

COUNCIL

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CABINET PORTFOLIO SUMMARY REPORT

REPORT OF	COUNCILLOR TONY SMITH
CABINET PORTFOLIO FOR	CHILDREN'S SERVICES
CO-ORDINATING CHIEF OFFICER	JULIA HASSALL, DIRECTOR OF CHILDREN'S SERVICES

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This report is an update from the Cabinet Portfolio Holder to Members of the Council on matters relevant to his portfolio.

1. New senior manager appointments to Children's Services

Two new appointments have been made to complete the Children's Services senior management team; Emma Taylor joined the authority on 7 October as the Head of Specialist Services and Deborah Gornik will join the authority in November as the Head of Targeted Services.

2. Wirral's intensive family intervention programme (troubled families)

Louise Casey, national lead for the Troubled Families programme visited Wirral's programme during September. This was a return visit to talk to families about the impact of this service on their lives and to workers about the strengths of engaging with families in this way. Key information about the programme to date is that:

- Wirral is currently working with, or has worked with approximately 450 families identified for this project since the scheme started;
- There is a dedicated group of key workers, from the charity Catch 22 and the local authority family support service delivering intensive family support across Wirral;
- Using this evidence-based model, families are assessed using a specially developed family assessment and then receive support delivered through a family contract;
- The main focus of the work is to improve school attendance, reduce youth crime and anti-social behaviour, and increase the number of parents in employment;
- Progress is good, with 204 families already achieving positive outcomes;
- The programme is embedded within Targeted Preventative Services and working links with the partner agencies and the voluntary sector are strong.

3. Children's achievement in Wirral's schools, academies and colleges

Once again this year there have been some real successes in the attainment of children in Wirral's schools, academies and colleges. Some of the results include:

- An increase in attainment at Level 2+, at the end of Key Stage 1, in speaking & listening, reading, writing and mathematics, and the free school meal gap has narrowed in speaking and listening;
- A continued increase over the last four years in attainment at L4+, at the end of Key Stage 2, in reading, writing and mathematics and the free school meal gap has narrowed in writing and mathematics. The percentage of pupils making the expected 2 levels progress in writing and mathematics has increased;
- Attainment at the end of Key Stage 4 has increased by 1% to 66% for pupils attaining 5A* - Cs in their GCSE's, this is above the national average, and is in line with the steady increase over the past ten years;
- Almost half of our students at schools, academies and colleges (49.3%) entering A' levels (including General Studies) received a grade of A*-B, and the overall pass rate in 2013 is 97.4% in line with the national picture of 98%. Over the past seven years there has been a continuing rise in the number of students gaining a range of qualifications.

4. Implementing the Multiagency Safeguarding hub (MASH)

Partnership working to safeguard vulnerable children and adults continues to be strong; an example of this is the development of the Multi Agency Safeguarding hub:

- This new development will improve information sharing arrangements for children and adults at risk of harm through a single multi agency "front door";
- Located together in Moreton, the joint team will be operational prior to Christmas and will include children's and adult social workers, police, probation officers and health workers.
- Evidence from other local authorities indicates that a well run MASH increases the opportunity to quickly gather multiagency information about children, families and adults who are vulnerable, and target responses more effectively to keep people safe.