

London Borough of Richmond upon Thames

Young People's Housing Strategy & Teenage Parents' Housing Strategy 2008-2012



Albanian

Nese keni veshtersi per te kuptuar kete botim, ju lutemi ejani ne receptionin ne adresen e shenuar me poshte ku ne mund te organizojme perkthime nepermjet telefonit.

Arabic

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Bengali

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Farsi

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Gujurati

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Polish

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Punjabi

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Urdu

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Executive Summary

Background

There have been significant policy developments in the last 10 years to address homelessness. The Homelessness Act 2002 required local housing authorities to have a strategy to prevent homelessness and ensure accommodation and any necessary support will be available for people who are homeless or at risk of homelessness. This strategy placed a new emphasis on prevention with particular attention paid to young people. This was developed further in the 'Change for Children' agenda, which is focused on early identification and intervention for children and young people at risk and emphasises the need for all public and voluntary agencies to work together to achieve positive outcomes for this group. Changes in legislation and the strengthening of statutory categories such as the extensions to priority need categories (for 16-17 year olds and 18-20 care leavers) and the measures specified as part of a 'Youth Homelessness Strategy' by the Government has ensured that promoting positive outcomes for young people remains high on the agenda.

Key Priorities & Objectives

The key priorities and objectives of the Young People's Housing Strategy are:

Preventing youth homelessness

1. Prevent youth homelessness (where appropriate) through mediation and early intervention of advice and services for young people so there is a general expectation of such services
2. Investigate links between homelessness and overcrowding
3. Ensure service delivery reflects the requirements of the Common Assessment Framework (CAF) and is strategically and operationally aligned
4. Work with Targeted Youth Support Services to provide advice and information in schools and youth clubs
5. Respond appropriately to BME & LGBT Homelessness

Providing appropriate accommodation for young people experiencing homelessness

1. Develop a supported lodgings scheme or crash pad to provide accommodation, advice and mediation services for young people who can no longer stay in the family home
2. Increase the supply of emergency and temporary accommodation suitable for young people

3. Reduce all use of B&B accommodation (except in an emergency) and work with providers towards providing self contained B&B when it is used

4. Continue to make planned housing and support provision for care leavers to prevent homelessness (ensuring all care leavers aged 19 are living in suitable accommodation)

5. Ensure young people involved with the Youth Offending Team (YOT) and Adolescent Resource Team (ART) have access to suitable accommodation

6. Ensure there is a monitoring system in place for young people with physical disabilities and their housing needs

Providing a wider range of housing options and support for young people

1. Increase access to support services including floating support and supported housing to ensure the success of young people achieving independent living

2. Work in partnership with Connexions to reduce the amount of young homeless people and those in temporary housing who are NEET (not in education, employment or training)

3. Increase the involvement of young people in the design and delivery of homelessness services

The action plan at the end of this strategy will set out targets for 2008-2012 and the lead agencies, time scales and performance indicators for these priorities.

Priority 1: Prevention of youth homelessness

Achievements

- The Homelessness Forum supported the creation of the Richmond Youth Partnership (RYP) in 2005. The RYP provides youth services for young people in Richmond including the Youth Café Bus Project, The Detached Drug Project, Young Mothers Project and Off the Record Counselling Services (which includes a sexual health clinic).
- A Young Persons' Housing Officer is in post in the Housing Advice and Assessment Team, giving out advice and information to young people on housing and referring young people and their families to mediation services.
- Housing Services representatives attend the Achieve Economic Wellbeing Subgroup (part of the Children and Young People's Strategic Partnership) and ensure housing issues are fed into the Children and Young People's Plan (an assessment of services in Richmond for children and young people).
- The new Common Assessment Framework (CAF) for children also includes housing considerations when assessing unmet needs as part of the Every Child Matters programme.

Objectives

1. Prevent youth homelessness (where appropriate) through mediation and early intervention of advice and services for young people so there is a general expectation of such services.
2. Investigate links between homelessness and overcrowding.
3. Ensure service delivery reflects the requirements of the Common Assessment Framework (CAF).
4. Work with Targeted Youth Support Services to provide advice and information in schools and youth clubs.
5. Respond appropriately to BME and LGBT homelessness.

Actions

1. Evaluate and review the current mediation service used by the borough and ensure that all young people and their families receive this service to resolve family conflicts and reduce parental evictions.
2. Investigate links between homelessness and overcrowding, and link to overall overcrowding strategy. Monitor young people made homeless by overcrowding and take action in line with the overcrowding action plan in the borough's Homelessness Strategy (2008-12).
3. Ensure service delivery reflects the requirements of the CAF by

- Work in partnership with Children's Services to identify families and young people who require housing advice and assistance.
 - Work with Children's Services to ensure service providers are trained and knowledgeable in the delivery of the CAF.
 - Ensure young people with mild learning difficulties who do not qualify for Social Services support are referred through the CAF to wider provision to support their needs.
4. Work with targeted youth support services to develop and implement a programme of homelessness education and advice for use in schools and youth clubs.
 5. Ensure all housing forms record young homeless BME and LGBT to enable adequate monitoring to be carried out. If there is over-representation of these groups, develop appropriate strategies targeting resources to remedy this. Ensure adequate training and awareness for housing staff and providers on the issues and needs of these groups.

Priority 2: Providing appropriate accommodation for young people experiencing homelessness

Achievements

- A three bedroom hostel for 16-17 year old male homeless clients was completed in late 2007 and is being used as temporary accommodation, with one bed space used by the Youth Offending Team. The partners working on this scheme included SPEAR (the support provider), Richmond Housing Services and Richmond Youth Offending Team, who successfully worked in partnership to increase the provision of temporary accommodation for young men in the borough.

- The Rent Deposit scheme which was introduced in 2002, and is run jointly with SPEAR, has found tenancies for 20 households where at least one member was under 25 years of age, about 18% of the total. Out of the 53 households SPEAR is currently working with to secure private sector accommodation, 20 involve at least one person under 25, about 38% of the total.

Objectives

1. Develop a supported lodgings scheme/crash pad to provide accommodation, advice and mediation services for young people who can no longer stay in the family home.
2. Increase the supply of emergency and temporary accommodation suitable for young people.
3. Reduce all use of B&B accommodation (except in an emergency) and work with providers towards providing self contained B&B when it is used.
4. Continue to make planned housing and support provision for care leavers to prevent homelessness (ensuring all care leavers aged 19 are living in suitable accommodation).
5. Ensure young people involved with the Youth Offending Team and Adolescent Resource Team have access to suitable accommodation.
6. Ensure there is a monitoring system in place for young people with physical disabilities and their housing needs.

Actions

1. Explore potential for the development of a supported lodgings scheme/crash pad for 16-17 year old young homeless clients, possibly with a joint provider.
2. Evaluate the need for a four bedroom hostel for young women in the borough. Numbers of female acceptances outnumber those from males and there are an increasing number of young women being seen by the Young People's Housing Officer with additional support needs, who may benefit from living in a small, supported, single sex hostel.
3. Reduce the use of B&B accommodation for young people and by 2010 ensure no 16-17 year olds are placed here except in an emergency. As at March 2008 there are 19 young people in B&B, 18 of these are 16/17 year olds and one is 18 years old. The borough will be working with temporary accommodation providers to encourage the provision of more self contained units.
4. Review alternative provision of self contained supported units (currently being sourced in the private sector) which offer flexibility of location for young people leaving care. Also include a review of the need for supported accommodation for care leavers with high support needs.
5. Work with the Youth Offending Team and Adolescent Resource Team to ensure young people's accommodation needs are assessed and addressed and they are provided with suitable accommodation and support, in particular, ensure this is in place on release from prison/young offenders institution.

6. Set up appropriate systems in Housing Provisions to monitor the needs of young people with physical disabilities. Work with Residential Services to ensure the needs of young people with disabilities in the private sector are monitored.

Priority 3: Providing a wider range of housing options and support for young people

Achievements

- A supported housing project was set up in October 2007 for three young women with learning disabilities to share a house while receiving onsite support from a live in carer.
- Four units of self contained accommodation from an RSL in the borough housing people with learning difficulties (PLD), including young people was set up in April 2008. One unit will enable a carer to live nearby and provide support on a weekly basis to them and a further four other clients living in RSL properties close by.
- Four individual units of accommodation from an RSL have been acquired for care leavers, who receive floating support from a support provider to enable them to learn independent living skills and move on to sustain their own tenancies.

Objectives

1. Increase access to support services including floating support and supported housing to ensure the success of young people achieving independent living.

2. Work in partnership with Connexions to reduce the amount of young homeless people and those in temporary housing who are NEET (not in education, employment or training).

3. Increase the involvement of young people in the design and delivery of homelessness services.

Actions

1. Ensure the prompt delivery of a project for four young men and women with learning disabilities (of any age) being developed using four self contained units of accommodation with a local RSL.

2. Continue providing floating support services to young people placed in the private rented sector by the Rent Deposit scheme, to ensure all young people are assisted in adapting to independent living.

3. Housing staff to work in partnership with Connexions advisers to ensure all young homeless people are encouraged and empowered to participate in education, employment or training. This is to be done by

- Individual support pathways being agreed between Housing Services and Connexions, to ensure all young people receive adequate support from both services to do so.
- Implementing a monitoring system to track clients' progress.

4. Continue holding six monthly and yearly consultation sessions with young people to ensure their feedback on the service is incorporated in its future delivery.

5. Work with the Integrated Youth Officer to increase young people's participation in the design and delivery of homelessness services for young people.

Introduction

Overview

Many young people leave home to live independently, and do so with support, planning and preparation. Unfortunately, for a small but significant group, this may not be the case, and they leave home without this, the income, knowledge or experience needed to maintain an adequate home, and therefore find this move very difficult.

A Young People's Housing Strategy by the London Borough of Richmond was published in 2001 and 2004, and aimed to determine priorities, resources and partnerships to improve the housing opportunities for young people. It developed as a result of the Homelessness Act 2002 which required each local authority in England to carry out a review of homelessness and homelessness services in their area and to publish a homelessness strategy. This also provided an opportunity for local authorities to analyse their provision for young people in their area as part of the homelessness review and strategy process.

Since these strategies were published, the Government is increasingly raising the profile of children and young people in papers such as 'Every Child Matters' (2005), 'Youth Matters' (2005) and 'Transitions, Young Adults with Complex Needs' (2005). This strategy aims to raise local issues and consider how it can best

meet the needs of vulnerable 16-25 year olds at a critical stage in their lives.

The groups of young people this strategy will be addressing will be:

- 16-17 year old statutory single homeless
- 16-17 year old pregnant/teenage parents
- Young people leaving care
- Unaccompanied asylum seekers
- Young people with special needs i.e. learning and physical disabilities
- Young offenders and vulnerable young people requiring resettlement support

This young people's housing strategy aims to:

Prevent youth homelessness

1. Prevent youth homelessness (where appropriate) through mediation and early intervention of advice and services for young people so there is a general expectation of such services.
2. Investigate links between homelessness and overcrowding.
3. Ensure service delivery reflects the requirements of the Common Assessment Framework (CAF).
4. Work with Targeted Youth Support Services to provide advice and information in schools and youth clubs.
5. Respond appropriately to BME and LGBT youth homelessness.

Provide appropriate accommodation for young people experiencing homelessness

1. Develop a supported lodgings scheme/crash pad to provide accommodation, advice and mediation services for young people who can no longer stay in the family home.
2. Increase the supply of emergency and temporary accommodation suitable for young people.
3. Reduce all use of B&B accommodation (except in an emergency) working with providers towards providing self contained B&B where it is used.
4. Continue to make planned housing and support provision for care leavers to prevent homelessness (ensuring all care leavers aged 19 are living in suitable accommodation).
5. Ensure young people involved with the Youth Offending Team and Adolescent Resource Team have access to suitable accommodation.
6. Ensure a monitoring system is in place for young people with physical disabilities and their housing needs

Provide a wider range of housing options and support for young people

1. Increase access to support services including floating support and supported housing to ensure the success of young people achieving independent living.

2. Work in partnership with Connexions to reduce the amount of young homeless people and those in temporary housing who are NEET (not in education, employment or training).
3. Increase the involvement of young people in the design and delivery of homelessness services.

This strategy aims to promote joint working with all partners and other strategies to form an integrated approach towards dealing with youth homelessness for young people aged 16-24 years old living in Richmond.

Definitions

For the purposes of this strategy young people are defined as those aged 16-24 years old.

The Children Act (1989), Children Act (2004 Section 10) and Children (Leaving Care) Act 2000 sets out a statutory requirement for local authorities and their “relevant” partners to cooperate to improve children’s wellbeing. The Department for Communities & Local Government (CLG) and Department for Children, Schools and Families have developed a guide for ‘Joint working between Housing and Children’s Services: Preventing homelessness and tackling its effects on children and young people’ (2008). This guide identifies four groups of children and young people who are at particular risk of poor outcomes in the absence of effective joint working between housing and children’s services and their partners:

- 16 and 17 year olds who are homeless or at risk of homelessness

- Care leavers aged 18-21 (a Council also continues to retain the role of “Corporate parent” if the young person is in education or training over the age of 21)
- Children of families living in temporary accommodation
- Children of families who have been, or at risk of being, found intentionally homeless by a housing authority.

The guidance aims to achieve three things for children living with their families and young people:

- Prevent homelessness
- Minimise the negative impact of homelessness on their lives and life chances
- Make sure they receive the co-ordinated service and support they need to recover from the impact of homelessness and get their lives back on track, including maintaining or returning to their journey through learning or work

This strategy aims to set out priorities to ensure that vulnerable groups including 16/17 years olds and care leavers are not at risk. In addition, it will work with Children’s Services, through the Common Assessment Framework (CAF) to ensure effective joint working leads to better outcomes for children of families living in temporary accommodation or whose families are at risk of being found intentionally homeless by a housing authority.

National & Regional Policy Context

Background

There have been significant policy developments to address youth homelessness in recent years, most particularly the extension of priority need groups and a new emphasis on the prevention of homelessness.

The Homelessness Act 2002 required each local authority to carry out a review of homelessness in their area and to publish a homelessness strategy. Within this, Government also recognised the need to have a young people’s homelessness strategy taking into account preventative measures and the specific needs of young people which are significantly different from other groups. A further government strategy, ‘Settled Homes, Changing lives: A Strategy for Tackling Homelessness 2005-10’ also recognised that young people can become homeless for a wide range of complex reasons, and recommended effective joint working between housing and social care providers in the development of Children’s Trust arrangements. In accordance with the Children Act 2004 and within the ‘Change for Children - Every Child Matters’ agenda, tackling and preventing homelessness amongst young people and their families became a priority to ensure that young people were able to realise their potential.

Within homelessness strategies a new emphasis has been placed on prevention, paying explicit attention to young people. Statutory protection has also been strengthened with the extension of priority need categories (particularly 16 and 17 year olds and care leavers aged 18–20) under homelessness legislation, and together with measures specified as part of a Youth Homelessness Strategy, the

Government has ensured that promoting positive outcomes for young people remains high on the agenda.

Policy Context

There have been a number of Government initiatives that have had implications on providing appropriate services to meet the needs of vulnerable young people.

The Homelessness Act 2002 placed a duty on local authorities to review homelessness in their area and develop and implement a strategy for preventing homelessness. This Act also amended priority needs categories ensuring council's have a duty to house 16-17 year old homeless young people and 18-21 year old "relevant" care leavers. Since these changes, the numbers of 16-17 year old homeless young people housed by the London Borough of Richmond has increased and has required additional resources in terms of service provision to this group, with more specialised staff such as young people's officers and resettlement staff needed, and an alternative range of temporary accommodation considered to meet the varied needs of this group.

Particular emphasis was paid to young people leaving care in this act, strengthening the previous **Children's (Leaving Care) Act 2000** which had already imposed stronger duties on local authorities to assist care leavers until they reach the age of 21. **Care Matters (2007)** further sets out how the Government intends to transform outcomes for children in care by ensuring young people leaving care have planned access to a range of options to provide them with future accommodation and support.

Significantly, the Governments Every Child Matters programme (**DfES: Every Child Matters 2004**) set out five key outcomes in the Every Child Matters Framework:

- Be healthy
- Stay safe
- Enjoy and achieve
- Make a positive contribution
- Achieve economic wellbeing

This set out a programme for better integrated services to improve outcomes for children, young people and families. Under the achieve economic well-being outcome sits the aim that children and young people live in decent homes and sustainable communities, and therefore joint working between Housing and Children's Services is necessary to deliver on these outcomes. New protocols and referral pathways required under the Common Assessment Framework (CAF) ensure effective joint working leads to better outcomes for children of families living in temporary accommodation or whose families are at risk of being found intentionally homeless by a housing authority. The **Youth Matters (policy briefing) 2005** further set out details for providing opportunities, challenges and support for young people and how all teenagers can achieve the 'Every Child Matters' outcomes.

Other Government strategies such as **Sustainable Communities - settled homes, changing lives (2005)** set out what steps can be taken to prevent youth homelessness and support those in temporary accommodation and those moving into settled accommodation and **Tackling Youth Homelessness (Policy Briefing 18 2007)** focuses on this further, and also brings together good practice examples of how local authorities can, often with the

help of the voluntary and community sector, design services to prevent and tackle youth homelessness. **Targeted Youth Support (2007)** builds on this by involving the Youth Service, who have specialist knowledge in working with young people, as well as resources, in working jointly with housing to prevent homelessness as well as supporting those who are homeless.

