

BRISTOL CITY COUNCIL

Neighbourhood and People Scrutiny Commission

Thursday 27th October 2016

Report of: Joanna Roberts, Commissioning Manager
Children's Joint Commissioning Team

Title: Young People's Housing and Independence Pathway Plan

Ward: City-wide

Officer Presenting Report: Michele Farmer, service director Early Help

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RECOMMENDATIONS

1. That the Scrutiny Commission considers and comments on the proposals set out in the draft young people's housing and independence pathway plan (Appendix 1) summarised in this report.

Background

1. This draft plan has been jointly developed by commissioners of homelessness prevention and children's services. We have been consulting on the draft plan between 20th July and 17th October.
2. The draft plan sets out proposals for a new positive pathway approach in Bristol to support young people to remain living in their family networks, or help them access and sustain suitable housing where living with their family is not possible. It is for 16-21 year olds, including care leavers, and more vulnerable 22-24 year olds.
3. The plan includes:
 - Proposals to change the way we work so that we are better at helping young people and their families to prevent housing crisis and/or enable young people to access the housing and support they need in a more

planned way.

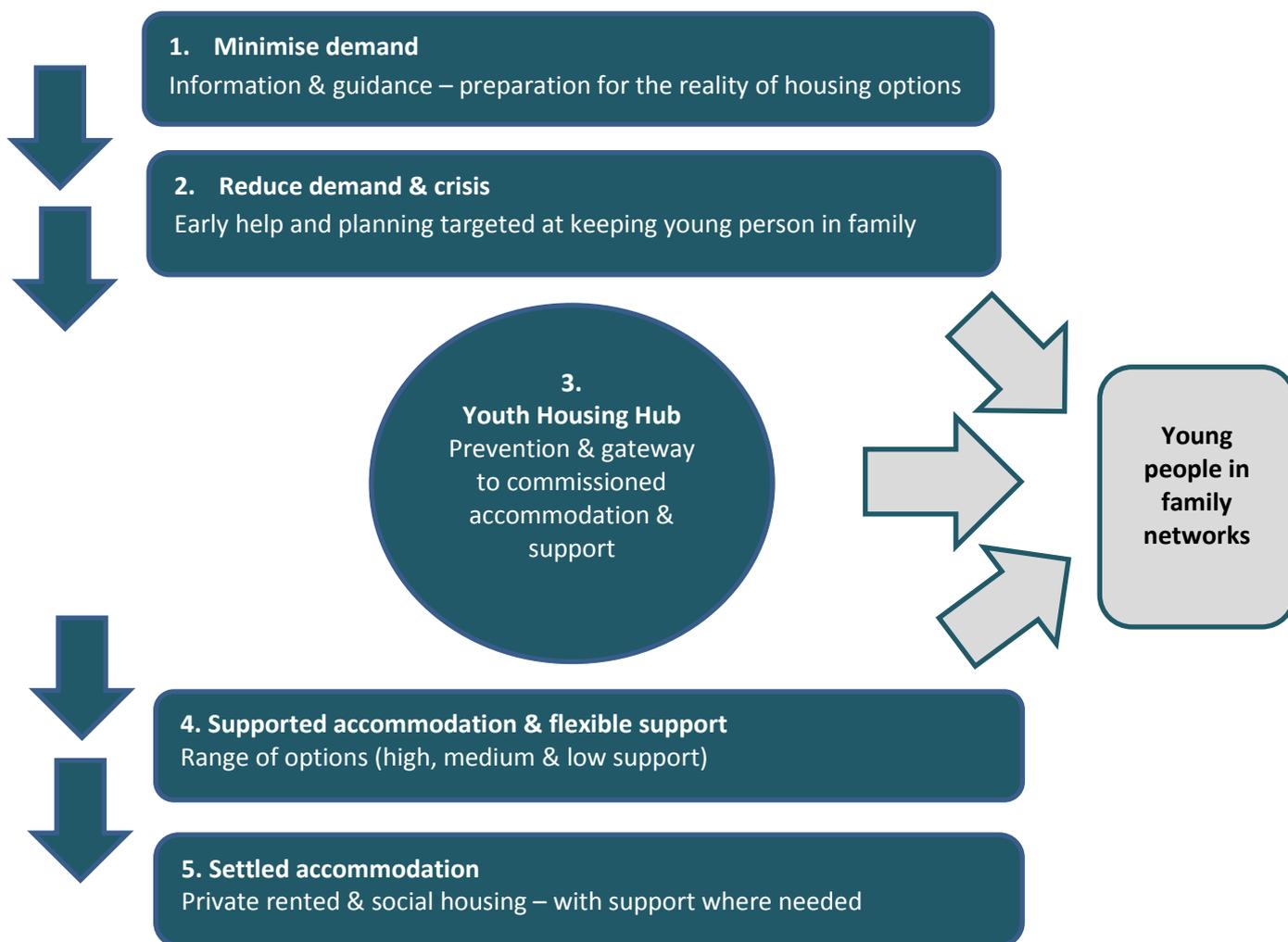
- Commissioning proposals about how we will secure the accommodation and support needed for Bristol care leavers as well as young people at risk of homelessness.

