

CORPORATE PARENTING ADVISORY COMMITTEE

27 March 2023

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 and development 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. The Gateway was set up to allow better partnership working between Housing and Children's Services, ensuring that regardless of whether a young person had 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.
4. The YPG was expanded in 2022/23 and now contains 173 units of accommodation, split between two contracts.

- 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.
5. Contract 1 has a total of 109 units of accommodation and comprises of larger hostel spaces (the 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.
 6. Contract 2 has a total of 64 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.
 7. As of 06.03.2023 there were 68 young people on the waiting list to enter YPG. Referrals into the Gateway come from three main referral routes: young people homeless in an emergency who need immediate placement; young people whose threat of homelessness could not be prevented; and young people who need to move on local authority care. 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.
 8. Where a Child Looked After requires move on from their current accommodation (e.g. residential or foster care), their Social Worker refers the young person direct to the Accommodation Team responsible for managing the waiting list for YPG. The young person's risk and support details are considered and a referral to a suitable placement within YPG is made. With the correct planning of cases, these young people are usually placed in a planned way where YPG providers and the young person are able to meet and create a relationship before the move.
 9. 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.

10. Where a young person presents as homeless in an emergency, Llamau Advice Officers carry out the homeless application. Cases being considered as homeless on the day of presentation would usually be those who are, for example, fleeing abuse (i.e., domestic, honour-based violence, county lines), bailiff warrant or a parental notice where the relationship has completely broken down. The Llamau Officer will obtain all relevant information in order for the young person's full support needs and a referral to the most suitable accommodation option is made. Liaising with partner agencies is essential to obtain this information (schools, Youth Justice Service), as well as discussions with any other relevant parties who can include landlord, parents / carers. Prevention of homelessness is always a key priority where it is a safe and suitable option.
11. Where a young person is threatened with homelessness, this provides a greater opportunity to be able to prevent this homelessness by either working with their current accommodation provider or assisting with sourcing alternative accommodation outside the Gateway (e.g. private rented accommodation). Llamau's mediation service and the Local Authority's dedicated YPG Prevention Officer work with this client group to achieve positive outcomes outside of entering YPG.
12. A Senior Accommodation Officer, dedicated to managing the YPG, was appointed in September 2022. The Officer's role focuses on the monitoring and developing of the YPG, such as working with Children's Services and providers to work on complex cases within the Gateway to ensuring move-on pathways out of the Gateway are as effective as possible.
13. Young people that are placed within the Gateway generally experience very positive outcomes, especially given the high needs that many present with. Between 1st April 2022 and 28th February 2023, move on out of the Gateway was as per below from each contract:

- Salvation Army
 - **70 (84%) young people positively moved on from the YPG**
 - 45 (64%) moved into a Tenancy Training property
 - 25 (36%) positively returned home / Moved in with family or friends / Moved to University / Moved out of area
 - **13 (16%) young people experienced a negative exit**
 - 4 (31%) abandoned
 - 6 (46%) were evicted
 - 3 (23%) were sentenced to prison and are currently still there
- Llamau
 - **28 (80%) young people positively moved on from the YPG**
 - 15 (54%) moved into Tenancy Training property
 - 9 (32%) positively returned home / Moved in with family or friends / Moved to University / Moved out of area
 - 4 (14%) moved into the Private Rented Sector
 - **7 (20%) young people experienced a negative exit**
 - 2 (29%) were sentenced to prison and are currently still there
 - 4 (57%) evicted due to antisocial or violent behaviour
 - 1 (14%) refused offer of accommodation

14. While in YPG supported accommodation, 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 maintain 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.

15. 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.

