

WIRRAL CHILDREN'S TRUST BOARD – 17th July 2012

ACHIEVING ECONOMIC WELLBEING STRATEGY GROUP ANNUAL REPORT

Introduction

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

- Ensure that all young people aged 16-18 particularly those in vulnerable groups are effectively supported to access the education, employment and training opportunities available.
- Minimise the impact of poverty on children.
- Support vulnerable young people and children with additional housing needs to access suitable housing options.
- Ensure that our young people have excellent skills and opportunities in to employment, including through Wirral's Apprenticeship programme.

The Economic Well Being Strategy Group, from September 2011, has been chaired by Vivian Stafford, Strategic Service Manager. In November 2011 the group went through a thorough review of its role and responsibilities, whilst also subsuming relevant activity from the disbanded 14-19 Partnership. Current membership is drawn from multi-agency representation relating to these priority areas and key representatives who can make a difference in this outcome area from across the Children's Trust. Meetings are held every 6 weeks and an annual programme of work for each meeting has been agreed. The Strategy Group is closely aligned with the 14-19 team.

One of the main functions of the Economic Well Being group is to monitor and report on the progress in this element of the Children and Young People's plan relating particularly to the National Indicators, 14-19 Raising of the Participation Age Plan (RPA) and any other areas of focus agreed by the Partnership. Other functions of the group include:

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

Impact of activity on performance indicators April 2011 – March 2012

PI No.	Title	2010 Actual	2011 Actual	Direction of Travel
NI 79	Achievement of a Level 2 qualification by the age of 19	77.7%	81.7%	
NI 80	Achievement of a Level 3 qualification by the age of 19	50.5%	53.4%	
NI 81	Inequality gap in the achievement of	36%	36%	

	a Level 3 qualification by the age of 19			
NI 82	Achievement of a Level 2 qualification by the age of 19 by FSM Group	60%	67%	↑
NI 91	Participation of 17 year-olds in education or training	85% (2009)	92% (2010)	↑
NI 117	16 to 18 year olds who are not in education, employment or training (NEET)	8.6%	8.9%	↓
NI 148	Care leavers in education, employment or training	39%	52%	↑

<p>Key recent achievements</p>	<p>14-19 Foundation Learning (FL) curriculum development</p> <p>Between 2008-2011</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 14 Secondary and Secondary Special Schools have engaged in curriculum development at KS4 • 9 training providers have delivered off site learning • More than 400 learners have engaged on a FL programme <p>Face to Face learner voice survey (Autumn term) overwhelmingly confirmed that young people enjoy provision at off-site training providers, as part of their Foundation Learning programme. The subsequent online Learner voice completed by all learners reinforced the significant contribution FL programmes make in re-engaging learners.</p> <p>Termly monitoring of achievements indicated that young people on FL programmes are gaining qualifications and achieving a higher point's score that would have been achieved through mainstream provision.</p> <p>More schools are now using the Initial Assessment to identify learning needs, which is used to develop a personalised learning programme for the individual young person. This motivates young people.</p> <p>The use of individual learning plans (ILP), and increased focus on destination-led planning, has resulted in an increased number of (very challenging and hard to reach) young people who now have a clearer progression plan in place.</p> <p>In 2011/12 three schools with Resource Based Learning Units have delivered in-house programmes and support has been offered to those schools. This area of work is expected to increase as Resource Based learners move into KS4 and subsequently Post 16 FL, as they remain in learning until their 18th birthday (RPA).</p>
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Learners with learning difficulties and disabilities

The numbers of high tariff young people SEN / LDD entering local further education opportunities has increased from 20 in 2009/10 to 62 in 2011/12. This has been the result of partnership working in the borough and a keen focus on education based solutions for young people. In Partnership with the Education Funding Agency (EFA) a further 65 places are available for ALS High Cost Learners in 2012/13.

Due to the improvement in the quality of local FE provision learners with learning difficulties are more likely to remain in the borough. Consequently, this has resulted in a reduction of out of area numbers from ten in 2009/10 to six in 2010/11. Four learners are accessing Independent Specialist Provider (ISP) in 2011/12. Currently five learner applications have been received for 2012/13 ISP places.

