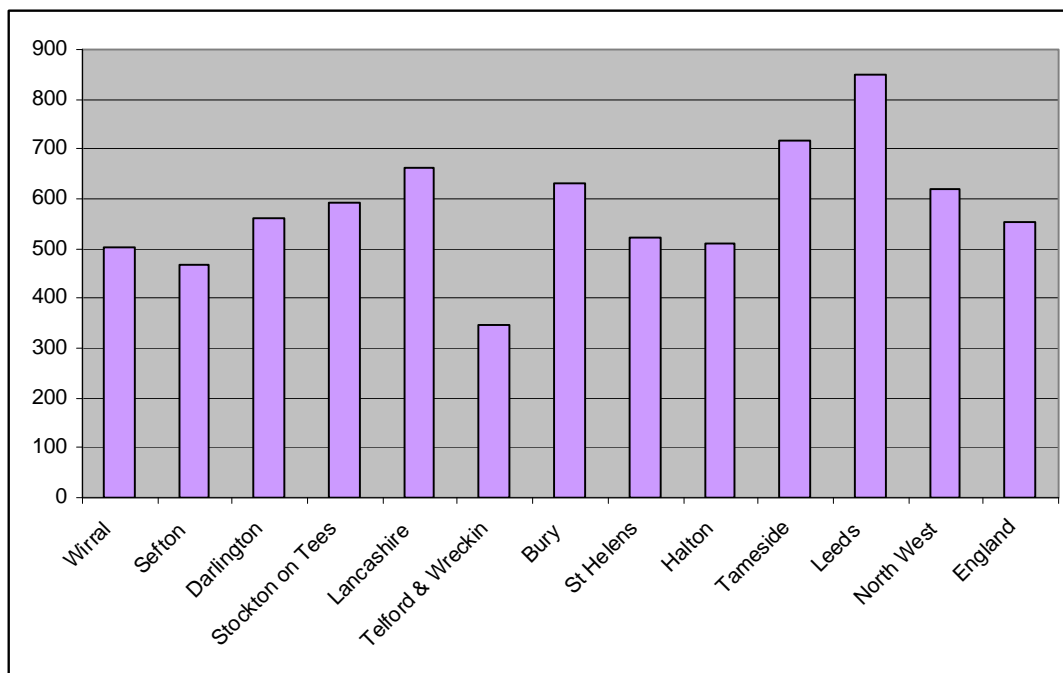


Figure: Represents referral rates per 10,000 child population for each comparator local authority from 1 April 2010 – 31 March 2011.

The average number of referrals per 10,000 children across the benchmarking authorities is 626. With 502 referrals Wirral is below average for the year ending 31 March 2011.

Whilst authorities such as Bury, Lancashire and Leeds have a comparably high number of referrals, they have the lowest percentage of referrals that followed to initial assessment (*see figure below.*) Wirral has recorded for the year ending 31 March 2011 a total of 90% of referrals followed by an initial assessment; this is 15% higher than last year.

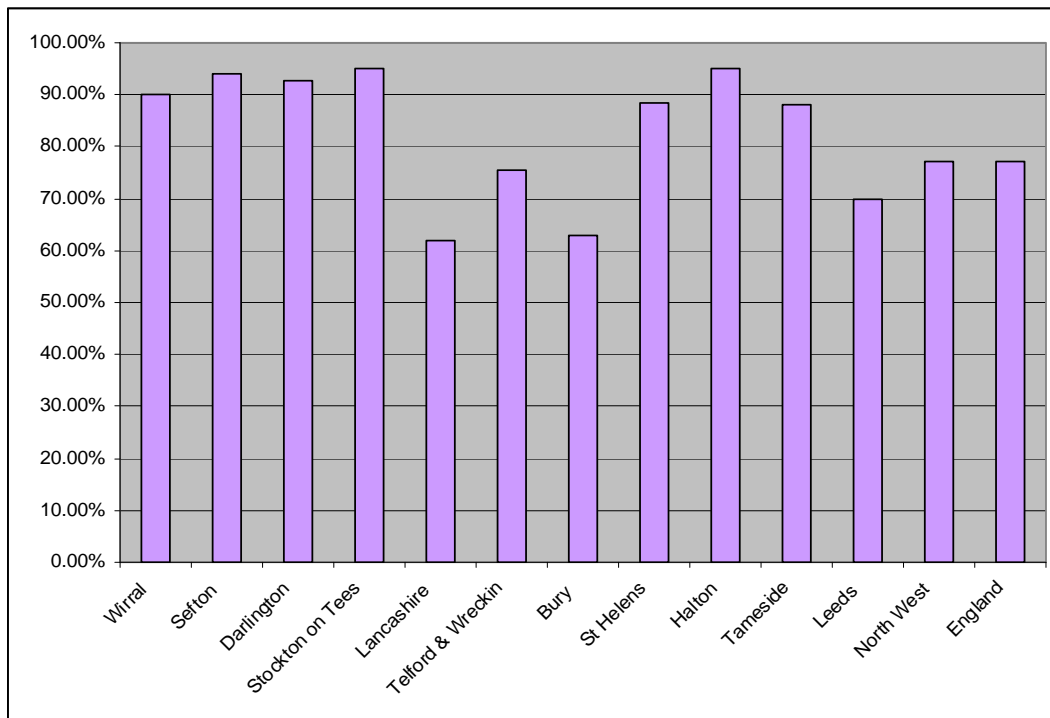
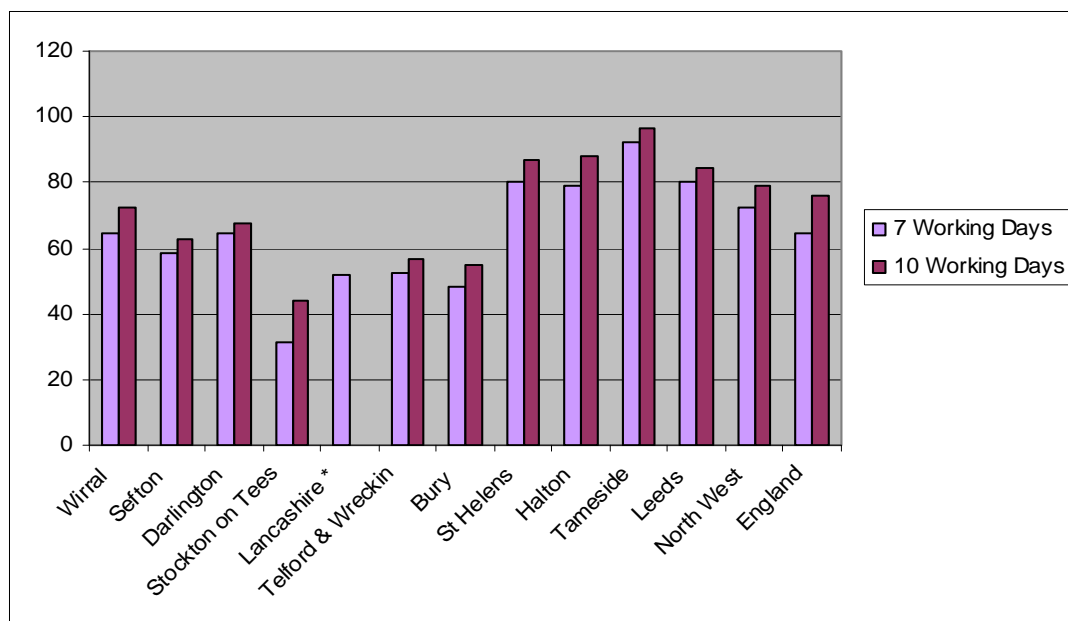


Figure: Represents the percentage of referrals that have resulted in an initial assessment from 1 April 2010 – 31 March 2011.

