

Room for improvement:

research into the accommodation and support needs of young people in Cardiff

Written by Peter Mackie



Acknowledgements

For this research to be effective, Shelter Cymru required young people and the professionals who work with them to fully engage in the research process. In fact, we exceeded our expectations with regard to the range of people who contributed to the study. Shelter Cymru is extremely grateful to the many young people and professionals who contributed to this research and we hope that the report is a fair and accurate portrayal of their views.

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Introduction

The Cardiff Children and Young People's Partnership commissioned Shelter Cymru to conduct research into the accommodation and housing support needs of vulnerable young people in Cardiff. The purpose of the research is to provide evidence which will inform future provision of both housing and youth support services.

The research provides three key outputs. Firstly it maps current accommodation and support services for young people. Secondly, it highlights good practice and deficiencies in current services. Finally, the report recommends improvements to accommodation and support services.

Key to the effectiveness of the research was an approach which enabled young people to express their views, whilst also accounting for the experiences and perceptions of professionals working with young people. The research methods included in depth discussions with young people and self-completion questionnaires with key stakeholders. This mix of research methods has resulted in a well-informed research study.

The following research report provides a detailed account of the research findings. It shows that there is a lot of very effective provision in Cardiff, which is received well by young people. Inevitably there is *room for improvement*, and some of these improvements can be addressed by local agencies. However, the research also identifies several service and support deficiencies which must be actioned by the Welsh and UK Governments.

The overwhelming message from the young people and professionals who contributed to this research is that they want to see change. It is hoped that the Children and Young People's Partnership will take all possible steps to act on the recommendations of the research report, keeping the community informed as changes take place.

Method

In order to meet the research objectives, young people and professionals working with them had to be involved in the research. Effectively involving young people required a different approach to that used for involving adult professionals. Hence the research methods included a literature review, key informant interviews, discussion groups with young people, and questionnaires with stakeholders. Details on each aspect of the method are given below.

Literature review

The brief literature review provides a summary of the local and national policy contexts relating to young people's housing. It also presents a synopsis of several existing studies which have explored the accommodation and support needs of young people.

Key informant interviews

In order to begin to map the current accommodation and support services, five key informant interviews were conducted. Interviewees were introduced to the project objectives and asked to identify key services currently operating in Cardiff. The interviewees were also given the opportunity to discuss their perspectives on the key accommodation and support issues.

Discussion groups with young people

This research considers young people's experiences and perceptions. These are not easily explored in any depth through structured questionnaires. Therefore a more qualitative approach, of discussion groups and one-to-one interviews, was used. A number of considerations were made when involving young people in this research study. Firstly, young people were given information on the project aims and they were invited to take part in a discussion group, or a one-to-one interview. The discussion groups and interviews were then held in locations where the young people felt comfortable, predominantly in the hostel where they were living, or in the premises of a support agency. At all times the young people were aware that they could withdraw from the research.

The discussions were recorded, although on two occasions no recording was made because the young people preferred the researcher to take notes. The discussions explored the following broad issues:

- Positive and negative perceptions of current accommodation and support
- Potential improvements to accommodation and support services

Figure 1 lists the organisations which assisted in organising a discussion group and the groups of young people which the organisations work with. Figure 1 also summarises the age groups of the young people who participated and the total number of participating young people in each group. In total 15 discussion groups were held and it is clear that the report is based on the opinions of a mix of young people, of varying ages.

Figure 1. Discussion groups completed

Organisation	Group of young people	Age range of participants			Total no. of participants
		16-17	18-21	22-25	
BAWSO	BME women fleeing violence	-	1	-	1
Cardiff Foyer	Young people in housing need	-	1	1	2
Care Leavers Forum	Care leavers	-	2	-	2
Coalition for Disabled People	Disabled young people	4	-	-	4
Foundation Housing	Young people in housing need	2	-	-	2
Inroads Drug Project	Substance misuse issues	-	-	1	1
<i>Llamau</i> Safe House	Young homeless	4	-	-	4
Young Offenders	Young offenders	1	1	-	2
Northlands (Salvation Army)	Young homeless	-	3	-	3
Somali Youth Association	BME young people	-	-	3	3
<i>Taff Housing Association</i> Ty Enfys	Homeless young mothers	2	3	-	5
Ty Seren	Homeless young women	2	5	1	8
Triangle (Trothwy Cyf)	LGBT young people	-	3	-	3
YMCA (The Walk)	Young homeless	-	4	1	5
Welsh Refugee Council	Asylum seekers	-	-	3	3
Total		15	23	10	48

Once all the discussion groups had been conducted and initial analyses were complete, a summary of the findings was prepared and the young people were re-visited to provide feedback and engage them in discussing the research findings. A small percentage of the young people did not participate in the follow-up discussions due to cancelled groups and a limited research timescale. However, all organisations were sent a summary of the research findings.

Self-completion stakeholder questionnaires

The experiences and perceptions of key professionals were elicited through self-completion questionnaires. The questionnaires were distributed and collated via email where possible. The questionnaires explored the following broad topics:

- Perceptions of young people’s accommodation and support needs
- Awareness and perceptions of accommodation and support services for young people
- Perceived improvements for current accommodation and support services

Questionnaires were also supplemented by a small number of informal face-to-face interviews with staff during project visits. In total, responses were received from 31 organisations, many of which include joint responses from several staff members. The following organisations responded to the research:

Adams Court
Cardiff Bond Board
Church Army
Foundation Housing
Housing Services
Leaving Care Services
Penyr Enfys
Supporting People
Tenancy Support
Trothwy/Triangle
Welsh Refugee Council

Barnardos Caterpillar Service
Cardiff Foyer
Coalition for Disabled People
Grassroots
Huggard Centre
Llamau Safe House
Salvation Army
Sure Start & Flying Start
The Wallich
YMCA

Calon Lettings
Cardiff Gypsy Project
Fairbridge
Greenfarm Hostel
Inroads Drug Project
Participation Officer
Somali Youth
Taff Housing
Tresilian House
YOS

Literature review summary

This section of the report summarises the content of the full literature review (Appendix A). First, this section lists the key national policies and legislation. Second, it lists the most significant local policies. Third, it lists several key reports and the issues which emerge from them. Finally the section provides a summary of the issues which are raised in relation to particular groups of young people.

National policy and legislation

Key national policy documents and legislation are listed below. Further information on these can be found in the full literature review (Appendix A).

- One Wales: A Progressive Agenda for the Government of Wales 2007
- National Youth Service Strategy for Wales 2007
- Welsh Assembly Government National Homelessness Strategy 2006-2008
- All Wales Youth Offending Strategy 2004
- Extending Entitlement: Supporting Young People in Wales 2000
- The Homelessness (Suitability of Accommodation) (Wales) Order 2006
- Children Act 2004
- The Homelessness Act 2002
- The Homeless Persons (Priority Need) (Wales) Order 2001
- Children (Leaving Care) Act 2000
- Housing Act 1996
- Children Act 1989

Local policy

Whilst there are many local policy documents that have relevance to the accommodation and support needs of young people in Cardiff, the following are perceived to have particular relevance. Further information on these can be found in the full literature review (Appendix A).

- Draft Children and Young People's Plan 2008-2011
- Draft Local Housing Strategy 2007 – 2012
- Supporting People Operational Plan 2007
- Homelessness Strategy for Cardiff 2003 – 2008

Accommodation and support: good practice and issues

Of the considerable volume of literature on the accommodation and support needs of young people in Wales and across the UK, the following reports are particularly informative:

- Centrepont (2006) 'A place to call home: care leavers' experiences of finding suitable accommodation'
- Home Office Research Study 258 (2003) 'Youth homelessness and substance misuse: report to the drugs and alcohol research unit'
- Quilgars, D., Johnsen, S. and Pleace, N. (2008) 'Youth homelessness in the UK: a decade of progress?' Joseph Rowntree Foundation

- Social Justice and Regeneration committee (2007) 'Youth homelessness: everybody's business, no-one's responsibility'
- WAG (2007) 'A study of models of accommodation and support for young single homeless people'
- WAG (2006) 'The housing needs of lesbian, gay and bisexual people in Wales'
- Youth Justice Board (2006) 'Suitable, sustainable, supported: a strategy to ensure provision of accommodation for children and young people who offend'

Several themes emerge from this key literature and other smaller research studies. A brief summary of the good practice and issues are identified under each theme.

Information

The literature on housing information provision describes good practice examples, such as peer education, advocacy and one-stop-shops. However, issues are identified such as a lack of awareness of what services are available, and a lack of tenant participation.

Suitable housing supply

Much of the selected literature comments on the suitability of housing supply for young people, outlining the available options and making recommendations for improving supply. However, many issues include a lack of suitable supply, especially for young people with high support needs. There also appear to be issues with current legislation on intentional homelessness.

Welfare benefits

Whilst the literature identifies some good practice in supporting young people to access benefits and rent deposits, the literature predominantly focuses on issues such as the single room rent restriction and low financial awareness amongst young people.

Independent living

The literature recognises several examples of good practice in supporting young people to live independently. It also describes the difficulties that many young people face in living alone.

Behaviour and relationships

The literature identifies behaviour problems as one of the key housing issues faced by young people. Mediation is highlighted as a key tool for addressing behavioural issues and relationship breakdown.

Education, training and employment

The literature identifies a link between employment and housing, commenting on the need for joined up working between employment and housing services.

Partnership working

The literature describes the importance of raising awareness of housing issues amongst a range of agencies working with young people.

Good practice and issues relating to particular groups of young people

The literature identified above and several additional studies comment on the issues facing specific groups of young people. A brief summary of the good practice and issues relating to each specific group is given below.

Young Offenders

There is a considerable literature on the accommodation needs of young offenders. It describes the good practice of youth offending teams, whilst also commenting on the lack of suitable accommodation and support available to this group of young people.

Care Leavers

Care leavers are the focus of several research studies. The research shows that there are systems which should address housing difficulties, however the effectiveness of these systems is sometimes limited, hence care leavers face a range of housing problems.

Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transsexual (LGBT) Young People

Literature on LGBT youth housing identifies the nature of support which is required and highlights specific housing issues such as lack of family support and fear of discrimination.

Disabled Young People

The selected literature describes several good housing interventions for disabled young people but it also comments on some of the issues young disabled people face in moving to independent accommodation.

Young people with mental health issues

The literature identifies key facets of support for young people with mental health issues and describes common service deficiencies such as a lack of transition support for young people aged 16-18 years.

Service mapping summary

This chapter describes the range of key accommodation, support and advice services identified in the literature review and by research participants. It does not purport to be an exhaustive account of all accommodation, support and advice providers in Cardiff. The services are divided into two categories: i) accommodation and ii) support and advice, although it is recognised that most of the accommodation services incorporate support as well. Figure 2 summarises the key organisations, identified as providing accommodation, support and advice for young people in Cardiff. The full service mapping findings are available in Appendix B.

Figure 2. Organisations providing accommodation and support for young people

Accommodation providers	Support and advice providers
Asylum Seekers Unit and Refugee Support Team Barnardos BAWSO Calon lettings Cardiff Action for Single Homeless Cardiff County Council Cardiff Leaving Care Supported Lodgings Church Army Dyfrig House Foundation Housing Gwalia Cardiff Foyer Llamau Mandeville House Bail Hostel Salvation Army Taff Housing Association Tai Trothwy Triangle Wales and Trothwy Cyf The Wallich Women's Aid YMCA	Asylum Seekers Unit and Refugee Support Team BAWSO Cardiff Action for Single Homeless Day Centre Cardiff and Vale coalition for Disabled People Cardiff Bond Board Cardiff City Centre Team Cardiff Gypsy and Traveller Project Cardiff Leaving care Service Design for Life Early Years Family Team Fairbridge Fitzham Centre Fynnon scheme Grassroots Housing Advice Unit Inroads Law Centre Llamau Riverside Advice Salvation Army Somali Youth Association Tai Trothwy Cardiff move-on Tenant Support Scheme Triangle Helpline Welsh Refugee Council Women's Aid Youth Offending Service

Accommodation and support: good practice, issues and improvements

This chapter forms the backbone of the report. It presents the perspectives of young people and the professionals who work with them in Cardiff. Perceptions of current accommodation and support issues are discussed, highlighting services that are considered to be particularly effective and identifying potential service improvements. The chapter is divided into a number of sub-sections, each relating to a theme which emerged from the research. These themes are not entirely independent and there are some clear overlaps in messages arising. The themes of this chapter are:

- Causes of housing difficulties
- Accommodation availability
- Accommodation standard and suitability
- Accommodation affordability
- Welfare benefits
- Information and advice services
- Support services and preparation for independent living
- Education, training and employment
- Tenancy support
- Mediation
- Health support
- Partnership working

A standard structure is used for the discussion under each theme. Firstly, a matrix illustrates the number of young people's groups and stakeholders who commented on good practice, issues or possible improvements relating to the theme. The discussion then presents evidence on good practice, issues and finally potential improvements.

Causes of housing difficulties

In discussing the housing issues faced by young people in Cardiff it is inevitable that comments were made by young people about what caused their housing difficulties. In broad terms, there were three main causes. The first is family and relationship problems. Often young people had disagreements with their parents, which frequently led to violence. As a result they either chose to leave or were made to leave and found themselves sleeping on friends' sofas or in various hostels.

'My mum was having a lot of arguments and when I was 13 she started getting violent towards me. Half of it wasn't her fault though because she was married to this wife beater. He was drugging her up so she couldn't remember a thing and she kept hitting me over the head and all that and eventually I started to shout at her saying that I hated her. When I was 15 I kept getting kicked out of my house and I kept going to my grandmas and then she'd come back saying that it wouldn't happen again. Then I used to go back and the same thing used to happen.'

The second main cause of housing difficulties was leaving an institution such as prison or state care. Several young people commented that they had difficulties

keeping accommodation after leaving prison or care as they weren't prepared for managing the property alone.

'From age 10 to 15 I was in care then straight from care into prison. After leaving prison I got a temporary flat in Ely and mixed with the wrong people. Dealers moved into my flat and took over. There were police raids and I left and was on the street. I was between the streets and hostels for years.'

The final cause of housing difficulties reported by young people was an inability to live independently without support. Reportedly, some young people leave home believing that independent living will be free of difficulties and they face challenges in maintaining the accommodation.

'So many people think it's cool to leave home and get a flat and they have this vision of being free but when they get to it it's hard.'

Accommodation availability

	No. of young people groups	No. of stakeholders
Good practice	4	2
Issues	6	19
Improvements	1	14

The single most quoted issue amongst young people and professionals was the lack of suitable accommodation in Cardiff. This sub section is divided into three: it firstly presents some of the positive comments made about accommodation availability, secondly it summarises the key concerns and finally it describes potential service improvements.

Good practice

Several young people gave accounts of how quickly the local authority had dealt with them in finding temporary accommodation. This speed at a time of uncertainty and anguish was welcomed. The allocation of move on accommodation from temporary or supported accommodation is also sometimes very efficient. Some young people were offered properties after only a short period in temporary accommodation. Equally, housing applications by some young people were deferred to allow greater opportunity to develop independent living skills. Finally, positive comments were made by several stakeholders about access to the private rented sector through the Calon Lettings scheme.

'I lived in my friend's house for about a week and then I went to the Council and then I declared myself homeless and after that I had to wait a couple of hours and then they put me in Ty Seren and I've been there up to now.'

Issues

Many young people and professionals stated that a lack of affordable accommodation was a key problem in Cardiff. Young people express this issue by commenting that the local authority housing waiting list is too long. It is important that young people are housed in suitable accommodation, which is often in areas where the waiting time is particularly long. Reportedly the lack of accommodation for young people is blocking the pathway for other young people into temporary and supported

accommodation. Another implication of this lack of housing is that young people are accepting unsuitable properties as they have no other option. This in turn leads to a situation where young people are unlikely to sustain their tenancy.

'The waiting list is quite long, especially for the areas I want. For other areas the waiting list isn't as long but then you go outside of your social contacts. These may be important for your religious requirements.'

Whilst some young people described how quickly they were found temporary accommodation, others believe that there is a lack of temporary accommodation for young people and this makes it difficult when making a homeless application to the local authority. Accounts were given of situations where no suitable temporary accommodation was available and this led to young people sleeping in cars or sofa surfing. Several stakeholders also commented on the lack of temporary accommodation, particularly a direct access hostel for young single homeless and accommodation for young people when they are unable to stay in their temporary accommodation.

'I waited for this hostel for about six months and I thought they (the council) were playing me around. After that six months I thought there's no point going there no more and they're not going to bother helping me anyway and then I told everyone don't go to Marland house because they don't do nothing.'

