



Ministry of Housing,
Communities &
Local Government

Preventing and Reducing Youth Homelessness in Bradford

Feedback to Bradford City Council

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Youth Homelessness Advice and Support Advisers

- Youth homelessness advisers are funded by DfE and MHCLG and report to both
- Experienced officers seconded to MHCLG
- Focus on prevention of homelessness for care leavers, 16/17s and other vulnerable 18 – 25 year olds
- Work with all authorities in England responding to requests and some targeted work as needed
- Can offer some authorities with particular challenges some on going support



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Bradford: strengths to build on

- Corporate ambition to bring together improving outcomes generally for young people with current regeneration and business development opportunities
- A history of joint working between Housing and Children's Services
- Your Local Offer to care leavers is embedded in your wider offer to young people – a reflection of the corporate commitment to young people growing up and living in the city and other areas of the authority
- Commitment to improve accommodation and support options for young people who are not able to remain in the family home or with foster carers
- Emerging Early Help offer for teenagers via targeted youth support
- Strong corporate commitment to listen to and take into account the views of young people in shaping of services



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Overview of your current position

- Over a quarter of the population in Bradford is under the age of 20 and 7 in 10 of the population is under 50.
- H-Clic data returns indicate approximately 22% of all applicants owed a prevention or relief duty are aged 16 – 24 between April – December 2019
- 24% of the identified support needs for those who are homeless or threatened with homelessness related to young people aged 16 – 25 in Bradford between April and December 2018.
- Your looked after children population has risen significantly over the last 3 years, with a noticeable increase in the proportion of newly looked after teenagers
- Limited information is available for young people about housing options and homelessness, how to access advice and support or information about the realities of living independently.
- There are some supported housing options but these are limited for those with higher needs.
- Settled housing options are limited for young people generally in both social and private rented sectors



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Bradford Youth Housing and Youth Homeless Strategies: Recommendations

Agree with partners an overall objective to design youth homelessness out of young people's experience of growing up in Bradford. This could be linked to your housing strategy and ambitions for general housing supply and options for retaining and supporting younger people in Bradford.

Frame any youth homelessness strategy and action plan around 5 core areas, which are the national 'Positive Pathway' elements:

- Universal information and advice to young people and their parents/carers
- Early identification, advanced planning and Early Help offer to young people and their families /carers
- Jointly delivered preventative responses to young people at the point of homelessness crisis
- A range of suitable accommodation and support options locally for those who need additional support
- Housing options - social, private rented and other options



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Current position: Universal information and advice

- There is no easy to find information giving bespoke and realistic housing information and advice targeted at young people and their families /carers
- Young people who are in crisis are not able to easily find out where to go
- Colleges and schools are not linked into the new arrangements for delivering housing options and homelessness prevention work



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Development of universal information and advice

- Work with young people to design information and advice about housing options and relevant information relating to money /affordability and realities of living away from home/care. Also consider what information would be useful for parents/carers
- Consult with young people and other agencies about which communication channels young people can easily access information through
- Consider if there is any possibility of schools and colleges delivering information. This can be done in many ways, and via PHSE or as part of the 'financial capability' element of the curriculum. Methods of delivery include peer led sessions, on line resources, youth theatre companies.



Early identification and help to young people and their families

- Consider the Early Help /Targeted Youth Support offer to 13 – 17 year olds and their families through the lens of avoiding homelessness later - as well as becoming looked after - and pro actively planning moves if needed
- Is there clarity regarding what behaviours, needs and risks are driving rising looked after numbers or homeless at a young age? This is a key area for Children's Services to understand
- You may want to hold a workshop with a small number of officers/staff from relevant service /agencies (e.g. YOS, Early Help, your substance misuse service for young people, school exclusion and non-attendance staff, those working on missing children) to check the components of the offer to families and identify gaps
- Learn from what works well in other areas as well as locally. E.g. pro-active skilled family mediation and negotiation; youth service offers and parenting advice and support



Current position: 16/17 year olds at risk of homelessness

- Responsibility for 16/17s at risk of homelessness recently moved to MASH
- Small team of Housing Options officers cover work within the MASH - positive
- Shared understanding of the legal duties to 16/17s – positive
- Commitment to offer support/services beyond 18th birthday to young people who do not want to become looked after - positive
- Reduced numbers of 16/17s being seen through the new arrangement, but a high proportion of these are reported to be approaching in crisis, already homelessness
- Some 16/17s are being placed into supported housing by locality teams - the reasons for placements and the legal basis for these are not well understood
- A shared view that there is not enough focus on supporting young people to remain in the family home – low success rates. Currently there is some ‘drift’ when young people move into supported housing and opportunities are being missed for re-unification
- Independent agency appointed to offer advocacy - positive



Improving work with 16/17 year olds at risk of homelessness

- For all young people aged 16 and over consider if a 'one stop shop'/joint front door/'hub' type service would improve prevention rates and support other positive outcomes, learning from your own recent experience and other areas
- Jointly review your youth homelessness prevention tools/options and look at any additions /changes based on what works well in Bradford and elsewhere
- Continuation of the support offer - possibly as part of any new housing related support contact - to assist some young people to return to the family home/network once they are in supported housing.
- Arrange view only access to the Integrated Children's System for Housing Options officers
- Update your 16/17 joint protocol ensuring that the 'duty to refer' which is placed on Children's Services to notify Housing Options of any one (with consent) who may be homeless or at risk of homelessness is a part of this



