

REPORT FOR: Corporate Parenting Panel

Date of Meeting:	1 October 2014
Subject:	Report on Housing for Care leavers
Key Decision:	No
Responsible Officer:	Chris Spencer, Interim Corporate Director of Children and Families
Portfolio Holder:	Councillor Simon Brown
Exempt:	No
Decision subject to Call-in:	No
Wards affected:	All
Enclosures:	Appendix A - Report on Housing provision for care Leavers

Section 1 – Summary and Recommendations

This report seeks to update the Corporate Parenting Panel of the housing assistance available for care leavers.

Recommendations:

The Panel is requested to note the contents of the report

2. Environmental Impact

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

3. Financial Implications

The Leaving Care service is funded from within existing budgets.

4. 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.

5. Equalities implications

None.

6. Corporate Priorities

Supports the following corporate priorities:

- Making a difference for the vulnerable
- Making a difference for communities
- Making a difference for families

Section 3 - Statutory Officer Clearance

Name: Jo Frost	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	on behalf of the* Chief Financial Officer
Date: 17/09/2014		
Name: Sarah Hellier	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	on behalf of the* Monitoring Officer
Date: 23-09-2014		

Ward Councillors notified:

NO

Section 4 - Contact Details and Background Papers

Contact: Negus Gebeyehu, Team Manager, 0208 416 8095

Background Papers: report on Housing provision for care leavers.

Report on Housing Provision for Care Leavers

Introduction

Local authorities have a legal duty to support young people making the transition from care to adulthood. The duties that local authorities have to their care leavers are set out in the statutory guidance and regulations associated with the children (Leaving care) Act 2000. This was replaced in April 2011 by planning Transition to Adulthood for Care Leavers.

Young people Leaving Care are entitled to support with housing needs from their Council. The primary responsibility for securing accommodation for care leavers rests with the local authority & it is essential that a Council wide corporate approach is adopted.

The Housing needs of care leavers can be complex & must be addressed before they leave care, by the Children & Families Directorate completing pathway plans & a joint assessment of need to support a referral to the Housing department under the Locata scheme.

Preparation for Independence

The local authority has a responsibility to ensure that young people have the necessary skills to make the successful transition in to adulthood & independence.

Young people leaving care have to complete the life skill training, Catch 22 programme, 'My Bank' Training and engage in youth development programme X16 and 'LINAB' Language is not a Barrier.

The decision that young person is ready for independence is made by the UASC and Leaving Care service following completion of vulnerability assessment form. This also discussed in care leavers sub-housing group meeting.

Young people will be supported to claim Job Seekers allowance or Income Support (if in full-time education) and must claim housing benefit. Those on benefits will be supported in applying for the Social Fund Grant / Community Care Grant. Young people as care leavers are entitled to £2000.00 Independent Leaving Grant (ILG).

Pathway Planning

The initial Pathway Plan should be completed 3 months before the young person reaches 16th birthday and then must be reviewed every 6 months. The pathway plan is an intricate part of formalising and assessing the young

persons need with the aim of facilitating the planning for services. The pathway plan should cover the following main areas:

- Education, employment and training achievements as well as anticipated ambitions and special need
- Health
- Behavioural, emotional and intellectual development
- Religious, ethnicity, sexual orientation etc.
- Family and social network and relationship
- Independent living skills
- Accommodation arrangement and future needs
- Financial arrangement

The review of the pathway plan is undertaken with the young person & all relevant people involved with the young person. The pathway plans are quality assured by the Head of The Virtual School on a quarterly basis.

Moving in to suitable, safe accommodation of their choice is one of the main concerns of young people preparing for and leaving care. This is done by involving young people in planning and decision making. Helping young people prepare for moves, offering a choice in style and location of accommodation, having contingency plans in place, setting up a package of support to go with the accommodation and having a clear financial plan is paramount. It is therefore important social workers and other professionals strive to match the young people to the type of placement and semi-independent placement that will best meet their needs.

Challenges for Young People

It is often the case that care leavers are expected to become independent and self-sufficient much earlier than their non-care peers thus accelerating their transition to adulthood. During this transition some care leavers cope well but many find the path to independence uncertain. On view of this fact, the local authorities aim is to help young people learning the skills needed to sustain independent living accommodation. However the young people encounter a number of difficulties. These difficulties can be self-inflicted and sometimes appear to be environmental and beyond their control.

