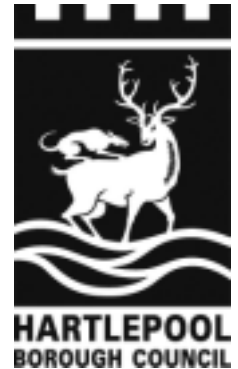


CHILDREN'S SERVICES SCRUTINY FORUM AGENDA



Tuesday, 24 March 2009

at 4.30 pm

in the Council Chamber, Civic Centre, Hartlepool

MEMBERS: CHILDREN'S SERVICES SCRUTINY FORUM:

Councillors Aiken, Fleet, Griffin, Kaiser, London, McKenna, Preece, Shaw and Simmons,

Co-opted Member: David Relton

Resident Representatives: Christopher Akers-Belcher, Joan Steel and Sally Vokes

Young Peoples Representatives: Arran Frame, Danielle Howie, Dean Jeffries, Chris Lund, Gillian Pounder and Graham Skinner

1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

2. TO RECEIVE ANY DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST BY MEMBERS

3. MINUTES

3.1 To confirm the minutes of the meeting held on 3 March 2009 (to follow).

4. SHORT ICE BREAKER EXERCISE

5. RESPONSES FROM THE COUNCIL, THE EXECUTIVE OR COMMITTEES OF THE COUNCIL TO FINAL REPORTS OF THIS FORUM

No items

6. CONSIDERATION OF REQUEST FOR SCRUTINY REVIEWS REFERRED VIA SCRUTINY CO-ORDINATING COMMITTEE

No items

7. **CONSIDERATION OF PROGRESS REPORTS / BUDGET AND POLICY FRAMEWORK DOCUMENTS**

No items

8. **ITEMS FOR DISCUSSION**

Scrutiny Investigation into Appropriate Accommodation for Homeless Young People for Whatever Reason

- 8.1 Evidence from Stockton-on-Tees Borough Council
- (a) Covering Report – *Scrutiny Support Officer*;
 - (b) Verbal Evidence from representatives from Stockton-on-Tees Borough Council.
- 8.2 Evidence from Housing Hartlepool
- (a) Covering Report – *Scrutiny Support Officer*;
 - (b) Verbal Evidence from a representative from Housing Hartlepool.
- 8.3 Evidence on Supported Accommodation
- (a) Covering Report – *Scrutiny Support Officer*;
 - (b) Homeless Young People – *Head of Business Unit (Young Persons), Children's Services Department*;
 - (c) Verbal Feedback from tour of Supported Accommodation in Hartlepool held on 11 March 2009;
 - (d) Verbal Feedback from Children's Services Network Good Practice Seminar held on 28 November 2008;
 - (e) Verbal Feedback led by members of Hartlepool Young Voices who visited MP Iain Wright's Ministerial Department supported by the Chair of the Children's Services Scrutiny Forum on 18 March 2009.
- 8.4 Draft Final Report Recommendations – *Scrutiny Support Officer*

8. **ISSUES IDENTIFIED FROM FORWARD PLAN**

9. **ANY OTHER ITEMS WHICH THE CHAIRMAN CONSIDERS ARE URGENT**

ITEMS FOR INFORMATION

- i) **Date of Next Meeting:- Tuesday, 21 April 2009, commencing at 4.30 pm in the Council Chamber, Civic Centre, Hartlepool**

CHILDREN'S SERVICES SCRUTINY FORUM

24 March 2009



Report of: Scrutiny Support Officer

Subject: SCRUTINY INVESTIGATION INTO APPROPRIATE ACCOMMODATION FOR HOMELESS YOUNG PEOPLE FOR WHATEVER REASON – EVIDENCE FROM STOCKTON-ON-TEES BOROUGH COUNCIL – COVERING REPORT

1. PURPOSE OF REPORT

1.1 To inform Members of the Forum that representatives from Stockton-on-Tees Borough Council have been invited to attend this meeting to provide evidence in relation to the Children's Services Scrutiny Forum's ongoing investigation into 'Appropriate Accommodation for Homeless Young People for Whatever Reason'.

