

Scrutiny Commission

LIH and CYPS

**Housing Support for young
people leaving care**

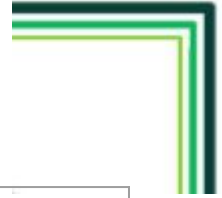


Levels of demand



- Hackney's Leaving Care Service provides an offer of support to all young people with leaving care rights between the age of 18 and 25. **This includes a statutory duty to support care leavers to access suitable accommodation between the ages of 18 and 21.**
- As of January 2022, the Service was supporting a total of **399 care leavers** age 18 to 25, including **296 young people age 18 to 21.**
- **The number of care leavers is going up over time:** there were 316 at the end of March 2019, 335 at the end of March 2020, which had risen to 376 at the end of March 2021.
- As of January 2022, there were 413 children in our care, **129 of them are age 16 or 17.**
- The forecasted spend within the Children and Families Service for care leavers accommodation for 2021/2 is **£4.9 million.**

Care leaver accommodation options 18 - 21



| Accommodation Type | Numbers | 2021/22 Budget Forecast |
|---|----------------|--------------------------------|
| Semi independent accommodation | 145 | £3,806,000 |
| Independent tenancy | 27 | 0 |
| Staying Put (with former foster carers) | 48 | £1,052,000 |
| Supported Lodgings | 6 | £76,000 |
| Living with friends or family | 20 | 0 |
| Prison | 24 | 0 |
| No fixed abode/homeless | 2 | 0 |

Supported accommodation options for care leavers 18 - 21



Staying Put: This is our preferred option for care leavers and most similar to the experience of most 18 year olds growing up in Hackney

- **Trend:** Currently 54 young people in Staying Put, up for 33 in March 2021.
- **Challenge:** If all our foster carers kept all their children Staying Put until 21, we would have few fostering places available for younger children.

Supported Lodgings

- **Trend:** Since 2020 we have recruited 12 Supported Lodgings hosts.
- **Challenge:** Promoting the potential benefits of this option to care leavers.

Semi Independent Accommodation

- **Scope:** Ranges from floating support (5 hours plus key work support) to 24 hour staffed provision
- **Challenges:** Variability in quality, availability of provision in the areas we want it (both local and in areas where looked after children have lived before turning 18), costs.

New Young People's Pathway



Re-procurement of semi-independent contract informed by scoping exercise led by Hackney of Tomorrow around what care leavers want from supported accommodation. 30 young people living across 7 semi-independent homes were consulted.

- 80% felt adequately supported when they moved into their current homes;
- Only 63% felt they received the support they needed in their homes;
- On average, young people said they were accessing 2.5 hours of key worker support per week;
- 70% said they felt harassed rather than supported by staff at their homes if they fall into rent areas;
- 90% felt the home was adequately preparing them for independent living;
- Only 57% described their homes as safe and secure;
- Only 37% felt that anti-social behaviour in their homes were dealt with effectively;
- 77% said they felt financially trapped in their accommodation;
- Only 57% said their homes were in a good state of repair.

50 concrete recommendations were made, which informed the new service specification.

New Young People's Pathway - from April 2022



The Ambition:

- To increase the number of semi-independent homes available for care leavers in Hackney and neighbouring boroughs;
- To procure a service that is able to meet the complexity of young people's presenting needs;
- To secure good homes for care leavers at competitive rates (7 year contract);
- To offer a flexible model of support, which can respond to changes in young people's circumstances over time;
- To have high expectation of key worker support e.g to work within a psychologically informed environment (PIE) or with a trauma informed approach;
- To offer affordable accommodation, particularly for young people who are working;
- Support young people in understanding their realistic move on options and empower them to be able to access private rented accommodation when they are ready.
- The service specification was co-produced with care leavers and young people who have experienced homelessness.

What we know care leavers want long-term



- To know, long before they turn 21, where they will live going forward;
- To have stable, affordable accommodation options;
- To have some feeling of agency in important decisions about their housing future;
- To have access to consistent advice about their housing options from housing specialists;
- To have a choice about where they live: Not all young people want to live in Hackney. *As of January 2022, 148 care leavers were living in Hackney, 66 more living in neighbouring boroughs, 185 were living further afield.*

Nominations for quota places



Leaving Care approach to nominations

- Is the care leaver approaching or recently turned 20?
- Do they want to live in Hackney?
- Do they have leave to remain in the UK?
- Are they likely to be able to maintain a tenancy?
- Do they have rent arrears?
- Are they most 'in need'?

