

Youth Homelessness Prevention Plan 2016 – 2020

1. Setting the Scene

The plan follows the Council's first Strategy to Prevent and Tackle Youth Homelessness in Nottinghamshire 2012-2015, and builds on the work delivered during the lifespan of that strategy. It seeks to identify current and emerging challenges and plan solutions for 3 priority areas: the prevention of youth homelessness; the supported accommodation pathway, and longer term housing options.

This plan has been developed in consultation with, Children's Social Care (including the Leaving Care Team), Supported Accommodation Providers, young people and the 7 District and Borough Homelessness Teams. Young people living in 16+ supported accommodation were invited to take part in a survey designed to gather their views about: accessing supported accommodation; prevention work that was offered to them; the support service they receive and changes to the welfare system and implications for longer term housing options. Their feedback has been incorporated into this plan and will help shape services in the future.

Nottinghamshire is a two tier authority, the County Council has a statutory duty of care for all children and young people that are referred or present themselves to the Council (either directly or via other agencies) as at risk of being homeless. This duty was strengthened in respect of 16/17 year olds through a ruling commonly known as the 'Southwark Judgement'¹, which clearly placed responsibility for homeless 16/17 year olds with Children's Services. The District and Borough Councils are the local housing authorities who have responsibility for assessing homeless applicants and providing temporary accommodation where necessary.

It is well known that it is in the best interests of most young people aged 16 or 17 to live in the family home, or, where this is not safe or appropriate, with responsible adults in their wider family and friends network (*DCSF 2010:3*)^{2.i} Where it is not possible to keep young people living within the family network, there are a range of supported accommodation options available to young people which are commissioned by the council.

During the last 4 years significant changes have been implemented, to drive service improvements and deliver the savings and efficiencies. The key changes delivered between 2012-2016 are:

- A change in the definition of young people. The service now supports young people aged 16-21 years, and had previously supported those up to the age of 25 years.

¹ R (on the application of G) (FC) (Appellant) v London Borough of Southwark (Respondents). Available from: <http://www.publications.parliament.uk/pa/ld200809/ldjudgmt/jd090520/appg-1.htm>

² Department for Communities and Local Government and Department for Education (2010). Provision of accommodation for 16 and 17 year old young people who may be homeless and/or require accommodation. Available from: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/provision-of-accommodation-for-16-and-17-year-olds-who-may-be-homeless-and-or-require-accommodation>

- Development of the Joint Working Protocol, this was established in 2012 and refreshed in 2015. It sets out the roles and responsibilities for agencies in Nottinghamshire working with young people who are vulnerably housed or at risk of homelessness, and was developed to resolve some of the tensions between District/Borough Council and County Council regarding accommodating homeless 16/17 year olds
- Transition from Targeted Support to the new Family Service
- The Family Service and Children's Social Care shared responsibility for homeless 16 and 17 year olds to ensure the most effective service was provided
- Development of single referral and assessment form, prior to this, each provider had their own referral and assessment process. If young people wished to apply to more than one service, then multiple applications would have to be made
- Central Access Hub established and waiting list managed by the Family Service operating as a gateway to control access into services
- Nottinghamshire Pathway model developed
- Agreement to combine funding from Children's Social Care, Family Service and Public Health to commission 16+ supported accommodation
- 16+ Supported Accommodation re-commissioned

The supported accommodation pathway and provision was commissioned jointly between the Family Service, Children's Social Care and Public Health. The contract management of these services currently sits within the Family Service. From 2015-16 the budget for Supported Accommodation is made up from:

- £1,065k CSC Placements Budget
- £663k Early Help Services
- £424k Public Health

There is a commitment to maintain funding at this level during the life of the contract. To offer stability to the market, the Council entered into 5 year contracts for supported accommodation with the option to extend for a further 24 months.

There are currently 257 units of supported accommodation funded by the Council to provide support to young people aged 16-21 (displayed on a map Appendix 1). Units are located throughout the County, and there are a range of accommodation options available depending on the needs of the young person, including services with staff on site 24 hours a day, to shared housing with visiting support to supported lodgings. There are currently 4 contracts: 3 are locality based services and the fourth is a county wide Host Families service. There are 220 units of supported accommodation, plus 7 emergency bed spaces, 20 Supported Lodging placements and 10 Nightstop placements.

Support can include:

- Building independence skills
- advice, advocacy and liaison with other agencies
- monitoring health and well-being
- safety and security
- developing social and life skills
- emotional support and confidence building
- resettlement when setting up and managing a new tenancy
- assistance with housing and welfare benefits

CASE STUDY

K was referred for Supported Accommodation in November 2015, by a Family Service NEET worker. At the time of the referral K was living at home with her mother and brother who were both using alcohol and substances. She had experienced a chaotic childhood with poor and neglectful parenting, and had been subject to a Child Protection and a Child in Need plan in 2014/15. She was hospitalised following an injury from boiling water, combined with untreated scabies and eczema, and had previously sustained severe injuries to her head caused by untreated head lice. She had a history of going missing, sofa surfing, and suffered from depression and developed anxieties over food and eating which resulted in low weight. K moved into a Branching Out cluster unit in Retford in January 2016, but initially struggled in that setting and in February 2016 moved into the core service in Worksop. She has benefitted from a service where staff are on site 24 hours a day, and has been supported to attend her training provision, engage with mental health services, and take part in group activities which initially she struggled with. K's confidence has improved and she has become a Tenant Volunteer and helps out at weekly Drop In and Activity Sessions. There have been no missing episodes, or hospital admissions since she moved into the core service. There are still periods when she struggles with her emotional well-being and eating habits, but she has made significant improvements in a relatively short space of time. She will progress from the core service into a cluster unit to continue to develop her independent living skills prior to moving onto independent living.

The above case study demonstrates how the input of a relatively low cost support service can result in the avoidance of high cost interventions such as hospital admissions and Police time associated with missing episodes.

Strategic relevance

The 16+ Supported Accommodation Services will contribute to the key priorities and outcomes of the following strategic plans:

- **NCC Strategic Plan (204-18)**
 - The most vulnerable children and adults will be effectively protected and supported
 - More young people will be in work, education or training.
 - Children and young people receive the help and support they require to be safe and thrive
 - Young people are supported to reach their potential
- **Health & Wellbeing Board Strategy (2014-17)**
 - To work together to keep children and young people safe
 - To provide children and young people with the early help support they need
- **Children, Young People and Families Plan (2014-16)**
 - To work together to keep children and young people safe
 - To provide children and young people with the early help support they need
- **NSCB Business Plan (2014-16)**
 - Through a comprehensive understanding of the needs to ensure that the work of the NSCB is focussed on the most vulnerable children, their safety and empowerment
- District and Borough Housing Strategies

The Council aims to work alongside its district council partners to prevent homelessness and to improve outcomes for those experiencing homelessness. The district councils are key partners in the Youth Homelessness Forum and have been involved with the development of this plan and recent commissioning process. Joint working

has focussed on developing protocols to improve access to services for young people aged 16/17, and clearly define roles and responsibilities. Thematic discussions take place at the quarterly Youth Homelessness Forum to address any existing or emerging challenges, and share best practice.

