



Children, Young People & Education Committee

Date:	Thursday, 1 February 2024
Time:	6.00 p.m.
Venue:	Committee Room One, Birkenhead Town Hall

Contact Officer: Bryn Griffiths
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This meeting will be [webcast](#)

AGENDA

- 1. WELCOME AND INTRODUCTION**
- 2. APOLOGIES**
- 3. MEMBERS CODE OF CONDUCT - DECLARATIONS OF INTERESTS**

Members are asked to consider whether they have any disclosable pecuniary interests and/or any other relevant interest in connection with any item(s) on this agenda and, if so, to declare them and state the nature of the interest.

- 4. MINUTES (Pages 1 - 4)**

To approve the accuracy of the minutes of the meeting held on 29

November 2023.

5. PUBLIC AND MEMBERS QUESTIONS

Public Questions

Notice of question to be given in writing or by email by Midday, Monday 29 January 2024 to the Council's Monitoring Officer via this link: [Public Question Form](#) and to be dealt with in accordance with Standing Order 10.

Please telephone the Committee Services Officer if you have not received an acknowledgement of your question by the deadline for submission.

For more information on how your personal information will be used, please see this link: [Document Data Protection Protocol](#).

Statements and Petitions

Statements

Notice of representations to be given in writing or by email by Midday, Monday 29 January 2024, to the Council's Monitoring Officer (committeeservices@wirral.gov.uk) and to be dealt with in accordance with Standing Order 11.

Petitions

Petitions may be presented to the Council if provided to Democratic and Member Services no later than 10 working days before the meeting, at the discretion of the Chair. The person presenting the petition will be allowed to address the meeting briefly (not exceeding three minutes) to outline the aims of the petition. The Chair will refer the matter to another appropriate body of the Council within whose terms of reference it falls without discussion, unless a relevant item appears elsewhere on the Agenda. If a petition contains more than 5,000 signatures, it will be debated at a subsequent meeting of Council for up to 15 minutes, at the discretion of the Mayor. Please telephone the Committee Services Officer if you have not received an acknowledgement of your question/statement by the deadline for submission.

Please telephone the Committee Services Officer if you have not received an acknowledgement of your statement or petition by the deadline submission.

Questions by Members

Questions by Members to be dealt with in accordance with Standing Orders 12.3 to 12.8.

SECTION A - DECISIONS

- 6. ADMISSION ARRANGEMENTS FOR COMMUNITY AND VOLUNTARY PRIMARY AND SECONDARY SCHOOLS AND COORDINATED ADMISSION SCHEMES FOR 2025-26 (Pages 5 - 64)**

SECTION B - BUDGET REPORTS

- 7. 2024-25 BUDGET REPORT UPDATE (Pages 65 - 76)**

SECTION C - PERFORMANCE REPORTS

- 8. HOLIDAY ACTIVITY AND FOOD PROVISION (EDSENTIAL) (Pages 77 - 82)**
- 9. SCHOOLS STANDARDS (Pages 83 - 142)**

The appendices to this report may not be suitable to view for people with disabilities, users of assistive technology or mobile phone devices. Please contact jamesbackhouse@wirral.gov.uk if you would like these documents in an accessible format.

SECTION D - REVIEWS/ REPORTS FOR INFORMATION

- 10. SOCIAL CARE WORKFORCE STRATEGY 2022-2025 (Pages 143 - 234)**

Some of the appendices to this report may not be suitable to view for people with disabilities, users of assistive technology or mobile phone devices. Please contact amandaconnor@wirral.gov.uk if you would like these documents in an accessible format.

- 11. EARLY YEARS FUNDING EXPANSION (Pages 235 - 240)**
- 12. WORK PROGRAMME (Pages 241 - 250)**
- 13. EXEMPT INFORMATION - EXCLUSION OF THE PRESS AND PUBLIC**

The following item contains exempt information.

RECOMMENDATION: That, under section 100 (A) (4) of the Local Government Act 1972, the public be excluded from the meeting during consideration of the following items of business on the grounds that they involve the likely disclosure of exempt information as defined by paragraph 3 of Part I of Schedule 12A (as amended) to that Act. The Public Interest test has been applied and favours exclusion.

- 14. 2024-25 BUDGET REPORT UPDATE - EXEMPT APPENDIX (Pages 251 - 256)**

Terms of Reference

The terms of reference for this committee can be found at the end of this agenda.

CHILDREN, YOUNG PEOPLE & EDUCATION COMMITTEE

Wednesday, 29 November 2023

Present: Councillor S Powell-Wilde (Chair)

Councillors	P Basnett	V Wilson
	S Bennett	C Cooke
	T Laing	J Grier
	L Luxon-Kewley	C Carubia
	K Hodson	M Jordan (for C Povall)

53 WELCOME AND INTRODUCTION

The Chair welcomed everyone to the meeting as well as those watching the webcast and reminded them that a copy of the webcast would be retained on the Council's website for two years.

54 APOLOGIES

Cllr Cherry Povall sent her apologies, Cllr Mary Jordan substituted.

55 MEMBERS CODE OF CONDUCT - DECLARATIONS OF INTERESTS

Members were asked to consider whether they had any disclosable pecuniary interests and/or any other relevant interests in connections with any item on the agenda and, if so, to declare them and state the nature of the interest.

Councillor Paula Basnett and the Chair both declared personal interest as foster carers.

56 MINUTES

Resolved – That the minutes of the meeting held on 18 October 2023 be approved as a correct record.

57 PUBLIC AND MEMBERS QUESTIONS

The Chair noted that no public questions, statements, or petitions had been received.

58 **CONSULTATION ON AGE RANGE CHANGE, HESWALL PRIMARY SCHOOL**

The Assistant Director for Education introduced the report of the Director of Children, Family and Education. The report provided the outcome of a consultation on a proposal to alter the age range of Heswall Primary School to establish a maintained nursery class and a 2-year-old provision. No objections were received during the consultation. The proposal will mean that Heswall primary school will have formalised its oversight of the early years provision at the school.

The report noted that incorporating early years provision into the maintained school would allow children in attendance to be registered as pupils of the school. This would enable the school to ensure communication and administration and adopt a cohesive and consistent approach to learning through to Year 6. This change would not increase the number of early years places in the area or impact on the school's admission policy for Foundation 2.

Members discussed staffing and budget implications, and were assured by officers that there were no staffing implications and that officers had been assured by the school that it has the budget to cover the changes.

Resolved -

1. That the alteration of the age range of Heswall Primary School from 4 to 11 years old, to 2 to 11 years old, as a prescribed alteration to a maintained school be approved.

2. That all necessary authority be granted to the Director of Children, Families and Education to implement the proposal.

59 **CHILDREN LOOKED AFTER SUFFICIENCY STRATEGY**

The Director for Children, Families and Education presented her report which noted that the Sufficiency Duty required Local Authorities and children's safeguarding partners to ensure sufficient local accommodation and support to meet the needs of children and young people in care, or to ensure that there was a plan in place to move towards that position. It presented an overview of children in care, how long they had been in care and some of the reasons why children needed to become looked after. The report detailed the current level of provision for children who are looked after which included foster placements, residential homes and semi supported accommodation.

Members discussed the need for more foster carers, why the largest cohort of children taken into care was in the 10-15 year old range, the differences in those receiving help between the East and West of the borough, and the number of looked after children awaiting adoption.

Officers noted that the number of foster carers was falling nationally and that while Wirral is in a similar position it had been more successful than others. Officer reassured Members that work was ongoing to improve the support offered to foster carers and to encourage more people to become a foster carer. Officers noted that reasons for the 10-15 cohort being the largest were varied and abuse and neglect were the most common reasons. Children of that age are more likely to be out in the community than younger children and are more likely to fall foul of criminal exploitation. Officers suggested bringing a further report to committee on the impact that Early Years work might have in reducing the number of children in the 10-15 cohort becoming looked after. Officers noted that a common difference between the East and West of the borough was that while the issues and needs were similar across the borough, people were less likely to seek help in some areas and that work was being done to make help as accessible as possible to those that might not know how best to seek it. Officers confirmed that the 17 children awaiting adoption were in the process of receiving a placement order.

Resolved – That

1. The Childrens Looked After and Care Leavers Strategy 2023-2026 be noted; and

2. An update on the progress of the Strategy to be delivered within 12 months be agreed.

60 2023-24 BUDGET MONITORING FOR QUARTER TWO

The Senior Finance Business Partner introduced the report of the Director for Children, Families and Education. The report set out the financial monitoring information for the Children, Families and Education Committee as at Quarter 2 (1 Apr – 30 Sep) of 2023-24. The report provided Members with an overview of budget performance, including progress on the delivery of the 2023-24 saving programme and a summary of reserves to enable the Committee to take ownership of the budgets and provide robust challenge and scrutiny to Officers on the performance of those budgets.

At the end of Quarter 2, there was a forecast adverse position of £0.351m on the Committees net revenue budget of £86,748m. This position was based on activity to date, projected trends in income and expenditure and potential mitigation to offset areas of adverse/favourable variance.

Members discussed the adverse forecast and whether the directorate was likely to get a handle on the deficit, as well as the impact that the number of asylum seeking children requiring residential care might have on the budget.

Officers noted that they had seen a national rise in special needs with associated costs in that area, as well as a rise in the number of EHCP assessments. They proposed a further workshop to go over these trends in

detail and noted that it would be a challenge to balance the budget. Officers stated that the government provided a fixed amount of money to the council for each asylum seeking child requiring residential care but that if that child needed further care, the cost would fall to the council.

Resolved – That

- 1. The forecast revenue position presented at Quarter 2 be noted.**
- 2. The progress on delivery of the 2023-24 savings programme at Quarter 2 be noted.**
- 3. The forecast level of reserves at Quarter 2 be noted.**
- 4. The forecast capital position presented at Quarter 2 be noted.**

61 **A CELEBRATION OF YOUNG PEOPLE**

The Interim Head of Performance and Improvement introduced the report of the Director for Children, Families and Education. The report provided the Children, Young People and Education Committee with an overview of how Council services were actively engaging with children and young people to ensure their views, experiences and contribution were influencing delivery and helping to improve outcomes. The report also celebrated some of the many successes Wirral's young people had achieved in the previous twelve months.

Members thanked officers for the report and noted how impressed they had been when attending events involving young people from Wirral.

Resolved – That the important contribution made to service delivery and Wirral communities by children and young people be noted and those involved be congratulated for those contributions.

62 **WORK PROGRAMME**

The Head of Legal Services introduced the report of the Director of Law and Governance which reminded members that the Children, Young People and Housing Committee was responsible for proposing and delivering an annual committee work programme. This work programme was to align with the corporate priorities of the Council, in particular the delivery of the key decisions which were the remit of the Committee.

Officers noted that an additional report on Early Years was to be added to the work programme with the intention to bring it to the committee in either January or March. The Chair noted her preference would be for it to be received at January's committee.

Resolved – That the work programme be noted.



CHILDREN, YOUNG PEOPLE & EDUCATION COMMITTEE

Thursday, 1 February 2024

REPORT TITLE:	ADMISSION ARRANGEMENTS FOR COMMUNITY AND VOLUNTARY CONTROLLED PRIMARY AND SECONDARY SCHOOLS AND THE CO-ORDINATED ADMISSION SCHEMES FOR 2025-26
REPORT OF:	DIRECTOR OF CHILDREN, FAMILIES AND EDUCATION

REPORT SUMMARY

This report invites the Children, Young People and Education Committee to determine the Council's admission arrangements for community and voluntary controlled primary and secondary schools and the co-ordinated schemes for 2025-2026. The Wirral Fair Access Protocol has also been amended to reflect feedback from Wirral schools.

This affects all Wards within the Borough. The Wirral Plan 2023-27 priority "Life chances" and theme "Early help for children and families" are supported by clear and objective admission arrangements in conjunction with a fit for purpose sufficiency strategy.

This is a key decision.

RECOMMENDATION/S

The Children, Young People and Education Committee is recommended to approve:

1. the admission arrangements for community and voluntary controlled schools and the Wirral co-ordinated schemes for 2025-2026 as set out in Appendices 1 and 2 to the report.
2. the revised Wirral Fair Access Protocol as set out in Appendix 3 of this report.

SUPPORTING INFORMATION

1.0 REASON/S FOR RECOMMENDATION/S

- 1.1 The Council in its capacity as Local Education Authority is required to determine admission arrangements for community and voluntary controlled primary and secondary schools. The Council is also required to have in place a co-ordinated scheme for admissions to all primary and secondary schools including Academy schools, in 2025-26. The proposed schemes are attached along with proposed admission numbers for community and controlled schools (Appendices 1 and 2).
- 1.2 The Council is required to have in place a Fair Access Protocol agreed with the majority of schools which ensures that there is a fair and balanced approach to admitting unplaced children, particularly those who are most vulnerable, outside the normal admissions round. The Wirral Fair Access Protocol has been developed in partnership with local schools. All admission authority schools must participate in order to ensure that children are allocated a place quickly. The criteria list of children included is set out in the Fair Access Protocol Guidance. The Protocol is reviewed annually; in the current version was reviewed in Autumn 2022 and was in force from March 2023 accordingly.
- 1.3 The Protocol was circulated to primary and secondary school headteachers in November 2023 as part of the the annual review.

2.0 OTHER OPTIONS CONSIDERED

- 2.1 The arrangements could remain unchanged, however, it is recommended that the variations detailed in section 3 to the Fair Access Protocol are made for the reasons set out in the report, as agreed by Wirral schools.

3.0 BACKGROUND INFORMATION

- 3.1 The co-ordinated schemes for 2025-26 incorporate all prior published amendments. No significant changes have been made to the admission arrangements in the body of the schemes. The admission numbers for community and voluntary controlled schools are unchanged.
- 3.2 The Pupil Place Planning Review involves consideration of options for all schools including both community and own admission authority schools such as Academy and Voluntary Aided schools. Phase 2 concluded in Summer 2023. Phase 3 began in Autumn 2023.
- 3.3 The Wirral Fair Access Protocol ensures that unplaced and vulnerable children, and those who are having difficulty in securing a school place in-year, are allocated a school place as quickly as possible. This includes decisions on Managed Move destinations for pupils at risk of permanent exclusion and re-integration decisions on pupils with a single permanent exclusion. All schools are expected to work together collaboratively and abide by the decisions of the Fair Access Panel.

For context, in the 2021-22 academic year, 76 placements were made via Fair Access. Of these, 75% related to children who were new to Wirral without a school place, 18% to children returning from elective home education and 7% to transfers between Wirral schools for other Fair Access reasons.

- 3.4 The Protocol is reviewed annually. Comments or feedback were invited from Wirral primary and secondary schools in November 2023.
- 3.5 Included in comments from schools were requests for:
- a flow chart to show where the Protocol sits within the school admissions process; and
 - a link to the Department for Education guidance
 - Detailed minutes to be provided with the decision outcome to school(s)
 - Inclusion Team to gather information on complex students for Panel
 - Context to be given for number of permanent exclusions at individual schools
 - Amend point 5.4 to 5.2
- 3.6 In relation to minute provision to schools, schools are already provided with a copy of the decision outcome letter which is sent to the parent of the child. This gives the Panel's rationale for the decision. Schools who are interested in further context to a decision may contact the Chair of the Fair Access Panel.
- 3.7 Additional information on complex students. The Admissions Code allows for only information relevant to the decision making process to be collected and used by schools. Advice has recently been taken from the Council's ICT Governance and Compliance Team regarding the background information form which is currently sent by the Admissions Team to the current/previous school for pupils requesting a transfer in Year 7 and above, which is then provided to the requested school(s) for a decision. From the advice given, the background information request form has been amended to remove non-Code compliant information such as prior attendance, curriculum and attainment, also incorporate new items, such as Young Carer status, which could be relevant for Fair Access purposes if a referral is made. The revised background information form includes social care, special educational needs and disability (SEND), health, asylum/refugee status, young carer status; behaviour concerns; and homelessness. There is also an opportunity for the current/previous school to give any other information they believe is relevant.
- The completion of the background form is a local to Wirral arrangement and as such, out of area, overseas or private schools cannot be compelled to complete it. In this situation, Wirral secondary schools must not refuse to make a decision without background and are required to decide on the basis of the application information provided by the parent and the school's own situation in terms of places available and so on. It is open to requested schools to contact the current/previous school for a professional's discussion if they believe they require more information or for clarification prior to making a decision on an application, as long as this information required under the Admissions Code.
- As in 5.2 of the Protocol - The Fair Access Panel includes members from SEND, School Attendance; Managed Moves, Exclusions and Alternative Provision; the 14 to 19 Team, in addition to Social Care and can draw on information from all these sources and any others, as are required and applicable to each individual case. The views of the requested school are considered as per 5.2 (v); and 5.2 (vi) "other reasonable considerations" also allows the Panel to request further information from other sources and the Panel regularly does so where appropriate and relevant. An amendment to the Protocol is not required.
- 3.8 In relation to context, the Fair Access Grid provides a net view of the situation in each school and year group, both for the current academic year and cumulatively including transfers in previous academic years. A child currently in Year 11 may

have been a Managed Move in Year 9, for example. The intention is to provide an overview of Managed Moves (in/out), Permanent Exclusions (out); Key Stage 3 Progress School reintegrations (in) and Fair Access Panel decision (in/out) which can be considered alongside all of the other factors such as distance, parental preference and so on. The respondent school's concerns were that due to the locality and community of their school, there were potentially a relatively high number of permanent exclusions compared to other schools for which the school was being unfairly penalised on the Grid.

Whether or not this is the case, the Grid mitigates this in a number of ways - Permanently excluded pupils at Key Stage 3 are open to a reintegration into mainstream education where this is deemed appropriate, and schools taking these pupils onto roll are given an "in" point on the Grid. Schools taking pupils on a Managed Move are also given an "in" point on the Grid, which the school retains, even if the Managed Move subsequently fails. Other Fair Access placements including those simply for pupils moving into Wirral and requiring a school place, also count as a positive point on the Grid. The Grid is one factor within the wider decision making process of the Fair Access Panel, not the sole reason for a Fair Access placement decision being made. An amendment to the Protocol is not required.

- 3.9 In addition, a respondent was concerned that students leaving a school due to an Education Health and Care Plan (EHCP) placement were being unfairly counted as an "out" in the Fair Access Grid, and also that students transferring out due to personal circumstances were being unfairly counted as a negative in the Grid, such as asylum seekers moved on by the Home Office and other emergency rehousing decisions. For clarity, students transferring either in or out of Wirral schools with an EHCP are not included in the Grid at all as these pupils are outside the Fair Access Protocol. Students leaving to attend a school outside Wirral are not included on the Grid. Students transferring between Wirral schools for personal circumstance reasons such as in the examples raised, are also not counted as an "out" on the Grid, unless they were to qualify for a Fair Access decision into another Wirral school under one of the criteria.
- 3.10 The flow chart, link to DfE guidance, and paragraph numbering amendment have been actioned and a revised draft of the Protocol is attached to this report.

4.0 FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 4.1 There are no financial implications arising directly as a result of this report.

5.0 LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

- 5.1 The New School Admissions (England) Regulations (2003) require the Council to have in place a co-ordinated scheme for admissions to all primary and secondary schools including Academy schools, in 2025-26.
- 5.2 It should be noted that the relevant co-ordinated schemes and the Fair Access Protocol apply to all Wirral primary and secondary schools, including Academy schools. There is additional emphasis on the importance of school governing bodies to understand and apply the Admissions Code, Wirral co-ordinated scheme and Fair Access Protocol correctly and fairly, otherwise schools will be open to challenge both at parental appeal and by the Schools Adjudicator and/or Secretary of State.

- 5.3 The date by which the arrangements must be determined is 28th February. These admission arrangements must then be published on Wirral Borough Council (“the Council”)’s website by 15th March. The deadline for objections against the admission arrangements to the Schools Adjudicator is 15th May.
- 5.4 Section 88P of the School Standards and Framework Act 1998 requires local authorities to make an annual report to the Schools Adjudicator on admissions to all schools in their area. The report covers how admission arrangements serve the interests of looked after and previously looked after children, children with disabilities and children with special educational needs, including any details where problems have arisen. It includes an assessment of the effectiveness of Fair Access Protocols and co-ordination in the local area, including how many children were admitted to each type of school under the protocol, information on admission appeals and any other issues the local authority may wish to include. Additional information may also be requested by the Schools Adjudicator as required by the Secretary of State.

6.0 RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS: STAFFING, ICT AND ASSETS

- 6.1 The Fair Access Protocol requires a Council Clerk to organise Fair Access Panels, prepare paperwork and disseminate Panel decisions to parents and schools. Fair Access Panels include Council officers from various disciplines. The cost of this is met from the Council’s budget.

7.0 RELEVANT RISKS

- 7.1 Failure to determine the admission arrangements by 28th February of the preceding year would contravene the 2021 Admissions Code and associated guidance. Objections to the admission arrangements can be made to the Schools Adjudicator. Any decision of the Adjudicator must be acted on by the admission authority and admissions arrangements amended accordingly within 2 months of any decision by the Adjudicator. This would be a reputational risk to the Council.
- 7.2 It should be noted that the relevant co-ordinated schemes and the Fair Access Protocol apply to all Wirral primary and secondary schools, including Academy schools. There is additional emphasis on the importance of school governing bodies to understand and apply the Admissions Code, Wirral co-ordinated scheme and Fair Access Protocol correctly and fairly, otherwise schools will be open to challenge both at parental appeal and by the Schools Adjudicator and/or Secretary of State. Admission arrangements are monitored via the annual report to the Schools Adjudicator (see 5.4) across all Wirral schools. In addition, the annual School Admissions Appeals data collection is completed by the Council on behalf of community and voluntary controlled schools, and by its own admission authority schools through the Spring Schools Census data collection.

8.0 ENGAGEMENT/CONSULTATION

- 8.1 Where the admission arrangements have not changed from the previous year, there is no requirement to consult, subject to the requirement that admission authorities must consult on their admission arrangements at least once every 7

years, even if there have been no changes during that period. The previous consultation was held in December 2022-January 2022, covering both primary and secondary schemes.

- 8.2 No significant amendments are proposed to either the Primary or Secondary Scheme, and a consultation is not formally required. However a consultation was held between November 2023 and 3rd January 2024.
- 8.4 Feedback and comments from Wirral schools on the Wirral Fair Access Protocol were invited on 21st November 2023, with a deadline for response of 3rd January 2024

9.0 EQUALITY IMPLICATIONS

- 9.1 Wirral Council has a legal requirement to make sure its policies, and the way it carries out its work, do not discriminate against anyone. An Equality Impact Assessment is a tool to help council services identify steps they can take to ensure equality for anyone who might be affected by a particular policy, decision, or activity.
- 9.2 An Equality Impact Assessment has been carried out and can be found here: <https://www.wirral.gov.uk/communities-and-neighbourhoods/equality-impact-assessments>

10.0 ENVIRONMENT AND CLIMATE IMPLICATIONS

- 10.1 The content and/or recommendations contained within this report are expected to have no impact on emissions of Greenhouse Gases.

11.0 COMMUNITY WEALTH IMPLICATIONS

- 11.1 Investing in children's futures supports the community through quality efficient education provision, enhancing life chances for children, families, and the wider community.
- 11.2 Clear and fair co-ordinated schemes for admission to school's support ease of access for all residents to local school places. The Fair Access Protocol is intended to ensure that vulnerable children and those who are having difficulty securing a school place in-year who meet the criteria, are allocated a school place as quickly as possible. The Protocol also ensures that all schools admit their fair share of vulnerable and hard to place children and that no one school is overburdened.

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APPENDICES

Appendix 1 Draft Co-ordinated Scheme for Primary Schools 2025-26
Appendix 2 Draft Co-ordinated Scheme for Secondary Schools 2025-26
Appendix 3 Draft Wirral Fair Access Protocol

The PDF file may not be suitable to view for people with disabilities, users of assistive technology or mobile devices. Please contact schooladmissions@wirral.gov.uk if you would like this document in an accessible format.

BACKGROUND PAPERS

[School Admissions Code](#) (2021)

TERMS OF REFERENCE

This report is being considered by the Children, Young People and Education Committee in accordance with Section B of its Terms of Reference, the functions and powers conferred on or exercisable by the Council as Local Authority in relation to the provision of education.

SUBJECT HISTORY (last 3 years)

Council Meeting	Date
Children, Young People and Education Committee	24th January 2023
Children, Young People and Education Committee	31st January 2022
Children, Young People and Education Committee	28th January 2021

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**SCHEME FOR THE CO-ORDINATION OF ADMISSION ARRANGEMENTS
FOR MAINTAINED PRIMARY SCHOOLS IN THE WIRRAL AREA
FOR THE ACADEMIC YEAR 2025-2026**

This scheme fulfils the requirements for a scheme for co-ordinating admission arrangements under the School Admission (Co-ordination of Admissions Arrangements) (England) Regulations 2008, made under the School Standards and Framework Act 1998, for the area of Wirral Council. It builds on the well-established co-ordination of primary school admissions that have been a longstanding feature of local practice.

The scheme applies to arrangements whereby children are to be admitted to primary schools in the academic year 2025/26 and for subsequent years, subject to any review.

The co-ordinated scheme applies to all schools, excluding special schools, maintained by Wirral Council ("the Council") and to preferences expressed by Wirral resident parents and carers for schools maintained by other English local authorities (LA), academies and free schools. Admissions to other schools with independent status are not covered by this scheme.

1.0 Applications for school places for admission into Foundation 2 – the normal admission round

1.1 Wirral Council will act as the co-ordinating authority for all applications. Offers will be made by the Council, in its role as the home authority, on behalf of the admissions authority for the school allocated as follows:

Admissions Authority	Category of School
Wirral Council	All Wirral community and voluntary controlled schools
Governing body of school	All Voluntary Aided, Foundation, Trust and Academy schools
Maintaining Local Authority	Non-Wirral community and voluntary controlled schools

1.2 The admission arrangements for schools maintained by Wirral Council are published on the Council's website in line with the requirements set out in the School

Admissions Code. The Council's information for parents is available electronically on the Council's website from 1 September. Hard copies will be obtainable by request from the Council from the start of the autumn term. Admissions arrangements are also available from each school on request.

- 1.3 All parents who live in the area administered by Wirral Council must apply for places in maintained and Academy primary schools either in Wirral or in the area of another Local Authority by completing a Wirral Parental Preference application. On-line applications are recommended and are made through the Council's website: www.wirral.gov.uk/schooladmissions. Parents who are unable to access the online admission system can request a paper application form from Wirral Council from the start of the autumn term.

The application (online or paper) provides an opportunity for the parent to:

- apply for up to 3 schools
- rank the schools applied for in order of preference

- 1.4 Applications for all schools, including Foundation, Trust, Academy and Voluntary Aided schools must be included on the application.
- 1.5 Applications for places sent direct by parents and carers to individual schools cannot be accepted and must be sent to the Council for inclusion within these arrangements.
- 1.6 Parents must return online and paper applications to Wirral Council by 15th January to ensure the allocation of a school place on 16th April or next working day (the National Offer date). Applications received after the published deadline of 15th January will be dealt with once the offer of places has been sent to parents on 16th April or next working day.
- 1.7 Parents can apply for school places only from the 1st September preceding admission to Foundation 2, that is, at the beginning of the academic year in which their child's 4th birthday falls. Children are normally admitted to school at the beginning of the academic year in which their 5th birthday falls.
- 1.8 Deferred entry and part-time places.** Parents can request deferred entry or part-time attendance up until their child reaches compulsory school age (the term following their 5th birthday). The request must be made in writing to the Local Authority.

Child's age 5 birthdate between	First term of compulsory education
1 st January and 31 st March	Summer term (April)
1 st April and 31 st August	Autumn term (September)
1 st September and 31 st December	Spring term (January)

Parents should note that if a summer born child delays entry to the September after their fifth birthday, the child will ordinarily be expected to enter Year 1, not Foundation 2.

Parents of children born between 1st April and 31st August who wish to delay their child's entry to September, but are intending to request their child enters Foundation 2 rather than Year 1 are advised to apply as usual and to contact Wirral Council in writing prior to 15th January to discuss options (primaryplaces@wirral.gov.uk)

These requests will be considered on the circumstances of each individual case and will also require written agreement in principle from the allocated or intended preferred school. If agreed, deferred entry to Foundation 2 for a full year does not guarantee a place in any school. The child will then be in the year below their chronological age for the rest of their school career, including Key Stage assessments and selective tests for grammar schools. Parents must re-apply by 15th January of the following year and the application will be considered alongside the entry cohort according to the protocols and criteria in place at that time.

1.9 **Applications from separated parents.** Only one application can be processed for each child; therefore it is important that both parties in shared custody arrangements are in agreement over the preferred school(s) named. The parent with whom the child is majority resident should submit the application giving their address as the child's home address— this is the parent with which the child resides most days in a week.

In a situation where a child spends exactly equal time with both parents, the child's main permanent residence should be submitted as their home address. If agreement cannot be reached, or if neither parent has been granted a Specific Issues Order in this respect, then the Council will accept the application from the parent with whom the child is "ordinarily resident". This is the address where the child lives for the majority of the school week (Monday to Friday), and is usually where the parent/carer

receives child benefit for the child (where eligible). Proof of address and residence arrangements will be required with the application.

1.10 **Changes of address.** Parents and carers must inform the Council immediately of a change of address, even if details of a future change of residency were included on the application form. The Council will require supporting evidence to show that the place of residency has changed; e.g. a letter from the solicitor confirming the completion date; a signed rental agreement showing the start of the tenancy and its duration. In addition further information may be requested – for example, copies of council tax and utility bills or any other information considered relevant to the application, including evidence of disposal of previous property. Information and supporting evidence must be received by 28th February. Proof of residency received after 28th February will not be used to assign a higher criterion for admission, but will be used to send the decision letter on the published offer date. We may remove a place where it has been identified that a change of address has taken place before 28th February and has not been declared.

1.11 **Home address.** This must be the child's permanent home address where he/she lives with a person of parental responsibility as the main carer as defined by the Children Act 1989. Applicants must not give the address of a business, relative, childminder, friend, a temporary address or an address to which they hope to move. The home address must not be where parents have taken out a short term let on a property solely to use its address on the application form without any intention of taking up permanent residence there. Arrangements where parents leave and collect children from another relative or carer on a daily basis will be regarded as childcare arrangements, and the child will not be deemed to be "ordinarily resident" with that person. The Council will require proof of residence which may include proof of sale of a previous property.

Wirral Council regularly check addresses and **any deliberate misrepresentation will result in a place being withdrawn.** The Council acts on behalf of all Wirral admission authorities and reserves the right to request independent confirmation of the child's place of residence, as felt appropriate. The Mainstream Admissions team may have to share the information provided with other departments of the Council in order to verify the authenticity of pupil's addresses. This may include data held by Council Tax and/or Housing Benefit teams. The Council's Fraud and Investigations

Team may be asked to review the information that has been provided. This may include interviewing and taking a signed statement from the applicant.

- 1.12 **Withdrawal of places.** The Council has the right to withdraw any place offered on the basis of a fraudulent or intentionally misleading application, or where a place has been offered in error.

2.0 Dealing with Applications

- 2.1 The Council's admissions criteria will be applied to rank the order of priority of each application for community schools and voluntary controlled schools.
- 2.2 The Council will provide Academy and Voluntary Aided Schools with details of those preference forms which include an application for their school by 21st February. Schools may also view applications for their school at any time via the online Portal.
- 2.3 Preference ranking will not be shared with school admission authorities in accordance with paragraph 1.9 of the School Admissions Code 2014 as this cannot lawfully be used when applying oversubscription criteria.
- 2.4 The Governing Bodies of Academy and Voluntary Aided schools will rank each application by applying the school's admission criteria and notify the Mainstream Admissions team of their ranking by 28th February.
- 2.5 Where a pupil is eligible to receive an offer of two or more school places then the Council will allocate the highest priority preference.
- 2.6 The Mainstream Admissions team will notify the Governing Bodies of Academy and Voluntary Aided primary schools of those pupils who will be allocated places at their school shortly before 16th April via the online Portal.
- 2.7 In March the Council will inform other Local Authorities of any pupils who are not resident in Wirral and to whom the Council can offer places at Wirral schools.

3.0 Determination of applications for Community and Voluntary Controlled schools

- 3.1 **Allocation of places.** Applications for all Community schools and also for Bidston Village Church of England (CE) Primary School, Holy Trinity CE Primary School (Hoylake), Millfields CE Primary School and St Bridget's CE Primary School (West Kirby) will be determined on the following basis:

3.1.1 All children who have applied before 15th January will be eligible for a place so long as there is space within the school's admission number. If there are more applications than there are places available, then eligibility will be determined in accordance with the following scheme of priorities:

- Children in care, and children who were in care but have been adopted or are subject to a residency order or special guardianship order ("previously in care"), including those children who appear (to the admission authority) to have been in state care outside of England and ceased to be in state care as a result of being adopted
- Then children who live in the school's catchment zone in the following priority order:
 - Children who already have older brothers or sisters (including half or step siblings living in the same household) at the school when they are due to start school. If there are more children with older brothers or sisters at the school than there are places available, we will give priority to children with the youngest brothers or sisters at the school. We will also treat a brother or sister at a corresponding junior school as a sibling. Where there is more than one applicant with a sibling in the same year group, priority will be given to those children who live nearest to the school. We measure distances from the child's home to the school gate nearest to the child's home using the shortest road route, unless it is possible to use a footpath which we consider to be a safe walking route, using the Council's computerised routing system.
 - Children who live nearest to the school. We measure distances from home to the school gate nearest to the child's home using the shortest road route, unless it is possible to use a footpath which we consider to be a safe walking route, using the Council's computerised routing system.

3.1.2 If places remain available, eligibility for children who do not live in the school's catchment area will be determined in accordance with the following scheme of priorities.

- Children who already have older brothers or sisters (including half or step-brothers and sisters living in the same household) at the school when they are due to start school. If there are more children with older brothers or sisters at the school than there are places available, we will give priority to children with

the youngest brothers or sisters at the school. We will also treat a brother or sister at a corresponding junior school as a sibling. Where there is more than one applicant with a sibling in the same year group, priority will be given to those children who live nearest to the school. We measure distances from home to the school gate nearest to the child's home using the shortest road route, unless it is possible to use a footpath which we consider to be a safe walking route, using the Council's computerised routing system.

- Pupils who live nearest to the school. We measure distances from home to the school gate nearest to the child's home using the shortest road route, unless it is possible to use a footpath which we consider to be a safe walking route, using the Council's computerised routing system.

3.1.3 If places remain available at the school after all "on time" applicants have been allocated at the initial allocation point, places will then be allocated to late applications received after 15th January, in accordance with the policy criteria, up to the school's admission number. See paragraph 5.0 below.

3.2 **Aided schools and Academies.** Applications for Academy schools and the Catholic and Church of England voluntary aided schools will be determined by the governing bodies of these schools in accordance with their published admission criteria.

Christ Church CE Aided Primary School in Birkenhead shares part of its catchment zone with two other schools - Woodchurch Road Primary School and Woodlands Primary School. Priority is given as detailed above in 3.1.1- 3.1.3.

3.3 **Mandatory Allocation.** Where it is not possible to allocate a place at any of the schools applied for, children resident in Wirral will be allocated a place at the nearest appropriate Wirral school where there are places available. "Appropriate " where possible means community school if the parents' preferences indicate preferences for non-denominational education; or a Catholic school or Church of England school if the parents indicated a preference for education in a school of that denomination. The nearest school will be measured on shortest walking distance using the Council's computerised routing system.

3.4 **Special Needs.** All schools will be required to admit a pupil with an Education Health and Care Plan naming the school.

3.5 **Single Sex Schools.** Admissions to single-sex school schools are based on the pupil's legal sex as recorded on their birth certificate.

3.6 **Route measurements**

The “shortest road route” from home to school starts at the “seed point” of the home address as provided by the Ordnance Survey compiled from Royal Mail and/or local council data. The starting point connects to the nearest point of the Authority’s digitised routing network. The digitised network is based on the Integrated Transport Network (ITN) supplied by Ordnance Survey and is accurately digitised to measure along the centre of roads. The Ordnance Survey ITN dataset is the most accurate road dataset available and is the definitive national road network for Great Britain. The ITN has been augmented by the Authority to take into account public footpaths and alleyways etc. that are approved to be safe for use by children, accompanied as necessary by an adult, by the Authority. The end point of the “shortest road route” is the nearest open gate of the school officially available for use by pupils at the start and end of the school day. The location of these gates has been set by the Authority based on information provided by the school.

The “shortest road route” is not necessarily a driving route as it may use in part a non-driveable route, such as a footpath. The shortest road route is also not necessarily a walking route, because the measurement is along the centre of the road, not the edge (pavement or equivalent).

The same measuring system must be used for pupils in relation to admission to schools as this treats all pupils equally. Other measuring systems may give a different measurement but the Authority cannot take a measurement from another system into account. Online systems that parents may use for comparison, including Google Maps and walk-it.com etc. use the free Ordnance Survey Meridian dataset which is far less detailed, and consequently less accurate. They will not have an accurate starting point, will not bar unsuitable paths, and will not include accurate positions for the gates of the school being measured to.

For addresses outside the Authority’s digitised network of approximately 48 square miles, including overseas addresses, an internet mapping solution will be used, e.g. maps.google.co.uk.

4.0 **Offer of Places**

4.1 Parents and carers resident in Wirral who have made an online application will be informed by the Council of the school allocated by e-mail on 16th April or next working day, if a valid e-mail address has been provided. The e-mail will also inform the

parent of their legal right to appeal to an independent panel and who to contact to make an appeal.

- 4.2 Parents and carers resident in Wirral who have submitted a paper application will be informed by the Council of the school allocated in writing. Letters will be despatched on 16th April or next working day, and will be sent by second class post. The letter will also inform the parent of their legal right to appeal to an independent panel and who to contact to make an appeal.
- 4.3 If places become available before the start of the autumn term, the Council will allocate them to children whose parents have either lodged an appeal but not been successful or who have expressed a continuing interest in a place at the school concerned. Parents can do this by online by e-mail or by returning the reply slip attached to the paper allocation letter. If there are more children interested in a particular school than places available, the Council will use the same criteria to determine priorities as is used for the initial allocation.
- 4.4 All offers of places for schools covered by the Wirral scheme will be issued by the Council. Schools cannot offer places directly to parents.

5.0 Late applications

- 5.1 Applications received after the published deadline of 15th January will be dealt with after the offer of places have been sent to parents on 16th April or next working day. Wirral Council will send details of late applications for Academy and Voluntary Aided schools to the governors of the schools concerned by 23rd April or, for applications received after that date, within five days of receipt. An electronic Portal is in place for all schools to view applications as soon as they are received.
- 5.2 After the closing date for waiting list requests and the closing date for appeals to be lodged has passed, any available places will be re-allocated in accordance with the same order of priority as for the original allocation (see 3.1.1 and 3.1.2 above) and the policy criteria for own admission authority schools, including any late applications received up to that point, as a “mini-allocation”. After this, late applications/requests will be dealt with as they are received, including mandatory allocations where no preferred school can be allocated. School places that become available after the mini-allocation takes place will be re-allocated on the basis of the order of priority as set out in 3.1.1 and 3.1.2 above, and the policy criteria for own admission authority

schools, taking into account any late applications or place requests received up to the date the place is re-allocated.

- 5.3 Parents will be notified in writing by Wirral Council. The letter will also inform the parent of their legal right to appeal for any Wirral school and who to contact to make an appeal. Parents should, where possible, lodge an appeal within 20 working days of receipt of notification of the outcome of their application.
- 5.4 Applications for Catholic or Church of England Aided Primary Schools and the Academies received after the published deadline of 15th January will be determined by reference to the schools' published admission arrangements and the governors will inform Wirral Council of the outcome of the applications. Parents will be notified in writing by Wirral Council. The letter will also inform the parent of their legal right to appeal and who to contact to make an appeal. Parents should, where possible, lodge an appeal within 20 working days of receipt of notification of the outcome of their application.
- 5.5 Parents and carers must accept or decline the offer of a late place within 10 working days of the offer date.

6.0 Waiting Lists

- 6.1 If at the end of the Summer Term a school is believed to be full, the Council will close the procedures and make no more reallocations. However, it may be that places will become available at the beginning of or during the Autumn Term. The Council will keep a list of children whose parents have expressed an interest in obtaining a place at the school if a place becomes available. In August, the Council will write to the parents of those children included in paragraph 4.3 who have expressed a continuing interest. This list will be held open during the Autumn Term. Priority on the list for community and controlled schools will be given to children in accordance with the criteria given in paragraphs 3.1.1 and 3.1.2. Each added child requires the list to be ranked again in line with the published admission criteria.
- 6.2 The Council will contact parents directly if a vacancy does occur. Schools must not notify parents that a place has become available but must inform the Council in order that an offer can be made by the home Local Authority. The Council will cease to hold the Foundation 2 waiting list at the end of the Autumn Term.

7.0 In Year applications outside the normal round of admissions

- 7.1 'In year' applications are those made during the school year into any year group, other than at the normal point of entry (i.e. the normal admission round). This will include applications from parents and carers of children moving into Wirral from another Local Authority area, moving within Wirral, or seeking to transfer to an alternative school for other reasons.
- 7.2 **Opted-In** – Unless schools have specifically opted out of co-ordinated in-year admissions (see 7.16 below), applications for all schools including Academy and Voluntary Aided schools must be made on a common Transfer Form which can be submitted online via the Wirral Admissions Portal or downloaded from the Wirral School Admissions website. The form allows parents to state up to three school preferences ranked in priority order.
- 7.3 Opted-In schools should not deal with transfer application forms. Any forms received by schools should be forwarded to the Mainstream Admissions team. The Council co-ordinates all parental requests for in-year transfers and placements unless schools have opted out of in-year transfers.
- 7.4 Parents should contact the headteacher of their child's current school prior to application to discuss their request.
- 7.5 Additional information may be required before an application can be processed: this could include proof of residence; passports/visas; PEP for looked after children and so on. Mainstream Admissions team will then forward the application to their current and preferred school(s). Requests for transfer in Y6 other than moves from outside Wirral will be discouraged on educational grounds, but parents have the ultimate right to proceed with the request.
- 7.6 The Mainstream Admissions team will forward the documentation/online application notification to their current and preferred school(s).
- 7.7 The Council will arrange for children in Years 1 and 2 to start at a community or voluntary controlled primary school in a similar way as Foundation 2 (Reception) age children. The appropriate year group is determined by the chronological age of the child.

Key Stage 1 – The Council will offer children places at their catchment school as long as this will not bring the class size to more than 30, and if the Council cannot offer an alternative school place within two miles of the parents home address.

The Council will agree a place in an out-of-zone school as long as:

- i) there is room within the admission number; and
- ii) there are not already 30 children in the class.

Where a school, which is below its admission number, has organised its Key Stage 1 into classes of 30 and the only way to admit another child would require the admission authority to take Qualifying Measures (that is, it would require the school to provide additional resources in terms of staff and accommodation), these are grounds on which the Council or other admission authority may refuse an application.

Key Stage 2 – Children are usually entitled to a place at their catchment school even though the school may be on or above its admission number. However, where there is a serious concern, for example about health and safety, there may be circumstances in which a Key Stage 2 place may be refused at a catchment school.

The Council will agree a place in an out-of-zone school as long as there is room within the admission number.

7.7 **Infant Class Size limit exceptions**

There are a limited number of exceptions to the Infant Class Size limit of 30. These children remain an excepted pupil for the time they are in an infant class, or until the class numbers fall back to the infant class size limit. They are:

- Children with statements of special educational need (SEN) or Education Health and Care Plan (EHCP) admitted outside the normal admission round
- Looked after children and previously looked after children, including those children who appear (to the admission authority) to have been in state care outside of England and ceased to be in state care as a result of being adopted
- Children admitted because of a procedural error made by any admission authority in the original application process
- Children admitted following an appeal upheld by an independent appeals panel

- Children who move into a catchment area outside the normal admission round for whom there is no other school place within a shortest walking distance of 2 miles
- Children of UK service personnel admitted outside the normal admission round who move into a catchment area
- Twins and children from multiple births when one of the siblings is the 30th child admitted
- Children with SEN who are normally taught in an SEN unit attached to the school or who are registered with a special school, but attend some infant classes within a mainstream school

7.8 **Children of UK service personnel.** Places for these children will be allocated in advance if accompanied by an official letter with a relocation date and Unit postal address or quartering area address.

7.9 **Overseas applications.** Parents who have already moved to the UK from overseas who are British or Irish citizens; or have Settled Status under the EU Settlement Scheme; or who are in the UK on a Work Visa or Student Visa; or who are part of a family entering or residing in the UK under the immigration route for British National (Overseas) citizens and their dependents; or who have an endorsed passport showing right of abode; can apply for places for their child at any school covered by this scheme.

Parents or children in these categories who do not yet live in the UK can apply before the date they move to the UK. However, the address to be used in the allocation will be the address that the child is living at on the closing date, unless a subsequent house move has been accepted up to the last date for changes in the coordinated scheme. A UK address will only be used once the child is residing at that address, and evidence will be required of this, as in paragraph 1.10 of this document.

For applicants who are resident overseas and are not yet resident in the UK, the Council may ask to see passports and visas for verification and may confirm visa status with the Home Office if this is unclear or missing. It is the responsibility of foreign nationals, who wish to apply for a state-funded school place, to check that they have a right of abode or that the conditions of their immigration status otherwise permit them to access a state-funded school

Children in the UK on a Standard Visitor visa or a Short-Term Study (English Language) visa; are not entitled to free state education. Any parents wishing to access education for their child whilst visiting the UK may however choose to pay for private education during their stay. The only waiver to this applies to children of visiting academics (parent has an Academic Visitor visa, up to 12 months) who may access free state education during their visit.

Visa over-stayers may be asked to provide evidence of an on-going appeal in order to access free state education for the duration of the appeal process.

- 7.10 **Waiting Lists.** The Council will not keep waiting lists for places in Year 1 and above. Parents may wish to contact schools directly to establish whether there is space in their child's year group prior to completing an in-year transfer request form. The Council will confirm the availability of a place with the school before issuing a formal offer of a place. Schools must not offer places to parents.
- 7.11 The Council will provide Voluntary Aided and Academy schools with relevant on-line and paper form preference information for those applications which include a preference for their school.
- 7.12 The Governing Bodies of Voluntary Aided and Academy schools will consider each application by applying the school's admission criteria and notify the Council of their decision within 5 days of receipt of the application.
- 7.13 Where a pupil is eligible to receive an offer of two or more school places then the parent's highest priority eligible preference will take precedence.
- 7.14 All parents will be informed by the Council of the school place allocated by letter (post or email). The letter will also inform the parent of their legal right to appeal and who to contact to make an appeal. Parents should, wherever possible, make an appeal within 20 working days of receipt of the letter notifying them of the outcome of their application.
- 7.15 If the relevant body is refusing admission the Council will write to the parent advising them that the application has been refused and informing the parent of the legal right to appeal against the decision. Where a house move from outside the area or within Wirral is the reason for requesting an in-year transfer and none of the preferred schools are able to offer a place, the Council will, where possible, indicate on the refusal letter the nearest appropriate school with vacancies at the time of application, where "nearest" uses the shortest walking distance from the Council's computerised

Ordinance Survey Address Point based routing system. The letter will also inform the parent of their legal right to appeal and who to contact to make an appeal. Parents should, wherever possible, make an appeal within 20 working days of receipt of the letter notifying them of the outcome of their application.

- 7.16 In accordance with the School Admissions Code admission authorities must not refuse to admit a child solely because:
- (a) they have applied later than other applicants;
 - (b) they are not of the faith of the school in the case of a faith school;
 - (c) they have followed a different curriculum at their previous school;
 - (d) information has not been received from their previous school;
 - (e) they have missed entrance tests for selective places.
- 7.17 Parental preference must be met unless the school believes that do so would “prejudice the efficient education or the efficient use of resources”, under Section 86 of the School Standards and Framework Act 1998. In effect, schools are expected to offer a place if there are places available in the year group. Parents who are refused a place have a right to an appeal to an Independent Appeal Panel. Schools considering refusing to offer a place when places are available in the year group should consider whether they believe their decision to refuse was one that a reasonable admission authority would have made in the circumstances of the case, as the onus will be on the school to prove prejudice.
- 7.18 **Challenging behaviour:** The Admissions Code says that if a governing body does not want to admit a child with challenging behaviour as an in-year transfer, even though places are available, it must refer the case to the local authority under the Fair Access Protocol. The definition of “challenging behaviour” is set out in the Fair Access Protocol. Any such cases must be raised with the local authority within 5 working days of receiving the transfer paperwork. Children not meeting the Fair Access definition of “challenging behaviour” must be considered as in year transfers. Fair Access does not apply to a looked after child or a child with an Education Health and Care Plan (EHCP) naming the school as these children MUST be admitted.
- 7.19 The time taken for a transfer request to be processed should be as short as possible. The Council expects that parents will be informed of the outcome of their request within 15 school days, however this may take significantly longer where further information is required in order to process the application such as visa or address verification or the application is referred under the Fair Access Protocol.

7.20 **Opted-Out** – Schools must advise the Council in writing by 31st July each year whether or not they wish to “opt out” of the co-ordinated in-year transfer processes for the following academic year. “Opting out” of co-ordinated in-year transfers is only an option for own admission authority schools. Community and Voluntary Controlled schools will remain opted in for in-year transfers.

There is no option to opt out of the normal admissions round for entry to Foundation 2, it is a statutory requirement that all such applications are co-ordinated centrally by the Council, this runs up until the end of December in the year of entry.

“Opted-out” schools must provide an appropriate application form for parents to complete and **notify the Council of each application within 2 days of receipt. Admission decisions must be notified to parents within 15 school days of receipt**, with an aim to notify parents within 10 school days. Decision outcome letters must include reasons for refusing to offer a place (if applicable) and information on how to appeal, for all applicants.

The school **must notify the Council of the application decision within 2 school days of the decision.**

Opting-out of in-year co-ordination does NOT mean opting out of the Fair Access Protocol; referrals to the Fair Access Protocol must be made within 5 school days of receipt of the application by sending to the Local Authority.

In addition to the above, “opted-out” schools are responsible for ensuring that all decisions are compliant with the School Admissions Code, the general provisions of the Wirral Co-Ordinated Scheme and the school’s own admission policy. They are responsible for all checks including address verification, passports/visas; PEPs for looked after children, obtaining background information from previous schools and for keeping records of all decisions made by the Governing Body or Admissions Sub-Committee.

8.0 Pupils transferring from Infant to Junior Schools

8.1 All children who are on roll at one of the Infant Schools listed below at the time of transfer from Year 2 to Year 3 are eligible to transfer to the linked junior even if they do not live in the school’s catchment area. Children who live in the catchment area of the Junior School are also eligible.

Black Horse Hill Infant School to Black Horse Hill Junior School

Brackenwood Infant School to Brackenwood Junior School

Greasby Infant School to Greasby Junior School

Overchurch Infant School to Overchurch Junior School

Town Lane Infant School to Higher Bebington Junior School

- 8.2 Admissions to St John's Junior School are detailed by the governing body in accordance with the school's admission arrangements.

9.0 The Fair Access Protocol

- 9.1 All requests for in-year places will be considered with reference to the Council's current admission arrangements and procedures for in year placements.
- 9.2 All schools will take part in the Fair Access Protocol, which is published separately. Schools must respond immediately to requests for admission to school according to the timescales above so that admission of the pupil is not unduly delayed.
- 9.3 Children who are looked after and children with an Education Health and Care Plan (EHCP) naming the school are NOT included in the Fair Access protocol. These children MUST be placed in the school of their carer's preference irrespective of the availability of places in the year group.
- 9.4 **Permanent Exclusions.** For pupils who are at risk of permanent exclusion and on the roll of a Wirral school it is open to the headteacher to refer the child to Gilbrook Outreach Service or to consider a Managed Move. All such placements will be initially on a trial basis for a minimum of six weeks. Confirmation of placement or the school roll will be subject to a satisfactory report.
- 9.5 Pupils who have been permanently excluded will normally be placed on the roll of Gilbrook School or the Progress School. Schools should contact the Exclusions Officer as soon as the exclusion has taken place. The Exclusions Officer will consider whether the pupil can be transferred immediately to an alternative primary school. Such transfers will be agreed with the parent and relevant headteacher. All primary schools will take a minimum number of 1, or the number of permanent exclusions in the previous academic year, as the agreed quota of permanently excluded pupils for placement.
- 9.6 Parents retain their legal right to an appeal for a place at any school of their preference. This right is not affected by the decision of the Fair Access Panel.

Admissions Authorities in Wirral
Wirral Council
Community Primary Schools (42)
Voluntary Controlled Primary Schools (4)
The Governing Bodies of:
Academy Schools
Birkenhead High School Academy for Girls (Junior)
Brackenwood Junior School
Christ Church (Moreton) CE Primary School
Church Drive Primary School
Co-Op Academy Hillside
Co-Op Academy Portland
Co-Op Academy Woodslee
Egremont Primary School
Gayton Primary School
Greasby Junior School
Great Meols Primary School
Heswall Primary School
Manor Primary School
Mendell Primary School
Our Lady of Pity Catholic Primary School
Overchurch Junior School
Poulton Lancelyn Primary School
Rock Ferry Primary School
Sandbrook Primary School

Stanton Road Primary School
St Joseph's (Birkenhead) Catholic Primary School
Thingwall Primary School
Thurstaston Dawpool CE Primary School
Townfield Primary School
Town Lane Infant School
Woodchurch Road Academy
Church of England Aided Primary Schools
Christ Church (Birkenhead) CE Primary School
St Andrew's CE Primary School
St Peter's CE Primary School
St Saviour's CE Primary School
The Priory CE Primary School
Woodchurch CE Primary School
Catholic Aided Primary Schools
Christ The King Catholic Primary School
Holy Cross Catholic Primary School
Ladymount Catholic Primary School
Our Lady and St Edwards Catholic Primary School
Sacred Heart Catholic Primary School
St Alban's Catholic Primary School *
St Anne's Catholic Primary School
St John's Catholic Infant School
St John's Catholic Junior School
St Joseph's (Upton) Catholic Primary School
St Joseph's (Wallasey) Catholic Primary School

St Michael and All Angels Catholic Primary School
St Paul's Catholic Primary School
St Peter & St Paul Catholic Primary School *
St Peter's Catholic Primary School
St Werburgh's Catholic Primary School
Joint Denominational Aided Primary Schools
Holy Spirit Catholic and CE Primary School

A full list and map is provided in the Council's information for parents, available online at www.wirral.gov.uk/schooladmissions.

* Status subject to confirmation at time of publication.

PROPOSED ADMISSION NUMBERS FOR 2025-26

**WIRRAL COMMUNITY AND VOLUNTARY CONTROLLED
PRIMARY SCHOOLS**

SCHOOL	ADMISSION NUMBER
Barnston Primary	45
Bedford Drive Primary	60
Bidston Avenue Primary	60
Black Horse Hill Infant	60
Black Horse Hill Junior*	60
Bidston Village CE Primary School	52
Brackenwood Infant	60
Brookdale Primary*	30
Brookhurst Primary	30
Castleway Primary	30
Cathcart Street Primary	30
Devonshire Park Primary	60
Eastway Primary	30
Fender Primary	42
Greasby Infant	60
Greenleas Primary	45
Grove Street Primary	60
Heswall Primary*	30
Heygarth Primary	60

SCHOOL	ADMISSION NUMBER
Higher Bebington Junior	96
Hoylake Holy Trinity CE Primary	45
Irby Primary*	30
Kingsway Primary	25
Leasowe Primary	30
Lingham Primary	57
Liscard Primary	90
Manor Primary*	30
Mendell Primary*	30
Mersey Park Primary	60
Millfields CE Primary	30
Mount Primary	48
New Brighton Primary	90
Overchurch Infant	90
Park Primary School	60
Pensby Primary	30
Prenton Primary	60
Raeburn Primary	60
Riverside Primary	30
Rock Ferry Primary*	45
Somerville Primary	90
St. Bridget's CE Primary	60
St. George's Primary	120

SCHOOL	ADMISSION NUMBER
Thornton Hough Primary	25
Well Lane Primary*	30
West Kirby Primary	40
Woodlands Primary	45

*Note that the status of these (and potentially other) primary schools is subject to change at time of determination. These tables will be updated accordingly should this occur.

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**SCHEME FOR THE CO-ORDINATION OF ADMISSION ARRANGEMENTS
FOR MAINTAINED SECONDARY SCHOOLS IN THE WIRRAL AREA
FOR THE ACADEMIC YEAR 2025-2026**

This scheme fulfils the requirements for a scheme for co-ordinating admission arrangements under the School Admission (Co-ordination of Admissions Arrangements) (England) Regulations 2008, made under the School Standards and Framework Act 1998, for the area of Wirral Council. It builds on the well-established coordination of secondary school admissions that have been a longstanding feature of local practice.

The scheme applied for admissions to secondary schools in the academic year 2025/26 and for subsequent years, subject to any review.

The co-ordinated scheme applies to all schools, excluding special schools, maintained by Wirral Council ("the Council") and to preferences expressed by Wirral resident parents and carers for schools maintained by other English local authorities, academies and free schools. Admissions to other schools with independent status are not be covered by this scheme.

