



A POSITIVE ACCOMMODATION AND SUPPORT PATHWAY FOR YOUNG PEOPLE IN BIRMINGHAM



Commissioned by:





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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- Public and voluntary sector agencies in Birmingham have a long history of working together to develop and deliver services for young people in the City as they make the transition to adulthood. These include, for example, the new 'Youth Promise' and services around training, employment, education, as well as physical and mental health provision.
- Birmingham has a young and growing population, with aspirations to learn, live and work in Birmingham.
- The pressures on supply of social housing, difficulties in accessing and sustaining private rented accommodation, affordability and impacts of welfare reform for young people on low incomes are both national and local concerns.
- Young people are the most disadvantaged in the housing market in the UK because they are the most inexperienced, low waged and are often viewed as high risk by both social and private landlords.
- Being able to live independently is increasingly linked to being economically active and policy changes for 18 – 21 year olds will restrict most young people's ability to claim housing costs support in the future if they are unemployed.
- Housing the next generation of young people in the City requires pro-active planning and policy because where housing need amongst young people is not addressed it can 'tip into' homelessness.
- Commissioners and providers of services for young people at risk of homelessness have, over many years, delivered a range of relevant services together which have helped to prevent homelessness and supported improved outcomes.
- The number and % of 16-25 year olds in the City presenting as homeless continues to reduce, despite the range of challenges facing many young people, families and public services.
- There remain deep inequalities reflected in the groups who present: Young People from black and minority ethnic communities are over-represented as are young people who have been looked after by the local authority, young people who have no qualifications or experienced school exclusion, and young people involved in the criminal justice system.
- Youth homelessness services across England are identifying a higher proportion of young people with multiple and complex needs - Birmingham is no exception to this trend.
- Providers often report difficulties in meeting the needs of this group through the current levels of housing related support provision alone. Commissioning of services which go beyond housing related support and enable other positive outcomes, requires a joint approach across a range of public sector agencies, including the local authority, but also other public sector agencies.
- There are opportunities to improve across the whole of the 'Positive Pathway' through joint planning, more joint commissioning and integrated service delivery and governance.
- Any developments would build on current partnerships and go further in pro-actively providing a 'Youth Housing Promise', which addresses universal information and advice to parents and young people about housing, and housing supply options that are decent, safe and affordable to young people. All of these would be aligned to the 'Youth Promise', ensuring affordability and economic activity are reflected in young people's future options.

INTRODUCTION

Birmingham believes that homelessness should not be part of growing up and made a commitment on World Homelessness Day in October 2013 to work together to End Youth Homelessness. Supporters and partners from across the City pledged to do their best to ensure that we support our young people through a positive transition to adulthood.

With the City's pledge to end youth homelessness as a platform to build on, Birmingham became one of England's 2013/14 national 'Positive Transitions' pilots. Linked to the national Public Service Transformation programme, the 'Positive Transitions' pilots were established to explore improving publically funded services through joint commissioning and integrated delivery. Funded by the Department for Communities and Local Government, our pilot has involved 2 linked elements:

- A review of current policy direction and service provision for vulnerable young people in the City
- A study on the affordability of housing for all young people across the City

This report summarises the review work undertaken, which has included examining what our current data tells us and mapping existing services against the new national 'Positive Pathway' framework¹. From this analysis the report makes suggestions for practical and achievable improvements in the current provision for young people in the City.

The combination of the City's aspiration to end youth homelessness and the strategic direction we need to take in light of the current challenges around policy, provision and demand point to a need to more pro-actively link housing offers with young people's success as economically active young citizens.

Safe, decent and affordable housing is a vital foundation stone for young people as they become economically active adults. But young people's routes into housing as young adults are getting more complex, taking longer and are harder to navigate. Put simply, our housing policy nationally does not meet the needs of young people and this looks set to continue. And when housing needs are not met, the result can often be homelessness. If homelessness occurs, other critically important outcomes for young people tend to dip as well — in the areas of employment, education or training and health and well-being.

Young people in Birmingham can progress through all sorts of different housing situations; staying with parents, extended family or foster carers; living with friends; moving in with a partner; going off to university or college; living in supported accommodation; sharing in private rented accommodation; taking out a mortgage or living in social housing. But what more can the City do to ensure housing choices genuinely exist for all young people, that the options are decent, safe and affordable, therefore supporting young people to be successful?

Based on national and local evidence and the policy direction of the new Government, continuing to plan for and commission around youth homelessness in isolation, without addressing housing needs more widely, will only exacerbate youth homelessness. The housing market and the growing population of young people in the City mean that despite the best efforts of all partners, if we do not address key issues of accommodation supply, affordability for young people and find more joined up ways of working with young people, there is a high risk of increased poor outcomes around education, training, employment, health and community safety, as well as homelessness. Alongside this report we commissioned Housing Vision with Kim Sangster Associates to undertake a study of housing affordability and financial modelling which looks at young people living and working in Birmingham and what their housing options might be based on their incomes. This provides evidence regarding the limited supply of accommodation which is available to most young people.

Our challenge as a City is to have enough accommodation that is affordable and decent for young people to move into, when they are ready to succeed independently, without encouraging them to leave home or supported options too early and risk failure. In so doing, we will prevent homelessness and avert a significant housing problem amongst the next generation.

The purpose of this report is therefore to suggest ways to continue to both improve our current provision for vulnerable young people but also to go beyond youth homelessness prevention and focus on developing housing pathways for all young people in the City that will support their economic activity and success.

¹ See <http://www.stbasils.org.uk/how-we-help/#positive-pathway> for the new 2015 national 'Positive Pathway' document and 2 page diagram.

RECOMMENDATIONS

As part of the review which informs this report we have looked at a wide range of information, taken views from stakeholders through consultation and drawn on innovative practice from some other areas that might be useful to consider in Birmingham. The overall theme is of closer alignment between partners and with young people and local communities— extending and deepening integration of planning, commissioning and delivery in order to achieve better outcomes across a range of domains. Better use of data and needs analysis to target interventions, a planned approach to ensuring supply of accommodation appropriate for young people and planned moves based on a readiness to succeed, with the support of parents/carers are underpinning themes.

The first recommendation is that we re-think **our universal offer** to young people regarding housing options.

If we provide good information and advice to young people and their parents/carers about housing options, offering pro-active advice and support to address housing needs, then more young people can realistically plan for independence and succeed. Exclusion on the basis of housing and homelessness will reduce and all of this will underpin and support the success of the Youth Promise for all young people in the city.

The report therefore suggests that a new focus is needed on housing more generally for young people in the City. In effect it's a 'Youth Housing Options' offer, linked to the Youth Promise, which gives the basic information and advice young people and their parents/carers need so they can make informed choices and plan for their futures. All the trends point to a medium to longer term risk of increased youth homelessness (and all the associated poor outcomes in employment, health and community safety) if we put off or ignore the youth housing policy area. So as counter-intuitive as it might seem, now is the time for some discussion between stakeholders around young people and housing.

Whilst not wishing to anticipate or prescribe City-wide solutions without much more discussion, it is perhaps helpful to describe what we envisage the provision of universal advice and information might mean for partners in the City, as it's a new concept and should the City wish to proceed, there is no blueprint or best practice out there to learn from.

Rather than more 'walk in' provision, the development of a web-based information and advice channel for young people and their families/carers/advisers on housing options within the City, augmented by a telephone and on-line advice option would complement the Youth Hub access for young people who are homeless or at risk. This could also be complemented by schools based work, particularly if a targeted approach was also required.

The second recommendation is to provide better **targeted** joint planning, commissioning and delivery of services for young people across several public sector agencies, in order to improve outcomes and ultimately reduce longer term costs. It is based on the evidence pointing to an increase in the proportion of young people who present in housing crisis with multiple or complex needs. This is a national and a local trend. This group of young people are at high risk of long term poor outcomes, based on multiple exclusion in terms of homelessness, involvement in the criminal justice system, mental health, substance misuse and benefit dependency. No single commissioner has the remit to comprehensively address these needs. All the evidence indicates that the long term fiscal costs of failure do not lie at the door of the local authority alone but more so with health and criminal justice agencies. There is much learning from the Government's 'Fair Chance Fund', of which Birmingham is a pilot area, which can inform this area.

This recommendation includes targeted early help in schools and community settings where evidence shows young people at risk. This would include support for parents, carers and teachers to prevent escalation of situations which lead to homelessness; to take a holistic approach to young people facing difficulties at home and at school.

The third recommendation is to **review our housing policy for young people and open up** more supply options for young people that are affordable, given the age profile of the City and other challenges around supply and suitability requires the City to look at our housing policy for young people. For the first time we have some evidence (**Positive Transitions Pathway: Housing Affordability and Financial Modelling 2015**) on what is currently affordable and available to different groups of young people from which we can plan together on options. Not only is this a first for the City, but we believe it is a nationally significant piece of work that others can learn from.

The fourth recommendation

is to provide collective governance of the Birmingham Housing Pathway within an agreed Outcomes Framework enabling more focused discussion, planning, commissioning and delivery amongst stakeholders, including:

- Continuing to improve in the many areas of youth homelessness prevention and housing support that partners are already working on across the City
- Targeting the underlying equality issues and reduce the disproportionate numbers of young people experiencing homelessness from over-represented groups.
- Creating a universal Birmingham offer for young people and their parents/carers through provision of information, advice and access to decent, safe, affordable housing for those who need it- which links to the City's Youth Promise
- Joint commissioning of support for vulnerable young people who are not living at home or in care anymore- which goes beyond housing related support and links to other key outcomes around education, training and employment, health and community safety.
- Opening up of decent, safe, affordable supply of housing for young people
- Ensuring young people remain within the pathway and are able to move on in a positive way

The report concludes that a Youth Housing Promise, underpinning a revised Birmingham 'Positive Pathway' (see page 8) and sitting alongside the Youth Promise, has the possibility of transforming the lives of young people and the future success of the City.

THE POSITIVE TRANSITIONS PILOTS

In 2014 the Department for Communities and Local Government (DCLG) invited Birmingham City Council to be one of a small number of local authorities to take part in the Positive Transitions programme, which was created to develop and share learning regarding how local services can be redesigned or shaped to improve outcomes for vulnerable young people. There is a particular focus within Positive Transitions on how to better align commissioning and service delivery to minimise youth homelessness and improve outcomes for vulnerable young people who have to leave home or care at a young age.

Positive Transitions pilots are linked to the 'Public Service Transformation' work across Government and public sector agencies. The local authorities taking part in the pilot work have all attended workshops run by civil servants and other staff promoting the Public Service Transformation Network and been given information to use and disseminate.

Young people experiencing homelessness are mentioned in various Government policies and strategies. But what is not often explicitly said is that these young people have much more than homelessness going on in their lives. They are also much more likely to be experiencing other difficulties. Living in poverty as a child is a key risk factor. Unlike many of their counterparts, many young people could draw their issues out as a Venn diagram, which might include a number of other risk issues for example:

Leaving care	Substance misuse
Mental health problems	Not being in education, employment or training
Child sexual exploitation	Involvement in offending behaviour
Poor physical health	Being a young parent
Neglect as a child	Violence in the family home
Learning difficulties	Developmental delay

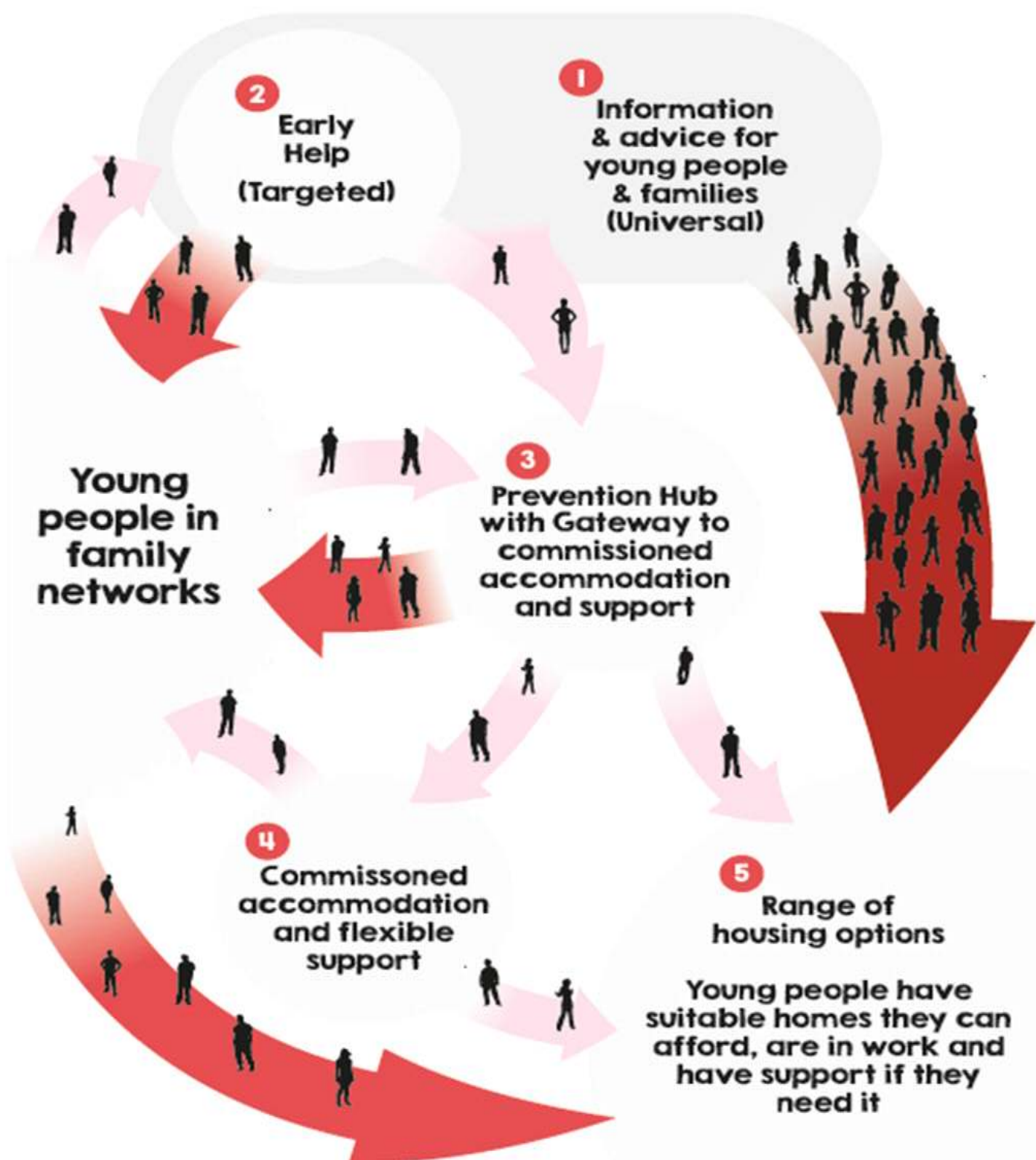
Other factors can also come into play here — for example, young people from black or minority ethnic backgrounds and LGBT young people are over-represented in youth homelessness cohorts.

But positive outcomes for this group are possible. The right help at the right time can transform young people's lives. These young people, each with their own Venn diagram and unique life story, are the very young people that Government and many parts of the public sector acknowledge are the hardest to reach and to assist in achieving positive outcomes.

THE POSITIVE PATHWAY

The national Positive Pathway was first developed by St Basils in 2012 with input from a range of other stakeholders. The 2012 Pathway aimed to provide a framework to assist local authorities and their partners in reviewing, planning, commissioning and delivery of their services to young people at risk of homelessness. DCLG have funded St Basils to help 'roll out' the Positive Pathway across England. Around 50% of local authorities replying to a Homeless Link² survey in 2014 said they had a version of the Positive Pathway in place or were in the process of developing one.

Positive Pathway Model



A revised Positive Pathway model has been published in August 2015, updated to better support local authorities and other agencies in their work to prevent homelessness and get good outcomes for young people. The new Positive Pathway for 2015 provides an opportunity in Birmingham to aspire to more than preventing homelessness amongst young people. It is based on planned moves when young people are able and ready to afford and manage their own place. The link between economic activity and obtaining and sustaining housing for young people has arguably never been stronger. The revised 2015 model, outlined on page 8 is the framework we used in the review to map Birmingham's current position against.

The detail within the revised 2015 national Positive Pathway model outlines the intrinsic link between economic activity and decent, affordable housing for young people. This report highlights the interdependence of these two aspects of young people's lives in Birmingham. The City's Youth Promise is a clear signal that young people will be supported in Birmingham to achieve their potential and that all young people need a positive transition to adulthood. Housing should be an enabler, not a block to success.

POLICY, TRENDS AND THEIR IMPACT ON YOUNG PEOPLE'S TRANSITIONS TO ADULTHOOD

The review considered a number of the major national and local policy areas which are pertinent to children and young people, with a particular focus on policy relating to those who may have to leave home or care at a young age and be at risk of homelessness and associated poor outcomes such as being NEET. Other trend information and data were considered where available. The context for some groups at high risk of homelessness, including care leavers and young offenders, was also covered. The detail of this part of the review is outlined in Appendix One.

The starting point for consideration of policy and trends is the premise that homelessness at a young age is not usually just about lack of accommodation. The underlying causes that lead to homelessness often stem back to much earlier problems or factors in childhood. The crisis of homelessness is usually a coming together of a number of factors — things that have changed, gone wrong, seem unfixable and usually built up over time. But whilst homelessness is usually symptomatic at a young age of other risk factors, once a young person is actually homeless, or living away from family or care, other risk factors can emerge, or pre-existing problems, such as mental health issues, can become worse. National research over several years³ has consistently shown that it's more likely that young people could be NEET whilst they are homeless or have insecure housing.

Some policy areas, if seen through into practice and delivery, are likely to support positive, planned transitions to adulthood — such as Early Help; the Birmingham Youth Promise, education, training and employment offers through Job Centre Plus and partners, physical and mental health policy, the Think Family /Troubled Families programme and the increased focus on teenage safeguarding. Some policies outlined in the review are more universally focussed than others, however, in most - but not all - policy areas, there is a theme of recognising, reaching, engaging and giving additional support to the most vulnerable groups to help them achieve positive life outcomes. There are however significant challenges in the area of housing and welfare reform relating to supply of decent, safe and affordable accommodation for all young people.

The review looked at relevant national policy, trends and available local information against different elements of the Positive Pathway (as outlined on page 8). Against this the following were noted:

Education: The National Curriculum requires that schools and colleges teach financial literacy to pupils, which can incorporate elements on housing costs. The PHSE element of the curriculum is not compulsory but education work on homelessness can be delivered through this where schools choose to utilise this option. Whilst St Basils run the STaMP (Schools Training and Mentoring Programme), this is not universally taken up by Birmingham schools.

Early Help: An early intervention strategy is required in every local authority, which aims to create clear service thresholds and access to provision for families with children and young people under 18 who may need additional non-statutory support. In Birmingham the 'Right Service, Right Time' strategy, led by the Local Safeguarding Board, requires a wide range of agencies to work together to ensure services are available and easy to access for families. Some of the early risk factors, such as non-attendance at school, involvement in anti-social behaviour, violence in the family home are strongly correlated with early homelessness amongst young people.

³ For example: Fitzpatrick .S Chapter 12, Statutory Homelessness in England 2008, Quilgars and Rigg etc

Safeguarding:

This is a theme which runs through the whole of the Positive Pathway. Arguably there is more focus than ever before on the safeguarding of older teenagers, in part as a result of the uncovering of systematic child sexual exploitation in several areas and the failure of some public authorities in dealing with this. The signs and symptoms of child abuse amongst older teenagers can be very different to those of young children and whilst the new 2013 '*Working Together to Safeguard Children — A guide to interagency working to safeguard and promote the welfare of children*' does not explicitly acknowledge this, increasingly it is an area subject to scrutiny through Ofsted inspection and Local Safeguarding Children Boards.

Troubled Families Programme/Think Family Programme

Now into its second phase nationally the Troubled Families Programme is a voluntary initiative. Any family can be referred by specialist agencies if they have 2 of the 6 following problems, several of which are known risk factors in terms of later youth homelessness:

- parents and children involved in crime or anti-social behaviour
- children who have not been attending school regularly
- children who need help
- adults out of work or at risk of financial exclusion and young people at risk of worklessness
- families affected by domestic violence and abuse
- parents and children with a range of health problems

In Birmingham, the Think Family programme has achieved positive outcomes with 4,180 families (by May 2015). It has been viewed as a strength within Birmingham in the most recent Ofsted Inspection report of Children's Services (2014). The preventative role that Think Family plays encompasses many areas of a family's life — therefore a wide range of public sector organisations' are involved in planning and delivery of the Programme

Education, training and employment amongst young people

The latest Government statistics show that nationally 12.7% of young people aged 16 — 24 were NEET in between April and June 2015, equating to around 922,000 young people. Of these 47% were unemployed and looking for work, the rest were economically inactive. In England, the regions with the highest proportion of 16-24 year olds who are NEET are the North East, Yorkshire & Humber, and West Midlands.

Factors which research has highlighted increase the likelihood of becoming NEET are: Invo

vement in the criminal justice system, exclusion from school/non-attendance, substance misuse, being a care leaver, being a young parent/pregnant and being NEET previously. There are strong correlations with all of these underlying causal factors and risks of youth homelessness.

National policy and related programmes to address youth unemployment and low educational outcomes include the raising of the compulsory education age to 18, the Youth Contract, the Work Programme, the National Apprenticeship Scheme. All of these programmes require strong working relationships at a local level between Job Centre Plus, local authorities, colleges, schools, training providers and employers.

In Birmingham there has been a focus, led by the local authority, Job Centre Plus and other partners, on addressing unemployment amongst young people. A 2013 Birmingham Commission on Youth Unemployment has developed a City 'Youth Promise' which recognises that a spiral of linked disadvantages in early life can be hard to reverse without specific and concerted efforts and is developing ways to align and reach these groups. The multi-agency Youth Employment Partnership chaired by the Cabinet Member for Skills, Learning and Culture, leads on the implementation of the Birmingham Youth Promise and has also led on the Birmingham and Solihull YEI bid, focussing on the most disadvantaged, including those at risk of homelessness.