2. What are the key aims of this plan?

There are three key areas this plan seeks to address, these are:

- To prevent young people from becoming homeless
- To operate a successful support and accommodation pathway
- To advocate for the needs of vulnerable young people for longer term housing options

3. Preventing young people from becoming homeless

Effective early intervention and prevention services result in fewer inappropriate referrals to specialist services and in children, young people and their families receiving the support required much earlier and at a reduced cost.

The Family Service launched in November 2015 following the integration of 9 teams from across Children's Social Care and Early Help Services, the new service offers support to children, Young People and their Families at Levels 3 and 4 of the Pathway to Provision. It replaced the Targeted Support Teams, Supporting Families Teams, Family Assessment Team and Family Resource Team.

The Family Service provides a new integrated vehicle for the delivery of early help support to children, young people and families to prevent the need for social care or youth justice services by addressing problems as soon as they arise. It also provides additional support for families involved with social care or youth justice and provides a "step-down" arrangement for families following statutory involvement by the local authority.

Services on offer through the Family Service include, but are not limited to:

- Case managing lead professional for Families at Level 3 of the pathway to provision
- A wide range of group parenting programmes
- Edge of Care interventions
- Education Welfare services
- Support for Kinship Carers
- Intensive intervention where multiple visits a week are required to bring about change
- Advice on entering Employment, Education or Training for 16-17 year olds who are NEET

- Substance Misuse Services for teenagers
- Support to Homeless 16-17 year olds
- A range of one to one interventions for young people (such as anger management, classroom behaviour, CSE risk awareness, online safety and healthy relationships)

The Family Service recognises that there are risk factors in a young person's life which increase the likelihood of homelessness. These include: Leaving Care, abuse/neglect as a child, or ran away as a child, domestic violence, mental health or substance issues in family home, truanting or excluded from school, leaving school with no qualifications, learning disabilities, LGBT, young offenders, experiencing poverty and deprivation³. The Family Service will work to provide holistic support and interventions to address many of the risk factors to prevent the young person from becoming homeless.

A key role in the prevention of homelessness is provided by the Rapid Assessment Workers, who will respond to all requests for emergency accommodation for 16/17 non LAC young people. The Rapid Assessment Worker will conduct a face to face visit within 2 hours, and will establish if the young person is homeless. This ensures a robust process of mediation with the family is attempted prior to the consideration of supported accommodation. This process ensures that young people have a safe place to live and that they and family members can access appropriate support to maintain the young person in the family home. If it is not in the best interests of the young person to remain in the family home, access to emergency accommodation will be facilitated, or a referral will be made to the Multi Agency Safeguarding Hub (MASH).

All referrals for Supported Accommodation go through the Central Access Point; this process acts as an effective gateway so only those young people that are homeless, and require accommodation are able to access it.

Young people tell us that information wasn't always available about homelessness services or how to access help, and the majority surveyed (52%) said they would have found it helpful if someone who had experienced homelessness at a young age could speak to them in school or a youth centre about the realities of becoming homeless.

46 young people living in 16+ supported accommodation responded to a survey, only 47% said information was available to them about services to prevent homelessness. However 84% felt there wasn't anything more that could have been done to prevent their homelessness (or felt the question wasn't applicable).

Key challenges for 2016-2020

- Nationally and locally reductions in public funding are likely to see an increase in youth homelessness. Young people are being disadvantaged across the labour and housing market and within the welfare system. Nationally youth unemployment is three times that of the overall rate, and young people are five times more likely to be on zero hours contracts than other age groups. Welfare reform is targeting young people and the impact of the roll out of Universal credit is yet to be seen. The changes may lead to more failed tenancies and increased homelessness for young people aged 18-21 as the Housing element of universal credit will go directly to the young person rather than the landlord as it currently does through Housing Benefit. This coupled with the proposal to remove the housing element of universal credit for 18-21 year olds and apply the shared room rate for under 35s only worsens the horizon for young people in the housing market.
- The Family Service is currently in the process of being restructured, the Council aims to save £1,000,000 by delivering smarter ways of working, and the reduction of posts within the Family Service. This may have a negative impact on the work being delivered and result in more young people becoming homeless as less family intervention can be offered.

³ Dr Beth Watts Young and Homeless 2016 Conference

- Accurate data collection on homelessness prevention is problematic. The implementation of the Family Service occurred at the same time as a new IT operating system was introduced, and as the new system embeds problems around data collection are being identified and resolved.
- Information and advice is not widely available on homelessness preventions services and young people do not know how to access help
- Many young people see supported accommodation as a route to getting their own tenancy at 18, and do not recognise that in most cases it is in their best interests to remain at home, the reality of supported accommodation can often be different to preconceived expectations.

The plan for 2016-2020

We will:

1. Ensure information and advice for young people and families is readily available about Housing Options and Homelessness Services
2. Provide Early Help through the Family Service to prevent homelessness and help to maintain young people in family networks
3. Keep abreast of welfare reform and share up to date information with young people and families
4. Attempt mediation with all young people where it is appropriate and safe, and aim for a minimum of 20% of cases to be successfully mediated
5. Resolve data recording issues to accurately record the prevention work that is being undertaken
6. Establish a peer support programme to communicate the realities of leaving home early or becoming homeless

4. Operating a successful supported and accommodation pathway

The new 16+ Supported Accommodation services commenced in Summer/Autumn 2015. Access into supported accommodation is via the Central Access Hub. All referrals are made by completing an assessment form, following which the young person is allocated a number of points based on their age and presenting needs. A waiting list, ranked by priority score operates to ensure fair access to services. The Supported Accommodation Panel meet on a weekly basis to discuss referrals into the service, and ensures a fair and transparent system is in operation.

