

Starting Point

Supported Accommodation



North
Tyneside
Council

Overview

Starting Point offers supported accommodation to care leavers in North Tyneside. We provide supported accommodation and ensure care leavers have access to a range of services and support, focusing on engaging in education, employment and training, health needs, and developing the necessary skills to live independently.

Accommodation is offered to school leavers up to the age of 21 years. The service aims to:

- Support young people to develop aspirations for a successful future
- Provide supportive accommodation where young people can develop the necessary domestic skills to live independently
- Provide support to engage and sustain young people in training and/or employment
- Support young people to develop social skills to manage the transition to independence
- Develop the skills that young people need to take responsibility for their actions and future, including a focus on managing health needs
- Work with young people to arrange appropriate move-on plans and offer ongoing outreach, either through associated trainer flats or other accommodation.

There are four Starting Point units:

- **Bridlington Close in Battle Hill** provides accommodation for up to four males and females over school-leaving age. Each young person has a bedroom with their own key and shares communal living areas, kitchen/dining area and bathroom.
- **Elm House in North Shields** provides accommodation for up to five males and females over school-leaving age. Each young person has a bedroom with their own key and shares communal living areas, kitchen/dining area and bathroom.
- **Mitford Gardens in Howdon** provides supported accommodation for up to five males and females over school-leaving age in self-contained flats. Each young person has their own flat key and there is also a communal area where young people can spend time with staff and other residents.

- **Purley Close in Howdon** provides supported accommodation for up to five males and females over school-leaving age in self-contained flats. Each young person has their own flat key and there is also a communal area where young people can spend time with staff and other residents.

There are also five trainer flats in Battle Hill for up to five males and females. They are self-contained flats where each young person has their own flat key and are supported by staff through outreach.

Starting Point also offers outreach support to young people who would benefit from dedicated staff encouraging their engagement in training or employment. Priority is given to young people who are NEET (Not in Employment, Education or Training) however referrals for other young people can be accepted.

The service manager oversees Bridlington Close, Elm House Purley Close, Elm House and the trainer flats, as well as the provision of outreach and meets regularly with the corporate parenting and leaving care managers.

The service has two senior house leaders who manage the accommodation. Each accommodation has one house leader and a team of support workers. Senior house leaders work closely with the leaving care team and have case responsibility for in-house placements as well as outreach support.

Senior house leaders allocate and direct the involvement of support workers who undertake targeted work to achieve the aims outlined above. Work is consistent with the aims and pathway plan for the young person.

Accommodations are staffed overnight, and staff are trained in all mandatory aspects of the role, including lone-working for the dual roles of in-house and outreach support. In all instances the emphasis is on direct, persistent support to encourage young people to engage and maintain that engagement.

Referrals

Referrals are received by the service manager for placements for school leavers. For all referrals the appropriate referral document and risk assessment must be completed for review prior to placement (see appendix 1).

All of our accommodation settings can offer placements to asylum seeking or homeless young people who become looked after by the leaving care team. Referrals for outreach are received by the service manager (see appendix 2).

Colleagues are allocated to undertake work following the referral document and risk assessment being received, and discussion with the allocated social worker.

Each young person has a named keyworker to offer support in accessing services and making decisions regarding their future. Each young person has individual needs and staff work with the allocated social worker to ensure relevant aspects of the pathway plan (training, health and exit plan) are a major focus. Each team comprises male and female staff members and staff may work across all units.

Residents are expected to engage in education, training, or employment, or to actively seek provision. Colleagues also support residents to develop social, domestic and self-care skills to develop confidence and experience essential for moving successfully into the community. The main focus is around budgeting and healthy diet. Young people are allocated £25 each week to contribute to buying food with colleagues, as well as developing basic cooking skills.

Focus of support

Transition to adulthood can be difficult for young people who do not have the support of family members, in particular for care leavers, and many factors can impact on their achieving work readiness and successful independence. Social isolation and lack of skill in domestic, social, and self-management tasks can result in an inability to progress, and dependency on services.

Starting Point aims to offer support during that transition and to equip young people with the skills and confidence to succeed independently. As well as focusing on training and employment, each young person has an individualised package of support agreed with them and social worker which may include some or all of the following:

- Self-care and living skills.
- Managing money
- Recognising own needs and accessing universal services
- Wellbeing – physical, emotional, sexual and mental health
- Social skills and relationships
- Problem solving
- Managing tenancy and accommodation
- Barriers to attainment: substance use, offending.
- Developing interests and hobbies
- Motivation and taking responsibility

- Any additional focus is agreed with the allocated social worker to meet the needs of the young person in accordance with their wishes, and/or the pathway plan

Involvement

Residents are encouraged to take an active role in their home, helping to maintain a clean and positive living environment and making suggestions for how the unit runs. Young people are invited to spend time with colleagues, for example having movie nights or curry nights. Young people are asked to make suggestions for events within the unit and there will be activities organised at times, in particular encouraging young people to access local facilities using their Ease cards.

Young people are encouraged to make decisions regarding their own care and welfare. This increases over time according to each individual's needs and abilities, with young people gradually taking responsibility for themselves. As with all parenting roles, support is maintained in the long term as young people develop and move into adulthood.

