

**SERVICE SPECIFICATION**

**FOR**

**FRAMEWORK FOR THE  
PROVISION OF SUPPORTED  
HOUSING FOR YOUNG PEOPLE**

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## 1. Brief Summary of Service

The Provider will provide accommodation and/or support for young people aged 16 to 25, including the following groups:

- Children in care, including unaccompanied asylum-seeking children (UASC)
- Care leavers
- Young people with complex needs and other support needs
- Young people who are parents and their children

The Service is to be provided in the Dorset Council area.

The Provider shall offer either their own accommodation or accommodation belonging to another owner, providing the property meets this service specification for quality and location, and there is assurance that it will be available for the duration of the contract.

## 2. Background and Context

In Dorset we are building a new model of working with our partners to deliver improved outcomes for children, young people and families which we call Thrive. Details can be found at

[Children, Young People and Families' Plan 2023 to 2033 - Dorset Council](#)

At the heart of this model is the voice of the young person. Dorset Council wishes to create services which are restorative and which deliver real impact on the lives the young people, by engaging with and staying alongside young people.

The Council has a duty to accommodate all homeless 16 and 17 year olds and care leavers under the following legislation:

- The Children Act 1989
- The Children Leaving Care Act 2000
- Children and Social Work Act 2017
- Housing Act 1996
- Homeless (Priority Need) Order 2002)

Dorset Council has a joint protocol between Children's and Housing services which details how the Council will assess and meet the needs of young people aged 16 and 17 who are in housing need.

Children in care and vulnerable young people have difficulty finding appropriate accommodation and support to prepare for independence and move into adulthood. Care leavers have poor outcomes compared with their peers (National Audit Office, [Care leavers' transitions to adulthood](#), 2015). We are committed to improving outcomes for Children in care, vulnerable young people and care leavers, preparing them for adulthood and independent living. We wish to improve the sufficiency of supply of high-quality supported housing in Dorset through commissioning a range of provision from a number of providers. Each Provider, working closely with the Council and multiagency partners, shall commit to supporting young people through difficulties and maintain that support, without giving up, even if delivery becomes challenging.

Her Majesty's Government will implement a registration and quality standards regime for this type of accommodation and support when used for 16 and 17 year-olds. Providers who deliver services to 16 and 17 year olds shall comply with all current and new standards. The Provider delivering care shall comply with the law and seek to register their provision with the appropriate regulator –

OFSTED (Office for Standards in Education, Children's Services and Skills) or the Care Quality Commission.

The Council's aims and values are:

- To provide young people with security and stability for as long as it's needed
- To provide skilled and confident support which works alongside young people and develops positive relationships and role modelling, enables them to develop their skills and self reliance, fosters ambition and aspiration, and embeds them as members of a local community.
- Commission the right placement, at the right location and right time
- Achieve best value for money for these services
- Offer a greater range of choice and level of support to meet the requirements for young people with more complex needs

### 3. Lots

The Framework will have the following lots:

**Lot 1 High support accommodation**

For young people aged 16-17 and those aged 18-25 identified as having high support needs. Support will normally include between 7-10 hours per week per young person, provided on a flexible basis according to need. Time-limited additional support, including floating support, may be provided.

**Children in care, including unaccompanied asylum seeking children**

These young people would be moving from foster care or residential care in a planned way as they prepare for independence. Exceptions might be unaccompanied asylum seeking children who are placed as part of the National Transfer Scheme, or 16/17 year old homeless young people who have been accommodated by the Council

**Care leavers**

Young people who have been looked after by a local authority for a period of 13 weeks, or periods amounting in total to 13 weeks, which began after his/her 14<sup>th</sup> birthday and ended after his/her 16<sup>th</sup> birthday.

**Young people with complex needs**

The cohort would include young people who have a mental health condition, or young people stepping down from a children's home. It would also include 16-17 year olds who are leaving secure accommodation or being released from a custodial sentence or who are awaiting court and likely to have a custodial sentence. It might also suit young people who have been repeatedly evicted from other shared / semi-independent provision, or who have been victim to or are at risk of Child Exploitation.

**Young Parents**

Those who require supported accommodation with their child to promote their welfare and the welfare of their child/ren.

<b>Lot 2</b>	<b>Accommodation with support for young people aged 18-25</b>	<b>Care Leavers</b>
	Support will normally include between 5-7 hours per week per young person, provided on a flexible basis according to need.	Young people who have been looked after by the Council for a period of 13 weeks, or periods amounting in total to 13 weeks, which began after his/her 14 <sup>th</sup> birthday and ended after his/her 16 <sup>th</sup> birthday.
		<b>Young people with support needs</b>
		The cohort would include young people who have a mental health condition; young people moving on from a children's home or foster care; young people who are leaving secure accommodation or being released from a custodial sentence or who are awaiting court and likely to have a custodial sentence. It might also include young people who have been victim to or are at risk of exploitation.
		<b>Young Parents</b>
		Those who require supported accommodation with their child to promote their welfare and the welfare of their child/ren.
<b>Lot 3</b>	<b>Emergency accommodation</b>	<b>High support</b>
		Short term (between 2 to 6 weeks) accommodation with support as per Lot 1 available at short notice (within 24 hours) for 18 – 25 year olds with a priority for Care Leavers. This accommodation offer will have a focus on working with young people whose previous tenancies have not been sustainable within either Lot 1 or 2 provision, and therefore must focus on providing stability and readiness to move on.

#### 4. Call-Off Award Criteria

The Council shall award a Call-Off Contract for an individual placement, or Block Contract, by way of direct award, based on the following criteria per Lot and on the terms laid down in the Framework Agreement.

In respect of individual placement the following criteria shall be applied:

- A Provider meeting the requirements of the indicative Supported Accommodation Needs Analysis in Appendix 1
- Provider's suitability to meet an individual young person's needs
- Price (best value)

In respect of call-Off Block Contracts the following criteria shall be applied:

- A Provider meeting the requirements of the indicative Supported Accommodation Needs Analysis in Appendix 1
- Provider's suitability to meet an individual young person's needs and service needs of location, capacity, service provision
- Provider's available capacity that will enable for all places within a single setting to be directly awarded by the Council, i.e., full capacity purchased by the Council
- Price (best value)

## 5. Recommendations from Young People

The Council, as part of the consultation, asked young people about their priorities for the services. The Dorset Young Inspectors gave the following recommendations which the Provider is required to take account of in the service provision:

1. Invest more in the property itself e.g., doors, windows, repairs, decorations, computers and Wi-Fi.
2. When commissioning supported accommodation consider transport, location, communal spaces and size of bedrooms available.
3. Invest in training flats where young people can try living on their own independently for a short period of time.
4. Where the location is inaccessible, invest in a community transport scheme
5. Pay carers more to recruit more carers who will give young people better and more support.