2. BACKGROUND INFORMATION

2.1 Members will recall that at the meeting of this Forum on 13 January 2009, the Terms of Reference and Potential Areas of Inquiry / Sources of Evidence for this scrutiny investigation were approved by the Forum.

2.2 Consequently representatives from Stockton-on-Tees Borough Council have agreed to attend this meeting to submit evidence as good practice evidence from a neighbouring local authority.

2.3 During this evidence gathering session with Stockton-on-Tees Borough Council it is suggested that responses should be sought to the following key questions:-

- (a) How much of a problem is youth homelessness in Stockton; with additional reference to the numbers of rough sleepers and 'sofa surfers'?

- (b) What barriers were overcome that enabled Stockton Borough Council to achieve the Regional Centre of Excellence for Youth Homelessness in 2007 and 2008?
- (c) How is information made accessible to ensure young people are aware of where to turn to when facing crises that may lead to homelessness?
- (d) What accommodation provision is on offer and utilised in Stockton?
- (e) Do you have any other views / information which you feel may be useful to Members in forming their recommendations?

3. RECOMMENDATIONS

- 3.1 That Members of the Forum consider the views of those representatives from Stockton-on-Tees Borough Council in attendance at this meeting in relation to the questions outlined in paragraph 2.1 of this report.

Contact Officer:- James Walsh – Scrutiny Support Officer
Chief Executive's Department - Corporate Strategy
Hartlepool Borough Council
Tel: 01429 523647
Email: james.walsh@hartlepool.gov.uk

BACKGROUND PAPERS

The following background paper was used in the preparation of this report:-

- (i) Report of the Scrutiny Support Officer titled 'Scrutiny Investigation into Appropriate Accommodation for Homeless Young People for Whatever Reason – Scoping Report,' presented at the meeting of the Children's Services Scrutiny Forum of 13 January 2009.

CHILDREN'S SERVICES SCRUTINY FORUM

24 March 2009



Report of: Scrutiny Support Officer

Subject: SCRUTINY INVESTIGATION INTO APPROPRIATE ACCOMMODATION FOR HOMELESS YOUNG PEOPLE FOR WHATEVER REASON – EVIDENCE FROM HOUSING HARTLEPOOL – COVERING REPORT

1. PURPOSE OF REPORT

1.1 To inform Members of the Forum that representative from Housing Hartlepool has been invited to attend this meeting to provide evidence in relation to the ongoing investigation into 'Appropriate Accommodation for Homeless Young People for Whatever Reason'.

2. BACKGROUND INFORMATION

2.1 Members will recall that at the meeting of this Forum on 13 January 2009, the Terms of Reference and Potential Areas of Inquiry / Sources of Evidence were approved by the Forum for this scrutiny investigation into 'Appropriate Accommodation for Homeless Young People for Whatever Reason'.

2.2 Consequently a representative from Housing Hartlepool has been invited to this meeting to provide verbal evidence on the issues that young people face in relation to this Forum's investigation into 'Appropriate Accommodation for Homeless Young People for Whatever Reason'.

2.3 During this evidence gathering session with a representative from Housing Hartlepool, it is suggested that responses should be sought to the following key questions:-

(a) What is the role of your organisation in assisting the provision of appropriate accommodation for homeless young people?

- (b) To what extent and in what ways does your organisation educate young people to:-
- (i) prevent youth homelessness?; and
 - (ii) ensure young people know where to seek advice and support when they become homeless?
- (c) Do you have any other view / information which you feel maybe useful to Members in forming their recommendations?

3. RECOMMENDATIONS

- 3.1 That Members of the Forum consider the views of the representative from Housing Hartlepool in relation to the questions outlined in section 2.3.

