

WIRRAL CHILDREN'S TRUST BOARD – 21 July 2015

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 (herein referred to as the Hubs).

2.0 The Working Group Update

- 2.1 Membership, terms of reference, positioning and focus of the group have been reviewed in light of Liverpool City Region (LCR) Strategy refresh. Work is underway, led by Public Health to capture the Working Group's key components in a summary document that includes:

- JSNA summary
- Key principles that will reflect the LCR Strategy
- Terms of reference and work plan
- Achievements to date

It is anticipated that the document will be taken to Cabinet along with the regional strategy in September 2015.

- 2.2 The group received a presentation from the Church Credit Champion Co-ordinator for Wirral. The call to action will be to introduce 'money in schools' project following evaluation outcomes from the current pilot in Sefton.
- 2.3 Contribution has been made to the climate change group action plan where the group has identified where they can facilitate support regarding fuel poverty.
- 2.4 A process evaluation of the Hubs to date is in progress, led by Public Health. This evaluation will be completed by the end of August 2015.

3.0 Local Projects Update

Fender Community Hub (See Appendix A for a case study)

- 3.1 Sub groups are to focus on events for children; health and adult support, and fund raising has been set up. These groups are well attended by parents across the estate that swap and share ideas of best practice.
- 3.2 A 'Swap Board' that covers furniture, clothes and bedding is coordinated by community connectors.
- 3.3 The Hub can provide anecdotal evidence to support the following:
- Improved relationships between primary schools and pupils from these schools ensuring readiness for secondary school and improved transition
 - Readiness for school return after holidays and reduction previously observed 'dip' upon return after the summer holidays due to continued involvement in educational activities for a further 5 weeks during the break
 - Improved SATs results due to revision sessions set up during Easter break

- Subsidised Nursery/Primary holiday places for vulnerable pupils in Social Care or TAF has reduced the crisis points for these families and improved school readiness for those pupils joining F2 in September.
- 3.4 Increased engagement with parents and carers regarding employment opportunities can be demonstrated through numbers that access Lifelong Learning. The Hub has seen 20 successful completers in GCSE Maths and English.

Leasowe Community hub (See Appendix B for a case study)

- 3.5 The Hub has supported set up of Beavers, Scouts and Cubs and is pursuing opportunities for Brownies & Guides. Leasowe Early Years is hosting Beavers & Cubs and the Hub is hosting Scouts.
- 3.6 The two community organisers (one Hub and the other one from Leasowe Development Trust) are now developing and running joint projects. A number of community connectors at the Holy Spirit Family Hub now wish to form a parents group to support fundraising for school and also allotment growing projects, they would not have had the confidence before engaging with the Hub.
- 3.7 Kingsway Academy has now made a greater commitment to the Hub and is working to extend its' community role. They are developing a link with Teen Champions and incorporating this into the citizenship element of the school. This has been a really positive development for longer term engagement of local youths. They are also offering the use of facilities for community activities without charge and the expertise of staff to support sessions based in schools or in the Millennium Centre.
- 3.8 The Hub has co-organised a number of events within other settings, these include Wirral Credit Union collection point and a family picnic. A weekly Music Club for children has been funded by the Hub

St. Paul's Hub

- 3.9.1 It had previously been agreed to extend the concept of the hub approach to include a school within the Birkenhead Constituency Committee utilising funding from Public Health.
- 3.9.2 St Paul's Roman Catholic Primary School in Beechwood was successful in their tender to develop a community hub focussing on school readiness as a means to address the impact of child poverty. The Steering Committee made recommendations around the operating of the hub.
- 3.9.3 Asset Based Community Development (ABCD) principles: The St Paul's team has been invited to attend ABCD training and the steering group which is made up of Beechwood Big Local (Lottery funded partnership) representatives are encouraging the development of the project through ABCD Community Connectors as a key part of promoting the project.