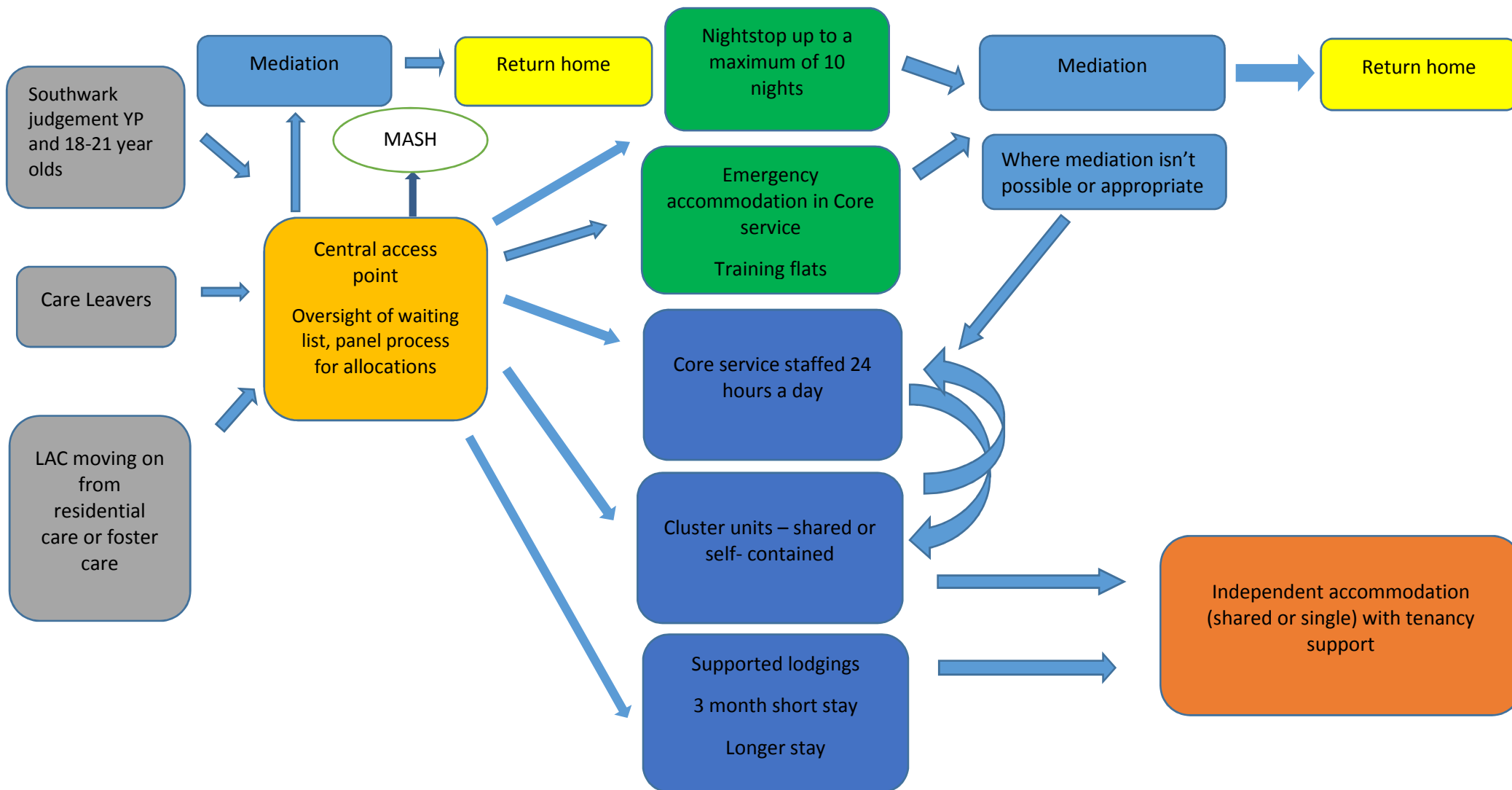
Emergency accommodation is available for 16/17 year olds, Care Leavers and Looked After Children where existing placements have broken down. It can be provided in two settings: either in a home environment by volunteer Nightstop hosts, or in a core service which has staff on site 24 hours a day.

The new Supported Accommodation pathway provides greater choice around housing options for young people via the provision of 'Core' and 'Cluster' accommodation. The Core service has staff on site 24 hours a day and has appropriate levels of staffing to support young people presenting with a range of complex needs. In addition to the Core service, there are cluster units of accommodation throughout the County, some of which are self-contained but the majority of which are shared accommodation. These units have visiting support to the level required by the young person. In most cases a young person will require a core setting initially, but following a period of stabilisation

the young person will have developed sufficient independent living skills to be placed into cluster accommodation. Once the young person has demonstrated sufficient independent living skills to manage their own tenancy, a 'Ready to Move assessment' will be completed and the young person will be supported to bid for properties or apply for private rented accommodation.

In some cases a young person's journey may not be as straight forward as this; a set-back in their life, or crisis may mean they require a move from a cluster property back into a core setting before they are ready to move on into independence. The pathway model, presented below, shows the route through services and the range of supported accommodation options available.

Nottinghamshire Supported Accommodation pathway model for 16-21 year olds



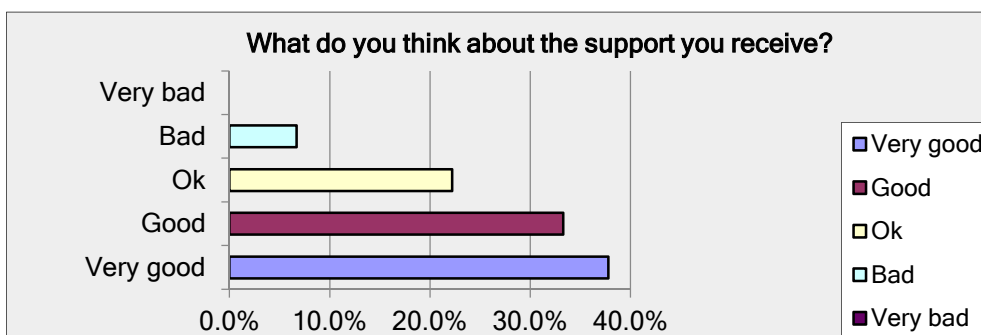
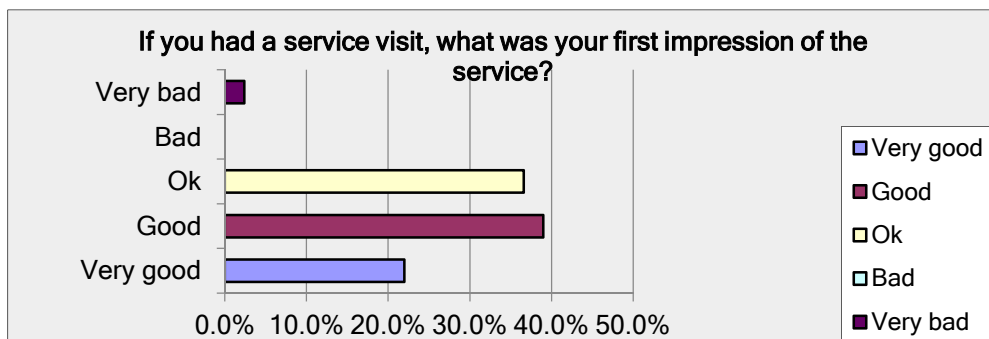
From autumn 2016 providers will be paid based on 'Journeys of Support'. It is hoped that the new model will incentivise providers to move service users through services preventing services from 'silting up'. Providers will be paid a price per journey for every young person who is supported by the service. Providers will use this budget to tailor a service package around each service user with the aim of achieving the outcomes as efficiently as possible. The more people the provider successfully moves on into independent accommodation, the more money they are able to draw down on (up to a maximum budget cap). The Council will benefit by being able to make more referrals and avoid expensive alternative placements. If providers do not move young people through the system then they will not be able to take on new referrals and draw down further revenue.

The re-commissioning of the supported accommodation services has led to many improvements for the Council and the young people who require the service. The services now offer:

- Improved access to services and a clear pathway into services
- Improved choice of types of accommodation available
- Parity of service provision across the 3 localities
- Standardisation of quality and monitoring systems
- Improved value for money

The Supported Accommodation Pathway has been recognised as a model of good practice by leading experts on Youth Homelessness and has been cited in 'Provision of Accommodation for young people aged 16-18 leaving Secure Estate in the East Midlands'⁴ as an example of what's working well.

Young people tell us that on the whole they thought the assessment process was ok or good, the time they had to wait for an offer to be made was good, their first impression of the service was good, and the support they receive is very good. Responses to the survey are shown below.



⁴ Anna Whalen Provision of Accommodation for young people aged 16-18 leaving Secure Estate in the East Midlands, November 2015

Young people also responded favourably to questions asked about their accommodation, its location, and the support they receive. 100% of young people surveyed felt they get the right amount of support, and 95% felt that their support worker meets them at a time that is convenient. It is pleasing to see such a positive response from young people using the service, indicating that services are delivering person centred support and packages of support tailored to individual's needs.



