

# Impact Assessment



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Assessment of: The implementation of the Staying Close initiative for care leavers aged 18+

Service: Childrens Services

Head of Service: Vikki Hearn – Head of Service for Commissioning and Resources.

Version / date of sign off by Head of Service: 05 September 2023

Assessment carried out by (job title): Yvonne Short, Service Manager for Commissioning and Placements and Amber Wallis, Commissioning Officer

## 1. Description of project / service / activity / policy under review

The Council secured a revenue grant of £1.147 million in May 2023 from the Department for Education following a successful bid for funding under the Wave 3 Staying Close programme. The revenue grant is to be used over the next 2 years to pilot Staying Close for care experienced young people aged 18 plus. During this period the project will be evaluated as part of a national programme led by Foundations (formally known as What Works Centre for Children and Families), the focus of which will be improving outcomes and revenue savings.

The successful Staying Close bid submitted sets out how the Council will use up to 6 buildings to accommodate a minimum of 24 care experienced young people aged 18+ in high and medium needs provision. The young people will benefit from the support of accommodation support workers, based in the intensive support property and with a small caseload to enable them to offer a higher level of support for between 12 and 18 months, depending on the needs of the young people.

## 2. Proposal, aims and objectives, and reason for change or review

[Insert text here including, where relevant, explanation of how the economic, social and environmental well-being will be improved through what is being proposed. Where relevant, how, in conducting the process of procurement, might that improvement and 'social value' be secured?]

These services will enable the Council to provide supported accommodation for care experienced young people who are currently living in high cost supported accommodation for 16–18-year-olds and residential children’s homes. The Staying Close offer will provide more tailored support, with a focus on relationships built with the young person before they leave care, which is better suited to the transition of these young people to independent living.

### 3. Risk assessment, limitations and options explored (summary)

[Insert text here – summarise key findings of the equality, human rights, environment and economic analysis including overall risk assessment and combined or conflicting impacts]

[How will impacts and actions be monitored? Insert text here]

The funding for this service has come from grant funding from the Department for Education to deliver Staying Close initiatives, which are for care leavers aged 18+.

The service will be delivered as an internal service to care leavers and therefore staff will be recruited through the local authorities processes, ensuring staff display the core principles and behaviours at the heart of the local authority.

Staying Close will offer an additional move on options with support for care leavers in Devon. This will result in care leavers being supported to gain employment, participate positively in their local communities, maintain trusted relationships, and live independently.

Staying Close will allow care leavers to have tenancies which ensure their right to quiet enjoyment of their home, with support to ensure that this is maintained and eventually progress to private tenancies in the community.

In order to deliver Staying Close, the local authority will need to employ a number of staff in each area where a suitable property is identified. Those staff will then work with care leavers to support them to find employment and keep financial sustainability. Staying Close also relies on wrap around service in order to support young people, and where possible, those services will be commissioned through local providers.

### 4. People affected, diversity profile and analysis of needs

[Provide comprehensive diversity data and information in this section. This could include community, staff and service user profiles, feedback and analysis by protected characteristics, socio-economic status and other factors such as care experienced people. Delete this note and insert text here]

As of April 2023, there were 28 young people aged 18+ in supported accommodation provisions for 16- and 17-year-old children in care and 5 young people aged 18+ in residential childrens homes. The Council has arrangements in place with District Councils to jointly support

young people leaving care at 18 who require a semi-independent option as part of their transition. In 2022-23 205 care leavers were supported by specialist housing workers for young people based in District Councils and as at the 31st March 2023 44 care leavers were accessing supported accommodation, where the accommodation was funded by District Councils and support funded by DCC. However, this route does not meet the needs of all young people, which can be demonstrated by the number of young people remaining in care placements post 18.

