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| <u>Committee and Date</u> |
| People Overview Committee |
| 27 January 2021 |

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| <u>Item</u> |
| <u>Public</u> |

Supporting young people into housing

Responsible officer

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1. Summary

- 1.1 This report sets out the current work undertaken by Housing Services regarding Children and Young People who are in Housing need.

2. Recommendations

- 2.1 That the People Overview Committee:
- Notes the work of the council in supporting young people to move into suitable accommodation.
 - Make any recommendations to further support this cohort of young people.

3. Risk assessment and opportunities appraisal

- 3.1 This report is for information only. No risk assessment has therefore been carried out.

REPORT

- 4.1 In a previous scrutiny meeting it was recognised that Housing needed dedicated support for those young people who have a housing need. This report provides members with an update on this role.

Note – this report is not in relation to any children who form part of a family unit, it refers to single applicants only aged 16-25.

- 4.2 Shropshire Council Services currently employs a Children and Young Person Coordinator within housing on a full-time basis.

This officer works with all individuals who come through the service who are aged 16 to 25 years of age. Many of the young people are also supported by Shropshire

Council's Leaving Care Team. Work with this cohort begins at age 17.5 when they are getting ready for independence. The young person will have been flagged by their social worker and / or their personal assistant. Many of them are ready to live independently but need guidance as to how to access the housing market.

4.3 Key tasks for this officer include:

- Support to join Shropshire HomePoint – this includes completing and submitting an application, providing the relevant documentation as well as weekly bidding on current adverts. They will also request gold banding for those young people leaving care and also those ready for move on if they are currently in supported housing;
- Some young people are not ready to move into independent living so need to find semi supported / supported living. This can be due to a number of reasons and can include (but not exhaustive of) mental health issues, exploitation/vulnerabilities, ex-offenders or just need a place so where they can improve their independence skills knowing there are staff on site to support them.
- The officer also completes referrals to the two supported accommodation options we have in the county and also regularly attends the projects to support with interviews as well as move people in. They also regularly attend both projects to talk through any concerns the clients may have about move on options and their future housing.
- Further to this, the officer also supports the young people with accessing the Discretionary Housing Payments and Local Support and Prevention Schemes in regard to deposits and rent in advance for both private and social housing as well as paying off arrears or access to funding for essentials for their new properties (ie, white goods).
- As well as the large number of care leavers, the service also supports 16 / 17 year olds who approach the Council as homeless. These young people may have never been in the care system and so be unaware of the support available to them. As well as the general advice and assistance stated above, officers will also provide support to rebuild relationship with parents / family members and support to return home if it is appropriate and safe for the young person to do so.
- As part of the support to those who approach as homeless, officers also attend joint assessments with the COMPASS team. This is a statutory responsibility for children's and Housing to undertake to determine who has the duty to house

the young person. Working with the allocated social worker, officers ensure the process is as relaxing as possible for the young person and ensure that they fully understand their options and choices.

- The housing service will also support young people who have been placed into Shropshire by other authorities and wish to remain here post 18.
- The service officer also sits on LAC reviews and safeguarding meetings where relevant and is part of the Child Exploitation panel.

5.0 Case Studies

5.1 The following two case studies demonstrate the day-to-day work carried out by the service:

5.2 I have supported three care leavers to register on Homepoint, I have placed bids for them and when all three were offered a property. I supported them to view and sign for the property, apply for the rent in advance and apply to the LSPF fund to help them furnish their homes. These three young people are now settled in their homes and are either in education or working. They still contact me if they need help and I keep in touch with their personal assistants should the need for me to support them again arise.

5.3 I have one care leaver I have supported for the last two years who is a single mum, she has been wanting to move to a bigger home and move closer to her family. I have been bidding weekly for this young lady and finally she has moved into a new build in the same village as her family. As part of my support I have been in contact with the landlord, her personal assistant and other agencies. I have arranged the Discretionary Housing Payments to fund the rent in advance and successfully obtained Local Support and Prevention Funding for carpets.

List of background papers (This MUST be completed for all reports, but does not include items containing exempt or confidential information)

Cabinet Member (Portfolio Holder)

Robert Macey (Housing and Strategic Planning)

Edward Potter (Children's Services)

Local Member

All Members

Appendices

None