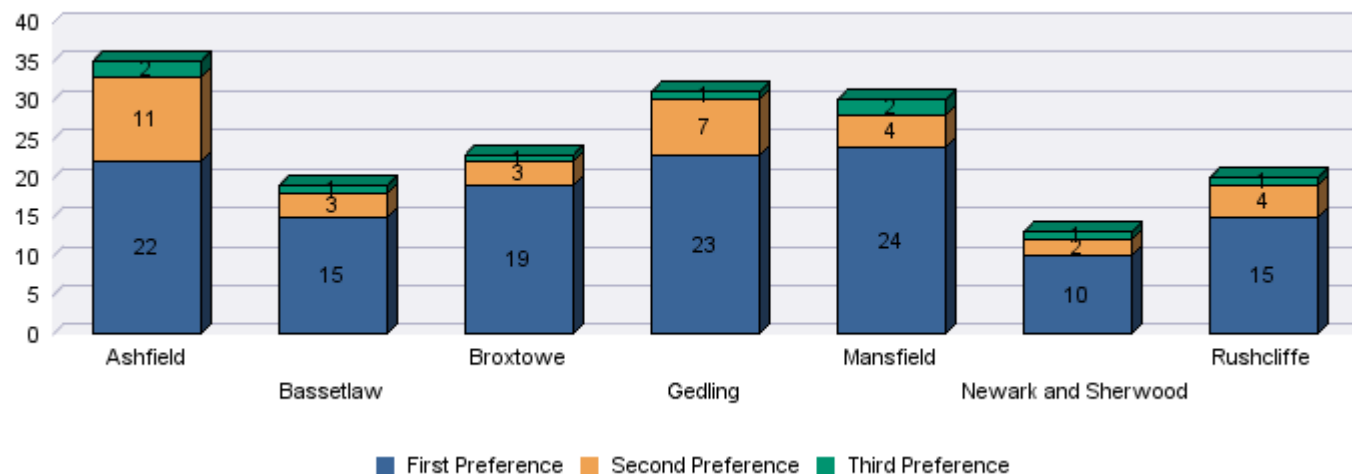
Demand for services

As of 12 May 2016 there were 103 people on the waiting list for supported accommodation, of these 44% were female and 54% were male.

There is a waiting list for all areas, the chart below shows the young person's district preference.

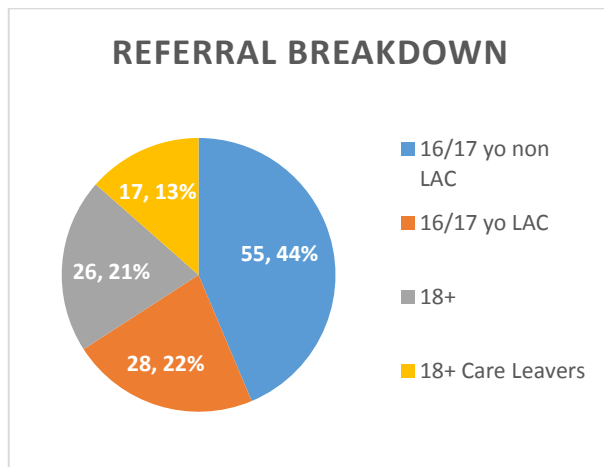
The service in the South of the county is not yet fully operational, and it is anticipated the numbers on the waiting list for the south of the county will reduce once the core service goes live. The south of the county had previously been lacking in appropriate supported accommodation provision for young people and this was one of the key areas the re commissioning process wished to address. A suitable building was identified by the Provider but unfortunately delays to planning consent led to an unexpected delay, this has now been resolved and the core service should become operational by July 2016. The core provision will include an additional 2 emergency beds which it is hoped will help to reduce pressure on the other emergency provision and will offer those in the south a more local option for emergency accommodation.

Waiting List - District Preferences



During quarter 4 of 2015-16 the Family Service received 137 referrals for supported accommodation, and during quarter 1 2016-17, 126 referrals were received and processed. Of those received during quarter 1, 83 were from young people aged 16 and 17 and 43 referrals were received for over 18 year olds, of these 17 were from Care Leavers. The pie chart below provides a breakdown of the referrals received during the first quarter of 2016-17 (April to end June 2016). The outcome of the referral is also shown below for referrals received during the first quarter of 2016-17. Fifty one people referred into the service have been placed into supported accommodation (data taken on 29 August 2016).

Referral breakdown	Outcome						Total
	Placed into supported housing	Mediated	Did not go ahead	Remain on waiting list	Refused - unable to manage risk	Unable to be placed due to capacity	
16/17 yo non LAC	26	13	6	10	0	0	55
16/17 yo LAC	11	0	4	11	2	0	28
18+	7	5	4	6	3	1	26
18+ Care Leavers	7	0	4	6	0	0	17
Total	51	18	18	33	5	1	126



Key challenges for 2016 – 2020

- There are insufficient funds to adequately support all 16-21s in Nottinghamshire in housing need, priority has been given to the groups identified as most vulnerable: 16/17 year olds and Care Leavers. This leaves the 18 -21 year olds with no previous LA Care history as most at risk of becoming homeless. Unfortunately due to budgetary constraints this is not an area this plan seeks to address.
- National research which is also reflected locally shows there has been an increase in the complexity of support needs of young people accessing services. Over half of all young people living in homeless accommodation have complex needs. There are multiple reasons for this: improved awareness of complex needs; stricter targeting; more effective prevention among lower needs young people; reduction in pre-crisis support therefore young people are accessing services later with more serious issues which are harder to resolve⁵. In Nottinghamshire young parents are presenting with multiple needs and risks; many are in violent relationships and are significantly lacking in parenting skills. Young people are also displaying more violence and aggression towards other service users and staff. Analysis of data from quarters 3 and 4 of 2015-16 shows that 8% of leavers from the service, left as a result of being asked to leave due to their behaviour. Further analysis reveals that all of these people are male, over half are Care Leavers, all were evicted due to threatening behaviours, including physical assaults to staff and other service users. All of the Care Leavers had multiple placement breakdowns prior to entering the service, and had multiple support needs.
- The Government is proposing to cap the Housing Benefit for Supported Accommodation to the Local Housing Allowance rate. This proposal is due to take effect in April 2018, which could have catastrophic consequences for Supported Accommodation providers as approximately 50% of their revenue is generated through rent.

⁵ Dr Beth Watts Young and Homeless 2016 Conference

To put this into context, the average rent cost for Supported Accommodation service in Nottinghamshire is £280 per week, compared with the average local housing allowance rate which is between £58.41 - £66.74 for single claimants under 35 years. The government is also proposing a 1% reduction in rents to social housing which is due to take effect from 2017. This will have a disproportionate effect on Supported Accommodation providers due to higher rent costs.

