



**WIRRAL
INTELLIGENCE
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Future in Mind Evidence Base: Care of the Vulnerable

**Wirral Future in Mind
Steering Group and Wirral
Intelligence Service**

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Future in Mind Evidence Base: Care of the Vulnerable

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Introduction

[Future in Mind](#) is the government's approach to improve the emotional health and wellbeing of children and young people. It was published in 2015 and calls for action on five themes:

- Promoting resilience, prevention and early intervention.
- Improving access to effective support – a system without tiers.
- Care for the most vulnerable.
- Accountability and transparency.
- Developing the workforce.

Wirral's local approach in response to this national direction and local need is set out in our annually refreshed [Transformation Plan](#). The evidence base that underpins this work is outlined below.

Why is this important?

The recently published [Green Paper, Transforming Children and Young People's Mental Health Provision](#), outlines that some groups of young people are more likely to experience mental health problems (Transforming Children and Young People's Mental Health Provision: a Green Paper, 2017).

These vulnerable groups include, but are not limited to, age, gender, disability, sexual orientation, involvement in the criminal justice system, children looked after, children in need and young people not in employment, education or training.

The Green Paper highlights the following in relation to the mental health and wellbeing of vulnerable groups of children and young people:

- The prevalence of mental health disorders varies by age, with nearly 8% of 5- 10 year olds having a diagnosable mental health disorder, compared to nearly 12% of 11-15 year olds.
- Mental health disorders also vary by sex in that they are more common in boys (just over 11%) than girls (nearly 8%).
- An Office of National Statistics (ONS) survey showed that mental health problems in children and young people varied depending on ethnicity, with around 1 in 10 white children having a mental health disorder, compared to just under 1 in 10 black children, and 3 in 100 Indian children.
- Research has shown there to be links between mental ill-health and [Adverse Childhood Experience \(ACEs\)](#), with mental health needs being more prevalent among children looked after. It has been estimated that 45% of looked after children have a diagnosable mental disorder (compared to 10% of all children).
- Exposure to domestic abuse can have a negative impact on a child's emotional wellbeing. One study ([SafeLives](#)) has shown that 52% of children who witness domestic abuse experienced behavioural problems and issues with social development and relationships.
- Lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender (LGBT) people are more likely to experience poorer mental health than heterosexuals. This indicates that LGBT children and young people have mental support needs.
- Young people involved in gangs experience high rates of mental illness. Signs of severe behavioural problems before the age of 12 are prevalent (40% of those who were gang

members, of both sexes, compared with 13% of general youth justice entrants), and as many as 1 in 3 female and 1 in 10 male gang members are considered at risk of suicide or self-harm.

- There is evidence that young people who are not in education, employment or training (NEETs) have more mental health problems than non-NEET young people. This becomes greater when they become NEET at a younger age, or for a long period of time.
- One quarter of boys in Young Offender Institutions reported emotional or mental health problems and young people with conduct disorder are more likely to engage in criminal activity. Research has suggested that, compared to the general population, these young people are 20 times more likely to end up in prison, and four times more likely to become dependent on drugs.
- There is much evidence that adult mental health problems begin in childhood or adolescence which shows that Adverse Childhood Experiences in infancy may have a negative impact on future mental health and wellbeing. A British cohort study showed that teens who had common mental disorders (CMDs) were more than two and a half times more likely to have a CMD at age 36, compared with mentally healthy teenagers. For teens with persistent CMD, they were over six times more likely to have CMD at age 36 and 43, and four times more likely at age 53.
- Young carers' mental health can be affected by their caring roles.
- Vulnerable children, defined by the Children Act 1989 as 'Children in Need' currently face worse outcomes than the general population. These vulnerable children need support and protection from children's social care due to a variety of reasons which can include being at risk of, or suffering, abuse, neglect, exploitation or youth violence, witnessing domestic abuse, being a young carer, or having a disability. Many children in contact with children's services, including children looked after, and care leavers, have post-trauma stress symptoms, and attachment disorders.

Facts, figures, information (Wirral and beyond)

Our local [Future in Mind Transformation Plan](#) has highlighted Care for the Most Vulnerable as a key theme for delivery. It recognises that vulnerable children are those children most at risk of experiencing inequalities and poor life chances.

In Wirral, the focus of this theme has been around children or young people who are unable or have difficulties accessing mental health services due to either personal or environmental issues. Barriers which prevent effective engagement around emotional wellbeing and mental health are highly likely to be further compounded when children and young people are vulnerable due to other factors.

In understanding children and young people's needs for emotional wellbeing and mental health we need to ensure they are supported in accordance with their presenting issues rather than the vulnerable group they belong to. Offering a personalised approach which builds on positive relationships that are already in place will also help to meet the needs of complex children and young people.

The golden thread of Future in Mind is that all the themes are interlinked and without transforming themes 1, 2 and 4, transforming care for the most vulnerable will be problematic.

