



ELEV8 CARE LTD

Residential Children's Care Specialists

ANCHOR HOUSE

Planning Sufficiency Statement

The case for local residential children's care in Knowsley

172 Arbour Lane, Kirkby, Knowsley, L33 7XB

Prepared by

Eleva8 Care Ltd

July 2026

"Creating stability, building resilience and enabling brighter futures."

Document Control

This Sufficiency Statement forms part of the planning submission for the proposed change of use of Anchor House to a small residential children's home. It sets out the local, regional and national context for the proposal, the demonstrated need for additional residential children's care within Knowsley, and the contribution that the proposal will make to keeping vulnerable children closer to home.

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Capacity	Up to two (2) children / young people
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1 • Introduction

This statement sets out the case for additional residential children's care provision within Knowsley, and explains why the proposed Anchor House development will make a meaningful contribution to meeting that need.

It draws on the national and regional context for children's social care, the recognised shortage of local residential placements, and the strong body of evidence that children do better when they are kept close to their home communities. It also explains why small, family-style homes consistently achieve better outcomes for children than larger, more institutional settings.

Children do better when they are kept close to home.

2 · National Context

2.1 A System Under Pressure

The children's social care system in England is under sustained and well-documented pressure. The number of children in care has risen over the past decade, while the supply of high-quality local residential placements has not kept pace. This has driven significant increases in the use of expensive out-of-area placements, often in homes far from the child's family, school and community.

The Competition and Markets Authority (CMA) children's social care market study concluded that the market for residential placements is not working well for children or for the public purse. Too few homes are available in the right places, particularly for children with complex needs, and placements are too often determined by what is available rather than what is right for the child.

2.2 The Out-of-Area Problem

Independent reviews of children's social care have consistently highlighted the harm caused by placing children far from home. Children placed out of area are more likely to experience placement disruption, disengagement from education, contact breakdown with family, and exposure to risk including exploitation. They lose the protective web of familiar people, places and routines that support recovery and stability.

- Out-of-area placements sever children from family and community.
- They are associated with higher placement instability.
- They disrupt education and health arrangements.
- They increase exposure to risks including exploitation.
- They are significantly more expensive for placing authorities.

Out-of-area placements cost more, and achieve worse outcomes.

2.3 National Policy Direction

National policy and guidance increasingly emphasise the importance of local provision, sufficiency planning and placement stability. The commitment to keeping children close to home, and to local authorities having sufficient local provision to meet need, is a recognised objective of the children's social care reform programme.

3 • North West Regional Context

The North West of England has one of the highest concentrations of children in care in England. The region accounts for a significant share of all looked-after children nationally, and demand for residential placements has grown steadily over recent years.

3.1 Concentration and Capacity

Residential children's homes in the North West are not evenly distributed. Provision has historically concentrated in particular local authority areas, often driven by property costs and historical patterns of supply rather than by assessed need. This uneven distribution contributes to the persistent use of cross-boundary placements, with children moved between authorities because no suitable local placement is available.

3.2 Placements of Last Resort

Where no local placement can be identified, placing authorities often turn to placements of last resort — distant, expensive and sometimes unsuitable — to keep a child safe in the immediate term. This pattern is recognised as a failure of the system, not a planned choice, and is exactly the kind of outcome that local sufficiency investment seeks to reduce.

3.3 The Cost to the Public Purse

Out-of-area placements are typically more expensive than local provision. The additional costs include not only higher weekly fees but also transport, contact supervision, social worker travel time and the long-term cost of poorer outcomes. Investment in additional local capacity is widely recognised as offering better long-term value.

4 · Liverpool City Region and Knowsley

Knowsley is one of the Liverpool City Region authorities and has a higher-than-average rate of children in care. Like many authorities in the region, it faces a shortage of suitable local residential placements for some of its most vulnerable children, particularly those whose needs cannot be met in foster care or in larger group settings.