- Another Welfare reform which will impact on young people is the ‘Youth Obligation’ for 18-21 year olds on Universal Credit. YP will be required to participate in an intensive regime of support from day one of their benefit claim and after 6 months they will be expected to apply for an apprenticeship or traineeship, gain work based skills or undertake a mandatory work placement. This poses a significant challenge for many young people accessing supported accommodation services presenting with multiple and complex needs, as they will struggle to fulfil the requirements of the youth obligation.
- Nottinghamshire County Council expects a £50m shortfall in the budget for 2018-19 and beyond, all service areas will be asked to identify possible savings. It is not yet clear if the Supported Accommodation Pathway will be affected by this.
- Managing young people’s housing expectations continues to be an issue. Most young people do not wish to live in shared accommodation, however the Council commissioned shared cluster units with the foresight of proposed changes to the welfare system.
- Striking a balance between Core and Cluster units to ensure demand doesn’t outstrip supply or result in voids and loss of rental income. One locality in particular has had issues with filling voids in the cluster units, coupled with a long waiting list for the core service in one district whilst the core service in the neighbouring district has not been 100% utilised.
- The use of and demand for the emergency beds is unpredictable. Since the contracts commenced in August 2015, there have been a couple of periods when all emergency beds have been utilised, this has led to young people becoming Looked After and spot purchasing arrangements made. In total 6 people were made S20 due to this reason. Care Leavers in particular seem to require the emergency accommodation following placement breakdowns.
- Transitioning between Children’s and Adult’s services can be challenging. There are a small number of young people that will not be able to move into independent accommodation prior to their 22nd birthday. These vulnerable adults will require a longer period of support and local experience of accessing Ault CLDT and MH services have proved to be a slow and problematic process to navigate.
- Careful consideration needs to be given regarding existing capacity of the Supported Accommodation services to absorb the number of Looked After young people that are currently 15 but will turn 16-17 over the next couple of years. The table below shows the number of Looked After young people in Nottinghamshire and their current age

Age	No. (not already in supported accommodation)
17	66
16	65
15	84
14	48

The plan for 2016-2020

We will:

1. Utilise existing NCC IT systems to share waiting list, A1 assessments, and other key information to improve communication, reduce administrative time and emails
2. Review the Joint Working Protocol at least annually and following any major changes to the service
3. Review the effectiveness of Supported Accommodation Allocation Panel and make any necessary changes
4. Analyse data regarding use of emergency accommodation and establish sufficiency
5. Inspect services annually to assess the quality of service provision
6. Conduct an annual Contract Monitoring visit and report
7. Review demand for services and capacity, and consider the best approach to supporting young parents requiring a core service. This may mean remodelling some units.
8. Transition to new payment system for 'journeys of support'
9. Explore possibilities of utilising additional emergency accommodation with Districts and Boroughs for Care Leavers to relieve pressure on Emergency Bed Spaces and provide a range of options for Care Leavers which reduces the use of B&B
10. Improve pre tenancy planning for challenging young people transitioning from residential care or semi-independent accommodation.
11. Assess the impact of the proposed Policy change to cap the HB for Supported Accommodation to LHA rates to take effect in April 2018 and try to influence decision makers
12. Close the gaps between Children's and Adult's services for vulnerable young adults requiring more intensive or specialist support or an ongoing service post 22 years.

6. Advocating for the needs of vulnerable young people for longer term housing options

Nationally young people are finding it difficult to find suitable tenancies, and are tending to live at home for longer and when they do move on, they are more likely to be living in shared accommodation.⁶ Young people's routes to finding their own independent housing are getting more complex, taking longer and getting harder to navigate⁷.

⁶ Dr Beth Watts Young and Homeless 2016 Conference

⁷ <http://www.youthandpolicy.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/04rugg-quilgards-young-people-and-housing1.pdf>

In Nottinghamshire the availability and affordability of longer term housing options for young people on low incomes is limited. Most districts report a shortage of 1 bed properties in their area, and many are starting to do affordability checks prior to offering a tenancy.

The pathway model's success is based on the ability of the Provider to move young people through the service. The contract places the responsibility for move on with the Provider, and they are working closely with the local Housing Authority and any other private or Registered Social Landlords in the area to find suitable independent or shared accommodation for move on when the young person is ready to do so.

Many young people wish to have their own flat when they move on from Supported Accommodation, unfortunately this has become an unrealistic expectation due to Welfare Reform. The entitlement to Housing Benefit for people under the age of 35 has been reduced to the shared room rate, as a result of this, finding self-contained affordable accommodation is becoming increasingly difficult. All agencies involved with the young person need to work together to manage young people's move on expectations and must challenge the view that they will get their own flat at age 18. Care Leavers are exempt from the Shared Accommodation rate until their 22nd birthday, so private rented one bed self-contained accommodation remains an affordable option for this group of young people. After they turn 22, the shared room rate will apply and therefore if they have secured a one bed property, this will no longer be affordable unless they have other sources of income to top this up.

Young people are at high risk of tenancy failure and placing them in tenancies at 18 can result in further homelessness and the risk of 'intentionally homeless' decision. In Nottinghamshire a 'Ready to Move' assessment is completed with every young person prior to moving on from the service. This is designed to demonstrate the young person's ability to manage a tenancy. All providers also offer a life skills programme, supporting the young person to gain independent living skills and become tenancy ready.

When the supported accommodation services were re-commissioned, the Council asked the provider to offer tenancy support to all young people moving on from the service, and provide a drop in facility at the core service if the young person required advice or assistance around their tenancy. Providers were also asked to remain in contact with the young person once the support service had ended to establish if the young person was still maintaining their tenancy at 6 months and 12 months after they moved in.

A key focus on resettlement is about preparing young people for the type of accommodation available to them with the focus on education, training and economic activity. For young people to succeed as young tenants, many will need to be economically active and not reliant on welfare benefits.⁸

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 or best option. Furthermore, there is limited understanding of the impact of Welfare Reform and the impact this will have on settled accommodation options. This means discussion of other options including the option of sharing accommodation is not happening routinely, and issues of affordability in the private rented sector may not be part of any preparation work.

Young people tell us that they wish to move into independent self-contained accommodation when they move on from Supported Accommodation. Of the 46 people surveyed 90% chose this option. The majority (46%) would prefer to be accommodated in local authority accommodation and 30% had no preference who their landlord was. Young people were asked "Are you aware that changes the Government are making to the Benefit system will make it harder for young people to afford to live on their own?" 67 percent of people answered "Yes" to this question. They were then invited to comment about how they would feel about living in shared accommodation as this may be the only affordable option. 40 comments were received, the overwhelming theme from the respondents was that this wasn't a desirable option, although there were a couple of more positive comments about the positives of sharing with friends. People commented about feeling angry and frustrated with the system, and that they wouldn't want to share. A couple of quotes have been included below.