Based on the evidence given above, the Care of the Most Vulnerable theme identifies the groups below as those who need to further focus:

- Children and young people with Special Educational Needs and/or a Disability.
- Children and young people not attending school or not in education, employment or training.
- Children and young people open to social care – Children in Need, Child Protection and Children Looked After.
- Children looked after who live outside Wirral.
- Out of borough Children looked after who live in Wirral.
- Care leavers.
- Children and young people open to the youth justice system.
- Children and young people with parents with physical and/ or mental health conditions.
- Young carers.
- Refugee or asylum seekers.
- Young people at risk of exploitation inclusive of sexual and criminal acts.
- Young people for whom substance/alcohol misuse is a concern.

Within the groups above, the Care for the Most Vulnerable theme has identified the following as priorities for 2018.

- Children in Need, Child Protection and Children Looked After.
- NEET.
- Children and young people open to the youth justice system.
- Children and young people who exhibit harmful sexual behaviour.

The situation for these groups in Wirral is outlined below.

Children in Need, Child Protection and Children Looked After

Wirral has developed [20 pledges to improve services by 2020](#).

The mental health of young people fits in with the Wirral 20/20 Pledge – “Vulnerable Children Reach their Full Potential”, Wirral Councils public website hosts all the pledge performance information and [this most recent overview of this pledge with associated statistics](#)

NEET

Table 1 below details statistics, from March 2018, for all Wirral resident young people aged 16 and 17 not participating in Employment, Education and / or Training (NEET). The Wirral actual NEET figure (3.6%) is the **lowest rate** for any local authority in the Liverpool City Region but is 0.1% higher than in March 2017. This data is statutorily reported to the Department for Education on a monthly basis.

Table 1: Activities of those Wirral young people who have reached statutory school leaving age, as at March 2018

Characteristic	Year 12	Year 13	Year 12-Yr 13 Total
Cohort Total	3528	3592	7120
EET Total	3374	3335	6709
In education, post Year 11	3111	2816	5927
In Learning %	94.9%	89.6%	92.2%
Not Known %	1.4%	2.9%	2.2%
NEET %	3.0%	4.2%	3.6%
NEET + Not Known %	4.4%	7.2%	5.8%

Source: NCCIS, April 2018

Table 2 below disaggregates the all Wirral resident data (as per table 1) to focus on Wirral's more vulnerable cohorts. The ages of the young people in the data have remain constant to enable an analysis of NEET rates by vulnerable group compared to the all Wirral resident population (young people aged 16 and 17). It shows that, compared with the figure for the whole population, young people in vulnerable groups are significantly more likely to be NEET. For example, Children Looked After (20.8%), care leavers (41.7%) or young people supervised by YOT (45.5%) are all **much more likely** to be NEET than the population as a whole (3.6%). Those expecting or with children are also **far more likely** to be NEET: Young people (aged 16-17) who are pregnant (46.9%), are teenage mothers (87.5%) or caring for their own child (88.9%).

Table 2: Activities of those Wirral young people who have reached statutory school leaving age (age 16 and 17) reported by vulnerable characteristic as at, March 2018

Progress	Looked after / In care	Caring for own child	Care Leaver	Supervised by YoT	Pregnancy	SEND	Teenage Mothers
Cohort Total	72	18	12	32	10	278	16
In Learning %	72.2%	11.1%	58.3%	45.5%	43.8%	82.7%	12.5%
Not Known %	2.8%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	3.6%	0.0%
NEET %	20.8%	88.9%	41.7%	45.5%	46.9%	12.2%	87.5%
NEET + Not Known %	23.6%	88.9%	41.7%	45.5%	46.9%	15.8%	87.5%

Source, NCCIS, April 2018

Notes:

A further analysis of Wirral young people's post 16 participation can be found in the [Wirral Intelligence Service, Post 16 Participation in Employment, Education, Training & Skills Development report](#) published November 2017.

Children and young people open to the youth justice system

Below are the latest statistics from the Wirral Youth Offending Service (as of March 2018):

Reducing Re-offending (Impact Indicator):-

- This presents the new youth re-offending measure which uses data from the Police National Computer. The 12 month re-offending rate for April 2015 to March 2016 cohort is presented. The cohort consists of all young people who have received a pre-court or court disposal or were released from custody in this date range.
- Re-offending frequency rate for April 2015 to March 2016 after 12 months is 2.04.
- Re-offending binary rate for April 2015 to March 2016 after 12 months is 42.3% **compared** to 41.9% nationally and 48% for the Merseyside Police & Crime Commissioner area.
- Re-offences per re-offender average rate for the above period is 4.83.
- Wirral has seen **a reduction** in the binary rate of re-offending of 8.5% when comparing April 2014 – March 2015 with April 2015 – March 2016. The frequency rate **has reduced** by 0.11. The new measure of average number of re-offences per re-offender **has increased** by 0.6.

Use of custody (Transparency Indicator):-

- The use of custody indicator looks at the number of custodial disposals presented as a rate per 1,000 of the local general 10–17 year old population.
- During January to December 2017 there were 12 custodial disposals.
- The local general population of 10–17 year olds is 29,303.
- The rate per 1,000 of the local general population is 0.41 **compared with** 0.38 nationally and 0.57 for the Merseyside area for the period January to December 2017.
- Wirral has seen a **reduction** in the custodial rate of 0.24 during the above period when comparing with January to December 2016 baseline rate of 0.65.