- 3.9.4 Improving speech and language for children aged two. Speech and language therapist hours are delivered through the project and include involving parents in 'chatter matters' workshops. Building on that, the community hub is offering 'Stay and Play' sessions run by Homestart volunteers. The Hub has attracted additional funding from Wirral Life Long Learning and Family Learning Services for family trips.
- 3.9.5 The project has installed a climbing frame to enhance outdoor play. They are also working directly with Catholic Children's Society to support families in parenting projects.
- 3.9.6 The St Paul's team are collating extensive monitoring data through the Welcomm system which measures progress of children in their communication. They also measure general school readiness and are capturing anecdotal evidence of impact.
- 3.9.7 They are working with Leasowe and Woodchurch community hubs to exchange good practice and also invite Bidston and Manor primary schools to access their services. As the project has only recently started an impact monitoring report will be undertaken at the end of 2015.

Birkenhead Foundation Years Trust

- 3.9.8 Pilot services in the Beechwood Ballantine estate, Rock Ferry and Birkenhead are now established with two one-to-one services and 10 groups running by July. 102 families were supported in the quarter January – March.
- 3.9.9 Antenatal and baby support is being delivered via the Bump-Start service (data is currently being analysed the on the first 40 mothers referred to this service to identify lessons and priorities for the future); an antenatal group is being launched this month and a Baby Discovery group for babies from 0 to 8 months, both at Rock Ferry.
- 3.9.10 Play support is well established in Beechwood with support for the Read It Together @ groups growing particularly in Rock Ferry.
- 3.9.11 Two classes for children new to Foundation Stage 1 and their parents have been successfully piloted at the Manor Primary and Bidston Village Primary and it is planned to offer this in the autumn to schools in Rock Ferry.
- 3.9.12 The Triple S - Starting School Successfully (re-named Brief Early Skills and Support Index) indicators are in the final phase of the research, involving wider testing across a more ethnically diverse group of children than was achieved in the original research; this tool is now believed to be a reliable indicator for children from 2.5-5.5 years. A second resource for children aged 1-3 years, a parental measure, is still in the development stage. It is anticipated that the final report on these two measures will be available in early September (2015). The Birkenhead Project is now planning to use the BESSI as a key monitoring tool.

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 Working Group's refreshed work plan and support the long term plans
- Agree for an update on the Hubs' work to be presented at the Liverpool City Region meeting

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Appendix A
Fender Hub Case Study

Supporting positive wellbeing

X is a young child who lives locally and has been identified as having learning disabilities. Mum, by her own admission, has bi – polar and has found it extremely hard to engage with the school and the Hub. The Hub’s community connector made visits to the child’s home to support mum and dad and building up a relationship with the child. The child was offered a place in Easter Camp to support the family and give them a break. Mum’s self-esteem was so low that she was a virtual recluse. The Hub continued to support, even dropping around just for a ‘cuppa’. The Hub offered to ‘walk mum over’ to the coffee afternoon, explaining it was only for an hour. Mum was nervous but said she will come. That was 6 months ago. Mum has grown in strength and explained that she had never attended school. The Hub offered her a place at English & Maths, mum has attended both and even accessed the highest papers and attended night school. Mum said the Hub had changed her life and given her anew outlook, she is now going to go onto Wirral Met to access a midwifery course. The child’s attendance is now 100% in school.

Appendix B
Leasowe Hub Case Study

Supporting positive wellbeing

J is in her late 60s and lives with her husband who has had a number of health related issues that make him highly dependent on his wife. J's two youngest grandchildren attend Holy Spirit Primary school and a third grandchild is in mid-teens.

J's daughter has a number of complicated health issues that leaves her reliant on the care of her mother for both herself and her 3 children. The family have previously been known to social care following concerns about the well-being of the children and parenting capacity. They chose not to engage in services offered at the time of assessment.

J is an avid gardener and has led many sessions in the community allotment as well as fundraising for the garden and cookery sessions, during the few hours of spare time she has.

On many occasions she has brought along her two youngest grandchildren and it is clear to see that her commitment to them is very tiring, during half term is an especially hard time for J as she doesn't have the respite of the children being in school.

On the four weeks that approached the half term at the end of May we arranged for J to access one therapy session a week for four weeks at Leasowe Early Years that was funded through the Hub. This gave J a chance to take a little time for herself away from her daily challenges and recharge her batteries leaving her more relaxed leading in to the half term.

Since then J has continued to volunteer at the Hub and has returned and is continuing to use this service. She has also enquired about possible support available for her daughter and the hub is assisting her in planning for the summer holidays.