

CABINET PORTFOLIO SUMMARY REPORT

REPORT OF	Councillor Tom Usher
CABINET PORTFOLIO FOR	Children, Families and Education

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This report is an update from the Cabinet Portfolio Holder for Children, Families and Education to Members of the Council on matters relevant to the portfolio.

Care Leavers:

Care leavers in Wirral enjoyed a range of activities and events as part of a celebration for National Care Leavers' Week. (28 October – 1 November). The events are designed to bring young people together while offering them a listening ear if needed - and most of all the opportunity to have fun.

Every day counts:

The #EveryDayCounts campaign was launched in early November, with the aim of improving school attendance in Wirral.

In encouraging good attendance, the campaign seeks to ensure that young people are protected and can be nurtured well throughout their education.

Children who don't attend school regularly, or who have regular absences, can become vulnerable or 'at risk'. This campaign seeks to support young people who may be facing issues, looking at welfare in relation to attending school.

The campaign is based on facts and statistics to encourage attendance. Education and community partners are also encouraged to embrace the campaign by sharing messages and supporting parents where they can.

In addition to specialised campaign resources being rolled out across the borough, the campaign will accompany the introduction of the Wirral Attendance Service, a dedicated team of 13 attendance officers, working with local schools and partner agencies to support students.

The campaign also encourages families to speak out and access advice and support for any attendance issues, rather than struggle in isolation.

Youth Matters:

A new Youth Matters campaign was launched in November at Wirral Council's annual Youth Parliament session – which is organised by, and for, young people.

The new campaign to rebrand youth work in Wirral is highlighting the life-changing services which support young people and includes the strapline: 'Building futures, Shaping lives'.

By working alongside young people to build their confidence, raise awareness, and promote resilience, the Youth Matters team helps to prepare them for adulthood. Staff build trusted relationships with young people to let them know they don't have to face any problems alone.

Wirral's Youth Matters team offers a wide range of support, including:

- Drug and Alcohol advice
- Counselling service
- Youth Hubs and Clubs
- Play schemes
- Health Services in Schools: working in partnership with secondary school nurses to nurture young people's health and wellbeing
- Creative Youth Development: participatory arts including dance, drama, technical theatre, music, visual arts, life skills projects and youth engagement
- Detached Youth Work teams: working with young people in their communities to provide opportunities for personal development.

Independent School Appeal Panel:

There is a statutory requirement to appoint members to sit on the Independent School Admission Appeals Panel.

Brenda Thompson, a member of the public has been appointed to the pool of Panel Members for the Independent School Appeals Panel. When a child's place is declined at a particular school, a parent has the right to appeal to an Independent School Appeals Panel.

Safer Wirral:

- Community Action Day - Woodlands Park

Partners from Wirral Council, Merseyside Police, Biffa, Community Connectors, Community Payback, YMCA and Energy Projects Plus came together for a day of community action to support residents in the Woodlands area to improve environmental issues and discuss concerns around anti-social behaviour. Two tonnes of waste were removed from the local area as part of the action day. This was coordinated by the Birkenhead Constituency Team.

As part of the day the Mayor unveiled a new piece of graffiti artwork in Woodlands Park that has been created by pupils at Woodlands Primary School, the colourful display stands out against the railings and welcomes visitors to the park.

After the unveiling, pupils from the school - with some help from Wirral Council's Parks & Countryside team helped to plant 50kg of daffodil bulbs in the park.

- Operation Banger

We have again supported 'Operation Banger' the annual partnership work with Merseyside Fire and Rescue, Merseyside Police, Housing Association partners and community pay back teams to reduce anti-social behaviour around Halloween and bonfire night.

Firefighters attended nearly 40% fewer deliberately set fires across Merseyside on Bonfire Night, Tuesday 5th November, than on the same date last year.

Birkenhead Constituency and Community Pay Back team over the Operation Banger period took part in clean-up activities that resulted in 47 tonnes of combustible materials being removed across Wirral and between 19th October – 8th November MFRS attended 30 incidents compared to 63 last year giving a reduction of 52.3%.

- Modern Slavery

A new Strategy, Action plan, and Code of Conduct addressing modern slavery was approved in November.

As part of the new strategy, free training sessions were introduced to raise awareness of modern slavery in Wirral and help to ensure minimum working standards.

Training was delivered to 50 staff in the Safer Wirral Hub in October; including Safeguarding, Education, Health, Police, Youth Offending Services, Probation, and the Fire Service.

A new Supplier Code of Conduct addresses the Modern Slavery Act 2015 and ensures that Wirral Council's own supply chains are setting ethical employment standards. Wirral is also signed up to the [Cooperative Party Charter Against Modern Slavery](#).

- Restorative Justice

During Restorative Justice Week, (18 November) victims of crime who want answers from perpetrators were encouraged to contact Victim Support Merseyside for free, confidential support.

The Restorative Justice Scheme gives victims the opportunity to challenge offenders and get the answers they need to recover from a crime. It empowers victims by giving them a voice, offering them the chance to meet their offender and explain the impact the crime has had on them.

The scheme receives referrals from the Police, housing providers and Wirral Council's Anti-Social Behaviour team. Anyone interested in finding out more can contact Victim Support by calling 0151 353 4003 or emailing the team on rj.merseyside@victimsupport.org.uk

Domestic Abuse:

- Domestic Abuse Business Quality Mark training.

In October the Council honoured 13 businesses and community groups for receiving the borough's Domestic Abuse Business Quality Mark training.

Businesses received Wirral's Business Quality Mark for Zero Tolerance to Domestic Abuse, which was first launched in October 2018 at Wirral's Domestic Abuse conference. Community groups received their titles as Community Champions for Domestic Abuse, which is an extension of the borough's quality mark scheme.

The training has so far benefitted 18 businesses, care organisations, service providers and community groups across the borough. A further five are currently engaged in the accreditation process.