

Equality Impact Assessment - head of service review

Reference: EQIA377359256

Submitted: 09 November 2021 15:43 PM

Executive summary

Title of policy or decision: Housing Related Support for Young People 16+: Contract award for a new 5-year contract (with two-year extension option) from 01 June 2022.

Describe the main aims, objectives and purpose of the policy (or decision): The Housing Related Support - Post 16 service is currently commissioned to ensure that the most appropriate support services are available for Young People in need of support around housing needs.

The key groups of young people supported are:

- o Aged 16 and 17 years old at risk of homelessness.
- o Additional young people aged 18 to 21 years old at risk of homelessness and assessed as having specific vulnerabilities.
- o Care Leavers aged 18 to 21
- o Young parents aged 18 to 21 with additional vulnerabilities

These cohorts of young people are often the very vulnerable and have experienced poor parenting and/or may have been in local authority care for some of their lives or been in a situation where they find it difficult to remain within their own family home. Young parents often may have additional support needs of their own can also struggle to effectively parent their own children and as a result may be known to social care.

The outcomes that the service will deliver as set out in the contract specification are below:

- Young people live in safe, appropriate accommodation
- Young people maintain good physical and mental health
- Young people are accessing education, employment or training (ETE)
- Young people are able to sustain a tenancy and live independently
- Young people have a social and support network

What outcome(s) are you hoping to achieve?:

Is this a new policy (or decision) or a change to an existing policy, practice or project?: a change to an existing policy, practice or project

Please provide a link to the document / website / resource to which this EqIA relates: Relates to a CMA (currently in draft so unable to upload) seeking agreement to award a contract - Forward Plan reference number: FP/198/10/21

Please upload any documents which relate to this EqIA, for example decision documents: Relates to a CMA (currently in draft so unable to upload) seeking agreement to award a contract - Forward Plan reference number: FP/198/10/21

Assessing the equality impact

Use this section to record how you have assessed any potential impact on the communities likely to be affected by the policy (or decision): Analysis of service data from 2017-20 indicated that:

- An average of 148 young people entered the service per year.

- Both referrals and allocations rose slightly in 2019 and dipped in 2020, a likely impact of the pandemic.
- Of those accepted into the service, nearly 50% of these were Care Leavers, around 30% were 16-17 year olds at risk of homelessness, 10% were vulnerable young parents and 10% 18-21 year olds with other vulnerabilities.
- Generally, all quadrants are following the same pattern of referrals and acceptances have remained relatively stable.
- Over the past 2 years, the number of active clients at any one time has ranged from 232-262.
- Around one third of young people are assessed as having high or specialist levels of need, with this proportion being slightly higher amongst young parents and vulnerable 18-21 year olds.
- When ready to move on, limited available data indicates that just over one third of young people move into local authority social housing, with a further 11% moving into private rented accommodation, 11% returning home and 11% staying with friends.

Data analysis undertaken as part of recommissioning identified the following key points:

A total of 730 referrals were received to the service between contract commencement in 2017 and January 2020 when the analysis took place.

Of these, an average of 62% were accepted into the service

Of those referrals with gender recorded (585) just over half are male (55%).

Overall half of the young people being referred are White British, with 9.4% from Black or Asian backgrounds. During the last 12 months this figure has increased to 14.4%. This is significantly higher than the overall Essex population, with only an estimated 3.8% having Black or Asian ethnicity. This is likely to be because Care Leavers are a key cohort supported by the service, and they include former Unaccompanied Asylum Seeking Children (UASC) who have been granted Leave To Remain and who therefore are entitled to leaving care support.

The average age at referral is 18. while the number of referrals for those aged 16 has been falling each year, 2019 saw an increase in the number of referrals for young people aged 18 and 19.

During 2019, the Commissioning Team and Insight & Analysis Teams jointly engaged with 30 young people from across all the cohorts supported, some of whom are now living independently. This was carried out through a series of face to face focus groups and 1:1 interviews across all geographical areas of the County. The key themes that emerged from the engagement were that young people need to feel safe & secure, need support around maintaining financial stability and improved life skills, need to receive support at the right time and want support through transitional periods both moving into and leaving the service. These themes formed the key outcomes for the re-designed service.

Full reports of this engagement accompanied the Cabinet paper seeking approval to launch the tender.

Wider engagement also took place with current providers, district councils and wider stakeholders regarding the recommissioning of the service.

Further engagement took place with young people and stakeholders including those in care who may access the service in the future to inform future service design and 'You said, we heard' sessions were carried out with young people in the service during 2020 which concluded that previous findings were accurate.

All of the findings from the review and engagement work informed the recommissioning.