Recommendations 1 – 5 were the Young Inspectors' top priorities. Recommendations 6-14 are not prioritised.

6. Ensure young people's feedback is included in contract monitoring.
7. Make sure there is a welcome and exit pack for new tenants that is easy to understand and designed by young people.
8. Make sure information about health, safety, complaints, activities are always clearly visible.
9. Continue to invest in staff development and ask young people to be involved in their recruitment and appraisals.
10. Consult young people with regards to the rules for the property.
11. Think about how staff communicate with young people and how young people communicate with staff to make this simple and frequent.
12. Have "staff exchanges" to share ideas and best practice between projects.
13. Invest in training rooms for young people where they can learn life skills.
14. Make sure that information about being in care is accessible online.

## 6. Specifications

Services in Lot 1 shall comply with any system of regulation and registration introduced by Her Majesty's Government and this shall be at no additional cost to the Council.

The standards and indicators below shall ensure that services operate within the relevant legislation and good practice, including that referred to in section 2 of this specification.

### 6.1 Purpose and intent

The Provider shall refer to the specification and appendices to inform:

- the level of support the setting/service provides;
- the young people's need that the setting/service is equipped to accommodate; and
- how it meets their needs

## **6.2 Quality of accommodation**

The Provider shall refer to the specification and appendices to inform:

- the standard and arrangements for the living space in which young people are accommodated, and the furnishings and fittings expected;
- the services and facilities made available in the setting;
- the state of repair of a setting, and health and safety requirements, for example, gas and fire safety checks and other regulatory requirements;
- a plan with clear lines of responsibility and accountability for maintenance and upkeep of the setting;
- security and safety of settings; and
- the provision of physical support for young people with disabilities.

This requirement also applies to floating support providers who are partnered with or hosted by general needs Providers of accommodation.

## **6.3 Support**

The Provider shall support young people to:

- access education, employment and training;
- maintain positive relationships and facilitate the provision of any extra support they receive from lead/named professionals;
- access other local services they need, e.g. local GPs, dentists and mental health services;
- move towards independence and ensure that they have continued access to and support from services; and
- access advocacy services

The Provider shall demonstrate an awareness of local multi-agency arrangements for supporting young people and preventing harm and detail how they shall participate in these arrangements.

## **6.4 Protection of children and young people**

The Provider shall set out their arrangements for the protection of young people from safeguarding and health and safety risks.

There shall be a workforce plan which will set clear expectations on the employment, recruitment and retention of staff, managers and supervisors of provision, including:

- a requirement for every person involved in delivering any form of service to young people having undertaken and maintain an enhanced DBS (Disclosure and Barring Service) check;
- all managers and supervisors of services to have undertaken a 'fit and proper persons' assessment;
- the management and staffing structure, (including any staff commissioned to provide health and education), the experience and qualifications of staff currently working within the staffing structure and any further training required for those staff;
- the processes and agreed timescales for staff to complete induction, probation and any core training (such as safeguarding, health and safety qualifications);
- the process for managing and improving poor performance; and

- the process and timescales for supervision of practice and keeping appropriate records for staff.

### 6.5 Person centred decommissioning

Should the Provider need to decommission a service, then they will work in partnership with Dorset Council on an individual service user basis to make sure that the individual's needs are met on a timeline appropriate for the individual.

## 7. Services to be provided

The services shall comprise of a range of accommodation and support options for vulnerable young people within the Dorset Council area. This could include, but is not limited to:

- buildings based supported accommodation with staff on site
- supported lodgings within the homes of trained hosts
- flexible outreach support to support young people in general needs housing
- services to prevent homelessness and eviction

The Council is particularly interested in models of support which mobilise peers and/or community assets.

### Approach

The Provider shall work in ways which are consistent with the Dorset Thrive approach. This requires the Provider to be committed to:

- Strengths based approaches which focus on the whole person – not “issues” or deficits.
- Relationship based practice – the effectiveness of any support will be measured by the quality of relationships and engagement demonstrated by support staff – not by the hours of support provided – and by their stickability.
- Restorative practice – where young people exhibit behaviour which causes harm or distress to others the Council expects to see this addressed within a restorative framework which reduces harm and allows repair to take place. The Council does not expect to see punitive practice in this range of provision.
- Multi-agency and community-based approaches – the Provider shall work closely with other agencies and community organisations to enable young people to thrive in the place where they live.

## 8. Processes, guidance and regulations, policies and procedures, data protection and information sharing

### 8a. Guidance and regulations

In addition to the requirements set out in this specification, the Provider must follow any relevant legislation and guidance in the provision of this service. It is the responsibility of the Provider to be aware of all relevant legislation and guidance and subsequent amendments and to ensure compliance, to include the following:

- [Children Act 1989](#) (as amended), guidance and regulations [Volume 2 Care Planning, Placement and Case Review](#) and [Volume 3 Transition to Adulthood](#)
- [Children Leaving Care Act 2000](#), and regulations and Guidance relating to the Act



- Regulation 27 and Schedule 6, [Care Planning, Placement and Case Review Regulations 2010](#)
- [Housing Act 1996](#) (as amended 2002)
- [Homeless \(Priority Need\) Order](#) 2002.
- [Protections from evictions act](#) 1977 (as amended)

## 8b. Policies and Procedures

The Provider must deliver a safe and legal service and have in place the relevant policies and procedures that enable this. In particular, the Provider must operate within the Dorset and/or pan-Dorset policies and procedures for safeguarding adults and children and demonstrate that they have processes in place to keep up to date with changes on policy, and to ensure that staff receive this information and have access to regular refresher training.

- Safeguarding children and vulnerable adults
- Safer recruitment
- Health and Safety
- Complaints and allegations management
- Whistle Blowing
- Lone Working
- Equalities
- Service User Involvement
- Business Continuity
- Exit Strategy

The Provider must comply with the Council's Accommodation Sustainment and Pre-eviction protocol for 16-25 year olds (Appendix 5). The Provider shall ensure that young people are aware of the range of policies which may impact upon their care and be given access to them should they want to review them. All documents shall be available in print and electronic formats. 'Easyread' versions shall be made freely available.