1.0 Applications for school places for admission into Year 7 - the normal admission round

- 1.1 Wirral Council will act as the co-ordinating authority for all applications. Offers will be made by the Council, in its role as the home authority, on behalf of the admissions authority for the school allocated as follows:

Admissions Authority	Category of School
Wirral Council	All Wirral community and voluntary controlled schools
Governing body of school	All Voluntary Aided, Foundation, Trust and Academy schools
Maintaining Local Authority	Non-Wirral community and voluntary controlled schools

- 1.2 The admission arrangements for schools maintained by Wirral Council are published on the Council's website and in its information for parents, in line with the requirements set out in the School Admissions Code. The Council's information for

parents will be available electronically on the Council's website from 1 September. Hard copies are obtainable by request from the Council at the start of the autumn term. Admissions arrangements are also available from each school on request.

- 1.3 All parents who live in the area administered by Wirral Council must apply for places in maintained secondary schools either in Wirral or in the area of another Local Authority by completing the Wirral Parental Preference application. On-line applications are recommended and are made through the Council's website: www.wirral.gov.uk/schooladmissions. Parents of Year 6 pupils who are unable to access the online admission system can request a paper application form from Wirral Council from the start of the autumn term.

The form (online or paper) provides an opportunity for the parent to:

- apply for up to 5 schools
- rank the schools applied for in order of preference

- 1.4 Applications for places sent direct by parents and carers to individual schools cannot be accepted and must be sent to the Council for inclusion within these arrangements.

- 1.5 Preference forms should be returned to Wirral Council by 31st October to ensure the allocation of a school place on 1st March or next working day (the National Offer date). Applications received after the published deadline of 31st October will be dealt with once the offer of places has been sent to parents on 1st March or next working day.

- 1.6 **Applications from separated parents.** Only one application can be processed for each child; therefore it is important that both parties in shared custody arrangements are in agreement over the preferred school(s) named. The parent with whom the child is majority resident should submit the application giving their address as the child's home address– this is the parent with which the child resides most days in a week.

In a situation where a child spends exactly equal time with both parents, the child's main permanent residence should be submitted as their home address. If agreement cannot be reached, or if neither parent has been granted a Specific Issues Order in this respect, then the Council will accept the application from the parent with whom the child is "ordinarily resident". This is the address where the child lives for the majority of the school week (Monday to Friday), and is usually

where the parent/carer receives child benefit for the child (where eligible). Proof of address and residence arrangements will be required with the application.

1.7. **Changes of address.** Parents and carers must inform the Council immediately of a change of address, even if details of a future change of residency were included on the application form. The Council will require supporting evidence to show that the place of residency has changed; e.g. a letter from the solicitor confirming the completion date; a signed rental agreement showing the start of the tenancy and its duration. In addition further information may be requested – for example, copies of council tax and utility bills or any other information considered relevant to the application, including evidence of disposal of previous property. Information and supporting evidence must be received by 1st January. Proof of residency received after 1st January will not be used to assign a higher criterion for admission, but will be used to send the decision letter on the published offer date. We may remove a place where it has been identified that a change of address has taken place before 1st January and has not been declared.

1.8 **Home address.** This must be the child's permanent home address where he/she lives with a person of parental responsibility as the main carer as defined by the Children Act 1989. Applicants must not give the address of a business, relative, childminder, friend, a temporary address or an address to which they hope to move. The home address must not be where parents have taken out a short term let on a property solely to use its address on the application form without any intention of taking up permanent residence there. Arrangements where parents leave and collect children from another relative or carer on a daily basis will be regarded as childcare arrangements, and the child will not be deemed to be "ordinarily resident" with that person. The Council will require proof of residence which may include proof of sale of a previous property.

Wirral Council regularly check addresses and **any deliberate misrepresentation will result in a place being withdrawn.** The Council acts on behalf of all Wirral admission authorities and reserves the right to request independent confirmation of the child's place of residence, as felt appropriate. The Mainstream Admissions team may have to share the information provided with other departments of the Council in order to verify the authenticity of pupil's addresses. This may include data held by Council Tax and/or Housing Benefit teams. The Council's Fraud and Investigations

Team may be asked to review the information that has been provided. This may include interviewing and taking a signed statement from the applicant.

- 1.9 **Withdrawal of places.** The Authority has the right to withdraw any place offered on the basis of a fraudulent or intentionally misleading application, or where a place has been offered in error.

2.0 Dealing with Applications

- 2.1 The Council's admissions criteria will be applied to rank the order of priority of each application for community schools.
- 2.2 The Council will provide Academy, Foundation, Trust and Voluntary Aided Schools with details of applicants for their school by 15th January. Details of preferences for a school place in the area of another Local Authority will be sent to that Authority along with any details and supporting evidence provided by the parent by 1st January.
- 2.3 Preference ranking will not be shared with school admission authorities in accordance with paragraph 1.9 of the School Admissions Code 2014 as this cannot lawfully be used when applying oversubscription criteria.
- 2.4 The Governing Bodies of Academy, Foundation, Trust and Voluntary Aided schools will rank each application by applying the school's admission criteria and are required to notify the Mainstream Admissions team of their ranking by 30th January.
- 2.5 Where a pupil is eligible to receive an offer of two or more school places then the Council will allocate the highest priority preference.
- 2.6 The Mainstream Admissions team will notify the Governing Bodies of Wirral Academy, Foundation, Trust and Voluntary Aided schools of those pupils who will provisionally be allocated places at their school by 13th February.
- 2.7 When the Council receives from other Local Authorities details of their provisional allocation for Wirral children seeking places in schools maintained by them, the Council will then offer the highest preference if they are eligible for more than one school.
- 2.8 On 23rd February Wirral Council will inform schools and neighbouring Authorities of the final allocations. On-line applicants will receive an e-mail notification on 1st March (or next working day). Paper form applicants will receive a letter posted by second class post on 1st March (or next working day).

3.0 Determination of applications for Community schools

- 3.1 Each secondary school has a published admission number. Places will be allocated up to but not beyond this number.
- 3.2 All children who have applied before 31st October will be eligible for a place so long as there is space within the school's admission number. If there are more applications than there are places available, then eligibility for community schools will be determined in accordance with the following scheme of priorities:
- Children in care, and children who were in care but have been adopted or are subject to a residency order or special guardianship order (“previously in care”) including those children who appear (to the admission authority) to have been in state care outside of England and ceased to be in state care as a result of being adopted.
 - Pupils who have a medical reason for attending a particular school. A letter in support from a health care professional will be required as evidence. A letter in support from a senior health care professional will be required as evidence which must make it clear why only this school is appropriate for your child's medical needs.
 - Pupils who have a brother or sister of statutory school age (including half or step-brothers and sisters living in the same household) at the school when the pupil starts school. If there are more children with older brothers or sisters at the school than there are places available, we will give priority to children with the youngest brothers or sisters at the school.
 - Pupils who live nearest to the school. We measure distances from home to the school gate nearest to the child's home using the shortest road route, unless it is possible to use a footpath which we consider to be a safe walking route, using the Council's computerised routing system.
- 3.3 If places remain available at the school after all “on time” applicants have been allocated, places will then be allocated to late applications received after 31st October according to the admissions criteria, up to the school's admission number.
- 3.4 **Multiple births.** For community schools, where the final place in a year group is offered to one of twins (or triplets etc.) it will be our policy to admit the other twin even if that means going above the admission number.

- 3.5 **Single Sex Schools.** Admissions to single-sex school schools are based on the pupil's legal sex as recorded on their birth certificate.
- 3.6 Applications for Academy, Foundation, Trust and Aided schools will be determined by the governing bodies of these schools in accordance with their published admission criteria.
- 3.7 **Mandatory Allocation.** Where it is not possible to allocate a place at any of the schools applied for, children resident in Wirral will be allocated a place at the nearest appropriate Wirral school where there are places available. "Appropriate " where possible means community school if the parents' preferences indicate preferences for non-denominational education; or a Catholic school if the parents indicated a preference for education in a school of that denomination. The nearest school will be measured on shortest walking distance using the Council's computerised routing system.
- 3.8 **Special Needs.** All schools will be required to admit a pupil with an Education Health and Care Plan (EHCP) naming the school.

A Health Care Plan does not give any particular priority for admission to a specific school.

3.9 **Route measurements**

The "shortest road route" from home to school starts at the "seed point" of the home address as provided by the Ordnance Survey compiled from Royal Mail and/or local council data. The starting point connects to the nearest point of the Authority's digitised routing network. The digitised network is based on the Integrated Transport Network (ITN) supplied by Ordnance Survey and is accurately digitised to measure along the centre of roads. The Ordnance Survey ITN dataset is the most accurate road dataset available and is the definitive national road network for Great Britain. The ITN has been augmented by the Authority to take into account public footpaths and alleyways etc. that are approved to be safe for use by children, accompanied as necessary by an adult, by the Authority. The end point of the "shortest road route" is the nearest open gate of the school officially available for use by pupils at the start and end of the school day. The location of these gates has been set by the Authority based on information provided by the school.

The "shortest road route" is not necessarily a driving route as it may use in part a non-driveable route, such as a footpath. The shortest road route is also not

necessarily a walking route, because the measurement is along the centre of the road, not the edge (pavement or equivalent).

The same measuring system must be used for pupils in relation to admission to schools as this treats all pupils equally. Other measuring systems may give a different measurement but the Authority cannot take a measurement from another system into account. Online systems that parents may use for comparison, including Google Maps and walk-it.com etc. use the free Ordnance Survey Meridian dataset which is far less detailed, and consequently less accurate. They will not have an accurate starting point, will not bar unsuitable paths, and will not include accurate positions for the gates of the school being measured to.

For addresses outside the Authority's digitised network of approximately 48 square miles, including overseas addresses, an internet mapping solution will be used, e.g. maps.google.co.uk.

4.0 Admission to Grammar Schools

- 4.1 Admissions authorities for the grammar schools in Wirral will allocate places only to children who have achieved the required standard. If they are oversubscribed with children who have achieved the standard, they will not be able to offer places to all; they will use other non-academic criteria to decide which children should be offered places.
- 4.2 **Request for Assessment.** Parents who wish their child to be assessed for non-Catholic grammar school education should register by **31st May in Year 5** by completing either the online or paper Request for Assessment form.
- 4.3 Parents who wish their children to be assessed for a place at Upton Hall School FCJ or St. Anselm's College must follow the procedures for requesting an assessment set out by those schools; those children will be assessed by the schools themselves.
- 4.4 The grammar schools have criteria to determine which children will be given places if more children achieve the standard than there are places available.
- 4.5 **The selection tests.** The assessment is based on the results of a test comprising two papers that pupils take in Autumn of Year 6. The tests have been designed to predict a pupil's potential performance at secondary school and so preparation for the tests is not necessary. However, familiarisation materials containing sample questions will be available by 30th June to help children prepare for the tests.

To ensure that children are not disadvantaged because of their date of birth, in each case the score is age standardised to take account of each child's age in years and completed months. A total weighted score is calculated from the Verbal, Maths and Non-verbal components, for boys and girls. Children who reach the qualifying score will be deemed to have reached the required grammar school standard.

At the end of the process, there will be a list of the children who have reached the qualifying score. This does not necessarily mean that they will go to a grammar school; that will depend on the number of preferences for the grammar schools. If a grammar school is oversubscribed, the governors use other criteria to decide who should be given places.

The outcome of the assessment tests will be sent e-mail to parents who have provided a valid e-mail address on their request for assessment form within 6 weeks of the assessment date. Postal notification will be despatched to all other parents on the same date as e-mails are sent out, by first class post.

A **late test** will take place later in the Autumn term for pupils who were registered to take the test but were unable to do so due to illness or absence on the main test date. No other arrangements will be made to assess children if request forms were received after 31st May, unless they have moved from another part of the country. Parents should still submit a preference form before 31st October naming at least one grammar school. If their child does not meet the grammar standard, any grammar preferences will be withdrawn.

5.0 Determination of applications for Foundation, Trust, Academy and Aided schools

- 5.1 The governing bodies of Foundation, Trust, Academy and Aided schools publish their own admission arrangements which include the criteria which they will use to determine priorities if their school is oversubscribed.

Admissions to single-sex school schools are based on the pupil's legal sex as recorded on their birth certificate.

- 5.2 **Special Educational Needs.** All schools will be required to admit a pupil with a Statement of Special Educational Needs or Education Health and Care Plan naming the school.

6.0 Offer of Places

- 6.1 Where online applications have been received from parents resident in Wirral, the parent or carer making the online application will receive their offer by e-mail on 1st March (or next working day). Parents applying on a paper form will be informed in writing by second class post by the Council posted on 1st March (or next working day) of the school allocated to their child.
- 6.2 This will include the allocation of a place in a school of another Local Authority if the parent's application for a place there has been successful. The letter or e-mail will also inform parents of their legal right to appeal to an independent panel and who to contact to make an appeal. Parents should, wherever possible, make an appeal within 20 working days of receipt of the letter or e-mail notifying them of the outcome of their application.

7.0 Late Applications

- 7.1 Preferences which are received on or after 1st November will be dealt with after places have been allocated on 1st March (or next working day). At that point some schools may be full and no more places will be allocated at those schools. In the case of schools which have places available, places will be allocated up to the school's admission number in accordance with the arrangements described in paragraphs 3 and 5.
- 7.2 Late applications for grammar schools will require separate arrangements for testing. See 4.9 above.
- 7.3 Parents will be notified in writing by Wirral Council. The letter will also inform the parent of their legal right to appeal and who to contact to make an appeal. Parents should, wherever possible, make an appeal within 20 working days of receipt of the letter notifying them of the outcome of their application. Parents and carers must accept or decline the offer of a late place within 10 working days of the offer date.
- 7.4 If places become available before the start of the autumn term, the Council will re-allocate them up to the school's admission number. If there are more children interested in a particular school than places available, in the case of Community schools the Council will use the same criteria to determine priorities as is used for the initial allocation. In most cases the re-allocation will be made depending on where the children live. If this is the case, the Council will keep a list in order of those who will have priority because they live nearer the school in question.

7.5 If at the end of the Summer Term a school is believed to be full, the Council will close the procedures and make no more reallocations. However, it may be that places will become available at the beginning of or during the Autumn Term. For community schools, the Council will keep a waiting list of children whose parents are interested in obtaining a place at the school if a place becomes available, following the same criteria as when places were first offered. The waiting list will be kept open until the last day of the autumn term.

8.0 **In Year applications outside the normal round of admissions**

8.1 'In year' applications are those made during the school year into any year group, other than at the normal point of entry (i.e. the normal admission round). This will include applications from parents and carers of children moving into Wirral from another Local Authority area, moving within Wirral, or seeking to transfer to an alternative school for other reasons.

8.2 **Opted-In** - Unless schools have specifically "opted out" of co-ordinated in-year admissions applications (see 8.19 below) applications for all schools including Academy, Foundation, Trust and Voluntary Aided schools must be made on a common Wirral Transfer Form which can be submitted on the Wirral Admissions Portal or on a transfer form available on the Wirral Admissions website. The form allows parents to state up to three school preferences ranked in priority order.

8.3 Opted-In schools should not deal with transfer application forms. Any forms received by schools should be forwarded to the Mainstream Admissions team of Wirral Council. The Council coordinates all parental requests for in-year transfers and placements unless schools have opted-out of in-year transfers.

8.4 Parents are advised to contact the headteacher of their child's current school to discuss their request prior to submitting an application.

8.5 The Mainstream Admissions Team will then request completion of appropriate documentation from their current school to forward to their preferred school. Requests for transfer in Y10 and Y11 will be discouraged on educational grounds, but parents have the ultimate right to proceed with the request. Requests for transfer in these year groups due to relocation to Wirral from another area or country will be processed automatically.

8.6 For transfers between Wirral schools, the Council will request from the Headteacher of the child's current or previous school, information relating to the child's

curriculum record, attendance and behaviour. The headteacher of the school must sign the form and return it to Mainstream Admissions within 5 school days. Where a child has relocated to Wirral from another area or country, this information will not be requested by the Council.

- 8.7 The background information and any relevant documentation from other agencies such as the Attendance Team, social worker, educational psychologists and so on (where provided), will then be forwarded to the Headteacher of the requested school(s).
- 8.8 The governing body of the requested school should reply to the Council within 10 school days of receipt of the application notifying the decision whether a place will be offered.
- 8.9 However, if the school believes that the child should be considered under any of the elements of the Fair Access Protocol, this must be notified to the Mainstream Admissions team within 5 school days of receipt of the application. Where it would be helpful, an Attendance Officer, Exclusions Officer or Managed Move Officer may facilitate meetings between the parents and the schools involved in order to resolve any difficulties.
- 8.10 For Community Schools the Council will consider all available information and decide whether to agree or refuse the request within 10 school days of receipt of the application.
- 8.11 If a parent expresses a preference for one or more of the grammar schools, then their child will be assessed by the school or schools concerned and a decision made by the governing body as to whether to offer a place. The governing body will then inform the Council of the outcome of the application.
- 8.12 Where a pupil is eligible to receive an offer of two or more school places then the parent's highest eligible preference will take precedence. Headteachers will be informed of the decision.
- 8.13 All parents will be informed by the Council of the school place allocated by letter and advised to contact the headteacher of the school to arrange admission. The letter will also inform the parent of their legal right to appeal and who to contact to make an appeal. Parents should, wherever possible, make an appeal within 20 working days of receipt of the letter notifying them of the outcome of their application.

- 8.14 In accordance with the School Admissions Code admission authorities must not refuse to admit a child solely because:
- (a) they have applied later than other applicants;
 - (b) they are not of the faith of the school in the case of a faith school;
 - (c) they have followed a different curriculum at their previous school;
 - (d) information has not been received from their previous school;
 - (e) they have missed entrance tests for selective places.
- 8.15 Parental preference must be met unless the school believes that do so would “prejudice the efficient education or the efficient use of resources”, under Section 86 of the School Standards and Framework Act 1998. In effect, schools are expected to offer a place if there are places available in the year group. Parents who are refused a place have a right to an appeal to an Independent Appeal Panel. Schools considering refusing to offer a place when places are available in the year group should consider whether they believe their decision to refuse was one that a reasonable admission authority would have made in the circumstances of the case, as the onus will be on the school to prove prejudice.
- 8.16 **Challenging behaviour:** The Admissions Code says that if a governing body does not want to admit a child with challenging behaviour as an in-year transfer, even though places are available, it must refer the case to the local authority under the Fair Access Protocol. The definition of “challenging behaviour” is set out in the Fair Access Protocol. Any such cases must be raised with the local authority within 5 working days of receiving the transfer paperwork. Children not meeting the Fair Access definition of “challenging behaviour” must be considered as in year transfers. Fair Access does not apply to a looked after child or a child with an Education Health and Care Plan (EHCP) naming the school as these children MUST be admitted.
- 8.17 If the request is refused, headteachers are informed of the decision and parents are informed in writing and given details of their legal right to appeal. Parents should, wherever possible, make an appeal within 20 working days of receipt of the letter notifying them of the outcome of their application. If a parent lodges an appeal, copies of the relevant documentation will be sent to the preferred school.
- 8.18 The time taken for a transfer request to be processed should be as short as possible. The Council expects that parents will be informed of the outcome of their request within 15 school days, however this may take significantly longer where

background information is not received in a timely manner, further information is required in order to process the application such as visa or address verification, the application requires an assessment for a selective school or the application is referred under the Fair Access Protocol.

- 8.19 **Opted-out** – Schools must advise the Council in writing by 31st July each year whether or not they wish to “opt out” of the co-ordinated in-year transfer processes for the following academic year.

This option only applies to own-admission authority schools, Community schools will remain opted-in for in-year transfers.

There is no option to “opt out” of the normal admissions round for entry to Year 7, it is a statutory requirement that all such applications are co-ordinated centrally by the Council.

“Opted-out” schools must provide an appropriate application form for parents to complete and **notify the Council of each application within 2 days of receipt. Admission decisions must be notified to parents within 15 school days of receipt**, with an aim to notify parents within 10 school days. Decision outcome letters must include reasons for refusing to offer a place (if applicable) and information on how to appeal, for all applicants.

The school **must notify the Council of the application decision within 2 school days of the decision.**

Opting-out of in-year co-ordination does NOT mean opting out of the Fair Access Protocol; referrals to the Fair Access Protocol must be made within 5 school days of receipt of the application by sending to the Local Authority.

In addition to the above, opted-out schools are responsible for ensuring that all decisions are compliant with the School Admissions Code, the general provisions of the Wirral Co-Ordinated Scheme and the school’s own admission policy. They are responsible for all checks including addresses, passports/visas; PEPs for looked after children, obtaining background information from previous schools and for keeping records of all decisions made by the Governing Body or Admissions Sub-Committee.

- 8.20 **Children of UK service personnel.** Places for these children will be allocated in advance if accompanied by an official letter with a relocation date and Unit postal address or quartering area address.

8.21 **Overseas applications.** Parents who have already moved to the UK from overseas who are British or Irish citizens; or have Settled Status under the EU Settlement Scheme; or who are in the UK on a Work Visa or Student Visa; or who are part of a family entering or residing in the UK under the immigration route for British National (Overseas) citizens and their dependents; or who have an endorsed passport showing right of abode; can apply for places for their child at any school covered by this scheme.

Parents or children in these categories who do not yet live in the UK can apply before the date they move to the UK. However, the address to be used in the allocation will be the address that the child is living at on the closing date, unless a subsequent house move has been accepted up to the last date for changes in the coordinated scheme. A UK address will only be used once the child is residing at that address, and evidence will be required of this, as in paragraph 1.10 of this document.

For applicants who are resident overseas and are not yet resident in the UK, the Council may ask to see passports and visas for verification and may confirm visa status with the Home Office if this is unclear or missing. It is the responsibility of foreign nationals, who wish to apply for a state-funded school place, to check that they have a right of abode or that the conditions of their immigration status otherwise permit them to access a state-funded school

Children in the UK on a Standard Visitor visa or a Short-Term Study (English Language) visa; are not entitled to free state education. Any parents wishing to access education for their child whilst visiting the UK may however choose to pay for private education during their stay. The only waiver to this applies to children of visiting academics (parent has an Academic Visitor visa, up to 12 months) who may access free state education during their visit.

Visa over-stayers may be asked to provide evidence of an on-going appeal in order to access free state education for the duration of the appeal process.

9.0 **The In Year Fair Access Protocol**

9.1 All requests for in-year places will be considered with reference to the Council's current admission arrangements and procedures for in year placements. The majority of requests will be agreed or refused by admission authorities with

reference to two important factors: parental preference, and the availability of places within the relevant year group.

- 9.2 All Wirral schools will take part in the Fair Access Protocol, which is published separately. Schools must respond immediately to requests for admission to school according to the timescales above so that admission of the pupil is not unduly delayed.
- 9.3 The categories of children who can be considered under the Fair Access Protocol are set out in that document. Children who are looked after and children with an Education Health and Care Plan (EHCP) naming the school are NOT included in the Fair Access protocol. These children MUST be placed in the school of their carer's preference irrespective of the availability of places in the year group.
- 9.4 Parents retain their legal right to an appeal for a place at any school of their preference. This right is not affected by the decision of the Fair Access Panel. Parents do not need to wait for a Fair Access Panel decision prior to submitting an appeal to an Independent Appeal Panel.

Admission Authorities in Wirral
Wirral Council
Community Secondary Schools (1) Mosslands School
The Governing Bodies of:
Academy Schools
Birkenhead High School Academy for Girls (Senior)
Calday Grange Grammar School for Boys
The Co-Op Academy Bebington
Hilbre High School
Oldershaw School
Prenton High School for Girls
St Anselm's College

St John Plessington Catholic College
St Mary's Catholic College
The Birkenhead Park School
Upton Hall School FCJ
Weatherhead High School for Girls
West Kirby Grammar School for Girls
Wirral Grammar School for Boys
Wirral Grammar School for Girls
Woodchurch High School
Foundation Schools
Pensby High School
Ridgeway High School *
South Wirral High School

* Status subject to confirmation.

A full list of schools and a map showing locations is provided in the Council's information for parents, available on-line at www.wirral.gov.uk/schooladmissions

The scheme will be amended if there are further changes to the status of schools.

PROPOSED ADMISSION NUMBERS FOR WIRRAL COMMUNITY SECONDARY SCHOOLS

SCHOOL	ADMISSION NUMBER
Mosslands School	225

*Status of this school subject to change at time of determination.

In-Year Admissions Fair Access Protocol 2023

1.0 Background

- 1.1 The School Admissions Code sets out the mandatory requirements regarding the admissions process and makes clear that all local authorities and admission authorities are required to have a Fair Access Protocol, and that all schools and academies must participate in their local authority's protocol in order to ensure that children, especially the most vulnerable, are offered a place at a suitable school as quickly as possible. This includes admitting children above the published admission number to schools that are already full.
- 1.2 The School Admissions Code 2021 also makes clear that the local authority must ensure that no school - including those with available places - is asked to take a disproportionate number of children who have been excluded from other schools, or who have challenging behaviour, under the Fair Access Protocol.

2.0 Aims of the Protocol

- 2.1 The protocol is designed to:
 - a. acknowledge the need for vulnerable young people who are seeking a school place to be dealt with quickly and sympathetically;
 - b. reduce the time that these pupils spend out of school;
 - c. ensure that schools admit pupils including those with challenging educational needs on a fair basis;
 - d. be fair and transparent, and to have the confidence of all schools;
 - e. ensure that all schools accept a fair and equitable share of pupils.

3.0 Main Principles

The majority of pupils are already admitted to Wirral schools through the routine admissions procedures operated by the Mainstream Admissions team and this will continue to be the case.

- Where schools have places, children should be admitted under the normal admissions procedures unless the requested school demonstrates that category 3.1(i) below applies and requests the case be considered under Fair Access.
- Where an application is made for a secondary school that has reached its admission number, in the majority of cases parents will be advised of alternative schools and the appeals procedure, unless the application falls into one of the Fair Access categories.

3.1 In order for this protocol to be successful:

- a. All schools will take part.
- b. There will be a single point of entry and a coordinated approach for all in-year admissions via the Mainstream Admissions team. These admissions include school to school transfers as well as those who are new to Wirral or the country. Schools who “opt-out” of in-year transfer co-ordination will continue to take part in the Wirral Fair Access Protocol.
- c. The Fair Access protocol will apply to all school age pupils (4-16).
- d. The protocol will only apply to those pupils who are ordinarily resident within Wirral Authority boundaries.
- e. All schools subscribe to a ‘no walk-in’ admissions process.
- f. The protocol may require schools to admit pupils above their Published Admission Number (PAN) and ahead of pupils on their waiting list or awaiting an appeal.
- g. A Fair Access Panel shall make the decisions about placement in an open and transparent way.
- h. The distribution of pupils across schools under the protocol shall be fair, with due recognition given to the circumstances of the school, the year group (including the school’s view on the impact on the provision of efficient education or the efficient use of resources), and circumstances of the individual.
- i. Where a school does not wish to admit a child because they have good reason to believe the child may display challenging behaviour (as defined in 4.2 below) outside of the normal admissions round, even though there are places available, it can refer the case to the Authority for action under the Fair Access Protocol. To avoid delay, concerns must be raised within 5 working days of receipt of the child’s application.

A school should only refer a child to the Fair Access Protocol for this reason if it has a particularly high proportion of either children with challenging behaviour or previously permanently excluded pupils on roll compared to other local schools and it considers that admitting another child with challenging behaviour would prejudice the provision of efficient education or efficient use of resources.

Schools cannot refuse admission to Looked After Children, previously Looked After Children or children with an Education Health and Care Plan naming the school, on the grounds of challenging behaviour.
- j. Undersubscribed schools must not be required to admit a greater proportion of those children referred to a Fair Access Panel, particularly those schools with a recent history of challenging behaviour greater than that of other schools.
- k. Schools must respond immediately to requests for admission so that the admission of the pupil is not unduly delayed.
- l. For schools that are their own admissions authorities, Headteachers and Governors are requested to agree a procedure to empower a subcommittee comprising the Head in consultation with the Chair to make immediate decisions

regarding admissions where there is a place available in the year group. Where the year group is full, the Admissions Committee should be convened as soon as possible so that the decision regarding admission can be made without delay.

m. Schools should not refuse to admit a child who has been denied a place by an Independent Appeal Panel, if the Fair Access Panel subsequently identifies that school as the one to admit the child. This could occur if the parental appeal to the Independent Appeal Panel takes place before the Fair Access Panel meets.

4.0 Children Covered by the Protocol

It is a legal requirement that Looked After Children (LAC) and previously looked after children (as defined by the Admissions Code 2021) be given first priority for admission to all schools within their oversubscription criteria. **Any consideration of a school move for a child in care must be preceded by a PEP. The PEP should have representation from the existing school, social care and LACES.**

Children with an Education Health and Care Plan (EHCP) are not covered by this Protocol as their needs are covered by specific guidance in the SEN Code of Practice. Any consideration of a school move must be preceded by an EHCP Review.

- 4.1 The Fair Access Protocol must cover children who fall into one of the following categories:
- a. children either subject to a Child in Need Plan or a Child Protection Plan, or having had a Child in Need Plan or a Child Protection Plan within 12 months at the point of being referred to the protocol
 - b. children living in a refuge or in other Relevant Accommodation at the point of being referred to the Protocol
 - c. children from the criminal justice system
 - d. children in alternative provision who need to be reintegrated back into mainstream education or have been permanently excluded but are deemed suitable for mainstream education ;
 - e. children with special educational needs (but without an Education, Health and Care Plan), disabilities or medical conditions
 - f. children who are carers;
 - g. children who are homeless;
 - h. children in formal kinship care arrangements (as evidenced by either a child arrangements order not relating to either birth parent or a special guardianship order)
 - i. children of, or who are, Gypsies, Roma, Travellers, refugees and asylum seekers;
 - j. children who have been refused a school place on the grounds of their challenging behaviour and referred to the Protocol in accordance with paragraph 3.10 of the Admissions Code 2021
 - k. children for whom a place has not been sought due to exceptional circumstances;

- l. children who have been out of education for four or more weeks where it can be demonstrated that there are no places available at any school within a reasonable distance (see 4.2) of their home. This does not include circumstances where a suitable place has been offered to a child and this has not been accepted; and,
- m. previously looked after children for whom the local authority has been unable to promptly secure a school place.

4.2 **Reasonable distance:** The reasonable home to school travel distance is below 2 miles for children aged under 8, and under 3 miles for children aged 8 and over. This is measured as the shortest safe walking route as defined in the Wirral Home to School Transport Policy. Parents may apply for a school further than the reasonable distance, this does not necessarily carry with it eligibility for free home to school travel. Panel decisions which give a place at a school over the reasonable travel distance that were not a parental preference may result in free travel eligibility. The age, needs and circumstances of the child may also be taken into account by the Panel in deciding if a travel distance is reasonable.

4.3 **Challenging behaviour:** Under the School Admissions Code 2021, behaviour can be described as “challenging” where:

“it would be unlikely to be responsive to the usual range of interventions to help prevent and address pupil misbehaviour or it is of such severity, frequency, or duration that it is beyond the normal range that schools can tolerate. We would expect this behaviour to significantly interfere with the pupil’s/other pupils’ education or jeopardise the right of staff and pupils to a safe and orderly environment”.

A child with challenging behaviour may also be disabled as defined in the Equality Act 2010. When considering using this grounds, schools should consider their duties under that Act; including the implications when a pupil exhibits a tendency to physical abuse of other persons as a consequence of a disability.

4.4 Wirral’s Fair Access protocol does not cover:

- Children with an Education Health and Care Plan (see above); Any consideration of a school move must be preceded by an EHCP review.
- Children who are in care (looked after), as these children must be admitted (see above). Any consideration of a school move for a child currently in care must be preceded by a PEP. The PEP should have representation from the existing school, social care and LACES.

5.0 Fair Access Protocol Procedure

5.1 Referrals to the Fair Access Panel

Admission of hard to place children will be co-ordinated by the Mainstream Admissions team.

Where the requested school identifies that an application meets the criteria for a 'Hard to Place' pupil as defined above, the case must be notified to the Mainstream Admissions team within 5 school days who will refer the case to the Clerk of the Fair Access Panel.

Where none of the requested schools are able to or have refused to offer a place and the Mainstream Admissions team identifies that the child meets the Fair Access criteria, the Mainstream Admissions team may also refer an application directly to the Fair Access Panel.

Managed Move decisions and re-integration to mainstream school decisions for pupils attending the Progress School will be referred to the Fair Access Panel by the Managed Move and Exclusions manager.

5.2 In reaching a decision on the placement of a Hard to Place child, each panel will consider the balance of circumstances of the pupil and the circumstances of the school, taking into account the following factors:

- i. the distance and ease of travel from home to school;
- ii. the fairness of any placement and proportion of hard to place pupils in each school as reflected in the "grid";
- iii. the school that is the parent/carer's preferred choice;
- iv. the religious affiliation of the pupil (where possible)
- v. genuine concerns from the requested school about admission (e.g. previous serious breakdown of relationship or local issues that will have an impact on the school, child or child's family);
- vi. other reasonable considerations.

NB. Where a child is returning from elective home education, the Panel would firstly consider a placement at the Wirral secondary school the child most recently attended, unless there are strong grounds to decide otherwise, taking into account i. to vi. above.

5.3 **Failure to engage** - The Fair Access Panel may request the Attendance Service intervene with a family where it can be shown that a pupil has been placed through the Panel but the family fails to engage with the named school when it tries to secure admission of the pupil, e.g. parent/carer has failed to engage in securing admission of the child to the school within 5 working school days of notification that a place has been allocated.

- 5.4 **The Grid** - The Mainstream Admissions team will maintain a grid in order to ensure that schools are not being asked to admit a disproportionate number of pupils through the Protocol. This grid will also take into account permanent exclusions as a transfer out. When a pupil is admitted under the protocol, this will add a positive factor to the school's weighting whilst transfers out will add a negative factor. Pupils admitted or leaving through a 'Managed Move' or reintegration from the Progress Schools will also be included on this grid. A list of schools showing the number of vacancies in each year group will also be provided to the Panel.
- 5.5 **Outcomes of FAP panels** - Within 7 working days, the Clerk to the panel will inform any school not represented at a Panel if the decision relates to that school. The Clerk will inform parents in writing within 7 working days with a copy to the previous and requested school and to the Mainstream Admissions team.
- 5.6 **Right to an appeal** - Parents/carers retain a legal right to an appeal to an Independent Appeal Panel.
- 5.7 **Powers of Direction** - If a school is identified as the one to admit a child by a Fair Access Panel and refuses to do so, the local authority may use their powers of direction in the case of maintained schools or request the Secretary of State to intervene and direct an academy school. See 'Rules Governing Direction'.
- 5.8 **Placement Procedure** - for the purposes of this regulation a child is a pupil at the school from the beginning of the first day on which the school has agreed, or has been notified, that the pupil will attend the school.
- 5.9 Pupils join the school roll on the expected first day of attendance and must be listed in both admissions and the attendance registers from that day. If a child is the subject of a School Attendance Order, he/she only becomes registered at the school if the parents enrol him/her at the school and agree the first day on which the child will attend. If this does not happen the parent(s) are in breach of the Order. If the parents agree the first day that their child will attend, any subsequent absence should be treated in the same way as any other pupil.
- 5.10 **Monitoring** - In order to maintain transparency in the placement process and to facilitate the work of the Panels, the local authority will collect data on admissions and the list of schools. This data will be made available to each of the panels. An annual report will be presented to the Department's Senior Management Team; and to Schools Forum as required.
- 5.11 **Review** - The protocol will be reviewed annually.

APPENDIX A

Panel membership and terms of reference

The panel meets monthly or as required.

1. Composition of the Panel

In addition to a Clerk, the Panel will include

- The Assistant Director for Education

The lead officers for the following services:

- Special Educational Needs and Disability
- School Attendance
- Managed Moves and Exclusions
- Alternative Provision
- 14 to 19
- Other persons as required

In addition, the Panel will include at minimum two headteachers* on a volunteer basis, who will participate for a minimum of 12 months. Appointment of a new headteacher representative will be via nomination by Wirral Association of Secondary Headteachers (WASH) and will be staggered.

A Headteacher who is not currently a Panel member may attend as a non-participatory observer by request to the Panel Chair; agreement to this is at the Chair's discretion.

The Panel will include a primary headteacher representative* where there is a referral for a primary aged child.

In all cases, headteachers will not consider applications in relation to their own school.

**The headteacher of a school may appoint a senior representative to attend the Panel, with full powers to act on his/her behalf in respect of decisions in relation to the placement of children brought to the panel.*

2. Frequency of meeting

The Panel will meet at least monthly and may meet more frequently as required, e.g. bi-monthly.

3. The Panel will be chaired by the Lead Commissioner for Schools or their proxy representative.
4. The quorum for the panel will be a minimum of three members.
5. All in-year admissions will go through the Mainstream Admissions team. Schools opting out of in-year co-ordination must send Fair Access referrals to the Mainstream Admissions team within 5 days of receipt of a direct application being received.

6. The Clerk will be responsible for ensuring that all casework is prepared and made available to the Chair at least 5 school days prior to the panel meeting.
7. The Clerk will ensure that the Panel decision is communicated to the parent/carer and the schools concerned within 7 school days.
8. The school will agree a start date with the parent that is no later than 10 school days following the panel meeting.
9. Where the offer of a place is not in line with parental preference, parent/carers will be advised of the appropriate course of action they can take in the Clerk's letter to the parent, which will include the right to an appeal to an Independent Appeal Panel.
10. Decisions on placement will be by majority view.
11. The Chair's role is pivotal to the success of the panel. This includes overseeing data, liaising with School Admissions Team and school reps, providing support and acting as a mediator with some of the more difficult cases, negotiating with Heads and ultimately ensuring decisions taken are carried through.

Notes

1. Any difficulties or delay in securing the identified placement of any pupil by a Fair Access Panel will be brought to the attention of the Director for Children, Families and Education by the Clerk or the Senior Manager for Admissions who will make a decision about the most appropriate response which may include direction to admit or referral to the Secretary of State to direct. The Director for Children, Families and Education may also write to the Chair of Governors if a school is deemed to be obstructing or not co-operating with the agreed protocol.
2. In order to monitor actions taken to place pupils presented to the panel, the Clerk will ensure that accurate records are maintained and that these are forwarded electronically within 7 working days to the Mainstream Admissions team. Data required will include allocated school, start date and pupil name.

Appendix B

The Weightings

PRINCIPLES

1. The list will allow comparisons between schools so that the admission and transfer of pupils under Fair Access/Managed Moves can easily be tracked
2. The weightings will enhance the priority of very vulnerable groups of children

FORMAT OF THE WEIGHTINGS

3. The list will be a simple spreadsheet identifying all schools in the relevant phase (primary and secondary) – “the Grid”.
4. There will be columns to track transferred in pupils, i.e. hard to place pupils admitted by the school (plus 1 point).
5. Columns will also track transferred out hard to place pupils (minus 1 point).
6. The difference between the ‘IN’ and the ‘OUT’ columns will give a net score for each year group and for each school overall. The school with the lowest or most negative weighted score will be deemed the next most likely school to admit a pupil, taking into account parental preference.
7. The spreadsheet will also maintain a column that records the number of ‘managed moves’ and re-integrations from the Progress School involving each school. These pupils will attract a single weighting (+1 point for the receiving school and -1 point for the transfer out school), which will be added to the weighted score for each school to give a total weighting.

Any subsequent failure of a Managed Move or reintegration will not be taken into account.

The summary sheet by year group and school will be provided to the Fair Access Panel.

MAINTENANCE AND USE OF THE WEIGHTINGS

8. The Mainstream Admissions team will maintain copies of the relative weightings and will ensure they are updated before the next relevant panel meeting.
9. The weightings will be used by Fair Access panels to inform their decision making about the school indicated to admit a pupil
10. The Grid for secondary schools will be provided by the Clerk to the Fair Access Panel at the end of each Academic term to the Chair of WASH.

Appendix C

Rules Governing Direction

Local authority powers of direction (general) - A local authority has the power to direct the admission authority for any maintained school in its area to admit a child even when the school is full. The local authority can only make such a direction in respect of a child in the local authority's area who has been refused entry to, or has been permanently excluded from, every suitable school within a reasonable distance. The local authority **must** choose a school that is a reasonable distance from the child's home and from which the child is not permanently excluded. It **must not** choose a sixth-form that selects by ability unless the child meets the selection requirements, or a school that would have to take measures to avoid breaking the rules on infant class sizes if those measures would prejudice the provision of efficient education or the efficient use of resources.

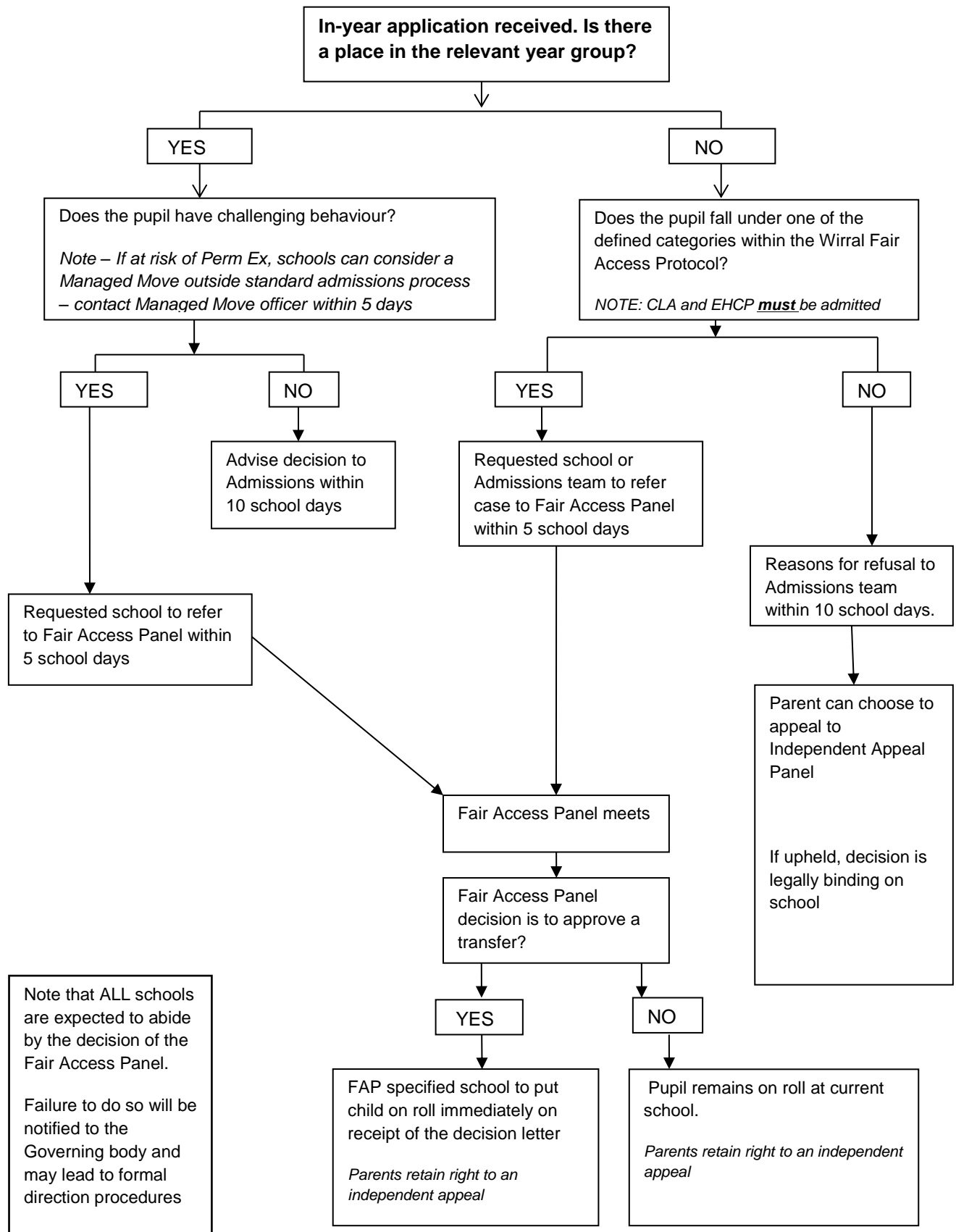
Before deciding to give a direction, the local authority **must** consult the governing body of the school, the parent of the child and the child if they are over compulsory school age. If, following consultation, the local authority decides to direct, it **must** inform the governing body and head teacher of the school. The governing body can appeal by referring the case to the Schools Adjudicator within 15 days. If it does this, the governing body **must** tell the local authority. The local authority **must not** make a direction until the 15 days have passed and the case has not been referred. If the case is referred to the Schools Adjudicator, the Schools Adjudicator may either uphold the direction, determine that another maintained school **must** admit the child or decide not to issue a direction. The Adjudicator's decision is binding. The Schools Adjudicator **must not** direct a school to admit a child if this would require the school to take measures to avoid breaking the rules on infant class sizes and those measures would prejudice the provision of efficient education or the efficient use of resources.

Secretary of State's power of direction (Academies) - Where a local authority considers that an Academy will best meet the needs of any child, it can ask the Academy to admit that child but has no power to direct it to do so. The local authority and the Academy will usually come to an agreement, but if the Academy refuses to admit the child, the local authority can ask the Secretary of State to intervene. The Secretary of State has the power under an Academy's Funding Agreement to direct the Academy to admit a child, and can seek advice from the Schools Adjudicator in reaching a decision

Appendix D

Department for Education Fair Access Protocol Guidance -
https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/media/6124ab6ae90e0705410757e8/FAP_Guidance.pdf

APPENDIX E -FLOWCHART



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CHILDREN, YOUNG PEOPLE & EDUCATION COMMITTEE

Thursday, 1st February 2024

REPORT TITLE:	2024-25 BUDGET REPORT UPDATE
REPORT OF:	DIRECTOR OF FINANCE

REPORT SUMMARY

The purpose of this report is to provide an update on the budgets within the remit of the Committee in respect of forthcoming pressures and proposed savings that are being considered within the Medium Term Financial Plan.

It is also for the Committee to consider feedback and outcomes from the Budget Workshops which have been held in recent months. The workshops enabled officer and member liaison on proposed budget options, to facilitate discussion and allow direction to be obtained on further analysis required. The Budget Workshops also provided an opportunity for alternative proposals to be considered.

The Policy and Service Committees are responsible for those services being delivered under their operational headings within their annual budget envelope. The Policy and Resources Committee, in consultation with the respective Policy and Service Committees, has been charged by Council to formulate a draft Medium Term Financial Plan (MTFP) and budget to recommend to the Council.

The Council is required to set a balanced budget each year and set a Medium Term Financial Plan which considers the future pressures and savings options that will be taken forward to result in a balanced budget position.

The Council faces a challenging financial outlook due to inflationary and demand pressures alongside the previous significant reductions in Government funding and uncertainty around the future financial settlements.

The report contributes to the Wirral Plan 2023-2027 in supporting the organisation in meeting all Council priorities.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The Children, Young People & Education committee is recommended to:

1. Note the indicative pressures and proposed savings detailed in Appendix 1 and 2
2. Agree the Budget Workshop feedback and outcomes, as detailed in Appendix 3.

SUPPORTING INFORMATION

1.0 REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATIONS

- 1.1 The Council has a legal responsibility to set a balanced budget, which sets out how financial resources are to be allocated and utilised. This report highlights the external challenges impacting the 2024/25 budget setting process and proposes options to address the challenges faced.
- 1.2 Setting a budget, especially in the context of largely uncontrollable, macro-economic pressures, requires challenging decisions to ensure that a balanced position can be presented. Members are engaged in the process through the work of this Committee, the Finance Subgroup and Policy and Service Committees.

2.0 OTHER OPTIONS CONSIDERED

- 2.1 The setting of a legal budget is a statutory requirement and therefore no other options have been considered.

3.0 BACKGROUND INFORMATION

- 3.1 The Council has a legal responsibility to set a balanced budget, which sets out how financial resources are to be allocated and utilised. To do this effectively requires engagement with staff, elected members and residents along with other stakeholders. Previous reports to the Committee have highlighted the external challenges that are impacting on the 2024/25 budget setting process and have highlighted the extent of the financial challenge faced. This report presents the culmination of the work undertaken to present options for budget formulation and to ensure the necessary preparations to facilitate a budget recommendation to Council on 26 February 2024.
- 3.2 The Policy & Resources Committee is responsible for co-ordinating processes for the development of the Budget and Policy Framework, together with decision-making on cross-cutting policies not part of the Policy Framework. The Policy and Service Committees are responsible for those services being delivered under their operational headings within their annual budget envelope. The Policy and Resources Committee, in consultation with the respective Policy and Service Committees, has been charged by Council to formulate a draft Medium Term Financial Plan (MTFP) and budget to recommend to the Council.
- 3.3 The Senior Leadership Team (SLT) has met regularly to discuss the budget setting process, budget proposals, the budget gap that the Council faces and the associated uncertainty on funding. Member engagement in the process has taken place through Budget Workshops along with the presentation on Committee reports.
- 3.4 The Budget workshops were convened to enable officer and member liaison on proposed budget options, in order to facilitate discussion and allow direction to be obtained on further analysis required. The Budget Workshops also provided an opportunity for alternative proposals to be considered.

- 3.5 The outcomes of these workshops are to be reported to meetings of those committees and to the Policy & Resources Committee as part of the decision-making process that facilitates a budget proposal to Full Council.
- 3.6 Appendix 3 to this report details the feedback and outcomes from this Committees Budget Workshop.
- 3.7 At the Policy and Resources Committee on 4 October 2023, a potential budget gap of £14.9m for 2024/25 was presented. Members will be aware that the budget gap is an ever-moving target due to a number of factors; these include:
- Ongoing Government announcements of funding, including specifically the Provisional Local Government Financial Settlement for 2024/25
 - A process of challenge and refinement within the Council to ensure that the proposals are evidence based. Addition of new pressures that continue to materialise as further local and national evidence comes to light.
 - The continuing refinement of budget assumptions including inflation.
 - The development and refinement of budget options.
- 3.8 As a result of these factors, the budget forecast presented to P&R in November 2023 was updated and a more robust position made available. An accurate appraisal was not possible at the time as the details of the financial settlement for Local Authorities was not received until late December.
- 3.9 Following budget challenge sessions with Directors and a review of the Q2 budget monitoring information, a position around the current and future pressures has been ascertained. This represents the best available information at this point in time and forms the baseline for the pressures within the Medium Term Financial Plan (MTFP) for current and future years.
- 3.10 This information will be updated periodically as a significant element of the pressures is linked to inflation. Assumptions have been made that inflation will continue to fall between now and the 24/25 financial year and that this will be reflected in pay and contract negotiations for 24/25.
- 3.11 Demographic changes have been incorporated within the pressure figures based on the current trend data and the available datasets.
- 3.12 An assessment of the in-year budget variances has necessitated the inclusion of pressures to negate existing income targets and some additional funding for service pressures. These amounts have been minimised in recognition of previously agreed savings which are still to be delivered.
- 3.13 The impact of all these changes will be considered, along with feedback from the consultation process and the budget proposals developed through the Service Committee and Policy & Resources Committee (P&R) Budget Workshop approach to present a robust position on financial matters to be considered in formulating a budget proposal to Full Council.
- 3.14 Policy & Resources Committee budget recommendations will be proposed in February 2023 in respect of the agreement of the annual Budget, setting of the

council tax requirement and related matters to the Council, which will be debated by Full Council and voted upon by a simple majority.

4.0 FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 4.1 This report is part of a programme of activity to ensure that a fully balanced, legal budget can be recommended by the Policy and Resources Committee to Full Council at its meeting of 26 February 2024.
- 4.2 The programme to develop a robust budget position, of which this report is a part, will support the Council in demonstrating compliance with CIPFA's Financial Management Code, specifically in relation to Section 4 of the FM Code which refers to the Annual Budget.
- 4.3 The FM Code requires the Council to demonstrate that the processes used satisfy the principles of good financial management, based on the following six principles:
- Organisational Leadership – demonstrating a clear strategic direction based on a vision in which financial management is embedded into organisation culture.
 - Accountability – based on Medium-Term Financial Planning, which derives the annual budget process supported by effective risk management, quality supporting data and whole life costs.
 - Financial management - undertaken with transparency at its core using consistent, meaningful and understandable data, reported frequently with evidence of periodic officer actions and elected member decision making.
 - Professional standards - Adherence to professional standards is promoted by the leadership team and is evidenced.
 - Assurance - sources of assurance are recognised as an effective tool and are mainstreamed into financial management, including political scrutiny and the results of external audit, Internal Audit and inspection.
 - Sustainability: issues around sustainability of local services are at the heart of all financial management processes and is evidenced by prudent use of public resources.
- 4.4 Delivering financial sustainability is vitally important for the Council and the budget options presented have been drawn up with this in mind, consideration is given to areas of discretionary expenditure that could be curtailed along with demonstrating savings that can be delivered from statutory components of the Council.

5.0 LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

- 5.1 The Council must set the budget in accordance with the provisions of the Local Government Finance Act 1992 and approval of a balanced budget each year is a statutory responsibility of the Council. Sections 25 to 29 of the Local Government Act 2003 impose duties on the Council in relation to how it sets and monitors its budget. These provisions require the Council to make prudent allowance for the risk and uncertainties in its budget and regularly monitor its finances during the year. The legislation leaves discretion to the Council about the allowances to be made and action to be taken.
- 5.2 The provisions of section 25, Local Government Act 2003 require that, when the Council is making the calculation of its budget requirement, it must have regard to

the report of the chief finance (s.151) officer as to the robustness of the estimates made for the purposes of the calculations and the adequacy of the proposed financial reserves.

- 5.3 It is essential, as a matter of prudence that the financial position continues to be closely monitored. In particular, Members must satisfy themselves that sufficient mechanisms are in place to ensure both that savings are delivered and that new expenditure is contained within the available resources. Accordingly, any proposals put forward must identify the realistic measures and mechanisms to produce those savings.

6.0 RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS: STAFFING, ICT AND ASSETS

- 6.1 There are no additional resource requirements directly from this report, however the implications for the proposals included within the 2024/25 budget and MTFP will be assessed at the time of implementation. For budget proposals that may result in reductions to the workforce, the Council has consulted with trade unions and relevant staff groups as required and in accordance with section 188(1A) of the Trade Union and Labour Relations Act).

7.0 RELEVANT RISKS

- 7.1 The Council's ability to close the funding gap is highly dependent on the accuracy of assumptions used for Government funding and levies from other bodies, as well as demand estimates for Council services. As the Local Government Finance Settlement only covers one year, the uncertainty around future funding over the MTFP period remains high.
- 7.2 The Council's ability to maintain a balanced budget is dependent on a proactive approach due to estimated figures being provided in the calculation for the budget, albeit the best estimates available at the time, plus any amount of internal and external factors that could impact on the budget position in year. Examples of which are new legislation, increased demand, loss of income, increased funding, decreased funding, inability to recruit to posts, etc.
- 7.3 A robust monitoring and management process for the budget is in place. If at any time during the year an adverse position is forecast, remedial action must be agreed and implemented immediately to ensure the budget can be brought back to balanced position.
- 7.4 Failure to achieve a balanced budget would lead to the Section 151 Officer issuing a Section 114 notice and potential ministerial intervention under Section 15 of the Local Government Act 1999.

8.0 ENGAGEMENT/CONSULTATION

- 8.1 In December 2022, consultation took place in respect of the priorities and views of the public in formulating budget plans.
- 8.2 Statutory budget consultation will commence subject to agreement by the Committee. This will take place in January 2024 and feedback will be taken into consideration by the Policy and Resources Committee when recommending a budget to Full Council at its meeting of 13 February 2024.
- 8.3 The Council has engaged regularly with trade unions about the Council's financial position.

9.0 EQUALITY IMPLICATIONS

- 9.1 Wirral Council has a legal requirement to make sure its policies, and the way it carries out its work, do not discriminate against anyone. An Equality Impact Assessment is a tool to help council services identify steps they can take to ensure equality for anyone who might be affected by a particular policy, decision or activity.
- 9.2 The equality implications will be included within the individual savings proposals currently being developed and will be addressed when these are brought forward for approval.

10.0 ENVIRONMENT AND CLIMATE IMPLICATIONS

- 10.1 The environment and climate implications will be considered within the individual savings proposals currently being developed and will be addressed when these are brought forward for approval.

11.0 COMMUNITY WEALTH IMPLICATIONS

- 11.1 The community wealth implications will be considered within the individual savings proposals currently being developed. The budget proposals under consideration will take account of related matters across headings such as:
- **Progressive Procurement and Social Value**
How we commission and procure goods and services. Encouraging contractors to deliver more benefits for the local area, such as good jobs, apprenticeship, training & skills opportunities, real living wage, minimising their environmental impact, and greater wellbeing.
 - **More local & community ownership of the economy**
Supporting more cooperatives and community businesses.
Enabling greater opportunities for local businesses.
Building on the experience of partnership working with voluntary, community and faith groups during the pandemic to further develop this sector.
 - **Decent and Fair Employment**
Paying all employees a fair and reasonable wage.
 - **Making wealth work for local places**

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APPENDICES

Appendix 1: Budget Pressures

Appendix 2: Potential Savings

Appendix 3: Service & Policy Committee workshop feedback (Exempt)

Appendix 3 of this report is exempt from publication under Paragraph 3 of part 1 of Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972 (Information relating to the financial or business affairs of any particular person (including the authority holding that information)).