Initial Assessments

The purpose of an initial assessment is to determine, quickly and accurately, whether a child is 'in need' and the nature of the services that the child and the child's family require.



The above figure presents the percentage of initial assessments which were completed within seven working days and 10 working days of a referral being initiated from April 2010 – 31 March 2011.

From April 2010, the timescale nationally for completion of initial assessments was extended from 7 working days to 10. It was anticipated that these extra three days would allow local authorities to assure the quality of initial assessments, without compromising timeliness.

Wirral undertook 3014 initial assessments for the period 1 April 2010 – 31 March 2011. This is a total of 451 initial assessments per 10,000 children (ages 0 – 17) in Wirral. Out of these 3014 initial assessments the following outcomes have been recorded:

Core assessments

A core assessment can be defined as; “an in-depth assessment which addresses the central or most important aspects of the needs of the child and the capacity of his or her parents or caregivers to respond appropriately to these needs within the wider family and community context”.

The graph below highlights that the number of core assessments conducted in Wirral from 1 April 2010 - 31 March 2011 increased from 1 April 2009 – 31 March 2010. The actual number of core assessments completed within rose from 744 to 800.

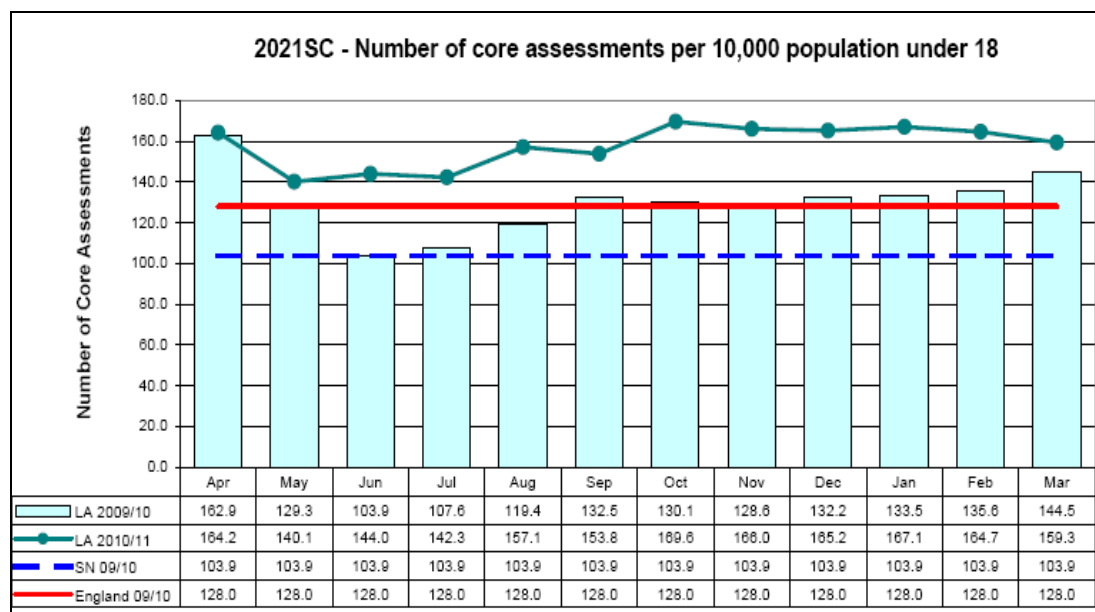
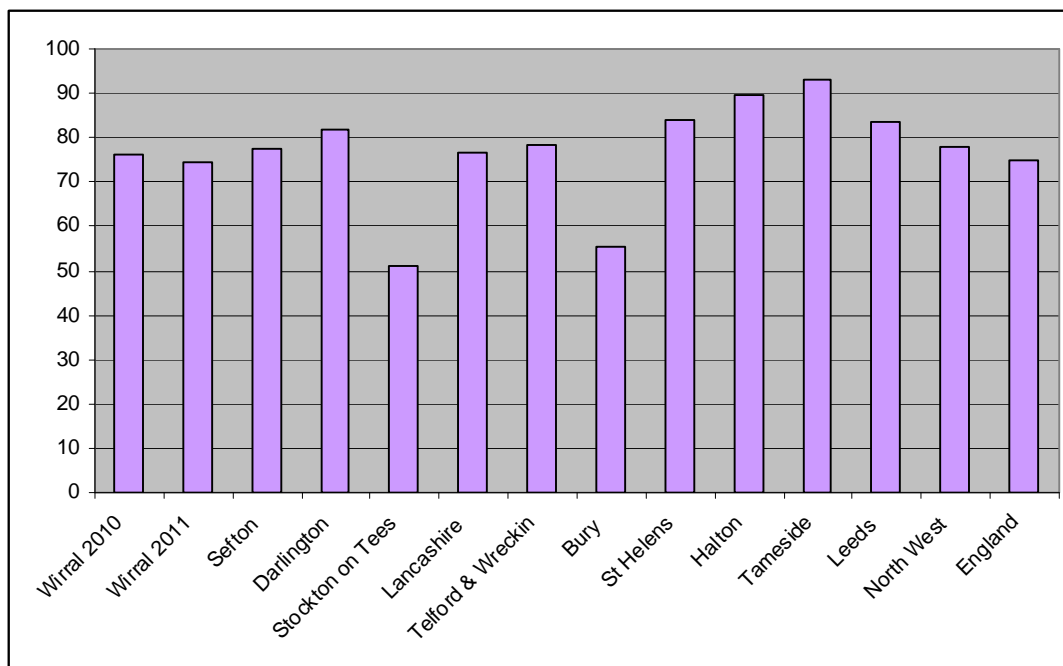


Figure: Number of core assessments per 10,000 child population for Wirral from April 2010 – 31 March 2011.

Core assessments should be completed within 35 working days of the referral which began the process. The graph below compares the performance of Wirral 2009-2010 with 2010-2011, comparator authorities, regional and national averages.