4.1 Local Need

Local authorities have a statutory duty to secure sufficient accommodation within their area to meet the needs of looked-after children. Despite this duty, many children from Knowsley and the surrounding region are placed outside the area each year, sometimes at significant distance, because no suitable local placement can be identified.

- Children placed out of area lose contact with family and community.
- Education and health arrangements are disrupted.
- Social worker oversight becomes more difficult and costly.
- Safeguarding oversight is diluted across local authority boundaries.
- Placements are often driven by availability, not by assessed need.

4.2 The Case for Local Provision

A small, locally placed home such as Anchor House directly addresses the out-of-area problem. It enables a Knowsley child, or a child from a neighbouring authority, to live in a safe, therapeutic environment within reach of their family, their school, their social worker and their community. The local authority retains closer oversight, contact arrangements are easier to maintain, and the child's network of protective relationships is preserved.

Local provision keeps protective relationships intact.

5 · Why Crisis Placements Are Scarce

Crisis and emergency placements are among the hardest to source. When a child's placement breaks down, or when a child cannot safely remain at home, the placing authority needs a placement immediately — often outside normal working hours, often for a child in distress, and often with limited information about the child's full needs.

5.1 The Mismatch

Most existing residential homes are not designed or commissioned for emergency admission. They are full, or are configured for particular age groups or needs, or are unwilling to accept a child without a careful matching process. The result is that children in crisis are often moved significant distances to whichever home has a vacancy, regardless of fit.

5.2 The Impact on Children

For a child in crisis, a distant placement at short notice compounds trauma. It removes them from everything familiar at the very moment they most need stability and continuity. It also makes the work of recovery harder, because the relationships and routines that would support that recovery are not in place.

5.3 The Contribution of Small Homes

Small homes such as Anchor House are well suited to thoughtful, planned admissions for children in crisis, because the small staff team can give the child intensive, individualised support from the first day. A two-child home can absorb the disruption of an emergency admission more readily than a larger setting, and can keep the child at the centre of attention rather than one of many.

A small home can give a child in crisis intensive, individualised support from day one.

6 · Keeping Children Closer to Home

Keeping children close to home is not simply a matter of geography. It is a matter of preserving the protective relationships, routines and identity that support recovery and long-term outcomes.

6.1 Family Contact

Local placement makes regular, meaningful family contact achievable. Social workers can supervise and support contact without prohibitive travel. Parents and siblings can maintain real relationships rather than transactional visits. Where return home is the plan, local placement makes that transition realistic.

6.2 Education Continuity

A child placed locally is far more likely to remain in their existing school, or to move to a new local school with proper transition planning. Educational disruption is one of the strongest predictors of poor long-term outcomes for looked-after children, and continuity is a key protective factor.

6.3 Social Worker Oversight

Local placement keeps the child within easy reach of their allocated social worker, the local authority virtual school, CAMHS and other partners. Oversight is closer, more frequent and more effective, and safeguarding arrangements are not diluted across local authority boundaries.

6.4 Identity and Belonging

A child who remains in their local area retains their sense of identity — their accent, their landmarks, their community, their friends. These are not trivial considerations. They are the foundations of recovery and the building blocks of a stable adult life.

Family contact, education continuity, social worker oversight, identity and belonging.

7 • Reducing Reliance on Distant Placements

Every additional local placement represents one fewer child moved out of area. While no single home will resolve the wider sufficiency challenge, each new high-quality local placement makes a direct and measurable contribution.

7.1 Direct Reduction

Anchor House will provide up to two local placements. Each child placed at Anchor House who would otherwise have been placed out of area represents a direct reduction in the use of distant, costly and often less suitable provision.

7.2 Cost Reduction

Local placements are typically less expensive than out-of-area alternatives once the full cost of transport, contact supervision, social worker travel and oversight is taken into account. The savings released can be reinvested in services for children.

7.3 Outcome Improvement

Beyond cost, the real benefit is in outcomes. Children who are kept close to home do better — they are more stable in placement, more engaged in education, more likely to maintain family relationships and better prepared for adulthood. The long-term social and economic value of better outcomes is substantial.