Contact Officer:- James Walsh – Scrutiny Support Officer
Chief Executive's Department - Corporate Strategy
Hartlepool Borough Council
Tel: 01429 523647
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BACKGROUND PAPERS

The following background papers were used in the preparation of this report:-

- (i) Report of the Scrutiny Support Officer titled 'Scrutiny Investigation into Appropriate Accommodation for Homeless Young People for Whatever Reason – Scoping Report,' presented at the meeting of the Children's Services Scrutiny Forum of 13 January 2009.

CHILDREN'S SERVICES SCRUTINY FORUM

24 March 2009



Report of: Scrutiny Support Officer

Subject: SCRUTINY INVESTIGATION INTO APPROPRIATE ACCOMMODATION FOR HOMELESS YOUNG PEOPLE FOR WHATEVER REASON – EVIDENCE ON SUPPORTED ACCOMMODATION – COVERING REPORT

1. PURPOSE OF REPORT

- 1.1 To inform Members of the Forum that key partners have been invited to attend this meeting to provide evidence in relation to the Children's Services Scrutiny Forum's ongoing investigation into 'Appropriate Accommodation for Homeless Young People for Whatever Reason'.

2. BACKGROUND INFORMATION

- 2.1 As part of the evidence gathering process for the undertaking of 'Appropriate Accommodation for Homeless Young People the following evidence will be presented to Members at this meeting:-
- (a) Written evidence from the Children's Services Department on accommodation and support provision for young people in care;
 - (b) Verbal evidence from Members undertaking the tour of Supported Accommodation for Young People in Hartlepool held on 11 March 2009 (written summary attached as **Appendix A**);
 - (c) Verbal evidence from the Chair of the Children's Services Forum and Participation Officer, Bamardos who attended the 'Accommodation and Care Leavers – Pulling Together' conference (written summary attached as **Appendix B**);

(d) Verbal evidence led by members of Hartlepool Young Voices who visited MP Iain Wright's Ministerial Department supported by the Chair of the Children's Services Scrutiny Forum held on 18 March 2009.

2.2 In line with good practice, Members of this Forum who were in attendance on the site visits under section 2.1 (b), (c) and (d) are requested to share / discuss their findings at today's meeting.

3. RECOMMENDATIONS

3.1 That Members of the Forum note the content of this report and discuss their findings from the evidence outlined in paragraph 2.1 of this report.

Contact Officer:- James Walsh – Scrutiny Support Officer
Chief Executive's Department - Corporate Strategy
Hartlepool Borough Council
Tel: 01429 523647
Email: james.walsh@hartlepool.gov.uk

BACKGROUND PAPERS

There were no background papers referred to in the preparation of this report.

APPENDIX A

CHILDREN'S SERVICES SCRUTINY FORUM – TOUR OF SUPPORTED ACCOMMODATION IN HARTLEPOOL

11 March 2009

Notes

Present:

Councillors: Jane Shaw, Frances London, Sheila Griffin, Mary Fleet, Martyn Aiken and Chris McKenna

Co-opted Young People: Michael Burford

Officers: Lynda Igoe, Principal Housing Advice Officer
Siobhan Rafferty, Supported Housing Co-ordinator
James Walsh, Scrutiny Support Officer

As part of the evidence gathering process, Members of the Children's Services Scrutiny Forum toured the supported accommodation in Hartlepool on 11 March 2009. The findings of those Members who attend the site visit were as follows:-

Scott Grange

- Operated by Stonham Housing.
- Has 11 self contained flats with their own kitchen
 - Communal kitchen available for social / cooking training activities
- The service gives skills and support to the young people housed within Scott Grange.
- The scheme operates for over 18s up to the age of 65
 - Majority are at younger age range of 18-25
 - All residents are male
- Scheme primarily for ex-offenders or those at the risk of offending.
- Normally stay for 2 years, with outreach support available for an addition 2 years once they have left Scott Grange.
- Scheme has been operating for over 20 years
 - Building has been used for a variety of social housing / hostel for a lot longer
 - Neighbours are very accommodating and there are no complaints about residents of Scott Grange
- Before being accepted at Scott Grange, residents have to undergo risk assessment and interview
 - Unsuccessful applicants are returned to homeless team at Hartlepool Borough Council.
- Almost always at 100% capacity