Feedback from providers and front-line workers is that move on from residential children's homes and supported accommodation is a challenge for the following reasons:

- Finding suitable options for young people whose needs are not met within the current provision, including young people in need of mental health support.
- High levels of demand for housing, particularly in Exeter where there are more employment and education opportunities.
- Young people who come into a care placement at a late age and require time in a stable environment before they are ready to consider move-on options.
- The introduction of Ofsted registration for supported accommodation providers for 16- and 17-year-olds in care may further reduce sufficiency for care leavers age 18+, as it is anticipated that providers will prioritise delivering services for the cohort of young people that their registration covers. There is also the potential impact that some providers will not meet the quality thresholds implemented by Ofsted, and this will have an impact on 16/17 placement sufficiency and therefore providers ability to support young people 18 and over in the way they have to date i.e., regular extension past 18.

Securing move on accommodation with appropriate levels of support for care experienced young people will have a number of benefits:

- Reduced use of homeless accommodation for care leavers, including the use of B&Bs.
- Better supportive pathways for children as they leave care and become independent reducing cost in the long-term.
- Good quality accommodation for young people to support the transition to independence.
- Increase availability of 16-17 supported accommodation for children in care as 18+ young people will be able to move to more independent options.
- Reduced use of high cost supported accommodation for 18+ care experienced young people.

## 5. Stakeholders, their interest and potential impacts

- District Councils – Properties and services will be in local communities within district councils geographic area. District councils have a housing responsibility to care leavers

over the age of 18.

- Children in Care – This will be an additional offer for children in care once they become care leavers aged 18 years old. This offer will meet the needs of our care leavers who have higher/complex support needs.
- Care leavers – This will be an additional offer for care leavers who are 18 years old. This offer will meet the needs of our care leavers who have higher/complex support needs.

## 6. Additional relevant research used to inform this assessment

Following publication of the Independent Social Care Review in 2022 the government has indicated a commitment to the provision of supported accommodation for care experienced young people aged 18+. Staying Close 2023-25 guide for local authorities states that “we will be bringing forward legislation for Staying Close to be a national entitlement and for Staying Close to support young people up to age 23, recognising that young people in the general population are leaving home at older ages.” Drawing down the funding awarded under wave 3 will give us an opportunity to develop our offer with the benefit of funding attached in the first few years to help us develop our capacity.

The revenue grant used over the next 2 years to pilot Staying Close for care experienced young people aged 18 plus. During this period the local authority will complete formal data returns that will be used to support an ongoing evaluation of Staying close. At the end of the 2 years, the project will be evaluated as part of a national programme led by Foundations (formally known as What Works Centre for Children and Families), the focus of which will be improving outcomes and revenue savings.

## 7. Description of consultation process and outcomes

### Feedback from Care Experienced Young People on Housing and Support

A workshop with care experienced people took place at the Youth Voice Event on 17th June 2023. This explored the Staying Close model and support needed for young people to thrive as they move to independent living. Young people also undertook an assessment of housing issues in preparation for the event. The key quotes summarised by young people for the Housing workshop were as follows:

## Planning and Transitions

- *Moving suddenly without planning or knowing where you are moving to is scary.*
- *Slower transition between homes would be better so we can adjust and can feel supported and have time to get to know the new workers while our previous workers are still involved.*

## Housing and Accommodation Options

*More genuinely affordable homes for young adults!.*

*We can get stuck in supported accommodation because there is no move-in housing'.  
Living in a hotel or temporary accommodation can be scary and inappropriate and you  
can't move on with your life*

*There is not enough suitable accommodation for young adults with disabilities, so we feel  
like we are stuck with family forever.*

## Decision Making and Communication

*There is inconsistent decision-making on what housing is offered (Some get Band B and  
some do not, some get supported accommodation and some do not).*

*Better communication between all the different services we are accessing so that our  
housing officers receive the right information.*

All of the young people priorities raised in the above list are key priorities of the Staying Close project. A further workshop is planned with care experienced young people to provide further feedback on the detailed planning and design of the project.

The young people that are identified to move in to Staying Close properties will be engaged in the design and planning of the accommodation and support services.

Providers that already work with the young people and providers within the locality of Staying Close services will be engaged in the planning for the local network of services.