Several stakeholders explained that there is not enough 'tier two' accommodation. This form of accommodation provides support to young people but on a limited scale. It is a step towards independent living from supported accommodation. Stakeholders suggested that student-type shared accommodation would be suitable.

A further issue is the lack of access to the private rented sector. Single room rent restrictions impact on the affordability of a sector which is already difficult to access. Reportedly, there are relatively few private landlords who will rent to young people who are in receipt of housing benefit.

'It's the rent, you cant afford to private rent, there is no way we could afford it, there is no way we would be able to do it on our own, would we?'

In addition to a lack of local authority and private rented accommodation, some research participants described difficulties in accessing housing association properties. For example, one interviewee described how some housing associations are very selective in their allocation process. This restricts access for many young people.

'Another problem is the housing associations, they pick and chose who they have... Like a 16 year old, there's no way they'll have them. They do discriminate on that basis.'

Improvements

No fewer than eight improvements were suggested for addressing the lack of suitable accommodation for young people in Cardiff. Firstly, a lot of stakeholders explained that more affordable housing should be built that meets the needs of young people. Stakeholders commented that this accommodation should take various forms, including shared accommodation, one-bed flats and houses. Secondly, it was suggested that better uses of empty homes could be made. Thirdly, one stakeholder recommended that there should be a fast-tracking system which gives greater priority to young people up to the age of 25 when making an

application to the general housing register. The fourth improvement, which one young person suggested, is that a single housing register should be introduced for social housing in Cardiff.

The fifth improvement, identified by two stakeholders is that new supported accommodation should be provided for the exclusive use of young people. Reportedly, this has been a suggested improvement since the homeless legislation was extended. Steps are now being taken and new provision is currently being developed. In addition to this supported accommodation many stakeholders believe that housing circumstances of young people would be improved by developing 'tier two' accommodation.

'More accommodation for young people with some supervision on site would greatly increase the likelihood of the accommodation being sustainable. Perhaps licence agreements with conditions of attendance at life skills classes would further enhance the ability of young people to cope and successful young people could then be offered full tenancy agreements perhaps off the supervised accommodation site.'

Another improvement identified by stakeholders is for more direct access accommodation which only young people can access. Finally, stakeholders called for more creative thinking on making the private rented sector more accessible. The Calon lettings scheme is an example of an innovative approach which avoids the single room rent restriction.

Accommodation standard and suitability

	No. of young people groups	No. of stakeholders
Good practice	8	0
Issues	9	6
Improvements	0	1

This sub section describes the often positive perceptions about the standard of accommodation for young people in Cardiff. However, a number of issues are identified regarding the suitability of accommodation and these are also presented. Finally, the section outlines suggested improvements for the standard and suitability of accommodation in Cardiff.

Good practice

The temporary and supported accommodation available to young people was frequently cited as being of a good standard. Researcher observation also provides evidence that the standard of the accommodation is good. Young people described how they felt safe in their supported accommodation and that it was maintained well. Not all supported accommodation was suitable for all young people because needs vary. However, accounts were given of young people being able to move between supported accommodation projects in order to find a suitable placement.

'I feel very secure here. I feel looked after in a way because they look after the house, they maintain it. I have people who come to the communal areas and clean it.'

Social rented accommodation is also often thought to be of a good standard. Some professionals explained that they accompanied young people to view properties in order to ensure their suitability and to request any maintenance that might be required.

'The accommodation is decent for a 17 year old. That is the point of us viewing with a tenant because I look at condition, I look at damage, I write lists, I contact the council telling them that I want that repaired, I want that changed. Since I have been working in Cardiff, every flat that we have gone to view, they have a void system in place so that as soon as someone moves out they call it void and they won't rent it out until they redecorate it from top to bottom. You paper the wall and you paint the woodwork. The point of us going and viewing is that if a place isn't fit or habitable I automatically say sorry I'm not prepared to accept it on these bases. We will accept it if you repair a, b & c and that's what we do.'

Issues

Although many positive comments were made about the standard of accommodation, many negative remarks were made about the suitability of some housing. For example, the regulations in some hostels were perceived to be too restrictive. The rules that raised most concern were about visitors, hours at which they had to be in their rooms, and lack of access to a television. The eventual result of breaking these rules is sometimes eviction to destitution.

'Two of my friends got evicted and this boy he is just living in a crack den right now. Some people can go back and live with their parents and that but when you live in the city in a house full of crack heads and prostitutes and that...'

The most prominent issue about the suitability of accommodation is that temporary accommodation, and sometimes supported accommodation, can often place young people in danger. Some young people were placed in accommodation where they faced a lot of drug use and they did not feel safe. These concerns are best illustrated with a series of quotations:

'The first house I was in people were taking drugs every day.'

'The hostel is full of drugs and it moved me on to drugs. I ended up on gear which I was originally dead against.'

'No it's not a B&B, it's a crack house. It stinks in there. The crack heads would wake you up at 2am asking if you had a fag and all that. I had to tell them to go away. It was full of schedule 1 offenders.'

'We find that many young people end up being sent to a hostel for floor space which is worrying considering the vulnerability of most young people when they become homeless.'

Issues were raised about the suitability of the private rented sector. The accommodation which young people can access is often provided by *'unscrupulous landlords'* where the accommodation is of a poor standard. The security in the private rented sector is also limited at a time when young people need stability.

Finally, many young people are housed in good quality accommodation but it is in an unsuitable location, where there are perhaps limited facilities. Reportedly this often results in young people not feeling safe in their accommodation and losing their tenancy.

'Many young people are housed in areas which are unsuitable i.e. areas where there are limited facilities and schools, or areas which are known to have anti social behaviour problems, which can result in young people not feeling safe in their accommodation or losing their tenancy.'

Improvements

One stakeholder made some very clear recommendations for improving the suitability of accommodation for young people. It was stated that what people perceive to be suitable housing for young people is absolutely key in addressing their housing needs and expectations. Firstly, it was suggested that accommodation needs to be affordable in terms of not being a barrier to training or work. Secondly, the stakeholder explained that accommodation needs to be secure in terms of meeting their immediate need and safe in terms of personal space and security.

Thirdly, the location of the accommodation is very often a key issue and must be taken into account when providing accommodation. The stakeholder acknowledged that there are different pressures associated with living in different parts of Cardiff and that must be acknowledged. Social housing stock, while being affordable and secure, is often only available in areas which are not seen as attractive or safe. The Private Rented Sector accommodation may be in an area that is seen as desirable but very often is not affordable.

Finally, it was suggested that in order to address what are reasonable demands by young people seeking housing there needs to be a greater investment in social housing and a change in the legislation controlling the private rented sector.

Accommodation affordability

	No. of young people groups	No. of stakeholders
Good practice	1	0
Issues	7	7
Improvements	0	2

The research revealed almost no positive comments about the affordability of accommodation for young people in Cardiff. The significant number of negative statements demonstrates that this is a key issue.

Issues

Generally supported accommodation rents are perceived to be too expensive across Cardiff. Young people describe their perception that they could live for far cheaper in *'better accommodation'*. Young people particularly singled out the additional service charge which they must pay in most supported accommodation projects.

'When you've got your own house or flat or whatever you wouldn't even have to pay that much. That's what I'm saying. You're paying more for a little hostel room, sharing facilities than you would for a flat.'

There are several impacts of high rents in supported accommodation. Firstly, a lot of comments were made about the lack of incentive to go into paid employment because they will not be monetarily better off. This is the perception of young people and professionals. High rents also impact on the quality of life of young people. For

example, several interviewees found that they had only enough to pay for their food and bills. One young person explained that he had been unable to afford to wash his clothes for three weeks due to the prohibitive costs.

'The rents charged by hostel providers are clearly rents which they feel are at levels essential to provide the accommodation but there is no doubt that they are too expensive when a resident gains employment. Although this could, and perhaps should, be addressed through the benefits system there is a need for hostels to review their charges. While some hostels have initiatives to assist those who do find a job, this does remain a major issue in assisting young people into work and permanent housing.'

'I haven't been able to wash my clothes. This is the first time in three weeks and it cost me £9.50.'

The issue of affordability was again raised in reference to the private rented sector. The single room rent restriction for young people makes it particularly unaffordable.

'It's quite hard to find suitable private accommodation but when you do find it its a lot more expensive than housing association and council accommodation and there are a lot more hidden charges.'

Improvements

The majority of suggestions for improving affordability in Cardiff were about the private rented sector. Firstly, one stakeholder suggested that the housing benefit regulations should be changed, scrapping the single room rent restriction. Secondly, extending schemes such as Calon lettings was perceived to be one opportunity for avoiding the single room rent restriction. Thirdly, increasing options from the bond board and supporting young people with rent in advance payments was thought to increase access to the private rented sector as currently bonds do not always cover the rate required from landlords and young people struggle to make rent in advance payments.

Fourthly, one stakeholder recommended changing the top up on housing benefit when young people are in receipt of a training allowance. Reportedly, this would provide the young people with an incentive to enter training. In addition, changes to housing benefit levels could reduce the cost and impact of additional service charges.

Welfare benefits

	No. of young people groups	No. of stakeholders
Good practice	1	0
Issues	7	5
Improvements	0	4

Welfare benefit issues were raised by many young people and appear to be a key concern. The specific concerns are discussed below, alongside several suggested improvements to the welfare benefits system.

Good practice

Few positive comments were made about welfare benefits, except to recognise the Educational Money Allowance provides a useful income and that some supported accommodation providers offer useful support in completing benefits forms.

Issues

The most cited issue is that welfare benefits, particularly housing benefit, are not always addressed by support workers. A significant number of young people highlighted that their support worker had not discussed welfare benefits and there was a perception that some support workers were not trained to offer this support. As a consequence some young people get into arrears.

'Yes, when I first moved in I was paying my rent. I didn't know that I could claim housing benefits with the benefit that I am on.'

'Money is an issue. Two years ago a hostel had housing benefit paid when I got kicked out so they take £35 a fortnight. That's on top of what I pay anyway. I can't afford to buy food and stuff.'

The process of applying for housing benefit is perceived to be a long process, often characterised by delays. Again this can result in a young person getting into arrears or being unable to access accommodation.

'At one time I did apply for housing benefit and the waiting times were a month and a half to two months just to find out if you are eligible or not.'

According to one stakeholder a young person cannot access a Community Care Grant (CCG) if they are engaged in training. This means that often young people are unable to furnish their accommodation when they move on and as a consequence they are unlikely to sustain the tenancy.

The final issue relating to welfare benefits is the uncertainty and concern about the introduction of the Local Housing Allowance which pays young people directly, not the landlord. Several young people felt that they would not be able to manage this payment and they were not well-informed about it.

Improvements

Firstly, greater support is reportedly needed to ensure that young people complete all welfare benefit forms early enough and accurately. This support is claimed to be particularly important where literacy levels are low. Secondly, stakeholders claimed that applying for benefits such as the Community Care Grant need to be less burdensome.

Thirdly, it is no surprise that some professionals would like to see the level of benefits increased to make bill payments more affordable. Finally, scrapping the cost of TV licenses for young people would make this form of leisure more accessible.

Information and advice services

	No. of young people groups	No. of stakeholders
Good practice	8	1
Issues	8	10
Improvements	2	5

Many young people and stakeholders made positive comments about the provision of housing advice to young people in Cardiff. For example, the effectiveness of HOPS was mentioned in many of the group discussions. However, there are perceived issues such as the lack of approachability of staff receiving young people at Marland House. Consequently, some improvements were suggested.

Good practice

Firstly, HOPS provides information and advice to young people and makes referrals based on their accommodation needs. Importantly, the HOPS staff are thought to be approachable, non judgemental and understanding. The HOPS team and general advice team at Marland House were also commended for their role in signposting young people to other organisations such as BAWSO.

'I spoke with HOPS and they were really approachable and understood me.'

'They (HOPS) make sure that we're ok; they make you feel that they want to help you.'

Information and advice is also provided to young people in schools and through youth clubs. Two key sources of information were mentioned, namely the No Guarantees DVD and Shelter Cymru's Housemate. The information in these resources was perceived to raise awareness of housing problems.

'I knew because a person came to my school from Shelter. She came to my college and then I found out about Marland House.'

There is some information provided to young people about their rights and responsibilities. For instance, the Care Leavers Forum provides an opportunity to discuss housing and associated rights, whilst house meetings in supported accommodation also enables young people to voice their opinions. Finally, some support workers provide signposting to Cardiff Advocacy, although this is only available to care leavers.

Issues

In several discussion groups the service at Marland House was perceived to be unsupportive. For example, the assessment enquiry often requires the young person to wait all day and they are treated as if they caused their housing difficulties. This differs significantly to the experience with HOPS. There are also sometimes difficulties completing forms, which reception staff simply hand to the young person to complete. One young person gave an account of his housing enquiry which resulted in him receiving a list of housing associations and private landlords. It was felt that support was required to pursue these options.

'When you apply for general housing you are given a list of housing associations and private rented accommodation for you to go and find out. If you are a young person who is unemployed then it is really very hard for you to phone around or actually visit these places to request for housing so they might as well not have given that information to you.'

A second issue is that some young people lack awareness of what services are available and how they can be accessed. This is particularly true for young people who did not grow up in the city. Young people do not have enough information on a range of issues, including benefits, accommodation projects, support services and advocacy.

'From my understanding, young people are not given enough information about the housing support services available in Cardiff. Also young people are uncertain where to go for information, although there are services out there, they are not published to young people as much as they should be.'

A third issue is information on progress with housing applications. Young people have limited awareness of the process and feel that they are not kept up to date with their position on the waiting list and they often fail to receive confirmation that their application has even been accepted. One stakeholder explained that most waiting lists move so slowly that there is little point in providing regular updates.

'Out of all the waiting lists I have applied for I have had one letter back telling me I am on the list.'

The last issue raised by young people is their lack of information on rights and responsibilities. For example, many young people believe that supported accommodation projects do not involve young people enough in designing and monitoring service delivery. Furthermore, one stakeholder suggested that young people are not able to access relevant advice and support on tenant's rights and this can result in them being evicted unlawfully.

'We don't seem to have rights to be consulted on the changes here. We're denied help. I'd like to know more about our rights.'

'Many landlords take advantage of young people and their possible lack of understanding of housing law relating to tenancy issues, often resulting in young people being evicted unlawfully.'

Improvements

The first suggested improvement is for information and advice to be available around the city in a range of formats after 5pm. Furthermore the information should be accessible, for disabled groups and in commonly used community languages.

The second suggested improvement is to have a more transparent housing process. One stakeholder recommended that more work should be done with support workers to assist young people in developing an understanding of their housing options and the allocation process. Young people would be told about the possible outcomes and the likely timescales for their housing provision.

The third recommended service improvement is that independent advocacy should be made more widely available to young people in Cardiff. Fourthly, it was recommended that young people should be more involved in service development and monitoring.

Lastly, young people and stakeholders suggested that there should be a more effective scheme for raising awareness of housing issues and housing advice to young people in a range of settings. This might include information days at schools or class-based workshops.

Support services

	No. of young people groups	No. of stakeholders
Good practice	6	2
Issues	8	8
Improvements	2	7

For many young people, support staff were recognised as playing an essential role in preparation for independent living. However, the positive experiences of many young people are balanced by the concerns of other young people about their support experiences. This sub section explores these viewpoints.

Good practice

Support provision obviously varies across different tenures and between different projects. However, a lot of young people mentioned that their key worker gave regular support and developed a clear support plan. Support staff in some projects vary their working hours to ensure that young people can access support after education, training or employment. Also of importance is the approach taken by some supported accommodation projects, where levels of support gradually decrease to ensure that the young person is ready for move on.

'Staff monitor the support needs and decide if the young people are able to maintain a tenancy. They set up personal support plans and then monitor their needs on a daily contact sheet.'

Preparation for independent living appears to be a key part of support provision. Interviewees described how support is provided with issues such as money management, cooking, healthy eating, bill payments and self-esteem. In preparation for independent living some projects also have self-contained flats which are essentially a second tier of supported accommodation, where the support for young people is reduced.

'Yeah I want to feel confident that I will keep my own tenancy and that's why I came here to build up my confidence so I can have my own place.'

One final example of good practice is the open door or drop-in service. This is where young people can access support when their needs arise. In some instances, this might simply be an open door to the offices of the support workers.

Issues

Young people described how there is sometimes a lack of any coherent support available. For instance, some young people had been in supported accommodation for two months and had still not met their support worker. Moreover, another young person had their support ended temporarily as a punishment for breaking project rules. Another limitation of support provision is the lack of provision outside of school

and working hours which has meant that some young people miss support sessions. The following quotations illustrate these concerns:

'I haven't actually met my support worker yet and the one I've been using has been on holiday for two weeks and then when she comes back I should have another one. While she's away I have another lady.'