APPENDIX A

- Waiting list of roughly 5-7 people
 - 4-5 of these have been definitely accepted and waiting for current residents to move on
- Scheme links in with other supportive groups in the town such as those helping to solve substance misuse or mental health issues.
- Funding comes from Supporting People for the support for the residents and Housing Benefit for the accommodation costs.
 - Supporting People commission services on a 3 year contract
 - Ongoing monitoring occurs, but full review towards end of 3 year contract

Evidence from resident at Scott Grange

- Had a background of offending.
- Recently on remand for a conviction that was dropped due to wrongful identification
 - Advantage of Scott Grange was that accommodation was still available on release to avoid the movement from jail to jail as they had somewhere to go
- Without the accommodation at Scott Grange, would have found themselves on the street and possibly even dead.
- Probation Officer referred them to Scott Grange, as the resident was not aware of how to access the provision on offer.
- Has been delays in payment of benefits, but Scott Grange has managed to provide supervised finance and loan until benefit comes through.
 - Without this level of support, would be on the streets, hungry and at a high risk of offending.
 - Went to support worker at Scott Grange who helped with temporary finances, as resident was concerned that they may steal to raise enough money for food.
- Can access drug rehabilitation support that either comes to Scott Grange or is accessed externally.

St Paul's

- 5 self contained flats.
 - Shared kitchen and bathroom facilities.
- Takes young people aged 16-18 who are homeless or at risk of homelessness.
- 4 members of staff provide intensive 24 hour support to the residents of St Paul's.
- Scheme dual funded by Support People and Children's Services in a 2:3 ratio.
 - Young People from Children's Services are normally those leaving care.
- Minimum length of stay is 6 months to 1 year.

APPENDIX A

- Current waiting list is 6 who have been accepted and another 2 waiting for interview.
 - Some young people can be on the waiting list so long that they never actually achieve a placement at St Paul's.
- Scheme has been operating since 1984.
- There have been no formal complaints from neighbours about St Paul's residents.
 - Manager will periodically visit local residents to check that they have no concerns.

Gainford House

- Operated by Stonham Housing.
- 10 units available for young people aged 16-25.
 - 6 higher dependency units, 4 'move on' units.
 - Majority of referrals are at lower age range of 16-17.
- Young people stay between 6 months – 2 years
 - Average is 10 months.
- Major planning controversy and objections over building
- Operational since 2006
 - No complaints from neighbours about residents in Gainford House
- There is currently a 100% occupancy
 - Waiting list varied for 2-9 young people.
- 80% of young people referred are homeless
 - Other young people come from leaving care team, youth offending team and CAMHS.
- Currently developing an emergency bed provision to open in April
 - Initially will operate as weekday on call service
 - Plans to expand to 7 days a week, once facility can be properly tested
 - Looking at it becoming a rest bite provision until other suitable accommodation can be found for the homeless young person.
- Plans to improve the surrounding area
 - Sponsorship to improve waste ground at front of building
 - Enclosed area for waste bins

APPENDIX B

CHILDREN'S SERVICES SCRUTINY FORUM – CHILDREN'S SERVICES NETWORK CONFERENCE 'ACCOMMODATION AND CARE LEAVERS – PULLING TOGETHER', ORGANISED BY THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT INFORMATION UNIT.

28 November 2008

Notes

Present:

Councillors: Jane Shaw (Chair)

Hartlepool Young Voices Representative: Kelly Goulding, Participation Officer, Barnardos

Officers: James Walsh, Scrutiny Support Officer

INVESTIGATION APPROPRIATE ACCOMMODATION FOR HOMELESS YOUNG PEOPLE FOR WHATEVER REASON

As part of the evidence gathering process, the Chair of the Children's Services Forum and the Participation Officer, Barnardos attended the Children's Services Network Conference on 'Accommodation and Care Leavers – Pulling Together'.