8 · Why Small Homes Achieve Better Outcomes

A growing body of practice evidence supports the view that small, family-style homes achieve better outcomes for children than larger, more institutional settings. Anchor House is deliberately configured as a small, two-child home.

8.1 Relationships

Recovery from trauma is achieved through relationships. In a small home, each child is known deeply by a small, stable staff team. There is no rotation through unfamiliar faces, no sharing of attention across many children, no institutional anonymity.

8.2 Individualisation

A small home can be tailored to the individual child — their routine, their food, their interests, their boundaries, their pace of recovery. A larger home necessarily imposes more uniformity; a small home can flex around the child.

8.3 Calm and Predictability

Small homes are calmer. There are fewer children, fewer interactions, fewer flashpoints. The environment is more predictable, which is exactly what a traumatised child needs in order to feel safe.

8.4 Community Integration

A small home is indistinguishable from a family home in the street. Children live as part of the community, attend local schools and clubs, and grow up with ordinary expectations. Larger settings, by their nature, stand apart.

8.5 Lower Risk of Disruption

Group dynamics in larger homes can themselves become a source of risk, particularly where children with complex needs are grouped together. A two-child home minimises peer-on-peer risk and allows careful, individualised matching.

Small, family-style homes achieve better outcomes through relationships, individualisation and calm.

9 · How Eleva8 Complements Existing Services

Eleva8 Care is committed to working in partnership with local authorities, existing providers and partners to strengthen the overall sufficiency of local provision.

9.1 Partnership Working

- Commissioning in collaboration with Knowsley and neighbouring authorities.
- Transparent fee structures and clear placement specifications.
- Joint working with social workers, CAMHS, virtual schools and education partners.
- Engagement with local safeguarding partnerships.
- Information sharing in line with GDPR and safeguarding requirements.

9.2 Filling a Gap

Anchor House is not intended to replace existing provision. It is intended to fill a specific gap — small, locally placed, therapeutically informed provision for up to two children whose needs cannot be met in foster care or in larger group settings, and who would otherwise be at risk of an out-of-area placement.

9.3 Long-Term Commitment

Eleva8 Care is established as a long-term provider of residential children's care in the region. The Anchor House model is intended to be the first of a small number of similarly configured homes, each developed in partnership with local commissioners and each contributing to local sufficiency.

A small, locally placed, therapeutically informed home — filling a specific gap.

10 • Summary of Need

The following table summarises the case for the proposed development at each level — national, regional, local and child-level — and the contribution that Anchor House will make.

Level	Need	Anchor House Contribution
National	Persistent shortage of suitable local placements; rising use of expensive out-of-area provision	Adds local capacity, reducing reliance on distant placements
Regional	High concentration of children in care; uneven distribution of homes across the North West	Provides provision in an under-served local authority area
Local	Statutory duty to secure sufficiency; children placed out of area due to lack of local provision	Two local placements within Knowsley
Child-level	Children in crisis often moved at short notice to distant homes	Small, family-style home suited to thoughtful planned admissions
Outcome	Out-of-area placement linked to poorer outcomes and higher cost	Local placement supports stability, education and family contact

11 • Conclusion

The case for additional local residential children's care in Knowsley is well made. The national, regional and local evidence base is consistent: there is a persistent shortage of suitable local placements; children are too often placed out of area at significant cost and with poorer outcomes; and small, family-style homes consistently achieve better outcomes for children than larger, more institutional settings.

Anchor House will provide up to two local placements within Knowsley, contributing directly to local sufficiency, reducing reliance on distant provision, and offering a small, therapeutically informed home in which vulnerable children can recover, grow and prepare for adulthood. The proposal is consistent with national policy direction, regional sufficiency needs and the statutory duty of the local authority to secure sufficient accommodation for looked-after children within its area.

Two local placements. A small, therapeutic home. A direct contribution to local sufficiency.

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