

Report title	Accommodation for 16 and 17-year-old Young People in Care and Care Leavers	
Cabinet member with lead responsibility	Councillor John Reynolds Children and Young People	
Wards affected	All wards	
Accountable Director	Emma Bennett, Director of Children's Services	
Originating service	Commissioning	
Accountable employees	Adam Cooper	Lead Commissioner
	Tel	01902 551028
	Email	Adam.cooper@wolverhampton.gov.uk
	Veronica Grantham	Quality Assurance & Compliance Manager
		01902 555494
	Tel	Veronica.grantham@wolverhampton.gov.uk
	Email	ov.uk
Report to has been considered by	Children and Young People Strategic Leadership Team Meeting	23 May 2019

Recommendation for action:

The Corporate Parenting Board is recommended to:

1. Receive the Accommodation for 16 and 17-year-old Young People in Care and Care Leavers report.

Recommendation for noting:

The Corporate Parenting Board is recommended to note:

1. The arrangements in place to ensure the support and quality of care for 16-17 young people in care living in supported accommodation.

1.0 Purpose

- 1.1 This report asks the Corporate Parenting Board to consider the following:
- The City of Wolverhampton Council's procedures when placing 16 and 17-year-old young people in 'other accommodation', including semi-independent units, supported accommodation, hostels, foyers and supported lodgings
 - an overview of each type of 'other accommodation' and quality assurance to safeguard young people
 - the number of young people currently placed in 'other accommodation'
 - commissioning developments intended to improve quality and safeguarding

