



Appendix A

**SERVICE LEVEL AGREEMENT BETWEEN CHILDREN'S SERVICES AND  
HOUSING FOR THE PLACEMENT OF YOUNG PEOPLE AT RISK OF  
HOMELESSNESS AND CARE LEAVERS IN SUPPORTED HOUSING/SEMI-  
INDEPENDENT LIVING**

Updated November 2020

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## 1. PURPOSE OF SERVICE LEVEL OF AGREEMENT

- 1.1 This service level agreement is between H&F Children's Services and the Economy department (Placement and Assessment Team for Homeless Singles, PATHS) and outlines which accommodation-based support services, also referred to as semi-independent living services, will be available for Care Leavers and Young People at Risk of Homelessness (YPAR).
- 1.2 The agreement has been drafted in view of recent changes to the set-up and organisation of services, including the recent analysis which shows an ongoing level of voids in the YPAR schemes, the Supporting People budget disaggregation with associated funding and commissioning responsibility transferring to Children's Services.

## 2. SERVICE OBJECTIVES AND CONFIGURATION

- 2.1 The primary objectives of the services discussed within this agreement are to:
- Prevent homelessness of people aged 16-24 years.
  - Prevent vulnerable 16 and 17-year olds entering the care system.
  - Enable vulnerable young people to develop the skills and resilience to be independent in adulthood.
  - Increase the number of young people in employment, training, or education.
  - Ensure the Council fulfils statutory obligations in relation to the Children's Act 1989 and the Housing Act 1996
  - Ensure all young people's accommodation services are provided to a consistent, high-quality standard and enable young people to develop the skills, aspirations and motivation to move to independence and social inclusion;
  - Minimise evictions, reduce voids, abandonments and placement breakdowns;
- 2.2 The table below outlines the current configuration of accommodation services for young people across H&F:

Property Address	Provider	Units	Support Level	Client group	Funding Source
1-3 Masbro Road	Centrepoint	12	High	Care leavers	CHS placements <sup>1</sup>
15 Weltje Road	Centrepoint	7	High	Care leavers	CHS placements
10 Avonmore Road	Centrepoint	7	High	Care leavers	CHS placements
208 Hammersmith Grove	Centrepoint	6	Medium	Care leavers	CHS placements
16-18 Thornfield Road	Centrepoint	7	Medium	Care leavers	CHS placements
64 Hetley Road	Centrepoint	8	Medium	Care leavers	CHS placements

<sup>1</sup> Children's services placements budget

78-86 Percy Road	Centrepoint	8	Medium	Care leavers	CHS placements
108 Shepherds Bush Road	Centrepoint	7	Low	Care leavers	CHS placements
13-21 Down Place	Centrepoint	9	Low	Care leavers	CHS placements
1A Shepherds Bush Road	Centrepoint	9	Low	Care leavers	CHS placements
Buffy House 12 Sinclair Road	Centrepoint	12	High	YPAR	SP budget <sup>2</sup>
47-49 Woodstock Grove	Centrepoint	13	Medium	Transition to care leavers 01/12/20 with flexible, mixed use arrangement thereafter	SP budget
5 Fielding Road	St. Christopher's Fellowship	10	High	YPAR	SP budget

2.3 All services provide short term accommodation (normally up to a maximum of 2 years) to young people aged between 16 and 25 years. The provision of accommodation is unregistered and not subject to a national inspection regime, Children's services have a separate but related protocol in relation to the use of unregulated semi-independent living provision.

### 3. REFERRAL PROCESSES

3.1 Currently, care leavers and looked after children are referred to semi-independent living services from both the Children's services fortnightly allocations panel and the Children's Services Placement Team. Young people at risk of homelessness are referred to supported housing from the Placement and Assessment Team for Homeless Singles (PATHS). There are no changes proposed to this referral mechanism.

3.2 Once looked after children or care leavers are placed into accommodation as part of their care plan, the move-on responsibility, monitoring and all other duties related to this cohort rest with the allocated social work team in Children's services. The associated statutory duties that apply are the Children's Act 1989 and the Children and Families Act 2014. There are no changes proposed to this referral mechanism.

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<sup>2</sup> Supporting People Budget

- 3.3 Where a homeless young person aged 18 or over is placed, or aged 16 or 17 and having been placed in the assessment centre and having been assessed as not a child in need or requiring ongoing social care involvement, but at risk of homelessness, then move-on responsibility, monitoring and all other duties related to the placement rest with the PATHS team. The associated duties that apply are the Housing Act 1996 and the Homelessness Reduction Act 2017 following a children's social care vulnerability assessment for 16/17 year olds only.
- 3.4 There are no changes to the management and oversight function for each department and the relevant cohort of young people as set out throughout section 3.