TERMS OF REFERENCE

This matter is being considered by the Policy and Resources Committee in accordance with section 1.2(b) provide a co-ordinating role across all other service committees and retain a 'whole council' view of [budget monitoring].

BACKGROUND PAPERS

CIPFA's Financial Management Code

SUBJECT HISTORY (last 3 years)

Council Meeting	Date
Policy and Resources Committee	21 November 2023
Children, Young People & Education Committee	25 September 2023
Policy and Resources Committee	4 October 2023
Policy and Resources Committee	14 June 2023
Council	27 February 2023
Policy and Resources Committee	15 February 2023
Policy and Resources Committee	17 January 2022

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APPENDIX 1 – Budget Pressures

Pressure	24/25 (£m)	25/26 (£m)	26/27 (£m)	27/28 (£m)	28/29 (£m)
Children, Young People & Education					
Inflation					
Looked After Children (LAC) placement & allowances price uplifts	1.890	2.000	1.300	1.300	1.400
Home to School Transport price uplifts	0.550	0.280	0.380	0.310	0.320
Private Financing Initiative (PFI) Schools contract inflation	0.663	0.150	0.150	0.150	0.150
Demographic					
Potential growth in numbers of Looked After Children (LAC)	0.660	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000
Service Pressures					
Increased demand for social care assessments	0.300	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000
LAC budget adjustment for in-year (23/24) pressures	1.900	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000
Total	5.963	2.430	1.830	1.760	1.870

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APPENDIX 2 – POTENTIAL SAVINGS

Budget Saving Proposals can be placed into the following categories:

- **Increasing Business Efficiencies:** This approach will identify efficiency measures that will result in more effective ways in which services are currently provided and may include cost reduction.
- **Increasing Income:** The Council will look to identify areas where it can raise income through fees and charges.
- **Changing how we fund or provide services:** We aim to ensure that the right service reaches the right resident when and where they need it, for the best cost. This may mean changing how we fund or provide services so that we are able to reduce costs and maintain services by becoming more efficient and by doing things differently.
- **Reducing or stopping services:** Although all efforts will be made to keep service reduction to a minimum, the scale of the financial challenge means that not all reduction proposals can be avoided.

Committee: Children, Young People & Education							
Theme	Option	Description	24/25 Saving (£m)	25/26 Saving (£m)	26/27 Saving (£m)	27/28 Saving (£m)	28/29 Saving (£m)
Increasing Business Efficiencies	Reduction in teachers pension liabilities	This saving reflects a reduction in Teacher's pension liabilities for the Council.	-0.200	-0.075	-0.050	0.000	0.000
	Kingsway PFI buy out	This proposal is to buy out part of the PFI contract which will result in an ongoing revenue saving.	-0.500	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000
	Re-organisation of Early Help, Family Support and Social Care into locality teams.	This option proposes that the current Early Help, Family Support and Social Care services move into a locality-based model, supporting multiagency teams to offer support to children and families at the earliest opportunity.	-0.550	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000
Changing how we fund or provide services	Reduction in looked after children (LAC) numbers	This saving reflects a reduction in Wirral's Looked After Children numbers as historic high levels align more with other authorities following practice improvements since 2019	-0.330	-0.439	-0.375	0.000	0.000
	Reducing High Cost Residential Care	This option aims to ensure that more children remain within Wirral in more cost-effective foster placements and less children have to go into higher cost residential care.	-1.100	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000
	Promoting Independence	The review will consider current practice including all guidance and best practice nationally to look at how service models could change to promote independence.	-0.300	-0.200	0.000	0.000	0.000



CHILDREN, YOUNG PEOPLE & EDUCATION COMMITTEE

Thursday, 1st February 2024

REPORT TITLE:	HOLIDAY ACTIVITY FUND (HAF) UPDATE
REPORT OF:	DIRECTOR OF CHILDREN'S, FAMILIES AND EDUCATION

REPORT SUMMARY

In 2020 Wirral local authority made the decision for Edsential, a CIC jointly owned by Wirral and Chester and Cheshire West Councils, to deliver the Holiday Activity Fund (HAF) on behalf of Wirral local authority. HAF funding received by the LA from the DFE in the last academic year was £1.46 million, this funding has continued this financial year and will continue in 2024-2025.

The Edsential team that delivers HAF oversees management, administration marketing, training and finance in relation to the HAF programme, Edsential work closely with officers within Children's Services to deliver the programme. After each holiday programme Edsential have to complete a finance return to the DFE outlining how the funding has been utilised.

Over the past 3 years the Wirral HAF team has developed a clear programme engaging a wide variety of statutory and non-statutory partners. The aim of the programme is to support children on Wirral who are eligible to access healthy food and activities through the three extended holiday periods each academic year.

The HAF team on Wirral prioritises the quality of provision and experience for children and young people, whether that be in the exciting and diverse range of physical and enriching activities on offer, or in the good quality nutritious meals that are provided to our young people every day during the holiday period.

Moving forward for the summer period 2024 Edsential have agreed to work with Wirral local authority to develop further, the access to HAF programme to young people that are eligible and have not been able to access HAF previously.

This matter affects all Wards within the Borough and the actions taken link to the Wirral plan 2023-2027 – Early Help for Children and Families.

This is not a key decision.

RECOMMENDATION/S

The Children, Young People and Education Committee is recommended to:

- 1) note the report; and
- 2) support further developments with Edsential CIC for provision in summer 2024.

SUPPORTING INFORMATION

1.0 REASON/S FOR RECOMMENDATION/S

- 1.1 The Holiday Activity Fund (HAF) has successfully supported thousands of children with healthy food and activities over the last three years.

2.0 OTHER OPTIONS CONSIDERED

- 2.1 We could have delivered the HAF internally as a local authority, with oversight and staffing responsibility for delivering the programme. This would pressure on current staffing within the directorate and the programme has been effectively delivered by Edsential for the last three years.

3.0 BACKGROUND INFORMATION

- 3.1 Since 2018, the HAF programme has provided support to children in receipt of free school meals through holiday periods. This support was increased through the COVID-19 period and following this period the DFE agreed to a funding settlement of £200 million for each year, this commenced in the financial year 2022-2023.
- 3.2 The aim of the HAF programme is to support families and children who would normally struggle to access organised out-of-school activities; physical health opportunities and could struggle with social isolation.
- 3.3 The HAF programme funding is primarily for school aged children from reception to year 11 who receive benefits-related free school meals (FSM).
- 3.4 From a Wirral context perspective, using the January Census 2023, 13,823 children and young people are eligible for FSM. This data has been used to support the HAF team in prioritising where provision is place.
- 3.5 The HAF team work closely with the marketing and the communication team within Wirral LA. When the programme started in 2022, they supported in promoting the application stage of HAF. Potential providers could apply for the whole year or for individual HAF periods. The HAF team held information sessions where local providers who were interested in becoming a new HAF provider could attend. The HAF team attended School Heads meetings and annual conferences to promote engagement with schools as providers.
- 3.6 The HAF team have supported a provider forum since 2020. The aim of the forum is to enable providers to meet one another, to share good practice and hear from other providers who may be able to enhance their provisions. Each provider is sent an application form to become a member of the forum when they receive their Terms and Conditions. Once a member, they are then invited to regular meetings with other providers. These have been both virtual and face to face.
- 3.7 During 2022 the HAF team had a clear focus on food quality with an improvement seen. The HAF team have offered food and nutrition training to all providers developed with Food Active, the accredited nutritional organisation. The HAF team also included suggestions in the compulsory training on how to make food exciting to

young people. A clear approach to intensive monitoring of provision over all 3 holiday periods is in place, it has been recognised that training delivered is beginning to have an impact on food quality.

- 3.8 In relation to physical activity, the HAF team has focused on different offers. An indoor high ropes climbing centre funded locally become part of HAF. The offer was enhanced by new and existing martial arts clubs, Boxing clubs and a Mua Thai club. Work has continued to build relationships with local football clubs, Everton in the Community and Tranmere Rovers. In addition, Wheels Extreme have continued to work with our children and young people educating them about Skateboarding, inline skating, and BMXing. They teach how to be safe and how to maintain their equipment.
- 3.9 Many children and young people have found that having the opportunity to be calm and quiet was a refreshing opportunity, to have a digital detox. HAF has offered lots of new activities, dancing including 'Lets Dance Mat', drama and singing workshops, yoga, mindfulness, forest skills and also a hair and beauty salon for teens. Many of the providers use cooking as an enrichment activity and also as a way to relate messages around health and nutrition.
- 3.10 Wirral HAF has a structured Governance process engaging across all aspects of HAF. HAF Management and co-ordination is ultimately answerable to the Local Authority HAF Scrutiny committee who meet three times a year to hear about and to analyse all aspects of HAF. We also present three times a year to the Edsential Board. The steering group also mark the grants for each holiday period. A refresh of the steering group membership was completed at the end of 2022. The steering group has representation from schools, council officers and third sector organisations.
- 3.11 During Easter 2023, the HAF programme was attended by a total of 2527 primary age pupils and 524 secondary aged pupils. In relation to the total number of days attended, for primary school aged pupils was 8740 days and for secondary aged pupils was 2014 days. During the Easter period 64 different clubs delivered HAF provision.
- 3.12 During Summer 2023, the HAF programme was attended by a total of 3766 primary age pupils and 759 secondary aged pupils. In relation to the total number of days attended, for primary school aged pupils was 33044 days and for secondary aged pupils was 6079 days. During the summer period 72 different clubs delivered HAF provision. For the summer period of HAF this programme delivered 39,000 nutritious meals, and of the 4525 pupils that attended the HAF programme, 838 pupils were SEND.
- 3.13 At the time of writing this report for Christmas 2023, 40 applications had been received to delivered HAF. This led to a commissioning of 51 different clubs for this holiday period.
- 3.14 Moving forward into 2024, the HAF team have met with senior officers from the LA to look at further work to support more children with SEND being able to access the HAF programme. Further work will take place to support this in Spring 2024 ahead of the summer holiday period. In addition, the HAF team will be attending Equality

Training and HAF providers have been audited in relation to working with young people with SEND and how further support can be put in place.

- 3.15 The HAF team have also provided access to ADHD and autism awareness training and delivered experiential training at a local special school who delivers the HAF programme.

4.0 FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 4.1 The HAF programme is delivered through DFE grant, in 2022 the DFE grant was total of £1.46 million pounds. The funding is confirmed for the remainder of this academic year and the next academic year. The spend of the grant is overseen by the LA HAF scrutiny committee.

5.0 LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

- 5.1 The local authority had a responsibility to deliver the HAF programme based on the conditions set out by the DFE. The oversight of delivery sits with the LA HAF scrutiny committee. In addition, the HAF team submit a post-holiday report for each of the three holiday periods to the DFE to confirm compliance.

6.0 RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS: STAFFING, ICT AND ASSETS

- 6.1 The HAF programme is delivered by Edsential CIC and therefore the LA has no specific resource implications currently.

7.0 RELEVANT RISKS

- 7.1 The Corporate Risk Register will be refreshed in line with the new Wirral Plan 2023-2027 to ensure that any risks to delivery are understood and mitigating actions are put in place as appropriate.

8.0 ENGAGEMENT/CONSULTATION

- 8.1 The LA HAF scrutiny committee has representation from schools and the third sector. The HAF team provides workshops and training for new and on-going providers.
- 8.2 During Spring 2024 the HAF team and LA will work with partners to address any areas of provision that has a current gap. Consultation with parents/carers will be part of this process.

9.0 EQUALITY IMPLICATIONS

- 9.1 Wirral Council has a legal requirement to make sure its policies, and the way it carries out its work, do not discriminate against anyone. An Equality Impact Assessment is a tool to help council services identify steps they can take to ensure equality for anyone who might be affected by a particular policy, decision, or activity. An EIA will be completed in line with the refresh of the school improvement strategy.

10.0 ENVIRONMENT AND CLIMATE IMPLICATIONS

10.1 There are no environmental or climate implications from this report.

11.0 COMMUNITY WEALTH IMPLICATIONS

11.1 It is important that young people have access to quality food and physical activity during holiday periods, especially for young people where support maybe required. This will support in improving opportunities for young people, allowing them to be more successful and links to the Wirral Plan 2021-2026 – Bright futures for all young people.

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APPENDICES

None

BACKGROUND PAPERS

Wirral Plan 2023-27
January Census 2023

TERMS OF REFERENCE

This report is being considered by the Children, Young People and Education Committee in accordance with Section B of its Terms of Reference, the functions and powers conferred on or exercisable by the Council as Local Authority in relation to the provision of education.

SUBJECT HISTORY (last 3 years)

Council Meeting	Date



CHILDREN, YOUNG PEOPLE & EDUCATION COMMITTEE

Thursday, 1st February 2024

REPORT TITLE:	SUMMARY OF STANDARDS – OUTCOMES FOR EARLY YEARS, PHONICS, KEY STAGE 1, KEY STAGE 2 AND KEY STAGE 4
REPORT OF:	DIRECTOR OF CHILDREN'S, FAMILIES AND EDUCATION

REPORT SUMMARY

The Standards 2023 report gives information about the provisional pupil outcomes. There is an executive summary followed by a detailed analysis for the pupil outcomes at the age of 5 (Good level of development), age of 6 (Phonics assessment) the age of 7 (Key Stage 1 SATs), the age of 11 (Key Stage 2 SATs) and at the of 16 years old (Key Stage 4 qualifications).

Comparisons have been made with the results nationally wherever possible. For key stage 4 the final statistical release will be at the end of January, any significant changes will be amended and shared with the committee. This report provides a detailed analysis of pupil outcomes and gives a clearer picture a further year on from the COVID-19 pandemic. For the first time since 2019 both primary and secondary outcomes will be published nationally.

It is important that we do not compare this year's results to previous years, as those outcomes will be pre-pandemic and for primary schools this is the first year data is being published nationally since 2019. That said, national comparisons will be able to be used to identify the areas Wirral must prioritise over the next 12 months. The standards report and educational outcomes will be linked to the refresh of the priorities in relation to the school improvement strategy and the re-banding of schools across Wirral to identify needing support.

This matter affects all Wards within the Borough and the actions taken link to the Wirral plan 2023-2027 – Early Help for Children and Families

This is not a key decision.

RECOMMENDATION/S

The Children, Young People and Education Committee is recommended to:

- 1) note the report; and
- 2) support the service priorities to support the school improvement strategy based on the outcomes outlined.

SUPPORTING INFORMATION

1.0 REASON/S FOR RECOMMENDATION/S

- 1.1 The Standards 2023 report has been produced to evaluate the impact of the education system to support young people. The outcomes will be linked to the next steps in relation to school improvement over the next 12 to 18 months. The report will be shared with headteachers and used as an essential tool to challenge underperformance as well as celebrate successes/improvements in Wirral schools.

2.0 OTHER OPTIONS CONSIDERED

- 2.1 We could do nothing but in response to outcomes it is appropriate to reassess and refresh the school improvement strategy to reflect this.

3.0 BACKGROUND INFORMATION

- 3.1 The provisional data is scrutinised to determine where there have been improvements and where standards have deteriorated. The data is analysed at a local authority level, then further scrutiny takes place using pupil characteristics, to determine underachievement and key areas for development.
- 3.2 For many of the cohorts included within these national data sets this will be the first time they have completed a formal external assessment as this cohort was significantly impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic. For example, pupils who have complete Key stage 1 assessments will have had a significantly disrupted early years experience.
- 3.3 In addition, it is important to consider the educational experiences for young people across Wirral prior to the last academic year, many children will have experienced significant periods of home learning and others have anxiety as they returned to the school environment over the last academic year. In addition, young people completing the Good Level of Development Early Years assessment have been impacted significantly in relation to development of speech, language, and communication skills.
- 3.4 Over the last academic year a significant impact on pupil experience has been a significant increase in the number of pupils that have been persistently absent from school, this has significantly increased on pre-COVID-19 levels and is having a significant impact on the progress of pupils at school.

4.0 FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 4.1 There are no financial implications arising directly from this report.

5.0 LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

- 5.1 There are no legal implications arising directly from this report.

6.0 RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS: STAFFING, ICT AND ASSETS

- 6.1 The Standards 2023 reports are key documents used to implement the Wirral Schools strategy 2021-2024. The necessary challenge to underperforming schools is coordinated in partnership by the Head of School Effectiveness and two Senior School Advisors combined with support from external School Assurance Professionals.
- 6.2 School can access additional resource from the local authority if specific areas of improvement are identified and they do not have the financial capacity to support the relevant activity.
- 6.3 A refresh of the Wirral Schools strategy will be brought to Committee during the next academic year.

7.0 RELEVANT RISKS

- 7.1 The Corporate Risk Register will be refreshed in line with the new Wirral Plan 2023-2027 to ensure that any risks to delivery are understood and mitigating actions are put in place as appropriate.

8.0 ENGAGEMENT/CONSULTATION

- 8.1 The reports will be shared with all headteachers in September 2022. The local authority engages with Multi-Academy Trusts with responsibility for Wirral schools to make sure key areas raised from the standards report are shared to allow joint working on key priorities.

9.0 EQUALITY IMPLICATIONS

- 9.1 Wirral Council has a legal requirement to make sure its policies, and the way it carries out its work, do not discriminate against anyone. An Equality Impact Assessment is a tool to help council services identify steps they can take to ensure equality for anyone who might be affected by a particular policy, decision, or activity. An EIA will be completed in line with the refresh of the school improvement strategy.

10.0 ENVIRONMENT AND CLIMATE IMPLICATIONS

- 10.1 There are no environmental or climate implications from this report.

11.0 COMMUNITY WEALTH IMPLICATIONS

- 11.1 It is important the educational outcomes are analysed to support the local authority to prioritise its resources in the relevant areas. This will support improving outcomes for young people, allowing them to be more successful and links to the Wirral Plan 2021-2026 – Bright futures for all young people.

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APPENDICES

- Appendix 1. Wirral Standards Report KS4(Provisional) 2023
- Appendix 2. Wirral Standards Report KS2 (provisional) 2023
- Appendix 3. Wirral Standards Report KS1 (provisional) 2023
- Appendix 4. Wirral Standards Report Phonics (provisional) 2023
- Appendix 5. Wirral Standards Report GLD (provisional) 2023
- Appendix 6. Glossary of terminology

BACKGROUND PAPERS

- Wirral Schools Strategy 2021-2024
- Good Level of Development Early Years assessment

TERMS OF REFERENCE

This report is being considered by the Children, Young People and Education Committee in accordance with Section A of its Terms of Reference; “exercising management, oversight and delivery of services to children and young people in relation to their care, wellbeing, education or health, with the exception of any powers reserved to full Council”.

SUBJECT HISTORY (last 3 years)

Council Meeting	Date
Children, Young People and Education Committee	12th October 2022
Children, Young People and Education Committee	24th January 2023
Children’s and Families Overview and Scrutiny Committee	25th September 2019

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Executive Summary

Locality figures are calculated from pupil postcode, not school location. Only pupils with Wirral postcodes included in the locality groups.

Wirral figures for National comparison and school comparison includes all Wirral school pupils with key stage four attainment data. Comparison has been made between 2023 and 2022.

(December 2023)

Key Stage Four – provisional outcomes

Attainment 8

Locality Overall

Wirral West has the highest average attainment 8 score in 2023 with 51.54, 1.84 higher than Wirral South with 49.70. Wirral West attainment 8 score is 12.34 higher than the lowest Wirral locality attainment 8 score of Wallasey with 39.20. (Appendix 1)

Locality Characteristics

Birkenhead

In Birkenhead, the attainment 8 score of EAL has increased 1.90 to 52.44. The non-EAL attainment 8 score decreased 2.56 to 40.53. The gap between EAL and Non-EAL increased by 4.46, and EAL are outperforming non-EAL by 11.91. (Appendix 5)

In Birkenhead, the attainment 8 score of disadvantaged students had decreased by 3.06 to 31.28. The non-disadvantaged attainment 8 score has decreased by 1.36 to 48.58. The disadvantaged gap has increased by 1.70 to 17.30. (Appendix 5)

Wallasey

In Wallasey, the attainment 8 score of those with an EHCP has increased 3.71 to 11.64. The non-SEN attainment 8 score decreased 4.39 to 43.07. The gap between EHCP and Non-SEN decreased by 8.10 to 31.43. (Appendix 6)

In Wallasey, the attainment 8 score of EAL has decreased 8.14 to 49.56. The non-EAL attainment 8 score decreased 4.19 to 38.86. The gap between EAL and Non-EAL decreased by 3.94, and EAL are outperforming non-EAL by 10.70. (Appendix 6)

Wirral South

In Wirral South, the attainment 8 score of those with an SEN Support has increased 4.45 to 43.32. The non-SEN attainment 8 score decreased 5.13 to 53.06. The gap between SEN Support and Non-SEN decreased by 9.57 to 9.74. (Appendix 7)

In Wirral South, the attainment 8 score of Non-White British decreased 7.52 to 57.69. The attainment 8 score for White British decreased by 4.95 to 49.01. The ethnicity gap has decreased 2.57 to 8.68. (Appendix 7)

Wirral West

In Wirral West, the attainment 8 score of EAL increased 19.66 to 70.46. The attainment 8 score of Non-EAL decreased 2.80 to 50.83. The gap between EAL and Non-EAL has increased by 22.46, with EAL outperforming Non-EAL by 19.63. (Appendix 8)

In Wirral West, the attainment 8 score of those with an EHCP has decreased 3.81 to 17.31. The Non-SEN attainment 8 score decreased 1.11 to 55.09. The gap between EHCP and Non-SEN increased 2.70 to 37.78. (Appendix 8)

National Comparison 2022 and 2023

In 2022 Wirral females' attainment 8 score was 0.5 higher than the national average at 51.8. Whereas, in 2023 Wirral females' attainment score is 0.4 lower than the national score at 48.

In 2022 Wirral males' attainment 8 score was 0.4 lower than national with 45.8. in 2023, the males' attainment 8 score was 1.5 lower than the national at 42.7. (Appendix 21)

In 2022, Wirral had the same overall score as the national with 48.7. Whereas in 2023 Wirral are 1.2 lower than the National with 45.3.

Non-Selective Schools

3 out of 14 Wirral non-selective schools have increased their attainment 8 score in 2023 in comparison to 2022. Most notably Birkenhead Park School whose attainment 8 score has increased 2.4 to 32.3 in 2023. (Appendix 22)

Birkenhead High School Academy has the highest attainment 8 score of 51.1 in 2023, 8.9 higher than the National non-selective school average attainment 8 score of 42.2 in 2023. (Appendix 22)

3 out of 14 Wirral non-selective schools are higher than the national non-selective school average attainment 8 score. (Appendix 22)

Selective Schools

100%, or 7 out of 7 Wirral selective schools have decreased their attainment 8 score in 2023 in comparison to 2022. Most notably Wirral Grammar School for Girls whose attainment 8 score has decreased 5.7 to 70 in 2023, and Wirral Grammar School for Boys who decreased 4.6 to 65 in 2023. (Appendix 23)

Wirral Grammar School for Girls has the highest attainment 8 score of 70 in 2023, 1.7 lower than the National selective school average attainment 8 score of 71.7 in 2023. (Appendix 23)

100%, or 7 out of 7 Wirral selective school have a lower attainment 8 score than the national selective school average of 71.7. (Appendix 23)

Progress 8

Locality Overall

Wirral West has the highest average progress 8 score in 2023 with 0.27, 0.17 higher than Wirral South with 0.1. Wirral West progress 8 score is 0.69 higher than the lowest Wirral locality progress 8 score of Wallasey with -0.42. (Appendix 2)

Locality Characteristics

Birkenhead

In Birkenhead, the progress 8 score of those with an EHCP has increased 0.22 to -0.92. The non-SEN progress 8 score has remained the same at -0.15. The gap between EHCP and non-SEN decreased by 0.22 to 0.77. (Appendix 9)

In Birkenhead, the progress 8 score of males has decreased by 0.05 to -0.49. The progress 8 score of females has increased by 0.08 to -0.05 in 2023. The gap between males and females has increased 0.13 to 0.44. (Appendix 9)

Wallasey

In Wallasey, the progress 8 score of those with an EHCP has increased 0.76 to -1.13. The non-SEN progress 8 score decreased 0.05 to -0.30. The gap between EHCP and Non-SEN decreased by 0.81 to 0.83. (Appendix 10)

In Wallasey, the progress 8 score of Non-White British decreased 0.26 to 0.16. The progress 8 score for White British decreased 0.05 to -0.47. The gap between Non-White British and White British has increased by 0.21 to -0.63. (Appendix 10)

Wirral South

In Wirral South, the progress 8 score of those with SEN Support has increased 0.23 to 0.12. The progress 8 score of those with No SEN has decreased 0.25 to 0.16. The gap between those with SEN Support and No SEN has decreased 0.49 to 0.04. (Appendix 11)

In Wirral South, the progress 8 score of FSM eligible has decreased 0.01 to -0.48. The non-FSM Eligible progress 8 score decreased 0.25 to 0.22. The gap between FSM eligible and non-FSM eligible decreased by 0.25 to 0.70. (Appendix 11)

Wirral West

In Wirral West, the progress 8 score of those with SEN Support has increased 0.35 to -0.24. The Non-SEN progress 8 score remained the same at 0.41. The gap between EHCP and Non-SEN increased by 0.35 to 0.65. (Appendix 12)

In Wirral West, the progress 8 score EAL has increased 1.21 to 1.23. The Non EAL progress 8 score decreased 0.10 to 0.24. The gap between EAL and Non EAL decreased by 1.31 to -0.99. (Appendix 12)

National Comparison 2022 and 2023

In 2022 Wirral females progress 8 score was 0.04 higher than national at 0.19, whereas in 2023 the Wirral progress 8 score of females is 0.15 lower than the national of 0.12. In 2023 Wirral males progress 8 score was 0.04 lower than national with -0.25. In 2023, Wirral males progress 8 score is

0.25 higher than the national score of -0.17. (Appendix 21) Overall in 2023 Wirral have a progress 8 score of -0.11 compared to the National score of -0.02.

Non-Selective Schools

5 out of 14 Wirral non-selective schools have increased their progress 8 score in 2023 in comparison to 2022. Most notably Birkenhead Park School whose progress 8 score has increased 0.44 to -0.65 in 2023, and Birkenhead High School Academy who increased 0.33 to 0.63 in 2023. (Appendix 22)

Birkenhead High School Academy has the highest progress 8 score of 0.63 in 2023, 0.79 higher than National non-selective school average progress 8 score of -0.16 in 2023. (Appendix 22)

5 out of 14 Wirral non-selective schools are higher than the national non-selective school average progress 8 score. (Appendix 22)

Selective Schools

4 out of 6 Wirral selective schools have increased their progress 8 score in 2023 in comparison to 2022. Most notably Upton Hall School FCJ whose progress 8 score has increased 0.17 to 1.08 in 2023, and St Anselm's College who increased 0.08 to 0.24 in 2023. (Appendix 23)

Upton Hall School FCJ has the highest progress 8 score of 1.08 in 2023, 0.46 higher than National selective school average progress 8 score of 0.63 in 2023. (Appendix 23)

1 out of 6 Wirral selective schools is higher than the national selective school average progress 8 score. (Appendix 23)

English and Maths 9-4 %

Locality Overall

Wirral West has the highest English and Maths 9-4 % in 2023 with 75%, 4% higher than Wirral South with 71%. Wirral West English and Maths 9-4 % is 23% higher than the lowest Wirral locality English and Maths 9-4 % of Wallasey with 52%. (Appendix 3)

Locality Characteristics

Birkenhead

In Birkenhead, the English and Maths 9-4 % of those with an EHCP has increased 3% to 14%. The Non-SEN English and Maths 9-4 % decreased 5% to 62%. The gap between those with an EHCP and Non-SEN has decreased 8% to 48%. (Appendix 13)

In Birkenhead, the English and Maths 9-4 % of disadvantaged has decreased 8% to 34%. The non-disadvantaged English and Maths 9-4 % decreased 3% to 67%. The gap between disadvantaged and non-disadvantaged increased by 5% to 33%. (Appendix 13)

Wallasey

In Wallasey, the English and Maths 9-4 % of those with an EHCP has increased 5% to 7%. The non-SEN English and Maths 9-4 % decreased 2% to 60%. The gap between EHCP and Non-SEN decreased by 6% to 53%. (Appendix 14)

In Wallasey, the English and Maths 9-4 % males remained the same at 49%. The English and Maths 9-4% for females decreased by 5% to 56%, reducing the gender gap to 7% with females outperforming males. (Appendix 14)

Wirral South

In Wirral South, the English and Maths 9-4 % of those with an EHCP has increased 3% to 12%. The English and Maths 9-4 % for Non-SEN has decreased 4% to 77%. The gap between those with an EHCP and Non-SEN has decreased by 7% to 65%. (Appendix 15)

In Wirral South, the English and Maths 9-4 % of EAL has decreased 10% to 90%. The non-EAL English and Maths 9-4 % decreased 4% to 70%. The gap between EAL and non-EAL decreased by 6% so EAL outperform non-EAL by 20%. (Appendix 15)

Wirral West

In Wirral West, the English and Maths 9-4 % of those with an SEN Support has decreased 7% to 50%. The non-SEN English and Maths 9-4 % increased 1% to 82%. The gap between EHCP and Non-SEN increased by 8% to 32%. (Appendix 16)

In Wirral West, the English and Maths 9-4 % of EAL has increased 33% to 93%. The Non-EAL English and Maths 9-4 % decreased 2% to 74%. The gap between EAL and Non-EAL increased by 3% to 19% with EAL now outperforming Non-EAL. (Appendix 16)

National Comparison 2022 and 2023

In 2022 Wirral females English and Maths 9-4 % was 3.5% lower than national at 67.9%, whereas in 2023 it is 3.2% lower than the national with 64.6%.

In 2022 Wirral males English and Maths 9-4 % was 2.9% lower than national at 63.1%, whereas in 2023 Wirral males English and Maths 9-4 % is 2.8% lower than national with 62.9%. (Appendix 21)

Overall in 2023 Wirral are 3 % lower than National with 62.3%.

Non-Selective Schools

5 out of 14 Wirral non-selective schools have increased their English and Maths 9-4 % in 2023 in comparison to 2022. Most notably Birkenhead High School Academy whose English and Maths 9-4 % has increased 5.1% to 75.2% in 2023, and Birkenhead High School Academy who increased 3.3% to 34.6% in 2023. (Appendix 22)

Birkenhead Park School has the highest English and Maths 9-4 % of 75.2% in 2023, 17.2% higher than the National non-selective school English and Maths 9-4 % of 58% in 2023. (Appendix 22)

2 out of 14 Wirral non-selective schools are higher than the national non-selective school English and Maths 9-4 %. (Appendix 22)

Selective Schools

50%, or 3 out of 6 Wirral selective schools have increased their English and Maths 9-4 % in 2023 in comparison to 2022. Most notably Upton Hall School FCJ whose English and Maths 9-4 % has increased 1.3% to 98.7% in 2023. (Appendix 23)

Wirral Grammar School for Boys have the highest English and Maths 9-4 % of 100% in 2023, 1.5% higher than the National selective school English and Maths 9-4 % of 98.5% in 2023. (Appendix 23)

4 out of 6 Wirral selective schools are higher than the national selective school English and Maths 9-4 %. (Appendix 23)

English and Maths 9-5%

Locality Overall

Both Wirral West has the highest English and Maths 9-5 % in 2023, with 57%. Wirral South has the second highest English and Maths 9-5 %, with 52%. Wirral South English and Maths 9-5 % is 25% higher than the lowest Wirral locality English and Maths 9-5 % of Wallasey with 32%. (Appendix 4)

Locality Characteristics

Birkenhead

In Birkenhead, the English and Maths 9-5 % of disadvantaged has decreased 5% to 17%. The non-disadvantaged English and Maths 9-5 % decreased 1% 48%. The gap between disadvantaged and non-disadvantaged increased by 4% to 31%. (Appendix 17)

In Birkenhead, the English and Maths 9-5 % of EAL has increased 10% to 56%. The non-EAL English and Maths 9-5 % decreased 4% to 33%. The gap between EAL and non-EAL increased by 14% to 23% (Appendix 17)

Wallasey

In Wallasey, the English and Maths 9-5 % of males has remained the same at 30%. The female English and Maths 9-5 % decreased 9% to 34%. The gap between males and females decreased by 9% with females outperforming males by 4%. (Appendix 18)

In Wallasey, the English and Maths 9-5 % of Non-White British has decreased 13% to 44%. The White British English and Maths 9-5 % decreased 3% to 31%. The ethnicity gap has decreased by 9% to 13%. (Appendix 18)

Wirral South

In Wirral South, the English and Maths 9-5 % of those with SEN Support has increased 8% to 36%. The No SEN English and Maths 9-5 % decreased 6% to 57%. The gap between those with SEN Support and No SEN decreased by 14% to 21%. (Appendix 19)

In Wirral South, the English and Maths 9-5 % of disadvantaged has decreased 7% to 20%. The non-disadvantaged English and Maths 9-5 % decreased 5% to 60%. The gap between disadvantaged and non-disadvantaged increased by 1% to 40%. (Appendix 19)

Wirral West

In Wirral West, the English and Maths 9-5 % of EAL has increased 19% to 79%. The non-EAL English and Maths 9-5 % decreased 2% to 56%. The gap between EAL and Non-EAL increased by 21% to 23%. (Appendix 20)

In Wirral West, the English and Maths 9-5 % of FSM eligible has increased 3% to 28%. The Non-FSM eligible English and Maths 9-5 % decreased 1% to 63%. The gap between FSM eligible and Non-FSM eligible decreased by 3% to 35%. (Appendix 20)

National Comparison 2019 and 2022

In 2022 Wirral females English and Maths 9-5 % was 2.4% lower than national at 50.1%. Whereas, in 2023, Wirral females English and Maths 9-5 % is 1.2% lower than the national at 46.4%.

In 2022 Wirral males English and Maths 9-5 % was 2.5% lower than national at 44.3%, whereas in 2023 Wirral males English and Maths 9-5 % is 2.2% lower than national with 41.2%. (Appendix 21)

Overall in 2023 Wirral are 1.7% lower than National with 43.7%.

Non-Selective Schools

3 out of 14 Wirral non-selective schools have increased their English and Maths 9-5 % in 2023 in comparison to 2022. Most notably Birkenhead High School Academy whose English and Maths 9-5 % has increased 7.5% to 49.6% in 2023, and Pensby High School who increased 5.1% to 43.9% in 2023. (Appendix 22)

Birkenhead High School Academy has the highest English and Maths 9-5 % of 49.6% in 2023, 15.2% higher than the National non-selective school English and Maths 9-5 % of 34.4% in 2023. (Appendix 22)

2 out of 14 Wirral non-selective schools are higher than the national non-selective school English and Maths 9-5 %. (Appendix 22)

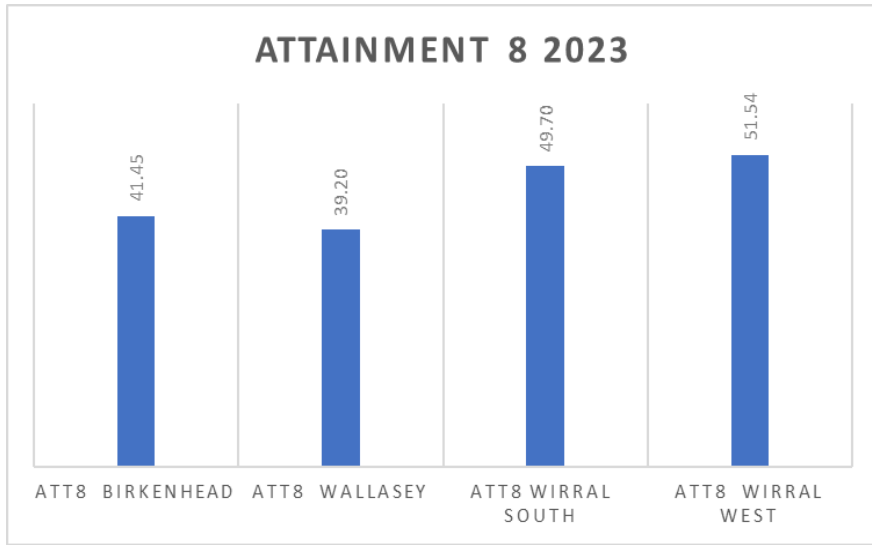
Selective Schools

3 out of 6 Wirral selective schools have increased their English and Maths 9-5 % in 2023 in comparison to 2022. Most notably Calday Grange Grammar School whose English and Maths 9-5 % has increased 0.9% to 93.8% in 2023. (Appendix 23)

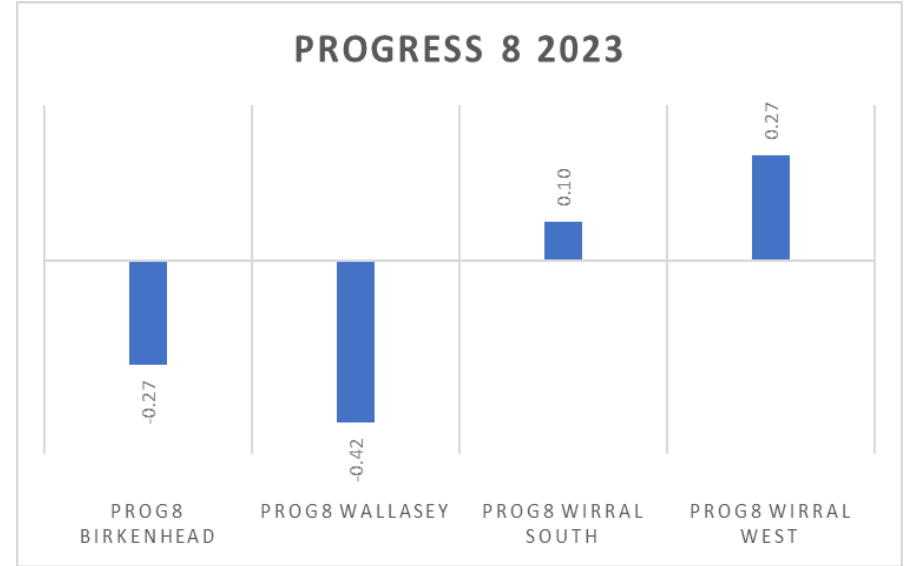
Calday Grange Grammar School has the highest English and Maths 9-5 % of 93.8% in 2023, 0.5% higher than the National selective school English and Maths 9-5 % of 93.3% in 2023. (Appendix 23)

2 out of 6 Wirral selective schools are higher than the national selective school English and Maths 9-5 %. (Appendix 23)

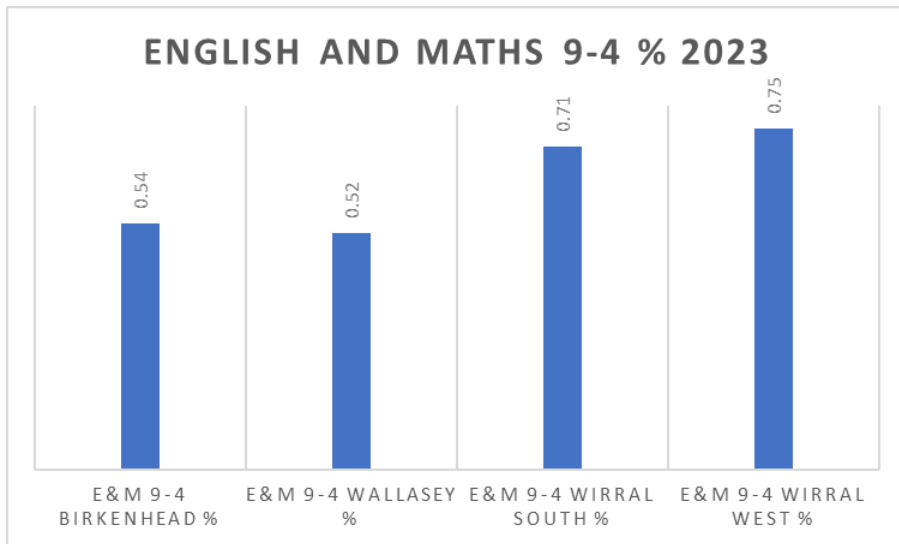
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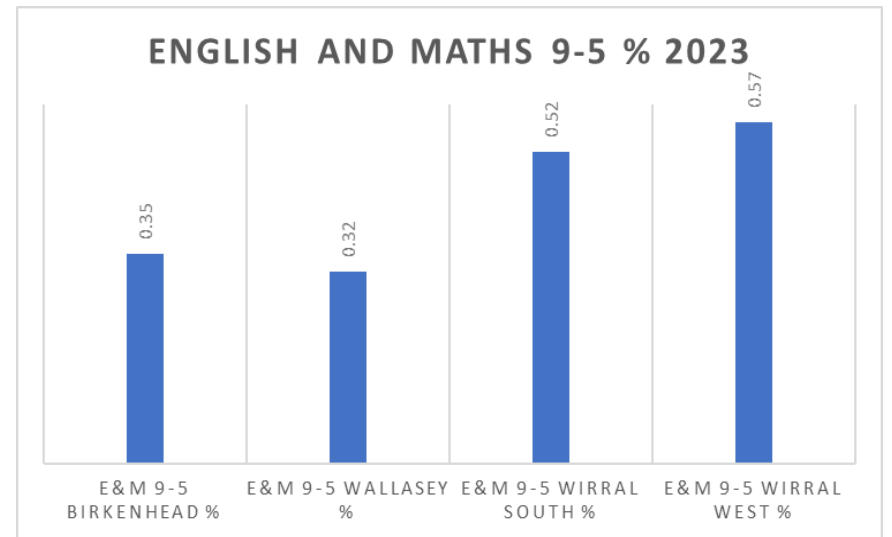
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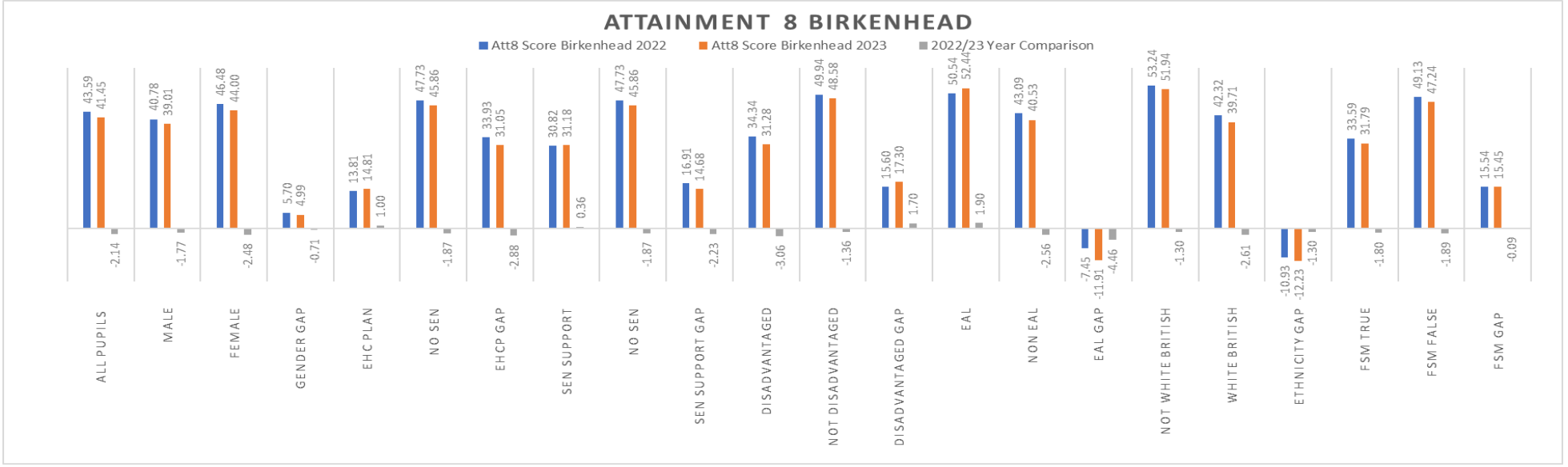
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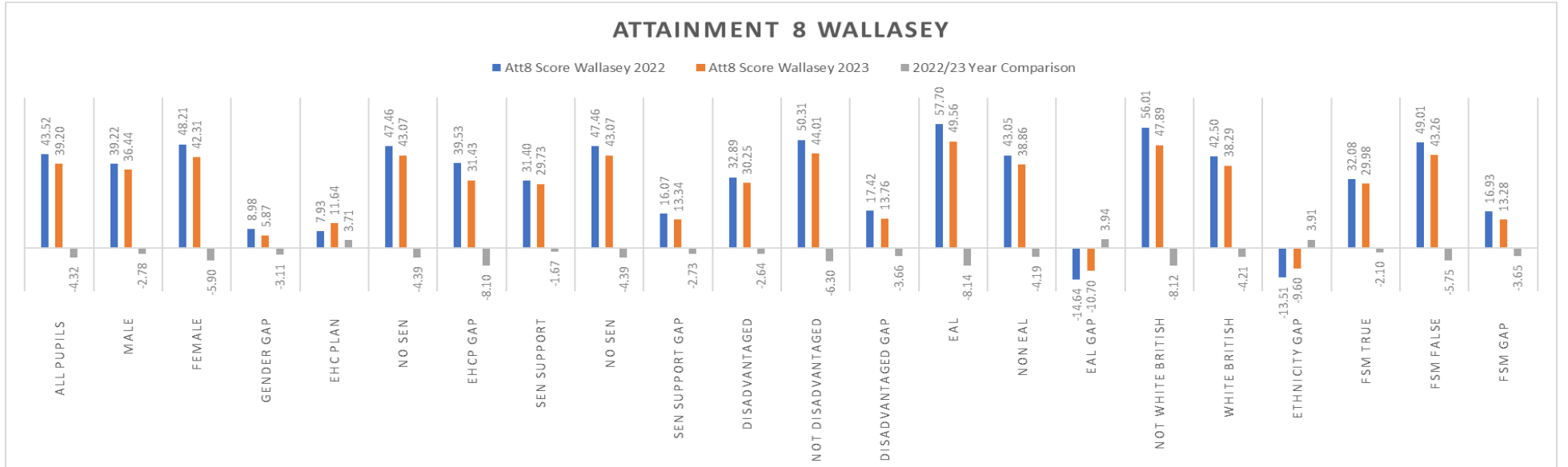
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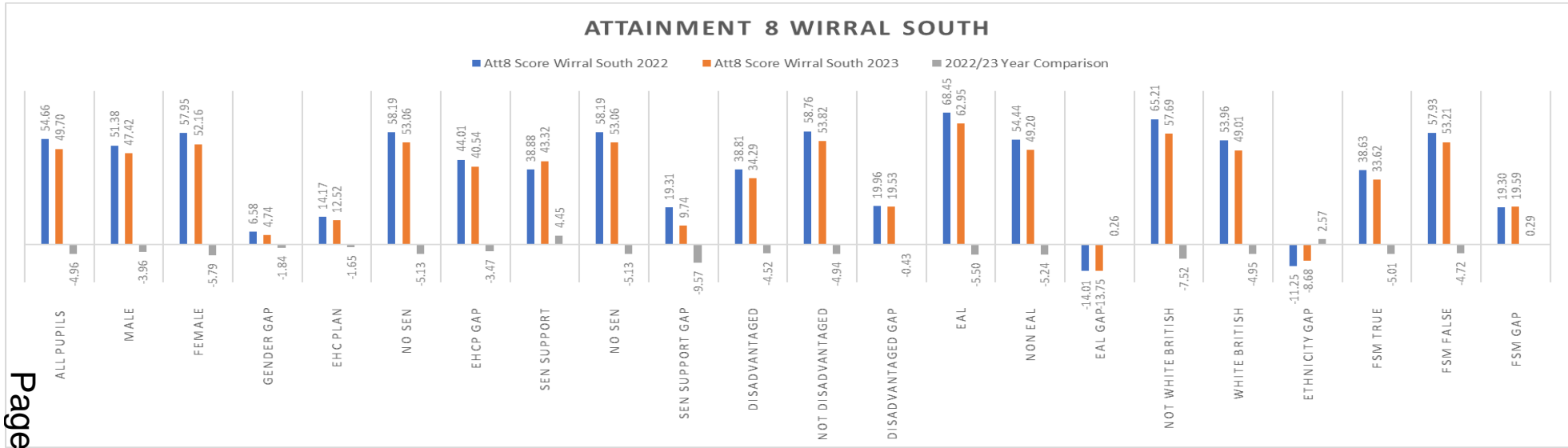
Appendix 5



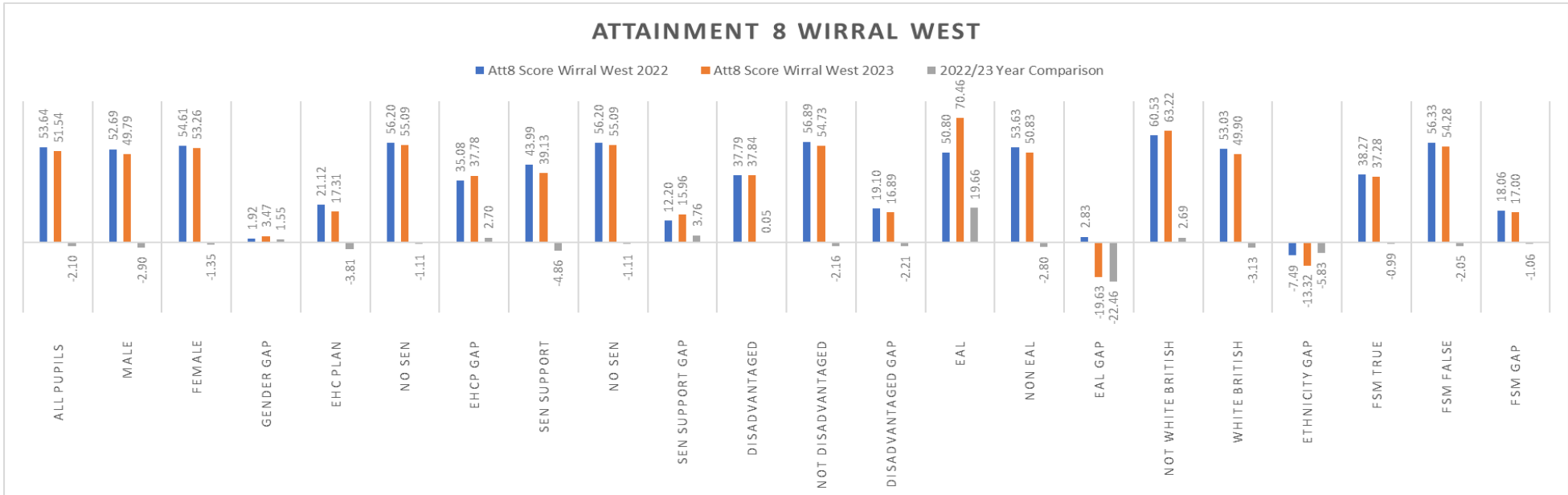
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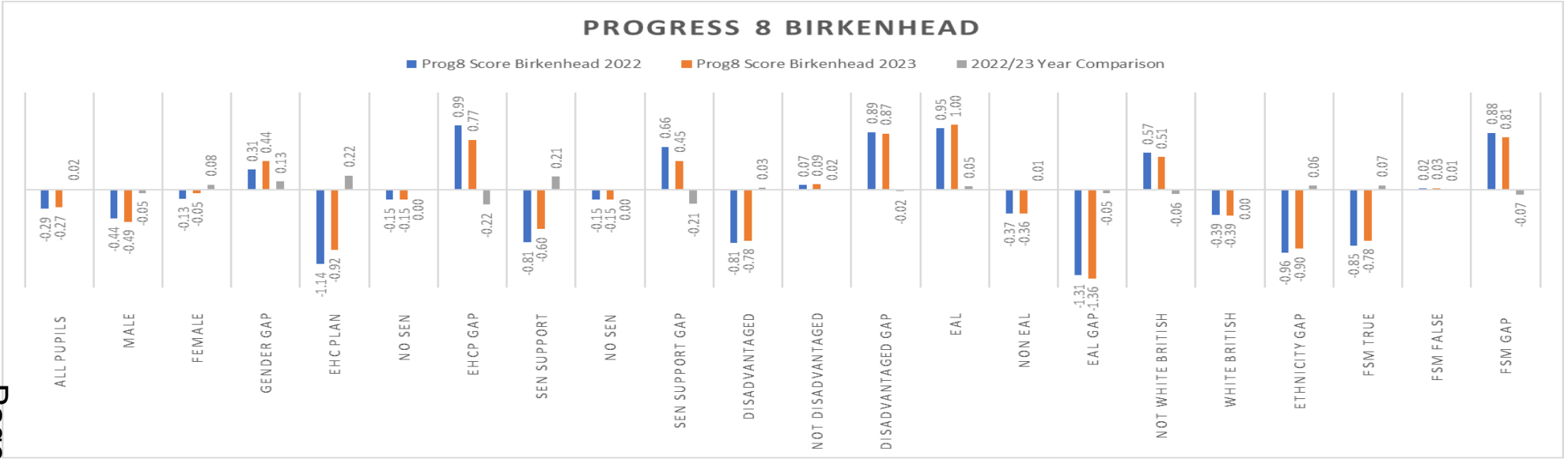
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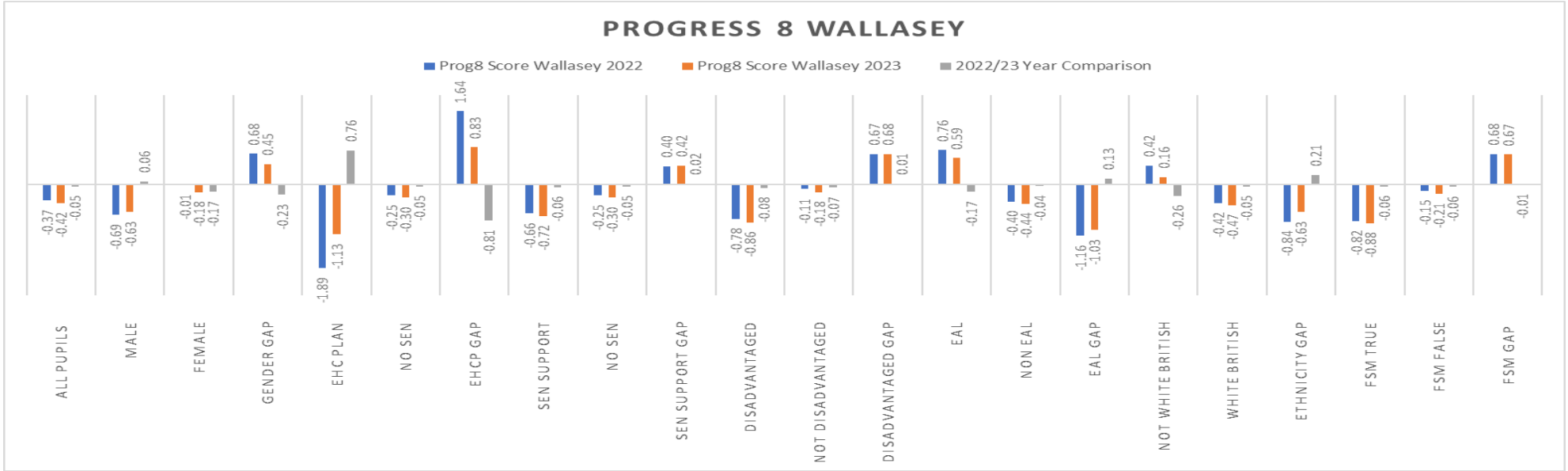
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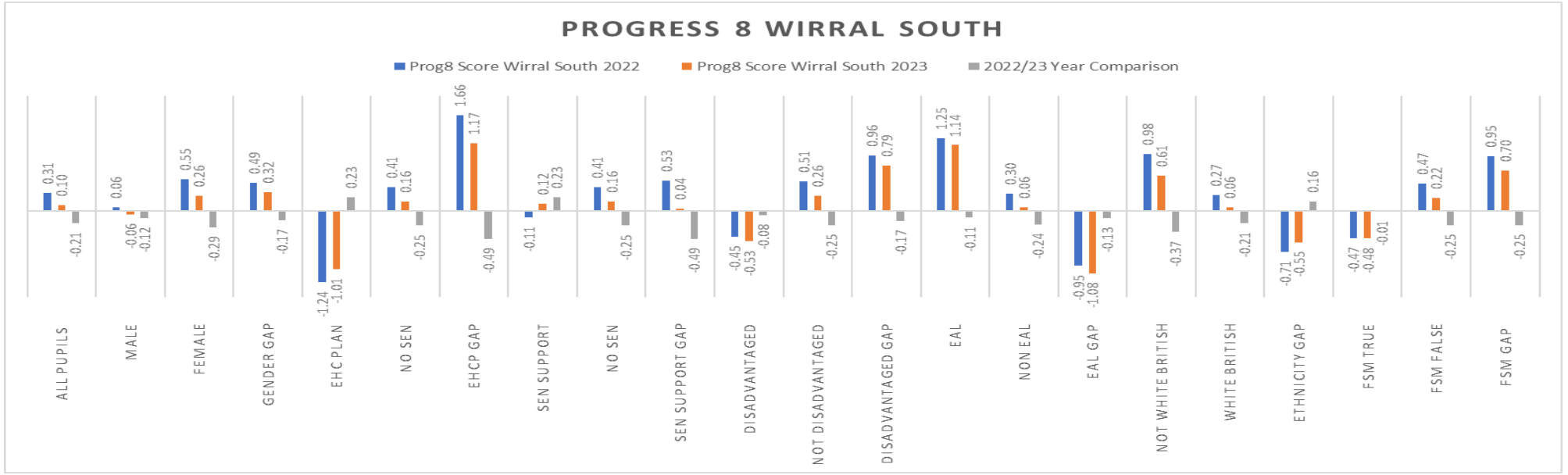
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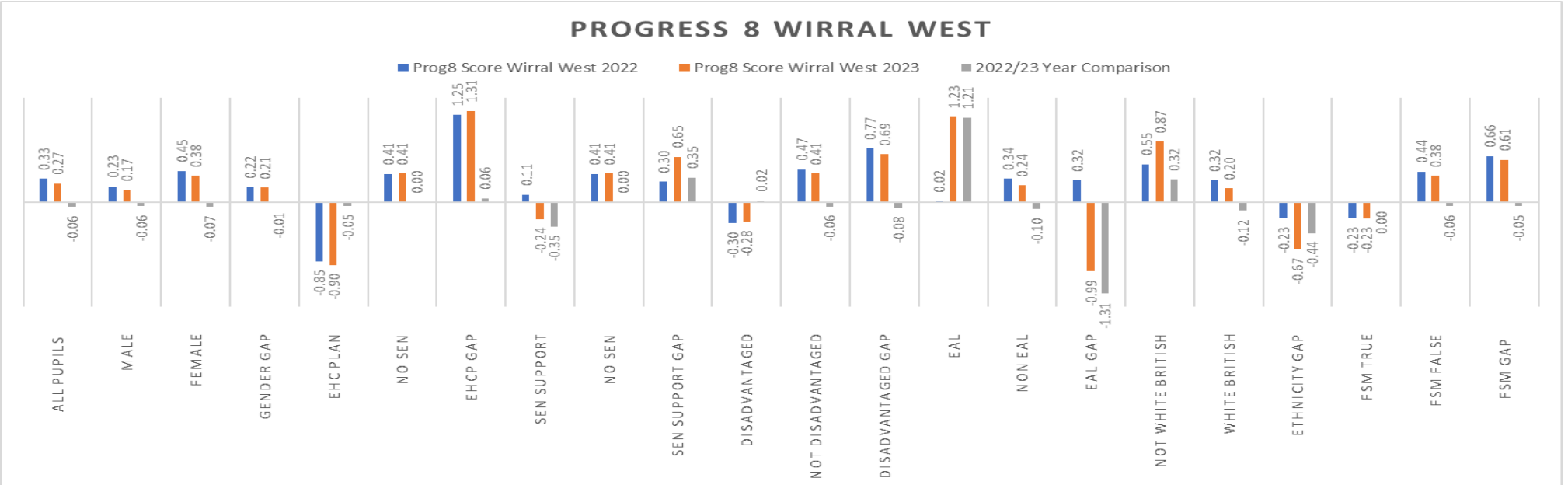
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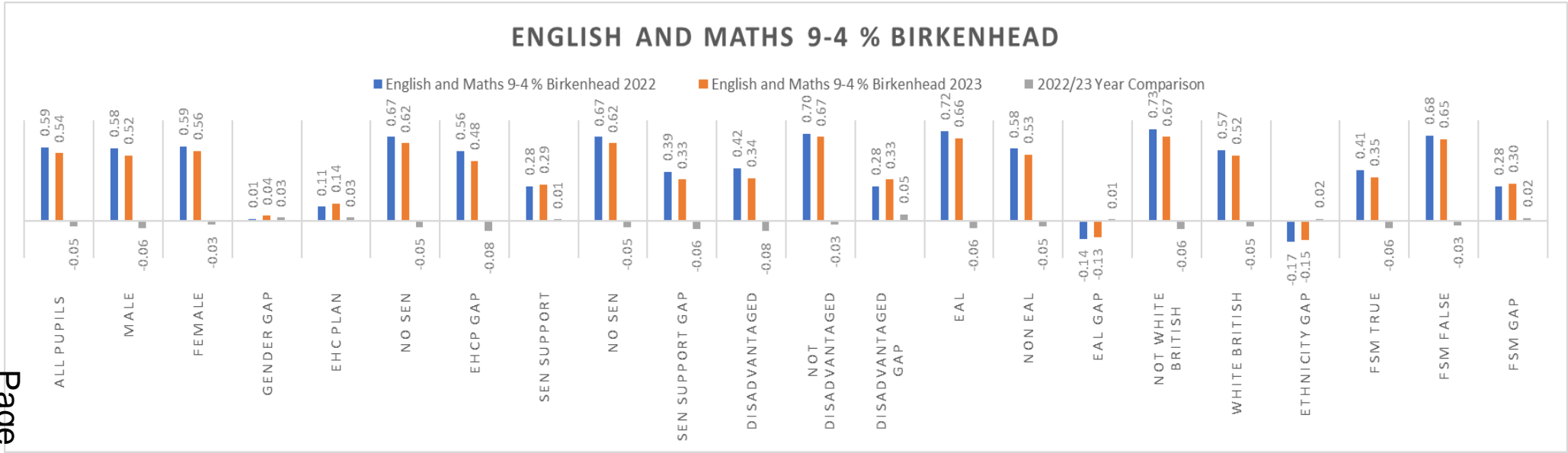
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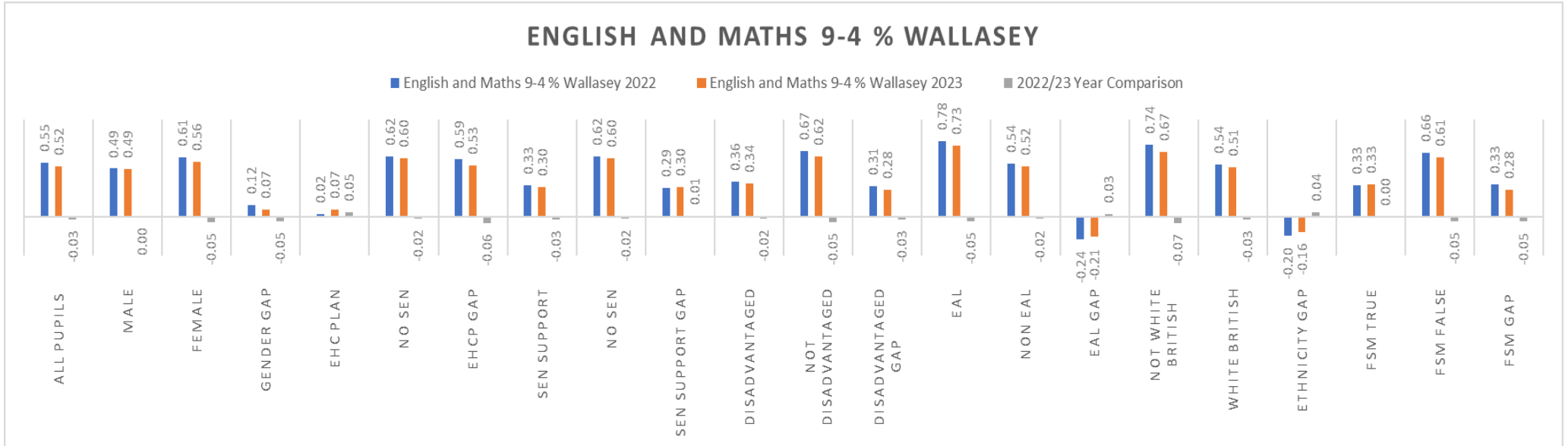
Appendix 12



