

NORTH YORKSHIRE CHILDREN'S TRUST

Agenda Item Cover Sheet

TITLE OF PAPER: **Homelessness Prevention for Young People**

DATE OF MEETING: **22 March 2010**

ORGANISATION/SUB GROUP: **Children and Young People's Service**

RELATED CYPP IMPROVEMENT PRIORITY:

5.7 Prevention of homelessness and provision of suitable accommodation for young people

RELATED PERFORMANCE INDICATOR(S): **NI141, NI 142, PSA 16**

MAIN RECOMMENDATIONS OF PAPER:

1. That the review of housing related support needs and service provision for young people be accelerated for completion by end of July 2010
2. That governance arrangements be developed that provide accountability for resources and outcomes to the Children's Trust (as the relevant thematic group of the NYSP)

IMPACT ON RESOURCES:

Recommendation	Resource Type	Cost	Benefit
1.	Officer time	15 days development time	More cost-effective provision of services that are directly related to accommodation needs assessment.
2	Officer time	2 - 5 days development time	Improved accommodation and homelessness prevention outcomes with accountability to CT partners and Chief Housing Officers Group

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NORTH YORKSHIRE CHILDREN'S TRUST BOARD

22 March 2010

Review of accommodation related commissioning and governance arrangements**1.0 Purpose of Paper**

- 1.1 To request that the Board considers what measures need to be taken to secure effective and sufficient accommodation related services for young people.

2.0 Recommendations

- 2.1 That the Board supports a review of housing related support needs and service provision for young people be completed by July 2010.
- 2.2 That the Board considers the governance arrangements required for securing good accommodation outcomes for young people, with consideration being given for the need to secure accountability to the North Yorkshire Children's Trust (as the relevant thematic group of the NYSP).

3.0 Background

- 3.1 There have recently been three significant events, each of which has a potential for negative impact on outcomes for vulnerable young people. Taken together they cause a very significant risk to the provision of suitable accommodation and to homelessness prevention.
- 3.2 The recession has caused additional relationship strains within families, causing more young people to be at risk of homelessness and requiring prevention and support services. Alongside this, service provision is threatened as a consequence of reduced resources being available to both Government and local authorities. This situation is likely to get worse over the next few years.
- 3.3 The recent Law Lord Judgements (including the "G versus Southwark") have increased the likely-hood of young people being taken into care when presenting as homeless. Whilst both children's services and housing authorities have shared statutory duties in regard to preventing homelessness, it is children's services that will be principally held to account for any failures to secure good outcomes for 16 and 17 year olds. If there are significant losses of prevention service, or these fail to deliver equitable and consistent delivery county-wide, then that will have severe consequences for many vulnerable young people. In North Yorkshire we have made considerable progress in our partnership arrangements, in particular our joint protocols and multi-agency training – which has been acknowledged as best

practice regionally. It remains the case however that service provision and effectiveness is not yet consistent or equitable county-wide.

- 3.4 The Supporting People grant is the largest single source of funding within the Area Based Grant (ABG). To date this has been protected but this is not guaranteed. The grant requirements that governed the use of these funds have now been lifted, providing local authorities and their partners with the freedom to set their own local priorities, together with commissioning and procurement arrangements. There is an expectation by government and confirmed by Parliamentary Committee, that local partners should take the opportunity to consider what are now the best local arrangements for securing the most effective accommodation related services.

4.0 **The need for enhanced commissioning and governance arrangements**

- 4.1 The SP Commissioning Group is seen by District Councils and service providers, as being an effective partnership where each has a voice and can directly influence decisions. Any new arrangements must build upon this but deliver a model that requires less maintenance (all agencies will be faced with the need to do more but with less resource). These arrangements must also have regard to the expectation of government that the flexibilities provided by ABG will be realised, in particular by combining funding streams and priorities beyond those that have defined SP. It will be important as we do this to ensure that accountabilities are clear and that those for young people lie with the Children's Trust.

- 4.2 It is important as we consider change, that strategic regional linkages are maintained, as it is through these that overall housing priorities are set. In particular it will be important to maintain those with the Regional Housing Board, where District Officers and Members have an important voice.

