

## **Divisions Affected - All**

# **DELEGATED DECISIONS BY CABINET MEMBER FOR CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE**

**19 August 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 18 months from 1<sup>st</sup> October 2025 to 30<sup>th</sup> April 2027.**

## **Executive Summary**

1. The commissioned block YPSA contracts are due to expire on 30<sup>th</sup> September 2025 however there is an option to extend the contracts for a further 18 months until the 30<sup>th</sup> April 2027.
2. The YPSA is currently a mixed delivery model of services for young people aged 16-25 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. The YPSA is also used to support 'Staying Close' and duties for Care Leavers as part of the *Children Act guidance and regulations Volume 3: "Planning transition to adulthood for care leavers"* guidance<sup>1</sup>.
4. A thorough review of the YPSA with internal and external stakeholders including

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<sup>1</sup> [The Children Act 1989 guidance and regulations](#)

providers and young people was completed in late 2024.

## Service

5. The Council commissions the majority of its YPSA services for young people aged over 18 (16+ for Parents) from 6 providers who deliver 203 units of support and accommodation across Oxfordshire.
6. The contract supports both care leavers who are the responsibility of Oxfordshire County Council to support and for young people aged 18+ who are not Care experienced. These young people fall under the City and District Councils housing statutory duties and support the partnership approach to tackling youth 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, this is currently approximately £400k per year.
7. The YPSA services commenced on the 1<sup>st</sup> October 2020, after a full procurement exercise.

The table below shows a breakdown of the total number of units in each of the services.

**Table 1: Number of current beds per Service**

Contract	Provider	Current No. of Beds
18+ Singles - South	Connection Support	6
18+ Singles - City	Connection Support	10
18+ Singles - Cherwell	Connection Support	6
18+ Singles -West	Stonewater	3
18+ Singles - Vale	Stonewater	3
<b>Total Singles Provision</b>		<b>28</b>
18+ Parents - City	A2 Dominion	10
16+ Parents - Vale	Stonewater	5
18+ Parents – Cherwell	Sanctuary	10
18+ Parents - West	A2 Dominion	5
18+ Parents – South*	A2 Dominion	5
<b>Total Parents Provision</b>		<b>35</b>
18+ Shared – All Areas	Response	119
18+ Shared - South	Homegroup	11
<b>Total Shared Provision</b>		<b>130</b>
Out of County – Care Leavers only	Connection support	10
<b>Total YPSA Provision</b>		<b>203</b>

*\*this service is has been used for unaccompanied asylum seeker children (UASC) since April 2025 as this property was vacant at the time*

8. Oxfordshire County Council are planning to extend the following contracts from the 1<sup>st</sup> October 2025 for 2 years to the value of £4,335,883.

Table 2: Contract changes from 1<sup>st</sup> October 2025:

Contract	Provider	Current No. of Beds	Changes	From 1 <sup>st</sup> October 25 No. of Beds
18+ Singles - South	Connection Support	6	Extend by 18 months	6
18+ Singles - City	Connection Support	10	Extend by 18 months	10
18+ Singles - Cherwell	Connection Support	6	Extend by 18 months	6
18+ Singles -West	Stonewater	3	Extend by 18 months	3
18+ Singles - Vale	Stonewater	3	Extend by 18 months	3
<b>Total Singles Provision</b>		<b>28</b>		<b>28</b>
18+ Parents - City	A2 Dominion	10	Extend by 18 months	10
16+ Parents - Vale	Stonewater	5	Extend by 18 months	5
18+ Parents – Cherwell	Sanctuary	10	Extend by 18 months	10
18+ Parents - West	A2 Dominion	5	Do not extend – mutually agreed with provider	0
18+ Parents – South*	A2 Dominion	5	Do not extend – mutually agreed with provider	0
<b>Total Parents Provision</b>		<b>35</b>		<b>15</b>
18+ Shared – All Areas	Response	119	Extend by 18 months but on a reduction of bed no. to be mutually agreed with provider	90*
18+ Shared - South	Homegroup	11	Extend by 18 months	11
<b>Total Shared Provision</b>		<b>130</b>		<b>102</b>
Out of County – Care Leavers only	Connection support	10	Do not extend – mutually agreed with provider	0
<b>Total YPSA Provision</b>		<b>203</b>		<b>154*</b>

*\*final contract numbers to be agreed mutually with Response but will be no less than 90 beds.*

- There are important reasons for not extending all of the current contracts. These include low occupancy numbers due to location and type of provision and low waiting lists. There are 20 young people living in these identified services, with decommissioning plans in place for each young person to take

into account their individual housing and support needs. Either moving them to another supported housing scheme if required or prioritising them to move on into general needs accommodation through the relevant District/City Housing registers or by supporting them to access the private rented sector. On a case by case basis there could be one off discretionary use for assistance with rent guarantee, deposits and liaising with landlords/lettings agencies (provided by both Children's Services for Care Leavers and the relevant District/City for those without care leaver status).