Joint Working

New guidance from Communities & Local Government (**Joint Working between Housing & Children's Services 2008**) emphasises the need for joint working between housing authorities and Children's Services to prevent homelessness, minimise its negative impact on life chances and ensure young people and children and families receive co-ordinated services and support to recover from the impact of homelessness, including returning to work. The use of the CAF is key in front line services for children and young people under 18, and housing staff at Richmond have been trained to use this process for young people who are homeless or at risk of homelessness and have "additional needs". An aim for this strategy is to develop a joint protocol between Housing and Children's Services, and establish a joint approach, in particular for 16-17 year olds who are in crisis, to prevent them being passed between services and maximise positive outcomes for this group.

The main outcomes of joint working to prevent and tackle homelessness for this group should be

- young people remaining in, or returning to the family home (unless unsafe or inappropriate)
- Improved relationships with their families
- Flexible accommodation and support pathways

- A personalised support package for every young person to include support in learning or work

For Care leavers aged 18-21, there is a need to promote and plan their transition to adulthood so that they can be provided with the support they need to manage independent living. The outcomes of joint working for this group include:

- Planned moves towards independence
- Maintained and developed family support (where appropriate)
- A personalised support package including support in learning or work
- Access to safe, secure and appropriate emergency accommodation if accommodation arrangements breakdown

A Joint Working Checklist in the 2008 guidance gives housing authorities clear guidelines and areas to include when developing a protocol and this work will be undertaken as part of meeting the aims of this strategy.

Further research into youth homelessness, carried out by the Joseph Rowntree Foundation ('Youth Homelessness in the UK' 2008), looked at how joint working between service providers has made significant steps in the past few years, but that challenges still exist. These challenges are in respect of inter-agency working in terms of resource constraints, and a lack of understanding of organisational roles, which are issues we will need to be aware of when developing a protocol.

Recently introduced three year Local Area Agreements (LAAs) between central and local government and its partners are also a

good opportunity to influence priorities in future homelessness service delivery.

National Priorities

Nationally, the numbers of young people aged 16-17 seeking housing from local authorities because they are homeless are relatively high compared to other groups. In 2005/06, 8,350 young people aged 16 and 17 (together with 18-20 year old care leavers) were accepted as being unintentionally homeless, and this represents 9% of all homelessness acceptances nationally (Source - DCLG Policy Briefing 18 Tackling Youth Homelessness). In general, young people under 25 make up a relatively high proportion of acceptances, in 2005/06 they made up 39% of total applicants accepted as homeless.

BME and LGBT Young People

Specific groups of young people, such as those from ethnic minority backgrounds (BME) are more likely than their white British peers to experience homelessness. Statistically they are more likely to suffer disadvantage and discrimination in terms of education, employment, poverty, overcrowding, physical/mental health and involvement in the criminal justice system (Source - St Basil's 2008). People from BME groups make up 22% of households accepted by local authorities as homeless, therefore an aim of this strategy is to look at preventative services for BME communities, and the accessibility of homelessness services for BME young people to ensure their needs are recognised and supported.

Another group of young people who may also be more vulnerable are those who are lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender (LGBT).

Research from Stonewall ('Meeting the needs of homeless lesbian and gay youth' 2007), found that being lesbian or gay can cause young people to become homeless, and this group are particularly at risk of family breakdown. Once homeless they may be subject to negative experiences of local authority homeless applications, and when they are housed, LGBT young people also report feeling isolated and unsafe in temporary or supported accommodation. The "Out on my own" report ('Understanding the Experiences and Needs of homeless LGBT Youth' M Cull, H Paltzer and S Balloch 2006) recommends:

- Earlier preventative work in schools and through mental health services could reduce the incidence of homelessness
- Training and awareness for housing services and providers to understand the needs of LGBT young people and support them more effectively
- Sensitive monitoring of sexual and gender identity
- Specialist support for this group once placed in housing projects

Government Priorities

The Government is committed to reducing homelessness among young people by working with local authorities and voluntary sector partners to:

- Prevent vulnerable young people becoming homeless, through early identification and intervention

- Support homeless young people and those living in temporary accommodation to ensure their housing and wider support needs are met
- Manage the transition of young people between temporary and settled accommodation to ensure continued access to the services they need

(Source - Sustainable communities: settled homes, changing lives 2005)

In 2006 the Government announced a further package of measures to further prevent and tackle youth homelessness, which included

- A commitment by 2010, no 16/17 year olds should be placed in B&B accommodation by a local authority, except in an emergency
- Improving access to homelessness mediation (including family mediation for young people)
- Establishing supported lodgings schemes providing accommodation, advice and mediation services for young people no longer able to stay in the family home

(Source - DCLG)

These measures will be delivered through a new national youth homelessness scheme by a range of voluntary and community sector agencies, which will enable local authorities to deliver these through a variety of different approaches.

National Indicators (2008)

The Young People’s Housing Strategy may influence and contribute to the following National Indicators.

NI	Definition	How Young People’s Housing Strategy Contributes to Indicator
NI 46	Young offenders access to suitable accommodation	Promoting joint working across service to ensure all young offenders are suitably housed when released from prison.
NI 147	Care leavers in suitable accommodation	Offering a variety of suitable supported housing options to care leavers.
NI 136	People supported to live independently through Social Services (all ages)	Promoting joint working to develop a range of schemes for people with learning difficulties (PLD) in the borough.

Supporting Local Strategies

Our aims and objectives feed into the following local strategies, and we will be working in partnership to meet them. This strategy supports:

- Supporting Local Strategies**
- Children & Young People Plan (2006-2009)
- Community Plan (2007-2017)
- Corporate Plan (2007-2010)
- Housing Strategy (2008-2012)
- Homelessness Strategy (2008-2012)

Youth Justice Plan (2007-2008)

Supporting People Strategy (2005-2010)

Housing & Support Plan for People with Learning Disabilities (2007-2010)

The Children & Young People Plan was published after **Every Child Matters 2003** and subsequent **Children's Act**, which led to the integration of services for children and families. The Young People's Housing Strategy feeds into its priority of ensuring the effective transition of young people into adulthood, through its goal of providing supported housing and floating support for young people. Both the **Children & Young People Plan** and the **Youth Justice Plan** prioritise the prevention of offending and re-offending, and the provision of appropriate supported and independent accommodation on release to young offenders is crucial in achieving this.

The provision of good quality, affordable housing, and supported living options for families and young people are central to the borough's **Corporate** and **Community Plans** through their priorities of "tackling disadvantage" in the borough and working to decrease the gap between the most disadvantaged and the borough average. **The Supporting People Programme** provides the funding for housing related support to vulnerable people in the borough, and the programme's priorities are reflected in the borough's **Supporting People's Strategy**. In particular, for clients with learning disabilities the **Governments White Paper 'Valuing People: A New Strategy for Learning Disability for the 21st Century' (2001)** led to the development of the borough's '**Housing & Support Plan for People with Learning Disabilities**', which

sets out proposals to improve the range of accommodation options for this client group in the borough. Increasing the range of supported housing accommodation and supporting independent living is an important priority of the Young People's Housing Strategy, and both these and preventing youth homelessness, are key aims of the borough's **Homelessness** and **Housing Strategies**.

This strategy will also work to meet targets for young people as laid out in the London Mayor's **Draft Housing Strategy (2007)** and **Refugee Strategy (2007)** (the former is subject to change due to the new administration). The Mayor will build young people's needs and interests into future strategies for the London region, and these will state their commitment to working with London Council's to provide an appropriate supply of general needs and supported housing for specific groups. The groups will include young people and young refugee/asylum seekers. The Mayor also emphasises his commitment in ending overcrowding and worklessness, both of which affect families and young people.

Housing Issues in Richmond upon Thames

As in many other London boroughs, there is limited availability of affordable accommodation in Richmond. Demand exceeds supply across all tenures, and this is exacerbated by the popularity of the borough as a place to live and work.

Owner occupation is high, with 69% (Source - ONS Census 2001) of households in the borough owning their own home, and the average price of a property is £488,062 (for a three bedroom house - source Hometrack 2007). Affordability is a key housing problem facing the borough, which was highlighted in a housing needs

survey carried out in 2006 (by Fordham – see appendices). For first time buyers, such as a nurse at the start of their career, the average price for a one bedroom flat is 11 times their gross salary.

Around 17% (Source - Census 2001) of households rent privately in the borough, yet despite having relatively high rents in place, only 10.4% (Source - DWP) of all private sector tenants were claiming Housing Benefit, the lowest of any local authority in London. The cheapest areas in the borough to rent also have lower than the borough average private rented sector, and this and other issues add to the difficulties of households on low to moderate incomes accessing private rented accommodation.

The social housing sector in the borough is one of the smallest in London, and comprises 12% of the total housing stock. For historical reasons, the stock profile of the two largest RSLs in the borough is weighted heavily towards bed-sit and one bedroom properties, and 59% of re-lets available to the Council in 2006/07 were of this size. A comparison of new social housing lettings available during this period highlighted a need for two bedroom properties, but a low turnover of three and four bedroom properties has also led to a shortage of three and four bed family sized accommodation.

As at November 2007, the number of housing applicants on the Richmond Housing Register was 5,219, with the main reasons stated by applicants for housing being:

Reason for Homelessness	%
Need for a larger property	20
Having to leave parents/family	16
Asked to leave present accommodation	16
Unable to afford current housing	15
Health/medical reasons	8

A small number of other applicants have specialised reasons, including domestic violence or leaving care.

The number of young people aged 16-25 on the housing register is currently 776, as at April 2008. In terms of homelessness acceptances from January 2006 – April 2008, the main reasons why young people aged 16-17 were accepted as homeless are:

Reason for Homelessness	%
Parental eviction	67
Asylum seeker	22
Violence	3
Domestic violence	3
ART/Social Services	2
Eviction	1
Leaving Care	1

An overcrowding action plan will be developed as part of the housing strategy and the numbers of young people being asked to leave by parents because of overcrowding will be investigated. This is an action in this Young People’s Housing Strategy as part of preventing youth homelessness priority.

Measuring Young People’s Housing Needs & Preventing Homelessness

Research into young people’s needs in the borough has been completed as part of the Homelessness Review (March 2008) and the Housing Strategy (December 2008), and although a housing needs survey (by Fordham 2007) was carried out to assess the future requirements for both affordable and market housing in general, the latter didn’t consider the needs of young people in particular.

This strategy will look at measuring the extent of young people presently without suitable, secure accommodation. Supply issues in Richmond are not as great as in other boroughs because of the greater number of bedsit/one bedroom properties in social housing stock. The emphasis here therefore will be at identifying the groups in need of housing, the factors contributing to their need for housing and improving their access to accommodation, advice and support.

Groups in need of housing will include:

- 16-17 year old statutory single homeless
- 16-17 year olds who are pregnant or teenage parents
- Over 16 year olds leaving care
- Unaccompanied asylum seekers
- Young people with special needs
- Young Offenders
- Vulnerable young people who require resettlement support

These groups have been identified as those who have particular housing needs in Richmond upon Thames.

Key Evidence

Homelessness Acceptances

In the period November 2004 – November 2007, 201 approaches were made by 16-17 year olds. Of these, 43 were determined as not homeless and 98 were accepted as homeless.

Accepted	98
Not homeless	43
Discharge of duty	20
Intentionally homeless	19
Not yet assessed	13
Referral	3
No priority need	5
Total applications	201

Source - Richmond upon Thames Borough 2004/07

Homeless acceptances

	2004/05		2005/06		2006/07		Total	
	No	%	No	%	No	%	No	%
Aged 16/17 years old	40	14.3	44	17	27	17.8	119	16.8
In care and aged 18-20	4	1.4	1	0.4	3	2.0	8	1.1

Source - P1E Returns

Key finding – The number of young people aged 16/17 years old who are accepted as homeless has fallen from 40 in 2004/05 to 27 in 2006/07. This is in line with the overall fall in the number of

acceptances of homeless households. However, the percentage of young person households as a proportion of homelessness acceptances has in effect risen, with those aged 16-24 making up approximately 16.8% of all acceptances (Source - Richmond upon Thames Homelessness Review 2008). This is an area we need to address in this strategy.

Housing Services & Temporary Accommodation for Young Homeless People in Richmond

When a young person is accepted as statutory homeless they are housed:

- Either in one of two hostels in the borough – one comprises of 33 rooms, the other 23 rooms. These hostels also house other single homeless, therefore are not specifically for young people.
- B&B – most of which is based out of the borough, and mostly with shared facilities, although some self contained is available.

Ending the use of B&B (except in an emergency) and introducing a supported lodgings scheme are two aims the strategy has identified in terms of improving temporary accommodation options for young people while they await a permanent offer of housing.

Rent Deposit Guarantee Scheme

If a young person over 18 is not accepted as statutory homeless, they can be assisted in finding accommodation through Housing

Options. This is where Housing Advice and Assessment workers look at a variety of various housing options with clients, taking into consideration their various needs. The Rent Deposit scheme (RDS) is one option, and this scheme assists people find housing in the private rented sector. It works by guaranteeing a deposit required by a landlord, up to the equivalent of four weeks rent. It is often the case that for those without savings, the need for a deposit can work to exclude some people from this sector, and this guarantee can assist young people in securing a tenancy.

There has been an increase in the number of young people referred to the RDS scheme, out of 53 households the scheme is currently working with to secure private sector accommodation, 20 involve at least one applicant under 25. RDS Officers do report however, that the under 25 year olds who are housed through the scheme sometimes struggle with issues such as budgeting and some will ideally require a level of resettlement support to enable them to live independently in the private sector.

A further issue here is the amount of Housing Benefit those under 25 years can claim, as eligible rent is restricted to that of a room in a shared house, and in an area with high rents, this will impact on young people in particular who are looking for accommodation in the private rented sector.

This strategy identifies the following groups as those who have particular housing needs in the borough of Richmond

16-17 Year Old Statutory Single Homeless

Data

All 16-17 year olds who are homeless have a priority need for accommodation under the Homelessness Act 2002. From November 2004 until November 2007, 201 approaches were made by 16-17 year olds, and of these, 43 were not accepted as homeless and 98 were. As the following table shows, the homeless acceptances for this age group as a percentage of overall acceptances, since 2004, has increased:

	2004/05		2005/06		2006/07		Total	
	No	%	No	%	No	%	No	%
Aged 16/17 years	40	14	44	17	27	18	119	16.8

The Government also want a commitment from local authorities that by 2010, no 16-17 year olds should be placed in B&B accommodation by a local authority, except in an emergency. As at March 2008, we have 19 young people in B&B accommodation, 18 are 16-17 year olds and one is 18 years old.

Service Provision

There are specialist resources committed to working with this client group in the form of a Young People's Housing Officer based in the Advice and Assessment Team. However, if it is expected that this trend continue, the issue of expanding provision in terms of staff may need to be addressed in the future.

Most of these young people are housed in B&Bs located out of borough with shared facilities, and the trend at the moment is upward. Around half of this number are young people who have previously been placed in one of the Council owned hostels, and

have been removed for being disruptive. Alternative provision such as temporary self contained units for this group will need to be considered, and private sector providers (including current B&B owners) could be encouraged to deliver these. The Private Sector Housing Forum, serviced by Housing Services, which is a network of private landlords working with Housing Services, could play a part in promoting this provision.

Key Issues

The borough's Housing Initiatives Officer will need to work with providers of B&B accommodation and other landlords to look at the possibility of sourcing self contained temporary accommodation for 16-17 year olds and eliminate all use of shared accommodation. This could be done through the Council's Private Sector Housing Forum which works in partnerships with all types of private housing providers in the borough.

Key Implication – We are committed to eliminating all use of B&B for 16-17 year olds in line with Government requirements and will work towards finding appropriate alternative accommodation and support for this group of young homeless people.

16-17 Year Old Pregnant/Teenage Parents

Data

The following table shows the figures returned to the CLG for the Housing Strategy Statistical Appendix for the last three years for 16-17 year olds with children:

Date	Homeless Acceptances	Support Provided
April 2004-March 2005	10	9 floating support, 1 on site support
April 2005-March 2006	4	All floating support
April 2006-March 2007	5	All floating support
April 2007-March 2008	2	Both floating support

In Richmond’s Supported Housing Strategy for Teenage Parents 2004, it was estimated that we would see around ten 16-17 year old pregnant women a year, and we have housed half this number in the last two years. Our overall teenage pregnancy rates are relatively low; however the teenage conception rates have risen in the last two years, with over 75% leading to terminations.

Service Provision

The most popular model of housing and support for this client group has been temporary self contained units whilst receiving floating support from a dedicated resettlement officer from the Housing Resettlement Team. Other temporary housing for this client group include

- four units on a scheme providing on site support, which is used for young women who may be more vulnerable
- 2 hostels in the borough, used to house clients while their needs are being assessed

- 3 units of RSL owned and managed bedsits, specifically for more able clients

Key Issues

It is the borough’s preference that all young pregnant women are initially housed in the hostel to enable them to receive support from staff on site. Once young women are assessed in the hostel they are able to move into self contained accommodation nearer to their baby’s due date, or to a supported hostel. The preference in the borough is for self contained accommodation with floating support provided from the Resettlement Team, and this is provided to young mums until they are settled into permanent accommodation.

Key Implication – We will ensure young parents are able to access good quality temporary and permanent housing to achieve better outcomes in terms of parenting, re-engagement with learning, their own and their babies health (this will be delivered by working closely with our partners at the PCT).