The service shall operate a drugs policy that ensures they are operating within the law, but that acknowledges that some young people will be using controlled drugs. This policy to enable young people to disclose problematic drug use without automatic exclusion, and with confidence that a supportive environment, helping them to reduce the harm and control their use of substances, will be provided.

## 9. Referral process/individual placement call off

The Provider shall make available a clear point of contact into the service. This shall include a named contact for referrals, and a telephone line staffed during normal office hours, at a minimum, but with clear out-of-hours processes for emergencies and business continuity.

Referrals will be co-ordinated by the Children's Services Brokerage Team or by Dorset Council Housing teams. The Provider shall respond to all referrals within 24 hours.

The Provider shall receive referrals using a standard referral form, which will outline needs of the young people and the outcomes to be achieved.

A monthly Council-led housing panel will take place and Providers will be required to comply with panel decisions. The Provider shall attend this panel each month and is required to supply to the Council a named contact for attendance at the panel; updating the Council on any subsequent change. Waiting lists, void management and notice to quit will be discussed with the Council at this panel.

## 10. Performance management and contract monitoring

The Council is committed to outcomes based accountability and will seek to measure the success of interventions by the positive impact on the lives of young people. The Provider shall evidence outcomes for young people using the Outcomes document, in Appendix 2 The Provider shall have clear processes for:

- identifying need – both from referral information and conversations with the young person
- developing plans with the young person for meeting that need and helping the young person realise their ambitions; plans need to be SMART (Specific, Measureable, Achievable, Realistic, Timely)
- celebrating milestones and achievements

The Provider shall submit monitoring data on outputs quarterly to the Council which will be discussed during contract review meetings/visits. The Provider shall consolidate this data into an annual report. This will include, but is not limited to the table below:

	Data requirement	Reporting frequency
1.	Number of referrals for each lot / no. Accepted / no. Declined / reasoning	Quarterly
2.	Length of stay with service for each young person	Quarterly
3.	Engagement with employment, education and training for each young person	Quarterly
4.	Initial destinations of those leaving service, reasons for leaving and whether this was planned or unplanned	Quarterly
5.	Number of complaints received from young people or from professionals on behalf of young people	Quarterly
6.	Safeguarding concerns received and addressed – including missing episodes and contextual safeguarding concerns	Quarterly
7.	Data and reports on Young People in Placement; to include  Narrative updates on outcomes, physical and mental health, safety and an overall RAG rating of the placement.	Quarterly

Other data may be requested from the Provider either as part of contract monitoring or in response to specific incidents or concerns. The Provider shall respond to additional requests in a timely manner.

<b>10a Annual monitoring</b>
<p>The Provider shall complete the following annually:</p> <p>Safeguarding self-audit;</p> <p>Annual property audit;</p> <p>Insurance renewals;</p> <p>Audited accounts;</p> <p>Complaints log and actions taken;</p> <p>Service user survey;</p> <p>Locality risk assessment with updates;</p> <p>A report to reflect development and areas for improvement based on experience of placements for the past year, service user feedback and purchaser feedback.</p> <p>Annual reports shall be submitted to the Council on the anniversary of the contract.</p>
<b>10b Monitoring of young people's plans</b>
<p>The Provider shall communicate (at least monthly) with the named professional for any young person.</p>
<b>10c Monitoring where there are concerns about the Provider</b>
<p>The Council will:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Conduct enhanced monitoring: visits of homes / units</li> <li>• Check single central records;</li> <li>• Sample files (staff and young people).</li> </ul>

## Appendix 1 – Needs Analysis

### Needs Analysis

#### Demographics:

##### General information

Dorset Council is a unitary authority and is responsible for the provision of public services to a population of 379,800 (2020 total population). The State of Dorset 2022 was published in May 2022 and provides a good overview of the local demographic and context for Dorset's residents.

There are significant variations in population density within the county (which is to be expected in a rural environment), unsurprisingly, the towns and the area around the conurbations contain the highest density of population and this is also true of the 0-19 population.

Over half of Dorset is covered by the Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty designation. However, the Dorset rural idyll can conceal hidden deprivation: there are pockets of deprivation, mostly in urban areas (mainly Weymouth and Portland). There is also some rural deprivation due to isolation and difficulty accessing housing, transport and essential services.

The 0-19 population in Dorset is 74,305, and the 20-24 population is 14,637. The number of children aged between 5 and 15 is expected to decrease by about 2,200 by between 2019 and 2029. There are around 450 Children in Care, and nearly a quarter are aged 16 and over, at 112 in June 2022.

##### Vulnerable groups

Nationally, one in ten children and young people need support or treatment for mental health problems.

Between 35% and 40% of Dorset Children in Care are supported with an Education, Health and Care Plan and 11% of Care Leavers have a disability.

9% of children and young people in Dorset are from a black and ethnic minority community, and over 33 different first languages are represented.

11% of care leavers are from Black, Asian, Mixed or other minority ethnic group.

	2013-14	2014-15	2015-16	2016-17	2017-18	2018-19	2019-20	2020-21
No of vulnerable young people aged 16-25 accommodated through Housing Services	142	172	140	163	234	189	163	279

## Current usage:

### Children in supported accommodation

1. Between 45% and 55% of new care entries are children aged over 10, and up to half of these are aged over 16.
2. On 12/08/2022 there were 43 young people aged 16-17 placed in semi-independent supported accommodation.
3. Some of these young people are Children in Care, some are Care Leavers, some are placed as Children in Need and some have no Children's Services involvement and were placed by Housing.
4. 18 of these 43 are in intensive support placements with 10+ hours of support per week.
5. These are all Children in Care and in future it is likely that those with intensive support needs will require registered placements rather than supported accommodation.
6. 13 young people from the 18 high support placements are Unaccompanied Asylum Seeking Children (UASC)
7. 25 of the 43 are in low support placements with 5-7 hours support per week.
8. 6 of the 25 young people in low support placements are Unaccompanied Asylum Seeking Children (UASC)
9. A small number of 16-17 year olds are placed in supported lodgings; currently there is only 1.

