

## **Report from the Cabinet Portfolio Holder for Children, Families and Education**

### ***Hungry Little Minds Campaign Launch***

The *Hungry Little Minds* campaign, initiated by the Department for Education, launched on 20<sup>th</sup> January 2020, with the Children and Families Minister, Michelle Donelan, in attendance. Wirral's Early Childhood Services, in partnership with the Foundation Years Trust, are one of six local authority areas involved in this pilot initiative.

### ***New pilot programme for families affected by the 'trigger trio'***

Plans to deliver a pilot programme for families affected by the trigger trio (formerly referred to as the 'Toxic Trio' which includes domestic abuse, substance misuse and mental health issues) are being coordinated by a partnership group. The pilot will see the creation of an integrated, multi-agency team to enable families, who have had long-term involvement with children's services, to make significant and sustained change. Planned to run for a two-year period, the programme will operate using an evidence-based approach to families across Wirral.

### ***Community Matters – One year on***

All partners celebrated the first year of the Community Matters initiative with a reflection session to review progress, consider learning and plan for year two. Wirral's Early Help and Prevention Service commissioned the help of community organisations to deliver an early help service to families across Wirral who need it most. In its first year, Community Matters has provided support to more than 800 Wirral families.

Partners involved in the project include Home-Start Wirral, The Open Door, Women's Enterprise Breakthrough (WEB), WIRED, Caritas, and Fender Community Hub School.

### ***Troubled Families programme extension confirmed***

The Ministry for Housing, Communities and Local Government confirmed a one-year extension to the Troubled Families programme. For Wirral this will mean a continuation of services for 150 families facing multiple and complex issues. The national agenda will focus particularly on service transformation over the 12-month period, encouraging local areas to use the extension as an opportunity to further enhance their multi-agency approaches.

### ***Developing a new model for early help***

Capacity: The Public Services Lab have completed their year one insight work with more than 450 Wirral families. Their report, *Why Community Matters*, will be published in March and will inform the development of a model for early help.

### ***Youth offer proposals***

On 24<sup>th</sup> February, Cabinet agreed a set of proposals for Phase of the Youth Offer. The proposals, which were developed by multi-agency partners and young people, are complimented by the launch of the *In Our Hands* photo-journalism exhibition. The exhibition contains 22 images of young people 'going about their daily business in Wirral' and has been produced by six local young photographers. The exhibition opened on 24<sup>th</sup> February 2020 at Wallasey Town Hall

### ***Funding bid success for domestic abuse programme***

In partnership with SafeLives and Merseyside Police, Wirral has been successful in a bid to pilot the Drive programme for early intervention with perpetrators of domestic abuse. Timescales, the number of courses, capacity of the programme and other details are currently at the planning stage.

### ***Care Leavers Awards***

The Children Looked After Awards night took place on 11<sup>th</sup> December 2019 with more than 600 children being nominated by carers, friends and family to receive awards. A programme of social events for Children Looked After and Care Leavers has subsequently been developed following the huge success and attendance at this event.

### ***#Bethedifference Awards***

Children's Services' #Bethedifference awards were held during December 2019 to celebrate the efforts and achievements of colleagues from within Children's Services, including Team Support Officers, Social Workers, Team Managers, Independent Reviewing Officers, a Community Patrol Officer and Leaving Care Officers. Four similar events are planned for 2020, starting with a 'World Social Work' Day Event on 17<sup>th</sup> March.

### ***Annual Conversation with Ofsted***

The Director and Senior Managers from across Children's Services met with senior HMI Inspectors and the Regional Director for Ofsted in February 2020 as part of the annual challenge process, set by the Schools and Social Care regulator. The session focussed on progress in inspection recommendations following the ILACS inspection in June 2019 and how the local authority is supporting schools to promote and deliver an 'ambitious curriculum'.

### ***Accountability meeting and 'Supervision and support' - six months on***

The Department for Education confirmed that it remains satisfied with Wirral's progress towards recommendations from the Social Care inspection in June 2019 and the 'supervision and support' period remains light touch. An accountability meeting on 7<sup>th</sup> February 2020 reviewed progress since the ILACS inspection and members confirmed satisfactory progress had been made.

### ***Inspection success for Short Breaks provision – Willowtree***

Willowtree short breaks service maintained its 'Outstanding' rating for the 6<sup>th</sup> year. The feedback from inspectors outlined that the staff team has continued to develop from strength to strength and the service "opens up the world to children", encouraging new activities and setting goals for young people to develop independence and new skills

### ***SEND Youth Conference and Partnership Summit***

On Friday 31<sup>st</sup> January 2020 Wirral SEND Youth Voice Group hosted their third annual conference inviting key senior leaders with the autonomy and drive to make a difference. The event concluded with attendees being asked to make a pledge that they, and their service, will work to deliver on over the next 12 months.

The Youth Conference followed a series of SEND partnership events involving more than 100 practitioners and managers who deliver care and support for children with special educational needs and disabilities. An initial summit event held on 16<sup>th</sup> December 2019 focussed on preparing the local area for the forthcoming SEND inspection. The second event on 24<sup>th</sup> January 2020 explored the priorities and deliverables in the new SEND Strategy.

### ***Consultation launched on SEND strategy 2020 – 2024***

Consultation on the new SEND strategy was launched at the beginning of February 2020. A key aim of the consultation is to ensure that the views of stakeholders help shape the local area's plans for improving life chances and outcomes for children and young people with special educational needs and disabilities. The consultation seeks views on the deliverables and priorities outlined in the strategy which include:

- Improve the quality of provision and outcomes for young people with SEND.
- Ensure early identification of special education needs and high-quality intervention particularly for children and young people exhibiting social, emotional and mental health issues.
- Further develop effective transition from one education phase/setting including preparing for adulthood pathway.
- To further develop participation, engagement and coproduction with children, young people, parents and carers.

### ***Report on special school provision***

An initial summary presentation on the findings and proposed options from an independent review of SEND provision was provided to Children and Families Overview and Scrutiny Committee in January.

### ***Independent Chair appointed for Partnership for Children, Young People and Families***

An independent chair for the Partnership for Children, Young People and Families was appointed on 6<sup>th</sup> February 2020. The new chair, Justine Molyneux, will lead a collaborative approach to improve outcomes for children and their families.

***Care Leavers Leisure Pass Scheme*** More than 40 Care Leavers have accessed free Gym and Swim passes for use at the Council's leisure centres as part of a wider wellbeing scheme to support Care Leavers with both their physical and emotional health.

### ***Accommodation for Care Leavers***

As part of a new pilot, in partnership with Regenda Social Landlord, two Care Leaver residential units have now been purchased. The houses will open in April and May this year offering, in total, eight young people shared living supported accommodation.

***Employment Opportunities for Care Leavers***

More employment opportunities for Care Leavers have been secured through apprenticeship schemes with Merseyside Police. This will add to the growing pool of employers who are willing and enthusiastic about employing and supporting Care Leavers' independence and development.