

COUNCIL
11 JULY 2016

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. CHILDREN ARE READY FOR SCHOOL

Making sure children start life well and are ready for school is crucial, and I am clear we must do all that we can to prevent any child being left behind. Our target this year is to ensure at least 60% of children in receipt of free school meals will achieve a good level of development at the early years' foundation stage: an increase of 6% from 2015.

To support this increase the school improvement team have been training early year's practitioners. This year 40 out of 86 schools were represented on the four day training programme; an increase of 16 from last year. The training supports and advises teachers on how to deliver effective teaching and learning, how to track children's progress and attainment and how to work to develop and progress more vulnerable children. Data is analysed and targeted support is made available to schools which would benefit from additional input.

The early years and children centre review is now complete, staff members have been appointed to their new positions and a new manager has been appointed to lead the service. Strengthened partnership working is developing and the service is focusing on identifying the most vulnerable young children and families, making sure vulnerable two year olds attend nursery provision, and working to enhance and develop families' strengths.

2. YOUNG PEOPLE ARE READY FOR WORK AND ADULTHOOD

Considerable work is being done to ensure young people are ready for work and adulthood. Some of the activity currently underway includes:

- We are currently working with schools about supporting children who may be experiencing anxiety and stress. This work will provide a baseline to inform how the new mental health workers funded through the Future in Mind project will work in the three localities of Birkenhead, South & West Wirral, and

Wallasey to deliver intervention strategies to improve young peoples' mental health and resilience.

- We have seen a slight increase in the numbers of children not in education, employment or training (NEET): 3.9% from 3.8% in April 2015. However, encouragingly, we are also seeing a significant decrease in the number of young people who are not known to the service. This has improved from 4.9% in April 2015 to 3.0% currently.
- We have audited the careers information, advice and guidance (IAG) services provided by schools, which has informed a collaborative project between the Young Chamber and all Wirral Secondary Schools, ready to commence in September 2016 which will support young people's readiness for work.
- Six schools (two secondary and four primary schools) have been inspected by Ofsted this academic year. The outcome in all these inspections was an improving judgement from requiring improvement to good.
- We are working to develop a Schools Strategy, which will guide how we work with schools in the future. To support the development of the strategy we are currently conducting market research with schools to ensure the strategy is informed by the views of head teachers. Work will then progress to canvassing the views of parents, governors and young people.

3. VULNERABLE CHILDREN ACHIEVE THEIR FULL POTENTIAL PLEDGE

For vulnerable children to flourish and achieve their full potential it is important that they feel safe and are safe. We are currently staging a play, funded through the Home Office, to warn young people about the dangers of Extremism. The play, called "One Extreme to the Other" is being performed 10 times over five days in five different locations in Wirral over the course of the next six weeks. Primarily aimed at 14 to 25 year olds, the play centres on the story of two former friends, Tony and Ali, whose drift into different forms of extremism sets them on a potential collision course. It is designed to stimulate debate beyond the performance itself as it asks the audience to consider what unites communities as well as looking at what divisions exist.

During June over 50 children and young people who are looked after nominated adults who had made a difference to their lives for an award. The annual 'listen to me' awards celebrates the work supporting looked after children to enable them to reach their full potential.

4. REDUCE CHILD AND FAMILY POVERTY PLEDGE

At the last Improving Life Chances Steering Group leads were agreed for each of the priority areas in the strategy: supporting parents into sustainable employment; improving life chances; supporting families to become financially resilient and tackling the immediate effects of poverty. Each of the leads is responsible for a working group to deliver key actions. The work also links up strategically with the Liverpool City Region Child Poverty and Improving Life Chances work.

A review of child poverty awareness training is underway to inform the development of a new package to be delivered locally. The steering group is also currently in the

early stages of planning for a stakeholder event is scheduled for 20th October, this follows on from the success of the event held last November.