



# **Bristol City Council**

## **Young People's Housing and Independence Pathway Plan**

January 2017

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# Introduction and context

## Executive summary

This plan is about creating a new approach to help young people to remain living in their family networks, or access and sustain suitable housing where this isn't possible.

The plan includes:

- Proposals to make us better at helping young people and their families to prevent housing crisis and help them get the housing and support they need in a more planned way.
- Commissioning proposals setting out how we will secure the accommodation and support needed for Bristol care leavers as well as young people at risk of homelessness.

Our proposed pathway plan is based on the 2015 positive pathway framework developed by St Basil's.<sup>1</sup> The detailed proposal for Bristol is described in section B of this document. Our aim is to work more effectively across the council, and with partners, to provide an integrated approach focused on:

- Making sure young people, their families and those who work with them have information and guidance to understand housing options and plan when and how young people will leave the family home or leave care.
- Pro-actively preventing housing crisis and supporting young people to live with their family if it's safe to do so, including returning home from care.
- Ensuring our processes, including assessment and allocation of housing, are clear to young people and help them to access the most appropriate service to meet their needs.
- Having a suitable range of value for money accommodation and support options to meet the varying needs of Bristol young people.
- Helping young people to access and sustain settled accommodation, which will usually need to be shared.

Currently, we spend around £2.8M per year on young people's housing pathway services. This spend is from the council's housing and children's services budgets. The council faces considerable budget pressures and we have been asked to make a 10% reduction in spend on these services over the next three years.

We consulted on a draft version of this plan for 12 weeks between 25<sup>th</sup> July and 17<sup>th</sup> October 2016. Consultation feedback and the council's response is set out in Appendix 6.

## Who is the plan for

This pathway plan is focused on meeting the needs of:

- Young people aged 16-21 years and
- Care leavers up to their 25<sup>th</sup> birthday

Pathway services will also be available to young people aged up to 25 years if they would benefit from specialist young people's services because they have a learning disability and/or are particularly vulnerable because they are at risk of harm from others, or from self-harm.

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<sup>1</sup> [http://www.stbasils.org.uk/files/2015-08-35/10\\_FINAL\\_pathwaysA4\\_booklet\\_98812.pdf](http://www.stbasils.org.uk/files/2015-08-35/10_FINAL_pathwaysA4_booklet_98812.pdf)

# Introduction and context

## Local strategic context

**Corporate Strategy** - The council is currently consulting on a new five year corporate strategy<sup>2</sup> which contains a number of priorities relevant to this plan, including:

- Decent affordable homes, providing the springboard to achieving a high quality of life.
- Getting involved early to reduce risks later.
- Leading and championing learning and skills – keeping Bristol working and learning.
- Reducing health inequalities by focussing on prevention and early intervention and the causes of ill health.
- Promoting good mental health in the wider community, emphasising early intervention, especially for children and young people and those at greatest risk.

**More than a roof – Bristol Housing Strategy 2016-2020** - Emphasises how good quality, suitable housing is essential in helping people to thrive and achieve a high quality of life.<sup>3</sup>

**Bristol Preventing Homelessness Strategy 2013-2018** - Aims for Bristol to provide integrated accessible services that deliver focused preventative support in order to stop the escalation of homelessness issues, reduce repeat homelessness and significantly reduce the call on other statutory duties.<sup>4</sup>

**Bristol's Strategy for Children, Young People and Families 2016 – 2020** – This strategy sets out the priorities agreed by Bristol's Children and Families Partnership. These include working with the Bristol Homes Board and supporting the Preventing Homeless Strategy to ensure access to safe, stable, suitable or adapted and affordable housing for vulnerable families and young people including children in care and care leavers.

**Corporate Parenting Strategy and Pledge to Children in Care and Care Leavers** – Our commitments to children in care and care leavers are set out in these documents.<sup>5</sup> Our objectives include making sure all children in young people are in safe and secure accommodation and that we support children to live safely with their families. The council's Sufficiency Plan forms part of the corporate parenting strategy and sets out how we will make sure we have the right placements for children in care and homes for care leavers.

**Bristol Youth Links** – The current youth services the council commissions for young people aged 8-19 years are to be re-commissioned. The current budget (£4.9M) will be reduced by between £0.9 and £1.7M which means that the number of youth and play sessions will reduce across the city. The council is consulting with stakeholders, including young people, to make sure there are innovative and sustained services in communities.

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<sup>2</sup> <https://bristol.citizenspace.com/bristol-city-council/corporate-strategy-2017-2022/>

<sup>3</sup> <https://www.bristol.gov.uk/housing/housing-strategy-and-supporting-strategies>

<sup>4</sup> <https://www.bristol.gov.uk/housing/housing-strategy-and-supporting-strategies>

<sup>5</sup> <https://www.bristol.gov.uk/policies-plans-strategies/plans-and-policy-for-children-in-or-leaving-care>

## Other drivers for change

**Improving the pathway** - At present the pathway out of care for many young people is through crisis homelessness services. A core part of how we meet our broader duties as a corporate parent must be to enable a more planned route, and housing options, for care leavers that do not carry with them a badge of homelessness. Best practice in other areas of the country demonstrates the need for an integrated approach to address housing, support and education needs of older young people (and their families/carers). Bristol currently has a fragmented service offer for this group.

**Housing pressures** - There is a shortage of housing in Bristol, particularly affordable housing for low-income households. This makes it hard for young people to find housing and impacts on the ability to recruit local foster carers/ supported lodging hosts with spare rooms for children preparing to leave care. Access to the private-renting sector is becoming increasingly difficult particularly for young people. Currently most single private renters under 35 would only be entitled to a lower rate of housing benefit, equivalent to the cost of renting a room in a shared house (maximum of £67.37 per week).

**Budget pressures** - In Bristol there is a projected £92m budget gap between April 2017 – March 2022, created by a mixture of government cuts and increasing demands for our services. The increasing cost pressure in social care (which includes the cost of supporting children in care) is a significant contributing factor. It is crucial that we effectively plan and understand the process for young people to successfully move towards independent living in a cost effective way.

**Changing demand** – While there is increasing demand for some groups of young people (young parents, 16-17 year olds coming into care and unaccompanied asylum seekers), overall the numbers of young people presenting to the council at risk of homelessness appear to have decreased in recent years. This change in demand means we are able to reduce the total number of units of supported accommodation we commission.

**Education/employment issues** - Three quarters of the young people in the homelessness pathway accommodation are NEET (not in education, employment or training). This is particularly concerning given the relative strength of Bristol's jobs market compared with other core cities. Bristol is committed to being an effective, caring, and ambitious corporate parent, and to equip the young people in our care with the skills and tools to live a fulfilling, successful and rewarding life. This includes working with city leaders to develop Bristol as a Learning City and a commitment to looking at ways to improve the educational and employment outcomes for both care leavers and other vulnerable young people.

**Children and Social Work Bill** - The May 2016 Queen's Speech announced the government's intention to introduce legislation to enhance support to care leavers including:

- New standards about how councils must perform their corporate parenting role for children in care as they move into adulthood.
- Requiring councils to tell children leaving care what services they are entitled to.
- Giving care leavers the right to a personal adviser up to the age of 25.