Housing Services Resettlement Team provide intensive one to one floating support to enable their clients to successfully move onto independent tenancies, as this case study shows.

Rosie* and her young son were housed by the Council after she was asked to leave home by her parents due to family difficulties. She had previously led a very unsettled life, had a history of psychiatric problems and had been treated for depression, self-harm and suicidal thoughts. She was difficult to engage and would often cancel pre-arranged appointments to meet. She found it very difficult to manage initially, and required extensive support from her Resettlement Officer in all aspects of tenancy management, bill payments, day to day tasks and so on. With our help she made a lot

of progress both personally and in managing her day to day tasks. We referred her to counselling, which really helped her, and she is now attending an access to higher education course in social work, and has settled her son in a full time nursery placement. She has now moved into her permanent tenancy, and is looking forward to the future.

Young Persons Resettlement Officer
(*name has been changed)

Young People Leaving Care

Data

The borough has seen an increase in the numbers of young people receiving a leaving care service as a result of the Hillingdon judgement. This ruled that 16-17 year old asylum seekers who had initially been provided with accommodation and support, are still eligible for a leaving care service until they are 25 (if they are in full time education).

Date	Leaving care clients	% of care leavers who are asylum seekers
April 2004-March 2005	81	41%
April 2006-March 2007	75	36%
April 2007-March 2008	104	57%

As the above table shows, over half of all Council care leavers are now asylum seekers.

The asylum seekers and ex-asylum seekers who have been granted indefinite leave to remain/given refugee status are split into two groups:

- Young people seeking asylum as unaccompanied minors, the majority of whom arrived under 16 years of age and became “looked after” under Section 20 of the Children’s Act 1989. There are a total of 16 young people in this group, 15 male and one female, aged from 18-23 years old.
- Young people who arrived in Richmond aged 16-17 and were initially provided with a service by the Housing Asylum Team. Following the Hillingdon Judgement in 2003, this group has increased significantly. At the moment it comprises 41 17-21 year olds, 16 male, 39 female (14 of these are parents/pregnant).

We have a quota of seven RSL units to house care leavers for 2008/09.

Service Provision

Care leavers are either housed in:

- The private rented sector – some of which are located out of borough. Alternative provision of self contained supported units which offer flexibility of location for this client group is under review by the Leaving Care Team.
- One of a number of supported housing schemes where they receive either on site or floating support. The need for a 24 hour supported unit to accommodate care leavers with higher levels

of support, including emergency provision, is currently under review.

- Supported lodgings (often with ex-foster carers)

Key Issues

- There is still a significant number of asylum seekers who are not currently receiving a service, but who are now eligible, and this would stretch current resources in the Leaving Care Team even further. There is a discussion between Housing and Specialist Children's Services on the way forward to resolve this, and a decision will be made on which of these two services will take over responsibility for the group of 16-17 year olds asylum seekers in the future, in light of the new integrated Education and Children's Services.
- There are also issues for service provision in terms of providing an appropriate service to this growing group of care leavers who are asylum seekers. Translations and interpreting services are used for instance, and some services such as sexual health workshops have been provided in other languages. Staff have been trained to give specialist advice to this group and recognise they may have different needs. An increasing number of these asylum seekers have come from war torn countries such as Iraq, Afghanistan, Sierra Leone, Eritrea and the Congo and referrals to counselling services are made to enable them to deal with the often traumatic experience's they have been through.

Key Implication – We will be working closely with Education & Children's Services to ensure that appropriate accommodation and support is provided to all asylum seekers entitled to a leaving care service (in line with the Hillingdon judgement).

Unaccompanied Asylum Seekers

Data

In January 2008 the Corporate Asylum Team were supporting 14 16-17 year olds and five over the age of 18. The 16-17 year olds are all relevant children under the Children Act 1989 but were not being accommodated by the Children & Families Service. At the moment, the service is seeing an average of two new arrivals per month of 16-17 year olds, who are subject to age assessments, and over 38% have been refused a service as unaccompanied minors as a result of these assessments.

Service Provision

Clients are placed in the private rented sector (funded by a Home Office grant) until they reach 18 and gain refugee status, when they are then referred to Homeless Advice and Assessment Service, and wait for an offer of permanent accommodation.

The Asylum Team support their clients in accessing housing, health, social services, education services as well as other services provided by voluntary and community bodies, and have produced a guide on all these services in a variety of community languages.

The Resettlement Team will provide support to those over 18, who are waiting for temporary accommodation and support them until they are settled into an RSL tenancy. At the moment, many of the clients we see are from Eritrea, Afghanistan, the Congo and Sierra Leone, and translation services and leaflets in community languages are used to enable the asylum team to work with their clients effectively and ensure equality of access to services. This

case study shows how unaccompanied asylum seekers are assisted by our Asylum Team:

Rifat* was referred to us via rota referral from another London Council. He fled Afghanistan due to a feud between factions in the north of the country and we housed him temporarily in a house with other boys in a similar situation, who were from a variety of different countries. He had no independent living skills as his mother and sisters had done all of the domestic chores and as his support worker I worked intensively with him to ensure he learnt to shop, cook, use money and public transport. He enrolled on a college course to learn English and began to socialise with the other boys in the house. Although he was not very enthusiastic academically, he was a keen sportsman and joined a cricket club, playing for the local side, and he became much better at expressing himself, and matured into a more confident and capable young man.

Asylum Support Worker
(*name has been changed)

Key Issues

Future numbers of this client group are difficult to predict as they will depend on external factors determining the number of asylum seekers arriving in the UK. Housing services must therefore remain flexible to adapt to a fluctuation in numbers, and the various issues and needs that different BME groups have.

Key Implication – We will work towards providing a flexible housing and support service for asylum seekers arriving from different destinations, responding to the needs of young BME groups.

Young People with Special Needs

The Valuing People programme emphasises the importance of widening the range of housing and support choices that are available to people with learning disabilities (PLD). This is the first government White Paper for this group for over 30 years, and is aimed at making the lives of people with learning difficulties, their families and carers better by increasing their rights as citizens, including them in local communities and giving them real choice and chances to be independent.

If a young person meets the criteria for Services for Adults with a learning disability, physical disability or sensory impairment, a transition plan is agreed with the young person and care management responsibility moves to Services for Adults. Housing needs registration forms are filled in and this enables Housing and Services for Adults to assess the future housing needs for these groups.

Young People with Learning Disabilities

Data

There are approximately 20 PLD clients who have a transition plan every year and of these most go to residential school or live at home and attend a day school until they are 19.

We see on average of about eight clients a year who are 19 and over and in need of accommodation. Housing Services have a quota to house 10 clients with learning difficulties in 2008/09.

Service Provision

PLD Services are exploring with partners numerous opportunities to establish a range of supported accommodation options for younger people with learning difficulties who wish to leave the parental home and live independently, or with other young people in shared accommodation.

There is also a very small number of voluntary bodies/charities who provide about 14 bed spaces in supported houses in the borough, to which the PLD service have full nomination rights, and fund these in full for their clients.

When young people with learning difficulties leave their residential school their options are:

- living in a one bedroom flat and receiving additional support where necessary for the most able clients
- living with peers in a three bedroom house with a live in carer providing cover primarily in the evening
- living in a supported house for a period of around two years with a full time support worker assisting them in learning independent living skills
- living in residential care – for those with higher support needs. The government agenda is however to move these clients into the community with a package of care suited to their needs, which may include a live in carer for those with higher needs.

Key Issues

We have access to one bedroom units for the most independent PLD clients, however the last three options above are in short supply, and the PLD service is actively working with the Housing Department and other RSL partners on an ongoing basis to secure such accommodation. Again, the shortage of two and three bedroom properties makes this difficult and means many clients will leave home to live in supported projects outside the borough. Increasing the range of housing options in the borough and providing more choice and value for money are key priorities for the next two years for this and the wider Housing and Homelessness Strategies.

One of the actions from Richmond's 'Housing & Support Plan for People with Learning Disabilities' (2007-2010) is to develop a greater use of options, such as

- shared ownership,
- use of the private rented sector,
- Keyring models of accommodation – this model involves a support worker living on site in close proximity to seven clients, and assisting them in living independently.

The first Keyring model has been set up, and it is hoped this and the other options will lead to a wider range of supported housing for PLD clients in the borough. We have had very positive feedback from clients on the supported schemes we have set up in the past year; in particular, clients sharing a three bedroom house who receive part time support had this to say:

We chose our bedrooms, the paint, furniture and everything else for our house. We are happy and always busy. We are really pleased we decided to live together.

We love living together in our own space. We feel independent. We make our own choices. We have lots of fun.

Key Implications – Effective joint working between Housing and Social Services is integral to ensure the housing needs of young people with learning disabilities are monitored and met. This will ensure better outcomes and transitions to independent living in the social and private rented sector.

Another action of the Support Plan is to investigate future needs of people with learning disabilities through the transitional planning process and conduct research into this, as well as appoint a Joint Housing Worker to work with the housing needs of this group on an ongoing basis. The Transitions Coordinator is involved in a new pilot initiative launched in April 2008, which aims to improve the lives of PLD clients by tailoring services to meet their needs. Through the ‘Getting a Life’ scheme, the links between children and adult services are to be improved to ensure there is a seamless transition from school to adult life, and improving housing options will be an integral part of this, enabling clients to make their own decisions about their future.

Young People with Physical Disabilities

Data

Adult Services do not provide support to young people with physical or sensory impairment aged 18 and over. These clients will apply for benefits, grants, to Connexions, or to specialist voluntary organisations for support. For those aged 16-17 there are a number of non-means tested benefits for which they can apply for e.g. to fit adaptations to their home. At the moment, we do not see many young people with physical disabilities. Currently, however, no separate figures are recorded on this group, and this is an area where better monitoring is needed, in order to predict future demand from this group. Improving monitoring will be an aim in this strategy.

Service Provision

If young people with physical disabilities are placed in a tenancy which needs to be adapted the RSL owners adapt them accordingly, with larger associations doing so using their own funding. For those in the private sector who are under 18 years old with physical disabilities there are non means tested Disabled Facilities Grants (DFGs), which can be used to adapt family homes. Once they are over 18 years old they are subject to means testing.

Date	Number of DFGs completed
2005/06	2
2006/07	6
2007/08	7

Source - Residential Services

In terms of new build affordable housing, the borough will ensure that 10% of properties are adapted across both private and

affordable units, and these units enable us to ensure young people with physical disabilities and their families on the waiting list are adequately housed. The Local Development Framework, to be implemented by the Planning Department, also requires all homes to meet Lifetime Homes standards, and 10% of all new built homes will be wheelchair accessible.

Key Issues

Better monitoring is required of the numbers of young people who have physical disabilities to enable housing services to measure demand and plan future services. The Housing Provisions Team will be putting systems in place to ensure this is done, and working with our Residential Services Team to monitor the needs of young people in the private rented sector.

Key Implications – Effective joint working between Housing and Social Service is integral to ensure the housing needs of young people with physical disabilities are monitored and met to ensure better outcomes and transitions to independent living.

Young Offenders

Data

Richmond Young Offenders Team incorporates representatives from a wide range of services such as probation, health, education, social services and housing. It identifies the needs of each young offender in order to create suitable programmes to address these needs with the intention of preventing further offending.

Offending figures have reduced significantly. In 2004/05 474 offences were committed by young offenders, in 2007/08 they were down to 213. At any one time, the team is dealing with 60 clients,

and 100% of those released from a custodial sentence are housed successfully, although in practice this number is actually small, as only four have been released since October 2006.

Service Provision

Young offenders go through the normal homeless route. Although there is a quota of eight move on units for ex-offenders of any age, young offenders do not have any specific move on route, except for a one bed space in a new hostel for young homeless men (see below).

Housing provision for this group include:

- The Rent Deposit scheme – Housing Assessment and Advice Team have developed a protocol with the YOT to refer young offenders who wish to rent privately into the Rent Deposit scheme, with the YOT offering the deposit where appropriate.
- A scheme with Children's Services whereby specialist foster carers offer accommodation and care for young offenders.
- A new three bedroom hostel in Richmond, of which one unit is specifically for YOT clients.

Key Issues

Increasing the provision of suitable accommodation and options for young offenders remains a priority for the borough and the YOT, as suitable accommodation is crucial to ensuring young offenders are settled back into the community, to reduce their chances of re-offending.

Key Implication - Support and appropriate housing is integral to settling young offenders back into the community. We will continue

to work with the YOT to increase the supply of appropriate accommodation options and support for this group.

An example of successful integration into the community can be demonstrated through this case study.

John* was a high risk young offender whom we housed after he served a period in a young offenders institute for violent offences. He could not return home due to a relationship breakdown with his father and was placed into temporary accommodation. We supported him in acquiring the skills to manage a tenancy to prepare him for permanent re-housing. He got a full time job and was a model tenant, always paying his rent on time, and has been re-housed into permanent accommodation.

Young Persons Housing Officer
(*name has been changed)

Vulnerable Young People Requiring Resettlement Support

Data

Young people are the largest group who are being supported, since changes in legislation in 2002 required local authorities to house 16-17 year old homeless applicants.

The borough’s three Young People’s Resettlement Officers have a caseload of around 20 clients each, as at March 2008, they are supporting 53 young people, four of whom are pregnant.

These clients have a variety of needs as the following table shows:

Resettlement client categories	%
Young people	37
Mental health	35
Substance misuse	6
Medical	3.5
Physical disability	3.5
Learning disability	2
Other	7

Source - Resettlement Team

Service Provision

The Resettlement Service provides resettlement support to vulnerable people, including young people while they are housed in temporary accommodation. They signpost clients to relevant services, working with Connexions advisers and Care Managers, enabling young people to prepare for independent living in their own tenancies.

The Resettlement Service work jointly with a number of other services, such as Connexions, to support their clients to independent living. Feedback collected from clients at the end of the support period demonstrates how invaluable the service is to clients going through a difficult time in their lives.

My Resettlement Officer helped me through some tough times

I was really pleased with the help that I received. My Resettlement Officer was very caring and understanding towards my situation and always did everything she could to help me out

My Resettlement Officer was very helpful. There were lots of things I didn't know I needed to do and she made things very easy

Key Issues

More work in partnership with Connexions is needed to reduce the amount of young homeless people and those in temporary housing who are NEET (not in education, employment or training), particularly in line with the Government's policy on worklessness. Many homeless young people often have difficulty in working because of their past insecure housing situation, however ongoing support around education, training and employment must be maintained throughout young people's stay in temporary housing, and after they receive a permanent tenancy. Some Councils have Connexions advisers working alongside housing assessment and

resettlement staff to ensure there is ongoing support around these areas and this may be a model the borough can consider in conjunction with the local Connexions Service.

Key Implications – Work with Connexions to ensure there is consistent advice and support for young people to continue their path into education, work or training.

Key Priorities & Objectives for the Young People's Housing Strategy 2008-2012

The key priorities and objectives of the Young People's Housing Strategy are:

Priority 1: Preventing youth homelessness

- Prevent youth homelessness (where appropriate) through mediation and early intervention of advice and services for young people so there is a general expectation of such services
- Investigate links between homelessness and overcrowding
- Ensure service delivery reflects the requirements of the Common Assessment Framework (CAF) and is strategically and operationally aligned
- Work with Targeted Youth Services to provide advice and information in schools and youth clubs
- Respond appropriately to BME and LGBT homelessness

Priority 2: Providing appropriate accommodation for young people experiencing homelessness

- Develop a supported lodgings scheme or crash pad to provide accommodation, advice and mediation services for young people who can no longer stay in the family home
- Increase the supply of emergency and temporary accommodation suitable for young people
- Reduce all use of B&B accommodation (except in an emergency) and work with providers towards providing self contained B&B when it is used
- Continue to make planned housing and support provision for care leavers to prevent homelessness (ensuring all care leavers aged 19 are living in suitable accommodation)
- Ensure young people involved with the YOT and ART have access to suitable accommodation
- Ensure there is a monitoring system in place for young people with physical disabilities and their housing needs

Priority 3: Providing a wider range of housing options and support for young people

- Increase access to support services including floating support and supported housing to ensure the success of young people achieving independent living
- Work in partnership with Connexions to reduce the amount of young homeless people and those in temporary housing who are NEET (not in education, employment or training)
- Increase the involvement of young people in the design and delivery of homelessness services

The action plan at the end of this strategy will set out targets for 2008-2012 and the lead agencies, time scales and performance indicators for these priorities.

Priority 1: Prevention of youth homelessness

Homelessness Prevention

The Government has emphasised the importance of preventing homelessness, and in 2006 introduced a package of measures to do so which included

- Improving access to homelessness mediation (including family mediation for young people)
- Establishing supported lodgings schemes providing accommodation, advice and mediation services for young people no longer able to stay in the family home

There are many examples of good practice mediation services and supported lodgings/crash pad schemes which have been set up across the UK, and these examples can assist the borough in developing an appropriate model suited to local needs. The type of scheme developed, however, does rely on funding available.

Achievements

- The Homelessness Forum supported the creation of the Richmond Youth Partnership in 2005. The RYP provides youth services for young people in Richmond including the Youth Café Bus Project, The Detached Drug Project, Young Mothers

Project and Off the Record Counselling Services (which includes a sexual health clinic).

- A Young Person’s Housing Officer is in post in the Housing Advice and Assessment Team, giving out advice and information to young people on housing and referring young people and their families to mediation services.
- Housing Services representatives attend the Achieve Economic Wellbeing Subgroup (part of the Children and Young People’s Strategic Partnership) and ensure housing issues are fed into the Children & Young Peoples Plan (an assessment of services in Richmond for children and young people).

