

# **REPORT FOR: Corporate Parenting Panel**

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<b>Date of Meeting:</b>	29 October 2012
<b>Subject:</b>	Housing for Careleavers
<b>Key Decision:</b>	No
<b>Responsible Officer:</b>	Catherine Doran Corporate Director of Children's Services
<b>Portfolio Holder:</b>	Councillor Mitzi Green
<b>Exempt:</b>	No
<b>Decision subject to Call-in:</b>	N/A
<b>Enclosures:</b>	No

## **1.0 Summary and Recommendations**

- This report seeks to inform the Corporate Parenting Panel of the housing assistance available for careleavers.
- Panel members are invited to consider recommendations contained in section 4 and give guidance on subsequent Cabinet or Portfolio Holder decision making arrangements.

## **2.0 Introduction**

Every year in February of March the number of allocations of permanent housing (a quota) for the following financial year is agreed between Housing Services and Children and Families Directorate.

### **2.1**

This quota is agreed following consideration of historic lettings data, future supply and demand data and assumptions, together with the number of careleavers anticipated to be ready for independent living, and therefore ready to leave care in the following financial year.

### **2.2**

In the year 2011/12 the quota agreed was 22 allocations, and in the year 2012/13, as a result of an increase in the young people ready to live independently, and therefore leaving care, the quota agreed increased to 25 allocations. This was discussed with the Head of service, Safeguarding & Family Support.

## **3.0 Issues**

Despite the increased numbers in the quota it does not meet the needs of all the young people who are ready to leave care in 2012/13. Current demand for permanent single person accommodation (studio or one bedroom) is high and supply in the current year is down on the previous year. 2011/12 Apr–Oct 124 lettings, 2012/13 Apr–Oct 50 lettings. Examination of our records have shown that less tenancies are becoming available to us and those that are, are being allocated to applicants with a higher priority, including those tenants under-occupying family sized homes.

In view of this we need to agree a way forward for the remainder of this year and following years.

## **4. Proposed Recommendations**

The Corporate Parenting Panel are asked to consider and provide officers with guidance on which of the following recommendations should be taken forward in order to address the shortage of permanent accommodation in 2012/13 and future years.

### **4.1**

We could remove the quota altogether and assist the care leavers as priority homeless. This would mean officers working across directorates to avoid emergency accommodation and careleavers would be housed in the private rented sector, with either a private landlord or a housing association landlord. Whilst satisfactorily housed in private sector housing, social housing would not be offered.

### **4.2**

We could continue with a quota which may not match the demand of the numbers of young people leaving care. This year there is a 40% reduction in social housing units available for letting, so the quota may have to be adjusted in future years.

4.3

We could have a combination of both social and private rented lettings to meet the demand.

## **5. Environmental Impact**

There is no specific environmental impact from the issues outlined in this report.

## **6. Financial Implications**

Developing private sector and housing association solutions will incur the following additional one off costs:

- a. Renting from a private landlord will probably incur a cost of a deposit and rent in advance, currently equal to £1,500 approx.
- b. Renting from a housing association may require a fixed sum financial guarantee, £3,000 approx per tenancy.

This cost would be funded from the leaving care budget. The lack of suitable housing can lead to young people having to stay longer in placements. This presents a more cost effective solution.

## **7. Risk Management Implications**

All related risks are recorded in the Children's Services risk register. There is a significant reputational risk from a poor inspection of social care, where support to children looked after and young people leaving care are crucial to mitigate risks and demonstrate developing practice and procedure support to this cohort.

## **8. Equalities implications**

CLA and care leavers are additionally vulnerable child in need. The 2009 statutory guidance "The Roles & Responsibilities of the Lead Member for Children's Services and the Director of Children's Services" highlights the need for Local Authorities to work corporately to improve the well-being of looked after children and young people leaving care, to make their needs a priority and seek the same outcomes that any reasonable caring parent would want for their own children. CLA consistently fare worse than their peers across a range of indicators including health, education, training, employment, homelessness and offending.

## **9. Corporate Priorities**

CLA and care leavers are additionally vulnerable by virtue of the experiences that led them into Local Authority care and in respect of the poor outcomes that many CLA and care leavers experience when compared to their peers, The Council's corporate priorities include providing care and protection to those who are most in need and this includes CLA and care leavers.

## **10.0 Statutory Officer Clearance**

Name: Emma Stabler

on behalf of the  
Chief Financial Officer

Date: 18 October 2012

## **11.0 Contact Details and Background Papers**

**NONE**

**Contact:**

**Jacky Souter, Housing Provision Manager, Housing Services**

Tel: 020 8424 1211

jacky.souter@harrow.gov.uk