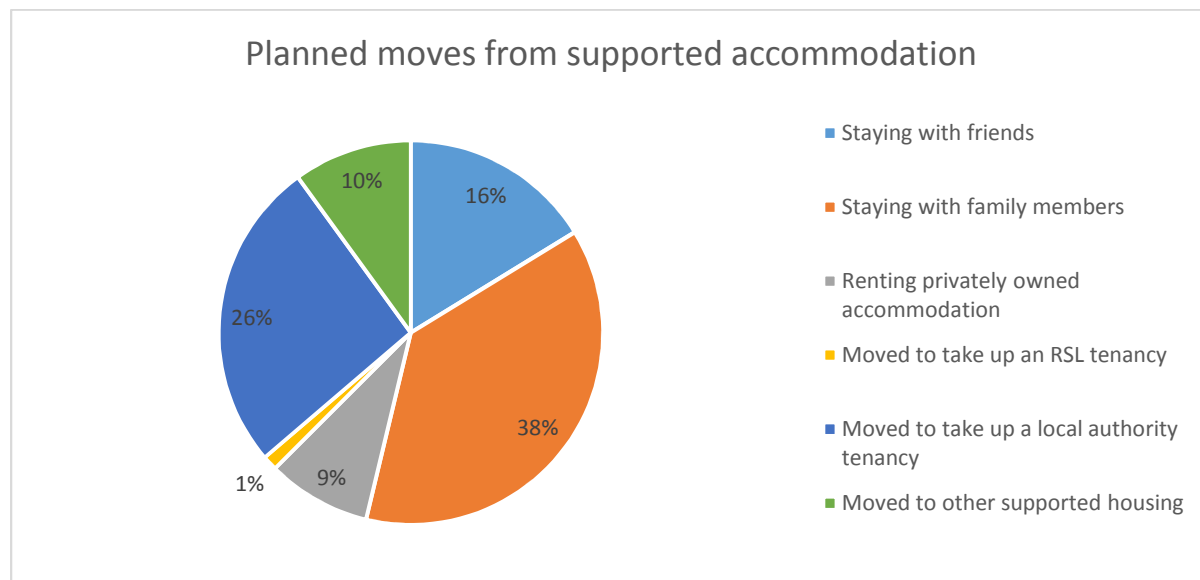
⁸ Anna Whalen Provision of Accommodation for young people aged 16-18 leaving Secure Estate in the East Midlands, November 2015

“Shared house is not suitable for all young people and can worsen people’s mental health therefore costing the government more than it saves.”

“It is disgusting it just making young people into criminals because they can't afford to live. It's also making young girls think life is easier with a child as they will have a roof over their head.”

Young people were also asked their views about establishing a peer support network to offer support following their move into shared or self-contained accommodation. 60% didn’t think this would be useful.

Nottinghamshire is made up of 7 district/borough housing authorities. They all operate choice based lettings systems, although the process and banding system varies slightly between authorities. On the whole, on completion of a ready to move assessment the young person will be placed into Band 2 and will have 12 weeks to bid on a property. In Newark and Sherwood young people are placed onto Band 1 following an interview and the completion of the ready to move assessment. This route into independent accommodation remains the most likely for young people moving on from supported accommodation into tenancies. During Quarters 3 and 4 of 2015-16 eighty people moved on from supported accommodation in a planned and positive way, of these 26% moved into a local authority tenancy. The pie chart below shows where young people moved to following their stay in supported accommodation.



Key challenges for 2016 – 2020

- There is a shortage of affordable housing for to those on low incomes, and young people on low incomes are adversely impacted by the shortage of support. There is increasingly low confidence amongst landlords in both the social and private rented sectors towards young people on low incomes due to concerns about their ability to afford accommodation. Local authorities and many RSLs are starting to do affordability checks prior to offering tenancies.

- Some young people are finding it difficult to prove they have a local connection to any one area. This is a particular problem where a young person has been asked to move to another service following a placement breakdown or if there is no emergency accommodation available in their originating District/Borough.
- Welfare reform is targeting young people with 3 key policy changes:
 - the proposed removal of the housing element of universal Credit for 18-21 year olds It is currently unclear which groups of vulnerable young people will be excluded from this policy change and how this will be administered.
 - application of the shared room rate for under 35s for the housing element of Universal Credit Landlords are reviewing allocation policies in line with welfare reform. Affordability assessments are being completed prior to being offered a tenancy. Currently the shortfall is topped up with Discretionary Housing Benefit, but this is not a long term solution. This will have a negative impact on throughput, making it harder to source appropriate affordable move on options for young people.
 - the roll out of Universal Credit is predicted to have an adverse effect on young people. Money for the Housing element of Universal Credit will go to the young person and not directly to the landlord as it currently does. This may lead to more failed tenancies or an increased unwillingness from landlords to accept young people, leading to a negative impact on throughput

The plan for 2016-2020

We will:

1. Analyse data from the Provider regarding tenancy sustainment at 6 and 12 months, and establish what is working well to drive improvements in the sector
2. Share best practice around successful move on and building relationships with landlords at Provider meetings
3. Research successful models of shared housing and identify how this can be replicated in Nottinghamshire
4. Assess the impact of Welfare Reform/seek further clarification regarding exceptions to Universal Credit and the Removal of entitlement to Housing element of UC for 18-21 year olds
5. Provide Welfare Reform briefings for Social Workers and raise awareness of other settled accommodation options
6. Establish system for managing young people's expectations of settled accommodation e.g. self-contained, local authority, wi-fi, affordability, isolation issues
7. Match young people that are suitable to live together in shared accommodation and promote this as an option
8. Use the Youth Homelessness Forum to advocate for young people in terms of housing allocation policies and housing strategies
9. Use the Youth Homelessness Forum and Joint Working Protocol to seek agreement for young people in supported accommodation to gain a local connection to the District/Borough they are living in after a 6 month stay in the service, or alternatively retain their local connection to their previous District/Borough

7. Performance

Outcomes approach to service delivery

The new contracts have seen the implementation of a new system for monitoring outcomes for young people. Providers are now required to measure service user outcomes by using an Outcome Star model. The Outcomes Star enables providers to give a detailed picture of the changes taking place within a service by measuring more precisely where service users are when they arrive in a service, and where they are at a later point in time in relation to ten key aspects of their life.

The Outcome Framework (below) was developed in conjunction with NCC Children's Social Care, Leaving Care, and Public Health sets out the service objectives, expected outcomes, performance measures and targets for the three core areas of service delivery:

- a) increasing independence for young people, Care Leavers and Looked After Children (LAC) in Nottinghamshire
- b) improving health of young people, Care Leavers and Looked After Children
- c) enabling young people, Care Leavers and Looked After Children to achieve their optimal potential.

Outcome Framework

The Outcome Framework makes reference to the Outcome Star as a measurement tool. It should be noted that (as with other outcomes) there is a need to identify that a prioritisation has taken place to identify the areas of highest need, and that there is a focused plan for how the other outcome areas are being considered whilst the priority areas are being dealt with at an intensive level. There is an expectation of a realistic programme of work for young people and each is individual. The need for on-going evidence is also a requirement where the young person has a shorter stay in one service than the outcome framework suggests for the measure. Targets linked to the Outcome Star are provisional and will be reviewed by the Commissioner and Provider 6 months after implementation of the Outcome Star system.

