



**WIRRAL
INTELLIGENCE
SERVICE**

This is Wirral

**Children and Young
People**

**Wirral Intelligence Service
(December 2019)**

This is Wirral

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Background to This is Wirral

This is Wirral is a collected set of evidence about Wirral.

It includes information about the Wirral population including their current and future health and wellbeing needs and the borough including information about the economy, housing, environment and transport.

The insight is collected into a number of sections to allow ease of access for the reader.

Each section contains detailed content including the key messages from the analysis and insight on main issues and is underpinned by detailed information.

The information forms our Joint Strategic Needs Assessment (JSNA) providing a detailed picture of the borough.

It is used to enable effective strategic planning to determine what actions local authorities and other partners need to take to meet resident needs and to address the wider determinants that impact on health and wellbeing.

How can you help?

If you have ideas or any suggestions about these issues or topics then please email us at wirralintelligenceservice@wirral.gov.uk or go to <https://www.wirralintelligenceservice.org/>

Version Number	Date	Authors
1.0	December 2019	Tricia Thomas Performance and Improvement Manager, Children's Services for Wirral Council

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- John Highton johnhighton@wirral.gov.uk JSNA Programme Manager

Key Messages

- In June 2019, Ofsted inspection of local authority children's services in Wirral found that Wirral was no longer providing inadequate services for children. The inspection judgements as stated within the Inspection Report rated the impact of leadership on social work practice as 'Good' and the experience and progress of children in need of help and protection and children in care as 'Requires Improvement'.
- There were a number of recommendations made by Ofsted. In response, Wirral Children's Services developed an Ofsted Improvement Plan with specific, measurable and realistic actions which will provide the direction and focus for the next year. The plan will be monitored in-year with a full review completed annually to evaluate impact and to reshape priorities moving forward.
- The proportion of year 1 pupils attaining the expected standard in phonics increased from 80.8% (2018) to 81.9% (2019). This matches the emerging national average which is also 81.9%.
- The proportion of children achieving the expected standard in mathematics at Key Stage 2 increased from 71% (2018) to 74.9% (2019), resulting in the gap between Wirral outcomes and the national average narrowing from 5% to 4.1%.
- A Progress School located in Birkenhead, provides a 12-week re-integration programme for Key Stage 3 students, as preparation for students to re-join mainstream school. Over 94% of Key Stage 3 students have been successfully re-integrated back into mainstream education.
- There has been a 36.5% increase in referrals to Wirral's Early Help Service (over the past 12 months) which is beginning to reduce demand on statutory, Level 4 Social Care teams. There has already been a 15.5% reduction in social care contacts at the Integrated Front Door
- 100% of Early Help cases have a plan in place to ensure that interventions are targeted, and plans do not drift.
- There has been an increase in the number of social workers recruited to permanent positions. This includes a 55% reduction in agency staff over the past twelve months.
- The number of Children Looked After in Wirral is beginning to reduce. Low numbers of children leaving care has been a familiar trend, but a new discharge process has been introduced to address this issue. As at end of October 2019 the number of Children Looked After in Wirral was 822 or 121.6 per 10,000 population.
- Almost 74% of Wirral Children Looked After are placed with foster carers.
- The number of children identified with SEND in early years has risen to 4% (2018/19) from 3.8% (2017/18)
- Improved practice and processes within the local authority SEND Team and increased compliance with advices from Health and the Education Psychologist Service has resulted in increased compliance of completion of Education, Health & Care Plans (EHCPs) Completion rates for 2019/20 highlight a figure for Quarter 2 (2019/20) of 52% which is a significant increase from 25.8% in Quarter 1 (2019/20).

This is Wirral: Children and Young People

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CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE



PHONICS YEAR 1



MATHEMATICS KEY STAGE 2



EARLY HELP CASES



HAVE PLANS IN PLACE

INCREASED
REFERRALS TO
EARLY HELP SERVICE



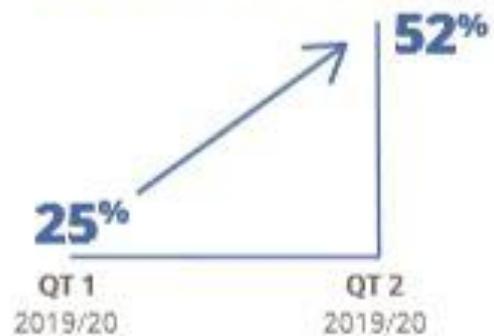
REDUCED
SOCIAL CARE
CONTACTS



CHILDREN IDENTIFIED WITH SPECIAL EDUCATIONAL NEEDS AND/OR DISABILITIES IN EARLY YEARS



COMPLETION OF EDUCATION, HEALTH AND CARE PLANS



822

NUMBER OF CHILDREN
LOOKED AFTER AS AT
OCTOBER 2019

NUMBER OF CHILDREN LOOKED AFTER PER 10,000 POPULATION

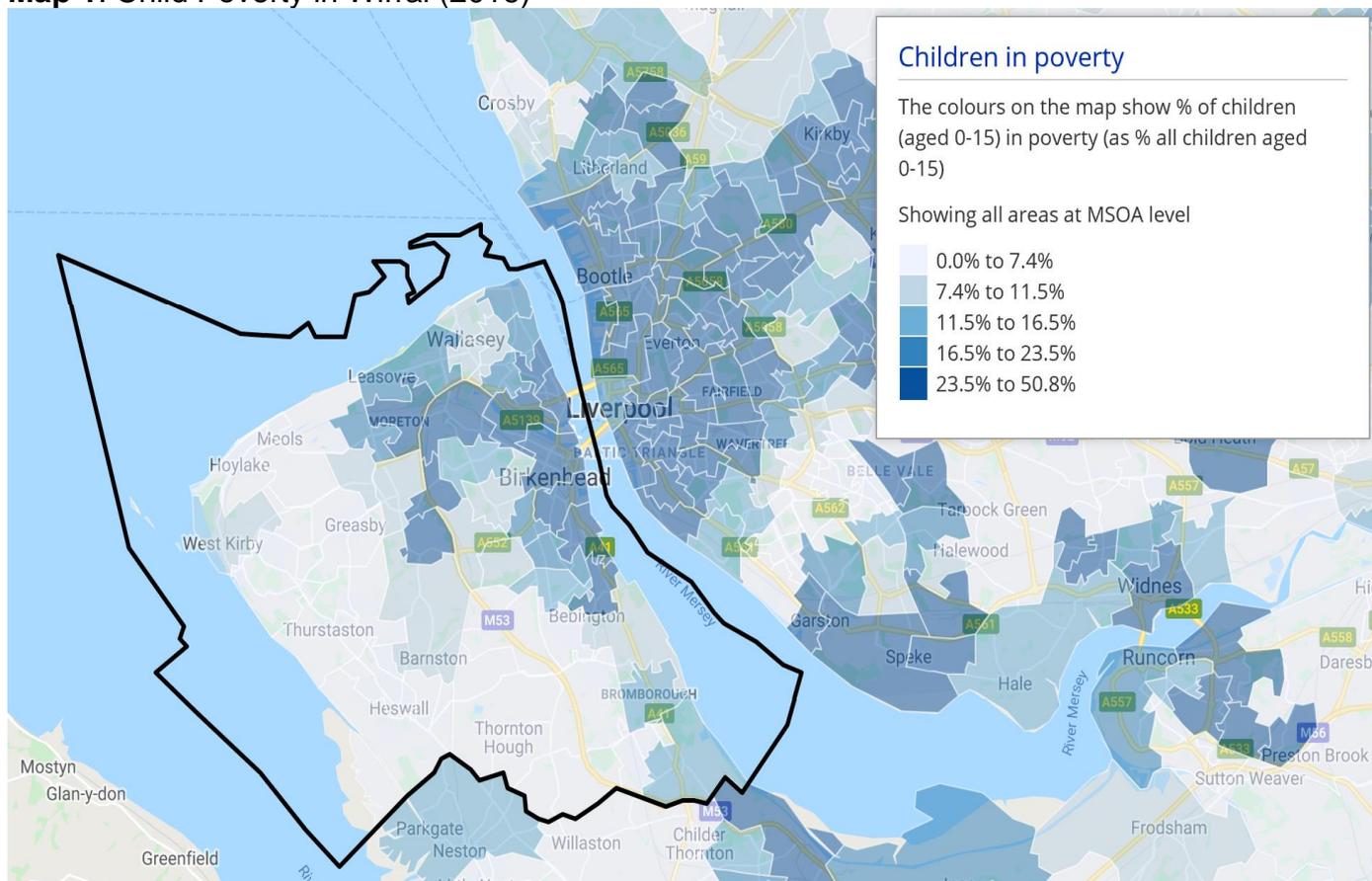


Introduction

The population of Wirral is approximately 323,200 including 74,300 children and young people (age 0 up to 19) ([Wirral Intelligence Service 2019](#)).

For a child or young person growing up in Wirral, the Borough is an area of sharp contrasts. While many enjoy a very good quality of life, in parts of the borough there are significant levels of deprivation. Localities within the borough range from some of the most deprived in the country to some of the most affluent. There are 19.2% of children and young people in Wirral that live in poverty (December 2018).

Map 1: Child Poverty in Wirral (2016)*



Source: [Local Insight sourced at Wirral Intelligence Service Website](#) (2019)

Notes: *This data is latest published in December 2018 and refers to 2 years previous, 2016. Next available data is expected in late December 2019 for 2017.

Current local data suggest that children and young people in Wirral are more likely to be brought up in poverty (almost twice as likely in some areas of the borough); be a Child in Need or Child Looked After; be diagnosed as having a Special Educational Need or Disability; be absent from school (secondary & primary); have a hospital admission due to alcohol or substance misuse, or a mental health condition or incident.

They are less likely to achieve expected levels in Key Stage 1 and Key Stage 2 in reading, writing and maths; the average attainment 8 score at Key Stage 4 of their peers who live elsewhere; or achieve NVQ level 3 or more at the age of 19 if they have been in receipt of free school meals than those who live elsewhere.

Moreover, Children Looked After in Wirral are more likely to be in care for longer than if they lived elsewhere; be absent from school; achieve less than half of the average attainment 8 score at Key Stage 4 as their Wirral peers who are not Looked After; and only just over half as likely to be in Education, Employment or Training.

Some of these issues are interdependent – if you experience at least one of these negative outcomes, you are likely to be experiencing a number them.

Wirral Council and Partners have the ambition to make Wirral great for children, young people and their families and aim to do this by supporting every child to reach their full potential whilst feeling safe and supported.

In June 2019, Ofsted inspection of Local Authority Children's Services in Wirral found that Wirral was no longer providing inadequate services for children. The inspection judgements as stated within the Inspection Report rated the impact of leadership on social work practice as 'Good' and the experience and progress of children in need of help and protection and children in care as 'Requires Improvement'.

Continued sector-led improvements involve local authorities leading the way to make sure they improve their services and maintain high standards. Transparent performance reporting, ongoing self-assessment, peer challenge and sharing best practice are all part of sector-led improvement.

In Autumn 2019, Wirral Children's Services completed and submitted their [Annual Self-Assessment](#) which will inform their annual conversation with Ofsted and the programme of peer reviews for the next 12 months.

Wirral's Local Authority Self-Assessment

The content of this report provides some insight into the findings of the self-assessment.

Please read: [Wirral's 2019/20 Self-Assessment \(North West Peer Challenge\) for the complete report](#)

The self-assessment report covers three areas which include Education and School Improvement, Children's Social Care and Special Educational Needs and/or Disabilities. **The following sections detail where work remains ongoing and there is an improving picture, in the knowledge that both the Self-Assessment and Ofsted Improvement Plan identify future priorities.**

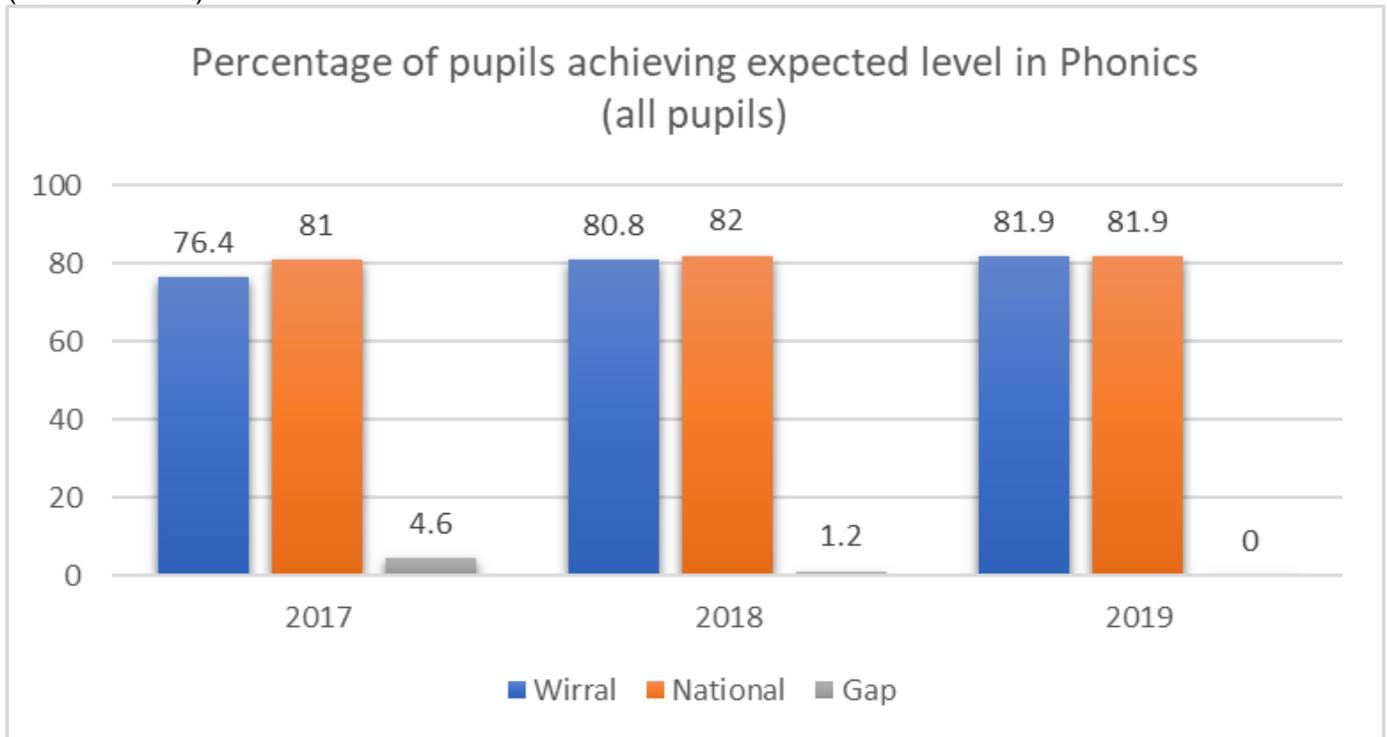
Education and School Improvement

Considered strengths

Improvements in Phonics

In the 2019 academic year, the proportion of year 1 pupils attaining the expected standard in phonics increased, resulting in the gap between Wirral outcomes and the national average closing and therefore currently matching the emerging national average of 81.9% **(Figure 1)**.