Linked to the national policy initiatives above, but with additional local investment and impetus, a multi-agency initiative response has resulted in 3 key programmes, Destination Work, Talent Match and Birmingham's Jobs Fund (See Appendix One for more detail on all of these) and a campaign aimed at employers, 'Young Talent for Birmingham.'

In addition to these, there are other initiatives in the City. For example there are two Department for Work and Pensions 'Youth Hubs' at Broad Street and Solihull Jobcentres. In each of the 12 Job Centres there is an accredited under 18's Work Coach. Birmingham City Council and DWP locally have a protocol that aims to ensure those leaving care don't drop out of the system but are helped to establish independent living with sustained employment a goal. And Job Centres in Birmingham have worked with St Basils to reduce the frequency of benefit sanctions for young homeless people in recognition of their increased levels of vulnerability.

The investment in addressing youth unemployment through the range of initiatives appears to be having an impact on Birmingham's levels of youth unemployment (See Appendix One) . However, the progress locally is being matched regionally and nationally, so there is still significant lag in the position in Birmingham comparatively. But that should not detract from the real progress locally, which is significant. But whilst there is significant improvement in the rates of unemployment, there is still some way to go with highly disadvantaged young people.

Health

A new framework, *"Improving Young People's Health and Well-Being, A Framework for Public Health"*⁴ was published in January 2015 by Public Health England. This outlines some principles to work by (see Appendix One), the rationale for investment in the 10 - 24 year olds age group and a set of health related outcomes for young people. The new framework was driven by some concerning national data sets relating to young people, including:

- More than one in three 11-15 year olds in England are obese or overweight.
- Only 14% of boys and 8% of girls aged 13-15 meet recommended physical activity levels.
- Almost two-thirds of adult smokers begin before they are 18.
- 10% of 5-16 year olds have a diagnosable mental health disorder.
- Half of all mental health illnesses (excluding dementia) start by age 14, three quarters by age 24.

The inadequacies of child and adolescent mental health provision have been highlighted nationally and resulted in NHS England leading a Taskforce to consider how to improve access, treatment, commissioning and organisation.

Locally there are significant challenges in relation to the overall health of children and young people. High levels of deprivation impact on health outcomes in Birmingham and there are some early signs of this in children and young people's health. For example:

- Obesity: more children are overweight compared to the national average and increases as children become older - 23% for 4 to 5 year olds and 39% for 10 to 11.
- Teenage pregnancy: although rates are decreasing, Birmingham's levels of teenage pregnancy remain considerably higher than national average.
- Substance misuse: the peak age at treatment centres is 18. 500 young people accessing treatment centres have complex needs. 1,500 young people require short-term alcohol related interventions. 49% of young people referrals to a treatment centre are from the Youth Offending Service.

In terms of strategy, Birmingham's Clinical Commissioning Groups and Birmingham City Council have undertaken a Joint Strategic Needs Assessment and from this have developed a Health and Well-Being Strategy. The priority areas are:

1. Improve the health and wellbeing of the most vulnerable adults and children in need, which includes homeless children, young people and families
2. Improve the resilience of our health and care systems
3. Improve the health and well-being of children

There are a range of specialist services for young people who are vulnerable, including those who are homeless or at risk of homelessness, including a new mental health provision for young people 'Forward Thinking Birmingham', substance misuse services and sexual health services.

A recent piece of research into the health needs of the homeless population in Birmingham (The Homeless Lifestyles Review, published in December 2014) has some detailed findings relating to young people. 77% of the respondents were under 25 year olds. See Appendix One for more detail.

⁴ See https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/399391/20150128_YP_HW_Framework_FINAL_WP__3_.pdf

Housing

The overall backdrop is the generally accepted position of a housing crisis in England. But how does this impact on young people? Firstly there is no coherent national housing policy for young people. In this gap lies a fragmented set of Government policy changes, combined with the underlying context that surround housing, homelessness and young people. These can broadly be described as a combination of welfare reform policies and the supply of and access to affordable accommodation, in both social and private rented accommodation. The detail of this part of the report is set out in Appendix One.

In the main the impact of the previous Coalition Government's policies and the market conditions are regarded by leading researchers and homelessness charities as having had an adverse effect on vulnerable young people in housing terms. This is not only in relation to young people as future tenants or home owners, but the pressure that some policy changes and the 'over heated' housing market in some areas is having on families with older teenagers. The new Government's policy intentions are not addressing these key concerns directly and may present greater challenges for young people on low incomes in relation to housing.

Young people are generally finding it harder to get a foothold on the housing ladder whilst in their 20s. Rather than taking on a mortgage, many young people on low to middle incomes are renting — more usually in the private rented sector or staying at home with parents for longer.

There is generally a tightening of access to affordable, decent housing for poor young people. Unlike most areas, the analysis within Birmingham's Strategic Housing Market Assessment, last updated in January 2013, suggests that households in housing need who are most likely to get their housing needs met are those who require one or two bed properties. The greatest need is for 4 bed properties and then 3 bed properties. This is positive for single young people in the City, but there is still a lack of supply to meet needs. Approximately 11.5% of the 18 - 25s waiting for social housing on Birmingham's Housing Register for social housing will move into social housing each year, based on current figures.

Around 30,000 households of all ages and sizes rent in the private rented market in Birmingham, including many young people. This part of the housing market in the City is picking up many households who previously might have been young first time buyers in their 20s and those who cannot access social housing. But Birmingham's Youth Hub data show a significant rise in loss of tenancy in the private rented sector as a cause of homelessness amongst 18 - 25 year olds.

Notable welfare reforms which will or are impacting on young people's access to accommodation and consequent housing need include:

- Housing Benefit rates payable in the private rented sector dropping from the 50th to the 30th percentile of the local rental market
- The Shared Accommodation Rate (SAR) of housing benefit - the lowest amount payable - used to apply to under 25 year olds but applies now to all those aged under 35, with some exemptions
- From 2017 under 22s entitlement to housing benefit will not be automatic if they are unemployed — detail is expected shortly on this
- The 'benefit cap' to be reduced from £26,000 to £20,000 for families outside London, this will impact on many families in the City and may result in some older teenagers being asked to leave home to enable families to afford to stay in accommodation
- Universal Credit - payment of rent direct to claimant and 4 weeks in arrears is reducing landlord confidence further
- The 'bedroom tax' - under occupancy penalties in social housing - has reduced supply of one bed accommodation
- Freezing of working age benefit between 2016 and 2020

Other changes include the shift to 'affordable' rents which allow social housing providers to charge up to 80% of the local market rent on new lettings should they choose to do so. Counter- intuitively, the government are also introducing a mandatory 1% rent cut to social housing over 4 years. As this report goes to print, it would appear that this will also be applied to exempt supported housing. This would have a significant detrimental effect on the supply of supported accommodation for vulnerable young people. Whilst the introduction of flexible tenancies in social housing gives social landlords the option of granting a fixed period of tenure to their tenants -usually 5 years, the indication is that secure indefinite tenancies will come to an end.

At the point of finalising this report an announcement within the 2015 Comprehensive Spending Review indicated the Government's intention to change the levels of social rent payable through housing benefit, so social rents in effect match the Local Housing Allowance levels, which currently apply only to those living in private rented accommodation. The Shared Accommodation Rate will apply in social housing from 2018 and impact on single people on low income or unemployment, until their 35th birthday, unless they have an exemption. This is of great concern and until further detail is known, it is hard to analyse possible impacts with confidence. But based on our report on affordability levels of housing for young people, this change would render all social housing unaffordable for those subject to the Shared Accommodation Rate, as their housing benefit would not cover the cost of this.

Youth homelessness

The partnership approach in Birmingham over a number of years has seen a steady reduction in the numbers of young people presenting as homeless. Whilst in 2000, research estimated that 5% of the 16-25 population were homeless or at risk, this is now around 2.2% in 2014/15, despite all the challenges of supply and affordability noted above, combined with welfare reform and low wages. Birmingham's performance on prevention of youth homelessness is excellent⁵, with prevention success rates of around 85% for 16/17 year olds⁶ and 18 -21 year olds. This is defined as young people having their homelessness resolved and not accessing the Youth Hub again within a 6- month period. There is no room for complacency as experience also shows that it takes concerted efforts to sustain and improve on this performance.

However there are some trends which are worthy of mention, with much more detail available on youth homelessness in Appendix One. Firstly some groups of young people are much more likely to experience homelessness or risk of homelessness. Whilst there are differences based on gender and age of homelessness, the most significant is in relation to ethnicity. There is significant over-representation of presentations amongst young people who identify as being from the following groups:

- Mixed heritage: White and Black Caribbean
- Mixed heritage: Other
- Black British /Black Other
- Black African
- Black Caribbean
- Asian British/Asian Other

The Child Poverty Needs Assessment for Birmingham (2015) notes that 37% of children in 2013 in Birmingham lived in poverty (after housing costs), against a national position of 25%. Based on some simple correlation of available data, four of the top five wards for child poverty in the City in 2013 also recorded in the 2011 Census that 90% of the residents were from an ethnic group other than white British. It may be that the link between ethnicity, socio-economic disadvantage and risk of homelessness at a young age in Birmingham needs further study.

Secondly in line with national reporting, there is evidence to suggest that in Birmingham there is a growing proportion of young people presenting or being referred identified as having multiple needs/complex needs. This is a key issue for Supporting People commissioners as well as other commissioners across the public sector if positive outcomes across a range of domains are to be achieved for this group.

A summary of Birmingham's current position against the positive pathway 2015 elements and suggestions for the future

The review looked at current activity against the national Positive Pathway model 2015 (see page 8) , taking each Service Area of the Pathway at a time. The detail of this part of the review is available in Appendix Three. Suggestions are based on consultation with stakeholders, including young people, the policy context and what works well already in Birmingham and other local authority areas.

⁵ Based on knowledge from visits to other local authorities in England by the DCLG funded St Basils Youth Homelessness Advisers.

⁶ From the 2013/14 Youth Hub report

SERVICE AREA 1: INFORMATION AND ADVICE FOR YOUNG PEOPLE AND FAMILIES (A UNIVERSAL OFFER)

Description: Timely, accurate information and advice about the full range and local realities of housing options and affordability - available to everyone, delivered in a range of ways to reach young people, families and professionals.

Desired results: Young people and families are empowered to plan transitions to independent living without support from specialist services. They understand the links between housing choice and their financial end employment situation. They know where to get help if they need it.

Gaps/duplication/obstacles that need addressing to improve outcomes for young people:

- Many young people are likely to learn about their housing choices from their families. Parents/carers and older family members may not be familiar with the new challenges within the housing market for young people e.g. welfare reform, limited choices for young people due to affordability and a tightening of supply of social housing
- There is still a lack of awareness amongst some professionals advising young people regarding the realities of leaving home at a young age (in particular, choice and affordability in the longer term) and the options available when young people leave supported accommodation.
- The sheer number of secondary schools, academies and FE colleges means coverage in Birmingham is challenging if the face to face offer such as STaMP were to become part of the universal offer.

Suggestions and ideas to address gaps and obstacles

Reaching young people:

- Use technology to get general information across to young people and parents/carers via existing portals in schools, academies and FE colleges. Including some information on housing, homelessness, where to call for advice, early advice and help
- Link any new offer or approach to the Financial Literacy aspect of the national curriculum as well as PSHE⁷
- Seek support from a wider range of stakeholders in delivery of this - tenancy success is a business objective for all Registered Providers and the Social Lettings Agency, 'Let to Birmingham'. Young people are prospective tenants of the future who need advice and information.
- Information and advice should not be all 'doom and gloom' but could be framed in an aspirational, but realistic way about housing choice - linking it to pathways to economic activity, the Youth Promise and affordability. It would also need to include where to go for early advice/help.
- Children's and Young People's Services also have an interest in reducing youth homelessness at a young age. This work could be viewed as part of a universal service, but incorporate an 'Early Help' offer (see below) for older teenagers who come forward for additional advice and support.
- Consideration would need to be given to reach young people not in mainstream schools through Pupil Referral Units or other provisions - they are often at a higher risk of homelessness

Reaching parents and other professionals :

- Placing of information for parents and young people on Birmingham City Council and housing association websites and leaflet format covering:
 - Housing options for young people in Birmingham
 - Affordability considerations
 - Planning moves with young people leaving home
 - Where to go for advice and support on housing issues, including the Youth Hub
 - Who to contact if a parent is finding things difficult with a teenage child
- A short briefing delivered to those working with young people (including foster carers and residential care staff) covering: Housing options for young people, affordability and welfare reform challenges, where to seek advice/support when young people may be a high risk of homelessness in the future - not only the Youth Hub, but other Early Help services - incorporating relevant elements of the Right Service, Right Time framework training

SERVICE AREA 2: EARLY HELP AND TARGETED SUPPORT

Description: Early intervention targeted to reach households where young people are most likely to be at risk of homelessness. Delivery involving all local services working with young people and families at risk, e.g. Family Support, Think Family, Youth Support and Youth Offending Services.

Desired result: Young people stay in the family network where possible and safe and are supported to make planned moves to suitable accommodation if they need to move out.

Current known activity/provision

A large proportion of young people presenting to the Youth Hub as homeless are already known to and getting support from other, often statutory services. In addition many services are working with young people at high risk of homelessness, for example:

- Schools and academies
- Pupil Referral Units
- Think Family
- Youth Offending Service
- CAMHS
- Children's Services - teenagers in care, leaving care, on the edge of care, subject to child protection plans and child in need plans
- FE Colleges
- Voluntary agencies - e.g. Aquarius, (substance misuse service) Crisis (Housing Coach service)

Gaps/duplication/obstacles that need addressing to improve outcomes for young people

- Limited integration of services and difficulties navigating through services remains a key obstacle for professionals and is therefore likely to be difficult for young people and their families as well.
- Young people with multiple needs who are at high risk of homelessness as they get older are not systematically being identified as such, although other risks/needs in their lives are being identified and supported
- Think Family is working well in the city but the strategic alignment or join up regarding young people at risk of homelessness could be improved
- Awareness of other professionals regarding the increasing difficulties of leaving home at a young age and managing independently is often limited.

Suggestions to address gaps and obstacles

- The 'Right Service, Right Time' threshold framework has been launched and some training is being provided to other agencies. It may be useful to consider linking this - or the core elements of the training - with the briefing for professionals on youth housing/homelessness (see Service Area 1 suggestion)
- Clarity is needed regarding the Early Help offer for teenagers - and promotion of this to ensure professionals are aware of what is available. Within this could be a stronger message regarding identifying the issues/risks that may lead to youth homelessness, where to go for help and the realities of leaving home at a young age
- Set up a short 'task and finish' piece of work to create more alignment/join up between Think Family structures and processes and the Positive Pathway, particularly this point.
- Annual tenancy visits are undertaken by Birmingham City Council, which could be another opportunity to pick up on issues relating to teenagers living with parents/family and referral for additional services.
- Consider options to delay some young people moving out in crisis where safeguarding is not an issue. See Appendix Two for 3 examples from other local authorities.
- Provision of targeted schools programme such as STaMP in areas where there are high presentations; early non-stigmatised help for parents/carers with adolescent children such as Psychologically Informed Parenting Programme currently being piloted by St Basils.
- Development of Psychologically Informed professional environments for those working with children and young people

SERVICE AREA 3: INTEGRATED RESPONSE FOR YOUNG PEOPLE WHO NEED HELP WITH HOUSING AND GATEWAY TO COMMISSIONED ACCOMMODATION AND SUPPORT

Description: An integrated service for young people who are homeless, at risk of homelessness or need help with planned transitions to independence. Housing options and homelessness prevention services from housing and children's services come together, often co-located, with other services including support for pathways into learning and work. Underpinned by assessment and including a needs driven gateway into commissioned supported accommodation and flexible support services. Key data collection point to inform on-going development of the pathway.

Desired results: Homelessness is prevented wherever possible, for example by supporting young people to stay in their family network or preventing the loss of a tenancy. Young people who need accommodation and/or support get it, including quick access emergency accommodation and immediate and on-going support where needed

Current known activity/provision:

- The Youth Hub is an exemplar nationally in terms of work with young people at risk of homelessness, with St Basils undertaking advice, options, non-statutory assessment and prevention work, including family mediation, advice and finding safe alternatives within family and friends networks
- Children's Services and Housing both place staff within the Youth Hub to undertake statutory assessment of need
- Data collection enables the local authority and St Basils to understand trends and prevention outcomes at this point of the Pathway.
- Joint working ensures a sustained focus on maintaining high prevention rates.
- Other agencies link in closely with the Youth Hub, e.g. Crisis Skylight hold a regular surgery at the Youth Hub
- The 'gateway' into supported accommodation for young people is also provided through the Youth Hub function
- The commissioning through Supporting People ensures a focus on broader outcomes for young people and joint working by all providers

Gaps/duplication/obstacles that need addressing to improve outcomes for young people:

- The Youth Hub is not intended to be the 'one stop shop' for a wide range of issues for young people but there are some agencies/services whose primary objectives may be better met in relation to outcomes for vulnerable young people if they were more closely aligned with activity within the Youth Hub.
- Young people usually contact the Youth Hub when they are at high risk of homelessness. Like all other local authorities there is a challenge to look at service redesign at other points in the Positive Pathway which encourage young people and/or their families to get high quality information and if needed, seek advice on housing issues **before** the crisis of homelessness.
- Leaving care is showing in the Youth Hub data as one of the highest causes of youth homelessness. If processes were more joined up it is likely that improved housing options work with care leavers would help to reduce the instances of housing crisis amongst this group.
- A relatively small number of young people who are highly vulnerable due to homelessness, e.g. have a learning disability are falling between gaps in statutory provision due to lack of join up with Adult Social Care.
- Young people aged 16/17 are not being jointly assessed by Housing and Children's Services currently. This is likely to duplicate effort/time for statutory services and from a customer perspective may be experienced as confusing and unnecessary.

Suggestions and ideas to address gaps and obstacles:

- Closer alignment with agencies/services working around the Youth Promise and others whose primary objectives regarding outcomes for vulnerable young people dovetail with the Positive Pathway outcomes framework. See Appendix Two for the list of suggestions.

- Consider the merits of re-positioning the function of the Youth Hub so it is also the place young people and parents/carers contact for earlier, more universal housing advice, before the crisis of homelessness. No matter where a new more universal function is located within existing services in the City, for this to work, there would need to be a mixture of offers of information, advice and access to housing options. Ideas to support this shift in service focus include:
 - Development of some incentives for move on in a planned way when young people are ready to succeed (see Appendix Three for examples)
 - Easy access to the social lettings agency, Let to Birmingham, with an enhanced youth access incentive offer for landlords if needed (see below)
 In addition, specifically at the Youth Hub the following would be useful changes to consider:
 - Young people – including care leavers - being able to access the housing register through the Homechoice Gateway directly via the Youth Hub and getting consistent advice and support on their readiness for a tenancy
 - Making a short DVD/film clip to show young people at the Youth Hub regarding advice on the realities of what's good and what's difficult about living independently – made by other young people
- Housing and Children's Services to consider developing a joint statutory assessment.
- Continuing to enhance the prevention tools within the Youth Hub - see Appendix Three for some suggestions of these.
 - Children's Services to consider if young people at high risk of homelessness aged 16/17 and their families could have access to Family Group Conferencing , on the basis that they are on the edge of care - this may require a CAF assessment in order to refer to the service
 - Using home visits as a key prevention tool
 - Young people – including care leavers - being able to access the housing register through the Homechoice Gateway directly via the Youth Hub and getting consistent advice and support on their readiness for a tenancy
 - More time to do follow up with young people where prevention has been successful – to continue to support and to find out what the outcomes were.

SERVICE AREA 4 : COMMISSIONED ACCOMMODATION AND SUPPORT

Description: A range of accommodation and support options designed for younger and more vulnerable young people. Access is through the 'gateway'. Accommodation and support is linked together in some options, for example supported accommodation, Foyers, supported lodgings and Housing First. Flexible outreach support is also available to support young people wherever they live (including in the family home) and stick with them when they move if needed. Public sector integration/join up around planning and commissioning are core features to meet the wide range of needs of young people.

Desired results: Young people gain the stability and skills they need, engage with learning and work and move on to greater independence.

Current known activity/provision

- Birmingham has a well-developed accommodation and support pathway for young people, with 115 units of immediate access provision, around 560 units of longer stay accommodation, including supported lodgings for care leavers (24 units) specialist provision for young offenders (20 units) and for those involved in gang activity as well as tenure neutral floating support service.
- Led by Supporting People commissioners, much of the above provision has been put out to tender and new contracts have been awarded to 5 provider organisations. Within this process there has been a small amount of joint commissioning to date.
- St Basils has been awarded a contract as part of the 'Fair Chance Fund' to run a programme for young people with multiple needs at high risk of long term multiple exclusion. This programme aims to work with those who are unable to access or sustain existing services and focuses on accommodation and employment, education and training outcomes with them.

Gaps/duplication/obstacles that need addressing to improve outcomes for young people

- Currently there is no shared understanding regarding the destinations and outcomes of young people within the Supporting People commissioned accommodation pathway.

- There is a separate commissioning process for young people aged 16 and over who are in and leaving care but not living in registered children's homes or foster care, which at the point of writing this report, was not aligned or informed by Supporting People commissioning.
- There is a lack of clarity regarding what happens to young people who are evicted or have unplanned moves out of supported accommodation in terms of who is responsible for them.
- The new Supporting People contracts have reduced the length of stay in provision for young people. It is recognised that this is likely to be challenging given the complexity of need of many young people.
- Young people's aspirations for one-bed social housing as a move-on option are not always able to be met. Following the announcement in the Comprehensive Spending Review in November 2015 regarding Local Housing Allowance housing benefit levels being applied to social rents from 2018, the opportunity for most young people on low incomes to rent from social landlords will diminish. Information and advice regarding wider options are important.
- Helping young people to develop the skills needed for sharing housing may be a gap within tenancy preparation work.
- There is not enough of the 'light touch' affordable shared housing as an option for young people who are in education, training or employment. This provision is not a 'forever' option for young people, but another stage of progression to independence for some.