4. The plan is based on the 2015 positive pathway framework developed by the youth homelessness charity St Basil's. Our aim is to work more effectively across the council, and with partners, to provide an integrated approach to:

- Make sure young people, their families and support workers have information and guidance to understand housing options and plan when and how young people leave home or leave care.
- Prevent housing crisis and support young people to return home where safe, including returning home from care.
- Establish a youth housing hub to coordinate and carry out assessments, prevention work and be the single gateway to access accommodation and support.
- Ensure 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.
- Have a suitable range of accommodation and support options.
- Help young people with settled accommodation, which will usually need to be shared private rented housing.

5. Currently, we spend around £3.2M per year on these services. We anticipate that 3-5% savings will be required.

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



7. It is proposed that the youth housing hub is an integrated team, lead by an external partner and including council housing advisers and social workers.

8. For more information see the draft plan (Appendix 1).

Timetable

Activity	Timescale
Consult on draft plan	25.10.16 to 17.10.16
Design Youth Housing Hub	Aug 2016 – Jan 2017
Initial negotiations with providers re direct awards and design of Hub	Nov – Dec 2016
Key decision to approve final plan	Jan 2017
Tender process / negotiation	Jan – July 2017
Majority of new services start	August 2017

Consultation

- 9. Internal:** We have involved staff from these teams in developing these proposals:
- Early help
 - Children's social care, including children in care and after
 - Youth offending team
 - Housing advice
 - Adult social care commissioning
 - Special educational needs and 0-25 service
- 10. External:** We have consulted widely, including an electronic survey, workshops and focus groups with the following stakeholders:
- Young people who have used homelessness services
 - Unaccompanied asylum seekers
 - Providers of supported accommodation and other services for people at risk of homelessness
 - Youth service providers, including Bristol Youth Links providers
 - Commissioners of mental health services
- 11.** Feedback has been very positive about the proposed pathway and youth housing hub and stakeholders have provided lots of input to inform the design of the hub service.
- 12.** Some consultees have raised issues about elements of our proposals for stage 4 – the range of supported accommodation, in particular:
- The number of units of accommodation should not be reduced
 - There needs to be more medium level supported accommodation
 - Young people's services should include some provision available for 22-24 year olds
- Some stakeholders have also argued that the age range for the youth housing hub should be extended to all 16-25 year olds at risk of homelessness and not be restricted to 16-21 year olds.

Public Sector Equality Duties

- 13.** A full equalities impact assessment is currently being developed.

Appendices:

Appendix 1 – Draft young people's housing and independence pathway plan

LOCAL GOVERNMENT (ACCESS TO INFORMATION) ACT 1985

Background Papers:



Bristol City Council

Young People's Housing and Independence Pathway Plan

Draft for consultation

July 2016

v.18.7.16

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Introduction and context

Executive summary

This plan sets out proposals to develop a new positive pathway approach to support young people to remain living in their family networks, or access and sustain suitable housing where living with their family is not possible.

The plan includes:

- Proposals for changing the way we work so that we are better at helping young people and their families to prevent housing crisis and/or enable young people to access 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.¹ The detailed pathway 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 support workers 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 return home where safe, 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 £3.2M 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 all service areas are under pressure to reduce expenditure.

Purpose of this document

This draft plan has been prepared for a formal consultation exercise about our proposals. We are keen to get views on these proposals from children in care, care leavers, other young service users, landlords, providers and other practitioners.

This draft plan is provisional and subject to change following the end of the consultation process. The consultation will be critical in shaping the pathway and how we commission services. We may also have to make changes to the plan if there are significant changes to the available budget or to the welfare benefits entitlement of young people who need housing pathway accommodation.

Please see Section C for more details about how to provide your feedback. The consultation period will last for 12 weeks between 25th July and 17th October 2016. Following this, we will consider your feedback and make revisions to the plan. We intend that the final Young People's Pathway Plan will be adopted by the Mayor in January 2017. We will then commence any competitive procurement exercises required with a view to awarded contracts by April 2017 with new services in place by July 2017.