Appendix 13

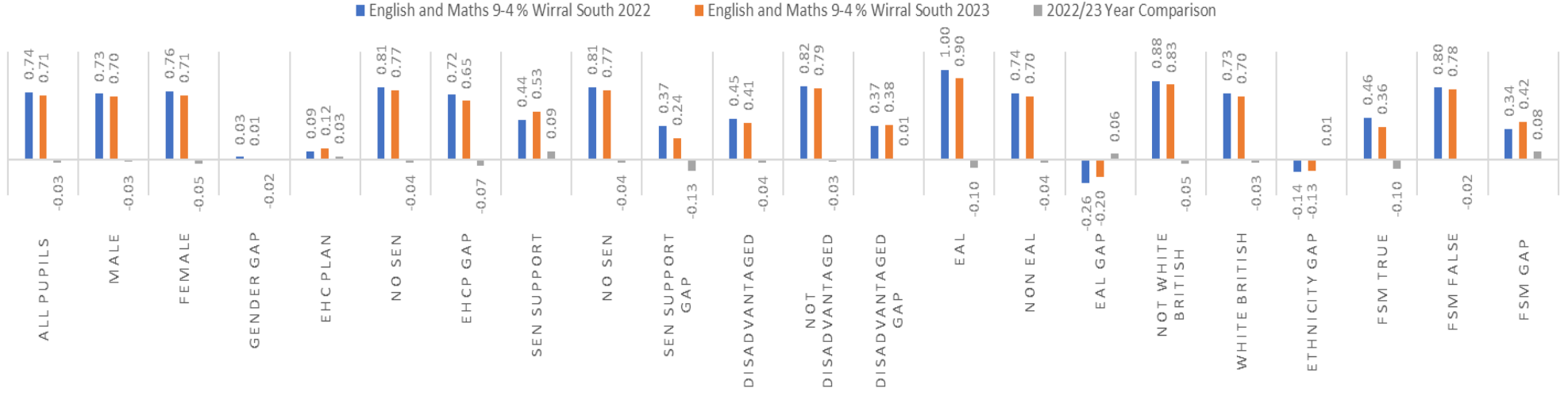


Appendix 14



Appendix 15

ENGLISH AND MATHS 9-4 % WIRRAL SOUTH

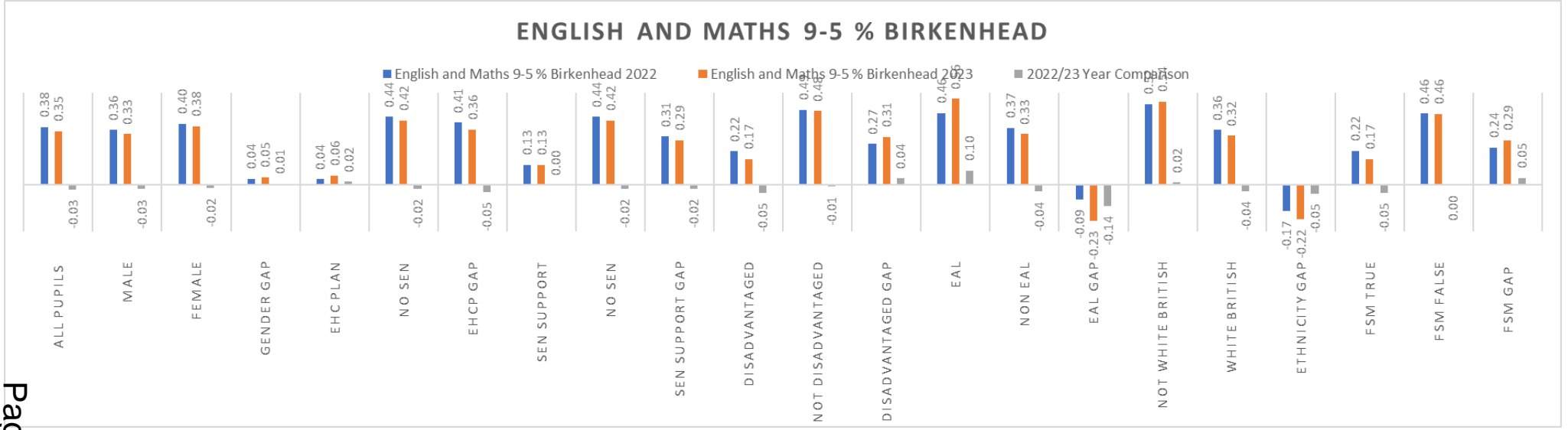


Appendix 16

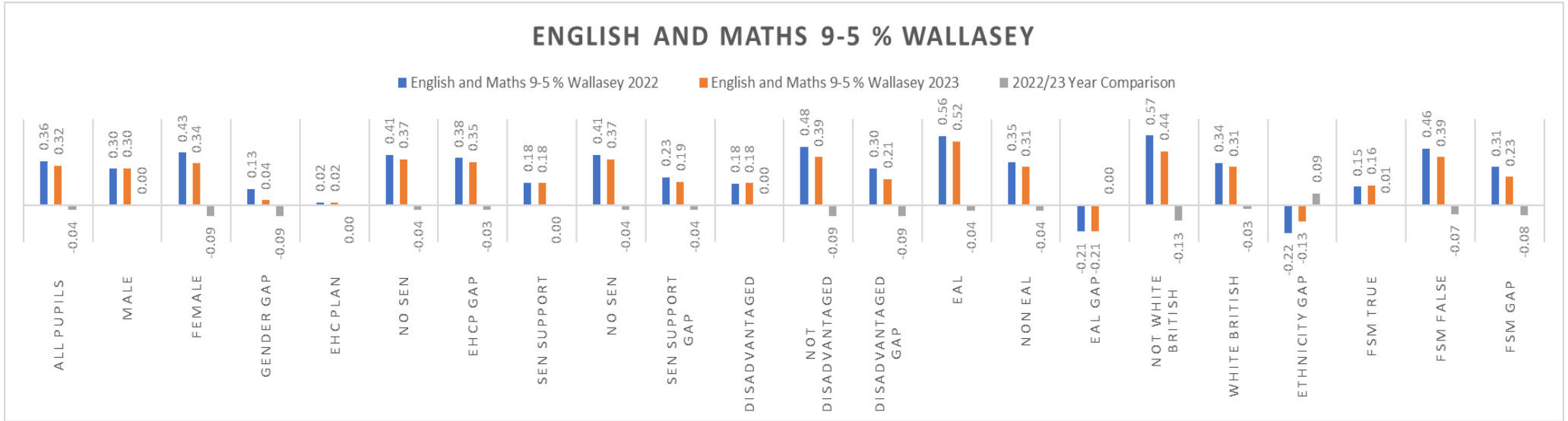
ENGLISH AND MATHS 9-4 % WIRRAL WEST



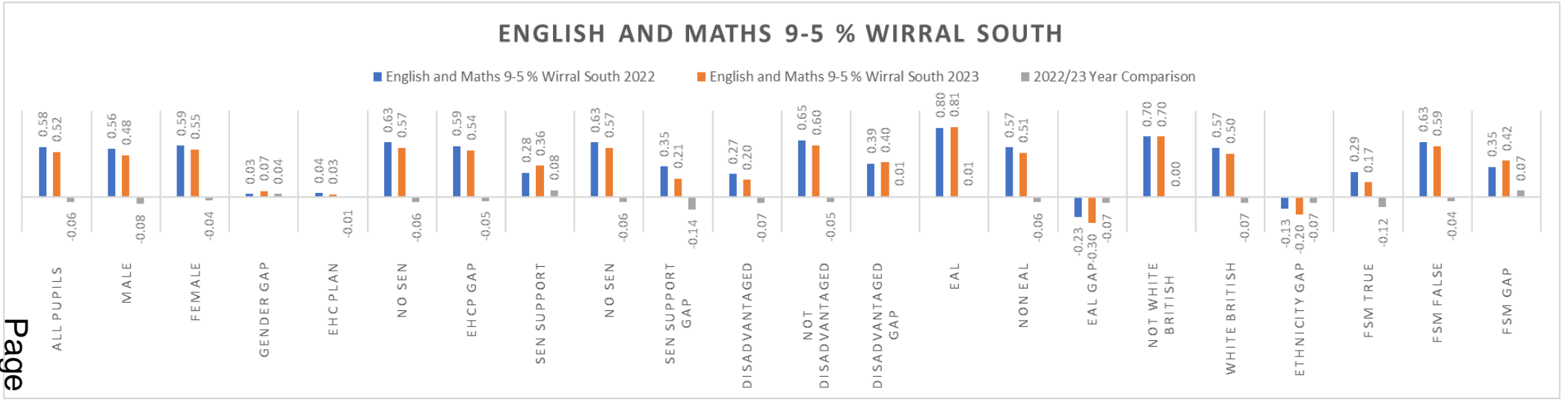
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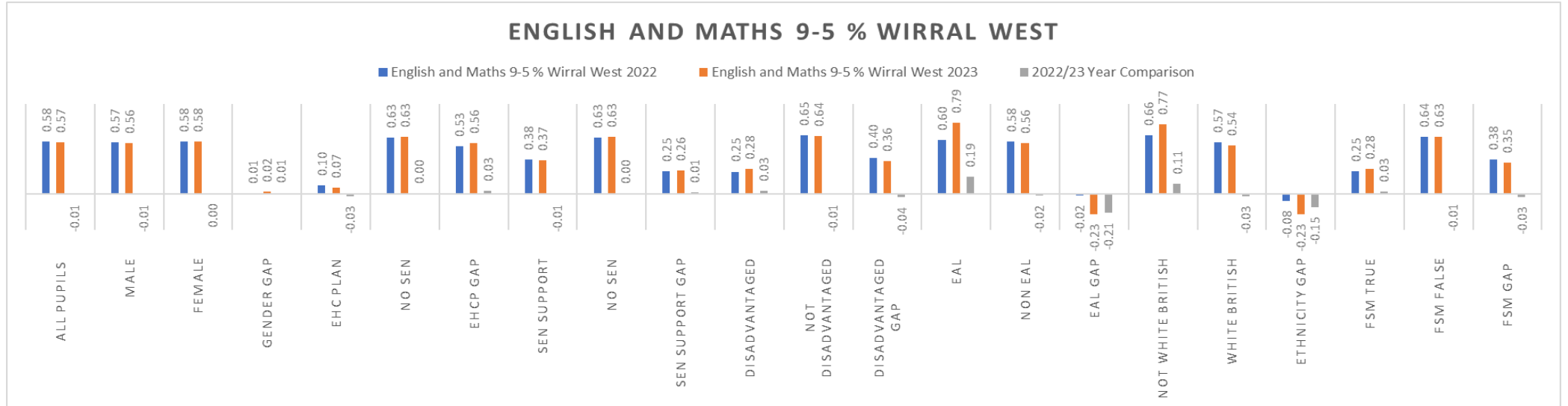
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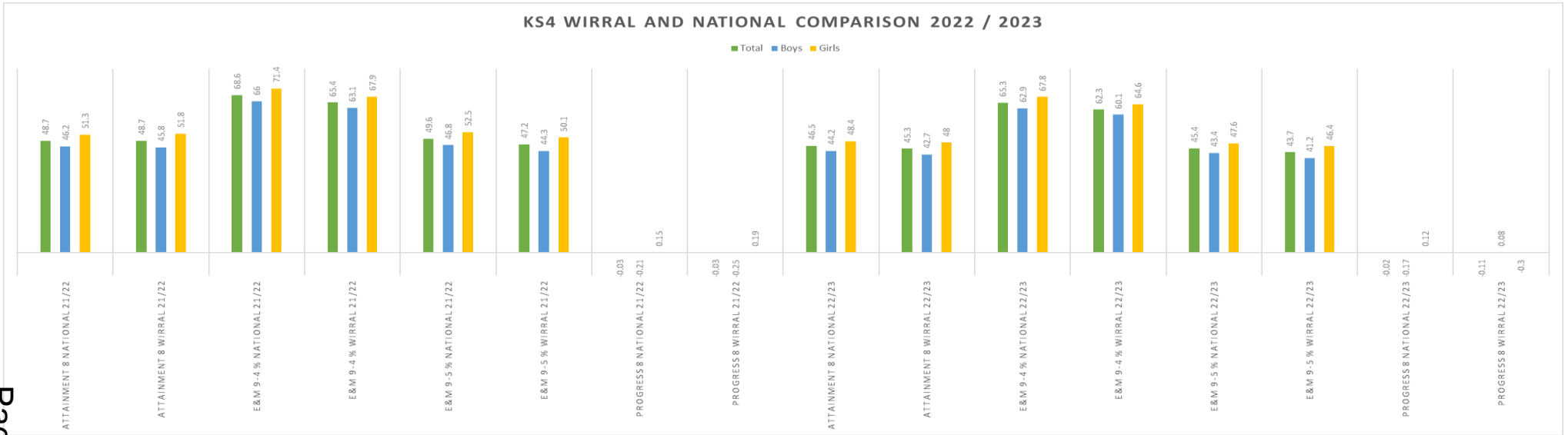
Appendix 19



Appendix 20



Appendix 21



Appendix 22

School	Attainment 8 2022	Attainment 8 2023	2022/2023 Year Comparison	Progress 8 2022	Progress 8 2023	2022/2023 Year Comparison	E&M 9-4 % 2022	E&M 9-4 % 2023	2022/2023 Year Comparison	E&M 9-5 % 2022	E&M 9-5 % 2023	2022/2023 Year Comparison
Birkenhead High School Academy	50.4	51.1	0.7	0.3	0.63	0.33	70.1	75.2	5.1	42.1	49.6	7.5
Birkenhead Park School	29.9	32.3	2.4	-1.09	-0.65	0.44	31.3	34.6	3.3	13	17.3	4.3
Co-op Academy Bebington	42.1	36.6	-5.5	-0.04	-0.44	-0.4	56.9	44.8	-12.1	34.8	24.2	-10.6
Hilbre High School	44.3	39.2	-5.1	0.14	0	-0.14	64.8	57.5	-7.3	37.7	28.5	-9.2
Pensby High School	45.1	44.7	-0.4	0.19	0.26	0.07	69.1	64.3	-4.8	38.8	43.9	5.1
Prenton High School for Girls	48.1	42.2	-5.9	0.18	-0.03	-0.21	68.2	57.6	-10.6	43.5	33.8	-9.7
Ridgeway High School	37.6	37.3	-0.3	-0.48	-0.3	0.18	51.8	41.4	-10.4	32.7	22.8	-9.9
South Wirral High School	40.5	40.8	0.3	-0.28	-0.16	0.12	50.7	53.6	2.9	28.3	23	-5.3
St John Plessington Catholic College	44	38.9	-5.1	-0.14	-0.57	-0.43	57.3	51	-6.3	27.3	26.8	-0.5
St Mary's Catholic College	34.7	32.8	-1.9	-0.63	-0.82	-0.19	30.9	34.1	3.2	16	11.4	-4.6
The Mosslands School	37	33.6	-3.4	-0.76	-0.76	0	45.6	40.6	-5	19.4	17.9	-1.5
The Oldershaw Academy	34.8	28.6	-6.2	-0.84	-1.01	-0.17	37.7	38.3	0.6	20.8	18	-2.8
Weatherhead High School	49.5	43	-6.5	0.14	-0.14	-0.28	62.9	56.4	-6.5	39	30	-9
Woodchurch High School	42.7	38.5	-4.2	0.06	-0.13	-0.19	56.8	50.9	-5.9	33.4	27.4	-6
National Non-Selective Schools	44.2	42.2	-2	-0.2	-0.16	0.04	61.8	58	-3.8	38.6	34.4	-4.2

Appendix 23

School	Attainment 8 2022	Attainment 8 2023	2022/2023 Year Comparison	Progress 8 2022	Progress 8 2023	2022/2023 Year Comparison	E&M 9-4 % 2022	E&M 9-4 % 2023	2022/2023 Year Comparison	E&M 9-5 % 2022	E&M 9-5 % 2023	2022/2023 Year Comparison
Calday Grange Grammar School	68.8	66	-2.8	0.28	0.29	0.01	97.3	97.9	0.6	92.9	93.8	0.9
St Anselm's College	61	58.1	-2.9	0.16	0.24	0.08	97.9	96.8	-1.1	79.3	79.5	0.2
Upton Hall School FCJ	68.3	66.4	-1.9	0.91	1.08	0.17	97.4	98.7	1.3	92.7	92.7	0
West Kirby Grammar School	71.6	67.7	-3.9	0.49	0.56	0.07	100	98.9	-1.1	93.3	93.5	0.2
Wirral Grammar School for Boys	69.6	65	-4.6	0.37	0.29	-0.08	100	100	0	91.3	91	-0.3
Wirral Grammar School for Girls	75.7	70	-5.7	1	0.63	-0.37	99.4	99.5	0.1	98.3	92.3	-6
National Selective Schools	74.1	71.7	-2.4	0.58	0.63	0.05	98.2	98.5	0.3	94.2	93.3	-0.9

Appendix 24

Characteristics	Att8 Score Birkenhead 2022	Att8 Score Birkenhead 2023	2022/23 Year Comparison	Att8 Score Wallasey 2022	Att8 Score Wallasey 2023	2022/23 Year Comparison	Att8 Score Wirral South 2022	Att8 Score Wirral South 2023	2022/23 Year Comparison	Att8 Score Wirral West 2022	Att8 Score Wirral West 2023	2022/23 Year Comparison
All Pupils	43.59	41.45	-2.14	43.52	39.20	-4.32	54.66	49.70	-4.96	53.64	51.54	-2.10
Male	40.78	39.01	-1.77	39.22	36.44	-2.78	51.38	47.42	-3.96	52.69	49.79	-2.90
Female	46.48	44.00	-2.48	48.21	42.31	-5.90	57.95	52.16	-5.79	54.61	53.26	-1.35
Gender Gap	5.70	4.99	-0.71	8.98	5.87	-3.11	6.58	4.74	-1.84	1.92	3.47	1.55
EHC Plan	13.81	14.81	1.00	7.93	11.64	3.71	14.17	12.52	-1.65	21.12	17.31	-3.81
No SEN	47.73	45.86	-1.87	47.46	43.07	-4.39	58.19	53.06	-5.13	56.20	55.09	-1.11
EHCP Gap	33.93	31.05	-2.88	39.53	31.43	-8.10	44.01	40.54	-3.47	35.08	37.78	2.70
SEN Support	30.82	31.18	0.36	31.40	29.73	-1.67	38.88	43.32	4.45	43.99	39.13	-4.86
No SEN	47.73	45.86	-1.87	47.46	43.07	-4.39	58.19	53.06	-5.13	56.20	55.09	-1.11
SEN Support Gap	16.91	14.68	-2.23	16.07	13.34	-2.73	19.31	9.74	-9.57	12.20	15.96	3.76
Disadvantaged	34.34	31.28	-3.06	32.89	30.25	-2.64	38.81	34.29	-4.52	37.79	37.84	0.05
Not Disadvantaged	49.94	48.58	-1.36	50.31	44.01	-6.30	58.76	53.82	-4.94	56.89	54.73	-2.16
Disadvantaged Gap	15.60	17.30	1.70	17.42	13.76	-3.66	19.96	19.53	-0.43	19.10	16.89	-2.21
EAL	50.54	52.44	1.90	57.70	49.56	-8.14	68.45	62.95	-5.50	50.80	70.46	19.66
Non EAL	43.09	40.53	-2.56	43.05	38.86	-4.19	54.44	49.20	-5.24	53.63	50.83	-2.80
EAL Gap	-7.45	-11.91	-4.46	-14.64	-10.70	3.94	-14.01	-13.75	0.26	2.83	-19.63	-22.46
Not White British	53.24	51.94	-1.30	56.01	47.89	-8.12	65.21	57.69	-7.52	60.53	63.22	2.69
WHITE BRITISH	42.32	39.71	-2.61	42.50	38.29	-4.21	53.96	49.01	-4.95	53.03	49.90	-3.13
Ethnicity Gap	-10.93	-12.23	-1.30	-13.51	-9.60	3.91	-11.25	-8.68	2.57	-7.49	-13.32	-5.83
FSM True	33.59	31.79	-1.80	32.08	29.98	-2.10	38.63	33.62	-5.01	38.27	37.28	-0.99
FSM False	49.13	47.24	-1.89	49.01	43.26	-5.75	57.93	53.21	-4.72	56.33	54.28	-2.05
FSM Gap	15.54	15.45	-0.09	16.93	13.28	-3.65	19.30	19.59	0.29	18.06	17.00	-1.06

Appendix 25

Characteristics	Prog8 Score Birkenhead 2022	Prog8 Score Birkenhead 2023	2022/23 Year Comparison	Prog8 Score Wallasey 2022	Prog8 Score Wallasey 2023	2022/23 Year Comparison	Prog8 Score Wirral South 2022	Prog8 Score Wirral South 2023	2022/23 Year Comparison	Prog8 Score Wirral West 2022	Prog8 Score Wirral West 2023	2022/23 Year Comparison
All Pupils	-0.29	-0.27	0.02	-0.37	-0.42	-0.05	0.31	0.10	-0.21	0.33	0.27	-0.06
Male	-0.44	-0.49	-0.05	-0.69	-0.63	0.06	0.06	-0.06	-0.12	0.23	0.17	-0.06
Female	-0.13	-0.05	0.08	-0.01	-0.18	-0.17	0.55	0.26	-0.29	0.45	0.38	-0.07
Gender Gap	0.31	0.44	0.13	0.68	0.45	-0.23	0.49	0.32	-0.17	0.22	0.21	-0.01
EHC Plan	-1.14	-0.92	0.22	-1.89	-1.13	0.76	-1.24	-1.01	0.23	-0.85	-0.90	-0.05
No SEN	-0.15	-0.15	0.00	-0.25	-0.30	-0.05	0.41	0.16	-0.25	0.41	0.41	0.00
EHCP Gap	0.99	0.77	-0.22	1.64	0.83	-0.81	1.66	1.17	-0.49	1.25	1.31	0.06
SEN Support	-0.81	-0.60	0.21	-0.66	-0.72	-0.06	-0.11	0.12	0.23	0.11	-0.24	-0.35
No SEN	-0.15	-0.15	0.00	-0.25	-0.30	-0.05	0.41	0.16	-0.25	0.41	0.41	0.00
SEN Support Gap	0.66	0.45	-0.21	0.40	0.42	0.02	0.53	0.04	-0.49	0.30	0.65	0.35
Disadvantaged	-0.81	-0.78	0.03	-0.78	-0.86	-0.08	-0.45	-0.53	-0.08	-0.30	-0.28	0.02
Not Disadvantaged	0.07	0.09	0.02	-0.11	-0.18	-0.07	0.51	0.26	-0.25	0.47	0.41	-0.06
Disadvantaged Gap	0.89	0.87	-0.02	0.67	0.68	0.01	0.96	0.79	-0.17	0.77	0.69	-0.08
EAL	0.95	1.00	0.05	0.76	0.59	-0.17	1.25	1.14	-0.11	0.02	1.23	1.21
Non EAL	-0.37	-0.36	0.01	-0.40	-0.44	-0.04	0.30	0.06	-0.24	0.34	0.24	-0.10
EAL Gap	-1.31	-1.36	-0.05	-1.16	-1.03	0.13	-0.95	-1.08	-0.13	0.32	-0.99	-1.31
Not White British	0.57	0.51	-0.06	0.42	0.16	-0.26	0.98	0.61	-0.37	0.55	0.87	0.32
WHITE BRITISH	-0.39	-0.39	0.00	-0.42	-0.47	-0.05	0.27	0.06	-0.21	0.32	0.20	-0.12
Ethnicity Gap	-0.96	-0.90	0.06	-0.84	-0.63	0.21	-0.71	-0.55	0.16	-0.23	-0.67	-0.44
FSM True	-0.85	-0.78	0.07	-0.82	-0.88	-0.06	-0.47	-0.48	-0.01	-0.23	-0.23	0.00
FSM False	0.02	0.03	0.01	-0.15	-0.21	-0.06	0.47	0.22	-0.25	0.44	0.38	-0.06
FSM Gap	0.88	0.81	-0.07	0.68	0.67	-0.01	0.95	0.70	-0.25	0.66	0.61	-0.05

Appendix 26

Characteristics	English and Maths 9-4 % Birkenhead 2022	English and Maths 9-4 % Birkenhead 2023	2022/23 Year Comparison	English and Maths 9-4 % Wallasey 2022	English and Maths 9-4 % Wallasey 2023	2022/23 Year Comparison	English and Maths 9-4 % Wirral South 2022	English and Maths 9-4 % Wirral South 2023	2022/23 Year Comparison	English and Maths 9-4 % Wirral West 2022	English and Maths 9-4 % Wirral West 2023	2022/23 Year Comparison
All Pupils	0.59	0.54	-0.05	0.55	0.52	-0.03	0.74	0.71	-0.03	0.76	0.75	-0.01
Male	0.58	0.52	-0.06	0.49	0.49	0.00	0.73	0.70	-0.03	0.74	0.74	0.00
Female	0.59	0.56	-0.03	0.61	0.56	-0.05	0.76	0.71	-0.05	0.77	0.76	-0.01
Gender Gap	0.01	0.04	0.03	0.12	0.07	-0.05	0.03	0.01	-0.02	0.03	0.02	-0.01
EHC Plan	0.11	0.14	0.03	0.02	0.07	0.05	0.09	0.12	0.03	0.10	0.19	0.09
No SEN	0.67	0.62	-0.05	0.62	0.60	-0.02	0.81	0.77	-0.04	0.81	0.82	0.01
EHCP Gap	0.56	0.48	-0.08	0.59	0.53	-0.06	0.72	0.65	-0.07	0.71	0.63	-0.08
SEN Support	0.28	0.29	0.01	0.33	0.30	-0.03	0.44	0.53	0.09	0.57	0.50	-0.07
No SEN	0.67	0.62	-0.05	0.62	0.60	-0.02	0.81	0.77	-0.04	0.81	0.82	0.01
SEN Support Gap	0.39	0.33	-0.06	0.29	0.30	0.01	0.37	0.24	-0.13	0.24	0.32	0.08
Disadvantaged	0.42	0.34	-0.08	0.36	0.34	-0.02	0.45	0.41	-0.04	0.48	0.49	0.01
Not Disadvantaged	0.70	0.67	-0.03	0.67	0.62	-0.05	0.82	0.79	-0.03	0.82	0.81	-0.01
Disadvantaged Gap	0.28	0.33	0.05	0.31	0.28	-0.03	0.37	0.38	0.01	0.34	0.32	-0.02
EAL	0.72	0.66	-0.06	0.78	0.73	-0.05	1.00	0.90	-0.10	0.60	0.93	0.33
Non EAL	0.58	0.53	-0.05	0.54	0.52	-0.02	0.74	0.70	-0.04	0.76	0.74	-0.02
EAL Gap	-0.14	-0.13	0.01	-0.24	-0.21	0.03	-0.26	-0.20	0.06	0.16	-0.19	-0.35
Not White British	0.73	0.67	-0.06	0.74	0.67	-0.07	0.88	0.83	-0.05	0.84	0.86	0.02
WHITE BRITISH	0.57	0.52	-0.05	0.54	0.51	-0.03	0.73	0.70	-0.03	0.75	0.74	-0.01
Ethnicity Gap	-0.17	-0.15	0.02	-0.20	-0.16	0.04	-0.14	-0.13	0.01	-0.09	-0.12	-0.03
FSM True	0.41	0.35	-0.06	0.33	0.33	0.00	0.46	0.36	-0.10	0.49	0.48	-0.01
FSM False	0.68	0.65	-0.03	0.66	0.61	-0.05	0.80	0.78	-0.02	0.81	0.80	-0.01
FSM Gap	0.28	0.30	0.02	0.33	0.28	-0.05	0.34	0.42	0.08	0.32	0.32	0.00

Appendix 27

Characteristics	English and Maths 9-5 % Birkenhead 2022	English and Maths 9-5 % Birkenhead 2023	2022/23 Year Comparison	English and Maths 9-5 % Wallasey 2022	English and Maths 9-5 % Wallasey 2023	2022/23 Year Comparison	English and Maths 9-5 % Wirral South 2022	English and Maths 9-5 % Wirral South 2023	2022/23 Year Comparison	English and Maths 9-5 % Wirral West 2022	English and Maths 9-5 % Wirral West 2023	2022/23 Year Comparison
All Pupils	0.38	0.35	-0.03	0.36	0.32	-0.04	0.58	0.52	-0.06	0.58	0.57	-0.01
Male	0.36	0.33	-0.03	0.30	0.30	0.00	0.56	0.48	-0.08	0.57	0.56	-0.01
Female	0.40	0.38	-0.02	0.43	0.34	-0.09	0.59	0.55	-0.04	0.58	0.58	0.00
Gender Gap	0.04	0.05	0.01	0.13	0.04	-0.09	0.03	0.07	0.04	0.01	0.02	0.01
EHC Plan	0.04	0.06	0.02	0.02	0.02	0.00	0.04	0.03	-0.01	0.10	0.07	-0.03
No SEN	0.44	0.42	-0.02	0.41	0.37	-0.04	0.63	0.57	-0.06	0.63	0.63	0.00
EHCP Gap	0.41	0.36	-0.05	0.38	0.35	-0.03	0.59	0.54	-0.05	0.53	0.56	0.03
SEN Support	0.13	0.13	0.00	0.18	0.18	0.00	0.28	0.36	0.08	0.38	0.37	-0.01
No SEN	0.44	0.42	-0.02	0.41	0.37	-0.04	0.63	0.57	-0.06	0.63	0.63	0.00
SEN Support Gap	0.31	0.29	-0.02	0.23	0.19	-0.04	0.35	0.21	-0.14	0.25	0.26	0.01
Disadvantaged	0.22	0.17	-0.05	0.18	0.18	0.00	0.27	0.20	-0.07	0.25	0.28	0.03
Not Disadvantaged	0.49	0.48	-0.01	0.48	0.39	-0.09	0.65	0.60	-0.05	0.65	0.64	-0.01
Disadvantaged Gap	0.27	0.31	0.04	0.30	0.21	-0.09	0.39	0.40	0.01	0.40	0.36	-0.04
EAL	0.46	0.56	0.10	0.56	0.52	-0.04	0.80	0.81	0.01	0.60	0.79	0.19
Non EAL	0.37	0.33	-0.04	0.35	0.31	-0.04	0.57	0.51	-0.06	0.58	0.56	-0.02
EAL Gap	-0.09	-0.23	-0.14	-0.21	-0.21	0.00	-0.23	-0.30	-0.07	-0.02	-0.23	-0.21
Not White British	0.52	0.54	0.02	0.57	0.44	-0.13	0.70	0.70	0.00	0.66	0.77	0.11
WHITE BRITISH	0.36	0.32	-0.04	0.34	0.31	-0.03	0.57	0.50	-0.07	0.57	0.54	-0.03
Ethnicity Gap	-0.17	-0.22	-0.05	-0.22	-0.13	0.09	-0.13	-0.20	-0.07	-0.08	-0.23	-0.15
FSM True	0.22	0.17	-0.05	0.15	0.16	0.01	0.29	0.17	-0.12	0.25	0.28	0.03
FSM False	0.46	0.46	0.00	0.46	0.39	-0.07	0.63	0.59	-0.04	0.64	0.63	-0.01
FSM Gap	0.24	0.29	0.05	0.31	0.23	-0.08	0.35	0.42	0.07	0.38	0.35	-0.03

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Executive Summary

Please note all results are provisional at the time of authoring this report. The emerging national is the NCER National figure of 144 contributing Local Authorities. At the time of this report Hillside Primary School Writing Teacher assessment was missing from the data. Comparison has been made between 2023 and 2022. Trend analysis is referring to years 2019,2022 and 2023.

(August 2023)

Key Stage Two

Reading, Writing and Mathematics Combined (RWM)

All Pupils - The proportion of children attaining the expected standard in reading, writing and maths (RWM) has increased 3.53% from 2022 to 55.5% in 2023. (Appendix 4) The percentage of all Wirral pupils attaining the expected standard in RWM is 4% lower than the emerging national figure of 59.5% (Appendix 9).

Gender - The proportion of boys who attained the expected standard in RWM has increased by 5.38% to 52.54%. There has been a 1.36% increase for girls in 2023 to 58.65%. The gender gap has decreased by 4.01% to 6.12%. (Appendix 4)

SEN - Pupils with SEN who attained the expected standard in RWM has increased by 2.6% to 19.8%. Non-SEN pupils who attained the expected standard in RWM increased by 3.4%. The SEN gap increased by 0.8% to 48.43%. Those with an EHCP who attained the expected standard in RWM increased by 2.36% to 4.86%. Those with SEN Support increased by 3.88% to 24.44% (Appendix 4). The SEN gap for pupils on the Wirral is 1.37% less than the emerging national, with the Wirral SEN gap at 48.43% compared to the emerging national at 49.8%. (Appendix 9)

FSM - The increase in FSM pupils attaining the expected standard in RWM by 1.3% to 37.2% is less than the non-FSM pupils decrease of 4.6% to 64.8%. The FSM gap increased by 3.3% to 27.6%. (Appendix 4)

EAL - The proportion of EAL pupils attaining the expected standard in RWM has decreased by 1.2% since 2022 to 56.7%. Non-EAL pupils attaining the expected standard in RWM has decreased by 3.2% to 55.4%. The gap between EAL and non-EAL has decreased by 4.4% to 1.3%, continuing a trend of decrease in the gap for the last three years. (Appendix 4)

Ethnicity - The percentage of Wirral non-white British pupils who attained the expected standard in RWM decreased by 6.1% to 61.4%. 55% of Wirral white British pupils attained the expected standard in RWM, which is 3.7% increase since 2022. (Appendix 4)

Disadvantaged – 37.7% of disadvantaged pupils attained the expected standard in RWM, a 1.5% increase since 2022. 65.4% of non-disadvantaged pupils attained the expected standard in RWM, an 3.5% increase since 2022. The Disadvantaged gap increased by 2% to 27.7%. (Appendix 4) The percentage of disadvantaged pupils attaining the expected standard in RWM in Wirral is 37.7%, which is 6.3% less than the emerging national figure of 44% (Appendix 9).

Reading

All Pupils – In 2023 the proportion of children attaining the expected standard in reading increased 0.1% to 70.82%. (Appendix 1)

Gender - The proportion of boys who attained the expected standard in reading has increased by 3.43% to 67.91%. There has been a 3.7% decrease for girls in 2023 to 73.9%. The gender gap has decreased by 7.12% to 6%. **(Appendix 1)** Wirral girls are 1.59% behind the emerging national figure of 75.5% for girls. Wirral males are 1.89% below the emerging national figure of 69.8% for males. **(Appendix 6)**

SEN - Pupils with SEN who attained the expected standard in reading has increased by 4.8% to 41.8%. Non-SEN pupils who attained the expected standard in reading decreased by 2.09% to 81.23%. The SEN gap decreased by 6.89% to 39.43%. 17.81% of those with an EHCP attained the expected standard in reading, a 6.37% increase since 2022 and continuing a trend in increase over the past three years. Those with SEN Support increased by 6.51% to 49.25%. The gap between EHCP and SEN Support increased by 0.14% to 31.43%. **(Appendix 1)**

FSM - The increase in FSM pupils attaining the expected standard in reading by 20.4% to 56.3% is more than the non-FSM pupils increase of 18.1% to 78.3%. The FSM gap decreased by 2.3% to 22%. **(Appendix 1)**

EAL - The percentage of EAL pupils who attained the expected standard in reading has decreased by 9.6% to 64.8%. There has been no change in the attainment of non-EAL pupils, with 71.2% attaining the expected standard of reading. **(Appendix 1)** EAL pupils on the Wirral are 4.9% behind the emerging national figure of 69.7%. **(Appendix 6)**

Ethnicity – 69.8% of non-white British pupils attained the expected standard in reading in 2023, 10% less than in 2022. 70.9% of white British pupils attained the expected standard in reading, which is a 0.2% increase. The ethnicity gap has decreased by 10.2% to 1.1%. **(Appendix 1)**

Disadvantaged – The decrease in disadvantaged pupils attaining the expected standard in reading by 1.9% to 56.6% is more than the non-disadvantaged pupils decrease of 0.2% to 78.7%. The disadvantaged gap increased by 1.7% to 22.1%. **(Appendix 1)**

Writing

All Pupils – In 2023 the proportion of children attaining the expected standard in writing increased 4.58% to 67.75%. **(Appendix 2)**

Gender - The proportion of boys who attained the expected standard in writing has increased by 5.76% to 61.38%. There has been a 3.06% increase for girls since 2022 to 74.52%. The gender gap has decreased by 2.7% to 13.14%. **(Appendix 2)**

SEN - Pupils with SEN who attained the expected standard in writing has increased by 3.7% to 28.8%. Non-SEN pupils who attained the expected standard in writing increased by 4.33% to 81.63%. The SEN gap increased by 0.63% to 52.83%. 7.69% of those with an EHCP attained the expected standard in writing, increasing 3.79% since 2022. Those with SEN Support increased by 5.58% to 35.34%. **(Appendix 2)** The gap between EHCP and SEN Support increased by 1.79% to 27.65%. **(Appendix 2)** Pupils on the Wirral with an EHCP are attaining 4.41% less than the emerging national figure of 12.10%. **(Appendix 7)**

FSM - The increase in FSM pupils attaining the expected standard in writing by 3.8% to 51.8% is less than the non-FSM pupils increase of 4.8% to 75.9%. The FSM gap increased by 1% to 24.1%. **(Appendix 2)**

EAL – There has been an increase in EAL pupils attaining the expected standard in writing by 1.6% to 68.1%. There has been an increase for non-EAL pupils by 4.1% to 67.7%. The EAL gap decreased by 2.5% to 0.4%. **(Appendix 2)**

Ethnicity - The attainment of Wirral non-white British pupils in writing at 72.10% in 2023, is 2.2% less than in 2022. 67.4% white British pupils attaining the expected standard in writing is 4.5% higher than in 2022. **(Appendix 2)**

Disadvantaged – 52.4% of Wirral disadvantaged pupils attained the expected standard in writing, this is 3.9% more than 2022. 76.3% of Wirral non - disadvantaged pupils attained the expected standard in writing, this is a 3.7% increase from 2022. The disadvantaged gap has decreased by 0.2% to 23.9% **(Appendix 2)** Disadvantaged pupils on the Wirral are attaining the expected standard in writing 5.7% less than the emerging national figure for disadvantaged pupils at 58.1%. **(Appendix 7)**

Mathematics

All Pupils –In 2023 the proportion of children attaining the expected standard in maths increased 2.84% to 67.06%. **(Appendix 3)**

Gender - The proportion of boys who attained the expected standard in maths has increased by 2.42% to 66.51%. There has been 3.28% increase for girls since 2022 to 67.66%. The gender attainment gap has increased by 0.86% to 1.15%. **(Appendix 3)** Boys are 6.89% behind the emerging national figure of 73.4%, and girls are 4.64% behind the emerging national figure of 72.3%. **(Appendix 8)**

SEN - Pupils with SEN who attained the expected standard in maths has increased by 2.1% to 32.7%. Non-SEN pupils who attained the expected standard in maths increased by 2.59% to 79.27%. The SEN gap increased by 0.49% to 46.57%, continuing a trend decrease of the gap the last three years. 10.93% of those with an EHCP attained the expected standard in maths, increasing 5.96%. Attainment of those with SEN Support increased by 2.93% to 39.42%. The attainment gap between EHCP and SEN Support decreased by 3.03% to 28.49%. **(Appendix 3)**

FSM – 49.8% of FSM pupils attained the expected standard in maths, this is 0.5% more than 2022. 75.8% of non-FSM pupils attained the expected standard in maths, this is a 4.1% increase from 2022. The FSM gap has increased by 3.6% to 26%. **(Appendix 3)**

EAL – 74.8% of Wirral EAL pupils attained the expected standard in maths in 2023, which is 1.4% less than in 2022. 66.6% of Wirral non-EAL pupils attained the expected standard in maths, which is 2.5% higher than in 2022. The EAL gap has decreased by 3.9% to 8.2%. **(Appendix 3)**

Ethnicity - The attainment of Wirral non-white British pupils in maths at 74% in 2022, is a 3.7% decrease since 2022. 66.5% white British pupils attaining the expected standard in maths is 3% higher than in 2022. **(Appendix 3)** Non-white British pupils are attaining the expected standard in mathematics 3.2% less than the emerging national figure of 77.2%. White British pupils are behind the emerging national by 4.8%. **(Appendix 8)**

Disadvantaged – 50.2% of Wirral disadvantaged pupils attained the expected standard in maths, this is 0.2% more than 2022. 76.5% of Wirral non-disadvantaged pupils attained the expected standard in maths, this is an 3.4% increase since 2022. The disadvantaged attainment gap increased by 3.2% **(Appendix 3)**

Grammar Punctuation and Spelling (GPS)

All Pupils – In 2023 the proportion of children attaining the expected standard in grammar, punctuation and spelling (GPS) increased 0.65% to 67.65%. **(Appendix 5)**

Gender - The proportion of boys who attained the expected standard in GPS has increased by 0.91% to 62.8%. There has been a 0.17% increase for girls since 2022 to 72.79%. The gender gap has decreased by 0.75% to 9.99%. (**Appendix 5**)

SEN – Wirral pupils with SEN who attained the expected standard in GPS has increased by 0.9% to 31.8% (**Appendix 5**). Non-SEN pupils who attained the expected standard in GPS increased by 0.26% to 80.45% (**Appendix 5**). The SEN gap decreased by 0.64% to 48.65%. 13.71% of those with an EHCP attained the expected standard in GPS, increasing 6.25% since 2022. Those with SEN Support attainment increased by 1% to 37.42% (**Appendix 5**). The gap between EHCP and SEN Support decreased by 5.24% to 23.71%. (**Appendix 5**)

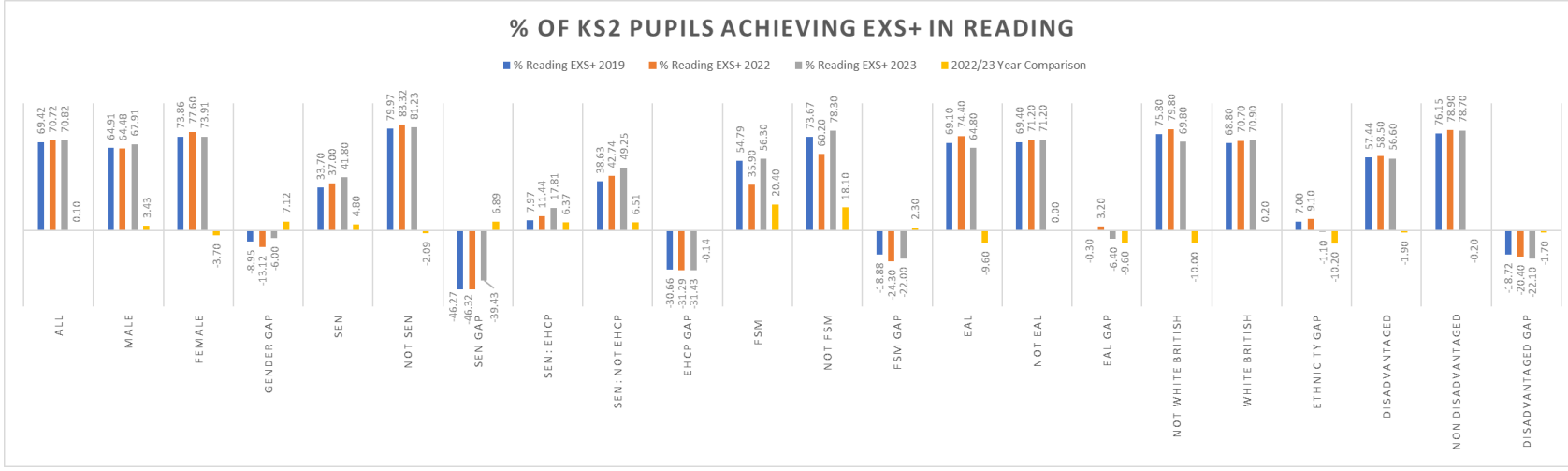
FSM - The increase in FSM pupils attaining the expected standard in GPS by 0.9% to 52% is the same as the non-FSM pupils increase of 0.9% to 75.6%. The FSM gap has remained the same as in 2022 at 23.6% (**Appendix 5**).

EAL – 69% of EAL pupils attained the expected standard in GPS, which is a decrease of 4.2% since 2022 and 6.10% behind the emerging national of 75.1%. (**Appendix 10**) Non-EAL pupils' attainment increased by 0.6% to 67.6%. The EAL attainment gap decreased by 4.8% to 1.4%, continuing a three-year trend of decrease in the gap. (**Appendix 5**)

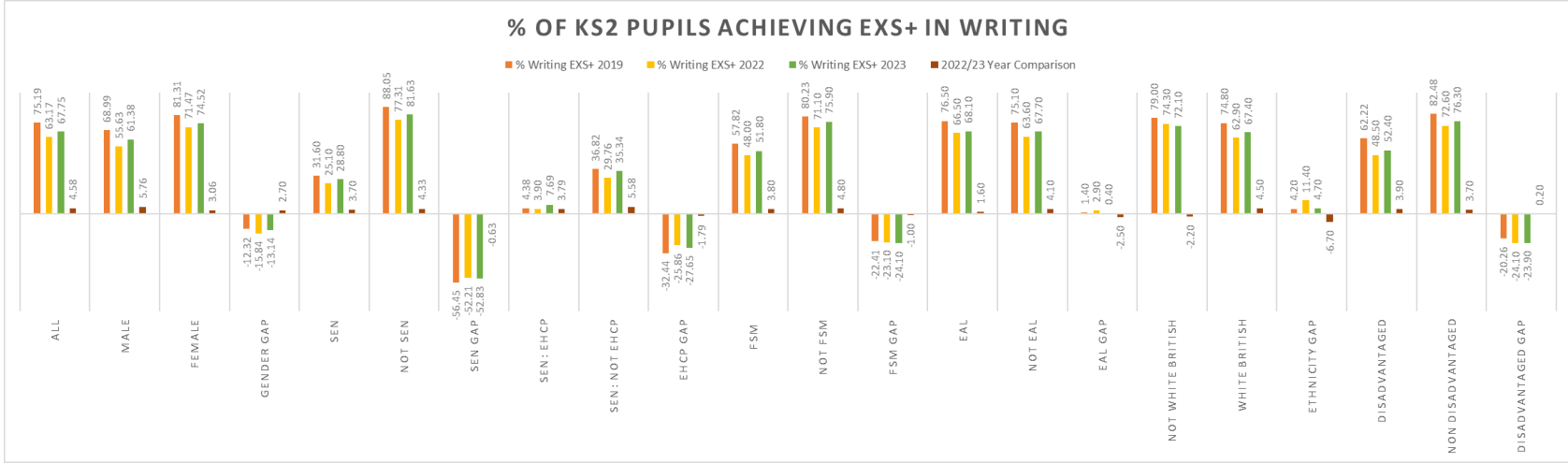
Ethnicity – 71.1% of Wirral non-white British pupils achieved the expected standard in GPS in 2023, which is 5.6% lower than in 2022. 67.4% of Wirral white British pupils attained the expected standard in GPS, which is a 0.9% increase. The Ethnicity gap has decreased by 6.5% (**Appendix 5**).