The findings of the Chair and the Participation Officer, Barnardos who attend the conference were as follows:-

- Every year around 8,000 young people leave care with varying levels of need and support to live independently.
- The key to supported accommodation is not to ask 'what would you like' as this can be unrealistic, more sensible to concentrate on what is available.
- Pre-tenancy programmes that introduce young people to independent living are extremely beneficial in reducing tenancy failures.
- 'Training Flats' can not only enhance pre-tenancy programmes, but can allow young people in a secure environment to realise:-
 - that independent living is not for them just yet;
 - how to budget effectively - with support mechanisms in place;
 - the pitfalls that can result in tenancy failures
- That Pathway Plans for young people should be constantly monitored and evidenced by all groups involved with the young person, including the young person themselves.
- That by 2010 there is a governmental target to reduce the utilisation of Bed & Breakfasts and Emergency Housing by 50%.

APPENDIX B

- At the moment the definition of 'suitable housing' is varied and guidance does not make implicit what would constitute as suitable.
- Independent sector providers of accommodation can be 'challenging' in accepting young people as tenants.
- That there is an increasing demand nationally for sufficient suitable accommodation for young people.
- That foster carers should be involved in any planned movement of young person in care into independent living.
- That foster carers should be educated or be provided with support to help work with their foster children as they embark on the transition into independent living.

CHILDREN'S SERVICES SCRUTINY FORUM

24 March 2009



Report of: Head of Business Unit (Young Persons)

Subject: HOMELESS YOUNG PEOPLE

1. PURPOSE OF REPORT

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to provide background information in relation to the statutory responsibility that the Authority has in relation to accommodation provision for young people leaving care.

2. BACKGROUND INFORMATION

PURPOSE OF THE CHILDREN (LEAVING CARE) ACT 2000

The Children (Leaving Care) Act 2000 came in to effect on the 1st of October 2001. This Act gave local authorities the statutory duty of providing additional services to care leavers. The Act did not repeal the Children Act 1989 in respect of s.24 for those care leavers who are defined as 'Qualifying'.

The purpose of the Children (Leaving Care) Act 2000 is to improve the opportunities, life chances and outcomes for children, young people and young adults who are in and have left care so they can be supported to live successful and independent lives. The act was based on the research report "**Me, Survive Out There?**" (D.O.H.1999). This paper painted a poor picture of the outcomes for young people leaving the public care system. The act also sought to promote the concept that young people should not leave care under the age of 18 and when they do leave, they should be prepared for and able to cope with, the transition to independent or supported living.

SUITABLE ACCOMMODATION

A key role of the Personal Adviser is to support the young person/adult in accessing suitable and appropriate accommodation. This means liaising and working in partnership with staff from local authority housing providers as well as other agencies e.g. a Housing Trust in order to achieve this outcome.

3. CURRENT PROVISION

The Leaving Care Team of 4 staff are co located with the Connexions Service in the town centre. They provide the whole range of leaving care services to the 60 young people who are eligible. In addition to providing advice and assistance in relation to the other aspects of their life in particular employment and training they assist young people to access suitable accommodation.

Current resources accessed within Hartlepool are:

- Housing Hartlepool who provide access to 1 and 2 bedroom houses/flats.
- Tees Valley Housing Association provide 6 flats arranged around a court yard in Anna Court for a mother and baby unit.
- Tees Valley Housing Association also provide 5 beds at St Paul's semi independent unit (16-19 years olds). Both resources have 24 hour staffing and provide a floating support service to support young people when they move on in to independent living.
- Stonham Housing Group provide Avondene, a semi independent unit with 11 flats within the complex. This provides 24 hour staffing support for 18-24 year olds who require a lower level of support to achieve independence
- Stonham Housing Group also provide Scott Grange which has 11 flats within the building. This accommodation has an increased client to staff ratio which reflect the level of need.
- Stonham Housing Group also provide Gainford House which has 6 rooms for 16 to 24 year olds with complex needs within their building, and 4 flats outside the building 2 of which have facilities for a disabled person. Currently Gainford is being reconfigured in to a 12 bed resource having just had permission for a 'crash pad' (short term support).
- Richmond Fellowship have a number of flats for young people with mental health needs (18 year old onwards).
- Endeavour Housing have 2 properties in Hartlepool which provide 6 flats within them. They provide support during office hours.
- Accent Homes offer one bedroom flats but not specifically for our client group.
- Guinness Trust offer 1 and 2 bedroom properties.
- Three Rivers offer 1 and 2 bedroom self contained flats.
- Nightstop have recently extended their services to cover Hartlepool, and currently have 3 providers within the town from whom we can commission services.