Some of the difficulties are:

- Unable to identify a suitable and matching accommodation that meets the requirements of the young people
- The breakdown of tenancy as a result of not being able to abide by the tenancy rules, rent and council tax arrears, not claiming the right benefit at the right time, failing to attend appointments, substance misuse and alcohol abuse.
- Lack of sufficient properties to bid outside the borough

Housing Providers

Foster Placements

There are in-house or agency fostering placements accessed through placement team. The 'staying put' policy applies to all young people who are approaching their 18th birthday. Planning and consideration for the 'staying put' scheme should take place following the young person's 17th birthday at their Looked after Review. This will be discussed with the young people social worker.

LOCATA

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. Care leavers are provided priority housing under relevant band.

These quotas are set following consideration of historic lettings data, future supply and demand data and assumptions. 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 are also considered.

Locata is a type of accommodation allocated by the Housing department of the Council to care Leavers. The nomination process of young people in to such a scheme involves the contribution of various departments within the local authority. (Housing, Council tax, supporting people and the benefit agency)

2.6.2 LOCATA Figures

Year	Agreed Quota	Allocated	Remarks
2011/12	23	23	
2012/13	25	25	
2013/14	20	20	
2014/15	19	11	8 will be allocated before Jan 2015

As stated above, the historical data shows the quota and the allocations match the team's requirements. The remaining 2014/15 quota will be filled before the end of this year.

YMCA

The local authority has a contract in place with the YMCA. We have agreed a quota with Housing of 15 YMCA spaces to be allocated to care leavers. The YMCA Hostel units are currently fully occupied but we will, through contract monitoring arrangements, ensure that care leavers are awarded high priority when spaces become available.

Harrow Church

These are housing association properties and the team can refer a young person to this scheme for independent living post 18. On this scheme currently we have 2 young people who are accommodated with support in place.

2.6.4 Gayton

The local authority has a service level agreement with the Gayton for the provision of accommodation 29 placements. The unit is used mainly for unaccompanied asylum seeking young people over the age of 16 years. The UASC and Leaving care team hold a weekly surgery to listen and address young people views and concerns they may have in addition the youth development team provide a programme of events through LINAB (Language is not a barrier).

The aim of this programme is to focus specifically on working with unaccompanied asylum seeking young people to provide them with individual and group tutoring sessions. It will also offer them the opportunity to enjoy leisure activities with one another,

Total number of young people and placement.

Accommodation Type	No of Young People	Comment
Independent Living	61	Own Tenancy
Semi Independent	79	29 of these at the Gayton
Foster Care	18	Includes under the age of 18
Hospital Placement	2	Mental Health Unit
Live with Parents	2	
Prison	4	
Not Known	4	Refused to disclose
Missing	2	

Total	172	

There are some young people who have significant additional needs which require specialist provision, such as mental health unit or a specialist private provider with 24/7 hours support.

UASC provision and Immigration Status impacting on own tenancy

Unaccompanied asylum seeking young people who are over the age of 18 without refugee status (RS) or indefinite leave to remain (ILR) are not entitled to be nominated for their own tenancy. Currently we have 61 young people who are subject to immigration control this includes minors under the age of 18 who are placed in foster care, semi-independent accommodation including Gayton.

2.7.1 Asylum young people subject to immigration control.

ELR	HP	Asylum Pending	Limited Leave	ARE & Exhausted	Fresh Asylum Claim	Total
6	2	15 + 11 + 4	3 + 6	8 + 1 + 3	2	61

2.7.2 Care Leavers and their Status

UK Citizen	85
EU Citizen	3
Refugee Status to date	18
ELR/DLR	6
Limited Leave to Remain	3
Humanitarian Protection	2
All Rights Exhausted	8
Asylum application pending	15
No update	3
Appeal pending	4

Extension of time applied for	11
No Record	1
Expired date no record of extension	6
ILR	4
Refused	1
Fresh Asylum Claim	2
Total	172

Young People Views

- Young people used to complain, that the ILG was not sufficient, This has been increased and young people have expressed their satisfaction.
- Upon leaving care, the majority of young people express how happy they are with the level of outreach support provided in settling them in well into the new accommodation
- Some young people who have been placed at Gayton have expressed concern that they do not get the opportunity to develop their independent living skills. This is currently being addressed with the service provider.
- It is often the case that young people source their items from limited stores to use their ILG and many feel that they are being restricted from maximising their resources and having choices as adults. This is being addressed through planned introduction of pre-paid cards.