Disadvantaged – 52.2% of Wirral disadvantaged pupils attained the expected standard in GPS, this is 0.3% more than 2022. 76.3% of Wirral non - disadvantaged pupils attained the expected standard in GPS, this is a 0.1% increase from 2022. (**Appendix 5**) The disadvantaged gap has decreased by 0.2% to 24.1% in 2023 and is 5.2% higher than the emerging national figure of 18.9%. (**Appendix 10**)

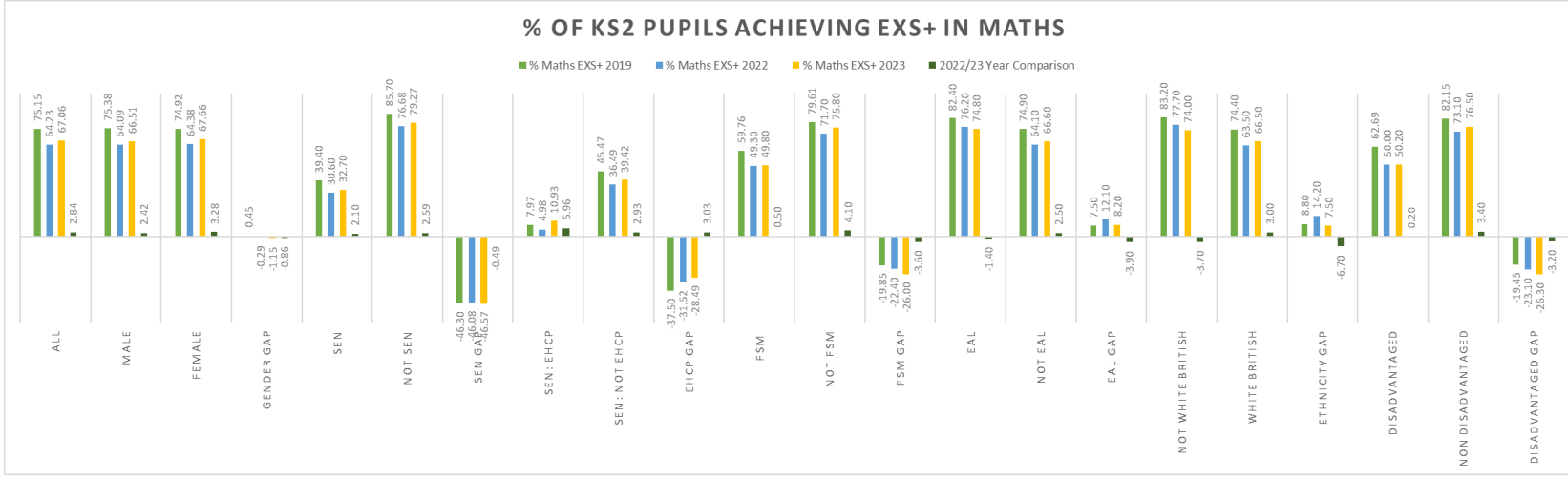
Appendix 1



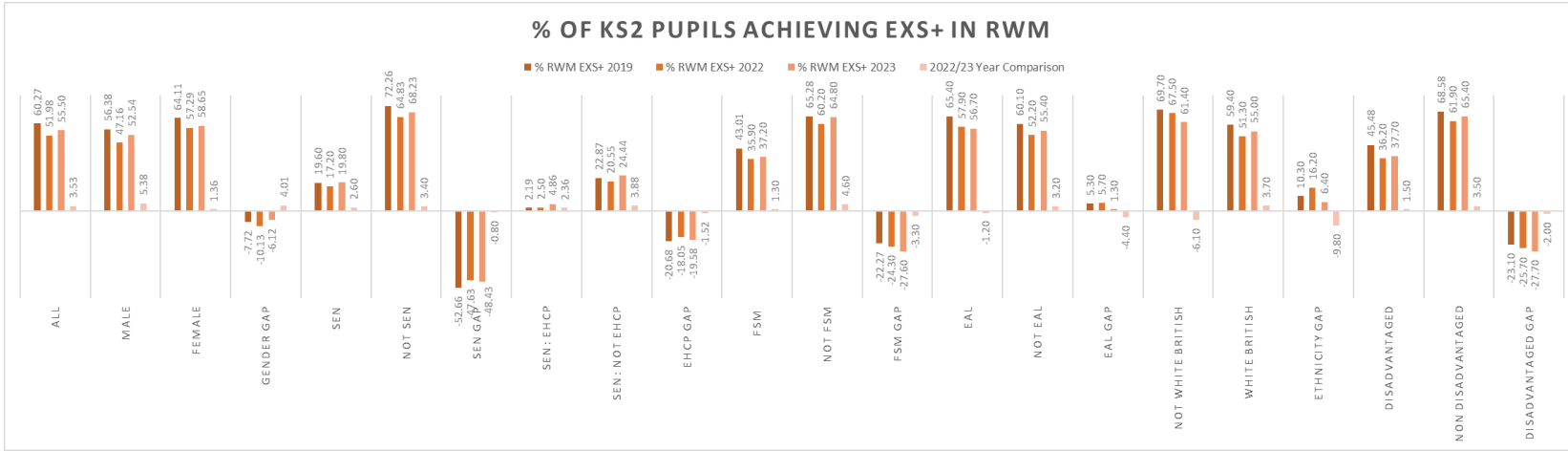
Appendix 2



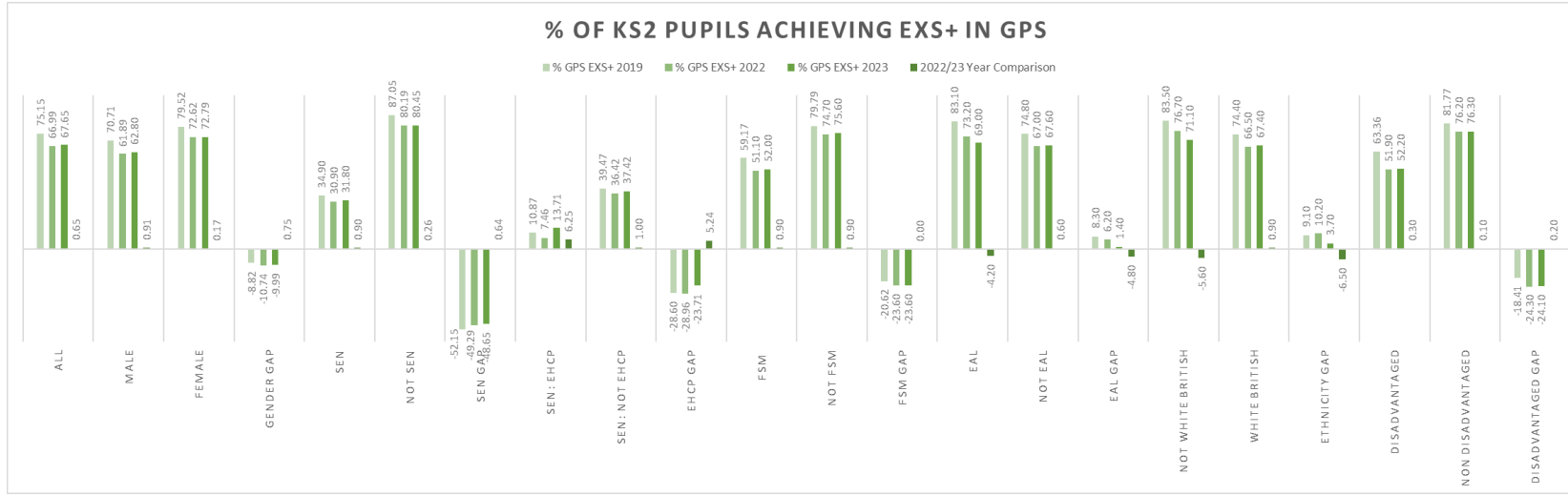
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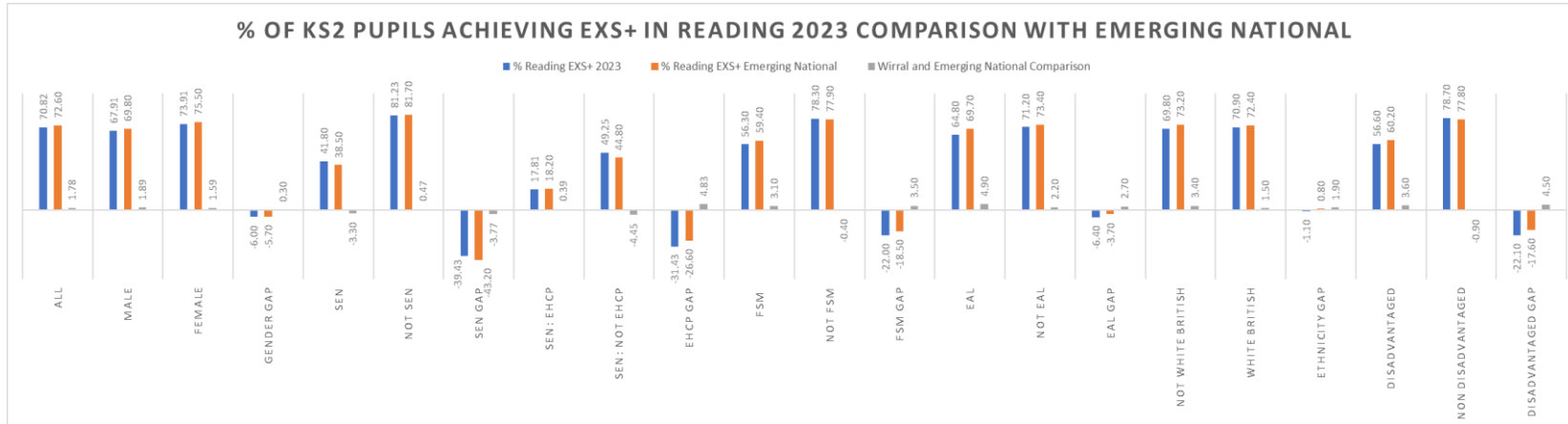
Appendix 4



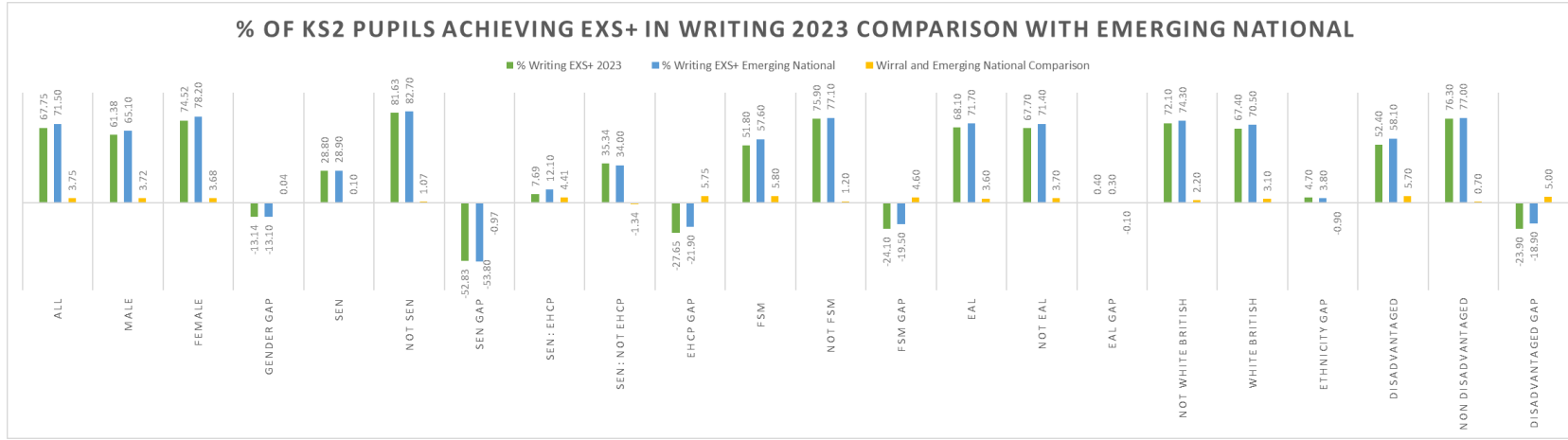
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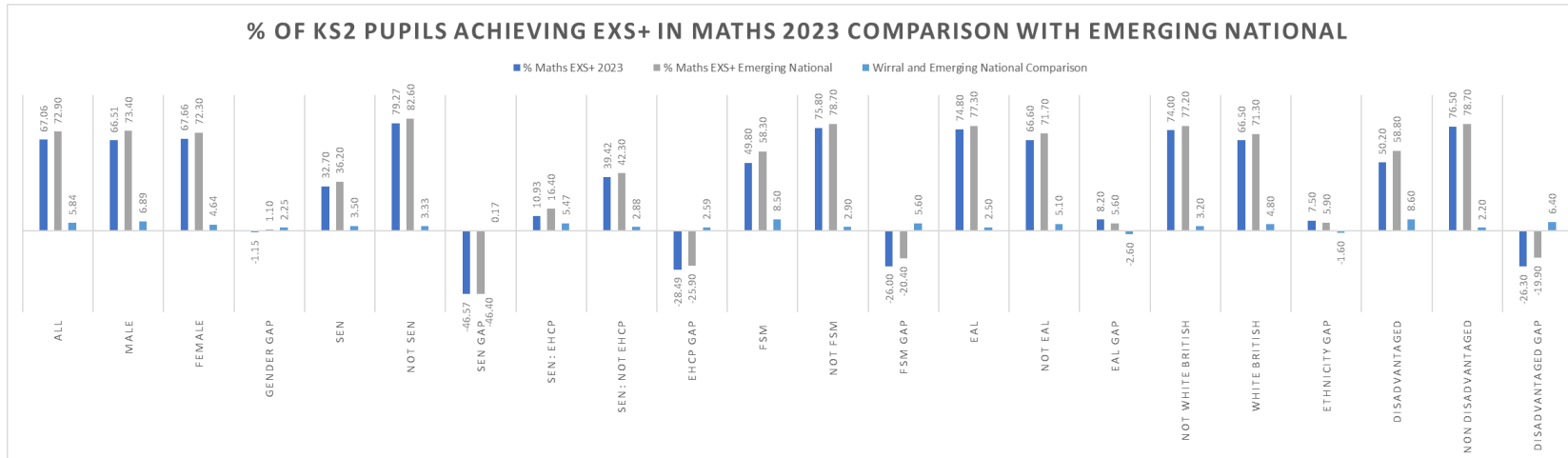
Appendix 6



Appendix 7



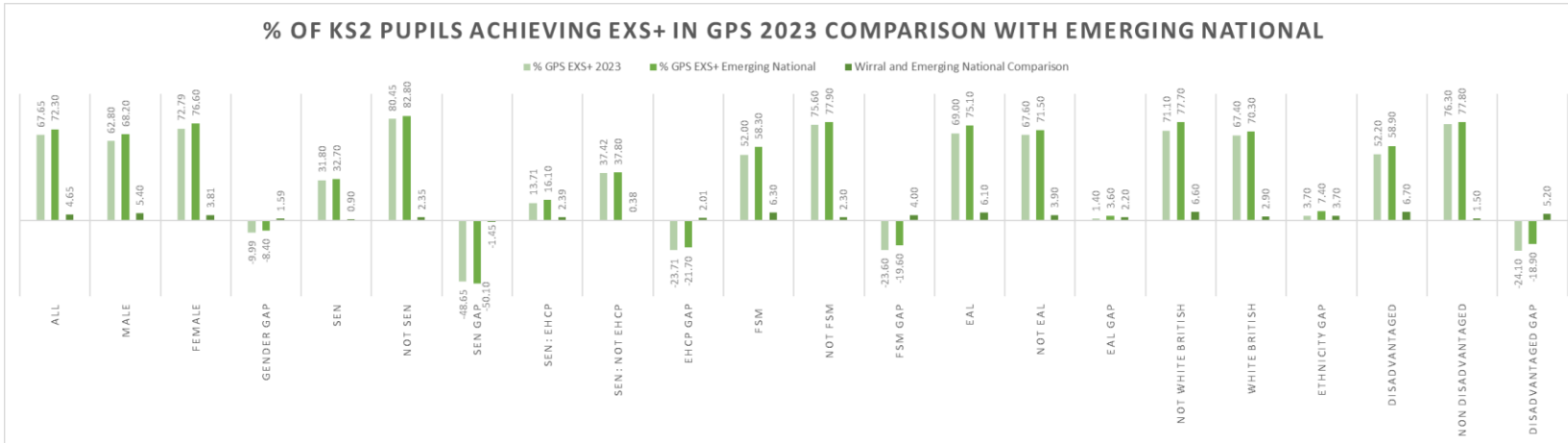
Appendix 8



Appendix 9



Appendix 10



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Executive Summary

Please note all results are provisional at the time of authoring this report. The emerging national is the NCER National figure of 151 contributing Local Authorities. Comparison has been made between 2023 and 2022. Trend analysis is referring to years 2019,2022 and 2023.

(August 2023)

Key Stage One

Reading, Writing and Mathematics Combined (RWM)

All Pupils - The proportion of children attaining the expected standard in reading, writing and maths (RWM) has increased by 3.1% to 51.8%. **(Appendix 4)**

Gender - The proportion of boys who attained the expected standard in RWM has increased by 0.5% less than girls. This is a 2.8% increase since 2022. There has been a 3.3% increase for girls in 2023. The gender gap has increased by 0.5% to 10.9%. **(Appendix 4)**

SEN - Pupils with SEN who attained the expected standard in RWM has increased by 0.8% to 12.8%. Non-SEN pupils who attained the expected standard in RWM increased by 4%. The SEN gap decreased by 3.2% to 48.3%. Those with an EHCP who attained the expected standard in RWM has increased by 2.5% to 3.4%. Those who attained without an EHCP but with SEN Support increased by 1.3% to 15.5%. **(Appendix 4)**

FSM - The increase in FSM pupils attaining the expected standard in RWM by 4% to 36.8% is more than the non-FSM pupils increase of 2.7% to 58.3%. The FSM gap further decreased by 1.2% to 21.5%. **(Appendix 4)**

EAL - The attainment of Wirral EAL pupils in RWM has decreased by 7.5% and is now 9.1% lower than the emerging national figure at 45.7%. Non EAL pupils attaining the expected standard in RWM has increased by 3.6% to 52.1%, lower than the emerging National figure of 56.4%. **(Appendix 8)**

Ethnicity - The percentage of Non-White British pupils who attained the expected standard in RWM has decreased by 0.2% to 50%. The White British pupils who have attained the expected standard in RWM has increased by 3.4% to 52%. **(Appendix 4)**

Disadvantaged – 36.5% Disadvantaged attained the expected standard in RWM, an 4.2% increase since 2022. 58.1% of non-disadvantaged attained the expected standard in RWM, a 2.4% increase since 2022. The Disadvantaged gap decreased by 1.8%. **(Appendix 4)**

Reading

All Pupils – Since 2022 the proportion of children attaining the expected standard in reading increased 1.4% to 65.8%. **(Appendix 1)**

Gender - The proportion of boys who attained the expected standard in Reading has increased by 1.9% to 61.2%. There has been a 0.8% increase for girls in 2023. The gender gap has decreased by 1.1% to 9.5%. **(Appendix 1)** The Wirral girls are only 1.1% behind the emerging national figure of 71.8% for girls. Unlike Wirral males who are 3.7% below the emerging national figure of 64.9% for males. **(Appendix 5)**

SEN - Pupils with SEN who attained the expected standard in Reading has increased by 4.1% to 28%. Non-SEN pupils who attained the expected standard in Reading increased by 1.2% to 74.8%. The SEN gap decreased by 2.8% to 46.8%, continuing a trend decrease of the gap the last three years. 11.4% of those with an EHCP attained the expected standard in reading, a 8.7% increase since 2022. Those with SEN Support also increased by 4.4% to 32.6%. The gap between EHCP and SEN Support further decreased by 4.2% to 21.2%. (**Appendix 1**) Wirral EHCP pupils are 1.2% behind the emerging national figure of 12.6%. The Wirral SEN Support pupils are 0.6% ahead of the emerging national figure of 32%. (**Appendix 5**)

FSM - The increase in FSM pupils attaining the expected standard in reading by 2% to 50.2% is more than the non-FSM pupils increase of 1.1% to 72.5%. The FSM gap decreased by 0.9% to 22.3%. (**Appendix 1**)

EAL - The attainment of Wirral EAL pupils in reading at 54.3% in 2023, is 10.5% lower than the emerging national figure. 66.4% non EAL pupils attaining the expected standard in reading are still 2.8% lower than the emerging national figure. (**Appendix 5**)

Ethnicity - The percentage of non-white British pupils who attained the expected standard in reading has decreased by 3.1% to 60.6%. The white British pupils have increased attainment by 1.6% to 66.3%. (**Appendix 1**)

Disadvantaged – 49.8% of Wirral disadvantaged pupils attained the expected standard in reading, this is 4.2% less than the emerging national figure. 72.3% of Wirral non - disadvantaged pupils attained the expected standard in reading, this is 0.5% lower than the emerging national figure. (**Appendix 5**)

Writing

All Pupils – Since 2022 the proportion of children attaining the expected standard in writing increased 3.6% to 57.2%. (**Appendix 2**)

Gender - The proportion of boys who attained the expected standard in writing has increased by 3.4% to 50.2%. There has been a 3.8% increase for girls in 2023. The gender gap has increased by 0.5% to 14.4%. (**Appendix 2**)

SEN - Pupils with SEN who attained the expected standard in writing has increased by 0.5% to 15.2%. Non-SEN pupils who attained the expected standard in writing increased by 4.8% to 67.2%. The SEN gap increased by 4.3% to 52%. 4% of those with an EHCP attained the expected standard in writing, an increase of 3.1%. Those with SEN Support also increased by 0.7% to 18.2%. The gap between EHCP and SEN Support further decreased by 2.3% to 14.2%. (**Appendix 2**)

FSM - The increase in FSM pupils attaining the expected standard in writing by 3.3% to 41% is less than the non-FSM pupils increase of 3.7% to 64.1%. The FSM gap increased by 0.4% to 23.1%. (**Appendix 2**)

EAL – 49.5% of Wirral EAL pupils attained the expected standard in writing in 2023, 9.3% lower than the emerging national figure. 57.6% non EAL pupils attaining the expected standard in writing is 2.9% lower than the emerging national figure. (**Appendix 6**)

Ethnicity - The attainment of Wirral non-white British pupils in writing at 53.5% in 2023, is 8.9% lower than the emerging national figure. 57.5% white British pupils attaining the expected standard in writing is 1.7% lower than the emerging national figure. (**Appendix 6**)

Disadvantaged – 40.5% of Wirral disadvantaged pupils attained the expected standard in writing, this is 3.1% more than 2022. 64% of Wirral non - disadvantaged pupils attained the expected standard in writing, this is a 3.6% increase from 2022. **(Appendix 2)**

Mathematics

All Pupils –In 2023 the proportion of children attaining the expected standard in maths increased 3% to 68.5%. **(Appendix 3)**

Gender - The proportion of boys who attained the expected standard in maths has increased by 3.1% to 68.4%. There has been 2.8% increase for girls since 2022 to 68.6%. The gender gap has decreased by 0.3% to 0.2%. **(Appendix 3)**

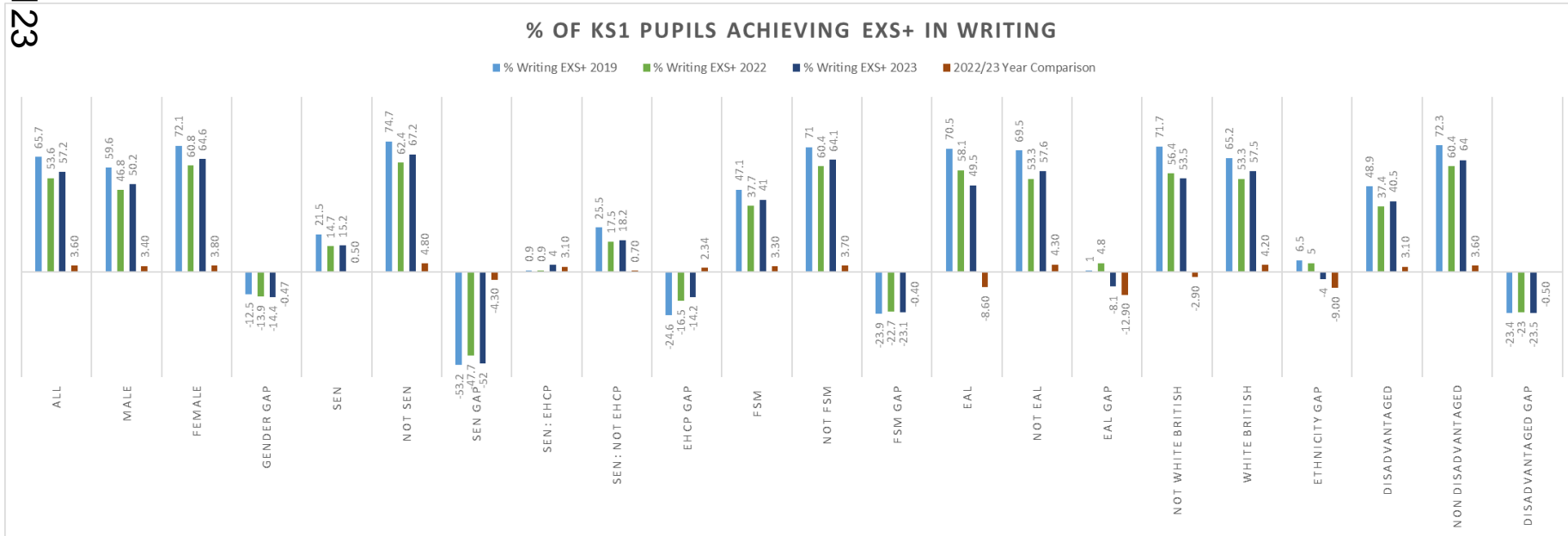
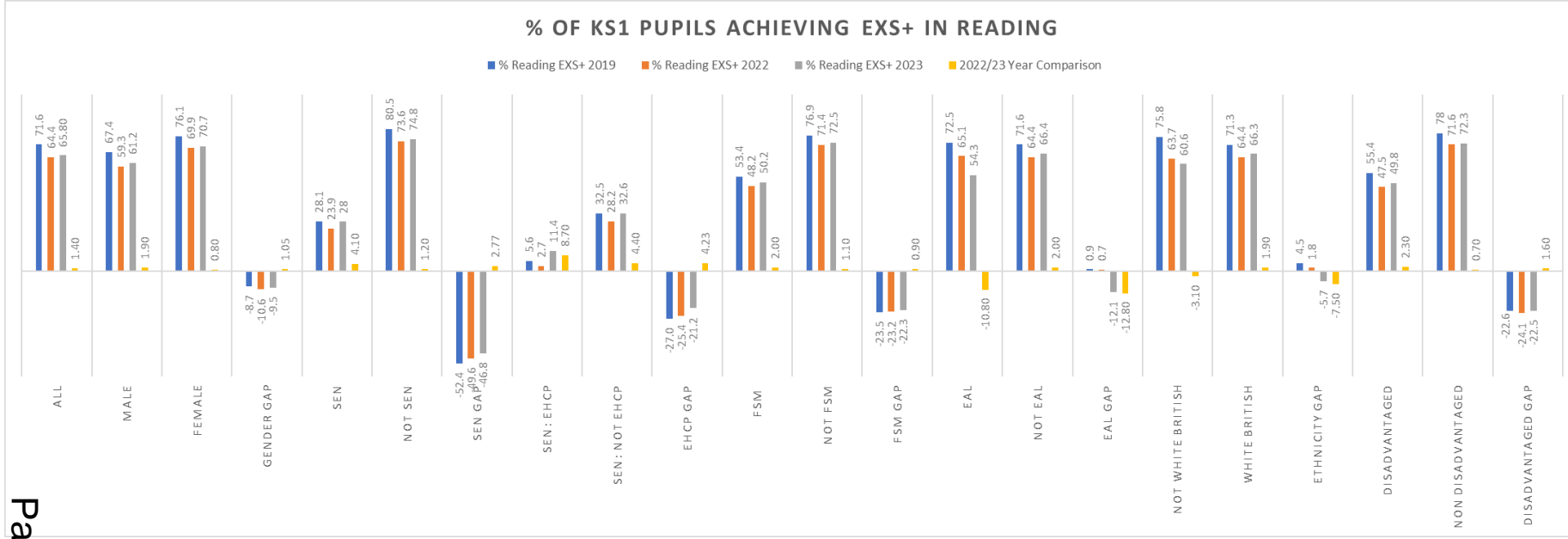
SEN - Pupils with SEN who attained the expected standard in maths has increased by 2% to 29.6%. Non-SEN pupils who attained the expected standard in maths increased by 3.7% to 77.8%. The SEN gap increased by 1.7% to 48.2%. 12.1% of those with an EHCP attained the expected standard in maths, increasing 9.4%. Those with SEN Support increased by 2% to 34.5%. The gap between EHCP and SEN Support decreased by 7.4% to 22.4%. **(Appendix 3)**

FSM – 53.4% of Wirral FSM pupils attained the expected standard in maths is which is 2.4% less than the emerging national figure. 75% of Wirral non-FSM pupils attained the expected standard in maths is which is 0.7% less than the emerging national figure. **(Appendix 7)**

EAL – 64.9% of Wirral EAL pupils attained the expected standard in maths in 2023, 4.3% lower than the emerging national figure. 68.7% of Wirral non EAL pupils attained the expected standard in maths, which is 2% lower than the emerging national figure. **(Appendix 7)**

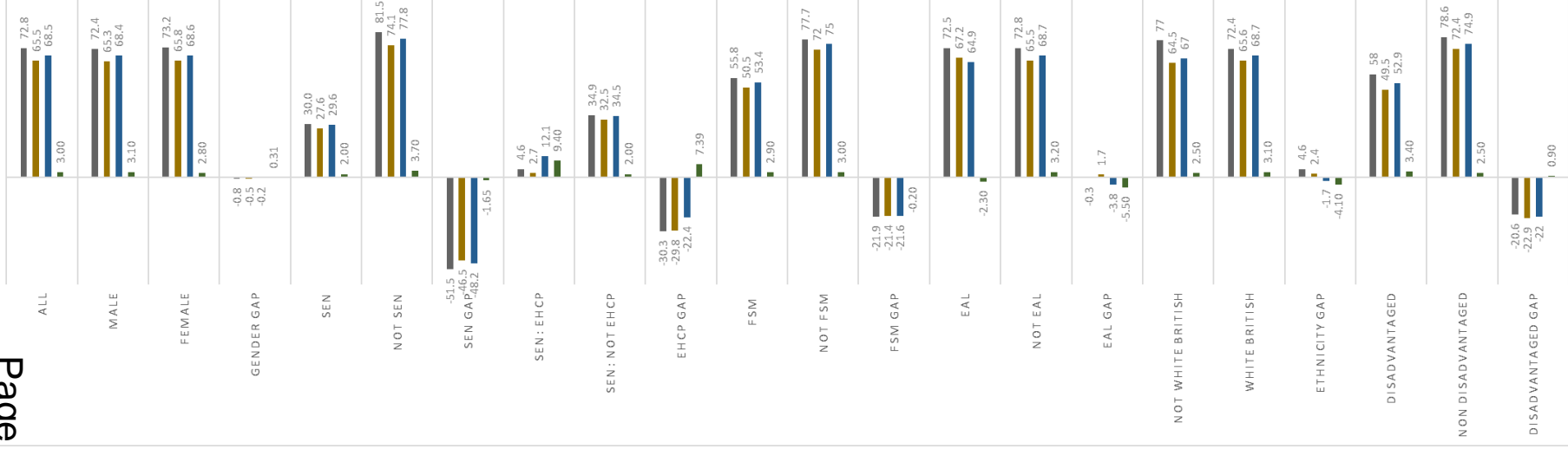
Ethnicity - The attainment of Wirral non-white British pupils in maths at 67% in 2023, is 3.9% lower than the emerging national figure. 68.7% white British pupils attaining the expected standard in maths is 1.5% lower than the emerging national figure. **(Appendix 7)**

Disadvantaged – 52.9% of Wirral disadvantaged pupils attained the expected standard in maths, this is 3.4% more than 2022. 74.9% of Wirral non - disadvantaged pupils attained the expected standard in maths, this is a 2.5% increase from 2022. **(Appendix 3)**



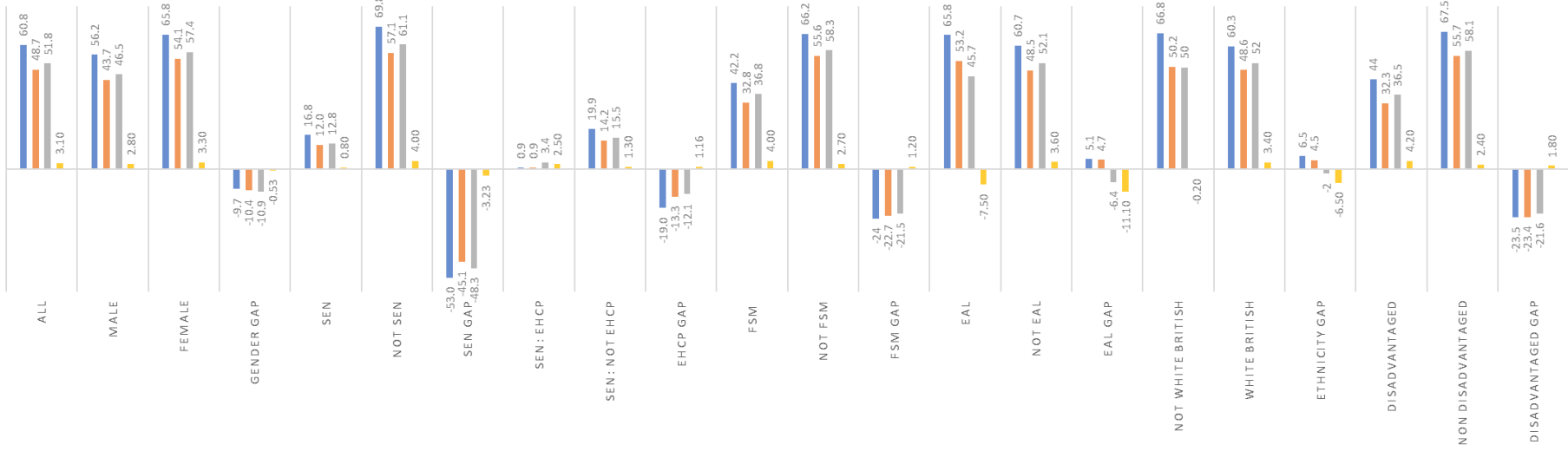
% OF KS1 PUPILS ACHIEVING EXS+ IN MATHS

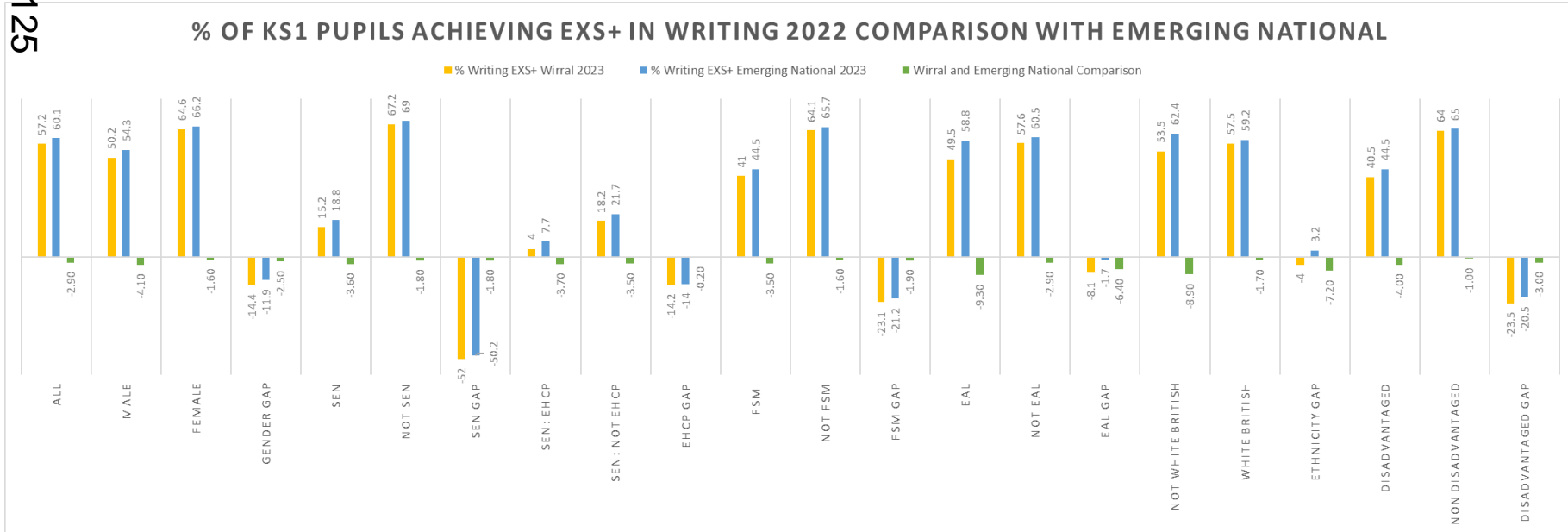
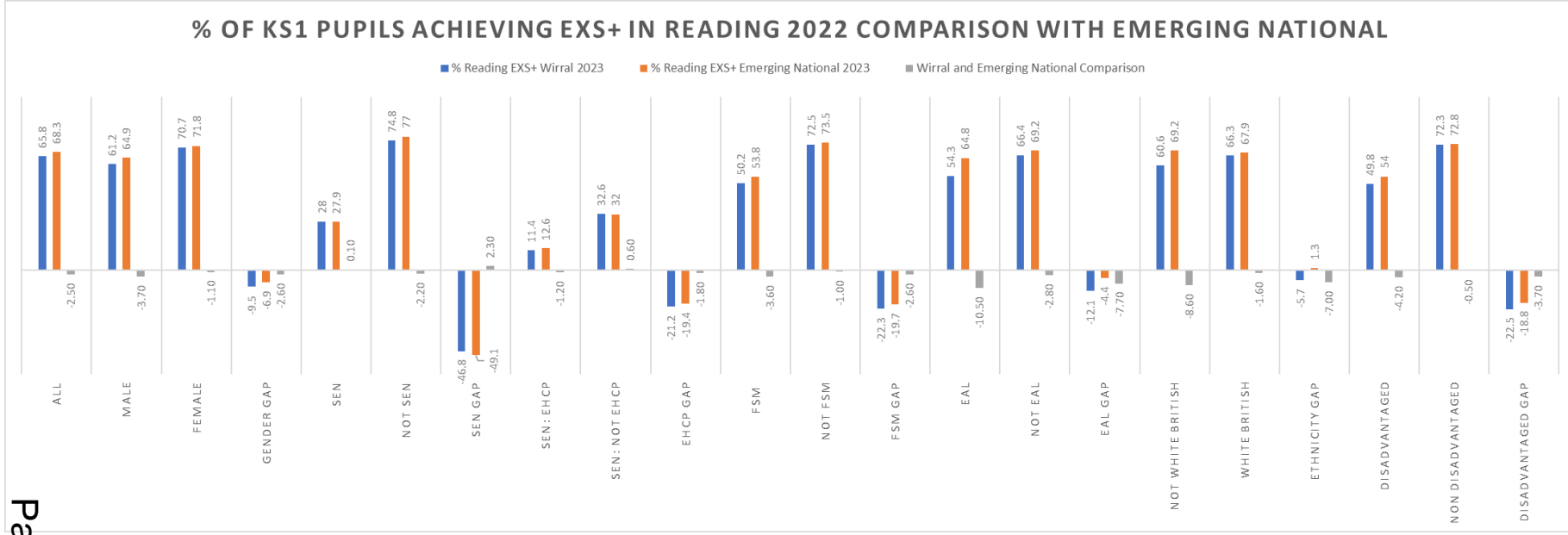
■ % Maths EXS+ 2019 ■ % Maths EXS+ 2022 ■ % Maths EXS+ 2023 ■ 2022/23 Year Comparison



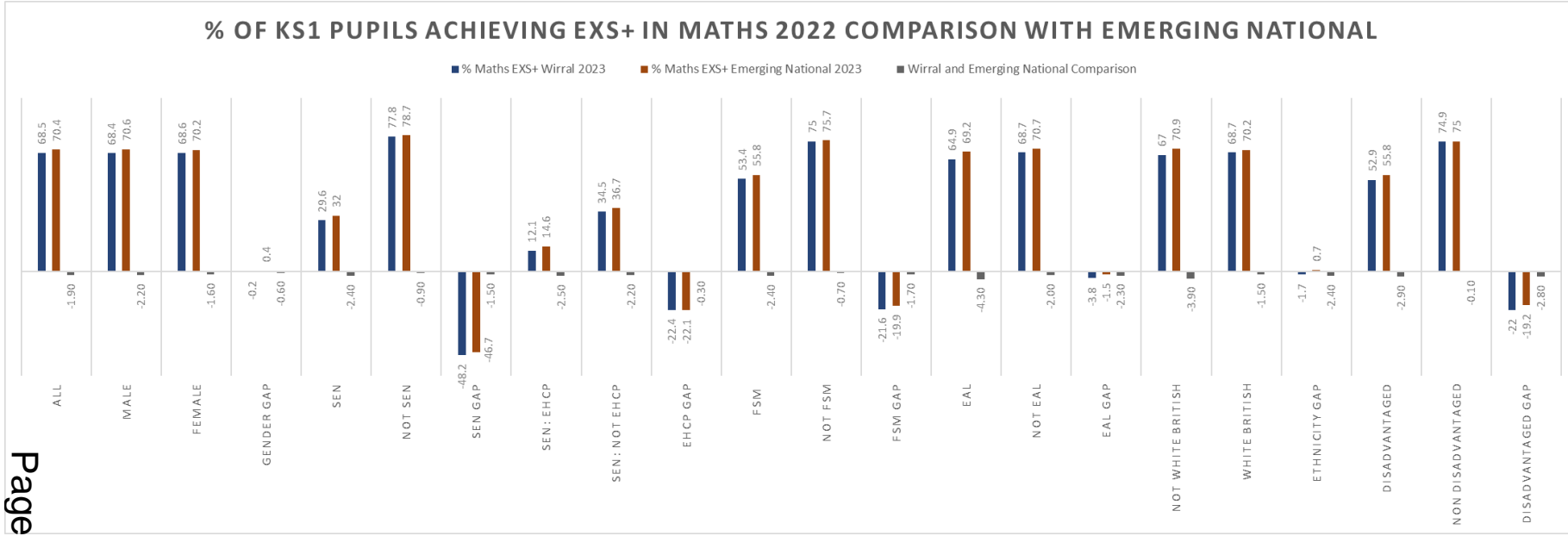
% OF KS1 PUPILS ACHIEVING EXS+ IN RWM

■ % RWM EXS+ 2019 ■ % RWM EXS+ 2022 ■ % RWM EXS+ 2023 ■ 2022/23 Year Comparison

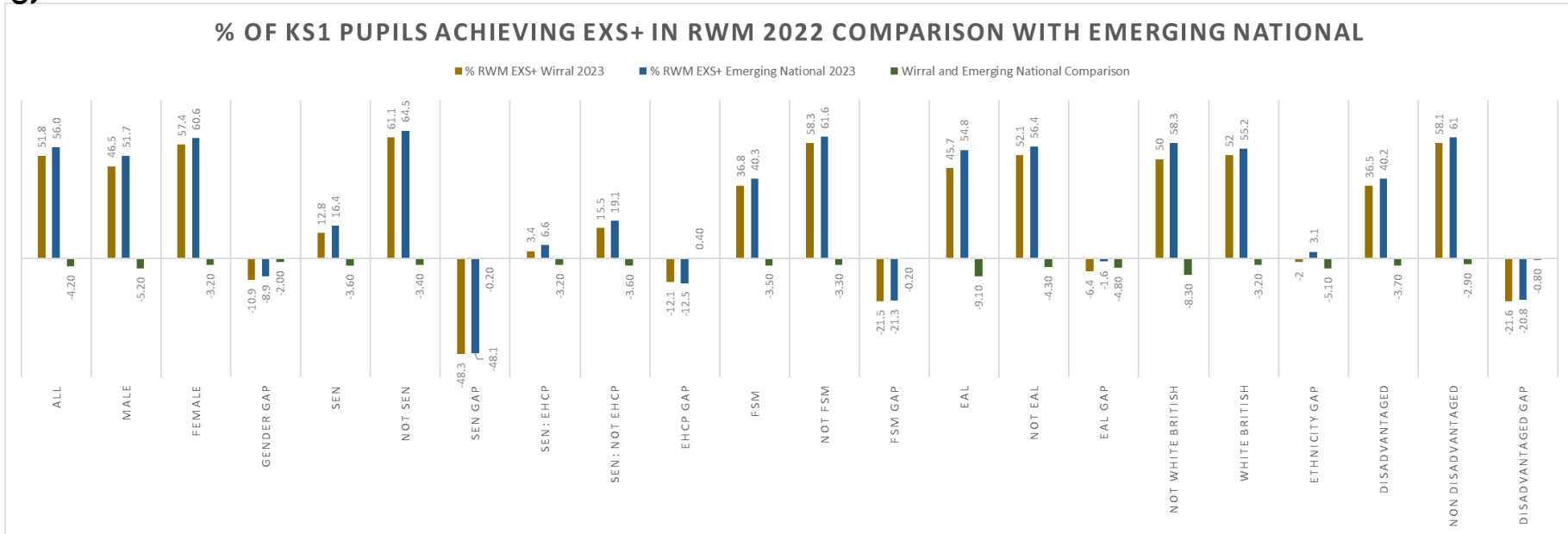




Appendix 7



Appendix 8



Appendix 9

Characteristic	% Reading EXS+ 2019	% Reading EXS+ 2022	% Reading EXS+ 2023	2022/23 Year Comparison	% Writing EXS+ 2019	% Writing EXS+ 2022	% Writing EXS+ 2023	2022/23 Year Comparison	% Maths EXS+ 2019	% Maths EXS+ 2022	% Maths EXS+ 2023	2022/23 Year Comparison	% RWM EXS+ 2019	% RWM EXS+ 2022	% RWM EXS+ 2023	2022/23 Year Comparison
All	71.6	64.4	65.80	1.40	65.7	53.6	57.2	3.60	72.8	65.5	68.5	3.00	60.8	48.7	51.8	3.10
Male	67.4	59.3	61.2	1.90	59.6	46.8	50.2	3.40	72.4	65.3	68.4	3.10	56.2	43.7	46.5	2.80
Female	76.1	69.9	70.7	0.80	72.1	60.8	64.6	3.80	73.2	65.8	68.6	2.80	65.8	54.1	57.4	3.30
Gender Gap	-8.7	-10.6	-9.5	1.05	-12.5	-13.9	-14.4	-0.47	-0.8	-0.5	-0.2	0.31	-9.7	-10.4	-10.9	-0.53
SEN	28.1	23.9	28	4.10	21.5	14.7	15.2	0.50	30.0	27.6	29.6	2.00	16.8	12.0	12.8	0.80
Not SEN	80.5	73.6	74.8	1.20	74.7	62.4	67.2	4.80	81.5	74.1	77.8	3.70	69.8	57.1	61.1	4.00
SEN gap	-52.4	-49.6	-46.8	2.77	-53.2	-47.7	-52	-4.30	-51.5	-46.5	-48.2	-1.65	-53.0	-45.1	-48.3	-3.23
SEN: EHCP	5.6	2.7	11.4	8.70	0.9	0.9	4	3.10	4.6	2.7	12.1	9.40	0.9	0.9	3.4	2.50
SEN: Not EHCP	32.5	28.2	32.6	4.40	25.5	17.5	18.2	0.70	34.9	32.5	34.5	2.00	19.9	14.2	15.5	1.30
EHCP Gap	-27.0	-25.4	-21.2	4.23	-24.6	-16.5	-14.2	2.34	-30.3	-29.8	-22.4	7.39	-19.0	-13.3	-12.1	1.16
FSM	53.4	48.2	50.2	2.00	47.1	37.7	41	3.30	55.8	50.5	53.4	2.90	42.2	32.8	36.8	4.00
Not FSM	76.9	71.4	72.5	1.10	71	60.4	64.1	3.70	77.7	72	75	3.00	66.2	55.6	58.3	2.70
FSM Gap	-23.5	-23.2	-22.3	0.90	-23.9	-22.7	-23.1	-0.40	-21.9	-21.4	-21.6	-0.20	-24	-22.7	-21.5	1.20
EAL	72.5	65.1	54.3	-10.80	70.5	58.1	49.5	-8.60	72.5	67.2	64.9	-2.30	65.8	53.2	45.7	-7.50
Not EAL	71.6	64.4	66.4	2.00	69.5	53.3	57.6	4.30	72.8	65.5	68.7	3.20	60.7	48.5	52.1	3.60
EAL Gap	0.9	0.7	-12.1	-12.80	1	4.8	-8.1	-12.90	-0.3	1.7	-3.8	-5.50	5.1	4.7	-6.4	-11.10
Not White British	75.8	63.7	60.6	-3.10	71.7	56.4	53.5	-2.90	77	64.5	67	2.50	66.8	50.2	50	-0.20
White British	71.3	64.4	66.3	1.90	65.2	53.3	57.5	4.20	72.4	65.6	68.7	3.10	60.3	48.6	52	3.40
Ethnicity gap	4.5	1.8	-5.7	-7.50	6.5	5	-4	-9.00	4.6	2.4	-1.7	-4.10	6.5	4.5	-2	-6.50
Disadvantaged	55.4	47.5	49.8	2.30	48.9	37.4	40.5	3.10	58	49.5	52.9	3.40	44	32.3	36.5	4.20
Non Disadvantaged	78	71.6	72.3	0.70	72.3	60.4	64	3.60	78.6	72.4	74.9	2.50	67.5	55.7	58.1	2.40
Disadvantaged gap	-22.6	-24.1	-22.5	1.60	-23.4	-23	-23.5	-0.50	-20.6	-22.9	-22	0.90	-23.5	-23.4	-21.6	1.80

Appendix 10

Characteristic	% Reading EXS+ Wirral 2023	% Reading EXS+ Emerging National 2023	Wirral and Emerging National Comparison	% Writing EXS+ Wirral 2023	% Writing EXS+ Emerging National 2023	Wirral and Emerging National Comparison	% Maths EXS+ Wirral 2023	% Maths EXS+ Emerging National 2023	Wirral and Emerging National Comparison	% RWM EXS+ Wirral 2023	% RWM EXS+ Emerging National 2023	Wirral and Emerging National Comparison
All	65.8	68.3	-2.50	57.2	60.1	-2.90	68.5	70.4	-1.90	51.8	56.0	-4.20
Male	61.2	64.9	-3.70	50.2	54.3	-4.10	68.4	70.6	-2.20	46.5	51.7	-5.20
Female	70.7	71.8	-1.10	64.6	66.2	-1.60	68.6	70.2	-1.60	57.4	60.6	-3.20
Gender Gap	-9.5	-6.9	-2.60	-14.4	-11.9	-2.50	-0.2	0.4	-0.60	-10.9	-8.9	-2.00
SEN	28	27.9	0.10	15.2	18.8	-3.60	29.6	32	-2.40	12.8	16.4	-3.60
Not SEN	74.8	77	-2.20	67.2	69	-1.80	77.8	78.7	-0.90	61.1	64.5	-3.40
SEN gap	-46.8	-49.1	2.30	-52	-50.2	-1.80	-48.2	-46.7	-1.50	-48.3	-48.1	-0.20
SEN: EHCP	11.4	12.6	-1.20	4	7.7	-3.70	12.1	14.6	-2.50	3.4	6.6	-3.20
SEN: Not EHCP	32.6	32	0.60	18.2	21.7	-3.50	34.5	36.7	-2.20	15.5	19.1	-3.60
EHCP Gap	-21.2	-19.4	-1.80	-14.2	-14	-0.20	-22.4	-22.1	-0.30	-12.1	-12.5	0.40
FSM	50.2	53.8	-3.60	41	44.5	-3.50	53.4	55.8	-2.40	36.8	40.3	-3.50
Not FSM	72.5	73.5	-1.00	64.1	65.7	-1.60	75	75.7	-0.70	58.3	61.6	-3.30
FSM Gap	-22.3	-19.7	-2.60	-23.1	-21.2	-1.90	-21.6	-19.9	-1.70	-21.5	-21.3	-0.20
EAL	54.3	64.8	-10.50	49.5	58.8	-9.30	64.9	69.2	-4.30	45.7	54.8	-9.10
Not EAL	66.4	69.2	-2.80	57.6	60.5	-2.90	68.7	70.7	-2.00	52.1	56.4	-4.30
EAL Gap	-12.1	-4.4	-7.70	-8.1	-1.7	-6.40	-3.8	-1.5	-2.30	-6.4	-1.6	-4.80
Not White British	60.6	69.2	-8.60	53.5	62.4	-8.90	67	70.9	-3.90	50	58.3	-8.30
White British	66.3	67.9	-1.60	57.5	59.2	-1.70	68.7	70.2	-1.50	52	55.2	-3.20
Ethnicity gap	-5.7	1.3	-7.00	-4	3.2	-7.20	-1.7	0.7	-2.40	-2	3.1	-5.10
Disadvantaged	49.8	54	-4.20	40.5	44.5	-4.00	52.9	55.8	-2.90	36.5	40.2	-3.70
Non Disadvantaged	72.3	72.8	-0.50	64	65	-1.00	74.9	75	-0.10	58.1	61	-2.90
Disadvantaged gap	-22.5	-18.8	-3.70	-23.5	-20.5	-3.00	-22	-19.2	-2.80	-21.6	-20.8	-0.80

Executive Summary

Year 1 Phonics 2023

All Pupils - The proportion of year 1 pupils attaining the expected standard in phonics increased by 1.7% to 79% (**Appendix 3**). The national average has also increased to 78.9% (**Appendix 4**). This has resulted in the gap between Wirral outcomes and the national average reducing to a gap of 0.1% in 2023.

Gender - Phonics outcomes increased for both boys and girls. Boys increased at a greater rate which reduced the gender gap by 1.7% to 9.8% (**Appendix 3**).

SEN - The proportion of SEN pupils attaining the phonics standard increased by 5.6% to 41.7%. The attainment of non-SEN children has increased by 2.9% to 87%. The gap between SEN and Not SEN has narrowed by 2.7% to 45.3% (**Appendix 3**).

SEN: EHCP - The proportion of SEN pupils with an EHCP attaining the phonics standard increased by 8.1 to 16.9%. The attainment of SEN pupils without an EHCP has increased by 6.5% to 48.7% so the gap reduced by 1.6% to 31.8% (**Appendix 3**).

FSM - The proportion of FSM pupils who attained the phonics standard increased by 2.3% to 67.1% while non-FSM attainment increased by 1.9% to 84.1%, so reducing the free school meal gap by 0.4% to 17% (**Appendix 3**).

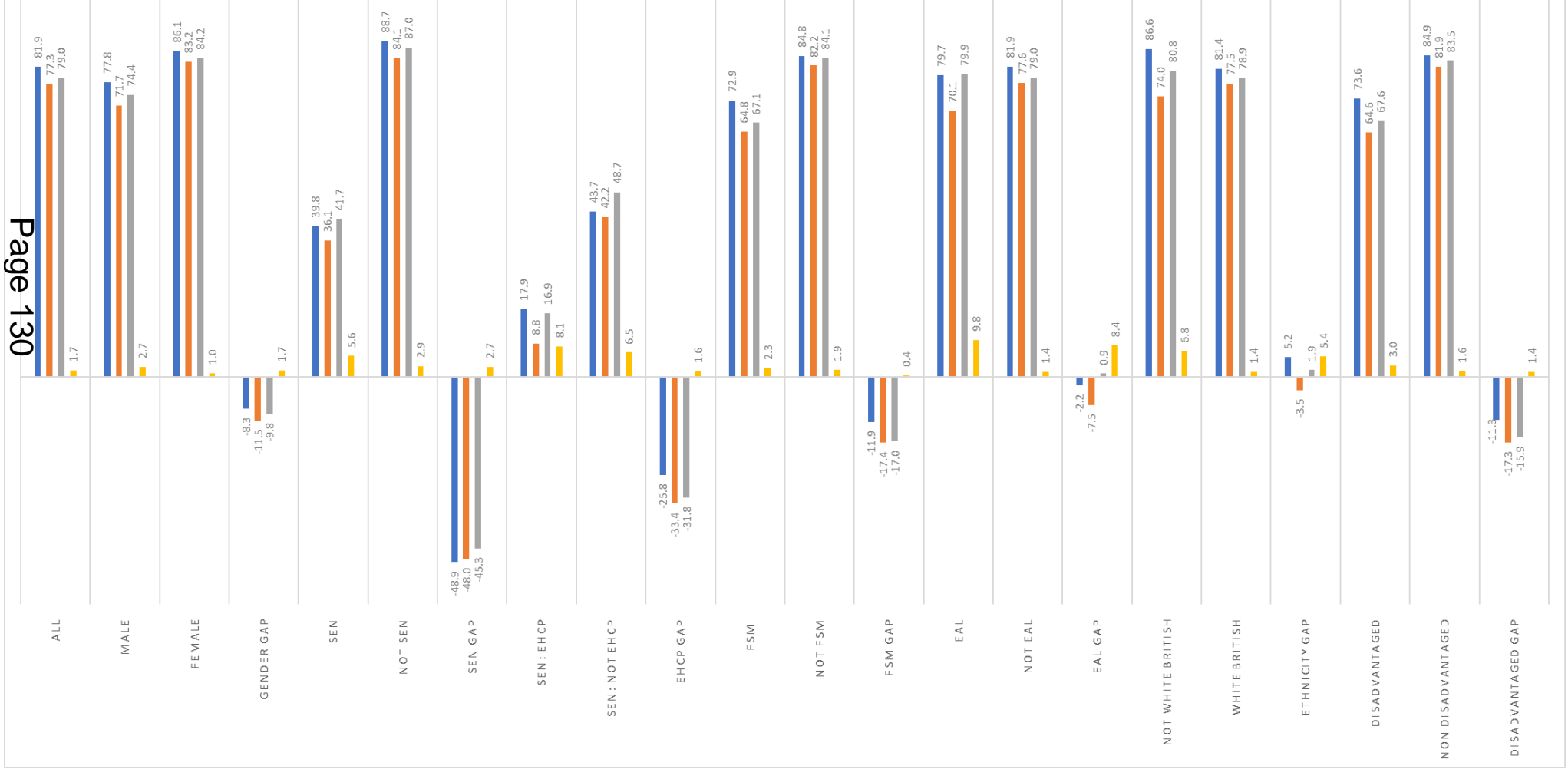
EAL - Phonics outcomes increased for pupils with English as an additional language (EAL). The proportion of pupils with EAL who met the phonics standard increased by 9.8% to 79.9% while the attainment of pupils who do not have EAL increased by 1.4% to 79%, as a result, the EAL attainment gap has reduced greatly by 8.4% to a 0.9% difference (**Appendix 3**).