For the fourth year the Council ran the **'Your Future Your Choice'** conference for young people with learning difficulties and disabilities. The event brings together the young people, their families and their teachers with a range of providers, both voluntary and statutory; in order that the young people could be fully informed of the options available to them post 16 and, therefore, make informed choices for their future.

In 2009 the following numbers attended 131 pupils, 14 Schools, 33 NEET Young people, 119 professionals, 93 parents and 55 providers. In 2011, over 700 people attended which included 357 pupils from over 14 schools. Another positive were the variety of representatives from housing, benefits, health and areas like adult services. Boroughs such as Halton and St Helens are looking to replicate a similar event.

Progress has been achieved with housing to support learner towards independent living by engaging more widely with parents and partners.

Targeted NEET reduction activity

Youth Contract

Nationally the Government has announced and is administering a number of new initiatives under the DWP 'Youth Contract' programme. In response to the challenge of youth unemployment the Government announced a £1billion Youth Contract to help young unemployed people get a job. The Youth Contract, which launches in April 2012, will provide nearly half-a-million new opportunities for 18-24 years olds, including apprenticeships and work experience placements. As part of the Youth Contract the National Apprenticeship Service (NAS) is currently offering small to medium sized employers financial incentives to take on young people either directly or from the work programme.

European Social Funded Provision

New Futures is a flexible, engaging and supportive programme for Wirral young people who are not in education, employment and training (NEET) – or at risk of becoming NEET who reside within the borough. The programme is currently being delivered through a consortium of voluntary, community and faith organisations across the borough.

The programme combines high levels of individual support with engaging and inspiring practical activities and incentives to achieve key milestones and progression. New Futures is essentially a pre Foundation Learning type programme. The focus is on supporting the young people to take control of their own lives, develop positive attitudes towards ambition, achievement, learning and work, and to work on building their confidence and self-esteem.

Get Involved Programme

This programme is Council funded aimed at young people aged 16 and 17, currently not in employment, education or training, who have an interest in progressing on to an Apprenticeship or further learning in September 2012. Between June 2012 and March 2013 the programme is targeted with engaging 105 NEET young people.

The programme will assist young people to develop the skills and attributes perspective employers are looking for from their Apprentices. The programme will also give you the opportunity to gain real work experience with a quality voluntary, community and / faith organisation and gain a qualification.

Throughout the learning journey progress will be reviewed regularly and participants will be given constant support and guidance to help them achieve their goals.

DWP New Horizons Programme

Greater Merseyside Connexions Partnership (GMCP) has started the recruitment of around 4,000 young people to take part in the Triodos New Horizons programme. The scheme will help young people in Merseyside, many of whom are young offenders, have learning disabilities, or are in or leaving care. The programme is run in one of the most deprived areas of the UK where unemployment and youth crime is above average.

Programme headlines are as follows:

- Equipping vulnerable young people to make and sustain successful key transitions
- Delivered within GMCP's established service footprint of Greater Merseyside
- Targeting those groups of young people who are NEET or most likely to become of be NEET with the following vulnerabilities:
 - Those in care or leaving care
 - Young offenders
 - LLDD
- Developing individual 'stickability' or resilience using *Mental Toughness*
- A family/carer centric approach
- Raising of aspirations
- Exposure to the world of work

- 'End to end' programme including employment opportunities

Beneficiaries of the New Horizons programme will have the aim of achieving one or more of the following -

- Improved attendance at school
- Improved behaviour at school
- Achieve 1st NQF Level 1
- Achieve 1st NQF Level 2
- Successful entry into 1st employment -13 weeks
- Successful entry to employment -26 weeks

Profiling of eligibility for young people who fall into the above categories and recruitment to the programme is well underway in Wirral.

Commissioning of a Targeted Information, Advice and Guidance Service

The Education Act 2011 changes the duties on delivering information, advice and guidance (IAG) to young people. Primary responsibility now rests with schools and academies to provide provision of careers education, information, advice and guidance to their young people in years 9 to 11. Wirral Council retains its statutory duty to encourage, enable or assist young people's participation in education or training.

