

**CORPORATE PARENTING BOARD
8 FEBRUARY 2018**

CARE LEAVERS AND HOUSING UPDATE

Recommendation

- 1. The Corporate Parenting Board receives regular updates on the progress of housing for care leavers from both the Care Leavers Service and District Housing.**

Background

2. A presentation was made to the October Corporate Parenting Board by four care leavers, their Personal Advisers and managers from the Care Leavers Service. During this presentation a 'wish list' was read out that it was believed would greatly assist care leavers to make the transition into adult life.
3. The following is a joint update from the Care Leavers Service and Strategic Housing on key areas of development work in respect of both wish list aims and other areas of joint development work including:

Training flats

4. The pilot with Redditch Housing is now active with accommodation provided by Housing and support via Outreach Team. Discussions are ongoing with Bromsgrove Housing (BDHT) regarding options for a similar pilot which would allow a successful care leaver to remain in the property as a starter tenancy (as opposed to have to move on to another property). Discussions are also underway with Wyre Forest and Worcester via the Homeless Intervention Team / Care Leavers & Housing meetings with pilot options for alternative models being reviewed. Content and delivery of independence training is also being discussed with the aim of gaining agreement from all districts around the assessment process for young people in training flats. A further meeting is set up in February to discuss the provision of properties for both Training Flats and Crash Pad Plus with Strategic Housing leads and Registered Providers.

Crash Pad Plus

5. Proposal for jointly commissioned pilot of two units of emergency access accommodation for 18+ care leavers with complex / high support needs provided by Housing with support supplied by the Outreach Team (one in the north of the county, one in the south). Key aim is to avoid B&B use for our most vulnerable young people.
6. Initial discussions have progressed with Deb Roe (Commercial Contract Officer) supporting the development of a Memorandum of Understanding to clarify definitions and requirements. Tasks are ongoing via the Homeless Intervention

Team / Care Leavers & Housing meeting with support from Debbie Herbert (Lead Commissioner, Families Communities). Next steps include discussion around resourcing the Outreach Team support element of the pilot. Initial consensus is that accommodation units be provided by Housing but this resource will initially require up to three visits daily in order to effectively support a high or complex needs 18+ young person in crisis. Some potential to explore how existing support contracts may be applied e.g. Basement Project floating support.

Prevention of Eviction protocol

7. Discussions to date have centred around sharing of information and possible constraints associated with data protection. Following a meeting with Strategic Housing and Fortis on 22 January a pilot prevention of eviction process has been suggested, initially working with Supported Housing Providers in respect of Looked After Children, Children in Need and Care Leavers. An agreed list of indicators of risk of accommodation breakdown is being developed between the Homeless Intervention Team and Care Leavers Service, before being shared with Supported Housing Providers and Strategic Housing for consultation. The express aim is the development of a set of agreed 'red flags' which workers will use to identify risk and instigate a universally applied, assertive, joined up and timely preventative approach.

Locality Hubs

8. A pilot has been run and completed with Axis Youth Hub in Wyre Forest, with a PA based one day a week within Axis alongside the Housing Young Persons Pathway Worker (as well as an array of other professionals and services). Initial take up by care leavers has been slow but has increased latterly. Following discussion with the team and partner agencies location of PA drop-ins is being expanded county wide via our duty PAs.
9. Location of Duty PAs within the community increases face to face access for care leavers, supports the development of good working relationships and communication with partner agencies (who often already support or accommodate our young people) and allows PAs to increase their awareness of resources which can broaden their young people's networks.
10. To progress this aim the Care Leavers Service will increase the Duty PA number from one to two from the 1 February 2018 supporting routine location of PAs with partners such as Axis, YouTurn (Evesham), and subsequently revisiting offers of co-location from Basement Project (Bromsgrove) Malvern Foyer, Worcester YMCA and supported accommodation providers in the North of the County.

Joint Protocol

11. The Worcestershire Joint protocol for Care Leavers is now signed by all districts and Children's Services. Signatures are being updated to include titles before redistribution. Revision of language and content for both Care Leavers and Homeless 16/17 year Olds to be considered once the Housing Reduction Act is implemented.

Housing Panel

- 12.** The revised Housing Panel is now in operation, running bi-monthly and bringing together representatives from each of the Housing Districts and the Care Leavers Service enabling joint decision making in respect of accommodation plans for Care Leavers aged 17 and over.

Care Leaver participation

- 13.** The Care Leavers Service has now appointed four young people who have accessed the service as peer mentors. This exciting development will provide each young person with;

- A full induction programme to Worcester County Council.
- Level 2 Peer Mentoring qualification through a training provider.
- Participation work with Housing Pathways Workers to develop housing colleagues understanding of the needs of Care Leavers.
- Developing knowledge of key partners and agencies involved with the Care Leavers Team.
- The completion of a 7 week confidence building programme.
- Developing roles within internal Children's Houses to become mentors for currently Looked After Children.
- Participation in Team Development Meetings and Training for Care Leavers Service.
- Supporting the Care Leavers Team through consultation work to improve processes, team understanding and culture within the service.
- Involvement in setting up a social media page for the Care Leavers Team.
- 6 month Peer Mentor placement with a view to moving into an apprenticeship, supported by a training provider.

- 14.** Jake Shaw, Head of Corporate Parenting and James MacDonald, Team Manager from the Care Leavers service both attended a meeting at the Speak Out Project on the 7 December. The views of young people were eloquently put to both during this meeting and there was discussion around the continued involvement of the Care Leavers within this forum.

- 15.** Kate Bailey, Wyre Forest District Housing will also attend the Speak Out project and intends to canvas the views of young people with regards to changes within Housing process and policy.

General Housing update

- 16.** Strategic Housing managers continue to fund crash pad rooms in various locations across the county and work with accommodation and support providers and Children's Services commissioners. Housing are also developing the advice offer to Care Leavers as an identified group within the HRA and other related works as part of the Housing Partnership Plan including developing a pre-tenancy training package, the pre-eviction protocol mentioned above and a Housing First model.

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Supporting Information

None

Background Papers

None