'They have all these activities and so on. Because I'm in school I get to miss all of them. I think I'm the only one over there in school.'

'We have weekly key sessions but they (the support staff) forget the times. We need more staff and a log somewhere to write down the session times.'

Although there are worries that at times support is not coherent, one young person also mentioned that support can be too structured. This can infringe on the independence of a young person and actually be detrimental to their preparation for independent living.

The effective preparation for independent living for some young people has been highlighted but in some instances young people do not receive sufficient support. Young people recounted a lack of awareness that they had to pay bills and an inability to manage their money. Some young people move to their own tenancy before they have developed their ability to live independently and this frequently results in a tenancy failure.

'Young people aged 16 or 17 have limited life skills and experience and are not usually willing to acquire the skills in preparation for move on. They often see having accommodation as the solution to their circumstances. This is particularly concerning for young people for whom the local authority has accepted as priority re-housing and they will be re-housed quickly, irrespective of their assessed abilities or otherwise.'

Improvements

Stakeholders made most of the suggested improvements. Firstly, they suggest that there needs to be more preparation for independent living and that it should begin far earlier in schools. Without this improved support young people are reportedly *'being set up to fail'*. This suggested improvement would also reportedly require more time for support workers to spend with young people, which in turn requires improved funding. Some of the general areas of support should reportedly include:

'...budgeting, education and career advice, life skills training, counselling, sexual identity and health issues, anger management and self-esteem workshops, family and relationship therapy and guidance, improved access to drink and drug advice and information, and specialised services acknowledging mental health issues and dual-diagnosis.'

Secondly, several stakeholders stated that more specialist support services for young people are required. These might address mental health issues or anger management.

Education, training and employment

	No. of young people groups	No. of stakeholders
Good practice	4	0
Issues	2	3
Improvements	0	3

Whilst discussing accommodation and support needs, a high proportion of young people commented on the link between their housing circumstances and their education and employment. There are some examples of good practice, although there are a greater number of concerns.

Good practice

The first example of good practice is the YMCA work incentive which encourages young people to enter paid employment. The incentive for being in employment is the service charge is scrapped, a packed lunch is provided and they are given accommodation in a quieter and more secure corridor.

There are a huge array of training schemes operating in Cardiff, many of which are not perceived to provide suitable training, however projects such as BTCV do meet the training needs of some young people.

The final example of good practice is a college which showed flexibility with a young person who faced extreme housing and personal difficulties. The college offered support and understanding and made it possible for the young person to continue with their education.

'I've always wanted to carry on with education. Lately with everything that's been happening I found I was behind with work and I still have to catch up now. It's hard to keep up with school stuff when I have got my own life problems. College were aware. They helped me a lot. They have let me use the office to phone and stuff. They helped me get free school meals. They have been very supportive.'

Issues

The most prominent issue appears to be the treatment of young people by staff at the Job Centre. Young people and stakeholders have commented on the difficulties young people can face when trying to access the services at the job Centre. The following quotations effectively demonstrate this issue:

'They (support staff) will phone up the job centre because they don't listen to me, as soon as they get on the phone it's sorted. As soon as they talk to a support worker they change their attitude.'

'The Job centre can make you feel really bad.'

One young person described how living in unsettled accommodation makes it difficult to access training, education or employment.

'I also just want to say whilst living in a hostel it's really hard to focus on your education not just because it's an unstable way of living but because of the people who are around you. You mix with people who take drugs, people who are prostitutes, gangs.'

Improvements

The first suggested improvement is for more schemes to be introduced that offer incentives for young people in supported accommodation to find employment. It was suggested that this could involve establishing agreements with employers to work with young people in supported accommodation. The second recommendation is for more financial and move on support to be available to young people on training courses.

Tenancy support

	No. of young people groups	No. of stakeholders
Good practice	1	3
Issues	2	9
Improvements	1	6

This sub section describes how some supported housing projects are offering suitable and much needed tenancy and move on support as the young people move to independent living. However, it also highlights a number of instances where tenancy support has been lacking. As a consequence, some young people and professionals identified a need for improved tenancy support services.

Good practice

Several supported housing projects provide support to their tenants for a fixed period after they have moved on. This support is part of their signed resettlement agreement and is often provided by staff with whom they are familiar. Different projects offer various packages of support but generally the support is more intense in the initial months or weeks and less so in the following months or weeks. One project worker described how formal support sessions end after three months, then there is three months when the young person can receive floating support if it is needed. Finally, letters are written quarterly for a year to ensure any problems are addressed.

'In resettlement we pull together a contract for tenancy support/resettlement. Support is part of that agreement. The resettlement worker links in and talks to our staff.'

It seems to be crucial that support is provided on the day that a young person signs their tenancy agreement. Most supported accommodation providers will support young people to set up utility bills and take meter readings on the first day. Support is also provided to make sure that the accommodation is secure and the locks are changed.

'On the day of viewing a property we do meter readings, payment plans, arrange gas and electric payments and sign the agreement on that day. We also make sure the flat is secure and locks are changed etc.'

Issues

Despite several examples of move on and tenancy support, more generally the provision of tenancy support seems to be lacking. Several young people recounted how they had been given keys to a flat but they received little if any support and

inevitably their tenancy failed. The lack of social worker support during the transition period for young people leaving care was cited as an issue by some young people and stakeholders. Furthermore, the waiting time for tenancy support services was perceived to be a barrier to effective move on. It was suggested that the support was not available at the exact point when it is most needed.

'I was pure excited because it was my first flat. I was only 16 at the time. I just couldn't sleep there on my own. You get a housing person who comes out to see you. They only came out to see me once and I never heard from them ever again. My social worker done a runner like.'

There appears to be a lack of relatively intensive tenancy support. One stakeholder described how tenancy support is available but it is not *in situ* so young people often fail to manage visitors.

'The Tenancy Support Service is available to any young person in their own accommodation but for many young people the lack of supervision on site will result in their losing the accommodation as a result of failing to manage visitors etc.'

Improvements

Firstly, young people and professionals would like greater provision of tenancy support which is tailored to the needs of young people. Secondly, stakeholders recommended that this support should include the option of intensive provision for some young people. Thirdly, it was suggested that support has to be available when a tenancy agreement is being signed and for the initial months of the tenancy. Reportedly this will require the waiting time for tenancy support to be reduced. However, several young people stated that they want their support to be provided by a worker who is familiar to them and at hours when support is needed.

'There needs to be more time spent with the tenants when they move into a new flat to ensure they are settled and not feeling isolated and alone.'

'It is important to have the same support workers in transition from supported accommodation to independent living. You have built up trust and a relationship.'

It should be noted that some steps are being taken by the local authority to explore projects which work more intensively with young people who are at risk of losing their tenancy.

Finally, one stakeholder added to this discussion that tenancy support should not only address the immediate housing needs but there should also be referral to training and employment. It was suggested that this more holistic support would more effectively meet the needs of young people.

Mediation

	No. of young people groups	No. of stakeholders
Good practice	0	1
Issues	2	2
Improvements	1	1

A small number of interviewees commented on mediation services. Whilst it was recognised that for some young people the mediation service can address breakdowns in family relationships, the majority of points made were about service deficiencies or potential improvements.

Issues

For one stakeholder they felt that the mediation service acted as a gate keeping tool, preventing homeless applications. Another concern is that there are too few family liaison workers who will address family relationship breakdown earlier than the current mediation service. One last concern is that mediation is not always appropriate and often there are cultural issues which the mediation service does not fully understand.

Improvements

It was recommended that the mediation service should be available over a much larger time scale. Firstly, it was suggested that the intervention should not only be used as a tool for preventing homelessness prior to a young person leaving the family home, it should be offered more widely to young people who have perhaps moved into independent living and are ready to engage with support. A homeless prison leaver felt this would be particularly useful.

Secondly, one stakeholder recommended that there needs to be more conflict resolution targeting those at risk of family breakdown and building bridges for those estranged from family or in custody.

Health support

	No. of young people groups	No. of stakeholders
Good practice	1	0
Issues	3	3
Improvements	0	1

In discussing accommodation and related support needs, some young people mentioned that they received some excellent health provision, whilst far more described deficiencies in specific health services.

Good practice

Support for young people with substance misuse problems is available. Moreover, this support goes beyond medical support and will often address housing problems. Another example of good practice is the counselling support provided in some supported accommodation projects. This is provided through a nurse.

'At the moment I'm coming off heroin and I'm on methadone. I go to CAU which is where most people will get it from. They're really helpful and give a lot of help.'

Issues

One of the issues relating to health is that young people questioned the value of counselling. Most had never been offered any counselling support and had limited awareness of its potential value. Counselling and mental health support are

generally perceived to be difficult to access, particularly for young people aged 16-17 years. Similarly, accessing doctors when young people change their address has presented difficulties, with support staff having to advocate for young people to ensure they are treated.

'With regards to the doctors, I have been there a few times lately with a few of the tenants. When they have moved areas they (the surgery) try and tell them that they are no longer providing them with the services. Because they are still classed as homeless the law is that you have to still carry on treating them. We have to enforce that.'

Improvements

A single comment was made about health service improvements. There is reportedly a need for children and adult services to clarify who takes responsibility for addressing the needs of 16-17 year olds.

Partnership working

	No. of young people groups	No. of stakeholders
Good practice	1	1
Issues	1	4
Improvements	0	3

Several comments were made about the joined up approach towards accommodation and support for young people. The general message is that some agencies are sharing information and at a more strategic level there has been some good progress in joint working. That said, examples of a lack of communication were provided and subsequent improvements were suggested.

Good practice

One support agency described how they transferred responsibility for supporting a particular young person when she was housed in supported accommodation. This transfer of support seems to avoid unnecessary duplication of support. In addition to some examples of joint working between different agencies, there are several examples of organisations in Cardiff who provide support at various stages of the accommodation process and this results in an almost seamless transition. For example, the referral between HOPS and the Safe House seemed to work very well. Other examples include agencies such as Inroads who combine drug related support with housing advice. Equally, Cardiff Foyer's agreement with Cardiff community housing leads to effective move on.

Issues

Although some agencies effectively hand over the duty for support provision, there are examples where the hand over has resulted in support issues going unnoticed. One young person described how the supported accommodation provider was not aware that housing benefits had not been arranged by the previous support provider. Several accommodation providers also explained that they felt there is limited communication between them and Marland House. This reiterates an earlier point

that support staff and young people wish to be kept updated on progress on the housing register.

'There is no key contact with Marland House. That would be useful to check on and be updated on the move-on process.'

Finally, one stakeholder explained that there is not enough partnership working between child and adult services which leads to ineffective or insufficient support for young people.

Improvements

Firstly it was suggested that a more co-ordinated approach is needed between housing and social services. It was claimed that this would avoid any young person missing out on necessary support. Secondly, one stakeholder commented that a one-stop-shop for young people to access might address this. The final joint working improvement is reportedly for support workers to be made more aware of other agencies, enabling and encouraging them to make links and provide more holistic support for young people.

Issues facing particular groups of young people

A broad mix of vulnerable young people were involved in this research, hence many examples of good practice and service issues have been identified that relate to specific groups of young people. The groups of young people include:

- Black and Minority Ethnic young people
- Care leavers
- Young people with mental health issues
- Young offenders
- Young mothers
- Young people with substance misuse issues
- Disabled young people
- Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transsexual young people

BME young people

	No. of young people groups	No. of stakeholders
Good practice	1	3
Issues	4	3
Improvements	0	1

The overwhelming majority of evidence in this sub section relates to the experiences of asylum seekers and refugees in Wales. The following discussion very clearly illustrates the plethora of problems facing these young people. Only a small number of good practice examples were identified in the research.

Good practice

Interviewees explained that some voluntary organisations in Cardiff such as BAWSO and the Welsh Refugee Council are providing interpretation services to BME young people. This provision is limited but reportedly plays an important role. In terms of accommodation provision, the Welsh Refugee Council and Taff Housing provide some accommodation to refugees, with move on after a tenancy has been successfully managed.

Issues

It was claimed that the first issue facing many BME young people is that mainstream services are sometimes unable to meet their needs. For example, young people explained that service providers do not always understand certain cultural issues, or language barriers are unaddressed. Several young people stated that interpreters were not available in Marland House.

'Well they went to Marland House, they asked for an interpreter but there wasn't one there so I went with them and about three times clients have come back saying they don't have interpreters.'

A second issue identified by respondents is that some of the specialist BME agencies do not have the resources and the expertise to meet the often very specific housing related support needs of BME young people, despite the fact that these are the organisations many young people feel most comfortable approaching.

Young asylum seekers appear to face some very specific accommodation concerns. For instance, they explained that the accommodation they are provided with often exposes them to drugs and violence. Furthermore, the accommodation is described as being in a very poor standard, characterised by dirty living spaces and faulty bathroom fittings. The monetary support given to young asylum seekers also causes difficulties. For example the vouchers they receive restrict where they can shop, which makes it difficult for them to buy halal meats. Reportedly, there is an informal economy in trading vouchers for cash, reducing the already limited income they have.

'The place is dirty. It is frightening for me to live there.'

'The bathroom is leaking now and coming through into my room. The standard of the accommodation and my situation as an asylum seeker in the UK is affecting my mental health.'

Once an asylum seeker is granted refugee status there are additional problems. After receiving refugee status young people have 28 days to find alternative accommodation. Reportedly this causes problems as young refugees have limited awareness of what services are available, the housing system and most frequently there are language barriers. Interviewees explained that young single men face greatest difficulties in finding accommodation and they have limited recourse to afford private rented accommodation. It is claimed that the impacts on mental health are significant.

'They are saying they received the NASS paperwork to vacate which gave them 28 days and they took this to Marland House and it made no difference at all. They were told they couldn't do anything and were just left in the centre and didn't know what to do.'

Respondents explained that refugees often face language difficulties and currently face very long waiting lists for English language courses. Similarly, young refugees face difficulties in accessing citizenship courses, where they could learn about life in the UK. These barriers to integration mean that many refugees are still living in fear.

Young gypsies and travellers also reportedly face some difficulties. It was stated that there is no private caravan site in Cardiff and many young people have to stay in overcrowded caravans on overcrowded pitches because of a lack of social rented accommodation. One stakeholder also remarked that the conditions at the Rover Way caravan site are poor.

'The Rover Way site has been in need of substantial redevelopment for nine years now. It is a disgrace that people have to live in Third World conditions and that young people have no option other than to stay there.'

Improvements

Only a small number of improvements were suggested to address accommodation issues facing BME young people. Firstly, one stakeholder suggested that responsibilities and rights should be taught to asylum seekers at an early stage in

order to prevent problems at a later stage. Secondly it was recommended that there should be more supported accommodation projects specifically for refugees.

Young people leaving care

	No. of young people groups	No. of stakeholders
Good practice	0	1
Issues	1	4
Improvements	1	0

For most young people, leaving care and living independently appears to be a huge challenge. The discussion groups with young care leavers have revealed a number of service deficiencies which are discussed below. One example of good practice was mentioned.

Good practice

The single cited example of good practice was the Care Leavers Forum. This forum helps prepare young people in budgeting and other life skills. It also provides an opportunity to discuss housing and associated rights.

Issues

A key issue facing care leavers appears to be the low standard and lack of suitable accommodation. Some care leavers described how they had almost no choice in the accommodation they moved into. Some of this accommodation was described as being in a poor condition.

'I always thought why was I being treated so badly? Some of the things I remember were muck on the wall, and chewing gum on the wall, a window made out of plastic as it had been smashed so many times, graffiti at random places around the room, ripped carpet, and the wardrobes not assembled properly so they would wobble. The mattress was a leather slab and you would have a sheet over it but it was uncomfortable and disgusting.'

Many comments were made about the lack of appropriate support for care leavers. For instance, care leavers might move to independent living and face difficulties managing their tenancy. At the same time they are often sitting exams in college and schools do not always offer the necessary support. These challenges are faced at the initial transition to independent living. A second stage of challenges are faced when care leavers are 21. One care leaver described how his support ended abruptly and there was no transition to adult services, despite the need for continued support. Without this support there are claimed to be difficulties managing the tenancy.

'Now I am 21 the support has ended and I have found that they haven't referred me to anyone for support so in my home I feel a little bit alone and I'm not getting any support from the housing people because they don't know my needs and my social workers have left. They may think I am confident and I am okay on my own but it's a completely different world.'

'I dropped out of college because I lived in hostel. I stopped because I couldn't look after myself; keep my clothes clean, shopping, cleaning and studying. I found

it completely impossible so I dropped out. I also found that the college didn't know or understand my circumstances and there wasn't enough support.'

