

CORPORATE PARENTING ADVISORY COMMITTEE

19 OCTOBER 2021

Young Person Gateway

Reasons for the Report

1. This report provides the Committee with information in relation to the Young Person Gateway (YPG) which is the Accommodation Gateway for young people aged 16-21. The report aims to inform the Committee of the current structure of the YPG, data on outcomes and information around the expansion plans for the Gateway.

Background

2. The YPG initially launched on 5th October 2015 and is an accommodation and support gateway for young people in Cardiff who are threatened with homelessness or who need to move on from care.
3. Upon presentation the young person is met by an Advice Worker from our partner agency Llamau. They will obtain information necessary to support the young person which will include the reason for presentation and whether they are already open to either homeless or Children's Services. Llamau will also capture as much risk and support information about the young person as possible, which can include liaising with other professionals including Youth Offending Service and Schools.
4. For any 16 / 17-year-olds presenting who are not already open to Children's Services, they will be advised of their right to a Child Looked After assessment under the Southwark Judgement. A social worker and housing representative will carry out this meeting with the young person who will choose whether they wish to become a Child Looked After or not.
5. The Gateway was set up to allow better partnership working between Housing and Children's Services, ensuring that regardless of whether a young person is

owed a housing duty or a Children's Services duty, their accommodation options and pathways were the same. The Gateway was also intended to reduce the number of high-cost placements for Looked After Children.

6. In May 2019 the YPG was recommissioned with accommodation and support now sitting under two contracts with a total of 166 units of accommodation:
 - Contract 1 is led by the Salvation Army in partnership with Church Army and Taff Housing.
 - Contract 2 is led by Llamau in partnership with Hafod Care Association.
7. Contract 1 has a total of 106 units of accommodation and comprises of larger hostel spaces (largest is 29 units) along with several self-contained units in the community. Support ranges from 24 hour on site for larger accommodation projects and floating support for self-contained flats.
8. Contract 2 has a total of 60 units of accommodation which all have staff on site 24 hours a day, with no more than 7 units in each of the buildings. These schemes are intended for young people with higher support needs.
9. Outcomes for the young people are generally very positive, especially given the high needs that many present with. Between 1st April 2020 and 31st August 2021, move on out of the Gateway was as per below from each contract:
 - Salvation Army
 - **114 (82%) young people positively moved on from the YPG**
 - 66 (46%) moved into social housing
 - 33 (25%) positively returned home / stayed with friends
 - 2 (1%) moved into the Private Rented Sector
 - 13 (10%) moved out of area
 - **25 (18%) young people experienced a negative exit**
 - 1 (1%) abandoned (was subsequently reaccommodated)
 - 10 (7%) were evicted (6 were subsequently reaccommodated within YPG or Single Person Gateway)
 - 7 (5%) were sentenced to prison and are currently still there
 - 1 (1%) was denied access to public funds
 - 6 (5%) room closed by provider due to low occupancy
 - Llamau
 - **39 (84%) young people positively moved on from the YPG**
 - 21 (46%) moved into social housing
 - 15 (31%) positively returned home / stayed with friends
 - 3 (7%) moved into the Private Rented Sector
 - **7 (16%) young people experienced a negative exit**

- 4 (9%) were sentenced to prison and are currently still there
 - 3 (7%) evicted due to antisocial or violent behaviour (1 subsequently imprisoned, 1 reaccommodated within Single Person Gateway and 1 currently being supported by Children's Services)
10. While in supported accommodation the young people are supported to learn independent living skills and performance against this is closely monitored. The contract with the providers includes detailed targets that they are required to meet which include the number of young people in Education, Training and Employment, the number of young people regularly paying their Service Charge and the number of young people maintaining contact with family where safe to do so. The providers are responsible for supporting the young person to achieve these outcomes and develop skills necessary to do so.
 11. Since its introduction in March 2016, the main pathway out of the supported accommodation provided by the Gateway is via the Tenancy Training scheme. Once a young person has been identified as being ready to live independently, they will be required to attend a training session which covers all the necessary information around managing a tenancy, such as, connecting utilities, how to pay rent, applying for any benefits, how to register with a GP and managing relationships with neighbours.
 12. Whilst the training used to be held in person, during the pandemic the training team have developed virtual training for young people meaning that young people have still been able to move on to independence throughout the crisis.
 13. Once training is complete the young person is given Immediate Priority on the Social Housing Waiting List.
 14. To ensure continuity the young people who move on from the supported accommodation provision continue to receive support from the same provider for 12 months and this can be extended if necessary. Should they prove not to be ready for independent living they can return to supported accommodation.
 15. As of 15.09.2021, since March 2016, 319 young people have been housed through the Training Tenancy scheme.
 16. There are only a total of 4 young people who have been unable to maintain their tenancies giving the Tenancy Training pathway a 99% sustainment rate.

Next Steps

17. We have seen an increase in demand for accommodation within YPG. This has been due to an increase in Children Looked After (CLA), coupled with a general increase in youth homelessness.
18. Between March 2016 and June 2020, the overall number of CLA increased by 302 (47%), with the number in external fostering increasing by 38 (12%) and number in external residential placements increasing by 39 (80%).
19. As of 16.09.2021 there were 28 young people on the waiting list to enter YPG. The Accommodation Team work closely with Llamau Advice Officers and Children's Services to ensure that any particularly urgent cases are prioritised and provided with emergency accommodation.
20. Due to the increased demand, a dedicated YPG Prevention Officer was appointed who works with young people who are at risk of homelessness and supports them to either maintain their current accommodation where safe and suitable to do so or, if appropriate to secure alternative accommodation to YPG, e.g., Private Rented Sector.
21. We are also in the process of recruiting a Senior Accommodation Officer, dedicated to managing the YPG. A part of this role will be to work closely with Children's Services to continuously analyse potential demand for the YPG based on information known to them of young people currently placed outside YPG. This will allow an opportunity to ensure the most suitable accommodation option is secured based on the young person's needs and wishes.
22. In January 2021 it was also agreed to increase accommodation provision in YPG to assist with the increased demand. It was agreed that the YPG would be expanded by 4 x 4-bedroom units which would allow Children's Services to move Children Looked After from out of area high-cost residential placements into the YPG.
23. In May 2021 the first of these units was opened and is fully occupied. The second unit opened in September 2021 and is due to be fully occupied by the end of September 2021.
24. Children's Services are also increasing the provision of Supported Lodgings by an additional 24 units with the intention to create more emergency spaces using that accommodation method.
25. A new specialist project for young people with complex needs is also being planned which will comprise of 8 rooms, 2 emergency placement spaces and 2 independent flats. The young people referred for this project would be able to live independently but will have complex and challenging support needs

including, offending behaviour, substance misuse and high mental health issues.

26. We are continuously monitoring young people who present and assessing the accommodation available to ensure that the accommodation meets the needs of our clients.

Financial Implications

27. The YPG service is a base budget funded service. Additional expansion has allowed additional young people to move on from supported accommodation. The cost of expanding the service has been affordable through the reallocation of funds released from the costs previously incurred on supported accommodation. It is an area that will continue to be monitored closely to ensure the service continues to provide good value and remains within base budget.

Legal Implications

28. There are no legal implications arising from this report

RECOMMENDATIONS

29. The Committee are recommended to note Young Person Gateway update and to make any observations or comments

DEBORAH DRIFFIELD
Director, Children's Services
28 September 2021