



Knowsley Council



# Knowsley Children's Social Care

Sufficiency Position Statement **2018 - 2021**

**KEY HEADLINES**

## KNOWSLEY SUFFICIENCY POSITION STATEMENT 2018-2021

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#### Overall

1. In Knowsley, the previous Sufficiency Strategy (2015-17) has successfully reduced demand for placements for Children Looked After. Evidence shows that over the last three years (2015/16-2017/18) - while overall numbers of Children Looked After have remained stable (c.290) - that fewer children are coming into and out of care.
2. However, changes to the external market (primarily in the independent fostering and residential sectors) and increasing numbers of children who present with complex needs (often in relation to emotional and mental health and exploitation) continues to place pressure on sufficiency in Knowsley.
3. The current position shows that while the churn of Children Looked After has reduced, that there are increased numbers of younger Children Looked After on full care orders. This is likely to mean that there is sustained demand coming from these children for placements over the next 10 years, and could potentially create greater pressure on foster care placements and residential placements as these children grow older.

#### Knowsley CLA Demographics

4. Whilst there has been little change in the position over the past 3 years, Knowsley continues to have a higher rate of younger Children Looked After than the national average (especially in the 5-10 age band), but a lower rate than nationally of those aged 16+
5. There is increasing recognition of gender variation and identity.
6. See next page for more detail on Knowsley CLA demographics. Projections for the next 3 years are for a CLA population in the range of 270 – 310.

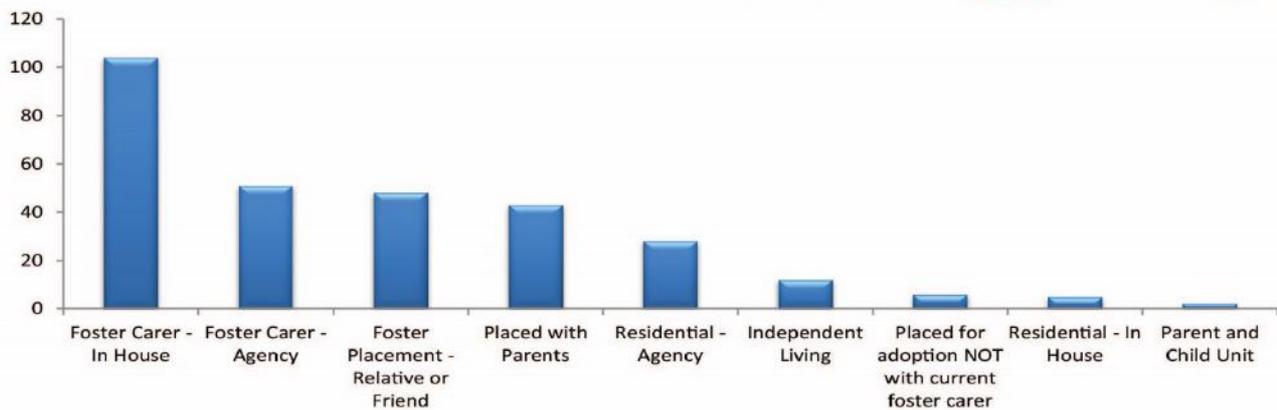
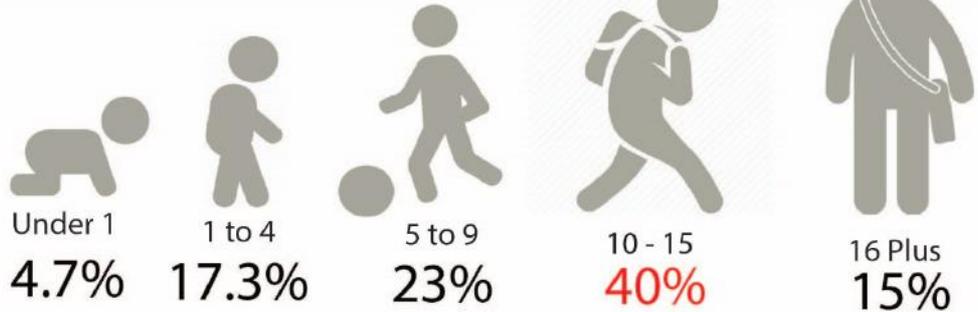
#### Knowsley Placement Trends

