

## Appendix 1 – Accommodation with Support for 16-25 year old Cared for Children, Care leavers, and Unaccompanied Asylum Seeking Children and Young People.

### Consultation and Engagement summary

- 1 During the review of the supported accommodation offer the Council has consulted and engaged with care leavers, providers of supported accommodation, professionals and other local authorities to shape the future intentions of a commissioned offer. During the evaluation stage of the recommissioning, we are hopeful that our Care Leaver Ambassador will form part of an interview panel for prospective providers, where their scores will be included in the award of future contracts.
- 2 The consultation and engagement included the following activities:
  - a) The Council gathered care leaver feedback in collaboration with the Youth Support Participation Team, a Care Leaver Ambassador and Care Leaver Service via a Care Leaver Survey.
  - b) The Care Leaver Survey was shared with commissioned providers, the Care Leaver Service and Pure Insight who are the current contracted provider for Care Leaver Mentoring.
  - c) The Children's Commissioning Team have consulted and engaged with providers of supported accommodation via a Market Engagement questionnaire.
  - d) Since the last report was presented to Children and Families Committee on the 9<sup>th</sup> June 2025, Children's Commissioning have carried out further consultation with providers of supported accommodation using the original Market Engagement questionnaire.
- 3 Additional feedback has been gathered from the Local Offer review in 2024, where care leavers highlighted pathway plans, housing, preparing for adulthood and specific support areas i.e. financial, mental health, life skills as areas of need.
- 4 Results from both surveys were mixed, with 28 responses for the Care Leaver Survey and 41 responses for the Provider Market Engagement questionnaire.
- 5 The Care Leaver Survey highlighted the below themes in response to how the current service could be enhanced:
  - a) **Independence preparation should be gradual and start before the age of 16**, with support from foster carers, residential staff, and semi-independent housing providers. This could include skills-building around managing a household, cooking, and budgeting.
  - b) There should be **more housing options available to young people** and in the areas that they want to live. There needs to be better understanding and support with the Cheshire Homechoice process. A

dedicated housing officer within the team could act as a mediator between the Leaving Care Service and Housing.

- c) Young people told us they would like **‘trainer flats’ that are semi-independent. Shared living/accommodation with support are also highlighted, sharing with 1-3 people to learn new skills together.**
- d) Young people feel that they require **supported accommodation until they are mentally, physically and financially ready to move on.** This could take anywhere between 12 months to a few years.
- e) Young people would **like to be close to town centres** i.e. Crewe, Congleton, Macclesfield which include colleges/education settings.
- f) Young people told us that a good service offers support, with appropriate staffing levels and prepares them for independence. 24/7 access to support was also highlighted to help with feeling isolated. Mental health support in becoming ‘adult’ ready was highlighted within the responses.

6 The Provider Market Engagement questionnaire highlighted the below responses:

- a) All providers that completed the questionnaire told us that they would be interested in delivering across Cheshire East, but this would be mainly dependent on suitable accommodation being readily available, and funding available with the contract.
- b) The types of accommodation that could be achievable are Semi-independent living (16–18-year-olds) including 24/7 onsite support, Independent Living (18-21 years old) with lower less intensive support and Full Independence (21-25 years old) with mentoring and aftercare support. Emergency accommodation with specific move on plans would also be achievable within the right budget.
- c) By providing tailored accommodation, preventative support, person-centred planning through the correct pathways, and strong partnerships, providers can ensure that young people in Cheshire East are supported to avoid homelessness and achieve the best possible life chances.
- d) Every young person should receive an initial assessment, shaping their personalised support plan ensuring their participation, with regular weekly key working sessions to track progress. More formal reviews at intervals agreed with the young person would work towards positive transition to adulthood.
- e) Mental Health and Wellbeing Team, who support trauma-informed practice and good connection to specialist agencies.
- f) Challenges that providers will face include demand and capacity issues, with the rising numbers of care leavers and UASC putting

pressure on available placements, availability of suitable properties, sustainable funding – longer term contracts would be beneficial for providers to build a sustainable offer.