Figure 1: Percentage of pupils achieving expected levels of achievement in phonics (all pupils (2017 – 2019)

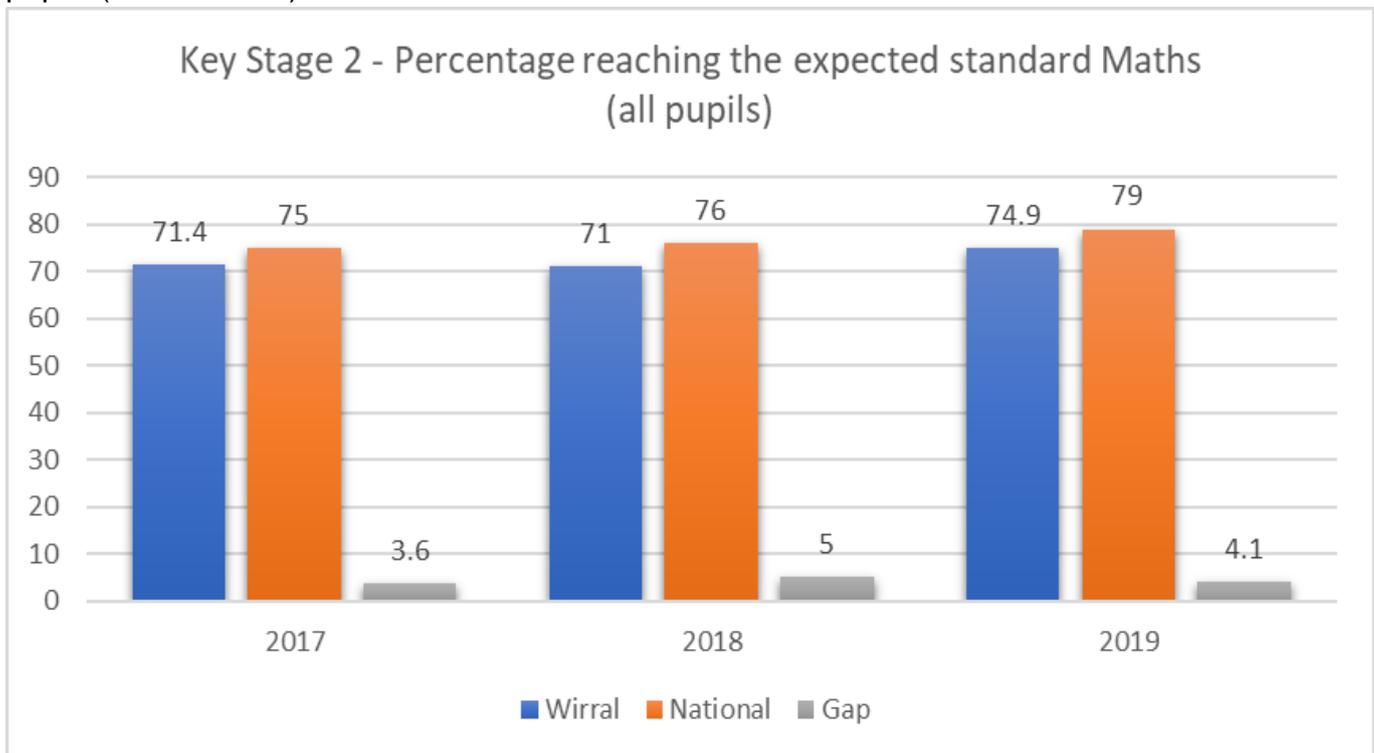


Source: Department for Education published results (2019)

Notes: For further detail see [Wirral Council's Phonics Standards Report \(Pages 131 to 139\)](#). Other elements of the report are Early Years Data - pages 37 to 45, Key Stage 1 - pages 47 to 87 and Key Stage 2 - pages 89 to 130

In Key Stage 2, the children attaining the expected standard remained in line with 2018 outcomes and improved in Mathematics (**Figure 2**).

Figure 2: Percentage of pupils achieving expected levels in mathematics at Key Stage 2 (all pupils (2017 – 2019)



Source: Department for Education published results (2019)

Notes: For further detail see [Wirral Council's Key Stage 2 \(Pages 89 – 130\)](#). Other elements of the report are Early Years Data - pages 37 to 45, Key Stage 1 - pages 47 to 87, Key Stage 2 - pages 89 to 130 and Phonics - pages 131 to 139

Wirral System Leaders

Ten newly appointed Wirral System Team leaders (WSLs) have been helping to secure good quality education in schools. WSLs are headteachers in outstanding schools and provide high quality challenge, guidance and training which has strengthened the capacity of leaders to make and sustain improvements. The impact of this has been significant improvements in leadership and management across schools as evident through inspection judgements.

Progress schools

Progress School, which is specifically in Birkenhead, provides a 12-week re-integration programme for Key Stage 3 students, as preparation for students to re-join mainstream school. Over 94% of Key Stage 3 students have been successfully re-integrated back into mainstream education.

Continued development

Local authority School Improvement capacity

There is strong and effective local system leadership, formalised through School to School Partnership Board and Locality Boards. The School to School Partnership Board has representatives from Locality Board, Wirral System Team leaders, National Leaders in Education, Multi Academy Trusts (MATs) and teaching schools.

Partnership Board is used to work together to identify areas for development and ensure action plans are created to address these.

The Partnership Governance model adopted is now being used and adopted by other local authorities as exemplar practice of bringing key heads together.

Partnership Board governance is underpinned by Locality Boards with responsibility for decision-making data review and challenge. Through Locality Boards, schools share expertise with each other to address improvements in many areas including teaching and learning, and leadership and management.