## Pathway objectives

### The key outcomes we seek to achieve are that young people

- Are safe
- Maintain good physical, sexual and emotional health
- Are socially engaged and enjoy positive relationships with peers, family and the wider community
- Develop the skills needed to live and work independently
- Are able to successfully manage their finances
- Access and sustain settled housing

### Additional key outcomes for young parents and their children

- Young parents have good parenting skills
- Children thrive and reach their developmental milestones
- Parents in supported accommodation do not have repeat pregnancies

### Other strategic outcomes we aim to achieve

- Young people stay or return to live in their family network where possible and are supported to make planned moves if they need to move out
- Young people live in safe, affordable, secure accommodation
- Fewer 16-17 year olds enter care
- Fewer young people present as homeless or at risk of homelessness
- No young people are housed in Bed and Breakfast accommodation
- Care leavers and other young people are engaged in education, training or employment
- Spending on young people's housing pathway services is reduced
- Reduced spend on high cost residential placements for older teenagers in care

### Cost avoidance in other service areas

There are well evidenced links between homelessness, poor mental and physical health<sup>6</sup>, offending<sup>7</sup> and lower educational attainment<sup>8</sup>, amongst other poor outcomes for people. Getting the young people's housing and independence pathway services wrong or inadequately funding them risks exacerbating those poor outcomes for individuals as well as making the city as a whole a less attractive, less healthy place to live, work, visit or invest in. In 2009, the Department of Communities and Local Government (DCLG) commissioned independent research which found that every £1 spent on Supporting People services (which included services for homeless single people and families) saves the public purse £2.11<sup>9</sup>. Money spent on housing support and preventing homelessness saves money in areas like health, education and criminal justice.

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<sup>6</sup> <http://www.homeless.org.uk/facts/our-research/homelessness-and-health-research>

<sup>7</sup> <http://www.homeless.org.uk/facts/our-research/better-together-preventing-re-offending-and-homelessness>

<sup>8</sup> [www.gov.scot/resource/doc/1125/0104564.doc](http://www.gov.scot/resource/doc/1125/0104564.doc)

<sup>9</sup> <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/research-into-the-financial-benefits-of-the-supporting-people-programme-2009>

## Methodology

In developing this plan we have done the following:

- Reviewed current services and processes to identify issues and improvements required.
- Considered the findings from research and best practice in other areas.
- Listened to young people using services, to understand their experience and needs and find out what they want from services.
- Talked to practitioners in other agencies and provider organisations to get their views about services and processes and what improvements they would like to see.
- Collaborated with colleagues across the council to make sure we maximise opportunities to improve how we work and enable effective joint internal working.

## Commissioning priorities

- Align supply and demand so that the right type of accommodation is provided at the right time to people in need.
- Quality services that meet needs and agreed outcomes.
- Value for money for the public purse and balance economy (cost), efficiency (service productivity) and effectiveness (quality).
- Services are targeted at those who most need them and that young people are housed in the lowest cost service suitable to meet their needs.
- Make the most efficient use of accommodation by:
  - Reducing void times
  - Helping people move on as quickly as is possible
  - Reducing the number of refused referrals (by both providers and service users).
- Meaningful engagement with key stakeholders including service users.
- Maximise opportunities for holistic commissioning, collaborative working and improvements to the whole system.
- Ensure that services are sufficiently flexible to deal with changing needs within longer-term contracts.
- Make sure providers give additional social value.<sup>10</sup>
- Maintain / develop a healthy provider market.

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<sup>10</sup> The council's guidance on social value is published here:

<https://www.bristol.gov.uk/documents/20182/239382/Creating+Social+Value+-+Social+Value+Toolkit+-+approved+March+2016-1.pdf/a596f490-ab73-4827-9274-5025ca5a4f1b>

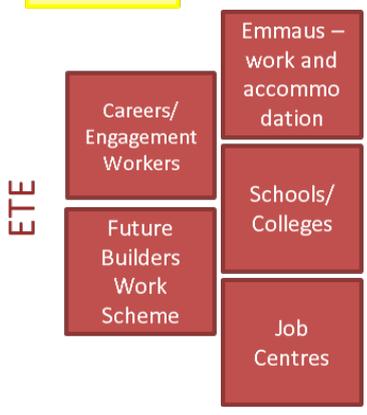
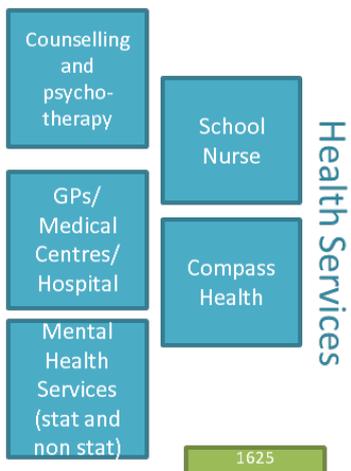
# Section A - Analysis

## The whole system

This diagram is an attempt to show the resources in Bristol for care leavers and young people at risk of homelessness. It is not comprehensive but gives an indication of the range of help available.

### Criminal Justice

### Funded by Bristol City Council



### Voluntary Sector / Charitable Organisations

### Information and guidance

- Bristol young people, including care leavers, their carers and people who work with them often have unrealistic expectations of future housing options and about living independently.
- Research suggests that information and guidance should be targeted at those most at risk. The local charity, 1625 Independent People currently does peer education in schools, but schools could also play a greater role in preparing young people for the reality of living independently and their housing options. Young people have told us they would like to learn more about housing in their PSHE lessons.
- There needs to be better web-based information about housing for Bristol young people, their families and professionals who work with them.

### Early help and planning

- Currently our approach focuses on addressing homeless crisis – there isn't a clear pathway for planned move on for those in care or young people who need to leave home. We need to get better at intervening earlier and at helping young people to plan their housing; this will include working earlier with children's homes and with the youth offending team make housing plans.
- We need an approach to working with young adults and their families, to resolve conflicts and address problems that prevent them from living together. Mediation and other approaches to supporting young people to stay in family networks (e.g. family group conferencing) are successful in other areas.
- There is currently limited ability to plan for young people coming out of care and custody. In part this is because it is not possible to hold voids, or move them up the priority list before they are at risk of homelessness.
- Our current system for young people at risk of homelessness is fragmented; it does not consistently focus on prevention or helping young people stay in their family network. This needs to include helping parents to get the support they need to address their own problems.
- Young people have stressed the importance of gaining independence skills, particularly about how to manage their money.

### Assessment and response

- The current system is fragmented. Young people in services said they didn't understand the process or pathway – or what happened to them. There are multiple handovers and assessments.
- While care leavers do have a long-term case worker, other young people often have multiple case workers and numerous short term interventions, rather than a long-term, trusted relationship with one committed worker.
- Most, but not all, supported accommodation is allocated via the council's Housing Support Register (HSR), a central electronic register of homeless households with support needs including adults and families. This system includes an on-line referral process, enables the prioritisation of referrals and management of waiting lists.
- The HSR is an effective system, but some improvements are needed. These include enabling better pathway planning (especially for care leavers and young offenders leaving custody) and to make sure we match young people to the right level of accommodation.