10. Oxfordshire County Council and the District and City Councils could if necessary, consider discretionary spot purchase of a placement on a limited and case by case basis after the 1<sup>st</sup> October 2025 on a case by case basis to avoid homelessness if necessary up to a period of up to 6 months. This use of one off, case by case arrangements would apply to this specific cohort of young adults in the transition arrangements and would not be an ongoing approach.
11. Reducing the number of surplus beds on the YPSA is also contributing to a key Council wide savings plan for 2025/26 – signed off by full Council during the budget setting process for 2025/26 any spot purchasing may have a temporary or short term impact to the agreed savings delivery plan.
12. Extending the 18+ YPSA contracts as set out in table 2 (*including 16+ Parents service with Connection Support who are OFSTED registered*) for 18 months would allow sufficient time to remodel and recommission these services. The 18 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.
13. The recommissioning work for all young people supported housing including the YPSA would start during the Autumn of 2025.
14. A number of variations will be made to the extended contracts to provide clarifications and also include revised age range changes to reduce the age limit for new referrals only from 25 to 21 years of age. As set out in paragraph 9 a plan is in place jointly with providers and the District and City Council's for young people to support them to move on if they no longer require supported housing via the private rented sector or via the relevant district/city housing register. Young people will not be made homeless as a result of being aged over 21 years however we will no longer accept referrals for any young person into the service aged 21+.
15. If the contracts were not extended on the 30<sup>th</sup> September 2025 for the majority of young people housed in the YPSA there would be no alternative option for accommodating the young people and would therefore risk the young people becoming homeless.

## Financial Implications

16. These services are funded by Children's Social Care and any beds that referred to from the District / City Councils are re-charged each financial year.
17. The contracts that will be extended for 2 years are listed below (pt.20).
18. The collective annual budget for 2025/26 and 2026/27 is £4,335,883. £2,146,476 for year 1 and £2,189,406 for year 2 taking into account a 2% uplift.
19. These contracts are for support only, accommodation costs are funded by young people and for the majority this is via Housing Benefit payments.
20. These costs do not include any forecast reimbursement by the City and District Councils.
21. If any spot purchasing is required this may affect Oxfordshire County Councils delivery of the savings plan however this will be time limited.
22. 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
18+ Parents - Cherwell	Sanctuary	10	150,476.52	153,486.05
		<b>144</b>	<b>£2,146,476.79</b>	<b>£2,189,406.32</b>

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

## Legal Implications

23. 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 and the Children (Leaving Care) Act 2000 as defined in the Pathway Plan to support their assessed needs. 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.

24. 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  
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## Staff Implications

25. For services that are not being extended/reduced on the 1<sup>st</sup> October there will be staff redundancies and this process is being managed by the provider.

## Equality & Inclusion Implications

26. As these are existing services, the contract extensions do not negatively impact on people in Oxfordshire.
27. For those affected by de-commissioning of services and changes to the upper age limit, implementation plans are in place to safely move young people into alternative accommodation arrangements based on their identified need and legal status and homelessness will be avoided at all costs.

## Risk Management

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

Options	Benefits	Risks
Option 1 - do nothing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Continue to accommodate young people in an established service until 30<sup>th</sup> September 2025 when the contract expires</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Young people could be made homeless by 30<sup>th</sup> September 2025</li></ul>
Option 2 – extend the contracts (with agreed variations) <i>for 18 months</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>The contracts provide a good quality service at a reasonable price</li><li>Variations will manage the issues that have been apparent within the current contract</li><li>Allows time to fully re-commission and implement a new service</li><li>The option to extend is supported by City and District Council housing departments however they have voiced</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Providers may not want to continue to deliver services</li><li>Providers objecting to decommissioning plans/variations</li></ul>

	<p>concerns over the reduction in upper age limit and decommissioning plans. Oxfordshire County Council are working with the District and City Councils on an implementation plan to safely transition to the new arrangements avoiding homelessness.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Prevents providers from uplifting bed prices beyond the agreed percentage built into the contract</li> </ul>	
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