MARKET POSITION STATEMENT 2019

"Making Wirral great for children, young people and their families."

#BETHE DIFFERENCE

WIRRAL

2018 - 2021

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FOREWORD

As part of Wirral Borough Council's 2020 vision, a key commitment to all Wirral children, including children looked after and care leavers, is that we will ensure:

- they are ready for school,
- ready for work and adulthood
- that they will be supported to reach their full potential.

This market position statement focuses on helping the Council to meet this commitment and ensure that all children and young people looked after have a happy stable home with carers who are committed to nurturing and supporting them. Wherever possible we aim to place children and young people locally on the Wirral. Our intention is for providers to access this market position statement to inform any new business developments or to review their current business models to offer a robust response to need which can adapt flexibly to meet the changing needs of the Children Looked After population on the Wirral and can offer stability to the marketplace in the years ahead.

We understand that our relationship with providers is crucial to the ongoing shaping and development of high quality services. Elected Members, Senior Managers and Commissioners will play a key role in ensuring that Wirral refreshes and publishes its Sufficiency Strategy and that the Council's aspiration of continuously improving the services for children looked after becomes a reality, based firmly on the needs, wishes and voice of children and young people.

Councillor Bernie Mooney
Cabinet Portfolio Holder for Children and Families

Paul Boyce
Director of Children's Services

CONTEXT

Wirral's Children Looked After (CLA) numbers have been rising over the course of the last two years with an increase of 70 between 1st April 2017 and 31st March 2018. This mirrors an upward trend nationally although Wirral's traditionally high numbers means that we have a significantly higher rate per 10,000 (125) than national, regional, and similar local authority comparators.

While the upward trend appears to have levelled off in the last 12 months, reducing overall numbers continues to present significant challenges.

A snapshot picture as at the 1st January 2019 tells us that Wirral's Children Looked After (CLA) population stood at 842. Of these the information below illustrates the number of children and young people placed with external residential, independent fostering (IFA) and supported accommodation and independent living providers (SAILS).

CURRENT MARKET POSITION

RESIDENTIAL CHILDREN'S HOMES

Across the provider market locally there are 33 residential placements available on the Wirral, including 4 parent and child placements. We currently have 69 externally commissioned placements, 22 in-borough and 47 out of borough, we are therefore accessing only 67% of the available local residential market.

TOTAL no. of placements	69
TOTAL no. of placements Inside LA	22
TOTAL no. of placements Outside LA	47
% Placements Inside LA Boundary	32

Source: Placements Commissioning Service: Placements Tracker (January 2019)

PREDICTED NEED FOR LOCAL RESIDENTIAL PROVISION

Despite the apparent 'oversupply' of beds and homes in the Liverpool City Region (LCR) *(Source sub-regional placement sufficiency statement: Liverpool City Region 2016)*, Wirral is still struggling to secure local residential placements for local children. Currently 32 children are placed over 20 miles outside of the local authority border and 15 are placed 20 miles or less outside the LA boundary. External factors such as LCR and the North West being used as a national market are seriously impeding the ability to secure local placements for local children. Providers tell us that they are unable or unwilling to take our more complex young people as they feel OFSTED do not recognise small step changes for these young people as good outcomes and they view complexity as a business risk which may lead to a lower regulatory rating.

Current gaps in residential services are for Wirral young people who present with the following needs:

- Mental health issues, particularly those not meeting the threshold for Tier 4 services and/or those who are stepping down from Tier 4 provision and assessed as fit for discharge.
- Young people expressing trauma through violence towards other young people, carers and/or staff, these young people tend to have a label of ADHD, ODD etc. which is often a misrepresentation of their presenting difficulties that are more likely to be attachment based.
- Young people stepping down from secure welfare or Youth Justice Board provision.
- Young people with a pattern of missing, risk of CSE, self-harm, risk of criminality.
- Young people who are in need of an evidence based model of therapeutic support and that a residential provision could be secured to offer this a short-term intervention.
- Young people who need short term residential intervention as part of a long term step down plan to fostering and or home.

Emerging data and analysis of need from Wirral's strategic CLA group was as follows with regard to predicted need for residential placements over the next three years.

AGE PROFILE	AS AT 1.4.2018	AS AT 1.4.2019	AS AT 1.4.2020	AS AT 1.4.2021
Under 1	2	2	2	2
1-4 years	1	1	1	1
5-9 years	1	1	1	1
10-15 years	42	38	36	33
16 plus	24	22	21	19
Totals	**70**	**64**	**60**	**56**

INDEPENDENT FOSTERING AGENCIES (IFA's)

Across the IFA market the last estimated figures *(Source: OFSTED/PNW fostering data collection 2016 and 903)* for Wirral was 229 approved foster beds. We currently have as at 1st January 2019 104 IFA placements externally commissioned, 55 in borough and 49 out of borough equating to 47% of our total externally commissioned placements. We are accessing only 24% of the local market.

TOTAL no. of placements	104
TOTAL no. of placements Inside LA	55
TOTAL no. of placements Outside LA	49
% Placements Inside LA Boundary	53

Source: Placements Commissioning Service: Placements Tracker (January 2019)

PREDICTED NEED FOR LOCAL INDEPENDENT FOSTERING AGENCY PLACEMENTS

As with the data and analysis of future need for residential provision illustrated above, Wirral's strategic CLA leads are predicting the following demand for IFA placements over the next three years.

