

**CORPORATE PARENTING BOARD**

**2 July 2018**

**HOUSING OFFER**

**Report of the Senior Housing Manager, People Services**

**1. Strategic Context**

The Council has recently approved a Housing Strategy for Sunderland 2017 – 2022 <https://www.sunderland.gov.uk/article/12805/Housing-Strategy-for-Sunderland-2017-2022>. One of the main priorities of the Strategy is supporting vulnerable people to access and maintain housing. Within this priority, there is a key action to “develop a joint protocol between Together for Children and Housing Services to ensure that homeless young people and those leaving care are supported to find suitable accommodation”.

The Council is now embarking on developing its Homelessness Strategy, which will feed into the Housing Strategy, with the prevention of homelessness and provision of accommodation for young people and care leavers being a key part of this.

**2. Introduction**

The duties to provide accommodation to young people fall under the Children Act 1989 (section 20) and the Housing Act 1996 (Part 7). Whilst the Children Act 1989 duty takes precedence, it is essential that Together for Children and Housing Services work closely together to plan and provide services that are centred on young people and care leavers. Joint working between the two services is the most effective way of meeting the needs of our young people.

The introduction of the Homelessness Reduction Act 2018 (HRA) introduces a new duty to prevent homelessness and this will be incorporated into the new joint protocol referred to above. The Council’s Housing Allocation Scheme which deals with the allocation of social housing to those in priority need (including care leavers) is also being updated to reflect the HRA.

**3. Current Picture**

There is a range of accommodation available to young people and care leavers in the City and this has been the subject of a previous report to the Corporate Parenting Board in January 2018. This accommodation and support is provided by Together for Children.

Young people leaving care who are within 56 days for their eighteenth birthday, will be referred to Housing Services by Together for Children, in line with the new Homelessness Reduction Act 2018. A Personalised Housing Plan (PHP) will be

drawn up with the young person which will outline their housing needs and any support they require. Housing Services will work with landlords and partners to meet the needs of young people agreed in their PHP.

The Government's Homeless Advice Service Team (HAST) is visiting the Council in July 2018 to meet with officers from Housing and Together for Children and young people. The purpose of the visit is to give advice and make recommendations in the context of the Homelessness Reduction Act, current practice and any OFSTED recommendations.

#### **4. Next Steps**

1. Robust data is gathered on the future housing and support needs of young people and care leavers by March 2019.
2. Recommendations made by HAST are considered and implemented. The timescale will be guided by the recommendations of the HAST report.
3. Recommendations made by OFSTED in relation to the housing needs of homeless young people and care leavers are considered and implemented. The timescale will be determined/guided by the OFSTED report.
4. Together for Children and Housing Services draw up a written joint protocol which sets clear and practical arrangements to prevent youth homelessness and to ensure 16 or 17 year olds have accommodation which meets their needs. This will be based on the recommendations above and in the light of Government guidance with a target date for completion being March 2019.
5. A Homelessness Strategy is developed which addresses the needs of homeless young people and care leavers by September 2019.
6. The Council's Housing Allocation Scheme is revised in the light of the HRA and the needs of care leavers are reflected in the revised Scheme which has a target date for publication of January 2019.

#### **5. Recommendations**

The Corporate Parenting Board is recommended to:

- i) Accept this report as an update on the Housing Offer for young people and the new duty of prevention through the HRA.
- ii) Agree to receive a further report by March 2019 on the joint written protocol and the Homelessness Strategy in relation to young people.