Initial child protection conferences and reviews

The initial child protection conference brings together family members, the child who is the subject of the conference (where appropriate) and those professionals most involved with the child and family, following section 47 enquiries.

The purpose of the initial child protection conference is to bring together and analyse, in an inter-agency setting, the information which has been obtained about the child's development needs and the parents' or carers' capacity to respond to these needs to ensure the child's safety and promote the child's health and development within the context of their wider family and environment.

For the period 1 April 2010 to 31 March 2011 Wirral Council had recorded 425 children being the subject of an initial child protection conference. 386 conferences were held within 15 working days from the start of the S47 enquiry. This equated to a total of 86.6% of initial child protection conferences (for 1 April 2010 – 31 March 2011) being held within 15 working days from the start of the section 47 enquiry which led to a conference. Wirral therefore recorded overall a higher percentage of conferences than England and subsequently the North West of England. *(See graph below).*

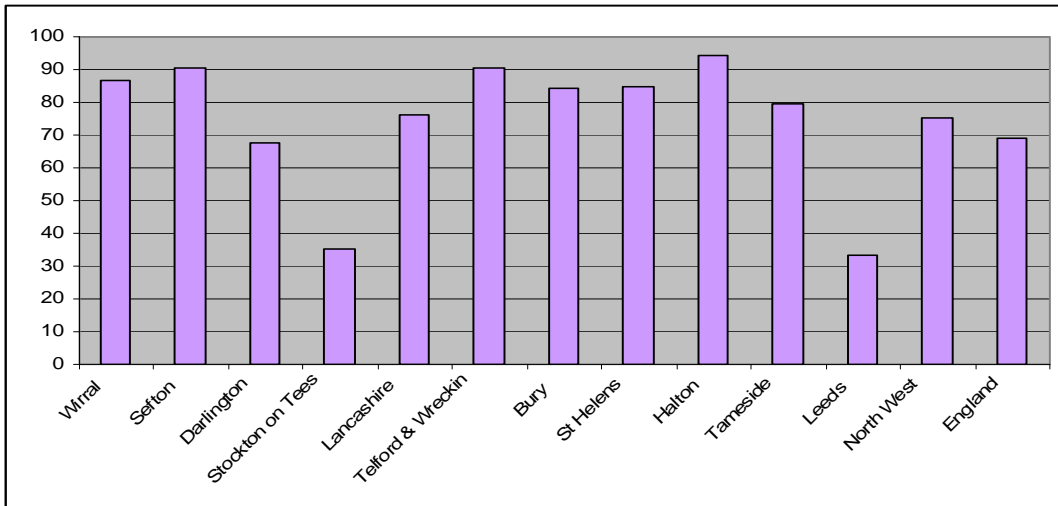


Figure: Percentage of initial child protection conferences held within 15 days of the start of the section 47 enquiries which led to a conference

The child protection plan is reviewed in accordance with statutory timescales. Each review considers whether the plan should remain in place, should be changed or should end. It is important that these reviews take place as scheduled within timescales to help keep professionals and the family focussed on achieving the necessary changes.

The graph below highlights Wirral's success at meeting the required timescales for 31 March 2011 for undertaking child protection reviews, for the previous two years 99% has been achieved. (See graph below).

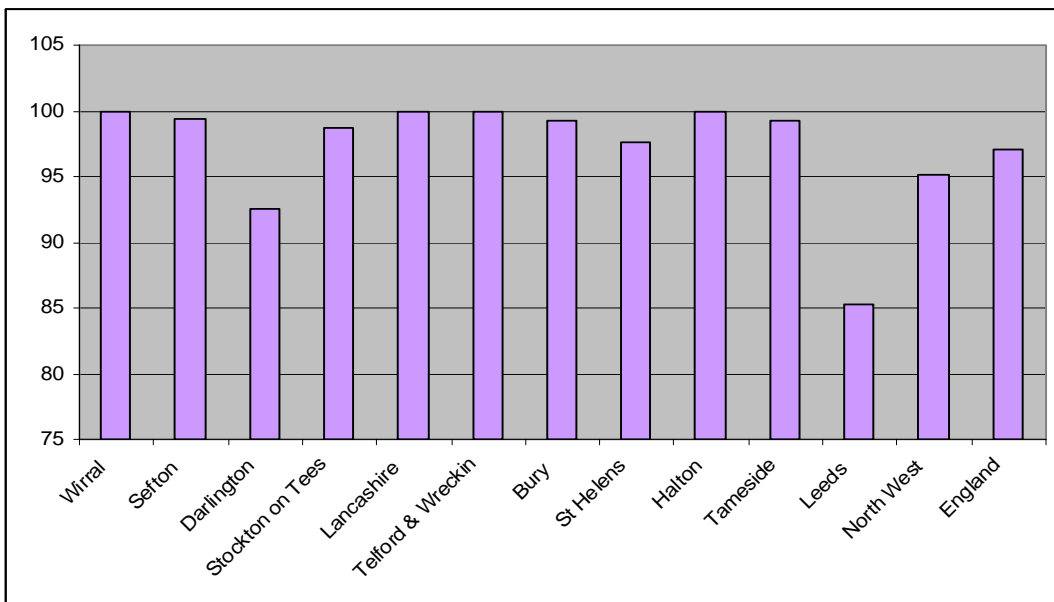


Figure: Percentage of initial child protection reviews carried out within the required timescales (based on the number of children who have been subject to a child protection plan for at least three months) for the period 1 April 2010 – 31 March 2011.

Children with child protection plans

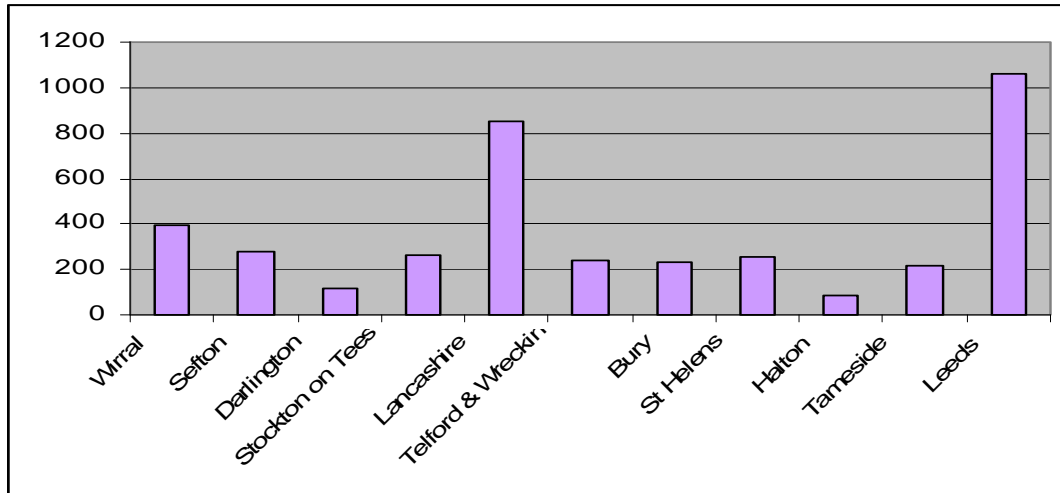


Figure: The Number of children subject to a child protection plan during the period 1 April 2010 – 31 March 2011.