Improvements

Care leavers identified two possible service improvements. The first is for more supported accommodation for care leavers. One young person described a situation where they would be living in a self-contained flat with on-site support. The second improvement is for greater flexibility in accommodating care leavers. It was suggested that breaches of tenancy agreements should result in a care leaver having to return to a hostel for two weeks to address support needs, before returning to their flat. This was perceived to be a way of addressing the high number of tenancy failures by care leavers.

'A service which I think would work would be a big house which has say five or six flats in it and at the top of the flat is a flat which is provided to say a worker. The other flats would be for care leavers and the duty of that person would be to make sure the young people are looking after themselves, buying food properly, looking for jobs and supporting them and then they would live here whilst they are in education or on a plan. I think it would work.'

Young people with mental health issues

	No. of young people groups	No. of stakeholders
Good practice	0	0
Issues	1	4
Improvements	0	3

Several professionals highlighted that there are two key issues facing young people with mental health problems. The first is that there is a lack of suitable accommodation and the second is there is a lack of suitable support.

Issues

Stakeholders find that it is difficult to find safe, suitable accommodation that young people with mental health issues want and need. In particular, it was claimed that there is a lack of longer term supported accommodation for young people with mental health issues. It was further claimed that without this accommodation they have only limited opportunities to be part of the community. One stakeholder described how a young person was discharged from hospital with no accommodation to go to, let alone suitable accommodation. Reportedly, difficulties in finding accommodation and living in unsuitable accommodation has further exacerbated mental health problems.

'We have had experiences of young people being discharged from inpatient care with nowhere to go, so their first day out of hospital has to be spent seeking accommodation as there has been very short notice of their discharge from hospital. The young people that we work with are extremely vulnerable, the issues that they face with regard to trying to find suitable housing has a great impact on their mental health and well being.'

'It was this place making me like it, it was driving me to the ground and they didn't care. I had a couple of extra points and that's it because I had a psychiatrist when

really they should be getting me out of this place. In the beginning it was great, everything was fine, but as time goes on you just want to get out.'

Stakeholders explained that it can be very difficult to get service providers to take responsibility for providing support to young people with mental health issues. Particularly where children and adult services disagree over who should have responsibility. Reportedly, where support is provided it can often be short-term and is rarely provided out of hours.

'Out of hours support is incredibly hard to find and in certain situations can be crucial for the young person to be able to have the reassurance that there is support there if needed.'

Improvements

The first improvement suggested by interviewees is for more specialist supported accommodation for young people with mental health issues in Cardiff.

'A greater number of specialist supported accommodation projects for young people with learning difficulties and mental health issues would result in their specific and specialist needs being effectively addressed and would ensure long term successful independent living.'

Secondly it was suggested that support providers should spend more time helping young people to feel confident, safe and secure in their homes. Thirdly, it was suggested that further research is required into the suitability of placements in hostels.

'There should be more emphasis on empowering young people to help themselves and to develop skills so that they can have independence and security in their housing.'

Young offenders

	No. of young people groups	No. of stakeholders
Good practice	1	0
Issues	2	7
Improvements	0	1

The work of the Youth Offending Team (YOT) was perceived to be effective in many circumstances, often finding accommodation relatively quickly. However, the majority of comments relating to young offenders were about service deficiencies, particularly in prisons.

Issues

The first problem is that accommodation issues are often not dealt with during the prison sentence. Reportedly, too many young offenders are leaving prison with no accommodation arranged. In the worst cases young people are leaving prison on a Friday afternoon and then struggle to access support for several days. When accommodation is arranged it is too often perceived to be unsuitable and is commonly a bed and breakfast.

'The majority of people who are of no fixed abode (NFA) in prison are NFA on release. I ended up in prison because I had nowhere to stay.'

'Too many young people leaving prison are being placed in hotels and B&Bs. They are not all informed of what is available for them.'

Interviewees explained that due to the very complex needs of many young offenders, they have specific accommodation needs and these are not currently being met. It was stated that agencies are often reluctant to provide accommodation due to the risks presented by young offenders. One stakeholder explained that this lack of accommodation means that often young people exhaust all their housing options.

'Some young people have very high complex needs such as arson, sex offenders, and young people with very challenging behaviours.'

In addition to a lack of accommodation there is claimed to be insufficient support for those leaving prison. Without support there are frequently tenancy failures. Support from the RAP team was mentioned by stakeholders but it was suggested that some young offenders associate this team with the YOT and this can deter them from engaging. A stakeholder stated that there is sometimes a debate between housing and children's services in relation to who is responsible for supporting a young offender and this can result in delayed action and reluctance to offer a service.

'Young offenders are often difficult to work with, therefore it is very challenging to get them and the services to engage.'

Improvements

There are only two suggested improvements. The first is for more direct access provision and provision that can accept electronic tagging. The second is for a local protocol that ensures young people are not leaving custody with no fixed abode.

Young mothers

	No. of young people groups	No. of stakeholders
Good practice	0	0
Issues	1	1
Improvements	0	1

A number of young mothers were involved in the research discussion groups. They highlighted several issues relating to the suitability of supported accommodation and suggested that there is not enough supported accommodation for young mothers.

Issues

Some young mothers believe that temporary accommodation does not meet their needs. For example, they described how accommodation often lacks play opportunities and there is not enough space for the children. Problems with cooking and sleeping routines are also reportedly affected by living in the current shared accommodation. The lack of space in bedrooms can pose dangers as two parents explained how their children bumped into hot radiators because they had little space to move in.

'Our babies have to go without their needs because our rooms are so small. I have a table in my room which is not needed and they say they are not allowed to take it out. My son is running around now, he needs more space to be able to play but he can't.'

It is perceived that there is not enough supported accommodation for young mothers. Some interviewees explained that they had waited a long time to be placed in their current accommodation.

Improvements

The first suggested improvement is for a better standard of supported accommodation, including: play facilities & community rooms, cooking facilities, basic safety for children and easier access to a named paediatrician. Secondly, one stakeholder believes that all young parents should be offered parenting support and move-on support when independent accommodation is secured.

Young people with substance misuse issues

	No. of young people groups	No. of stakeholders
Good practice	0	2
Issues	0	1
Improvements	0	2

While there is some provision specifically available for young people with substance misuse issues, stakeholders described difficulties in accessing accommodation for young people who are still using drugs.

Issues

Firstly, not all young people are in a situation where they are willing to give up taking drugs. One stakeholder explained that this poses challenges to support providers in finding accommodation. Reportedly, even young people who are no longer using drugs can face difficulties accessing accommodation if the referral is made by a drug support agency. Finally, it was suggested that some staff working for accommodation providers in Cardiff hold negative perceptions about young people who have had substance misuse issues.

'Some supported housing for young people have zero tolerance to substance misuse and this causes us dilemmas as referrals from ourselves are not looked on favourably.'

'Many providers are not willing to take someone with these problems. Not all providers, but a significant number in Cardiff, are negative about the client group.'

Improvements

Stakeholders recommended that there should be more supported accommodation specifically for young people with substance misuse issues.

Disabled young people

	No. of young people groups	No. of stakeholders
Good practice	1	0
Issues	1	2
Improvements	0	0

Relatively few accommodation and support issues were raised by disabled young people. This may be in part due to the fact that the interviewees were currently living at home with their families. The young people mostly described the effective support received within the family home.

Good practice

For most of the young disabled people involved in the research their family accommodation was either well adapted to their needs or it met their needs without adaptation. For example, one young person who used a wheelchair had his bedroom on the ground floor and there was also a bathroom there. Another young person, also in a wheelchair, lived in a bungalow which had suitable access.

'I live in a bungalow with my parents. It's good because everything is on one floor and I use a wheelchair.'

Young people also explained that there is sufficient support. This is mostly provided by parents, although there is also carer support. Two of the young people explained that they had been given support with preparation for independent living. They had discussed money management and bill payments at school.

'My mum helps me in the mornings. We have a hoist...I do have a carer on a Tuesday that comes in to look after me for a few hours and that gives mum and dad some time to themselves.'

Issues

The only issue identified by one stakeholder was the difficulties in securing long-term support for young disabled people into adulthood. Again, this is an issue of transition from child to adult support services.

Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transsexual young people

	No. of young people groups	No. of stakeholders
Good practice	0	0
Issues	1	0
Improvements	0	0

Several research participants were LGBT young people and it was anticipated that issues would be identified that are specific to this group of young people. However, the young people drove the agenda and were clear that their greatest concerns were actually concerns that a lot of other young people face, such as a lack of tenant participation. Issues such as homophobia did not arise.

Summary of findings and recommendations

The research findings provide a detailed insight into the accommodation and support needs of young people in Cardiff. For each of the key themes which emerge this chapter presents a summary of the findings and makes relevant recommendations.

Summary of findings	Recommendations
<p>1. Despite some excellent provision of supported accommodation and innovative schemes accessing the private rented sector there is a lack of suitable accommodation for young people in Cardiff.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ There is a broad range of supported accommodation and Calon lettings provides innovative access to the private rented sector. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. The Housing Strategy Team should continue to pursue its plans to develop more supported accommodation for young people.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Many young people are waiting for too long to find suitable affordable accommodation because there is limited supply and some housing associations are perceived to be selective. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> b. The Welsh Assembly Government, housing associations and the Housing Strategy Team should commit to providing more affordable housing for young people. This housing should take various forms, including shared accommodation. c. The Private Sector Housing Team should ensure that empty homes are used effectively to meet the housing needs of young people. The Private Sector Housing Team should work closely with Shelter Cymru’s Empty Homes Officer. d. The Council allocations Team should continue to pursue the development of the single, accessible, community waiting list.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ There is not enough ‘tier two’ accommodation. Tier two accommodation provides some tenancy and related support to young people in limited support accommodation. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> e. The Housing Strategy Team, Supporting People Team and housing associations should provide ‘tier two’ accommodation which encourages the transition from supported accommodation to independent living. Danescourt 2 is an example of this form of accommodation.

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ There is very limited access to the private rented sector. 	<p>f. The Strategy, Advice and Support Service of the Housing and Neighbourhood Renewal Department should develop new schemes like Calon lettings, which avoid the single room rent restriction. More innovative approaches should be taken to accessing the private rented sector. These innovative approaches must be affordable.</p>
<p>2. The standard of accommodation for young people in Cardiff is generally perceived to be good. However, suitable accommodation is not always available.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Researcher observation and the perceptions of young people indicate that the standard of temporary, supported and social rented accommodation is good. 	<p>a. The Housing Strategy Team and Private Sector Housing Team should continue to monitor the high standard of accommodation and should consider involving young people in this process.</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ The regulations in some supported accommodation projects are perceived to be too strict and based on limited consultation with tenants. 	<p>b. Accommodation providers must involve their tenants more effectively e.g. through tenant participation groups, holding regular house meetings, and adopting the National Children and Young People's Participation Standards.</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Some temporary accommodation used to house young people is unsuitable and places them in danger. Adults mostly populate these projects. Notably, housing services state that they no longer place young people in B&Bs, although Children's services do. 	<p>c. Children's Services should ensure that accommodation such as Tresilian house is not used to accommodate young people.</p> <p>d. The Housing Strategy Team should develop a range of direct access accommodation for young people.</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Young people renting private sector accommodation face a lack of security and often poor accommodation. 	<p>e. The Strategy, Advice and Support Service of the Housing and Neighbourhood Renewal Department should ensure that young people who find accommodation in the private rented sector are supported and advocacy with the landlord is provided when required.</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ The good standard of accommodation is often undermined by its unsuitable location. 	<p>f. When allocating accommodation to young people, housing providers should consider all of a young person's needs, including the suitability of a particular location.</p>

<p>3. Young people face affordability issues in most housing tenures in Cardiff.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Supported accommodation rents are considered to be too high. This has implications for entering employment and on quality of life. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Supported accommodation providers should consider reducing the costs which young people must meet. b. The UK government should consider revising the amount which young people are required to pay towards supported accommodation rents when in training or employment.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ The private rented sector is particularly unaffordable, in part because of the single room rent restriction. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> c. The UK government should abolish the single room rent restriction which currently discriminates against young people. d. The Strategy, Advice and Support Service (Housing and Neighbourhood Renewal Department) and Leaving Care and Related Services should make appropriate rent in advance payments to enable young people to access accommodation more readily. e. The Cardiff Bond Board should ensure that where possible the bond meets the amount required by the landlord.
<p>4. Young people are not always supported to access the often burdensome welfare benefits system.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Support workers do not always support young people to access vital welfare benefits. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Supported accommodation providers must ensure that their processes involve addressing welfare benefits issues at a very early stage. Moreover, staff should be made aware of the process and its importance.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Accessing housing benefits can be a long process with implications for young people's access to accommodation. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> b. The Housing Benefit Service should endeavour to meet housing benefit claims more quickly.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Young people cannot always access Community Care Grants. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> c. The UK government should make the Community Care Grant accessible to all vulnerable young people.

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Some young people are concerned about the impact of the introduction of the Local Housing Allowance. 	<p>d. The Children and Young People’s Partnership should monitor and research the impact of the local housing allowance on young people in Cardiff.</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Young people in supported accommodation are often unable to afford a television license. 	<p>e. The UK government should consider scrapping the cost of a TV license for young people in supported accommodation.</p>
<p>5. The provision of information and advice by the HOPS service is perceived well by young people but there is limited awareness of what services are available and what young people’s housing entitlements are.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ The HOPS staff are thought to be approachable, non judgemental, knowledgeable and understanding. Information and advice is also provided in an understandable format through Shelter Cymru’s Housemate resource and the No Guarantees DVD. The Care Leavers forum and Cardiff Advocacy also provide useful information and advice. 	<p>a. The Children and Young People’s Partnership should promote the use of Housemate and No Guarantees more widely.</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ The assessment enquiry by front line staff at Marland House is unsupportive for some young people and information provision does not always meet their needs. 	<p>b. Housing services must ensure that reception staff who are meeting young people at Marland House are provided with training which raises awareness of the issues these young people face.</p> <p>c. Housing services should refer young people to a support provider who will help them interpret any information given to them about housing.</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Some young people are unaware of what services are available to them. 	<p>d. The Children and Young People’s Partnership and HOPS should make information and advice available to young people around the city in a range of formats after 5pm.</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Young people and support staff do not feel sufficiently updated on progress on housing waiting lists. 	<p>e. Accommodation providers, HOPS and Housing Services should work together with tenants to make the housing process more transparent.</p>

	f. The local authority should make independent advocacy more widely available to all young people.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Tenant participation amongst young people is low and young people have limited awareness of their rights. 	g. Accommodation providers must involve their tenants more effectively.
<p>6. The effectiveness of support provision varies across Cardiff.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Some young people engage in clear support sessions at times that are convenient to their other commitments. Support often addresses independent living skills. 	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Some young people are not provided with a coherent support service and cannot always access support because it is not available outside of education, training or work commitments. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Supported accommodation providers should provide support sessions outside of normal working hours. b. Supported accommodation providers must ensure they have clear support processes which staff are aware of and committed to. These processes should not be overly weighted on completing paperwork.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Some young people are ill-prepared when they move to independent living. 	c. The Welsh Assembly Government and schools should commit to teaching independent living skills in schools.
<p>7. Living in supported accommodation is currently a barrier to accessing employment. Furthermore, training schemes are often perceived to be of limited value to young people.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ The YMCA operates an effective programme which offers an incentive to work. There are also a small number of training schemes which are perceived positively. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Supported accommodation providers should consider replicating or adapting the YMCA programme which offers incentives for entering employment.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Living in unsettled accommodation can make it difficult to access education, training or employment. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> b. Supported accommodation providers should pursue agreements with employers to offer meaningful skills development and employment.

	c. Supported accommodation providers should liaise with schools and colleges, where appropriate and with the permission of young people, in order to ensure there are no barriers to accessing education.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Young people and professionals see little benefit in accessing employment whilst in supported accommodation. 	d. The UK government should consider revising the amount which young people are required to pay towards supported accommodation rents when in training or employment.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Young people face barriers to accessing support at the Job Centre 	e. Front line staff at the Job Centre should be engaged in young person led training in order to raise staff awareness of the difficulties young people face and to improve treatment of young people at the centre.
<p>8. The effectiveness of tenancy support provision varies across Cardiff.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Some supported housing projects provide support to their tenants for a fixed period after they have moved on. This support can continue for up to a year and it is intended to decrease in intensity over that period. Support on the day that a tenancy agreement is signed is effectively carried out by most supported accommodation providers. 	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Despite several examples of move on and tenancy support, more generally tenancy support is lacking. The waiting time for tenancy support is too long. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. All supported accommodation providers should ensure a package of tenancy support is available, which must include an assessment of the property condition when the tenancy agreement is signed. b. The Tenant Support Team and Supporting People Team must reduce the time that it takes to provide tenancy support.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ There is a lack of intensive tenancy support. 	c. The Tenant Support Team and Supporting People Team should introduce more intensive tenancy support which also acts as a case manager for young people, making referrals to other support agencies such as training providers.