Key Objectives

1. Prevent youth homelessness (where appropriate) through mediation and early intervention of advice and services for young people so there is a general expectation of such services

2. Investigate links between homelessness and overcrowding

3. Ensure service delivery reflects the requirements of the Common Assessment Framework (CAF) and is strategically and operationally aligned

4. Work with Targeted Youth Support Services to provide advice and information in schools and youth clubs

5. Respond appropriately to BME and LGBT homelessness

Actions

1. Prevent youth homelessness (where appropriate) through mediation and early intervention of advice and services for young people so there is a general expectation of such services

1.	Evaluate the current mediation service, consider alternative models if necessary.	2009/10
2.	Ensure there is a clear referral mechanism for all young people and families to this service so there is a general expectation of such services.	2009/10
3.	Ensure an effective monitoring mechanism of the mediation service is in place.	2009/10

2. Investigate links between homelessness and overcrowding

4.	Investigate links between homelessness and overcrowding, monitor numbers and link to overall overcrowding action plan in the borough’s Homelessness Strategy.	2009/10
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3. Ensure service delivery reflects the requirements of the Common Assessment Framework (CAF)

5.	Work with Children’s Services to ensure service providers are trained and knowledgeable in the delivery of the CAF.	2009/10
6.	Work in partnership with Children’s Services to identify families and young people who require housing advice and assistance.	Ongoing

7.	Ensure young people with mild learning difficulties who do not qualify for Social Services support are referred through the CAF to wider provision to support their needs.	Ongoing
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4. Work with Targeted Youth Support Services to provide advice & information to schools and youth clubs		
8.	Work with Targeted Youth Support services to develop and implement a programme of homelessness education and advice for use in schools and youth clubs.	2008/09

5. Respond appropriately to BME & LGBT homelessness		
9.	Ensure all housing forms record young homeless BME and LGBT to enable adequate monitoring to be carried out.	2009/10
10.	Carry out regular analysis of forms. Develop appropriate strategies if there is over-representation of these groups and target resources to remedy this.	2009/10
11.	Ensure there is adequate training and awareness for housing services and providers to understand the needs of these groups and support them more effectively.	2009/10

Priority 2: Providing appropriate accommodation for young people experiencing homelessness

We aim to provide a range of housing options suitable to the needs of young people in the borough, in particular, emergency accommodation and semi-supported accommodation.

Achievements	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A three bedroom hostel for 16-17 year old male homeless clients was completed in late 2007 and is being used as temporary accommodation, with one bed space used by the Youth Offending Team. The partners working on this scheme included SPEAR (the support provider), Richmond Housing Services, and Richmond Youth Offending Team, who all successfully worked in partnership to increase the provision of temporary accommodation for young men in the borough. • The Rent Deposit scheme which was introduced in 2002, and is run jointly with SPEAR, has found tenancies for 20 households where at least one member was under 25 years of age, about 18% of the total. Out of the 53 households SPEAR is currently working with to secure private sector accommodation, 20 involve at least one person under 25, about 38% of the total. 	

Key Objectives

1. Develop a supported lodgings/crash pad to provide accommodation, advice and mediation services for young people who can no longer stay in the family home

2. Increase the supply of emergency and temporary accommodation suitable for young people

3. Reduce all use of B&B accommodation (except in an emergency) and work with providers towards providing self contained B&B when it is used

4. Continue to make planned housing and support provision for care leavers to prevent homelessness (ensuring all care leavers aged 19 are living in suitable accommodation)

5. Ensure young people involved with the YOT and ART have access to suitable accommodation

6. Ensure a monitoring system is in place for young people with physical disabilities and their housing needs

Actions

1. Develop a supported lodgings scheme/crash pad to provide accommodation, advice and mediation services for young people who can no longer stay in the family home

12.	Explore potential for the development of a supported lodgings scheme for 16-17 year old young homeless clients, possibly with a joint provider.	2010/11
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2. Increase the supply of emergency and temporary accommodation suitable for young people

13.	Evaluate the need for a four bedroom hostel for young women.	2009/10
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14.	Review the evidence base of the Young Peoples' Housing Strategy to determine current and future demand.	2010/11
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3. Reduce all use of B&B accommodation (except in an emergency) and work with providers towards providing self-contained B&B when it is used

15.	Reduce the use of B&B accommodation for young people and by 2010 ensure no 16-17 year olds are placed here except in an emergency.	2009/10
16.	Work with temporary accommodation providers to encourage the provision of more self contained units.	2009/10

4. Continue to make planned housing and support provision for care leavers to prevent homelessness (ensuring all care leavers aged 19 are living in suitable accommodation)

17.	Review alternative provision of self contained supported units (currently being sourced in the private sector) which offer flexibility of location for young people leaving care.	2009/10
18.	Review the need for supported accommodation for care leavers with high support needs.	2010/11

5. Ensure young people involved with the YOT and ART have access to suitable accommodation

19.	Work with the Youth Offending Team to ensure all young people it supports are provided with suitable accommodation and support	Ongoing
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20.	Ensure suitable accommodation is in place on release from prison/young offenders' institution for all young people.	Ongoing
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6. Ensure there is a monitoring system in place for young people with physical disabilities and their housing needs

21.	Set up appropriate systems in Housing Provisions to monitor the needs of young people with physical disabilities.	2010/11
22.	Work with Residential Services to ensure the needs of young people with disabilities in the private sector are monitored.	Ongoing

Priority 3: Providing a wider range of housing options and support for young people

Achievements

- A supported housing project was set up in October 2007 for three young women with learning disabilities to share a house, while receiving onsite support from a live in carer. Four units of self contained accommodation from an RSL in the borough, housing male and female PLD clients including young people was set up in April 2008. One unit will enable a carer to live nearby and provide support on a weekly basis to them and a further four other clients living in RSL properties close by.
- Four individual units of accommodation from an RSL have been acquired for care leavers, who receive floating support from a support provider to enable them to learn independent living skills and move on to sustain their own tenancies.

Key Objectives

1. Increase access to support services including floating support and supported housing to ensure the success of young people achieving independent living

2. Work in partnership with Connexions to reduce the amount of young homeless people and those in temporary housing who are NEET (not in education, employment or training)

3. Increase the involvement of young people in the design and delivery of homelessness services

Actions

1. Increase access to support services including floating support and supported housing to ensure the success of young people achieving independent living

23.	Ensure the prompt delivery of projects such as Ferry Rd and Seymour Rd for four young men and women with learning disabilities being developed with a local RSL (two can accommodate a live in carer).	2009/10
24.	Continue providing floating support services to young people placed in the private rented sector by the Rent Deposit scheme, assisting all young people in their transition to independent living.	Ongoing

2. Work in partnership with Connexions to reduce the amount of young homeless people and those in temporary housing who are NEET (not in education, employment or training)		
25.	Housing staff to work in partnership with Connexions advisers to ensure all young homeless people are encouraged and empowered to participate in education, employment or training (EET).	2010 & ongoing
26.	Individual support pathways to be agreed for all young people, to ensure they receive adequate support from housing and voluntary services to participate in EET.	As above
27.	Ensure a monitoring system is in place to track individuals' progress in EET, analyse findings and implement strategies to resolve any problems.	As above

3. Increase the involvement of young people in the design and delivery of homelessness services		
28.	Continue holding six monthly and yearly consultation sessions with young people to ensure their feedback on the service is incorporated in its future delivery.	Ongoing
29.	Work with the Integrated Youth Officer to increase young people's participation in the design and delivery of homelessness services and other relevant services for young people.	2008 & ongoing

Working in Partnership

Successful delivery of the strategy depends upon effective joint working between key agencies. A well-established Homelessness Forum (set up in 1996) enables effective multi-agency partnership working between voluntary and statutory agencies to deliver

housing strategies. Agencies involved in monitoring this strategy through the Homelessness Forum include (but are not confined to):

- LB Richmond Adults & Community Services, including the Strategy & Policy Team, Housing Provision Team, Resettlement Team and Asylum Seekers Team
- LB Richmond Education & Children's Services including Leaving Care Team, Children with Disabilities Service, Youth Offending Team, Youth Service and Connexions
- SPEAR (Single Persons Emergency Accommodation in Richmond)
- Richmond upon Thames Churches Housing Trust (RSL)
- Richmond Housing Partnership (RSL)
- Centrepont (Support provider)
- St Christopher's Fellowship (Support Provider)
- Richmond & Twickenham PCT (including the Teenage Pregnancy Co-Ordinator)
- Off the Record (part of the Richmond Youth Partnership)
- Members of the Private Sector Housing Forum

The partners have adopted the following principles:

- All individuals will be treated in accordance with the borough's equal opportunities policies
- Individuals have separate and distinct rights in law to services provided by the statutory services; these rights will not be diminished in any way as a result of joint working
- The strategy will take account of the housing needs of 16-25 year olds who live in the borough

The partners recognise that there are many organisations working with young people in the borough and without an overarching

strategy there is a danger that the most urgent needs of young people will not be met. The importance therefore, of joint working is key to delivering the strategy.

Monitoring of the Strategy

This strategy will be reviewed twice a year through the Homelessness Forum. A subgroup of the Forum which will include statutory, charitable and voluntary partners working with young people will meet to monitor the tasks on the Action Plan and the secretary of the Forum will ensure these are recorded, updated and progressed.

How will this strategy be delivered?

This strategy will be monitored annually by the Richmond Homelessness Forum. This group will monitor progress against the objectives in the action plan and tackle problems which arise in meeting the targets set.

Young People's Action Plan 2008-12

	Action	Timescale	Lead AD	Lead Officer	Organisation	Resources
1	Evaluate current mediation service. Ensure clear referral mechanism and monitoring and evaluation system in place.	2009/10	AD Adults & Communities	Housing Initiatives Officer	Housing & Wellbeing	Existing
2	Ensure there is a clear referral mechanism for all young people and families so there is a general expectation of such services.	2009/10	AD Adults & Communities	Head of Housing Operations	Housing Services	Existing
3	Ensure an effective monitoring mechanism of the mediation service is in place.	2009/10	AD Adults & Communities	Head of Housing Operations	Housing Services	Existing
4	Investigate links between homelessness and overcrowding, monitoring numbers and linking to overall overcrowding action plan in Homelessness Strategy.	2009/10	AD Adults & Communities	Housing Initiatives Officer	Housing & Wellbeing	Existing
5	Work with Children's Services to ensure service providers are trained and knowledgeable in the delivery of the CAF.	2009/10	AD Adults & Communities	Housing Initiatives Officer	Housing & Wellbeing, Education & Children's Services	Existing
6	Work in partnership with Children's Services to identify families and young people who require housing advice and assistance.	Ongoing	AD Adults & Communities, Educations & Children's Services	Head of Housing Operations, AD Children's Services	Housing Services, Education & Children's Services	Existing

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7	Ensure young people with mild learning difficulties who do not qualify for Social Services support are referred through the CAF to wider provision to support their needs.	Ongoing	AD Adults & Communities, Educations & Children's Services	Head of Housing Operations, AD Children's Services	Housing Services, Education & Children's Services	Existing
8	Work with Targeted Youth Support Services to develop and implement a programme of homelessness education and advice for use in schools and youth clubs.	2008/09 & ongoing	AD Adults & Communities	Housing Initiatives Officer, Targeted Youth Support Worker, Housing Advice & Assessment Team Leader	Housing & Wellbeing, Housing Operations & Youth Service	Existing
9	Ensure monitoring and adequate training and awareness for housing staff and providers around BME and LGBT issues (facing young people who are homeless).	2009/10	AD Community Service Operations	Head of Housing Operations	Housing Operations	Existing
10	Carry out regular analysis of forms and develop appropriate strategies if there is over-representation of these groups, targeting resources to remedy this.	Ongoing	AD Adult & Communities	Housing Initiatives Officer, Head of Housing Operations	Housing & Wellbeing, Housing Operations	Existing
11	Ensure there is adequate training and awareness for housing services and providers to understand the needs of these groups and support them more effectively.	Ongoing	AD Adult & Communities	Housing Initiatives Officer, Head of Housing Operations	Housing & Wellbeing, Housing Operations	Existing
12.	Develop a supported lodgings scheme/crash pad for 16-17 year old young homeless clients, possibly with a joint provider.	2010/11	AD Adult & Communities	Head of Housing Operations	Housing Operations	To be evaluated
13.	Evaluate the need for a four bedroom hostel for young women in the borough.	2009/10	AD Adult & Communities	Head of Housing Operations	Housing Operations	Existing

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14.	Review the evidence base of the Young People's Housing Strategy to determine current and future demand	2010/11	AD Adult & Communities	Housing Initiatives Officer	Health & Wellbeing Team	Existing
15.	Reduce the use of B&B accommodation for young people and by 2010 ensure no 16-17 year olds are placed here except in an emergency.	2009/10	AD Adult & Communities	Head of Housing Operations	Housing Operations	Existing
16.	Work with temporary accommodation providers to encourage the provision of self-contained units or accommodation.	2009/10	AD Adult & Communities	Temporary Accommodation Team Manager, Housing Initiatives Officer	Housing Operations, Housing & Wellbeing	Existing
17.	Review alternative provision of self contained supported units (currently being sourced in the private sector) which offer flexibility of location for young people leaving care.	2009/10	AD Education & Children's Services	Leaving Care Team Manager	Leaving Care Team	Existing
18.	Review the need for supported accommodation for care leavers with high support needs.	2010/11	AD Education & Children's Services	Leaving Care Team Manager	Leaving Care Team	Existing
19.	Work with the Youth Offending Team to ensure all young people it supports are provided with suitable accommodation and support.	Ongoing	AD Education & Children's Services, AD Adults & Communities	YOT Manager, Housing Provision Manager	YOT Team, Housing Operations	Existing
20.	Ensure suitable accommodation is in place on release from prison/young offenders' institution for all young people.	Ongoing	AD Education & Children's Services, AD Adults & Communities	YOT Manager, Housing Provision Manager	YOT Team, Housing Operations	Existing

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21.	Carry out research to understand the housing needs of children and young people with physical disabilities.	2010/11	AD Community Service Operations, AD Commissioning Corporate Policy & Strategy	Private Sector Housing Manager, Policy & Research Manager (Housing)	Housing Operations, Strategy & Policy	Existing
22.	Work with Residential Services to ensure the needs of young people with physical disabilities in the private sector are monitored.	Ongoing	AD Adults & Communities	Housing Provision Team, Residential Services Team	Team Leader Housing Provisions, Residential Services Team Leader	Existing
23	Increase the range of housing options in the borough for people with learning disabilities by delivering supported living projects at Ferry Road and Seymour Road.	2008/09	AD Commissioning Care Services	PLD Development Manager	PLD Service Development	Ongoing
24	Continue delivering floating support services to young people placed in the private rented sector by the Rent Deposit scheme, assisting all young people in their transition to independent living.	Ongoing	AD Adult & Communities	Rent Deposit Team, Resettlement Team	Housing Operations	Existing
25	Housing staff to work in partnership with Connexions advisers to ensure all young homeless people are encouraged and empowered to participate in education, employment or training (EET).	Ongoing	AD Adult & Communities, AD Children's Services	Connexions Advisers, Resettlement Officers	Connexions Manager, Housing Operations	Existing
26	Individual support pathways to be agreed for all young people to ensure they receive adequate support from housing and voluntary services to participate in EET.	2010 & ongoing	AD Adult & Communities, AD Education & Children's Services	Resettlement Officers, Connexions Advisers	Housing Operations, Connexions Manager	Existing

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27	Ensure a monitoring system is in place to track individual progress in EET, analyse findings and implement strategies to resolve any problems.	2010 & ongoing	AD Adult & Communities, AD Education & Children's Services	Resettlement Officers, Leaving Care Workers, Connexions Advisers	Housing Operations, Connexions Manager	Existing
28	Continue holding six monthly and yearly consultation sessions with young people to ensure their feedback on the service is incorporated in its future delivery.	Ongoing	AD Adult & Communities, Education & Children's Services	Resettlement Team, Targeted Youth Support Officer	Housing Operations, Youth Service	Existing
29	Work with Integrated Youth Officer to increase young people's participation in the design and delivery of homelessness and other relevant services for young people.	Ongoing	AD Adult & Communities, AD Education & Children's Services	Resettlement Team, Targeted Youth Support Officer	Housing Operations, Youth Service	Existing

Supported Housing for Teenage Parents

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Executive Summary

Background

Teenage pregnancy has been recognised as both a cause and consequence of social exclusion (Sure Start Plus 2005). The Government's National Teenage Pregnancy Strategy (1999) was the first strategy developed through the Social Exclusion Unit (SEU) to deal with the high rates of teenage pregnancy in the UK, which are the highest in Western Europe (UNICEF 2001).

The SEU studied the complex reasons behind teenage pregnancy and set out a clear strategy to prevent teenage pregnancy and address the support needs of young parents. It highlighted two key goals:

- To halve the under 18 conception rate and establish a firm downward trend in the under 16 conception rate by 2010
- To increase to 60% the proportion of 16-19 year old mothers in education, training and employment, to reduce their long term risk of social exclusion

The SEU highlighted the increased risks of poor health and social outcomes faced by teenage parents and their children and made it clear that with specialist tailored support these were not inevitable. Support for teenage parents continues to be central to government policy, and all Local Councils were required to provide supported housing by 2003 for all lone parents under 18 years old. All lone parents who could not live with family or a partner are to be placed in supervised semi independent housing with support rather than an independent tenancy. Access to good quality housing with support is crucial as this has a considerable impact on achieving better

outcomes in terms of parenting, re-engagement with learning and young parents and babies' health.