There were 393 children who became the subject of a child protection plan during the period 1 April 2010 – 31 March 2011; this is 68 more than for the period 1 April 2009 – 31 March 2010.

The number of children who were subject to a child protection plan in Wirral for the end of March 2011 was 290.

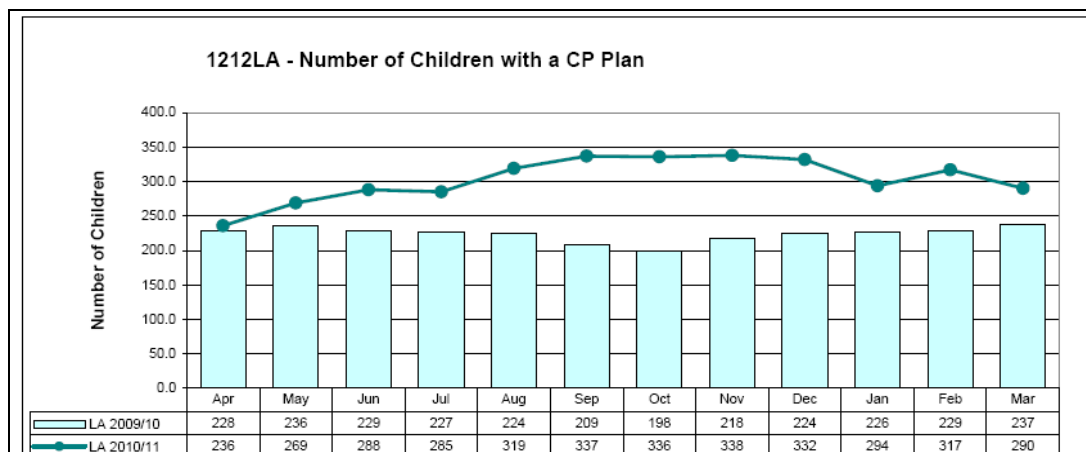
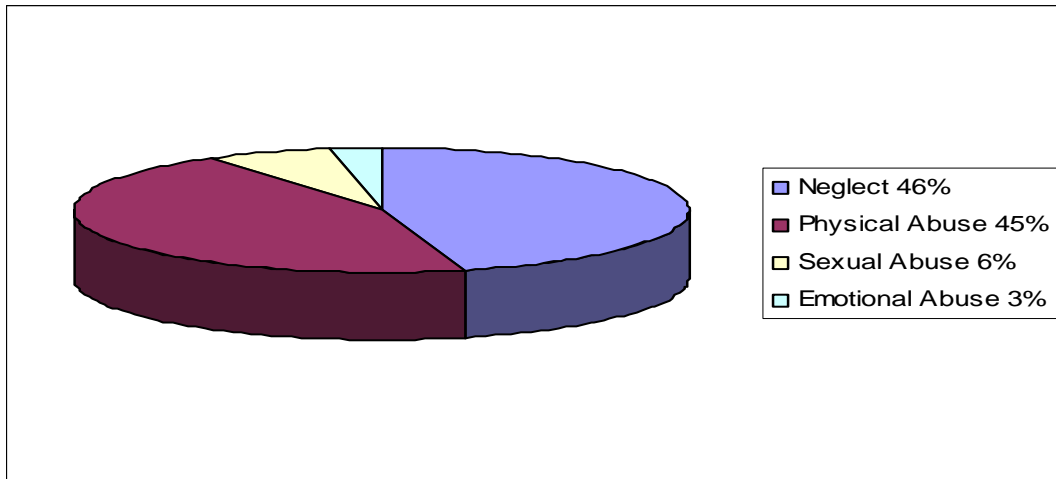


Figure: The Number of children subject to a child protection (CP) plan for the period 1 April 2010 – 31 March 2011 compared to the number of children subject to a child protection plan for the period 1 April 2009 – 31 March 2010.

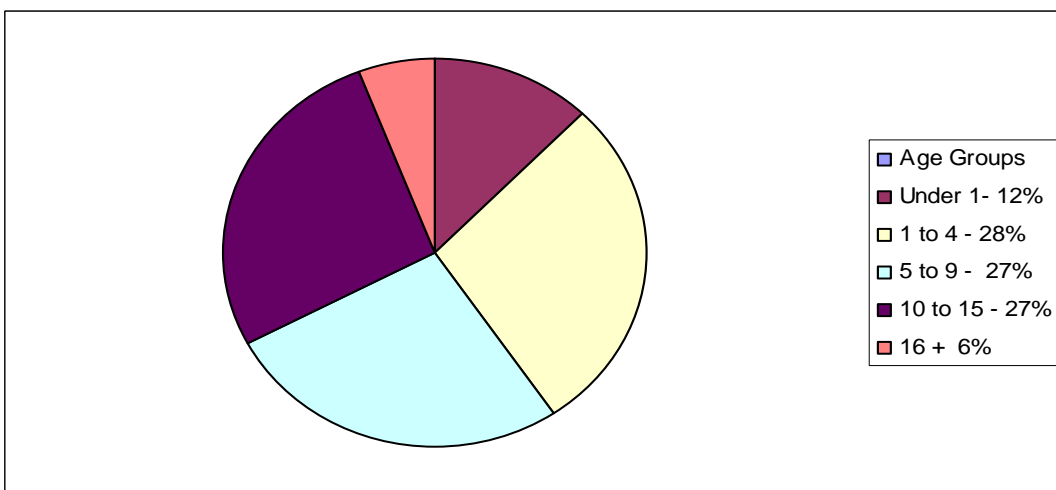
From the table above it is evident that more children became subject to a child protection plan for the period 1 April 2010 – 31 March 2011 than had been in the previous year. This represents an increase of 53 children (22%) at 31 March 2011 compared to 237 recorded at 31 March 2010.