Aim: To prevent homelessness and increase independence for young people, Care Leavers and Looked After Children in Nottinghamshire				
Objective	Outcome Sought	Performance Indicator	Target	Evidence
Gain access to accommodation with support at the point of need	Providers accept service users at the point of need	Percentage of referrals accepted	100%	Framework-I Outcome of A1 Episode
Support service users to manage their tenancy during and beyond service provision	Service users successfully maintain their tenancy/licence in supported accommodation	Percentage of service users who have maintained their tenancy	95%	Framework-I Outcome of Supported accommodation Episode Or PI Workbook

	Service users gain independent living skills	Percentage of service users who have completed a R2M assessment	100% at point of move on from the service	Framework-I Collated via Outcome Stars and Monitoring Form
		Percentage of service user who have achieved a 2 point progression on the Outcome Star	Provisional target 75% at 6 month point 85% at 12 months	Distance travelled on Outcome Star for: - Self Care and Living skills - Managing a tenancy and accommodation Report from Framework-i
	Service users have successfully managed their tenancy 12 months after leaving the service	% of ex-service users successfully maintaining their tenancy 12 months after leaving the service	Provisional target 50%	Hoping to link this into Framework-I so can track complete journey for young person
Support service users to find independent accommodation	Service users secure appropriate accommodation	Percentage of service users moving on to RSL, Private rented or LA accommodation	For information to inform move on discussions	Framework-I Outcome from Supported Accommodation Episode
Provide ways for young people to meet suitable flat mates to reduce reliance on unsustainable solo units of accommodation	Service users are able to identify potential flat/house shares	Matching service users for potential house shares	For information to inform move on discussions	Provider quarterly report
Aim: To improve the health of Young people, Care Leavers and Looked After Children				
Objective	Outcome Sought	Performance Indicator	Target	Evidence
Support service users to access services relevant to their physical, emotional, mental, sexual health and maternity services	Service users have maintained or improved their sexual health	Percentage of service users who have registered onto the C Card scheme	All Providers to be a C Card registration point, and attend C Card refresher training every 2 years	Contract management meeting Framework-I Collated via Outcomes Star and Monitoring Form
		Appropriate referrals to contraception and sexual health services	For information only	Framework-I Collated via Outcomes Star and monitoring Form

	Service users experience an improvement to their mental/emotional health	Percentage of service users who have achieved a 2 point progression on the Outcome Star.	Provisional target 60% at 6 month point 75% at 12 months	Distance travelled on Outcome Star for Emotional/Mental Health Framework-I report
		Percentage of service users who are referred when necessary to CAMHS.	100% of referrals made to CAMHS where relevant.	Framework-I Collated via Outcomes Star and monitoring Form
	Service users experience an improvement to their physical health	Percentage of service users who have achieved a 2 point progression on the Outcome Star	Provisional target 80% at 6 month point 90% at 12 months	Distance travelled on Outcome Star for Being Healthy Framework-I report
		Percentage of service users registered with a GP, Optician and Dentist	100%	Framework-I Collated via Outcomes Star and monitoring Form
		Appropriate referrals to smoking cessation service.	For information only	Framework-I Collated via Outcomes Star and monitoring Form Monitoring visit
		Percentage of service users who have plans in place for support in harm reduction linked to smoking	100% of service users have plans where relevant	Framework-I Collated via Outcomes Star and monitoring Form monitoring visit
		Appropriate referrals to weight management service.	For information only	Framework-I Collated via Outcomes Star and monitoring Form Monitoring visit
		Percentage of service users who have plans in place for support in harm reduction linked to weight management	100% of service users have plans where relevant	Framework-I Collated via Outcomes Star and monitoring Form Monitoring visit
Service users minimise harm from their drug and alcohol use	Percentage of service users who have achieved a 2 point progression on the Outcome Star	Provisional target 60% at 6 month point 75% at 12 months	Distance travelled on Outcome Star for Drug and Alcohol misuse Framework-I report	

		Percentage of service users who have the option of planning meetings held with Lead Professional regarding substance misuse.	100% of service users have option of planning meeting with Lead Professional where relevant	Contract Management meeting Monitoring Visit
	Service users access relevant maternity services	Percentage of service users registered with the relevant maternity service	100%	Framework-I report Collated from Outcomes Stars and Monitoring Form Information collected for Public Health
	Service users maintain Health Visiting appointments	Percentage of service users who attend every Health Visitor appointment	95%	Framework-I report Collated from Outcomes Stars and Monitoring Form Information collected for Public Health
	Service users access professional support to reduce self-harm related injuries that require medical intervention	Percentage of service users who have appropriate referrals to CAMHS	100%	Framework-I report Collated from Outcomes Stars and Monitoring Form Contract Management meeting Monitoring Visit (risk assessments and use of CAMHS consultation)
Support service users to maintain their safety	Service users maintain their safety	Percentage of service users who have appropriate risk assessments and referrals to MASH	100%	Risk assessments and Safeguarding referrals. QAF self-assessment, monitoring visit and annual contract review (risk assessments) Evidence of complaints investigated (particularly around bullying)and attendance at CSE strategy meetings

Support service users to reduce reoffending and promote compliance with statutory orders and licences	Reduced reoffending and compliance with statutory orders and licences	Percentage of service users who have achieved a 2 point progression on the Outcome Star	Provisional target 65% at 6 month point 70% at 12 months	Distance travelled on Outcome Star for Making Positive Choices Framework-I report Contract Management meeting Monitoring Visit.
Aim: To enable young people, Care Leavers and Looked After Children to achieve their optimal potential				
Objective	Outcome sought	Performance Indicator	Target	Evidence
Support service users to access appropriate training, education, employment or voluntary work	Service users participate in appropriate training, education and employment	Percentage of service users who have achieved a 2 point progression on the Outcome Star	Provisional target 75% at 6 month point 90% at 12 months	Distance travelled on Outcome Star for Meaningful use of time Framework-I report
		Percentage of service users that accessed training, education, employment and volunteering during their stay	95%	Provider Monitoring return Framework and Business Objects report Contract Management meetings Monitoring Visits (evidence of qualifications obtained or plans towards attendance at training, employment or education).
Support service users to maximise their income, improve budgeting skills and reduce debt	Service users gain money management skill, and reduce any existing debt	Percentage of service users who have achieved a 2 point progression on the Outcome Star	Provisional 95%	Distance travelled on Outcome Star for Managing Money and Bills Framework-I report Contract management meeting Monitoring Visits (key work sessions on finance)
Support service users to increase their confidence, self-esteem and develop greater resilience	Service users feel more confident and able to deal with life events	Percentage of service users who have achieved a 2 point progression on the Outcome Star	Provisional target 70% at 6 month point 80% at 12 months	Distance travelled on Outcome Star for Being enthusiastic about my Life Framework-I report

		Percentage of service users who express feeling positive about their future and can describe relationships from which they derive support from outside the professional organisation	90%	QAF monitoring visit Service user feedback on exit from service
		Percentage of service users who have the opportunity to access leisure/exercise.	100%	QAF monitoring visit Service user feedback on exit from service
Support service users to maintain and develop their relationships with their families and communities of origin	Service users have an improved relationship with their families and communities and/or can identify a supportive network in their local community	Percentage of service users who have achieved a 2 point progression on the Outcome Star	Provision target 70% at 6 month point 80% at 12 months	Distance travelled on Outcome Star for Building Personal and Social networks Framework-i
		Percentage of young people who are supported to move to live with or near members of their family, friends or supportive network	100%	Service user feedback on exit from service.