¹ http://www.stbasils.org.uk/files/2015-08-35/10_FINAL_pathwaysA4_booklet_98812.pdf

Introduction and context

Local strategic context

Mayor's Vision – Bristol's new Corporate Vision is being developed. This will be based on the priorities set out by the new Bristol Mayor, which included a number of priorities relevant to this plan:

- Tackle homelessness - Minimise homelessness through early intervention and work with and support young people who are at risk of becoming homeless.
- Support people into work – Develop a 'passport for employability' for all young people in Bristol.
- Promote good mental health in the wider community – Emphasise 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.²

Bristol Preventing Homelessness Strategy 2013-2018 - Aims for Bristol to provide integrated accessible services that deliver focussed preventative support in order to stop the escalation of homelessness issues, reduce repeat homelessness and significantly reduce the call on other statutory duties.³

Bristol's Strategy for Children, Young People and Families – This draft strategy is currently being consulted on.⁴ It will include a clear shared vision for Bristol and priorities for 2016-2010 along with an annual action plan.

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.⁵ 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.

Other drivers for change

Improving the pathway - Current contracts are approaching the end and there is only scope to temporarily extend contracts for up to a further year. This provides the opportunity to collectively look at the housing needs of older teenagers leaving care, and at prevention and crisis provision for other vulnerable homeless young people. 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 entail being badged as homeless. Best practice in other areas of the country demonstrates the need for an integrated approach to address housing, support and education needs of older adolescents (and their families/carers). Bristol currently has a fragmented service offer for this group of young people.

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).

² <https://www.bristol.gov.uk/housing/housing-strategy-and-supporting-strategies>

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

⁴ https://bristol.citizenspace.com/cyps/cypf-2016-2020/consult_view

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

Budget pressures - In Bristol there is a projected £60m budget gap between April 2017 – March 2020, 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.

Education/employment Issues - In Bristol NEET (not in education, employment or training) levels are high for care leavers. Also, three quarters of the young people in the homelessness pathway accommodation are NEET. 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.

Who is the new pathway for

It aims to meet the needs of more vulnerable young people including:

- All 16-17 year olds at risk of homelessness and/or who become children in care.
- All care leavers up to 21 years old (or 24 if particularly vulnerable, disabled or in education).
- 18-21 year olds at risk of homelessness with additional support needs.
- 22-24 year olds at risk of homelessness with a learning difficulty, disability or other reason making them particularly vulnerable.
- Pregnant young women and young parents at risk of homelessness with high support needs.

Pathway objectives

The key outcomes we seek to achieve for 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

- 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 living in the 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 health⁶, offending⁷ and lower educational attainment⁸, amongst other poor outcomes for people. Getting these 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 £2.11⁹. Thus money spent on housing support and preventing homelessness saves money in areas like health, education and criminal justice.

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.
- 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 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.¹⁰
- Maintain / develop a healthy provider market.

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

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

⁸ www.gov.scot/resource/doc/1125/0104564.doc

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

¹⁰ 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

Early intervention, prevention and access to service – gaps and issues

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.
- Research suggests that information and guidance should be targeted at those most at risk.
- 1625 currently do 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.

Early help and planning

- Currently our approach focuses on addressing homeless crisis – there is no 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 those working with young offenders to make housing plans.
- There is currently limited ability to plan for young people coming out of care and custody 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.
- It is particularly hard to plan housing for care leavers with higher support needs and young offenders leaving custody.
- Mediation and other approaches to supporting young people to stay in family networks (e.g. family group conferencing) are very successful in other areas. We need an effective mediation service, connected to a family-based respite accommodation option.

Assessment and response

- The current system is fragmented. Young people in services say 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, 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 pathway (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

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
- 36 families living in young parents' supported accommodation
- 80 young people plus about 60 young parents getting floating support

These specialist young people's services are for people aged 16-21 and those aged 22-25 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'.¹¹