From the 393 children who became the subject of a child protection plan during the period 1 April 2010 – 31 March 2011 the child protection plan initial category of abuse was as follows:

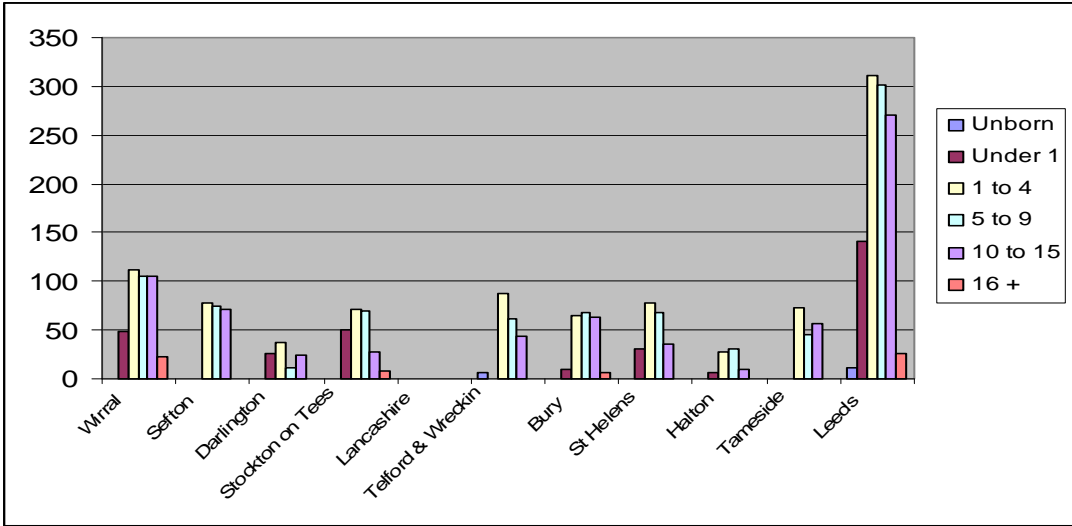


The greatest reported initial category of abuse for 1 April 2010 – 31 March 2011 was neglect followed by physical abuse.

The age group of the 393 children who became the subject of a child protection plan during the year ending 31 March 2011 is as follows:



The majority of children on a child protection plan are of the age group 1 – 4, 5 – 9 and 10 - 15. This compares favourably with the rest of the benchmarking authorities who overall had the most children for the year end 31 March subject to a child protection plan in the age group 1 – 4 (as shown below).

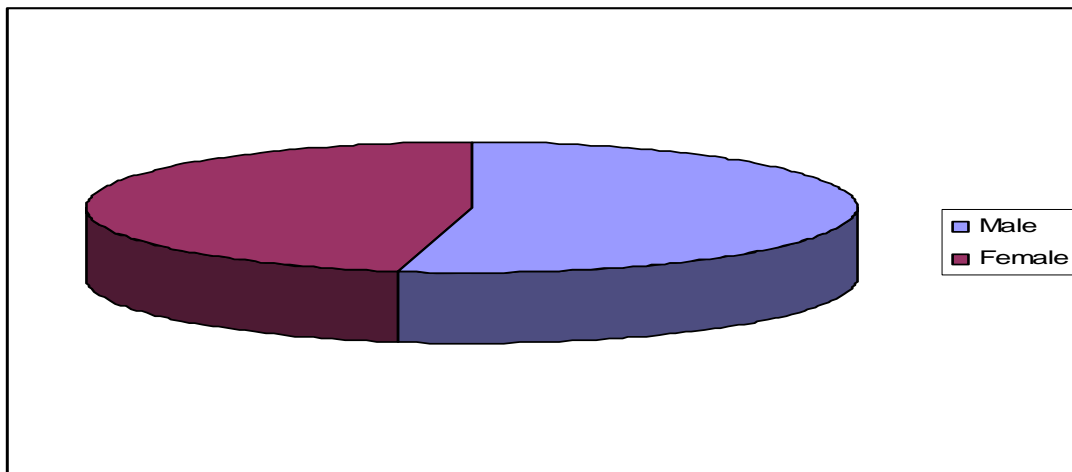


Looked After Children

Wirral Council's Children and Young People's Department provides services for Looked after Children which include support, placement and care of children within the Wirral.

Wirral Council provides support and placement in areas including adoption, foster care, residential care and young people leaving care. Wirral Council aim's to assist children and young people by providing them with a range of placement options that will help them be safe, secure and develop in order to meet their full potential.

At 31 March 2011 Wirral had a total of 680 Looked after Children.



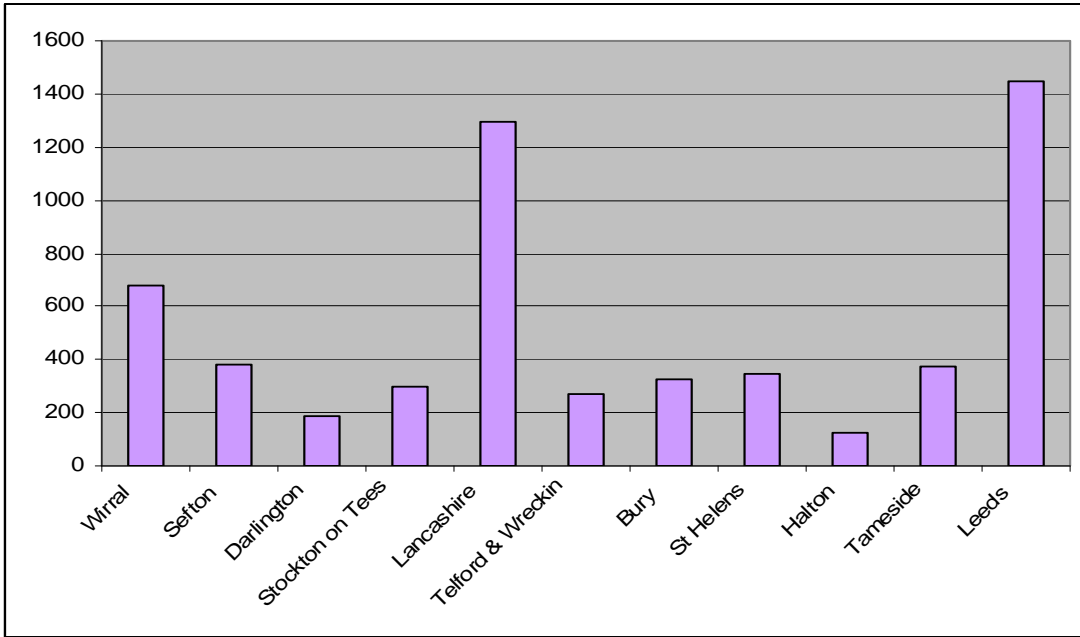


Figure: Looked After Children by comparator authorities for the period 1 April 2010 – 31 March 2011.

From the graph shown above it is evident that Leeds, Lancashire and Wirral reported the highest number of Looked after Children for the period. The average number of Looked after Children for 1 April 2010 – 31 March 2011 for the authorities shown in the graph above was 520.

The graph below highlights that Wirral, Leeds and St Helens have the highest number of Looked after Children (per 10,000 child population).

