

Health Improvement Board briefing paper

Governance of the Joint Housing Steering Group for Young People's Supported Housing

Recommendation

The Health Improvement Board is recommended to:

- Provide oversight of the Joint Housing Steering Group and the Supported Housing Pathway for Young People.
- Agree the outcome measure for supporting vulnerable young people in appropriate housing that will be monitored by the Health Improvement Board under priority 10.

Overview of the Joint Housing Steering Group

The Joint Housing Steering Group is a strategic development and decision-making group comprising representatives from the County Council - including Children's Social Care, the Youth Offending Service, Early Intervention Service and Joint Commissioning - and representatives from the Housing department within each of Oxfordshire's District and City Councils. The aim of the group is to address the strategic issues presented by vulnerable young people aged 16 to 24 years presenting as homeless or in significant housing need.

This group oversees the work of the Joint Housing Team, an operational team made up of front line Social Workers and Housing Options officers working across the County and District/City Councils. The aim of this group is to undertake case work directly with young people and to work as part of front line services to prevent and address housing and homelessness issues among this group of young people.

The Joint Housing Steering Group meets quarterly unless factors are identified which indicate more frequent meetings are required.

Homelessness and housing need among young people in Oxfordshire

National legislative policy changes around Welfare Reform, local implementation of national legislative changes around the Localism Act, new policy changes around social sector property ownership and the local context of a highly buoyant and competitive private rented sector combine in Oxfordshire to create a highly challenging environment for young people in terms of both short-term and long-term housing options.

In practice this means, unless you are able to remain at home with your family you must be financially self-sustaining in one of the most expensive area of housing in the country.

Groups of young people particularly affected are those who struggle to maintain (or are removed from) their family environments and/or those who struggle to compete on an equal basis with their peers:

- Young people who are Looked After and Leaving Care.
- Young people who are Children In Need.
- Young people who are aged 18+ and homeless but to whom no statutory duty is owed by any agency.
- Young people open to Probation or YOS.
- Young people open to Adult Services as 'best fit'. For example those with Autistic Spectrum Disorder.
- Young parents in any of the categories above who have support needs of their own as well as those around their parenting.

As an illustration of the level of need, since the 1st of April 2015, 92 referrals have been received requesting access to the Young People's Supported Housing Pathway. Referrals have been submitted from a range of agencies working with young people including Children's Social Care, CAMHS, Adult Learning Disability, Probation, YOS, District Councils, Thriving Families and the Early Intervention Service.

Case studies illustrating some of the issues facing these young people and the services which support them can be found at the end of this document.

Supported Housing Services

The Joint Housing Steering Group has a commissioning role and oversaw the recent outcome focused re-commissioning of supported housing services for young people in Oxfordshire.

The new services commenced on the 1st of April and collectively deliver 230 bed spaces across 5 service packages to 16 to 24 year olds across the county. From April 2015 there are 5 supported housing providers delivering services within the Pathway as follows:

- Sanctuary
- Home Group
- St Mungo's Broadway
- Key 2
- Stonewater

The service packages these services span are as follows:

- Package 1: Family provision - for young parents.
- Package 2: Singles Shared provision - for single young people and provided in hostel accommodation and/or smaller shared houses. This package includes emergency accommodation and 'step-down' accommodation.
- Package 3: Self-contained dispersed provision - for single young people who cannot safely be managed living with other young people. This is provided in self-contained flats within the community.

- Package 4: Specialist provision - this includes provision for newly arrived Unaccompanied Asylum Seeking young people (UASC), provided in small shared houses; and a small number of bespoke packages for those with additional and complex needs which are jointly funded by other agencies. This accommodation will vary depending on the need of the young person.
- Package 5: Supported Lodgings - for single young people needing to live within a family environment. This is provided by individuals within their own homes. This service is not commissioned externally, but is delivered in-house the Fostering and Adoption Service.

All services are based on robust, timely and multi-agency assessment of risk, vulnerability and need informing effective intervention to deliver positive long-term housing outcomes and improved life chances for these young people.

These services do not replace Social Sector accommodation provided by Registered Providers (social landlords): this accommodation would be a potential exit route from the Pathway. Nor do they replace Statutory Duty owed to young people under Children's legislation or Housing legislation.