Local Authority departments such as education, social services and youth support services have a crucial role in working together and with key partners such as local PCTs and the voluntary sector to reduce teenage pregnancy rates. Through local teenage pregnancy partnership boards (TPPB) partners monitor and implement the Teenage Pregnancy Strategy, and identify additional funding for initiatives to reduce rates. The engagement and commitment of TPPB partners is key to delivering a successful strategy, reducing teenage conception rates, and improving outcomes for teenage parents.

Key Priorities & Objectives

The key priorities and objectives of the Teenage Parent's Supported Housing Strategy are:

Work in partnership to prevent teenage conceptions and achieve the teenage pregnancy target.

1. Work in partnership with the PCT and their partners in prevention work on teenage conceptions, achieving the teenage pregnancy target and supporting young mothers to prevent repeat pregnancies

2. Attend all Teenage Parents Partnership Board meetings ensuring housing services update and feed into the Teenage Parents Self Assessment Toolkit

3. Assist housing clients in accessing better contraception, advice and information services by targeting preventative work with young people in temporary accommodation

Provide appropriate accommodation for all pregnant and teenage parents

1. Ensure no 16-17 year old teenage parents are placed in unsupported accommodation

2. Ensure all teenage parents are placed in suitable supported accommodation or suitable accommodation with an intensive floating support package

3. Ensure supported accommodation is monitored and offers a quality service to young parents complying with Supporting People housing indicators

4. Continue to carry out consultation with young parents and ensure they are involved in service delivery

Ensure appropriate referral mechanisms are in place so that teenage parents are not a socially excluded group

1. Work with all Teenage Pregnancy Partnership Board members to progress work on the PCT's Self Assessment Toolkit in relation to this action

2. Work with the Connexions Service and other partners to encourage young mothers into education, employment or training (EET)

3. Provide relevant information on housing resources and procedures to the new A-Z of services website, which will be developed by Education & Children's Services

The action plan at the end of this strategy will set out targets for 2008-2012 and the lead agencies, time scales and resources for these priorities.

Overview

Preventing teenage conceptions and supporting young parents are important for a number of reasons. Children born to teenage mothers are more likely to live in deprived areas, do less well at school and disengage early from learning, and these are risk factors for teenage pregnancy and poor outcomes. Daughters of teenage mothers are twice as likely as daughters born to older mothers to become teenage mothers themselves (DCSF 1999).

Work on reducing teenage pregnancies is part of the Government's long term effort to reduce future teenage pregnancies, narrow social and health inequalities and tackle child poverty. The Teenage Pregnancy Strategy, launched in 1999, represents the first coordinated attempt by government to tackle both the causes and consequences of teenage pregnancy. It outlined how all local areas should have a 10 year strategy in place, with local targets underpinning a national 50% reduction in the under -18 conception rate. Joined up action at national, regional and local levels by Local Authorities, Primary Care Trusts and Local Strategic Partnerships

along with children's trusts were crucial to achieving progress in this 10 year strategy.

A Teenage Parents' Supported Housing Strategy was produced by the London Borough of Richmond in 2004, and aimed to determine priorities, resources and partnerships to improve supported housing for teenage parents. It was developed as a result of the 1999 national strategy which made the commitment of providing semi-independent housing with support for all under 18 lone parents by 2003. The Government is increasingly raising the profile of young parents in papers such as the Children's Act (2004), through the role of Children's Trust and Sure Start Plus programmes (2005). This strategy aims to raise the local issues and consider how it can best meet the needs of teenage parents at a critical stage in their lives.

The groups of young parents this strategy will be addressing will be 16-19 year old teenage parents.

This Teenage Parents Supported Housing Strategy aims to:

Work in partnership to prevent teenage conceptions and achieve the teenage pregnancy target.

1. Work in partnership with the PCT and their partners in prevention work on teenage conceptions, achieving the teenage pregnancy target, and supporting young mothers to prevent repeat pregnancies.
2. Attend all Teenage Parents Partnership Board meetings and ensure housing services update and feed into the Teenage Parents' Self Assessment Toolkit.

3. Assist housing clients in accessing better contraception, advice and information services by targeting preventative work with young people in temporary accommodation.

Provide appropriate accommodation for all pregnant and teenage parents

1. Ensure no 16-17 year old teenage parents are placed in unsupported accommodation.
2. Ensure all teenage parents are placed in suitable supported accommodation or suitable accommodation with an intensive floating support package.
3. Ensure supported accommodation is monitored and offers a quality service to young parents complying with Supporting People housing indicators.
4. Continue to carry out consultation with young parents and ensure they are involved in service delivery.

Ensure appropriate referral mechanisms are in place so that teenage parents are not a socially excluded group

1. Work with all Teenage Pregnancy Partnership Board members to progress work on the PCT Self Assessment Toolkit in relation to this action.
2. Work with the Connexions Service and other partners to encourage young mothers into education, employment or training (EET).

3. Provide relevant information on housing resources and procedures to a new A-Z of services website.

Definitions

For the purposes of this strategy, young mothers are defined as those aged from 16-19 years old.

The Children's Act sets out a statutory requirement for local authorities and their "relevant" partners to cooperate to improve children's wellbeing. This strategy aims to set out priorities to ensure 16-19 year old teenage parents have access to suitable, good quality accommodation and support, and the improvement of outcomes for teenage parents are met through local provision and the effective working of key local partnerships.

National & Regional Policy Agenda

In 1999, the Government launched a report from the Social Exclusion Unit (SEU) on teenage pregnancy. This report outlined a 10 year **Teenage Pregnancy Strategy** to halve the rate of teenage pregnancy across the UK.

The Strategy has four main themes:

- Joined up action at national, regional and local level
- National campaign to help young people resist peer pressure, make their own choices and take responsibility
- Better prevention of the causes of teenage pregnancy through improved Sex and Relationships Education, and by increasing

young people's access to effective contraceptive and advice services

- Improved support for pregnant teenagers and teenage parents to increase their participation in education, training and employment and reduce their risk of social exclusion.

Poor outcomes experienced by teenage mothers and their children include:

- Poor child health
- Poor emotional health and wellbeing
- Poor economic wellbeing

Measures to improve outcomes for teenage parents will, in turn, reduce the chances their children will become teenage parents, and their children experiencing some of the factors associated with this.

The Government built on the children and young people's agenda in '**Every Child Matters**' (2003), the overarching aim being to draw all agencies together to deliver better services and support for children to achieve the five key outcomes:

- Being Healthy
- Staying Safe
- Enjoying & Achieving
- Making a Positive Contribution
- Achieving Economic Wellbeing

Teenage pregnancy strategies must contain key strategic objectives set against the five outcomes of Every Child Matters.

The emphasis on joint working, sharing of information between agencies and professionals and improving access to services was further emphasised in the **Children’s Act (2004)**, which placed a duty on Primary Care Trusts (PCTs) and other local bodies to co-operate with local authorities to improve the well being of children, and the emphasis on health continued in **The National Service Framework for Children, Young People and Maternity Services (2004)**. This went on to set national standards for children’s health and social care, promoting high quality, women and child centred services and personalised care that meets the needs of parents, children and their families which local PCTs adopted.

The Government also encouraged the development of **Children’s Trusts** to play a key role in co-ordinating and integrating the planning and delivery of services for children and families and creating local frameworks for these new ways of working, which local authorities have embedded through integrated working. **Sure Start Plus programmes (2005)** were then developed to provide one to one support through an adviser for teenage mums and were rolled out across local authorities in the UK, often working through other agencies such as Connexions. These programmes however have been focused in areas with higher levels of need, and Richmond does not fall into this category, being a small and relatively affluent area, although there are pockets of relative deprivation across the borough.

Teenage Conception Rates

Reducing teenage conception rates is a national indicator and through this, central government manages outcomes delivered by local government (and their partners). The outcome is for children and young people to “make a positive contribution” (one of the five

‘Every Child Matters’ outcomes) and reducing the teenage conception rate is the way this outcome will be measured. The Government target in 1999 was to halve the under 18 conception rate and establish a firm downward trend in the under 16 conception rate by 2010.

The provisional 2006 conception rate was announced in February 2008. Nationally, the provisional figures for 2006 under 18 conception rate is 40.4 per 1,000 girls aged 15-17, representing an overall decline of 13.3% since 1998 – the baseline year for the Teenage Pregnancy Strategy. The under 18 conception rate is now at its lowest level for over 20 years. London rates tend to be higher than for England and Wales, (although there has been a downward shift) as a high proportion of vulnerable young people live in London including care leavers, homeless families and young people, young asylum seekers and young people from deprived communities, and rates are higher among vulnerable groups. The average conception rate for under 18 year olds in inner London is 52.6 per 1,000 compared with a national average of 41.3 per 1,000. Abortion rates are also higher for London compared with the England average.

Key Implication - All local authorities are set specific targets for reducing the conception rate in their area, and for the London Borough of Richmond the target is 40%.

Locally however there has been an increase in conception rates in the borough of Richmond upon Thames.

Borough	1998 rate	2006 rate	% change 1998-2006	% leading to abortion
Richmond	23.1%	26.9%	16.5%	78%

Source - LB Richmond upon Thames

The wards with the highest numbers of conceptions among 15-17 year olds are Mortlake & Barnes Common, St Margarets & North Twickenham and West Twickenham.

Overall, the increase in the conception rate from 1998 to 2006 is 16.5%, which in actual figures means there has been an increase of 15 conceptions. The lowest rate of conceptions achieved over the life of the strategy is seven in 2004, and the highest is 23 in 2006. Because the numbers are relatively small, any increase will be significant, and reducing teenage conceptions as well as preventing second conceptions to teenage mothers is a priority for the borough's local teenage pregnancy strategy.

Key Implication – Because of the small number of teenage parents in the borough, no further supported housing projects are required, however figures will be monitored to ensure provision meets any rise in demand.

National Indicators (2008)

The Teenage Parents Supported Housing Strategy may influence and contribute to the following National indicators.

National Indicator	Definition	How Young People's Housing Strategy Contributes to Indicator
NI 112	Under 18 Conception Rate	Joint working to ensure signposting to sexual health services

Local Context

Every local authority area has in place a Teenage Pregnancy Co-Ordinator and has agreed on a local teenage pregnancy strategy. This is a rolling three year action plan, set out in the Self Assessment Toolkit, and this details how the local authority and health bodies will work together to implement the national strategy.

The local Teenage Pregnancy Co-Ordinator leads the work on the Toolkit, working with a Teenage Pregnancy Partnership Board (TPPB) made up of representatives from other social services, education and housing departments, local Primary Care Trusts, Connexions Services and other key local partners including the voluntary sector.

The TPPB meet quarterly to monitor and implement the Teenage Pregnancy Strategy, identify additional funding for work arising from this, manage the budget, manage performance data and receive feedback for the TP Coordinator.

A 'Teenage Parents Next Steps: Local Authority & Primary Care Trust Self Assessment Toolkit' was published in 2008 by the TPU to assist TPPBs to assess their progress towards ensuring young parents receive the support they need for them and their children, and avoid any subsequent pregnancies whilst still teenagers. This toolkit is attached in appendix two of this strategy and will take the place of the Richmond Teenage Pregnancy Strategy from 2008 onwards.

The toolkit contains a number of strategic objectives that TPPB partners will work in partnership to meet and include these:

- Supporting teenage parents to achieve better outcomes
- Improving child health outcomes
- Improving teenage mothers' emotional health and well-being
- Helping teenage mothers and young fathers to achieve economic well-being
- Support for young fathers

The TP Coordinator identifies a planned programme of work for the year ahead arising from these strategy objectives. Training and support is provided for the Coordinator and others working to deliver TP services across all agencies.

Housing Objectives

The main strategic objective for housing in the toolkit, and nationally is:

“...to ensure all under 18 lone parents are provided with accommodation with support in a safe environment”.

Guidance to local housing authorities recommends:

- Intensive support for teenage parents with very high levels of need
- The role of mediation to help young mothers - where safe - to remain in the family home
- The need to provide “move on” accommodation and avoid bottlenecks in supported housing
- The importance of floating support, both as an alternative to on-site supported housing and as part of the transition to independent living

- The importance of using the Supporting People outcomes to monitor impact of SP funded services in meeting needs of teenage parents
- Avoiding bed and breakfast for teenage mothers
- The importance of considering the housing and other support needs of young fathers

‘Good Practice in Supported Housing for Young Mothers’ (2003) advised local authorities on setting up supported housing projects, and there is one supported project in the borough.

Key Implication – The Borough will be working towards ensuring there is choice in the range of accommodation and support provided, and quality in the standard of units available

Supporting Local Strategies

This strategy supports other local strategies, such as the **Children & Young People Plan**, an objective of which is working towards improving young people's access to decent housing, and minimising the amount of families with children in temporary or unsuitable accommodation. These aims are echoed in both the **Community** and **Corporate Plans**, and the **Youth Justice Plan** emphasises how suitable housing is essential to the resettlement of ex-offenders into society. The **Supporting People Strategy** emphasises using SP outcomes to monitor the impact of SP funded services in meeting the needs of teenage parents and The Richmond & Twickenham Primary Care Trust **Local Delivery Plan** is key in setting out the priorities for improving access to effective sexual health services, as well as health services for young parents and their children.

Supporting Local Strategies

This strategy supports:

Children & Young People Plan (2006-2009)

Community Plan (2007-2017)

Corporate Plan (2007-2010)

Housing Strategy (2008-2012)

Supporting People Strategy (2005-2010)

Homelessness Strategy (2008-2012)

RTPCT Local Delivery Plan (2005-2008)

Youth Justice Plan (2007-2008)

Joint Working

The ‘Teenage Parents Next Steps: Local Authority and Primary Care Trust Self Assessment Toolkit’ is used in conjunction with the ‘Teenage Parents Next Steps: guidance for Local Authorities and Primary Care Trusts’ (2007 DCSF and DH) to focus the resources of local authorities, PCTs and their partnerships, local strategic partnerships (LSPs) and Children’s Trusts to achieve progress in supporting teenage mothers, young fathers and their children. It is designed to help in planning and review processes annually and it emphasises the need for joint working to support teenage mothers. The use of the Common Assessment Framework by local authority departments and partners is key in front line services for children and young people under 18, and housing staff at Richmond have

been trained to use this process for young people who are homeless or at risk of homelessness and have “additional needs”.

One aim for this strategy is to develop a joint protocol between Housing and its partners to ensure the referral process into housing for young mothers is clear and transparent and establish a joint approach to avoid young mothers being passed between them unnecessarily and maximise positive outcomes for this group. Guidance on joint working and developing a protocol is provided by the DCLG.

Key Implication – We will develop a Joint Working Protocol between Housing Services and its key partners to ensure the referral process for young mothers is clear and transparent

Local Demand and Supply of Supported Accommodation

Demand

Over the course of the last strategy, from 2004-8, we predicted that the number of units required for 16-17 year old teenage parents would be no more than 10 per year.

From 2004 to 2008, we saw fewer than this estimated number of young women:

Teenage Parent Approaches	November 2004-March 2008
Accepted	23
Rejected	8
No decision	2
Total	33

Source - London Borough of Richmond upon Thames

Our figures compare favourably with our neighbouring borough, the Royal Borough of Kingston, who is most similar to us in terms of size and characteristics out of our partners in the South West London sub-region. Kingston has a slightly lower teenage conception rate, but houses a similar number of young parents each year.

In terms of ethnicity, over 90% these young women are white British, and although we have seen a continued increase in the number of young asylum seekers accepted for housing and support, they have not been over-represented in this group of 16-17 teenage parents. Of this 10%, the majority are predominantly from African countries, and our Asylum Team ensure translation services and appropriate literature are provided, as well as signposting to relevant services and working across services such as refugee groups, to ensure appropriate support is provided. It is difficult to predict future trends in this group however due to external factors; however a monitoring system is in place.

We have however seen a rise in the number of couples approaching, and being accepted by the borough, with nearly a third of the 33 clients being made up of couples. This may have implications in terms of the type of temporary accommodation available to this group, as there will be a preference for self contained 1 bedroom units. We will need to ensure therefore there is a sufficient supply of good quality temporary units in this size.

Key Implication- The type of support needs couples have may be different to single clients, and these will need to be assessed in the future to ensure appropriate support is provided.

Teenage Parents Leaving Care

A number of the total teenage mothers housed will be leaving care clients, and they come from three different routes. They are either unaccompanied young minors seeking asylum and have been “looked after” (under S.20 of the Children Act 1989), 16-17 year olds provided with a service from the Asylum Team (under Section 17 Children Act 1989) or British care leavers who are being “looked after”.

From April 2007-2008 the borough is supporting 104 care leavers, and 24 are young mothers, two are pregnant. About half of this number are asylum seekers.

All care leavers being provided with a leaving care service have the same housing options as other groups. Young mothers are placed in temporary accommodation and receive support from the leaving care team or resettlement team, while they wait for a permanent offer of accommodation. The leaving care service can continue until the client is 21, or over if they are in full time education.

Supply

Because the level of demand is relatively low for Richmond, and taking into account the increase in couples seeking housing, there is limited justification for a purpose built scheme for this client group.

