

CABINET PORTFOLIO SUMMARY REPORT

REPORT OF	Councillor Tony Smith
CABINET PORTFOLIO	Children and Family Services
CO-ORDINATING CHIEF OFFICER	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. INSPECTION OF CHILDREN IN NEED OF HELP AND PROTECTION, CHILDREN LOOKED AFTER AND CARE LEAVERS

This new Office for Standards in Education (OfSTED) framework was published and became live in November 2013. Inspections will be undertaken with one day's notice, and last for four weeks. All authorities will be inspected over the next three years. Key features are:

- A focus on front line practice, evidencing that interventions make a difference;
- Scrutiny of the impact of the help given, including the effectiveness of inter-agency working and how well partners take account of children's views;
- Tracking 25–30 children's cases, and auditing a number of our own cases during the inspection, evidencing the robustness of our own analysis;
- A graded review of the effectiveness of the Local Safeguarding Children's Board.

Within this framework, initial priorities for the new Children's Services leadership team include:

- Reviewing the effectiveness of children's child protection plans;
- Quality assuring the robustness of social workers' supervision arrangements;
- Strengthening partnership arrangements to deliver preventative services which make sure that the right children receive the right services, at the right time.

2. REPORT OF SHORT QUALITY SCREENING (SQS) OF YOUTH OFFENDING WORK IN WIRRAL

Wirral's Youth Offending Service was inspected by Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Probation between 30th September and 2nd October 2013. This involved consideration of a sample of 34 recent cases dealt with by the service.

The Inspectorate concluded that it found a "very positive picture in Wirral Youth Offending Service". Substantial improvement was required in all areas of work when the service was inspected four years ago. "It was pleasing to see that significant progress had been made. Staff were well supported and committed. They produced good quality reports, assessments and plans and had access to a range of

services". The two areas for development were to continue to improve the quality of children's risk and vulnerability plans.

3. YOUTH VOICE CONFERENCE AND YOUTH PARLIAMENT

The theme for this year's Youth Voice Conference, held on 15th October, was Respect; the theme was identified following consultation with 79 young people from Youth Hubs, Youth Clubs and Youth Outreach provision. In addition to the workshops, planned and facilitated in partnership with young people (peer educators), there was a hot seating panel, comprising councillors and senior leaders from different organisations answering questions from young people.

Comments from the 71 young people attending the event included:

- I learned about tackling issues and getting further understanding of the topics
- A sense of solidarity among the general youth public on issues relating to bullying and respect
- Been made aware of how young people can have a say – and all the things I can do

The Youth Parliament, held on 12th November 2013, involved 49 young people this year, representing eight secondary schools and seven youth groups. Thoroughly enjoyed by all, some of the young people's comments included:

- Other people's opinions are different. I learnt that I may not like their opinion but it's not about me – it's about the Wirral
- That the youth really do have a voice
- How to successfully debate as part of the parliament

Both events successfully engaged young people in positive and productive activities and their views expressed will inform service development.