

<i>item:</i>	7
<i>report:</i>	CYP1208

## **HOUSING SUPPORT FOR CARE LEAVERS**

### **By Bill Alexander**

#### **Summary**

At its December 2007 meeting, the Highland Council recognised that aftercare services for looked after children are in need of further development, including the need to develop housing support options that keep young people away from general homelessness provision. The Council agreed that the Joint Committee on Children & Young People should further consider how it might address enhanced housing support for care leavers.

This report sets out and seeks agreement for two specific housing support initiatives for care leavers: supported accommodation and a supported lodgings scheme.

#### **1. Introduction**

- 1.1 This report reflects the commitment of the Council and its partner agencies to fulfil the role of corporate parent for children and young people who are looked after.
- 1.2 Following last year's review of leaving care services and the subsequent reports presented to the Joint Committee (JYP23/07 and JYP06/08) the following two proposals have been developed to better meet the housing needs of Young People Leaving Care.
- 1.3 These proposals enhance and complement existing services for young people who leave care by providing a wider range of supported accommodation options. They are part of a pro-active approach, focussed on the prevention of young homelessness, rough sleeping and the use of bed and breakfast accommodation. This is intended to achieve the following outcomes:
  - Reduction in numbers of young people aged 16-21 who have been involved in tenancy failures; multiple tenancy failures.
  - Reduction in numbers of young people aged 16-21 in bed and breakfast accommodation.
  - Increase in the number of young people aged 16-21 sustaining employment, community living and further education.
  - Improvement in the emotional wellbeing and mental health of young people.
  - Development of young people's social, emotional and practical skills.
  - Reduction in the expenditure of The Highland Council on bed and breakfast accommodation for former Looked After young people.
  - Development of a network of supported lodging accommodation

throughout The Highland Council area.

- Reduction in the vulnerability of young people and increased ability to face the risks and challenges that society presents.

## **2. Background**

- 2.1 The average age of young people leaving care in Scotland is 16/17 compared to the average age of 22 for other young people starting to live independently.
- 2.2 Some resilient young people with support from Through and Aftercare Services can manage in tenancies. It is however unrealistic to expect all young people leaving care to support themselves independently in their own tenancy. They may require a period of support, care and guidance on a day to day basis to learn the skills required to manage their own home.
- 2.3 It is also important that we have a range of support and housing provision available, to meet the range of individual requirements and needs. .
- 2.4 Work also continues to take place to ensure that the young people's Health, Social and Educational needs are addressed. Links have been made with Inverness Council on alcohol and substance misuse, Health, Careers and Barnardos to ensure comprehensive plans are in place for each individual and to provide information and group work as required. The plans will be co-ordinated by a Lead Professional with the young person and professionals having clear time limited tasks in relation to identified outcomes.
- 2.5 Support and plans have to be targeted at the needs of the individual young person and monitored and reviewed on a regular basis. It is imperative that any plans are created in full partnership with the individual young person addressing their identified targets and needs for the future. These plans will be in line with the principles of Getting It Right for Every Child and will build on the strengths and pressures that the young person and the people who know them have identified. Each young person will have contributed to their Pathways Plan and have identified clear goals for their future. To achieve their goals, they require support to be able to move into independence and meet their full potential.
- 2.6 As part of this, a Joint Protocol has been developed between Integrated Children's Services, Criminal Justice Services and Barnardos Springboard that clearly identifies the Lead Professional and the responsibilities on each party to the protocol.
- 2.7 Quality Assurance processes are being established to ensure these systems are in place and are affective. This is as part of the ongoing self evaluation of Through and Aftercare Services to make sure that young people's needs are met.
- 2.8 In addition, the two initiatives proposed in this report will require to be registered and inspected by the Care Commission.

## **3. Dedicated Supported Accommodation**

- 3.1 The Highland Homeless Trust has identified an Inverness property, that can be

developed in partnership with the Housing Service and Social Work Service, to meet the needs of Young People where the Local Authority has a statutory duty under Through and After Care Regulations.

- 3.2 In line with current regulations, this property would provide facilities for seven young people between the age of 16 to 19 years. This age range could be extended for young people who continue in full time education.
- 3.3 It is intended that this unit will provide 24 hour staff cover with considerable security in place to ensure the young people's safety.
- 3.4 Two full time workers have been identified to provide the day to day care and guidance for the young people. The identified workers have considerable expertise and experience in supporting the identified age range and developing independence skills.
- 3.5 Housing Services have undertaken to identify suitable move on accommodation once the assessment identifies that the young person is ready to live independently.
- 3.6 The cost for the unit is £168,140, as detailed in Appendix One. This makes the cost for each young person of £461.92 per week.
- 3.7 This cost can be met by utilising existing Supporting People funding, along with budgets that are presently used to fund young people in bed and breakfast accommodation. Supporting People funding will provide 2 hours of housing support per person day, equating to £80,262, and meeting just under half the costs of the service. This will require the Council to fund a weekly rent of £241.42 per room per week, to meet the full costs of the accommodation. This is comparable to the highest rents that are currently paid by the Social Work Service.

