

Wirral Children and Young People's Plan

2013 – 2016

Equality Impact Assessment

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Introduction

Wirral Children's Trust has a commitment to contributing to a fairer society by ensuring that unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation is eliminated, equality of opportunity is advanced and good relations are fostered between different groups. It also understands its specific equality duties under the Equality Act to analyse the effect of policies and practices and how they further the equality aims and to publish the results of that analysis which includes the information used and the engagement that took place.

It has therefore undertaken an equality impact assessment of the Children and Young People's Plan for 2013-14 focusing on the impact of the priorities of the plan on people from protected groups. An assumption has been made that the lead organisation for delivery of the individual projects will undertake their own equality impact assessments.

Legislative framework

The equality impact assessment has been undertaken in line with the Equality Act 2010 which defines the requirement to protect people with 'protected characteristics' from discrimination.

The protected characteristics are:

- Age
- Disability
- Gender reassignment
- Pregnancy and maternity
- Race
- Religion or belief
- Sex
- Sexual orientation
- Marriage and civil partnership (only a requirement for eliminating unlawful discrimination)
- In addition to the above Wirral includes the impact of socio-economic status in their assessment.

The Equality Act also places a general duty on public authorities when carrying out their functions to have due regard to the need to:

- Eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation and other conduct prohibited by the Act.
- Advance equality of opportunity between people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not.
- Foster good relations between people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not.
- In order to advance equality, this should involve:
- Removing or minimising disadvantages suffered by people due to their protected characteristics.
- Taking steps to meet the needs of people from protected groups where these are different from the needs of other people.

- Encouraging people from protected groups to participate in public life or in other activities where their participation is disproportionately low.

Equality and Diversity Pledge for Wirral Children's Services

In addition Children's Social Care have developed an equality pledge that they use as reference point for measuring progress in achieving equality of opportunity.

- Continuous challenge is provided to all children's practitioners to ensure that the needs of children and young people are being met and understood in the context of their culture, religion and identity
- Children and young people from all communities in Wirral are involved in planning improvements to the delivery of children's services
- The provision of children's services reflects the needs of all communities in Wirral both through 'in-house' services and through commissioned services
- The children's workforce is more diverse to provide a greater understanding and knowledge of equality and diversity and be better equipped to respond to children's needs
- Staff working with children are appropriately trained on understanding equality and diversity and particularly the importance of a child's identity and its impact on their lives
- Improve communication between the statutory sector and the voluntary, community and faith sector to ensure staff have a better knowledge of resources and services available from all agencies and the community that can meet the diverse needs of children, young people and families in Wirral

What young people said we should say.....

- Everyone is different.
- We will do our best to remember this when we are recruiting and training people to support you, to ensure that they will be sensitive to your needs.
- We promise to respect your differences and ensure that everyone is given opportunities to succeed. We believe in Children and Young People full stop.
- We will do this by listening to your wishes, feelings and opinions and taking them seriously, no matter where you come from, what you believe in or who you want to be as a person. Without your voice there is only silence

Relevance of the plan on the general equality duty

The vision of the plan is "to enable Wirral's children, young people and families to access services quickly in order to be secure, healthy, have fun and achieve their full potential" which promotes equality of access and equality of opportunity. The plan deals with the challenge of reduced resources at the sometime as a commitment to focusing on continued improvement of services for children and young people. Specialist support is more targeted to ensure early support is accessed and effectively provided to those that need it.

At the same time the right high quality universal services for Wirral families are continued. There is a continued commitment to improve the life chances of children and young people who experience disadvantage with specific projects that work to support Wirral's most complex families.

The plan is also aligned to the Wirral Child Poverty Strategy so that poverty and disadvantage are a key theme.

The development of the plan has been through evaluating all available evidence and listening carefully to what children, young people and their families are saying. The priorities have changed from previous years to be more focused and directly address disadvantage and equality of opportunity whilst listening to children's views.

Relevance of the plan to protected groups

There are some parts of the plan that specifically address the areas of the protected characteristics which are detailed below. However this is limited in this year's plan as the priorities and actions are more general than in previous years.

Age

Separate priorities for 5 and under and 5-19 year olds for health improvements

Disability

Ensure an SEN framework and budget arrangements are delivered in line with new national guidance

Agencies understand the signs of post natal depression

Promoting the benefits of Vitamin D supplements to reduce rickets and osteomalacia

Pregnancy and maternity

Promoting breast feeding

Reduce teenage pregnancy

Sex

Targeting of young women about smoking in pregnancy

Sexual orientation

Continue anti-bullying work

Looked after children

Focus on their education and gap in outcomes

Socio-economic disadvantage

Reducing the gap in life expectancy

Reduce attainment gap between those eligible for free school meals and those not eligible

Consultation with Young People

The plan includes the consultation with young people which has their defined activities which is very positive in addressing many equality issues such as being more inclusive in

range of services and activities for disabled people, improving responses to bullying specially around disability and race, and be more inclusive in developing skills for employment.