### Engagement with District Councils and Other Partners

Engagement with District Councils so far includes:

- An initial briefing on Staying Close at the Housing and Homes subgroup of corporate parenting board, where we discussed the objectives of the project and a wish to work in partnership with Local Housing Authorities.
- A request has gone out to District Councils setting out our property needs for Staying Close and asking them to let us know of any properties they may be able to put forward to it.

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## Background information

### 8. Equality analysis

Under the Equality Act 2010, the local authority must consider how people will be affected by a service, policy or practice. In so doing we must give due regard to the need to: eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation; advance equality of opportunity and foster good relations across protected characteristics of age, disability, gender reassignment, pregnancy and maternity, marriage and civil partnership (for work), sex, sexual orientation, race, and religion and belief. The Equality Act 2010 and other relevant legislation does not prevent the Council from taking difficult decisions which result in service reductions or closures for example, it does however require the Council to ensure that such decisions are: informed and properly considered with a rigorous, conscious approach and open mind, taking due regard of the effects on the protected characteristics and the general duty to eliminate discrimination, advance equality and foster good relations; proportionate (negative impacts are proportionate to the aims of the policy decision); fair, necessary, reasonable, and those affected have been adequately consulted.

- a) Is this group negatively or potentially negatively impacted, and in what way?
- b) What could be done or has been done to remove the potential for direct or indirect discrimination, harassment or disadvantage and inequalities?
- c) In what way do you consider any negative consequences to be reasonable and proportionate in order to achieve a legitimate aim?
- d) What can be done to advance equality further? This could include meeting specific needs, ensuring equality of opportunity and access, encouraging participation, empowering people, making adjustments for disabled people and action to reduce disparities and inequalities.
- e) Is there a need to foster good relations between groups (tackled prejudice and promote understanding) and help people to be safe and protected from harm? What can be done?

### **All residents by geographic area**

Only Devon care leavers will be able to access the Staying Close project, as this is linked to Department for Education funding for care leavers.

The aim is to have 6 properties spread across the footprint of Devon, and therefore there should not be any significant impact on the residents of each area.

The service will generate increased social value by facilitating care leavers development with support therefore increasing the likelihood in being successful in employment, reducing those who are not in education, employment or training and encouraging them to participate in their communities and be good social citizens.

It will give the opportunity for care leavers to continue to live in local communities which they have resided in and have existing community links.

### **Age**

Only Devon care leavers will be able to access the Staying Close project, as this is linked to Department for Education funding for care leavers.

Will positively impact on young people aged 18-25 – providing supportive move on options and promoting independent living skills. This will mean that young people are more likely to be successfully independent into adulthood.

**Disability (includes sensory, mobility, mental health, learning disability, neurodiversity, long term ill health) and carers of disabled people.**

Only Devon care leavers will be able to access the Staying Close project, as this is linked to Department for Education funding for care leavers. Reasonable adjustments will be implemented to support a care leaver into Staying Close if they

The proposal will offer a supportive move on option for young people with SEND and mental health, as it offers an enhanced wrap-around services.

**Race and culture: nationality/national origin, ethnic origin, skin colour, religion and belief, asylum seeker and refugee status, language needs**

Only Devon care leavers will be able to access the Staying Close project, as this is linked to Department for Education funding for care leavers. There are no restrictions in place that would discriminate against someone's Race and culture: nationality/national origin, ethnic origin, skin colour, religion and belief, asylum seeker and refugee status, language needs.

The project will be open to care leavers who have previously been Unaccompanied Asylum Seeking Children, and staff will work to ways identified through the Devon Race Equality Audit.

Matching will take place in properties with shared kitchen facilities and living areas to ensure that cultural needs are reflected.

**Sex and gender identity and reassignment (including men, women, non-binary and transgender people), and pregnancy and maternity (including women's right to breastfeed)**

Only Devon care leavers will be able to access the Staying Close project, as this is linked to Department for Education funding for care leavers. There are no restrictions in place that would discriminate against someone's sex, gender identity and reassignment, or pregnancy and maternity.

