



Preventing Homelessness Accommodation – Supported Family Accommodation

Specification

Sep 2017

<p>Overview</p>	<p>This accommodation will be for families to whom the Council owes a duty of accommodation under Section 193 of the Housing Act 1996¹, and who would benefit from supported housing (many families need housing but not necessarily support). There may be occasional times where there is an interim duty to accommodate a family (exceptional cases agreed with the Head of service). It will:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide the right type of accommodation for people once they have become homeless. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Reduce the number of people sleeping rough. ○ Reduce the need for spot purchased emergency accommodation. • Help people to gain the skills to prevent them becoming homeless again. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Improve the numbers of people moving successfully out of the pathway into sustainable living. ○ Build resilience and help people access training/employment. ○ Reduce repeat incidences of homelessness, including amongst people with complex needs. <p>The pathway will provide short-term accommodation with appropriate housing management and support to help vulnerable families leave supported housing and move into sustainable alternative accommodation (usually an offer of accommodation made to discharge the main homelessness duty).</p> <p>The service will assist Bristol City Council (BCC) in ensuring that BCC complies with the Homelessness (Suitability of Accommodation) (England) Order 2003 that B&B is only used as a last resort and ensure that families (or households that contain an expectant mother) do not stay in B&B for longer than six weeks.</p>
<p>Client Group</p>	<p>Families (couples or single parents) with an expectant mother in the household or with dependent children. Referrals to this accommodation will be for families to whom the Council owes either a permanent or interim duty of accommodation under the Housing Act 1996², and who would benefit from supported housing (many families need housing but not necessarily support).</p> <p>Families will be referred through the Housing Support Register (HSR) and must meet their criteria. These are:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The applicant must be 'vulnerable', 2. The applicant must be in need of 'housing-related support' to assist with their homelessness, 3. The applicant must have recourse to public funds, 4. The council owes a permanent or interim duty under the Housing Act 1996. <p>The head of the household will be 18 years of age or older.</p> <p>People will be referred into the pathway via the HSR following referral by Bristol City Council's Homelessness Prevention Team.</p> <p>Accommodation provided must be self-contained. Where the layout of the accommodation makes it possible e.g. hostel accommodation, the ability to house larger families flexibly in more than one unit is desirable.</p>
<p>Context</p>	<p>The preventing homelessness accommodation pathways are part of the city's wider response to homelessness. The plan is described in the Preventing Homelessness Pathways Commissioning plan https://www.bristol.gov.uk/documents/20182/239470/Preventing+homelessness+commissioning+plan+May+2017/5adabd2a-97d4-9cf7-bd3e-fdf7f18eb765 , which was developed during</p>