Children's Social Care

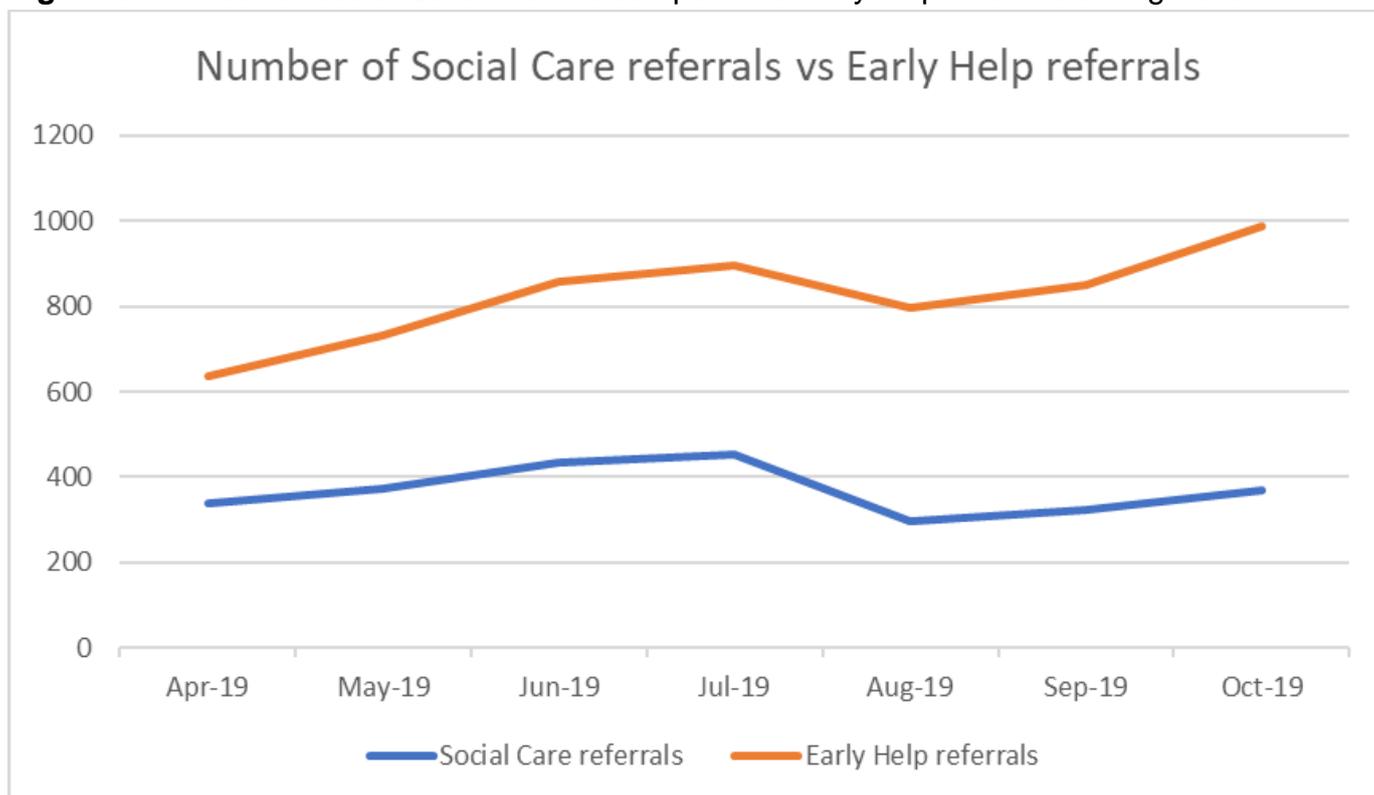
Considered strengths

Early Help system

Wirral's Early Help offer ensures children and their families have access to advice and support at the earliest opportunity. Evidence shows that demand for these Early Help services has increased which in turn is beginning to have an impact on number of referrals to Children's Social Care. In addition, there has also been a 15.5% reduction in the number of children's social care contacts at the integrated front door. Between October 2018 and October 2019, the contacts fell from 1,651 to 1,396.

Figure 3 below also shows the number of referrals to Early Help and the number of referrals to Social Care over a six month period, Between October 2018 and October 2019 there has been a 36.5% increase in referrals to Early Help from 723 (2018) to 987 (2019).

Figure 3: Number of Social Care referrals compared to early help referrals during 2019



Source: Children's Insight Team data reports (Internal Report).

Notes: Please note these figures are subject to change due to timeliness of recording

It is also starting to become evident that in cases being worked with by Family Matters (part of the Early Help Service), the majority have not been worked by the teams within the last 12 months. The Practice Development Officers are also keeping a repository of positive feedback from Families they have been working with.

All of the children have an up to date assessment so that service providers know their needs are appropriately identified. The data is showing that between April and September 2019, 232 Early Help Assessment Tools (EHATs) were completed with the relevant teams completing 1,270 plans. All of the children have a plan in order to ensure that interventions are targeted and do not drift.

Assessed and Supported Year in Employment (ASYE) Programme and progression

There has been an increase in the number of social workers recruited to permanent positions, ensuring that our children and families experience continuity of involvement from practitioners. There has also been an increase in the number of Experienced Social Workers applying for positions and with the recently appointed Assessed and Supported Year in Employment (ASYE) Coordinator and as such Children's Services are better able to plan in the recruitment of Newly Qualified Social Workers (NQSW). Regular recruitment campaigns ensure that we are keeping activities high on our agenda in line with our recruitment strategy. Two Senior Managers from Children's are leading on recruitment and retention, and focussed meetings ensure that current trends are understood as well as the needs of the service.

A new appointment has occurred to the post of ASYE Co-ordinator with responsibility for providing support and monitoring progress of NQSW's completing their ASYE, identifying opportunities for further development or training where required. The throughput of NQSW's completing their ASYE is being carefully monitored as part of our recruitment and retention strategy.