### Care leavers

1. There are currently approximately between 260 and 280 young adults aged 18-25 who are care leavers; approximately 51% identify as male, 48% female, and an inferred 1% of other orientation including transgender.
2. Approximately half of 17 and 18 year old Care Leavers live in semi-independent or supported lodging accommodation, compared with less than 20% of 19 and 20 year olds.
3. Many care leavers live independently in rented accommodation or lodgings without on-site or floating support.
4. 92 live in accommodation funded by Dorset Council.
5. Snapshot of main accommodation types:

Semi-independent transitional accommodation	46
Staying Put with previous foster carer	15
Supported Lodgings	19
Foyers & similar supported accommodation	5
B&B	3
Emergency accommodation	4

## Where are we now:

- We have sufficient capacity to meet the needs of 16-17 year-old young people, however need to develop the local offer for Unaccompanied Asylum Seeking Children.
- Concerns about support levels for the most vulnerable.
- Concerns about how whole system working and pathways into settled accommodation.

- Concern that some young people go into supported accommodation that could go into independent accommodation with floating support.

### **What will change:**

- Fewer 16-17 year-old young people placed in supported housing.
- More UASC placed with families.
- Increase in Staying Put arrangements.
- Providers accommodating 16-17 year old young people will need to be able to meet regulatory standards.
- Some providers will need to consider registration as children's home.
- Supported accommodation providers need to develop their offer to help young people into independent accommodation.
- Supported accommodation providers need to develop clear and SMART (Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Realistic, Timely) plans that set out specific services to help young people to develop independent living skills.
- Providers need to work proactively to promote tenancy sustainment.
- Providers need to be able to evidence employment and education outcomes and achievements for young people and adults.

### **What do we think we need:**

While we had expected to see a decline in the numbers of children in care placed in supported housing, this has not materialised to the extent expected, as there has been an increasing number of young people who have come into care after entering the UK unaccompanied seeking asylum.

### **Current Funding:**

£1.5 million

### **Future modelling:**

Dorset Council's plan, outlined in its sufficiency strategy, is to reduce the number of children in care as indicated in the table below.

Year	2021-22	2022-23	2023-24
Target no. of CiC at year end	450	420	390

As we currently have a large number of teenagers in our care, we know that the number of care leavers will increase over the next 2 years, but we can expect it to decrease after that if the age profile of children coming into care changes and we can reduce the number of older teenagers entering care.

There are increasing referrals for Unaccompanied Asylum Seeking Children through the national transfer system that may lead to an increase or maintenance of the 450 Children in Care figure.

The number of care leavers receiving support after the age of 21 decreases with around 27% remaining open to the service.

We need to be better able to support children and young people who have multiple and complex needs, are at risk of criminal and sexual exploitation, have mental health issues, have additional communication needs, and who are disabled.

We expect an increase in young adults requiring accommodation with support due to their mental health needs, specifically at the point of discharge from tier 4 services.

## **OUTCOMES FRAMEWORK**

**For**

**POST 16**

**SEMI-INDEPENDENT ACCOMMODATION**

**Issued: 05/08/2022**

**Version No: 1.0**



## Outcomes

Working to achieve these outcomes for young people ensure that services operate within the framework of the relevant legislation and good practice, including that referred to in section one of the specification.

The Service Provider shall ensure that Outcomes 1 to 5 are evidenced on an individual service user basis and at a service level.

### Contents

1. Stay safe
2. Enjoying and Achieving
3. Stay Healthy
4. Making a Positive Contribution
5. Achieve economic wellbeing

## Outcome 1: Staying Safe

### **Young People stay safe and feel safe from harm.**

Young People will be supported and advised in their decision making for all aspects of their relationships including but not limited to: -

- Online safety
- Social networks
- Wider community
- CSE (Child Sexual Exploitation)
- Grooming
- Family relationships

The Service Provider will have robust procedures in place, compliant with local safeguarding partnership policies, for safeguarding children and vulnerable adults, responding to suspicion or evidence (including “whistle-blowing”) of abuse to ensure the safety and protection of Young People and visitors. The Service provider will immediately notify the responsible local authority of any safeguarding concern relating to young people residing in or known to their service.

## Outcome 2: Enjoying and Achieving

### **Young People develop independent living skills and access, and participate in a range of activities in their community.**

The Service Provider has a clear documented approach to empowering Young People and supporting their independence and this is clear through linked policies and procedures, including recruitment and staff management practice. Staff are skilled in encouraging Young People to develop self-sufficiency. Support plans must be person centred.

Young People will be offered support to gain or maintain independent living skills such as: food preparation, cooking, washing clothes, ironing, cleaning their room, form filling, welfare benefits, reporting maintenance issues, finances, skills development and confidence building.

Young People are actively engaged in meaningful daily occupation in the form of paid employment, voluntary employment, education including training and apprenticeships and various leisure and recreational activities in and outside the service, which suit their needs, preferences, aspirations, lifestyle, and choices.

The Service Provider promotes and encourages Young People to express and access relevant religious, cultural and lifestyle groups to meet their needs.

### **Outcome 3: Being Healthy**

**Young People are healthy, physically and mentally; they receive appropriate health and social care, have access to community services and specialist input to meet their assessed needs and maximise their health, wellbeing and independence.**

Service user's health and wellbeing is promoted and maintained, and access is provided in a timely manner to relevant health and social care services to meet the assessed individual need. Professionals involved with the service user will be informed of any significant changes to the service user's health and wellbeing and a review of the young person's support plan must be triggered.

The Service Provider supports:

- Service users to register and access dental and medical professionals.
- Service users to be involved with other professionals such as sexual health, opticians and to meet health needs on a regular basis.
- Service users to attend regular health checks including medical reviews of their health and medication and this is captured within their support plan.

Where applicable, Young People are supported to access telecare and telehealth aids to assist them maximise their independence.

### **Outcome 4: Make a Positive Contribution**

**Young People experience and develop autonomy and self-efficacy on a day-to-day basis and contribute to their home and community.**

The Service Provider ensures there is a strong emphasis on social inclusion within the local and wider community, including Young People participating in local and wider community affairs. This approach is strategically addressed by staff practice.

Young People are clear about their rights and responsibilities whilst being supported by the Service Provider. Young People will be consulted on significant changes concerning the service delivery and their views will be considered.

The Service Provider aims to promote the service user's self-confidence, self-esteem, and ability to make choices and maximises their potential to live as independently as possible.