Challenges for the future

The current services were re-commissioned based on a model designed to recognise and address the following issues:

- An increasingly complex cohort of young people entering the Pathway:
 - When previous contracts commenced in 2010, 75% of young people entering the Pathway had housing as their primary need.
 - Just 3 years later, at review of these services to inform re-commissioning, this had dropped to 25% with the large majority of those entering services having other issues as their primary, secondary and even tertiary needs e.g. substance misuse, mental health issues, domestic abuse.
- Reducing and extremely challenging long-term housing options for young people meaning that exit from supported housing is very difficult.
- The need for an emphasis on prevention and early intervention in a time of reducing resources and focus on statutory duty.

Outcome measures

A proposed outcome measure for monitoring by the Health Improvement Board is as follows:

Priority 10: Tackling the broader determinants of health through better housing and preventing homelessness.

- 95% of young people receiving housing related support within the Pathway depart to a planned and positive accommodation option. **Responsible organisation: Oxfordshire County Council**

This aligns with one of the key outcome measures for the commissioned supported housing services within the Pathway and could sit alongside indicator 2 within priority 10.

Links with the Housing Support Advisory Group and the Health Improvement Board

It is likely that the Joint Housing Steering Group will seek to join with HSAG in the future as the groups perform parallel functions with overlapping membership. A decision has been made for the next year however to maintain the JHSG as a discrete entity, given the recent re-commissioning of services and their implementation.

The Health Improvement Board was identified by JHSG partners as a good fit for governance, as it has representation from all five District Councils. This is significant given that many operational and strategic decisions need all-District sign-up, as they will have reciprocal and interdependent impact.

In addition, since April 2015, 51% of referrals into the Pathway have been for young people aged 18 and over. Referrals span a range of adult partners including Probation, District Councils, Adult Social Care and Disability services. The long-term impact of poor outcomes for young people experiencing these issues will be directly felt by the outcomes reported to the HIB. 40% of those referred to the Pathway already aged over 18 were not Care Leavers and therefore had presented directly to services with homelessness issues as adults, not children.

Case studies - young people and the Supported Housing Pathway

Prevention

Poppy is a 16 year old whose relationship with her family has broken down to the point that she is unable to live at home currently. Despite current difficulties, both Poppy and her mother would like her to return home in the future. The young person has been accepted into the Pathway for up to 3 months to enable intensive work with both the family and the young person to repair the relationship and facilitate a successful and sustainable return home.

Inclusion

Siobhan is a 19 year old Care Leaver who became Looked After when she was 13 years old. Following a transition from residential care at 18 into semi-independent supported housing within the Pathway, she has had a turbulent accommodation history. She has moved in and out of four different housing projects within the services over a period of 18 months due to behavioural issues as a result of historical trauma and current vulnerabilities and risky behaviours. Siobhan began to settle within her accommodation towards the end of last year and made sufficient progress to be nominated for move-on with her District Council for a social sector tenancy. However, historical issues resurfaced, impacting on her behaviour and her nomination was withdrawn. Having subsequently spent some time outside the Pathway, Siobhan has now re-entered the services and has stabilised again. She is

working successfully towards regaining her nomination for social sector housing and is hoping to begin bidding for properties soon.

Progression

Jamal arrived in the UK when he was 16 years old having fled trauma in Afghanistan. He moved briefly into foster care but was unable to sustain the family environment in the wake of his recent trauma. He was suffering with post-traumatic stress and moved into supported housing within the Pathway. Unrelated to this move, Jamal became the victim of two violent attacks committed in the community resulting in significant injuries and hospitalisation leaving him very frightened to leave the house. Around this time he was also refused asylum and went into depression. His asylum claim was later reviewed and he was granted indefinite leave to remain in the UK which entitled him to be nominated for move-on to social sector housing. He was housed in permanent accommodation by the Local Housing Authority at 18 years old but experienced a period of highly chaotic behaviour as a result of his experiences. A multi-agency package of support delivered across Social Care, Education, Health and Housing Support services have supported Jamal to successfully maintain his permanent accommodation. He has been living in this accommodation for two years now, has successfully completed a vocational qualification and is working full-time.

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