Strategy Action Plan

Priority 1: Early Prevention of homelessness

What will success look like? 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 and employment situation. They know where to get help if they need it. Mediation is successful and young people stay in the family network where possible, and are safe and are supported to make planned moves if they need to move out. Care leavers will continue to be a priority group and will have access to emergency accommodation, therefore reducing the need for homelessness applications wherever possible

	Outcome	Action required	Lead	By When	How will it be measured?
1	Young people know where to get help to prevent them from becoming homeless	Ensure information and advice for young people and families is readily available about Housing Options and Homelessness Services	Housing departments and Family Service	March 2017	Young people feedback
2	Young people remain within the wider family network	Provide Early Help through the Family Service to prevent homelessness and help to maintain young people in family networks	Family Service, Service Managers	Ongoing	Performance dashboard
3	Young people make planned moves into accommodation and understand the implications of welfare reform	Keep abreast of welfare reform and share information with young people and their families	Family Service, Service Managers	Ongoing	Young people feedback
4	Mediation keeps young people living within the wider family network	Attempt mediation with all young people where it is appropriate and safe, and aim for a minimum of 20% of cases to be successfully mediated	Rapid Assessment Workers	October 2016	Percentage of cases successfully mediated
5	Reliable data exists which can be used for future commissioning and reports	Resolve data recording issues to accurately record the prevention work that is being undertaken	Service Manager	January 2017	Performance dashboard
6	Young people remain living in the family network for longer and make planned moves into accommodation	Establish peer support network, and share realities of leaving home early and homelessness.	Providers?	January 2018	Contract Management meetings

Priority 2: Support and Accommodation Pathway

What will success look like?

The central access hub effectively gate keep referrals, and manages a waiting list.

Looked After children, Care Leavers and young people who need accommodation and/or support will be able to access it, including emergency accommodation.

A range of accommodation and support options are available and are tailored to the individual's needs. A flexible package of support is offered.

	Outcome	Action required	Lead	By When	How will it be measured?
	<p>Young people have a period of stabilisation whilst gaining independence skills prior to moving on into more independent settings. All young people will engage with volunteering, training, education or work like activities to enable them to reach their optimal potential.</p> <p>The health of young people will improve.</p> <p>All LAC young people will have their accommodation options reviewed as part of the pathway plan episodes. There will be clear accommodation pathways, that will be reviewed from the age of 16 ½, to ensure that all young people are aware of their options and the support on offer.</p> <p>Supported accommodation services are fully utilised and the pathway is operating effectively</p>				

	Outcome	Action required	Lead	By When	How will it be measured?
1	Improved communication, and reduction in administrative time associated with managing referrals	Utilise existing NCC IT systems to share waiting list, A1 assessments, and other key information	Service Manager Homelessness	October 2016	Providers able to access and use One Space
2	Joint Working Protocol remains up to date, relevant and any issues are quickly resolved	Review Joint Working Protocol at least annually and following any major changes to service	Service Manager Homelessness	Annually	Reviews will take place at Youth Homelessness Forum
3	Supported Accommodation Panel operates effectively, and access into services is transparent and based on application of the scoring system	Review the effectiveness of Supported Accommodation Allocation Panel and make any necessary changes	Service Manager Homelessness	March 2017	Panel member discussion
4	Sufficient emergency accommodation exists which prevents the need for more costly spot purchased arrangements	Analyse data regarding use of emergency accommodation and establish sufficiency	Service Manager Homelessness	March 2017	Referrals monitoring
5	Providers meet minimum quality standards	Inspect services annually to assess the quality of service provision	Service Manager	Annually	QAF report
6	Robust contract management processes exist and feedback is offered to the provider	Conduct an annual Contract Monitoring visit and prepare contract review report	Service Manager	Annually	Contract review report

	Outcome	Action required	Lead	By When	How will it be measured?
7	Services are fully utilised, and are appropriate to the needs of young people	Review demand for services and capacity, and consider the best approach to supporting young parents requiring a core service	Service Manager	March 2017	Performance workbooks and provider discussion
8	Providers are paid for 'Journeys of Support'	Transition to new payment system for 'journeys of support'	Service Manager	October 2016	New payment system operational
9	Sufficient emergency accommodation exists which prevents the need for more costly spot purchased arrangements or use of B&B for Care Leavers	Explore possibilities of utilising additional emergency accommodation with Districts and Boroughs for Care Leavers	Service Manager/ Leaving Care	January 2017	Referrals monitoring
10	Impact of policy change known and risks highlighted and mitigated	Assess the impact of the proposed Policy change to cap the HB for Supported Accommodation to LHA rates to take effect in April 2018 and try to influence decision makers	Service Manager	April 2018	
11	Young people transition to adult mental health or learning disability services effectively	Close the gaps between Children's and Adult's services for vulnerable young adults requiring more intensive or specialist support or an ongoing service post 22 years.	Service Manager/ Vic Marshall	April 2018	Panel discussion

Priority 3: Move On/ Longer term housing options

What will success look like?

A range of safe, decent, and affordable housing options will be available within both the private and social sector. Both shared and self-contained options will be utilised. Young people will begin to understand that self-contained accommodation may not be a financially viable option.

Supported Accommodation providers will have strong relationships with the Local Housing Authority and landlords in the private rented sector and will successfully support young people to move on when they are ready to do so.

Floating/tenancy support is provided to all young people moving on from Supported Accommodation, and a drop in service is available if required.

The young person will maintain their tenancy for at least 12 months after they have moved on from Supported Accommodation.

	Outcome	Action required	Lead	By When	How will it be measured?
1	Young people successfully manage their tenancy after they have moved on from Supported Accommodation	Analyse data from the Provider regarding tenancy sustainment at 6 and 12 months, and establish what is working well to drive improvements in the sector	Service Manager	Annually	Provider report
2	A range of move on options are available for young people	Share best practice around successful move on and building relationships with landlords at Provider meetings	Service Manager	March 2017	Performance monitoring
3	A range of move on options are available for young people	Research successful models of shared housing and identify how this can be replicated in Nottinghamshire	Service Manager	October 2018	Report
4	Impact of policy change known and risks highlighted and mitigated where possible	Assess the impact of Welfare Reform/seek further clarification regarding exceptions to : <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Universal Credit • Removal of entitlement to Housing element of UC for 18-21 year olds 	Service Manager	Ongoing	
5	Young people understand their options for move on, and recognise that self-contained accommodation is not an affordable option	Provide Welfare Reform briefings for Social Workers and raise awareness of other settled accommodation options		March 2017	Briefings circulated
6	Young people understand their options for move on, and recognise that self-contained accommodation is not always affordable	Establish system for managing young people's expectations of settled accommodation e.g. self-contained, local authority, wi-fi, affordability, isolation issues	Combined approach NCC and Providers	September 2017	Panel discussions
7	Young people move on into shared accommodation	Match young people that are suitable to live together in shared accommodation and promote this as an option	Providers	Ongoing	Performance report

	Outcome	Action required	Lead	By When	How will it be measured?
8	A range of suitable housing options are available to young people on low incomes	Use the youth Homelessness Forum to advocate for young people in terms of housing allocation policies and housing strategies	Service Manager	Ongoing	Participation at Homeless Inter-agency meetings
9	Local connections are retained or made and as a result move on into local authority accommodation is possible	Use the Youth Homelessness Forum and Joint Working Protocol to seek agreement for young people in supported accommodation to gain a local connection to the District/Borough they are living in after a 6 month stay in the service, or alternatively retain their local connection to their previous District/Borough	Service Manager	October 2016	Updated Joint Working Protocol