The Council will provide a targeted IAG service to support the engagement of vulnerable young people in learning; and intervention with those at risk of disengagement aged 16 to 18 and for those young people with a learning difficulties or disabilities (subject to a learning difficulty disability assessment (139a)).

The new service is aligned to the Council Services Access Strategy. Access for young people to the new service will therefore be more localised. Connexions personal advisors will provide services from selected Council 'One Stop Shops', Libraries, Youth Hubs and Area Team Offices as well as providing a peripatetic service out in the community.

An interactive web portal was also launched (www.merseyinteractive.com) on 1st April 2012, which will act as an online resource of all learning, employment and training options available to young people across Wirral.

Minority Ethnic Achievement Service

Minority Ethnic Achievement Service (MEAS) has been reorganised to build capacity of schools and support children's centres to support achievement of EAL children.

Lifelong and Family Learning Service

Lifelong and Family Learning Service is increasing its focus on support for unemployed adults and those with most needs in partnership with children's centres, schools, VCF organisations and Job Centre.

Wirral Council's Young Parents to be Programme

The Young Parents to be Programme is delivered by Tranmere Community Project in partnership with Wirral NHS Trust, the local PCT and Connexions.

Two cohorts of Tranmere Community Project (TCP) Young Mums now been accredited with an Edexcel qualification BTEC 'Parents to be' at Entry Level 3, with some Level 1 credits.

Five young mums who had undertaken the programme have secured funding for a peer mentoring programme where they will go into schools to discuss their experiences with other young people. The programme is funded for 2 years and could result in 5 jobs.

The programme was recognised nationally featuring in The Sunday Times and as part of a Panorama programme in 2011.

Skills

Wirral Apprentice Programme

In 2009 the Council recognised that the impact of the then economic downturn was starting to have on the availability of apprenticeship places in the borough. Whilst demand for places from young people continued to be high, it was found that employers were finding it increasingly difficult to support the business case for employing apprentices and have access to a growing available 'job ready' labour supply.

Based on this evidence, the Council developed The Wirral Apprentice which was initially funded by £1.7m of Working Neighbourhoods Funds for the creation of 100 apprenticeship places. The early programme offered an 18 month wage subsidy from an expected minimum of a 2 year employment contract. The Wirral Apprenticeship Programme has since April 2009 supported 313 Apprenticeship opportunities for Wirral young people and adults.

The Council has recently sought expressions of interest from employers for a further round of the programme which is offering subsidies to employers to support up to a further 114 NEET young people or unemployed adults to access an Apprenticeship. The opportunities will go live August 2012.

The Council's Internal Apprenticeship Programme

Between 2010 and 2011 the Council has significantly increased the number of internal Apprenticeship places offered, achieved in part through promoting the Apprenticeship framework to existing employees.

It is desired that future apprenticeship activity is structured in such a way that it responds to organisational requirements. Planned future internal Apprenticeship activity will include:-

- Continued liaison with schools to publicise the benefits of Apprenticeships and attend relevant promotional events

to raise awareness.

- Work with the Leaving Care Team and the 14-19 Team to specifically promote Apprenticeships to care leavers as part of the Council's corporate parenting duties.
- Frameworks aimed at Higher Apprentices, undertaking qualifications at level four are now becoming available. This may be suitable for Apprentice Conversions and is currently being investigated to identify if the approach aligns to the needs of the Council and should be incorporated into the internal Apprentice offer.

Post 16 attainment

16-18 success rates have improved. The 2011/12 Wirral 16-18 FE success rate performance illustrates a performance improvement over the last three academic years.

Significant quality improvement work has been undertaken to improve post 16 level 3 attainment:

- Additional funding made available, through the Council school improvement budget, to assist those schools with declining 2011 key stage 5 outcomes.
- Practical support via the heads of 6th Form network has been provided, for example, – observation of teaching and learning materials, teaching standards materials etc...
- Additional activity with School Improvement Partners to work with schools to plan strategies to drive up standards.
- Post 16 Provider Dialogue process

Funding has also been made available during 2012 to support in narrowing the level 3 attainment gap by age 19 for those young people previously free school meals eligible.