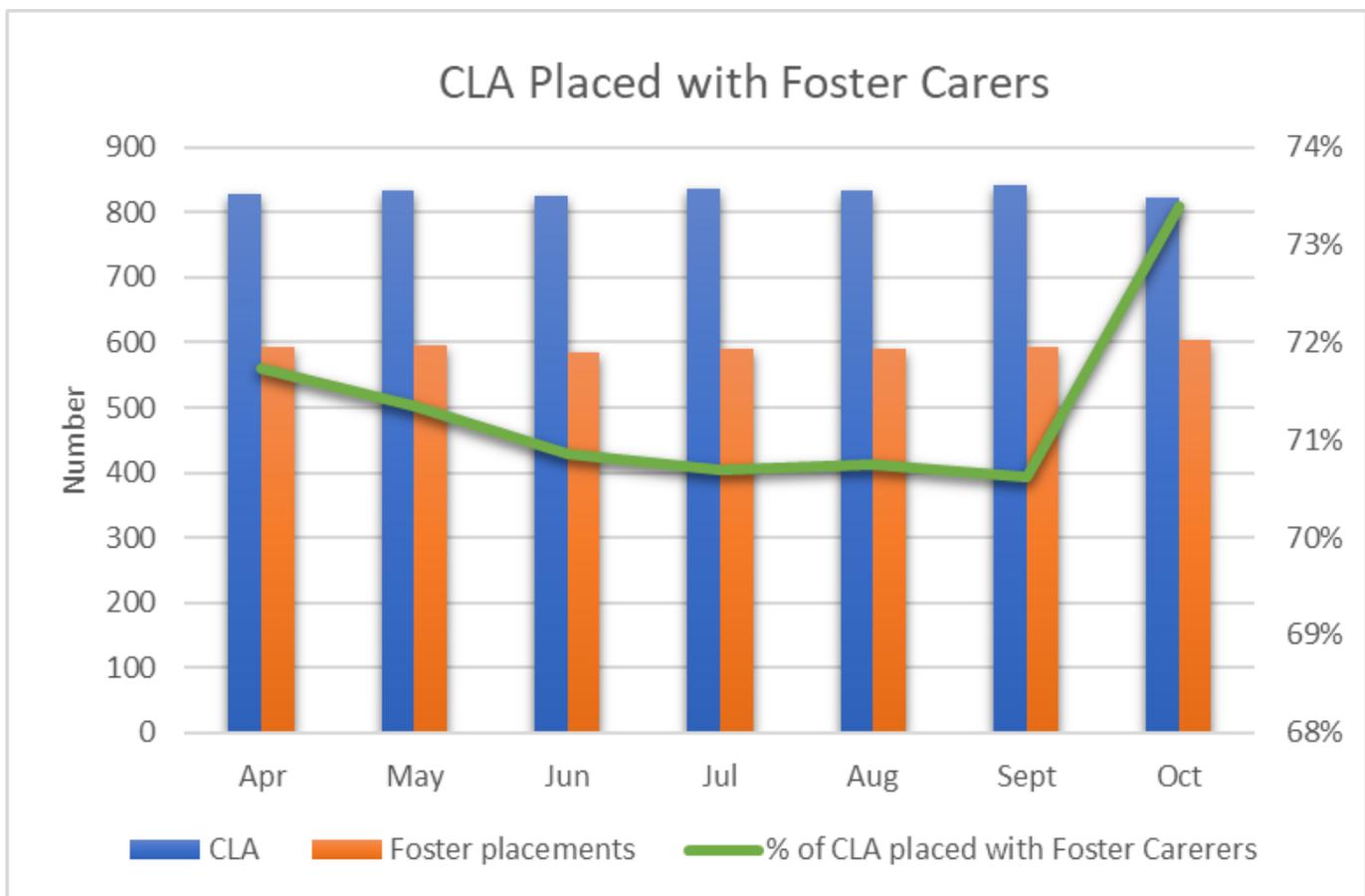
Fostering improvements

In terms of service provision there are 73.4% of Wirral Children Looked After placed with foster carers and the feedback from the newly appointed foster carers for this process has been positive.

Following the ongoing recruitment drive, there have been significant improvements in the number of enquiries received, with three to four enquiries to be potential future foster carers now coming into Children's Services each week. This has also been supported by improvements in the timeliness of assessments being completed, with assessments now completed within 16 weeks.

Figure 4 below shows the number of Children Looked After (CLA) and how many have been placed with foster carers over the past six months. It also presents this information as a percentage of CLA placed with foster carers which most recently has risen to 73.4%.

Figure 4: Number and percentage of children looked after who have been placed with foster carers so far in 2019



Source: Children's Insight Team data reports. Please note these figures are correct at time of reporting but may differ slightly from published data

Continued development

Reducing the number of Children Looked After (CLA)

The number of Children Looked After (CLA) in Wirral remains high and currently stands at 822 (October 2019). Whilst this number is indeed high and when expressed as a rate per 10,000 population is 121.6 (October 2019) compared to a North West average of 94.0 (2018/19), it is in fact the lowest it has been for six months and a trend that is expected to continue (see **Figure 4 above**).

In **figure 5** below for comparison are the rates of children looked after per 10,000 population for Wirral, its statistical neighbours, North West and England between 2014/2015 up to most recent reporting. As noted above Wirral has higher numbers of CLA than its comparator areas but recent performance data suggests this figure has stopped increasing and is beginning to reduce.

Figure 5: Rates of Children Looked After per 10,000 population for Wirral and comparator areas*, between 2014/15 and 2019/20*

	2014/15	2015/16	2016/17	2017/18	2018/19	2019/20
Wirral	99.0	99.0	113.0	123.0	123.0	121.6
Statistical Neighbours	81.9	85.3	92.3	97.0	103.0	See * below
North West	82.0	82.0	86.0	91.0	94.0	See * below
England	60.0	60.0	62.0	64.0	65.0	See * below

Source: Department for Education (2019) as Statistical First Release (SFR) <https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/children-looked-after-in-england-including-adoption-2018-to-2019>

Notes: * these figures for the comparator will be reported and available in the future. The Wirral figure of 121.6 is the current number as recorded by Wirral Children’s Services Performance Team in October 2019 and in line with national data recording standards.

The relationship between the number of children entering care and leaving care has continued to be a key area of focus for Children’s Services. Low numbers of children leaving care has been a familiar trend, but a new discharge process has been introduced to address this issue.

Saturated placement market impacting on stability and resources for CLA

The Council is exploring ways in which it can establish a footing in the residential placement market through the Liverpool City Region, exploring in-house provision and evaluating the local social enterprise offer and how it can support children better in improving outcomes and stability.

Special Educational Needs and/or Disabilities (SEND)

Considered strengths

Early years identification, assessment and collaboration

There has been an increase in the number of children identified with SEND in early years; a rise to 4% in 2018/19 from 3.8% the previous year. Wirral Early Years SEND Team works with early year’s providers to support them with identification and how to record the child’s needs appropriately, ensuring provision is carefully matched to identified needs.

Information about how to refer as a parent with young children is available through [Wirral’s Local Offer](#) that seeks to provide information for children and young people with special educational needs and disabilities. Parents are contacted within five days to attend a pre-portage group and/or sensory sessions at one of Wirral’s three children centres. Portage workers also signpost parents about where to go for information for a parental referral for an assessment. They recommend to parents that as much evidence as possible is submitted initially. Portage workers write advice when requested by the Education, Health & Care Plan (EHCP) co-ordinators.

362 [registered child minders](#) are encouraged to monitor children’s stages of development and alert the Early Years SEND team if concerned, who support assessment of need including assessing the severity of the delay and whether the child’s needs fall within the identified areas in the Code of Practice. This supports the local authority’s judgements when allocating funds for support.

Involvement of parents, carers and children in Education, Health & Care Plan (EHCP) assessments and planning

Parents and carers have been involved in co-producing threshold documents and toolkits for practitioners regarding identification of need. Co-production of the local offer with parents and carers has also ensured that appropriate advice and referral forms are supportive to families and young people. Direct face to face sessions with parents and carers allow for bespoke targeting, questioning and understanding to identify the needs of children and young people with SEND. There are health drop-in sessions for parents and young people where advice is provided.

Timeliness and quality of health advices

Special Educational Needs and/or Disabilities (SEND) Education, Health & Care Plan (EHCP) co-ordinators work with parents, carers, young people, health and social care to deliver plans and ensure the young person's needs are assessed appropriately. Coordinators ensure health advice is appropriately reflected in assessments and planning.

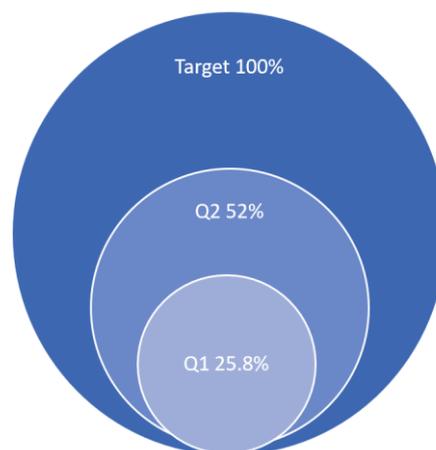
Advices from health are timely and informed by detailed assessment of need. The SEND Health Team provides a single point of access to referrers and co-ordinates the process of assessment, ensuring advices are received within timescale. In August and September all health advices (except for one partner) were 100% compliant with 6-week statutory timescales. In-built quality assurance processes in the SEND Health Team ensure that advices are reviewed and of good quality.

Advices from social care are 100% compliant with statutory timescales but there is further work to do to ensure the quality of advices is robust. A newly appointed Single Point of Contact for Social Care will ensure that appropriate challenge can be provided where the quality of advice is not sufficient or robust.

