

REPORT FOR: Corporate Parenting Panel

Date of Meeting:	22 April 2013
Subject:	Housing for Careleavers
Key Decision:	No
Responsible Officer:	Catherine Doran Corporate Director of Children and Families
Portfolio Holder:	Councillor Mitzi Green Portfolio Holder for Children, Schools and Families
Exempt:	No
Enclosures:	No

1.0 Summary and Recommendations

- This report seeks to update the Corporate Parenting Panel of the housing assistance available for careleavers.

2.0 Introduction

Every year in March the planned distribution of permanent housing (i.e. quotas) for the following financial year is agreed with the Portfolio Holder for Housing.

2.1

These quotas are set following consideration of historic lettings data, future supply and demand data and assumptions. Careleavers are supported and prioritised under band B. For the leaving care quota, the number of care leavers anticipated to be ready for independent living, and therefore ready to leave care in the following financial year is also considered.

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.

3.0 Issues

Current demand for permanent single person accommodation (studio or one bedroom) is high and supply in the year 2012/13 reduced and is anticipated to fall by a further 20% in 2013/14. Our records show that less tenancies are becoming available to us. Those that are, are being allocated to applicants with a high priority, including tenants under-occupying family sized homes who will be financially impacted by the “bedroom tax” from April 2013.

In spite of the expectation that the number of care leavers would exceed the quota in 2012-13, this did not happen, and so alternative housing solutions were not needed. This has been because some young people undertook different options and moved to other areas and/or refused offers made.

4. Proposed Recommendations

The quota for young people leaving care will need to reduce to 20 in 2013-14. There are however, 22 young people identified as eligible and ready to seek accommodation.

These names are prioritised based on need and age and can be reviewed in October 2013 to see if sufficient accommodation is available and /or alternate steps required to be taken to ensure all young people are housed in this financial year.

If the quota is not sufficient we can again consider developing alternatives such as housing 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. Judgments on which option should be offered to a care leaver should rest with Children & Families who currently select applicants for the quota, based on their eligibility and needs assessment.

Because no demand existed for extra accommodation in 2012/13, we have not pursued this option to date. If it is needed more options would be available if subsidy for schemes was put in place. No budget exists for this in Housing, and so it would be helpful if Children & Families Service could decide if funding would be offered to develop schemes, should it be needed.

The Careleavers and Housing sub group meeting regularly and is due to meet in May 2013, where notification of the young people will be made and monitoring and tracking arrangements in place again to closely manage the Locata process.

Housing Services and Children & Families Services will continue to work in partnership in this sub group and actively manage and respond to careleavers housing needs.

5. Environmental Impact

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

6. Financial Implications

- a. Renting from a private landlord will probably incur a cost of a deposit and rent in advance, plus admin costs currently equal to £1750 approx.
- b. Renting from a housing association may require a fixed sum financial guarantee, £3k approx per tenancy.

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.

4.0 Statutory Officer Clearance

Name: Patricia Harvey



on behalf of the
Chief Financial Officer

Date: 11 April 2013

5.0 Contact Details and Background Papers

NONE

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