

WIRRAL CHILDREN'S TRUST BOARD - 20 May 2014

CHILD POVERTY UPDATE

1.0 Background

1.1 The purpose of this report is to provide an update on actions being taken by the Wirral Child and Family Poverty Working group (herein referred to as the Working Group) and to provide an update on the development of the school community hubs.

2.0 Update

2.1 The Working Group has agreed the following terms of reference:

- Challenge the members of the Working Group and others to take practical action to achieve common goals of reducing poverty and harnessing the talent and ambitions of Wirral's children, families and communities;
- Proactively promote the use of research and best practice in addressing poverty

2.2 The Working Group has committed to focusing their energies on ensuring that Wirral plays a part in delivering the aims and actions identified in the Liverpool City Region Child Poverty and Life Chances Strategy. The current priorities for this strategy are:

- Improve school readiness
- Support families to be prepared for Universal Credit
- Tackle children and young people with unhealthy weight
- Close attainment differences in schools
- Improve transport access
- Increase employment and skills within low income families

2.3 The Working group has established a work programme to deliver topic based presentations to invite comment and challenge from Working Group members with a call to action.

- The focus in December 2013 was support for families to be prepared for Universal Credit. The Working Group put forward a recommendation for funding to be invested in the set-up of a credit union, which could help people on low incomes and facing crisis. Julia Hassall is leading on this recommendation.
- The theme for the March 2014 meeting was working with children and young people with unhealthy weight, the group received a presentation from Gareth Hill, Public Health. The Working Group requested that it be investigated as to whether all staff/volunteers in the voluntary sector could be trained up to deliver HENRY, rather than just council staff.

2.4 The Working Group meeting in June 2014 will focus on improving school readiness. Both school community hub leads have been invited to provide a verbal update and there will be an update provided by Zoe Munby on the Foundations Years Trust project.

3.0 School Community Hub Update

3.1 The school community hubs development and implementation commenced in February 2014.

3.2 Both school Hubs have carried out extensive mapping of local community assets and established steering groups with key partners to progress the work of the Hub. One Hub

has developed a skills map of community volunteers. 'New' money/resources have been attracted as a result of the Hub. One Hub's community connector has attended ethnography training hosted by Wirral Council.

3.3 Partnership work with the other local schools has been established and joint activities for both children and parents developed. Each community Hub is using a model bespoke to its local community needs, using local people as the community connectors. One Hub has hosted an open day for local residents and extended the invite to the working group and local councillors. The purpose of the open day was to raise awareness of the Hub.

3.4 Activities have been developed focusing on the following:

- Family and children wellbeing
- Greater awareness of support available to parents in local area
- Increased desire of parents to move into work
- Increased engagement of parents with existing employment and enterprise
- Improved aspirations of children due to rising parental aspirations

3.5 A number of activities have already been set up and started delivery - these include;

- Easter school which used young local people with experience in child care employed as Easter school staff
- adult education sessions in English and Maths and NVQ 2 child care
- coffee afternoons run by volunteers

3.6 Both Hubs will carry out an early implementation evaluation to consider the challenges of setting up the project and early successes. This evaluation will be completed during June/July 2014

4.0 **Recommendations**

4.1 It is recommended that the Children's Trust Board:

- Note the updates set out in the report and request further information as required
- Agree to receive the next quarterly update on the 15 July 2014

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