Ethnicity - The proportion of both White British and non-white British pupils reaching the phonics standard has increased by 1.4% to 78.9% and 6.8% to 80.8% respectively. The attainment gap between White British and Non-white British has therefore changed to 1.9% in 2023 (**Appendix 3**).

Disadvantaged The proportion of disadvantaged pupils attaining the phonics standard increased by 3% compared with non-disadvantaged pupils' attainment increasing by 1.6%. As a result, the disadvantaged gap has reduced by 1.4% to 15.9% (**Appendix 3**).

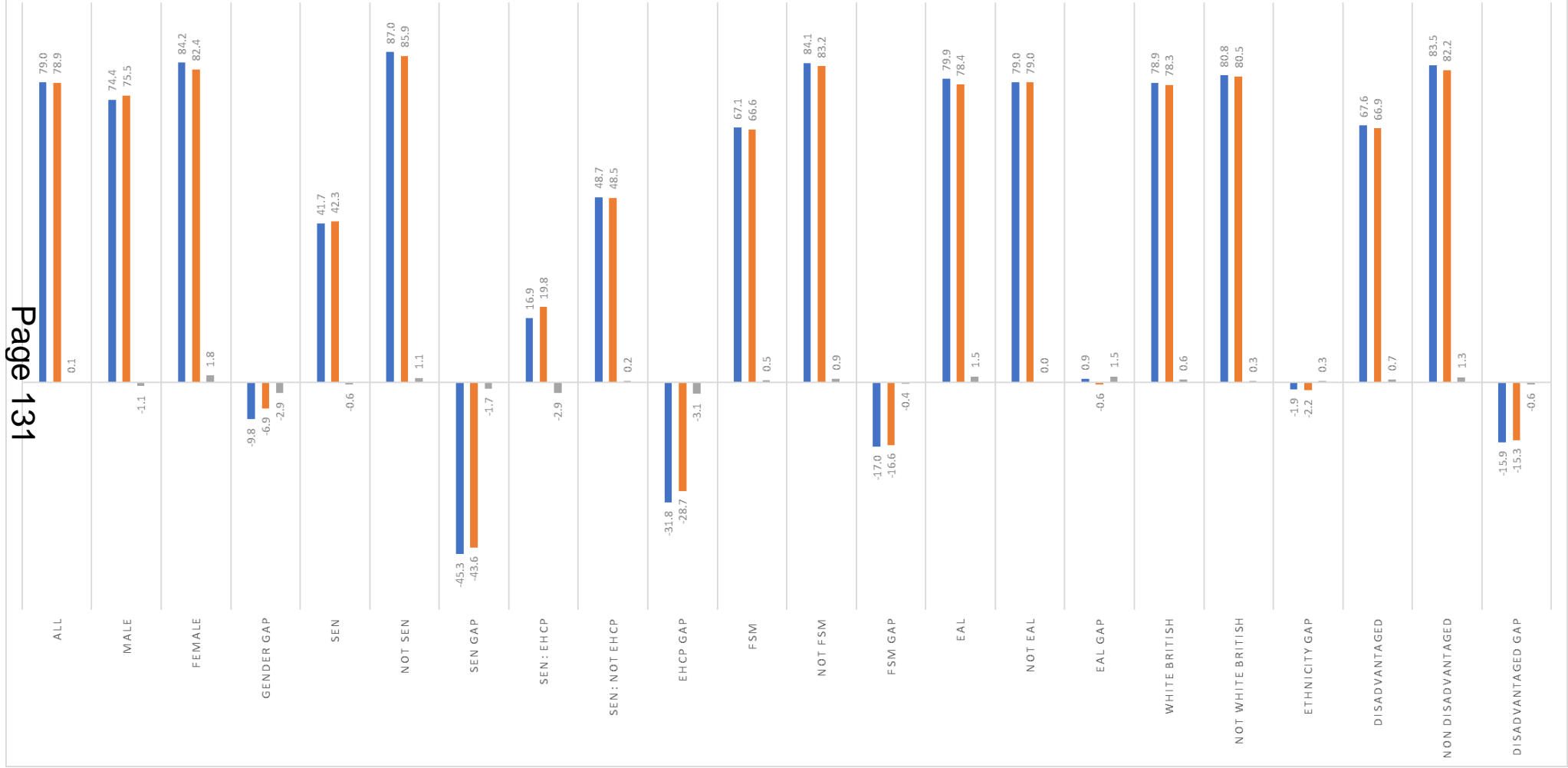
% OF YEAR 1 PUPILS ACHIEVING WA IN PHONICS

■ % Wa 2019 ■ % Wa 2022 ■ % Wa 2023 ■ 2019/22 Year Comparison



% OF YEAR 1 PUPILS ACHIEVING WA IN PHONICS 2022 COMPARISON WITH EMERGING NATIONAL

■ % Wa Wirral 2023 ■ % Wa Emerging National ■ Wirral and Emerging National Comparison



Appendix 3

Characteristic	% Wa 2019	% Wa 2022	% Wa 2023	2019/22 Year Comparison
All	81.9	77.3	79.0	↑ 1.7
Male	77.8	71.7	74.4	↑ 2.7
Female	86.1	83.2	84.2	↑ 1.0
Gender Gap	-8.3	-11.5	-9.8	↑ 1.7
SEN	39.8	36.1	41.7	↑ 5.6
Not SEN	88.7	84.1	87.0	↑ 2.9
SEN gap	-48.9	-48.0	-45.3	↑ 2.7
SEN: EHCP	17.9	8.8	16.9	↑ 8.1
SEN: Not EHCP	43.7	42.2	48.7	↑ 6.5
EHCP Gap	-25.8	-33.4	-31.8	↑ 1.6
FSM	72.9	64.8	67.1	↑ 2.3
Not FSM	84.8	82.2	84.1	↑ 1.9
FSM Gap	-11.9	-17.4	-17.0	↑ 0.4
EAL	79.7	70.1	79.9	↑ 9.8
Not EAL	81.9	77.6	79.0	↑ 1.4
EAL Gap	-2.2	-7.5	0.9	↑ 8.4
Not White British	86.6	74.0	80.8	↑ 6.8
White British	81.4	77.5	78.9	↑ 1.4
Ethnicity gap	5.2	-3.5	1.9	↑ 5.4
Disadvantaged	73.6	64.6	67.6	↑ 3.0
Non Disadvantaged	84.9	81.9	83.5	↑ 1.6
Disadvantaged gap	-11.3	-17.3	-15.9	↑ 1.4

Appendix 4

Characteristic	% Wa Wirral 2023	% Wa Emerging National	Wirral and Emerging National Comparison
All	79.0	78.9	0.1
Male	74.4	75.5	-1.1
Female	84.2	82.4	1.8
Gender Gap	-9.8	-6.9	-2.9
SEN	41.7	42.3	-0.6
Not SEN	87.0	85.9	1.1
SEN gap	-45.3	-43.6	-1.7
SEN: EHCP	16.9	19.8	-2.9
SEN: Not EHCP	48.7	48.5	0.2
EHCP Gap	-31.8	-28.7	-3.1
FSM	67.1	66.6	0.5
Not FSM	84.1	83.2	0.9
FSM Gap	-17.0	-16.6	-0.4
EAL	79.9	78.4	1.5
Not EAL	79.0	79.0	0.0
EAL Gap	0.9	-0.6	1.5
White British	78.9	78.3	0.6
Not White British	80.8	80.5	0.3
Ethnicity gap	-1.9	-2.2	0.3
Disadvantaged	67.6	66.9	0.7
Non Disadvantaged	83.5	82.2	1.3
Disadvantaged gap	-15.9	-15.3	-0.6

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Executive Summary

Comparison has been made between 2022 and 2023.

(August 2023)

Early Years Foundation Stage Profile

GLD – Wirral Yearly Comparison 2019, 2022 & 2023

All Pupils – In 2023 the proportion of children attaining the expected standard or above in GLD increased compared to the 2022 results but has not reached its 2019 proportion, currently at 65.2%, with a gap of 2.1% compared with the emerging national results. **(Appendix 1, 3 & 4)**

Gender - The gender gap has continued to widen in 2023, after first falling in 2022. Compared to 2022 the gender gap is 0.4% lower at 15.4% still in favour of female children. From 2022 to 2023 males' GLD rose by 2% to 57.9% while females rose by 2.4% to 73.3%. **(Appendix 1 & 3)**

SEN – The SEN percentage has fallen for the fourth successive testing year from 2018 to 2023. Since 2022 it has fallen 0.3% to 16.9%. The SEN gap has also widened due to an increase in the non-SEN rate which improved by 3.8% to 73% in 2023. The SEN gap is now 56.1%, increased by 4.1% since 2022. The EHCP gap has also widened by 1.9% to 20.5%. **(Appendix 1 & 3)**

FSM – An increase in the non-FSM pupils' attainment by 2.1% is less than the FSM pupils increase of 3.4%, which has caused the FSM gap to narrow by 1.3% to 20.2%. **(Appendix 1 & 3)**

EAL - An increase in EAL pupils' attainment of 6% is more than the non-EAL pupils increase of 2.3%, which has caused the EAL gap to close by 3.7% to 15.3%. **(Appendix 1 & 3)**

Ethnicity - The White British pupils outperform the non-White British pupils, by 4.5% an increase of 2.5%. **(Appendix 1 & 3)**

Disadvantaged – The Disadvantaged and non-Disadvantaged rose by 2.5% and 1.8% respectively, this has brought the Disadvantaged group up to 49.7% and the non-Disadvantaged up to 69.2%. The Disadvantaged gap has continued to decrease by 0.7% to 19.5%. **(Appendix 1 & 3)**

GLD – Wirral to National Comparison 2022

All Pupils - The Wirral %GLD amount at least meeting the standard increase to 65.2% which was 2.1% lower than the national rate of 67.3%. **(Appendix 2 & 4)**

Gender – The Wirral gender gap is now 15.4% compared to the national figures of 13.6%. A difference of 1.8%. **(Appendix 2 & 4)**

SEN - The Wirral SEN gap is now 56.1% compared to the national figures of 54.4%. A difference of 1.7%. EHCP and non-EHCP figures are both lower than the national average, but the EHCP gap has improved compared to the national. The Wirral EHCP gap is 20.5% whilst the national is 20.6%, so Wirral have narrowed the gap to 0.1%. **(Appendix 2 & 4)**

FSM – The FSM GLD rate is behind the national figure by 1.4% at 50.3%. The Wirral FSM gap is now 20.2% compared to the national figures of 19.8%. A reduced difference of 0.4%. **(Appendix 2 & 4)**

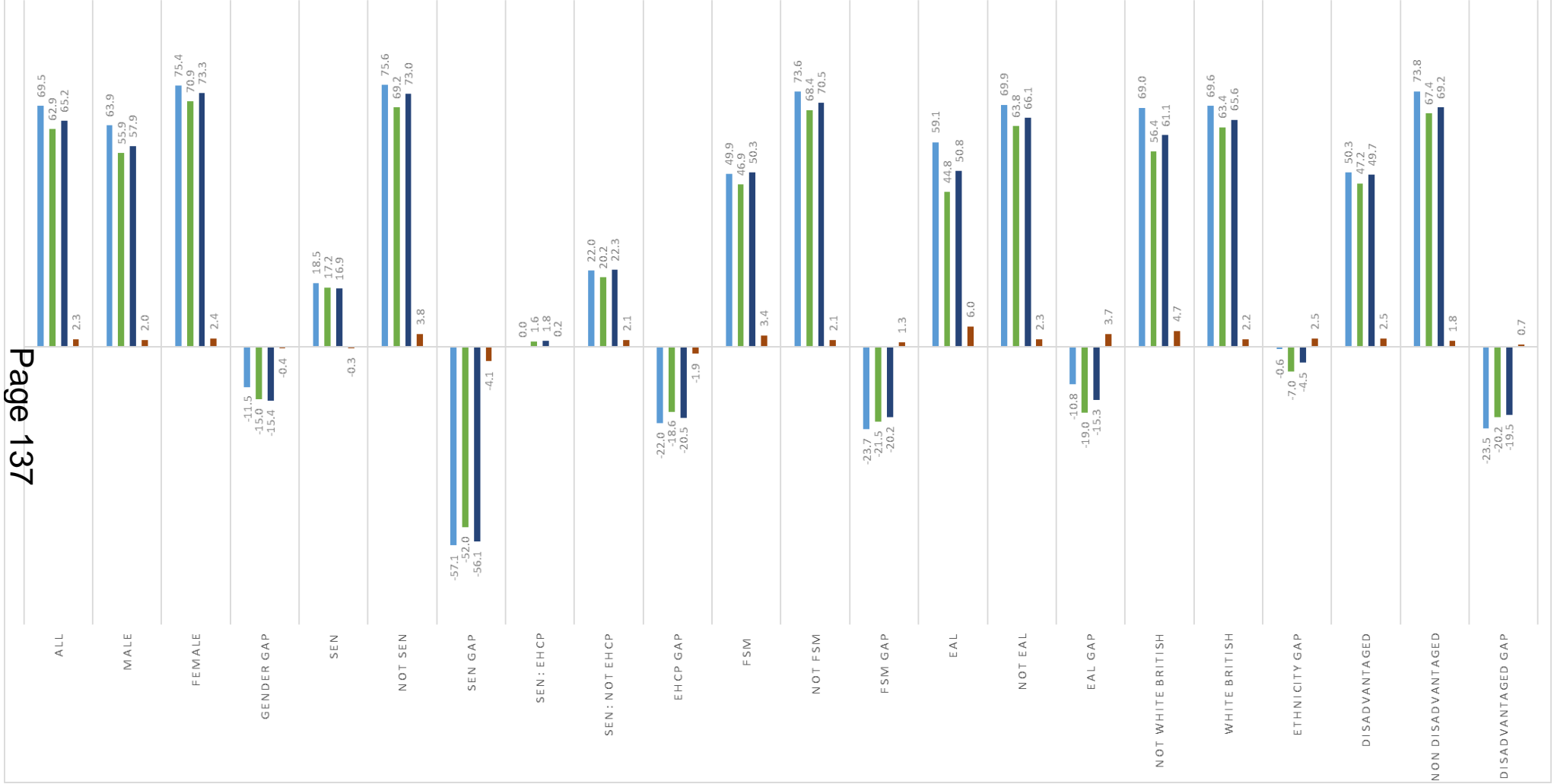
EAL - The Wirral EAL is now 50.8% compared to the national figures of 62.7%. A reduced difference of 11.9%. There is a 9.6% EAL gap difference between the Wirral at 15.3% and the smaller national rate EAL gap of GLD which is 5.7%. **(Appendix 2 & 4)**

Ethnicity – Wirral’s white British population at 65.6% GLD rate are behind the national rate of 67.7%. Whilst the non-white British GLD 61.1% is lagging more behind the national figures of 66.1%. The Wirral white British/non-white British gap difference is now 4.5% compared to the narrower national figures of 1.6%. A difference of 2.9%. **(Appendix 2 & 4)**

Disadvantaged - The Wirral disadvantaged rate of 49.7% is only slightly behind the national amount of 52.1%, While the disadvantaged gap is now 19.5% compared to the national figures of 17.8%. **(Appendix 2 & 4)**

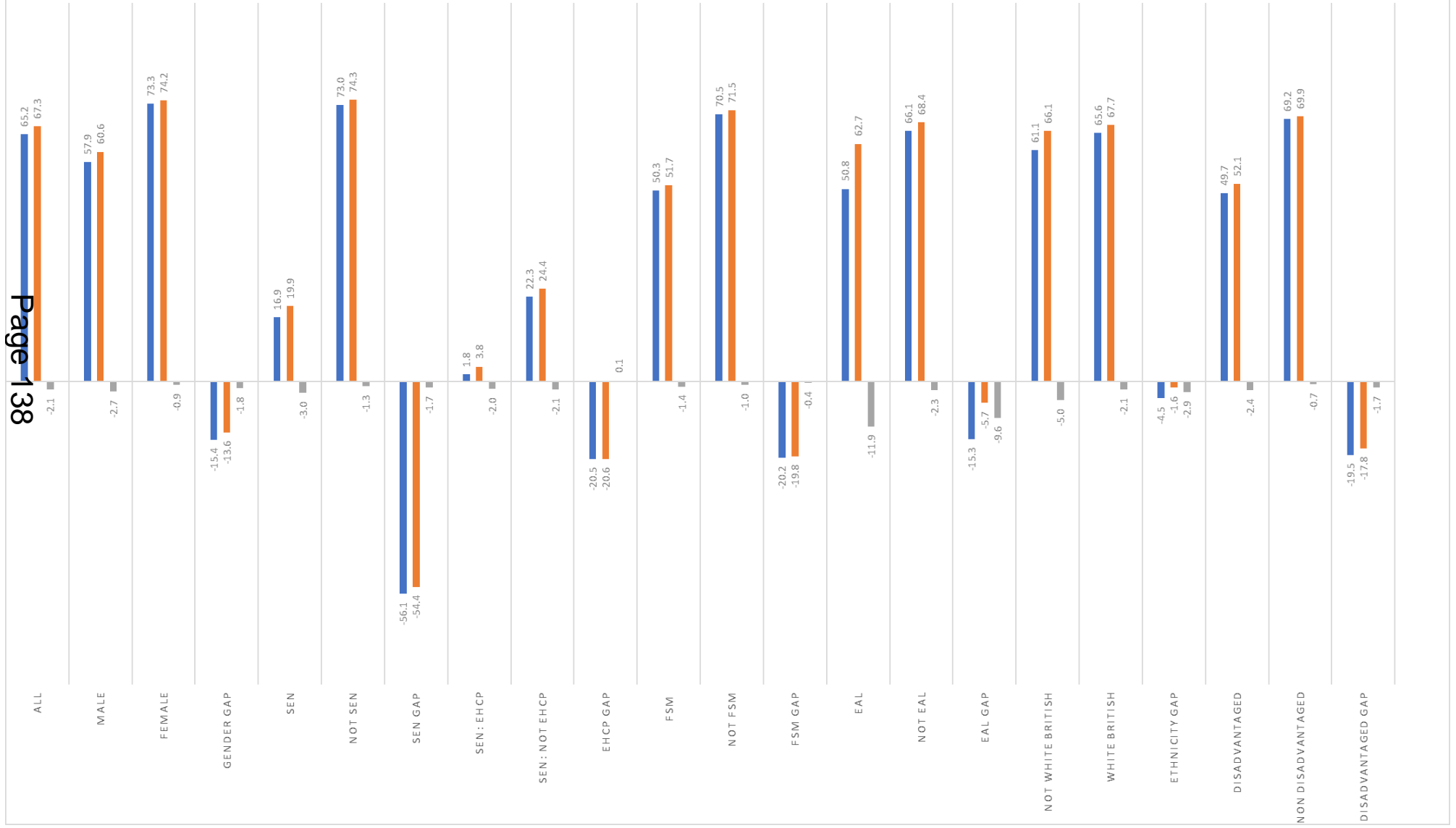
% OF EYFSP PUPILS ACHIEVING EXS+ IN GLD

■ % GLD EXS+ 2019 ■ % GLD EXS+ 2022 ■ % GLD EXS+ 2023 ■ 2022/23 Year Comparison



% OF EYFSP PUPILS ACHIEVING EXS+ IN GLD 2023 COMPARISON WITH EMERGING NATIONAL

■ % GLD EXS+ Wirral 2023 ■ % GLD EXS+ Emerging National ■ Wirral and Emerging National Comparison



Appendix 3

Characteristic	% GLD EXS+ 2019	% GLD EXS+ 2022	% GLD EXS+ 2023	2022/23 Year Compariso n
All	69.5	62.9	65.2	2.3
Male	63.9	55.9	57.9	2.0
Female	75.4	70.9	73.3	2.4
Gender Gap	-11.5	-15.0	-15.4	-0.4
SEN	18.5	17.2	16.9	-0.3
Not SEN	75.6	69.2	73.0	3.8
SEN gap	-57.1	-52.0	-56.1	-4.1
SEN: EHCP	0.0	1.6	1.8	0.2
SEN: Not EHCP	22.0	20.2	22.3	2.1
EHCP Gap	-22.0	-18.6	-20.5	-1.9
FSM	49.9	46.9	50.3	3.4
Not FSM	73.6	68.4	70.5	2.1
FSM Gap	-23.7	-21.5	-20.2	1.3
EAL	59.1	44.8	50.8	6.0
Not EAL	69.9	63.8	66.1	2.3
EAL Gap	-10.8	-19.0	-15.3	3.7
Not White British	69.0	56.4	61.1	4.7
White British	69.6	63.4	65.6	2.2
Ethnicity gap	-0.6	-7.0	-4.5	2.5
Disadvantaged	50.3	47.2	49.7	2.5
Non Disadvantaged	73.8	67.4	69.2	1.8
Disadvantaged gap	-23.5	-20.2	-19.5	0.7

Appendix 4

Characteristic	% GLD EXS+ Wirral 2023	% GLD EXS+ Emerging National	Wirral and Emerging National Compariso n
All	65.2	67.3	-2.1
Male	57.9	60.6	-2.7
Female	73.3	74.2	-0.9
Gender Gap	-15.4	-13.6	-1.8
SEN	16.9	19.9	-3.0
Not SEN	73.0	74.3	-1.3
SEN gap	-56.1	-54.4	-1.7
SEN: EHCP	1.8	3.8	-2.0
SEN: Not EHCP	22.3	24.4	-2.1
EHCP Gap	-20.5	-20.6	0.1
FSM	50.3	51.7	-1.4
Not FSM	70.5	71.5	-1.0
FSM Gap	-20.2	-19.8	-0.4
EAL	50.8	62.7	-11.9
Not EAL	66.1	68.4	-2.3
EAL Gap	-15.3	-5.7	-9.6
Not White British	61.1	66.1	-5.0
White British	65.6	67.7	-2.1
Ethnicity gap	-4.5	-1.6	-2.9
Disadvantaged	49.7	52.1	-2.4
Non Disadvantaged	69.2	69.9	-0.7
Disadvantaged gap	-19.5	-17.8	-1.7

Appendix 2: Common education terms

Attainment 8	Attainment 8 is a whole school performance measure that is calculated based on the grades achieved by students across 8 key subjects. The maximum score is 9, English and Maths have a double weighting.
Progress 8	Progress 8 is a measure that indicates how much a secondary school has helped pupils progress over a five-year period. This measure takes a pupil's performance in relation to their peers at primary school level, compares it with their performance at KS4 (their Attainment 8 score) establishes whether the individual has progressed. They are then grouped together to get an average for a school's overall score.
9-4 - English and Maths	The percentage of pupils that have achieved a grade 4 or above in both English and Maths
9-5 – English and Maths	The percentage of pupils that have achieved a grade 5 or above in both English and Maths
FSM	Free School Meal is a statutory benefit available to school- aged children from families who receive other qualifying benefits
PP	Pupil premium is funding available to schools for pupils who have been receipt of free school meals in the last 6 years.
SEND	Special Educational Needs and Disability
EHCP	Education and health care plan, a plan outlining the education, health and social care needs of a child with additional needs
SEND Support	Identified with SEND needs but not in receipt of an EHCP
CLA	Child Looked After, where a child is looked after by the local authority
EAL	English as an additional language

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CHILDREN, YOUNG PEOPLE & EDUCATION COMMITTEE

Thursday 1 February 2024

REPORT TITLE:	SOCIAL CARE WORKFORCE STRATEGY 2022-2025
REPORT OF:	DIRECTOR OF CHILDREN, FAMILIES AND EDUCATION

REPORT SUMMARY

The report presents the Children, Young People and Education Committee with an updated version on the Children’s Social Care Workforce Strategy 2022-2025.

The Strategy sets out the local authority’s strategy and plans for developing and supporting the social care workforce over the remainder of its course. It outlines five priorities to attract, retain and support the development of a stable, talented, and committed workforce which has the skills, knowledge and motivation to improve children’s lives. These priorities are:

- Priority 1: ‘Growing our own’ through recruitment and development
- Priority 2: Support Continuous Professional Development to deliver a motivated and skilled workforce, with an emphasis on supporting staff retention
- Priority 3: Develop high performing social work managers that support a performance management framework that reflects ‘high support high challenge’
- Priority 4: Develop new and revised ways of working building on existing strengths to support children, young people and their families
- Priority 5: Communication and change management

Underpinning these priorities is a commitment to developing a healthy working environment that supports a positive emotional health and wellbeing amongst our workforce and enables Wirral Council to be an employer of choice in children’s social care services.

The Strategy will continue to work in conjunction with a range of other key workforce strategies and is aligned to the priority and vision of the Wirral Plan. The success in building a strong and stable workforce will secure “brighter futures” for Wirral children and young people – one of the main priorities outlined in the Wirral Plan.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The Children, Young People and Education Committee is recommended to:

- a. Endorse the progress made to date on the Social Care Workforce Strategy 2022-2025; and,
- b. Agree to receive a further update on progress at a future date.

SUPPORTING INFORMATION

1.0 REASON/S FOR RECOMMENDATION/S

- 1.1 To ensure that elected members are briefed and have oversight on the progress towards implementation of the Social Care Workforce Strategy.

2.0 OTHER OPTIONS CONSIDERED

- 2.1 Do nothing: It is important that there is appropriate and effective monitoring of strategies and plans to provide assurance that progress is being made.

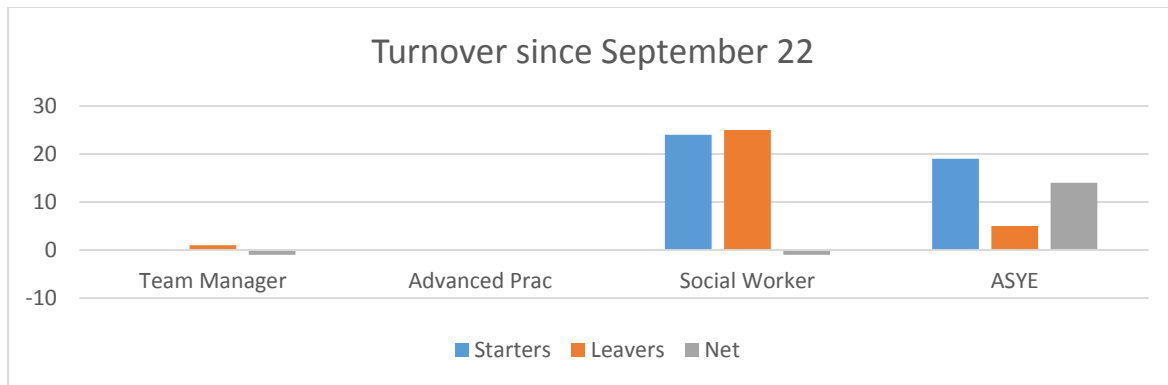
3.0 BACKGROUND INFORMATION

- 3.1 The Social Care Workforce Strategy 2022 – 2025 was approved by the Children, Young People and Education Committee in January 2022. The Strategy sets out how the local authority will attract, retain and support the development of a stable, talented, and committed workforce which has the skills, knowledge and motivation to improve children's lives. The Strategy identifies five key priorities to drive change and improvement over a three-year period.
- 3.2 Following approval of the Strategy, a robust governance framework was put in place. This involved the establishment of a Social Care Workforce Strategy Board, chaired by the Assistant Director for Children and Families and consisting of key representatives from the Practice and Performance Improvement Teams, HR and Social Care. Several sub-groups were also established to lead on the specific priorities within the Strategy.
- 3.3 Nationally, regionally and locally in children's social care we continue to see an increasing shortage of newly qualified and experienced children's social workers. Local authorities across the country are experiencing an increasing number of vacancies due to several factors including fewer people choosing social work as a career, and increased rates of social workers leaving the profession. Additionally, social workers don't necessarily seek the job security of local authority employment, often choosing to move between local authorities or more likely to work in the agency market. Whilst many social workers prefer the security of permanent contracts, there is a shift towards temporary work because of the flexibility to choose when to work, where to work, the ability to move swiftly and higher pay rates. Statistics published by the government from 2021 found that there was a 16% increase in the number of children and families social workers leaving to that of the year before and this was the highest rise in the last five years, and this resulted in a 7% increase in vacancies.
- 3.4 In May 2022 the most recent independent review of Children's Social Care was published. It allowed for the Government to provide an initial response to how they plan to develop a more detailed response over the coming months to the problems the sector is facing, including which recommendations it wishes to take forward. There was also a focus on the impact of agency work and the report found that whilst some level of agency work is arguably inevitable in any front-line profession, the rates in children's social work are inexcusably high at 15.5%, double the rate of adult social care (Skills for Care, 2020; Department for Education, 2021c). Workforce data

shows that around 2.6% of social workers moved from permanent local authority employment to agency roles in 2021 alone (Department for Education, 2022c). Once social workers are in agency roles, they are more likely to move around, contributing to the instability children and families experience.

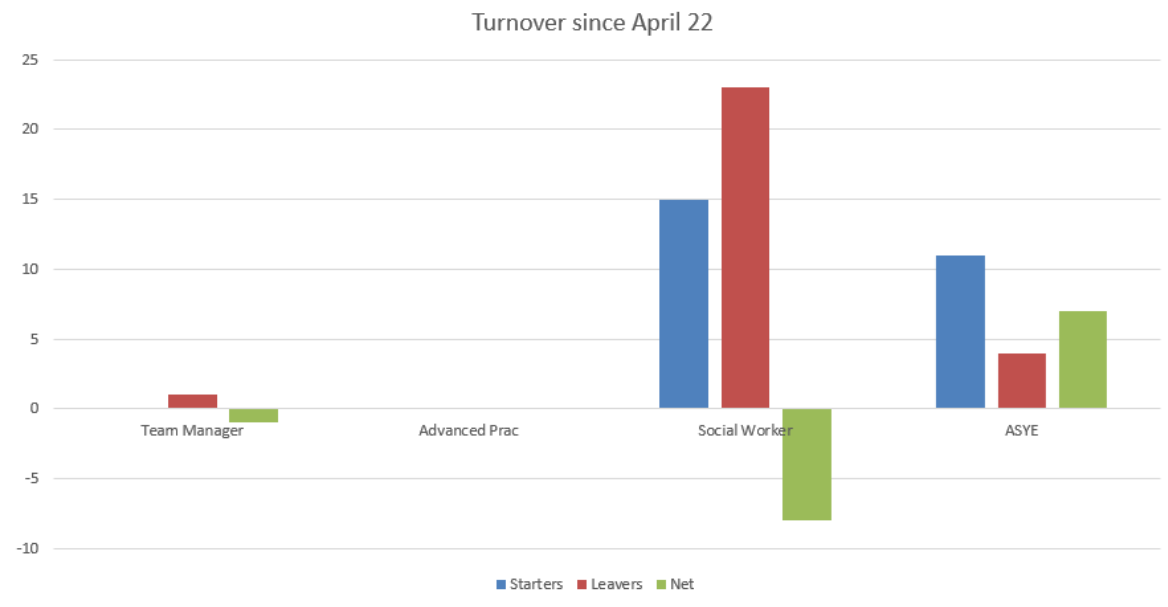
3.5 We have gathered our own internal data since November 2022 to date to inform us on how we compare to those national statistics. Details on staff turnover, sickness and agency rates are included below.

Staff turnover (September 2022 – October 2023)

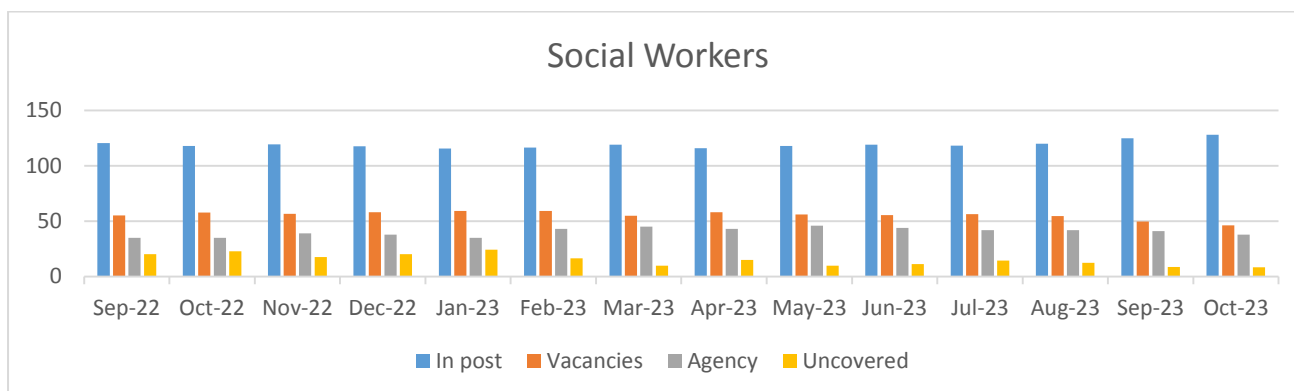


We have included last year's figures below for comparison. This illustrates the impact the Workforce Strategy has had on recruitment and retention and that overall turnover has reduced.

(April 2022-November 2022)

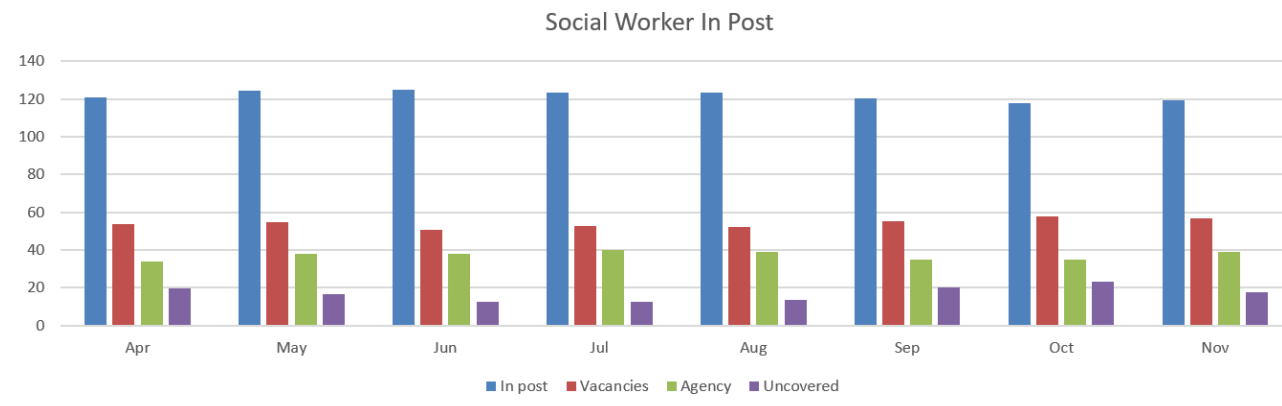


Social workers in post (September 2022 – October 2023)



Again, we have included last year’s figures for comparison, it suggests that we are moving in the right direction.

(April 2022-November 2022)



Number of agency staff in post (April 2022 – October 2023)

Function Name	Service Name	FY 2022/23												FY 2023/24						
		Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct
Children, Family and Education	Children and Families	53	50	51	48	50	50	48	53	50	51	55	57	52	54	53	49	48	47	45
	Children, Family and Education	3	3	3	3	3	3	5	5	4	4	3	1	1						
	Early Help and Prevention	2	2	2	2	2	2	1	1	2	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1		
	Education	12	9	8	8	8	8	7	6	6	3	3	3	3	2	2	3	3	3	2

A comparison of agency over time for a similar time period is seen below.

(April 2022-November 2022)

Agency

Function Name	Service Name	FY 2021/22																			
		Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	June	July	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov
Children, Family and Education	Children and Families	36	32	30	30	47	50	55	61	47	50	53	51	55	52	52	50	50	50	49	54
	Early Help and Prevention	5	5	4	7	8	7	7	6	5	4	5	5	3	3	2	2	2	2	1	1
	Education	7	6	6	10	11	10	10	12	11	11	14	16	13	12	12	12	12	11	11	
	Modernisation and Support	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	1	1	3	3	

Sickness and days lost throughout the directorate (April 2023 – October 2023)

Sickness - FTE days per FTE												
Lost Days per FTE												
FY 2022/23 Total												
Row Labels	Service Name	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Current Total	Projected for April		
Children, Family and Education	Children and Families	14.9	1.0	1.0	1.1	1.4	1.7	1.0	0.8	8.0	13.7	
	Children, Family and Education	14.4	1.3	1.3	1.0	0.9	1.2	1.3	0.9	8.0	N/A	
	Early Help and Prevention	14.3	1.4	1.0	1.2	1.5	1.4	1.5	1.0	8.9	N/A	
	Education	6.0	0.6	0.8	0.8	1.1	1.3	1.4	1.2	7.1	N/A	

A comparison of sickness over time for a similar time period this year (previous year is included below) outlines that we are projected to reduce sickness absence by April 2024 by 0.7 days lost per FTE.

(April 2022-November 2022)

Sickness - FTE days per FTE												
Lost Days per FTE												
FY 2021/22 Total												
Row Labels	Service Name	Apr	May	June	July	Aug	Sept	Oct	Nov	Current Total	Projected for April	
Children, Family and Education	Children and Families	16.0	1.4	0.9	1.4	1.1	1.3	1.1	1.3	1.2	9.6	14.4
	Early Help and Prevention	10.8	0.91	0.91	0.99	0.67	0.99	1.13	1.28	1.21	8.1	N/A
	Education	5.0	0.22	0.22	0.12	0.13	0.30	0.24	0.30	0.53	2.1	N/A
	Modernisation and Support	13.1	1.07	1.01	1.49	0.92	1.12	1.02	0.97	0.95	8.5	N/A

- 3.6 The progress and updates of the priorities outlined within the strategy have been summarised within appendix B attached to this report.

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 4.1 There is no significant additional investment required currently to deliver the workforce strategy. A cost-benefit-analysis will need to be undertaken for each initiative to explore financial implications and balance this against impact. Ultimately this may mean that some programmes do not come to fruition.
- 4.2 A focus of the strategy will continue to be on securing permanent employees into vacant posts to reduce the reliance on agency workers. In this regard, the importance of the strategy implementation is significant in supporting the local authority to achieve a balanced budget. Any investment, therefore, should be considered in the context of any potential deliverable savings.

4.0 LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

- 5.1 The local authority has a legal duty to safeguard the welfare of children and young people in Wirral. The Council service is highly regulated and performs several statutory functions. It is obliged to meet statutory timescales and risks intervention and scrutiny from Ofsted (regulator) and the Department for Education if these are not met. The development of a stable, skilled and supported workforce is fundamental to the ability of the local authority in adhering to its legal obligations.

5.0 RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS: STAFFING, ICT AND ASSETS

- 6.1 The key teams which will have responsibility for implementation of the Strategy include:

- Children's Performance and Improvement Team
- Social Care Practice Improvement Team
- Human Resources
- Organisational Development

6.2 In addition, colleagues from across the Council and Children's Services may also be called upon to assist with specific projects or initiatives. This could include support from Legal Services, Information Technology and Finance providing advice and guidance and assisting in the effective implementation of planned approaches and initiatives.

6.0 RELEVANT RISKS

7.1 This strategy seeks to lead the development of a planned, meaningful and achievable programme of activity that can be monitored, reviewed and assessed to understand its impact and effectiveness.

7.2 The workforce challenges outlined are not unique to Wirral. Local authorities across the country struggle to recruit and retain social work professionals. Whilst this strategy seeks to address the pertinent local issues, the national challenges associated with market shortages may continue to be apparent for its duration.

7.3 There has been an increase in the volume of neighbouring local authorities who have received an inadequate Ofsted rating, and this may result in them improving on their recruitment techniques and offering financial incentives. In turn this could see our own social workers encouraged into moving.

7.0 ENGAGEMENT/CONSULTATION

8.1 The strategy has been co-produced with social care practitioners from different fields and specialisms. Engagement and consultation activity has involved:

- SWORD survey with all staff
- focus groups with frontline practitioners
- 1-2-1 discussions with frontline practitioners
- review and discussion at practitioner forums and team manager forums
- review and discussion at team manager conference
- review and discussion at social care workforce working group consisting of Heads of Service and Assistant Director for Children and Families

8.2 The feedback from the engagement activities has resulted in the shaping and development of the priorities outlined in the strategy. Feedback will continue to shape and develop the work programme moving forward. Regular 'check back' sessions will form part of the analysis and evaluation of the impact and outcomes of the strategy.

8.0 EQUALITY IMPLICATIONS

9.1 Wirral Council has a legal requirement to make sure its policies, and the way it carries out its work, do not discriminate against anyone.

10.0 ENVIRONMENT AND CLIMATE IMPLICATIONS

10.1 There are no significant environment and climate change implications arising from the report. The strategy articulates plans to develop a robust hybrid model of working which will continue to support reductions in Carbon dioxide emissions.

11.0 COMMUNITY WEALTH IMPLICATIONS

11.1 The strategy outlines a strategic approach to 'growing our own' as being a fundamental concept to drive planning moving forward. Initiatives outlined include working with local schools and universities to encourage young adults from Wirral to consider a career in social work. These training and development opportunities can translate into rewarding career opportunities, thus creating new employment for residents on Wirral.

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APPENDICES

Appendix A Children's Social Care Workforce Strategy 2022-2025
Appendix B Details of progress made for each priority and future plans
Appendix C Branding Update
Appendix D Offer on a page – final version
Appendix E Yonder Update – Capacity Workforce Project
Appendix F ASYE Annual Report

BACKGROUND PAPERS

Social Care Workforce Strategy 2019-2021
SWORD survey 2021
SWORD survey 2022

TERMS OF REFERENCE

This report is being considered by the Children, Young People and Education Committee in accordance with Section G of its Terms of Reference; Committee's functions, incorporating the assessment of outcomes, review of effectiveness and formulation of recommendations to the Council, partners and other bodies, which shall include any decision relating to:

- child protection;
- children's centres;
- education, schools and settings;
- looked after children;
- mental health services;
- safeguarding;

- special educational needs and disability (SEND);
- youth offending services;
- youth services; and
- social and education transport

SUBJECT HISTORY (last 3 years)

Council Meeting	Date

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WELLBEING

RECRUITMENT

DEVELOPMENT

COMMUNICATION

SOCIAL CARE WORKFORCE STRATEGY 2022-2025

DEVELOPMENT

SUPPORT

GROW OUR OWN

CHANGE MANAGEMENT

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FOREWORD

Councillor Wendy Clements, Chair of Children, Young People and Education Committee



At the heart of every organisation are the people who work in it. Building success, creating services that are high quality and delivering improvements means supporting and developing people. In Children’s Social Care, this includes frontline practitioners, managers and senior leaders who are all pivotal in shaping support and providing the right help for children and families when they need it.

I am delighted to introduce the Social Care Workforce Strategy 2022-2025 which sets out how we will work over the next three years to attract the skilled workforce we need, to support their development in ways which match our strategic priorities, and to ensure that their managers and leaders are as skilled as possible.



Simone White, Director for Children, Families and Education

In Wirral, we want to improve the lives of children, young people and families to keep them safe, and to fulfil their potential. This can only be achieved through a confident, competent and highly skilled children and young people’s workforce that understands its responsibilities and works in partnership with others to deliver relevant, responsive and high-quality services.

It is essential that we, as the council, put the right support, development and infrastructure in place to enable all our social care practitioners to deliver high quality services to help vulnerable children and families to achieve their full potential. We want our social workers to be proud of what they do and the quality of work they deliver - this is our most powerful tool to recruit and attract others.

The Strategy sets out a clear ambition: to attract, retain and support the development of a stable, talented, and committed workforce which has the skills, knowledge and motivation to improve children’s lives. This will be underpinned by a respectful organisation that values the role of social workers in supporting vulnerable children and families. It is characterised by an environment that provides “high support and high challenge” to social workers to be reflective, analytical and professionally curious in their practice. We must celebrate and recognise good practice and support others to do the same building and creating a strengths-based model that is recognised across the country and beyond.

INTRODUCTION

The Social Care Workforce Strategy 2022 – 2025 sets out how the local authority will attract, retain and support the development of a stable, talented, and committed workforce which has the skills, knowledge and motivation to improve children’s lives. It will set out our direction of travel for building a strong and stable workforce and outline the best route to get there and about how we will embed good practice and strong ethos of the right values, behaviours and culture as part of our work each day.

The Strategy will also respond to the challenges facing councils in recruiting and retaining the workforce, by thinking innovatively about how to ‘grow our own’ experienced practitioners who have the right skill set and expertise.

The Strategy will seek to address some of the financial challenges for the local authority as well by reducing the number of agency workers that will both improve stability for children and young people and reduce costs.

The Strategy identifies five key priorities to drive change and improvement over the next two years:

- **Priority 1:** ‘Growing our own’ through recruitment and development
- **Priority 2:** Support Continuous Professional Development to deliver a motivated and skilled workforce, with an emphasis on supporting staff retention
- **Priority 3:** Develop high performing social work managers that support a performance management framework that reflects ‘high support high challenge’
- **Priority 4:** Develop new and revised ways of working building on existing strengths to support children, young people and their families
- **Priority 5:** Communication and change management

Good health and wellbeing are critical in supporting a successful workforce strategy and this will be the underpinning priority across all the work carried out.

A planned programme of work will be outlined with SMART actions, timescales, responsible officers and intended outcomes. A set of key performance indicators aligned to each priority will enable robust monitoring. This will also be supported by regular ‘pulse’ surveys to assess the impact of the Strategy on the wellbeing and views of the workforce.

NATIONAL AND LOCAL CONTEXT

Nationally, regionally and locally in children's social care there is an increasing shortage of newly qualified and experienced children's social workers. Government reporting on the Children's Social Care Workforce in 2020 showed that there were 6,100 FTE children and family social worker vacancies on 30 September 2020, up from 6,000 at the same point in 2019. Many local authorities across the country are seeing increasing number of vacancies due to several factors including fewer people choosing social work as a career, and increased rates of social workers leaving the profession.

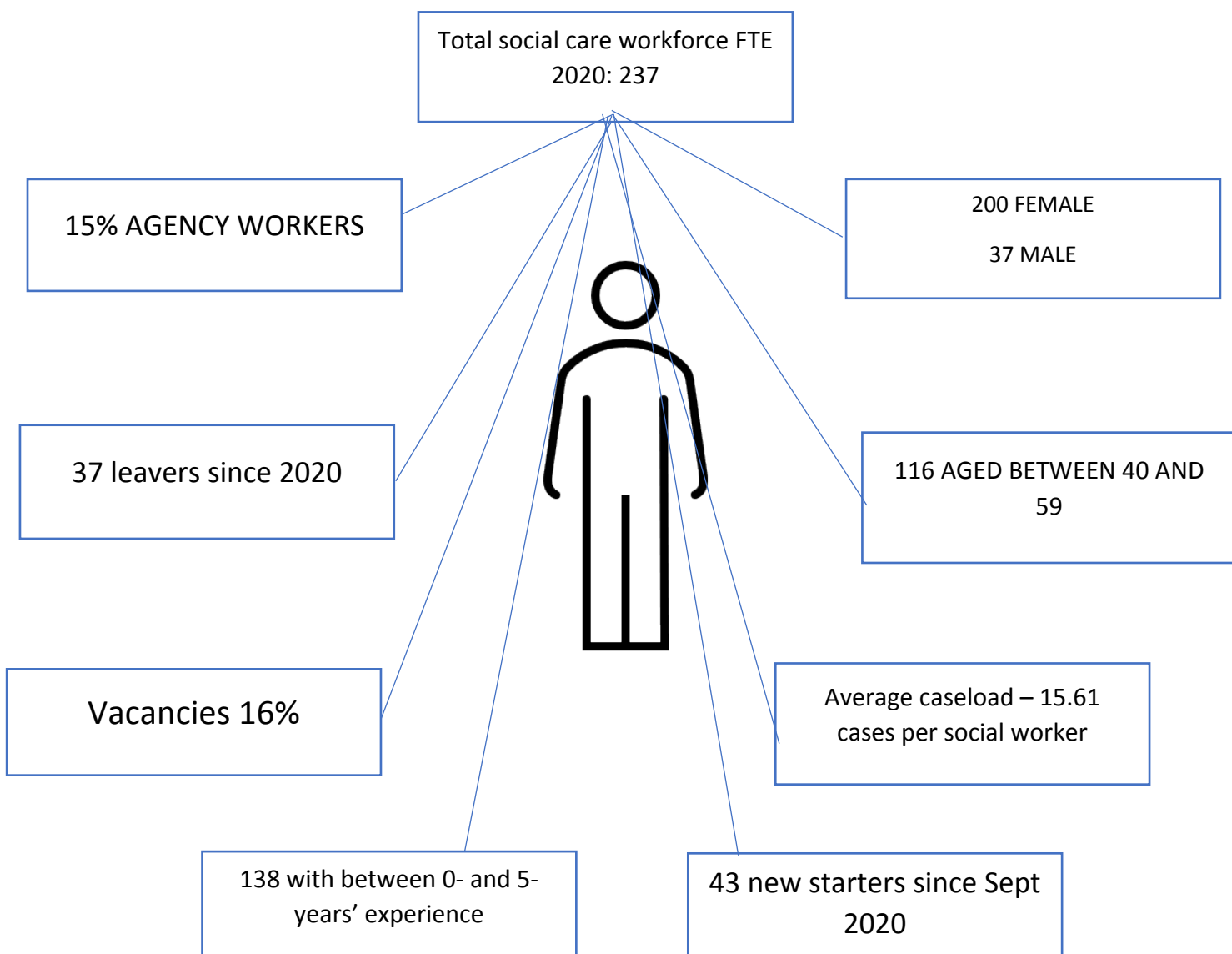
Additionally, social workers don't necessarily seek the job security of local authority employment, often choosing to move between local authorities or more likely to work in the agency market.

The COVID-19 pandemic has further exacerbated the challenges. A recent study by the Department for Education reported a higher number of social workers to be experiencing work related stress, being over-worked and a fall in job satisfaction.

Whilst Wirral has benefitted for several years in having a stable workforce, more recently there is greater evidence of staff turnover and instability. This is impacting upon the workforce in managing staff vacancies, an experience gap in only being able to recruitment predominantly newly qualified social workers, and a greater reliance on agency staffing.

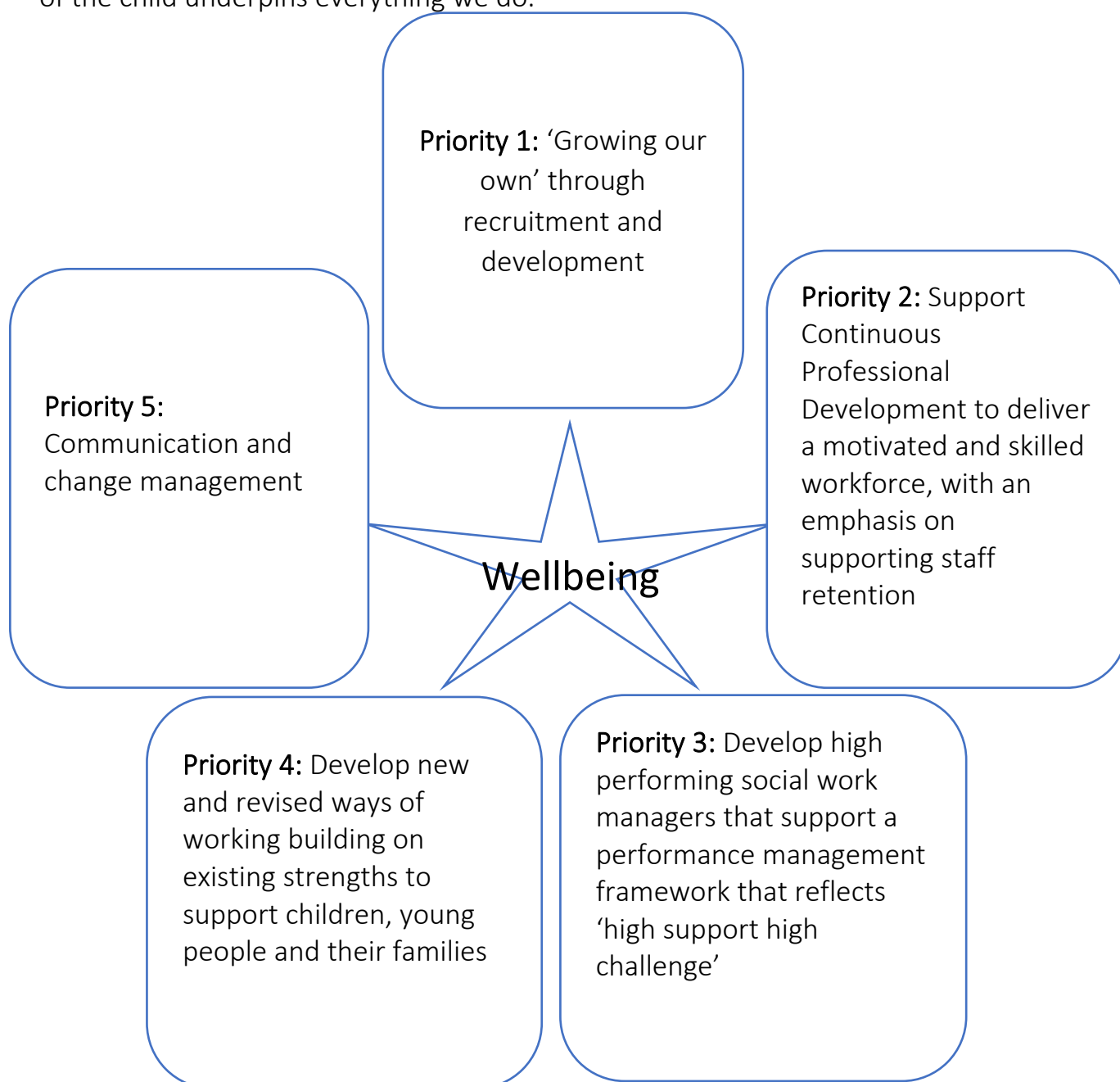
WIRRAL WORKFORCE SNAPSHOT

As of September 21 – workforce census



OUR PRIORITIES

As a council and children's services, five key priorities have been identified that are the workforce strategy. These priorities describe the environment required for an effective workforce that will deliver our vision and ensures that the voice of the child underpins everything we do.



Each priority will have its own action plan setting out the activities and timescales for delivering them together with how we will measure progress. The action plan will be reviewed regularly.

PRIORITY 1: 'GROWING OUR OWN' THROUGH RECRUITMENT AND DEVELOPMENT

Having a robust, timely and impactful recruitment programme is fundamental to ensuring that the workforce does not become overwhelmed and fatigued. The previous Workforce Strategy 2019 outlined a focus on growing our own practitioners through various recruitment initiatives.

The Step Up to Social Work programme has proved successful each year with positive conversion rates from students to the ASYE programme. Many of the students from the original cohorts in January 2020 continue to work in social care professions in Wirral.

The continued positive relationship with the Cheshire and Merseyside Social Work Teaching Partnership has offered new and ideas and concepts to support the grow our own approach.

These have been complemented by recruitment campaigns, events and incentives to advertise the offer and benefits of working for Wirral Council.

To build on this, our Workforce Strategy for 2022 will articulate plans to continue to 'grow our own' and expand our current offer and campaigns. The Strategy will outline how it will attract and recruit the best candidates, creating an environment for them to flourish and provide the opportunity for them to develop their careers and become our experienced social workers and team managers of the future.

Successful recruitment initiatives

- ✓ Holding events with universities which present us with the opportunities to talk to students
- ✓ Successful fast track social work programmes including Step up to Social Work Programme and Front-Line Programme
- ✓ Targeted external recruitment campaigns with Jobs Go Public #Bring it On Campaign, #Be the Difference
- ✓ Assessment Centres and Recruitment Days
- ✓ Targeted Agency to Permanent
- ✓ Contribution of £50 towards HCPC registration
- ✓ ASYE offer and support: The Service has focussed on recruiting newly qualified ASYEs
- ✓ Step Up to Social Work programme – This has run for the past 13 years and has seen six successful cohorts go through the programme with a seventh beginning, consisting of 33 students.
- ✓ Frontline – Another successful scheme which is currently underway on its third cohort, consisting of 4 students.

WHAT WE WILL DO OVER THE NEXT THREE YEARS

Theme 1: Growing our own

We will continue to be part of the Step Up to Social Work Programme and offer placements for students on the BA and MA programmes. Our Assessed and Supported Year in Employment (ASYE) offer for Newly Qualified Social Workers (NQSWS) is already strong and we have further developed our pay and rewards in this area.