Suggestions and ideas to address gaps and obstacles

- There is an opportunity to consider joint commissioning between Children's Services, Supporting People and other commissioners. A more joined up approach should improve value for money, quality and could avoid the 'cliff edge' for many care leavers when they become 18.
- To reduce duplication and improve joint working and data collection, consider development of a shared referral form and common risk assessment process. This could help to pick up any trends regarding the changes to the length of stay for young people, outcomes and any links to, for example, increased repeat presentations/homelessness
- Agree a shared process/Forum, including roles and responsibilities, for young people who are evicted or have unplanned moves from supported accommodation. This should provide clarity to providers and commissioners regarding who is responsible for young people at any point in the process and reduce the likelihood of young people slipping through gaps. This Forum could also consider young people at risk of falling out of the pathway. This should include care leavers at the point of leaving care or moving from a registered placement and young offenders due to come out of custody, as well as other young people.
- As the issues of affordability, supply and sharing impact more widely, more young people are staying with parents for longer, or returning to the parental home or family network. This is an area of potential support which has not been widely recognised for older young people and their parents/family, but there is likely to be a need for some sort of provision.
- Given that a higher proportion of young people coming into the Accommodation and Support pathway have complex or multiple needs, consider the learning from both the Fair Chance Fund and Camden (See Appendix Three) re: health commissioners funding specialist workers from mental health and substance misuse services who provide additional specialist support to providers and to young people.
- In order to prepare young people for sharing with others as their move on option, provider organisations could consider adjusting their pre-tenancy training. There is some learning from St Vincent's SnugBug House Share Scheme on training (see below) and from the Crisis 'Sharing Solutions' evaluation and toolkit (See Service Area 5 below).
- Development of more low cost, affordable, shared accommodation for young people aged 18 – 25 in education, training or employment – there are limited examples of this across England.
 - The Live and Work scheme is a partnership between St Basils, Birmingham and Sandwell Hospitals NHS Trust
 - St Vincent's Housing Association - Snugbug House Share provides young people in Manchester with a room in shared social housing. This is open to any young person as long as they have a local connection to Manchester. Support is not provided but there is intensive housing management through a 'Ranger' service. See <http://www.snugbughousesshare.co.uk> for more information. See Appendix Three for other examples.

SERVICE AREA 5: A RANGE OF HOUSING OPTIONS

Description: A range of safe, decent, affordable housing options, self-contained and shared, in the private, social and third sectors. Where the market doesn't provide, the offer is shaped through local housing strategies and partnerships to create options for young people starting out on low incomes. May include creative approaches such as partnerships with learning providers and employers to provide dedicated accommodation that underpins participation in learning and work. Connections with the flexible outreach support for those who need it.

The results: Young people are economically active and have suitable homes that they can afford - they can build for their future.

Current known activity/provision

The housing market in Birmingham is extensive and varied. Access to the private sector is closely linked to affordability and young people are the least able to afford quality accommodation. The accompanying report on affordability mapping of accommodation options for young people that we have commissioned explores this issue in more detail. Whilst increasingly young people are remaining at home for longer, the main routes for young people starting out are:

- Accommodation linked to higher education courses.
- Private renting: including shared housing, lodgings, self-contained depending on their income and ability to rent without recourse to housing benefit. Young people can find their own accommodation, via friends, letting agents or through 'Let to Birmingham', the City's Social Lettings Agency. The purpose of the Social Lettings Agency is to increase the supply and quality of private rented accommodation in Birmingham. Landlords receive a range of incentives and support through Let to Birmingham.
- Living in social housing: Approximately half of housing association properties and all of the City Council's own supply of social housing is allocated through the Housing Register. HomeChoice is the choice based lettings scheme. The rest of housing association properties are let directly by them or through a shared system, HomesDirect.
- Supported housing options, including supported lodgings, for those assessed as vulnerable or at risk of homelessness.
- Home ownership is another option for some under 30 year olds.

Where young people live, access to public transport and what sort of local amenities are available (e.g. shopping, primary health services) are important factors, as these will impact on assessment of the ability to be economically active and affordability overall.

Gaps/duplication/obstacles that need addressing to improve outcomes for young people

- There is limited understanding amongst some professionals regarding options beyond a tenancy in social housing, which in turn creates an expectation amongst young people that social housing is the only option. This means discussion of the option of sharing of accommodation is not happening routinely. And issues of affordability in the private rented sector may not be part of any preparation work.
- Options of living in the private rented sector may need to be extended, if social housing becomes less available for young people in the future. However, In light of the Comprehensive Spending Review announcement regarding rent levels payable for social tenancies from 2018, we recommend a strategic look at the range of social housing options available to young people as these should provide the safest, well managed and most affordable option for those on low incomes.
- Shared social housing as an option has not yet been developed as an option for young people in Birmingham because there has been little need or demand for it so far. In light of the announcement in the Comprehensive Spending Review, this option may need to be explored further in Birmingham.
- Affordability generally for young people on low incomes is a key concern, as is quality and location of accommodation

Suggestions and ideas to address gaps and obstacles

- Supporting People and Children's Services commissioners and providers could consider some training / messaging for provider organisations to deliver to their staff on housing options beyond social housing e.g. accessing the Private Rented Sector and other shared models.

- In order to prepare young people for sharing with others as their move on option, provider organisations could consider adjusting their pre-tenancy training.
- The Crisis 'Sharing Solutions' programme published an evaluation and toolkit in March 2015 providing invaluable insights into what makes sharing work – or not. Models of sharing include peer tenants/lead tenants and lodgings. See Appendix Three for links to this.
- Given the difficulty for young people under 25 on low incomes accessing the private rented sector, there could be a more specialist offer to private landlords to take young people.
- Sharing in social housing is an option that could be developed by housing associations and the local authority as an option for some young people. It can help to address affordability and better use of stock. Some examples of sharing accommodation for the longer term are set out in Appendix Three.
- For young people with minimal family support and on low incomes, access to furniture, white goods and other setting up home necessities is very difficult. With the ending of the Social Fund for loans and grants, and many pressures on the discretionary hardship fund held by the local authority, other options, such as use of a credit union, saving or approaching the Birmingham Business Alliance /Chamber of Commerce to support young people leaving supported accommodation who are in apprenticeships or work with 'setting up home' help could be explored by providers and incentivised.

In summing up this part of the report, the mapping exercise against the national Positive Pathway (2015) model shows there is much in place which works well. But there are several areas where together we could do things differently — and underpinning this is a theme of more joint planning, ever closer alignment, more integration of delivery.

There is a gap in 'Service Area 1' - the universal offer of information and where needed, advice on housing options. This raises a critical question: Recognising that many young people will stay at home longer, how can we achieve a culture shift which makes it possible for young people to move into independence when they are ready to succeed and without crisis. Can Birmingham be a leader in a culture shift and avert a significant housing problem amongst the next generation in the longer term?

This in turn brings a focus to 'Service Area 5'. Move-on options may be just about holding up for most young people now — but in the medium and longer term, the presumption that social housing will be available and affordable is a high risk. This means addressing the supply options available now and in the future. A platform providing universal access to information and home options advice, accessible to all young people and their families/carers is needed as is a real focus on supply. In our view both of these areas need to be addressed in a collaborative way.

Improving outcomes for young people

Like every other local authority area, the need for public services to work together in joint planning and joint commissioning to achieve improvements is arguably more critical than ever before. Leadership and strategy are focused on taking a more integrated course, but many services and systems continue to operate in their traditional spheres.

The challenge is how to move from single issue commissioning (for example, addressing NEET status, homelessness, housing related support, offending, leaving care, mental health) , to more joint planning and commissioning for this group. Can commissioners come together and do some 'nudging' - often in small, practical ways that explicitly recognise the inter-dependence between different 'single' outcomes and support the young person's journey to adulthood more seamlessly?

There are possibilities to start to do things differently in the City. Birmingham City Council now have a single, corporate 'Commissioning Centre of Excellence' which is an opportunity to start commissioning based on outcomes as young people make their transition to adulthood. There is some learning locally - for example Supporting People have commissioned around other outcomes, not only tenancy /housing ones - but there is some way to go.

The model outlined in Appendix Two is our suggestion for a slightly different approach to thinking about outcomes. It goes beyond addressing youth homelessness. Our shared ambition is that our young people will be economically active. Housing and financial security go hand in hand. Without a decent, safe place to live, it is almost impossible to get ready for the world of work or hold down a job. Without financial security, young people have little prospect of living in decent, safe accommodation as young adults.

The outcomes that underpin this, in relation to health, well-being and safety are ones that every commissioner and provider in the city working with young people will be familiar with and many will be shared across several organisations.

Our recommendation is that a collective governance structure be set up with providers to take responsibility for the Birmingham Pathway, developing a shared outcomes framework and ensuring that young people progress through the Pathway and that services work together to support a positive transition to adulthood.

Conclusion: build for success and everything changes

Birmingham has a history of working together to support young people at risk of homelessness and is one of the leaders nationally. Not surprisingly the parts of the Positive Pathway that are most developed, those in Service Areas 3 and 4 (the Youth Hub and Commissioned Accommodation and Support) reflect this.

Some of the suggestions in this report, in terms of changes to the current working of the Pathway in Birmingham are relatively straightforward, requiring some discussion and then, if seen as relevant, perhaps mini reviews, creating new agreements, small bits of tweaking across agencies around joint working.

But these changes alone will not be enough without paying attention to other parts of the Pathway. At one end of the Pathway, more information on housing, affordability and options is needed and at the other end, more supply options for young people starting out need to be pro-actively developed.

The suggested Outcomes Framework in Appendix Two aims to start more focused discussion amongst stakeholders on:

- ✓ Creating a universal offer of information, advice and ultimately for some, access to decent affordable housing
- ✓ Opening up of decent, affordable supply of housing for young people — through the private rented sector but also new models in social housing
- ✓ Joint commissioning of support for vulnerable young people who are not living at home or in care anymore— which goes beyond housing related support and links to other key outcomes around education, training and employment, health and community safety.

Our starting point and ending conclusion is this: if we continue to plan for and commission around only dealing with and preventing youth homelessness, or addressing acute housing need, then that's what we'll continue to get. And given the housing market and the growing population of young people in the City, we are likely to get more homelessness and the resulting poor outcomes if we do not address key issues of supply, affordability and more joined up ways of working with young people at high risk of poor outcomes. A new focus is needed on housing more generally for young people in the City. In effect it's an 'Early Help' housing approach for young people, very much linked to the Youth Promise, which gives the information and advice young people and their parents need so they can make choices and plan for their futures. As counter-intuitive as it might seem, now is the time for some discussion between stakeholders around young people and housing.

We want to emphasise that this is not to encourage young people to leave home or care early, but to ensure young people and their parents or carers understand the realities of affordability and housing options sooner rather than later, and financial and other planning is based on readiness to succeed and being economically active or taking steps in that direction.

These suggested changes sit within a bigger strategic approach, which is best summarised as public service transformation. The components of this are set out in the national Service Transformation Challenge Panel report, 'Bolder, Braver Better; why we need local deals to save public services' published in November 2014. The report defines this transformation as:

'Radically re-designing approaches to service provision that reduces unit costs and is difficult to reverse. In practice this will mean:

- *People are the focus of delivery, regardless of the organisation providing or commissioning*
- *Outcomes for people take priority over output or process target and measures*
- *Frequent users of public services are encouraged to make better choices, mitigate their own costs and contribute to their communities, and services are designed to encourage and facilitate responsible behavior*
- *Multi-agency provision of services, virtual and physical co-location, become the norm, service silos and duplication are eliminated*
- *Digital technologies and big data are embedded in decision and delivery of services to improve customer experience'¹⁰*

A Youth Housing Promise, underpinning the Positive Pathway and sitting alongside the Youth Promise, requires that agencies work together to agree a shared set of outcomes that start with the premise of successful young people. This has the possibility of transforming the lives of young people and the future success of the City.

¹⁰ http://publicservicetransformation.org/images/2902929_ChallengePanelReport_acc3.pdf

APPENDIX ONE: REVIEW OF POLICY CONTEXT, TRENDS AND RELEVANT AVAILABLE DATA - LOCAL AND NATIONAL

This part of the review considered a number of the major national and local policy areas which are pertinent to young people. We didn't only consider employment and housing, although these are major policy areas, but also looked at other policy areas which can support the development of good outcomes for young people in the City. There was a particular focus on policy relating to those who may have to leave home or care at a young age.

Some policies are more universally focussed than others, however, in most - but not all - policy areas, there is a theme of recognising, reaching, engaging and giving additional support to the most vulnerable groups to help them achieve positive life outcomes.

Where appropriate any trends, data and key issues were identified. The point of particular relevance within the Positive Pathway is set out at the beginning of each policy area covered.

EDUCATION - THE NATIONAL CURRICULUM

Education & the National Curriculum relates to Service Area 1 of the national Positive Pathway (2015):
'Information and Advice for young people and their families'

Timely, accurate information and advice about housing options available to everyone, delivered in a range of ways including web-based information and through schools to reach young people, families and professionals.

A new National Curriculum went live in September 2014. It applies to all local authority maintained schools. Money management and financial planning are now components of both the Maths and the Citizenship elements of the statutory curriculum.¹¹ This should, dependent on how a school or academy chooses to deliver this area of curriculum, include budgeting as a young adult on a limited income.

PSHE (Personal, Social, Health and Economic Education) is a non-statutory part of the new National Curriculum. Schools do not have to teach PSHE but a national association exists to support them to do so. Following the recent uncovering of widespread child sexual exploitation in several areas of England, there has been a renewed debate on the need to focus on sex, relationships and consent within PSHE.

Section 2.5 of the National Curriculum guidance states that:

'Schools should seek to use PSHE education to build, where appropriate, on the statutory content already outlined in the national curriculum, the basic school curriculum and in statutory guidance on: drug education, financial education, sex and relationship education (SRE) and the importance of physical activity and diet for a healthy lifestyle.'

Local information:

In Birmingham there are 120 secondary schools, of which 84 are state funded. Some of these are academy schools. Each will devise its own programme of Citizenship and PSHE, if it opts to deliver this as a subject area. The only known work in schools specifically on youth housing and homelessness is delivered by St Basils through STaMP (Schools, Training and Mentoring Project) which works in 14 secondary schools. This work is funded through St Basils' own fundraising and is not a commissioned service.

¹¹ See a newspaper article with links to resources here: <http://www.theguardian.com/education/teacher-blog/2013/mar/04/financial-education-teaching-resources>

EARLY HELP

Early Help relates to Service Area 2 of the national Positive Pathway (2015):

'Early Help'

Early intervention targeted to reach households where young people are most likely to be at risk of homelessness. Delivery involving all local services working with young people and families at risk, e.g. Troubled Families programme, Family Support, Youth Support and Youth Offending Services.

'Early Help' as an approach to resolving problems within families at an early stage is not new. But perhaps a key difference that makes Early Help different to previous early intervention programmes, such as Sure Start, is that Early Help is defined by needs of children, not by their age. The concept and any resulting local strategies will need to apply therefore to older teenagers as well as younger children. The context for Early Help is the 2011 report by Professor Eileen Munro into child protection¹² and the subsequent issuing by Government of revised statutory guidance on safeguarding¹³ in 2013. These have both served as a catalyst to Children's Services Authorities and their partners to develop new strategies, drawing on the key messages from the Munro report and the Working Together guidance.

Another driver for a review of early intervention approaches is the rising demand on Children's Social Care combined with pressure on local authority and other public sector budgets. Early Help as an 'invest to save' option is a compelling argument, given the huge challenges local authorities face nationally in demand for social care for vulnerable groups in our society and the high cost of more intensive interventions, such as looking after a child in care.¹⁴

There is a strong focus in the national guidance on having systems to identify and refer children and young people who may need additional early support and the use of the Common Assessment Framework (CAF) to assess and then plan the support to be provided by a range of agencies. Local Safeguarding Children Boards lead on Early Help and need to publish information on thresholds for Early Help and there should be clarity about the local referral routes into Children's Social Care for statutory assessment where needed. Services provided locally are not prescribed but are likely to include universal services, parenting support services, family support and specialist services.

Local information:

In Birmingham there is a renewed focus on Early Help, led by the Local Safeguarding Children Board. New guidance for all agencies about thresholds for referrals has been launched, "Right Service, Right Time" and the Early Help offer extends up to older teenagers, as outlined in the local definition for Birmingham:

Early Help means taking action to support a child, young person or their family early in the life of a problem, as soon as it emerges. It can be required at any stage in a child's life from pre-birth to adulthood, and applies to any problem or need that the family cannot deal with or meet on their own. It also applies to all children and young people, with any form of need".

(Definition as agreed by Birmingham Safeguarding Children's Board)

¹² See http://data.gov.uk/sib_knowledge_box/toolkit for national unit costs of looking after a child for 1 year, estimated at an average of £52, 676 per annum

¹³ https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/175391/Munro-Review.pdf

¹⁴ <http://www.workingtogetheronline.co.uk/documents/Working%20TogetherFINAL.pdf>

SAFEGUARDING OF OLDER TEENAGERS

Safeguarding runs through every element of the Positive Pathway model.

Whilst there is no individual policy change or amendment to any statutory guidance, the issue of older teenagers who are or may be at risk of significant harm has arguably had more profile recently than ever before. There is more understanding that safeguarding issues - spotting of signs and symptoms and types of intervention to protect - are often very different for teenagers than for younger children. Identifying risk within a family home and then protecting a child from harm - or removing them — has historically been the way child protection has been framed. But there is an increasing concern about older teenagers at risk from external factors, beyond the home. With the uncovering of systematic child sexual exploitation in several areas of England and evidence of systematic failure of public services to respond to teenagers at risk, Government, leading child welfare organisations and local authorities, with Local Safeguarding Children Boards, are reframing how to work successfully with older teenagers to keep them safe from external risks. **There is** a paucity of research in the area of safeguarding older children, but that is likely to change, given the recent cases and media profile.

Some of the risk issues related to safeguarding of children and young people also indicate an increased likelihood of future homelessness. For example, in a recent piece of research published by the Lankelly Chase Foundation¹⁵ 42% of adults interviewed facing the most acute form of severe and multiple disadvantage (defined as homelessness, involvement in the criminal justice system and substance misuse) had run away from home as a child. There is also a strong correlation between youth homelessness amongst 16/17s and being reported as missing as a child under 16.

Homelessness itself at a young age can be a trigger into a wide range of risks unless there are services to support young people and keep them safe. Without these, young people at high risk can go off everyone's radar.

A 2012 Education Select Committee Report on protecting older children explored a wide range of areas of risk and agency responses to older teenagers. Their findings summarise the complexity of protecting older children but also the gaps in understanding and response.

"We recommend that the Government urgently review the support offered by the child protection system to older children and consult on proposals for re-shaping services to meet the needs of this very vulnerable group."

The 2013 Department for Education "Working Together to Safeguard Children — A guide to interagency working to safeguard and promote the welfare of children" did not detail any issues relating to teenagers, risk and working together specifically. The new Ofsted inspection framework does focus on the activity and effectiveness of Local Safeguarding Children Boards; inspections are based on a range of cross cutting data and information about all groups of children and also care leavers aged 18 and over. It is not unreasonable to assume that inspectors are likely to be asking more searching questions about work to protect teenagers at risk.

THE TROUBLED FAMILIES PROGRAMME

The Troubled Families programme relates to Service Area 2 of the national Positive Pathway (2015)

'Early Help'

Early intervention targeted to reach households where young people are most likely to be at risk of homelessness. Delivery involving all local services working with young people and families at risk, e.g. Troubled Families programme, Family Support, Youth Support and Youth Offending Services.

There is a focus here on planning and preparing with those at high risk of homelessness before they are in crisis.

The national Troubled Families programme has entered Phase 2. The first phase which committed to support 120,000 families aimed to:

¹⁵ G.Bramley and S.Fitzpatrick et al. 'Hard Edges – Mapping Severe and Multiple Disadvantage in England' published by Lankelly Chase Foundation 2015

- Get children back to school
- Reduce anti-social behaviour and youth offending
- Support adults in families to gain employment and come off long term benefit

The model used has been heralded as successful nationally in dealing with complex problems, through joint working across agencies with a single worker being the point of contact and support for all issues within a family.

Phase 2 of the Programme focuses on working with a further 400,000 families nationally. A family is referred by specialist agencies as having 2 of the 6 following problems:

- parents and children involved in crime or anti-social behaviour
- children who have not been attending school regularly
- children who need help
- adults out of work or at risk of financial exclusion and young people at risk of worklessness
- families affected by domestic violence and abuse
- parents and children with a range of health problems

Local Information:

In Birmingham, the Think Family programme has achieved positive outcomes with 4,180 families (by May 2015). It has been viewed as a strength within Birmingham in the most recent Ofsted Inspection report of Children's Services (2014).

The preventative role that Think Family plays encompasses many areas of a family's life – therefore a wide range of public sector organisations' are involved in planning and delivery of the Programme. For example, Birmingham's Director of Public Health is a member of the Think Family Board and the Think Family agenda forms a crucial part of Birmingham's overall public health strategy. As a result families' needs have been included in Birmingham's commissioning arrangements for substance misuse services, and substance misuse workers are placed within children and family teams.

EDUCATION, EMPLOYMENT AND TRAINING

All elements of the national Positive Pathway (2015) but specifically relates to :

Service Area 3 : Prevention Hub with a 'Gateway' into commissioned accommodation and support signposting to relevant services, including Careers Service and ETE provision, following advice and assessment of need.

Service Area 4: Commissioned accommodation and flexible support – all contain a focus on young people engaging in education, training or employment

Service Area 5: Housing Options – Young people have suitable homes they can afford, are in work and have support if they need it. The aim is that they are positively engaged in education training or employment, they have good health & emotional well-being, positive relationships and the ability to manage a tenancy and/or share with others.