¹ <https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/1996/52/contents>

² <http://www.crisis.org.uk/pages/statutory-homelessness.html>

	<p>consultation and was approved by the City Council’s Cabinet in May 2017. The Commissioning Plan also includes supported accommodation for young people, young parents and for single adults.</p> <p>Bristol City Council has been successful in bidding to the Department for Communities and Local Government (DCLG) for a homelessness prevention Trailblazer grant (January 2017 to 31st March 2019) along with a network of local authorities across England to fundamentally reform the response to homelessness.</p> <p>The programme will develop effective early intervention and prevention measures, using various predictive tools, and then make interventions with households most at risk of homelessness if their private rented sector tenancy came to an end. The programme will also target high risk groups to offer resilience training. Partners and key stakeholders include Advice Centres for Avon (ACFA), Children’s Services, Citizens Services (Housing Benefit Team) and Housing Options Service.</p> <p>The Prevention team within Housing Options will consist of Link Workers who will reach out to at risk families identified from Housing Benefit and Think Family data (to particularly work on increasing employability and access to work). The service includes Welfare Rights Advisers (internally and in ACFA), a Case Coordinator to work across Early Help and Homelessness Prevention Team to prevent families becoming intentionally homeless and a data analyst/customer insight officer to ensure at risk households are identified and impact is measured. Learning and best practice will be shared between DCLG and participating local authorities.</p> <p>The Trailblazer funding is being made available by DCLG to implement the new Homelessness Reduction Act. Factsheets about the Act can be found at: https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/homelessness-reduction-bill-policy-factsheets</p> <p>Key measures in the Act include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • An extension of the period during which an authority should treat someone as threatened with homelessness from 28 to 56 days, and clarification of the action an authority should take when someone applies for assistance having been served with a section 8 (1) or section 21 (2) notice. • A new duty to prevent homelessness for all eligible applicants threatened with homelessness, regardless of priority need. This extends the help available to people not in priority need, with local housing authorities supporting them to either stay in their accommodation or help them find somewhere to live. • A new duty to relieve homelessness for all eligible homeless applicants, regardless of priority need. This help could be, for example, the provision of a rent deposit or debt advice. Those who have a priority need will be provided with interim accommodation whilst the Local Housing Authority carries out the reasonable steps. • A new duty on public services to notify a local authority if they come into contact with someone they think may be homeless or at risk of becoming homeless. It is hoped that this measure will ensure that a person’s housing situation is considered when they come into contact with wider public services, and encourage public services to build strong relationships based on local need and circumstances.
<p>Local Priorities</p>	<p>Bristol City Council and its partners set out the city vision and intentions around homelessness prevention and supporting families in key strategy documents including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Corporate Strategy https://www.bristol.gov.uk/council-spending-performance/corporate-strategy-2017-2022-consultation ➤ More than a roof – Bristol Housing Strategy 2016-2010 https://www.bristol.gov.uk/documents/20182/361915/Bristol+Housing+Strategy+2016/8612fc26-53db-4061-b5e7-182083e3dbc6

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Bristol Preventing Homelessness Strategy 2013-2018 https://www.bristol.gov.uk/documents/20182/32779/Preventing%20Homelessness%20Strategy%202013-18%20Main%20body%20document%20190614.pdf/74f02511-3d00-47a9-9b83-c7e735386c08 ➤ Bristol’s Strategy for Children, Young People and Families 2016-2010 https://www.bristol.gov.uk/documents/20182/1309383/Bristol's+strategy+for+children+young+people+and+families/e4b7cdbc-3c6e-4527-8bb2-9a0094ef5b7f ➤ Corporate Parenting Strategy and Pledge to Children in Care and Care Leavers https://www.bristol.gov.uk/policies-plans-strategies/plans-and-policy-for-children-in-or-leaving-care
Objectives	<p>The key aims of service will be to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide and manage a range of suitable quality accommodation, maintaining this accommodation to a good standard consistent with the ‘Standards for Supported Accommodation’, and with good practice around creating a psychologically informed environment http://pielink.net/ (PIE – see below in Quality Requirements). • Provide accommodation- based support for around 4 months to meet the household’s holistic needs to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Work with families to ensure they are regularly bidding for properties on HomeChoice Bristol and liaise with the HomeChoice team over making a direct offer of accommodation if households are not bidding on a regular basis; ○ Work with families to source private sector accommodation; ○ Move on to independent living; ○ Resettle into their new accommodation; ○ Assist them to access support networks when they move-on to build resilience to sustain their tenancy and help prevent repeat homelessness; ○ Allow clients to re-access the resettlement service at any time if they are experiencing difficulties maintaining their tenancies so that they can be signposted to appropriate support to maintain their tenancy such as the Bristol Trailblazer service or a floating support service referral. <p>Principles</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Families are at the heart of service delivery and contribute to the design of services. • Processes, including assessment and allocation of housing are clear and understandable to families and they understand their rights and responsibilities in supported accommodation. • Where possible service users will have a key worker and there is continuity of relationship with their support worker. • Parents should be encouraged into training, education and employment where this is a practical option for them. • The service collaborates with partners, enabling multi-agency working to meet the needs of families and children. • Reciprocal information sharing protocols are to be developed with Children’s centres where there are shared clients. • Ensure that the service is flexible to deal with changing needs. • The provider is able to provide added value, for example by bringing additional resources.
Evidence of need	<p>Homelessness and in particular family homelessness has been increasing in Bristol for the last five years due to a combination of recession, Welfare Benefit Reform and affordability of accommodation, particularly in relation to the private rental sector. Since 2011-12 people presenting as homeless to Citizen service points has doubled from 6,000 to 12,000 p.a.; Homelessness Acceptances under the 1996 Housing Act have increased fivefold and the number of households with children in temporary accommodation at the end of each quarter has</p>

