**Cheshire West and Chester Market Engagement Opportunity**

**Delivery of a support service within established Group Supported Accommodation for Care leavers in Chester and Winsford**

**Background**

Cheshire West and Chester Council is seeking to continue supporting Children in Care aged 16-17 years to access Group Supported Accommodation where they wish to live semi-independently. This aims to help support children in care to gain confidence in managing their own home, whilst still having support staff nearby to help them with budget management, day to day tasks and independent behaviours including work, education or training with the goal of the young person being confident to manage their own tenancy when they turn 18.

In 2022 Cheshire West and Chester Council released the [Children in Care and Care Leaver Accommodation Strategy 2022-25.](https://ia802203.us.archive.org/26/items/publici_cast_cheshirewestandchester_630737/files/Appendix_A_-_CIC_and_CL_Accomodation_Strategy_2022-2025.pdf) Within the strategy nine priorities were outlined regarding children and in care and care leavers following an in depth look at our local picture and the national picture for this group of young people. Further engagement was made with the [Children and in Care Council](https://cicc.org.uk/) to gain their understanding of our responsibility to them and also what was important to them. Following these nine key priorities were drawn up, number 4 was regarding care leaver group accommodation specifically. We promised to build upon our current Group Supported Accommodation offer; developing an increased offer of supported group living accommodation with relevant support for independence, local to community support and transport links. The accommodation offer referred to is available in Chester city centre, and as of October 2023 this accommodation offer was expanded to Winsford.

**Description Of Opportunity**

Cheshire West and Chester Council are seeking to commission a Group Supported Accommodation service providing support to our young people who are getting ready to leave care within designated accommodation across two areas of Cheshire West and Chester. This service is an outcome focussed offer for 16/17 years leaving care for supported group living accommodation with relevant support for independence, access to local community support and transport links to achieve sustainable independent living skills to enhance fully independent living post 18.

We currently commission sleep in support across two sites within the Borough this offer is due to be recommissioned on the 1st of April 2025.

The Council currently offer five supported accommodation flats and one staff flat offering 24/7 support to the tenants located in Chester city centre and the same offer in Winsford this is the Group Supported Accommodation option for care leavers aged 16/17. The accommodation is supported by a commissioned service with staff available on each site 24/7 for the young people. The service has a staff flat to utilise for staff as an office, and whilst offering sleep in support at both sites. The young people residing at either site will receive that onsite support from support staff based at that site.

All referrals for this service will come through the councils Access to Resources team Management of the service will also include participation in a monthly panel with Children’s Social Care and quarterly contract meetings. All the flats are fully furnished by Cheshire West and Chester Council and maintenance of the flats and communal areas are supported by the young people, commissioned service, housing and children’s social care.

The support to the young people includes, development of household skills, maintaining health and hygiene, developing social skill, and reducing risk taking behaviours and work towards the young people managing their own tenancy.

The care leavers will be supported to access employment and then to maintain employment. Develop financial independence and budget management skills including managing a bank account and accessing the right benefits. The care leaver will also be supported to access training or regular education and use the established links within the community they live in and access volunteering opportunities. The flats offer supported, furnished accommodation to care leavers aged 16/17 in preparation for their own tenancy at 18 years old. Children in care and care leavers have indicated they would need to be feel safe and secure with the right support available within the accommodation provided. The young people are matched via the Councils inhouse Access to Resources team and referred to the commissioned support service. The service will continue to work with the young person, our Supporting Independence Team and our commissioned Step Forward service to secure the best housing outcomes for the care leaver when they reach 18 years old. To support the development of our service, offer please take the time to share with us your knowledge and experience from similar services

**Next Steps**

We would like to engage with providers to discuss the above service and how it might best be delivered. Please submit your responses to the questions below by 30th of April via email to **Natalie.Vanden@cheshirewestandchester.gov.uk**

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| **Question 1-** What do we need to consider as part of our offer to ensure that the needs of the young people can be met and the best outcomes achieved. What challenges might there be? |
| **Question 2-** Based on the description above and your previous experience in this field what worked well in delivery of group supported accommodation and young persons support. Were there any challenges/things that you would change if you delivered this service in Cheshire West and Chester |
| **Question 3-** Are thereany difficulties that may be encountered by providers in delivering this service across two sites? |
| **Question 4** What outcomes do you think you could achieve with this service? Were there any unintended outcomes from your experience of previous delivery in this field that we should consider? |
| **Question 5-** please give examples, based on your previous experiences of any innovative ways of delivery this type of service and how this was developed and implemented. |
| **Question 6** – within supported accommodation have you delivered Emergency Bed provision to young people aged 16/17; if so was this included as part of the Group Supported Accommodation provision and what were your experiences in running this additional provision? |

Commissioners intend to hold an online market engagement session on the **19th and the 24th of June** 2024. This will give further details of the procurement process and of the commission following.

Following this Market Engagement and the online sessions noted above there will be a competitive tender process that will be advertised on the CHEST over the summer - dates will be published shortly.