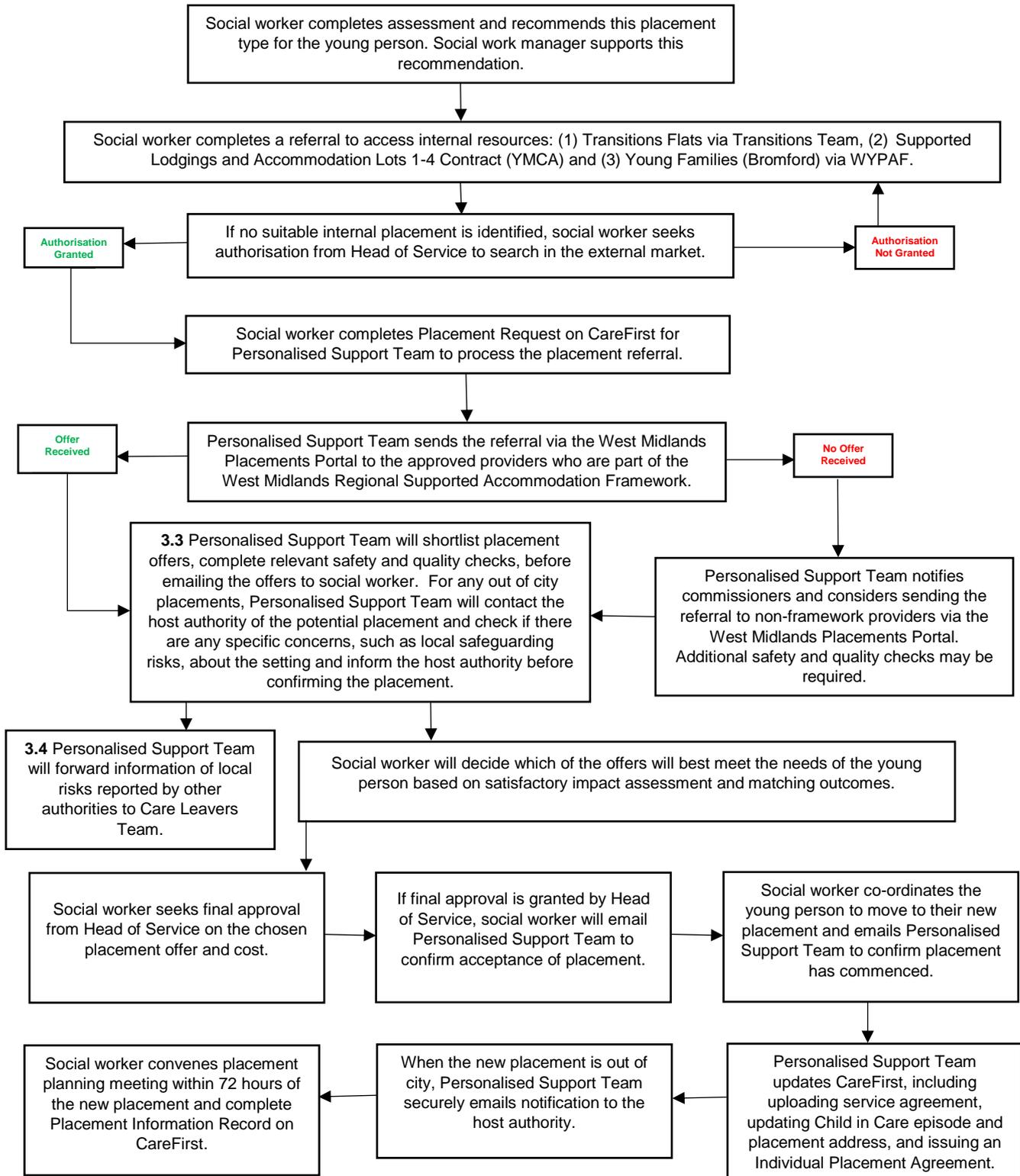
2.0 Background

- 2.1 Local authorities in England require to place 16 and 17-year-old young people in care and care leavers in 'other accommodation'. In England, 'other accommodation' includes semi-independent units, supported accommodation, hostels, foyers and supported lodgings. These types of accommodation provide an alternative for 16 and 17-year-old young people who do not wish to live with a foster family or in a children's home.
- 2.2 On 11 April 2019, Nadhim Zahawi MP, Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for Children and Families, wrote to all Directors of Children's Services and Chairs of Local Safeguarding Children's Board highlighting the challenges faced by many local authorities in relation to these unregulated services. These challenges include the recent increase in the number of older children coming into care, and these children are less likely to wish to live in a foster care home or children's home. (See Appendix 1 – Letter from Nadhim Zahawi MP).
- 2.3 This report sets out the current position of the City of Wolverhampton Council with regard to these issues.

3.0 Procedures of Placing Young People in 'Independent living with or without support'

- 3.1 The Head of Children and Young People in Care, Lead Commissioner Children's Services, Quality Assurance and Compliance Manager and Personalised Support Children's Lead have reviewed and agreed that the flowchart below. This shows the current processes and responsibilities of relevant officers/teams when placing young people in 'Independent living with or without support'.
- 3.2 These procedures are intended to ensure relevant processes and checks are carried out to ensure safety and quality of placements.
- 3.3 Following a review, two additional steps have been included (**see 3.3 and 3.4 in flowchart**) in order to ensure safety and suitability of placement offers. Personalised Support Team will contact the host authority of the potential placement and check if there are any specific concerns, such as local safeguarding risks of Child Sexual Exploitation and County Lines,

about the setting and inform the host authority before confirming the placement. Personalised Support Team will forward information of local risks reported by other authorities to Care Leavers Team.



4.0 Overview of Placement Types and Quality Assurance

- 4.1 There are a range of placement types available to 16 and 17-year-old young people in care and care leavers in order to meet their individual needs.
- 4.2 The types and placements and quality assurance are outlined below.

5.0 Internal Transitions Flats

- 5.1 If the young person is identified as ready to learn independence skills and gain support at one of the transitions flats, the social worker, in agreement with the young person will make an initial referral to the Senior Housing Worker/Supported Accommodation Manager.
- 5.2 There are 24 Transitions Flats. Each young person receives 8 to 30 hours per week of support depending on their needs. These flats are managed, and quality monitored internally by the Supported Accommodation Team.
- 5.3 As of 15 April 2019, there are 24 young people staying in these flats. 14 young people are 16 and 17-year-old, and ten young people are 18 and 19-year-old. Majority of the young people aged 18 and 19 are unaccompanied asylum-seeking children (UASC), others have moving on plans.

6.0 Supported Lodgings and Accommodation Lots 1-4 Contract (delivered by YMCA) Young Families Supported Accommodation Contract (delivered by Bromford)

- 6.1 These contracts provide accommodation options including supported accommodation and supported lodgings to 16 and 17-year-old in or near Wolverhampton.
- 6.2 They are quality monitored by the Quality Assurance and Compliance (QAC) Team in accordance to the contractual service specifications. To ensure young people are receiving safe and good quality of support, when required, the QAC team will set service improvement plans for YMCA with actions which are specific, measurable, achievable, relevant, and time bound. These placements are quality monitored by the QAC Team once a year as a minimum to ensure young people are receiving safe and good quality of support.

7.0 Sub Regional Framework

- 7.1 The City of Wolverhampton Council is part of the West Midlands Sub Regional Supported Framework Contract which has been extended to 2021. Staffordshire County Council is the lead authority of this framework. All 14 participating authorities report any quality concerns at a provider level to Staffordshire County Council who would address the concerns through contract management procedures.
- 7.2 In city placements are quality monitored by the QAC Team once a year as a minimum. To ensure young people are receiving safe and good quality of support, when required, the

QAC team will set service improvement plans for providers with actions which are specific, measurable, achievable, relevant, and time bound.

- 7.3 Occasionally, the City of Wolverhampton Council needs to place young people out of city. Placements within the West Midlands region are quality monitored by the QAC Team once a year as minimum.
- 7.4 The QAC team is a member of the West Midlands Regional Quality Assurance Group. The group meet bi-monthly to share monitoring outcomes, service improvement plans and escalations. The group and Ofsted hold regular information sharing to raise and discuss concerns where providers may be operating children's homes without Ofsted registration.
- 7.5 The QAC team continues to work closely with Wolverhampton Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO) to identify and investigate any concerns of unregulated supported accommodation in Wolverhampton. LADO will raise any concerns directly with the Police and Ofsted.