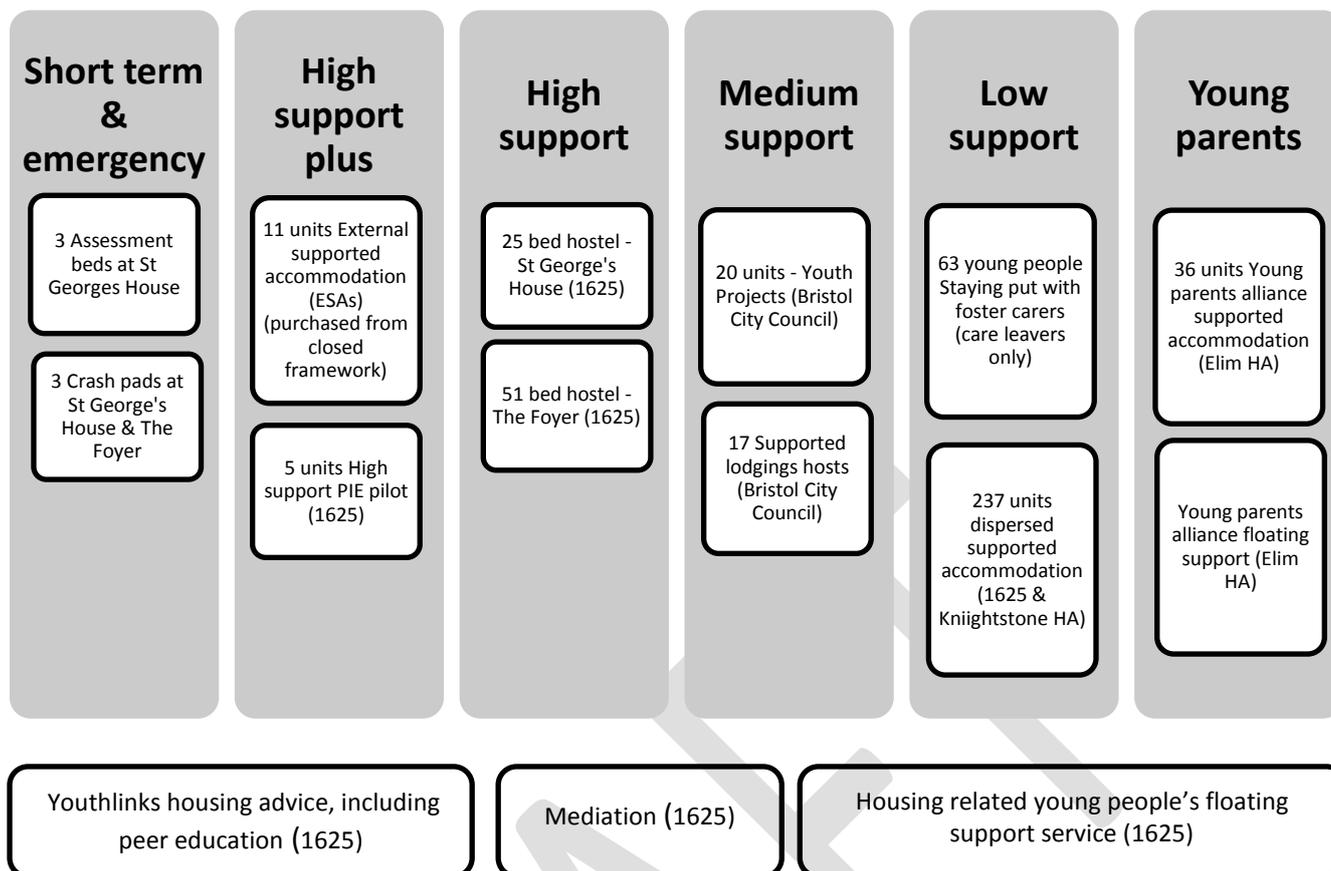
Young people's supported accommodation is categorised as follows:

- **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 should not require a managed front door and be able to sustain their home with a co-ordinated support package from relevant professionals, which would include a maximum 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 journey in high support accommodation (St Georges) 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. Outcomes from low support accommodation are good – with almost 90% having a positive move on into settled accommodation.

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



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 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 were aged over 21 years when placed.

Short-term and emergency accommodation

- St George's House assessment beds are not suitable as the hostel environment does not encourage return to family and young people are at risk of exposure to negative influences.
- 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, maybe 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 currently have a number of young people with gang affiliation living in ESAs. Only three providers on 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) 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 some risk to others; managing this can demand a disproportionate amount of staff time and makes the scheme an unsuitable environment for some more vulnerable young people.
- Having only one provider of high support services is perceived to cause difficulties for young people who are evicted from one hostel and sometimes not accepted into the other.

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 are under-used and 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.

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.¹² 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 services¹³ 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.

¹² 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-9d00-677dcfeff342.pdf>

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

Stakeholder feedback

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.