	<p>increased from 50 to over 461 (June 30th 2017) ³.</p> <p>Projections indicate that this number is not expected to change significantly during the term of this contract (three years).</p>
Outcomes	<p>Preventing homelessness and allocating accommodation and support</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Families who need accommodation and/or support get it, including quick access to emergency accommodation and immediate and on-going support where needed. Families 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. There are efficient and joined up processes for assessment and allocation of accommodation and support that make the best use of the available accommodation. <p>Effective accommodation and support</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Families leave supported accommodation as quickly as is sustainable, in a planned way. Families gain the skills they need, engage with learning and work and move on to settled accommodation. Supported accommodation delivers value for money including appropriate throughput, minimal void times and low refusal rates. Good quality accommodation and housing management, including timely repairs and maintenance.
Accommodation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The service will provide accommodation at the locations agreed with the council commissioner. Any changes to this accommodation must be agreed in advance with the commissioner. The accommodation rent and eligible service charges must come within the limit set in this Commissioning process. Any review of the rent and service charges must meet the requirement/process set out in the advice on service charges document. The accommodation must comply with: The council's Standards for Medium and Lower Support Accommodation https://www.bristol.gov.uk/housing/commissioning-homelessness-prevention-services
What we need	<p>Hostel accommodation- We require hostel accommodation with 20-22 family units within the south of the city using the river as the border between the south and the north. We are seeking six of the units at any one time to be used by families with high support needs.</p> <p>Dispersed Accommodation- We also require up to 30 units of dispersed accommodation, with a maximum of 20 units in the south of the city using the river as the border between the north and the south.</p> <p><i>There may be further requirements in the future and with this in mind an open framework is being set up. Set out above are initial requirements – we will specify in future if/what further accommodation is needed.</i></p>
Definition of hostel	<p>A building, or adjoining buildings with shared communal facilities – including: Communal lounge Private space, other than bedrooms, eg separate meeting rooms, (sited where clients cannot be overheard) – available for interviews and meetings with staff, visitors and other clients. Facilities for staff to remain on site for significant periods of time, to include access to toilet (not within someone's flat) and hand washing/drink-making facilities, desk space and secure storage facility for client records. An amenity space for occupiers - private outdoor space. Units within the hostel should be suitable for small family households but with flexibility for use of some</p>

³ P1E Homelessness Statistics

	adjoining units for larger family provision if required.
Definition of Dispersed accommodation	Self contained family units with between one and four rooms suitable for sleeping. There should not be more than 4 units in one building where the entrance is shared.
Referral arrangements	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Referrals to the service will be made by Homelessness Prevention Team. • All referrals will be made via the council’s Housing Support Register (HSR). This is the access software for all homelessness prevention supported accommodation and is administered by the council’s Interim and Supported Accommodation Team (ISAT).
Partnership working	<p>Providers of family supported accommodation will meet together regularly to develop a consistent approach sharing best practice, attending joint meetings, shadowing, and any other measure that will lead to a cohesive supported service for families. The experience of a families moving through the supported pathway will be coherent and consistent.</p> <p>There will also need to be good links with other pathways, as well as other relevant agencies. These other agencies will include, but not be limited to, Bristol Mental Health, Debt Advice Services through the Advice Network, Domestic Violence and Abuse services, (through Next Link and Bristol Against Violence and Abuse) Recovery Orientated Alcohol and Drugs Services (ROADS), Golden Key and offender services.</p> <p>Providers will develop good links and information sharing protocols with Children’s Centres, Area Social Work teams, Think family, Early Help services (e.g. the upcoming multi-agency coordination hubs), other statutory agencies such as schools, police and health services and any other relevant agencies focusing on families and children.</p> <p>The service will engage in multi-agency working, including attending and co-ordinating multi-agency case and family conferences to promote a ‘joined up’ and, where appropriate ‘team around the family’, approach to resolving the families housing and support needs.</p>
Quality requirements	<p>Safeguarding</p> <p>All relevant staff to have appropriate DBS checks.</p> <p>All staff and services will be expected to fully comply with current policies and guidance of -</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • the Bristol Safeguarding Children Board https://www.bristol.gov.uk/policies-plans-strategies/bristol-safeguarding-children-board, and • the Bristol Safeguarding Adults Board https://www.bristol.gov.uk/policies-plans-strategies/bristol-safeguarding-adults-board <p>Equalities</p> <p>The council expects the provider to work to the principles of the Equality Act 2010, in particular the s.149 public sector equality duty. The provider must have due regard to the need to:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> Eliminate discrimination, harassment, victimisation and any other conduct prohibited under the Act; Advance equality of opportunity between persons who share a protected characteristic and persons who do not share it; Foster good relations between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it. <p>The provider will record equalities data for service users including information on all protected characteristics and will analyse data to compare outcomes for people with different characteristics. The provider will take steps to address any significant differences in outcomes for different groups and will also take steps to make sure its workforce is appropriately representative of its service users. The provider must not use the delivery of the service as an opportunity to promote religion or any equivalent belief.</p> <p>Participation</p>