## Current accommodation and support services – overview of commissioned services

The diagram overleaf sets out the current range of commissioned accommodation and support for care leavers and young people at risk of homelessness. At any one time we have about:

- 65 care leavers living with their former foster carers
- 370 people living in specialist young people's supported accommodation (including c.30 young parents)
- 36 families living in specialist young parents' supported accommodation
- 80 young people plus about 60 young parents getting floating support

The specialist young people's services are for people aged 16-21 and those aged 22-24 who have additional vulnerability (e.g. a learning disability or being a care leaver). These services are part of a range of homelessness prevention services commissioned by the council which include accommodation and support for single adults, couples and families with dependent children. All of these services are required to operate as 'psychologically informed environments'.<sup>11</sup>

Young people's supported accommodation is categorised as follows:

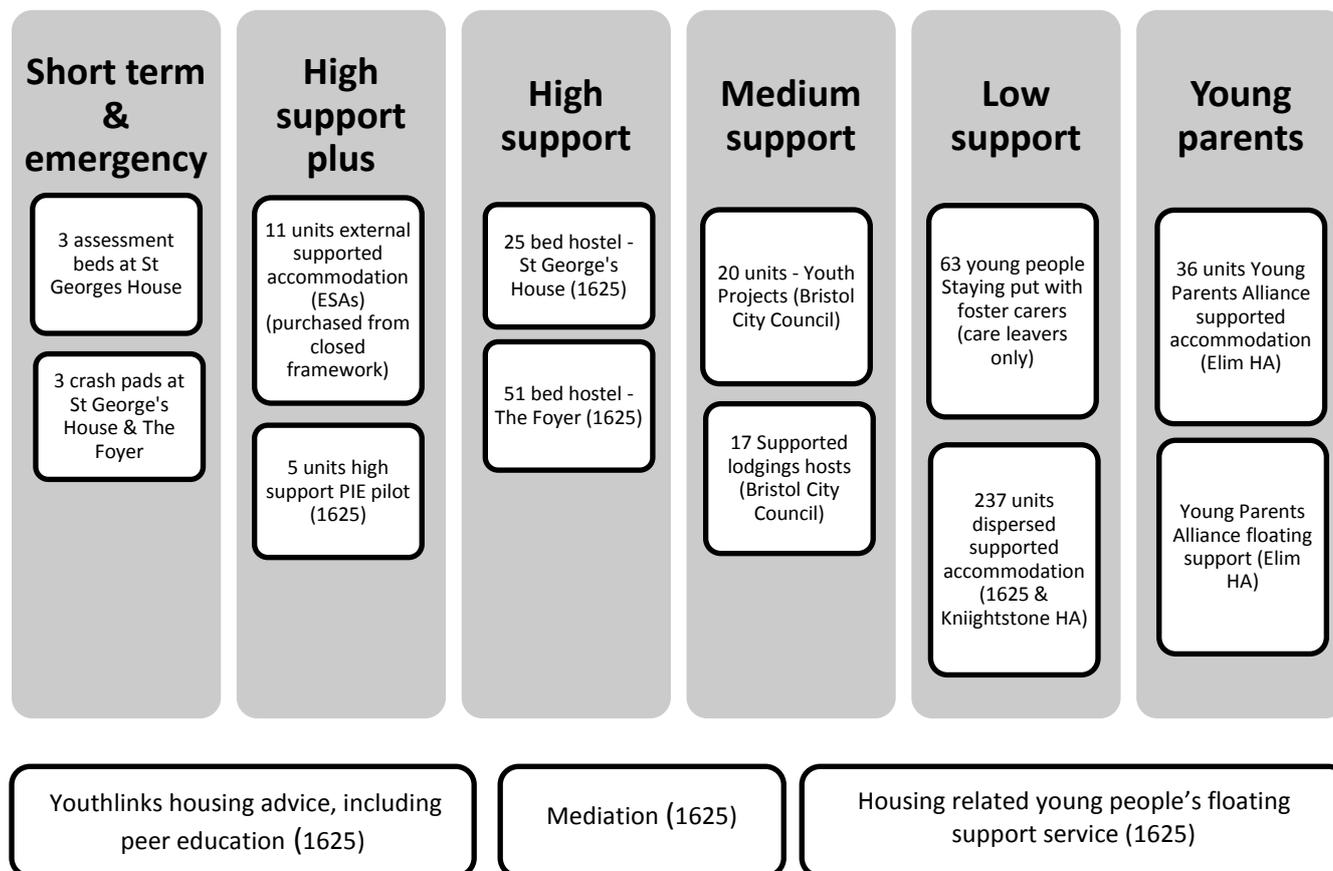
- **Short-term and emergency** – Short term accommodation for young people in housing crisis.
- **High support plus** – For young people in housing need, who due to vulnerability or the risk they present to themselves, or others, require a managed front door and/or high level of support. They are likely to have a range of needs including one or more of the following: learning difficulty, mental health issues, substance misuse, sexually harmful behaviour, self-harm, experience of sexual exploitation, domestic violence, and anger management problems. In a few cases the risk of harm to others may be such that the young person is likely to require self-contained accommodation and a bespoke support package.
- **High support** – For young people in housing need, who due to vulnerability and/or age would benefit from services that offer a managed front door and/or a general staff presence. Some may have complex and interrelated needs, which may manifest in challenging behaviour, and a threat of harm to themselves or others.
- **Medium support** – For young people in housing need who are assessed to be best placed in medium support services, either because they are moving on from higher support services as part of their pathway, or because they are likely to do better in a medium support service. This may be because they would benefit from a more nurturing environment or a longer stay.
- **Low support** – For young people in housing need who need a low level of support to develop life-skills to enable them to move on to independent housing. These may include care leavers making the transition from care to independent living and young people on a homelessness recovery pathway who are ready to step down from high support. These young people do not require a managed front door and should be able to sustain their home with a co-ordinated support package from relevant professionals, which includes around 1 - 2 hours of housing-related support per week.
- **Young parents** – For vulnerable young parents aged 16-24 years in housing need.

The majority of the young people's services are provided under contracts between the council and one local youth housing provider: 1625 Independent People. We also have contracts with Elim Housing Association for services for young parents and with Knightstone Housing Association to provide some dispersed low support accommodation. We purchase a small number of high support plus, individual bespoke packages of supported accommodation from providers on our 'ESA framework'. Other services are provided, in-house, by the council (Youth Projects and Supported Lodgings).

A snapshot of young people in the pathway over the last two years indicates an average length of stay of 400 days. Around one in ten young people only have one placement. Approximately half start their

<sup>11</sup> <http://www.rjaconsultancy.org.uk/6454%20clg%20pie%20operational%20document%20aw-1.pdf>

journey in St George's House and around 35% start at the Foyer. The main route is starting at St Georges and moving down through the pathway – and moving out from lower support in a planned way. Housing outcomes from low support accommodation are good – with almost 90% having a positive move on into settled accommodation.



## Current accommodation and support services - gaps and issues

### All services

- Planned departure rates are reasonably good across many services, but other outcomes need improvement. In particular, the majority of young people in supported accommodation are NEET and there is little evidence that providers are successfully supporting young people into education, training and employment. Engagement in ETE is better for young people who stay put with their foster carers, live in supported lodgings or live in the Youth Projects.
- Almost a third of people living in young people's services were aged 22 years or older and 5% were aged over 25. The majority of these were aged over 21 years when placed.

### Short-term and emergency accommodation

- St George's House assessment beds are not ideal as the hostel environment makes it harder to encourage a return to the family and young people are at risk of exposure to negative influences.
- There is insufficient crisis accommodation for under 18s.
- We need a family-based option for respite accommodation.

### High support plus

- There are a small number of young people with very high support needs who are hard to house (maximum ten at any one time). They are mainly 16-17 year old children in care and care leavers. Many are recovering from trauma and some are diagnosed with borderline personality disorder. Some are a risk to themselves and may exhibit self-harming behaviour and suicidal ideation. Others are offenders, often with gang affiliation, and are a risk to others.

- ESAs are very responsive, but very high cost. We usually have about 10-15 young people in an ESA at any one time and they usually stay for about six months. We often have a number of young people with gang affiliation living in ESAs. There are only three providers on the current 'closed' framework.
- The 1625 PIE pilot has found it difficult to secure accommodation, particularly outside of East Bristol. Support levels (10 hours per week) are not high enough for some young people.

