

CABINET PORTFOLIO SUMMARY REPORT

REPORT OF	Councillor Tony Smith
CABINET PORTFOLIO FOR	Children and Family 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. TARGETED SERVICES

In June 2013 the Government announced its intention to extend the Troubled Families programme for a further five years (2015-2020) and reach an estimated 400,000 families across England.

Due to Wirral's progress in delivering the current programme (Intensive Family Intervention Programme [IFIP]) Wirral has been invited to join the Expanded Troubled Families Programme as an Early Starter. Over the five year contract term Wirral will be expected to work with 3,010 families. Both the eligibility and payment by results criteria are changing, so that as well as including children and parents involved in crime and anti-social behaviour, children who have not been attending school regularly and adults out of work, the new scheme will also include children in need of help or subject to a child protection plan, families affected by domestic violence and abuse and parents and children with a range of health problems. Prioritised families are those with multiple problems most likely to benefit from an integrated approach and families at high cost to the public purse. A multiagency workshop has taken place to determine the outcomes plan and arrangements for collecting the data. An event to mark the end of phase one of this programme is taking place at the end of March.

2. SPECIALIST SERVICES

Following the departure of the substantive post holder an Interim Head of Specialist Services joined the department in mid-December, and will remain in this role until the new appointee takes up post at the end of March 2015.

Whilst Specialist Services continues to prioritise practice improvement, the primary focus has been on ensuring that service leaders have a thorough knowledge of all aspects of their service including robust performance information, research and data, in order to take the service forward. This has included challenging service managers to evidence the impact that their service has on improving outcomes for Wirral's most vulnerable children and young people, which includes ensuring that children's voices and views shape the services they are receiving. Evidence suggests that although there is much to do the service is now better placed to achieve it.

The services new structure has now been signed off and the recruitment process for Group Manager and Team Managers is underway. The process of allocating social workers into the redesigned teams will take place in April 2015. The reshaped service will go live from June 2015.

3. WIRRAL SAFEGUARDING CHILDREN BOARD

On February 4th Louise Casey's report into Child Sexual Exploitation (CSE) in Rotherham was published. This report highlights failures in respect of the culture, relationships within the authority, structural issues and local understanding of CSE. The report and those previously, emphasises that there can be no room for complacency in any Council, and that these are matters affecting all professionals and elected members, partners, workers in the wider community such as taxi drivers, hoteliers and accommodation providers, as well as the whole community. Wirral has used the findings of this report in its continuous review of our own practice and approach to child sexual exploitation. The CSE subcommittee of the Safeguarding Board is focusing on auditing practice and raising awareness amongst key groups of people who come into contact with young people, some of whom may be vulnerable to abuse. "Chelsea's Choice", a play about CSE has now been shown to over 2,200 secondary school young people, and the first refreshed meeting of the Safeguarding Reference Group, on 3rd February focused on CSE.

4. SCHOOLS TRADED SERVICES

The Managing Director has now been recruited to lead the new Community Interest Company, to deliver school traded services across Wirral, Cheshire West and Chester. Ian McGrady has a background in the consumer goods industry, and will use this experience to build the company to meet the needs of children and schools across both authorities. Ian McGrady commenced work on 2nd March; the new company will begin operation in shadow form on 1 April 2015.