The provider will involve service users in shaping, monitoring and improving the service in a planned and regular way. Participation should lead to changes in service delivery with the aim of achieving better outcomes.

Psychologically Informed Environment

All homelessness prevention services commissioned by the council are required to operate as 'psychologically informed environments' or 'PIEs'.⁴ There is no one way to ensure that your service is a PIE, but there are five areas that must be considered in service design and delivery, briefly summarised here:

- **Developing a psychological framework.** A psychological framework is a consistent approach to understanding human motivation. All staff should understand and contribute to the development of this framework, and it should underpin all policies and practice within the service.
- **The physical environment and social spaces.** The physical environment is connected to wellbeing, and the PIE should have the psychological framework in mind when making decisions about the physical environment. The Provider will have limited ability to change the physical environment, but will nevertheless need to ensure that the framework informs any decisions that are made.
- **Staff training and support.** This is a central element of a successful PIE. All staff must understand the framework, and how it applies to everyday practice. This is achieved through having and retaining the right staff, good quality on-going training arrangements and, crucially, **reflective practice**. The aim of reflective practice is to create a space for staff to learn from their experiences in order to improve practice. It also creates a space for staff to share experiences (both positive and challenging) in a supportive environment and to be able to critically reflect on the beliefs and assumptions that might influence their work. All staff will access reflective practice
- **Managing relationships.** Relationships are key to successful outcomes for residents. There are many relationships in supported accommodation, including between residents, staff, families, friends, other agencies etc. The PIE will have a consistent approach to relationships, grounded in the psychological framework.
- **Evaluation of outcomes.** As an extension of reflective practice, the service must reflect on what has been achieved for residents, how, why, and what could be done better in the future. In addition to the outcome reporting, the Council will meet with the Provider on a yearly basis to discuss outcomes, including service improvements.

Risk management

The service will work with families with a range of needs and will include some of Bristol's most vulnerable families. The provider will have the right to refuse an applicant if there is an unmanageable risk, but this will need to be kept to a minimum and the provider must take a positive approach to managing risk. Where the provider refuses a referral they must give full reasons, including what would need to change for that family to be accepted into their accommodation.

Security of information

The service must use secure email for the communication of sensitive personal data and suitable information sharing arrangements. Appropriate information sharing between the council services and other agencies will be critical to effective integrated working. The service must comply with General Data Protection Regulation and Information Security best practice in regard to how the service appropriately obtains, classifies, records, handles, stores, shares and deletes the information needed to provide this service.