7. Majority of Knowsley CLA are placed into foster care (36% in-house fostering, 16% friends/family carers, 18% IFA); placed with parents (16%); external residential (9%); in-house residential (1%).
8. Over last 3 years, churn in and out of care has significantly reduced, resulting in fewer placements needed (and reduced 'days in placement' overall):
  - IFA placements reduced
  - External residential reduced
  - Parent & Child increased
  - Family & Friends fostering increased
  - In-house fostering increased
  - In-house residential reduced
  - YOIs reduced
  - SAIL 16+ placements decreased
9. However, use of residential placements, plus Secure, has shown an increase recently (2018/19).

## KNOWSLEY CHILDREN LOOKED AFTER DECEMBER 2018



There are **300** Looked After Children in Knowsley  
47% are Female - 53% are Male



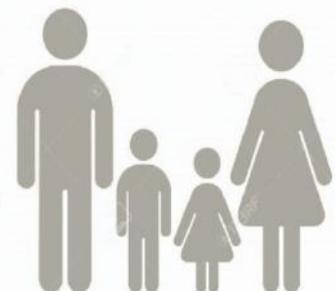
### CHILDREN IN RESIDENTIAL PLACEMENTS



- Currently **33** children in residential placements;
- More girls now require residential accommodation;
- The number of disabled children in residential placements has decreased – this cohort is mostly male, and have stable placements;
- There are more children in the 10 to 15 years old age band;
- **60%** of children in residential placements are placed more than 20 miles away

### CHILDREN IN FOSTERING PLACEMENTS

- There are 203 children in foster care placements  
– 152 in-house and 48 in independent placements;
- There are more children in the 10-15 age range;
- There is an equal split of male and female children looked after in foster care placements;
- Only 5% of placements in fostering are for children with disabilities;
- There are now fewer children who have been in care for 2.5 years or more.



### **Fostering in Knowsley**

10. Over the last 3 years, there has been a decrease in the number of IFA placements used, but an increase in the number of days that children have spent in IFA care – suggests IFA care meets longer-term needs for a smaller number of children. Use of in-house placements remained stable over the three-year period, with children spending fewer average days in in-house foster care than any other foster care provision - suggests in-house foster care is meeting more short-term accommodation needs.
11. Whereas the projection is that long-term demand will be met through fostering, the number of IFA carer households within Knowsley has declined slightly over recent years (53 in 2016, 49 in 2018) – this mirrors the regional picture of a shrinking market and challenges in recruiting new carers (estimated number of IFA households across the North West has fallen 11% in just two years, 2016-18).
12. There is a clear demand for skilled carers in or around Knowsley, with specialisms in caring for primary school aged and above children (including sibling groups), who can present with challenging behaviour.

### **Residential Care in Knowsley**

13. Whilst demand for residential care has decreased over the last 3 years, the majority of demand has been met through external residential provision (rather than internal provision). It is projected that future demand will be focused on children in the 10-15 age band with complexity/behavioural challenges, and that such demand may increase over the coming years.
14. Including KMBC, there are seven providers of residential children's homes within Knowsley. In total, there are 17 children's home, accounting for 56 beds overall (43 'external', 13 'in-house'); they are spread across the Borough as follows: 1 x Cronton, 6 x Kirkby, 4 x Huyton, 6 x Whiston/Prescot. Supply has increased slightly over the past three years, with the opening of new provision from existing providers (KMBC and Lytham Care), but despite this apparent increase in sufficiency, Knowsley only has one placement (as at November 2018) with a private provider within the Borough.
15. As well as looking at how KMBC residential provision can be better configured to meet needs, there is a clear need for smaller (dual/solo) provision in or around Knowsley, with specialisms for adolescents with complex needs/challenging behaviour (this includes: mental health, step-down from Secure, CSE/CCE, LD, autism – many of which are undiagnosed).