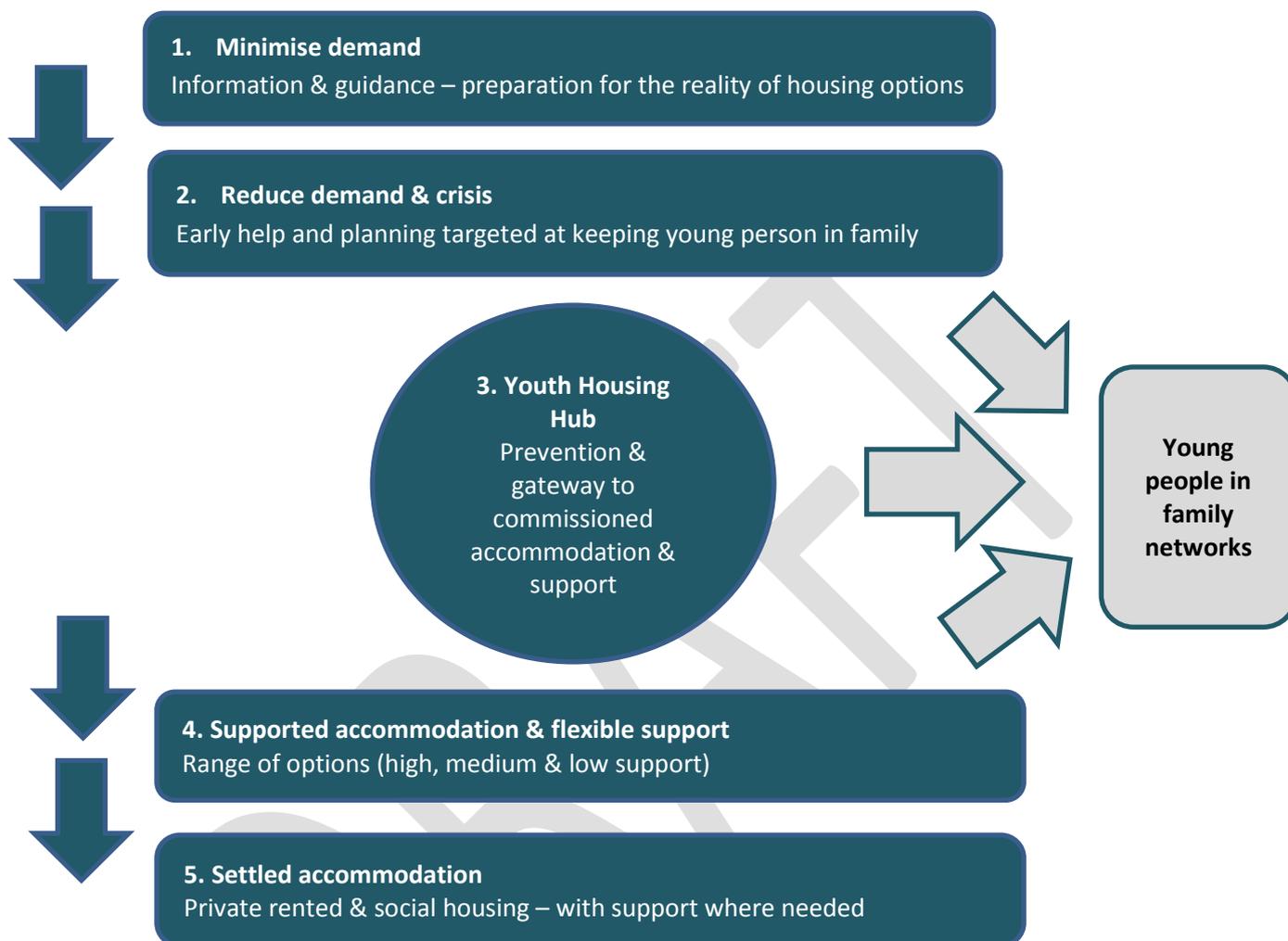
Suggested improvements

- 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.



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.

The pathway will be for 16-21 year olds plus 22-25 year olds who are particularly vulnerable. Research is very clear that 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.¹⁴ For this reason, we seek to enable continuity of relationships and, where possible, minimise the number of different people working with a young person and their family.

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

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 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 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 develop and communicate clear messages about the reality of housing options, emphasising the importance of sharing and accessing the private rented sector.
- We will provide independence training to children in care and care leavers in staying put arrangements.
- We will arrange for young people in care to have 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.

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 be focused on keeping the young person in their family where safe to do so – this will include helping older teenagers in care to return to live with their families. This whole-family approach will require culture change across the council and the whole system of organisations that work with young people, to develop a commitment to working with young people in the context of their families.
- We will commission effective mediation to support this. We will also further consider how best to work with young people in the context of their family and develop approaches to working with the family together using 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 avoid young people going into housing crisis.
- We will commission Nightstop arrangements 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.

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

- A more detailed design for the hub and business case will be developed during the consultation on this plan. We will involve young people in the design process.