Monitoring progress

Staff monitor each young person's progress in maintaining education, training and employment and offer regular support to overcome any hurdles encountered. Progress in other identified areas may also be monitored and in all cases shared with the young person to encourage ongoing success. Any concerns over engagement are discussed with the young person from a solution-focused perspective and managed through a joint approach with their social worker/personal advisor.

Practicalities

Young people are encouraged to visit the unit before admission. In both units young people are provided with a welcome pack to meet basic needs (towels, bedding, basic toiletries), after which time they are responsible for their own possessions and finances.

Leaving care allowance is paid directly by the social worker into the young person's bank. The units do not offer any additional allowance (other than support with food shopping) or advances of allowance. Young people will liaise with their social workers to discuss accessing setting up costs if they wish to purchase items such as a TV.

Each young person is provided a key to their bedroom on admission. Guests are welcome to visit the unit but overnight stays are not permitted. Guests are expected to behave within the boundaries of the unit and not to cause any disruption to staff or residents.

Young people are entitled to arrange overnight stays. Young people under the age of 18 years are required to arrange overnight stays outside of the unit with colleagues so that contact can be maintained, and staff are assured that they are safe.

If staff have any significant concerns regarding the welfare of a young person, they may be reported as missing to police following the NTSCB (North Tyneside Safeguarding Board) joint protocol with Northumbria Police.

Staff generally only access young people's bedrooms/flat to make health and safety checks or undertake work with the young person with that young person's agreement. However, where staff have concerns over the welfare of the young person or the impact of visitors, they may enter without permission.

Boundaries

Young people are responsible for their own behaviour and any guests to their home. Young people are encouraged to respect each other and colleagues to maintain a positive living environment. Any young person who causes distress or harm to another may face police involvement and may lose their placement if this cannot be resolved. Bullying is not acceptable.

Guests are welcome, however could be asked to leave and refused admittance if they cause any distress or harm to others. Young people will be charged for any damages, and this may be removed from their leaving care allowance (these are standardised charges for items agreed with the leaving care manager).

The units are council property and therefore smoking and substances are not allowed. Residents are asked to smoke in the designated area if they wish to do so. Any substances found within the unit will be confiscated and may be reported to the police.

Young people are responsible for their own family contact and involvement but can be supported by colleagues as appropriate. Family are welcome to visit the unit and colleagues provide information and updates on agreed terms respecting the young person's confidentiality.

Over 18 years

All young people are making a transition to adulthood and gradually become more independent. Over the age of 18, it is acceptable that young people become more independent, and plans are agreed with their personal advisor regarding overnight stays and general welfare.

Young people under the age of 18 who are looked after by North Tyneside Council, have their rent and amenities provided, and furthermore are supported with a leaving care weekly allowance. On reaching 18 years of age Starting Point will work with the young person and their personal advisor to access housing benefit or pay rental contributions and a contribution for amenities. This helps the young person to gradually take control over their own living arrangements.

Placement reviews

Where any placement appears not to be working in the interests of the young person or others, a meeting will be held with the young person and their social worker/personal advisor to review the placement and consider ways to improve engagement or look at other options. Any move to a new accommodation is preferably undertaken in a planned way. If there is a need to move a young person without usual planning, the care team will coordinate a suitable response.

Moving forward

All placements support young people to move on to independence, to successfully manage in the community and in their chosen careers. Plans and timescales vary according to each young person's needs. However the transition is supported by the team in accordance with the pathway plan and considers the best move-on option for the young person, to either trainer flats, council tenancies or private rental accommodation. Starting Point ensures young people are supported throughout this transition offering ongoing outreach from known colleagues at a level that suits the young person's needs.

Social isolation appears to be a key factor in satisfaction for care leavers who move to independence. Starting Point works with the leaving care, participation and HIVE teams who have collected the views of care leavers and particularly those who are NEET. The project will continue to develop trainer flats for care leavers. It is expected that regular, planned outreach and support reduces over

time, but there is no age or time restriction relating to contact and support from Starting Point.

Welfare and safety

All residents have access to universal services available in North Tyneside and to specific services for the client group. Starting Point operates within North Tyneside's safeguarding policy and staff are trained in safeguarding, including CSE (Child Sexual Exploitation). Any safeguarding concerns are referred to the social worker and/or front door as appropriate and concerns regarding members of the children's workforce are directed to the LADO.

Colleagues are trained in the Northumbria Police joint protocol for missing from placement and engage with police to carry out dynamic risk assessment regarding the welfare of any young person in their care. Young people who are absent but not missing will be monitored by staff.

Complaints

Young people have the right to make complaints which will be dealt with by the service manager as appropriate. Young people also have access to the council's formal complaints process and are introduced to the advocacy service which they can access as needed.

Further development

Starting Point offers a multi-agency, multi-service perspective to the progress of our young people. This is a long-term commitment, initially prioritising accommodation and targeted support, with consideration to develop:

- A range of in-house accommodation for young people including trainer flats, shared tenancies, and support in council or private arrangements
- An in-house training provision that provides modular-based learning and work experience through council channels to prepare for work readiness.

The project will be reviewed at regular intervals to evaluate its impact as well as adjustments to better meet the needs of service users and achieve council objectives.

For further information contact telephone 0191 643 81610.