Youth unemployment is a continuing focus of policy for Government. Government statistics show that nationally 13.1% of young people aged 16 – 24 were NEET in the fourth quarter of 2014, equating to around 963,000 young people. But it is important to add a few caveats around this headline figure:

- not all young people who are NEET are unemployed: for example in Quarter 4 of 2014, 47% of people who were NEET were unemployed, the rest were economically inactive, not seeking work and/or not available to start work
- and not all unemployed young people are NEET, for example in Quarter 4 of 2014, 61% of unemployed 16-24 year olds were NEET, but the remaining 39% were in further or higher education or training

In England, the regions with the highest proportion of 16-24 year olds who are NEET are the North East, Yorkshire & Humber, and West Midlands.

A culmination of a range of factors have led to the current high levels of youth unemployment in some areas. In part these are the result of long term economic downturn, resulting in changes in patterns within labour market, such as employment practices but are also impacted by local factors, such as transport and education and levels of deprivation. The issues that keep some young people at a distance from the labour market are well understood, including, for example, poor basic educational outcomes, low confidence, limited social networks, lack of experience and low self-efficacy.

Nationally and at a local level it's been recognised there is a need to find new ways of addressing what is now understood to be an embedded structural issue, requiring longer term strategic attention. Youth unemployment can no longer be viewed as a more cyclical, temporary issue which might go away in an economic upturn.

Factors which research has highlighted increase the likelihood of becoming NEET are: Involvement in the criminal justice system, exclusion from school/non-attendance, substance misuse, being a young parent/pregnant and being NEET previously. There are strong correlations with all of these underlying causal factors and risks of youth homelessness.

The new Government's direction of travel on youth employment is continuing with a focus on apprenticeships with a pledge to create 3 million more apprenticeships. However some recent research¹⁶ has found that 42% of apprenticeships in the last Government went to people over 25. There are other schemes developed by the last Government which will continue, all aimed at reducing the number of young people who are NEET: Raising the Participation Age, the Youth Contract and the Work Programme.

Education: Raising of the Participation Age

A relatively recent policy change in education has been to extend the age of compulsory education. Young people must now continue in education or training until they are 18, in effect until the end of Year 13. This does not mean young people must stay in school. They will be able to choose from:

- full-time education (e.g. at a school or college)
- an apprenticeship or traineeship
- part-time education or training combined with one of the following:
 - o employment or self-employment for 20 hours or more a week
 - o volunteering for 20 hours or more a week

The Work Programme

The Work Programme is the main Government scheme aimed at all people of working age, not just young people. Individuals are referred on to the Work Programme by Job Centre Plus after they have been receiving JSA for a minimum amount of time. Those aged 18-24 on JSA are referred to the programme after the 9-month point of their claim. Some claimants who are NEET are referred early to the Work Programme, after claiming for three months; care leavers and homeless people can be referred early on an optional basis.

The Youth Contract

The Government introduced a range of measures to specifically address youth unemployment, which together make up the Youth Contract offer.

A combination of measures include various incentives for employers to take on young people as apprentices and/or employees, additional payments to training organisations to work with the harder to help NEET 16 – 17s and for 18 – 24s, more contact with Job Centre Plus advice and support through weekly signing-on meetings, rather than fortnightly.

Apprenticeships

More opportunities to get training whilst in work have been created through the National Apprenticeship Scheme. The Government pays a proportion of the training costs for apprentices, depending on their age, with remaining training costs normally covered by the employer. The new Government has committed to creating a further 3 million apprenticeships by 2020.

Local Information:

In Birmingham there has been a focus, led by the local authority and Job Centre Plus with other partners, on addressing unemployment amongst young people. This follows a 2013 Birmingham Commission on Youth Unemployment. Linked to the national policy initiatives, but with additional local investment and impetus, a multi-agency initiative response have resulted in 3 key programmes, linked to the 'Youth Offer' (more recently called the 'Youth Promise') and a campaign aimed at employers, 'Young Talent for Birmingham' :

¹⁶ See <http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/education-32844164>

Birmingham Jobs Fund

Offers financial incentives to employers to take on young people in apprenticeship or non-apprenticeship roles. Since its inception in 2013 The Jobs Fund has placed approximately 2,000 young people and developed 6 short term local 'exemplar' pilots in areas of high youth unemployment to test different ways of working locally. The Fund was created to boost central Government funding through the Wage Incentive scheme, but this has since ended. However Birmingham City Council have recently committed to continue to fund the local scheme, allocating £2,000,000 in 2015/16. It is hoped that investment in the Fund will lever in other funding and in-kind contributions.

Learning from the exemplar pilots will assist in devising effective models of delivery to incorporate in any Greater Birmingham and Solihull Local Enterprise (GBSLEP) Partnership European bid.

Destination Work

Funded by the Cabinet Office, Destination Work has utilised £4,000,000 of the underspend from the Youth Contract to trial personalised support to 18 — 25s, through a model of assigning young people a coach/mentor and delivering a package starting with a two week intensive motivational activity and then a sustained personalised coaching and mentoring service through both pre and post-employment phases. The coach/mentor works with the young person on motivation and incentivising their focus on gaining and sustaining employment. It recognises the importance of the one to one relationship. The programme is being evaluated by the University of Birmingham. Run by 3 provider partnerships and linked with 3 Job Centres in Birmingham and Solihull, Destination Work connects with both community based and private training providers and DWP coaches. There is now agreement to extend the programme to another 3 Job Centres.

Talent Match

The Big Lottery Talent Match programme has awarded funding to 21 Local Enterprise Partnership areas, including GBSLEP. The funding is targeted at 16 — 24 year olds who are furthest away from the jobs market in areas of high youth unemployment. Funding of £7,600,000 over 5 years to Birmingham and Solihull through BVSC and Solihull Sustain aims to support 1,000 young people over 5 years. Again, there is a focus on the relationship with personal one to one coaching and support being a key element.

In addition, there are two Department for Work and Pensions 'Youth Hubs' at Broad Street and Solihull Jobcentres.

Birmingham City Council and DWP locally have a protocol that aims to ensure those leaving care don't drop out of the system but are helped to establish independent living with sustained employment a goal.

The investment in addressing youth unemployment through these 3 programmes is having an impact on Birmingham's levels of youth unemployment, measured by numbers of 18 — 24s claiming Job Seekers Allowance. However, the progress locally is being matched regionally and nationally, so there is still significant lag in the position in Birmingham comparatively. But that should not detract from the real progress locally, which is significant.

Number of 18 - 24 year olds claiming Job Seekers Allowance¹⁷

Quarter snapshot	Number claiming JSA aged 18 -24 in Birmingham	As a % of all 18 – 24s	West Midland %	GB %
February 2014	9,850	7.4%	6.4%	5.2%
February 2015	7,060	5.3%	4.0%	3.2%

But whilst there is significant improvement in the rates of unemployment, there is still some way to go with highly disadvantaged young people.

In terms of 16 -18 year olds, in 2014 Birmingham had the second highest NEET level in the West Midlands and highest 'Not Known' figure. In each of the 12 Job Centres there is an accredited under 18s Work Coach to try to reach and work with this group.

NEET status of higher risk groups of young people Birmingham 2013/14			
Service recording NEET status	Age of young people	Number reported as NEET	% NEET of cohort
Youth Hub	16/17 yr olds	510	58.9%
Youth Hub	18 -21 yr olds	2068	75.3%
18+ Leaving Care Service	19,20, 21 yr olds	405	45% (this excludes 18% who are 'Not Known')

There is a decrease in the number of NEETs aged 16 —18 nationally, in part due to the changes to the statutory age at which young people can leave education or training (see Raising of the Participation Age, above).

It is well-documented nationally that being in and leaving care, involvement in youth offending, substance misuse and becoming homeless are all factors which make worklessness more likely as a young adult. The statistics below are a stark reminder of the challenge to narrow the gap for these young people.

NEET status of 16 – 18 year olds in 2014				
Area / local authority	Known population	Number reported as NEET	% NEET of cohort	Not Knowns
West Midlands	192,930	10,420	5.4%	12.2%
Birmingham	38,770	2,790	7.2%	17.3%

The Birmingham Youth Offer/Youth Promise recognises that a spiral of linked disadvantages in early life can be hard to reverse without specific and concerted efforts and will be seeking ways to align and reach these groups.

'The level of participation in education, training or employment (ETE) for young people from vulnerable groups is poor compared to that of the overall 16-19 cohort. Many of these young people have complex needs or face multiple barriers which prevent them from ETE. These young people require significant on-going support and interventions, alongside impartial careers information, advice and guidance to enable them to progress into, and sustain, ETE.'

'We will commission specialist education, employment and training support/mentoring that will provide support for our vulnerable pre-Neet and NEET cohort, which includes children in care, care leavers, young offenders, young people with learning difficulties and disabilities and homeless young people'.

Many young people who are homeless, or at risk of homelessness will also be leaving care, may be involved in the criminal justice systems, and have learning difficulties or disabilities.

Job Centres in Birmingham have worked with St Basils to reduce the frequency of benefit sanctions for young homeless people in recognition of their increased levels of vulnerability.

HEALTH

Health runs through all elements of the national Positive Pathway (2015) but specifically relates to :

Service Area 2 – Early Help: Picking up health issues is an integral part of this work

Service Area 3 : Prevention Hub with a 'Gateway' into commissioned accommodation and support signposting to relevant services, including signposting to relevant health related services following advice and assessment of need.

Service Area 4:Commissioned accommodation and flexible support – all contain a focus on young people's physical and emotional health and well being

Service Area 5: Housing Options – Young people have suitable homes they can afford, are in work and have support if they need it. The aim is that they are positively engaged in education training or employment, they have good health & emotional well-being, positive relationships and the ability to manage a tenancy and/or share with others.

The wide parameters of the national health policy landscape have not always explicitly addressed health issues in depth relating to young people, but more recently there has been a shift and for a number of reasons the profile of young people's health and well-being needs has been raised.

A Government supported Forum, with senior level leadership and representation, The Children's and Young People's Health Outcomes Forum, has set out some proposals to address and modernise health care for young people.

The main areas it highlights are:

- Involvement and engagement of children and young people
- Improved information sharing and linkage of data systems
- Integration of services/provision
- Development and joining up of health outcomes across public services and international comparisons
- Financial incentives to get more innovation based on what works for young people
- Improved mental health provision
- Addressing workforce and sustainability

A new framework, *"Improving Young People's Health and Well-Being, A Framework for Public Health"*¹⁸ was published in January 2015 by Public Health England. This outlines some principles to work by (see the diagram on below), the rationale for investment in the 10 – 24 year olds age group and a set of health related outcomes for young people. The new framework was driven by some concerning national data sets relating to young people, including:

- More than one in three 11-15 year olds in England are obese or overweight.
- Only 14% of boys and 8% of girls aged 13-15 meet recommended physical activity levels.
- Almost two-thirds of adult smokers begin before they are 18.
- 10% of 5-16 year olds have a diagnosable mental health disorder.
- Half of all mental health illnesses (excluding dementia) start by age 14, three quarters by age 24.

Edited extracts below are taken from the Public Health England January 2015 document, *"Improving Young People's Health and Well-Being, A Framework for Public Health"*:

Outcomes: Improving the wider determinants of health:

- reduce the number of young people living in poverty
- provide targeted support for vulnerable groups, e.g. those in local authority care, youth custody, care leavers, young carers, homeless young people, asylum seekers or excluded from education and teenage parents
- target support for parents and families to those who need most help, linking with the Troubled Families programme
- improve safety: e.g. sexual exploitation, domestic and interpersonal violence, accidents and psychological trauma

¹⁸See https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/399391/20150128_YP_HW_Framework_FINAL_WP__3_.pdf

Outcomes: Health improvement:

- reduce smoking, drinking and drug use
- continue to reduce under-18 conceptions
- improve sexual health by de-stigmatising asking for advice

Outcomes: Improving young people's health and wellbeing

- increase levels of physical activity and fitness
- encourage healthy eating and weight, as well as positive body image: young people need support to improve nutrition (including cooking skills), there is an association between poor diet and nutrition and obesity with deprivation
- improve access to mental health services: particular attention should be given to more vulnerable groups of young people
- reduce self-harm and suicide: research suggest that between 6%-20% of young people may have self-harmed. Certain groups of young people may be significantly more at risk of self-harm or suicide, including lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and questioning young people
- encourage health literacy
- promote positive self-image
- support young people with long term conditions to maintain their independence and good health, with the minimum disruption to their education and learning

Outcomes: Health protection:

- young people are supported to develop the confidence to protect their health, to self-manage wherever possible and seek help when necessary
- champion the recommended vaccination schedule for adolescents, particularly those from marginalised and vulnerable groups.

Outcomes: Healthcare public health and preventing premature mortality:

- reduce depression and anxiety: mental ill health is the largest single cause of disability in the UK.
- manage long-term conditions, chronic disease and disability: one in seven young people aged 11-15 has a long-term medical illness or disability affecting many aspects of their life. The transition from child to adult services needs to be carefully planned with the young person.

Perhaps of greatest interest is the question of the “how”? What will the change be that enables the aspirations of national policy to be realised at a local and individual level? A framework for commissioners is set out below, again taken from the Public Health England January 2015 document, “*Improving Young People's Health and Well-Being, A Framework for Public Health*”:



Mental Health:

The increased profile nationally given to the inadequacies of child and adolescent mental health provision has resulted in NHS England leading a Taskforce to consider how to improve access, treatment, commissioning and organisation. The overarching report, published in March 2015, *“Future in Mind, Promoting, Preventing and improving our children and young people's mental health and well-being”* was accompanied by a commitment of £1.25 billion additional money over 5 years aimed at children, young people and new mothers.

Local Information:

There are significant challenges in relation to the overall health of children and young people in Birmingham. High levels of deprivation impact on health outcomes and there are some early signs of this in children and young people's health. For example:

- Obesity: more children are overweight compared to the national average and increases as children become older – 23% for 4 to 5 year olds and 39% for 10 to 11.
- Teenage pregnancy: although rates are decreasing, Birmingham's levels of teenage pregnancy remains considerably higher than national average.
- Substance misuse: peak age at treatment centres is 18. 500 young people accessing treatment centres have complex needs. 1,500 young people require short term alcohol related interventions. 49% of young people referrals to a treatment centre are from the Youth Offending Service.

In terms of strategy, Birmingham's Clinical Commissioning Groups and Birmingham City Council have undertaken a Joint Strategic Needs Assessment and from this have developed a Health and Well-Being Strategy. The priority areas are:

1. Improve the health and wellbeing of the most vulnerable adults and children in need
2. Improve the resilience of our health and care systems
3. Improve the health and well-being of children

There are 5 broad outcomes against the first priority:

- Make Children in Need Safer
- Improve the wellbeing of vulnerable children
- Increase the independence of people with a learning disability or mental health problem
- Reduce the people or families who are statutorily homeless
- Support older people to remain independent

Various performance indicators have been established against each outcome.

On a more operational level, there are a range of specialist services for young people who are vulnerable, including those who are homeless or at risk of homelessness.

- YouthSpace is a mental health service delivered by Birmingham and Solihull Mental Health Trust.
- Forward Thinking Birmingham will provide mental health services to young people up to the age of 25. The contract is worth £124 million over 5 years and was been awarded to a consortia in February 2015.
- There are 2 substance misuse services for young people, Aquarius and LifeLine.
- Sexual Health Birmingham and Solihull deliver a range of services. Brook is a national sexual health service for young people under 25 and is a partner in Birmingham.

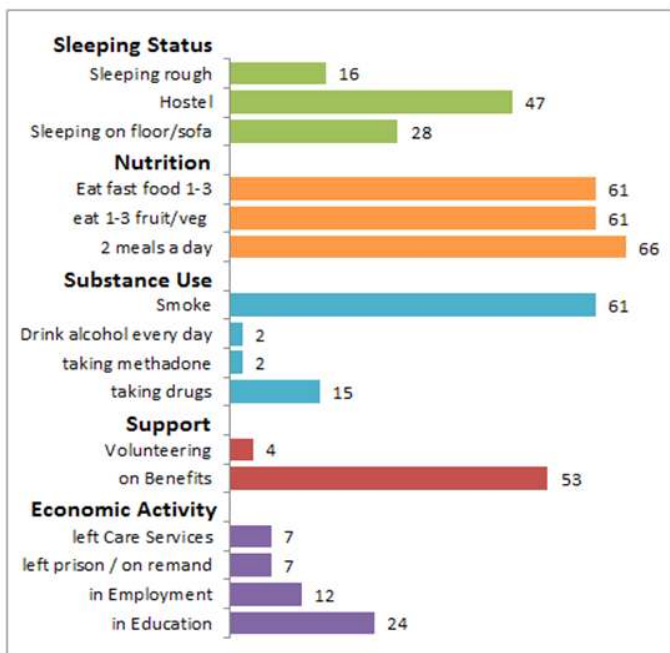
A recent piece of research into the health needs of the homeless population in Birmingham (The Homeless Lifestyles Review, published in December 2014) has some detailed findings relating to young people. Of the 342 respondents in a survey, 77% were under 25 year olds. Of these, 30% experience suicidal thoughts and ADHD. Of the whole group, including over 25s:

- 26% state they have a disability (mental health for half, a quarter have a learning disability)
- 10% were on bail, recently left prison or under probation
- 6% had left care in the last 12 months
- 6% were actively in drug treatment, 8% in recovery from drug misuse, 18% taking drugs
- 9% had used “legal highs” in the last month

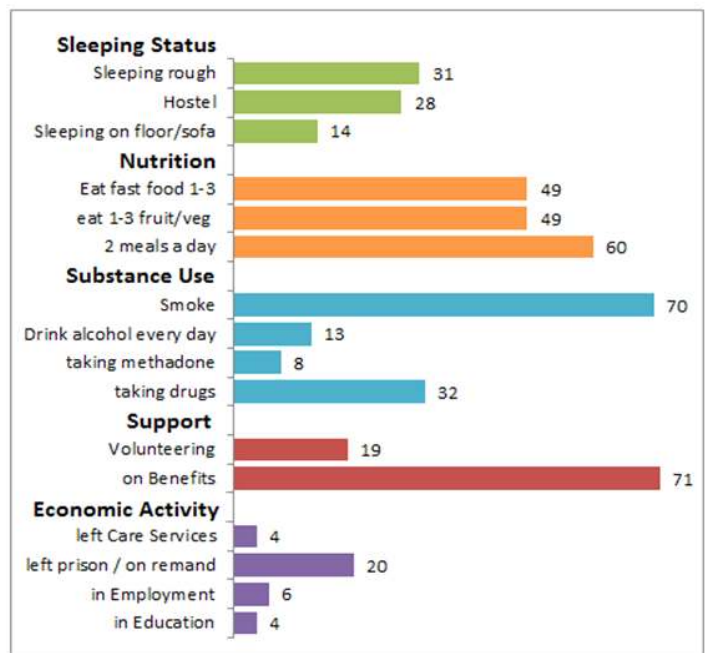
The other findings highlight the range of health issues and needs of this group:

Homeless Lifestyles Review - Birmingham City Council 2014

Under 25 year olds – 77% of respondents



Over 25 year olds – 33% of respondents



HOUSING AND HOMELESSNESS

Housing policy and the changes under welfare reform relate to all of the Positive Pathway but in particular to:

Service Area 1 of the national Positive Pathway (2015):

'Information and Advice for young people and their families'

Timely, accurate information and advice about housing options available to everyone, delivered in a range of ways including web-based information and through schools to reach young people, families and professionals.

Service Area 3 : Prevention Hub with a 'Gateway' into commissioned accommodation and support
- in particular the ability to prevent homelessness, and promote housing options where young people can't stay within their current accommodation

Service Area 4: Commissioned accommodation and flexible support – a range of housing and support options enable young people to progress /move on more readily

Service Area 5: Housing Options – Young people have suitable homes they can afford, are in work and have support if they need it. The aim is that they are positively engaged in education training or employment, they have good health & emotional well-being, positive relationships and the ability to manage a tenancy and/or share with others.

The overall backdrop is the generally accepted position of a housing crisis in England. But how does this impact on young people? The policy issues and underlying context that surround housing, homelessness and young people are broadly a combination of welfare reform policies and the supply of and access to affordable accommodation, in both social and private rented housing. In the main the impact of the previous Coalition Government's policies and the market conditions are regarded by leading researchers and homelessness charities as having had an adverse effect on vulnerable young people in housing terms. This is not only in relation to young people as future tenants or home owners, but the pressure that some policy changes and the 'over heated' housing market in some areas is having on families with older teenagers. The new Government's policy intentions are not addressing these key concerns directly and may present greater challenges for young people on low incomes in relation to housing.

Young people are generally finding it harder to get a foothold on the housing ladder whilst in their 20s. Rather than taking on a mortgage, many young people are staying at home with parents for longer.

Young people on low to middle incomes are renting – more usually in the private rented sector. Whilst this may not be ideal in itself for some, the impact of more young people, often young professionals, looking for private rented accommodation creates a new demand which, combined with some of the factors outlined below, around welfare reform and access to social housing, are displacing more disadvantaged young people on lower incomes out of a housing rental market they were previously more able to compete in. There is generally a tightening of access to affordable, decent housing for poor young people. Although there are significant regional and sub-regional variations in what is happening, the overall result is an increase in hidden homelessness, overcrowding and rough sleeping, all of which have risen in the last year.¹⁹

Housing Supply

The supply of affordable housing for single young people

The supply of social housing and private rented accommodation varies, with significant local and regional differences in the housing market.

Social housing

Availability of social housing is limited nationally and supply may contract further for those on low incomes due to a planned extension to the Right to buy policy. At the time of writing there is a new Government policy being introduced regarding extending the Right to Buy policy to housing association properties. This is viewed by the Housing sector as largely negative in terms of depleting further the overall stock of social housing in England. There is limited investment in building new social housing, a lack of incentive for Registered Providers to build if their new properties can be bought by tenants at low cost and the introduction of affordable rents, which can be up to 80% of the local market rent. This can make renting social housing beyond the means of many on low incomes who need to claim Housing Benefit.

The Localism Act 2011 has given local authorities the power to determine for themselves which groups of people will or will not qualify to be allocated social housing in their areas. Waiting lists can be rationalised as a result. For example, those who are working, or actively seeking work or making a contribution to the community could be qualifying groups, whilst those with anti-social behaviour convictions or previous rent arrears could be excluded. Reasonable preference must still be given to those in housing need, including statutorily homeless households.