- The council is considering the feasibility of developing this hub further into a more integrated youth service, but this is outside the scope of this pathway plan.
- The hub is likely to be a virtual or co-located team, including council staff and one or more external providers, coordinating and/or delivering the following services:
 - Prevention – information and guidance, mediation and family group conferencing, peer education in schools. Outreach support for young people at risk of homelessness.
 - Assessment – Holistic assessments of all young people presenting at risk of homelessness, including home visits. This will include a joined up approach to Part VII¹⁵ and s.20¹⁶ assessments of 16-17 year olds.¹⁷
 - Advice on housing options – For young people, their families and workers as well as training for advisers and workers.
 - Allocation of housing and support – Joint planning for care leavers and offenders. Controlling access to supported accommodation, including prioritisation. 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.

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 diagram below summarises what we propose to commission.

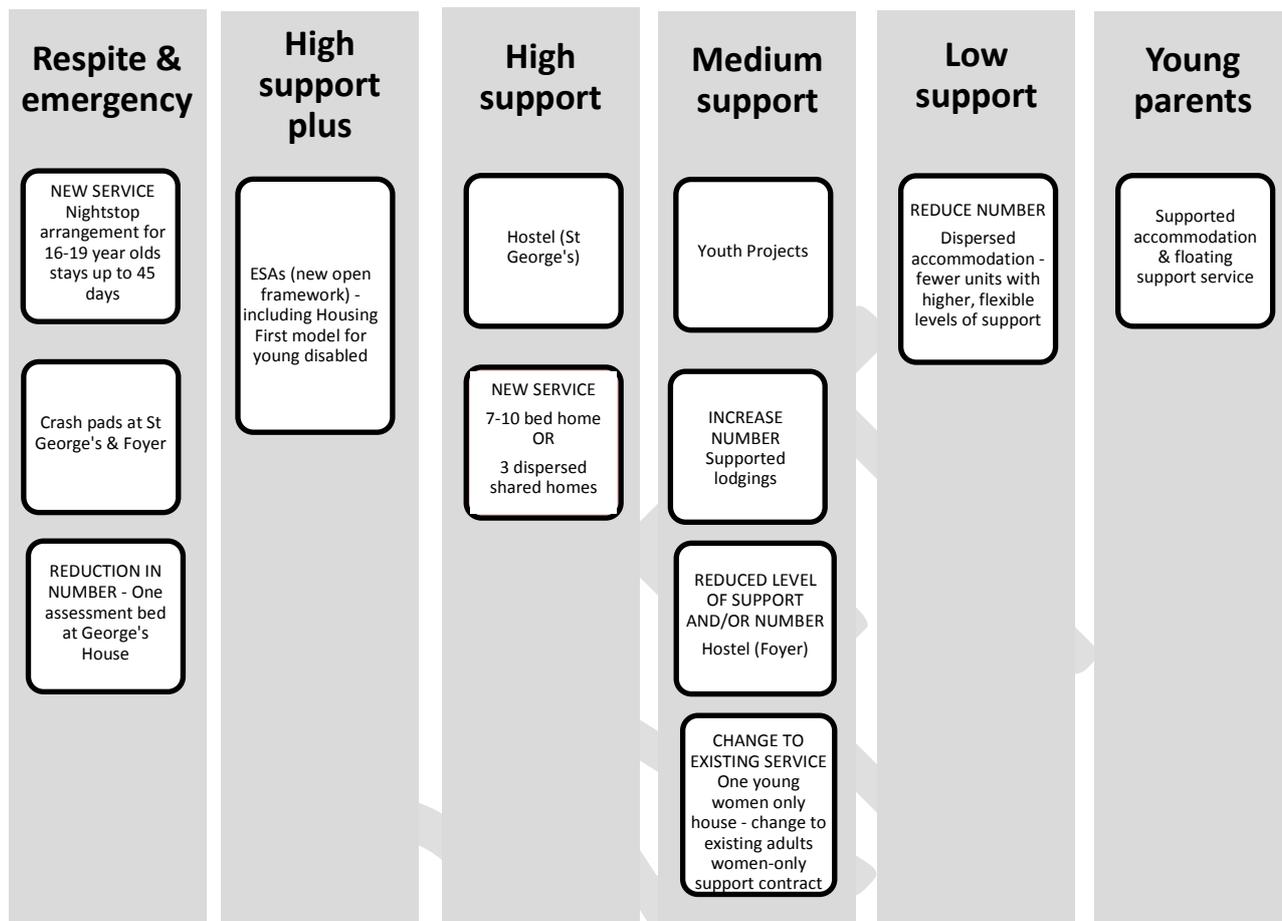
The intention is that each young person will enter the accommodation pathway at the appropriate level of support to meet their needs. The first step for a young person who is not known to the council is likely to be an emergency/short term placement, or St George's House (or the 7-10-bed home if they are deemed high risk). During their first substantive placement, we 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 best suited to meet their needs and then progress through the different support levels as appropriate to their needs. We expect that the usual length of stay in the pathway will be 12-18 months, with the average in high support accommodation being 3 months. The appropriate length of stay in high support plus accommodation will depend entirely on the needs of the individual young person and will be set out in their housing pathway plan.