## Outcome 5: Achieve Economic Wellbeing

**Young People's economic wellbeing is safeguarded. Provider accounting procedures must support service users' achievement of economic wellbeing.**

Young People will be supported to apply for and maintain welfare benefits, including housing benefit. The Service Provider will support Young People to understand the impact of any change to income or employment status may have on their welfare benefit status to prevent arrears and money management issues.

The Service Provider shall have clear income management procedures that offer a fair and consistent approach when dealing with Young People with arrears. The Service Provider will maintain accurate financial records, including a transparent rent/licence/occupation charge and service charge breakdown.

Young People will be informed and given clear guidance about repaying any arrears, possibly assisted by means of a repayment plan. The Service Provider will support service users in the event of arrears occurring and take preventative measures to minimise significant arrears. This must be addressed in the service user support plan and risk management plan to support the Young People to maintain their accommodation, as per the Local Authority's Prevention of Evictions Protocol or local relevant guidance.

The service user will retain control of their own money however be supported with budgeting, saving money and reducing debt where applicable.

The Service Provider will ensure that all staff understand how the service user's right to autonomy, choice, independence and fulfilment is maintained.

## Appendix 3 – Quality Standards for Unregulated Supported Housing

### Quality Standards for Unregulated Supported Housing

**Leadership and management** – this standard should enable a young person to have confidence in the organisation providing their accommodation and support, and the people responsible for running it.

- The provider must ensure that a clear statement (the Purpose and Intent Statement – see Appendix A) of the core aims, purpose and function of the service is produced, updated, reviewed regularly and is accessible to all interested parties.
- Each individual service must have an allocated person who is accountable for all elements of service delivery (see Appendix B).
- This Accountable Person must have undertaken a fit and proper persons assessment.

**Protection** – this standard should ensure that young people feel safe and their needs are met.

#### Staff

- Every individual involved in delivering any part of the service to young people has undertaken an enhanced DBS check.
- Staff understand the roles and responsibilities assigned to them in relation to protecting young people.
- Staff are aware of policies and procedures and their practice both safeguards young people and children and promotes understanding of abuse.
- Staff have the necessary skills to identify and act upon signs that a young person is at risk of abuse, neglect, exploitation, or any other risk that may cause a young person harm, and act to reduce this risk as effectively as possible.
- Staff work collaboratively with young people to ensure they understand how to keep safe and offer guidance and support on how to minimise any potential risks.
- Staff carrying out needs and risk assessments and negotiating support and risk management plans are competent to do so.

#### Delivery

- The provider shall fully adopt and implement the Pan-Dorset Safeguarding Children Partnership (PDSCP) policies and procedures, these can be found in <http://pandorsetscb.proceduresonline.com/contents.html>. The provider shall follow and fully implement the prescribed procedures in relation to safer recruitment in the PDSCP i.e. [http://pandorsetscb.proceduresonline.com/g\\_safe\\_rec.html](http://pandorsetscb.proceduresonline.com/g_safe_rec.html) and all other child safeguarding procedures as they have been or may be amended from time to time. The provider shall evidence compliance with these procedures.
- The provider must evidence that a robust staff recruitment, training and supervision programme is in place which meets best practice requirements and ensures all reasonable steps are taken to ensure the suitability and competency of staff. The staff recruitment and pre-employment check process must comply with all best practice safeguarding processes. These are detailed in the Pan Dorset Multi-Agency Safeguarding Policy and Procedures for adults <https://www.dorsetcouncil.gov.uk/care-and-support-for-adults/dorset-safeguarding-adults-board/dorset-safeguarding-adults-board.aspx>.
- There are processes and agreed timescales for staff to complete induction, probation, and any core training, such as safeguarding, health and safety qualifications.

- There is a process for managing and improving poor performance.
- There is a process and timescales for supervision and monitoring of practice, including details of how this information is recorded, in line with any other applicable legislation.
- Young people and any inherent risks are assessed on a consistent and comprehensive basis prior to a service being offered, or very shortly afterwards as appropriate to the needs of the client group.
- Needs/risk assessments and support/risk management plans are reviewed regularly on a consistent and systematic basis.
- Needs and risk assessment, support planning and reviews involve young people and take full account of their views, preferences and aspirations.

#### Provision

- A 'Location Assessment' (see Appendix C) will be undertaken, with focus on any potential safeguarding concerns, and the accessibility of local services. The service will have a co-ordinated approach to assessing and managing security, health and safety risks that potentially affect all young people, staff and the wider community.
- The service has a safeguarding policy which is reviewed regularly.
- There is a health and safety policy which has been reviewed in the last three years and is in accordance with current legislation.
- There is a formal process for notification of serious event (Appendix D).

**Accommodation** – a standard that ensures the quality and suitability of the built environment is safe and secure.

In addition to the minimum housing quality standards, this standard requires the Accountable Person to ensure:

- That each young person is provided with a bedroom or self-contained area which is lockable and equipped to meet the individual's needs and lifestyle.
- There is space within each bedroom or self-contained area for a young person to house a reasonable number of personal possessions.
- A comfortable space is provided, either for shared or private use, in line with the service's statement of purpose.
- That, where a young person does not have access to basic essentials such as bedding, personal hygiene products and eating utensils, the provider will support the young person to obtain these.
- That each young person is provided a written agreement, in an accessible format which outlines their rights, the terms and conditions of the service and how they can complain.
- A good standard of décor and furnishings are maintained throughout the service, and within individual and shared living spaces.
- The building complies with all relevant health and safety legislation and fire regulations.
- That appropriate security checks and measures are in place to maintain a safe service for young people.
- That appropriate arrangements are in place for young people to access help in a crisis or emergency, 24 hours a day.
- A written statement is available which sets out the agreed protocol with regard to any incidents of criminal or violent behaviour at the service. This statement must ensure the safeguarding and protection of all young people and staff but must also be measured and proportionate, so as not to cause unnecessary criminalisation.

- An adequate level of insurance is provided for the service, its staff and the young people using the service.
- The accommodation, and all accessible areas of the service must be designed, furnished, and maintained to remove avoidable hazards which could pose a health and safety risk.

**Support** – a standard focused on ensuring that support is provided for every young person, they have a say in what this is, and that there is a plan in place for delivering it.