Instead, the preference continues for self contained accommodation with floating support, and except for a very small number of clients spending a brief period in a supported scheme, young women are mostly housed in self contained accommodation with floating support provided by the Resettlement Team.

Key Implication – There is currently limited justification for a purpose built supported scheme in the borough, as there is a preference for self-contained accommodation with floating support.

Housing Floating Support

Floating support schemes are advantageous in that they can be provided across all types of tenancies and give flexibility in the intensity of the support available.

They ensure

- A formal system for needs assessment and care planning
- A key worker system
- Regular reviews

Support will ensure practical, needs-led support packages are developed and implemented for individual parents in the borough, in partnership with the young people themselves. The borough has a team of three resettlement officers who provide floating support to young people specifically, and this case study demonstrates how this support can assist a young mother successfully move onto independent living:

Jane* had left home due to disagreements with her parents and had been sleeping on friends sofas for a while. When she got pregnant her parents refused to allow her to return home, and we accepted a duty to house her, and placed her in temporary accommodation. We worked intensively with her while she was living in one of the hostels, and when her son was 10 months old she moved into a permanent tenancy. She has now applied for a “Care to Learn” grant to assist her with childcare costs while she attends university to begin a degree.

Young Person’s Resettlement Officer
(* Name has been changed)

Feedback from clients service questionnaires reflect how invaluable resettlement support can be:

She was friendly, helpful and always willing to help in any way possible. I will miss her visits

I cannot thank my Resettlement Officer enough for the exceptional support she offered me

Once young parents are placed in permanent accommodation, they can be supported for a further three months until they have been settled in by the Resettlement Officers, and if their case is closed

but they still require support, they can be referred to their RSLs own tenancy support team who can continue to provide this.

Temporary Housing Options:

- **Hostels**

There are two hostels inside the borough, owned by the Council which provide 53 bed spaces, with shared kitchen/bathroom and communal areas. All clients who are accepted as homeless are housed in the hostel until a full assessment can be made of their needs by their resettlement officers.

Both hostels have children's play areas and full time wardens, and a regular surgery is held by local health visitors for young parents. There is also a condom distribution scheme, which the health visitor administers to all young people living there. One of the hostels also has a computer room, and an objective of this strategy is to utilise this fully to provide courses in IT for young people who live there. Clients normally stay for a period of up to six months, and then move on to self contained accommodation, with continuing support from their resettlement officer, who will support them until they are permanently housed.

- **Life Housing**

Life Housing is for women aged 16 and over, who are homeless and pregnant or already have a baby up to one years of age. They provide supported accommodation houses with individual bedrooms and communal facilities. There is a prescriptive programme of support that all tenants must take part in, and staff work with clients to enable them to move into independent living with their children.

Although men are not allowed to stay, there is an allocated "family time" every week, where fathers can visit and take part in activities. Other services such as health visitors and Connexions advisers also work with young mothers resident in the scheme.

Life Housing has a four bedroom house in Richmond and LBRuT have priority on all nomination rights. They are also able to offer out of borough placements for clients at risk. Clients are resident for approximately 12 months after which, when a client reaches 18, Housing Needs arranges for permanent move on accommodation, or alternative accommodation with floating support if they are under 18.

A protocol has been agreed between Life and LBRuT and this is enclosed in appendix one. An exit questionnaire for young women moving on from the scheme is included in the protocol, and the results of this is fed back to Life at twice yearly service review meetings which also include the TP Coordinator and Connexions advisers, as well as housing services and Life managers/support workers.

- **Richmond upon Thames Churches Housing Trust**

The Trust owns four bedsits developed for use by young mothers. Clients take on an assured tenancy with the trust, whilst remaining on the Richmond Housing Register until they are offered move on accommodation. These bedsits are ideal for more able clients who do not require a longer stay in a hostel, and provide an alternative to shared accommodation. They are however not as suitable for couples, or for children in the longer term, because of their size as they lack of space can be restrictive.

A support agreement exists between the Trust and LBRuT where the Trust accepts nominations from the borough and 16-17 year olds are offered these units on the condition that they accept support as part of the tenancy agreement. The agreement is included in appendix two.

Cross Borough Working

For young mothers who for any reason, such as domestic violence, may require a short term out of borough placement, the borough has nomination rights to the Pathway scheme.

Pathway Housing Association is a specialist provider of supported housing units for mothers and babies, providing eight units of accommodation in four houses for 16-17 year old teenage mothers until they are 18 years of age. Since the scheme opened in 2003, we have not referred any clients to it, however through the South West London Boroughs' Partnership, we are offered units if needed. The referral and assessment procedures for this scheme are attached in appendix three.

Advice, Information and Support Services for Young Parents in the Borough

The Teenage Pregnancy Coordinator, employed by the Primary Care Trust, works closely with partners from the Teenage Parents Partnership Board to deliver the objectives from the 'Teenage Parents Next Steps: Local Authority and Primary Care Trust Self Assessment Toolkit'. The co-ordinator will monitor the objectives of the strategy by ensuring work is progressing in the following areas:

Sex & relationships education (SRE) both in and out of school settings

- Work is ongoing with all LA secondary schools in ensuring they have SRE policies in line with DfES guidance, and that they meet the needs of all pupils including BME, those with special needs and those from different faiths/cultures
- A Youth Service SRE policy has been launched to continue to develop SRE out of school
- Training has been arranged for youth workers and Connexions Personal Advisors (PAs) on involving young people in the development of SRE programmes
- School nurses have been holding regular drop in sessions at schools
- There is a strong focus and high commitment to achieving healthy schools status and 100% of schools in the borough are fully accredited on the Healthy School Scheme
- Courses have been held for teachers on PSHE programmes from schools with 20% free school meals.

Better contraception, advice & information services

Although the under 18 conception rate in the borough is low at 22.8% (March 2007) in comparison to the national average at 41.1% (March 2007), the termination rate is relatively high at 78%, and work is currently going on by professionals and the TP Coordinator to improve and extend contraception and sexual health advice. Work is progressing in:

- Improved contraception and sexual health advice. The KISS service provides a service for under 21's, and Sexually Transmitted Infections (STI) Services for under 18 year olds are also held six times a week, three of these inside the borough including a local youth club, and three in the

surrounding boroughs. There are four family planning clinics at hospitals and GP's in the borough.

- Increased Chlamydia testing at KISS, STI clinics and other clinics and local Boots chemists (for over 16's).
- Better access to termination services through family planning clinics and Teddington Memorial Hospital.
- Free emergency contraception for under 18s in the borough.
- A Young Parents Project Coordinator employed by the Richmond Youth Partnership runs groups for young parents across the borough.

Better Support

- A Connexions outreach PAs support young parents in the borough.
- A Young Parents Project Coordinator based at the Richmond Youth Partnership runs groups for young parents across the borough.
- Referrals for education, training and employment, including young mum/dad specific courses.

Service Information

For professionals working on the frontline with pregnant teenagers/teenage parents there is an A-Z of directory of services – 'Where to refer young people in and around Richmond & Twickenham', available from the PCT. There is also an information "credit card" for young people which include a range of telephone numbers for services such as sexual health, drugs and alcohol, education, training and employment, benefits and welfare advice, counselling and support services, and this is in the process of being updated. This card also includes information on local services in Hounslow, Kingston, Wandsworth as well those in the borough of Richmond, and additional web site information is also available.

Although a new edition is due this year, a project group, based in Education & Children's Services is currently working on extending this information to include all relevant services for children and young people, and this information will be included on a young person's specific website.

Service Agreements Protocols

Housing Services have signed an information sharing protocol with Education & Children's Services, Richmond & Twickenham PCT and the Richmond Youth Partnership. These outline the terms and conditions agreed between the agencies under which identifiable information can be shared and the safeguards that must be implemented.

These documents are included in the attached appendices which also include protocols with other service providers such as Life Housing, Richmond Churches Housing Trust and Pathway Housing Association.

Delivering the Action Plan

This strategy ends with an action plan, identifying the priorities and partnerships necessary to improve housing opportunities for teenage parents. A four year plan will ensure the borough works with partners to meet the needs of pregnant teenagers and young parents in the longer term, and these partners will be involved in the monitoring of the strategy to ensure successful delivery.

This strategy is incorporated into the borough's wider Young People's Housing Strategy which feeds into the borough's Housing Strategy.

Key Priorities & Objectives for the Supported Housing Strategy for Teenage Parents' 2008-2012

Priority 1: Work in partnership to prevent teenage conceptions and achieve the teenage pregnancy target

Achievements

- Housing Services are included in the “You’re Welcome” criteria for young mothers, and staff use an A-Z of young peoples services to ensure young mothers receive the support they need.
- Additional single sex sexual health workshops have been held specifically for asylum seekers (including mothers) in partnership with the PCT.

Key Objectives

1. Work in partnership with the PCT and their partners in prevention work on teenage conceptions, achieving the teenage pregnancy target and supporting young mothers to prevent repeat pregnancies.

2. Attend all Teenage Parents Partnership Board (TPPB) meetings and ensure housing services update and feed into the Teenage Parents Self Assessment Toolkit.

3. Assist clients in accessing better contraception, advice and information services by targeting preventative work with young people in temporary accommodation.

1. Work in partnership with the PCT and their partners in prevention work on teenage conceptions, achieving the teenage pregnancy target, and supporting young mothers to prevent repeat pregnancies.

1	Ensure all housing staff working with young people and young mothers attend training and are aware of preventative services in the borough and signpost clients to relevant services and related support.	2008/09 & ongoing
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2. Attend all Teenage Parents Partnership Board meetings and ensure housing services update and feed into the Teenage Parents Self Assessment Toolkit.

2	Attend quarterly meetings with partners and feedback progress on housing issues in relation to young parents, linking this into ongoing work on the Toolkit.	Ongoing
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3. Assist clients in accessing better contraception, advice and information services by targeting preventative work with young people in temporary accommodation and young mothers.

3	Work with the TP Coordinator, Sexual Health workers and Targeted Youth Support to ensure relevant sexual health and general health services are delivered in the two main hostels in the borough, and to all young people in temporary accommodation supported by the resettlement service.	Ongoing
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Priority 2: Provide appropriate accommodation for all pregnant and teenage parents

Achievements

- No 16-17 year olds have been placed into unsupported accommodation since 2003. This is a Housing Strategy Statistical Appendix indicator on which returns are sent to Communities & Local Government (CLG) on a yearly basis.
- All teenage parents are placed in accommodation with floating support using a range of accommodation options.
- Reviews are held with supported housing providers twice a year. Exit questionnaires are sent to all clients who have lived in supported projects and the results are fed back and progressed through these reviews.
- The Housing Resettlement Service hold yearly focus groups with clients, with groups for young people and young parents held on alternate years. A satisfaction questionnaire is also sent to all clients when their case is closed.
- Funding was acquired through the Youth Opportunities Fund for a play area, garden and computer suite at the Queens Road hostel.
- The Resettlement Team can offer up to three months additional support to clients moving into permanent accommodation to ensure a smooth transition is made.

Key Objectives

1. Ensure no 16-17 year old teenage parents are placed in unsupported accommodation

2. Ensure all teenage parents are placed in suitable supported accommodation or suitable accommodation with an intensive floating support package

3. Ensure supported accommodation is monitored and offers a quality service to young parents complying with Supporting People housing indicators

4. Continue to carry out consultation with young parents and ensure they are involved in service delivery

Actions

1. Ensure no 16-17 year old teenage parents are placed in unsupported accommodation

4	Ensure all yearly returns to the DCLG on the numbers of young mothers in unsupported accommodation are 0.	Ongoing
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2. Ensure all teenage parents are placed in suitable supported accommodation or suitable accommodation with an intensive floating support package.

5	Develop a joint working protocol between housing and other organisations to ensure referral procedures are clear, transparent and agreed between all parties.	2009/10
6	Review all current protocols and Service Level Agreements.	2009/10

3. Ensure supported accommodation is monitored and offers a quality service to young parents complying with Supporting People housing indicators		
7	Develop specific housing training focusing on legislation and procedures regarding housing young people and young parents for housing partners. Aim to hold two sessions per year.	2010/11
8	Continue to hold service review meetings with internal and external providers of supported accommodation.	Ongoing
9	Review the evidence base of the strategy on a yearly basis, ensuring services are responsive to changes in demand and needs of clients.	2009/10 & monitor yearly

4. Continue to carry out consultation with young parents and ensure they are involved in service delivery		
10	Ensure all users feedback on their experience of supported housing projects through exit questionnaires, which are incorporated into service delivery.	Ongoing
11	Continue to carry out focus groups with a snapshot of all clients receiving a service.	Ongoing
12	Continue completion of service satisfaction questionnaires with clients in supported accommodation projects.	Ongoing

Priority 3: Ensure appropriate referral mechanisms are in place so that teenage parents are not a socially excluded group

Achievements
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Housing Services staff work closely with the Young Parents' Project Coordinator (funded by the Richmond Youth Partnership and the PCT) to ensure as many young parents as possible participate in mother and baby groups and activities, and are signposted to relevant services through these groups. Young parents are referred to courses such as APPLE (Antenatal Postnatal Peer Learning Experience), as well as other relevant courses to encourage them into education and training.

Key Objectives

1. Work with all Teenage Pregnancy Partnership Board members to progress work on the PCT Self Assessment Toolkit.

2. Provide relevant information on housing resources and procedures in a new A-Z of services website for young people.

3. Work with the Connexions Service and other services to encourage young parents back into education, employment and training (EET).

Actions

1. Work with all Teenage Pregnancy Partnership Board members to progress work on the PCT Self Assessment Toolkit in relation to this action.

13	Work in partnership through quarterly TPPB meetings on delivering the PCT Self Assessment Toolkit.	Ongoing
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2. Provide relevant information on housing resources and procedures to a new A-Z of services for young people website (to be developed by Education & Children’s Services).

14	Appoint a housing representative for the web to ensure all relevant services for young people and young parents are updated on the borough’s website.	2009/10
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3. Contribute to work undertaken by the Connexions Service and other services to encourage young mothers back into education, employment & training (EET).

15	Work with Connexions and other partners to develop and accredit courses held at the hostel computer suite and to work carried out with health visitors.	2010/11
16	Floating support officers to work closely with Connexions to ensure clients follow a pathway into EET.	2009/10

The action plan at the end of this strategy will set out targets for 2008-2012 and the lead agencies, time scales and resources for these priorities.

Working in Partnership

Successful delivery of the strategy depends upon effective joint working between key agencies. A well-established Homelessness Forum (set up in 1996) enables effective multi-agency partnership working between voluntary and statutory agencies to deliver housing strategies. Agencies involved in monitoring this strategy through the Homelessness Forum include (but are not confined to):

- LB Richmond Adults & Community Services, including the Strategy & Policy Team, Housing Provision Team, Resettlement Team and Asylum Seekers Team
- LB Richmond Education & Children’s Services including Leaving Care Team, Children with Disabilities Service, Youth Offending Team, Youth Service and Connexions
- SPEAR (Single Persons Emergency Accommodation in Richmond)
- Richmond upon Thames Churches Housing Trust (RSL)
- Richmond Housing Partnership (RSL)
- Centrepont (Support provider)
- St Christopher’s Fellowship (Support Provider)
- Richmond & Twickenham PCT (including the Teenage Pregnancy Coordinator)
- Off the Record (part of the Richmond Youth Partnership)
- Members of the Private Sector Housing Forum

The partners have adopted the following principles:

- All individuals will be treated in accordance with the borough’s equal opportunities policies
- Individuals have separate and distinct rights in law to services provided by the statutory services; these rights will not be diminished in any way as a result of joint working.

- The strategy will take account of the housing needs of 16-25 year olds who live in the borough

The partners recognise that there are many organisations working with young people in the borough and without an overarching strategy there is a danger that the most urgent needs of young people will not be met. The importance therefore, of joint working is key to delivering the strategy.

Monitoring of the Strategy

This strategy will be reviewed twice a year through the Homelessness Forum. A subgroup of the Forum which will include statutory, charitable and voluntary partners working with young people will meet to monitor the tasks on the Action Plan and the secretary of the Forum will ensure these are recorded, updated and progressed. This strategy will also be reviewed through the TPP Board, which is held quarterly.

How will this strategy be delivered?

This strategy will be monitored annually by the Richmond Homelessness Forum. This group will monitor progress against the objectives in the Action plan and tackle problems which arise in meeting the targets set.

