



**INFORMING
FUTURES**

1625 Independent People

COMPARING YOUNG PEOPLE'S INTENSIVE SUPPORT SERVICES

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This resource is part of the Informing Futures toolkit, a free online resource for practitioners seeking to understand and support care and custody experienced young people.

For more information or queries on any of the topics covered in this toolkit, or to find out about training and consultancy we can offer please contact enquiries@1625ip.co.uk.

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Comparing Young People's Intensive Support Services

Supported housing for young people

Supported housing covers a wide variety of provision in the UK. Conventional supported housing is defined as housing which is either (a) made available only in conjunction with the supply of support, or (b) is made available exclusively to residents who have been identified as needing support. Support needs can be in a range of areas, including but not limited to; substance misuse, mental health, physical health, domestic violence or abuse, refugees, those leaving the criminal justice system.

In the context of youth homelessness, supported housing tends to be divided into high, medium and low support. There are no hard and fast definitions for what is meant by these terms, and different providers will have their own classifications which help them to match their housing offer to the perceived need, and to the requirements of those commissioning the services. These will typically reference an indicative number of hours of support provided to individuals in the scheme, the level of security or staff presence within the scheme, and the degree to which engagement in support is mandatory in order for the resident to retain the accommodation.

For example, St George's House in Bristol is classed as a high support hostel. There is a managed front door and a 24 hour staff presence in the hostel, with at least 2 members of staff on site at all times. Every resident has a keyworker and direct 1:1 support hours each week. Accommodation consists of private en suite bed/living rooms in small 'clusters' with shared kitchen facilities. Movement between clusters is limited. Some residents may also have curfews in place, which staff will monitor in conjunction with statutory services.

Why are trauma informed intensive support services needed?

High support accommodation for young people is often offered through a hostel model. Hostel provision varies greatly from place to place, but typically comprises a number of accommodation units grouped together, with varying configurations of private and shared spaces, typically including some staff working on site at least part of the time. A perceived benefit of this model is the economy of scale it offers. However, even in hostels with small numbers of units (and where these might be self-contained flats), it is recognised that grouping young people with sometimes very different support needs together in this way can create its own challenges.

Any accommodation which is recognised as housing vulnerable young people can become a target for drug dealing, child criminal exploitation (CCE) or child sexual exploitation (CSE) activity. High support hostel type accommodation, which groups numbers of young people with high support needs together in one place, can be particularly at risk of this. Young people who have experienced trauma may find it particularly challenging to live in a hostel

environment. Young people who struggle with emotional regulation can find the pressures of sharing space with others overwhelming. Noises, unfamiliar spaces and other people's unpredictable behaviours can be triggering. These triggers can exacerbate existing mental health challenges or challenging behaviours. Differing levels of risk and vulnerability amongst residents can be hard for staff to manage effectively whilst also maintaining a fair and equitable offer to all residents. For these reasons, some young people who have experienced trauma will be deemed unsuitable for high support hostel accommodation. This group are unlikely to be considered for other lower support housing options because of their perceived levels of risk.

A consequence of this can be a significant number of young people who are effectively excluded from all existing services. In some circumstances they may be deemed intentionally homeless, with no recourse to housing, or accommodated in temporary or emergency placements which are typically costly and do not offer support. For all these reasons, councils and providers have been exploring other approaches which might offer better opportunities to consider the impact of trauma, personalise accommodation and support, manage risk, and achieve better outcomes for young people for whom hostels are not an appropriate environment.

Comparing models of intensive support

For the purpose of this guide, we examine 3 different models of intensive support services from 3 different providers in England and Wales, and compare the key learning points from each of these to identify what characterises a successful intensive support service, and which factors should be considered in the designing of local services for young people with complex support needs.

The three models are:

- St Basil's Intensive Support Pilot in Birmingham
- Llamau's High support services in Wales
- 1625 Independent People's Intensive Support Service in Bristol & South Gloucestershire

St Basils - Context

St Basils works with young people aged 16-25 who are homeless or at risk of homelessness, helping over 5000 young people per year across the West Midlands region. St Basils offer prevention, accommodation, engagement and support services. Their supported housing comprises 37 schemes with 557 bed spaces, and in 2000 they became a registered provider (housing association). They have Homelessness Reduction Act statutory responsibility for 16-25 year olds in Birmingham and Solihull, through their Youth Hub models as part of the Positive Pathway Frameworks. St Basils also have a strong focus on training, research and innovation, and having developed and embedded their own Psychologically Informed Environments framework, they now offer training in this field to other providers. They are responsible for developing the national Positive Pathway Frameworks commissioned by MHCLG and Youth Homeless Parliament.

