

Equality Impact Assessment

Reference: EQIA213575910

Submitted: 03 June 2020 14:28 PM

Executive summary

Title of policy or decision: FP/710/05/20 Housing Related Support for Young People aged 16+: Contract extension

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 drives 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

The service includes the following main components:

Information, Advice and Guidance

- Prevention and Intervening Early
- Assessment and Support Planning
- Risk Assessment and ongoing Management
- Integrated Working/Partnership Working
- Wraparound Support
- Support/Interventions
- Access to and maintenance of ETE/peer and mentoring support/volunteering
- Move-on
- Emergency Placements

Access to the service is through a single point of access and this is currently managed by four quadrant Gateway Managers within ECC. The Gateway Managers work closely with operational Social care teams, providers and district housing partners to take a strategic partnership approach to improving the accommodation support system for young people. They also work closely with the leaving and after care teams to ensure referrals are made and there is a smooth transition for 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 has been in place for the period 1st June 2017 and runs until the 31st May 2020. A previous CMA (ref. KD04 FP/573/11/19) was approved in February 2020 to extend the current contract from 1st June 2020 to 31 March 2021 to enable service redesign work to be carried out robustly and collaboratively. Due to the impact of Covid-19 ECC are now seeking approval to extend the current contract up to the maximum 2-year period until 31st May 2022, which will enable ECC to proceed with procurement as soon as market conditions are favourable.

As a result of Covid-19 the market in supported accommodation is experiencing a number of pressures resulting from limitations in movement including increased costs of service users remaining in supported accommodation longer than planned, pressure elsewhere in the system due to eligible young people not being able to move into the service, a shortage of available accommodation for move on and limitations on service delivery due to staff absence. There is also a potential increase in demand as a result of family conflict or domestic abuse.

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: This EQIA relates to a CMA which is being drafted currently

Please upload any documents which relate to this EqIA, for example decision documents: This EQIA relates to a CMA which is being drafted currently

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% 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.

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. 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 that

move on from the service can be challenging.

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 findings 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?: 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?: No

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

Please describe the steps you have taken to meet the digital accessibility requirements:

Please describe the steps you have taken to test the accessibility of the website, system or application:

Please describe the steps you have taken to maintain accessibility once it has gone live:

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

Age

Nature of impact: Positive

Please provide more details about the nature of impact: This service is specific and targeted to those aged 16-21 and provides accommodation for those cohorts that meet the criteria. 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 Transition pathways are in place to adult services and work is planned to improve these pathways as part of in-contract improvements during the extension period.

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

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 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: 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 self 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. 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: Medium

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.

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: Medium

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

Race

Nature of impact: Positive

Please provide more details about the nature of impact: In the last 12 months 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 experienced in 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.

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: 03/06/2020

Name of person completing the EqIA: Henrietta Barkham

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

Your function: Children & Families

Your service area: Commissioning

Your team: C & F & MH Commissioning Team

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