



MEDIA RELEASE FROM WIRRAL COUNCIL

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Merseyside teenagers invited to apply for exchange visit to Hong Kong!

Wirral Council and Liverpool City Council is joining forces with Pine Court Housing Association to provide Merseyside teenagers with the chance of a life-changing exchange visit to Hong Kong.

Young people who sign up for the visit, which is sponsored by Cosmopolitan Student Homes, a member of the Cosmopolitan Housing Group, will spend two weeks in China's economic powerhouse taking part in cultural, educational and sightseeing activities. They will also host a visit from their Chinese contemporaries when they visit Merseyside. As well as taking part in the visit, they will fund-raise for the trip and take part in awareness activities to learn more about their host country.

Successful applicants will not have to provide accommodation in their own homes, and applications are invited from people of all abilities and backgrounds. Young people who are chosen will have to pay £250, but will be given help to fundraise and help will be available in cases of hardship.

Said Houston Smith, Housing Manager at Pine Court: 'We are looking for 16 people from Merseyside aged between 17 and 25 years of age who would really benefit from travel and new experiences.'

Houston has first hand knowledge of what a life-changing experience a youth exchange can be; she met her husband when she visited Britain on a youth exchange, and now lives and works on Merseyside.

'It's a great experience, not just the visit itself, but also the fund-raising, organisation and preparation that goes into it. You will learn many skills and meet many interesting people. It's a great experience – I would urge anyone interested to have a go,' she added.

To take part, applicants will be shortlisted after returning an application form, then interviewed. If successful, they will be part of a group that plays host to young Chinese visitors in July, and pay a return visit to Hong Kong in September.

Wirral Council and Liverpool City Council are working with Pine Court Housing Association to organise and host the visit.

Cllr Ann McLachlan, Wirral's Cabinet Member for Children's Services and Lifelong Learning, said it would be a marvelous opportunity for young people from both sides of the river: 'Wirral and Liverpool both have strong ties with China, culturally and economically, and we'll be working hard to make sure that the young people who take part really benefit from any opportunities that come as a result.'

Cllr Steve Munby, Cabinet Member for Liverpool Youth and Play Service, said: 'This is a brilliant project which has the potential to completely transform the fortunes of the young people who are successful in winning a place on the exchange.'

Further details and application forms are available from Pine Court Housing Association's website: www.pinecourt-housing.org.uk/youthexchange or by calling 0151 709 6878.

Forms must be returned to Houston Smith, Pine Court Housing Association Ltd, 1 Nelson Street, Liverpool, L1 5DW, by Wednesday January 25.

Ends

Note to Editors:

Pine Court is a registered social landlord providing affordable homes for rent mainly for the Chinese and South East Asian communities. The Association owns and manages more than 400 homes in Liverpool and Wirral.

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