¹⁵ 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.

¹⁶ 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.

Young people’s housing pathway – Recommended options for range of accommodation and support

The diagram below sets out the supported accommodation we propose to commission, showing whether the proposed services are new, unchanged or will be subject to some other change.



The detailed proposals for each accommodation type are described below in section C. Our intention is that there are two 'Key Pathways' through the accommodation, with a different provider for each pathway. The aim of these pathways is to make it easier for each of the two providers to enable continuity of relationships between young people and their support workers, and to facilitate young people’s progression through the pathway to greater independence and onto settled accommodation. It will be possible for young people to move across pathways, but normally young people will move through the pathway with the same provider. Other provision will be outside of these pathways, i.e. emergency/short term accommodation, high support plus accommodation, the 10-bed high support home and young parents’ services. The two Key Pathways are:

	High support	Medium support	Low support
Key Pathway 1		The Foyer	60-110 units of dispersed accommodation
Key Pathway 2	St George’s House	NA	60-110 units of dispersed accommodation

We intend to restrict access to young people’s services to 16-21 year olds as well as 22-25 year olds who are particularly vulnerable. This means we will need about 15% fewer units of accommodation overall. This reduction will be in the number of dispersed accommodation units (from 237 to approximately 160). We would like the excess dispersed accommodation to be converted for use as either homeless adults supported accommodation or emergency accommodation for families (this will be negotiated with landlords, but is outside the scope of the young people’s housing plan).

For all of the supported accommodation types set out below the key performance indicators will measure the following outcomes:

- Planned departures
- Rate of refusals
- Average length of stay in the service (or Key Pathway)
- Percentage of young people who are in education, training or employment
- Void times

For the specialist young parents' service key performance indicators will also include:

- Parents report an improvement in their parenting skills
- Parents reporting improved health and well-being
- Children reach their developmental milestones
- Breastfeeding at 6-8 weeks
- Smoking cessation
- Second conception rates

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** - All supported accommodation providers will be required 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 will require further support, the accommodation provider should provide this themselves 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.
- **Key pathway providers** – We will ask these providers what they will offer to help secure move on accommodation for young people in their pathway.
- **Monitoring long-term outcomes** - We will continue to monitor whether or not those who have left supported accommodation are back on the Housing Support Register within six months of moving on.
- **Surplus dispersed accommodation** – As we will be commissioning significantly fewer units of dispersed accommodation, there may be scope for using some of the surplus as move-on accommodation. We are interested to hear proposals as to how this could best be achieved.
- **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.

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. We are consulting on these recommendations and invite potential providers and other stakeholders to feedback on these proposals. In particular, if a provider wishes to challenge any proposal about how we buy and/or our rationale, we ask that they raise this with us during the consultation period.

Stage 1 - Procurement recommendations

Description of contract / service	How we will buy	Rationale
Youth hub partner contract – See stage 3 procurement recommendations	See stage 3 below	See stage 3 below

Stage 2 - Procurement recommendations

Description of contract / service	How we will buy	Rationale
Mediation service – A service to work with young people, their family and friends, to help rebuild relationships and, if possible, enable the young person to live with their family or wider network. The service will use mediation and other approaches to working with the whole family.	Competitive tender process – request for quote	A competitive process will ensure it is a transparent and fair process and ensure value for money.

Stage 3 - Procurement recommendations

Description of contract / service	How we will buy	Rationale
Youth hub partner contract – Provide information, advice and assistance as well as floating support to about 80 young people at any one time who are at risk of homelessness. The partner will operate within the Youth Housing Hub 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. It will also help to address other issues identified in the young person's assessment. This is likely to include help to access ETE and may include other issues such as managing money, substance abuse, low level mental health needs, positive relationships.	Competitive tender process with negotiation. Following an initial assessment, providers will be invited to negotiate and develop their final tender. The aim is to enable co-production of the service design.	A competitive process will ensure it is a transparent and fair process and ensure value for money. The negotiation will allow bidders to develop proposals in partnership with the council.

