

Children's Home Statement

Change of use from dwellinghouse (Use Class C3) to small children's home (Use Class C2), together with material alterations to the external appearance of the building at 108 Jeffereys Crescent, Liverpool, L36 4JU

1. This Children's Home Statement is submitted to comply with Knowsley Council Validation Checklist criterion 37. The following information is submitted having regard to the guidance notes in the Checklist.
2. Knowsley Council has published a Sufficiency Position Statement 2022-2025 (the SPS). This set out that the Action Plan will be refreshed annually. The Knowsley Council Sufficiency Needs Assessment for Children (3 June 2026) (the SNA26) is the first refresh. Also of relevance as background is the Cared-for-Children-Strategy-2023-2026 (CfCS).

Evidence of need based on sufficiency needs in Knowsley

3. In September 2021, Knowsley had 289 children looked after (SPS page 10). Of these, 29 (13 percent of all children looked after) were in homes and hostels (SPS page 12). In 2022 that figure had risen to 39 (CfCs page 15).
4. Knowsley Council had 13 places, and private providers 49 places. Despite the number of providers and places within the Borough, Knowsley had just one placement with a private provider within the Borough, and a further six placements within the Liverpool City Region (SPS page 18). Therefore, 15 were placed outside the Borough and 9 outside the Liverpool City Region. No information is provided on where these 'outside' placements were.
5. Between 2017 and 2026, numbers of children looked after has remained steady, from as low as 259 up to around 340¹, and to 2028 it is expected the children in care population will remain steady (SNA26). The pie chart on SPS page 12 is the best device available with which to forecast the number of home placements needed. It is also assumed there has been and will be no change in the number of placements in the Borough and in the Liverpool City Region, (because no information is given on how these may have changed or are expected to change). Applying the percentage from the pie chart to the lower and upper range from the SNA and CfCS gives a range of 26 to 34 children currently in need of placements in homes. The CfCS reports a higher figure for 2022 of 39 (CfCS page 15). On this basis, the number of children currently placed outside the Borough could range from 12 to 25, and outside the Liverpool City Region from 6 to 19.
6. There remains a particular issue in the number of children accommodated more than 30 miles away. The impact on children is considerable, as they are taken outside of their communities, schools and away from familiar settings. It can also affect [disrupt] the services they are able to access locally. (SPS page 4 and SNA26 (see section two on the most appropriate placement)).
7. One of Knowsley's commissioning priorities is to ensure that the Borough has sufficient placements available locally to meet the needs of our children and young people. It is often in the best interests of a child to reside inside the Knowsley borough as this will help to ensure stability with education and ability to maintain close links with family and friends. Where Knowsley's in-house provision (residential children's home or foster carer) cannot meet need, the Council aim is to work closely with external Providers to ensure that sufficiency is met. (SPS page 18). Developing residential provision is a priority (SNA26).

¹ SNA26 says 290, CfCS (page 12) says 340

8. There is a particular demand for residential placements for children with complex mental health or emotional difficulties, along with challenging behaviours, who require a setting where there is an opportunity to receive individual care in a small provision (SPS pages 4 & 26). Challenging or complex needs includes Special Education Needs and Disabilities, autism, mental and emotional health needs, and challenges that manifest in relation to child exploitation (SPS page 5). Future demand [for residential placements] will be focussed on complexity and supporting young people who have behavioural challenges (SPS page 16). One of the Cared for Children Priorities is for children to be in settled homes with the right support and care (CfCS, page 25), and Priority One (children are healthy and happy throughout childhood and into early adulthood) will be delivered in part by the provision of emotional mental health and wellbeing support services to provide children with the support they need (CfCS page 27).

How the proposed development will meet sufficiency needs in Knowsley

9. The proposed development will provide places for up to three children. The Applicant is willing to work alongside Knowsley Council Children's Services to make these places available to children from Knowsley. This will significantly increase the number of places available locally to children from the Borough and should help to reduce the number being placed outside of it.
10. The Management Plan for 108 Jeffereys Crescent outlines the services which will be available. This can include full-time specialist therapeutic care for children with emotional behavioural difficulties and mild to moderate learning disabilities. This would help to meet a need identified in the SPS.

Ofsted

11. Application for certification of a property with Ofsted for use as a children's home cannot be made until documentation is available to confirm, under the Planning Act, the property can be used for that purpose. There is no requirement (and no procedure) to engage with Ofsted ahead of the submission of an application for registration and certification. Guidance on the application process is available online. It stresses that it is for the provider to assess the suitability of the location of a property and Ofsted will assess whether the building complies with the relevant requirements, when an application is made for registration. This implies Ofsted will not do so in advance of receipt of an application.

Management Plan

12. A Management Plan is also submitted with this application.

[ENDS]