

From: Roger Gough, Cabinet Member for Children, Young People and Education

Andrew Ireland, Corporate Director of Social Care, Health and Wellbeing

To: Corporate Parenting Panel – 9 November 2017

Subject: **ACCOMMODATION AND HOUSING OPTIONS FOR 16/17 YEAR OLD HOMELESS YOUNG PEOPLE, CHILDREN IN CARE AND CARE LEAVERS**

Classification: Unrestricted

Electoral Divisions: All

Summary: Housing Related Support Services. This paper outlines a proposal to remodel Housing Related Support Services for young people to ensure that the Council can prioritise statutory service users. Implementation of this new model will be in 2018 following a procurement exercise. Whilst this new model is developed and procured, an interim arrangement is currently underway. This will give the Council greater control over referrals and support transition to the proposed new service.

Housing Options for 16/17 year old Homeless with an Update on the Homelessness Reduction Act 2017. A new protocol is in place and has been agreed by the Kent Joint Policy and Planning Board, Kent Housing Group and the County Council's Specialist Children's Services division. This supports greater working together and the Housing Related Support commissioning will provide appropriate accommodation for these young people, whether they require accommodation through children's social care or they require housing under the homelessness legislation where accommodation by children's social care is not appropriate. There are opportunities for Districts to work closely with Specialist Children's Services as the new Homelessness Reduction Act 2017 will be in place from April 2018.

Shared Accommodation Service. This paper also provides an update on the current procurement of a new Shared Accommodation Service (predominantly used by Unaccompanied Asylum Seeking Children and Asylum Care Leavers). It identifies actions taken to deliver an improved service and tighter budgetary assurance using an inclusive blended weekly unit rate.

Recommendation: The Corporate Parenting Panel is asked to **NOTE** the plans to commission a new Supported Accommodation Service with a focus on a greater number of statutory service users, **NOTE** the new protocol for 16 and 17 year old homeless young people and the update on Homelessness Reduction Act 2017 and **NOTE** the current procurement of a new Shared Accommodation Service.

1. Introduction

1.1 Foster Care and Supported Lodgings are established accommodation options for young people at 16 but other supported accommodation provision such as

Semi-Independent Accommodation and Housing Related Support services are either expensive, of variable quality or offer limited access to statutory service users.

- 1.2 Work is therefore underway to provide a seamless, consistent pathway of accommodation and support options for young people to enable them to acquire independent living skills at a time and location that is most appropriate for their circumstances.
- 1.3 Housing Related Support (HRS) services form an essential option for young people looking to acquire the necessary skills to move on into fully independent living and as such these services are being refocused to ensure the maximum number of statutory service users can access this provision.

2. Current Housing Related Support Provision

- 2.1 The primary aim of HRS provision is to prevent homelessness and promote independence and wellbeing for non-statutory clients. There are currently 25 former Supporting People HRS services across the county, providing 335 units of accommodation and support and 138 units of floating support for 16-25 year olds. These are delivered for a budget of £2.8 million by 13 providers (see Appendix A)
- 2.2 HRS services are located across the county (see Appendix B). Accommodation based support typically consists of self-contained flats; young people receive between 2-30 hours of support per week for a maximum of two years.
- 2.3 Services are jointly funded between Kent County Council and District/Borough Councils. The County Council pays for the support and District/Borough Councils pay housing management (including rent) via Housing Benefit. Being in supported accommodation typically improves the chances of a young person going on to find social housing when moving on.

3. Housing Related Support Future Planning

- 3.1 HRS services for young people need to prioritise care leavers and homeless 16/17 year olds to support the Council in meeting its statutory obligations. The refocused HRS service will form a key strand in the accommodation offer which the Council provides for 16-21 year olds (see Appendix C).
- 3.2 It is proposed that the new service will be procured in 2018 and embed changes that have taken place during the interim year.