Stage 4 – Procurement/provider recommendations

Description of contract / service	How we will buy	Rationale
Emergency/short-term accommodation – crash pads Emergency access accommodation on a camp bed in a private, lockable room not otherwise used for accommodation. The provision of crash pads will be included in both of the Key Pathway contracts.	See Key Pathway contracts below	See Key Pathway contracts below

<p>Emergency/short-term accommodation – Nightstop 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, including mediation, 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>	<p>Direct award to Bristol Nightstop as a pilot.</p>	<p>Our assessment is that there is not another provider able to deliver this service locally. Other interested providers should contact us during the consultation period if they wish to bid to provide this service.</p>
<p>High support plus – External supported accommodation 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.</p>	<p>Open procedure to establish a new 'open' framework (ideally sub-regional). The framework will operate as a form of Dynamic Purchasing System from which we may purchase individual units or blocks of supported accommodation.</p>	<p>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>High support plus – 1625 PIE high support pilot Provision of five units of self-contained accommodation with 10 hours support weekly per unit. Option to increase to ten units.</p>	<p>Extend pilot until new external support accommodation is established.</p>	<p>We will have the option of block purchasing supported accommodation of this nature from the framework.</p>
<p>High support Provision of support and housing management for young people who present a risk to others and/or themselves who are likely to have a range of needs including a combination of: experience of complex trauma, offending, gang affiliation, mental health needs, sexually predatory behaviour, learning difficulty, Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder, ASD/Asperger's. Option 1 - 7-10 bed home - High level of support including 24 hour staffing and managed front door at a 7-10 bed home (property to be specified by the council). Option 2 –3-4 dispersed shared homes - High level of support including a resident adult at each home (provider to secure properties).</p>	<p>Open competitive tender process to provide support.</p>	<p>A competitive process will ensure it is a transparent and fair process and ensure value for money.</p>
<p>Key Pathway 1 – St George's House & dispersed accommodation Provision of support and housing management: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ St George's House (25-bed accommodation owned </p>	<p>Negotiated procedure without prior publication, i.e. negotiate with</p>	<p>Minimise disruption to service users as 1625 is current provider at St</p>

<p>by Stonewater Housing Association) - high level support, including the provision of one crash pad.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 50-110 units of dispersed accommodation (the provider will provide the accommodation which must be at locations spread across the city) - lower level, flexible support; may include peer support or resident landlord arrangements. 	<p>current provider, 1625. If we are unable to reach an agreement that secures value for money, we will have an open competitive tender process.</p>	<p>George's House and of dispersed accommodation. Secure sufficient dispersed accommodation (currently owned or managed by 1625). Ensure the future viability of 1625 as an organisation, a key local partner.</p>
<p>Key Pathway 2 – The Foyer & dispersed accommodation</p> <p>Provision of support and housing management:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Foyer (51-bed accommodation owned by Knightstone Housing Association) - medium level support, including provision of two crash pads. 50-110 units of dispersed accommodation (the provider will provide the accommodation which must be at locations spread across the city) - lower level, flexible support and may include peer support or resident landlord arrangements. 	<p>Negotiated procedure without prior publication, i.e. negotiate with current provider, Knightstone Housing Association. If we are unable to reach an agreement that secures value for money, we will have an open competitive tender process.</p>	<p>Minimise disruption to service users as KHA is current provider of dispersed accommodation. Secure the Foyer and dispersed accommodation owned by KHA. Enable optimum use of the Foyer building.</p>
<p>Youth Projects</p> <p>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>	<p>Bristol City Council to continue as provider – with revised service level agreement.</p>	<p>Current service delivers value for money. Outcomes are good and there are strong, effective working relationships between the service and social work teams.</p>
<p>Supported lodgings</p> <p>A service to recruit and support 25 hosts (an increase from current levels) who provide a supportive and stable home environment accommodation for young people with medium to low level support needs.</p>	<p>Bristol City Council to continue to provide – with revised service level agreement.</p>	<p>Current service delivers value for money. Outcomes are good and there are strong, effective working relationships between the service and social work teams.</p>

<p>Young parents – accommodation and support An integrated service providing floating support and supported accommodation (including its support and housing management at four schemes: Lanercost and Wigton (11 self-contained units owned by Elim), Priory Court (10 self-contained units owned plus 5-bed shared house by Orbit (Heart of England)), Owen Street (two self-contained flats owned by Places for People) and Kilburn Court (8-bed shared housing owned by Places for People). The floating support will give short-term advice and assistance, pre-tenancy and resettlement support and help young parents sustain their tenancies.</p>	<p>Extend the current contract to 21st July 2018 with some variations. Review in July 2017.</p>	<p>Current contract allows an extension until July 2018. Current service can meet needs and deliver value for money if some, limited variations are agreed.</p>
<p>Floating support The provision of floating support will be included in the Youth Housing Hub partner contract – see stage 3.</p>	<p>See stage 3</p>	<p>See stage 3</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 used 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

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