

## Strategic Housing Partnership - Housing for Care Experienced Young People (CEYP)

Some of the recurring themes that came out of the session are outlined in the document below. However, the following quote resonated with each of the breakout groups:

***“CEYP need to feel confident that change will occur from events like this”.***

The feedback from the CEYP strategic housing partnership, highlights the critical areas where improvements are needed to support care-experienced young people in their transition to independent living. Emphasising consistency, accessible information, adequate financial and material support, and effective communication between agencies can significantly enhance their housing experiences and transitions and overall well-being.



### Visualisation of conversations



## Breakout Session Notes

### Care Experienced Young People (CEYP) Feedback – what's your housing experience?

*How can we?*

#### **Better enable our care leavers to live independently but with support.**

- Need to improve links with Independent Living Officers (ILOs) and Personal Advisors (PAs)
- Managing moves more effectively with a potential for directly letting social homes for care experienced young people.
- Improving the support fund for decoration, furniture and ensure basic essentials are provided in each home.
- Review Children Services approach to care experienced Mums (& Dads).
- Need to improve communication between housing providers and the care experienced service within the Local Authority.
- Work needs to be done to help prevent homelessness at 18+
  
- Need to be better prepared in housing issues – PAs potentially more involved in advance of Care Experienced 16<sup>th</sup> birthday.
- Don't view care experienced people at chronological age. Some people need more assistance than others at an earlier or later stage in life.
- Preparation should start sooner, ideally before 16<sup>th</sup> birthday (strive to thrive builds on solid foundations).
- Provide access to a 'handyman' service with swift response support with painting and decorating.
- Improving engagement with CEYP with regards to repairs scheduling. For example, some organisations ask tenants to be available over a 48-hour period for repairs etc. Removal of these barriers and become more flexible in-service delivery. For example, calling the tenant when 1 hour away from job.
- More flexible approaches in general – removing processes as much as possible for all CEYP.
- Recognition that CEYP personal advisors are very time limited. They would like time to support young people into their properties properly.
- Remove barriers to housing for Unaccompanied Asylum-Seeking Children (UASC). Finding a 'work-around' for those waiting for a decision from the Home Office.

#### **Experiences**

- Shower broken - took a long time to fix.
- Flooring very dirty (not ideal with a young baby)
- Boiler broken - with no one taking responsibility for repair.
- Different bulbs /light fittings
- ILO never came out or directly spoke to CEYP.



- In the PA experience some ILOs are changed and there is a lack of communication between Local Authority and housing provider regarding this.
- Positively, there are more established routes /connections between Care Experienced team and One Vision Housing.
- Good experience of Property Pool Plus (PPP)– easy to use.
- Reliant on evidence from police for managed moves, this can mean CYYP residing in temporary accommodation for too long.
- Sometimes a feeling of being abandoned at a critical point.
- Homelessness - leading to a loss of voice and autonomy.
  
- Feeling 'stuck' - living independently can be so overwhelming & you don't always feel able to live your life, get a job etc.

## Experiences of Accommodation

### Some of the discussed issues included:

- Location of properties not available in preferred areas
- Waiting time for a flat. Wait times for social housing are very long.
- PA Support. This can vary depending on PAs experience of housing & housing issues.
- Maintenance Issues and property upkeep
- Banding Issues
- Decorating Issues - No support
- Inappropriate housing area/ culture
- Lack of resettlement work
- Lack of furnishings



However, on the positive side the Housing Officer contacts are supportive.

### Potential solutions to these accommodation issues

- There could be more housing related support around a new tenancy & turning 18.
- Accommodation e.g. flats environments should be prepared in advance of move (ego painting/decorating).
- Better handover from care to independent living
- A more effective system in care experience in terms of staff/back up support for housing queries.
- A better transition process from care to independent living by providing new tenant an 'information pack' and related housing guidance.
- More financial support for CEYP.



- Clearer information regarding setting up homes budgeting such as bill payments.
- More choice around furnishings.
- Consistency across services with open communication channels.

### Further reflections

- A good/knowledgeable PA is very useful in the housing process.
- Illusion of 'choice' in the Property Pool does not match the reality.
- Is Property Pool the right tool in these particular circumstances?
- Priority Banding/Planning should be set across any borough.
- CEYP need to feel confident that change will occur from events like this.
- Feel like the current system is set up to make people expect failure.

### Experiences

- Turned 18 and moved in, wanted to stay in Southport but had a direct match in Bootle. Unaddressed concerns about moving but had no say in the outcome.
- Got into debt with water and had barriers to access money:
- Housing mentoring with other CEYP with lived experience is crucial.
- Consistency with PAs, Social workers and other housing staff is essential (but not the norm)
- Direct experience of care homes and foster care as a young person.
- No consistency with social workers.
- Delays in moving due to SW changes.
- Felt like there was a lack of support in this process.
- No trust fund access
- Sometimes inaccurate or wrong information provided.
- There were personal financial impacts of staying put.



## Potential solutions to these accommodation issues

- More engagement with PAs
- Consult approach to transitioning to adulthood.
- Need a multi-agency approach.
- Commissioned support service that works across all social housing providers.
- Better transition between SW/PA – For example working together for 12 months. This would help to improve communication.
- Promote lived experience support.
- Provide housing information and housing opportunities.

## To help CEYP flourish we need to provide:

- employment support/ career guidance
- Peer support/ mentoring

## Experiences

- Moving to the first tenancy from care is easy. There is help to make the move. The subsequent moves were much more challenging.
- Moving out of area and moving back to Sefton was very difficult.
- The language used around housing is very confusing and not straightforward. Different systems and processes use different terms.
- Experienced some issues with ASB (knives) in their first property and couldn't return there. Issues with the Police not accepting evidence provided by the Personal Advisor.
- Recent experience of moving from care into own property, but the experience has been fine. The property is welcoming when compared to where he was staying previously. Feels safe there.
- Gets help from friends about setting up bills etc.
  
- Getting evidence of NI number for PPP was challenging and adds unnecessary delays. Solution – could providers accept written evidence from PAs to start tenancy on licence agreement prior to full tenancy whilst evidence of NI is provided by gov/local authority?
  
- Sometimes feels like the PPP system doesn't want to rehouse care leavers. CEYP is in a Green Pastures property at the moment but would like to be rehoused with a social landlord.
  
- Some Housing Officers are good, but others are not person centered, when working with young people.



## Potential Solutions

- Trauma informed training could be rolled out to Housing Officers/Housing Providers
- Being better informed of 'paint pack' or other offers of support that care leavers are eligible for. A feeling that these are hidden. This type of support should be promoted more and offered rather than being directly sought.
- Could Universal Credit / Housing Benefits help to pay for service charges?
- Potentially there should be a protocol between landlords regarding care leavers.
- There are lots of opportunities for care leavers to progress to work through apprenticeships for example.
- Also, other opportunities for care leavers through the Council; e.g. upcoming placement with an events provider specifically for care leavers.
- Existing data and information should be utilized more effectively to help model future accommodation needs for care leavers. For example, Property Pool Plus data or Childrens Social Care data.
- Having a 'Sefton Housing' website for CEYP where user friendly information can be found. One place with information from all partners. The existing Web information is very disjointed.