A combination of 2 factors is limiting access to self-contained one bed social housing, including bedsits:

- A general shortage of one bed supply. This is a national issue; many units of one bed accommodation are sheltered housing, or are designated for older people, or are subject to specifically restricted lettings, excluding, for example, under 30s or under 40s through local letting policies
- Increased demand for this size accommodation from those subject to the under-occupation penalty or bedroom tax. Local authorities and Registered Providers are understandably reducing the risk of arrears and homelessness amongst existing tenants, and prioritise these households within allocations schemes, further reducing access for most young people

More generally, as the risk of arrears in social housing increases, many housing associations are understandably undertaking thorough affordability checks before they offer tenancies. Given the lower benefit levels and minimum wage levels for young people, it is more likely that prospective tenants in this age group will be advised they cannot afford to live in social housing.

¹⁹ Crisis Monitor 2015, see <http://www.crisis.org.uk/pages/homelessnessmonitor.html>, Authors: S Fitzpatrick, H Pawson, G Bramley, S Wilcox, B Watts

Private rented accommodation

Access to the private rented sector (PRS) for young people on benefit or who are low waged is increasingly difficult in many areas in the face of considerable competition from students and those in work.

Landlords are reporting they are more concerned about taking tenants who are claiming Housing Benefit, not least because of the changes under Universal Credit (see below) whereby the payment of rent will be monthly in arrears to the tenant rather than paid directly on a fortnightly basis to the landlord. It is possible to claim an exemption to this based on vulnerability but this is on a 'case by case' basis, rather than by any named groups of tenants.

Security of tenure is limited to 6 month Assured Shorthold Tenancies (ASTs) usually. The main cause of statutory homelessness across all age groups is now the ending of a tenancy in the PRS, with the latest England wide statistics from April – July 2015 showing that 30% of all statutory homelessness was caused by the ending of an AST²⁰ and reflects a growing trend over the last 13 quarters of reporting: in 2009/10 11% of statutory homeless acceptances were due to an ending of an AST. The increased competition for private rented accommodation in areas of high demand is believed to be the leading factor in this change.

Amounts of shared accommodation available for rent to those claiming Housing Benefit varies across England. Standards of accommodation in the cheaper end of the PRS are also a concern, with no national obligations on landlords to register or be licensed in England unless they are letting a large House of Multiple Occupation (HMO).

94% of the Crisis funded dedicated access schemes for single homeless people are reporting increased difficulties in finding landlords willing to let to those subject to the Shared Accommodation Rate.

Affordability Issues

Local Housing Allowance rates for private rented accommodation and Housing Benefit rates for social housing are now uprated by the Consumer Price Index (CPI) rather than with reference to local rents, severing the link between housing benefit and actual housing costs. This is exacerbated by the uprating of Local Housing Allowance rates by only 1% for the last two years.

The Shared Accommodation Rate and capping of housing benefit

The Shared Accommodation Rate (SAR) limits the amount payable to a young person living in private rented accommodation to the cost of a room in a shared house. From April 2012 the SAR was extended from the age of 25 up to 35. This is reported by both Crisis²¹ and Homeless Link²² to be having a significant impact on the availability of private rented accommodation, and in particular on the under 25 year old group, who are reported to be being displaced out of the market by the 26-35 year old group.

There are some exemptions to the SAR, including care leavers up to the age of 22 and for those who have lived in resettlement accommodation for 3 months or more, an exemption is given once they reach the age of 25.

The 2011 change in calculation of the Local Housing Allowance from the 50th to the 30th percentile has restricted the pool of private rented accommodation that is affordable in any area to the lower end of the market – around the bottom 30% of properties. Most authorities report anecdotally that the percentage is much lower than 30% in terms of what's available for those on housing benefit – and for rooms in shared houses it is often very hard to find landlords willing to rent to those on benefit. This is likely to get worse under Universal Credit, due to payment of rent direct to tenants and the risks landlords wish to avoid regarding non-payment of rent. These changes will make all but the cheapest properties out of reach for young people. The scarcity of supply means there is a risk of young people building up rent arrears due to a shortfall in their Housing Benefit, increasing the risk of eviction and ultimately homelessness.

At the point of finalising this report it was announced in the Comprehensive Spending Review that the Government intends to apply the Local Housing Allowance levels of housing benefit to social housing rents, including the Shared Accommodation Rate for under 35s. There is limited detail on this currently but this could potentially have a very negative impact on single under 35 year olds' ability to access social housing as an option as the SAR rate is not likely to match any local one bed social housing rent.

²⁰ DCLG P1E for Quarter 4 of 2014 <https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/statutory-homelessness-in-england-october-to-december-2014>

²¹ Crisis publication: No Room Available 2012 a study of the availability of shared accommodation

²² Homeless Link, 'Nowhere to Move; Is renting on the Shared Accommodation Rate affordable in London?' May 2013

Non-Dependent Deductions

Non-dependent deductions (NDDs) are made from Housing Benefit where there is a non-dependent adult, living in the same house as the Housing Benefit claimant. NDDs were in effect frozen from 2001 onward but over the last 4 years have increased, from £7.40 up to £14.15 for 2014/15 a week for those in receipt of Income Support or Job Seekers Allowance. Under Universal Credit a deduction (a 'housing costs contribution') will be made for each non-dependant aged 21 and over at a flat rate of £68 per month, regardless of the non-dependant's income or benefit status.

There is on-going concern from a range of agencies that the changes will increase tension in many households, and ultimately could cause an increase in youth homelessness.

The Benefit Cap

The total amount of benefits that can currently be claimed by any individual or family, with some exemptions, is currently limited to a maximum amount of:

£500 per week for single parents and couples with children

£350 per week for single people.

Based on the Government's election manifesto, the overall benefit cap will be reduced by primary legislation to reflect an income of no more than £23,000 per family per year in London and £20,000 outside London. Housing benefit is the benefit that is reduced to prevent the total benefits received going above the set limits. Some low income families in Birmingham will be affected by this. Local authorities identify and work with families to reduce housing costs, for some households this might mean moving house. The benefit cap combined with other pressures on housing in London mean already some large families are moving to other areas, out of London, including Birmingham. This is set to continue.

The impact of the benefit cap on young people is not understood but it is possible that the cap will result in some young people leaving the family home, due to the financial squeeze on these households, combined with a potential further loss of benefit due to non-dependent deductions.

Universal Credit

The impact of Universal Credit as a piece of welfare reform will not be fully understood until it has been rolled out and embedded. There are some expected negative impacts regarding young people and housing:

- Payment of rent costs direct to the tenant – both social and private landlords are concerned about non-payment of rent and build-up of arrears. It is generally the case that young people are already viewed as a higher risk group than their older counterparts by landlords. There is an acceptance that some individuals may not be able to manage payment of rent, but any exemption from this change is on a case by case basis - no criteria has been put forward by DWP for vulnerability criteria.
- Payment of Universal Credit in arrears monthly. Young people will need to budget their income over 4 weeks rather than the current 2 weeks. There is increasing concern amongst landlords and Housing Authorities about the system for payment regarding short periods of time within calendar months where Universal Credit will not be paid if someone finds work.

Affordable rents

Councils and housing associations have historically charged tenants a rent that was set around 50%, or lower, of the local market rent, to enable people on low income to live in social housing. 'Affordable' rents have been introduced by the Government to allow social housing providers to charge up to 80% of the local market rent on new lettings should they choose to do so. A Government backed debt guarantee enables Registered Providers of social housing to borrow more to invest in building of more social housing under this scheme. There are reports that the Affordable Rent policy is increasing poverty amongst some tenants living in these higher cost rented properties.

Other recent announcements and changes

Since starting this review some major changes have been announced, which together are reducing affordable rent house building by social landlords; these are a decrease in the affordable homes grant ; a 1% cut in the rent that social landlords can charge and the Right to Buy extending to housing association properties.

Flexible tenancies

Flexible tenancies in social housing are a new type of tenancy which is for a fixed period of usually 5 years, but could be somewhere between 2 and 5 years. Other types of tenure still exist for social housing tenants, including introductory tenancies (often for up to a year) and a Secure Tenancy which is uninterrupted providing the tenant meets tenancy conditions.

At the end of the fixed period the social landlord may decide to renew the tenancy, change it to a Secure Tenancy or end the tenancy, but would need to have a valid reason for doing so.

At the point of writing this (November 2015) there are proposals to change tenure status for those in social housing, so a lifetime tenancy will no longer be an option for most tenants, instead 5 year tenancies will be issued. The rationale for this is to better utilise social housing stock.

The 'bedroom tax' - under occupation of social housing by working age claimants

From April 2013, households of working age in receipt of Housing Benefit have had deductions made if they are assessed as under-occupying their social housing properties. For one bedroom under occupation Housing Benefit is reduced by 14% per week, for two bedrooms, the deduction rises to 25%.

The longer-term impact of this on young people is not yet fully understood, but the following points highlight the complexity of this change:

The demand for void one-bed social housing has risen due to under-occupying households needing to downsize to smaller properties. Social landlords have adjusted their allocations policies to reduce risks of rent arrears growing and ultimately eviction of tenants. There is therefore less one-bed social housing available in most areas for other groups. In many areas, particularly in London and the South, there has never been enough one-bed social housing to meet demand and therefore the likelihood of single young people getting social housing has reduced. More of this issue is covered below.

It has been claimed that for some households the threat of under-occupation penalties or a move to smaller accommodation if an older child leaves home and vacates a bedroom could reduce the likelihood of parental eviction. In effect there could be an incentive for the family to stay together. There is some anecdotal reporting of this but no detailed research or evidence. It is reasonable to assume this may have an impact in some situations. There is also the dilemma of bedroom tax or non- dependent deduction - rock and a hard place.

In some parts of England relatively large numbers of homeless young people have been placed into 2 bed social housing to discharge the homelessness duty, because historically there has been a shortage of one-bed accommodation. They are now affected by the bedroom tax. There is a risk of repeat homelessness for this group once Discretionary Housing Payments, which have been used as a short term 'fix' to top up rents, are reduced.

Homelessness

Local authorities have statutory duties towards some groups of homeless people. The statutory support offered to homeless households who approach a local authority for help varies dependent on a range of statutory tests.²³

In terms of young people, only 16/17 year olds not owed an accommodation duty by Children's Services and care leavers aged 18 – 21 are automatically 'priority need'. Other single young people may be deemed to be in 'priority need' as well, for example, if they are fleeing violence, are pregnant or are deemed to be vulnerable.

In most local authorities many single over 18s presenting as homeless have not usually been recorded on any local authority statistics because they would be offered a prevention option as an alternative to submitting a homelessness application. They would not have been assessed as vulnerable enough to fit into the priority need group for single vulnerable adults. However, a recent Supreme Court judgment²⁴ has changed the definition of vulnerability for homeless single people and lowered the threshold of the vulnerability test. This will significantly change the statutory homelessness landscape for all single people, including 18 – 25 year olds.

²³ Set out in Part 7 of the 1994 Housing Act: 4 statutory tests – is the person eligible for assistance? Are they homeless? Are they intentionally homeless? Do they fit into a priority need group (includes 16/17s, care leavers up to 21, pregnant women and families)? The other test is a non statutory test - do they have a local connection?

²⁴ <https://www.supremecourt.uk/cases/docs/uksc-2013-0234-judgment.pdf>

But the current position remains that for single 18 – 25s who are not care leavers - where no statutory duty has been accepted - it is acknowledged that much of their housing need and homelessness is 'hidden' through young people 'sofa surfing' or living in unsuitable, overcrowded accommodation.

The latest Government data shows only a partial picture of homelessness, based on quarterly reporting by all housing authorities.²⁵ Statutory homelessness generally has been increasing since 2010, but until Quarter 2 of 2015 statutory homelessness amongst young people (16/17 year olds and care leavers aged 18 – 21) has been falling.

This may be a 'blip' as the rise is concentrated in 4 local authorities – and Birmingham is not one of them. In fact Birmingham's level of acceptances amongst young people for Quarter 2 of 2015 was very encouraging, representing 1% of all acceptances in the City. In the West Midlands overall levels of youth acceptances were 3%, and nationally the figure was 2%.

The lowest ever reported number of 16/17 year olds placed in B&B by housing authorities was also reported in the same period, with 40 young people being reported across England. Birmingham Housing Authority has not reported a B&B placement of a 16/17 year old for over 12 months. Given the size of the local authority and levels of poverty – an underpinning casual factor in much youth homelessness - this is extremely positive.

But statutory homelessness reporting does not give us the whole picture - and it is a changing picture. The numbers and percentage of young people coming into care as homeless 16 and 17 years olds, due to the Southwark ruling,²⁶ have increased significantly since 2010. And some Children's Services Authorities also place young people into bed and breakfast and do not report on this to central Government currently.

The current national position remains that for single 18 – 25s who are not care leavers and where no statutory duty has been accepted, their housing need and homelessness is likely to remain 'hidden' through young people 'sofa surfing' or living in unsuitable, overcrowded accommodation.

But in Birmingham we have a much better sense of youth homelessness. All under 21s and some single under 22-25 year olds in the city who are homeless, at risk of homelessness, or need housing advice are referred to the 'Youth Hub' as the central point of advice and access. The Youth Hub captures a range of data and is seen as an exemplar nationally in terms of youth homelessness data collection and analysis.

Comparing 6 months of data from the same periods in 2014 and 2015, youth homelessness referrals to the Youth Hub of 16 - 21 year olds have remained steady at just under 1,600 for both periods. There has been an increase in the overall numbers however because since December 2014 any 22- 25 year olds can also be referred. This added an additional 444 young people in the 6 month 2015 data set.

The Youth Hub data indicates that some groups of young people are much more likely to experience homelessness or risk of homelessness. These are patterns over several years of reporting and the **inequality gap for some groups appears to widening.**

In terms of gender, young women are over-represented in the 16/17 age group of referrals. In the 18 – 21 age group the gender representation is roughly equal. But young men are significantly over represented in the 22 – 25 age group. This is of concern, as it appears over several years of data that young men are at higher risk of homelessness the older they become. The Fair Chance Fund programme may assist the City in understanding some of the difficulties that some young men face in their early 20s in resolving their housing issues.

There is detailed data in each monthly Youth Hub report in relation to ethnicity. The reporting on this is set against the overall demography of the City from the 2011 Census. Under-representation is most significant amongst White British, Pakistani and Indian young people and to a lesser degree, Bangladeshi and 'Other' young people. There is significant over-representation, evidenced over several years, in terms of presentations amongst young people who identify as being from the following groups:

- Mixed heritage: White and Black Caribbean
- Mixed heritage: Other
- Black British /Black Other

²⁵<https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/homelessness-statistics>

²⁶ <http://www.publications.parliament.uk/pa/ld200809/ldjudgmt/jd090520/appg-1.htm> and also see <https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/children-looked-after-in-england-including-adoption-2014-to-2015>

- Black African
- Black Caribbean
- Asian British/Asian Other

The Child Poverty Needs Assessment for Birmingham (2015) notes that 37% of children in 2013 in Birmingham lived in poverty after housing costs, against a national position of 25%. The link between ethnicity, socio-economic disadvantage and risk of homelessness at a young age in Birmingham needs further study. But just based on some simple correlation of available data, four of the top five wards for child poverty in the City in 2013 also recorded in the 2011 Census that 90% of the residents were from an ethnic group other than white British.²⁷

In line with national reporting,²⁸ there is evidence to suggest that in Birmingham there is a growing proportion of young people presenting or being referred having multiple needs/complex needs. This is a key issue for Supporting People commissioners as well as other commissioners across the public sector if positive outcomes across a range of domains are to be achieved for this group.

Rough sleeping is also rising nationally with the 2014 reporting showing an increase of 14% from 2013.²⁹ The Youth Hub data records last type of accommodation and whilst more young people are arriving 'roofless' on the day they present, they are not reporting in any significant numbers rough sleeping. For example out of all referrals of all ages to the Youth Hub in the summer period of June, July and August 2015, in total 3 young people reported they were rough sleeping.

The main cause of homelessness, or risk of homelessness for 16/17 year olds and 18 -21 year olds is 'parent(s) no longer willing or able to accommodate'. In June, July and August 2015 approximately 66% of 16/17 year olds and 45% of 18 – 21 year olds cited this as the cause. Around 28% of 16/17s and 45% of 18 – 21s cited that "Family or friends are no longer willing or able to accommodate".

For those older young people, aged 18 and over, the loss of a tenancy in the private rented sector was also a notable cause of homelessness with 12% citing this aged between 18 – 21. This is a rising cause of homelessness. There is no equivalent data on social tenancy failure but based on data supplied by the local authority, whilst tenancy failure amongst all tenants living in City Council property is around 2.5%, for those aged 18 – 25 it is 11.5%, with young people more likely to abandon a tenancy than be evicted.

Leaving care is another significant cause of homelessness in Birmingham for 16/17 year olds and 18 – 21s with 9% overall citing this over June, July and August this year.

Birmingham's performance on prevention of youth homelessness is excellent,³⁰ with prevention success rates of around 85% for 16/17 year olds and 18 -21 year olds.³¹ This is defined as young people having their homelessness resolved and not accessing the Youth Hub again within a 6- month period.

Despite the limitations of the way in which national data on homelessness is recorded, other surveys and research confirm what is anecdotally reported by local authorities, that there is no noticeable increase in young people presenting as homeless. The impact of welfare reform and the supply of accommodation that young people on low incomes can afford will make this position difficult to maintain.

What local authorities and providers of supported accommodation say about youth homelessness is that whilst numbers may be steady, the proportion of young people becoming homeless with multiple or complex needs is rising. This is of concern at a point when budgets are under pressure, including Supporting People or 'housing related support' budgets.

Alongside the statutory framework local authorities are working to prevent and relieve homelessness. Some of the prevention and relief activity for young people involves planning moves into supported accommodation if needed, or helping with access to the Private Rented Sector through a rent deposit or a bond.

A change to the homelessness legislation:

A change brought in through the Localism Act concerns the ending of the link between homelessness and social housing. Local authorities now have the power to discharge the homelessness duty through a final offer,

²⁷ Lozells and East Handsworth, Sparkbrook, Aston and Washwood Heath wards reported 90% were from an ethnic group other than white British. The other ward in the top 5 in terms of child poverty was Nechells, which reported 75% from an ethnic group other than white British.

²⁸ See the Homeless Link "Young and Homeless" Survey 2014

²⁹ <https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/rough-sleeping-in-england-autumn-2014>

³⁰ Based on knowledge from visits to other local authorities in England by the DCLG funded St Basils Youth Homelessness Advisers.

³¹ From the 2013/14 Youth Hub report

without the applicant's consent, of a 12 month assured short hold tenancy in the private rented sector. Most local authorities are using this power with some homeless households. Statutory guidance has been issued to outline what constitutes a reasonable offer and suitable accommodation.

In England there is increasing interest amongst the leading homelessness charities regarding the changes to the homelessness legislation in Wales, which came into force on 1/4/2015. This creates a new duty on local authorities to prevent and relieve homelessness within 56 days, regardless of priority need status. Other duties to assess and support homeless households owed the main homeless duty through provision of suitable temporary accommodation remain broadly the same.

Entitlement to Housing Benefit for under 22s – proposed changes to national policy

The Conservative Party manifesto outlined plans to limit Housing Benefit to young people under the age of 22 in receipt of Job Seekers Allowance and claiming Housing Benefit. More detail is likely to be available shortly but at the time of writing this, (November 2015) the broad intention set out in the Queen's speech is that there will be no 'automatic' entitlement to housing benefit. The terms of this change have yet to be published. There will be exemption groups, which are likely to include young parents, those living in supported housing and care leavers. Jobseeker's Allowance is to be replaced by a Youth Allowance.

There is significant concern from a range of housing and homelessness agencies that young people who are vulnerable and a long way from the labour market, but do not fit into the current exemption groups, will be at risk of homelessness due to rent arrears.

Although it is unclear whether the policy change would affect existing claimants or not, a recent estimate from social landlords highlighted that 11,449 young people in social housing would be affected.³² The figure for the private rented sector is not known. These changes to the welfare safety net are regarded by youth and homelessness charities as likely to increase hidden homelessness and risks of exploitation.

Recent research on poverty and social exclusion from the Joseph Rowntree Foundation highlighted that young people are four times more likely than their older counterparts to be unemployed and five times more likely to be on zero hours contracts. A key concern is that landlord confidence is likely to diminish further as a result of the changes to housing costs entitlement for under 22s.

Housing related support/Supporting People

Local authorities commission housing related support services, often called Supporting People services, based on their local priorities and available budgets. Whilst the protection of Supporting People budgets has been very challenging in many local authorities since the ring fence was removed in 2009, there has arguably been some more flexibility and creativity.

The provision of housing related support to vulnerable groups who need additional support to live or resettle in local communities is regarded as a 'spend to save' investment by many local authorities and the organisations that provide services. In 2011 CapGemini developed a Value for Money tool to assist in showing the savings downstream that Supporting People services. The most recent calculation indicates that for every £1 of Supporting People funded spent, there is a saving to the public purse of £1.90.³³

Young people's housing related support services vary across England, based on local needs and context. There is no 'one size fits all' but broadly speaking provision is based around access to short stay/immediate access services, longer stay accommodation in small or larger houses/purpose built provision and then floating support for those living in their own accommodation.

There is a trend for services for young people to be commissioned up to 21 rather than 25 and for the length of stay in provision, or duration of support to be reduced, but these decisions are locally determined. Increasingly there is interest in joint commissioning to try to address the wide range of needs of different client groups, across health, social care, and employment and criminal justice domains.

Allocation of social housing

Birmingham's Allocations Scheme was published in 2009 and a new Allocations Scheme is due to be published in November 2015. The current Scheme is based on a points and banding system. As of 18th March 2015 there were 23,080 households on the Housing Register.

³² <http://www.insidehousing.co.uk/policy/welfare-reform/benefit-cut-could-hit-11400-tenants/7009784.article>

³³ SITRA report into Supporting People costs Northern Ireland 2014

Band A: 250 points or more

Band B: 100 – 250 points

Band C: 0 – 99 points

Band D: No points

Care leavers get 80 points, those living in supported housing get 50 points and statutorily homeless households owed the 'main homelessness duty' get 140 point. In addition, a variety of other points may be awarded based on welfare, medical and social grounds.

