

CABINET PORTFOLIO SUMMARY REPORT

REPORT OF	Councillor Tony Smith
CABINET PORTFOLIO FOR	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. YOUNG PEOPLE ARE READY FOR WORK AND ADULT LIFE.

NEET (Not engaged in Employment, Education or Training)

The proportion of young people who are NEET reduced in 2013/14. The DfE recently published the national 3 month mean NEET performance tables and Wirral's rate was 5.7% or 660 young people. Performance illustrates a 1.8% reduction in young people aged 16 to 18 against the same period in the previous year and illustrates the impact of the 14-19 Service in response to the Government's Raising of the Participation Age agenda.

2. CHILDREN IN CARE EMPLOYABILITY

In 2011/12 Ofsted noted that the council performance in relation to care leavers progressing in to employment, education and / or training (EET) at age 19 was 37 percent against a national benchmark of 58 percent. The latest data shows in 2013/14, 66 percent (37 out of 56) care leavers progressed in to EET at age 19. This is a 29 percent improvement which is supported by interventions including intensive 1:1 coaching and mentoring and delivery of a bespoke employability programme. This programme has a significant personal development focus and culminates in an extended internship and ring fenced apprenticeship opportunities.

In order to be ready for work and adult life, children need to reach their full potential throughout their school years:

Early Years Foundation Stage: The percentage of children achieving a good level of development has increased by 16% to 63%. Attainment of children in receipt of free school meals has increased by 18.8% strongly evidencing the gap is closing. However, amongst the larger cohort of children looked after the percentage of children attaining a good level of development has decreased.

Improvements in children's school readiness will be further enhanced by the implementation of a full review of early years and children's centres which was presented to Cabinet in September 2014. This will support a multiagency targeted approach to work with our most vulnerable young children and their families.

Key Stage 1: The percentage of pupils achieving Level 2+ in speaking and listening, writing and mathematics has increased. Attainment of children in receipt of free school meals has increased in all areas, and consequently the free school meal gap is narrowing. The percentage of Children Looked After achieving Level 2+ in speaking and listening, reading, writing and maths has increased in line with the national average.

Key Stage 2: The percentage of pupils achieving Level 4+ in reading, writing and mathematics has increased. Attainment of children in receipt of free school meals has increased and the gap is narrowing. The percentage of Children Looked After achieving reading and writing has increased, however attainment in mathematics has decreased. All results are above the national average for looked after children.

The Council are not in a position to report GCSE or GCE yet, due to a number of re marks going on in all school. The validated data will be available in December 2014.

3. CHILDREN WITH SPECIAL EDUCATIONAL NEEDS AND DISABILITIES (SEND)

Aspects of the Children and Families Act regarding services for children with special educational needs and / or disabilities, was implemented on 1 September. The legislation reinforces a child centred, outcome orientated approach, with a strong emphasis on strong partnership working. Changes include the introduction of Education, Health and Care Plans, which are replacing Statements of Special Educational Needs, transitional arrangements to ensure conversion of existing plans and the an easily accessible web based Local Offer, which describes all local services. Training for schools and all partners is ongoing.

4. CHILDREN FEEL SAFE AND ARE SAFE

The Jay Report into Child Sexual Exploitation in Rotherham is receiving detailed local attention in Children's Social Care, the Chief Executive Strategy Group, through the Local Safeguarding Children's Board and regionally. The Corporate Safeguarding Manager is leading an assessment of all multiagency approaches to children who may be vulnerable, including holding focus groups with young people and separately with all agencies engaged with young people, to assure ourselves that local approaches are robust and child / young person focussed. A report is being presented to Cabinet in October.

5. PRACTICE AUDITS

During the summer period, Children's Social Care has implemented a programme of auditing over 200 individual cases. Also, an external assessment of the 'front door' into children's services was undertaken; its findings included good practice and areas for further improvement. Recommendations are now being progressed. A new Quality Assurance framework is in place to ensure practice audits are robust and challenging, and good governance arrangements are in place.