#### **High support**

- We have more high support hostel places than needed for 16-21 year olds.
- The support level at the Foyer is not high enough for some young people.
- Rent and service charges are high which creates a barrier to employment.
- We rely on the Foyer to house some young people who present a risk to others; managing this can take up a disproportionate amount of staff time and means the scheme is not an ideal environment for some more vulnerable young people.

#### **Medium support**

- There is very limited medium support accommodation available, only Youth Projects and supported lodgings.
- Refusal rates at Youth Projects are very high and the service is reluctant to accept non-care leavers. The average length of stay in Youth Projects is long which makes the unit cost per planned departure very high.
- There is no young women-only supported accommodation available.
- The step down from the Foyer to low support accommodation is too great for some young people with greater needs who end up returning to high support schemes.
- Feedback from young people about supported lodgings is very positive and rates of engagement in ETE are high. Supply does not meet demand and more hosts are needed.

#### **Low support and floating support**

- We have more low support accommodation than needed. However, many referrals thought to be suitable for low support (including care leavers) are being refused on the grounds of risk.
- Current floating support services have been under-used. (However changes have recently been agreed with the provider to make support more widely available to young people in the housing pathway and to help them when they move on to settled accommodation).

#### **Young parents**

- There is a rapid rise in demand for accommodation for homeless families. The profile of families needing accommodation is changing, with more women aged 20 or more and an increase in couples with more than one child. There is a mix of needs, with some parents with high support needs and others that only need housing.
- Length of stay in young parents supported accommodation is increasing as the families struggle to secure settled accommodation to move on to.
- We also need to enable timely move on from costly residential parent and child assessment placements and prioritise these young parents when allocating young parents supported accommodation.
- Supported accommodation costs less than emergency temporary accommodation for homeless families.

#### **Unaccompanied asylum seekers**

- We expect to have increasing numbers of unaccompanied asylum seeking children coming to Bristol from Calais and from other countries and other areas of the UK. These will include 16-17 year olds who will be housed in this pathway accommodation. We do not yet know how many there will be.

- Young asylum seekers have told us they benefit from living with other young people from their country but they also like to live with British people, so they can learn English and find out about this country.

### **Disabled young people**

- There is a need for long-term supported accommodation for a small number of children in care with disabilities and/or mental health needs to move into age 16-17 where they can remain living post-18 with continuing support funded by adult social care services.

### **Move on to settle accommodation - gaps and issues**

- The lack of affordable housing in Bristol delays move on from supported accommodation.
- The shortage of social housing will mean young people will need to rely increasingly on private rented accommodation. High rents and changes to housing benefit will make it necessary for growing numbers of young people to share this accommodation.
- The council's social housing allocation scheme awards priority band 2 to applicants who have occupied two levels of homelessness supported accommodation.<sup>12</sup> This could be a disincentive to go straight into low support accommodation.

### **Support needs of young people**

Analysis of the support needs of young single people in our homelessness prevention services<sup>13</sup> shows:

- Significant numbers have support needs related to emotional health and well-being.
- About a third are care leavers, the majority of whom have a generic need for support consistent with their age/experience, however approximately 13% are identified as having complex needs.
- High numbers are in receipt of Employment and Support Allowance.
- Offending is a significant issue for some, particularly young men.
- Two-thirds of those 'at risk of domestic violence and abuse' are female.
- Substance misuse is a problem for some, particularly the habitual use of cannabis.
- The majority of service users (around 80%) are not in education, employment or training (NEET).
- They have a range of other needs including but not limited to learning difficulties, physical and sensory impairment; English as a second language; complex trauma and bereavement.

<sup>12</sup> Home Choice Bristol Housing Allocation Scheme sets out how social housing in Bristol is allocated:  
<https://www.homechoicebristol.co.uk/Data/Pub/StreamTemp/912d2a31-14c9-4c7f-9d00-677dceff342.pdf>

<sup>13</sup>Based on snapshot of young people in services on 09/02/2016 & data captured from outcome star responses from 1625 IP service users

## Stakeholder feedback – analyse phase

In preparing this plan, we have talked to practitioners and young people currently living in supported accommodation. Practitioners' comments are captured in Appendix 2. The council also got the views of care leavers in the New Belongings Survey carried out in autumn 2015.

## New Belongings Survey of care leavers – key findings relating to housing

**Family & social relationships** - Many care leavers were positive about making new friends, being able to have their friends round and being with their biological family. Others felt isolated and missed their friends and foster families. Some were concerned about forming new friendships with unsuitable people in supported accommodation.

**Independence** – Independence and living alone is highly prized by many care leavers but the downside is social isolation and exposure to risks. Care leavers do not always feel ready to live alone and some said they needed more support to do so.

**Preparation & support**- Care leavers feel they need better preparation for moving on. Careful planning, a slower transition and training flats would help them make a more successful move. Many need and value continuing support.

**Cost, safety & standard of accommodation** – Care leavers feel their housing doesn't always provide a safe environment, and isn't always of a suitable standard or type appropriate to them. Care leavers need financial support when starting out and continuing guidance to prevent getting into arrears.

## Feedback from young people in supported accommodation

### Strengths of supported accommodation

- Some younger residents feel well supported.
- Some young people find living with their peers to be a positive influence and support.
- Some accommodation is in good locations and feels safe.
- Don't feel judged.

### Weaknesses of supported accommodation

- Standard of accommodation often poor.
- Culture of residents using extreme behaviour to get support.
- Young people often feel neglected.
- Can feel surrounded by negative influences.
- High staff turnover.

### Processes

- Unsure where to go or what to do next.
- Not informed of how the pathway / system works.
- Do not understand why they were referred to a particular service.
- Rarely given options.
- It's good to have somewhere to stay when you need it.