<p>9. Mediation services are currently only meeting the needs of a proportion of young people and they are not always used appropriately.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Some research participants feel that mediation services are used when it is inappropriate and it would be more beneficial to access homelessness services. 	<p>a. Llamau mediation services must ensure that the situation of a young person is fully considered when determining if mediation services are to be provided.</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ There is a perception that mediation services are not always available at the stages when they would be most beneficial. 	<p>b. Llamau should promote mediation services more widely to young people before they are 16.</p> <p>c. Llamau should promote mediation services more widely, later in the homelessness process (for example after they have secured suitable accommodation).</p>
<p>10. Most young people in housing difficulties are able to access health services, although there are cases where access has been difficult.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Most young people can access their doctor and some supported housing providers make counselling services available. 	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ For some young people counselling and mental health support is difficult to access. 	<p>a. Cardiff local health services should consider making counselling support available in all supported accommodation.</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Accessing doctors when young people change their address has presented difficulties. 	<p>b. Supported accommodation providers must ensure that tenants are registered with a doctor and support workers should advocate on behalf of young people to ensure there is access to healthcare.</p>

<p>11. There are examples of good partnership working but there is also room for improvement.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Some support providers are handing over support duties in order to avoid duplication of services. Individual agencies that provide support at more than one stage in the homelessness process are often providing a relatively seamless transition of support for young people. 	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Some support agencies and accommodation providers are not effectively sharing information and support issues remain unaddressed. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. All agencies providing support to young people must ensure that they share information on support issues and actions taken. A redeveloped form of e-roof may address this need. b. Housing and social services must work more closely in order to meet the needs of young people. This is already being progressed through the imminent placement of a social worker in Housing Services. c. The Children and Young People’s Partnership and supported housing providers should seek to ensure that support workers are able to access regular information on other support services.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Children and adult services do not always work together to agree suitable support provision for young people. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> d. Children and adult services should review the needs of young people as individuals and agree on the most effective support plan for the young person.
<p>12. BME young people, particularly asylum seekers and refugees face considerable housing challenges.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Mainstream services are sometimes unable to meet the needs of BME young people. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Mainstream services which address housing needs must take steps to meet the need of BME young people (e.g. provide translation services).
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Some specialist BME organisations do not have the resources and expertise to meet the needs of their client group. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> b. Specialist BME organisations should be funded to provide greater housing support in an environment which is well known and comfortable for young people e.g. the Welsh Refugee Council, Somali Youth Association.

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ The accommodation provided to young asylum seekers is often of a very poor standard 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> c. The UK government and NASS must improve the standard of temporary accommodation for asylum seekers. d. Responsibilities and rights should be taught to asylum seekers at an earlier stage.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Refugees are not given enough information about living in the UK, they face language difficulties and they have difficulties accessing housing. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> e. The Housing Strategy Team and Supporting People Team should provide more supported accommodation for young refugees. f. Adult Services should provide more language classes for refugees in Cardiff.
<p>13. There is a lack of suitable accommodation and support for care leavers.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Young people leaving care are given limited choice in where they live and are often housed in unsuitable supported accommodation or hostels. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. The Housing Strategy Team and Leaving Care and Related Services should provide more supported accommodation and 'tier two' accommodation for care leavers. b. The Housing Strategy Team and Leaving Care and Related Services should consider flexible arrangements with care leavers which do not automatically take housing away when there are difficulties in maintaining a tenancy. c. The local authority should explore new ways of meeting its corporate responsibility of meeting the needs of young people leaving care (e.g. would apprenticeships etc. help them to feel more settled). d. Housing, Children's Services and Adult Services should consider developing a joint protocol which provides a shared approach towards housing vulnerable young people.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Young people leaving care are rarely prepared for independent living. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> e. Social services must ensure that independent living support and pathway plans address housing issues before children reach 16 years of age. The following issues must be addressed at a minimum: money management, cooking, healthy eating, bill payments and self-esteem.

	<p>f. The Children and Young People’s Partnership and Social Services should ensure that all young people in care have the opportunity to learn about independent living through information sources such as No Guarantees. This may reduce the likelihood that young people will automatically want to move into their own flat at 16.</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ There is limited transitional support from youth to adult services. 	<p>g. Child and adult services must take greater responsibility for supporting young people during their transition to adult services.</p>
<p>14. There is a lack of suitable accommodation and support for young people with mental health issues.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ There is a lack of supported accommodation for young people with mental health issues. 	<p>a. Adult Services, The Housing strategy Team, the NHS Trust and the Local Health Board should provide more specialist long-term accommodation for young people with mental health issues.</p> <p>b. The Children and Young People’s Partnership should commission further research into the impacts of placing young people with mental health issues in hostel accommodation.</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ It is difficult to get service providers to take responsibility for providing support to young people with mental health issues. 	<p>c. Child and adult services must take greater responsibility for supporting young people during their transition to adult services.</p>
<p>15. Young offenders are too frequently released from prison into homelessness</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Young offenders often leave prison with no fixed abode. 	<p>a. The Housing Safety Unit should monitor the local implementation of the Link Protocol Wales and consider making amendments locally.</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ The complex needs of young offenders mean that agencies are often reluctant to provide accommodation. 	<p>b. The Housing Strategy Team and Supporting People Team, in negotiation with accommodation providers, should provide more supported accommodation for young people with complex needs. This accommodation would need to accept electronic tagging.</p>

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ There is insufficient support for young people leaving prison and some young offenders are particularly hard to engage with. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> c. Supporting People and Youth Offending Teams should fund more agencies to support young offenders in their accommodation.
<p>16. Temporary and supported accommodation does not always meet the needs of young mothers</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Temporary and supported accommodation often lacks space for play and presents hazards to children. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. The Housing Strategy Team should improve the current standard of supported accommodation for young mothers. Accommodation should include space for play, community rooms, basic safety for children and adequate cooking facilities.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Some young mothers had to wait a long time to be offered a place in supported accommodation. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> b. The Housing Strategy Team should invest in more supported accommodation for young mothers.
<p>17. Young people with substance misuse issues face barriers to accessing suitable accommodation.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Not all young people are willing to give up taking drugs and there is only limited accommodation available for young people that can meet the support needs of these young people. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. The Housing Strategy Team, Substance Misuse Action Team and Supporting People Team should invest in more supported accommodation for young people with substance misuse issues.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Some accommodation providers hold negative perceptions of young people who have had substance misuse problems. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> b. The Welsh Assembly Government should consider producing information and commissioning training which will raise awareness of the vulnerabilities of young people with substance misuse issues.

18. Many disabled young people who live with their families receive suitable support and are helped to consider independent living opportunities.

- Many young disabled people live in suitable adapted accommodation. Also, support for young disabled people is often available from family and carers.

- Some young people face difficulties securing long-term support as they move from child to adult services.

- a. Child and adult services must take greater responsibility for supporting young people during their transition to adult services.

So why has the report been titled *Room for Improvement*? This title conveys the two key messages which emerge from this report. The first is that significant improvement is only likely to be achieved if more *rooms* are provided. More affordable and suitable accommodation is required to meet the needs of a diverse Cardiff population. Secondly, the good practice examples are nearly always accompanied by examples of service deficiencies, hence there is *room for improvement*. Finally, we reiterate here a point so frequently made by the research participants. Young people and stakeholders want to see changes as a result of the contributions they made to this study. Hence, the Children and Young People’s Partnership must take responsibility for monitoring the implementation of the report recommendations.

Appendix 1. Literature review

This review draws together existing literature on the housing issues of vulnerable young people. The literature review firstly introduces relevant national and local policies. The review then summarises key themes in the literature pertaining to young people's housing issues and summarises some of the support which is available in Wales, the UK and wider.

Policy context

This section of the review summarises the key national policies and legislation, as well as the local policies, which have significant relevance for young people's housing in Cardiff.

National policy

One Wales: A Progressive Agenda for the Government of Wales 2007

The Welsh Government agenda commits to improving access to housing for young people and improving employment opportunities by addressing skills shortages. More specifically the agenda will address issues faced by young offenders by exploring cross-cutting practice between the youth justice system, housing, education and mental health services.

National Youth Service Strategy for Wales 2007

The strategy sets out the action plan for youth services in Wales. It establishes that there will be increased investment and greater marketing of youth services. Training and support for those involved in youth services will be improved and young people will be more effectively engaged.

Welsh Assembly Government National Homelessness Strategy 2006-2008

The strategy sets out how the Welsh Assembly Government intends to tackle homelessness in Wales. Section 1.7 of the strategy makes particular commitments to children and young people, committing to:

- introduce legislation to provide better protection for children in homeless families
- require Young People's Partnerships (YPPs) to work with housing colleagues to identify the particular housing needs of young people
- explore the development of a training package for youth workers on dealing with housing issues
- establish a consultation mechanism on the National Homelessness Strategy to involve young people in its development
- introduce the National Service Framework for Children to promote joint working to support successful transitions for families affected by homelessness.

All Wales Youth Offending Strategy 2004

The All Wales Youth Offending Strategy provides a national framework for preventing offending and re-offending among children and young people in Wales. This strategy requires Youth Offending Teams (YOTs) to identify the housing needs of young offenders. It also states that YOTs should ensure that all young people subject to community interventions or on release from the secure estate have suitable accommodation to go to.

Better Homes for People in Wales: A National Housing Strategy for Wales 2001

Wales' first formal National Housing Strategy seeks to achieve the following objectives: improved housing quality, greater affordability, tackling homelessness, and meeting the housing requirements of disadvantaged people. The strategy acknowledges the specific housing needs of young people, particularly care leavers. It states, "any consideration of young people's accommodation needs should have regard to the young person's need for emotional and financial support and also their education, employment and training and health needs." More specifically, the Welsh Assembly Government (WAG) has asked for the UK Government to bring Housing Benefit entitlement for under 25 year olds into line with that for older people.

Extending Entitlement: Supporting Young People in Wales 2000

Extending Entitlement recommends that support for young people in Wales should be structured around an entitlement for all young people to a range of services. The universal entitlement is set out in 10 basic entitlements for all 11-25 year olds in Wales. Most notably one of these entitlements is the provision of advice on health, housing benefits and other issues provided in accessible and welcoming settings.

National legislation

The Homelessness (Suitability of Accommodation) (Wales) Order 2006

This secondary legislation was introduced by the Welsh Assembly in 2006 and is being implemented in three stages. These stages are summarised below:

Stage 1 (introduced in April 2006)

In determining the appropriateness of accommodation for vulnerable people, the following issues should be taken into consideration: i) their health needs, ii) the proximity of social services, iii) the proximity of support services, and iv) any disability of the vulnerable person.

Stage 2 (introduced in April 2007)

Establishes that families with children, pregnant women and 16 and 17 year olds can only remain in B&B accommodation for a maximum of 6 weeks, or 2 weeks if the B&B is a lower standard. After 6 weeks, suitable alternative accommodation must be offered.

Stage 3 (Introduced in April 2008)

All households in priority need and accommodated in B&Bs will be offered alternative accommodation after 6 weeks. For properties owned or managed by an RSL in April 2008, the higher standard does not apply until April 2011. Stage 3 extends stage 2 standards to all types of shared accommodation provided under Part 7 of the 1996 Housing Act. The restrictions on the use of B&B accommodation are extended to all households deemed to be in priority need.

Children Act 2004

This Act creates a statutory framework for co-operation between local authorities in Wales, key partner agencies and other relevant bodies, including the voluntary and community sectors, in order to improve the well-being of children in the area. The duty to make these arrangements is placed on local authorities and a duty to co-operate is placed on the partner agencies. This Act reinforces the need for the integrated children's services to work in partnership with the housing departments to address the housing and support needs of young people.

The Homelessness Act 2002

The Homelessness Act 2002 placed a greater responsibility on local authorities to tackle homelessness in a more co-ordinated and strategic way. It introduced:

- a duty on local authorities to carry out a review of homelessness in their area
- a duty on local authorities to publish a strategy to tackle and prevent homelessness
- a duty to provide settled accommodation for unintentionally homeless people in priority need
- reforms to the framework by which councils allocate housing

The Homeless Persons (Priority Need) (Wales) Order 2001

The National Assembly's introduction of the Homeless Person's (Priority Needs) (Wales) Order 2001 broadened the categories of people to be considered in priority need to include:

- a care leaver or person at particular risk of sexual or financial exploitation, 18 years or over but under the age of 21
- a 16 or 17 year old
- a person fleeing domestic violence or threatened domestic violence
- a person homeless after leaving the armed forces
- a former prisoner homeless after being released from custody

Children (Leaving Care) Act 2000

This Act amends the previous provisions for care leavers in the Children Act 1989. It seeks to ensure that young people do not leave care until they are ready to and that they receive more effective support once they have left. This legislation places more responsibility on local authorities to ensure that young people leaving care have access to accommodation and the necessary support and skills to maintain themselves in it. The Act requires that all young people leaving care will have a Personal Advisor and that their needs will be addressed and detailed in a Pathway Plan.

Housing Act 1996

The Housing Act 1996 provides the framework under which Local Authorities assess all households threatened with homelessness. It defines:

- when someone should be considered as homeless

- who is eligible for help (relating to people that may not be eligible to access public funds)
- who has priority need
- whether someone is ineligible for help because they became homeless intentionally
- whether they have a local connection with the Council they have approached for help

Part VII of the Housing Act 1996 establishes that Local Authorities have a duty to provide accommodation to those who are homeless, eligible for assistance and in priority need. Under section 189, those in priority need are defined as:

- a pregnant woman or a person with whom she resides or might reasonably be expected to reside
- a person with whom dependent children reside or might reasonably be expected to reside
- a person who is vulnerable as a result of old age, mental illness or handicap or physical disability or other special reason, or with whom such a person resides or might reasonably be expected to reside
- a person who is homeless or threatened with homelessness as a result of an emergency such as a flood, fire or other disaster

Children Act 1989

This legislation places a general duty on local authorities to safeguard and promote the welfare of children within their area. In relation to housing, every local authority is expected to provide accommodation for any child in need who has reached the age of 16 and lives within their area. The Children Act 1989 also outlines the requirement for local authorities to safeguard and promote the welfare of children in their care.

Local Policy

Draft Children and Young People's Plan 2008-2011

The single plan replaces a number of separate strategies and provides guidance and support for each organisation working with children and young people. The plan outlines priorities under seven core aims, of which core aim six is the most relevant to this study. Most notably, priority four under this core aim is to address the accommodation needs of children and young people.

Draft Local Housing Strategy 2007 – 2012

The strategy's vision is for Cardiff to achieve a housing market that supports the needs and aspirations of its community, a market that enables choice and accessibility by providing quality, affordable and sustainable homes. The strategy identifies a net affordable housing shortfall of 2,281 dwellings each year. Hence, the priority is to increase the supply of social, low cost, rented dwellings. The strategy also states that a common application form will be developed by 2010 for all social housing in Cardiff. Another priority is to establish a single assessment centre.

The Supporting People Operational Plan informs the housing strategy with regard to ensuring that appropriate housing and support is available to those with specific requirements, such as young people.

Supporting People Operational Plan 2007

A total of 430 Needs Mapping Exercise results have highlighted young and vulnerable as a support issue, 62% being women and 38% being men. The Young and Vulnerable group is the second largest lead need group on the e-roof system. In terms of housing, a variety of supported accommodation exists across Cardiff, 130 units of which are specifically for the young and vulnerable group:

- 754 Floating Support Units
- 110 Units of Direct Access Accommodation
- 76 Units of Shared Temporary Housing
- 27 Units of Supported Housing

The Operation Plan highlights the following issues for young people:

- care leavers tend to be at increased risk of homelessness
- young people become very dependent on projects and want to stay long term
- extra provision is required for 16-18 year olds with mental health issues
- very few projects start at age 16 years
- difficulties exist in placing Schedule 1 offenders with other young people
- the gap between specialist (out-of-county) provision and provision in Cardiff requires examination.

Homelessness Strategy for Cardiff 2003 – 2008

The key strategic aims are to prevent homelessness by offering good quality, comprehensive advice, ensuring that affordable housing opportunities are maximised to give clients' real choice and supporting clients to sustain tenancies in all types of tenure. In 2006/07, the main cause of homelessness was parents no longer being willing to accommodate young people, followed by the loss of rented or tied accommodation. The strategy encourages the introduction and expansion of innovative preventative measures, such as the mediation service for 16-21 year olds operated by Llamau, which aims to re-establish relationships between parents and young people to enable them to remain within the family.

