

**Corporate Parenting Board**  
**November 2012**

<b>Title of paper:</b>	<b>Accommodation for Care Leavers</b>	
<b>Director(s)/ Corporate Director(s):</b>	Ian Curryer, Corporate Director for Children and Families Satinder Gautam, Director of Childrens Safeguarding.	<b>Wards affected: All</b>
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<b>Relevant Council Plan Strategic Priority:</b>		
World Class Nottingham		
Work in Nottingham		X
Safer Nottingham		X
Neighbourhood Nottingham		X
Family Nottingham		X
Healthy Nottingham		X
Leading Nottingham		X
<b>Summary of issues (including benefits to citizens/service users):</b>		
<p>This report explains the current up to date issues in respect of the Legislative Duties required by Nottingham City Council in respect of sufficient Accommodation for Care-Leavers.</p> <p>It focuses in on the service provided to Care Leavers by the Fifteen Plus Team. It describes the importance of ensuring young people have appropriate and sufficient accommodation to ensure young people have a smooth transition into Adulthood. This report is framed by the Government Legislation Volume 3: Planning Transitions into Adulthood for Care leavers 2011.</p> <p>Performance information is summarised and demonstrates the progress made in respect of Housing for Care Leavers in Nottingham City.</p>		
<b>Recommendation(s):</b>		
1	The Board to continue to offer commitment to ensuring, as Corporate Parents, that Care Leavers receive sufficient and appropriate Housing in Nottingham City.	
2	The Board to commit to the Care Leavers Protocol implemented as a partnership between Nottingham City Homes and Children Services.	

## 1. **BACKGROUND**

- 1.1 Nottingham City Council has to adhere to the legislative framework and guidance provided by the Department for Children, Schools and Families. The main pieces of legislation are;
- The Sufficiency, Statutory Guidance on securing sufficient accommodation for Looked After Children (2011).
  - The Children Act (1989), Vol 3: Planning Transition to Adulthood for Care – Leavers.
  - Provision of Accommodation for 16 and 17 year olds, young people who may be homeless and/or require accommodation (Issued April 2010)
- 1.2 Sufficiency Statutory Guidance on securing sufficient accommodation for Looked After Children (2011) seeks to improve outcomes for young people. It requires that Local Authorities take steps that secure, so far as is reasonably practical, sufficient accommodation within the Authority's care which meets the needs of young people that the Local Authority are Looking After. This is known as the "Sufficiency Duty" and must be seen therefore as a core part of how Local Authorities meet their broader duties to ensure young peoples need are met.
- 1.3 Statutory guidance. 'Provision of Accommodation for 16 and 17 year old who may be Homeless and require Accommodation' (April 2010) underlines that Children's Services should be the lead Agency with regard to assessing and meeting the needs of 16 and 17 year olds who seek help because of homelessness. However, it also states that 'integrated services who can assist in the delivering of a seamless child-centred response to the needs of 17/16 year olds who are homeless.
- 1.4 Vol 3: Planning Transition to Adulthood for Care Leavers (Chapter 7) provides the legislative guidance for providing independent and semi-independent Accommodation to Care-Leavers.
- 1.5 The top ten concerning factors about Leaving Care reported by young people to the Children's Rights Director (2006) all relate to accommodation and young peoples ability to cope with independent living:
- Being on your own
  - Not being able to cope
  - Not being able to get help when you most need it
  - Not having enough money
  - Cleaning up after yourself
  - Leaving Care before you are ready
  - Having nowhere to go/come back to
  - Being put in a 'dodgy' place
  - Having nowhere to live
  - Not being settled anywhere and having to keep moving
- 1.6 Therefore when young people leave their care placement, Nottingham City Council , must ensure their new home is suitable for their needs. Regulation 9 (2) of the Care Leavers Regulations defines what is meant by suitable accommodation:
- That which is as far as reasonably practicable is suitable for a young person's need including health needs
  - That the Local Authority has satisfied itself to the character and suitability of the Landlord or other provider.

- Properties comply with Health and Safety Requirements.
- That the Local Authority so far as is reasonably practicable has taken into account the young persons wishes and feelings and their Education, Training or Employment needs

## **2. Providing Accommodation to Care-Leavers in Nottingham City.**

2.2 Since November 2011 Nottingham City Council has provided Accommodation to young people in semi-independent provision through a tendered framework. This framework includes a range of options in terms of semi-independent living for young people to ensure the diverse needs of Care Leavers are met. The options include:

- Supported lodgings (Stonham)
- Internal Residential (NG7)
- Internal Transitional Homes (Trainer Houses NG7)
- Shared Housing
- Supported Housing which combines accommodation with support and opportunities for Education, Training and Employment.