8.0 Spot Purchase

- 8.1 When all the above placement types have been exhausted, spot purchase placements will be considered. As these providers may be not known to the Council, thorough pre-placement checks must be completed to satisfactory levels by the Personalised Support Team and social workers.
- 8.2 Similar to placements made under the sub regional framework, in city placements are quality monitored by the QAC Team once a year as a minimum. To ensure young people are receiving safe and good quality of support, when required, the QAC team will set service improvement plans for providers with actions which are specific, measurable, achievable, relevant, and time bound.

9.0 Current Picture in the City of Wolverhampton

- 9.1 As of 15/04/2019, there are 44 young people in care are placed in the placement type of 'Independent living with or without support'. The majority of these young people are accommodated in internal transitions flats.

Service Type	Number of Young People
Internal Transitions Flats	24
Supported Lodgings and Accommodation Lots 1-4 Contract (YMCA) Supported Accommodation for Young Families (Bromford)	8
Sub Regional Framework	7
Spot Purchase	5
TOTAL	44

16 y.o.	8
17 y.o.	26
18 y.o.	6
19 y.o.	4
TOTAL	44

Male	25
Female	19
TOTAL	44

In City	35
Out of City	9
TOTAL	44

- 9.2 The City of Wolverhampton Council has less control of quality assurance over spot purchase placements. In addition to the above placement procedures, we aim to have better control of this type of placements to ensure young people are safe and receive good quality of support.

10.0 Commissioning Developments

Supported Accommodation Contracts

- 10.1 A comprehensive review of the City of Wolverhampton Council's current contracts with regard to supported accommodation was completed between October 2018 and January 2019 in order to ensure that these contracts meet the needs of children and young people in Wolverhampton.
- 10.2 As a result, new service specifications have been developed in collaboration with internal operational staff and young people that will underpin a provision which focuses on the following:
- Working with and complementing existing services, including the Council's Children's Services
 - Adherence to Gateway/Hub Approach which will be managed and administered by the Council (Children's Services, Care Leavers Team) to ensure objectivity in terms of accepting and directing referrals. In addition to this, a data collection system will be developed to track usage and trends in order to shape future service provision.
 - Having a well-trained and motivated staff team which can adequately meet the identified needs of service users, particularly those with multiple/complex issues including young offenders.

- Delivering activities which support sustained independence for service users and the successful achievement of outcomes, particularly those relating to education, employment and training.

- 10.3 The contracts will go out to tender in May 2019 and will be in place for 1 December 2019.
- 10.4 A comprehensive performance management framework will rigorously be applied to the new contracts to ensure outcomes of young people are optimised.
- 10.5 The supported lodgings element of the current contract with YMCA will be transferred to the City of Wolverhampton Council's Supported Accommodation Team in November 2019.
- 10.6 These measures will give the Council more control over the quality and safety of accommodation options for young people.

Sub Regional Supported Accommodation Framework

- 10.7 The current Sub Regional Supported Accommodation Framework has been extended to 2021. Regional work on the new tender will commence later in 2019 to ensure the new tender will go out in 2020. The City of Wolverhampton Council's Commissioning Team has asked to be part of the regional development group to ensure the new tender include adequate and effective quality assurance requirements.
- 10.8 In addition, the Council's Commissioning Team are part of the task and finish group that will develop the role of the regional commissioning resource and will look to ensure where appropriate that quality and safeguarding of supported accommodation considered to address this emerging need.

Spot Purchase

- 10.9 It is intended that as part of the Commissioning restructure and resulting re-prioritisation of Quality Assurance and Compliance Team's workload currently undertaken between Lead Commissioner for Children Services and Quality Assurance and Compliance Manager that additional quality monitoring will be able to be undertaken in regard to spot purchasing to manage the risks in this area.
- 10.10 Proposal regarding this will be agreed with Head of Children and Young People in Care to ensure quality monitoring is co-ordinated.

11.0 Financial implications

- 11.1 The total approved budget for 2019-2020 for accommodation for 16 and 17-year-old Young People in Care and Care Leavers is £937,000.
- 11.2 There are no direct financial implications as a result of this report.

12.0 Legal implications

12.1 There are no legal implications as a result of this report.

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13.0 Equalities implications

13.1 There are no equalities implications as a result of this report.

14.0 Environmental implications

14.1 There are no environment implications as a result of this report.

15.0 Health and Wellbeing Implications

15.1 There are no health and wellbeing implications as a result of this report.

16.0 Project Implications

16.1 There are no project implications as a result of this report.

17.0 Human resources implications

17.1 There are no human resources implications as a result of this report.

18.0 Corporate landlord implications

18.1 There are no corporate landlord implications as a result of this report.

19.0 Schedule of background papers

19.1 None

20.0 Appendices

20.1 Appendix 1 – Letter from Nadhim Zahawi MP, Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for Children and Families