⁴ Guidance on PIEs is published here: <http://www.homeless.org.uk/sites/default/files/site-attachments/Creating%20a%20Psychologically%20Informed%20Environment%20-%202015.pdf>

	<p>Complaints process The service will have a clear complaints process that is explained to families and will keep a record of complaints and the outcome of those complaints.</p> <p>Serious Incidents Serious Incident Reporting includes notifying the contract managers of incidents relating to Health and Safety, including environmental, and Safeguarding. This process is separate from and in addition to notifying relevant authorities of incidents (e.g. Care Direct in relation safeguarding) and forms part of the service provider’s contract compliance responsibilities, specifically ensuring that we are notified promptly of any serious incidents and what is being done.</p>																		
<p>Performance Indicators</p>	<p>Performance will be measured through monitoring the indicators below. During the contract period, these measures may be refined and targets adjusted in agreement with the provider.</p> <table border="1" data-bbox="336 719 1513 1514"> <thead> <tr> <th data-bbox="336 719 459 757">No.</th> <th data-bbox="459 719 1098 757">Performance indicators</th> <th data-bbox="1098 719 1513 757">Quarterly Target</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td data-bbox="336 757 459 938">1</td> <td data-bbox="459 757 1098 938">Moving through – Average length of stay</td> <td data-bbox="1098 757 1513 938">The average length of stay for families in the service will be 120 days (on average each unit to have a turnover of three families per year).</td> </tr> <tr> <td data-bbox="336 938 459 1010">2</td> <td data-bbox="459 938 1098 1010">Planned departures – Percentage of people leaving the service who leave in a planned way.</td> <td data-bbox="1098 938 1513 1010">At least 95% of departures must be planned.</td> </tr> <tr> <td data-bbox="336 1010 459 1122">3</td> <td data-bbox="459 1010 1098 1122">Refusals - The number of referrals refused on the grounds of risk as a percentage of relevant referrals (acceptances plus risk refusals).</td> <td data-bbox="1098 1010 1513 1122">No more than 7% of relevant referrals refused because of risk.</td> </tr> <tr> <td data-bbox="336 1122 459 1263">4</td> <td data-bbox="459 1122 1098 1263">Voids - The average number of nights that an accommodation unit is empty (void) between someone’s tenure ending and a new tenure beginning.</td> <td data-bbox="1098 1122 1513 1263">Void accommodation units must be available for nominations in an average of no more than 7 nights.</td> </tr> <tr> <td data-bbox="336 1263 459 1514">5</td> <td data-bbox="459 1263 1098 1514">Repeat homelessness - The percentage of people who have left the service in a planned way who return to homelessness. This will be measured by those people who have been referred to high support (L1 and L2) preventing homelessness accommodation in the six months following their planned departure.</td> <td data-bbox="1098 1263 1513 1514">No more than 5% of the people who left the service in a planned way to be needing L1 or L2 accommodation in the six months following their planned departure from the service</td> </tr> </tbody> </table> <p>Performance against targets 1-5 will be measured quarterly by the council commissioner by running relevant reports from the Housing Support Register (HSR). The provider must ensure that HSR records are up to date so that the performance monitoring is accurate.</p> <p>In addition to the HSR indicators, providers will need to submit the following information to the commissioner quarterly:</p> <p>Needs and engagement spreadsheet (see Appendix 1). This should be completed quarterly to show the support needs of the people resident in the accommodation on the last day of the relevant quarter (in the view of the service provider). The spreadsheet also shows engagement with specialist services and education, employment and training.</p>	No.	Performance indicators	Quarterly Target	1	Moving through – Average length of stay	The average length of stay for families in the service will be 120 days (on average each unit to have a turnover of three families per year).	2	Planned departures – Percentage of people leaving the service who leave in a planned way.	At least 95% of departures must be planned.	3	Refusals - The number of referrals refused on the grounds of risk as a percentage of relevant referrals (acceptances plus risk refusals).	No more than 7% of relevant referrals refused because of risk.	4	Void s - The average number of nights that an accommodation unit is empty (void) between someone’s tenure ending and a new tenure beginning.	Void accommodation units must be available for nominations in an average of no more than 7 nights.	5	Repeat homelessness - The percentage of people who have left the service in a planned way who return to homelessness. This will be measured by those people who have been referred to high support (L1 and L2) preventing homelessness accommodation in the six months following their planned departure.	No more than 5% of the people who left the service in a planned way to be needing L1 or L2 accommodation in the six months following their planned departure from the service
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	<p>Equalities information - This should be completed quarterly to show the protected characteristics of the people who: have accessed the service; have left the service; been refused from the service; and who work in the service. Template to be provided during the Implementation period.</p>
Monitoring Arrangements	<p>If there are any serious incidents in the pathway, the provider must inform the council as soon as possible, in line with the guidance around serious incident reporting.</p> <p>There will be an annual performance meeting between the council commissioner and the provider with the following standard agenda:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Performance - Consideration of the service’s performance relating to the performance indicators. • What the service has achieved - The service provider should present both qualitative and quantitative information to show how people accessing the service have been supported to become more independent. This should include wellbeing measures, in whichever way the service records them. • Access to employment, education and training - The service provider will show how the service it provides has enabled residents to access employment, education and training. • Equalities - Measures the provider has taken to ensure that the service is inclusive and successful in working with people with different protected characteristics. • The psychologically informed environment - How the service is working in a psychologically informed way and the impact that is having on service delivery. • Challenges and action planning for the coming period. <p>The agenda will change as required, and there may be a need for additional meetings in response to any concerns.</p> <p>Housing Support Register (HSR)</p> <p>It is vital that the HSR is updated in the following circumstances:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • If any support or risk information changes • Any other significant change in circumstances <p>If someone is evicted, the eviction protocol must be followed, which includes updating support and risk information relating to the eviction.</p>
Staffing	<p>The council does not wish to prescribe staffing levels and resources delivering the service. However, service providers will ensure adequate staffing levels to deliver the service required. All staff will be fully trained and have access to information to enable high quality service delivery.</p> <p>There will be regular staff satisfaction surveys to understand staff member’s attitudes to work to better inform the recruitment and retention of good quality staff.</p> <p>All employers in the pathway will pay their staff at least the Living Wage https://www.livingwage.org.uk/, as defined by the Living Wage Foundation, and will recognise trade unions for consultation over significant changes. If there are changes to the staff team that necessitate redundancies, the employer will offer voluntary redundancy before moving to compulsory redundancy.</p>
Business continuity	<p>The provider must have a suitable business continuity plan for the service.</p>
Sub-contracting arrangements	<p>If the main service provider wishes to sub-contract part of this service it must seek the approval of the council commissioner for the services either at the bidding stage if sub-contracting is</p>