Accommodation and support: good practice and issues

This section of the literature review synthesises a selection of literature on housing young people. Several themes are identified, under which good practice and issues are highlighted. The themes include:

- Information
- Suitable housing supply
- Welfare benefits
- Behaviour and relationships
- Education, training and employment
- Partnership working

Information

The literature on housing information provision concentrates on good practice examples, such as peer education, advocacy and one-stop-shops. This section provides some information on each of these approaches and identifies several concerns pertaining to information provision.

Good practice

One of the resources available for raising awareness of housing issues and rights amongst young people is Shelter's 'Housemate' which is a resource pack explaining issues of homelessness. The pack is predominantly delivered through schools. A second resource developed by Shelter Cymru is the 'Right Track Pack', which is a guide to housing and homelessness for youth workers in Wales. It outlines many of the housing issues facing young people in Wales and also describes some of the legal issues around housing and homelessness in Wales.

Other sources of information and advice include advice drop-in centres, particularly those dedicated to supporting young people, as in Amber Valley¹. One-stop shops are increasingly being recognised as good practice in the prevention of homelessness amongst young people. They involve bringing together the services that young people might need to access in a single location. For instance, some local authorities will situate a young people's worker in housing options^{2 3}. In addition to a one-stop shop, some local authorities operate a 24-hour service with a mobile emergency system in place.

In Renfrewshire there is a young people's housing forum which reportedly provides sufficient opportunity for young people to express their views and identify priorities in relation to housing matters. In fact, Communities Scotland highlighted it as Best Practice in Tenant Participation. Being part of the forum entitles young people to discounts in local shops and facilities and enables them to develop skills through training and conferences⁴.

Several UK charities advocate the process of peer support in addressing the housing needs of young people. For example, Centre Point are advocating for former care leavers to help educate and prepare current care leavers. This process not only has benefits for those about to leave care but also equips those giving support with valuable skills⁵.

National research and guidance consistently identifies that children and young people's interests are better safeguarded, supported and promoted by having a personal champion in the form of an advocate who can take an active part in their lives. By ensuring that young people have access to a quality independent advocacy service, they are able to express their views when things go wrong⁶. Providers of advocacy services in Wales at the moment include NCH Cymru, NSPCC Wales, Tros Gynnal and the Children's Commissioner for Wales.

¹ Amber Valley Borough Council (2004) *Young Person's Housing Strategy*

² Response Consulting (2006) *Research into the housing-related needs of vulnerable young people in Leicester*

³ Shelter Cymru (2008) *Equality and access: research into the housing needs of young people in Rhondda Cynon Taf*

⁴ Renfrewshire Council (2006) *Young person's housing forum – best practice*

⁵ Centrepoint (2006) *A place to call home: care leavers' experience of finding suitable accommodation*

⁶ WAG (2007) *New service model for delivering advocacy services for children and young people*

A recent consultation on a service model for delivering advocacy services for children and young people by WAG, requested a specialist independent and professional advocacy service to meet the needs of individual children and young people. The consultation states that volunteers may make valuable contributions but there is a need for paid, trained advocates who understand the legal and organisational framework and the specialist needs of particular groups. Moreover, advocates should deliver the service to national minimum standards. According to WAG, commissioning this independent advocacy service will involve collaborative commissioning across local authorities.

Issues

Whilst there are several clear examples of information and advice being provided to young people in the UK, many reports have suggested improvements and the need for additional services⁷. For example, in one young people's housing needs study the findings showed a need for an up to date central source of information about housing projects and providers which all potential referees can access⁸.

Sometimes information is available but it is not well advertised, hence Harrogate Borough Council Action Plan recommends that services are marketed more effectively by reviewing what information is provided and where it is available⁹. Similarly, recommendations were made to WAG by the Social Inclusion Unit, to identify good practice in the dissemination of information about homelessness services for young people. Furthermore, it was suggested that WAG should ensure that this good practice is shared amongst Local Authorities and the voluntary sector¹⁰.

Studies in Leicester and Milton Keynes have found that many young people do not know what housing related support is available to them^{11 12}. Furthermore, these studies show that when young people are aware of support services, they are sometimes unsure of how and where to access them. Awareness of available support services varies amongst young people. For instance, a study of vulnerable young people's support needs established that care leavers who use the system frequently know the options and who to talk to but those more occasional users 'find it difficult to keep up with what's available'.

Research indicates that young people are sometimes excluded from tenant participation processes¹³. If young people do not have the opportunity to engage with their landlords and other tenants then the specific issues facing them will be overlooked.

⁷ Oldham Metropolitan Borough (2005) *Young People's Housing Strategy 2005-2010*

⁸ Response Consulting (2006) *Research into the housing-related needs of vulnerable young people in Leicester*

⁹ Ibid.

¹⁰ Social Justice and Regeneration Committee (2007) *Youth homelessness: everybody's business, no-one's responsibility*

¹¹ Response Consulting (2006) *Research into the housing-related needs of vulnerable young people in Leicester*

¹² Milton Keynes Council (2006) *Young Person's Housing Strategy 2007-2010*

¹³ Renfrewshire Council (2006) *Young person's housing forum – best practice*

Suitable housing supply

Much of the literature comments on the suitability of housing supply for young people, outlining the available options and making recommendations for improving supply. However, many issues are also identified in relation to supply, suitability and the difficulties faced with current legislation on intentional homelessness.

Good practice

Most publications on young people and their housing needs outline possible accommodation options^{14 15}. Below is a summary of the types of accommodation that are most frequently cited:

- Private rented accommodation
- Housing Association Properties
- Move-on accommodation
- Supported shared accommodation
- Supported accommodation for particular groups of young people (e.g. young parents, drug users, women's refuges)
- Supported lodgings
- Hostels
- Foyers
- Night Shelters
- B&Bs

One example of a particular model of accommodation identified in the literature is the Core and Cluster support scheme. In the 'core' element there are a number of bedsits in a building with a warden, 24/7 security and access to young people's advisers out of hours. The aim is to promote independence and prepare the young people to move on. In the 'cluster' element there are bedsits and flats for young people to move on to when they are ready. Supporting them is a team of young people's advisers who provide ongoing floating support¹⁶.

There are requests for increased access to the private rented sector. Reportedly this could be achieved by using landlord forums to develop a relationship with private landlords and improve the image of young people as tenants. It might also involve joint protocols amongst agencies¹⁷. In addition, proposals have been made for increased access to RSL tenancies and low cost home ownership, as well as maximised use of existing stock¹⁸. With regard to accommodation options, service

¹⁴ Shelter Cymru (2007) *The Right Track Pack: a youth worker's guide to housing and homelessness*

¹⁵ Response Consulting (2006) *Research into the housing-related needs of vulnerable young people in Leicester*

¹⁶ Renewal.net *Solving the problem: tenancy support*

¹⁷ Harrogate borough Council (2005) *The housing needs of young people*

¹⁸ Harrogate borough Council (2005) *The housing needs of young people*

providers have identified a need for accommodation with varying lengths of stay, levels of support, types of accommodation and number of places¹⁹.

One problem facing young people is that they are often evicted for issues such as rent arrears. Consequently, one study recommended that alternatives to evictions for arrears should be considered, especially where the issue is debt²⁰. This would enable support services to address the problems which lead to homelessness rather than dealing with the consequences.

Issues

There are clearly a number of accommodation options that could be made available to young people²¹. However, there are many reports which state that in reality there is a shortage of accommodation options available^{22 23}. Young people have highlighted that there is not enough housing available²⁴. This issue is experienced across the UK. In particular, it has been suggested that there is a shortage of move-on accommodation, which allows young people to move from supported accommodation to independent living. As a consequence, there is a silting up of the housing system, whereby young people are ready to live independently but suitable accommodation is not available. Also, a Home Office research study on youth homelessness and substance use showed that there was a lack of supported accommodation which caters for young people who are currently taking drugs²⁵.

Many studies have commented on the suitability of accommodation made available to young people and the lack of housing options. For instance, in its Supporting People Shadow Strategy, Sheffield City Council identified an inadequate range of accommodation resources for care leavers, particularly the more vulnerable care leavers who will struggle to live independently²⁶. A study by the WAG Social Justice and Regeneration Committee observed that young people 'are new to the homeless experience and need to be provided with specific services to prevent repeat homelessness'. However, young people are reportedly stereotyped and receive a single service model which does not work due to their heterogeneity²⁷.

Further reports of unsuitable accommodation are found in a publication on the housing needs and experiences of young offenders²⁸. The report describes young offenders' concerns over cleanliness of accommodation and the safety of areas where they were placed. Similar concerns were raised by young homeless people in the Home Office study on youth homelessness and substance use²⁹.

¹⁹ Response Consulting (2006) *Research into the housing-related needs of vulnerable young people in Leicester*

²⁰ Ibid.

²¹ WAG (2007) *A study of models of accommodation and support for young single homeless people*

²² Amber Valley Borough Council (2004) *Young Person's Housing Strategy*

²³ Oldham Metropolitan Borough (2005) *Young People's Housing Strategy 2005-2010*

²⁴ Amber Valley Borough Council (2004) *Young Person's Housing Strategy*

²⁵ Home Office Research study 258 (2003) *Youth homelessness and substance misuse: report to the drugs and alcohol research unit*

²⁶ Renewal.net *Solving the problem: tenancy support*

²⁷ Social Justice and regeneration Committee (2006) *Youth homelessness in Wales: concentrating on a rural perspective*

²⁸ Youth Justice Board (2006) *Suitable, sustainable, supported: a strategy to ensure provision of accommodation for children and young people who offend*

²⁹ Home Office Research study 258 (2003) *Youth homelessness and substance misuse: report to the drugs and alcohol research unit*

Shared accommodation, particularly hostels, are most frequently cited as inappropriate places for vulnerable young people to live. Some hostels are reportedly places of substance misuse and criminality, which has significant implications for young people placed there³⁰. In a report by WAG³¹, standard shared accommodation was described as unsuitable for Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transsexual (LGBT) young people due to the prejudices they experience in communal settings. Equally, some young people with drug addictions described their concerns that shared accommodation often has restrictive admissions criteria, demanding that residents are drug/alcohol free on admission. Further concerns include a dislike or fear of other service users, exclusionary rules (no partners), and a feeling of shame in approaching the service provider³².

There have also been recommendations for WAG to amend its Homelessness Strategy to reflect evidence that the private rented sector is not always an appropriate housing option for young people³³.

Inconsistent allocation procedures are a key issue for young people who are homeless³⁴. A report on youth homelessness in Pembrokeshire described how homelessness prevention activities have focussed on making young people 'homeless at home' rather than using temporary accommodation³⁵. Young people were given assurance that they would be allocated the same points as young people in temporary accommodation. However, the Local Authority changed its practice and prioritised allocations to homeless persons in temporary accommodation. Consequently, young people who were 'homeless at home' had far less chance of being allocated housing.

Young people are frequently found to be intentionally homeless and subsequently Local Authorities discharge their duty to provide accommodation. Young people can be found intentionally homeless if they have previously:

- been evicted due to rent arrears (when they are capable of paying)
- lost accommodation due to antisocial behaviour
- left accommodation that was available and reasonable to occupy.

Concerns have been raised that finding young people intentionally homeless and therefore restricting their access to accommodation can cause difficulties³⁶. The legislation on intentional homelessness is currently under much scrutiny and it has been recommended by some that young people should not be tested for intentionality³⁷.

³⁰ Youth Justice Board (2006) *Suitable, sustainable, supported: a strategy to ensure provision of accommodation for children and young people who offend*

³¹ WAG (2006) *The housing needs of lesbian, gay and bisexual people in Wales*

³² Home Office Research study 258 (2003) *Youth homelessness and substance misuse: report to the drugs and alcohol research unit*

³³ Social Justice and Regeneration Committee (2007) *Youth homelessness: everybody's business, no-one's responsibility*

³⁴ Social Justice and regeneration Committee (2006) *Youth homelessness in Wales: concentrating on a rural perspective*

³⁵ Ibid.

³⁶ Shelter Cymru (2007) *The Right Track Pack: a youth worker's guide to housing and homelessness*

³⁷ Social Justice and Regeneration Committee (2007) *Youth homelessness: everybody's business, no-one's responsibility*

Welfare benefits

Whilst the literature identifies some good practice in supporting young people to access benefits and rent deposits, the literature predominantly focuses on issues such as the single room rent restriction and low financial awareness amongst young people.

Good practice

Many vulnerable young people face difficulties with their finances, often due to insufficient housing benefit. Consequently, several local authorities include financial support schemes for young people in their housing action plans. For instance, in Amber Valley and Harrogate bond/rent deposit schemes are required. Moreover, the Amber Valley strategy demands support for vulnerable young people with budgeting, utility accounts and benefits.

The Social Justice and Regeneration Committee report on youth homelessness recommends that WAG should lobby for an end to single room rent restrictions and provide additional housing benefit for young people under 25 years until this reform has been achieved³⁸.

Issues

The selected literature on housing needs frequently cites issues with the level of housing benefit available for young people^{39 40 41}. Payment of housing benefit to young people is restricted to the average rent of a single room in the private rented sector with shared use of facilities⁴². This is markedly lower than the housing benefit available to adults⁴³.

In addition to concerns about inadequate housing benefit, it has been observed that vulnerable young people have other financial issues. For example, they are often unemployed or have very low wages. Lots of young people also reportedly have “strong negative perceptions of the benefit trap and are likely to be prevented from seeking employment”⁴⁴. Furthermore, a report on the housing needs of LGBT young people found that many leave home unprepared and without the necessary finances⁴⁵.

There are various consequences of being entitled to lower housing benefit and experiencing other financial issues. For example, it is difficult to afford rent deposits and pay rent. It can also be challenging to manage a budget and find accommodation^{46 47}. Furthermore, a Home Office research study on youth

³⁸ Social Justice and Regeneration Committee (2007) *Youth homelessness: everybody's business, no-one's responsibility*

³⁹ Barrow Cadbury (2005) *Lost in transition: a report of the Barrow Cadbury commission on young adults and the criminal justice system*

⁴⁰ Howard League for Penal Reform (2005) *Out for good*

⁴¹ Home Office Research study 258 (2003) *Youth homelessness and substance misuse: report to the drugs and alcohol research unit*

⁴² Youth Justice Board (2006) *Suitable, sustainable, supported: a strategy to ensure provision of accommodation for children and young people who offend*

⁴³ Barrow Cadbury (2005) *Lost in transition: a report of the Barrow Cadbury commission on young adults and the criminal justice system*

⁴⁴ Centrepont (2006) *Working for your future: testing the impact of dedicated employment support in London and Newcastle*

⁴⁵ WAG (2006) *The housing needs of lesbian, gay and bisexual people in Wales*

⁴⁶ Amber Valley Borough Council (2004) *Young Person's Housing Strategy*

homelessness found that single room rent regulations made private landlords reluctant to house young adults⁴⁸.

Independent living

The literature recognises several examples of good practice in supporting young people to live independently. It also describes the difficulties that many young people face in living alone.

Good practice

Housing related support providers recognise the need to provide support relating to living skills. For example, many hostels give support with budgeting, tenancy legality, cooking and good neighbour issues⁴⁹. In Amber Valley it was commented that young people need support with the following:

- building relationships with others
- developing self esteem
- shopping and cooking on a budget
- living with others
- community services
- eating a balanced diet
- planning to live independently
- laundry/hygiene
- tenant's rights

One of the most frequently cited models of support for young people is floating tenancy support^{50 51}. The provision of floating tenancy support reportedly saves on the development, maintenance and management costs of fully supported accommodation. It can include⁵²:

- Establishing a tenancy by assisting with physical moves, obtaining furniture/equipment, developing practical living skills, explaining tenancy agreements and ensuring they're adhered to
- Additional housing support to help young people access work, education, training, social care, health services, leisure facilities and advocacy services
- Addressing financial issues such as benefits, grants, rent arrears and debts

Sunderland City Council recently set up a support team for young people, particularly those aged 16-17 years. The service offers personalised support in young people's tenancies and includes a full needs assessment and intense support with benefits,

⁴⁷ Howard League for Penal Reform (2005) *Out for good*

⁴⁸ Barrow Cadbury (2005) *Lost in transition: a report of the Barrow Cadbury commission on young adults and the criminal justice system*

⁴⁹ Response Consulting (2006) *Research into the housing-related needs of vulnerable young people in Leicester*

⁵⁰ Centrepoint (2006) *Bed and Breakfast: unfit housing for young people*

⁵¹ Centrepoint (2006) *Working for your future: testing the impact of dedicated employment support in London and Newcastle*

⁵² Renewal.net *Solving the problem: tenancy support*

health, and family contact. The success of this scheme is evident in that failed tenancies fell from 50% to 3% in one year⁵³.