Local considerations

Birmingham is a large authority with a Pathway model and commissioned supported housing.

St Basils provide Accommodation Pathway Coordinators within both Children's Services and also Youth Offending Service to ensure planned access to accommodation for Care Leavers and young people within the criminal justice system.

Birmingham Children's Trust also commissions accommodation via the Staffordshire Procurement Framework for Care Leavers who have needs beyond those able to be accommodated within supported housing or where there is insufficient supply.

Intensive support – pilot

St Basil's intensive support pilot was commissioned in 2017 by Birmingham City Council as part of an LGA funded programme to explore whether a more effective and less expensive solution could be offered to young people with high support needs in supported accommodation (in comparison with 'spot purchased' used as a last resort for young people who had exhausted other housing options).

5 spaces were created within existing supported accommodation, offering high quality self contained accommodation with 24 hour support from a staff team on site. Each young person was also assigned a progression coach, who worked with them on St Basil's My Strengths Training for Life programme. Bespoke support from a psychologist supported planning and assessment using a formulation model; and the flexibility to intensify support as needed was built in to the pilot.

The pilot ran for 9 months, with one early drop out. The remaining 4 young people achieved more outcomes in that period than they had in any other placement previously. Birmingham City Council calculated that the pilot achieved savings of £60k to public purse.

Key success factors identified:

- High quality properties underpinned by an established PIE ethos - all St Basils operational staff have PIE training and reflective practice. Attendance at RP sessions is a KPI
- Integration into an existing project enabled peer support to happen naturally and YP to establish relationships with others in a safe space.
- Experience & skill of existing staff team - with option to intensify when needed
- Psychologist support allowed for formulation - supporting good quality assessment and planning
- Bespoke training offered pathway to EET - this was made open access to avoid stigmatising those in the pilot - balance between integration with existing provision and bespoke elements is interesting.
- Independence but not isolation

Key challenges identified

Spot Purchasing Frameworks are always likely to be more expensive than commissioned supported housing models. Integrated commissioning could help overcome these challenges

Llamau - Context

Llamau were established 30 years ago as a youth homelessness charity. Today their core services cater for young people, vulnerable women and children across Wales, with the highest concentration of services in the South. Llamau offer a range of supported housing and refuge accommodation, as well as supported lodgings, floating support, specialist, advice, training and mediation services. Their supported housing offer is mainly comprised of small projects with 24 hour support. The majority of these properties are owned by local

authorities or housing associations. Llamau have always been a values based organisation, using a support methodology based on psychological principles but have been formalising a whole organisation, fully Psychologically Informed Environments approach over the past few years.

Local considerations

Supporting People funding (now incorporated into the Housing Support Grant) still exists in Wales and is ringfenced to provide support for the most vulnerable (in England this funding stream was absorbed into local councils formula grant in 2011/12). There is a strong focus from Welsh Government in ending homelessness in Wales. In addition to this, Welsh government has identified two priorities - reducing the number of children going into care, and reducing the instances of children being placed out of county. There are private accommodation providers in Wales of the type that have attracted negative attention in the media, these are being used to place children from England.

Intensive support – All of Llamau's supported housing projects work with young people who have been referred to them because of their complex support needs. In recent years, Llamau has developed small 2 or 3 bed projects, which have shared kitchen, bathrooms and living spaces but own bedroom. These projects have 24 hour support, with a staff to young person ratio of 1:1 or 1:2 . Some projects have waking night staff, but in most, staff sleep in with an expectation to wake up or stay up to deal with any housing management issues. There is also an on call system for out of hours.

There is the option to work with the local authority to increase the intensity of support for some young people by increasing the staffing across the 24hours. Accommodation is not earmarked specifically for care experienced young people, however it is recognised that most of their schemes will have at least some care experienced young people living in them. Support is delivered in a homely environment, at the projects or in the community. Staffing structure allows young people to be accompanied to appointments or positive activities, in recognition of the fact that this is important to enable young people to build links with their communities.

