

KENT COUNTY COUNCIL – RECORD OF OFFICER DECISION

Executive

DECISION TAKEN BY:

Sarah Hammond, Corporate Director Children, Young People and Education

DECISION NO:

24/00014

For publication [Do not include information which is exempt from publication under schedule 12a of the Local Government Act 1972]

Subject matter: Shared Accommodation two-year directly awarded contract

Cabinet Member decision to which this action relates:

Cabinet Member Decision Number: 23-00083 ([Record of Decision](#))
Supported Accommodation Service 16-19 and Transitional arrangements report presented to CYPE Cabinet Committee on 12 September 2023, decision taken 17 October 2023

Decision:

As Corporate Director for Children, Young People and Education, I:

- Agree to the implementation of the two-year direct award contract, under the same terms and conditions, to Clearsprings Ready Homes from 1 April 2024 to 31 March 2026 for 18+ Shared Accommodation services to support transition.

This executive officer decision is linked with the executive officer decision No OD/24/00013

Key Decision 23-00083 was taken by the Cabinet Member for Integrated Children's Services on 17 October 2023. In this decision, the Cabinet Member:

- agreed to directly award a new contract, under the same terms and conditions to Clearsprings Ready Homes from 1 April 2024 to 31 March 2026 for 18+ Shared Accommodation services to support transition.

Reasons for Decision

Ofsted introduced regulations for current unregulated accommodation from 28 October 2023. Through 2021, Commissioners undertook a full review of the Shared Accommodation Service and Young Persons Supported Accommodation and Floating Support Service, where the contracts expired on 31 March 2024 ([Decision - 22/00079 - Supported Accommodation](#) (kent.gov.uk)). The outcome of this work was to recommend that the services be aligned, categorised into levels of need, and expanded to reduce the reliance on spot purchased semi-independent accommodation and have one clear accommodation pathway.

The Children's Commissioning Team, with colleagues across CYPE, developed a revised structured Supported Accommodation offer enabling progression through services until the young adult is ready to move on at the age of 19. The new Supported Accommodation offer would only accommodate the 16 and 17 year old children in the Shared Accommodation service, to ensure compliance with Ofsted, however, all 18+ year olds would not be eligible for the new support services. The Shared Accommodation service accommodates young adults up until the age of 21.

The need to continue to commission the Shared Accommodation arose because KCC needs to manage the exit of 21+ year old Care Leavers who were accommodated by Clearsprings Ready Homes on legacy placements, in a planned way. This would allow approx. 376 legacy placements to be moved on, in a safe and phased way as and when they turn 21, that supports KCC in its statutory responsibility as corporate parent, mitigates risks and potential increase(s) in demand for further intervention or reliance on social services. It is technically and legally viable for KCC to cease providing accommodation beyond the age of 18.

Financial Implications:

The new contract for 24-months is included in the revenue budget under the following budget lines. "Looked After Children – Care and Support", "Children in Need – Care and Support", "Care Leavers Service" and "Asylum".

The 2024/2025 budget reports presented to County Council in February 2023 included [Appendix F - 23-24 Revenue budget changes by Directorate.pdf](#)

Legal implications:

The Council must provide Care Leavers (including former UAS Children) with support and financial support to assist in promoting their welfare, especially in relation to maintaining suitable accommodation and helping them access education, training, and employment. There is no statutory duty for Kent County Council to provide accommodation to Care Leavers above the age of 18.

Equality Implications:

An Equality Impact Assessment (EqIA) was originally completed as part of the planned redesign and commissioning of the Supported Accommodation service, which included a recommended transitional year for legacy placements in the Shared Accommodation service.

The majority of young adults aged 18+ in the service are former UAS children that have aged through the Shared Accommodation service and the expectation is these individuals will be moved into their own home, supported by their Personal Advisor.

Comments received from any Members or Officers consulted:

The Children, Young People's and Education Cabinet Committee considered and endorsed the decision at its meeting on 12 September 2023.

Any alternatives considered and rejected:

- To give every young adult in this service a Notice to Vacate on the 1 April 2024 (contract end date) resulting in 376 young adults potentially presenting as homeless to the Local Authorities.

Any conflict of interest declared by any executive member consulted by the decision maker and any dispensation granted by the Proper Officer:

No.

Sarah Hammond

12.12.2024

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signed

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date