#### Individual support plans

- Individual support plans are created from initial referral information, consultation with the young person and take account of other existing plans for the young person.
- Individual support plans cover transition to independent living, education or training, and employment.
- A formal plan is in place to support a young person to move on when ready for more independent living and that, where appropriate, an adequate level of support is available to the young person to assist with the next stage of transition
- All young people have individual outcomes-focused support plans that are SMART (Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Realistic and Timely).
- Risk management plans address the needs and risks identified by the assessment process.

#### Delivery

- An information pack containing relevant information about the service is available for young people accommodated at the service. This information must be produced in user friendly formats which also address cultural and disability needs.
- Young people are encouraged and enabled to take a lead role in the support they receive.
- The service is conducted in a way which is compliant with equality legislation and promotes the rights of young people.
- The service engages with other organisations and community services to encourage and enable young people to obtain a range of services such as advocacy organisations and training providers.
- Young people are enabled to maintain appropriate and safe relationships with family and friends.
- Young people are able to participate in and influence how the service operates. Young people are consulted on all significant proposals which may affect their service and their views taken into account.
- Fair access, fair exit, diversity and inclusion are embedded within the culture of the service and there is demonstrable promotion and implementation of the policies.
- There is a written complaints policy and procedure that has been reviewed in the last three years and this is used as a tool for service development.
- The assessment and allocations processes have been reviewed in the last three years and ensure fair access to the service.
- Young people wanting to access a service can make an informed decision before accepting an offer and know about the range of services and support available to meet their needs.
- Young people are encouraged to consider ways in which they can participate in the wider community.

## **Appendix A – The Purpose and Intent Statement**

The Purpose and Intent Statement must include:

- A Statement of the overall aims of the service, and the objectives to be achieved with regard to the young people being accommodated there. This must include details such as the age range, gender and numbers of young people the accommodation is to be provided for, whether the service is to provide any specialist accommodation or support, and the range of needs which the project intends to meet. This statement must cover how providers intend to manage the different risks young people in the setting present to each other and ensure that matching issues are considered in the admission of young people.
- A statement of the facilities and services to be provided for the young people accommodated at the service.
- The name and address of the provider
- The name of the Accountable Person and their relevant qualifications and experience.
- The number, relevant qualifications and experience of staff working at the service.
- The arrangements for the supervision, training and development of staff, and the organisational structure of the service.
- The arrangements in place for the management of referral and admission to the service including for emergency admissions i.e. whether these are offered, and how these are managed.
- Details of the provider's ethos, the outcomes it seeks to achieve, and its approach to achieving them.
- The arrangements in place to protect and promote the mental and physical health needs of young people at the service.
- The arrangements in place to support the development of skills which will enable the young person's transition towards independence.
- The arrangements in place to promote the young person's involvement in education, training or employment.
- The arrangements in place to ensure a young person is fully aware of their entitlements.
- A description of the accommodation offered by the service, including how the accommodation meets the accommodation standard.
- Details of who to contact if a person has a complaint about the service and how that person can access the relevant complaints policy.

## **Appendix B – Accountable Person**

Each individual service must have an allocated person who is accountable for all elements of service delivery.

This allocated person must:

- Enable, inspire and lead a culture in relation to the service which:
  - o helps young people aspire to fulfil their potential
  - o helps young people build and develop the skills required to live independently; and
  - o promotes their welfare.
- Lead and manage the service in a way that is consistent with the approach and ethos, and delivers the outcomes set out in the statement of purpose.
- Ensure that all young people in the service are fully aware of their entitlements and, where possible are encouraged to access them.
- Ensure that staff work as a team where appropriate.
- Ensure that staff have the experience, qualifications, and skills to meet the needs of each young person.
- Ensure that the service has sufficient staff to support and accommodate young people safely and effectively.
- Demonstrate that practice is informed and improved by considering and acting on:
  - o Feedback on the experiences of young people, including complaints received

- o Feedback on the impact that the service has had on a young person's life, especially on how well-prepared they feel when moving on, and
- o Use of monitoring and review systems to make continuous improvements in the quality of support provided by the service.

### **Appendix C – Location assessments**

- The protection standard requires the provider to ensure that a location assessment has been completed and has identified the local area as a suitable location for the type of service provided. The location assessment must take into account:
  - o Publicly available local data, such as local crime rates and the availability of amenities and services.
  - o Consultation with appropriate local services such as the police, local authorities children's and housing services, clinical commissioning groups and other relevant parties.
- This information must be used to produce a full risk assessment which also includes any relevant risk mitigation strategies to reduce potential risks.

### **Appendix D - Notification of a serious event**

If a young person dies, the provider must without delay notify:

- Dorset Council;
- Each other relevant person.

If there is a referral of a person working in the home pursuant to section 35 (Regulated activity providers: duty to refer) of the Safeguarding Vulnerable Groups Act 2006(1), the responsible person must without delay notify:

- Dorset Council;
- Each other relevant person.

The provider must notify Dorset Council and each other relevant person without delay if:

- a young person is involved in or subject to or is suspected of being involved in or subject to, sexual or criminal exploitation.
- an incident requiring police involvement occurs in relation to a young person which the responsible person considers to be serious.
- there is an allegation of abuse against the service or a person working there.

A notification made:

- Must include details of—
  - o The matter,
  - o The other persons, bodies or organisations (if any) who or which have been notified; and
  - o Any actions taken by the responsible person as a result of the matter;
- Must be made or confirmed in writing.



## **Appendix 4 – Minimum Accommodation Standards for Housing**

The information below is intended to provide a guide to some of the legislative standards and guidance to those providing accommodation. The list of issues is not exhaustive, and it is recommended that further advice is sought in individual circumstances to ensure compliance with legislative standards. It must also be noted that legislative standards are a statutory minimum.

Dorset Council provides advice for landlords renting in Dorset which can be found [here](#).

### **Decent Home Standard**

All residential accommodation must meet the [decent homes standard](#) and as a minimum meet the requirements of Sections 9A – 11 Landlord and Tenant Act.

A decent home is defined as a home that:

- meets the current statutory minimum standard for housing (i.e. the property has no category 1 hazards as defined by the Housing Health and Safety Rating system (HHSRS)
- It is in a reasonable state of repair
- It has reasonably modern facilities and services
- It provides a reasonable degree of thermal comfort

Guidance on what constitutes a decent Home [is here](#).