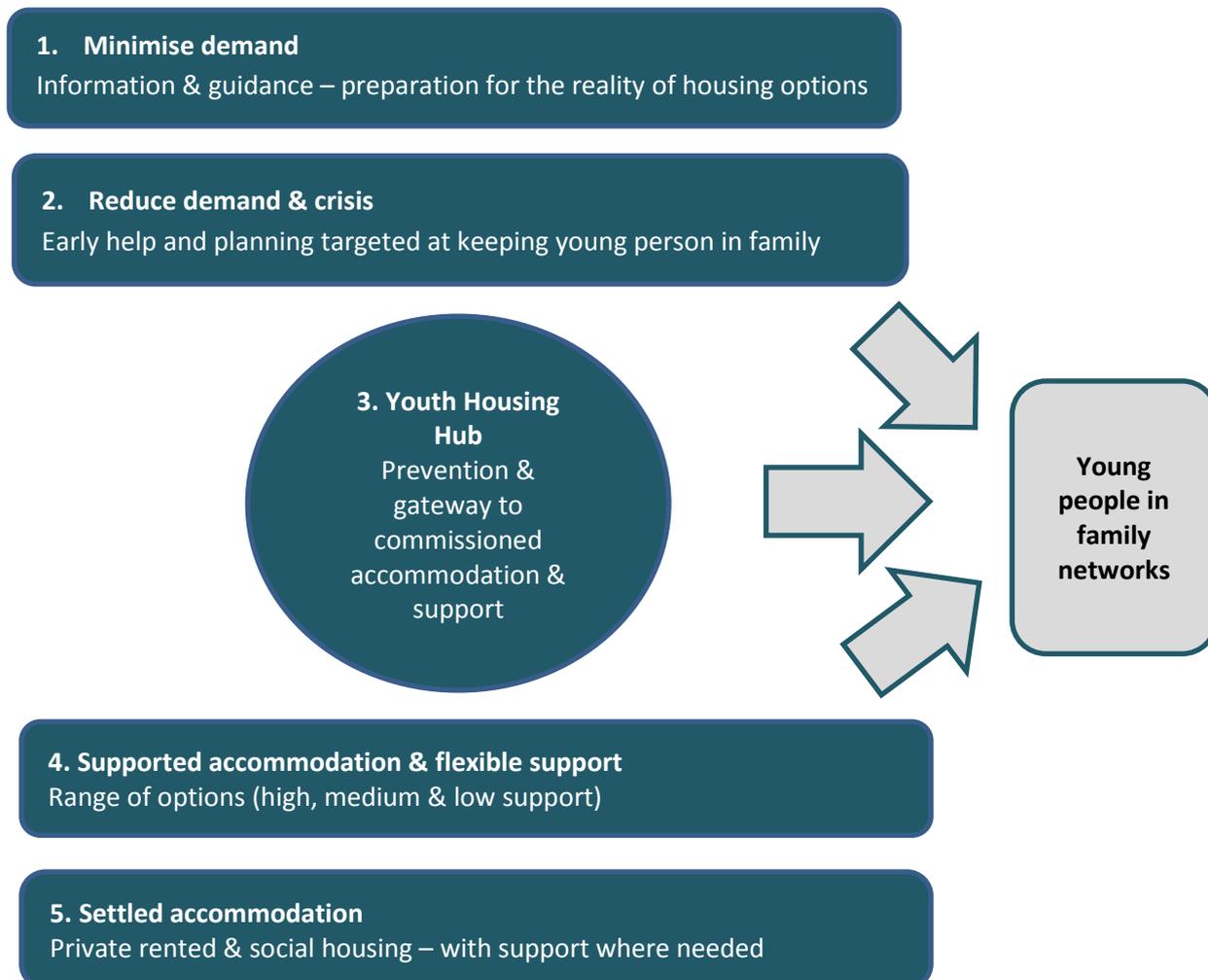
### Suggested improvements

- Younger residents (16-18 years) would prefer to live with this age group only.
- Give clear explanations about living in the accommodation, including service rules, tenancy agreement, rights and outcomes.
- Crashpads shouldn't be used for more than one or two nights.
- Ensure young people are well informed about move on options and plan for the future, including for ETE.

# Section B – A New Bristol Positive Pathway

## Positive pathway approach - overview

Our proposed pathway will operate over five areas as set out below.



The pathway will be for care leavers aged 16-25 and other young people aged 16-21 years (plus others aged up to 25 years if they would benefit from specialist young people's services because they have a learning disability and/or are particularly vulnerable because they are at risk of harm from others, or from self-harm).

There will be an increased focus on providing information early and helping young people to stay living with their family where safe to do so and resolve their housing problems before they are in housing crisis. For children in care and care leavers this will mean helping them plan their housing pathway, stay with their foster carers ('staying put') post-18 where possible, and access suitable accommodation and support when they are ready to leave care or staying put arrangements.

Research is very clear that the process of helping a young person to engage and become more resilient is enabled where there are strong, committed relationships between the young person and those working with them. Ideally, this means the young person will have one key worker with whom they can develop a relationship of trust and care.<sup>14</sup> For this reason, we seek to enable continuity of relationships

<sup>14</sup> For example, *That Difficult Age: Developing a more effective response to risks in adolescence*, Dr Elly Hanson and Dez Holmes, Research in Practice

and, where possible, minimise the number of different people working with a young person and their family.

Where it is not possible for a young person to stay with their family, we will consider the best options for each individual. This will be based on a holistic assessment undertaken in the Youth Housing Hub. For those aged over 18 with no, or low support needs, this may be helping them to access settled accommodation, possibly with outreach support to make sure they can sustain their tenancy or to help them to find flatmates and to share successfully. For 16-17 year olds and others with additional needs, this will usually mean helping them to access the right level of supported accommodation. Where young people leaving care need to move into supported accommodation, we will aim for this to be a planned step in their housing pathway and they will not need to be badged as 'homeless' to access young people's pathway supported accommodation.

The following sections describe each stage of the proposed pathway in more detail. Section C sets out what services we plan to commission and how we propose to buy these services.

## **Stage 1 Minimise demand - preparation for the reality of housing options**

### ***What we are trying to achieve at stage 1***

- *Young people and families are empowered to make informed choices and to plan transitions to independent living without support from specialist services.*
- *They have realistic expectations and understand the links between housing choice and their financial and employment situation.*
- *They know where to get help if they need it.*
- *Young people in care have sufficient relevant and accurate information about what will happen when they leave care, where they might live and the pros and cons of various options.*
- *Young people in care are well prepared for independence before they leave care.*

### **Proposals**

- We will develop and communicate clear messages about the reality of housing options, emphasising the importance of sharing and accessing the private rented sector. This will include having clear and accessible web-based information, using social media and encouraging schools and colleges to reinforce these messages.
- We will establish a Youth Housing Hub (see stage 3) which will coordinate the provision of information, advice and guidance. This will include supporting people who work with and advise young people and families to better understand housing options (e.g. First Response, Early Help teams, and children in care social workers).
- We will provide independence training to children in care and care leavers in staying put arrangements including opportunities to practise living independently and sharing their accommodation (e.g. in student accommodation during holidays).
- We will make sure that all young people in care have a housing pathway plan included in their care leaver pathway plan and that this is prepared at least 6 months before they are planning to leave their care placement.
- We will commission peer education in schools, targeted at those most at risk of homelessness to be provided under the Youth Housing Hub partner contract.

## Stage 2 - Reduce demand and crisis – early help and planning targeted at keeping young person in family

### **What we are trying to achieve at stage 2**

- *Young people stay safe.*
- *Young people including young parents stay in, or return to, the family network where possible.*
- *Young people are supported to make planned moves if they cannot stay in the family network.*
- *Young people in care stay living with their foster carers when they turn 18, where possible.*
- *Early intervention is targeted to reach households where young people are most likely to be at risk of homelessness.*
- *Young people in care are empowered to make well-informed plans about where they live and these choices are reflected in their pathway plan and regularly reviewed.*

### **Proposals**

- We will establish a Youth Housing Hub (see stage 3) which will coordinate prevention and early intervention for young people at risk of homelessness. This will include triage to make sure that the services are focused on those who most need help.
- Each point of contact with a young person and each referral will adopt a strength-based, whole-family approach focused on keeping the young person, including young adults, in their family where safe to do so. This will include helping older teenagers in care to return to live with their families. This will require culture change across the council and other organisations working young people to develop a commitment to helping adolescents stay living within their family networks.
- We will work with partners to develop effective approaches to working with young people in the context of their family, to resolve conflicts and address the problems making it hard for them to live together. We will use, and learn from, techniques such as Signs of Safety and Family Group Conferencing as well as mediation. The focus will be to support families to stay together and/or leave home in a planned way and avoid young people going into housing crisis.
- From November 2016 we have funded a six-month pilot arrangement with Bristol Mediation to work with young people and their families to resolve conflicts with the aim of enabling young people to remain living with their families. This service is targeted at 16-17 year olds. The learning from this pilot will inform how the Youth Housing Hub service works with families.
- We will commission short-term supported lodgings for stays of up to 45 days for young people to have a family-based respite option while family reunification is explored with the family.
- For young people in care who are not able to stay with their foster family, including young people in children's homes, we will make sure there is early joint planning of their housing options – with the young people, their social worker and a housing adviser. We will also review how we can hold voids, where necessary for young people leaving custody or children's homes (e.g. by using 'empty' rooms for emergency or short-term accommodation).