Staff will have appropriate training to ensure that they are able to meet the needs of young people with diverse gender identity including those undergoing transition.

Consideration will be made to ensure that properties are able to accommodate care leavers of all sex and gender identities.

Matching will take place in properties with shared bathroom facilities.



## Sexual orientation, and marriage/civil partnership if work related

Only Devon care leavers will be able to access the Staying Close project, as this is linked to Department for Education funding for care leavers. There are no restrictions in place that would discriminate against someone's sexual orientation, and marriage/civil partnership.

Whilst the accommodation is not intended for couples, PA's will support individuals in a variety of relationship and partnerships.

## Other relevant socio-economic factors and intersectionality

This includes, where relevant: income, housing, education and skills, language and literacy skills, family background (size/single people/lone parents), sub-cultures, rural isolation, access to services and transport, access to ICT/Broadband, children in care and care experienced people, social connectivity and refugee status/no recourse to public funds. Also consider intersectionality with other characteristics.

Only Devon care leavers will be able to access the Staying Close project, as this is linked to Department for Education funding for care leavers.

Care leavers will be supported by PA's to access housing benefits and other financial support schemes.

## 9. Human rights considerations:

We need to ensure that human rights are protected. In particular, that people have:

- A reasonable level of choice in where and how they live their life and interact with others (this is an aspect of the human right to 'private and family life').
- An appropriate level of care which results in dignity and respect (the protection to a private and family life, protection from torture and the freedom of thought, belief and religion within the Human Rights Act and elimination of discrimination and the promotion of good relations under the Equality Act 2010).
- A right to life (ensuring that nothing we do results in unlawful or unnecessary/avoidable death).

In selecting properties, consideration will be given to expressed views of care leaver in relation to location, access to services, education, and employment.

Occupants will have tenancies which ensure that their right to quiet enjoyment of their home and will be supported by PA's to sustain their tenancies.

Care leavers will also be supported to develop fully independent living skills and progress to private tenancies in the community.



## 10. Environmental analysis

An impact assessment should give due regard to the following activities in order to ensure we meet a range of environmental legal duties. The policy or practice does not require the identification of environmental impacts using this Impact Assessment process because it is subject to (please mark X in the relevant box below and proceed to the 11, otherwise complete the environmental analysis information below):

<b>Devon County Council's Environmental Review Process</b>	
<b>Planning Permission</b>	X
<b>Environmental Impact Assessment</b>	
<b>Strategic Environmental Assessment</b>	

- a) Description of any actual or potential negative consequences and consider how to mitigate against these.
- b) Description of any actual or potential neutral or positive outcomes and consider how to improve as far as possible.

[If carrying out an options appraisal, explore the pros and cons of each option for each area]

**Reduce, reuse, recycle and compost**

**Conserve and enhance wildlife**

**Safeguard the distinctive characteristics, features and special qualities of Devon's landscape**

**Conserve and enhance Devon's cultural and historic heritage**

**Minimise greenhouse gas emissions**

**Minimise pollution (including air, land, water, light and noise)**

**Contribute to reducing water consumption**

**Ensure resilience to the future effects of climate change (warmer, wetter winters; drier, hotter summers; more intense storms; and rising sea level)**

**Other (please state below)**

## 11. Economic analysis

- a) Description of any actual or potential negative consequences and consider how to mitigate against these.
- b) Description of any actual or potential neutral or positive outcomes and consider how to improve as far as possible.

[If carrying out an options appraisal, explore the pros and cons of each option for each area]

### **Impact on knowledge and skills**

PA's employed within the schemes will work with young people to increase their independent living skills, and encourage engagement with education, employment and training opportunities.

### **Impact on employment levels**

Staying Close will potentially require the local authority to appoint up to 10 new staff member to ensure the successful running of the project.

Care leavers will be more independent and will be encouraged to engage in employment.

### **Impact on local business**

Potentially increased level of business to providers, as the scheme has the flexibility to commission wrap around services for individuals. Where possible, wrap-around services will be commissioned through local providers.