### **Housing Health and Safety Rating System (HHSRS)**

Homes must be free from a number of hazards prescribed in the Housing Act 2004 which are assessed using the Housing Health and Safety Rating System. More details can be [found here](#).

### **Damp and mould**

Damp with associated mould is a common problem in accommodation. Dorset Council has issued guidance on preventing and managing damp and mould which can be found [here](#).

### **Accommodation provided by a Registered Provider (Housing Association)**

The [Homes Standard](#) will also apply when accommodation is provided by a Registered Provider. The Home Standard has been written by and is a requirement for the Regulator of Social Housing.

### **Access to and from buildings**

The accommodation must provide a safe and healthy environment for any potential occupier or visitor and must be accessible meeting building regulations [Approved Document M, vol 1 and 2](#)).

Accommodation must be:

- be designed, constructed, and maintained with non-hazardous materials
- be free from both unnecessary and avoidable hazards

- provide adequate protection from all potential hazards prevailing in the local environment

## **Gas Safety**

Landlords must meet The Gas Safety (Installation and Use) Regulations 1998. Gas Safety checks are required to be carried out by the landlord every 12 months by a Gas Safety registered engineer on all gas appliances and flues the landlord provides. They must keep a record of the safety checks for a minimum of 2 years and issue a copy of the most recent check to:

- existing tenants with 28 days of the check
- new tenants before they move in

## **Energy performance standards**

All properties must have a valid energy performance certificate (EPC) no older than 10 years old. No property should be let if it is below band 'E' unless an appropriate exemption has been made. In any case providers must work toward a minimum target of band 'C' of the Energy Performance Certificate.

## **Electrical Installation Conditions**

Providers must ensure an electrical installation condition report (EICR) has been carried out ensuring remedial works or further investigative works are carried out to remedy any 'C1, C2, or FI' classifications. More information [here](#)

## **Furniture and Furnishings**

Furniture and furnishings provided must comply with the regulations and be fire safe (Furniture and Furnishings) (Fire) (Safety) Regulations 1988.

## **Smoke and Carbon Monoxide**

A smoke alarm must be fitted to each storey of the premises on which there is a room used wholly or partly as living accommodation. A carbon monoxide alarm is fitted in any room of the premises which is used wholly or partly as living accommodation and contains a solid fuel burning combustion appliance.

Checks are made by or on behalf of the provider to ensure that each prescribed alarm is in proper working order on the day the tenancy begins.

## **Privacy**

The accommodation must provide residents with privacy and dignity, including private (as appropriate) space for dressing, showers, toileting and accessible space for disabled users. Storage must also be provided to keep resident's personal belongings safe.

## **Signage**

In communal settings it is recommended that clear signage is erected where needed.

## **Grounds**

Grounds must be maintained in all seasons to a reasonable standard.

### **Standards that apply to Houses in Multiple Occupation (HMOs)**

If a property is used to house two or more people not from the same household (i.e., not related), it is likely that the premises meets the definition of an HMO. A property may need to be licenced by the Council's Housing Standards team if five or more people reside there and some facilities are shared. (e.g. toilets, bathrooms, kitchen or lounge).

Whether a property is licensable or not it must meet the Dorset Council [minimum amenity standards](#). Homes must also be free from a number of hazards prescribed in the Housing Act 2004 which are assessed using the Housing Health and Safety Rating System [here](#)

HMO standards cover the following:

- Fire precautionary facilities
- Heating
- Washing facilities
- Amenity standard requirement for shared house type HMO
- Amenity standard requirement for bedsit type HMO
- Kitchens

### **Sleeping accommodation room sizes in HMOs**

Any room to be used as sleeping accommodation is only to be permitted to be occupied in accordance with the criteria stated in the following table.

#### **Sleeping accommodation criteria**

<b>Sleeping Accommodation Room Size</b>	<b>Permitted Occupancy</b>
<4.64m <sup>2</sup>	No occupancy permitted
4.65m <sup>2</sup> to 6.51m <sup>2</sup>	1 person age under 10
6.52m <sup>2</sup> to 10.21m <sup>2</sup>	1 person
>10.22m <sup>2</sup>	1 or 2 person

**NB** Any of the room where the ceiling height is less than 1.5 metres is not taken into account in determining the floor arear for the purpose of the above.

### **Waste disposal arrangements**

The licence holder of an HMO is required to comply with any scheme provided by the local authority, and which relates to the storage and disposal of household waste pending collection.

### **Locally adopted standards in Dorset**

The following standards are adopted by the council for the purpose of ensuring HMO's are suitable to be used as living accommodation.

These standards include:

- Natural lighting

- Artificial lighting
- Ventilation
- Water supply
- Refuse storage
- Floor areas for lettings
- Bedsit type HMO's
- One-person units of living accommodation room sizes
- Two-person units of living accommodation room sizes
- Shared house type HMO's room sizes
- General management

For full details of standards see [here](#)

**Main residency:**

These standards apply when accommodation, including HMOs, are the tenants'/occupiers only or main residence and used solely or mainly to house them.

## 1. Introduction

- a. This protocol applies to all providers of supported accommodation for Dorset's 16-25 year olds and other landlords that agreed to sign up to the processes outlined within this protocol.

## 2. Purpose

- 2.1 There is a common interest between Dorset Council and its partners providing accommodation to reduce homelessness in young people aged 16-25 years old.
- 2.2 Homeless reduction requires a focus and commitment to Tenancy / licence sustainment ultimately minimising evictions. The consequences of an eviction are not only damaging for the young person but also impact the local authority, including increased demand on social care, housing services and often associated high costs of providing temporary accommodation. There is a significant staff burden associated with evicting a tenant for the landlord and potential administrative, void and legal costs that can also be associated with evictions.
- 2.3 To minimise the number of young people who, for a variety of reasons, do not successfully manage their Tenancy / licence: To ensure that the Young Person is given the opportunity to understand how their behaviours are impacting on their licence and be given the chance to reflect and change to avoid putting their Tenancy / licence at risk. To enable the young person to modify their behaviour and for providers to understand and re-assess the support needs of the young person to prevent evictions from occurring and assist the Young Person to understand the impact of their behaviour and obligations under their Tenancy / licence/ agreement.