## Stage 3 Youth Housing Hub - Prevention and gateway to commissioned accommodation & support

### **What we are trying to achieve at stage 3**

- *Homelessness and housing crisis is prevented wherever possible, e.g. by supporting young people to remain living in family networks or preventing the loss of a tenancy or breakdown of a placement.*
- *Young people who need accommodation and/or support get it, including quick access to emergency accommodation and immediate and on-going support where needed.*
- *Young people who need supported accommodation, move into the right level of accommodation to meet their needs and move through the accommodation pathway and/or on to settled accommodation in a timely way.*
- *We have efficient and joined up processes for assessment and allocation of accommodation/support that are clear to young people.*

### **Proposals**

- The hub will be the main place young people aged 16-21 go if they are at risk of homelessness.<sup>15</sup> It will be a central co-located team lead by an external partner organisation (“the hub partner”). The core team will include council housing advisers and social workers working alongside hub partner staff. The hub will coordinate or deliver the following services:
  - Advice on housing options – For young people, their families and workers as well as training for advisers and workers.
  - Prevention – Information and guidance, work with families, outreach support for young people at risk of homelessness.
  - Assessment – Triage and holistic assessments of all young people presenting at risk of homelessness, including home visits. This will include a joined up approach to Part VII<sup>16</sup> and s.20<sup>17</sup> assessments of 16-17 year olds.<sup>18</sup>
  - Allocation of housing and support – Regular case review meetings, referrals to supported accommodation, including prioritisation. Joint planning for care leavers and offenders. Managing voids and move on. Preventing evictions from supported accommodation.
  - Achieving positive outcomes – Help to access ETE, help to identify private rented accommodation and supporting young people to successfully share accommodation.
- The hub will need to have strong links with a range of other services. The location of the hub has not yet been decided; ideally it will somewhere able to accommodate workers from other services, either full-time or for sessions. These might include: benefits advice, support to access ETE, mental health workers (or support and supervision for other hub staff), substance misuse support, young parents support workers, sexual health services, youth offending team.
- Feedback from some young people included a request that we enable case workers to communicate with them by instant messaging and we will look into how this can be achieved.

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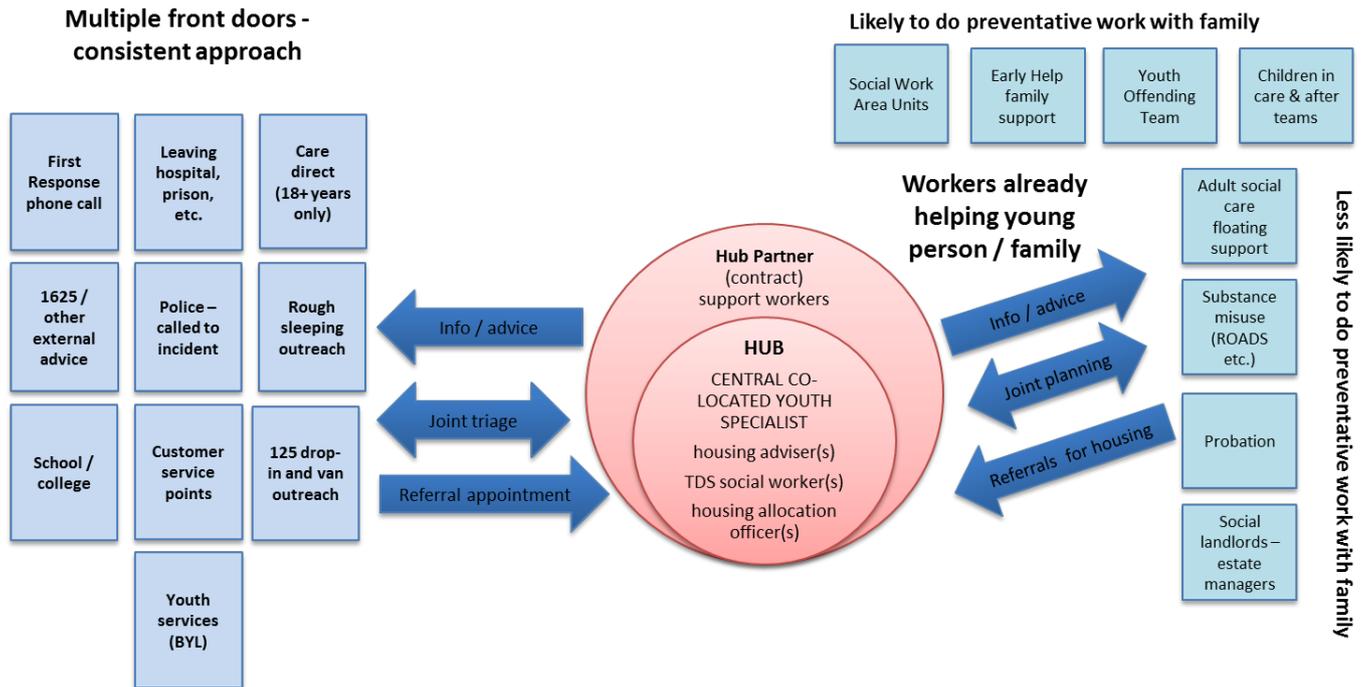
<sup>15</sup> This age range will be reviewed after 12 months. It may be possible to increase to serve 22+ year olds depending on demand for the service.

<sup>16</sup> An assessment under Part VII Housing Act 1996 of whether the council owes a duty to provide accommodation to the young person because they are homeless.

<sup>17</sup> An assessment of whether the young person is a child in need and, if so, whether the council has a duty to offer them accommodation as a child in care under s.20 Children Act 1989.

- We are seeking to appoint a hub partner to set up and run the hub. We will co-design the detail of how the hub will operate with the hub partner, involving other partner organisations and young people. The plan is for the hub to be operational from October 2017. The diagram below shows how the hub might fit with referrers and other teams working with young people and their families.
- We anticipate that there will be 600-1,000 young people each year presenting at or referred to the hub each year and, of these, about 300 will need to be referred into supported accommodation per year.

### Youth Housing Hub diagram – and links to referrers and other agencies



## Stage 4 Supported accommodation and flexible support – range of options

### **What we are trying to achieve at stage 4**

- *There is a range of accommodation and support options suitable to meet the range of needs of care leavers, younger (16-18 years old) and more vulnerable young people and young parents with children.*
- *Young people gain the stability and skills they need, engage with learning and work and move on to settled accommodation and greater independence.*

### **Proposals – for accommodation and support**

We aim to make sure there is a suitable range of supported accommodation options to meet young people's varying needs. Each young person's pathway into and through the accommodation services will be determined by their needs and individual circumstances. The table below summarises what we propose to commission.

The Youth Housing Hub will carry out a full assessment of the young person, either before they enter supported accommodation or during their initial placement. The hub will work with the young person and, where possible, their family to determine the best pathway for that young person including whether they can return home or move directly into settled accommodation. The aim is for young people entering the pathway to be placed in the level of accommodation able to meet their needs and then progress through the different support levels as appropriate to their needs.

The appropriate length of stay in all of the young people's pathway supported accommodation will be determined by that individual's needs, but all young people will need to be supported to move on into longer term accommodation as soon as that move would be safe and sustainable. We need to make the most efficient use of limited and expensive accommodation, and evidence suggests that for many young people, moving out of supported accommodation sooner avoids institutionalisation and leads to better long-term outcomes.<sup>19</sup> However, we also acknowledge that a longer stay may be necessary for some care leavers to achieve the stability they need to move on to independence.

