

SUITABLE ACCOMODATION FOR CARE LEAVERS

To: **Corporate Parenting Sub-Committee**

Meeting Date: **13 June 2018**

From: **Kate Knight
Service Manager for the 14 to 25 Service**

Electoral division(s): **All**

Purpose: **To provide information to Sub-Committee members in regards to the term 'suitable accommodation for care leavers' and to provide a brief overview about quality assurance mechanisms and steps taken to ensure the needs of care leavers are met.**

Recommendation: **To note and comment on the report.**

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Summary:

The report explains what we mean when we say 'suitable accommodation for care leavers' and the types of accommodation where our care leavers are placed.

1. BACKGROUND

The matter of suitable accommodation for care leavers was discussed at the first meeting of the Corporate Parenting Sub-Committee (CPSC) on 13 December 2017 with the minutes stating:

Members noted that accommodation for care leavers was not subject to inspection by Ofsted and identified the issue of 'care leavers in suitable accommodation' as one which they would wish to look at in more detail in future.

2. MAIN ISSUES**2.1 Suitable accommodation****The Children (Leaving Care) Act 2000**

The Children (Leaving Care) Act 2000 imposes accommodation duties on Local Authorities to support certain categories of looked-after children and care leavers. These extend to 16-18 year olds for whom the local authority must ensure that the accommodation they move to when leaving care is suitable, appropriate and in accordance with their Pathway Plan which clearly supports their transition and skills acquisition to enable each young person to live independently as adults when they reach 18 years.

The options available post 18 years for young people can be one of the following options:-

Staying Put
Independent Living
Semi Independent living with or without support
Supported lodgings
Living with friends or returning to family

There are three categories which define care leavers in terms of their status:

Eligible young people – those aged 16 or 17 who have been Children in Care for at least 13 weeks since the age of 14 and are still Children in Care.

Relevant young people – those aged 16 or 17 who have been Children in Care for at least 13 weeks since the age of 14 who have left care.

Former Relevant – those young people who have left care and are now aged 18 or over

Our duty also extends to Unaccompanied Asylum Seeking Children (UASC) who we have Looked After, as well as young people aged 16-17 in the criminal justice system who are remanded into the care of the Local Authority (Remanded into Local Authority Accommodation [RILAA]).

Suitable Accommodation and what it means to Cambridgeshire and our young people in care and those who are leaving or have left care:

The Pathway Plan (PWP) is the key document which is set out in law as the gateway to support for all children who are or have been Looked After. The PWP is the young person's plan which is written with the support of the Looked After Child's Social Worker and their Personal Advisor (PA) in conjunction the young person.

The PWP should determine the type of accommodation a young person requires and it is important to consider where it is located, for example being accessible to their local connections, education, employment and training opportunities, as well as considering the area in terms of and safety needs and the young person's own preferences.

As previously highlighted, semi-independent accommodation is one of a number of options for Looked After young people and care leavers, post 16 years of age. For the purpose of this report; this means the provision of semi-independent accommodation and support for those eligible or relevant 16-18 year olds who are ready to live semi-independently, with support, in preparation for their transition into independent living.

Cambridgeshire County Council currently has 155 young people in semi-independent accommodation; 59 young people living independently, for example in a flat, house or bedsit which also includes shared housing; 36 young people are living in ordinary lodgings without formal support; and 42 young people have returned to live with their parents or relatives. The table below provides a fuller breakdown.

ACCOMMODATION	ELIGIBLE	RELEVANT	FORMER RELEVANT
Semi-independent, transitional accommodation (like a supported hostel, trainer flats) self	63	1	92
Independent living, for example independent tenancy of flat, house or bedsit, including local authority or housing	0	0	59

association tenancy, or accommodation provided by a college or university. Includes flat sharing.			
Ordinary lodgings, without formal support.	0	0	36
With parents or relatives	7	4	31
With former foster carers where the young person has been fostered and on turning 18 continues to remain with the same carer who had fostered them immediately prior to their reaching legal adulthood, and where the plan for their care involves their remaining with this former foster family for the future	1	0	22
Residence not known	1	0	10
Other accommodation	3	1	10
No fixed abode / homeless	0	0	5
Supported lodgings (accommodation, usually in a family home, where adults in the "host family" provide formal advice and support).	3	0	5
Foster Care	62	0	4
In custody	0	0	3
Emergency accommodation (like a night shelter, direct access or emergency hostel)	0	0	3
Foyers and similar supported accommodation which combines the accommodation with opportunities for education, training or employment.	4	0	2
Foyers, for example, Cambridge Youth Foyer, provide support for local 16-25 year olds who are homeless or at risk of homelessness by providing safe and stable accommodation.			

Community home or other form of residential care such as an NHS establishment	10	0	1
Bed and breakfast	0	0	1
Not Recorded	0	0	1
Total	154	6	285

Supported Accommodation Providers.

Cambridgeshire County Council and Peterborough City Council are jointly commissioning the provision of supported accommodation services for Looked After young people aged 16 – 18 years, for whom each authority has a statutory responsibility.

The Councils are seeking to work with a number of providers who can demonstrate continual improvements in value for money achieved by deploying efficient and innovative ways of meeting both the accommodation and support needs of eligible young people.

While these types of accommodation are not under the scrutiny of Ofsted they are robustly monitored and assessed by internal monitoring.

Young People's Involvement

Young people were invited to give feedback on their experiences in supported accommodation provisions and were involved in the commissioning of providers.

3. SIGNIFICANT IMPLICATIONS

3.1 Resource Implications

n/a – information report

3.2 Procurement/Contractual/Council Contract Procedure Rules Implications

n/a – information report

3.3 Statutory, Legal and Risk Implications

n/a – information report

3.4 Equality and Diversity Implications

n/a – information report

3.5 Engagement and Communications Implications

n/a – information report

3.6 Localism and Local Member Involvement

n/a – information report

3.7 Public Health Implications

n/a – information report

SOURCE DOCUMENTS

Source Documents	Location
Children (Leaving Care Act 2000	https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2000/35/contents
Minutes of the Corporate Parenting Sub-Committee 13 December 2017	https://cmis.cambridgeshire.gov.uk/ccclive/Meetings/tabid/70/ctl/ViewMeetingPublic/mid/397/Meeting/904/Committee/46/Default.aspx