4. Housing Related Support: The Interim Year – Progress to Date

- 4.1 Since April 2017, joint multi-agency panels have been developed, between service providers, KCC Commissioners, Adolescent Support Team staff, Leaving Care staff and District Housing officers. Panels are also being currently expanded to include Children in Care staff.
- 4.2 Panels are in place to monitor referrals into HRS services and ensure that a higher proportion of statutory service users are accessing services.

4.3 Control over panel processes will:

- Create a seamless pathway and referral process for service users to access appropriate accommodation and support
- Reduce usage of spot-purchased, less well-regulated semi-independent provision
- Enable current providers to begin remodelling prior to the commissioning of new services (ensuring higher quality bids in future tendering processes)
- Prepare providers for statutory service users and design services to meet their needs, which at times can be complex.

5. Housing Options for 16/17 year old Homeless with an update on the Homelessness Reduction Act 2017

5.1 A joint protocol for 16 and 17 year olds who present as homeless is in place and has been agreed by the Kent Joint Policy and Planning Board (JPPB), Kent Housing Group (KHG) and the Council's Specialist Childrens Services (SCS) division. This protocol supports greater working together and the HRS commissioning will provide appropriate accommodation for homeless 16 and 17 year old young people, whether they require accommodation through SCS or under the Homelessness legislation where accommodation under Section 20 Children Act 1989 by SCS is not appropriate. Previously, HRS has been used for vulnerable adults and was not focused on the statutory responsibilities of SCS, specifically 16 and 17 year old homelessness and Care Leavers. To ensure there remains a service for vulnerable adults, SCS has committed £1m to Adult Social Care Services for the re-commissioning of adults HRS.

5.2 There are opportunities for Districts to work closely with the Children, Young People and Education Directorate through the new Homelessness Reduction Act 2017, which will be in place from April 2018. The Homelessness Reduction Act 2017 sets out a framework for the biggest changes to homelessness legislation since the 1977 Act was introduced. Where Local Authority Housing (LHA) Officers cannot prevent or relieve homelessness, there remains the duty to manage homelessness. Advice services must meet the needs of people released from prison, Care Leavers, ex-Armed Forces, victims of domestic abuse, people leaving hospital, those suffering from mental illness and anyone else identified more at risk of homelessness. There is also an amendment to the 1996 Act which is to allow, in certain circumstances, a local connection for care leavers in the area where they are living prior to their 16th birthday and up until they are 21 years of age. This will impact on local district housing offices who will have homelessness duties to care leavers placed in Kent by other local authorities. It does mean that Kent Care Leavers placed out of the area, including Medway, will be able to have their housing needs met locally if they meet the criteria for local connections.

6. Shared Accommodation UASC and Asylum Care Leavers - Introduction

6.1 SCS purchase a Shared Accommodation Service for over 500 Unaccompanied Asylum Seeking Children (UASC) Children in Care and Asylum Care Leavers aged 16-21. The primary aim of the service is to provide suitable accommodation that is stable, safe and well maintained for UASC and Asylum

Care Leavers. Table 1 reflects the current cohort of UASC (aged 16+) and Asylum Care Leavers and their accommodation type. The majority of Asylum Care Leavers live independently. The 18+ Care Leaving Service and the SCS Management Information Unit work continuously to ensure accurate recording on the database of the placement type. These do change depending on the placement movements of all young people aged 16 years and above.