Throughput targets (the number of new placements that are made into the service, reflecting current demand) will replace targets around the average length of stay, but these targets will clearly only be met if there is a focus on helping people to move through the service and into settled accommodation as quickly as possible.<sup>20</sup>

Young people's supported accommodation will be for care leavers aged 16-25 and other young people aged 16-21 years (plus others aged up to 25 years if they would benefit from specialist young people's services because they have a learning disability and/or are particularly vulnerable because they are at risk of harm from others, or from self-harm). This means we will need fewer units of accommodation overall. This reduction will be in the number of dispersed accommodation units (from 237 to 165 plus 30 for young parents). We would like the excess dispersed accommodation to be converted for use as either homeless adults supported accommodation or emergency accommodation for families.

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<sup>19</sup> <https://www.tcd.ie/childrensresearchcentre/assets/pdf/homelessness%202013.pdf>

<sup>20</sup> Based on current usage, the mean length of stay to meet throughput targets will be 6 months in high support and 12 months in low support (and 18 months in Youth Projects and supported lodgings).

This table sets out the supported accommodation we propose to commission.

	<b>Current services</b>	<b>Proposed services</b>
<b>Short term and emergency</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- 3 Assessment beds at St George's House</li> <li>- 3 Crash pads at St George's House and the Foyer</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- 3 Assessment beds at St George's House</li> <li>- 3 Crash pads in high support accommodation</li> <li>- 5 short-term supported lodgings placements for 16-19 year olds stays up to 45 days</li> </ul>
<b>High support plus</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- External supported accommodation (ESAs) purchased from closed framework (c.11 units at one time)</li> <li>- 5 units high support PIE pilot (1625)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- New sub-regional open framework from which we will spot purchase and block purchase provision required</li> <li>- Minimum 5 units high support block contract from framework</li> </ul>
<b>Medium and high support schemes</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- 22 bed hostel – St George's House (1625)</li> <li>- 51 bed hostel – the Foyer (1625)</li> <li>- 20 units – Youth Projects (Bristol City Council)</li> </ul>	<p>To May 2018:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- 22 bed hostel – St George's House (1625)</li> <li>- 51 bed hostel – the Foyer (1625)</li> <li>- 20 units – Youth Projects (Bristol City Council)</li> </ul>
		<p>From June 2018:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Up to 90 beds, likely to include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>o 22 bed hostel – St George's House</li> <li>o C.50 beds across 2-3 schemes with varying levels of support from high support plus to medium support</li> <li>o 20 units Youth Projects (Bristol City Council) subject to value for money review</li> </ul> </li> </ul>
<b>Medium support</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- 17 Supported lodgings hosts (Bristol City Council)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- 25 (minimum) supported lodgings hosts (Bristol City Council)</li> <li>- 3-4 units in one young-women only house (change to existing adults women-only support contract with no additional cost)</li> </ul>
<b>Low support</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- 63 young people staying put with foster carers (care leavers only)</li> <li>- 237 units dispersed supported accommodation (1625 &amp; Knightstone Housing Association)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Continue to support care leavers to stay living with their foster carers</li> <li>- 195 units of dispersed accommodation (to include 30 units for young parents with slightly lower level of support)</li> </ul>
<b>Specialist young parents</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- 36 units Young Parents Alliance supported accommodation (Elim HA)</li> <li>- Young Parents Alliance floating support (Elim HA)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- 36 units Young Parents Alliance supported accommodation plus floating support</li> </ul>
<b>Total units</b>	392 (excluding staying put)	c. 367 (excluding staying put) – 9% reduction

We aim to reduce the use of high cost spot-purchased ESA placements. We are also seeking alternative accommodation to replace the Foyer and will be asking providers to make proposals to us for two or three schemes, providing a total of 50+ units to include high support and medium support

accommodation. We would like these new schemes to be in place for June 2018. We will consider making the Youth Projects buildings available for these schemes, which would then need to provide a total of 70+ units. In the meantime, we will continue to fund services at the Foyer, recognising its limitations, with an increased focus on ETE, until we have identified a suitable alternative.

We plan to extend the contract for the specialist young parents' service with some service changes and reduced contract value. The specialist young parents' supported accommodation will have to be targeted at those young parents with the highest support needs. Other young parents will be housed in low support dispersed accommodation with additional floating support coming from the specialist young parents floating support service.

For all of the supported accommodation types the key performance indicators will measure the following outcomes: planned departures, rate of refusals, throughput, average length of stay, percentage of young people who are in education, training or employment, void times.

## Stage 5 Settled accommodation

### ***What we are trying to achieve***

- *Young people are economically active and have suitable homes they can afford – they can prepare for their future.*
- *There is a range of safe, decent, affordable housing options, shared and self-contained, in the private, social and third sectors.*

### **Proposals**

- **Move on plans** - Supported accommodation providers will have to review a young person's support plan before they move on to settled accommodation and identify what further support they need to sustain their new accommodation and participate in ETE. The plan should identify what support will be available to the young person and what other help they might need. If the young person needs further support, the accommodation provider should provide this or refer the young person to the hub partner floating support service. The accommodation provider should also consider if they should make other referrals for the young person, for example to HYPE (helping young people into employment) or 1625's CashPoint service.
- **Monitoring long-term outcomes** - We will monitor whether or not those who have left supported accommodation are back on the Housing Support Register within six months.
- **Support to access private-rented accommodation** – We will ask a member of the council's private rented team to specialise in attracting private landlords who may be interested in renting to young people.
- **Affordable accommodation linked to employment/training** – In other areas of the country there are schemes that have modified existing housing (e.g. sheltered housing for elderly, student nurses accommodation) to provide affordable housing linked to apprenticeships or other employment and training opportunities. Bristol City Council is very interested in establishing a similar scheme in Bristol if suitable accommodation can be identified.
- **Funding opportunities / partner organisations** – We will seek out funding opportunities and/or partner organisations to develop a range of settled accommodation options for young people as an alternative to the council's priority move on scheme (PMOS). Options to explore with partners include: peer landlord models, shared social housing, modular housing, enabling young people to access shared private rented accommodation, promoting ordinary lodgings.

# Section C – Commissioning proposals

## Procurement/provider recommendations

The services that are contained within this commissioning strategy are subject to the Light Touch Regime under the Public Contract Regulations 2015. The tables below set out the services we plan to commission and the procurement approach we recommend.

The commissioning and procurement proposals are grouped together as follows:

- Group 1 – Those services where we have a good understanding of need, capacity and how the market will respond. These are preventative services and low support accommodation.
- Group 2 – Those services where we need to better understand the capacity of the market to respond, including the capacity to identify alternative buildings for supported accommodation schemes. These are high and medium support services as well as specialist services.