Housing

Housing has a major impact on children's lives, affecting everything from their health and educational achievement, to their emotional well being and life chances. Significant improvements in housing standards have been made in Wirral through the work to ensure all social housing meets the decent homes standard. However, access to decent, affordable housing continues to be a key element in assisting to increase the number of young people achieving social and economic well being.

The links between poor and unsuitable housing, education, health and poverty, are clearly demonstrated when looking at the information at geographical ward level. The wards with the highest NEET levels, also reveal how demand and poor quality housing, houses in multiple occupation, poor health, and Indices of Multiple Deprivation (IMD).

Housing market interventions such as the high profile Housing Market Renewal Initiative (HMRI) which has spent over £90m since 2003 focus on these areas. Further work is being undertaken to target improving property standards and removing health hazards from homes, with the focus on the health and well being of residents.

A range of work has been completed to address enabling young people to access and accommodation and support including incorporating access by young people to social housing into the Wirral homes review, the housing priority panel facilitating access into housing and coordinating support provision for young vulnerable people, and the housing priority panel working in partnership with Wirral Bond Scheme to improve access into the private rented sector for young people.

Housing and Accommodation for LAC

The Council has signed up to Contract organised by Placements North West which accesses Regulated Supported Housing placements for Wirral Care Leavers. Placements North West are the Regulatory body. Since April 2012 Placements North West have implemented a Contract with private sector supported housing providers. This (a) ensures a good supply of Supported Housing placements (b) This means the providers had to enter a competitive process which was judged on 50% quality and 50% cost. This should have an impact therefore on both quality and cost. It also ensures there is a sufficiency of such placements for Wirral Care Leavers.

In respect of individual tenancies for Care Leavers, The Greenbank Partnership with Regenda continues to offer individual tenancies for three care leavers. The young people are provided with "floating support" by the Pathway Team. There are Nomination Agreements with Riverside Housing, Regenda Housing as well as Wirral Partnership Homes. The latter agreement has been renegotiated this year. Forum Housing continue to offer Supported Housing for Care Leavers and Wirral Supported Lodgings (formerly MAP) also continue to Support the more vulnerable young people. These options are utilised by care leavers who are assessed as not ready for full independence. Increasingly, young people placed in foster care are remaining with their cares post 18 in a "Staying Put" arrangement. There are a number of providers who are on the Department of Adult Social Services provider list, who provide supported housing to young people who have learning disabilities / mental health issues who are willing to offer placements for 16-17 year olds. This ensures that for those young people who meet DASS FACS criteria there is the continuation of support from Children's Services to Adult Services. The Pathway Team work closely with the Transition Team to ensure this is a smooth process.

Key issues

To continue to develop provision for LLDD learners by:

- Ensuring we have a LA transition protocol to clarify role and responsibilities for parents/families/partners etc.
- Identifying and resourcing appropriate routes and reducing the numbers of young people in residential provision.

Continue the momentum and improvement in attainment at L2 and L3 for those aged 19 and in particular those with disadvantage.

Ensure the Council secures sufficient suitable education and training provision for all young people aged 16-18 (inclusive) in their area (under sections 15ZA and 18A of the Education Act 1996 (as inserted by the ASCL Act 2009)) and make available to young people age 19 and below support that will encourage, enable or assist them to participate in education or training (Section 68, Education and Skills Act 2008).