Information on the supply of bedsit and one-bed social housing in Birmingham and under 25s

The analysis within Birmingham's Strategic Housing Market Assessment, last updated in January 2013, suggests that households in housing need who are most likely to get their housing needs met are those who require one or two bed properties. The greatest need is for 4 bed properties and then 3 bed properties.

Current stock of 1 bedroom General Needs Properties in Birmingham			
Source	Bedsit	1 Bedroom	Total
RP with Nominations Agreement	694	7,834	8,528
RP without Nominations Agreement	468	1,076	1,544
<i>Sub Total</i>	<i>1,162</i>	<i>8,910</i>	<i>10,072</i>
BCC	692	14,835	15,527
Total	1,854	23,745	25,599

Lettings 2013/14 – General Need Bedsit or 1 Bedroom Properties in Birmingham	
Source of Letting	Bedsit/ 1 Bedroom
Nomination to RP	403
BCC Letting	1,913
Total	2,316
Lettings in 2013/14 as a % of all bedsit and 1 bed stock	9%

BCC Bedsit and 1 Bedroom Lettings to 16-24 year olds 2013/14	
Lettings to 18-24 year olds	318
Lettings to 16-17 year olds	12
Age groups as a % of all lettings of these property types (BCC stock only)	17%

Demand for social housing amongst young people in Birmingham

Waiting list for 1 Bed property (as at 18/03/15)	
Total (all ages) on list	23,080
18-25s on list	2,742 (11.8%)
16 – 17s on list	21 (.09%)

Approximately 11.5% of the 18 – 25s on the list will move from the housing register into social housing each year, based on current figures.

Approximately 57% of the 16 – 17 year olds on the list will move into social housing each year, based on current figures, but the number is low as they are not able to hold a tenancy without a guarantor. There are usually exceptional circumstances which would warrant a 16 or 17 year old being given a tenancy. Based on Birmingham's Strategic Housing Market Assessment, updated in 2013, just over a fifth of households on the Housing Register in 2013 were assessed as able to afford suitable accommodation in the open market.

The report indicates that the Affordable Rent policy could work against housing those in most housing need, including homeless households. 19,952 households were assessed as being in gross need each year, and of these, only 2.4%, (479 households), could afford Affordable Rent if it were set at the maximum of 80% of the local market rent. If the Affordable Rent levels dropped to 65%, a much higher proportion of households in housing need could be housed. But this rent level is much closer to the usual social housing rent, rather defeating the object of Affordable Rent. A tapering off of rent against property size may be a solution, suggested in the report, but if this were to be implemented widely it would push the Affordable Rent of one and two bed properties up to 70%, with a taper down to 60% for 4 bed properties. This policy would be likely to further restrict access for young people on low incomes.

Tenancy Failure in social housings

Tenancy failure rates of BCC lettings – comparison by age and property size

Tenant type	Number of units let in total in 2013/14	Eviction	Abandonment	Total	% of tenancy failure against all lettings
Tenants under 25 years olds in bedsits and 1 bed properties	330	12	26	38	11.5%
Tenants of all ages and all property sizes	4,843	53	70	123	2.5%

It is interesting to note that a higher proportion of young people abandoned their properties than were evicted, and whilst this is the case for all tenants, the difference is less marked.

Midland Heart are undertaking some detailed work on tenancy failure which will usefully inform the local picture.

Birmingham's Private Rented Sector (PRS)

Around 30,000 households rent in the private rented market in Birmingham, including many young people.

Birmingham has recently set up a Social Lettings Agency, Let to Birmingham, in association with Omega Lettings Ltd. The purpose of the Social Lettings Agency is to increase the supply and quality of private rented accommodation in Birmingham. Landlords receive a range of incentives and support through Let to Birmingham. Households are encouraged to use the PRS as a prevention of homelessness option and some households may be offered help with rent deposits to access the PRS.

Needs and issues of young people presenting

Again in line with national reporting through the Homeless Link "Young and Homeless" Survey 2014, there is evidence to suggest that in Birmingham there is a growing proportion of the young people presenting or being referred having multiple needs/complex needs. This is a key issue for commissioners across the public sector if positive outcomes across a range of domains are to be achieved for this group. Across the needs groups in the table below are some marked increases.

Issue/factor	16/17s 12 months 2013/14	16/17s 3 months June - August 2015/16	18-21s 12 months 2013/14	18-21s 3 months June - August 2015/16
Criminal conviction	9.4%	15%	10%	20.9%
Mental health/ depression	7.0%	26.5%	9.4%	35.5%
Learning difficulties	4.9%	25.5%	5%	22%
Substance misuse	2.9%	10.5%	1.9%	8.3%

YOUNG PEOPLE AT HIGH RISK OF HOMELESSNESS - CARE LEAVERS, YOUNG OFFENDERS AND YOUNG PEOPLE WITH DISABILITIES AND OTHER SUPPORT NEEDS

Young people who are in housing need and also require additional support from other agencies: e.g. Children's Services, Youth Offending Service, Community Rehabilitation Companies, National Probation service, Adult Social Care and Health Services

Service Area 4:Commissioned accommodation and flexible support – a range of housing and support options enable young people to progress /move on more readily

Service Area 5: Housing Options – Young people have suitable homes they can afford, are in work and have support if they need it. The aim is that they are positively engaged in education training or employment, they have good health & emotional well-being, positive relationships and the ability to manage a tenancy and/or share with others.

Young people with disabilities

A relatively small proportion of young people in any local authority area will be in need of independent housing and be eligible for care and support from Adult Social Care including some young people leaving local authority care aged 18 will make the transition to Adult Social Care. This requires a high level of planning across agencies, with the young person and their family. There is arguably a good opportunity to consider joint commissioning of accommodation and support for some of these young people and including them within the 'youth' portfolio of provision in an area to ensure they are more integrated into other youth related services.

The Children and Family Act 2014

Section 3 of the Children and Families Act creates a new 'birth-to-25 years' Education, Health and Care Plan (EHC) for children and young people with special educational needs and includes personalised budgets. In some cases, where a person is over 18, the "Care" part of the EHC plan will be provided for by Adult Social Care under the new Care Act (see below).

The Care Act

The Care Act 2014 replaces several existing pieces of legislation in the domain of Adult Social Care, with the aim of creating a consistent route to establishing whether or not someone is entitled to public funding for care and support. It represents new duties for local authorities, and seeks to put the principle of 'wellbeing' at the heart of the outcomes people should expect from the care they receive. Significantly, it also brings about big changes to the way this funding is provided to individuals through more personalised budgets. There is a section in the Act relating to young people making the transition from Children's Services or needing services for the first time.

Many young people with mild to moderate learning disability and learning difficulties will not hit the threshold for Adult Social Care. This group will be part of the 'multiple and complex needs' group that most local authorities and provider organisations highlight is growing in proportion. The Youth Hub data set on page 42 show this trend locally. At a point where there are likely to be further reductions in non-statutory service, such as Supporting People, a more long term, strategic joint commissioning approach is likely to be needed.

Care leavers

Local authorities have legal duties and powers to support young people who are looked after and leaving care from the age of 16 to 21 and in many cases, up to the age of 25.³³ This includes a statutory duty to provide accommodation and support to young people aged 16 and 17 who are either still looked after or have left care before the age of 18. In addition care leavers aged 18 – 21 have entitlements to support and assistance, but Children's Services Authorities do not usually³⁴ have a duty to provide them with accommodation, as they can hold a tenancy, claim housing benefit and other welfare benefits in the same way as any other young person.

Government policy continues to develop for those aged 18 and over who have left care to ensure care leavers get the opportunities and support afforded to other young people by their parents, in terms of, for example, help with going to university and leaving foster care when ready rather than on their 18th birthday.³⁵ The new Ofsted inspection framework for Children's Social Care has also helped to raise the profile of care leavers with senior officers and politicians.

Care leavers needs and experiences vary considerably – for example, within any leaving care cohort will be young parents, disabled young people, unaccompanied asylum seekers or refugees and young offenders. Some will have been looked after from a very young age, whilst others may be relatively newly looked after, for example, those 16/17 year olds remanded into custody or homeless 16/17 year olds.

The spectrum of needs is wide, including high achieving, relatively low need young people, some at university or on career pathway, to those with medium support needs through to young people who have multiple needs, at high risk of rough sleeping and all the health and well-being issues that surround this. A wide range of accommodation and housing related support options are therefore required for this diverse group as they make their transition to adulthood.

³³ The key legislation is the Children (Leaving Care) Act 2000 but amendments subsequently include duties to a young person in education or training at the age of 21, so they can be supported until their 25th birthday or until their course finishes

³⁴ The 2010 *SO v Barking and Dagenham* case established that where a young person is not owed a housing duty (e.g. because they are

found to be intentionally homeless) then Children's Services have a duty under Section 23C(4)(c) to provide accommodation if the welfare of the young person requires it.

³⁵ As of April 2014, local authorities have a new duty to support every young person who wants to stay with their foster carers until their 21st birthday, known as "Staying Put".

Children's Services Authorities across England commission a range of accommodation options and tailored support for young people aged 16 or 17 to whom they have a set of duties as their "corporate parent". They are responsible for funding all accommodation and support costs for 16 and 17 year olds, regardless of whether they are in care or have left care. Looked after children aged 16 and 17 do not have to live in registered looked after placements (i.e. Foster or residential care), but can live in 'other arrangements'³⁶ that are suitable to their needs.

Most local authorities have not got sufficient accommodation and support options within their areas and despite reducing budgets and increased demand, will sometimes, out of necessity place children and young people in 'out of authority' placements until the age of 18 which tend to be more expensive than locally provided services.

Many commissioners are increasingly focussed on developing more local provision, to achieve better value for money, keep young people in their local area and be better able to monitor quality.³⁷ It is still the case in many authorities that some young people have to leave accommodation and support just after their 18th birthday, whether they feel ready to do so or not.

A challenge for local authorities is how to better commission accommodation and housing related support across the age-based transition point from being a child to reaching the age of 18 and beyond, so moves are planned on individual readiness to succeed rather than the artificial 'cliff edge' of age and legal status.

It is perhaps a generalisation, but is usually the case that where commissioning is for just 16/17s and is undertaken without Supporting People involvement, the costs are significantly higher, and often with no obvious correlation to better quality of accommodation or support.

One key trend to be aware of is that the fastest growing group of 'newly looked after' children are the 16/17 year old age group, which has risen 21% from 2012/13 to 2013/14.³⁸ This is significant in terms of numbers and also commissioning decisions. Many of these young people will be looked after due to either being remanded or because they are homeless. They are less likely than the core looked after population to be settled into foster care or residential care. Some authorities are reporting difficulties in engaging with some newly looked after young people, losing touch with them or finding the accommodation they have does not meet their needs.

Local information

In terms of housing and homelessness, care leavers aged 18 -21 made up 1.8% of all homelessness acceptances in Birmingham in 2014. This is higher than the national average of 1.2%.

The Youth Hub data shows that leaving care is the third highest cause of homelessness amongst 16/17 year olds, with 6% of young people in 2013/14 citing this. 2.8% of 18-21 year olds cited this reason in 2013/14.

From 2014 there has been a new requirement for local authorities to report to the Department for Education on where care leavers aged 19, 20 and 21 are living and what they are doing in terms of employment, education or training.

Birmingham reported that 82% of young people were living in suitable accommodation, which is 5% higher than the national position and that they did not have information on the remaining 18%. No young people were reported to be living in unsuitable accommodation, which is unusual, as the national figure is around 5%.

In terms of education, training and employment, Birmingham reported that 37% were in education, training or employment compared to a national overall figure of 45%. 10% had a disability or were ill, 9% were young parents and 26% were not in ETE for 'Other Reasons'. As in the return on accommodation, the local authority did not have information about 18% of the young people.

At the point of this report being finalised Children's Services and Supporting People commissioners are working together to develop additional options for young people leaving care.

³⁶ As set out in Volume 2 of the Children Act 1989 Guidance and Regulations: Care Planning, Placement and Case Review

³⁷ To address some of the issues with children and young people being placed out of their local authority area and deal with a shortage of placements, a new 'sufficiency' duty was introduced in the Children and Young Persons Act 2008. Local authorities need to take reasonably practicable steps to ensure that there is sufficient accommodation for looked after children. ³⁸ https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/359277/SFR36_2014_Text.pdf

Young people involved in the criminal justice system

Young people who are involved in criminal activity are recognised as a group that is at high risk of long term poor outcomes, including unemployment, poor physical and mental health and homelessness.

Currently the system in place in local authorities for dealing with children and young people up to the age of 18 is through multi-agency Youth Offending Services. Once a young person is 18 their case will transfer to the adult offender system. There has been some attention given to the poor planning around the transition between the 2 sets of services. A national Youth to Adult Transitions framework was launched in 2012 which highlights key principles and good practice advice, led by the Youth Justice Board.

The Transition to Adulthood Alliance (T2A) highlights the issues around young offenders aged 18 – 24 and has argued for this group to be viewed as distinct to older adults requiring a different, more youth-focused response. In the lead up to the General Election this year, both the Labour Party and the Liberal Democratic Party seem to have recognised this position and are proposing a new system for young offenders which would raise the age of youth related offender services to 20 and 21 respectively.

For under 18 year olds³⁹, the ineffectiveness of resettlement when they are coming out of custody is continually highlighted. In the 12 months leading up to March 2013, 68% of under 18 year olds released from custody reoffended. A recent thematic inspection report published jointly by Ofsted, HMI Probation and the Care Quality Commission⁴⁰ made a wide range of recommendations. Other relevant data relating to young offenders includes:

- The average population of young people in custody in 2013/14 (under 18) was 1,216 (1,318 including 18 year olds).
- The average population of the youth custodial estate fell by 21% in the last year and by 56% since 2003/04.
- There were 20% fewer First Time Entrants (FTEs) into the youth justice system than the previous year.
- Young people under 18 account for just 1% of the total custody population.
- Young people aged 18 – 24 constitute less than 10% of our population, but account for more than a third of the probation service's caseload and a third of those sentenced to prison each year.
- The average length of time spent in custody for young people is 90 days.
- This represents a fall of 7% since 2002.
- Boys make up 94% of young people in custody, girls comprise just 6%.
- In April 2014, 38% of 15-17 year olds in prison service accommodation were detained more than 50 miles from home. The equivalent figure for young adults aged 18-20 was 35%.

The Government's policy, 'Transforming Youth Custody (January 2014) outlines plans to develop 'secure colleges' which put education at the heart of work with young offenders. The policy also includes reforms to resettlement work and notes that:

"The key to effective resettlement is to ensure appropriate accommodation is secured sufficiently far in advance of release. Without this certainty it is frequently very difficult to organise a place in education, training or employment and to plan for access to health and other local services. But too often suitable accommodation is not found before young people are released. "

As part of the resettlement work, the Youth Justice Board has funded 4 new resettlement consortia in 2 parts of London, the East Midlands and South and West Yorkshire. Youth Offending Services are funded to work together to better support young people leaving custody through developing a pathway of support, starting in custody and following through into release. Ensuring young people have suitable accommodation is a key factor within this.

A relatively new piece of legislation, The Legal Aid, Sentencing and Punishment of Offenders Act 2012 has changed the nature of remand for under 18 year olds, recognising more explicitly that the young person is a child. The purpose of the provisions within the Act were to reduce the use of secure remand for children and young people and simplify what were complex remand arrangements into a 'single remand framework'. The costs of keeping a young person in custody on remand have been transferred to local authorities, in order to provide an incentive to use custodial remand more sparingly. Significantly, the status of 'looked

³⁹ Youth Justice Board - Juvenile proven re-offending data 2013

⁴⁰ see <http://www.justiceinspectorates.gov.uk/hmiprobation/inspections/youthresettlementthematic/#.VT5QzEtN1uY>
for the report: Joint Thematic inspection of resettlement services to children by Youth Offending Services and partner agencies, 2015

after child' now applies to all under 18 year olds on remand. 17 year olds can now be remanded in a secure children's homes or secure training centres, not just young offender institutions and if the young person is remanded to local authority accommodation, the local authority (as designated by the court) must receive the young person and provide/arrange suitable accommodation for them (as per the duties of a local authority to place a child that is remanded as set out in section 22C of the Children Act 1989).

One likely impact of the change in remand status is Children's Services Authorities reviewing their commissioning of accommodation and support for young people who are remanded to the local authority as an alternative to a custodial remand.

For those aged over 18, Transforming Rehabilitation is the Government's approach to changing the way in which adult offenders are managed. This has involved outsourcing a large portion of the probation service in England and Wales. The reforms have replaced the previous 35 individual Probation Trusts with a single National Probation Service, responsible for the management of high-risk offenders; and 21 Community Rehabilitation Companies (CRCs) responsible for the management of low to medium risk offenders in their Contract Package Area. The CRCs went live in April 2015 and have a new responsibility for supervising short-sentence prisoners (those sentenced to less than 12 months in prison) after release.

Local information

The Youth Offending Service has an Accommodation Pathway Service that involves liaising with local partners and the local housing department to ensure that the housing-related needs of young people are being addressed.

This service is coordinated by a specialist worker, on behalf of the Youth Offending Service, commissioned from the third-sector. Through Supporting People funding, the Service has access to specialist, dedicated accommodation, which includes emergency provision.

Work is ongoing in relation to ensuring the provision of suitable accommodation and support for young people on release from custody.

Between April 2013 and March 2014, 98.69% of young people were assessed as having suitable accommodation at the end of their order or on release from custody.

The Youth Hub data for over the last 6 months shows that approximately 15% of 16/17 year olds and 20% of 18 – 21 year olds cite 'criminal convictions' as a secondary need/issue.

APPENDIX TWO: IMPROVING OUTCOMES FOR YOUNG PEOPLE

Outcome framework for the Positive Transitions Pathway

The overall impact: Young people in Birmingham are in education, training or are economically active

The rationale:

Birmingham is a young city, 27% of our population is under 18.

31% of children 0 – 18 living in Birmingham live in poverty. That's 88,970 children.

Poverty is a key determinant: it increases the risk of poor outcomes across all other areas of young people's lives: health, education, community safety, and housing.

Economic activity must be our over-arching desired impact for young people and for the City– it can help to break the cycle of deprivation. This will increase the possibility of positive outcomes.

As many young people as possible live at home or with their carers until they are ready to leave in a planned way

Descriptor of activity along the Positive Pathway:

Young people are planning their further education, training and employment routes and alongside this understand their future housing options because.....

They are getting relevant, easy to understand information about their housing choices and the financial considerations of these from a range of sources

They know where to go for more in-depth advice and help

Parents and professionals who work with young people understand housing options and the real challenges of leaving home at a young age and can advise young people

Families where teenagers are at high risk of homelessness have access within their local area to support through Think Family, family mediation and practical advice and help

The Youth Hub has access to a range of prevention tools including signposting young people at high risk of leaving home in an unplanned way to community based support (Think Family), family mediation, money advice, youth support etc.

Measures

Some suggestions:

Young people report a good understanding of housing options and affordability issues (NB this is qualitative and we would need to do snapshot surveys or monitor through feedback)

Reduction in the number of young people presenting as homeless today? (Youth Hub)

Reduction in number of homelessness applications and S17 assessments undertaken at the Youth Hub (Housing and CYPS)

Planned moves from family home /care increase
(Youth Hub)(NB we would need to establish a baseline)

Young people are prevented from homelessness and do not re-present to the Youth Hub within 6 months?
(Youth Hub)

Young people have good physical and emotional well-being

Descriptor of activity along the Positive Pathway:

Young people who leave home or care at a young age have good physical and emotional well-being because.....

They understand their individual health needs and how to seek advice or help when needed

They are able to undertake activities which promote good physical health – physical exercise,
health eating

They can see /experience their lives moving forward positively, which helps promote their
emotional well being

They have social networks which support their emotional well being
When they need someone – a trusted adult - to talk to, they know who they can contact

Measures

Some suggestions for young people living in supported accommodation or receiving floating support:

Registered with GP and dental service (Supporting People – contracted providers)

Improved physical health (Supporting People, Public Health and Providers as a group?) (self-reported
– snapshot – SDQ?)

Improved emotional health and well-being (Supporting People with Forward Thinking
Birmingham/Mental Health Trust and the Supporting People providers as a group?) (self-reported
– snapshot – SDQ?)

Reduced levels of substance misuse - (Providers? Public Health? Aquarius and LifeLine?)
Increased access to sexual health services OR reduction in levels of chlamydia - (Sexual Health
Birmingham and Solihull)?

Young people feel safe and contribute positively within their local community

Descriptor of activity along the Positive Pathway:

Young people who leave home or care at a young age feel safe and contribute to others feeling safe
because.....

Their individual levels of vulnerability and risk are well understood by those professionals with whom they
work

There are systems in place to ensure there is a multi-agency response to those at high risk of significant
harm, including young people aged 18 and over

Young people have been supported to understand how to make safe choices in all areas of their lives -
including through social networking, targeting by gangs, bullying and sexual exploitation - and know where
to go for help and advice

If a young person is at risk of offending/re-offending or anti-social behaviour, a multi-agency response and
support to prevent and divert them is available

Measures

Some suggestions for young people living in supported accommodation or in their own accommodation
aged under 25

Reduction in first time entrants to the youth justice system, re-offending and youth custody rates (YOS,
Probation and CRC)

Number of young people who are victims of crime including sexual exploitation (Police and CYPS)

Young people report feeling safe (Supporting People with providers) (self-reported – snapshot – SDQ?)

Young people live in decent, safe, affordable accommodation

Descriptor of activity along the Positive Pathway:

Young people live in decent, safe accommodation which they can afford on their income because.....

