**Young Person’s Positive Pathway Notes from 22nd February 2017**

**Group Discussion 1: Stages 1 & 2 of the Positive Pathway**

**Information and Advice to YP and families**

**Early Help targeted at children most at risk of becoming homeless**

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**What are the gaps, pressures and challenges?**

Consistency across Kent in procedures with dealing with young people.

Need for clarification of what early help offers. Threshold document needs to be available.

Local challenges with agency relationships in some districts.

Local Housing Authorities (LHAs) deal with all client groups, not just young people.

Services change quite frequently, e.g. troubled families

Maintaining links with the right contacts - District managers should be first point of contact.

LHAs have no support duty, just accommodation.

No co-location.

**What would make a difference for 16-17 year olds?**

Reality check at prevention stage to ensure 16/17 year olds know the likely outcomes.

Co-operation of provision of information between SCS and LHAs to ensure each are aware of each other’s roles.

Representatives to attend each other’s team meetings.

Early Help Triage and Central Duty Team as the same team.

**What will make a difference to 18+ young people and care leavers?**

Communicate with each other about clients to allow early working before crisis point.

Teams from Early Help, SCS could be co-located - hot desks.

Educating families as to reality of what housing/support is actually available.

Centralised list of services to be available.

Links to websites for young people, e.g. Hi Homie.

LHAs would find it useful to have statistics from KCC of those young people that did not reach housing but were dealt with by Early Help or AST.

Helping young people to be tenancy ready for when they leave care - now becoming part of the pathway plans.

18+ may not have access to services if not formally looked after what happens to unplaced 18+?

**Priority action points**.

* Co-located services
* Web based Leaflets available for all 16/17 year olds, showing the realities of leaving home, including realistic budgeting. Should also inform YP of their options should they become homeless and what that would mean.
* List of Early Help district managers to be made available to LHAs.
* LHAs to look at KELSI website.
* Sharing of information so all aware of what actions have been taken (case summary).
* Agency reps attending each other’s team meetings.
* Clear understanding of what each agency’s role and remit is.
* All agencies to give clear and consistent message across Kent to YP and their families on what the process is when dealing with homelessness/potential homelessness.

**Group Discussion 2: Stage 3 of the Positive Pathway**

**An integrated or joined up response to prevent homelessness, assess needs and manage the gateway to commissioned accommodation**

**What are the gaps, pressures and challenges?**

Need to be robust in evaluation.

Crash Pad facilities – how can these be provided and paid for?

Asking providers to provide this type of accommodation.

From LHA point of view, sending referrals in which are not then allocated to the AST.

Housing only told of work with homeless YP at crisis point.

**What would make a difference for 16-17 year olds?**

Agencies talking from the outset of the case.

SCS – getting the same procedures in place across Kent.

Consistency across Kent – making sure that we are all following same procedures and giving same advice. Message that these YP are still the responsibility. Of their parents.

**What would make a difference for 18+ young people and for care leavers?**

Early notification to housing about unravelling housing/potential homelessness problems in LAC accommodation.

Need to appreciate all services have severe financial pressures.

**Priority Action Points**

Roll out the South Kent pilot across Kent

Need to put housing on notice when YP presents as homeless/at risk of homelessness, with open communication between LHA and KCC as the LHA may have knowledge of the YP and his/her family.

LHA needs to be aware of the threshold for referring YP to Early Help.

Build positive relationships including commissioning.

Recognising changes in legislation and adapting decisions/processes in order to comply.

Find our youth hub.

**Group Discussion 3: Stage 4 of the Positive Pathway and move on support for care leavers**

**Commissioned supported housing to meet a range of needs**

**YP and Care Leavers prepared and supported into independence**

**What are the gaps, pressures and challenges?**

Uncertainty about the future of supported accommodation.

 **What could you do to improve your supported accommodation provision for 16-17 year olds, care leavers and other vulnerable 18+ young people?**

Maidstone has purchased own temporary accommodation. A cost but potential savings.

More targeted/subjective support.

**Priority Action Points**

Need to be involved in the former SP Specialist Children Services housing panels

Band B of the Housing Register for move on. Most LHAs are doing this, but consider backdating the effective dates.

Tenancy Training so that YP is able to sustain tenancy and improve independent living skills.

Decide priority by area rather than district.

LHA to purchase own temporary accommodation –there is a cost, but there will be long term savings.

Explore crash pad facility.

Reciprocal cross district allocations for YP at risk or where parents in different locations for example.

**Group Discussion – Move on Housing Options**

* In order to enable move on the YP should be helped to:
* Develops skills in order to obtain employment (link with Job Centre)
* Undergo tenancy training including budgeting/understanding their rights and responsibilities
* Understand the reality of the available housing options

More support should be provided once the YP has moved on to ensure successful independent living.

Parents taking responsibility – could still help the YP even if they don’t live together.

Commissioning across services – pooling assets, joint commissioning.

Joint strategic planning.

Provide some case studies for senior managers at KCC.

Do an assessment of supported units of housing stock across County.

Look at shared housing options (e.g. university style) and also converting some supported accommodation 1 bed flats into 2 ‘bedsit’ style units with shared kitchen and bathroom, bearing in mind that shared accommodation would not suit everyone, but there may be young people who would like to share to avoid isolation. Listen to voice of young person as to suitable independent accommodation.

Target those people under-occupying homes in the social rented sector because of the spare room subsidy to allow young person as a lodger. Arrange a forum, inviting those with spare rooms and young people.

Educate next generation re the fact that social housing is not now a house for life and that affordability needs to be looked at.

There is a need to change the mind set of young people to demonstrate the reality of the housing market.

**Summary**

The workshop was a very positive one where it was apparent that Children’s services and Housing Services really want to work together in order to prevent homelessness for 16/17 year olds and care leavers.

 The main points in order to create a positive pathway across Kent for Young People are as follows:

The South Kent pilot with Early Help and ASTs to be rolled out across Kent.

Local Housing Authority to be alerted early on in the process if a YP is states that he/she is homeless/at risk of homelessness, as they may have knowledge of the family and be able to assist.

Home visits to parents/carers as soon as possible – not just a phone call.

Reminder to parents to take responsibility for their children.

Information and advice for YP and their families to be realistic and transparent - to be web based – perhaps a phone app?

Clear information between agencies from outset and an agreement that the message given to the YP and their families is clear and consistent from all, with the knowledge that this is the process, no matter which agency the YP goes to.

More work with Leaving Care services to give housing advice/options when needed.

Joint strategic planning to look at various accommodation options including crash pads.

Refresh YP Homeless Protocol.