#### **4. ACTIVITY ANALYSIS**

- 4.1 A recent needs analysis has taken place for the existing YPAR services using quarterly performance returns. Key themes emerging from this analysis show that a significant number of young people are known to Police, experience mental health problems and or are at risk of exploitation.
- 4.2 Voids analysis over the previous 3 full calendar years indicates an ongoing level of voids across the services of approximately six empty rooms throughout this period. Two of the current bed spaces within one of the YPAR schemes are also allocated and funded by Children's services specifically for care leavers.

#### **5. FUTURE CONFIGURATION ARRANGEMENTS**

- 5.1 All services referred to in this SLA will require recommissioning over the next 2 years. It is proposed that a competitive procurement exercise takes place for all current YPAR schemes early in 2021, and that the main Centrepoint care leaver service is re-procured towards the end of 2021.
- 5.2 Procurement of services will be carried out using the semi-independent living dynamic purchasing system led by Hammersmith & Fulham Council and managed by the Commissioning Alliance. Updated needs analysis will be needed on each of the two cohorts to inform service specifications, including options such as mental health support in care leaver schemes and changes to support levels in care leavers schemes.
- 5.3 Fielding Road and Buffy House will be recommissioned as a high support 22-bed supported housing service, primarily for YPAR with Fielding Road remaining as the initial assessment centre for 16/17 years requiring accommodation under sections 17 or 20 of the Children's Act whilst vulnerability child in need (CIN) assessments take place. This assessment determines whether or not the young person progresses to receive LAC status. If the child does not continue to receive formal LAC status, the placement reverts to accommodation provided under Part VII of the Housing Act 1996 and no further involvement from Children's Social Care is required as detailed at 3.3.
- 5.4 Woodstock Grove will be recommissioned as a medium to high 13-bed support service primarily for care leavers but with provision to also place young people at risk of homelessness if necessary. As YPAR transition out of this service voids will begin to be filled by care leavers considered suitable commencing from December 2020.

- 5.5 It is recommended that up to a maximum of 5 units at this 13-bed scheme could be used for the YPAR cohort and the remainder of units are utilised for care leavers. However, this arrangement should be reviewed regularly, and voids filled on a demand led basis so as not to incur void periods.
- 5.6 At present, if all YPAR services are full, a YPAR cannot be referred to a care leaver service, even where there is a void. Similarly, if all care leaver services are full, children's services cannot make use of any voids in the YPAR services. This can lead to an inefficient use of resources and it is anticipated that using Woodstock Grove in this way will lead to a more efficient use of resources. Anticipated benefits across both Children's Services and the Economy include:
- Reduction in use of emergency placements in B&B and other forms of unsuitable temporary accommodation;
  - A more efficient and effective use of resources and getting maximum value for money from contracts;
  - Reduction in voids;
  - More accommodation options for young people who are hard to place;
  - Reduction in evictions and failed placements;
  - Greater consistency across commissioned services;
- 5.7 There are risks to a full merger of the care leaver and young people at risk pathway into services. Therefore, Woodstock Grove is the only mixed-use scheme.

## **6. APPLICATION OF SERVICE LEVEL AGREEMENT IN RELATION TO USE OF WOODSTOCK GROVE**

- 6.1 Where PATHS have assessed that there are no suitable voids in the YPAR services for a young person who require accommodation, over the standard allocation of Fielding Road, Buffy House and Woodstock Grove (x5) the relevant PATHS officer will make a formal enquiry to the [Children's Services Placements Manager/Children's Services Commissioning Lead] regarding any suitable voids or forthcoming voids at Woodstock Grove.
- 6.2 It is also recommended that the relevant PATHS referral officer routinely attends the Children's Services fortnightly allocations meeting to discuss forthcoming referrals and voids for Woodstock Grove, it is proposed that this is covered under a separate agenda item.
- 6.3 Should a suitable void be available, the PATHS manager must make a formal request to use the void, in the agreed format, to the [Children's Services Placements Manager/Children's Services Commissioning Lead].
- 6.4 Following such request, the [Children's Services Placements Manager/Children's Services Commissioning Lead] must notify the PATHS Manager of their decision in writing. Preferably, the decision should be notified immediately and not later than within 24 hours of the request. The required proforma to be used.
- 6.5 If the placement is approved, PATHS must complete a referral form and forward to the relevant service provider. The service provider will carry out an

assessment in line with their agreed procedures and inform PATHS and children's services of the outcome.

6.6 This protocol will be introduced initially on a trail/pilot basis for 12 months. During the pilot period, the Children's Services Contract Manager, The PATHS referral officer / manager and the [Children's Services Placements Manager/Children's Services Commissioning Lead] will meet quarterly to review arrangements, taking into account referral information and demand from both cohorts. At the end of the 12 month pilot period, the reviewing officers will make a recommendation regarding the future use of the protocol.