2.3 If a Pathway Plan dictates that a young person would benefit from a semi-independent placement prior to living independently then a Social Worker will discuss with the young person the range of options available before making a referral to the Placement Service. The Placement Service will then send out the referral to the range of providers where a decision will be made as the provision that is provided to the young person.

2.4 The Referral (E01) will include an Individual Placement Plan that dictates the package of support that addresses the emotional, social and educational and health needs of the young person. The Placement Service provides a contractual framework that includes costs and expectations of Nottingham City Council for its Care Leavers to all providers. The Placement Service in partnership with internal residential managers also ensure accommodation provided is quality assured by visits to the properties and regular meetings with the providers.

2.5 As young people reach 17/18 years of age there is an expectation for the majority that they become a Tenant in their own right. Accommodation for Care Leavers in respect of their own tenancies is provided by Nottingham City Homes. The risk of tenancy breakdowns can be relatively high when a young person becomes a tenant for the first time. Therefore systems are now in place to ensure young people are well prepared and they can demonstrate they are ready to live independently. Nottingham City has implemented a Care Leavers Protocol and a Performance Framework for Pathway Planning to mitigate against the risks of young people becoming homeless.

2.6 The joint protocol enables both partners to understand their roles and engage more effectively in joint working, leading to increased transparency and better outcome for young people. It also complies with the 'sufficiency duty' required legislatively. The Protocol demonstrates:

- Planned moves towards independence (using clear and flexible accommodation and support pathways, for every Care Leaver)
- Ongoing support to ensure young people are able to maintain their accommodation and early intervention if things start to go wrong
- Access to safe, secure Emergency Accommodation if exceptionally accommodation arrangements do break down
- Ensuring that young people are in suitable accommodation is a priority for the 15+ Team, Placement Service and primarily Independent Reviewing Officers. Young

people in suitable accommodation will thrive better once they are no longer care leavers post the age of 21 as opposed to those who are of no fixed abode.

There will always be a cohort of the care leaver population that every local authority will be unable to locate. Some young people choose to disengage, live with unknown friends and acquaintances (often called sofa surfing) and or leave the local authority area. For some young people who are care leavers they make up a proportion of the prison population. NCC do not believe this to be suitable accommodation for young people.

### **3. Performance**

3.1 Year to date figures at Quarter 2 is currently at 95.24%. Suitable Accommodation is not recorded as suitable for young people who are serving Custodial Sentences. Performance is considerably improved on the 12 months to date figure which previously stood at 82%. Statistical Neighbour data was at 88.8%. This indicator is rated as a strong GREEN.

### **4. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS (INCLUDING VALUE FOR MONEY)**

4.1 The Framework for semi-independence accommodation has demonstrated savings efficiencies within Placement Budget. A deep dive of the savings is underway and will be reported to the CPB in mid 2013.

### **5. RISK MANAGEMENT ISSUES (INCLUDING LEGAL IMPLICATIONS, CRIME AND DISORDER ACT IMPLICATIONS AND EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY IMPLICATIONS)**

5.1 In May 2009 the Law Lords Judgement G Vs Southwark considered how Local Authorities support homeless 16 and 17 year olds (Baroness Hale of Richmond). The ruling confirmed the Governments view that Local Authorities Childrens Services should provide Accommodation under Section 20 of the Children Act (1989) unless the child is not in the Local Authority's judgement a 'Child in Need' (this must be based on an initial screening assessment).

5.2 The house of Lords re-iterated that the Children Act (1989) has primacy over the Housing Act in providing for children. The duties of Childrens Services to accommodate children can not be circumvented by referring a child to the Housing Authority whose duties under Part 7 of the Housing act (1996) provide a safety net for those few homeless children who do not meet the criteria for Accommodation under Section 20.

5.3 Exceptions to Accommodation criteria are;

- Young people who do not want to be Accommodated
- Young person who have been living independently without anyone caring/taking parental responsibility for him/her for some time.

### **6. EQUALITY IMPACT ASSESSMENTS (EIAs)**

This report does not include proposals for new or changing policies, services or functions.

7. **LIST OF BACKGROUND PAPERS OTHER THAN PUBLISHED WORKS OR THOSE DISCLOSING CONFIDENTIAL OR EXEMPT INFORMATION**

8. **PUBLISHED DOCUMENTS REFERRED TO IN COMPILING THIS REPORT**

8.1 The Children Act (1989), Volume 3: Planning Transition to Adulthood for Care Leavers.

8.2 Sufficiency: Statutory Guidance on Securing Sufficient Accommodation for Looked After Children (2011)