Issues

Young people sometimes do not have the skills to live independently and as a consequence they often fail to maintain tenancies and face the risk of entering a cycle of homelessness⁵⁴. With specific reference to young offenders, it has been found that without ongoing support many are unable to maintain tenancies. Amongst many issues associated with living independently, loneliness and a lack of maturity are factors referred to in the literature⁵⁵.

Behaviour and relationships

The literature identifies behaviour problems as one of the key housing issues faced by young people. Mediation is highlighted as a key tool for addressing behavioural issues and relationship breakdown.

Good practice

Mediation can be used to give young people and family members a chance to re-examine their relationship. If successful, this might result in the young person remaining at home, or it could provide sufficient time for a planned move⁵⁶.

The homeless at home scheme operated by Wokingham District Council is one form of mediation service. The local authority accepts young people as homeless but if appropriate they are enabled to remain living temporarily in the family home until they can be rehoused. The normal time period before a young person is rehoused under this scheme is approximately 6-12 months⁵⁷.

Although there is obviously some momentum to provide mediation services across Wales, it was recently recommended to WAG that it should require local authorities to provide high quality, effective mediation services which are readily available to homeless/potentially homeless young people⁵⁸. Some studies have been more prescriptive, suggesting that all young people who are asked to leave should be involved in mediation with their family before a planned move is necessary⁵⁹.

Issues

Young people who have offending histories, are substance users, or have committed antisocial behaviour often face difficulties in finding and maintaining accommodation.

Relationship breakdown has been quoted as one of the prime causes of homelessness amongst young people⁶⁰. In a study by the Youth Justice Board, 42% of young people cited 'family breakdown' as the cause of their housing need⁶¹.

⁵³ Centrepoint (2006) *Bed and Breakfast: unfit housing for young people*

⁵⁴ Renewal.net *Solving the problem: tenancy support*

⁵⁵ Youth Justice Board (2006) *Suitable, sustainable, supported: a strategy to ensure provision of accommodation for children and young people who offend*

⁵⁶ Ibid.

⁵⁷ Centrepoint (2006) *Bed and Breakfast: unfit housing for young people*

⁵⁸ Social Justice and Regeneration Committee (2007) *Youth homelessness: everybody's business, no-one's responsibility*

⁵⁹ Response Consulting (2006) *Research into the housing-related needs of vulnerable young people in Leicester*

⁶⁰ Amber Valley Borough Council (2004) *Young Person's Housing Strategy*

⁶¹ Youth Justice Board (2007) *Accommodation needs and experiences*

Relationship breakdown can result in abuse or violence, hence the young person cannot remain in their accommodation. However, there are reportedly other cases where relationships break down but it would be more beneficial for the young person to remain in their current accommodation⁶².

Education, training and employment

The literature identifies a link between employment and housing, commenting on the need for joined up working between employment and housing services.

Good practice

Currently, education, training and employment support are provided through a variety of schemes. Foyers offer help with completing application forms as well as signposting young people to local colleges and training schemes⁶³. In addition to foyers, placing an employment support worker in accommodation services has been highlighted as best practice⁶⁴.

Whilst guidance is available, put simply, there is a need for more employment opportunities for young people. Furthermore, there must be accurate information on in-work income, emphasising the potential for progression and other non-material advantages of employment. Only then will the employment prospects of young people be improved⁶⁵.

Partnership working

The literature describes the significance of raising awareness of housing issues amongst a range of agencies working with young people.

Good practice

Joint working is frequently identified as key to the delivery of effective housing related support provision⁶⁶. A necessary part of joint working involves having a person who leads on accommodation issues in all major agencies working with young people. That person can then highlight issues of particular groups of young people and ensure that appropriate referrals are made.

Another aspect of improved joint working is to increase information sharing. Young people will not always present as homeless and are likely to know of only certain agencies. Consequently, all agencies dealing with vulnerable young people should record and relay information back to the local authority⁶⁷. Looked at from another perspective, it would also be logical to develop a support needs profile within the main housing registration form, enabling the allocations team to make referrals to floating support services. Reportedly, for joint working to be effective there needs to be a climate of cooperation and partnership which does not exist in many areas⁶⁸. It might be argued that the prevention agenda is beginning to develop this cooperation.

⁶² Amber Valley Borough Council (2004) *Young Person's Housing Strategy*

⁶³ Amber Valley Borough Council (2004) *Young Person's Housing Strategy*

⁶⁴ Centrepoint (2006) *Working for your future: testing the impact of dedicated employment support in London and Newcastle*

⁶⁵ Ibid.

⁶⁶ Social Services Inspectorate for Wales and Wales Audit Office (2006) *Joint review of Rhondda Cynon Taf County Borough Council Social Services*

⁶⁷ Amber Valley Borough Council (2004) *Young Person's Housing Strategy*

⁶⁸ Medway Borough Council (2003) *Housing provision for vulnerable young people in Medway*

Good practice and issues relating to particular groups of young people

The selected literature reveals that particular groups of vulnerable young people experience relatively distinct problems in addition to many of the more generic issues already outlined above. This section of the literature review highlights good practice and issues relating to particular groups of young people. The groups of young people include:

- Young offenders
- Care leavers
- Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transsexual (LGBT) young people
- Disabled young people
- Young people with mental health issues

Young Offenders

There is a considerable literature on the accommodation needs of young offenders. It describes the good practice of youth offending teams, whilst also commenting on the lack of suitable accommodation and support available to this group of young people.

Good practice

Young offenders are provided with support which many other vulnerable young people do not receive. The youth offending service is required to provide additional support as a condition of a young person's placement⁶⁹. An example of support provided to this particular group of young people is the Link Worker Scheme operated by the Revolving Doors Agency in Harringey and Gillingham. The link workers work in pairs with the young people, slowly building up trust. The young people are given space to feel safe and work through their trauma and discover what they need. A support plan is developed in order to navigate the myriad of services. Support workers might accompany the young offenders to court, sort benefit claims, find and manage accommodation, and access substance misuse and mental health services on their behalf. This scheme has seen two thirds of the young offenders experience improvements in their lives, particularly in their housing situations⁷⁰.

Youth Offending Teams are required to have an accommodation officer who supports the young people in their transition to independent living. It is a requirement that young people subject to a community intervention or on release from the secure estate must have satisfactory accommodation to go to. This necessarily involves a degree of pathway planning⁷¹.

Further support requirements include help with family breakdown to reduce the need for placement in temporary accommodation. Such help might include

⁶⁹ Response Consulting (2006) *Research into the housing-related needs of vulnerable young people in Leicester*

⁷⁰ Barrow Cadbury (2005) *Lost in transition: a report of the Barrow Cadbury commission on young adults and the criminal justice system*

⁷¹ Youth Justice Board (2006) *Suitable, sustainable, supported: a strategy to ensure provision of accommodation for children and young people who offend*

parenting/support skills, mediation, family group conferencing, youth inclusion and support panels and mentoring⁷².

The Youth Offending Service has a particular role to play in addressing the housing related support needs of young people. It has been recommended that they should educate accommodation providers on technical requirements for accepting young offenders. Moreover, they should develop a programme of education for support staff on the behavioural issues associated with young offenders⁷³.

Support services available to young people with substance misuse issues are often closely linked to services for young offenders. There is a need for floating support packages which enable young people with substance misuse issues to sustain tenancies in social or private rented housing. There should also be supported accommodation for some groups of young people who require more intensive support. Agencies must be made aware of these services to ensure effective referrals⁷⁴.

Issues

The housing histories of young offenders are often chaotic, so they have little experience of maintaining any form of tenancy. A study by the Howard League for Penal Reform found that 75% of young prisoners left home at the age of 15⁷⁵. The study also found that not having a home before prison affected employment opportunities and led to a chaotic existence.

With such chaotic lifestyles prior to entering prison, it follows that nearly 1 in 5 young men in prison claimed they would be homeless on release. The study states that a key issue facing young offenders is that prisons are over-stretched so provision of advice and support is difficult. Furthermore, the Howard League for Penal Reform study found that of those young offenders interviewed just before they were due to be released from prison, half reported that the address they expected to live at on release had changed for the worse.

On leaving prison young men are thought to face a range of problems in trying to find and maintain accommodation and frequently find themselves in a revolving door between prison and inadequate accommodation or the street⁷⁶. In a study of the housing needs and experiences of young offenders, the most commonly cited gaps in provision were lack of accommodation, a poor range of options, not enough accommodation for people with high support needs, a lack of floating support, and landlords not promoting private rented accommodation as an option⁷⁷. There is also evidence from other sources that housing providers are sometimes unwilling to take people with a criminal record⁷⁸.

When young offenders are able to secure accommodation they face additional problems. It has been established that placements often breakdown due to non-

⁷² Youth Justice Board (2007) *Accommodation needs and experiences*

⁷³ Response Consulting (2006) *Research into the housing-related needs of vulnerable young people in Leicester*

⁷⁴ Home Office Research study 258 (2003) *Youth homelessness and substance misuse: report to the drugs and alcohol research unit*

⁷⁵ Howard League for Penal Reform (2005) *Out for good*

⁷⁶ Carlisle, J. (1996) *The housing needs of ex-prisoners* Centre for Housing Policy: York

⁷⁷ Youth Justice Board (2006) *Suitable, sustainable, supported: a strategy to ensure provision of accommodation for children and young people who offend*

⁷⁸ Howard League for Penal Reform (2005) *Out for good*

payment of rent, non-engagement with support, aggression towards staff or residents, and use of substances on premises⁷⁹. These problems are in addition to many of those already outlined in the general issues section above.

Several reports have focussed on the specific needs of young offenders and have called for increased support with anger management, drug abuse and mental health issues. Moreover, higher risk offenders are perceived to be a danger to place in the community so supported accommodation is required⁸⁰.

A recent youth Justice Board report recommended that within three years there should be no remands to custody as a result of a lack of available accommodation. The accommodation needs of this vulnerable group need to be high on the agenda of mainstream youth support and children's services⁸¹. In Oldham it has been highlighted that there is a particular service gap for young people who are not ready to stop misusing alcohol or drugs but need to access accommodation⁸².

Joint working is thought to be particularly important for young offenders. Currently police, probation, social services, education and health services are all statutory partners in Youth Offending Teams whereas housing remains an absent but crucial partner⁸³. This should be redressed. In addition, there is a wide range of agencies offering floating support across the UK but few young offenders can access it⁸⁴.

Care Leavers

Care leavers are the focus of several research studies. The research shows that there are systems which should address housing difficulties, however, the effectiveness of these systems is sometimes limited, hence care leavers face a range of housing problems.

Good practice

According to the Children Leaving Care Act (2000), all care leavers should have a comprehensive needs assessment, to which their own views are centred and which covers all areas of their life, including health and development, education, training, employment, financial needs, skills for independent living, support and accommodation. The Act also instructs local authorities to prepare a 'pathway plan' for each young person which covers their needs until they are 21 (or longer if in training or education). Pathway plans are meant to be reviewed every 6 months⁸⁵. It is clear that, if legislation is adhered to, the needs of Care Leavers are assessed and a clear plan is devised for addressing their needs prior to independent living.

Although Care Leavers are involved in pathway planning, it has been suggested that current pathway planning should be simplified and appropriate protocols should be

⁷⁹ Youth Justice Board (2006) *Suitable, sustainable, supported: a strategy to ensure provision of accommodation for children and young people who offend*

⁸⁰ Response Consulting (2006) *Research into the housing-related needs of vulnerable young people in Leicester*

⁸¹ Ibid.

⁸² Oldham Metropolitan Borough (2005) *Young People's Housing Strategy 2005-2010*

⁸³ Youth Justice Board (2007) *Accommodation needs and experiences*

⁸⁴ Medway Borough Council (2003) *Housing provision for vulnerable young people in Medway*

⁸⁵ Centrepoint (2006) *A place to call home: care leavers' experience of finding suitable accommodation*

developed to clarify areas of uncertainty⁸⁶. Despite any weakness in the current system, it has been recommended that WAG should develop a pathways approach for all children and young people who are identified as vulnerable, not only those who are care leavers or young offenders. In fact, WAG is developing an electronic common assessment framework for use by all those who work with children and young people⁸⁷.

High evictions from supported accommodation schemes suggests there is a need for alternative models of support for Care Leavers. For example, individual tenancies with intensive support may be more appropriate⁸⁸. Support should also include a personal adviser⁸⁹. The literature shows an overwhelming need for a range of accommodation options and ongoing support⁹⁰.

It has been recommended elsewhere that the leaving care team should educate accommodation providers, giving support and advice about individual cases, increasing the likelihood that tenancies will be sustained⁹¹.

Issues

'Young people leaving care are arguably one of the most vulnerable and disadvantaged groups in society'⁹².

The point at which young people leave care is out of their control. Consequently, care leavers often move on to independent living before they are ready⁹³. In a study in the USA, care leavers experienced an abrupt end to the formal support networks of state care at 16-18 years of age. In contrast, most Americans do not expect their children to complete a transition to adulthood until the age of 26 years⁹⁴. The problem of leaving state care too early is heightened because many care leavers can call on little, if any, direct family support to ease their transition to independent living⁹⁵. The family home typically acts as a safety net to which young people can return over a considerable period of time but not in the case of care leavers.

Research conducted by Centrepont found that Care Leavers wanted broader preparation for independent living, stating that their preparation had focussed far too strongly on practical skills like DiY, cooking and budgeting. Additional support must address self awareness, self esteem and identity; exploring and managing feelings; developing personal values; understanding others; communication skills and

⁸⁶ Response Consulting (2006) *Research into the housing-related needs of vulnerable young people in Leicester*

⁸⁷ Social Justice and Regeneration Committee (2007) *Youth homelessness: everybody's business, no-one's responsibility*

⁸⁸ Ibid.

⁸⁹ Centrepont (2006) *A place to call home: care leavers' experience of finding suitable accommodation*

⁹⁰ Mendes, P. and Moslehuddin, B. (2006) 'From dependence to interdependence: towards better outcomes for young people leaving state care' *Child Abuse Review* 15: 110-126

⁹¹ Response Consulting (2006) *Research into the housing-related needs of vulnerable young people in Leicester*

⁹² Mendes, P. and Moslehuddin, B. (2006) 'From dependence to interdependence: towards better outcomes for young people leaving state care' *Child Abuse Review* 15: 110-126

⁹³ Milton Keynes Council (2006) *Young Person's Housing Strategy 2007-2010*

⁹⁴ Shirk M, Stangler G. (2004) *On their own. What happens to kids when they age out of the foster care system?* Westview Press: Boulder

⁹⁵ Cashmore J, Paxman M. (1996) *Longitudinal study of wards leaving care* Social Policy Research Centre: Sydney

interpersonal skills; negotiation skills and skills in taking action⁹⁶. Furthermore, it has been suggested that support for mental health and emotional problems is also critical, particularly at transition. Intensive support for the first two weeks spent in new accommodation is vital⁹⁷.

On leaving state care young people face a plethora of housing related problems. As a result there is a high correlation between state care and later homelessness⁹⁸. Care leavers are often housed in unsuitable areas where there are localised problems such as drugs, gangs and antisocial behaviour⁹⁹. Poor mental and physical health are also key issues for care leavers. A study in Surrey found 1 in 6 care leavers had a chronic mental health illness¹⁰⁰.

It is claimed that due to a culmination of stressful care experiences, lack of continuity in placements and schools, and low expectations from social workers and carers, young people in care are less likely to succeed in education. Hence, they are less able to secure employment. A UK study found that more than half of care leavers left school with no formal qualifications and half were unemployed several months after leaving care¹⁰¹.

Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transsexual (LGBT) Young People

Literature on LGBT youth housing identifies the nature of support which is required and highlights the many specific housing issues that face LGBT young people.

Good practice

According to a report by Stonewall, LGBT young people need to be provided with tailored help and support. This should include specialist housing services that are dedicated to meeting the needs of homeless lesbian and gay youth. The benefits of such a service would be manifold. Homeless LGBT young people should be provided with a place to stay where they feel safe from homophobic violence and abuse, become ordinary, share experiences and can be more open and relaxed about their sexuality, learning more about lesbian and gay life. With specific reference to accommodation type, Stonewall suggest that specialist emergency accommodation is required¹⁰².

Issues

WAG conducted a study into the housing needs of LGBT young people in Wales¹⁰³. The study provides an excellent understanding of some of the key housing issues they face. Reportedly, the most prolific housing issue is harassment in and around the home. It is the most significant factor in the need to move home. Similarly, family

⁹⁶ Centrepont (2006) *A place to call home: care leavers' experience of finding suitable accommodation*

⁹⁷ Response Consulting (2006) *Research into the housing-related needs of vulnerable young people in Leicester*

⁹⁸ Mallon G. (1998) 'After care, then where? Outcomes of an independent living program' *Child Welfare* 77: 61–78

⁹⁹ Milton Keynes Council (2006) *Young Person's Housing Strategy 2007-2010*

¹⁰⁰ Mendes, P. and Moslehuddin, B. (2006) 'From dependence to interdependence: towards better outcomes for young people leaving state care' *Child Abuse Review* 15: 110-126

¹⁰¹ Biehal N, Clayden J, Stein M, Wade J. (1995) *Moving on: young people and leaving care schemes* HMSO: London

¹⁰² Ibid.

