

**What
Really
Matters?**

Budget Option
**Early
Intervention
to Support
Families**

Savings

2014/2015	2015/2016	2016/2017	TOTAL
£000s	£000s	£000s	£000s
300	1950	0	2250

Option summary

Current spend on commissioning or providing care for Looked After Children is £16m per year from a total budget for Specialist Services of £39m.

The numbers of children becoming looked after in Wirral is not any higher than in comparable Councils; however children do remain in care here longer than they should. This option would focus on early intervention, and supporting more children to safely leave care and live with families.

Potential impact

In implementing these proposals we will not compromise children's safety and welfare. The proposals should reduce the number of children needing more specialist intervention through delivering targeted early help resulting in fewer children needing specialist support and providing capacity to support fewer children to remain looked after for long periods of time.

Reducing the impact

The council provides services to looked after children including fostering and adoption, commissioned placements, looked after children education services, social work and leaving care. There is a corporate target to safely reduce the number of looked after children. Achieving the target will mean a reduction in care costs for children and associated staffing and support costs.

The number of children looked after in Wirral reflect some children remaining in care longer than they should. However, the number of children becoming looked after is not any higher than our comparator authorities.

By reducing the number of children and young people requiring specialist intervention, it will provide greater capacity in specialist services for children's plans to be progressed more quickly to achieve good outcomes.