To build on the previous successes of these programmes, we will also:

- ❖ explore the option of creating a **second 'Frontline' Team**: Wirral is currently part of the Frontline programme and has successfully recruited a full social work team. Due to the success of this programme, Wirral would be looking to expand the current programme further to incorporate a second Frontline Team.
- ❖ Implement and evaluate the **Social Work Apprenticeship Degree programme** –A social work apprenticeship degree programme was introduced in 2021 and seeks to provide opportunities for 'Family Workers' to develop their skills and careers in social care whilst being financially supported. We will continue to support the programme (with 4 employees) over the next three years with education and work-based placements to achieve the social work degree. This offer seeks to build on the skills and knowledge of workers who already have direct involvement with families and understand
- ❖ We hope to embark on a new and exciting **Step into Social Work Schools Project** which will see an offer being given to sixth form students who are making their university and career decisions. This programme will provide an opportunity for 50 year 12 students to find out more about careers in social work and social care from professionals who know. Students will also be given support on the application and interview process.
- ❖ We will also build on our current offer to **university students** through our involvement in the Grow Your Own pilot with the CMSWTP. This pilot will provide an opportunity for a small number of students to undertake both social work placements within Wirral. In supporting and developing these students over the duration of their Social Work Degree, we hope that

they will want to continue their professional journey with us and secure a permanent position.

Theme 2: Branding and marketing

Wirral has a lot to offer as a place to work and live. We want to showcase the benefits of working in social care and the many employee benefits, utilising a range of different forums and media to deliver a positive and fit for purpose branding that will resonate with those embarking on a career in social care, as well as existing social care professionals. To do this, we will:

- ❖ Develop and deliver a planned programme of **recruitment campaigns** using the current Jobs Go Public website but also exploring new ways of promoting roles in Wirral. We will explore how to use events and advertising to have the most impact as well as interesting ‘practice-focussed’ web articles and social media to promote innovative practice. Virtual and face-to-face recruitment events will be held throughout each year, both targeted and universal.
- ❖ **Re-brand and renew the current advertising and marketing plans** and strategies, continuing to build and enhance on the current #bethedifference branding. A refreshed job description and regular cycle of reviewing adverts will continue to ensure that marketing is timely and impactful. Measuring the impact of these campaigns and strategies will help shape future programmes/plans.
- ❖ **Design and develop a ‘package on a page’** will provide a visual and user-friendly guide to promote the benefits of working in Wirral. This will be used as part of the branding and promotional campaigns but also will be shared with professionals and partners to help promote the offer available to colleagues and friends.
- ❖ **Develop a Social Work Academy website** which contains detailed information about working for Wirral. This will allow anyone considering applying for a role in Wirral to understand the progression framework and what to expect at each stage in their career. The Practice Improvement Team offer and support as well as wider packages of support e.g. wellbeing/emotional support will all be included here and easily accessible to anyone wanting to ‘find out more’.
- ❖ **Strengthen and further investment in our ASYE programme** recognising that most of the social worker recruitment will be newly qualified. This

will mean a higher proportion of our workforce will be newly qualified social workers who will be supported through their ASYE programme.

Theme 3: Incentives

We want to look at what else attracts and interests people to work and live in Wirral. We know that our committed employees are also our biggest assets, and we want to use them to help promote and support our recruitment campaigns. Incentives can sometimes help motivate and drive people to think differently or make different decisions. Over the next few years we will:

- ❖ Review the **'refer a friend' scheme** and engage with staff to redevelop a more impactful approach. Currently we offer a financial incentive of up to £500 for Wirral employees to have a 'friend' join us. This hasn't yet taken off and so we would like to look at ways in which we can increase the amount and making this offer more attractive.
- ❖ Utilise the Council's **regeneration plans and developments** to promote and showcase new areas of Wirral to live and work. The residential developments at Wirral Waters and in other areas of Birkenhead provide an opportunity to market Wirral as a place to live and use this as part of the marketing campaigns. Further exploration with Council colleagues about any potential offers or incentives as part of a holistic relocation package will also be explored over the next three years.
- ❖ Look at **other incentives** to support professionals to Wirral, seeking to break down physical and financial barriers. For example, local research has found that the tunnel fees from Liverpool to Wirral have been a disincentive for some workers from further afield. A cost-benefit analysis to understand the impact and benefits of incentives to break down barriers is needed to support this priority.

Theme 4: Induction

We know from research and discussions with practitioners, that a positive start to a new role (in any position) is important and allows them to feel welcome and settle in well. The Council's induction programme supports new employees to have a range of information for starting their new role, but it is not tailored to the specific needs of social work professionals. We will:

- ❖ **develop a bespoke induction process** which brings together the offer of the Practice Improvement Team along with other important information about embarking on a career in social care in Wirral.
- ❖ **review the current buddy system** and implement a new buddy system for all new starters not just newly qualified so that there is a ‘helping hand’ for new recruits. This will be particularly important for those who start virtually.
- ❖ **Explore different ways of securing IT equipment** for new starters so that they don’t join without the right equipment in place.

PRIORITY 2: SUPPORT CONTINUOUS PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT TO DELIVER A MOTIVATED AND SKILLED WORKFORCE, WITH AN EMPHASIS ON SUPPORTING STAFF RETENTION

A strong and stable workforce is key to delivering high quality, effective and consistent practice to our children and families. We need to be clear on our offer so to attract high quality experienced practitioners that want to remain with us. We will promote a culture of continuous professional learning, where

Successful development initiatives

- An ASYE Programme
- An ASYE Co-ordinator
- Progression Framework
- Professional Development opportunities
- Buddy system for NQSW's
- Designated practice improvement team to support the service
- Centralised location and improved technology through Surface pros
- Agile working
- Revised grading structure for Team Managers and IROs
- More robust and effective progression framework – 'fast tracking' through grades
- Training and Development Programme: Core Skills for Managers, DfE Practice Leadership Programme
- Introduction of staff recognition programme (mug of recognition, staff engagement events, Be the Difference awards, etc)

practitioners have access to a range of opportunities that support their development.

Our practitioners will have access to development opportunities that supports their continuous learning and careers. We shall ensure that our practitioners are empowered to take responsibility for their own learning and development ensuring that practice remains excellent and meets the needs of our children

and families.

We want to create an environment where excellent social work can flourish. Our culture will promote healthy challenge and feedback where practitioners feel confident to question and offer solutions. We will listen and respond to feedback from our children and families, from colleagues and partners and we shall drive improvements that deliver the best outcomes for children and families and the practice of our workforce.

WHAT WE WILL DO OVER THE NEXT THREE YEARS

Theme 1: Training and development

We will continue to work hard to attract experienced social workers to Wirral and the work we have completed around reducing caseloads, career progression opportunities and pay and rewards are key areas in supporting this.

- Continuous Professional Development (CPD) – CPD will enable learning to become conscious and proactive, rather than passive and reactive. It is the holistic commitment of professionals towards the enhancement of personal skills and proficiency throughout their careers.

Theme 2: Mentoring and coaching

We want to be a progressive council which takes a strengths-based approach to employee development and wellbeing. Using fellow employees, we want to develop a robust mentoring and coaching offer for social work employees.

- ❖ Develop a **database** of mentors and coaches from across the council and those specific to social care.
- ❖ Outline a clear and planned **programme of mentoring and coaching** using a range of insight methods to target where this would be useful:
including:
 - feedback from managers
 - Insight from audit
 - self-referral/request for support
 - appraisal/check-in information

Theme 3: Audit as a learning tool

We have made significant progress in our approach to audit and in using this as an effective tool to identify good practice and learning. Previously it was regarded as a criticism rather than something constructive and helpful. We need to build on using audit to inform individual training and development needs, using it in supervision and check-ins to explore how audit can shape and direct CPD. We will:

- ❖ **Take a strengths-based approach to audit to ensure that it celebrates and identifies good quality practice and is shared with social workers so they have a good understanding of what good practice looks like and can talk about it.**
- ❖ **Ensure that the views of families, partners are incorporated into audit so that their feedback and learning can be shared and helped to identify learning**
- ❖ **Ensure that audit is captured in supervision and used to inform training and development needs and plans.**

Theme 4: Prep for progression

Our progression framework outlines the steps that social workers need to take to develop in their career. Sometimes, workers feel nervous or worried about what the next step might entail in practical terms or struggle with interview technique and preparation. We want to ensure that workers are supported to progress, building on the robust progression framework support. We will:

- ❖ **Ensure that the progression framework is clearly understood and accessible utilising the development of the Social Work Academy as the ‘one stop shop’ of progression information, hints and tips.**
- ❖ **Offer shadowing opportunities for those considering applying to progress to ensure that they feel confident and capable of taking the next step and have direct insight into the practicalities of the roles**
- ❖ **Support employees with interview training and preparation so that they are successful at interview, particularly into more management/senior roles.**

PRIORITY 3: DEVELOP HIGH PERFORMING SOCIAL WORK MANAGERS THAT SUPPORT A PERFORMANCE MANAGEMENT FRAMEWORK THAT REFLECTS 'HIGH SUPPORT HIGH CHALLENGE'

We recognise that our managers and leaders play a pivotal role in setting the standards and behaviours that empower our practitioners to deliver the very best practice. We will ensure that all our managers and leaders and aspiring managers are developed, creating opportunities for them to achieve their full potential.

We want to undertake a skills analysis with our managers and aspiring managers, providing us with the data to inform a development programme that not only develops their confidence and practice but the confidence and practice of others. We shall offer a range of development opportunities including coaching, mentoring, 360-degree feedback and shadowing.

In recent months we have implemented a revised performance management framework intended to provide clarity and security for employees and to support consistent practice. This approach has supported a more coherent and measured way of providing constructive challenge and to identify areas for improvement and development.

We want to build on this with a new supervision policy to ensure managers are clear on how to use reflective supervision to address performance and support improved practice. We need to make sure that actions are SMART and acted upon from supervisions and their impact considered and understood.

WHAT WE WILL DO OVER THE NEXT THREE YEARS

Theme 1: Manager skills audit

We need to understand the skill mix and strengths of our social worker managers to build on strengths and improve on development areas. A robust needs analysis of workers (through skills audit and health checks) will help to shape the training and development offer for managers. We will:

- ❖ undertake a skills audit of social work managers to identify strengths and to shape a manager training and development programme that is fit for purpose.
- ❖ Work with managers to identify development gaps and skills strengths across the management workforce and explore ways to harness these skills proactively.

Theme 2: Manager training and development

- ❖ Develop a competency framework and are exploring change management within the framework before rolling out across the organisation.
- ❖ Developing manager training for all managers and again which will include change management within this offer.
- ❖ Undertake 360 review. This involves obtaining 360-degree feedback & a self-assessment against elements of the competency framework. There are 7 behaviours within the framework including Change Orientation. Subsequent discussions with OD will help individuals to reflect on their individual leadership styles and behaviours. The OD team will review how to roll this out to other levels of management in due course.

Theme 3: Performance management and quality assurance framework

We will

- ❖ further embed the performance management framework so that there is a golden thread of reporting and management from DCS to frontline practitioner
- ❖ Use the performance framework to allow for constructive challenge and to feed into the training and development programme
- ❖ Ensure that managers understand what techniques and tools they can use to address performance that is constructive and strengths-based to support positive improvements.

Theme 4: High support, high challenge culture

We will:

- ❖ Empower managers to understand their roles and responsibilities in addressing improvements in practice
- ❖ Work with HR colleagues to embed a stronger and more asset-based approach to performance management, utilising the tools, pathways and processes available
- ❖ Ensure that training and support is provided to both managers and practitioners in order to implement a positive improvement culture.

PRIORITY 4: DEVELOP NEW AND REVISED WAYS OF WORKING BUILDING ON EXISTING STRENGTHS TO SUPPORT CHILDREN, YOUNG PEOPLE AND THEIR FAMILIES

Working through the Covid-19 pandemic has been challenging for us all, but it has provided us with an opportunity to look at the way we work and how we can adjust to our surroundings. Embracing more remote and hybrid working will mean changing working cultures, systems and behaviours

By working differently, it will enable us to be closer to our communities and work with them to ensure that our services are accessible and designed and delivered to meet the needs of families in the best way possible.

As an organisation, Wirral is looking towards the workforce adopting a ‘hybrid’ working model which incorporates staff working from home, working virtually, and having the option to utilise office space to work or conduct meetings from, if required.

Evidence (from audits and evaluation) tell us that relationship-based practice is working well in Wirral. Social workers are building strong and constructive relationships with families and children and young people, and this is translating into meaningful support and outcomes.

The current practice model works well in some areas, particularly in early help, where the golden thread of the Supporting Families Enhancing Futures is evident in the recording and feedback from families. Independent evaluation and audit have reflected that the practice model needs to be further embedded within the culture and delivery of practice across the social care workforce. We want to build upon some of the good practice that exists as part of the SFEF model and take it that stage further to help support our “practice identity” that is fundamental in how we work alongside children and families to achieve meaning and sustainable outcomes.

WHAT WE WILL DO OVER THE NEXT THREE YEARS

We need to build a model which support employees both in the short term and long-term. It is widely recognised that hybrid working is the reality and future

Benefits of a hybrid model

1. **Flexibility and promotion of a better work-life balance:** Service permitting, the hybrid model supports staff to accommodate a working pattern that recognises the conflicting demands of life (such as childcare, caring responsibility, and an individual's own health and wellbeing) and supports the prioritisation of these needs alongside the duty of work.
2. **Environment & Commute** With the understanding that staff can work at a location they feel best suits the priorities for that day, less commuting is required. Not only does this serve well towards our carbon footprint but it also means at the close of business employees are able to immediately switch from 'work' to 'life' mode without traffic, car parking or travel. The organisation can cost save on the running of multiple buildings and offer proportionate collaboration and office space to suit the requirements of the workforce.
3. **Increased productivity** Employees will be able to work from a location that best supports their focus and productivity whether that be from the comfort of home or within the structure of an office. Meetings can be held face to face in an office environment or virtually. Collaboration style will be flexible to support the best use of time and resource and will promote the ability to connect on smaller or larger scales and with colleagues near or far.
4. **Better mental health** Most importantly the mental health of employees is supported within the hybrid model to allow consideration for individual's needs, challenges or pressures and agree an environment that best supports these. The model encourages a more positive balance of work and life as well as maximising the opportunity to achieve successful outcomes within work.

for many local authorities across the country and in Wirral it is important that we embrace the learning and adapt to a new hybrid model.

A new hybrid model for the Council must reflect and support the social work profession and enable social workers to feel supported in their role. Working in partnership with colleagues from a range of fields across the council will ensure that the new model can do this.

Our ways of working needs to be interlinked and connected with our practice model and our structure – all of these must come together to direct our future practice and system.

Theme 1: Effective hybrid working (which meets practitioner needs)

We want to work effectively in partnership to support the development of a corporate hybrid working model which supports social workers and practitioners to effectively meet in work in a safe and relaxed environment in which they can share and discuss cases.

We will:

- ❖ Work with corporate colleagues to explore a new hybrid model which meets social care practitioner needs

- ❖ Implement a 'children's services' bespoke model which utilises assets such as Rock Ferry building to ensure that workers can have access to a place-based support infrastructure.

Theme 2: Relationship-based Practice Model

We will:

- ❖ Review and refresh the current practice model and training for SFEF to ensure that there is wider use and use this to inform evaluation
- ❖ Provide feedback on evaluation of current model and areas of strengths and development
- ❖ Supported by the Department for Education and the Children's Innovation Unit complete an options appraisal of accredited practice models that will complement our social work approach to supporting children and families.
- ❖ Complete systemic practice diagnostic in partnership with other local authorities to explore how it might help build on current strengths e.g. relationship-base practice whilst also providing the necessary tools and support for high quality practice.

Theme 3: Integrated ways of working

We will:

- ❖ Explore new locality-based models of practice which connects and integrated a more aligned early help offer to reduce escalation of need at level 4
- ❖ Explore further opportunity to bring in new services into an integrated framework of support
- ❖ Use new ways of working and integrated models as a 'hook' for social workers who are keen to explore this practice and development
- ❖ Build on learning from pilot programmes including social workers in school programme, Cradle to Career and we can talk about domestic abuse to develop new models of working and delivery.
- ❖ Outline a clear phased approach to place-based working which considers both the long- and medium-term plans.

PRIORITY 5: COMMUNICATION AND CHANGE MANAGEMENT

Strong, clear communication and engagement supports a culture of openness and transparency: where employees feel empowered, valued and listened to. We already utilise a range of internal communication methods to ensure key messages and information is passed to employees. This includes staff engagement sessions, monthly Director's updates which provide staff with information and good news stories on service developments and achievements. We also make very good use of our Teams channels to send out important announcements and general information.

During the recent SWORD survey this year, 'change' was identified as one of the main points that provided a great deal of negative response. With many practitioners feeling that change wasn't well managed, and information wasn't always readily accessible to them.

We want to provide clear communication which supports consistent delivery of coherent services, which continuously improves outcomes. We also want our staff to feel involved and confident that they are receiving the right information in the best format.

WHAT WE WILL DO OVER THE NEXT THREE YEARS

Theme 1: Change management

Feedback from practitioners

"Sometimes it really feels like information overload, and this can make it hard to keep up with the latest information because it comes in so many formats (email, newsletter, teams etc)"

"Information can be hard to locate because things get so lost in the number of emails received"

"General consensus was that methods of contact that work best are through MS Teams"

"Sometimes messages can feel very corporate."

"Feel that senior managers coming into team meetings and taking on any issues concerns would be better than just conducting a staff survey. Senior Managers can otherwise be out of touch with what happens on the front line."

"Mug of recognition – should go out to families and children and partners too. This incentive seems to be stuck with the same teams."

"Timings of communications make it difficult to read them as they come in – sent too late in the day."

Improve senior manager understanding of change management (provide them with training)

- Create new change management policy of engaging workforce in social care team changes
- The Practice Improvement Team are also offering to work with managers who are looking to implement change to ensure change is well managed and communicated.

Theme 2: Policy and process

- Work with the professional practice officer to ensure all updated documents and procedures are accessible to teams.
- Review and refine staff transfer process.

Theme 3: Communication

- Continue with staff engagement events and look at how we can continue to improve on these.
- We aim to create a MS Teams channel which will be used purely for promoting progression and development opportunities and it will be available for all, across the directorate.

UNDERPINNING THEME: WELLBEING

Workforce wellbeing is not only about supporting employees to be fit, healthy, and motivated but it is also recognising that doing so is key to the success of any organisation. Failure to protect the physical and emotional health of employees at work may mean:

- placing an organisation at risk
- affecting employees' ability to do their job
- affecting an organisation's productivity and effectiveness

During the past 2 years we have had to face many new and unprecedented challenges with the Covid-19 pandemic and so although already firmly on our radar the wellbeing of our people has never been more important.

We have had to take a deeper and more focused look at how we might work differently and how we can strengthen what we do to meet the future needs of our communities. Although a challenging time it is important to recognise that this can create many opportunities for us here at Wirral.

WHAT WE WILL DO OVER THE NEXT THREE YEARS

Theme 1: Recognition and rewards

- Implement DCS 'letters' to staff
- Sparkling Moments
- Exploring other reward options such as long serving awards and incentivised
- The team are also putting in place plans to undertake Serious Success Reviews and Sparkling Moments (one of the suggestions from within the SWORD workbook).

SWORD SURVEY – May 21

Back in May this year we asked colleagues to complete the Research in Practice (RIP) SWORD survey and as part of this wellbeing was covered amongst most questions. Since then, we have spent several months reviewing the results that RIP provided us with and working to address the feedback received.

Overall the results of the SWORD survey were positive: over 70% of staff feeling satisfied, and we also received an excellent response from the separate COVID questionnaire, where the positive response rate was between 70.48%-97.14% for all questions asked.

However, these figures show there is still room for improvement. As such, the team working on the SWORD survey have been working to address those areas where more than 40% of responses were negative and identified the following themes: the demands of the job and the opportunity to debrief/ reflect; all of which are being greatly impacting practitioners' wellbeing.

Theme 2: Bespoke emotional and mental health support

- Roll out an online learning package to build emotional resilience within teams. 36 representatives have been given a place on this course, with specific individuals within this number identified who will roll out the training to the wider service at a later stage.
- Commission emotional health and wellbeing and stress management support specifically for social workers
- Speaking to practitioners and managers about accessing services that currently exist such as Occupational Health (OH) and following the correct procedure

Theme 3: Motivation and staff morale

- The modernisation & support team are now working to update the Wellbeing Manifesto to develop a series of new offers, including a calendar of monthly activities and access to a range of health and wellbeing documents
- TED Talks
- Motivational speakers
- Wellbeing sessions
- Socials

Theme 4: Time for reflection

- Since the survey, the Practice Improvement Team has undertaken work with all teams introducing reflective tools. Following consultation with the practitioner forum the Practice Improvement Team are planning to trail taking reflective spaces to teams rather than working on a referral in basis.

EVALUATION AND MEASURING IMPACT

We will measure successful delivery of the Workforce Strategy using existing data and will continue to measure the “condition” of the organisation through other relevant data, but this will need to be expanded to include new outcome-based measures identified as we develop the strategy. This stage also includes measuring effectiveness, determining success and reporting on key performance indicators.

We will measure the impact of the Strategy through the following subjective approaches:

- Social care health check
- Social care census
- SWORD survey
- Focus groups/engagement sessions – practitioner forums

We have also outlined the following key performance indicators to measure the impact of the Strategy:

- No' of ASYEs successful completion of ASYE
- % Reduction in sickness absence
- % Reduction in sickness due to work related stress
- % of social worker returning to office
- % workers reporting improved mental health and wellbeing

GOVERNANCE

The Social Care Workforce Strategy Working Group will be the lead governance group for monitoring the progress and impact of the Strategy. This group will report progress to Children’s Senior Leadership Team on a regular basis, highlighting achievements and risks where this is necessary and appropriate.

The Children, Young People and Education Committee will also play a role in monitoring progress of delivery through review of the action plan and receipt of regular updates.

Appendix B – Progress and Updates

Priority 1: ‘Growing our own’ through recruitment and development:

The following key achievements have been made to date:

- We have continued to engage with the corporate Communications Team and there has been great progress in updating our ‘brand’ which will be used alongside our marketing campaigns through social media and at future job fayre’s/events – a draft is has been shared with the project board group in December, and we intend to agree a design and launch early this year (see appendices C).
- Five colleagues have successfully begun their Social Work Degree Apprenticeship Programme, two of which are in year 2 of studies and the other 3 are finalising year one. Two further suitable candidates have been put forward to join cohort 3 which has just begun this January.
- We have concluded shortlisting for our eighth cohort of Step Up To Social Work students and have 27 trainees beginning the programme this month. Four of the students have been placed with Wirral and will be beginning their first placement in April.
- Frontline Programme 2023 Wirral Children’s has welcomed its 5th Frontline unit of 4 participants who commenced in September 2023. Our 4th unit completed in September with 3 of our 4 participants remaining with us as Newly Qualified Social Workers.
- Social Work in Wirral Website has gone live following a ‘soft launch’ - Feedback from applicants has been positive.
- Our offer on a page has now been launched and details can be found on our microsite. We also plan to use this tool throughout our social media campaigns (appendices D).
- We have obtained a sponsorship licence to allow us to support international students with their studies – this provides us with additional opportunities for recruitment and ensures we are promoting equality, diversity and inclusion amongst staff.
- Following the Department for Education agreeing to provide £250,000 in 2022 to fund an innovation programme, which will see the development of a non-for-profit recruitment agency and led by Capacity, great progress has been made including;
 - A name being developed for the project so it’ll now been known as ‘Yonder’,
 - A programme lead has been recruited,
 - The legal structure for the project has concluded,
 - Capacity have begun discussions with local authorities around the membership offer.

In the coming months this project will begin to see the recruitment of social workers and Wirral will be one of the main beneficiaries of market testing. (see appendices E for further updates).

- We have remained strong with our ASYE programme and offer and as of 31.8.23 there were 24 NQSWs actively involved in the programme with another 17 to be registered over the next couple of months who are awaiting SWE registration (see appendix F for further information).
- Over the past 12 months, we have seen a reduction in staff turnover and an increase in number of social workers in post – these figures and comparisons from last year can be found embedded in the cover report.

Work planned for the next 12 months will include:

- Launch of communication and marketing campaign with promotional videos, recruitment adverts and social media posts.
- Further develop the grow your own project with Cheshire West and Chester Council exploring routes into schools and colleges. This year Wirral has supported 2 Social Work Students on the Grow our Own Project and in 2024 we shall support a further 2 students from our local HEI's.
- Continue to support and develop our staff through the different programmes we run with the aim of growing and nurturing excellent Social Workers.

Priority 2: Support Continuous Professional Development (CPD) to deliver a motivated and skilled workforce, with an emphasis on supporting staff retention:

This sub-group has met on a regular basis and below summarises the progress made to date:

- We are continuing to offer our new coaching and mentoring programme to staff following the launch in January 2023. We have also been offering shadowing opportunities which has seen one aspiring Social Work shadow our Assistant Director, Kerry Mehta, for a number of weeks to gain insight into her line of work – feedback has been very positive on the experience.
- The Staff college have been commissioned and has delivered training to Operational Leads, HOS and AD's. We have recommissioned this for a further year following funding being granted through the 'supporting families transformation grant'.
- Regular bi-monthly audits are still in place to identify good quality practice and areas for improvement. In line with this we continue to hold Learning and Celebration events quarterly to share and celebrate the excellent work of our social workers. The sessions have been very well received by colleagues. They provide teams with an opportunity to come together and share success stories and compliments received for staff; have a conversation about learning from recent QA activity; feedback from families; any other key topics/presentations of interest.
- Social Workers continue to progress under our Progression Framework and accurate data is maintained to support planning. Shadowing

opportunities have been advertised. Interview training has been developed and offered to social workers to support their development.

- Our Social Work in Wirral website has gone live. This website provides information on our CPD offer, ASYE offer, opportunities for progression and information on wellbeing and engagement. Visitors to the site have access to a number of recorded videos hearing first from colleagues about our offer and their experiences of working in Wirral Children's Services. Some of our young people have also been filmed sharing their thoughts on what makes a good Social Worker.

The next steps for this priority include:

- To continue to develop the mentor data base for children's services and to develop communications to support.
- To continue to promote the coaching and mentoring offer.
- To continue to promote and offer shadowing opportunities.
- To further develop and update the Social Work in Wirral Website.
- To continue to offer formal interview training for social workers to support their progression and success with interviews for internal opportunities.

Priority 3: Develop high performing social work managers that support a performance management framework that reflects 'high support high challenge':

The work under this priority sits with the CPD Subgroup which meets on a regular basis. Below summarises the progress made to date:

- We have continued to offer the Frontline Social Work Leadership Pathways Programme to relevant colleagues.
- Regular Team Manager forums have been designed to empower managers to understand their role and responsibilities in relation to improving practice.
- Regular staff engagement sessions and the new Learning and Celebration event provide excellent opportunities to develop a positive improvement culture.
- September saw the launch of our new leadership development programme. This programme consists of learning around each of the behaviours related to the leadership behaviour framework.

Areas that require focus and our next steps include:

- Working with corporate OD team to roll out the new Corporate Leadership Behaviours Framework across Children's Services

- Work with corporate colleagues on developing a skills audit for Team Managers
- Work with HR colleagues and the Practice Improvement Team to provide learning opportunities that support managers to constructively address performance and support improvements.

Priority 4: Develop new and revised ways of working building on existing strengths to support children, young people and their families:

This priority has focussed on two major change programmes:

- system-wide family approach
- systemic practice

A summary on the progress made to date on these two programmes is provided below:

System-wide family approach: A new locality approach to working has been designed and a first phase implemented in social care services on 31st October. The locality model has been informed through engagement sessions with practitioners and managers which has included:

- Engagement sessions with all children’s social care staff, family matters service in March, August, September and October.
- Engagement session with internal partners who have come together to identify the geographical areas they work in.

Internal partners – Youth Offending Service/ Youth Services/ Family Matters and Early Childhood Services, who have come together and identified lead Professionals to link in with Children’s social care.

The approach is being regularly reviewed by operational leads, heads of service and the assistant director for children’s social care.

Systemic Practice: The Wirral Safeguarding Children Partnership has introduced a systemic practice model as the next iteration of the Supporting families Enhancing Futures (SFEF) approach for working with children, young people and families.

Systemic practice emphasises people’s relationships as key to understanding their experiences and affecting change. It seeks to make sense of the world through relationships, focusing on the whole family system rather than individuals. Through a systemic approach, change can be achieved by exploring relationship patterns and understanding how they impact on children.

Progress that has been made so far includes:

- A multi-agency steering group has been established to oversee and direct development and implementation of the model. The group has developed a project delivery plan for 2023-24
- The systemic practice model was officially launched on the 2nd October 2023

- Warrington Council initially worked with us to support the development of training. DfE funding was awarded for this.
- A systemic practice lead post has been created to support the implementation and roll out of the model and to lead the training.
- Two day in person training courses have been running since October 2022. Over 200 professionals from the Council and another 200 from our partner agencies have attended the training so far. The training has been supplemented by regular skills workshops, which have been attended by 180 staff.
- In October 2023 online training through Flo was developed as an alternative to the face-to-face training for Council staff, and to make the training as accessible as possible.
- In September 2023 the WSCP introduced basic awareness training for the wider workforce.
- The online systemic practice hub was launched on 2nd October. This provides a 'one stop shop' for professionals to access support, training and guidance.
- A dedicated web page has been established and is also populated with information.

The next steps for this group over the next 12 months are to:

- Regularly review progress of implementation of the approach through the steering group on a quarterly basis
- Continue with the delivery of in person training, online training and skills workshops and report on Council and multi-agency attendance.
- Continue to populate the systemic practice hub with guidance and resources.
- Bid for additional monies from the DfE to support the introduction of specialist accredited training for children social care staff.
- Develop a quality assurance framework as a tool to evaluate and measure the impact of the model and the difference it is making for children, young people and families.

Priority 5: Communication and change management:

In order to address this priority, teams have been taking steps to improve the way in which we communicate, and our progress includes:

- Our professional practice officer has continued to offer and deliver training to teams around accessing policies and procedures so that staff can keep up to date with any changes.

- Newsletters continue to go out from our DCS via the performance and improvement team on a monthly basis to keep staff informed of changes, updates and news within the directorate.
- Bi-monthly staff engagement events take place either in person or virtually to deliver service updates and other key messages to staff.
- The practice improvement team continue to host quarterly service events to address audits and deliver messages.
- The performance and improvement team are linking in with colleagues from our corporate OD team every month to discuss Council updates and provide the directorate with further information via our TEAMS channels.
- The 2023 SWORD has been out to staff and recently closed on 13th December – we are now beginning to collate the results and provide feedback.

The next steps for this group over the next 12 months are to:

- Continue to plan and deliver meaningful staff engagement events bi-monthly – next one will be our end of year Christmas celebration session which will include a mini awards ceremony to get teams involved.
- Continue to meet regularly with corporate OD colleagues to plan wellbeing events and receive messages that are to be shared with the directorate.
- Collate 2023 SWORD survey results and follow up with 'You Said, We Did'.

Children's Social Work Recruitment

Our Vision

Our vision is to create equity for people and place and opportunities for all to secure the best possible future for our residents, communities and businesses.

Working together for brighter futures for our children, young people and their families by breaking the cycle of poor outcomes for all regardless of their background.

Wirral Workforce snapshot

- 200 female, 37 Male
- 15% Agency Workers
- 116 aged between 40 and 59
- 138 with between 0–5 years experience
- 43 new starters since September 2020
- Vacancies – 16%
- 37 leavers since 2020
- Average caseload – 15.61 cases per social worker

Our priorities

Priority 1: ‘Growing our own’ through recruitment and development

Priority 2: Support Continuous Professional Development to deliver a motivated and skilled workforce with an emphasis on supporting staff retention

Priority 3: Develop high performing social work managers that support a performance management framework that reflects ‘high support high challenge’

Priority 4: Develop new and revised ways of working building on existing strengths to support children, young people and their families

Priority 5: Communication and change management

Social Care Workforce Strategy 2022-25

Objectives

- Increase applications and reduce social work vacancy levels to 15% each year

Links to Wirral Council Plan

- Improve the lives of children and young people and families

Support

- Support development
- Manageable caseloads
- We value the role of social worker
- Recognise good practice
- High Support, High Challenge
- ‘Systemic Hub’
- £50 to HCPC registration
- ‘Grow your own’
- Creating an environment for social workers to flourish and provide the opportunity for them to develop their careers and become our experienced social workers and team managers of the future
- Step-Up to Social Work Programme
- Social Work Apprenticeship Degree programme
- Step into Social Work Schools Project
- Social work should reflect the communities within which it works. This is only possible when the prospect of becoming a social worker appeals to people from a broad range of backgrounds, and when routes into social work are affordable and accessible.

Ambition

- ‘Grow your own’ development opportunities
- Find a better worklife balance
- Career progression
- More time to plan practice and build up relationships.

Success

Staff

- Employees feel empowered, valued and listened to
- Being proud of what you do and the quality of work
- Supported with Continuous Professional Development delivering a motivated and skilled workforce with an emphasis on supporting staff retention
- Strong, clear communication and engagement supports a culture of openness and transparency: where employees feel empowered, valued and listened to.

Children

- Breaking the cycle of poor outcomes for all regardless of their background
- Children and families thrive
- Children are safer and family functioning improves.

Key messages

- You support our children to reach their potential. We support you to reach yours.
- Our support. Your ambition. Their success.
- Recruitment message: be the difference.

Target audiences

Marketing will be aimed at:

- Experienced social workers wanting a change in role
- Returning to the profession after a career break
- Upskilling and reskilling existing staff
- Social workers wanting to relocate - Wirral is a great place to live and work

Overall corporate message is: **be the difference**

The campaign entitled '**Step forward, reach out and be the difference**'

Wirral Council is reaching out to experienced social workers, who are considering their next career move or looking to return to social work and reconnecting with why they wanted to be a social worker, to make the difference to our children and families.

Step forward and Wirral Council will support you to **be the difference.**

Step forward, reach out and be the difference



Worklife balance - We know family is important to you and it is to Wirral.

We aim to support agile and homeworking as and when it suits employees' needs with a range of flexible working options.

Thinking about returning to social work?

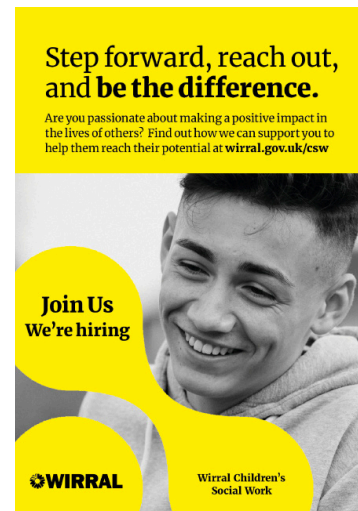
Wirral has so much to offer.

Making connections.

You wanted to be a social worker to make the difference to our children.

What's great about social work is you.

- You are passionate about making a positive impact in the lives of others.
- You build meaningful relationships with clients, witness and support positive changes in their lives, and advocate for policies that will benefit vulnerable communities.



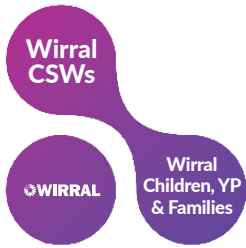
To make a positive difference in the lives of families in times of need.

Passionate about about social justice, human rights and how it affects lives. It's about wanting to influence and change outcomes for people facing challenges.

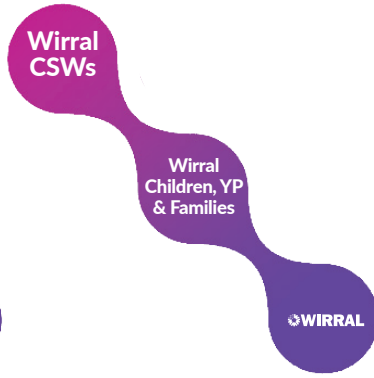
Making connections



- Wirral



- Wirral council
- Wirral children social workers
- Wirral children young people and their families



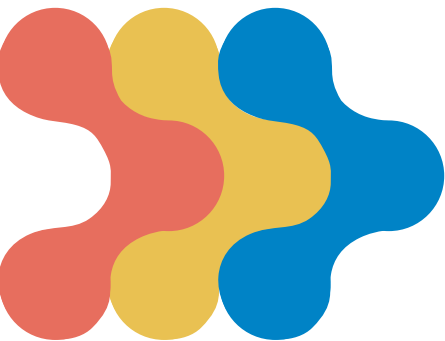
- Wirral council
- Wirral children social workers
- Wirral children young people and their families



- Wirral council
- Wirral children social workers
- Wirral children young people and their families
- Wirral council teams
- Wirral council partners

Reconnect people with the emotional core of what's great about social work.

- Social Workers Make a Difference
- Develop strong connections with clients, offering empathy, understanding, and support during difficult times
- Helping other people and personal satisfaction
- Social work is a broad and diverse field, offering a wide range of career paths
- Advocacy and Social Justice
- Professional Development and Learning
- Teamwork and Collaboration

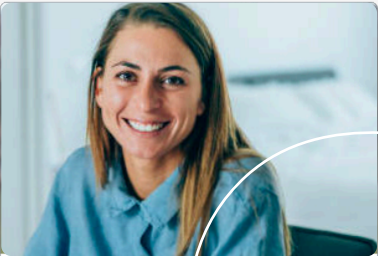


Step forward, reach out and
be the difference


Join our team. We're hiring
wirral.gov.uk/childrens-social-work-wirral

WIRRAL Search


Children's social work in Wirral




Current vacancies



Why be a social worker in Wirral?

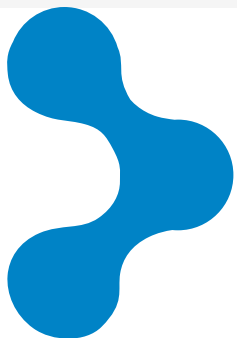
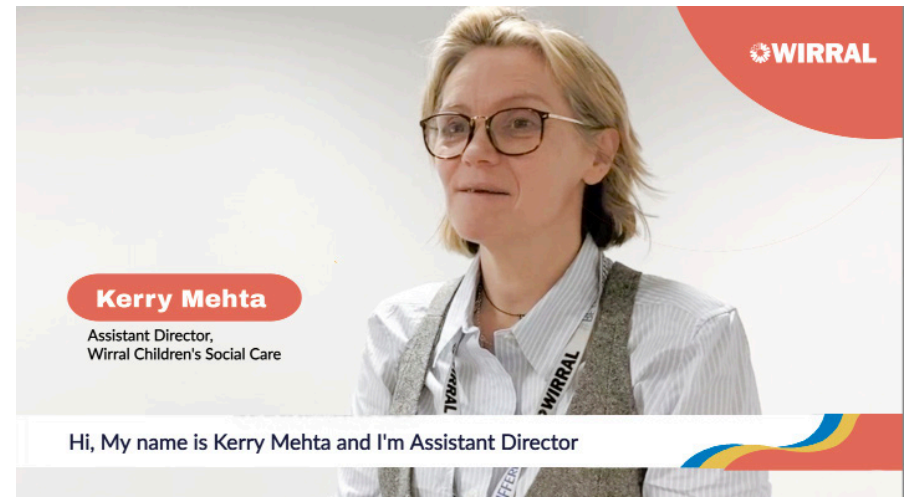


Meet the team



Assessed and supported year in employment (ASYE)

Website - New look would be applied to images and videos



The campaign entitled **'Who supports you? We will. Be a social worker in Wirral'**.

It's calling experienced social workers who are looking for that employer who has a strong ethos of support and values.

A social worker's job is to support others, but who supports them?
WE WILL. WIRRAL.

Wirral Council will support our children's social workers to
be the difference.

2 Who supports you? We will. Be a social worker in Wirral.

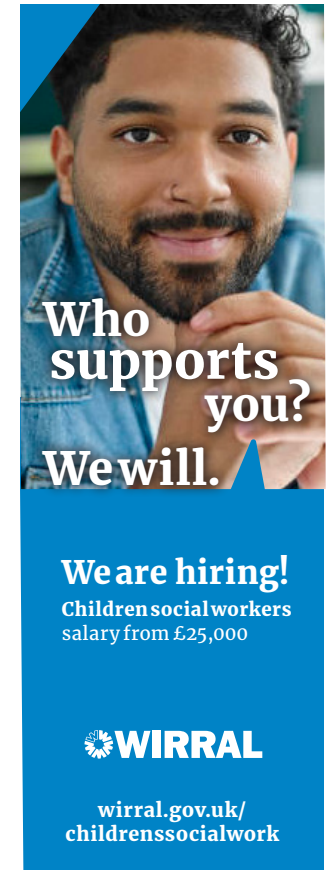
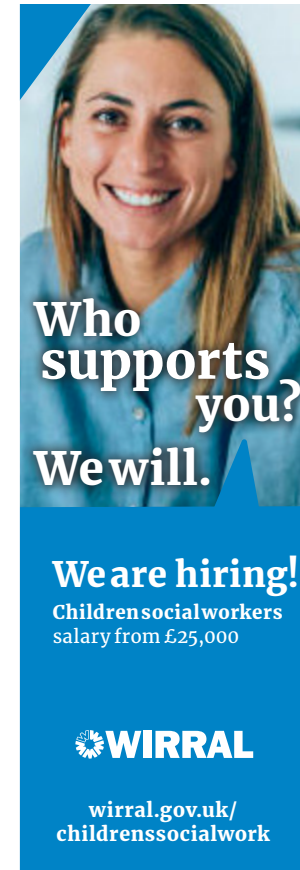
As a social worker your job is to support others, but who supports you? WE WILL.

Digital assets

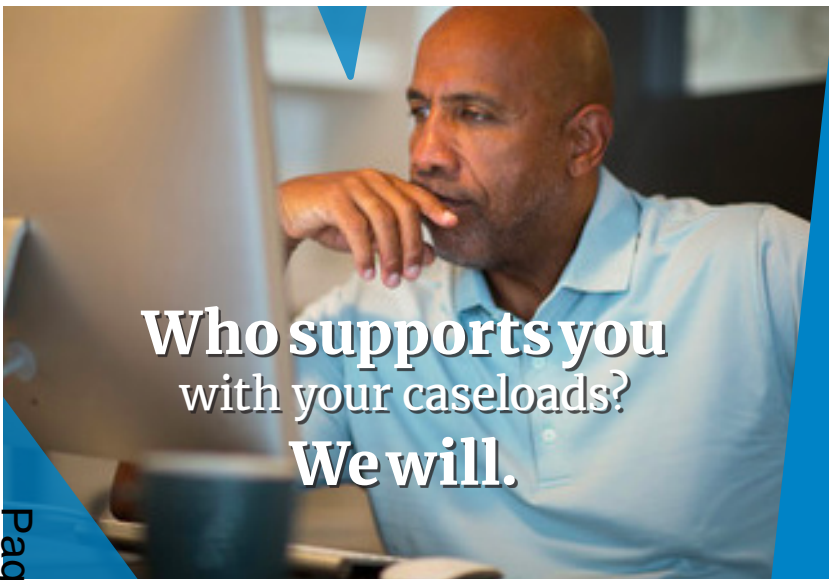
3 graphics would rotate to show - Support, Place, Opportunities



Skyscraper graphics for paid for website advertising



Press advertising



**Who supports you
with your caseloads?
We will.**

WIRRAL

Wirral Council has below the national average caseloads, and administrative support, to help you spend more time with our children and their families.

Supporting you to **be the difference.**

wirral.gov.uk/csw

Page 196



**Who supports you
to fulfil your ambitions?
We will.**

We are hiring!
Children social workers
salary from £25,000

[wirral.gov.uk/
childre socialwork](http://wirral.gov.uk/childre socialwork) **WIRRAL**




**Who supports you?
to be the difference
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We are hiring!
Children social workers
salary from £25,000

[wirral.gov.uk/
childre socialwork](http://wirral.gov.uk/childre socialwork) **WIRRAL**

Online advertising

3 graphics would rotate to show - Support



**You support our
children to reach
their potential.**



**Who
supports
you?**


We will. **WIRRAL**

#BETHEDIFFERENCE

WIRRAL

**MY CHAMP.
Rebecca Byrne**


"A fantastic manager who mentors, check in, offers support and shares her knowledge to benefit others. She's a passionate advocate for other women. She invests in her own learning by our LGBTQ+ network events. She's an ally and will speak up when needed."




#BETHEDIFFERENCE

WIRRAL Search


Children's social work in Wirral




Current vacancies



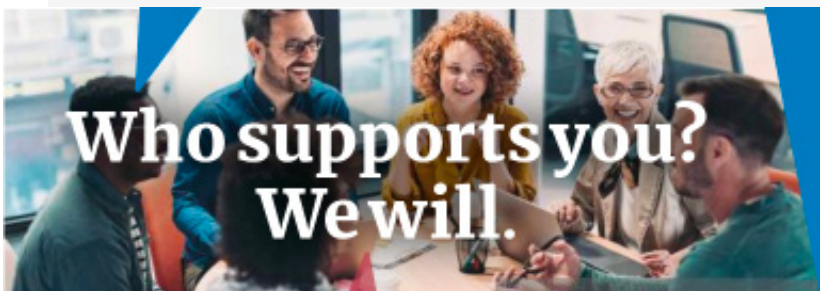
Why be a social worker in Wirral?



Meet the team



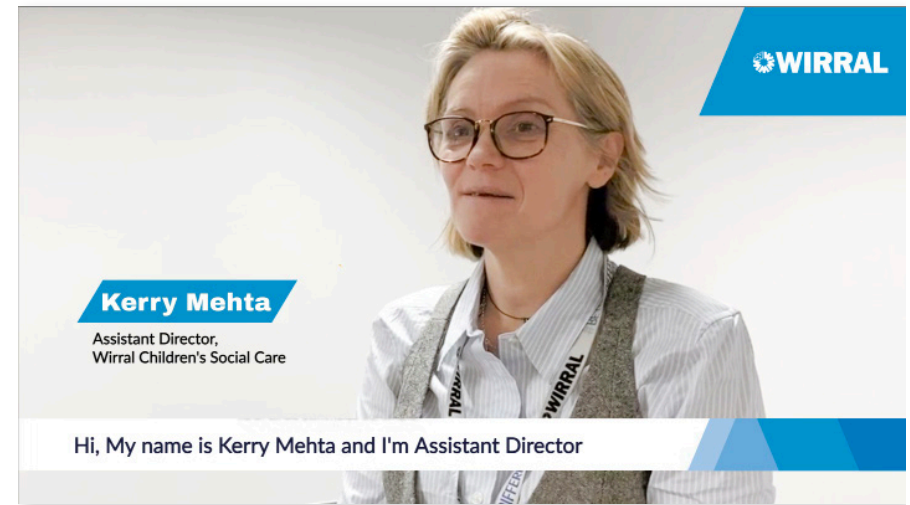
Assessed and supported year in employment (ASYE)



**Who supports you?
We will.**

WIRRAL

Website - New look would be applied to images and videos

Kerry Mehta
Assistant Director,
Wirral Children's Social Care

Hi, My name is Kerry Mehta and I'm Assistant Director

End slide to video

**Who supports you?
We will.**

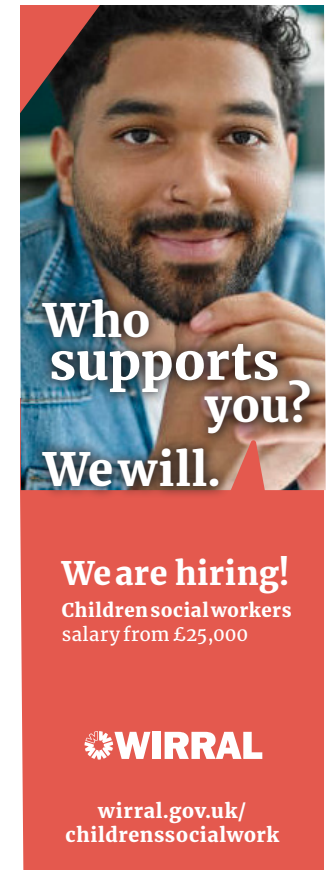
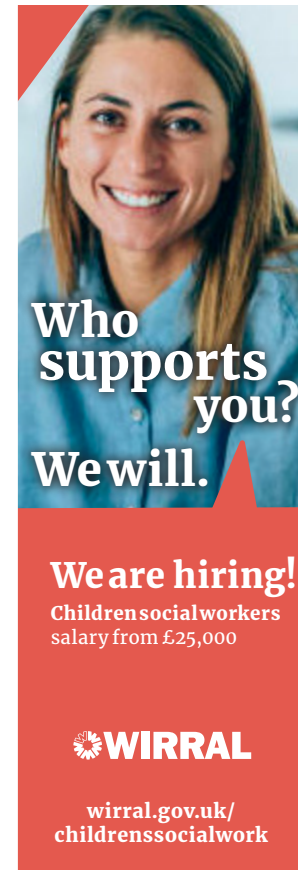
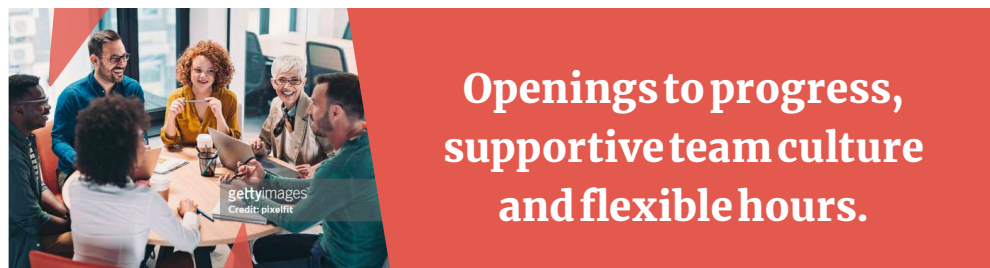
WIRRAL

wirral.gov.uk/childrensocialwork

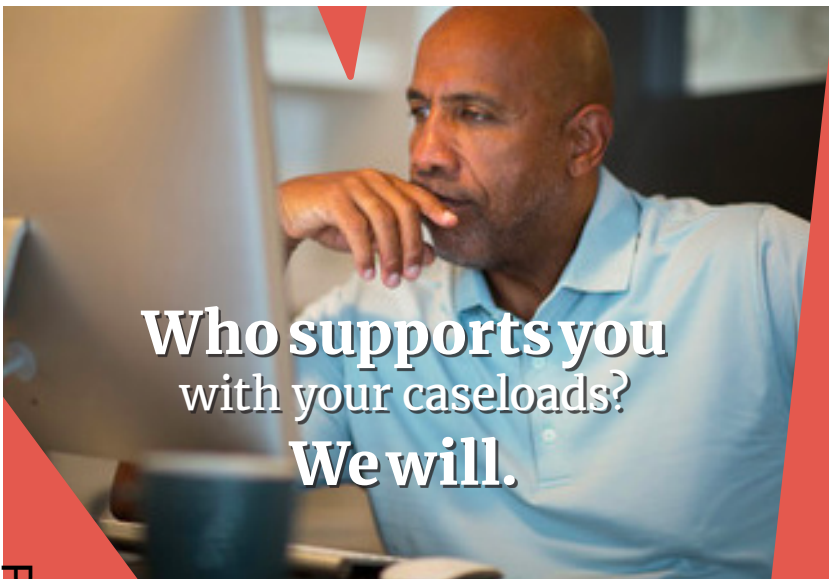
Digital assets

3 graphics would rotate to show - Support, Place, Opportunities

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Press advertising



**Who supports you
with your caseloads?
We will.**

WIRRAL


Wirral Council has below the national average caseloads, and administrative support, to help you spend more time with our children and their families.

Supporting you to be the difference.

wirral.gov.uk/csw

Online advertising

3 graphics would rotate to show - Support



You support our children to reach their potential.



Who supports you?

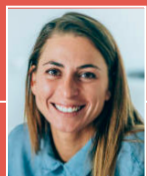
We will. WIRRAL

#BETHEDIFFERENCE

WIRRAL

**MY CHAMP.
Rebecca Byrne**

"A fantastic manager who mentors, check in, offers support and shares her knowledge to benefit others. She's a passionate advocate for other women. She invests in her own learning by our LGBTQ+ network events. She's an ally and will speak up when needed."



#BETHEDIFFERENCE

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**Who supports you to fulfil your ambitions?
We will.**

We are hiring!
Children social workers
salary from £25,000

wirral.gov.uk/
childrensocialwork

WIRRAL



**Who supports you?
to be the difference
We will.**


We are hiring!
Children social workers
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wirral.gov.uk/
childrensocialwork


WIRRAL

WIRRAL Search


Children's social work in Wirral




Current vacancies



Why be a social worker in Wirral?



Meet the team



Assessed and supported year in employment (ASYE)

Website - New look would be applied to images and videos



End slide to video



The campaign entitled '**Grow your career with Wirral Council**'.

We're targetting newly qualified and experienced social workers who are looking for the right support to help them grow to be the best they can be. Building good work relationships is important for personal and professional growth.

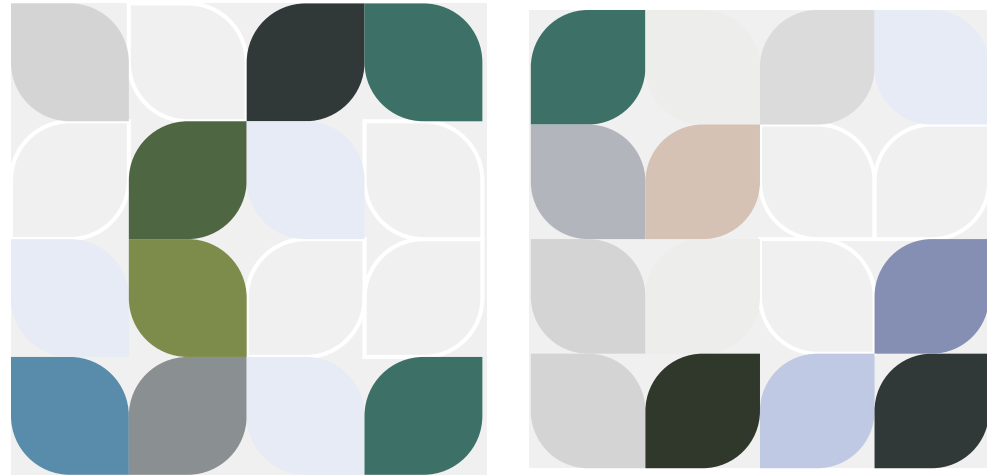
This campaign will also encourage existing Wirral staff to upskill in an environment of high support and high challenge.

Wirral Council will help them grow in confidence everyday so they can **be the difference**.

Grow your career with Wirral. Be the difference



Grow your career
with Wirral.
Be the difference



Our
support.

Your
ambition.

Their
success.

Supporting our priorities:

1. 'Growing our own' through recruitment and development
2. Support Continuous Professional Development to deliver a motivated and skilled workforce with an emphasis on supporting staff retention

Press advertising

Banners

Wirral Children's Social Work

Grow your career, be the difference.

You support our children to thrive and we support you to grow in confidence.



We are hiring!
Children social workers
salary from £25,000

wirral.gov.uk/childre socialwork 

Page 203

Wirral Children's Social Work

Grow your career, be the difference.



If you're a children's social worker looking for more support, find out how we're supporting our staff at wirral.gov.uk/childre socialwork

**Our support.
Your ambition.
Their success.**



Wirral Children's Social Work

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If you're a children's social worker looking for more support, find out how we're supporting our staff at wirral.gov.uk/childre socialwork

**Our support.
Your ambition.
Their success.**



Profile building

- Message that recognises/ promotes this area of work so it is a respected role.
- Ideas that convey: the hero nature of social workers
- The skills CSW possess



23 h

Peter is 7 year's old. He won't talk to anyone. Except to Jenny, the Social Worker. Our children are the most vulnerable. It takes a special person .. more

Inspiring brighter futures.
Bring your ambition

What's it like working FOR US?

OLIVIA WILSON
CHILDREN'S SOCIAL WORKER

This is the best job I've ever had. My manager truly cares about my success personally and professionally. In the last six months, my expertise has doubled and I wake up everyday excited to keep improving.

★★★★★

A photograph of Olivia Wilson, a woman with long brown hair, wearing a light blue button-down shirt, sitting at a desk and smiling at the camera.

Applications

Vacancy promotion

Message:

“We’re recruiting ...”

Other recruitment messages:

- Looking for a change?
New surroundings....
- Work balance
- Returning to social work
- Balanced caseload
- Lifestyle
- Regeneration area -
great place to relocate
- Great place to live and work



Are you a Children's Social Worker? Ambitious and looking to progress or maybe looking for a more supportive workplace.. more

**We're supporting
social workers to
support our children.
And we're recruiting.**

Join us.

Join us.

**Our team
is growing**

Apply now!

**Join
us.**

**Our team
is growing**

Apply now!

Morale

Other ways we support:

- Buddy scheme/mentoring
- Training / CPD
- Supporting progression
- Supporting managers
- Hybrid working
- Wellbeing support with: Rewards, Sparkling moments, DCS letters.

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Are you a Children's Social Worker? Have you remembered to renew your registration? We're supporting you with £50 toward your fee .. more




Invest in you
At Wirral we grow strong relationships

WIRRAL Search


Children's social work in Wirral




Current vacancies



Why be a social worker in Wirral?



Meet the team



Assessed and supported year in employment (ASYE)

Website - New look would be applied to images and videos



Community Care profile

Wirral Council



Digital banner would use style of campaign chosen

With stunning countryside, beaches and superb community spirit, Wirral is a great place to live and work. There has never been a more exciting time to join Wirral Council. We've got ambitious targets to meet and to achieve everything we have promised to our residents, we need people who are ready to deliver the very best for our communities and show how they can #BeTheDifference.