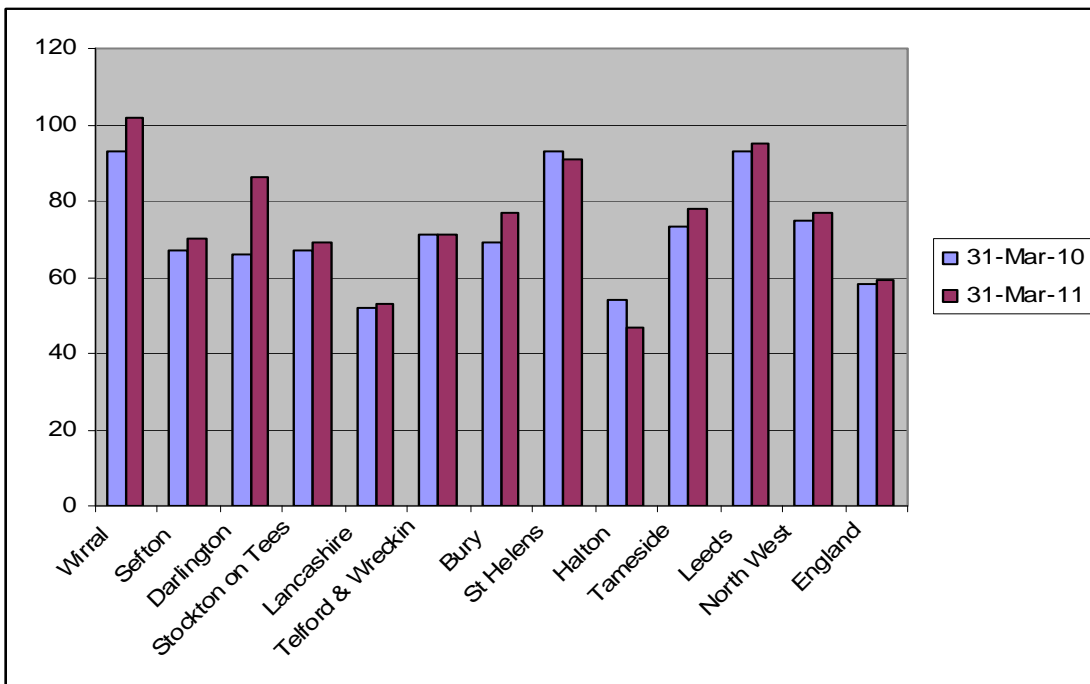


Figure: Looked After Children by comparator authorities (per 10,000 children) for the period 1 April 2010 – 31 March 2011.

Notifications of children missing from home or care

During the year ending March 31 2010, there were 429 notifications of Wirral young people missing from home or from care. The notifications were split between children who were missing from care (154) and those who had gone missing from home (275).

Children and young people cite a variety of reasons for going missing or running away. The figure below illustrates the most commonly given reasons.

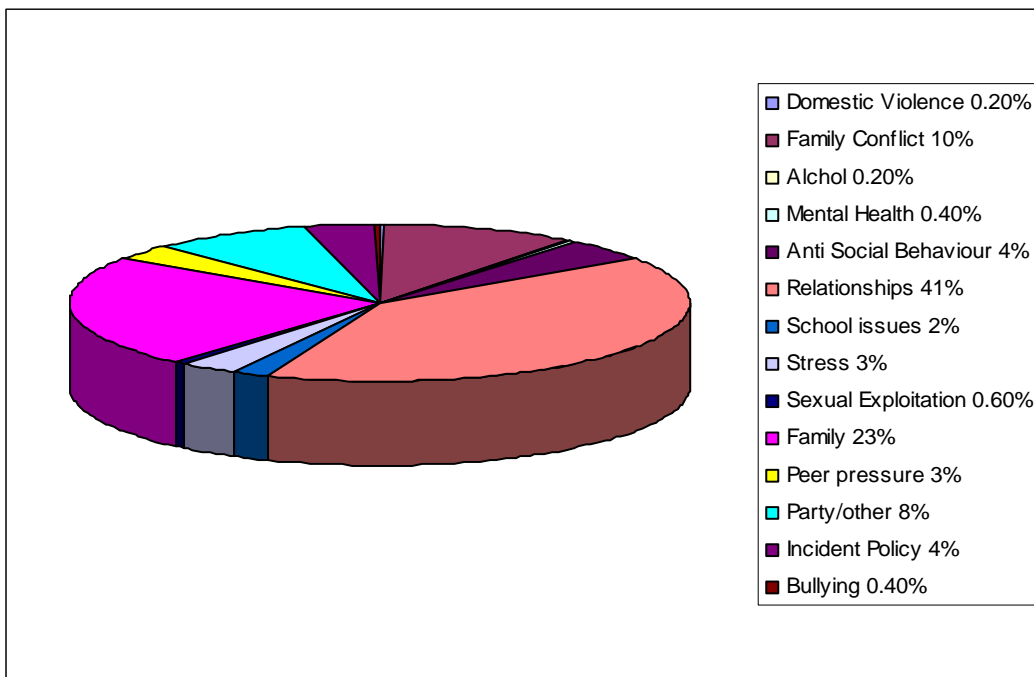


Figure: Reasons given for each notification of missing

Relationships are the biggest causal factor for children and young people missing from care. This information has been collated by Barnardo's who are commissioned by Wirral Council to provide the missing from care service.

Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO)

The Role of the LADO

The role of the LADO is defined in *Working Together to Safeguard Children (2010)*. Appendix 5 outlines the procedures for managing allegations against people who work with children in a position of trust and agencies responsibility to refer all concerns pertaining to professionals to the LADO.

The LADO should be alerted to all cases in which it is alleged that a person who works with children has:

- behaved in a way that has harmed, or may have harmed, a child
- possibly committed a criminal offence against children, or related to a child
- behaved towards a child or children in a way that indicates s/he is unsuitable to work with children.

This applies to paid and unpaid employees, volunteers, casual, fixed term or agency staff who are commissioned to work for any agency, and those self-employed. The LADO is responsible for considering concerns, allegations or offences emanating from within or outside of work, this also includes issues that may question the suitability of the individual to work with children and young people.