Teenage Pregnancy Action Plan 2008-12

	Action	Timescale	Lead AD	Lead Officers	Organisation	Resources
1	Ensure all housing staff working with young parents are aware of preventative services in the borough and signpost clients to services.	2008/09 & ongoing	AD Community Service Operations (BC)	Principal Resettlement Officer (LB), Teenage Parents Coordinator – PCT (CI)	Housing Operations & Primary Care Trust (PCT)	Existing
2	Attend quarterly meetings and feedback progress on housing issues, linking this into the TP Toolkit.	2008/09 & ongoing	AD Commissioning Corporate Policy & Strategy (MS)	Housing Initiatives Officer, TP Coordinator (CI) & Teenage Parents Partnership Board members	Strategy & Policy & PCT	Existing
3	Assist young parents in temporary accommodation access better contraception, advice and information services.	2008/09 & ongoing	AD Community Service Operations (BC) & AD Commissioning Corporate Policy & Strategy (MS)	Principal Resettlement Officer (LB), TP Coordinator (CI), Sexual Health Workers, Youth Service	Housing Operations & PCT & Youth Service	Existing
4	Ensure yearly returns to DCLG on numbers of young parents in unsupported accommodation are 0.	2008/09 & ongoing	AD Commissioning Corporate Policy & Strategy (MS)	Housing Initiatives Officer	Strategy & Policy	Existing
5	Develop a joint working protocol between housing and partners.	2009/10	AD Community Service Operations (BC) & AD Commissioning Corporate Policy & Strategy (MS)	Housing Initiatives Officer, Head of Housing Operations (KE), TP Coordinator (CI)	Strategy & Policy, Housing Operations & PCT	Existing

APPENDIX B

6	Review all current protocols and Service Level Agreements.	2009/10	AD Commissioning Corporate Policy & Strategy (MS)	Housing Initiatives Officer, TP Co-Ordinator (CI), Head of Housing Operations (KE), relevant Service Managers	Strategy & Policy, PCT & Housing Operations	Existing
7	Develop specific housing training on legislation and housing procedures regarding young people for housing partners. Aim to hold two sessions a year.	2010/11	AD Community Service Operations (BC)	Head of Housing Operations (KE), Housing Initiatives Officer	Housing Operations & Strategy & Policy	Existing
8	Continue to hold service review meetings with external providers of supported accommodation.	2008/09 & ongoing	AD Community Service Operations (BC) & AD Commissioning Corporate Policy & Strategy (MS)	Housing Initiatives Officer, TP Coordinator (CI), Head of Housing Operations (KE)	Strategy & Policy & PCT & Housing Operations	Existing
9	Review evidence base of strategy on a yearly basis to ensure it's responsive to changes in demand and needs of clients.	Annually	AD Commissioning Corporate Policy & Strategy (MS)	Hosing Initiatives Officer, Head of Housing Operations (KE)	Strategy & Policy & Housing Operations	Existing
10	Continue to complete exit questionnaires with young parents leaving the floating support service and ensure these are fed into service delivery.	2008/09 & ongoing	AD Commissioning Corporate Policy & Strategy (MS)	Housing Initiatives Officer	Housing Operations	Existing
11	Continue to carry out focus groups with teenage parents once a year.	2008/09 & ongoing	AD Community Service Operations (BC)	Principal Resettlement Officer (LB)	Housing Operations	Existing
12	Continue to complete exit questionnaires with young parents leaving supported housing projects.	2008/09 & ongoing	AD Commissioning Corporate Policy & Strategy (MS)	Housing Initiatives Officer	Housing Operations	Existing

APPENDIX B

13	Work in partnership through TPPB meetings on delivering the PCT Self Assessment Toolkit.	2008/09 & ongoing	AD Community Service Operations (BC) & AD Commissioning Corporate Policy & Strategy (MS)	Housing Initiatives Officer, TP Coordinator (CI)	Housing Operations & PCT	Existing
14	Appoint a Housing Representative for the web to ensure all TP services are updated on borough's website.	2009/10	AD Community Service Operations (BC)	Housing Initiatives, IT Staff	Housing Operations	Existing
15	Work with Connexions and health visitors to develop and accredit courses to be held at the borough's hostels.	2010/11	AD Commissioning Corporate Policy & Strategy (MS) & AD Specialist Children's Services (BM)	Connexions Advisers, Health Visitor, Housing Initiatives Officer	Connexions & Housing Operations	Existing
16	Floating support officers to work closely with Connexions to ensure clients follow a pathway into EET.	2009/11	AD Specialist Children's Services (BM)	Head of Housing Operations (KE), Connexions Manager	Housing Operations & Connexions	Existing

Appendices

A - Richmond Churches Housing Trust Accommodation Procedures

B - Life Housing Protocol

C - Pathway Housing Association Procedures

D - Richmond Youth Offending Team Protocol

E - Education & Children's Services Protocol

<p style="text-align: center;">A - LONDON BOROUGH OF RICHMOND UPON THAMES AND RICHMOND UPON THAMES CHURCHES HOUSING TRUST SUPPORT AGREEMENT</p>
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SUPPORT AGREEMENT

This Agreement is made the 7th day of April 2003 between the Mayor and Burgesses of the London Borough of Richmond upon Thames ("the Authority") of Civic Centre 44 York Street, Twickenham Middlesex acting by its Housing Services Resettlement Team ("Resettlement") and Richmond upon Thames Churches Housing Trust Limited of 13 Castle Mews, High Street, Hampton, Middlesex, TW12 2NN ("the Trust").

WHEREAS:

The Trust is the freehold owner of the properties described in Schedule 1 hereto (hereinafter called "the Accommodation").

- (a) The Trust has agreed to provide the Accommodation and Resettlement has agreed to provide a support service as hereinafter provided ("the Support Service") to the tenants who occupy the Accommodation ("the Tenants").
- (b) The Trust is a Registered Social Landlord within the meaning of Section 1 of the Housing Act 1996 and is registered with the Registrar of Friendly Societies under Section 74 of the Industrial and Provident Societies Act 1965.
- (c) Resettlement provides support to vulnerable people for whom the Authority has a statutory duty to re-house both in temporary accommodation and during their transition to permanent accommodation.
- (d) References to any statutory enactment in this Agreement shall include any amendment, substitution or re-enactment from time to time.
- (e) All parties to this agreement expressly agree that nothing in this Agreement shall in any way create a legal partnership between them.

- (f) Provided that the interests of the Parties under this Agreement shall not be materially prejudiced or interfered with, or the Agreement not otherwise frustrated, all Parties agree that, in connection with the carrying out of their duties under this Agreement, they will at all times have regard to the terms and conditions of any mortgage, the statutory rights and powers of the mortgagee, the rules governing any funding, whether capital or revenue, instructions affecting any property that is the subject of this Agreement at any time and any other rules or regulations statutory or otherwise, including VAT regulations, affecting the Trust, or Resettlement, which may from time to time be made known to them, and not at any time to act in contravention of them.

NOW IT IS HEREBY AGREED:

1. General Aims and Objectives:

- (a) The Accommodation and the Support Service are intended to assist pregnant teenagers and teenage parents, be they single or with partners, to develop independent skills and successfully settle into self-contained supported accommodation, develop parenting skills, and to sustain tenancies when transferred into independent accommodation.
- (b) The general objectives of the Support Service are:-
 - (i) to assist the Tenants to live in the community and to meet their responsibilities as tenants and as parents; and
 - (ii) to monitor the Tenants health and social care needs and to provide assistance in these areas, make referrals to appropriate care and support agencies and liaise with them as required.
 - (iii) to provide planned and supported resettlement into self-contained accommodation including: accompanied viewing of accommodation; practical assistance with accessing furniture and resources and moving-in; assisting with all property outgoings.
 - (iv) to assist the Tenants in meeting the obligations of their tenancy, including: benefit claims; payment of rent; maintaining the interior of the accommodation in good order; relationships with neighbours; and communication with the Trust.
 - (v) to develop parenting skills, enhance the self esteem of the young people, ensure that opportunities are provided for education, training and employment where appropriate.

2. The Trust's Obligations:

- (a) The Trust shall provide units of self-contained accommodation as set out in Schedule 1 hereto, which shall be let on assured shorthold tenancy agreements to the Tenants. It will be a condition of the tenancy that the Tenants accept and engage in the support being provided. The Trust shall discharge all its statutory duties and obligations as a landlord.
- (b) The Trust shall provide a housing management service equivalent to the standard level of service provided to tenants with general housing needs in self-contained accommodation with the exception of welfare benefits advice (which includes housing benefit), which shall be provided by Resettlement who may in turn refer tenants to specialist advice if required. The Trust's service shall include letting the Accommodation, issuing tenancy agreements, dealing with routine tenancy matters, estate management, repair and maintenance of the Accommodation, rent accounting and arrears control and tenant consultation and participation.
- (c) In the event of a breach of tenancy by the tenant which may lead to possession proceedings, the Trust must inform Resettlement and consult with them at all stages of such proceedings.
- (d) Prior to April 2003, the Trust shall provide all necessary information to tenants in order for them to apply to the London Borough of Richmond upon Thames for Transitional Housing Benefit (THB) in respect of the Accommodation and support.
- (e) For each tenant occupying premises under this agreement and receiving the Support Service, the Trust shall pay to Resettlement the gross General Counselling and Support Charge collectable less the agreed allowance for voids and bad debts. Such payments will be made quarterly in arrears. Any overpayments will be paid back. Post April 2003 under the supporting people regime the Supporting People Commissioning body will enter into a contract with Resettlement to provide support services directly to tenants.
- (f) The Trust shall identify a Supported Housing Officer as liaison officer in respect of the Accommodation and any other matters related to this agreement.
- (g) Nominations to this accommodation will be via the Local Authority, and the Trust is bound to accept them, except where the Trust may reject a Nominee who has physically assaulted any member of staff of the Company, at any time within a period of two years prior to the nomination.

- (h) As the accommodation being provided by the Trust has been deemed as temporary pending permanent re-housing through the Richmond Housing Register, these nominations and subsequent lettings by the Trust will not be included as part of the 75% nomination agreement with the London Borough of Richmond.

3. Resettlement's Obligations:

- (a) Resettlement shall provide the Trust with a suitable nominee within 10 working days of a void being notified to them. If a suitable nominee is not available, Resettlement has a further 5 working days to provide one who is aged 18, pregnant and requires support. If again there is no suitable nominee, Resettlement has a further 5 working days to provide one who is 18, has a child under 1 and requires support.

Although 16-17 year old pregnant teenagers and teenage mothers will have priority nomination rights to this scheme, if a suitable nominee cannot be found, 18 year old (and over) pregnant women and young mothers will be considered if they would benefit from the support this scheme provides.

- (b) Resettlement shall make a thorough assessment of persons referred to the accommodation and support service referred to in this agreement. Resettlement shall provide a summary of such an assessment ("the plan"), in a format to be agreed, from time to time between the parties for each person referred for a tenancy at the Accommodation.
- (c) Resettlement shall provide a Support Service to the Tenants in accordance with both the Aims and Objectives set out in Section 1 above and a summary of the plans detailing the care and support to be provided to each Tenant.
- (d) The Resettlement Manager shall act as a liaison officer in respect of the Care and Support Service and any other matters related to this agreement.
- (e) Resettlement shall employ sufficient skilled staff to ensure the proper delivery of the service; such staff will be the responsibility of Resettlement. Resettlement will provide the Trust with details of these staff, posts and hours worked. No contract of Employment with such staff shall impose upon the Trust, the rights or obligations of an employer.

- (f) Resettlement shall be entitled to use the THB received from the Trust exclusively in satisfaction of its obligations under this Agreement, including contributions to office costs and overheads as agreed by the Trust, payment of staff salaries and benefits, services provided to the Tenants.
- (g) If at any time, there is a deficit between income and expenditure in respect of the Support Service, then Resettlement shall still ensure that all its obligations under this Agreement are met and shall be responsible for meeting the deficit from its own resources.
- (h) Post April 2003 new arrangements under Supporting People will be effective and the Supporting People Commissioners will enter into an agreement with Resettlement to provide support services direct.
- (i) Resettlement shall notify the Trust of any commencement and termination of tenancies, and assist tenants in applying for dual housing benefit payments where appropriate.

4. Review and Liaison:

- (a) Both parties agree to carry out joint reviews of the operation of this agreement and the performance of the Support Service covered by it, six monthly in the first year and thereafter annually.
- (b) Resettlement shall produce annually, in accordance with the Trust's reasonable requirements, a written report of the progress of the Support Service and shall supply such statistical and other performance indicator information as shall be reasonably required by the Trust from time to time to fulfil its monitoring duties in relation to THB funding and to assessing the performance of the Support Service. Resettlement shall agree to undertake exit questionnaires with out-going tenants to evaluate their opinion of the service. This information will be used to monitor service standards and complaints and will be available to all parties concerned.
- (c) Resettlement agrees to share with the Trust relevant monitoring information obtained by the Supporting People Administrative Authority in order that the Trust can satisfy itself that its partnership arrangements comply with Housing Corporation requirements.

- (d) If the care and support needs of the Tenant change significantly from the needs addressed by the plan referred to in 3(a) above, or any subsequent plan which may be agreed between the parties, a meeting shall be convened by Resettlement as soon as reasonably practicable to agree an action plan and a revised package of support.

5. Value Added Tax:

Resettlement and the Trust confirm that the provision of the Care and Support Service is believed to be an exempt supply/non business activity for the purposes of Value Added Tax (VAT) but if found to be subject to VAT then all payments shall be deemed to have been made inclusive of VAT.

6. Insurance:

- (a) Both parties shall be responsible for arranging their own insurance (as may be necessary or appropriate) in respect of Public Liability, Employers Liability and Fidelity Guarantees.

- (b) Health & Safety – Both parties will ensure that they comply with relevant legislation and guidelines on Health & Safety.

7. Disputes:

Any dispute between the parties which may arise under this agreement shall be referred at the request of either party to a sole arbitrator to be agreed between the parties or in default of agreement to be appointed by the President of the Institute of Arbitrators. The decision of the Arbitrator shall be final and binding on the parties hereto. The costs of arbitration shall be borne as the arbitrator directs.

8. Duration, Termination and Revision:

- (a) Termination

- (i) This Agreement shall operate for a period of three years from 1st April 2003 hereof until determined by either party upon giving the other at least six months prior written notice.
- (ii) Following a breach of any of the terms of this Agreement, it may be terminated by three months written notice served on the party in breach and where such breach is capable of rectification this Agreement shall terminate if such breach is not rectified within the period of three months from service of the notice.

- (iii) This Agreement may be terminated forthwith upon either party being declared insolvent or having an administrator or receiver appointed over all or part of its assets.
- (iv) This Agreement may be terminated upon three months notice in writing where Resettlement has been found guilty of any financial irregularity or abuse of any person in receipt of care or support services from Resettlement, and such employee(s) involved in such irregularities or abuse has / (have) not been dealt with appropriately.
- (v) By the RSL or Resettlement giving 26 weeks written notice if the support contract with the Supporting People Administering Authority is terminated.
- (vi) Upon termination there shall be full accounting between the parties in accordance with this Agreement

Following consultation and by written agreement between the parties, amendments may be made to any of the clauses herein.

9. Notices:

- (a) Any notice required to be served under the terms herein shall be deemed to be served on Resettlement and sent to The Acting Head of Housing Services (or his successor in title) and deemed to be served on the Trust if sent to the Trust addressed to the Secretary at its registered address for the time being recorded on its headed notepaper or in either case such other addresses as may from time to time be notified by one party to the other.

10. Confidentiality and Data Protection Act:

- (a) Both parties shall respect the confidentiality of all information which becomes available to them concerning the Tenants and any proposed Tenants. Exceptions to this are when information is relevant to the process of an eviction and when information is required by the law. However the tenants consent to disclosure will be sought wherever possible. A copy of the Trust's confidentiality policy is attached to this agreement. Resettlement's policy on confidentiality is incorporated in point 10 of this support agreement.
- (b) Each party shall comply with the requirements of the Data Protection Act 1998 and any equivalent or associated legislation ("Data Protection Act") in relation to Personal Data (as defined in the Data Protection Act) concerning any Tenant ("Data").

- (c) The Trust will only process Data for the purpose of performing its obligations under this Agreement and, subject to clause (d) or if required by law, will not disclose Data without the explicit consent of the relevant Tenant to any other person other than employees to whom disclosure is reasonable necessary for the Trust to comply with this Agreement.
- (d) The Trust will provide to resettlement upon request any Data which Resettlement reasonably requires in order to carry out the Support Service, including, without limitation, information relating to the fact that a Tenant's accommodation with the Trust has been terminated, or is in danger of being terminated due to a breach of conditions of the tenancy agreement. The Trust will take all necessary steps to ensure that the disclosure of such Data to Resettlement complies with the Data Protection Act (including, without limitation, ensuring, where necessary, that the Tenants are aware of, and consent to, such disclosure).
- (e) The Trust must have in place, and undertakes to maintain throughout the term of this Agreement, appropriate technical and organizational measures against the accidental, unauthorized or unlawful processing, destruction, loss, damage or disclosure of Data and adequate security programmes and procedures to ensure that unauthorised persons do not have access to the Data or to any equipment used to process the Data.

11. Equal Opportunities

Both parties have policies regarding their commitment to Equal Opportunities and agree to keep their own records of the ethnic origins of residents and employees and other relevant information in pursuance of these policies and to monitor performance.

12. Assignment:

This Agreement is personal to the parties hereto and neither party shall assign the benefit thereof.

B - Referral Protocol Between LB Richmond Housing Needs & Life Housing

The hostel comprises 4 rooms in *****. Each room has its own washing facilities. Other facilities are shared. The property is furnished and staffed during office hours. There is an out of hours contact number in case of emergencies.

1 Nomination Rights

LB Richmond Housing Needs will have priority on nomination rights. Once notified of a vacancy a nomination will be made within 3 working days. If no nomination is made Life Housing will contact Housing Needs to confirm they do not wish to take up the nomination before offering it to another Local Authority. Life Housing are also able to offer out of borough placements for clients at risk and who need housing with support.

Eligibility

The target group are women aged 16-60 who are either pregnant or who have a child aged 1 or under. In exceptional circumstances children older than this can be accepted. All residents will have an individual support package and it is a condition of acceptance that they agree to this support.

The hostel will provide accommodation for applicants who have been accepted as homeless under the Housing Act 1996 pt. VII or its successor legislation. Clients will be resident for approximately 12 months.