Siobhan Rafferty who is the Supported Housing Officer and Sylvia Marshall, Housing Advice Officer support Leaving Care Services in progressing accommodation issues. This is a valuable link which enables young people to receive a thorough and timely service. Siobhan Rafferty also sits on the Vulnerable Person Panel where Leaving Care Services also have a voice.

4. OUTCOMES

There is a national performance indicator in relation to those who have received a service from the leaving care team and who are in suitable accommodation on their 19th birthday. The Authority has consistently exceeded the national average even taking into account that one or two young people have been in custody on their birthday each year.

Currently there are no young people supported by the Leaving Care Team who are in unsuitable accommodation. Several choose to live with friends on an informal basis in spite of being offered alternative accommodation.

5. RECOMMENDATIONS

Members of the Forum to note the content of the report.

The Local Authority to continue to explore supported accommodation options in conjunction with private providers with whom the Department already have working arrangements.

Contact Officer:- Jim Murdoch, Head of Business Unit (Young Persons)
Hartlepool Borough Council
Tel: 01429 275144
Email: jim.murdoch@hartlepool.gov.uk

BACKGROUND PAPERS

The following background paper was used in the preparation of this report:-

- (i) The Children (Leaving Care) Act 2000
- (ii) Leaving Care Policy & Procedure, rev 7.1.09, author Keith Munro
- (iii) 'Me Survive Out There', DoH 1999

CHILDREN'S SERVICES SCRUTINY FORUM

24 March 2009



Report of: Scrutiny Support Officer

Subject: SCRUTINY INVESTIGATION INTO
APPROPRIATE ACCOMMODATION FOR
HOMELESS YOUNG PEOPLE FOR
WHATEVER REASON -- DRAFT FINAL
REPORT RECOMMENDATIONS

1. PURPOSE OF THE REPORT

- 1.1 To facilitate a discussion from Members of the Forum about the recommendations they wish to include in the Forum's Draft Final Report on 'Appropriate Accommodation for Homeless Young People for Whatever Reason'.

2. BACKGROUND INFORMATION

- 2.1 Members will recall that at the meeting of this Forum on 13 January 2009, the Terms of Reference and Potential Areas of Inquiry / Sources of Evidence were approved by the Forum for this scrutiny investigation into Hartlepool Borough Council's Foster Care Service.
- 2.2 Consequently Members will be aware that the Draft Final Report is due to be considered by this Forum at their meeting of 21 April 2009. In order to formulate conclusions and recommendations to be included in the Draft Final Report, Members are invited to present any conclusions or recommendations relating to the topic of 'Appropriate Accommodation for Homeless Young People for Whatever Reason', as a result of the evidence gathered by this Forum since the 13 January 2009.

3. RECOMMENDATION

- 3.1 That Members of the Forum discuss conclusions and recommendations to be included in the Draft Final Report to be presented to Members at the meeting of this Forum on 21 April 2009.

Contact Officer: - James Walsh – Scrutiny Support Officer
Chief Executive's Department - Corporate Strategy
Hartlepool Borough Council
Tel: 01429 523647

Email: james.walsh@hartlepool.gov.uk

BACKGROUND PAPERS

The following background papers were used in the preparation of this report:-

- (i) Report of the Scrutiny Support Officer titled 'Scrutiny Investigation into Appropriate Accommodation for Homeless Young People for Whatever Reason – Scoping Report,' presented at the meeting of the Children's Services Scrutiny Forum of 13 January 2009.