Data Collection

During 2011 93 cases were managed by the LADO and were categorised as follows:

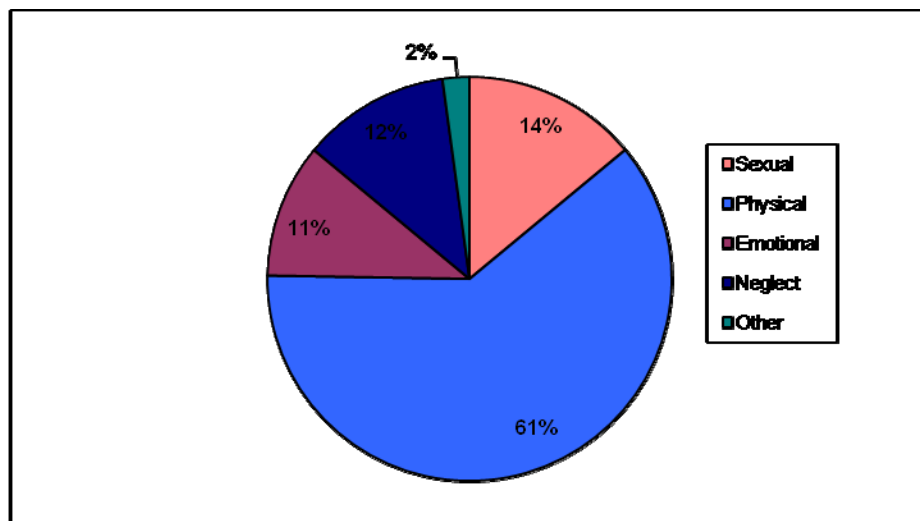


Figure: Categories of alleged abuse

It is noted that there is a significant decrease in the number of allegations reported under the category of alleged sexual abuse during 2011. Contributing factors to this decrease are the considerable amount of work undertaken in alerting agencies to the risks posed by professionals engaging in social contact with children and young people, specifically with the use of technology such as mobile communication including social

networking. As a result of the large increase of allegations in this area during 2010, the Social Networking Policy was introduced across education establishments and continues to be rolled throughout partner agencies providing a clear policy with practical guidance as to acceptable behaviour when communicating with children and young people.

Allegations related to alleged physical abuse has increased from contributing to 42% of all allegations during 2010 to 61% of allegations during 2011. Work by the LADO continues through training, briefings and conferences alerting agencies as to the risks of inappropriate physical intervention and safer working practices when working with children and young people. This will continue to be a priority during 2012.

Allegations recorded in 2010 have resulted in the following outcomes:

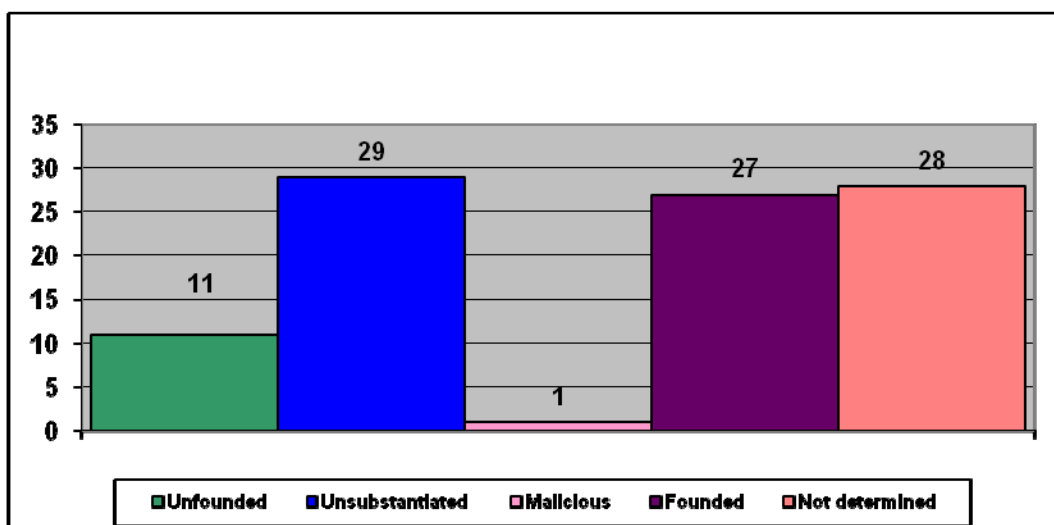


Figure: Outcomes of investigations of allegations

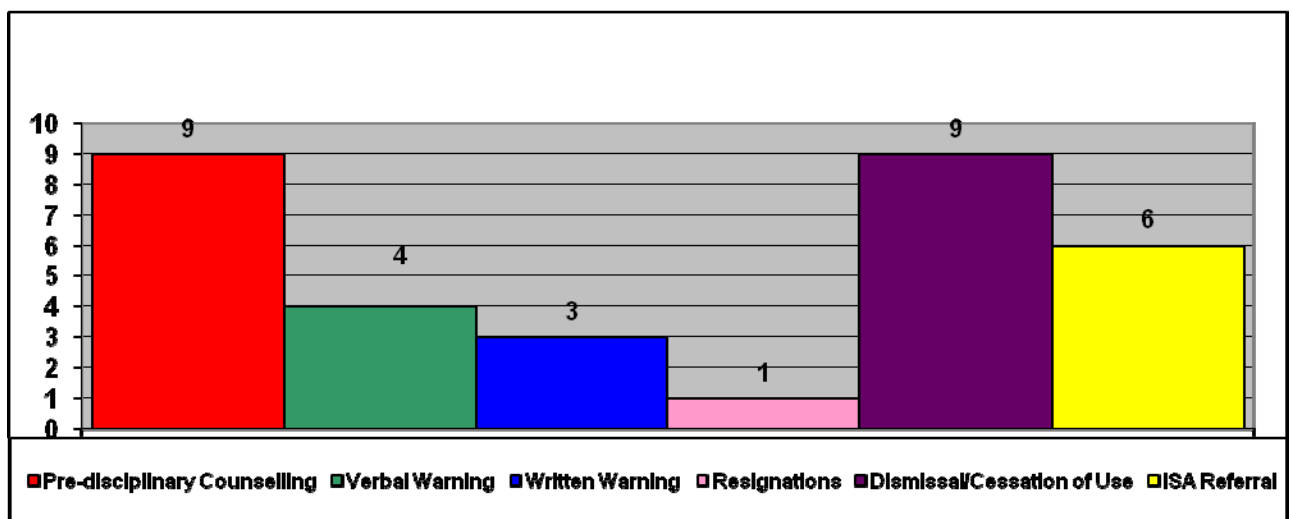


Figure: Action taken following investigations

Financial Report 2011-12

Expenditure	2010-11	2011-12
Staffing	178 155	169 957
Training	12 000	29 000
Serious Case Reviews	15 000	15 000
Advertising/marketing	0	0
Room Hire	11 400	0
General expenses	4 000	4 000
Total	220 555	217 957
Income	2010-11	2011-12
Children's Social Care	70 000	74 900
CAFCASS	550	550
Merseyside Police	10 000	10 000
Wirral PCT	30 000	30 000
Connexions	5 000	4 250
Probation Service	5 000	5 000
Schools	20 000	0
Schools Budget	20 000	30 000
Child Death Grant	56 100	28 000
CWDC/Munro Grant	0	28 070
Total	216 650	210 770

The LSCB is supported financially by its member organisations and, when available, by government grants. Managing the finances of the LSCB is a difficult process as although *Working Together to Safeguard Children* (2010) states that contributions should be made by partners, it does not specify a formula to do so. Rather, it is through negotiation and the commitment of the individual members that the contributions made remain consistent.