¹⁰³ WAG (2006) *The housing needs of lesbian, gay and bisexual people in Wales*

rejection which sometimes results in physical abuse is a problem which forces young people out of the home, ostracising them. Too often young people are not prepared to leave home and the consequence is homelessness.

In the study, the majority of LGBT participants involved in the research did not seek or receive assistance from statutory or voluntary housing support services for two main reasons. Firstly, because of fear of discrimination from mainstream service providers and secondly, because there is a perceived lack of LGBT specific support services in Wales.

Whilst housing crises of young people can be a direct consequence of sexuality, a report by Stonewall highlighted that young lesbians can become homeless for reasons entirely unconnected to their sexuality¹⁰⁴. Hence, it is important to note that many of the general housing issues described in the previous section apply to LGBT young people. The report also determined that young LGBT people lack safe, supported emergency and longer term accommodation.

At present, young lesbians and gay men are relatively invisible in most housing and homelessness services. Monitoring is one way of determining the true scale of homelessness amongst lesbian and gay youth¹⁰⁵. Service providers would need to be given guidance on what information to gather and how it should be collected.

Disabled Young People

The selected literature describes several good housing interventions for disabled young people but it also comments on some of the issues young disabled people face in moving to independent accommodation.

Good practice

A recent WAG study recognised several examples of good practice in the provision of accommodation for young disabled people. The first example is Ysgol Hendre in Neath which has residential facilities and provides academic education as well as life, relationship and independent living skills. Residential colleges such as Beechwood College in Cardiff and Pengwern College of higher education in Denbighshire also offer a wide range of vocational and life skills courses for young people with a range of disabilities¹⁰⁶.

Young disabled people's teams should ensure that they provide education to accommodation providers, recognising typical behavioural issues, particularly of young people with mental health disorders. Accommodation providers should be given support and advice on the management of individual cases¹⁰⁷.

Issues

Young people with disabilities were identified as having specific housing needs¹⁰⁸. In particular, young people with disabilities need to be able to live independently but there is a requirement for housing support to be available when required.

¹⁰⁴ Stonewall Cymru and Triangle Wales (2006) *The housing needs of lesbian, gay and bisexual people in Wales*

¹⁰⁵ Ibid.

¹⁰⁶ Equality of Opportunity Committee (2005) *Why is it that disabled young people are always left until last?*

¹⁰⁷ Ibid.

¹⁰⁸ Amber Valley Borough Council (2004) *Young Person's Housing Strategy*

Furthermore, young people with disabilities often find it difficult living with other young people and there are difficulties in relationships with family members and partners. One of the issues with family members is that their attitudes towards caring for young people with disabilities sometimes act as a barrier to independence, even though they most probably have the young person's best interests in mind¹⁰⁹.

Young people with mental health issues

The literature identifies key facets of support for young people with mental health issues and describes common service deficiencies such as a lack of transition support for young people aged 16-18 years.

Good practice

A recent Mental Health Foundation report¹¹⁰ identified four key themes in delivering services to young people. Firstly, the service environment must be welcoming, relaxed and informal. This must include flexible times and locations of meetings with staff that they can build a relationship with. Secondly, support should be non-judgemental and free of discrimination. Thirdly, the young people must have a range of opportunities for engagement and personal development. Finally, for young people faced with homelessness staff in housing and benefits must have a greater understanding of their needs and a more helpful approach.

Issues

There are numerous deficiencies in the services provided for young people with mental health issues. For instance, in Oldham there is a gap in mental health services for young disabled people in transition (16-18 yrs) and a gap in services for people with dual diagnosis of mental health and learning disabilities¹¹¹. Supported tenancies have also been identified as a viable option, particularly for young people with diagnosed psychosis¹¹².

¹⁰⁹ Equality of Opportunity Committee (2005) *Why is it that disabled young people are always left until last?*

¹¹⁰ Mental Health Foundation (2007) *Listen up! Person-centred approaches to helping young people experiencing mental health and emotional problems*

¹¹¹ Oldham Metropolitan Borough (2005) *Young People's Housing Strategy 2005-2010*

¹¹² Response Consulting (2006) *Research into the housing-related needs of vulnerable young people in Leicester*

Appendix 2. Service mapping

This appendix item provides a brief description of the range of accommodation, support and advice providers identified in the service mapping exercise. The findings do not purport to be an exhaustive list, they are however the key agencies identified during the research.

Accommodation

There are numerous different organisations providing accommodation to young people in Cardiff. A brief description of the provision by these organisations is given in alphabetical order.

Asylum Seekers Unit and Refugee Support Team

The Asylum Seekers Unit is responsible for approximately 300 properties in Cardiff for asylum seekers. There is also support attached to this accommodation. Young people aged 16+ who are asylum seekers can access this accommodation.

Barnardos

Barnardos operates several accommodation services in Cardiff, providing 24 bed spaces in total. Projects include:

- Marlborough Road supported housing for single young people aged 16-18, consists of 8 separate 2 bed self-contained flats.
- Marlborough Road Cardiff young families project provides 5 two bed self-contained flats for vulnerable young families.

BAWSO

BAWSO provides 12 bed spaces in a purpose built refuge for women and their children from visible minority communities who are suffering physical, mental, sexual or emotional abuse. Tenants must be 16 years or older.

Calon Lettings

Calon lettings is a project managed by Cadwyn Housing. They act as a letting and management agency for private landlords in order to provide accommodation to people aged 18+ and in housing need. Accommodation is predominantly for those to whom the local authority owes a duty to find permanent accommodation.

Cardiff Action for Single Homeless (CASH)

The Huggard Centre is a direct access homeless hostel single homeless people aged 16+. It has 20 bed spaces and provides key workers. CASH also operate 12 shared supported accommodation units in Cardiff.

Cardiff County Council

The local authority operates several direct access and supported accommodation services in Cardiff, including:

- Tresilian House (20 bed spaces), Greenfarm (37 bed spaces) and Adams Court hostels provide supported temporary accommodation for people aged 16 years and over. They operate a key worker system with resettlement.
- Nightingale House is a hostel established in partnership with the local authority to provide, safe temporary accommodation for homeless families who need support to resolve issues, and enable them to manage their own accommodation within the community they move on to. It has 26 rooms all with their own bathroom and most have their own mini kitchen.

Cardiff Leaving Care Supported Lodgings Scheme

This accommodation is only available to young people aged 16-21 and leaving care. It predominantly involves foster carers becoming supported lodgings providers in order to continue supporting a young person. Landlords are recruited using a similar method to foster carer recruitment.

Church Army

The Church Army operates several accommodation services in Cardiff, including:

- Ty Bronna is supported housing for young people aged 16-21. It provides temporary accommodation and support.
- Danescourt is a hostel with move-on support for young people aged 16-21. Referrals are made from Cardiff leaving care, homelessness services and there are self-referrals. Danescourt includes seven bed spaces and a further 5 bed spaces in Danescourt 2, which is move on accommodation provided by Cadwyn Housing Association.

Dyfrig House

This Pen Yr Enfyfys service provides direct access to a dry hostel which accommodates 21 people from the age of 18 years. There is also a 6-bed move on hostel (Glan-yr-afon). The accommodation is an alcohol free scheme that attempts to address the alcohol problems of residents.

Foundation housing

Foundation Housing provides supported housing for 16-18 year olds on Princes Street. Referrals can be made by Cardiff leaving care, homelessness services, YOS, or young people can self refer.

Gwalia Cardiff Foyer

The Cardiff Foyer provides 16 bed spaces of accommodation to young single people aged 16 – 25 years. Accommodation includes bedsits with shared facilities and self contained bedsits and flats. Referrals are for young people who are homeless or threatened with homelessness. Young people with high support needs are not accommodated and they must be motivated to engage in work, education or training. There is a move-on agreement with a housing association whereby residents who work towards achieving the goals they have identified in their support plan will be offered permanent accommodation.

Llamau

Llamau operates several supported accommodation services in Cardiff, including:

- 3 supported housing projects offering 15 units of accommodation to 16-21 year olds. Referrals predominantly come from Cardiff Leaving Care, YOS and homelessness services.
- The SAFE house is temporary supported accommodation for 16 and 17 year olds who have made a homeless application.
- Women's services provide a variety of supported housing projects (6 in number and including a 24 hour staffed project) in Cardiff for single women aged 16+.

Mandeville House Bail Hostel

This accommodation provides 25 bed spaces in purpose built hostel. It is an approved bail and probation hostel which facilitates the work of the probation service. Tenants must be 17 years or older and male.

Salvation Army

- Northlands is a 26 bed centre for men and women, comprising of 17 single furnished rooms on a part board basis and nine self catering training flats (4 of which are reserved for 16-17 year olds).
- Ty Gobaith has 66 units of accommodation for people aged 18+. 12 of these units are self-contained flats. 16 rooms are set aside for homelessness nominations made by the local authority. 28 of the rooms are available on a direct access basis. 10 rooms have been specially adapted for a residential treatment service for homeless people with addictions.

Taff Housing Association

Taff Housing association operates several accommodation services in Cardiff, including:

- Ty Seren is a hostel for young homeless women aged 16-25. The young women are provided with one-to-one support.
- Ty Enfys is a residential project, which provides temporary supported accommodation to single mothers. An individual support package is provided to equip them with the skills for moving onto independent living. The young mothers are aged 16-25 and are either pregnant or they have a child under two years. The mothers cannot stay if they have more than one child.

Tai Trothwy

Tai Trothwy provide 36 bed spaces for people aged 18+ who are or have been with probation services. Accommodation includes 27 self-contained flats, a 5 bed house and 4 beds with floating support attached.

Triangle Wales & Trothwy Cyf

This supported accommodation for homeless Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transsexual (LGBT) young people aged 16 -21 years is managed by Trothwy Cyf. There are four rooms in the shared house. Triangle also has a safe house for men

fleeing domestic violence. The project is for people aged 16 years and over with no families.

The Wallich

The Wallich operates several accommodation services in Cardiff, including:

- Sir Julian Hodge Centre on Bridge Street is a 21 bed space, direct access hostel for homeless people aged 18 years and over. It helps people with specific needs such as substance misuse or mental health problems.
- The Community House Team provides 23 bed spaces in four accommodation projects for people aged 16+:
 1. Two long stay houses for people who have suffered chronic alcohol or mental health problems.
 2. Two mid to long term houses for people with psychological or mental health problems.
 3. Two houses for people who have been in institutions and are working towards resettlement.
 4. Seven independent flats with floating support.
- The Riverside Project provides 8 bed spaces for homeless people aged 16+ who have a history of offending and are committed to taking part in training, education or voluntary work.
- Shoreline provides a permanent home for 18 people aged 18+ in two shared houses and 10 flats. This accommodation is for vulnerable adults who wish to continue drinking.
- The Nightshelter provides 10 bed spaces to people aged 16+ on a night-by-night basis. People that go to the Nightshelter need to obtain a referral either from one of The Wallich's other projects or another agency.

Women's Aid

Cardiff Women's aid provides 17 bed spaces to women aged 18+. Accommodation includes 2 single rooms for women without children in three direct access hostels. It also includes a second stage refuge with four rooms, including one single room for women without children.

YMCA

The YMCA operates several accommodation services in Cardiff, including:

- A general needs hostel on the Walk for 74 people aged 18 years and over, or 16 if they have ILSS support. There are also five resettlement rooms. After move on the hostel can offer eight weeks of support.
- The Ambassador is a hostel predominantly used by adults although the council also has 36 rooms which it uses for priority need groups. It is accessible to people aged 18 years and over, or 16 if they have ILSS support.
- The YMC8 is a multi-support need project which consist of seven self-contained flats.

Support and advice

There are several different organisations providing accommodation related support and advice to young people in Cardiff. Much of this support and advice has been mentioned in the section on accommodation as accommodation and support are linked. However, there are agencies that provide support and advice which is not necessarily tied to a particular accommodation project. A brief description of this provision is given below.

Asylum Seekers Unit and Refugee Support Team

These two council operated teams offer extensive housing and benefits support and advice to asylum seekers and refugees aged 16+. Referrals are sometimes received from the tenant support scheme. Where necessary they make referrals to the Welsh Refugee Council.

BAWSO

BAWSO provide specialist support to BME women and children who are made homeless through a threat of domestic violence or fleeing domestic violence. BAWSO is affiliated to Welsh Women's Aid.

Cardiff Action for Single Homeless (CASH) Day Centre

The CASH day centre is accessible to homeless people aged 16+. It provides washing facilities, laundry facilities and food. Support, including medical support is also available.

Cardiff and Vale Coalition for Disabled People

The coalition supports young people of all ages with a range of issues and makes referrals to other agencies where necessary.

Cardiff Bond Board

People aged 16+ can access the Bond Board in order to pay a landlord's deposit bond.

Cardiff City Centre Team

Cardiff county council tenants are able to access support from this multi-disciplinary team. The team offers advice and support to vulnerable people in Cardiff city centre. There are no age restrictions in accessing this service.

Cardiff Gypsy and Traveller project

This project is available to Cardiff based gypsies and travellers. It provides an information and advice service including sign-posting, individual case support, advocacy and representation when necessary.

Cardiff Leaving Care Service

The leaving care team includes social worker support up to the age of 21 (or 24 if in education). In addition there is a mentoring scheme which involves volunteers who can provide general support.

Design for Life

All YMCA hostel residents get daily living skills support and there is also a drop-in resource centre.

Early Years Family Team

Families with children aged 0-4 years are supported when living in temporary accommodation such as Nightingale House or Adams Court. They address health issues, play, relationships and behaviour.

Fairbridge

Young people can access this programme until they are 25. The programme helps young people who are not in education, training or employment to develop their skills and confidence.

Fitzham Centre

The alcohol free day resource offers advice, counselling and general support for anyone whose life has been adversely affected by alcohol. It is accessible to people aged 17+.

Fynnon Scheme

The scheme provides floating support for people aged 18+ who have a substance misuse issue.

Grassroots

Grassroots is a city centre youth project for 16-25 year olds. It offers a drop-in advice service and performance workshops.

Housing Advice Unit

The Housing Advice Unit provides advice and assistance to people in housing need. It helps people to stay in their current home where possible and appropriate. Young people in housing need will be referred to the HOPs team.

Inroads

Inroads provides support to young people and adults who are experiencing drug or alcohol related problems. As part of case management, housing issues are addressed and referrals are made to housing providers. Inroads also provides tenancy support to anyone with a drug related problem.

Law Centre

The Law Centre offers a free legal service on areas such as housing and welfare rights.

Llamau

Llamau operate two key information, advice and support projects:

- Llamau Housing Options Project is accessed by young people aged 16 to 21 years. They offer housing and benefit advice, advocacy and also a family mediation service.
- The Llamau Network Project provides high needs floating support for young people. It offers young people the opportunity to live independently before committing to a permanent tenancy. It is accessible to young people aged 16-21.

Riverside Advice

Riverside Advice provide general legal advice and advocacy. Similar legal advice services also exist in Cardiff.

Salvation Army

The Salvation Army bus project has outreach workers who work alongside local authority workers on a converted double-decker bus, which they use as a base for their work with rough sleepers. The outreach workers see between 25-45 rough sleepers each night. They provide advice and support as well as referrals to other agencies.

The Salvation Army also offers tenancy support. Staff support people living in their own tenancies. The emphasis is on preventing homelessness occurring in the first place or re-occurring after successful resettlement. Referrals are from the local authority or from Salvation Army accommodation.

Somali Youth Association

Young people aged 11-25 years are able to access information and advice. They are supported to make housing applications, with translation and signposting.

Tai Trothwy Cardiff Move-on

The service offers assessment and support for vulnerable single people aged 18+ and single parents. Support is available on housing related issues.

Tenants Support Scheme

The local authority tenancy support scheme is for those people, who due to their vulnerability, are at risk of losing their home. Young people aged 16 and over can access this support.

Triangle helpline

Triangle run a help line for LGBT people in housing crisis. This service is Wales wide.

Welsh Refugee Council housing and move-on service

They provide advice, sign posting, translation and referrals to housing providers. Asylum seekers and refugees are also supported in managing tenancies.

Women's Aid

Cardiff Women's Aid offers specialist support to women in order to work through issue arising from living in an abusive relationship.

Youth Offending Service

The Youth Offending Service provides support to young offenders aged up to 17 years. Support includes resettlement support.