## 3. Aims

The key aims of this protocol are to:

- Ensure safe and stable accommodation for all to promote continuity of relationships
- Reduce the stress, disruption and trauma to young people

- Reduce homelessness and increase planned transitions for young people aged 16-25 years old
- Minimise the use of emergency B&B placements and the financial strain associated
- Minimise the negative impact on providers in relation to costs, resources and time
- Minimise the spend of the public purse and allow better use of local authority time to be spent
- Lessen the risk of long-term voids for providers

## 4. Duty to Refer – Homelessness Reduction Act 2017

Responsibilities under the above act came into force on 1st October 2018 which extended the duties to specified public authorities – including children's services (Section 213B) to make local authority housing departments aware of those threatened with homelessness or who are homeless.

Although supported accommodation providers are not statutorily obliged to refer Dorset Council have introduced the Commitment to Refer to utilise the referral mechanism and extend this to our accommodation providers to adopt.

The referral can be accessed on:

<https://www.dorsetcouncil.gov.uk/housing/homelessness/duty-to-refer-for-public-authorities>

Referral form to be emailed to: [dutytorefer@dorsetcouncil.gov.uk](mailto:dutytorefer@dorsetcouncil.gov.uk)

## 5. Corporate Parents

In order to thrive, children and young people have key needs that good parents generally meet. These corporate parenting principles set out what Dorset Council must consider when exercising their functions towards looked after children and young people. We expect all professionals and providers to follow the same principles when working with our children and young people:

- Act in the best interests, and promote the physical and mental health and wellbeing, of those children and young people
- Encourage children and young people to express their views, wishes and feelings
- Take into account children and young people's views, wishes and feelings

- Help those children and young people to gain access to, and make the best use of, services provided by the local authority and relevant partners
- Promote high aspirations and seek to secure the best outcomes for those children and young people
- For children and young people to be safe and for stability in their home lives, relationships and education or work
- Prepare children and young people for adulthood and independent living

## 6. Tenancy / licence Sustainment and Pre-eviction protocol procedures

Dorset Council, the accommodation provider and partner agencies will work in collaboration to ensure the young person is provided with sufficient support to prevent eviction, or, the young person abandoning a property.

### 6.1 Pre-Tenancy / licence support assessment and planning:

Prior to the start of a Tenancy / licence a comprehensive assessment needs to be conducted focusing upon Tenancy / licence sustainment, identifying support needs, existing support networks and risks to Tenancy / licence. The assessment will be conducted with the young person and relevant professionals to achieve a holistic understanding.

Topics to explore include but is not limited to :

- Previous accommodation experiences
- Understanding specific behaviours
- Disabilities
- Drug or alcohol use and misuse
- Previous non-engagement with services
- History of homelessness or rough sleeping
- Experience of violence
- Difficult managing money and debt issues
- Offending history

The holistic assessment will enable a realistic and enabling plan to be produced and agreed. The plan will be reviewed in line with each providers protocols.

## 6.2 Stage one:

### Tenancy / licence sustainment breaches and concerns:

The protocol is based on the principle that accommodation providers and professionals will work with young people to support them to maintain their tenancies wherever possible, viewing problematic behaviour as a potential support need rather than simply a breach of rules.

Any breach of or concerns about the sustainment of the tenancy / licence agreement needs to be shared with the relevant worker involved at the earliest point.

Relevant workers can include:

- Social worker- children's or adult's services
  - Personal Advisor- leaving care team
  - Housing officer
  - Placing team e.g. Brokerage or Housing
  - Youth Offending Service / Probation
- A joint meeting with the young person, provider and professional must be arranged to take place within 3 working days of the breach or 10 working days of the concerns.
- Mediation between young person and provider must take place to encourage honesty, openness and positive relationships.
- Young person's voice and reasoning for behaviour must to be listened to so that the context can be understood. This should also help with overcoming the problem, finding a resolution and planning support.
- Outline that any repeated breaches will result in a formal written warning
- The meeting needs to be documented using proforma and any notes and actions need to be shared with all present within 3 working days



- Consider commitment/duty to refer (to housing)

**Dorset Councils proforma for recording meetings can be found [here](#) and must be used if you do not have your own preferred formal recording template.**

## **Stage two:**

### **Pre-eviction:**

Further breaches of the licence agreement must be addressed by way of both a written warning and further meeting within 3 days to discuss with the relevant workers and young person.

Considerations must be given to:

- Agreeing on an acceptable behaviour contract
- Increasing support for the young person and / or provision
- Signposting for further specialist advice i.e. Debt or financial support
- Encouragement to raise any concerns the young person may have with their placement
- Multi-agency planning with other involved agencies such as Probation or Youth Offending Service
- The meeting needs to be documented using proforma and any notes and actions need to be shared with all present within 3 working days
- Looking for an alternate, more suitable placement to enable planned placement transition
- Consider commitment/duty to refer (to housing)

*Written warnings need to be copied to the lead professional supporting the young person.*

## 6.4 Pre-eviction: Stage three

Where there are continual breaches and little success with previous attempts to resolve issues, any Notice to Quit issued needs to have had pre-approval within the providers organisation by senior management and a discussion with the lead professional around how to best serve this to the young person. The NTQ, where possible, needs to have a reasonable notice i.e. 28 days.

**A duty to refer needs to be completed by the nominated professional from Dorset Council to Housing services if not already complete, once NTQ issued.**

**Additionally, if there is risk of harm to self or others and a young person needs to leave on the same a phone call to the housing team needs to be completed.**

## 7. Move On and Evictions

- 7.1 Wherever possible, moving on and eviction must be carried out in a controlled and planned manner using person centred and multi-agency approaches to ensure the young person and provider receive support from professionals and ensuring alternate arrangements are made.
- 7.2 There are rare occasions where risk of harm leads to immediate evictions. These must be mitigated where possible and internal alternatives within the projects need to be explored.
- 7.3 All immediate evictions/serious incidents require a learning log to be completed and shared with the professionals supporting that young person. This ensures that the opportunity for learning and development can take place.
- 7.4 All signatories to this protocol agree to:
  - Work collaboratively to increase Tenancy / licence sustainment and reduce evictions across Dorset

- Effectively share information that supports and keeps the young person safe whilst adhering to GDPR
- Resolve disputes in a professional manner collaboratively with a full insight into the other professionals' limits and duties.
- Bring together providers / professionals to look at cases that have proved problematic and look at trends and learning.

**This document can be provided in large print, braille, audio or other non-written format, and in a variety of languages on request.**