First-time entrants to the youth justice system (Impact Indicator):-

- The number of first-time entrants to the youth justice system, defined as young people (aged 10-17) who receive their first substantive outcome. The data for this indicator comes from the Police National Computer.
- The latest data set published by the Youth Justice Board (YJB) compares October 2016 – September 2017 with October 2015 – September 2016. The YJB have used a 2016 population rate of 29,303 for young people living in Wirral aged 10 – 17 years.

First Time Entrants	Number	Rate
Oct 16 – Sep 17	46	157
Oct 15 - Sep 16	54	184

- The latest data set is showing a 15% **reduction** in the frequency rate of first time entrants when comparing the above periods. The Merseyside average is an increase of 11.1% and the national average is a reduction of 10.7% in first time entrants frequency rates.

Harmful Sexual Behaviour

In 2016/17 Wirral took part in the Local Authority Research Consortium (LARC). This project saw the National Children's Bureau and Research in Practice working with six local authorities (including Wirral) to undertake research so that their local area could be better equipped to address children and young people's harmful sexual behaviours (HSB). To undertake this research an overarching research question was identified as follows:

- *What is the understanding and needs of the children's workforce in terms of the harmful sexual behaviour of children and young people in their area?*

This question was explored through an electronic survey undertaken by the workforce across participating local authorities in order to build a knowledge base that could be reported nationally. The purpose of the survey was to find more information about the workforce's knowledge, skills, and confidence around harmful sexual behaviour, and perceived barriers and enablers to increasing workforce capabilities around harmful sexual behaviours.

Alongside the survey, local authorities also conducted local research to add value to the overarching research question. The theme of Wirral's local research was:

- *How does organisations' understanding of HSB affect decision making and practice for children?*

This local element of the research was carried out through two multi-agency focus groups one for practitioners and the second for managers.

This [report](#) was presented to Wirral Safeguarding Children Board in November 2017 and highlights some of the findings from national survey, Wirral's responses within the national survey and findings from the two Wirral focus groups. The survey shows staff in Wirral would benefit from greater knowledge of harmful sexual behaviour, particularly the difference between harmful sexual behaviour and child sexual exploitation, even though their confidence in identifying children with harmful sexual behaviour (17%) in Wirral was **higher** than the national average (9%).

Current activity and services

Services supporting the emotional wellbeing of children and young people (CYP) as described in [CYP Mental Health webpage Evidence Base to support Local Plans as Prevention & Early Intervention](#).

Specialist services supporting the mental health needs of CYP are provided by the Child & Adolescent Mental Health Services (CAMHS) and are described in [CYP Mental Health webpage Evidence Base to support Local Plans as Access to Services](#).

Specialist services supporting the mental health needs of CYP with a learning disability and / or autism are provided by the Child & Adolescent Mental Health Services (CAMHS) learning

disabilities team and are described in [CYP Mental Health webpage Evidence Base to support Local Plans as Children and Young People with a learning disability.](#)

Services supporting Children Looked After, Children in Need and Child Protection are provided through Wirral Children and Young People's Department and other multi-agency partners. For more information go to <https://www.wirralsafeguarding.co.uk/>

Services supporting young people not in employment, education or training are provided by various services. For more information go to <https://www.wirral.gov.uk/jobs-and-training/help-finding-work> and/or https://www.careerconnect.org.uk/Find_us.aspx?Location=Wirral

Services supporting CYP in contact with the criminal justice system are provided by Wirral Youth Offending Service. For more information go to:

<https://www.wirral.gov.uk/communities-and-neighbourhoods/crime-reduction/safer-wirral-hub> and/or <https://www.wirral.gov.uk/communities-and-neighbourhoods/crime-reduction/youth-offending-service> and/or <https://www.wirralsafeguarding.co.uk/>

What does this suggest as further action?

Work towards meeting local needs for Care for the Most Vulnerable theme have been included in the updated Future in Mind Transformation Plan [FiM Transformation Plan 2017-18](#)

The key deliverables for the Care for the Most Vulnerable theme for 2017/18 are:

- Ensure that all online resources are aligned and that local services are promoted on Live Well in Wirral, Early Help site, CWP, Safeguarding, Local Offer and Right Side of Care.
- Combine a single all-age directory to bring all relevant information together and act as a gateway for all.
- Link the criminal justice liaison service to wider emotional health and wellbeing mental health system where children are involved or at risk of offending behaviours.
- Develop a systematic approach around implementing the AMBIT model to work through professionals already engaging children and young people.
- Promotion of therapies that link to specific pathways i.e. what works for depression, low mood, self-harm etc.
- Promote access to resources that are linked to an evidence base.
- Emotional wellbeing support services are fully promoted as an effective alternative to specialist mental health intervention across all professionals.
- Develop a fully integrated emotional wellbeing and mental health system that takes a holistic approach to intervening early to reduce the need for specialist services

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