AGE PROFILE	AS AT 1.4.2018	AS AT 1.4.2019	AS AT 1.4.2020	AS AT 1.4.2021
Under 1	9	8	8	7
1-4 years	5	5	5	4
5-9 years	23	21	20	18
10-15 years	35	32	30	28
16 plus	10	9	8	8
Totals	**82**	**75**	**70**	**65**

SUPPORTED ACCOMMODATION AND INDEPENDENT LIVING PROVIDERS (SAILS)

As at the 1st January 2019 the snapshot headline figures were as illustrated below for SaILS provision for Wirral young people of which 10 placements host Unaccompanied Asylum Seekers.

TOTAL no. of placements	42
TOTAL no. of placements Inside LA	25
TOTAL no. of placements Outside LA	17
% Placements Inside LA Boundary	60

Source: Placements Commissioning Service: Placements Tracker (January 2019)

COMMISSIONING INTENTIONS BASED ON PREDICTED NEED FOR SaILS

Because there are a range of young people who could be placed in SaIL provisions, producing a prediction of demand is challenging. We have used the over 16 CLA rate published in the 903 Return as a proxy for potential demand. As at the 2016 903 return, Wirral's demand for SaILS placements was 12% of it's total over 16 CLA population. Of all placements purchased 8% were for floating support with accommodation and 92% were for group living/semi-independent. As illustrated below the current demand is higher than would be anticipated on this formula. The predicted need from April 2019 is based on the above formula. *Source: 903 2016 and PNW SaIL Census 2017.*

AGE PROFILE	AS AT 1.4.2018	AS AT 1.4.2019	AS AT 1.4.2020	AS AT 1.4.2021
16-18 years	34	14	13	12
Totals	**34**	**14**	**13**	**12**

The challenge and opportunity with the above figures for the local authority is that we are committed to placing Wirral children, where safe and appropriate, on the Wirral and wish to work with providers delivering locally to co-produce creative, collaborative solutions with us to enable this to become a reality. To this end the Children's Services Commissioning Team is committed to pro-actively engaging with the provider market locally and will continue to build relationships with the clear purpose of shaping local solutions to meet local need.

An additional challenge is that other local authorities (OLA's) occupy 217 of the available residential or fostering placements on the Wirral, impacting on all services locally, universal, targeted and specialist and reducing local choice.

We know regionally in the North West that the market is a national one. Some provider's business models are based on an expectation of a high level of inward placements. Despite a notional surplus of placements in the region, the local market is not shaped as yet to meet local needs.

OVERARCHING COMMISSIONING INTENTIONS FOR WIRRAL CHILDREN LOOKED AFTER

Our overarching intention is aspirational for all Wirral children and young people looked after. We will ensure that where other safe and appropriate permanency options are not available to the child, quality, local placements will be commissioned to meet need. Sufficiency will be secured in such a way that the following outcomes can be achieved:

- All children are placed in appropriate placements with access to the support services they require in Wirral, except where this is not consistent with their welfare.
- All children looked after will be prepared for independence and a healthy adulthood.
- The full range of universal, targeted and specialist services work together to meet children's needs in an integrated way in the local area, including children who are already looked after, as well as those at risk of care or custody.
- Where it is not reasonably practicable for a child to be placed on the Wirral, there are mechanisms in place to widen the range of provision in neighbouring areas, the sub-region or region.
- Partners, including housing and RP's, work together to secure a range of provision to meet the needs of those who are looked after at the age of 16 and 17, and support the continuity of accommodation beyond the age of 18.
- Services are available in adequate quantity to respond to children, including predicted demand for a range of needs, and emergencies.
- In addition to meeting relevant national minimum standards, services are of high quality to secure the specific outcomes identified in the care plans of looked after children.
- Services are situated across Wirral to reflect geographical distribution of need.
- Placement providers (including private, voluntary and public sector providers) are linked into the wider network of services and work with these services to offer appropriate support to deliver identified outcomes for looked after children.
- Universal services know when a child is looked after and have good links with the range of targeted and specialist services, including placement providers.
- Mechanisms are in place to ensure that professionals involved in placement decisions have sufficient knowledge and information about the supply and quality of placements and availability of all specialist, targeted and universal support services within Wirral.
- Wirral Local Authority and its partners continue to collaborate with neighbouring authorities and their partners to shape the market for services for children looked after and commission regionally or sub-regionally.

CONCLUSION

This market position statement focuses on helping the Council to meet this commitment and ensure that all children and young people looked after have a happy stable home with carers who are committed to nurturing and supporting them. It identifies the current position in relation to:

1. Residential Children's Homes;

2. Independent Fostering Agencies; and,

3. Supported Accommodation and Independent Living providers (SaILS)

It also sets out the Council's commissioning intentions based on predicted demand for these placements.

The Statement outlines our overarching commissioning intentions for Children Looked After and in order to provide clear and focussed aims for ensuring there is good quality local placements for all young people in our care.