Does or will the policy or decision affect:

Service users: Yes

Employees: No

The wider community or groups of people, particularly where there are areas of known inequalities: No

Which geographical areas of Essex does or will the policy or decision affect?: All Essex

Will the policy or decision influence how organisations operate?: Yes

Will the policy or decision involve substantial changes in resources?: No

Is this policy or decision associated with any of the Council's other policies?: Yes

Is the new or revised policy linked to a digital service (website, system or application)?: No

Description of impact

Description of Impact. If there is an impact on a specific protected group tick box, otherwise leave blank. You will be given the opportunity to rate identified impacts as positive, negative or neutral on the next page: Age, Disability - learning disability, Disability - mental health issues, Pregnancy / maternity, Race

I confirm that I have considered the potential impact on all of the protected characteristics: I confirm that I have considered the potential impact on all of the protected characteristics

Describe any actions that have already been taken to mitigate negative impacts on any of the protected characteristics: Engagement with young people with lived experience at an early stage to shape the recommissioning proposals.

Further engagement to test what we heard and to check that our priorities were right.

Young people involved in evaluation of tenders through design of young people's questions and evaluation of these.

Detailed requirements in the contract regarding data recording and submission to the LA which will improve the LA's ability to interrogate data by protected characteristics.

Age

Nature of impact: Positive

Please provide more details about the nature of impact: This service is specific to those aged 16-21 and provides support linked to accommodation for those cohorts that meet the criteria. The average age at referral is 18. In 2020, 35% of HRS Client group were 16/17, compared to 2019 where this was just 25%. 8% were 18-21 Additional Needs, compared to 10% in 2019. 48% were Care Leavers compared to 53% in 2019. The new service will continue to support target cohorts up to the age of 21 and will include Transition support into independence to help improve outcomes.

Extent of impact: Medium

Please provide more details about the extent of impact: Those young people who need support and meet the criteria are supported by the service. Case study feedback from young people has evidenced significant positive impact on their lives.

Disability - learning disability

Nature of impact: Positive

Please provide more details about the nature of impact: 66% of the 2019-20 cohort of Looked After Children have identified SEN. Care Leavers are the largest cohort of young people entering the service therefore it will be likely to cater for a higher proportion of young people with learning needs than the general population. Anecdotal evidence suggests that there are some young people who are supported by the service to get a diagnosis as learning needs have not always been diagnosed. Support will be tailored to meet individual needs and may include referral to specific Learning Disability services if required for more specific support around LD is required.

Extent of impact: Low

Please provide more details about the extent of impact: If a young person with a learning disability accesses the service they are supported if they meet the criteria – processes are in place to refer to other appropriate services if needed.

Disability - mental health issues

Nature of impact: Positive

Please provide more details about the nature of impact: Nearly 60% of service users identified as having a mental health need in 2019. The service will continue to support young people, including those with specific and complex health needs or mental health condition. A requirement of the new service is for the workforce to be trained in a relational, trauma-informed approach to underpin their interactions with young people in order to improve mental health. If appropriate, the provider, professional social care staff and ECC Gateway Managers will signpost or refer to specific Mental Health services if required for more specific support is required. The delivery model that is set out by the preferred bidder also includes an innovation project involving the embedding of a social worker in the provision in each quadrant, to oversee and develop the emotional wellbeing offer internally.

Extent of impact: Low

Please provide more details about the extent of impact: Young People who access the service with poor mental health are placed in suitable, and safe accommodation and the support provided is tailored around their mental health needs. Where young people are identified as having significant MH needs they are supported with relevant referrals and may transfer into MH supported accommodation if they meet the criteria for this and this is identified as a better option for them.

Pregnancy / maternity

Nature of impact: Positive

Please provide more details about the nature of impact: Young parents, or young women who are pregnant, are a specific cohort of young people who are supported by the service and therefore can be allocated support based on need. Some, due to issues or concerns, may be subject to a child in need or child protection plan and social care support is provided alongside the HRS service.

Extent of impact: Medium

Please provide more details about the extent of impact: Young parents may receive accommodation-based or wraparound support through the service, based on need.

Race

Nature of impact: Positive

Please provide more details about the nature of impact: During 2019, 14.4% of referrals received identified their ethnicity as Black or Asian. Many of these are care leavers who are former unaccompanied asylum-seeking children who have been granted leave to remain. The service will support this cohort of young people and will continue to support all young people of any race to enable them to move to independent living upon exit from the service. The increased demand for the service in West Essex as a result of the Leave To Remain population being predominantly based in the West has been factored into the specification.

Extent of impact: Low

Please provide more details about the extent of impact: All young people that meet the criteria for support can access the service. The service is made accessible through the spread of accommodation with a weighting towards West where a higher proportion of Care Leavers are BAME.

Action plan to address and monitor adverse impacts

Does your EqIA indicate that the policy or decision would have a medium or high adverse impact on one or more equality groups?: No

Details of person completing the form

I confirm that this has been completed based on the best information available and in following ECC guidance: I confirm that this has been completed based on the best information available and in following ECC guidance

Date EqIA completed: 09/11/2021

Name of person completing the EqIA: Henrietta Barkham

Email address of person completing the EqIA: Henrietta.Barkham@essex.gov.uk

Your function: Children, Families and Education

Your service area: Children & Families Commissioning

Your team: Children & Families Commissioning

Are you submitting this EqIA on behalf of another function, service area or team?: No

Email address of Head of Service: clare.burrell@essex.gov.uk