### **Supported Accommodation and Independent Living (SAIL) in Knowsley**

16. Over last 3-year period, demand for SAIL placements for 16/17 year olds has remained stable (31-36 placements used per year; typically 10 at any one point in time). The majority are for males (76%), and more placements are now in-borough (or within Liverpool City Region) than previously.

17. It is projected that demand will remain flat, and that - with the 3 'group living' units already operating in Knowsley plus KMBC's agreement with Knowsley Housing Trust for the provision of 1-bed flats - Knowsley has sufficient local SAIL provision.
18. However, irrespective of quantity, Knowsley – as part of a Liverpool City Region approach – are working to put into place clear expectations (i.e. LCR Quality Standards) for local providers to work towards, and are keen to shape this alongside local providers. Ultimately, Knowsley aim to ensure that local providers can deliver a high quality offer and good standard of property for our young people in areas that will meet their need

### **Complex Needs and Challenging Behaviour**

19. Since the last sufficiency statement, demand for placements has been more stable, but there has been an increase in cases where children present with complex needs and challenging behaviour (SEND, mental and emotional health needs, child exploitation). Whilst 8% of the overall CLA population have a recorded disability (the most common being learning disability or autism) – and 27% have an Education, Health & Care Plan (EHCP) - it is noted that many needs remain undiagnosed at the point of entry into care and present as challenging behaviour. Effects are being seen in terms of placement stability, with a decline in the rate over the past 12 months, and this is a clear priority for Knowsley over the coming years to address.

### **Knowsley's Sufficiency Priorities**

20. The latest Sufficiency Position Statement has led to a Sufficiency Action Plan, which has four key themes:
- Market Development
  - Residential
  - Fostering
  - Emotional Health & Wellbeing
21. Overarching aims are:
- ❖ Positive outcomes for our Children Looked After
  - ❖ Keep children closer to home
  - ❖ Improve placement stability
  - ❖ Stabilise financial pressures on the Local Authority

### **Further Information & Contacts**

22. If you would like to discuss Knowsley's Sufficiency Position Statement in more detail, or have any queries on projected needs or placements, please contact:

- Paul Simon, Commissioning Manager, [paul.simon@knowsley.gov.uk](mailto:paul.simon@knowsley.gov.uk) / 0151-443-4736
- Lisa Peltzer, ART Principal Commissioner, [lisa.peltzer@knowsley.gov.uk](mailto:lisa.peltzer@knowsley.gov.uk) / 0151-443-3157
- Cassie Stead, Placements Officer, [artplacements@knowsley.gov.uk](mailto:artplacements@knowsley.gov.uk) / 0151-443-2722
- Gemma Melia, Principal Performance & Intelligence Officer, [gemma.melia@knowsley.gov.uk](mailto:gemma.melia@knowsley.gov.uk) / 0151-443-3380



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Paul Simon, Commissioning Manager  
[paul.simon@knowsley.gov.uk](mailto:paul.simon@knowsley.gov.uk) **0151 443 4736**

Lisa Peltzer, ART Principal Commissioner  
[lisa.peltzer@knowsley.gov.uk](mailto:lisa.peltzer@knowsley.gov.uk) **0151 443 3157**

Cassie Stead, Placements Officer  
[artplacements@knowsley.gov.uk](mailto:artplacements@knowsley.gov.uk) **0151 443 2722**

Gemma Melia, Principal Performance & Intelligence Officer  
[gemma.melia@knowsley.gov.uk](mailto:gemma.melia@knowsley.gov.uk) **0151 443 3380**