	intended to be a core part of the proposal or prior to putting in place sub-contracting arrangements if such a change is needed for any element of the service provision after service delivery has commenced.
Marketing and branding	Any marketing, publicity or branding for the service, including the name of the service, must be agreed by the council's commissioner prior to publication.
Payment schedule	Contract price will be determined by tender process. Payments will be made monthly.
Contract deduction for poor performance	<p>If there is poor performance, the provider will try to resolve this. The council commissioner will also seek solutions to any problems that arise and will work with the partnership to improve performance. In exceptional circumstances where the indicators are significantly outside of the target, the council will withhold a proportion of the payment.</p> <p>Initially, there will be a focus on filling voids within a reasonable timescale.</p> <p>Where average void turnaround times are more than double the target in Supported Family accommodation in any quarter, BCC will withhold up to 10% of payments in the following quarter. Specifically:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • If the average void days figure is more than double the target in one quarter, the following payment run will be reduced by 5% (payments are made four weekly, in 13 equal instalments per year). • If the average void days figure is more than double in two consecutive quarters, the following payment run will be reduced by 10%. <p>The deduction will be taken from the payment run after the performance data has been finalised and circulated to providers. A variation notice will be issued which sets out in detail the amount that will be reduced. There will be an appeal process, if the appeal process is triggered, the deduction will not be actioned until the outcome of the appeal is known. If the deduction is upheld then a variation notice will be issued and deduction taken from the subsequent payment run.</p> <p>There are some circumstances in which some nights a room is empty will not count towards the void calculation. All issues around voids performance and payment issues are described in the associated void guidance document available to providers.</p>
Contract value and payment schedule	Payment for this contract will be made four weekly in arrears, i.e. in 13 equal instalments each year.