	<p>Deliver the 14-19 RPA action to ensure the Council is best placed to deliver RPA in 2013 and 2015.</p> <p>In response to Wirral's Housing Strategy review ensure that current housing related actions within CYPP are refreshed and further strengthen future joint working.</p>
<p>Key challenges ahead</p>	<p>The proposed transfer of the post 16 LLDD budget from the EFA to the Council in 2012/13 and how we manage this.</p> <p>Narrow the level 3 attainment gap for those young people previously free school meal eligible at age 19.</p> <p>Responding to the Governments:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reforms to the framework for the provision of careers education, information, advice and guidance from September 2012 for young people. • Vision to eradicate Child Poverty by 2020. • Raise the Participation Age in 2013 for those young people aged 17 and by 2015 for those aged 18. • Responding to green paper on SEN. • Education reform, including the development of local University Technical College's, academies and free schools. <p>To increase the pace of NEET reduction particularly for identified vulnerable groups - care leavers, LLDD, teenage parents and offenders.</p>
<p>Risks to outcome delivery and proposed actions</p>	<p>Our response to the continued and emerging financial constraints will be to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Seek opportunities to bid for grants where funding may be available • Work closely with a wider cross section of partners • Further develop the 14-19 Education Quality traded service – for example progression to higher education support, support for Careers Education, Information, Advice and Guidance (Mersey Interactive (www.merseyinteractive.com))
<p>Areas requiring further partnership involvement</p>	<p>Work with Health, Social Care and Connexions around the Independent Specialist providers (ISP) applications.</p> <p>Work with wider partners to keep promoting local provision above ISP.</p> <p>Engagement to secure better value for money in a landscape with ever reducing funding.</p>
<p>Equalities impact assessment areas for development and progress made</p>	<p>Areas for Development</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Access arrangements for disabled young people and effective arrangements for young parents across all learning providers. • Inclusion of 'young dads' in the focus on teenage parents. • Insufficient social accommodation for the under 25 demographic.

	<p>Progress Made</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Support in the redesigning the local learning offer for those with LDD has delivered increased capacity in local provision • Greater Merseyside SESS Service established. • Housing panel operational and meets monthly.
<p>Areas for promotion /publicity / communication / engagement</p>	<p>The Wirral Apprentice Programme achieved an Equality and Diversity Award from the North West Employer Organisation.</p> <p>Wirral Council was awarded a – Special Recognition Award for Services to Apprenticeships at the North West National Apprenticeship Awards evening. A Wirral Apprentice took the regional Apprenticeship award. He is employed by a local SME called Wishtac House.</p> <p>Achievement of the kite mark award for Education and Business Excellence</p> <p>Case Studies available from Foundation Learning, Looked after Children and Wirral Apprenticeship Programme if partners are interested.</p>

FOCUS ON YOUNG PEOPLE NEET – ‘The current picture’

NEET Reduction:

The NEET figure in Wirral at May 2012 is 8.47%, compared to 9.03% at the same time last year. Overall Wirral NEET has reduced considerably from May 11 by 0.56% and from last month by 0.53%, **which has resulted in this month’s NEET performance being the best achieved in Wirral since December 2010.**

Vulnerable Groups:

Outcomes for young people with LDD have improved, with Wirral showing a 12.63% increase in EET year on year and 7.14% increase since April 2012. The current EET figure is 67.72% compared to 55.09% in May 2011.

Outcomes for Care Leavers have improved significantly, with Wirral showing a 14.92% increase in EET this month on May 2011 and 2.58% since April 2012. The current EET figure is 61.35% compared to 46.43% in May 2011.

Outcomes for Teenage Mothers have improved overall, with Wirral showing a 1.74% increase in EET this month on May 2011. The current EET figure is 22.01% compared to 20.27% in May 2011.

Outcomes for young people who are Supervised by YOS have slightly improved, with Wirral showing a 3.45% increase this month on May 2011. The current EET figure is 43.59% compared to 40.14% in May 2011.

The gap between the highest and lowest NEET ward is 18.49%. In May 2011 the gap was 17.85% and NEET inequality has increased against the year on year performance indicator. The ward with the highest NEET is Bidston & St James at 19.72% compared to Heswall at 1.23%

NEET clients in Wirral are spending an average 18 days longer unemployed this month when compared to May 2011.

16-18 Learning Rates:

16-18 Learning rates have increased in Wirral by 3.06%. In learning for 16 year olds increased slightly by 1.57% and significantly by 8.62% for 18 year olds. This offsets the reduction for 17 year olds in learning of 0.66%. The current 16-18 Learning rate is 81.91% compared to 78.85% in May 2011.

Summary

Across the Economic Well being area positive progress is being made in delivering outcomes for our young people and meeting relevant national indicators. However, many challenges still remain if we are to improve outcomes at a quicker pace for our most vulnerable.

Recommendations:

That Wirral Children's Trust note the report

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Appendices None

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