

WIRRAL CHILDREN'S TRUST BOARD – 21st January 2014

Intensive Family Intervention Programme (IFIP)

1.0 Background

1.1 The Intensive Family Intervention Programme (IFIP) is Wirral's local response to the national Troubled Families agenda. The criteria for being identified as a troubled family are as follows:

- (i) A child within the family whose attendance at school is less than 85%
- (ii) A member of the family is involved in criminal or anti-social behaviour
- (iii) A member of the family is in receipt of out-of-work benefits

1.2 In Wirral we are expected to work with 900 families by 31st March 2015 to improve school attendance, reduce criminal/anti-social behaviour and raise aspirations regarding employment and training.

2.0 Introduction

2.1 Intensive Family Support has been commissioned in Wirral since 2006. Implementation of the Troubled Families programme has allowed us to learn from this previous experience and national research on Intensive Family Support in order to design a delivery model which is both evidence-based and sustainable. Following on from the original IFIP pilot in Seacombe and the Peer Challenge of CYPD's family support we have reconfigured the service, realigned resources and invested in the core competencies of staff. This has provided CYPD with an unique opportunity to develop the wider Family Support Service so that for future years the Department will be able to provide this service in-house.

3.0 Current Position

3.1 Delivery of the programme commenced in November 2011. Progress as of 31st December 2012 is as follows:

- 678 families identified as meeting the criteria for IFIP
- 495 families worked/working with
- 204 positive outcomes claimed against the Payment by Results framework

These results make Wirral one of the best performing authorities in the North West region.

4.0 Delivery

4.1 Currently the programme is delivered in 3 tiers. Families requiring 'intensive' support are allocated to a dedicated IFIP Key Worker. These staff work with only 6-7 families at any given time. Families with less intensive needs are matched to a Key Worker within the Family Support Service who will have a caseload of 10-15 families. The final tier, which is in its initial stages of development, involves practitioners from

partner agencies delivering to 2-3 families which are already on their caseload. All staff delivering the model receive accredited training and regular, reflective supervision.

5.0 Partnership Working

5.1 Partnership working continues to be a strong feature of the IFIP programme.

Secondees from Merseyside Police, Connexions Service, Health, Job Centre+ and Merseyside Fire and Rescue Service are integral to identifying families, sharing information and providing a comprehensive service. Joint initiatives, such as Safety Planning, Family Group Meetings and Employability Coaching are delivered in partnership by secondees and IFIP Key Workers.

5.2 In addition to the positive working relations with partner agencies, IFIP has established links across Council departments. Linking with the 14 -19 Team, Adult Learning, ReachOut and the ESF Working Families programme, existing resources are being utilised to maximise outcomes and achieve positive results for Wirral families. Establishing links with Constituency Managers through locality working is a priority for 2014 and plans to develop an Asset Based Community Development model into the IFIP programme are being initiated.

6.0 Information Sharing

6.1 The programme continues to be intelligence-led, and the Information Desk set up for IFIP has merged with the Gateway for Targeted and Preventative Services. The Gateway, which provides access to services at Levels 2 and 3 of the Continuum of Need, dovetails with the Central Advice and Duty Team, working to ensure that all children and families receive the right level of service at the right time. This development has enabled quicker identification of families eligible for IFIP and promotes more effective information sharing and easier engagement of families.

7.0 DCLG Publication

7.1 Louise Casey, Director General for Troubled Families, returned to Wirral on 18th September 2013 with her Head of Policy, Rachel Flag. The purpose of the visit was to offer IFIP Key Workers the opportunity to contribute to a new DCLG publication, 'Listening to Workers' which will examine the importance of the relationship between the Key Worker and the family. Six Key Workers were interviewed, giving their views on what helps to turn families around. Louise Casey also requested to meet with one of the parents she had interviewed in November 2012, to get an update on the positive progress she has made.

8.0 Recommendation:

That Wirral Children's Trust Board note the report.

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