WSCB Business Priorities 2012-13

- 1. Further develop professional expertise in safeguarding practice**
- 2. Improve learning from Serious Case Reviews**
- 3. Ensure outcomes for children are the focus of interventions and performance management reporting**
- 4. Implement the actions from the 2011 Serious Case Reviews**
- 5. Continue to improve the functioning and accountability of WSCB**
- 6. Continue to strengthen joint working between WSCB and SAPB**

Priority 1: Further develop professional expertise in safeguarding practice			
ACTION	LEAD	COMPLETION DATE	OUTCOME
Agree and communicate a set of safeguarding standards across all agencies following the publication of the new <i>Working Together</i>	Head of Safeguarding- Children & Adults	December 2012	All professionals and organisations provide consistent and effective services to protect children
Ensure core procedures are maintained to support safeguarding standards	Chair of Policy, Practice and Procedures Committee	February 2013	Outcomes for children are improved through practice which promotes and supports development of professional judgement
Enable every practitioner working with children and families to have access to safeguarding supervision and opportunities for reflective practice	All WSCB agencies	January 2013	All practitioners are supported by healthy challenge for learning, case progression and achieving better outcomes for children

Priority 2: Improve learning from Serious Case Reviews			
ACTION	LEAD	COMPLETION DATE	OUTCOME
Disseminate learning from the second national pilot using the SCIE systems approach methodology	Chair of Serious Case Review Committee and Learning & Development Committee	September 2012	Practitioners and managers embed improvements in learning
Implement the findings of the <i>Working Together</i> framework when published in July 2012	All WSCB members	Quarterly reporting July 2012- March 2013	Statutory responsibilities are met to safeguard and promote the welfare of all children in Wirral

Priority 3: Ensure outcomes for children are the focus of interventions and performance management reporting			
ACTION	LEAD	COMPLETION DATE	OUTCOME
Agree and implement a revised performance management reporting system in line with government/Munro recommendations	Head of Safeguarding- Children & Adults	December 2012	Performance management reports are focused on outcomes for and experiences of children and families
Develop and implement a multi-agency quality assurance framework	WSCB Manager	September 2012	Services and interventions are high quality and provide protection to children
Utilise the impact assessment tool for multi-agency training	Chair of Learning & Development Committee	Quarterly reporting throughout 2012-13	It can be evidenced that multi-agency training enables improved practice and better outcomes for children

Priority 4: Implement the actions from the 2011 Serious Case Reviews			
ACTION	LEAD	COMPLETION DATE	OUTCOME
Prioritise four areas for core training by increasing the availability of sessions and reaching a wider audience	Chair of Learning & Development Committee	September 2012	Multi-agency practice in relation to child sexual abuse, neglect, domestic abuse and parental mental health is improved and early intervention is effective in supporting families
Monitor and evaluate the joint working protocol for parental mental health	Chair of Performance Committee	March 2013	Families receive co-ordinated and effective multi-agency support
Produce case studies demonstrating the use and impact of the Graded Care Profile tool	WSCB Manager	March 2013	Positive impact of the tool is demonstrated and promoted across the partnership leading to wider use
Undertake an extensive and targeted child sexual abuse training programme	Safeguarding Training Officer	March 2013	Earlier intervention in child sexual abuse and well co-ordinated responses better support child victims

Priority 5: Continue to improve the functioning and accountability of WSCB			
ACTION	LEAD	COMPLETION DATE	OUTCOME
Develop the relationship between the Children's Trust and newly formed Health and Well-Being boards	Director of Children's Services	Quarterly reporting throughout 2012-13	Safeguarding children is embedded in key local forums
Implement the recommendations from the Section 11 Audit Overview report	WSCB Manager	December 2012	Arrangements to safeguard and promote the welfare of children are improved
Implement the government's statutory guidance on the role of the Lead Member and Director of Children's Services	Director of Children's Services and Lead Member for Children	September 2012	Key roles are strengthened to support the safeguarding agenda
Ensure safeguarding is linked in to the commissioning of services	WSCB Manager	September 2012	Arrangements to safeguard and promote the welfare of children are robust
Continue to monitor the effects of budgetary pressures, potential restructuring of services and resources to maintain WSCB	Executive Group	Quarterly reporting throughout 2012-13	WSCB is sufficiently resourced to fulfil its statutory functions
Review joint working with schools, ensuring that the duty to co-operate is upheld by academies and maintained schools	Head of Safeguarding- Children & Adults and WSCB School Reps	March 2013	Arrangements to safeguard and promote the welfare of children are strengthened

Priority 6: Continue to strengthen joint working between WSCB and SAPB			
ACTION	LEAD	COMPLETION DATE	OUTCOME
Work on shared service areas and when appropriate integrate sub-committees to focus on families	Head of Safeguarding- Children & Adults	Quarterly reporting throughout 2012-13	An holistic approach to working with families is achieved
Continue to share lessons learned from both children's and adults' reviews undertaken through the SCIE <i>Learning Together</i> project	Head of Safeguarding- Children & Adults and WSCB Chair	March 2013	Practitioners and managers embed improvements in learning
Ensure the Intensive Family Intervention Project integrates both adult's and children's services	Head of Safeguarding- Children & Adults and WSCB Chair	Quarterly reporting throughout 2012-13	An holistic approach to working with families is achieved

Appendix 1

Wirral Safeguarding Children Board and its Committees



Appendix 2

Wirral Safeguarding Children Board Membership

Independent Chair

Interim Director of Children's Services, Children & Young People's Department

Head of Branch, Children & Young People's Department

Interim Head of Safeguarding- Children and Adults

Designated Nurse-Safeguarding Children, Wirral PCT

Director of Quality & Governance, Wirral Community Trust

Director of Nursing and Midwifery, Wirral NHS

Borough Solicitor, Wirral Council

LSCB Business Manager

Director of Education and Training, Connexions

Head of Service, Youth Offending Service

Link Forum/Voluntary Sector Representative

Special Schools Representative

Primary Schools Representative

Secondary Schools Representative

Assistant Director of Operations, NHS Wirral

Director of Nursing, Cheshire & Wirral Partnerships

Head of Branch, Department of Adult Social Services

Councillor, Lead Member for Children

Public Health Consultant, NHS Wirral

Named GP, Safeguarding Children

Senior Strategic Service Manager-HR, Children & Young People's Department

Assistant Chief Officer, Merseyside Probation Trust

Superintendent, Merseyside Police

Deputy Principal, Wirral Metropolitan College

Director of Strategic Partnerships, NHS Wirral

Manager, Forum Housing representing the Strategic Housing Partnership

Service Manager, CAFCASS

Lay Member x 2

Deputy Director of Nursing, Cheshire & Wirral Partnerships

LSCB Business Administrator