Table 1

UASC and Asylum Care Leavers as at 11 October 2017

| Latest In Touch Accommodation Code | Authority | | | | Grand Total |
|--|------------|------------|------------|-------------------|-------------|
| | Kent | Medway | OLA | Address Not Known | |
| B - With parents or relatives/ Connected Person | 5 | 0 | 33 | 2 | 40 |
| C - Community home or other form of residential care | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 1 |
| D - Semi-independent, transitional accommodation | 28 | 10 | 40 | 1 | 79 |
| E - Supported Lodgings (Not Former Foster Carer) | 17 | 0 | 4 | 0 | 21 |
| K - Ordinary Lodgings without formal support | 3 | 0 | 1 | 0 | 4 |
| Not Recorded/Blank | 18 | 0 | 10 | 43 | 71 |
| R - Residence not known | 10 | 1 | 4 | 20 | 35 |
| S - No fixed abode / homeless | 3 | 2 | 3 | 7 | 15 |
| T - Foyers | 0 | 1 | 3 | 0 | 4 |
| U - Independent living | 325 | 100 | 70 | 7 | 502 |
| W - Bed and breakfast | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 1 |
| X - In custody | 5 | 2 | 1 | 0 | 8 |
| Y - Other accommodation | 6 | 0 | 3 | 1 | 10 |
| Z - Supported Lodgings (Staying Put) | 12 | 3 | 1 | 0 | 16 |
| Grand Total | 434 | 119 | 173 | 81 | 807 |

- 6.2 The original value of these contracts was in the region of £1.8 million (approximately 300 bed spaces) per annum. Due to a large increase in the number of Unaccompanied Asylum Seeking Children in Kent, annual spend for 2016-17 was approximately £4.4 million (approximately 600 bed spaces).
- 6.3 The current contracts expire on 28 February 2018 and a procurement exercise is now underway. To maintain current provision during the procurement phase, contracts with existing providers will continue through a Single Source Action for a six month period.

7. New Shared Accommodation Service

7.1 During the summer Children's Commissioning, SCS and the County Council's procurement team met with the current providers to gather intelligence to inform future commissioning arrangements. Work also focused on containing costs through the introduction of a blended weekly rate which covers the payment, management and oversight of damages as well as standard repairs.

7.2 The new service is currently being procured. The contract will run for a five year period from 24 October 2017 until 31 October 2022 to provide for longer term stability of placements and costs. The contract will enable new placements to be made from the commencement date, at the new inclusive rate, whilst supporting the mobilisation of existing clients over a longer period to ensure their safety and wellbeing is maintained.

7.3 The main advantages of the new service are:

- *Housing Benefit* – The provider will be responsible for the management of the necessary paperwork to support the housing benefit process, a significant contributor to the speed and access to payments received
- *Damages* – The new weekly inclusive rate covers the cost of damages and repairs. This has the advantage of passing the management of risk to the provider, reducing operational resource time and providing greater cost certainty for the County Council
- *Accountability and Clear Processes* – Duplication of activity will be removed and processes simplified to reduce the administrative burden
- *Key Performance Indicators* – The introduction of robust Key Performance Indicators to allow the service to hold the provider to account with greater rigor.

8. Conclusion

8.1 The commissioning of these two services will seek to address a number of current contractual weaknesses and support the County Council's delivery of the Sufficiency Strategy.

9. Recommendation

9.1 Recommendations: The Corporate Parenting Panel is asked to **NOTE** the plans to commission a new Supported Accommodation Service with a focus on a greater number of statutory service users, **NOTE** the new protocol for 16 and 17 year old homeless young people and the update on the Homelessness Reduction Act 2017 and **NOTE** the current procurement of a new Shared Accommodation Service.