They have planned for their moves based on accurate and realistic information and knowledge

They have had some choice about where they live and the type of tenure

They have undertaken independent living skills including budgeting

They have been assessed as able to afford and manage their tenancy/accommodation

If they are sharing accommodation with others, including returning to family, they have the skills to share successfully and know how to get help if needed

They have been encouraged to save prior to moving in

They can access funds or in kind help to set up their new home

There is resettlement support and floating support if needed

They know where to go for help at an early point if things start to go wrong

Measures

Some suggestions for young people living in supported accommodation or in their own accommodation aged under 25:

Reduction in BCC /other social landlord tenancy failure rates amongst under 25s in bedsits and one bed accommodation (Housing BCC)

Reduction in PRS tenancy failure where this is the housing option/move on option (Youth Hub? Housing?) *(NB need to establish a baseline for this)*

Reduction in repeat presentations to the Youth Hub of young people after 6 months, 12 months and 18 months for young people who have had their own tenancy? *(Youth Hub*

Young people are satisfied with their housing outcome – *(Access to decent housing and some choice - measured by snapshot survey/focus group?) (? who would be responsible - providers?)*

Young people are engaged in education, training or are economically active

Descriptor of activity along the Positive Pathway:

Young people who have to leave home or care at a young age are confident and motivated to achieve their career aspirations because....

They understand their strengths, challenges and the pathway to success they want to pursue

They have advice and support to assist them to make decisions

They have basic skills – literacy and numeracy?

They have good social and job skills – communication, time keeping, reliability

They know where they can get help if they have a set back

Measures

Some suggestions for young people living in supported accommodation or receiving floating support:

Engaged in employment, further education or training aged 19, 20 and 21 (Supporting People with providers – needs to link to BCC data collection?)

Engaged in further education or training (need to define?) aged 16 – 19 (Supporting People with providers needs to link to BCC data collection?)

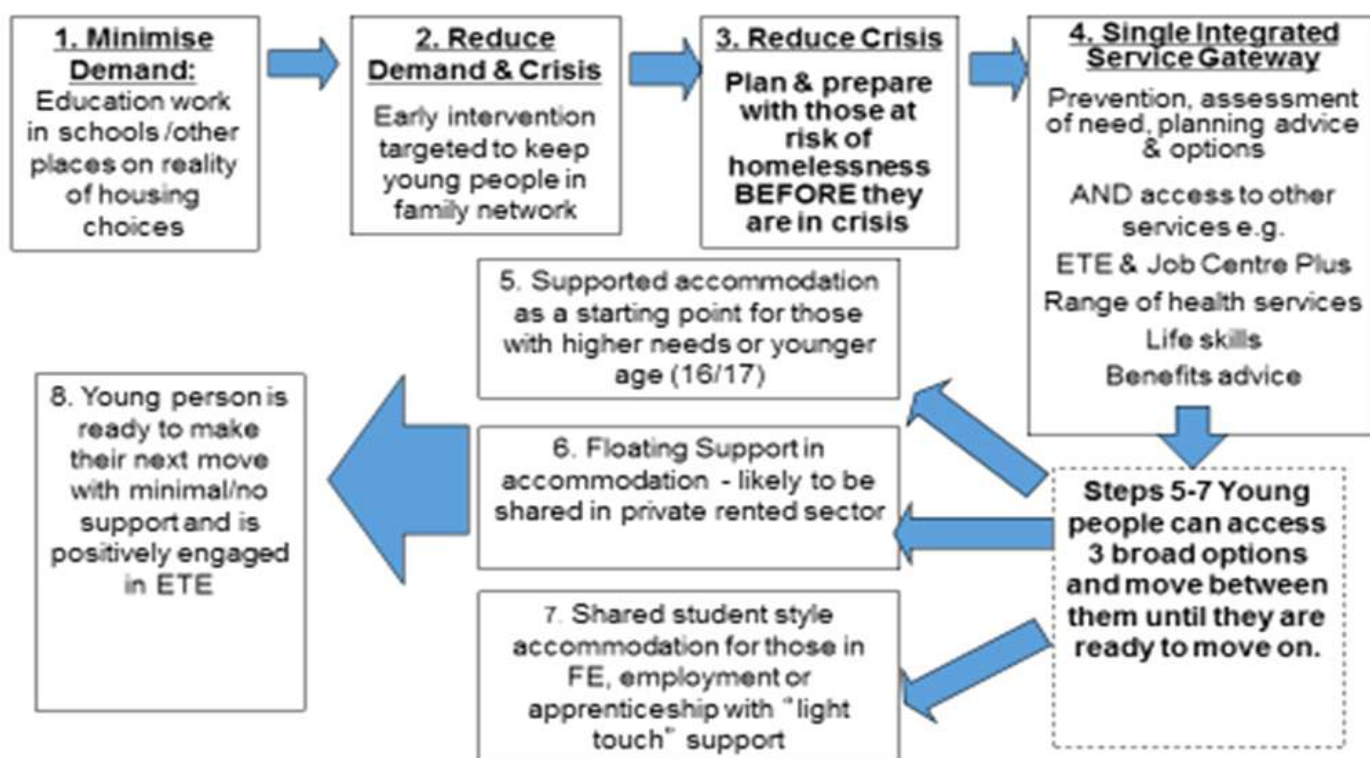
APPENDIX THREE: MAPPING BIRMINGHAM'S CURRENT POSITION AGAINST THE 2012 POSITIVE PATHWAY ELEMENTS AND SUGGESTIONS FOR THE FUTURE

This review started before the completion of the Positive Pathway refresh in May 2015. This appendix includes the mapping of Birmingham's services against the 2012 Positive Pathway (please see the diagram below) which is included for reference and also the emerging ideas we had about the new 2015 national Positive Pathway. There is supplementary information and examples in this Appendix which complement the information in the main body of the report. For mapping purposes each part of the Pathway looked at:

1. Current known activity/provision
2. Gaps/duplication/obstacles that need addressing to improve outcomes for young people
3. The customer perspective - what young people said
4. Suggestions and ideas to address gaps and obstacles:
 - Local opportunities e.g. to realign, reconfigure or join up services/ways of working
 - Innovative practice locally and from elsewhere in the UK
 - Feedback from consultation with young people and other stakeholders

POSITIVE PATHWAY 2012

The Positive Pathway for young people



SERVICE AREA 1: INFORMATION AND ADVICE FOR YOUNG PEOPLE AND FAMILIES (A UNIVERSAL OFFER)

Timely, accurate information and advice about the full range and local realities of housing options and affordability - available to everyone, delivered in a range of ways to reach young people, families and professionals.

Desired results: Young people and families are empowered to plan transitions to independent living without support from specialist services. They understand the links between housing choice and their financial end employment situation. They know where to get help if they need it.

Description:

- Information and advice is available through a range of mediums including easy to access and understand on line/web-based information and if needed, access to telephone advice
- Education work in schools, colleges and other places with all young people on the reality of housing choices and homelessness.
- Work with parents/carers and families to ensure their understanding of the housing options available to young people are realistic - current and reflect the local context
- Promoting understanding amongst professionals and volunteers working with young people regarding where to go for help and the realities of housing options and homelessness at a young age

Current known activity/provision:

St Basils STaMP programme – works with 14 secondary schools, with Years 7 and 11 and some 6th Form colleges. A peer education model is used to deliver the hour long sessions and peer mentoring can be offered to young people.

Gaps/duplication/obstacles that need addressing to improve outcomes for young people:

- The sheer number of secondary schools, academies and FE colleges means coverage in Birmingham is challenging if the offer is viewed as a 'nice to have' add-on
- The autonomy of schools and academies means there is likely to be a varied response to offers of education work on housing and homelessness
- Many young people are likely to learn about their housing choices from their families. Parents/carers and older family members may not be familiar with the new challenges within the housing market for young people e.g. welfare reform, limited choices for young people due to affordability and a tightening of supply of social housing
- There is still a lack of awareness amongst some professionals advising young people regarding the realities of leaving home at a young age (in particular, choice and affordability in the longer term) and the options available when young people leave supported accommodation.

The Customer Perspective - what young people said:

- *Teach lifeskills in schools/colleges to make more young people aware.*
- *Make young people aware of their rights – teach the law.*
- *Lifeskills should be compulsory in PHSE.*
- *All staff should be trained.*
- *Link issues between services.*

Suggestions and ideas to address gaps and obstacles

Reaching young people:

There is limited focus on this part of the Pathway in Birmingham at the moment.

Use technology to get general information across to young people and parents/carers via existing portals in schools, academies and FE colleges. Including some information on housing, homelessness, where to call for advice, early advice and help

Any new offer or approach is likely to be more successful with educational establishments and more sustainable in the longer term if it links into the curriculum, around Financial Literacy aspects and PSHE, and involves a number of stakeholders who have an interest in young people as successful tenants of the future.

Tenancy success is a business objective for all Registered Providers and the Social Letting Agency, Let to Birmingham. Young people are prospective tenants of the future. Feedback from young people consistently says they want and need good information on housing options and realities - not just homelessness, but they do not get this at school.

It could make longer-term business sense to jointly fund or jointly support input into schools, academies and FE colleges, focusing on housing for young people, affordability and options, as well as homelessness. This should not be all 'doom and gloom' and could be framed in an aspirational, but realistic way about housing choice linking it to pathways to economic activity, the Youth Promise and affordability. It would also need to include where to go for early advice/help.

Children's and Young People's Services also have an interest in reducing youth homelessness. This work could be viewed as part of a universal service, but incorporate an Early Help offer for older teenagers who come forward for additional advice and support.

There is an opportunity to revise the 'offer' to schools, academies and FE colleges using the Financial Literacy element of the new curriculum or continuing with input on the PHSE part of the curriculum.

Collapsed timetable days - a new approach to delivering PHSE is emerging in some schools, where regular lessons are replaced by a small number of full days each year to look at PHSE related issues, usually inviting external agencies into school to deliver information and advice to pupils. Housing and homelessness could be included in these days.

With limited capacity in this part of the Pathway, targeting schools/academies in areas with higher levels of deprivation or if data is available, schools/academies which have higher numbers of young people and/or families presenting as homeless.

Young people under the school leaving age who are not attending school or college have a higher risk of being homeless at a young age. Consideration would need to be given to reach young people not in mainstream schools through Pupil Referral Units or other provisions

There are various models that could be used to deliver messages to classes, assemblies or through 'collapsed timetable' days. In a city the size of Birmingham, a range of choice for schools/academies and colleges is likely to get better take up:

- A peer educator model works well in a classroom setting. It has a high impact with young people who are able to ask questions directly and learn from a peer who has direct experience of homelessness. STaMP has been running successfully in Birmingham for several years but has limited capacity due to limited funding. This model may be best used in areas of higher deprivation/high levels of youth homelessness
- Use of theatre and discussion workshop can work well with larger numbers of young people. Since 2008 Zest Theatre has been working with local authorities in Lincolnshire and beyond (Poole, Peak District) to deliver a production dealing with the issues surrounding youth homelessness. *Until It's Gone* is a hard-hitting production for Key Stage 4 based on the true-life stories of homeless young people. The show and accompanying workshop lasts 1 hour and is for audiences aged 13-18 in schools, PRUs and other youth settings. The session gives young people the opportunity to explore a range of difficult and complicated issues in an innovative and accessible way. Zest has done annual evaluations since they began the work and young people feedback via Twitter. ZEST website link: <http://www.zesttheatre.com/current-productions/until-its-gone>
- Incorporating housing costs and choices as part of a more generic package on financial literacy – integrating information on housing costs and options for young people into other areas, such as budgeting/money management. This could be done alongside other agencies. See <http://www.pfeg.org>

- Making a DVD around young people leaving home, housing and homelessness is another option that some local authorities have used. It can be delivered as part of a structured session with an external person/people running the session, or with a teacher who has had some briefing beforehand. The general feedback is that delivery by external agencies works better, but this is more costly in terms of time.

Reaching parents:

- Placing of information for parents and young people on Birmingham City Council and housing association websites and leaflet format covering:
Housing options for young people in Birmingham and affordability considerations
Planning moves with young people leaving home
Where to go for advice and support on housing issues, including the Youth Hub
Who to contact if a parent is finding things difficult with a teenage child

Reaching other professionals:

- A short briefing delivered to those working with young people (including foster carers and residential care staff) covering:
Housing options for young people, affordability and welfare reform challenges
The negative impact of homelessness on young people and communities
The prevention approach and concept of the Positive Pathway
The legal position
The trigger /risk factors that can lead to homelessness later on in teenagers
Where to seek advice/support when young people may be a high risk of homelessness in the future – not only the Youth Hub, but other Early Help services - incorporating relevant elements of the Right Service, Right Time framework training.

SERVICE AREA 2: EARLY HELP AND TARGETED SUPPORT

Early intervention targeted to reach households where young people are most likely to be at risk of homelessness. Delivery involving all local services working with young people and families at risk, e.g. Think Family Support, Youth Support and Youth Offending Services.

Desired result: Young people stay in the family network where possible and safe and are supported to make planned moves to suitable accommodation if they need to move out.

Description:

- Early intervention work is targeted to keep young people at high risk of homelessness in the family home/network where safe to do so.
- Planning and preparing with young people at high risk of homelessness and their parents/family BEFORE they are in crisis is a critical element of the Positive Pathway.
- Childhood experiences/issues which can indicate a high risk of early homelessness – and which a range of agencies are usually aware of before the age of 16 include:
 - Not attending school/excluded from school
 - Involvement in the criminal justice system
 - Running away/going missing for one night or more
 - Neglect
 - Substance misuse - Tier 2 /3 /4
 - Domestic abuse/violence in the family home
 - Mental health issues in the family (parents and/or young person)
 - Older siblings previously presenting as homeless at a young age

Current known activity/provision

A large proportion of young people presenting to the Youth Hub as homeless are already known to and getting support from other, often statutory services. For example, 28.3% (245) of young people aged 16/17 presenting at the Youth Hub self-reported that they were already known to Children's Services in 2013/14.

The following services – and others – will be working with young people at high risk of homelessness:

- Schools and academies
- Pupil Referral Units
- Think Family
- Youth Offending Service
- CAMHS
- Children's Services – teenagers in care, on the edge of care, subject to child protection plans and child in need plans
- FE Colleges
- Voluntary agencies – e.g. Aquarius, (substance misuse service) Crisis (Housing Coach service)

Gaps/duplication/obstacles that need addressing to improve outcomes for young people

- Limited integration of services and difficulties navigating through services remains a key obstacle for professionals and is therefore likely to be difficult for young people and their families as well. For example, consultation with stakeholders highlighted a lack of understanding from professionals of what is available in terms of Early Help and how to access Children's Services
- Young people with multiple needs who are at high risk of homelessness as they get older are not systematically being identified as such, although other risks/needs in their lives are being identified and supported
- Think Family is working well in the city but the strategic alignment or join up regarding young people at risk of homelessness could be improved
- Awareness of other professionals regarding the difficulties of leaving home at a young age is often limited. There may be some instances where leaving home and presenting as homeless/going into supported accommodation is too easily resorted to – perhaps as a short term 'solution' to family difficulties

The Customer Perspective - what young people said:

- *Improve communication between health, youth services, schools/colleges, family etc.*
- *More integration between council services – has to happen*
- *Who raises the alarm? (links to element one 'awareness')*
- *Provide family mediation*
- *Always keep the young person aware of their pathway and situation – keep them informed*
- *Promote where young people can go for help*
- *Really engage with the Early Help Service and integrate this pathway before 2016*

Suggestions to address gaps and obstacles

- The 'Right Service, Right Time' threshold framework has just been launched and some training is being provided to other agencies. It may be useful to consider linking this – or the core elements of the training - with the briefing for professionals on youth housing /homelessness (see above)
- Clarity is needed regarding the Early Help offer for teenagers – and promotion of this to ensure professionals are aware of what is available. Within this could be a stronger message regarding identifying the issues/risks that may lead to youth homelessness, where to go for help and the realities of leaving home at a young age
- The Troubled Families programme and the national Positive Pathway model are both premised on joint working, practical support, prevention and a whole-systems approach which focuses on improved outcomes. The criteria for the Think Family Programme and some of the causal factors which can lead to youth homelessness are the same (e.g. anti-social behaviour, not going to school/excluded). Locally there is an opportunity to align around Phase 2 of the Think Family programme and the Positive Pathway development. A short 'task and finish' piece of work to create more alignment/join up between Think Family structures and processes and the Positive Pathway, particularly this point.
- Annual tenancy visits are undertaken by Birmingham City Council, which could be another opportunity to pick up on issues relating to teenagers living with parents/family and referral for additional services.
- Consider options to delay young people moving out in crisis where safeguarding is not an issue. There are 3 schemes from elsewhere that might usefully be considered and could be adapted for the Birmingham context – they could be utilised at this point of the Positive Pathway for some young people and over or in the next section (Element 4), as prevention tools for utilising within the Youth Hub:

- 1) Learning from some pilot activity in Norfolk, evaluated in 2012. The County Council's Children's Services identified the majority of young people at high risk of homelessness/looked after, including

some under 16 year olds and commissioned 2 agencies to work intensively with them and their families. Where young people could not stay within the parental home, there was a focus on planning moves. The programme worked with 73 young people during the pilot phase. 70% of young people stayed at home, 12% had a planned move and 8% had an unplanned move.

- 2) For older young people – mainly 18 year olds and over - Shepherds Bush Housing Association developed and are commissioned by 2 local authorities in West London to run the Income project (INdependence, acCOMmodation, Employment). It was run initially as a two year pilot but is now well established. There are 3 main aims:
 - a) To combat overcrowding in social housing by assisting adult non- dependents out of the home into their own affordable flat for three years.
 - b) To break long-term dependency on benefits and increase the career aspirations of young adults that have grown up in overcrowded social housing by making training and employment outcomes part of their new assured shorthold tenancy agreement.
 - c) To increase their earnings capacity enabling them to move on from their temporary social housing provided by InComE into the private housing market with no or minimal reliance on welfare benefits.

Young people initially move in to shared social housing and then progress into their own tenancy in the private rented sector. This scheme has been very successful with young people. See: <http://www.sbhg.co.uk/income-project>

- 3) Wandsworth's Next Generation scheme is a discretionary scheme offered as a prevention option to those clients the local authority is likely to have a housing duty to. Young people who fit the criteria are offered this as an incentive to stay within the family home for at least 24 months, if they can do this they will be offered a social housing tenancy after that point. Its open to any age from 16 onward, but 16/17 year olds are only considered for the scheme after a discussion with Children's Services to determine that there aren't any safeguarding concerns.

All household sizes are considered but both the applicant/applicants and the parent/host must be residing in the borough. The scheme is not suitable for those fleeing violence or stipulating which areas they cannot go to. Applicants must be 18 before they can be granted a tenancy. To be made an offer there must be no reports of ASB, criminal convictions, possession proceedings or breaches of tenancy. The caseworker carries out a home visit before agreeing to accept the applicants onto the scheme and undertakes home visits over the 24 month period to ensure the young person is still living at the family/host home. Whilst this may not be a viable option for many young people in regard to self contained social housing beyond 2018, the idea is worth exploring in relation to shared social housing and the private rented sector.

SERVICE AREA 3: INTEGRATED RESPONSE FOR YOUNG PEOPLE WHO NEED HELP WITH HOUSING AND GATEWAY TO COMMISSIONED ACCOMMODATION AND SUPPORT

An integrated service for young people who are homeless, at risk of homelessness or need help with planned transitions to independence. Housing options and homelessness prevention services from housing and children's services come together, often co-located, with other services including support for pathways into learning and work. Underpinned by assessment and including a needs driven gateway into commissioned supported accommodation and flexible support services. Key data collection point to inform ongoing development of the pathway.

Desired results: Homelessness is prevented wherever possible, for example by supporting young people to stay in their family network or preventing the loss of a tenancy.

Young people who need accommodation and/or support get it, including quick access emergency accommodation and immediate and ongoing support where needed

Description:

- A local authority has a seamless, joined up approach to pro-actively prevent young people becoming homeless when they approach for help with housing.
- Ideally in a unitary or urban-based local authority there is a single, integrated “front door” with Children's Services and Housing working together, often with voluntary sector partner.
- This includes assessment of need, planning, advice, options and prevention activity.
- Short stay/emergency accommodation is available if needed.

- Signposting or access to other services is part of the function – e.g. access to advice /support on education, training and employment, health services, life skills and income maximisation.

Current known activity/provision:

- The Youth Hub is an exemplar nationally in terms of work with young people at risk of homelessness
- The contract to deliver the Youth Hub is with St Basils, who lead on the initial contact work, advice, options, non-statutory assessment and prevention work, including family mediation, advice and finding safe alternatives within family and friends networks
- Children's Services and Housing both place staff within the Youth Hub to undertake statutory assessment of need
- Weekly 'Case Review' meetings take place between Housing, Children's Services and St Basils to discuss young people's individual cases
- Data collection is detailed and enables the local authority and St Basils to understand trends and prevention outcomes at this point of the Pathway. The prevention success rate is consistently the highest recorded in England
- Other agencies link in closely with the Youth Hub, e.g. Crisis Skylight hold a regular surgery at the Youth Hub
- The 'gateway' into supported accommodation for young people is also provided through the Youth Hub function – in effect this is the day to day access into all Supporting People's commissioned provision for young people, not only the 'Immediate Access' provision. This function relates not only to this part of the Positive Pathway but also to Elements 5 and 6.

Gaps/duplication/obstacles that need addressing to improve outcomes for young people:

- Due in part to the size of the city, the Youth Hub is not intended to be the 'one stop shop' for a wide range of issues for young people in Birmingham, But there are some agencies/services whose primary objectives may be better met in relation to outcomes for vulnerable young people if they were more closely aligned with activity within the Youth Hub.
- Young people usually contact the Youth Hub when they are at high risk of homelessness. Like all other local authorities there is a challenge to look at service redesign at other points in the Positive Pathway regarding culture and systems change which encourage and enable young people and/or their families to get high quality information and if needed, seek advice on housing issues **before** the crisis of homelessness. This links to Service Areas 1 and 2 of the Positive Pathway. Any role that the Youth Hub might realistically play in offering such advice would need to be agreed by partners.
- Leaving care is showing in the Youth Hub data as the 3rd highest cause of youth homelessness in Birmingham and in 2014 Birmingham accepted 57 care leavers as statutorily homeless, 1.8% of all acceptances of homelessness in Birmingham. Some of this could be avoided if processes were more joined up and Children's Services staff had some training and information about the use of these processes. It is likely that improved housing options work with care leavers as part of Pathway Planning would help to avoid much of this. There is also an issue of young care leavers from neighbouring local authorities presenting to the Youth Hub as homeless.
- A relatively small number of young people who are highly vulnerable due to homelessness, a learning disability and other related issues are falling between gaps in statutory provision due to lack of join up with Adult Social Care.
- Young people aged 16/17 are not being jointly assessed by Housing and Children's Services currently – the 2 assessments take place in the same building but separately. This is likely to duplicate effort/time for statutory services and from a customer perspective may be experienced as confusing and unnecessary (for example, having to repeat everything at least twice to different people).

