

Divisions Affected - All

DELEGATED DECISIONS BY CABINET MEMBER FOR CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE

15 July 2025

Young Peoples Supported Accommodation (YPSA) Contract Extensions

Report by Director of Children's Services

RECOMMENDATION

The Cabinet Member is **RECOMMENDED** to

- a) **To delegate authority to the Director of Children's Services, in consultation with the Deputy Monitoring Officer and Head of Legal and Governance, to extend the YPSA contracts for 24 months from 1st October 2025 to 30th September 2027.**

Executive Summary

1. The commissioned block YPSA contracts are due to expire on 30th September 2025 however there is an option to extend the contracts for a further 24 months until the 30th September 2027.
2. The YPSA is a mixed delivery model of services for young people aged 16-21 which includes shared accommodation, self-contained single accommodation and accommodation for parent/s and children. The YPSA contracts referred to in this report are for support only, the accommodation provided under these contracts is governed by a tenancy agreement between the young person and the Provider. The young person funds the accommodation costs, for the majority of young people this is via Housing Benefit.
3. The aim of the YPSA is to enable young people in Oxfordshire who need supported accommodation to gain and maintain independence skills, to be facilitated into education, employment or training and to gain the knowledge and skills to make informed choices about their accommodation options outside of the YPSA.
4. A thorough review of the YPSA with internal and external stakeholders including providers and young people was completed in late 2023.

Service

5. The Council commissions the majority of its YPSA services for young people aged over 18 (16+ for Parents) from 5 providers who deliver 144 units of support and accommodation across Oxfordshire.
6. As well as Care Leavers, the contract has clear eligibility criteria which ensures vulnerable young people aged 18+ who are not Care Leavers are able to access the services, these young people fall under the City and District Councils housing statutory duties. This supports the Council and City and Districts Councils partnership approach to tackling homelessness across the County. The City and District Councils pay the Council for any beds utilised up to an agreed limit set by the City and District Councils.
7. The services commenced in October 2020, after a full procurement exercise.
8. The table below shows a breakdown of the total number of units in each of the services.

Table 1: Number of Beds per Service

Service Package	Number of beds
18+ Shared	101
18+ Single Self-Contained	28
16+ Parents	15

9. Extending all 18+ YPSA contracts (including 16+ Parents) for two years would allow sufficient time to remodel and recommission these services. The 24-month extension will provide ample time to engage with stakeholders, including the District/City Councils and the young people themselves, service providers, and social care staff. Their input is invaluable in shaping the future of supported accommodation services and ensuring that they are effective and responsive.
10. The recommissioning work would start during the Autumn of 2025.
11. A number of minor variations will be made to the contracts to provide clarification where there are known issues and also include revised age range changes to cap the age limit from 25 to 21 years of age.

12. All services are largely working well with all rated 'green' by the quality improvement team following annual monitoring reviews. Occupancy rates are good across the services.
13. If the contracts end on the 30th September 2025 for the majority of young people housed in the YPSA there will be no alternative option for accommodating the young people and would therefore risk the young people becoming homeless when the contracts end or moving to a framework or spot placement at an increased cost to the Council.

Financial Implications

14. These services are funded by Childrens Social Care and any beds that referred to from the District / City Councils are re-charged each financial year.
15. The contracts that will be extended for 2 years are listed below (pt.20).
16. The collective annual budget for 2025/26 is £1,996,000.27 The contracts state that the providers can receive an uplift of 2% for the preceding 12 months.
17. These contracts are for support only, accommodation costs are funded by young people and for the majority this is via Housing Benefit.
18. These costs do not include any forecast reimbursement by the City and District Councils.
19. Breakdown of the 2025/26 and 2026/27 budget required:

Contract	Provider	No. of Beds	Year 6: Oct 25 - Sept 26 Annual Cost	Year 7: Oct 26 - Sept 27 Annual Cost
18+ Singles - South	Connection Support	6	99,997.74	101,997.69
18+ Singles - City	Connection Support	10	161,166.12	164,389.44
18+ Singles - Cherwell	Connection Support	6	96,594.00	98,525.88
18+ Shared - South	Homegroup	11	153,000.00	156,060.00
18+ Singles Vale & 16+ Parents Vale	Stonewater	8	126,861.48	129,398.71
18+ Singles -West	Stonewater	3	57,351.54	58,498.57
18+ Parents - City	A2 Dominion	10	142,907.10	145,765.24
18+ Shared – All Areas	Response	90	1,158,122.29	1,181,284.74
		144	£1,996,000.27	£2,035,920.27

Comments checked by: Jane Billington, Strategic Finance Business Partner (finance) Jane.Billington@oxfordshire.gov.uk

Legal Implications

20. The Council's statutory duties to provide support services and accommodation for the categories of young people defined in the relevant contracts are set out in the Children Act 1989, the Care Act 2014 and the Children (Leaving Care) Act 2000. For the majority of young people covered by the contracts the provision of accommodation is by way of separate tenancy agreement between the young person and the provider and rent is the responsibility of the young person.
21. Under the Care Act 2014 the Council is prohibited from fulfilling its own care duties by doing anything which it or another local authority is required to do under the Housing Act 1996. Any support services which are functions of the district councils must therefore be fully funded by the City and District Councils. The existing partnering agreement between the Council and the City and District Councils deals with reimbursement of the Council by the City and District Councils. It could be argued that the Council's power to contract for these services on behalf of the City and Districts which are ancillary to the Council's own services is covered by the Council's general power of competence under s 1 Localism Act 2011. However, there is some risk that the arrangement conflicts with the Care Act 2014 prohibition above. Certainly, there is no duty or compulsion for the Council to take on this role. That said central government guidance on the Care Act 1989 in relation to care leavers clearly envisages partnership working in this area. The guidance requires the agreement of joint protocols between councils to establish a shared commitment from Children's Services and Housing Services to adopt a 'corporate parenting' approach for looked after children and care leavers making the transition to adulthood and ensuring access for care leavers to the full range of potentially suitable supported accommodation options in their area.
22. From a procurement law perspective, the contract extensions are clearly permitted under the terms and conditions of the original contracts. They are therefore compliant with the Council's Contract procedure Rules and the Public Contract Regulations 2015 (as amended).

Comments checked by: Jonathan Pool, Solicitor (contracts), Legal Services Jonathan.Pool@oxfordshire.gov.uk

Staff Implications

23. There are no new or additional implications.

Equality & Inclusion Implications

24. As these are existing services, the contract extensions do not negatively impact on people in Oxfordshire.

Risk Management

25. As part of the review process see below a table of benefits and risks.

Options	Benefits
Option 1 - do nothing	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Continue to accommodate young people in an established service until 30th September 2025 when the contract expires
Option 2 – extend the contracts (with agreed variations)	<ul style="list-style-type: none">The contracts provide a good quality service at a reasonable priceVariations will manage the issues that have been apparent within the current contractAllows time to fully re-commission and implement a new serviceThis option is supported by City and District Council housing departmentsPrevents providers from uplifting bed prices beyond the agreed percentage built into the contract

Options	Risks
Option 1 – do nothing	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Young people could be made homeless by 30th September 2025
Option 2 – extend the contracts	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Providers may not want to continue to deliver services

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