Group 1 prevention and low support		
Description of contract / service	How we will buy	Rationale
<p><b>1.1 Youth housing hub partner – new contract</b> Provide information, advice and assistance as well as outreach support to young people who are at risk of homelessness. The partner will establish and manage the Youth Housing Hub and co-located team and will play a role in developing and designing the hub. Support will focus on helping the young person to live in their family network, or sustain their tenancy or other housing. Achieving this will also help to address other issues identified in the young person's assessment which may include help to access ETE and managing money. (NB. This replaces current young people's floating support services.)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- 3 year contract with option to extend twice, each extension two years</li> <li>- Contract ceiling £300,000 p.a.</li> <li>- Establish number of potential bidders through publishing a PIN. If have multiple potential bidders, will have a competitive process to appoint preferred bidder</li> </ul>	Soft market testing allows us to gauge the level of interest in the market before finalising the procurement approach. It is intended if possible that the procedure to select the preferred bidder will entail negotiation with the bidder to develop the service design with the council.
<p><b>1.2 Short term supported lodgings – new pilot contract</b> A service to recruit and support five hosts who will provide short-term respite and crisis accommodation and support to young people aged 16-21 years. The service will enable young people to access other help, to rebuild relationships with their family network and progress to return to home and/or plan their move to settled accommodation or supported accommodation.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- 2 year pilot arrangement</li> <li>- Contract value £45,000 p.a.</li> <li>- Direct award to Caring in Bristol as a pilot or provided by in-house supported lodgings service</li> </ul>	Caring in Bristol already provide a similar service (Nightstop). During consultation, we invited providers to indicate if they are interested in providing this service and none did suggesting there is no other provider able to deliver this service locally for this price.
<p><b>1.3 Low support accommodation – extend contracts to September 2017</b> Extend current contracts for 6 months (Apr-Sep 2017) with 10% reduction in contract price.  There is no inflationary uplift in current contract</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Exercise existing option to extend contract for 6 months with 10% reduction in cost</li> <li>- Contract value £287,550 for 6 months</li> <li>- Contractors are 1625ip and Knightstone HA</li> </ul>	Reduction possible because of reduced demand.
<p><b>1.4 Low support accommodation – new contracts from October 2017</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- 3 year contracts with option to extend twice,</li> </ul>	This will be a fair and transparent process

<p>A total of 195 units of dispersed accommodation to include 30 for young parents. The provider will provide the accommodation at locations spread across the city. Support will be flexible; may include peer support or resident landlord arrangements. Contracts to include flexibility to change the number of units (e.g. reduce if more young people are helped to stay living in their family network).</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- each extension two years</li> <li>- Contract ceiling £550,000 p.a. (15% reduction)</li> <li>- There are 2 options: we may procure under a framework established by another authority (see row 2.2 below), or the Council may carry out a procurement</li> </ul>	<p>consistent with procurement rules.</p>
<p><b>1.5 Floating support – extend then end current contract</b> The provision of outreach support will be included in the Youth Housing Hub partner contract. There is no inflationary uplift in current contract.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Exercise existing option to extend contract to 31.9.16 with 20% reduction and then discontinue service</li> <li>- Contract value £94,800 for 6 months</li> </ul>	<p>Reduction possible because of relatively low demand.</p>

In relation to Group 2 services our aims are to:

- Make sure that all young people are in the right level of service, i.e. the lowest cost provision to meet their needs. This will mean we need to have a better range of accommodation options, including a new high support scheme for more high risk young people plus more medium support provision (replacing the high support services currently provided from the Foyer).
- Making sure the cost of services reflects the level of support provided. This will involve a review of the in-house Youth Projects service to explore whether it represents value for money (in terms of cost, needs of service users, length of stay and outcomes achieved).
- Reduce spend by reducing the use of high cost spot-purchased ESAs by investing in lower cost provision that is able to meet the needs of high risk young people, particularly 16-17 year olds in care.
- Achieve savings from the budgets for these services from 2018/19.

Group 2 high and medium support		
Description of contract / service	How we will buy	Rationale
<p><b>2.1 External supported accommodation – new ‘dynamic purchasing system’</b> Bespoke packages of self-contained accommodation and support for 16-17 year old children in care with high support needs. The young people are likely to present a high risk to themselves and/or others. Some will have significant disabilities and become eligible for adult social care when they turn 18. For some of these disabled young people, we seek accommodation and support that can continue post-18. We aim to reduce the use of high cost spot-purchased ESA placements.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Open procedure to establish a new ‘open’ framework (sub-regional) to operate from June 2017. The framework will be a form of Dynamic Purchasing System from which we may purchase individual units or blocks of supported accommodation. If this framework is for any reason not suitable the council may carry out its own procurement.</li> </ul>	<p>This will enable better procurement practice. A competitive process will ensure it is a transparent and fair process and ensure value for money. Able to purchase individual places and blocks of supported accommodation.</p>
<p><b>2.2 High and medium support – extend contract to May 2018</b> Provision of support and housing management at St George’s House (25-bed accommodation owned by Stonewater Housing Association) and the Foyer (51-bed accommodation owned by</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Exercise existing option to extend contract with 1625ip, subject to satisfactory negotiation up to 31<sup>st</sup> May 2018 including service improvements.</li> </ul>	<p>This is an interim arrangement while we seek alternative accommodation to the Foyer. Need to extend for 14 months in order to secure buildings and</p>

<p>Knightstone Housing Association) - high level support, including the provision of three crash pads. Service improvements will be required, particularly better help for young people to access ETE.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Contract value £785,000 p.a.</li> <li>- No inflationary uplift in current contract.</li> </ul>	<p>undertake appropriate procurement process for support contract(s).</p>
<p><b>2.3 High and medium support – new contract(s) from June 2018</b>  We will seek alternative accommodation to the Foyer to provide 50+ units across two or three schemes offering varying levels of support from high to medium support.  We will continue to commission support and housing management at St George’s House (in addition to the 50+ units above) from June 2018. Whether or not this is a discrete contract, or forms part of a larger contract will depend on the options for the 50+ units.  This contract/contracts will not be awarded, or the contract ceiling may be reduced, depending on what is needed.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Procure and enter into new contracts for up to 75 units of high and medium support accommodation.</li> <li>- Contract ceiling £785,000 p.a.</li> <li>- Issue PIN notice and invite providers to make proposals for new schemes. Procurement approach to be determined once we have proposals. Ensuring there is diversity in the supplier maker will be a priority when appointing support provider(s) for this provision.</li> </ul>	<p>Current accommodation does not provide the range of provision required to meet need, particularly for high risk young people, and medium support provision. This proposal enables we need to see how the market will respond then decide what and how we will procure based on cost, capacity and how best to meet need.</p>
<p><b>2.4 Youth Projects</b>  Provision of support at three properties owned by the council (total 20 beds). The Projects are principally for 16-17 year olds in care, care leavers and other young people who would benefit from a more nurturing environment. Some service improvements will be required including: reduced rate of refusals, reduced average length of stay, accommodation not to be used as holiday accommodation for care leavers attending university.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Budget £197,000 p.a. reducing by 10% in 2018/19</li> <li>- Bristol City Council to continue as provider while a value for money review is carried out</li> </ul>	<p>There are strong, effective working relationships between the service and social work teams enabling the council to effectively perform its corporate parenting role for care leavers. However, the cost of the service is relatively high.</p>
<p><b>2.5 Supported lodgings</b>  A service to recruit and support 25 hosts (an increase from current levels) who provide a supportive and stable home environment for young people with medium to low level support needs.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Budget £167,000 p.a.</li> <li>- Bristol City Council to continue to provide – with revised service level agreement.</li> </ul>	<p>Value for money will be improved by increasing number of hosts. Outcomes are good and there are strong, effective working relationships between the service and social work teams.</p>

## Transfer of undertakings protection of employment (TUPE)

Work of a similar nature to many of these services is currently undertaken by various providers for use by the council. The council does not know and has no view as to whether TUPE may apply between this provider and any other person the council may select to provide new services. It is up to each tenderer to reach its own view on the application of TUPE and if necessary to make enquiries of the present provider and make appropriate allowances for this in any tender submission.

## Appendix 1 – List of acronyms

ASD	Autistic Spectrum Disorder
ESA	External supported accommodation
ETE	Education, training and employment
HA	Housing Association
HSR	Housing support register
HYPE	Helping Young People into Employment
KHA	Knightstone Housing Association
NEET	Not in education, employment or training
PIE	Psychologically informed environment
TUPE	Transfer of undertakings protection of employment