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Young people leaving care in Bradford

- Map your current service options against the Barnardo's/St Basils 'Care Leaver Accommodation and Support Framework'
- It's helpful for Personal Advisers to work with young people at the earliest opportunity, alongside the social worker, to plan for accommodation options and prepare young people for transitions to independence
- Develop a regular panel/meeting approach to enable planning for young people leaving care , which picks up all those leaving care in the next 3 – 6 months as well as early planning for those who are potentially at risk of losing accommodation they are in (e.g. supported housing or a tenancy)
- Linked to the above, identify looked after children likely to be at higher risk of future homelessness much earlier and plan options, including contingency plans with them through improved Pathway Planning. This links to the DfE funded work that you are developing to prevent rough sleeping amongst care leavers



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Young people leaving care in Bradford

- Understand more about the level and causes of tenancy failure amongst your care leavers aged 18 – 24. Involve young people and use to help inform future work on accommodation and support and with social landlords
- Further develop opportunities for young people to prepare for independence with pre-tenancy training, such as the Money House or in ‘training flats’
- Develop or refresh your joint protocol for care leavers across Housing and Children’s Services/Through Care
- Continue to promote and support Staying Put arrangements to ensure young people who want to stay with carers at 18 are able to do so
- It’s positive to consider supported lodgings as a Staying Close arrangement for young people leaving residential care , but other options may be needed as well for those who don’t want to live in a family setting



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Current position at the point of crisis for single /childless couples 18 – 24 year olds at risk of homelessness

- Changes to service provision mean there is no longer a bespoke provision for young people.
- Staff believed there was a more limited ability to successfully prevent homelessness earlier and provide a more bespoke youth response as a result
- All single young people aged 18 and over are seen in the general Housing Options Service in Britannia House. They are currently around 22% of the applicants owed a statutory duty (prevention, relief or main duty). Note that some of this group will be parents not single young people
- There are very limited emergency accommodation options for single 18 – 25s, except Nightstop, which will not be suitable/available for all young people. Otherwise young people are going into all age hostels and the night shelter.



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Improving work to prevent and relieve homelessness amongst 18 – 24 year olds

- For all single young people aged 18 and over consider if a ‘one stop shop’/joint front door/’hub’ type service would improve prevention rates and support other positive outcomes, learning from your own recent experience and other areas
- Home visiting is a key prevention tool amongst this group where the cause of homelessness is family /parental eviction. Is this a possibility within current or future service arrangements?
- What are the other prevention and relief tools available to this group? Can these be reviewed and if needed, shaped to better meet the needs of young people?



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Current position: Commissioning of accommodation and support

- The current commissioning arrangements across Children, Adult and Housing Services are not aligned.
- Children's Services currently invest approximately £4 million in 16 plus supported accommodation for young people
- The lead provider commissioned by Adult Social Care, Centrepoin, has brought significant added value to the commissioned services
- Overall officers reported that services are not currently meeting the needs of the most vulnerable young people in Bradford
- Centrepoin were proposing taking self referrals on the basis of filling voids at the time of our visit. This suggests that there is some need to review utilisation and decisions re: which young people should be prioritised
- Supported lodgings is an option available to young people who are not care leavers - positive
- There are particular gaps in provision of suitable emergency access accommodation, with a current reliance on adult provision, including a night shelter, which is likely to be inappropriate for many young people



Developing your accommodation and support options

- Consider pooling budgets or jointly commissioned options. Minimise the use of spot purchasing and silo commissioning with a cliff edge at 18 and aim to improve value for money and outcomes for young people. Learn from other authorities where some joint commissioning has been a feature
- In preparation for a new round of commissioning in 2022 begin planning a joint housing and support needs assessment which includes care leavers and non care leavers who require additional support
- Emergency/short stay accommodation for young people aged 18 and over is a gap, would you wish to address this before 2022?
- Visit /learn more about outcome based commissioning and models of service provision for young people, with a focus on those with higher levels of needs who do not fit easily into your current provision



Housing options for young people

- As a metropolitan area with a higher than average proportion of young people, more affordable settled accommodation options are needed for young people generally including sharing options
- For young people who may be care leavers, or on low incomes with support needs, a number of additional incentives for both social and private landlords could be considered
- Focussed partnership work is needed with 'In Communities' and other registered providers for care leavers and other young people who are tenancy –ready and for whom social housing is a more suitable option
- Access to the private rented sector for young people -can more shared and suitable HMO options aimed specifically at under 25s be developed as part of your work on opening up the PRS to more of your customers



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Designing youth homelessness services – useful tools

Review current systems and processes for preventing homelessness, map against good practice frameworks to identify better ways of working to improve outcomes.

There are 3 national documents specifically focus on innovation and what works well re: prevention, accommodation and support for young people. They include information, examples and checklists:

- The St Basils '**Developing Positive Pathways to Adulthood**'
- The Barnardos and St Basils '**Care Leavers Accommodation and Support Framework**'
- St Basils '**Youth Justice Accommodation Pathway**'

<http://www.stbasils.org.uk/how-we-help/positive-pathway/st/>

The Government has supported the development and promotion of all of these. Currently all are in the process of being updated.



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