

Equality Impact Assessment - head of service review

Reference: EQIA312750546

Submitted: 03 March 2021 15:30 PM

Executive summary

Title of policy or decision: FP/843/10/20 Housing Related Support for Young People 16+: procurement of 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 (also known as Essex Young People's Partnership – EYPP) 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 primary legislation and guidance which continues to drive the commissioning of HRS Post 16 Accommodation and the support elements provided by ECC are

- o The Children Act 1989, as amended
- o Housing Act 1996 parts 6 and 7
- o Southwark Judgment 2009
- o The Care Leavers (England) Regulations 2010 and the Children Act 1989 statutory guidance Volume 3: planning transitions to adulthood for care leavers revised January 2015
- o Homelessness Reduction Act 2017
- o MHC&LG Homelessness Code of Guidance for local housing authorities
- o MHC&LG and DfE joint statutory guidance to Children's Services and Local Housing Authorities on "Prevention of homelessness and provision of accommodation for 16 and 17 year old young people who may be homeless and/or require accommodation.

Access to the current service is through a single point of access and this is managed by four quadrant Gateway Managers within ECC. The Gateway Managers work closely with operational Social care teams, providers and district housing partners, ensuring that referrals are progressed and there is a smooth transition for young people leaving care. Gateway Managers also facilitate access to emergency accommodation and prevent delays in young people being placed in appropriate accommodation and linked with relevant support. Referrals are prioritised using the Supported Housing Needs Assessment.

The current contract period was for 3 years from 1st June 2017 – 31st May 2020 with an option to extend for up to a further 2 years. This option to extend was invoked initially for a 10-month period 1st June 2020 – 31st March 2021 due to market limitations and extensive re-design work being required. A further 14-month extension was subsequently agreed because of a number of pressures and risks being experienced due to the Covid-19

pandemic (published decisions KD04 FP/573/11/19 and KD02 FP/710/05/20).

Analysis of service data over the past 3 years indicates that:

- An average of 148 young people have 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, 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.

The outcomes that the service will seek to deliver 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?: Help people get the best start and age well

Which strategic priorities does this support? - Help people get the best start and age well: Help keep vulnerable children safer and enable them to fulfil their potential, Enable more vulnerable adults to live independent of social care

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: EQIA links to a Cabinet report of the same title, which will be uploaded into the Cabinet channel once signed off

Please upload any documents which relate to this EqIA, for example decision documents: EQIA links to a Cabinet report of the same title, which will be uploaded into the Cabinet channel once signed off

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): 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 and January 2020 when the analysis took place.

Of these, an average of 62% progressed to become accommodated in 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.

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 May & June 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. Young people identified the following areas as important to them:

- Support around maintaining financial stability
- Help with life skills and becoming independent
- Mental health support
- Feeling safe & secure
- The right support at the right time
- Support moving on into independent living

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

Further engagement has taken 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 have been carried out with young people in the service which concluded our previous finding were accurate.

All of the findings from the review and engagement work are assisting to drive future recommissioning and to inform in-service development and improvement.

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?: No

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?: No

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, Disability - physical impairment, Disability - sensory impairment, Gender / sex, Gender reassignment, Pregnancy / maternity, Race, Religion / belief, Sexual orientation

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: n/a

Age

Nature of impact: Positive

Please provide more details about the nature of impact: Positive – This service is specific to those aged 16-21 and provides 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. Transition support into independence is a requirement of the new specification.

Extent of impact: Medium

Please provide more details about the extent of impact: Medium – Those young people within the defined age range who need support and meet the criteria are supported by the service

Disability - learning disability

Nature of impact: Positive

Please provide more details about the nature of impact: Positive – 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 caters for a higher proportion of young people with learning needs than the general population. If appropriate, the provider, professional social care staff and ECC Gateway Managers will signpost or refer 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: Low – 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: Positive – 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 will be 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.

Extent of impact: Low

Please provide more details about the extent of impact: Low – 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, referrals are made to specialist mental health provision if required.

Disability - physical impairment

Nature of impact: Neutral

Please provide more details about the nature of impact: Neutral – The service will continue to support all young people including those who have a physical impairment, to enable them to move to independent living upon exit from the service. Accessibility requirements for accommodation are included in the specification.

Extent of impact: Low

Please provide more details about the extent of impact: Low – if a young person with a physical 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 - sensory impairment

Nature of impact: Neutral

Please provide more details about the nature of impact: The service will continue to support all young people

who have a sensory impairment to enable them to move to independent living upon exit from the service.

Extent of impact: Low

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

Gender / sex

Nature of impact: Neutral

Please provide more details about the nature of impact: The service will continue to support all young people of any gender to enable them to move to independent living upon exit from the service.

Extent of impact: Low

Please provide more details about the extent of impact: The service is available to all young people that meet the criteria.

Gender reassignment

Nature of impact: Neutral

Please provide more details about the nature of impact: The service will continue to support all young people of any gender identification to enable them to move to independent living upon exit from the service.

Extent of impact: The service will continue to support all young people of any gender identification to enable them to move to independent living upon exit from the service.

Please provide more details about the extent of impact: Any young person can access the service if they meet the criteria.

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 have access to appropriate accommodation and support around their parenting needs. 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: Low

Please provide more details about the extent of impact: Young parents with identified vulnerabilities receive support and are accommodated through the service.

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 is accessed by a higher proportion of BAME young people and this is expected, due to the higher proportion of this cohort of young people leaving care in some parts of the county. The service has experience of supporting 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.

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.

Religion / belief

Nature of impact: Neutral

Please provide more details about the nature of impact: Data on religion/belief is limited, but it is known that this is often of particular importance for former UASC young people who have been granted leave to remain. Their wishes in relation to where they are accommodated for example in terms of proximity to places of worship is taken into consideration when identifying suitable accommodation.

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.

Sexual orientation

Nature of impact: Neutral

Please provide more details about the nature of impact: The service will continue to support all young people of any sexual orientation to enable them to move to independent living upon exit from the service.

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.

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: 03/03/2021

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 and All Age Mental Health Commissioning

Your team: Children & Families and All Age Mental Health 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