Our vision is to create equity for people and place and opportunities for all to secure the best possible future for our residents, communities and businesses. Working together for brighter futures for our children, young people and their families by breaking the cycle of poor outcomes for all regardless of their background.

If you strive to #BeTheDifference and want to be at the heart of our change and improvement journey, then this could be the perfect job for you.



Meet the chief executive



Paul Satoor Im as asit vellestiatu aliati cullatur. Axim renti omnis aciatum, ullaute la delit, nonectin nimincitatia dellabor asint. Sunt. Am, everianda nus a et oditate dolorenient enet et poria porpor repudit este dolupta epercus, nectemporum que.

"Otas dusam quam ne por sitatem eiumqui re conemquam ulparum nient quam asperfe riatunt, tecae nonem. Disit earchillia corepedi accaborumqui de sitaest, officidit acculpa volore etus est, num fugia plabore icaboreium quiatur."

Audience	Approach and key message	Activity	Channel
<p>Graduates, current SW looking to move job, looking for career progression.</p> <p>Colleagues in health and care sector (demonstrate scope and value of work)</p>	<p>How is the council perceived externally?</p> <p>Elevate the profile of Wirral. Every front facing channel and platform of council should tell a positive story of working for Wirral and of the work of the SW team.</p> <p>Promote Wirral Council's as a supportive employer, promote success of team, meaningful and valued work, - build up a back story for people to view that are looking/researching new jobs and considering joining Wirral Council.</p>	<p>Monthly written and video features to highlight Council as a leader in the field.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Wirral Council Children Social Worker jobs microsite • Wirral View • LinkedIn • Corporate social media <p>Potential that stories are picked up by local media.</p>
<p>Trade and sector websites and magazines</p>	<p>Raise profile of Wirral as a place to be a Social Worker. Leader in field. Supportive employer.</p>	<p>Current opportunities with Community Care:</p> <p>Social Work Diary Case Study series Motivational experiences</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pitched to trade sector
<p>Council staff</p>	<p>Stories above can be repurposed for use internally to show value to staff</p>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Intranet • Staff newsletter
<p>Graduates, current SW looking to move job, looking for career progression</p>	<p>Advertise job vacancies on sector specific website and publications read and reviewed by social workers on a frequent basis.</p>	<p>Online adverts Newsletters Social media</p>	<p>Trade sector publications</p>
<p>Graduates, current SW looking to move job, looking for career progression</p>	<p>Meet the team.</p>	<p>Paid targeted to postcodes / people with degree education, people recently graduated</p>	<p>Facebook</p>
<p>Graduates, current SW looking to move job, looking for career progression</p>		<p>Behavioural reinforcement adverts. Pop up digital adverts that reappear after people have searched Social Worker jobs in 'Merseyside' 'Wirral' (Set criteria)</p>	<p>Various</p>
<p>Graduates, current SW looking to move job, looking for career progression</p>	<p>Google Ads for search terms 'social worker jobs' 'social worker jobs Merseyside, Cheshire, North-West'</p>		<p>Google</p>
<p>Graduates / degree qualified Public</p>	<p>Step Up Campaign Quotes and positive experiences from past cohorts</p>		<p>Press release Facebook Social Media Paid for adverts across Facebook and LinkedIn</p>

Why Wirral? Children's Social Work

- Competitive salary • Hybrid and flexible working
- Access to the Assessed and Supported Year in Employment (ASYE)
- Career progression framework • FLO Wirral's learning platform
- Bi-monthly celebration and learning events
- Excellent pension scheme

... and a great place to live and work

A long list of employee benefits...

- 28 days annual leave + public holidays
- increasing to 32 days after 5 years of service
- Corporate coaching and mentoring
- Access to Employee Assistance Programme (EAP)
- Staff benefits scheme
- Equality, Diversity and Inclusion offer
- Corporate Invigor8 – council leisure centre discounts
- Occupational health support
- Motorcycle and bicycle loan scheme
- Volunteering scheme

plus more benefits...

- Regular supervision from permanent managers
- Coaching and mentoring opportunities
- Wellbeing calendar filled with monthly activities
- Practice and Development Programme
- Access to Research in Practice
- Participation in the Cheshire and Merseyside Social Work Teaching Partnership (CMSWTP) events
- Regular engagement sessions and events
- Bitesize Learning - Thinking Thursdays
- Reflective Spaces, Practitioner and Manager Forums
- Full payment of Social Work England registration

Interested?? Get in touch...

wirral.gov.uk/childrens-social-work-wirral

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Local Authority Update

October 2023

Update

July - Sept 2023

Recruitment of Lead for Yonder

- 2 rounds of recruitment, still ongoing but one strong candidate

Branding

- 'Yonder' chosen name for venture, brand guidelines created

Legal Structure for Yonder

- CIC Ltd by Shares

Local Authority Membership offer (to discuss further in individual meetings)

- Funding already agreed for 2024 & 2025 with pilot LAs (Wirral, St Helens, Cheshire East, Knowsley) to support the start up of Yonder in its first few years, but need to confirm amount and contract
- Designing a membership offer to clearly identify to current and future LAs how Yonder will support workforce initiatives and regional collaboration



Update

Funding

2024

Secured highly likely: £185K

Secured potential: £50K

Total: £235K

2025

Secured highly likely: £85K

Secured potential: £200K

Total: £285K

2026

Secured highly likely: £100K

Secured potential: £50K

Total: £150K

Highly Likely:

Local Authority Membership subscription
(£15-25K / year)

Continuation of existing funding

Potential:

Department of Education
Liverpool City Region Combined Authority
Additional Local Authority's membership
subscription

Additional Investment Conversations:

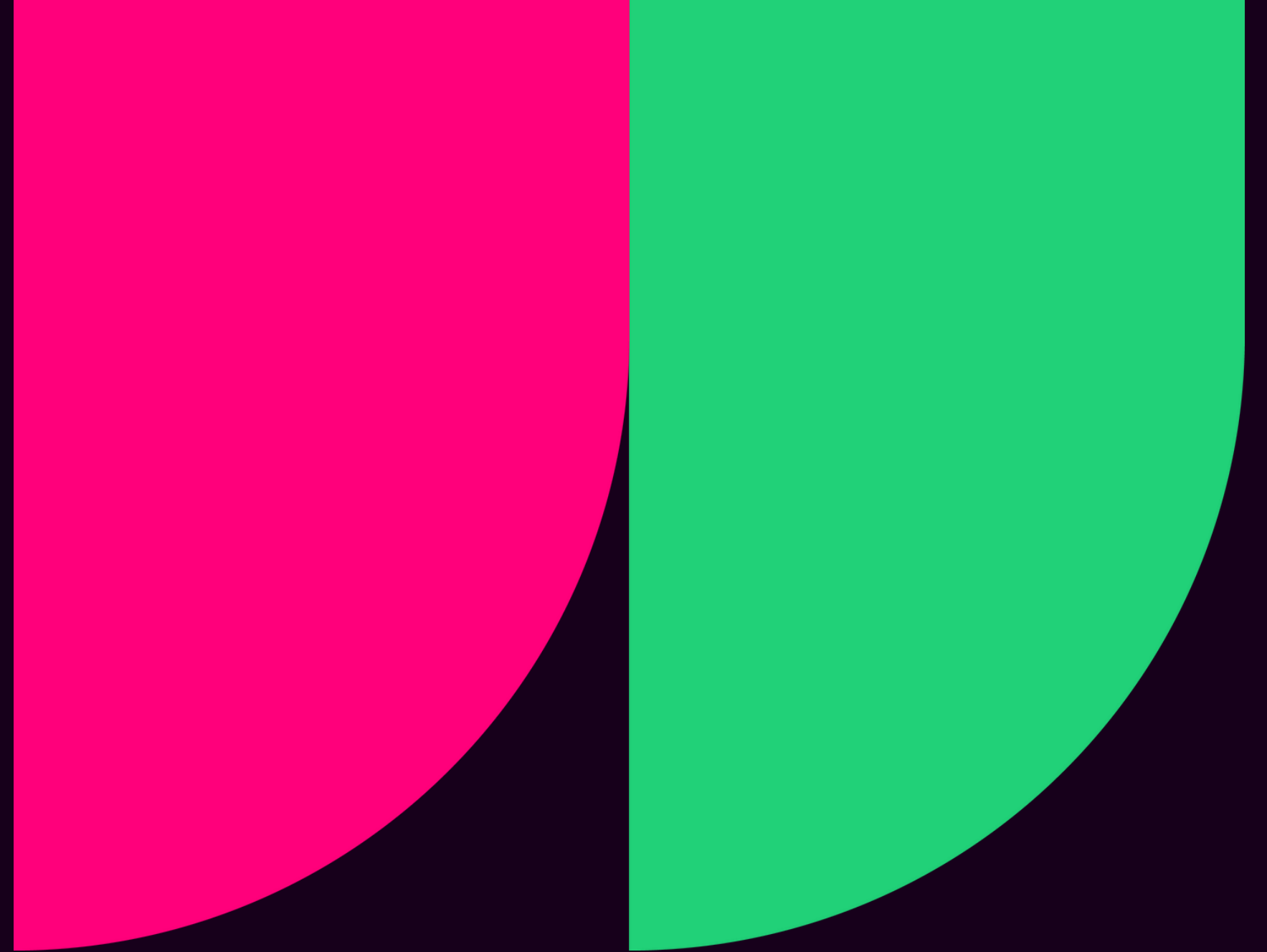
Catch 22

Joseph Rowntree Foundation

People Postcode Innovation Trust

Resolution Foundation



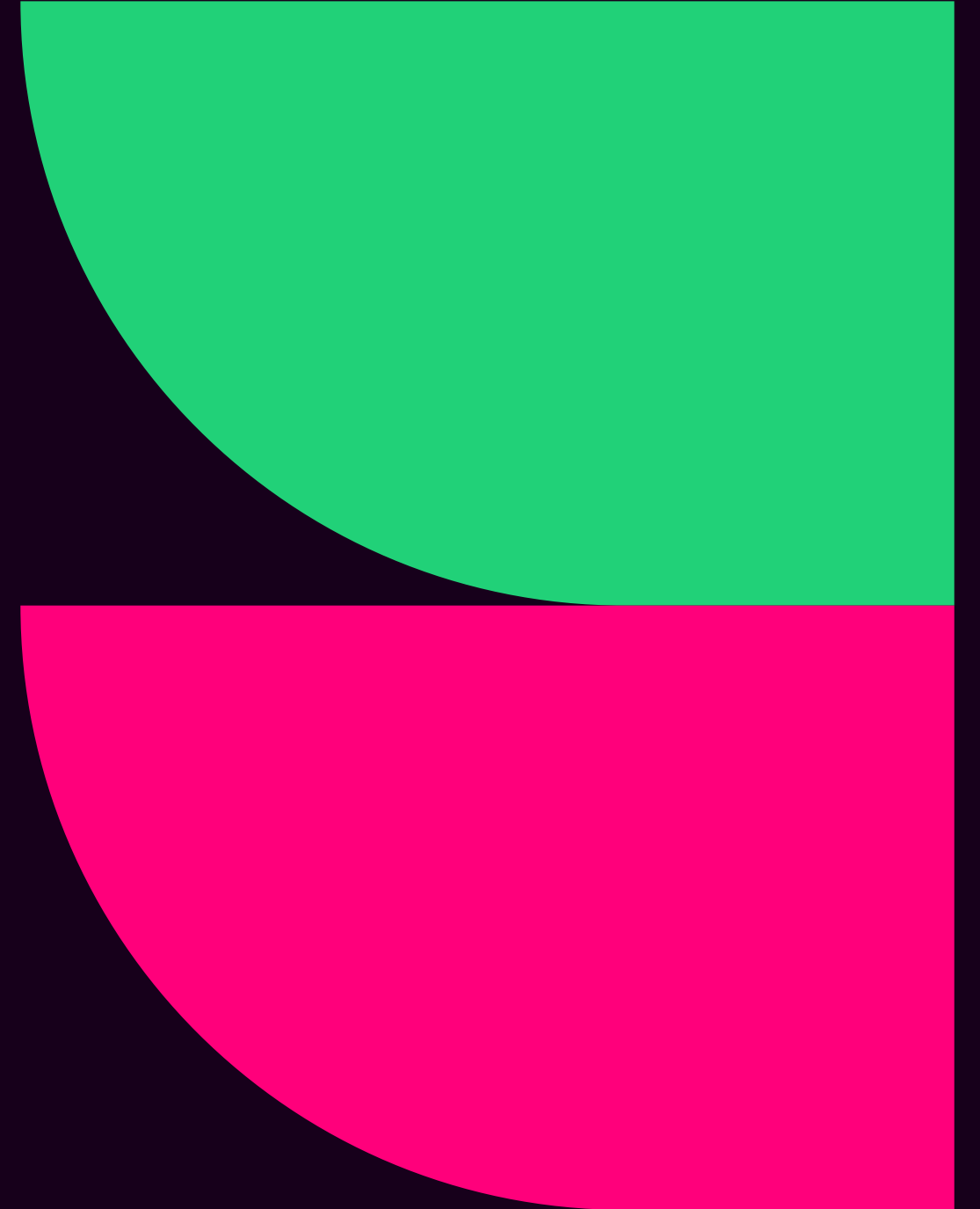


Branding - Yonder!



Yondler

Our Name and Brand



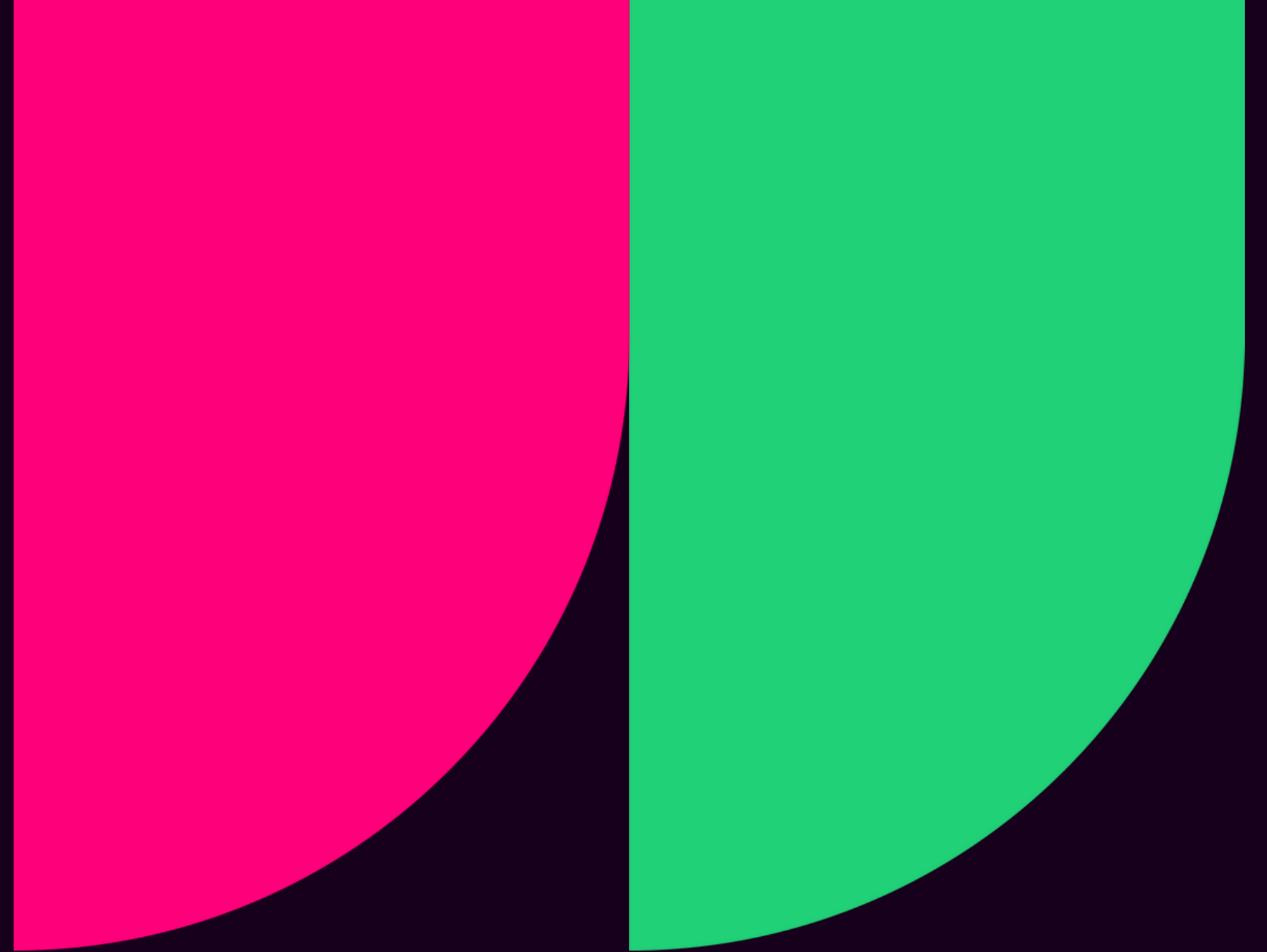
Short-term roles, long-term goals



Yonder

The Yonder wordmark represents an idea of looking at the bigger picture and planning for the future.





Delivery Timeline



Revised Timeline

Branding finalised

Sept 2023

**Yonder CIC as
legal structure**

Oct 2023

**Test Campaign
Begins**

Nov 2023

**Appointment of
Yonder Lead**

Dec 2023

**Secure 3 Year
Start Up Funding**

Feb 2024



Revised Timeline

Finalise delivery processes and systems

May 2024

Appointment of 1st Team Member

June 2024

Trading Activity Launched

June 2024

Procurement with first 1-2 LAs

July 2024

1st Social Worker placed

August 2024



Thank you

0151 123 456 789

hello@yonderpeople.com

sarah.taylor@thisiscapacity.co.uk

Yonder
Short-term roles, long-term goals.

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Assessed and Supported Year in Employment

Annual Report October 2023

Authors Sandra Williams and Rachael Clay

ASYE Coordinators

October 2023

Overview

The Assessed and Supported Year in Employment (ASYE) is a model of good practice that Wirral remains committed to providing for its Newly Qualified Social Workers (NQSWs). It is designed to provide additional support and opportunity for NQSWs to enable them to make a successful transition from their social work degree courses into employment. Ensuring that social workers are equipped and ready to practice influences positive outcomes for children and young people who are in need of help and support during their formative years. It also sets a strong foundation of professional practice which in turn influences continued professional development of the social worker and work force.

Wirral uses the new ASYE portfolio designed by Skills for Care as a template for the programme and NQSW progress is reviewed periodically throughout the year. Wirral is a member of the Cheshire and Merseyside Social Work Teaching Partnership (CMSWTP). The CMSWTP has utilised the Skills for Care portfolio to propose a Partnership model with the aim of establishing a Partnership ASYE experience with employer individuality. The portfolio has been designed to support neurodiverse learning styles. This has been active for 12 months now and feedback was mixed in that the template when first presented is considerable. NQSWs and assessors have been supported in focusing on quarterly targets to achieve tasks. There is currently a working group within CMSWTP exploring ways to reduce the portfolio.

In April 2023 the ASYE Coordinator post converted to being a job share position. Sandra Williams has reduced her hours and Rachael Clay has joined to ensure that the programme has a full time compliment of support. Rachael's most recent position was as Consultant Social Worker for the Frontline programme and she has brought several new initiatives which have been invested in the programme.

As of 31.8.23 there were 24 NQSWs actively involved in the programme with another 17 to be registered over the next couple of months who are awaiting SWE registration. The NQSWs are split across Assessment, Child Protection/Court, and Permanence. This includes 2 dedicated NQSW teams. One NQSW is placed in the Integrated Front Door (IFD). The continued placement of NQSWs in IFD is not supported by the coordinators moving forwards as the individual exposure to social work practice is considered too narrow. There are no NQSWs in the Fostering service. There is 1 NQSW employed by Wirral at Adoption in Merseyside following the programme. Previously Wirral has supported NQSW colleagues placed in Children with Disabilities Team, this provision is now available in house to those NQSWs.

This last year has seen Wirral targeting the recruitment of NQSWs within a 'grow our own' model. A review of the NQSW team was undertaken internally and determined a second ASYE team. This was supported by independent overview from CMSWTP. Our NQSWs are involved in Recruitment events and have contributed to the Social Work in Wirral website information videos. Evidence from recent interviews confirms that prospective NQSWs are accessing our website and coordinators to discuss ASYE prior to interview.



Wirral dedicated
ASYE team overview.

17 NQSWs completed their ASYE in this reporting period and 14 have remained with Wirral. 1 NQSW left prior to completing their ASYE. Reasons for staff leaving were captured in their

exit interviews (career re-evaluation, agency role). There have been 10 NQSWs who have experienced maternity leave or extended sick leave during the period which has impacted on ASYE completion.

The ASYE programme continues to be robust and timely, with review, completion dates and targets set at the Learning Agreement meeting at the start of the ASYE and reviewed during the year. This meeting is overseen by 1 of the ASYE Coordinators. ASYE Practice Development Days have been introduced from September following a consultation with the current cohort about their preferences for support and development. Practice Development Days are 1 day per month with an element of training, systemic reflective supervision and dedicated portfolio time. The NQSW is then able to book another day during the month for personal development time. NQSWs are now required to attend 75% of the ASYE development days in addition to completing mandatory training. The NQSW and/or Assessor are responsible for informing the ASYE Coordinator of any change to the programme timetable. Drift and delay is more focused and extensions to the programme now need to be agreed by the Head of Service Safeguarding and Quality. The programme aims to enrol an NQSW within 6 weeks of beginning employment.

Monthly reports to Operational Leads and Heads of Service continue to be helpful in identifying progress and drift. This report highlight the focus of the team managers to maintain the ASYE offer of 15 cases per NQSW.

ASYE assessors now have their own forum to access support and professional development. This has been well received with many contributing to the sessions. Through this forum we will provide support and training to ensure that assessment of NQSWs is equitable across the service. This will further support the general development of the workforce and service delivery.

Completion of ASYE is now firmly embedded in the Career Progression Framework. Four weeks post ASYE Moderation the progression framework is discussed with the social worker, evidence requirements are outlined for the social worker for them to share with their manager and plan for making an application within an agreed timeframe.

Wirral continues to be a part of a longitudinal study. *DfE study: Recruitment and Retention Among Local Authority Child and Family Social Workers – ASYE_sample*. The coordinators provide data as and when requested and attend ongoing briefings.

Following the successful Skills for Care Monitoring Visit in November 2022 Wirral has been invited to contribute to a national share learning and evaluation process.

Actions from Previous Report

The ASYE programme has supported the recruitment of NQSWs. Our offer is well known in the CMSWTP and Universities and our current and previous NQSW staff are our greatest asset in respect of sharing our ASYE programme and support. they have been willing to be part of recruitment activity and to contribute to the Social Work in Wirral website.

The national focus of recruitment to social work positions and their retention has remained on the agenda. Wirral has made a determined focus to recruit NQSWs. This is an area in which we achieve well. Building on from this, our focus has been to support the Grow Our Own model with training, support and career development through the ASYE programme and Career Progression Framework. Additionally the visibility of ASYE coordinators around the workforce and a direct encouragement of NQSWs to work from the office as much as possible further support the NQSW to develop a more resilient approach to their work.

The new Skills for Care Portfolio has been in use for 12 months. Wirral Coordinators were involved with CMSWTP in creating a neurodiverse template that has been well received. Initial response to the relaunched portfolio incurred some resistance given its template length. However, with the guidance from the coordinators and the support of assessors the portfolio seems to be understood and less daunting for NQSWs.

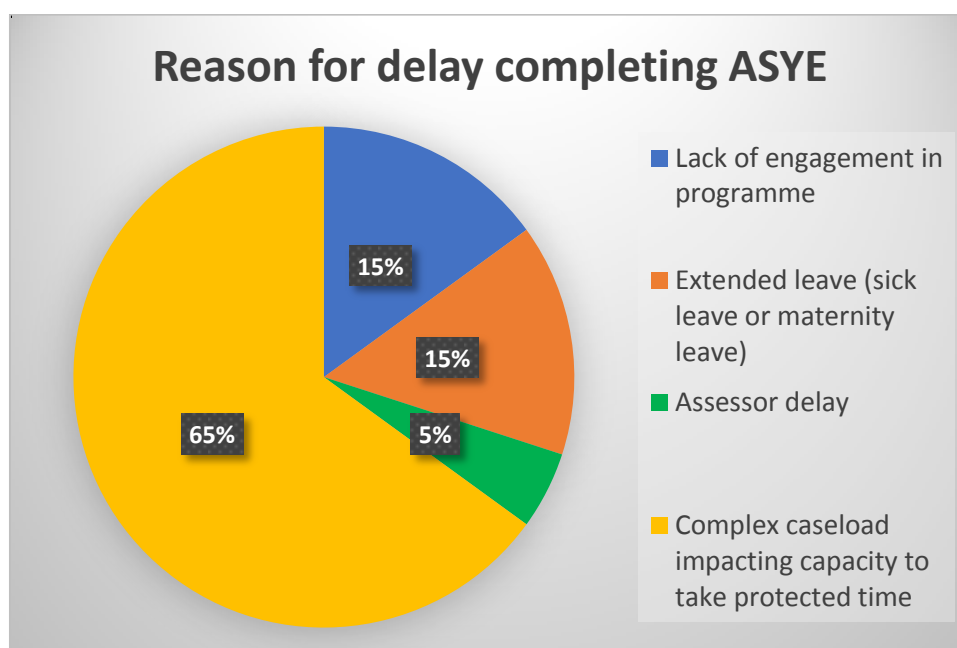
ASYE Cohort Activity Data 1.9.22 to 31.8.23

Cohort No.	Active on programme	Enrolled during period	Moderated	Outstanding	Left before completion	Left within 3 months of completion
7	0	n/a	1	0	0	1
8	0	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a
9	0	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a
10	5	n/a	3	1	1	1
11	19	n/a	12	3	4	1
12	12	12	na	na	na	na
13	6	<i>19 NQSWs to be enrolled post 01.09.23</i>				

A priority for the year ahead is to address the delay in completing the ASYE programme faced by a number of NQSW's (see graph below). In considering what the reasons for delay are for the current cohort has enabled the ASYE coordinators to address specific issues faced by a number of NQSW's.

Introduction of the monthly face to face Practice Development Days have enabled training needs to be addressed and additional support around emotional resilience/moral injury to be provided to the cohort. Monthly ASYE drop-ins are also facilitated every month so that NQSW's can seek support from the ASYE Coordinator with specific elements of the portfolio and/or emotional wellbeing.

The ASYE Co-ordinators will continue to liaise with individual team managers around caseloads and the issues affecting NQSW's taking their protected time. As per the ASYE officer, the protected personal development time equates to half a day per week. This time is vital in ensuring that NQSW's are able to complete evidence in a timely manner for their portfolio.



Support for NQSWs

Prior to the start of ASYE each NQSW is given the opportunity to discuss their individual support needs with the coordinator. The coordinator outlines the varied support choices provided by the local authority and liaises with assessors and managers to ensure the correct support is provided in a timely manner.

The buddy system remains active and post ASYE staff are always willing to support our NQSWs and provide them with service information, shadowing opportunities etc.

The ASYE Teams Chat goes from strength to strength and is very well used by our NQSWs. The Chat is a model for NQSWs supporting each other i.e., Peer to peer support. All NQSWs are welcomed to the chat as soon as they start and ASYE success is celebrated too, alongside such things as “who can I contact for...?”. Several have commented that the Chat has helped them realise that they have knowledge and skills to share with others, which when feeling particularly de-skilled as a new social worker has been a valuable affirmation for them. High Five Friday has also been introduced on the Chat which is an opportunity for NQSW's to share things from their working week that they are proud of. This celebration of successes has been positive in building morale across the ASYE cohort.



The monthly drop-in is another source of support where NQSW's can interact with one another and the ASYE Coordinator. This poster has also been shared with Team Managers and ASYE Assessors to enable them to signpost.

All past and current NQSWs have been provided with direct work tools in the form of resource bags and books including; *Morris and the Bundle of Worries*, *Elfa and the Box of Memories* and *A Safe Place for Rufus*. Emotional Resilience postcards (Biggart et al, 2016) have also been shared as a model of reflection for NQSW's.

ASYE Practice Development Days

It was noted that attendance at ASYE sessions had reduced over the last period. Delivering sessions virtually allowed for self-interpretation in respect of attendance. From September 2023 ASYE Development sessions have been relaunched, now being 1 full day per month, face to face and will compliment the main training offer. The expectation is that the NQSW will attend a minimum of 75% of these Practice Development Days. Attendance will be

reported to assessors and/or managers. This will allow for the NQSW to request another day during the month for personal development time.

In building an itinerary for the Practice Development Days, the current ASYE cohort were consulted and feedback after each Practice Development Day informs subsequent sessions. The NQSW's have been passionate about contributing to how these days look which is giving them greater ownership and commitment to the ASYE programme. The Practice Development Days follow the format;

- Team building: this is especially important for those not within the ASYE dedicated teams and has increased a sense of belonging within Wirral. This has provided each NQSW a secure base in which to practice.
- In-house training: team managers have been consulted to understand training needs of the ASYE cohort. Topics include; emotional resilience/moral injury, anti-racist practice, private fostering, pre-proceedings, private law, public law, analytical writing and child exploitation.
- Systemic Case reflection: each month, an NQSW will volunteer to talk through a case and supported by the cohort to reflect and build hypotheses. The discussion is supported by a Systemic Genogram which can be added to case records.
- Portfolio workshop: designated time to work on the ASYE portfolio with the support of peers and the ASYE Coordinators.



Training



ASYE Practice



ASYE Practice



ASYE Practice

Programme20232024Development Day 1 - Development Day 2 - Development Day 3 -



ASYE Practice Development Day – September

Bloom Building is used as a venue which is a relaxed community space and the home of Open Door mental health charity. Funds from the ASYE budget generated from Skills for Care to pay for the venue hire goes directly to the Open Door charity.



ASYE Practice Development Day – October

A panel of Social Workers who have recently completed the ASYE came to talk with the NQSW's about their experiences. Feedback was really positive about this session.

Moderation Meetings

17 NQSWs have successfully completed ASYE in this review period. There have been no NQSWs who have not passed.

To complete the ASYE programme the NQSW must be supported by their assessor and present their ASYE Portfolio to the Moderation Panel.

Prior to being forwarded to the Head of Service Safeguarding and Quality who chairs the Internal Moderation Panel the portfolio is quality assured by the coordinator. The Internal Moderation Template is prepared by the ASYE coordinator with any additional comments added at moderation.

The Internal Moderation Panel has a Terms of Reference and an agreed agenda with the aim of providing consistency in decision making across the programme. The NQSW is invited to verbally review the year, highlighting areas of confident practice and areas for continued improvement. The NQSW is expected to be able to refer to the legislative framework of the organisation/service alongside internal procedures and practice. They should also demonstrate their knowledge of the work and values of the wider organisation of the employer.

The assessor is invited to attend to support the NQSW and is verbally asked to confirm their recommendation and its rationale. The ASYE coordinator is invited to comment on the agency's approach to the programme and highlight any issues.

The NQSW is advised on the day of the Moderation outcome.

There is no requirement in the ASYE programme for the NQSW to be knowledgeable on the whole of Children's Services. NQSWs are however, expected to have a sound understanding of their service area, and the child's journey and daily lived experience.

Equality and Diversity

As part of induction to Wirral all NQSWs are mandatorily required to complete Equity and Diversity Training. A further training package is being explored to facilitate a safe learning environment to explore understanding. Each NQSW is advised of the range of corporate groups and forums that they may choose to access. Learning styles and needs are discussed with the NQSW prior to beginning ASYE to ensure that there is no delay in accessing and providing support and is revisited at the Learning Agreement Meeting.

As part of the CMSWTP Wirral supports the equality and diversity data reporting. The coordinator was part of a task and finish group that has formulated the new portfolio to offer a more neurodiverse format.

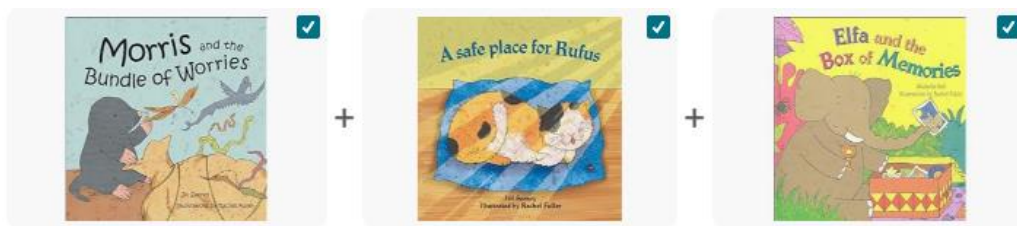
Feedback on the ASYE Programme 2022 to 2023

At the end of each ASYE programme each NQSW and Assessor is requested to complete written feedback. They are asked to comment on their ASYE experience. More written feedback than previous years has been received with most NQSWs reporting a satisfactory experience overall.

Finance

ASYE Income from Skills for Care 1.9.22 to 31.8.23

The Skills for Care funding is a government grant and is used to support the development of the programme. For example, payments made to assessors, purchase of direct workbooks and literacy resources, room hire for development days and on costs. The following books have been provided to all NQSW's currently in the ASYE cohort and those that completed ASYE within the last 2 years.



Grant income for the period is £27,000. The coordinators continue to work with finance to determine budget activity. Recently we have been successful in identifying our own ASYE budget which will more clearly support income and expenditure.

Moving Forward.

An Action Plan for 2023/2024 is now required to secure funding from Skills for Care which has been completed and ready for uploading when the Portal allows. In brief, the targets agreed by Assistant Director Kerry Mehta and notified to Skills for Care are:

Relaunch ASYE Practice Development Days to include a space for an ASYE forum and Action Learning Sets (reflective spaces).

As stated previously, a review of the current support sessions for NQSW's highlighted that attendance and engagement could improve. A feedback session took place with the NQSW cohort and ASYE Coordinators in March 2023 whereby NQSW's stated their preferences for how support sessions can be shaped moving forward. This feedback has contributed to the development and relaunch of support sessions which will take place one day per month and start in September 2023. The sessions will move from being virtual to in-person which NQSW's were positive about.

Support session dates have been shared with NQSW's for September 2023 until July 2024 so they can protect this time in their diary. These dates have also been shared with Team Managers so they can provide cover for these days as this was identified as a barrier for attendance at previous sessions.

Support sessions will include guided discussion around the ASYE portfolio, end of ASYE presentations (for those that opt for this over the assignment), in-house and commissioned training, reflective spaces (action learning sets), Research in Practice webinars, ASYE forum and networking opportunities.

There is an expectation, supported by Senior Managers, that all ASYE Support Sessions are mandatory. In order to complete their ASYE, NQSW's will need to attend a minimum of 75% of all support sessions.

Further embed anti-racist practice and Equity, Diversity and Inclusion in to the ASYE training plan for 2023-24.

It was identified within the Skills for Care Quality Assurance Review in November 2022 that NQSW's at times struggle to discuss issues around diversity and cultural needs. Whilst training is offered, it does not appear to be meeting the needs of the current ASYE cohort. Therefore, specific Action Learning Sets with a focus on Equity, Diversity and Inclusion will be offered within the relaunched Support Sessions. It is hoped that a smaller group, specifically for NQSW's, will create an environment where discussion and curiosity can be encouraged.

Resources from the Cheshire and Merseyside Teaching Partnership will be utilised for supporting NQSW's with implementing anti-racist practice which will be shared in addition to the Local Authority's agenda around anti-racist practice.

Further areas of support in this area can be garnered from the Skills for Care forums (including GEMS forum) and Research in Practice resources. NQSW's will be signposted to these forums, and this will be explored further within the monthly ASYE Support Sessions. Within the ASYE induction, the ASYE Co-ordinators signpost NQSW's to the staff networking groups that currently run to promote inclusion and equity within the organisation and ASYE cohort.

Review the offer provided to ASYE Assessors in terms of training and networking opportunities with an aim to raise professional accountability and pride within this role.

The ASYE Co-Ordinators have reviewed the current training offer provided to ASYE Assessors. A lot of the training currently is offered virtually by way of YouTube videos. Whilst the feedback around the usefulness of these videos has been positive, it does not always lend itself to meeting the needs of all learning styles.

Therefore, in order to provide a bespoke training offer to the learning needs of all our ASYE Assessors, we are planning to review and update the training that is delivered. Resources from the CMSWTP will be utilised in developing workshops to assist ASYE Assessors in areas they identified as needing support;

- Understanding the new portfolio template.
- Breaking down the Knowledge and Skills Statement and Professional Capabilities Framework so there is clarity on how they can be applied to professional development for NQSW's.
- Reflective supervision tools.
- ASYE Assessor Forum

In achieving the goal of finalising all ASYE portfolios within a 12-month period, it is recognised that the confidence and competence of our ASYE Assessors is integral to this. We want to raise the professional profile of the ASYE Assessors in Wirral and provide them with a space to shape the ASYE programme in Wirral through local and national forums.



ASYE Action plan
2023-24.docx

Sandra Williams and Rachael Clay

ASYE Coordinators

November 2023



CHILDREN, YOUNG PEOPLE & EDUCATION COMMITTEE

Thursday, 1 February 2024

REPORT TITLE:	EARLY YEARS FUNDING EXPANSION
REPORT OF:	DIRECTOR OF CHILDREN, FAMILY AND EDUCATION

REPORT SUMMARY

The changes to Early Years Funding Entitlements pose a significant change for families across Wirral as well as the landscape for early years childcare and education. Furthermore, the considerations may escalate where the committee is required to make a key decision.

Two-year funding take up has increased from 87% in summer term 23 to 96% in Autumn 23, back to pre-covid levels. The 9% points increase is down to a number of factors, the Family Hubs and Children's Centre continue assertively target eligible families and promote the entitlement whenever possible both to families and professionals. The eligible population has decreased across all wards in Wirral, coupled with Department for Education (DfE) supplying phone numbers for families have made it easier to promote the offer. The media coverage of the new working family's entitlements has possibly helped parents feel more comfortable with sending their young children into early years provision. Three-year funding remains unchanged from summer term at 95% take up.

RECOMMENDATION/S

The Children, Young People and Education Committee is requested to note the report.

SUPPORTING INFORMATION

1.0 REASON/S FOR RECOMMENDATION/S

- 1.1 The changes to Early Years Funding Entitlements pose a significant change for families across Wirral as well as the landscape for early years childcare and education. Furthermore, the considerations may escalate where the committee is required to make a key decision.

2.0 OTHER OPTIONS CONSIDERED

- 2.1 Every effort is being made to implement the Early Years Funding Entitlements as seamlessly and efficiently as possible to reduce risks and the escalation of issues.

3.0 BACKGROUND INFORMATION

- 3.1 The expansion to Early Years Funding Entitlements is part of the government's plan to support working families and encourage families into work. This policy is being supported by Job Centre Plus increasing the frequency of work coach meeting with unemployed families.
- 3.2 Following the review of Special Educational Needs Inclusion Fund (SENIF) we have supported 7 children with settling inclusion grants to ensure they could start positively into their provision. Autumn term has been a period of transition to the new processes, to ensure children were not left unsupported during this change. As part of the new SENIF process children are funded the term after they apply, to ensure children over Autumn term didn't miss out an exceptional process was applied. This provided 28 children with band A funding, and 24 children with band B funding. The monthly panels throughout Autumn term determined support for Spring term, the panel reviewed 167 applications. This is a significant increase on Autumn term 22 were 75 children received SENIF.
- 3.3 98% of early years providers are judged good or above. Providers with a judgement less than good receive targeted support from the Quality Improvement Team. One childminder received a second Inadequate judgement this term, funding had been paused following the initial inadequate judgement, cessation of funding will continue until their judgement improves.
- 3.4 From January 2024 the early years team will start implementing Operation Encompass, which will enable early years providers to support young children and their families following an incident of parental conflict attended by the Police. Providers will receive training on how to support children and their family and can use some of the existing resources provided by the council; for example, 'Do you feel what I feel' resources and My Happy Mind programme.

Key Changes Early Years Entitlements

- 3.5 In March 2023 the chancellor announced an expansion to Early Years Funding Entitlements (EYFE) for working parents of children between 9 months and 2 years old by September 2025 and for all schools to provide wrap around provision by September 2026. Currently eligible working families with a 3- or 4-year-old can

receive 15 hours of free childcare term time only this is in addition to the universal 15 hours all 3-and-4-year-olds receive.

- 3.6 To implement the expansion of EYFE the government have planned a phased approach. From April 2024 eligible working families with a 2-year-old will receive 15 hours of free childcare. From September 2024 the age range will drop to include families with children aged from 9-months-old. In September 2025 the hours available for eligible working families will increase to 30 hours.
- 3.7 Capacity funding has been given to Local Authorities to complete sufficiency work prior to the implementation of the expansion. This is alongside capital funding to ensure Wirral has adequate funded places.
- 3.8 From September 2026 all schools will be expected to offer wrap around provision between 8 till 6 term time only, for children between 5 and 11 years of age. Wirral has received capacity funding to work with schools to develop their offer, capital funding to support schools with resource requirements e.g., building work and programme funding which is tapered to support the setup and sustainability of the provision during the life of the programme.

Considerations

- 3.8 There are several considerations to highlight around the expansion of EYFE, the majority of these focus on sufficiency of places due to the recruitment and retention issues faced by the early years sector.
- 3.9 Due to the recruitment and retention issues many providers are capping places within their setting. This is due to not being able to recruit suitable qualified staff to fill vacancies from staff leaving to work in other service areas such as retail which is currently paying significantly higher wages than childcare is able to. This is a national issue and Wirral has commissioned two early years providers to support the relationship between training providers and early years settings. As well as working with the Liverpool City Region to address this issue.
- 3.10 As settings have capped places this has meant the sufficiency data provided by the Department for Education (DfE) is incorrect, as registered places has been used. Data published in November 2023 highlights Wirral to have enough places for eligible children in April and September 24 but will require places in September 25. Whilst this is anticipated to be accurate for April 24 (2-year-olds) the team is less confident this will be the case for September 24 (9-month-olds) due to the capping of places and not knowing the number of families who will increase their demand of childcare and switch from informal childcare (family members etc) to formal childcare (Childminders, day nurseries etc).
- 3.11 One of the biggest challenges in planning for the EYFE expansion is understanding the change in demand. The DfE have intimated families currently using childcare provision will increase their demand by an additional 4 hours per week and families new to using childcare provision will request 26 hours per week. Whilst this is useful information it is difficult to predict the number of families who will move from informal childcare to formal childcare and how many hours they will request.

- 3.12 Currently eligible disadvantaged families with a two-year-old receive 15 hours of free childcare term time only until they are eligible for the universal three-year-old funding. When working families receive two-year-funding from April 2024. If they are eligible for both schemes from September 2025, they will be expected to claim under both schemes in case they fall out of eligibility they will still receive 15 hours. However, there will be a small group of families who will not be eligible for either scheme e.g., two parent families where one parent is not working, this could be a low-income household that is just above the income threshold to receive disadvantaged two-year-funding.
- 3.13 There is also the possibility that places for disadvantaged two-year-olds may be decrease. As providers take more children from an earlier age for increased hours, in order to maintain this place till the child transitions to school, they may have to reduce the number of two-year-old 15-hour places they offer. Working families are also more likely to request additional hours which will generate further income for early years settings. Family Hubs will play an important part in supporting families not eligible for the expansion entitlements to ensure the gap between working and non-working families does not widen.
- 3.14 The DfE has issued indicative data on the number of Part-Time Equivalent (PTE) places Wirral is expected to achieve across 2024/25 financial year. Whilst the two-year-old data seems accurate the under-two's data seems to low. This affects the determination of funding rates as if we base the rates on too higher a figure of PTE then the budget will be overspent if we predict too low a take up, the budget will be underspent. Providers will be determining their delivery offer based on the funding rates which in turn could affect the number of available places. The DfE have also not confirmed if any authorities use their PTE data they will be recompensed if an overspend occurs.

4.0 FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 4.1 The early years budget will significantly increase through the expansion of early years funding entitlement. Once the rollout of entitlements has completed the Department for Education (DfE) plan to reduce the percentage councils can retain to deliver entitlements from 5% of the overall budget to 3%.
- 4.2 The SENIF budget is set to come in underspent, how much will depend on how many applications are received for settling inclusion grant. A plan for the underspend will be discussed with the Early Years School forum sub-group and shared with school forum in the next report.

5.0 LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

- 5.1 The legislative changes to the Childcare Act 2006 received ascension on 2nd January 2024, which is the statutory duty for Local Authorities to implement the new funding entitlements for families.

6.0 RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS: STAFFING, ICT AND ASSETS

- 6.1 Project Boards for both the early years funding entitlements expansion and wrap around increase have been set up with relevant key stakeholders. This has seen a

number of teams across the council commit their time to supporting this initiative, from systems team, finance team, marketing team and data and insight teams.

- 6.2 To provide the support to families and early years providers there will need to be an increase within the early years team. A structure has been proposed and will be implemented over the next two years.

7.0 RELEVANT RISKS

- 7.1 To implement the early years funding entitlement the biggest risk will be not having sufficient funded places to meet demand. The use of capital funding will be crucial in supporting providers to create places where it is determined there may be insufficient places.
- 7.2 There is also a risk that take up of the disadvantage two-year-old offer will decrease. To mitigate this risk a higher funding rate for this cohort is potentially being applied. This will go alongside a promotional campaign and close working links with family hubs to continue to assertively target eligible families to take up the offer.

8.0 ENGAGEMENT/CONSULTATION

- 8.1 The early years team in partnership with the corporate insight team have been surveying families to determine potential demand and changes in demand. Early years providers are also surveyed to inform of capacity.

9.0 EQUALITY IMPLICATIONS

- 9.1 Wirral Council has a legal requirement to make sure its policies, and the way it carries out its work, do not discriminate against anyone. An Equality Impact Assessment is a tool to help council services identify steps they can take to ensure equality for anyone who might be affected by a particular policy, decision or activity.

10.0 ENVIRONMENT AND CLIMATE IMPLICATIONS

- 10.1 Not applicable

11.0 COMMUNITY WEALTH IMPLICATIONS

- 11.1 It is anticipated an increase in employment opportunities across the early years sector. The policy will also support families back into employment as well as reducing the cost of childcare for all families.

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APPENDICES

None

BACKGROUND PAPERS

Early Education and childcare: Statutory Guidance for local authorities. January 2024

National Wraparound Childcare programme handbook: A guide for local authorities in England. October 2023

TERMS OF REFERENCE

This report is being considered by the Children, Young People & Education Committee in accordance with Section A of its Terms of Reference, exercising management, oversight and delivery of services to children and young people in relation to their care, wellbeing, education or health, with the exception of any powers reserved to full Council.

SUBJECT HISTORY (last 3 years)

Council Meeting	Date



CHILDREN, YOUNG PEOPLE AND EDUCATION COMMITTEE

THURSDAY 1 FEBRUARY 2024

REPORT TITLE:	CHILDREN, YOUNG PEOPLE AND EDUCATION WORK PROGRAMME
REPORT OF:	DIRECTOR OF LAW AND GOVERNANCE

REPORT SUMMARY

The Children, Young People and Education Committee, in co-operation with the other Policy and Service Committees, is responsible for proposing and delivering an annual committee work programme. This work programme should align with the corporate priorities of the Council, in particular the delivery of the key decisions which are within the remit of the Committee.

It is envisaged that the work programme will be formed from a combination of key decisions, standing items and requested officer reports. This report provides the Committee with an opportunity to plan and regularly review its work across the municipal year. The work programme for the Children, Young People and Education Committee is attached as Appendix 1 to this report.

Following the whole-Council elections, the newly composited Committee is invited to review the 2023-24 work programme moving into the 2023-24 municipal year. It is proposed that issues on the existing work programme that are for information purposes only can be considered via other means, such as briefing notes or workshops.

RECOMMENDATION

The Children, Young People and Education Committee is recommended to:

- (1) note and comment on the proposed Children, Young People and Education Committee work programme for the remainder of the 2023/24 municipal year.
- (2) review its items for future consideration on the work programme.

SUPPORTING INFORMATION

1.0 REASON/S FOR RECOMMENDATION/S

- 1.1 To ensure Members of the Children, Young People and Education Committee have the opportunity to contribute to the delivery of the annual work programme.

2.0 OTHER OPTIONS CONSIDERED

- 2.1 A number of workplan formats were explored, with the current framework open to amendment to match the requirements of the Committee.

3.0 BACKGROUND INFORMATION

- 3.1 The work programme should align with the priorities of the Council and its partners. The programme will be informed by:

- The Council Plan
- The Council's transformation programme
- The Council's Forward Plan
- Service performance information
- Risk management information
- Public or service user feedback
- Referrals from Council

Terms of Reference

The Children, Young People and Education Committee is responsible for services which help keep children and young people safe and fulfil their potential. It incorporates schools and attainment, and social care for children and families. It has a particular focus on those children who are in care, and for whom the Council has corporate parenting responsibility. The Committee is charged by full Council to undertake responsibility for: -

- (a) exercising management, oversight and delivery of services to children and young people in relation to their care, wellbeing, education or health, with the exception of any powers reserved to full Council;
- (b) the functions and powers conferred on or exercisable by the Council as Local Authority in relation to the provision of education;
- (c) working with all schools (including academies) in relation to raising standards of attainment and developing opportunities;
- (d) leading for the Council and its partners in the discharge the Council's functions as Corporate Parent for its children in care and care leavers;
- (e) any other functions comprised in partnership arrangements with other bodies connected with the delivery of services for children, young people and families;

- (f) providing a view of performance, budget monitoring and risk management in relation to the Committee's functions;
- (g) undertaking the development and implementation of policy in relation to the Committee's functions, incorporating the assessment of outcomes, review of effectiveness and formulation of recommendations to the Council, partners and other bodies, which shall include any decision relating to:
- child protection;
 - children's centres;
 - education, schools and settings;
 - looked after children;
 - mental health services;
 - safeguarding;
 - special educational needs and disability (SEND);
 - youth offending services;
 - youth services; and
 - social and education transport

4.0 FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 4.1 This report is for information and planning purposes only, therefore there are no direct financial implication arising. However, there may be financial implications arising as a result of work programme items.

5.0 LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

- 5.1 There are no direct legal implications arising from this report. However, there may be legal implications arising as a result of work programme items.

6.0 RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS: STAFFING, ICT AND ASSETS

- 6.1 There are no direct implications to Staffing, ICT or Assets.

7.0 RELEVANT RISKS

- 7.1 The Committee's ability to undertake its responsibility to provide strategic direction to the operation of the Council, make decisions on policies, co-ordinate spend, and maintain a strategic overview of outcomes, performance, risk management and budgets may be compromised if it does not have the opportunity to plan and regularly review its work across the municipal year.

8.0 ENGAGEMENT/CONSULTATION

- 8.1 Not applicable.

9.0 EQUALITY IMPLICATIONS

9.1 Wirral Council has a legal requirement to make sure its policies, and the way it carries out its work, do not discriminate against anyone. An Equality Impact Assessment is a tool to help council services identify steps they can take to ensure equality for anyone who might be affected by a particular policy, decision or activity.

This report is for information to Members and there are no direct equality implications.

10.0 ENVIRONMENT AND CLIMATE IMPLICATIONS

10.1 This report is for information to Members and there are no direct environment and climate implications.

11.0 COMMUNITY WEALTH IMPLICATIONS

11.1 This report is for information to Members and there are no direct community wealth implications.

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APPENDICES

Appendix 1: Children, Young People and Education Committee Work Plan

BACKGROUND PAPERS

Wirral Council Constitution
Forward Plan
The Council's transformation programme

SUBJECT HISTORY (last 3 years)

Council Meeting	Date
Children, Young People and Education Committee	1 December 2020
	28 January 2021
	11 March 2021
	15 June 2021
	4 October 2021
	27 October 2021
	23 November 2021
	31 January 2022
	10 March 2022
	21 June 2022
	19 July 2022
	19 September 2022

	12 October 2022 6 December 2022 24 January 2023 7 March 2023 21 June 2023 19 July 2023 25 September 2023 18 October 2023 29 November 2023
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**CHILDREN, YOUNG PEOPLE AND EDUCATION COMMITTEE
WORK PROGRAMME 2023/24**

KEY DECISIONS FEBRUARY 2024

Item	Brief Description	Committee Meeting	Lead Departmental Officer
Admission Arrangements for Community and Voluntary Controlled Primary and Secondary Schools and the Coordinated Admission Schemes for 2025-26 (Key)		February 2024	Sally Gibbs
Mental Health, Well Being and Therapeutic Support for Children Looked After. (Key)	A proposal to tender for the service that provides Mental Health and Emotional Wellbeing support for Children Looked After in Wirral.	March 2024	Elizabeth Hartley, Helen Hayes
Adult Learning Annual Performance Report		March 2024	Paul Smith

ADDITIONAL AGENDA ITEMS

Item	Approximate timescale	Lead Departmental Officer
Holiday Activity and Food Provision (Edsential)	February 2024	James Backhouse
Schools Standards	February 2024	James Backhouse
Safeguarding Partnership Annual Report	March 2024	David Robbins
Social Care Workforce Strategy	February 2024	Kerry Mehta
Early years funding Expansion	February 2024	Sarah Harper
Breaking the Cycle Report 3	March 2024	Elizabeth Hartley
Review of children aged 10-15 years becoming	March 2024	Elizabeth Hartley

looked after (Action)		
Early Years quality assurance and sufficiency	June 2024	James Backhouse
Tendering of Permanently Excluded Provision on Wirral	June 2024	James Backhouse
Attendance Report	September 2024	Catherine Kerr / Damian Stormont
Electively Home Educated Children	September 2024	Catherine Kerr / Damian Stormont
Alternative Provision	September 2024	James Backhouse / Chris Lowcock
Virtual School Report	September 2024	Trich Lewis

STANDING ITEMS AND MONITORING REPORTS

Item	Reporting Frequency	Lead Departmental Officer
Performance and Financial Monitoring Report	Quarterly June September December March	Tricia Thomas
Budget Update	Quarterly June September November February/March	Asako Brown
Annual Review of Ofsted inspections in Wirral Schools	Every June	James Backhouse
Reappointment of School Appeals Panel Members	Every June	
Children's Committee Work Programme Update	Each Meeting	Committee Team
Summary of Standards	January	James Backhouse
Safeguarding Partnership Annual Report	Every January	David Robbins
Safeguarding Fostering and Adoption	Every October	Kerry Mehta
Lifelong Learning Annual Performance report	Every September	Paul Smith
Admission Arrangements	Every January	Sally Gibbs

WORK PROGRAMME ACTIVITIES OUTSIDE COMMITTEE

Item	Format	Timescale	Lead Officer	Progress
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Working Groups/ Sub Committees				
Corporate Parenting Panel	Committee	Ongoing	Steve Smith	
Workshop – Statutory Duties (School Budget)	Workshop	TBC	Simone White	
Delivering Better Value - SEND	Workshop	February 2024	Elizabeth Hartley / James Backhouse	
Child Poverty Strategy	Workshop	February 2024	Elizabeth Hartley/Anna Paxman	
School Budget Update – inc traded services & Designated School's Grant	Workshop	TBC	Simone White	
Budget Monitoring Panel	Monthly meeting	TBC	Asako Brown	
Rising EHCP Needs and Increased Costs (Action)	Workshop	TBC	Simone White	
Task and Finish Reviews				
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Spotlight Sessions and Workshops				
All Age Disability Service	Workshop	TBC	Simone White	

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By virtue of paragraph(s) 3 of Part 1 of Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972.

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Children, Young People and Education Committee – Terms of Reference

The Children, Young People and Education Committee is responsible for services which help keep children and young people safe and fulfil their potential. It incorporates schools and attainment, and social care for children and families. It has a particular focus on those children who are in care, and for whom the Council has corporate parenting responsibility.

The Committee is charged by full Council to undertake responsibility for:-

- (a) exercising management, oversight and delivery of services to children and young people in relation to their care, wellbeing, education or health, with the exception of any powers reserved to full Council;
- (b) the functions and powers conferred on or exercisable by the Council as Local Authority in relation to the provision of education;
- (c) working with all schools (including academies) in relation to raising standards of attainment and developing opportunities;
- (d) leading for the Council and its partners in the discharge the Council's functions as Corporate Parent for its children in care and care leavers;
- (e) any other functions comprised in partnership arrangements with other bodies connected with the delivery of services for children, young people and families;
- (f) providing a view of performance, budget monitoring and risk management in relation to the Committee's functions;
- (g) undertaking the development and implementation of policy in relation to the Committee's functions, incorporating the assessment of outcomes, review of effectiveness and formulation of recommendations to the Council, partners and other bodies, which shall include any decision relating to:
 - child protection;
 - children's centres;
 - education, schools and settings;
 - looked after children;
 - mental health services;
 - safeguarding;
 - special educational needs and disability (SEND);
 - youth offending services;
 - youth services; and
 - social and education transport

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