Llamau runs its own training projects called Learning 4 Life and Symud Ymlaen/Moving Forward. Young people can be referred into these projects and are also supported to access other external training courses or college if these are more suitable.

A typical length of stay would be between 12 and 18 months, depending on the needs of the young person and their readiness for independent living. Often, when they move on to their own accommodation, a period of floating support will be delivered by Llamau.

Key success factors identified:

- Small size of properties and level of privacy contributes to YP being able to safely build relationships with peers which has a very positive impact.
- 'Spaces of Opportunity' Ethos - Emphasis on resident ownership of spaces, i.e. 'we work in their homes', not 'they live in our projects'

- Independence but not isolation
- Staff ratios allow for 24 hour support so risk can be managed
- Flexibility to intensify support reduces exclusions
- Commissioned to provide transition support at move on for up to a year
- High numbers of young people who have been evicted from other accommodation move on successfully from this model of support.

Key challenges identified:

- Working across multiple areas - availability of other services can vary from one local authority area to another, so staff need to develop good local links.
- LA gateway systems: Llamau does not operate any exclusions, so getting full and accurate information about each young person is vital to enable effective support planning.
- Building trusting relationships with statutory services - to support appropriate referrals and information sharing
- Determining what information exists on a YP – often, recording has all been crisis led. Llamau then need to work closely with the local authority to gain a more rounded view and ensure the young person is accessing all the services they are entitled to

1625 IP – Context

1625 Independent People is a charity supporting young people experiencing or at risk of homelessness. Created by the merging of two smaller charities in 2009, the organisation has over 30 years of experience of delivering housing and support services in Bristol, South Gloucestershire and neighbouring areas. 1625IP offers a range of accommodation services with differing levels of support, including hostels, shared houses, self contained flats, and supported lodging schemes, mainly delivered in partnership with registered providers. 1625 have developed a reputation for innovative practice and are considered to be a leader in the field of Psychologically Informed Environments. The housing offer is complemented by a well established Participation and Learning team who deliver EET support and liaise with external EET partners. 1625IP also have a focus on working in partnership - with local authorities, other charities and the corporate sector - to deliver their programmes and research activities.

Local considerations

Bristol is a large urban area experiencing a great deal of pressure on its housing. South Gloucestershire faces other challenges arising from being a large area with poorer infrastructure and access to services. 1625IP are a key partner in joining up services locally, particularly in Bristol where their Youth MAPS project is piloting a multi agency 'one-stop shop' approach to assessing & preventing youth homelessness and removing barriers to young people accessing services.

Intensive Support Service

The intensive support service comprises 15 self-contained flats in different locations in the community, 6 in Bristol and 9 in South Gloucestershire, provided for young people in or leaving care. The service was originally piloted in Bristol with the support of the local authority, and has since been commissioned in both areas. Referrals come directly from Social Services in the relevant authority. The service provides support from the point of referral to the point of move on, and acts as a bridge between care and independent living for young people who are certain to be offered social housing because of their leaving care status. A typical length of stay would be between 6 & 18 months, during which time the young person will receive around 10 hours support a week, tailored to meet their individual needs and prepare them for an independent tenancy in the future. Keyworkers work closely with each young person's leaving care PA or social worker (and any other professionals involved) to ensure a joined up approach to support.

Key success factors identified:

- Many young people benefit from having the privacy of their own front door and not sharing any facilities (often for the first time in their lives)
- Flats are carefully sourced with this specific user group in mind, so they are always located near to amenities to support integration into the community
- Relationship based support helps young people make the transition to independence at their own pace
- Service takes a multi agency approach from day one
- Good links into other support services provided by 1625IP, eg Reboot West (care leavers EET support)

Key Challenges identified:

- Some young people struggle with living alone and experience feelings of isolation in the self contained flats.
- Good liaison with social services is key and the most successful placements are those where the young person's PA is engaged and prepared to communicate effectively with other workers.
- Managing neighbours can be challenging, and it has been difficult to source one bedroom properties with good access to amenities which do not share access or facilities with a large number of other residents.