Improved practice and processes within the local authority SEND Team and increased compliance with advices from Health and the Education Psychologist Service has resulted in increased compliance of completion of Education, Health & Care Plans (EHCPs) Completion rates for 2019/20 with **figure 6** below highlighting a figure for Quarter 2 (2019/20) of 52% which is a significant increase from 25.8% in Quarter 1 (2019/20).

Figure 6: Percentage of Education, Health & Care Plans (EHCPs) completed within 6 weeks compared to target (Quarters 1 and 2 in 2019/20)

Education Health & Care Plans (EHCP) completed within 6 weeks (2019/20)



Source: Children's System Team, Capita data reports. Please note these figures are correct at time of reporting but may differ slightly from published data

Continued development

Demand for special school provision

There is more specialist provision within Wirral (10 special schools in total) when compared with other areas, resulting in high numbers of children in special schools, which means that many children with EHCPs are educated in Special Schools when they could be in mainstream.

The increasing number of young people with Education, Health & Care Plans (EHCPs) combined with parental preference for special school places has resulted in all special schools being full. Historically parents have seen special schools as the best option, and this has impacted on an increase number of tribunals to secure this provision for their child.

What are we doing and why?

Ofsted Improvement Plan Wirral (2019)

In June 2019, Ofsted inspection of local authority children's services in Wirral found that Wirral was no longer providing inadequate services for children. The inspection judgements as stated within the Inspection Report rated the impact of leadership on social work practice as good and the experience and progress of children in need of help and protection and children in care as requires improvement.

The [full July 2019 Ofsted report](#) recognised that *"changes to the senior leadership team...have ensured that the improvement of services for children is at the centre of a wider corporate agenda"*.

It identified that a greater number of children benefit from timely and good-quality early help and that quality assessment and care planning is leading to more timely action for children who are the subject of care proceedings. The inspection found that children looked after have more safe and secure placements in the local community because of an improved fostering service and recognised that care leavers now have access to a dedicated team that supports them well.

The report also highlighted five key areas for improvement which have been noted by the local authority and will form part of a wider Social Care Improvement agenda. The specific recommendations from Ofsted were:

To improve:

1. The **quality of analysis within social work assessments** to fully take account of the impact of lived experiences of children and lead to good-quality planning for children, including effective planning for permanence.
2. The **timeliness and quality of transition arrangements for young people** who will require support from adult services.
3. The **availability of good-quality services to meet the emotional health and wellbeing needs of all children and young people** at the time when they need it, without delay.
4. The **provision of education for children in care**, including improving their attendance and the timeliness and quality of their personal education plans.
5. The **provision of direct work and life-story work for all children** at the right time for them to make sure they understand their life experience.

These recommendations form the basis of Wirral's Ofsted Improvement Plan with specific, measurable and realistic actions which will provide the direction and focus for the next year. The Plan will be a working document, able to adjust and amend in line with emerging ideas and innovations as they develop across Children's Social Care.

The Plan will be fully reviewed after one year to evaluate impact and to redesign and reshape priorities to address the recommendations moving forward. A summary of the planned activity contained in Wirral's Ofsted Improvement Plan can be found in Appendix A. To view the full document please go to [Wirral Children's Services: Ofsted Improvement Plan \(2020\)](#)

In addition to the Improvement Plan, Wirral's self-assessment identified a number of aspects as key areas of improvement over the next 12 months. These will be undertaken alongside important, key day to day business activities.

Please read: [Wirral's 2019/20 Self-Assessment \(North West Peer Challenge\) for the complete report](#)

Education and School Improvement

Key Areas

Reading in Key Stage 1

There continues to be a challenge in improving reading outcomes, with latest Key Stage 1 results not as high as anticipated. An English Hub is being further developed and working with the local authority to focus on transition from good Phonics to improved Reading in Key Stage 1.

[For further information please see Key Stage 1 Standards Report \(Pages 47 to 87\)](#)

With funding from the Department for Education (DfE), a new Wirral and Cheshire Maths Hub and Education Endowment Foundation have both been inaugurated. These will be linked to the School to School Partnership for better collaboration.

Improving attendance and reducing Persistent Absence

Attendance remains a significant issue with Wirral ranked 150 out of 152 local authorities. Data for 2019 shows some improvement but Wirral is still one of the poorest performing local authorities for attendance. Authorised absence for health reasons and persistent absence remain key challenges.

Curriculum Development

A successful School Improvement Fund (SIF) bid in partnership with Weatherhead High School resulted in £300,000 additional resource to deliver a Phonics programme across the borough. This has resulted in improved outcomes in Phonics from 76% in 2017 to almost 82% in 2019.

[For further information please see Phonics Standards Report \(Pages 131 – 139\)](#)

A strategic focus on Mathematics, supported by 'challenge' sessions and conferences which brought colleagues together to learn about various national and regional Maths programmes has resulted in improved Maths outcomes from 71% in 2018 to almost 75% in 2019.

Also see content on pages 5 to 14 in [Wirral's 2019/20 Self-Assessment \(North West Peer Challenge\)](#) and the complete report

Please read: [Wirral Children's Services: Ofsted Improvement Plan \(2020\)](#)

Key Areas

Assessment and planning

The roll out of the audit framework, and the auditing that will be undertaken, will support service improvement and will identify what is working well, but also highlight areas of development. The reflective supervision for staff will build on staff confidence/learning and will support the overall improvement.

The development of a Performance Management approach will support evidencing sustained change. All Team Leaders now have access to the reports that have been built and will be discussing performance in a monthly meeting with the Head of Service.

The Practice Development Officers have recently drawn up an audit framework and auditing work is beginning in October 2019. The Practice Development officers have also arranged to undertake reflective supervision with groups of Family workers over a 12-month period, the first session being in October 2019.

Reducing the number of Children Looked After (CLA)

Wirral Children's Services and Partners are developing a Strategic Plan for Children Looked After. Part of the work underpinning the Strategy will be the development of an Accommodation Panel which will focus on the first 8 weeks when children become looked after, in order to ensure plans are in place and there is strong focus on reunification.

The strategy will also focus on reducing CLA through our early help framework and by tackling repeat referrals. Understanding and embedding attachment concepts and building a risk framework around this will also be a major element in this.

Repeat referrals

Children's Social Care will continue to strengthen its collaboration with Early Help, to ensure there is a seamless interface across the services resulting in children receiving the right service at the right time with an aim of reducing the number of repeat referrals.

Emotional health and wellbeing

Children are receiving review health assessments regularly and within timescale and appropriate referrals made to service. Mental health services and support for Children Looked After (CLA) is not robust enough with children not receiving emotional support in a timely way. A new commissioning model is under development to explore alternative service provision for CLA who require mental health support.

The Corporate Parenting Board is using its governance group to understand the priorities and requirements of young people, CLA and care leavers. Elected members are keen to engage with foster carers and CLA and ensure that enough progress is being made to deliver the priorities within the Corporate Parenting Strategy.

Also see content on pages 15 to 31 in [Wirral's 2019/20 Self-Assessment \(North West Peer Challenge\)](#) and the complete report

Please read: [Wirral Children's Services: Ofsted Improvement Plan \(2020\)](#)

Key Areas

Education Health Care Plans (EHCP) 20-week compliance

Improved practice and processes within the local authority SEN Team and increased compliance with advices from health and EP Service has resulted in increased compliance of completion of plans. Current completion rates for Q2 are 52% which is a significant increase from 25.8% in Q1. However, there is further work to be done to meet the local target of 100% compliance. One of the challenges is the monitoring and tracking of child through EHCP process using evidence-based and ensuring that statutory timescales are being adhered to. Further work to develop the system is required to ensure that system data accuracy is robust and can be used to monitor progress of the child.