- 4.3 There are several national indicators related to the accommodation needs of vulnerable people, including NI141, NI142 and those within PSA16. The NYSP partners will be held to account through the CAA inspection process for these outcomes and any performance deficits – either through reduction of funding or failing to realise the benefits of the greater freedoms by better use of existing resources.

- 4.4 Currently accommodation services for young people are commissioned by:
- the 7 District Housing Authorities, funded largely through their Prevent Grant;
 - through Supporting People (ABG); and
 - the Children and Young People's Service (NYCC) - in respect of 16 & 17 year olds and care leavers (in some cases up to 25 years of age)
 - through 3rd sector support to the most vulnerable of homeless people

- 4.5 Many vulnerable people are able to access Housing and Unemployment Benefits. Young people who enter care however, are not able to access these benefits and these costs fall to the Children's Services Authority (which is not in receipt of additional funding when this happens). In addition the cost

of operating the bureaucracy of care is considerable and often has limited benefit to young people. These resources would be more effective if directed to providing age related support to prevent their homelessness.

- 4.6 The Prevent grant is not guaranteed beyond 2010-11 and we have been informed by CLG that if it continues then this is likely to be through the ABG. The accommodation needs element of the ABG is being reduced at around 5% a year. NYCC, along with all local authorities, is also compelled to identify cost savings of a significant order.
- 4.7 To ensure the long-term survival of accommodation related services linked to the LAA it is essential to establish clear linkage between funding and targets - with accountability provided within the relevant thematic group. For young people the priorities and targets for accommodation support are located within the Children and Young People's Plan (Priority 5.7). These are shared with the Homelessness Prevention Strategy.
- 4.8 The Equality Impact Assessment (EIA) of the review of SP generic services, found that they did not provide the best outcomes for young people. The SP Commissioning Group has approved a top slice of 12% from the generic services to commission specific services for young people. This will take effect from July 2010. At that point interim arrangements will be needed to ensure that there is sufficient service cover for young people until additional capacity is secured within specialist young people's provision – this is likely to be by April 2011.
- 4.9 A review of SP young people services is about to start. This is a large task that will present a major challenge to the SP central team to complete within the time frames required. The CLG Parliamentary Committee has just reported on the value of the SP programme and the impact of the removal of the ring fence. The committee found that the SP procurement arrangements were overly bureaucratic, likewise the reporting arrangements. They welcomed the flexibility created by the end of the ring fence, including removal of these arrangements as a requirement of the grant conditions. Other key gains they identified included the potential for support to wider social inclusion priorities within local areas and to create opportunities for closer collaborative work.
- 4.10 The current governance arrangements and composition of the SP central team do not adequately reflect the current context and requirements. In particular they were developed at a time when there was a single social services department and there was less clarity about where prime responsibilities sat.
- 4.11 There is now an opportunity for partners to review young people's accommodation needs and provision and to commission services using the new flexibilities available. This will require:
- A clear apportionment of the ABG for young people's accommodation related services, linked to priorities within the Children and Young

People's Plan and Homelessness Strategy; and monitored by the Children's Trust.

- Commissioning arrangements that reflect the increased accountability of children's services.

5.0 Proposals for new governance and commissioning arrangements

5.2 Model 1.

- Specific resources are allocated for young people's accommodation needs from the ABG. These would be combined with other funds and resources that partners are able to contribute.
- The Children's Trust would be accountable for these funds (with NYCC acting as the accountable body).
- The Homelessness Group would continue to determine accommodation related priorities for young people (set out within the Homelessness Strategy and mirrored in the CYPP – priority 5.7). Those for young people would be subject to CT approval and review. The wider accountability of the Homelessness Group to the Chief Housing Officer's Group would continue.
- The SP partnership would commission services on behalf of the Children's Trust. Consideration could be given to streamlining the current structure, with perhaps a single group combining the functions of the Core and Commissioning groups.
- Procurement of services for young people and adults would be via two separate groups consisting of specialists in that age range's needs. Consideration could be given to simplifying the performance management arrangements, for example by being delivered through a much simplified outcomes framework (as developed by Camden).

5.3 Model 2. As above (bullets 1 –3) but:

- with a new joint commissioning group developed to cover all vulnerable young people's needs (and wider than housing), where a range of partners have common or related duties
- this group would commission and procure accommodation related services and be directly accountable to the CT

Report prepared by:

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10th March 2010