Summary and Conclusions

Despite the differences in the local context, the properties and the way support is offered, there are some clear themes which emerge from a comparison of these services.

Psychologically Informed Approaches – All three organisations have formally adopted PIE as the underpinning of their work. Although the outworking of this is different in each case, what is common is that staff are systematically trained in psychologically informed environments,

and have access to regular reflective practice. This influences the way support is structured and delivered, the way breaches of tenancy are dealt with, the way staff wellbeing is supported, and the way the organisation learns.

Relationship Based Support – the common factor in delivery of support across all three services is that it is based on developing a trusting relationship with the young person. Whether the staff are co-located with the accommodation or visit on a regular basis, attention is paid to getting to know the young person first, so that their support can reflect their goals and aspirations. There is an emphasis on consistency, and on limiting the number of staff who have a support relationship with the young person. This can be particularly important for young people who have experienced care, and may have been moved around a lot in the past.

Multi Agency Working – across all services, it is recognised that good communication with key partners is a factor in successful placements. This starts at point of referral. It is also recognised that when housing staff are empowered to take the lead on coordinating multi agency meetings this has a positive impact on outcomes for the young person.

Independence vs Isolation – Young people who are candidates for high support accommodation have usually failed in previous placements. This can be due to difficulties in managing other people in their living spaces. However single occupancy flats can lead to young people feeling isolated, and associated deterioration of their mental health. A portfolio of properties which allow for flexibility around number and configuration of occupants would be ideal, but in reality support providers do not always have this choice. Where young people are placed in single occupancy flats, attention needs to be paid in support to helping them establish positive networks in their locality.

Quality Properties - St Basil's decision to become a housing association was informed in part by a desire to have greater control over the quality of their properties, and for them this has been a key success factor. Acquisition of appropriate properties can be a challenge, particularly in urban areas where there is a lot of pressure on housing. Although there is a diversity of types of property across all three providers, in common is an ethos that the property should be a home, not just a house. Efficient maintenance programmes and clear void standards play a part in this, but the simple test is the question staff should ask themselves before sign up: 'Would you be happy letting this to a young person from your family?'

Location, location, location – All 3 organisations recognise the location of properties as being very important. Properties are chosen with regard for neighbours, and for their proximity to local amenities and public transport networks, to maximise opportunities for young people to engage fully in their local community.

Success Factors in High Support Accommodation			
	St Basils	Llamau	1625ip
Support			
Relationship based support	Surround support from experienced staff team	Support delivered in the home environment or wherever most appropriate for the young person. Informal support occurs every day, formal support sessions occur at least once a week.	Daily contact led by a named keyworker in a small team
Multi Agency Approach	All young people were placed via a new referral process, using a conversational approach between social worker and provider followed by a meeting and visit with young person.	Referrals usually come through the Youth Gateway of the local authority, with multi-agency links with Social Services and YOS. Every young person's key worker is invited to their support review (if they are happy for them to attend). Llamau take a lead in notifying of any new risks .	Social services and young people involved from point of referral, multi agency and risk management meetings coordinated by 1625ip staff
Psychology support	Formulation of cases available through St Basils in house psychologist	psychologists support formulations through reflective practice. They are also available to provide bespoke support to teams.	Staff trained in Trauma Recovery Model, regular case reviews managed by support team leader, access to clinical psychologist
Staff based on site	Yes	Yes	No
Floating support	Yes	Yes – after move on	Yes

Success Factors in High Support Accommodation			
	St Basils	Llamau	1625ip
24 hour cover	Yes including waking night staff	Yes – sleeping nights (waking nights in some projects). On Call system also available	Yes – via on call system
Property & Location			
Single occupancy	Properties are self-contained within a courtyard development with communal resource rooms and staff office on site	No All have own bedrooms. Some have own s/c flat within a project house	Yes
Shared kitchen	No	Some shared, some have own kitchen	No
Shared bathroom	No	Some shared, some have own bathroom	No
Shared social spaces	Communal training and resource room – all have own living space as well	Yes	No
Close to amenities	Yes	Yes –All Llamau projects are in residential streets close to local amenities.	Yes
Good public transport links	Yes	Yes –All Llamau projects are in residential streets close to good public transport links	Yes