#### **4. Supported Lodgings Scheme**

- 4.1 The development of a supported lodgings scheme will build upon the existing partnership between Barnardo's and Highland Council, to enhance service provision to vulnerable young people and meet a gap in service provision.
- 4.2 Barnardo's Springboard currently provides the Highland-wide Through Care and After Care service, and has responsibility for strategic and policy development in regard to the needs of young people aged 15 years - 21 years that are looked after, preparing for the transition to adulthood and independent living. We would view this provision as part of the development of the inter-agency protocol and procedures for providing accommodation and support to young people leaving care across Highland.
- 4.3 The supported lodging scheme would recruit, assess the suitability of, train and support 12 supported lodging providers (approved host families/couples/ individuals providing accommodation within their own homes). The supported lodging providers will be committed to helping young people develop personal skills for living independently.
- 4.4 The following targets would be set for the development of the scheme.

### **Year 1 Targets**

- Recruitment of support staff initially at Project Worker level.
- Recruitment of staff, carers and development of service.
- Policy and procedures for service development.
- Referral process negotiated and agreed.
- Establishment of inter-agency assessment panel, including young people, to approve carers.
- Recruitment, assessment, approval and training of 6 supported lodging providers.
- Identify capacity with providers for provision of crisis care for young people.
- Matching of identified young people with supported lodging providers.
- Establishment of links with housing agencies to identify move-on accommodation.

### **Year 2 Targets**

- Recruitment of further 6 supported lodging providers
- Review and make recommendations to ensure sustainable service

4.5 The cost for the scheme will be £186,746, as detailed in Appendix Two.

4.6 The cost includes £46,346 for management and staffing, and £140,400 for accommodation costs for 12 young people. This makes the cost for each young person of £232.42 per week.

4.7 The Housing & Social Work Committee is considering a report that will make £50,000 Supporting People funding for the housing support costs in relation to this scheme. This would make a rental charge of £219.14/week, which is equivalent to what has been paid previously to landlords who have offered a supported lodgings service.

## **5. Start-up Costs**

5.1 Both of these initiatives would require some start-up funding, as work is done on the plans of these young people, and directly with these young people, to support them into new housing provision. This will include ensuring that comprehensive GIRFEC assessments have been undertaken to ensure that each young person is appropriately placed and supported.

5.2 It is estimated that this will involve additional housing support of around £40,000, which is again being considered separately by the Housing & Social Work Committee.

## **Recommendation**

Members are asked to consider this report, and agree the development of the dedicated supported accommodation and supported lodgings schemes for care leavers in Highland.

**Bill Alexander**

Head of Children's Services

## Appendix 1: Dedicated Hostel Accommodation

Hostel Budget	
<b>Personnel</b>	<b>Budget</b>
Staffing	£143,040.00
<b>Operating</b>	<b>Budget</b>
Insurance	£1,200.00
Maintenance and repairs	£3,000.00
Office supplies	£2,700.00
Postage	£100.00
Telephone	£1,500.00
Utilities	£4,600.00
Rates	£3,000.00
Laundry	£2,000.00
Cleaning	£5,000.00
Security	£2,000.00
<b>Total Expenses</b>	<b>Budget</b>
	£ 168,140

## Appendix 2 - Supported Lodgings

Figures for revised Supported Lodgings Proposal	Year 1
	<u>Core Costs</u>
	<u>Full Year Estimate</u>
Recruitment Costs - Sundry	2000
Insurance - Staff	190
Payroll Costs	33270
Private Vehicle Expenses	2000
Public Transport	100
Accommodation	100
Meals	50
Parking Fees & Tolls	10
Registration Fee	1600
Insurance - Property	16
IT Recharges	640
Postage	200
External Course/Conference Fees	250
Internal Course (recharge)	640
VAT Input Costs	0
VAT Recovery	0
Short Term Hire	100
Petrol & Diesel	100
People Charges	430
Publicity	1000
Finance & Administration	217
<b>SUB TOTALS</b>	<b>42913</b>
Management Charge	3433
<b>TOTALS</b>	<b>46346</b>
Rent and support x 12 placements	<b>140400</b>
<b>TOTALS</b>	<b>186746</b>