Joint commissioning and integration

Some decisions for educational placements are made jointly and partners share funding, but formal joint commissioning arrangements are not well embedded. Multi-agency monitoring arrangements for children and young people with the most severe and complex SEN are established through the Planning for Children meetings, held weekly.

Oversight and decisions around placements may have been joint or tri-partite funded and there needs to be confidence that good progress is being made and that the placement provides value for money. The current process needs refining so that there are significant opportunities for joint commissioning that ensure best value for the Wirral pound. There are examples of strategic joint commissioning of services, and further work is to be undertaken to review and analyse future opportunities. The fully integrated All Age Disability Service joins up children's and adults service into one joined-up service co-located and provided by health.

Commissioners and services have planned together, to ensure needs-led support though this needs to be developed further. Elements of the Occupational service are jointly commissioned by Health and Local Authority, so each child or young person only has one designated occupational therapist that will identify, assess and support their needs. This reduces duplication, handovers and provides a more person-centred approach to the families with a single point of contact. Another example is of Specialist Equipment in Mainstream schools jointly commissioned through MediQuip as is the equipment in homes and health settings.

Further work is ongoing, such as care and health commissioners developing a greater range of supported accommodation and more outcome-based services that will support young people as they move into adulthood.

Co-production

There is an awareness that the service must constantly evolve and that there are areas for improvement. The Team are working to establish a more joined-up and robust relationship with Social Care, where there is not always collective working. Outcomes are improving and the ways in which we measure these outcomes are getting better too. Outcomes are what the SEND provision in Wirral is ultimately measured by and the data from which we drive forward the changes and smarter processes (ASD/ADHD pathway, Parenting Pathway, Co-Production and the raised profile of Youth Voice needed to make the difference and significantly improve outcomes for our SEN support children as well as those in receipt of an EHCP).

In March 2019, with facilitation by the Genuine Partnership Group from Rotherham, there was a jointly funded (Local Authority, Health and Parent Carer Participation Wirral) event which brought partners together within a Nationally Agreed Framework.

The purpose of the framework is to introduce principles and processes for whole area inclusive practice, co-production and participation. The day supported the production of an Action Plan which will facilitate a locally agreed approach to Inclusive practice, Engagement and Co-production.

In October 2019 staff in Special Educational Needs Support Teams received Continued Professional Development training from a Parent and Qualified Accredited trainer on Effective Communication with Relatives and Carers. This is part of a programme of continuous practice development and staff development and the understanding that purposeful, quality engagement and co-production is part of the service foundations.

Review of special schools

The majority of Wirral's maintained special schools are good or outstanding, and as a result most pupils in specialist/special school provision make very good progress. Special Schools can request additional financial support. This ensures that these children can remain and be supported within the local area. Despite this, there are several children who are placed out of authority and have part/tri-funded packages as a result of complex home circumstances.

Wirral's long term planning for children and young people placed out of the borough in residential and school settings is seen as a priority for the local area.

Also see content on pages 32 to 47 in [Wirral's 2019/20 Self-Assessment \(North West Peer Challenge\)](#) and the complete report

Please read: [Wirral Children's Services: Ofsted Improvement Plan \(2020\)](#)

Local View

Examples of local voice of children and young people

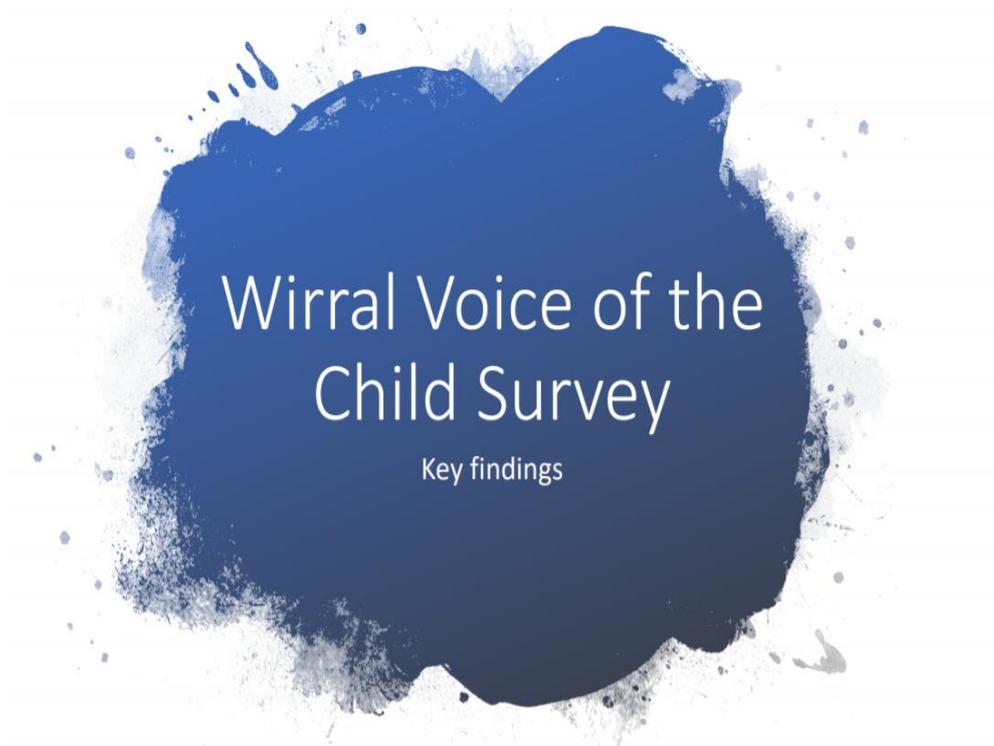
Wirral Voice of the Child Survey

111 children and young people were surveyed to establish what their lives were like, what they liked and would change about their lives, and their wishes for the future. Children were surveyed across several cohorts including children looked after, children with SEND and minority groups. Key themes emerging from the survey are highlighted below.

- **Friends** feature heavily, mentioned in answers to all 5 questions, primarily as a positive force in their lives, and in some cases a wish to have more of.
- **Family** is a common theme and appears in answers mainly as a positive thing in a young person's life.
- As expected, **school** is a prevalent theme. Some children identify school as positive area in their lives, other wish to reduce or remove the requirement.
- **Sports or hobbies** are referred to as a positive in many responses. Activities are varied although football, gymnastics & dancing are common.
- **Screen time**, often in the form of video games and streaming TV/films is another popular theme, appearing as a positive thing in respondent's lives.

- A young person's **surroundings** are another topic that appears several times in answers. Quite often discussed in terms of desiring a change in surroundings, either temporarily or permanent.

The full findings from the survey can be found by following this link [Wirral Voice of the Child Survey \(Key findings, 2019\)](#)



Local Voice

This is a summary of those opportunities and instances that Wirral's Children and Young People's Department and key partners have sought the views of those accessing the services provided, involving them, and seeking to understand and incorporate their views into the wider decision-making process. [Local voice for children and young people \(2018 Update\)](#)

Review of Youth Offer (October 2019)

The Review of the Youth Offer aimed to understand what young people in Wirral need and want to support their development and help them to achieve the best possible outcomes. With this insight, Children's Services will review current provision and work collaboratively to design a Youth Offer which will be accessible and beneficial to all young people in the borough.