16. Whilst the training used to be held in person, during the Covid19 pandemic the training team developed virtual training for young people, meaning that young people were still able to move on to independence throughout the crisis. Following positive feedback from young people and providers the decision was made to continue the training virtually. There are occasions where the training can be carried out in person, for example where the young person requires the support of an interpreter.
17. Once training is complete the young person is given Immediate Priority on the Social Housing Waiting List. This is the highest priority on the waiting list and ensures young people move on as quickly as possible.
18. 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.
19. As of 28.02.2023, since March 2016, 453 young people have been housed through the Training Tenancy scheme.
20. There are only 4 young people who have been unable to maintain their tenancies since March 2016, producing a 99% tenancy sustainment rate for the Tenancy Training pathway.

Development

21. Due to the increased complexity of the young people accessing YPG, a Young Person's Multi-Disciplinary Team (YP MDT) was introduced in January 2022. The YP MDT is a multi-agency response to the most challenging young people to ensure young people can access and maintain accommodation with additional specialist support. The YP MDT is now out of its pilot phase and the team are currently supporting over 30 young people, both within and outside

the YPG. The team comprises of 4 Complex Needs Case Coordinators, 2 Outreach Counsellors through Cardiff Mind and a Transitions Social Worker. Recruitment is ongoing for 2 Substance Misuse Workers, a Mental Health Community Psychiatric Nurse and an Approved Mental Health qualified Social Worker.

22. In addition to the YP MDT, a pilot additional housing pathway has also been developed for young people with complex needs which is complementary to the YPG. The Young Person's Housing First Scheme has been developed by the Council and aims to provide complex young people with tenancies in the community with very intensive support. The pathway is suitable for highly complex young people, such as those who may be a significant risk to others if placed with vulnerable young people in the Gateway. 5 young people are currently following this pathway; 2 of these are in tenancies with a further 3 pending property matching.
23. In January 2023, a pilot pathway was launched to move on Unaccompanied Asylum-Seeking Children (UASC) who were ready for semi-independent living from either YPG or Children's Services placements. It was identified that UASC were staying in accommodation for long periods due to issues moving them on to permanent accommodation while they still did not have settled immigration status, subsequently causing bed-blocking in YPG and Children's Services accommodation. A partnership between the YMCA Cardiff, Housing and Children's Services was therefore developed, and provides a range of accommodation options for UASC. The accommodation comprises of 5 units with George Williams House located in YMCA The Walk, Cardiff and 13 units of shared accommodation in 3 dispersed houses.

Next Steps

24. It has been agreed that the YPG will be expanded by 24 units of accommodation in 2023. Following the procurement open route process, Llamau were awarded this contract. This expansion is specifically to increase

the units of accommodation available to Children's Services to move Children Looked After from high-cost residential placements into the YPG. The first of these units is expected to be available from April 2023.

25. The Senior Accommodation Officer will work closely with Children's Services to create joint housing plans for all Children Looked After aged 15+. This will allow YPG a better opportunity to analyse upcoming demand and work towards securing a suitable placement for all young people.
26. An additional specialist accommodation project for young people with complex needs continues to be in progress with a current handover date of June 2024. 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.
27. Tai Ffres is a collaborative Service between United Welsh Housing Association, Llamau and Cardiff Council to provide an additional Housing pathway for young people aged 16-25. Tai Ffres aims to create up to 130 safe, secure and affordable homes for young people by April 2027. Young people will be offered Tai Ffres accommodation via the Tenancy Training pathway. The scheme is currently securing accommodation for the first offers to be made.

Financial Implications

28. The report details the work undertaken in the Young Persons gateway, which is currently funded through a combination of external grant and council revenue funding. Accommodation setting costs that are not eligible for grant funding are funded as increased gateway placements displace external residential placements, for the Council's Children looked after cohort. Any ongoing increases in the number of accommodation settings will need to be met by external grant funding, or within existing service area resources following an Officer decision report.

Legal Implications

29. There are no legal implications arising from this report.

RECOMMENDATION

The Committee is recommended to:

- a) Note the development of the YPG.

DEBORAH DRIFFIELD

Director of Children's Services

21 March 2023