10. Background Documents

None

11. Report Author

Karen Mills
Commissioning Manager
03000 416486
karen.mills@kent.gov.uk

Relevant Director

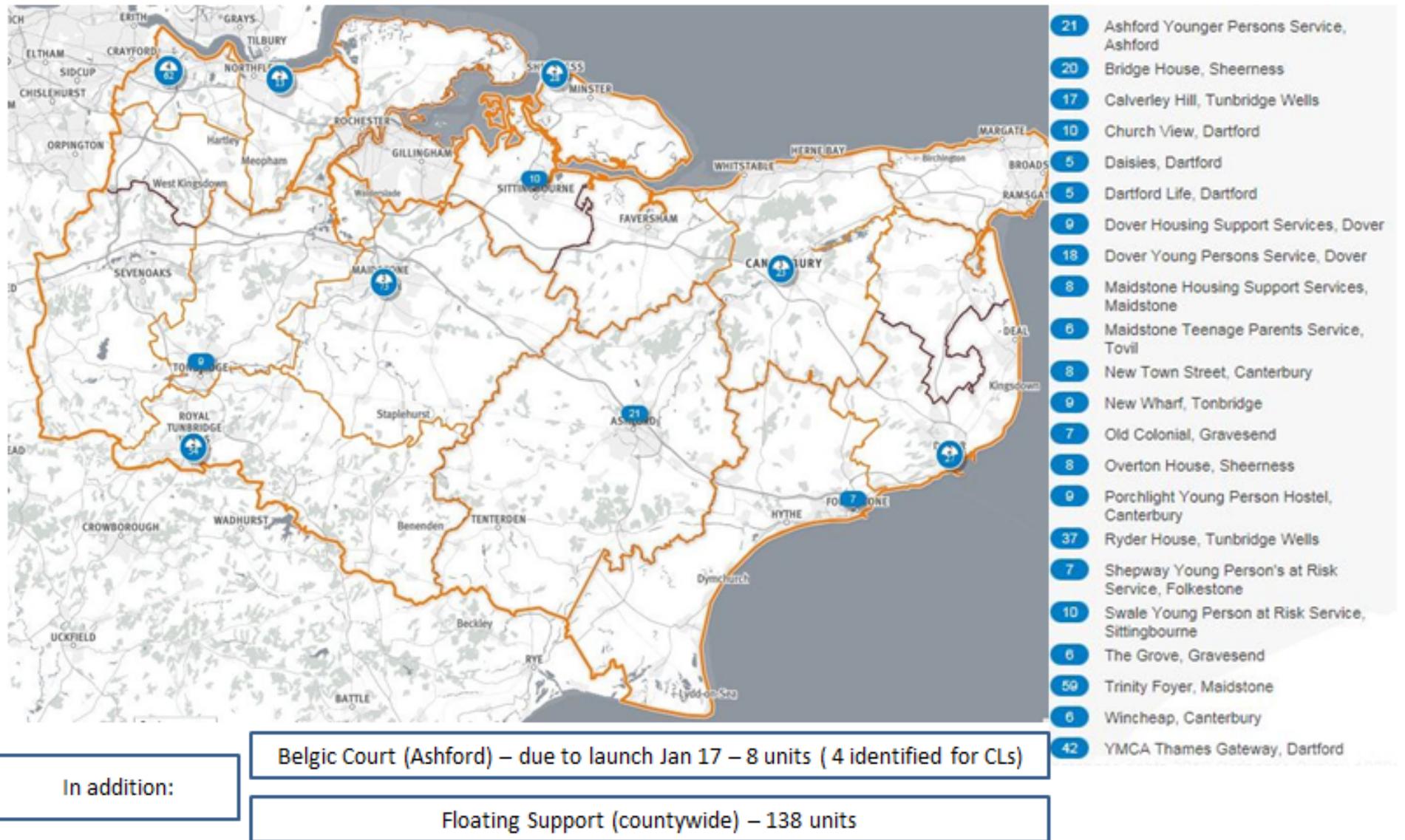
Sarah Hammond
Interim Director - Specialist Children's Services
03000 411488
sarah.hammond@kent.gov.uk

Current Young People's Housing Related Support providers

Porchlight – Canterbury, Swale, Tonbridge, Dover
Home Group – Ashford, Dover, Maidstone, Dartford
Look Ahead - Shepway
Chapter 1 – Tunbridge Wells
Centra - Swale
DePaul UK - Gravesham
West Kent YMCA – Tunbridge Wells
YMCA Thames Gateway – Dartford
Sanctuary Supported Living – Ashford, Maidstone (plus Countywide Floating Support)
Cantercare - Canterbury
LIFE Housing – Dartford
Family Mosaic - Gravesham
Golding Homes - Maidstone

Appendix B

HRS Current service – location and capacity



The 'New' 16-25 Accommodation Pathway

3

Current service users have highly variable paths to an independent life, with some being well prepared to move into their own accommodation, and others not being supported appropriately due to lack of accommodation options