Practice dilemmas

- How do we make the nominations system as fair as possible, given demand outweighs supply?
- Should the nomination process be a positive incentive for those doing well, or to be used for those most 'in need', in line with the Council's wider lettings policy?
- How do you determine who is most 'in need'?
- How do you manage young people's expectations?
- What can we do for those care leavers who do not want to live in Hackney?

What we think would help



- A dedicated leaving care housing officer, who can offer advice and support to our care leavers;
- Access to specific private rental schemes;
- A rethink of the quota system;
- New, diversified housing opportunities for care leavers with a range of strengths, needs and ambitions;
- Clear pathways that are easily communicated.

Housing demand and affordability



- In the last 10 years Hackney has seen the second highest jump in property prices increasing by an average of 105 % to an average of £604,000
- 8500 households on the Housing Register
- More and more households are in priority need; over 4,700 applicants are considered to be in acute need and many have multiple and complex needs including previous care leavers
- Homelessness levels are also increasing- 2020/21 up nearly 9% and up over 52% from 2017-18
- Number of social housing lets reduced from 1638 in 2010 to 409 in 2019/20 (215 were one bedroom properties)
- Demand for one bedroom properties is the highest - 2500+
- Renting is a challenge for single individuals with rents for an average one-bedroom dwelling in the borough standing at 61.2% of median pre-tax pay in London, one of the highest ratios in London.
- Only affordable option in PRS in Hackney and most of London is shared accommodation (benefit cap)

Current offer - social housing and financial



- Quota : 18 social housing properties ringfenced and allocated pa
 - 16 x 1 bedroom properties
 - 2 x 2 bedroom properties
- Waiting times for HR bidding is c.3 years for 1 bedroom, c.12 years for 2 bedroom
- Cannot gauge where or when these will become available - main reason for empty properties is the death of a tenant
- Maintained quantum figure for care leavers quota despite reduction of 75% in available properties
- Setting Up Home Allowance of up £2000 to all care leavers assessed as ready for a tenancy, to support them in furnishing their first property.
- Deposit and 1 months rent in advance and support to find affordable PRS if prevention of homeless ie 56 days prior to homelessness
- Peer Landlord Scheme - Thamesreach shared accommodation with support

Housing Strategy -accommodation for Care Leavers



- A new Hackney Housing Strategy 2022- 2027 under development
- Care Leavers will form a priority objective
- Development of a new housing pathway
 - Step up/down
 - Housing Supply options (inc Hackney Housing Company)
 - Support models
 - Single pathway / service?
 - Personal Housing Plans
 - Corporate Parent Principle

Care leavers outside the borough



- Whether careleavers can join the Housing Register in the borough they live, depends on that local Councils allocation policy.
- Hackney care leavers only have an automatic local connection to the area outside the borough due to being a care leaver if they have been resident in that area for a continuous period of 2 years or more, of which some of the 2 year period falls before the person attained the age of 16.
- If they move to an area outside Hackney after they are 16 they would have to meet any residency requirements that area impose. In most areas they would have to show a level of housing need to access the register.

Next Steps



- Dedicated workstream with managers from BHN & LC
- New process to utilise homeless preventions monies earlier in the process whilst able to show DLUCH return on investment via HCLIC
- Continued housing advice on affordability and realistic options directly with CL and in relevant professional settings
- Explore setting up a LBH Youth & Careleaver Homeless Prevention forum
- Design & implement a finding and keeping my new home toolkit
- Amend Lettings Policy to accept care leavers housing application at age 18 whilst still in care placement
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More than a leaflet- what is personalised housing advice?



The Benefits and Housing Needs Service are committed to providing meaningful advice and assistance to all households in housing need in the borough.

- **Personal Housing Plans** - developed by residents with Housing Advice staff - a realistic plan agreed and developed with the resident that documents the needs and aspirations allowing residents to set their goals. Outlines key actions required by residents with the councils support. Documents all options and assists with decision making. Resident can use to chart their progress.
- **Income maximisation and affordability** - Officers will assist residents to maximise their income through welfare benefit advice, access to employment and training advice through JCP and Hackney Works. Utilising LHA rates, rental market data and household circumstances residents will be able to identify affordable areas to concentrate their efforts.
- **Securing Properties** - Utilising contacts already in place the B&HN Service can assist residents to negotiate the Private Rented Sector, ensure that landlords and agents fulfill their legal requirements and that properties meet required standards. Residents have access to HomeswapperUK that advertises Social Tenancies throughout the UK

Any Questions?