The Customer Perspective - what young people said:

- *Advertising so young people know where to go*
- *The Youth Hub needs to carry on being somewhere central and somewhere that young people are comfortable going*
- *Repeating information about ourselves several times is unnecessary and stressful*

Suggestions and ideas to address gaps and obstacles:

- Closer alignment with other agencies/services whose primary objectives regarding outcomes for vulnerable young people dovetail with the Positive Pathway outcomes framework, for example:
 - o Making relevant elements of the Youth Offer/Promise more available /active through the Youth Hub e.g. onsite access to the new 'Guiding Young People' careers service
 - o DWP and Youth Hub alignment – given the client group, could there be more specialist input (e.g. surgeries)?
 - o Additional Leaving Care Service input/ focus at Youth Hub. Protocols are needed which incentivise prevention and planned moves rather than reliance on statutory homelessness processes
 - o Additional Youth Offending Service /Community Rehabilitation Company/Probation input/focus is needed - 15% of young people who present have a criminal conviction. Some additional input within the Youth Hub could work more proactively around young people leaving custody, working pro-actively on referrals, accommodation pathways, working out prevention approaches, links with Probation linking young people leaving custody to the specialist supported accommodation that Trident provide and other young people's accommodation providers
 - o Money advice/welfare benefit advice function - which could include working with parents who older children are still living with them and pro-active training on money management with young people (for example, the Money House model run by Hyde Housing and other partners in the London Borough of Greenwich,)
 - o Health assessments and access to related support – establishing linkage with new 'Forward Thinking Birmingham' service, reviewing alignment with other services e.g. Sexual Health Birmingham and Solihull
 - o A shared clarity over the referral process into Adult Social Care assessment and support services for older homeless young people with a learning disability (in particular autism) or physical disability, who may require additional support. This is not likely to be a large group but often their needs become chronic as they fall between gaps in provision. This could include access to the Adult Social Care 'Shared Lives' programme for some young people.
- Consider the merits of re-positioning the function of the Youth Hub so it is also the place young people and parents/carers contact for earlier, more universal housing advice, before the crisis of homelessness. No matter where a new more universal function is located within existing services in the City, for this to work, there would need to be a mixture of offers of information, advice and access to housing options. Ideas to support this shift in service focus (regardless of whether this is within the Youth Hub or elsewhere) include:
 - o Development of some incentives for move on in a planned way when young people are ready to succeed (see the section above for examples of the InCOMe Project and the Next Generation scheme)
 - o Easy access to the social lettings agency, Let to Birmingham, with an enhanced youth access incentive offer for landlords if needed (see below)In addition, specifically at the Youth Hub the following would be useful changes to consider:
 - o Young people – including care leavers - being able to access the housing register through the Homechoice Gateway directly via the Youth Hub and getting consistent advice and support on their readiness for a tenancy
 - o Making a short DVD/film clip to show young people at the Youth Hub regarding advice on the realities of what's good and what's difficult about living independently – made by other young people

- Housing and Children's Services to consider developing a joint statutory assessment. There is learning available from the joint assessment process in the London Borough of Greenwich.
- Continuing to enhance the prevention tools within the Youth Hub:
 - o Children's Services to consider if young people at high risk of homelessness aged 16/17 and their families could have access to Family Group Conferencing , on the basis that they are on the edge of care - this may require a CAF assessment in order to refer to the service
 - o Using home visits as a key prevention tool
 - o More time to do follow up with young people where prevention has been successful – to continue to support and to find out what the outcomes were

SERVICE AREA 4 : COMMISSIONED ACCOMMODATION AND SUPPORT

young people. Access is through the Gateway. Accommodation and support is linked together in some options, for example supported accommodation, Foyers, supported lodgings and Housing First. Flexible outreach support is also available to support young people wherever they live (including in the family home) and stick with them when they move if needed.

Desired results: Young people gain the stability and skills they need, engage with learning and work and move on to greater independence.

Description: There are a range of accommodation and support options that young people can progress through or move between. These broadly fit into 3 types of provision, which young people are matched into according to their individual assessed needs and strengths. Progression through each option may be right for some, but for others, their route may be more direct into more independence, with their own front door and a small amount of support to settle in. The critical point is that there are choices and young people are not 'stuck' in the system, in higher cost, high support provision when they are ready for moving on, because there is not enough housing supply to move them on to. Equally, young people who need more support can move back into higher support provision, if it looks like they are at high risk of 'failure' in their current accommodation.

a) Accommodation where there is support on-site on a daily or 24-hour cover basis. This can include living in supported lodgings in a host's home as well as supported accommodation projects/schemes. This tends to be more for younger people (e.g. 16 – 21) and for some young people with multiple or complex needs who are not yet ready to manage without a higher level of support.



b) Accommodation where the young person has their own tenancy, perhaps in shared housing with other young people, and the support worker comes to visit them for an agreed amount of time per week (floating support). This can be as a 'step down' or progression on from higher support in accommodation such as a foyer, with on-site support.

Floating support can also be an option for young people with multiple or complex needs, who may be more likely to succeed in a "Housing First" scheme, where they have their own tenancy and other services and support are provided as needed.



c) Accommodation which has some shared facilities (e.g. kitchen, living room/IT area, bathroom) and is affordable for young people on relatively low incomes. There is no funding provided for support beyond some 'housing management', such as cleaning of communal areas or a 24 hour call-out concierge service. This is for young people who are in work or training and need some low cost, decent accommodation but don't need housing related support as well. This option can be a progression on from more supported accommodation or could be an option young people go straight into if they do not need additional support from specialist services.

There is a 'gateway' or single access point into all supported accommodation in order to provide:

- Better use of limited resources, ensuring those with the highest needs access the services they need
- Improved safeguarding, with a shared knowledge of potential risk, agreed approaches to managing risk and knowledge of who is placed where
- Prompt and appropriate filling of voids

Joint commissioning by a range of public sector commissioners enhance outcomes, beyond the traditional 'housing related support' function. This would include Children's Services, to ensure looked after 16 /17 years olds do not hit a 'cliff edge' at 18 and move based on funding changes rather than their readiness to move on. It may also ensure that there are suitable alternative to custodial remand options for young people aged 16/17.

Joint commissioning can also include health commissioners (for example, mental health, substance misuse, primary health) and could also include Community Rehabilitation Companies and Probation, who need to ensure there is not only accommodation but appropriate support for young people coming out of custody.

Current known activity/provision

- Birmingham has a well-developed accommodation and support pathway for young people, with 115 units of immediate access provision, around 560 units of longer stay accommodation, including supported lodgings for care leavers (24 units) specialist provision for young offenders (20 units) and for those involved in gang activity as well as floating support for those living in their own accommodation
- Led by Supporting People commissioners, much of the above provision has been put out to tender and new contracts have been awarded to 5 provider organisations. Within this process there has been some joint commissioning with Children's Services for Supported Lodgings.
- In addition St Basils has been awarded a central government contract as part of the 'Fair Chance Fund' to run a programme for young people with multiple needs at high risk of long term multiple exclusion. This programme aims to work with those who have been evicted from services and focuses on accommodation and employment, education and training outcomes with them.

Gaps/duplication/obstacles that need addressing to improve outcomes for young people

- Currently there is no shared understanding between providers regarding the destinations and outcomes of young people within the accommodation pathway. This may be information that commissioners hold, but working together to improve outcomes and the overall Pathway could be enhanced with better data and collection system and analysis process that support this. • A lack of clarity regarding what happens to young people who are evicted or have unplanned moves out of supported accommodation in terms of who is responsible for them. This places some young people at risk of 'falling out' of the Pathway. Do they have to come around the system again, presenting as homeless to the Youth Hub and Gateway process again, or should their 'key worker' hold on to their case regardless of the move from the provision. Would that be different if the young person already had an allocated statutory worker e.g. was a care leaver or a young offender?
- The new contracts have reduced the length of stay in provision for young people. It is recognised that this is likely to be challenging given the complexity of need of many young people.
- Young people are not always being given realistic information about their move on options and most are expecting a one-bed unit of social housing. Whilst this is still an option for many, over reliance on this is likely to cause difficulties in the longer term. Given the low rate of allocation of one bed social housing to young people generally, and the reduced time that young people stay in longer-stay provision, there is likely to be a 'silting up' of supported accommodation unless other options, in particular accessing shared accommodation in the private rented sector, are presented as options for young people.
- Helping young people to develop the skills needed for sharing is likely to be a gap within tenancy preparation work
- There is not enough of the 'light touch' affordable shared housing option for young people who are in education, training or employment. This provision is not be a 'forever' option for young people, but another stage of progression to independence for some.

The Customer Perspective - what young people said:

- *Young people need variable support options*
- *Choices of accommodation can change based on needs*
- *Supported lodgings are good*
- *We need stability in support – e.g. one key worker*
- *Work with us to make sure our basic needs met*
- *Strategy is needed for the longer term, but less intensive support, as support may be most needed when 'independence' is reached.*
- *Pre-tenancy training is really important*

Suggestions and ideas to address gaps and obstacles

There are a number of elements which could enhance the Accommodation and Support elements of the Pathway at this point. Some of these are taken from learning from the London Borough of Camden, which is much smaller than Birmingham, but has been widely recognised for almost 10 years as having several areas of good practice.

- There is an opportunity to consider joint commissioning between Children's Services, Supporting People and other commissioners. A starting point could be to focus on young people leaving care, as the current provision for care leavers is being commissioned in a fragmented way, with additional supported accommodation being separately commissioned by Children's Services for over 18s as well as 16 and 17 year olds. A more joined up approach would ensure value for money, quality and could avoid the 'cliff edge' when a young person becomes 18.
- To reduce duplication and improve joint working and data collection, consider development of a shared referral form and common risk assessment process. This could help to pick up any trends regarding the changes to the length of stay for young people, outcomes and any links to, for example, increased repeat presentations/homelessness
- Agree a key process, including roles and responsibilities for young people who are evicted or have unplanned moves from supported accommodation. This should provide clarity to providers and commissioners regarding who is responsible for young people at any point in the process and reduce the likelihood of young people slipping through gaps. As part of this, it could be helpful to review the 'planned move' protocol between providers, to ensure that any risks of eviction are minimised through pre-empting difficulties.
- Establish a regular multi-agency 'Panel' meeting to discuss young people coming in to and at risk of falling out of the pathway. This should include care leavers at the point of leaving care and young offenders due to come out of custody, as well as other young people.
- Given the size of Birmingham, it may be useful to have a separate but linked 'Move On' Panel which agrees planned move on with young people and their key worker, when young person is ready or needs to move out of supported accommodation. This would not be tenure specific, so as well as social housing, access to private rented accommodation via 'Let to Birmingham' could be an option as well. This could assist in preventing 'silt up' by facilitating access to various Move On options (see below) and give a good overview of the destinations of young people, obstacles and what is working well.
- Consider the pros and cons of an Accommodation and Support Pathway co-ordinator role, who has oversight of the whole of this element of the pathway
- As the issues of affordability, supply and sharing impact more widely, more young people are staying with parents for longer, or returning to the parental home or family network. This is an area of potential support has not been widely recognised for older young people and their parents/family, but there is likely to be a need for some sort of provision. What this model of support might be is not clear - but Birmingham could look at some individual cases and levels of need
- Given that a higher proportion of young people coming into the Accommodation and Support pathway have complex or multiple needs, consider the learning from Camden re: health commissioners funding specialist workers from mental health and substance misuse services who 'float' across all the provision and offer additional specialist support to providers and to young people

- Supporting People and Children's Services commissioners and providers could consider some training / messaging for provider organisations to deliver to their staff on housing options beyond social housing e.g. accessing the Private Rented Sector, other shared models (see below)
- In order to prepare young people for sharing with others as their move on option, provider organisations could consider adjusting their pre-tenancy training. There is some learning from St Vincent's SnugBug House Share Scheme on training (see below) and from the Crisis 'Sharing Solutions' evaluation and toolkit
- Development of more low cost, affordable, shared accommodation for young people aged 18 – 25 in education, training or employment – there are limited examples of this across England.
 - o The Live and Work scheme is a partnership between St Basils, Birmingham and Sandwell Hospitals NHS Trust and Keepmoat Regeneration, who have renovated ex-nurses accommodation on the edge of Sandwell Hospital's site at cost, utilising Empty Homes monies. It is a new scheme, with 27 units of accommodation for young people aged 16-25 from both Sandwell and Birmingham, which links their low cost accommodation with employment onsite. This means they can live independently, whilst undertaking an apprenticeship or employment, without recourse to benefits.
 - o St Vincent's Housing Association - Snugbug House Share provides young people in Manchester with a room in shared social housing. This is open to any young person as long as they have a local connection to Manchester. Support is not provided but there is intensive housing management through a 'Ranger' service. Weekly health and safety checks on properties and 24-hour call out are all part of the additional housing management function. Young people are issued with assured shorthold tenancies and live in properties that the housing association has either bought off the open market, leased from other housing associations or already owned. Prior to being accepted on the Scheme, young people need to apply, attend several sessions of pre-tenancy training and have an interview. If young people need housing related support they need to bring it with them, there is no Supporting People funding for this Scheme. Around 60 young people live in 18 properties. See <http://www.snugbughousesshare.co.uk> for more information.
 - o Circle's Alone in London are piloting a model of sharing in order to demonstrate within Circle an option for young people as move on. A 6 bed property in the Old Street area has been developed for sharing. It's affordable – SAR rate plus £13 service charge. Young people are given a 1 year licence and the aim is to support young people to get as ready as possible for independent move on. Young people can access the other Alone in London packages of support – floating support, counselling, family mediation and ETE support.
 - o Barnet Homes - Get Real Project: Using their own stock, Barnet Homes are identifying young people in housing need who are ready to succeed in shared accommodation with some holistic support, including counselling and help to access education, training or employment. 1 property has been developed, another is in the pipeline and 4 more have been committed for this year. Young people are given insecure tenancies in this model. The Family Mediation Worker is supporting all young people at the moment and Barnet Homes are now looking at funding possibilities for an additional worker. Its working well and there is lots of learning to date.
 - o As outlined in Service Area 2, the Income Project, run by Shepherd Bush Housing Association has an element of sharing as a first stage move on from overcrowded family homes. There also learning from this model because young people initially move in to shared social housing and then progress into their own tenancy in the private rented sector. The scheme has been successful with young people. See: <http://www.sbhg.co.uk/income-project>

SERVICE AREA 5: A RANGE OF HOUSING OPTIONS

The service: A range of safe, decent, affordable housing options, shared and self-contained, in the private, social and third sectors. Where the market doesn't provide, the offer is shaped through local housing strategies and partnerships to create options for young people starting out on low incomes. May include creative approaches such as partnerships with learning providers and employers to provide dedicated accommodation that underpins participation in learning and work. Connections with the flexible outreach support in 4) in case young people need it.

The results: Young people are economically active and have suitable homes that they can afford - they can build for their future.

Description:

Young people move on from more specialist supported accommodation or 'progression' accommodation to their own place. Another possible scenario here is that a young person who is already living in their own tenancy and getting floating support does not move, but the floating support ends and the young person remains where they are.

At this point the aspiration is that the young person is either engaged in education or training, such as an apprenticeship, or they are in employment. The key difference between this Element and the 'Accommodation and Support' Elements is that there is no time limit on how long a young person can live in their accommodation at this 'final' point in the Positive Pathway. However, critically, it does need to be an affordable option, so preparation, planning and readiness to succeed is vital.

Move-on could be one of many options including:

- Sharing in the Private Rented Sector - with friends, a partner or with people not known prior to move in
- A one bed flat/bedsit in the Private Rented Sector
- A one bed flat/bedsit in social housing
- Sharing in social housing
- Living with family
- Accommodation provided as part of training or employment
- Private lodgings - with a live in landlord/landlady
- Shared ownership or taking out a mortgage – NB this would apply to small number but is still a possibility for some.

Current known activity/provision

The housing market in Birmingham is vast and complex and is not easily summarised here. But the two main routes for young people are:

- Private renting: Young people can find their own accommodation, via friends, letting agents or through Let to Birmingham, the City's Social Lettings Agency. Let to Birmingham is working with private landlords in association with Omega Lettings Ltd. The purpose of the Social Lettings Agency is to increase the supply and quality of private rented accommodation in Birmingham. Landlords receive a range of incentives and support through Let to Birmingham.
- Living in social housing: Approximately half of housing association properties and all of the City Council's own supply of social housing is allocated through the Housing Register and HomeChoice is the choice based lettings scheme. The rest of housing association's properties are let directly by them or through a shared system, HomesDirect.

Where young people live, access to public transport and what sort of local amenities are available (e.g. shopping, primary health services) are important factors, as these will impact on assessment of the ability to be economically active and affordability overall.

Gaps/duplication/obstacles that need addressing to improve outcomes for young people

- There is limited understanding amongst some professionals regarding options beyond a tenancy in social housing, which in turn creates an expectation amongst young people that social housing is the only option. This means discussion of the option of sharing of accommodation is not happening routinely. And issues of affordability in the private rented sector may not be part of any preparation work.
- Options of living in the private rented sector will need to be extended, as social housing becomes less available for young people in the future.
- Shared social housing as an option has not yet been developed as an option for young people in Birmingham, largely because there has been no need to do this.
- Affordability generally for young people on low incomes is a key concern, as is quality and location of accommodation
- Young people will need to buy furniture and white goods in order to settle in to a new home. Sources of funding for these are limited and unless providers assist young people in saving up, accessing the local welfare provision held by the City Council, the experience of setting up a home is likely to be very difficult.

The Customer Perspective – what young people said

- *More partnership working with young people and Private Landlords – more tenancies available for young people*
- *Floating support – 1 month, flexible, don't fix a time • Advice line for us to call if we need it – and a fast track system if things go wrong*
- *Train landlords about young people – to breakdown negativity and raise awareness*
- *Independent commission for private and social housing*

Suggestions and ideas to address gaps and obstacles

- As outlined in the Accommodation and Support elements above, Supporting People and Children's Services commissioners and providers could consider some training / messaging for provider organisations to deliver to their staff on housing options beyond social housing e.g. accessing the Private Rented Sector and other shared models.
- In order to prepare young people for sharing with others as their move on option, provider organisations could consider adjusting their pre-tenancy training. There is some learning from St Vincent's SnugBug House Share Scheme on training (see above)
- The Crisis 'Sharing Solutions' programme published an evaluation and toolkit in March 2015. This is based on 6 private rented sector sharing schemes piloted in 2014/15. Both of publications provides invaluable insights into what makes sharing work – or not. Models of sharing include peer tenants/lead tenants and lodgings. They can be accessed here:

<http://www.crisis.org.uk/pages/sharing-solutions-good-practice.html>

- A Move On Panel (see above) could double check affordability with young people who are deemed ready for move on
- Given the difficulty for young people under 25 on low incomes accessing the private rented sector, there could be a more specialist offer to private landlords to take young people. Let to Birmingham might consider additional landlord incentives in relation to young people as tenants. St Basils has experience of running a PRS access scheme in Worcestershire (MyPlace) and although this operates in a different housing market, there is learning that can be applied to a more urban setting. The 2012 Crisis toolkit on opening up the PRS to young people under 25 is the most informative resource available. See: <http://www.crisis.org.uk/data/files/publications/PRS%20Youth%20Homelessness%20Toolkit.pdf>
- Sharing in social housing is an option that could be developed by housing associations and the local authority as an options for some young people. It can help to address affordability and better use of stock. Some examples of sharing accommodation for the longer term are below:

- o New Charter Housing Association's Two's Company Scheme:
The Scheme facilitates sharing in 2 bed social housing, aimed at people who are already friends or relatives but not co-habiting. The purpose is to address affordability. Sharers are let 2 bed properties and are granted as Joint Assured Shorthold tenancies. If one person moves out, the other will need to meet the shortfall in the rent until a new lodger is found.
- o Westminster City Council's Fair Share Scheme:
Westminster is probably the most pressurised housing markets in the UK. Westminster's Fair Share housing scheme provides sub-market rented accommodation in housing association properties on a shared basis, with rents at a third cheaper than private sector rents. It is aimed at people who work and need to live in Westminster or very central London, such as market traders, performing artists and hospitality workers. The tenants' are on assured shorthold tenancy for 12 months and these can be renewed. A sharer can move out, with either a friend or a new tenant moving in – just like the private sector.
- o Thames Valley Housing - Fizzy Living:
This is aimed at young professionals living in London aged 25 – 34, who want an alternative to the difficulties of renting in private rented sector in London. Although this is not an affordable option for most young people, there are elements of this scheme which could be learned from and adapted by social landlords in Birmingham. Tenants live in blocks of high quality accommodation, near to public transport links with on-site housing management to a high level. There are sharing options or self-contained, a tenant portal, broadband and Freeview, fixed rate utility bills which are reconciled regularly and options of furniture packs. Fizzy Living is branding itself as the new way of renting for 'rentysomethings'. Whilst it may not, in its current format, be an option that housing associations in Birmingham might consider, its key components are useful reminders of what makes renting easier for young people.

Finally, for young people with minimal family support and on low incomes, access to furniture, white goods and other setting up home necessities is very difficult. Keeping on going to college or work when your new home is lacking in very basic items - and there is no obvious light at the end of the tunnel - requires determination. With the ending of the Social Fund for loans and grants, and many pressures on the discretionary hardship fund held by the local authority, other options, such as use of a credit union, saving or approaching the Birmingham Business Alliance /Chamber of Commerce to support young people leaving supported accommodation who are in apprenticeships or work with 'setting up home' help could be explored by providers and incentivised.



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