The review is focused on listening to what young people are telling us rather than making assumptions about what we think they want- they are the experts. The review is not just about youth clubs or leisure activities, it considers all aspects of young people's lives, including health & wellbeing; education, employment & learning; hobbies, activities & free time; youth voice & democracy; young people in their communities; and, advice, information and access.

[Full Report](#)

[Usage of Local Authority Funded Youth Provision](#)

[Questionnaire responses](#)

Special Educational Needs and Disabilities

This report outlines the detail of the SEND Youth Voice Conference held at Pilgrim Street Arts Centre on Friday 25th January 2019. This annual event affords Wirral's SEND Youth Voice group the opportunity to be listened to with a view to professionals learning and leading their services to better support and meet the needs of these young people. Last year's event acted as a catalyst for significant change and, as such, the SEND youth voice group were encouraged to share their views on their most problematic area, namely Safety. Not coincidentally the Under 16 group and the Over 16's both chose Safety as the nominated topic for discussion at this year's event.

[Summary Event Report \(February 2019\)](#)

Youth Parliament (November 2019)

This report covers the 14th annual Youth Parliament held on 6th November 2019.

Through a variety of forums including Wirral Youth Voice Group, Children in Care Council, Wirral Young People's Action Group and the Wirral SEND Youth Voice, Wirral strives to ensure that through listening and being responsive to the needs of children and young people that their views are at the heart of our services.

The Parliament fits into the Wirral Borough Council Children's Services strategic approach to youth engagement and participation and the Young People's Engagement and Participation Framework.

[Culture and Youth Culture \(November 2019\)](#)

Underpinning and supporting evidence

[Visit Wirral Intelligence Service website for more details that inform this document.](#)

Contact details

For further details please contact

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To subscribe to Wirral Intelligence Service Bulletin then please [complete this form](#)

To give us feedback

Let us know your views or if you need to find out more about a particular topic or subject then please [send us an email](#)

Wirral's Ofsted Improvement Plan

A summary of the planned activity contained in Wirral's Ofsted Improvement Plan can be found below. For further details and to view the full document please read: [Wirral Children's Services: Ofsted Improvement Plan \(2020\)](#)

Ofsted Improvement action 1	Improve quality of analysis within social work assessments so that they fully take account of the impact of lived experiences of children and lead to good quality planning for children, including effective planning for permanence
1.1	Undertake independent, in-depth review of Supporting Families Enhancing Futures (SFEF) practice model in partnership with Stockport Council (PiP), so that clear strengths and weaknesses can be identified
1.2	Roll-out of full second wave training of SFEF practice model for Team Managers, Heads of Services and practitioners.
1.3	Quality assurance review of assessments and plans based on a clear, shared idea of what 'good' assessment and planning looks like.
1.4	Develop a series of good practice guides and templates to improve timeliness and quality of assessments and ensure planning outcomes are SMART
1.5	Regular supervision with Team Managers which evaluates the impact of their quality assurance and advice on assessment and planning improvements
1.6	Develop SFEF outcomes framework to measure and understand impact.
1.7	Embed a system of compulsory practice observation linked to the appropriate DfE Knowledge and Skills Statements.

Ofsted improvement action 2	Improve the timeliness and quality of transition arrangements for young people who will require support from adult services
2.1	Develop a clear tracking system to monitor and ensure children are referred as early as possible to Adults Services for assessment.
2.2	Hold training and development workshops between Adults and Children's Services to agree and understand approach to transition and to develop relationships.
2.3	Deliver transition training to the Care Leavers, Permanence and IRO Team to ensure transition planning is embedded in pathway planning
2.4	Full commissioning review of 16-18 Panel
2.5	Ensure that joint funding decisions from TOG and Complex Care Health Panel are clearly communicated and jointly agreed
2.6	Review of the commission of the All Age Disability Service so that transition for young people with disabilities into adulthood is robust.
2.7	Review the current assessment procedures and pathways to adult/health services to ensure that there is appropriate care for vulnerable young people in Wirral when they turn 18
2.8	Quality assurance review of transitions to identify improvement learning outcomes
2.9	Raise awareness with staff in 0-19 teams to ensure understanding of recording the voice of the child in referrals and Named nurse to work with the local authority in changing the current referral form.

Ofsted improvement action 3	Ensure the availability of good quality services to meet the emotional health and wellbeing needs of all children and young people at the time when they need it, without delay
3.1	Undertake full review and recommissioning of CAMHs contract for CLA
3.2	Provide guidance and training for professionals about emotional health and wellbeing and mental health
3.3	Develop Mental Health Support and Planning for CLA-Creative Solutions Work with KIND Futures in Mind and Mental Health redesign Board.
3.4	Explore community options and initiatives such as allotments for mental health support and other creative approaches for Care Leavers and potentially other young people.
3.5	Creation of 'Our Space' hub for care leavers with access to mental health support, advice and guidance
3.6	Deliver training for managers on community emotional treatment reviews to support young people with mental health pre- level 4.
3.7	Create Mental Health Champions across practice areas with detailed insight and knowledge
3.8	Deliver AMP's training
3.9	Scrutiny committee to review CAMHs referrals and waiting times
3.10	Wirral CAMHS Head of Clinical Services to meet with CCG, Public health and LA Commissioners to review the recommendation and current data pertaining to current waiting list times
3.11	Include SDQ score in prepopulated section on Review Health Assessment care plan and outcome.
3.12	Wirral CAMHS to ensure all relevant staff in WCHC are aware of how they can contact the service through the CHOICE clinic. The CHOICE clinic can provide WCHC with relevant information pertaining to individual children.

Ofsted improvement action 4	Improve the provision of education for children in care, including improving their attendance and the timeliness and quality of their personal education plans
4.1	Improve access to education for children who are being assessed for EHCP
4.2	Launch Attendance Strategy which outlines plans to improve attendance including ensuring there are appropriate measures in place to address poor attendance of CLA, where required.
4.3	Improve timeliness and quality of personal education plans with clear targets and robust quality assurance
4.4	Undertake training with foster carers about supporting children to stay in and regularly attend school/education
4.5	Use supervision process to set objectives around education and use escalation processes where children are missing from education and/or need alternative provision
4.6	Develop reporting and monitoring framework for Head of Virtual School and senior managers to understand provision of education for children looked after.
4.7	Ensure Children's Social Care representation and contribution on the Fair Access Panel

Ofsted Improvement action 5	Improve the provision of direct work and life-story work for all children at the right time for them to make sure they understand their life experience
5.1	Design and offer training around structured Life story work
5.2	Build in a quality assurance process to view and comment on direct work and life story work in order to see correlation with assessment and planning
5.3	Explore the development of digital life story work as an interactive forum for children, cares and social workers to capture a child's life story.
5.4	Use Life story practice champions to work with practitioners to develop a consistent and quality approach to life story development.
5.5	Undertake programme of training e.g. counselling, mental health support to enable Personal Advisors and social workers to be able to know how to share life histories with young people
5.6	Appoint dedicated person to review Subject Access Requests who can work with Personal Advisor to provide information in a timely and sensitive way