2 Referral Procedure

- Life Housing will fax the Team Leader Housing Provision (TLHP) when a nomination arises.
- The TL-HP will fax through the nomination within 3 working days on a standard nomination form (Copy attached). The nomination form will contain details of the nominee as well as any special needs that Life Housing need to be made aware of. It will also contain the contact details of the nominee's Housing Officer so that the Hostel Support Worker can liaise and discuss the nominee's needs.

Note: all homeless applicants sign a consent form to disclose information. There will be a free flow of information sharing between Housing Needs and Life Housing but on the understanding that this remains confidential and on a need to know basis.

- The TL-HP will arrange for copies of the nomination form to go to:

The Housing Officer

Temporary Accommodation manager

- Life Housing will arrange to interview the nominee within 2 days.
- If, following the interview, the nominee wishes to refuse the offer they must go to the Civic Centre and see the duty Housing Officer within 24 hours to formally refuse the offer.
- If Life Housing feel the nominee is unsuitable they need to contact the TL- HP and give their reasons. Issues of client, and or staff safety will be regarded as reasonable grounds to refuse a nomination.
- Life Housing will be responsible for claiming housing benefit; issuing keys; and arranging for the tenancy sign up.
- Life Housing will inform the TL-HP of the tenancy date as soon as the tenancy has been signed (they will in turn ensure that the B+B Officer is made aware).

3 Support & Management

Day to day management, rent collection, and neighbour disputes shall be the responsibility of Life Housing. When a resident reports racial harassment this will be subject to Housing Needs “Racial Harassment in Temporary Accommodation” policy. This is overseen by the Team Leader Advice & Assessment who will ensure close liaison with Life Housing. Each resident will have an individual support plan drawn up with the Hostel Support Workers. The Hostel can offer low to medium support to clients with special needs including mental health problems or a past history of substance misuse. Clients currently using drugs will not be accepted.

4 Leaving the Hostel

If Life Housing require a resident to leave either because of rent arrears or breach of tenancy they shall inform Housing Needs before recovery action begins. Housing Needs will liaise with Life Housing to try and resolve the issue. If recovery action/eviction cannot be avoided the resident will be interviewed by their Housing Officer to ascertain whether Housing Needs continues to owe them a duty. Where appropriate Children & Families will also be notified. Once a resident no longer needs the support provided by the Life Housing support package Housing Needs will be informed and will look for alternative accommodation.

5 Placements By Other Local Authorities

Where a resident has been placed by another Local Authority it is on the basis that the resident retains their local connection with that Authority. Placements are not regarded as being “of their own choice”.

6 Monitoring

The protocol will be reviewed at 6 monthly intervals. If there are any problems or disputes during the intervening period these will be resolved between the TL-HP and Life Housing Regional Manager. Implementation date is from 30/05/02. An exit questionnaire will be filled in with clients leaving the project, by a third party to this agreement, and the results will be shared with Housing Services in order that service provision can be improved.

C - Pathway Housing Association Supported Housing Scheme for 16 and 17 year olds

Contents

1. Introduction
2. The Accommodation
3. Scheme Objectives
4. Staffing arrangements
5. Selection criteria
6. Referral arrangements
7. Nomination agreement
8. Move on and resettlement

1. Introduction

Pathway Housing Association has developed a new scheme of 18 units of shared accommodation in 6 houses located in the boroughs of Croydon and Merton. The schemes will open in the first quarter of 2003 and will provide:

- Temporary accommodation and support services for young people, principally 16 and 17 year olds.
- A low to medium support service.
- A holistic package of housing and support services across a range of areas covering: education, health, employment, social, spiritual and cultural development.

Young people and particularly from African and Caribbean communities are increasingly suffering homelessness as a direct result of circumstances in the family home. It is not intended that the scheme will cater exclusively for these communities. However, we are of the view that we are best positioned to tailor these services in a culturally sensitive and empathetic manner.

2. The Accommodation.

The scheme will provide 18 bedspaces in 6 houses each with three bedrooms and shared bathroom, kitchen/diner and sitting area. The provision is in two clusters, 3 houses in adjacent roads in Merton and 3 houses in adjacent roads in Croydon. There is office space for staff in one house within each cluster.

3. Scheme Objectives

The scheme is intended for unintentionally homeless young people in priority housing need. The schemes will provide low to medium support and will be suitable for young people, who need help with acquiring life skills and access to training and employment but who are able to live independently and co-operate with other residents.

A multi agency approach is central to the schemes' ethos. We will work with other agencies and the user to ensure that they attain independent living skills, the service will be provided for as long as necessary until a settled home becomes available.

The scheme **will not be suitable** for young people who have high support needs, and require the careful monitoring that is only possible with 24 hour on site staff.

The Objectives of the scheme are:

- To provide safe, secure and good quality short-term accommodation, prioritising young people between the ages of 16 and 17 years.
- To carry out comprehensive assessment of longer term housing and support needs and identify or access appropriate housing and support services to meet those needs.
- To offer advice and guidance in education, training and employment opportunities. This will be achieved by establishing local links with specialist agencies for example counselling, education, legal and health, in order to meet the specific needs of each resident.
- To provide support and information in relation to benefits and other financial entitlements.
- To encourage young people to build, and use, a network of friends, family and local community resources.
- To provide an environment that empowers young people by maintaining an active commitment to residents' participation.
- To work with young people to identify their support needs, their aspirations and the opportunities open to them and to help them make the transition to independent living.
- To provide a resettlement service which prepares a young person for independent living.
- To address the issues of discrimination and to promote all cultures of tolerance and acceptance of each others values by the implementation of an equal opportunity policy.

These objectives will be achieved through:

- The provision of a comprehensive key working system where each resident has a named worker who will co-ordinate their support and re-housing whilst living in the scheme.

- The use of support plans, action plans and reviews to ensure that key workers' plans and goals are client orientated so that residents are able to maximise on the benefits of their stay.
- Multi agency working.

4. Staffing

The schemes will be staffed by a team of four Supported Housing Workers and will be managed by the Project Manager. The Manager will also be responsible for our new scheme for teenage mothers. The team will provide a service between the hours of 8.30 am – 11.00 pm, seven days a week. Out of hours emergencies will be covered by on call service provided by the staff team on a rota basis.

5. Selection Criteria.

- Applicants must be between the ages of 16 - 25 years of age and accepted as homeless under S184, Section 7 of the Housing Act 1996 by the nominating authority. Priority will be given to 16 and 17 year olds who are unintentionally homeless and in priority need.
- Potential residents must have low to medium support needs and be able to live independently in a shared housing setting. The project is not able to accept young people with high support needs who require a high degree of monitoring and supervision that is not possible to provide in a scheme without 24 hour staff presence. This will include: young people on the child protection register; those with histories of alcohol and drug misuse; histories of serious or violent offences; those with mental health problems or learning disabilities. An assessment of support needs will be made at the referral stage.
- Potential residents must be eligible to claim benefits.
- The purpose of the scheme is to provide a holistic support service to assist young people in order to assist them make the transition to fully independent living. It is therefore important that referrals understand the aims of the scheme and indicate a willingness to engage with staff.

6. Referral and Assessment Process.

The Nomination Agreement, attached as Appendix One, details the division and order of nominations from participating authorities.

The following referral procedure will be followed:

- When a vacancy occurs Pathway will contact the host authority. The host authority will contact the authority next on the list. (the Nomination Agreement, attached as **appendix one**, details the division and order of nominations from participating authorities)
- Whenever it is possible to anticipate a void, Pathway will contact the authority prior to the unit becoming void.
- The nominating authority will have 10 working days, from notification, to make a referral. If no referral is received the nomination right will pass to the next Local authority who will have 10 working days to make a referral, if no referral is made the authority next on the list will be contacted.

- The case worker will complete a Pathway's referral form, (attached as **appendix two**) and the associations standard housing application form. The information will be faxed to the scheme office together with any relevant documentation.
- Pathway will then contact the referral to arrange an interview to be held at the scheme. The interview will assess the residents support needs and suitability for the scheme.
- A decision will be made within 5 working days and wherever possible same day decisions will be made. The referring authority will be informed of the decision. Reasons for rejecting a referral will be given in writing with a copy to the nominating authority.
- Pathway will inform the nominating authority of the tenancy start date by the proceeding Friday so that any B&B placement can be cancelled.
- A copy of the signed Tenancy Agreement will be sent to the case worker.

Re assessment of need

If at a later stage it is assessed that the young person has needs over and above what is offered by Pathway, Pathway will contact the local authority either to work together on a specific issue or to negotiate another placement that may be more suited to meet the young person's needs.

7. Nomination Agreement

The Nomination Agreement can be provided on request. Merton will monitor the nominations take up Pathway will manage the nominations process.

Each borough has 10 working days to make a nomination once invited to do so by Pathway. The Association will use its best endeavours to sign the tenant up as soon as possible.

If a borough is unable to nominate within 10 working days, then Pathway will invite the next borough to provide a nominee. This will continue until a nomination is secured.

8. Move on and resettlement

The nominating Authority accepts responsibility for the permanent re-housing of the resident under S184, as a condition of the referral. Pathway will work with the resident throughout their stay at the project in preparation for the move to independent housing. The resettlement service will include liaison with the Housing Department. Staff will accompany the resident to viewings and help deal with any problems that

arise. Other support services include following up tenancy start dates; applying for grants (such as the Community Care Grant) organising utilities, making referrals to furniture projects, helping with move arrangements and provide a follow up service in the first 6 months.

D - Protocol For Homeless Referrals Between Richmond Youth Offending Team (RYOT), Adolescent Resource Team (ART) and the LBRuT Advice & Assessment Team

Purpose

- To formalise joint working arrangements between RYOT, ART and the A&A Team.
- To prevent the breakdown of tenancies (both temporary or permanent) and the risk of re-offending.
- To ensure that homeless young people are appropriately referred and have a package of support.

Background

Homelessness is a statutory service covered by the Housing Act 1996 pt. VII and now the Homeless Act 2002. Local Authorities have a new duty to implement a strategy to prevent and eradicate homelessness. They also have an enhanced duty towards all 16-17 year old homeless young people who are now regarded as having a priority need.

Why Have A Protocol

In the past young people have been passed between agencies and asked to see a duty worker. This has led to a false level of expectation for the applicant, and has had the result that Housing Officers are expected to make an assessment without any background information and Youth Offending Team Workers/Social Workers are expected to provide information at short notice.

Planning and Appointments will ensure better collaborative work, better communication, reduced risk, shorter waiting times, less work and happier customers.

Procedure

All homeless young offenders/ART clients will be seen by appointment unless there are exceptional circumstances.

The YOT/ ART Worker will ring the A&A Team and request an appointment time. They should speak to the Young Persons Housing Officer.

They will outline the background of the case and a verbal decision can be made as to whether a referral to Richmond is appropriate or whether another Local Authority has a duty to assist.

If the case is coming to Richmond an appointment will be made within 3 working days.

The Young Persons Housing Officer will handle cases. This will ensure continuity and consistency of service delivery.

The YOT Worker will be asked to fax through a copy of:

- The Housing referral form (see appendix 1)
- Risk Assessment form (see appendix 2)
- Contact details for the applicant
- Any other relevant information in support of the application not covered above.

The ART Worker will be asked to fax through:

- Background report and history of involvement with the team
- Risk Assessment

The A+A team will send:

- An emergency housing form
- A medical self-assessment form
- Customer care booklet

to either the applicant or their YOT /ART Worker.

Until an applicant has been interviewed, the A&A Team cannot confirm that there is a duty to house. The Youth Justice Worker may wish to attend the interview.

If a homeless application is taken, a written decision (section 184 letter) will always be provided. If the customer can be assisted with advice, an email confirming what action was taken will be sent to either the RYOT or ART Manager.

The interview has to establish whether the applicant:

- Is eligible
- Is homeless
- Is in priority need
- Is not homeless intentionally
- Has a local connection

Once it has been established that there is a duty to offer temporary accommodation the A&A Officer will liase with the Youth Justice Worker to confirm the address details.

Once in temporary accommodation it will be vital that there is an agreed level of support to ensure that the tenancy is maintained. The level of support should be determined on a case-by-case basis.

The Youth Offending Team has a statutory involvement with young offenders to minimise risks. The A&A Team have access to a Young Persons Housing Officer and the Resettlement Team.

Agreement should be reached on what services are available, e.g. a drug and alcohol worker, and how often the applicant is visited.

Confidentiality

All homeless applicants have a paper file, which is stored separately. All reports are filed away and only accessed by authorised Officers. This Protocol recognises that both RYOT and the A&A Team have responsibility as corporate parents for the welfare of their applicants and to minimise risk *per se*.

This Protocol is written confirmation that information will be shared between the two organisations.

Intentionally Homeless Clients.

There will be instances where a client referred to as homeless will be found to have become homeless intentionally, or an accepted homeless client will lose their interim accommodation and be found intentionally homeless due to their behaviour. This decision will not be taken lightly, each case will be assessed sensitively and according to its own individual circumstances. The Housing Department duty to a customer will cease if they are found to be intentionally homeless but YOT may still have a duty of care. The following is a suggested protocol to follow.

Young Persons Housing Officer has reason to believe customer will be IH. They will alert YOT and Children and Family Housing Officer to this possibility.

YOT to consider funding either alternative accommodation or privately rented accommodation.

YOT to inform Children and Family Housing Officer they agree to fund the accommodation.

Children and Family Housing Officer will liaise with landlords willing to accept young people and locate accommodation. It may not always be possible to locate accommodation within London Borough of Richmond. They will liaise with customer and YOT worker to explain the legalities of private renting.

Children and Family Housing Officer to make best use of resources and seek a rent guarantee rather than pay one.
Housing to invoice YOT quarterly.

YOT worker will assist the customer complete their housing benefit forms

Monitoring

The Team Leader A&A and or the RYOT/ART Team Manager will resolve any disputes or difficulties.

E - Joint Working Protocol for the Assessment of Homeless Children and Families with Children

Purpose:

The protocol is designed to ensure that Housing Services and Children's Services work co-operatively to produce a higher quality, more efficient and cost-effective service for the client. It also intends to avoid any undesirable outcomes for the authority in the form of judicial review or an interim injunction being granted against the Council.

Background:

Housing have a legal obligation to refer the following to Children's Services.

1. All cases where an application for housing assistance is received from a 16 or 17 year old.
2. Where there is reason to believe that a family with children may be intentionally homeless.
3. All other cases where housing are considering making a decision that they do not, or no longer owe the family any further duty, e.g. discharge decisions.

Procedures:

16/17 year olds

1. The Lead Officer Children's Services will be sent a monthly spreadsheet notifying her of all applications received from 16/17 year olds.
2. The Young Persons Housing Officer will inform the applicant verbally that this will be done.
3. Lead Officer Housing Services will notify Children's Services of all 16/17 year olds found intentionally homeless and given 28 days notice to vacate temporary accommodation.
4. Children Services (IRT) to be notified by Housing Services of all 16/17 year olds evicted without notice. It is anticipated that this would be rare, and would only be for serious offences such as assaults on staff or other residents, fire starting, or any other behaviour that is considered to put staff or other residents at risk.
5. If Housing Needs identify any 16/17 year old in need of additional support they will be referred to ART via IRT. [This may change in the near future with all referrals going straight to ART].

Intentionally Homeless Families with Children

1. Housing Services will e-mail/fax I.H notifications to IRT Team Manager, Duty Manager and Referral Co-Coordinator.
2. Families with children on the Child Protection Register will not be found intentionally homeless without due regard to Childrens Services.
3. IRT will record e-mail notifications on RICS data base and record the decision as NFA. The notification is simply for information for the IRT to use should the family approach Specialist Children's Services.
4. Should the client make contact with IRT they will reinforce the message that the client must try to resolve their own housing situation by staying with family or friends or securing their own alternative accommodation.
5. If the client does nothing, or is not able to resolve their housing difficulties by the time the notice to leave their temporary accommodation expires and they turn up at IRT/HPU, IRT and HPU Lead Officers will agree an extended time period in temporary accommodation but only if the family are demonstrating a commitment to finding alternative accommodation. If they fail to act, and are placing a child/children at risk of homelessness IRT will carry out an Initial Assessment within 7 days. IRT may agree to accommodate the children if genuinely homeless and no other alternatives are available (either short or long term), but as a general rule will not provide temporary funding for a Bed and Breakfast for the whole family unless they can demonstrate a time period for which they will have housing (in this case IRT/HPU would normally be aware and the temporary accommodation extended already).
6. A copy of the assessment will be forwarded to Team Manager HPU.
7. Lead Officer Housing Services and Children's Services will, if necessary discuss final resolution. This could be children placed with extended family members until the parent(s) find accommodation, or temporary accommodation will continue to be provided and the client assisted through the Council's Rent Deposit Scheme. [Client's with a history of anti-social behaviour and serious rent arrears will not normally be considered eligible for the scheme]. As a last resort the client may be assisted with S.17 money (deposit of privately rented accommodation and rent in advance).

Families with Children where Housing Services have no duty such as Asylum Seeker Families and those where housing's duty has ended i.e. discharge of duty.

1. This refers to those families dispersed by NASS under Section 95 who should approach the local authority in their dispersal area on being granted leave to remain.
2. These families will only receive assistance with travel costs to return to their dispersal area.
3. All other families with children to which housing do not have a duty will continue to receive support by Housing Services and Children's Services with a view to assisting them to secure alternative accommodation with family or friends.

Implementation/Review: The policy is effective from June 08 and will be reviewed after 3 months.