Areas for improvement

Improve the cultural understanding of staff of staff across all agencies though training
Improve the diversity of young people involved in participation, engagement and consultation processes.

Priority Area	Which equality groups are affected	Equality Analysis of positive impact	Equality Analysis of negative impact	Further action required (If Negative impact)	Lead Officer	Timescale
We will support you to have the best possible start to life and to develop healthy lifestyle choices						
From conception to age five Wirral Children have the best possible physical, social, emotional and psychological start in life.	All	Ensures all children and their families have equality of opportunity by targeting interventions to promote healthy lifestyles.	Lack of knowledge about needs of protected groups	Re-commission cultural awareness training and continue to promote its uptake amongst local service providers	Julie Graham	March 2014
From 5 - 19 years, Wirral children and young people's health and well being will continue to develop through healthy lifestyle choices in preparation for adult life.	All	Ensures all children and their families have equality of opportunity by targeting interventions to promote healthy lifestyles.	Lack of knowledge about needs of protected groups	Re-commission cultural awareness training and continue to promote its uptake amongst local service providers	Julie Graham	March 2014
We will keep you safe from harm, in a family environment and where necessary support you at the earliest opportunity						
Improve outcomes for children and young people in need of protection.	Children in Need	Focus in improving children in need of protection.	Lack of knowledge about the needs of protected groups	Improve the practice of staff in understanding identity needs through cultural competency training.	Simon Garner	March 2014

Priority Area	Which equality groups are affected	Equality Analysis of positive impact	Equality Analysis of negative impact	Further action required (If Negative impact)	Lead Officer	Timescale
To support those children and young people who require extra help at the earliest opportunity.	All	Targeting of early preventative services to children and families on a multi-agency basis ensures that children and young people from protected groups will get co-ordinated support before it escalates to more acute intervention.	Lack of knowledge about needs of protected groups	Improve the practice of staff in understanding identity needs through cultural competency training	Steve Pimblett	March 2014
We will raise your aspirations and achievement, so you are equipped to enter adulthood and working life.						
To ensure that there is appropriate support and challenge to educational settings.	All		Potential for children and young people from protected groups to be excluded from certain activities as a result of schools not buying into activities that are provided through Education Quality (Wirral’s school improvement	Promoting the value of Education Quality with Head Teachers	Stuart Bellerby	Ongoing

Priority Area	Which equality groups are affected	Equality Analysis of positive impact	Equality Analysis of negative impact	Further action required (If Negative impact)	Lead Officer	Timescale
			traded services)			
To ensure children and young people across Wirral will have improved attainment levels and skills, to enable then to fulfil their aspirations	All	Improving the performance of all schools with particular focus on underperforming schools will ensure that education attainment of children and young people from protected groups will be improved.			Stuart Bellerby	March 2014
Effectively promote and enable participation and progression for all young people.	All	Focus on disadvantaged families for lifelong and family learning and targeted career and information service for vulnerable young people promotes equality of opportunity.			Lindsay Davidson	March 2014

Priority Area	Which equality groups are affected	Equality Analysis of positive impact	Equality Analysis of negative impact	Further action required (If Negative impact)	Lead Officer	Timescale
We will support those of you who need extra help to reach your potential and achieve well.						
Improve the educational outcomes for vulnerable children and young people.	All	There is a focus on monitoring, reviewing and reporting on the groups identified (early years, looked after children, children living in poverty)	Other protected groups such as gender, black and racial minority groups have less focus and their educational outcomes may suffer.	Support schools to work with minority groups to support learning.	Stuart Bellerby	March 2014
Ensure a SEN framework and budget arrangements are delivered in line with new national guidance.	Disabled children and young people	Aim of government changes is to give children, young people and their parents’ greater control and choice in decisions and ensuring needs are properly met.	Parents and carers of disabled children and young people may be resistant to the changes.	Ensure that the parents and carers are kept up to date with the changes and they have an opportunity to give their opinions.	Paul Ashcroft	March 2014
We will listen to your views to inform decisions that affect you.						
Enhance the involvement of children and young people in the decision making process.	All	Children’s participation improves the design and planning of the service delivery.	Risk that protected groups are not represented.	Ensure that there is a fair representation from minority groups in the decision making process.	Lindsay Davidson	March 2014