



## Children and Young People Select Committee

### How living in temporary accommodation affects children

**Date:** 23 January 2020

**Key decision:** No.

**Class:** Part 1

**Ward(s) affected:** All

**Contributors:** Scrutiny Manager

## 1. Summary

- 1.1 As part of the work programme for 2019/20 municipal year, the Select Committee agreed to carry out a short review of how living in temporary accommodation affects children.
- 1.2 The scope of the review was agreed in July 2019. Evidence has been gathered through meetings with officers, Ombudsman's reports, desktop research, visits to Rathfern and Rushey Green Primary Schools, conversations with Lewisham families living in temporary accommodation.
- 1.3 The Chair also visited Hamilton Lodge, a former care home that was converted to a temporary accommodation hostel in 2016. The hostel provides 74 bedspaces over 21 units, including one after-hours emergency facility (2 bedspaces). The Chair will provide the Committee with an oral account of his visit, together with any thoughts or observations he may wish to share.
- 1.4 Housing Officers will attend to answer any questions the committee may have.

### **Preliminary evidence from Housing**

- 1.5 Members of the Committee had an initial meeting with Lee Georgiou – Service Group Manager for Housing Needs and Refugee Services to gather background information for this review.
- 1.6 A number of themes emerged during the meeting:

1. **Preventative work** – ensuring compliance with the Homelessness Reduction Act 2017
2. **Weaknesses in joined up working**
  - Concerning children with an EHCP who would normally be provided with school transport but, having been placed out of borough have to arrange transport through the borough in which their address lies;
  - Between Housing and Children’s Social Care;
  - Ensuring consistent messages from Housing to schools and other services.
3. **Quality assurance** – concerns with inspection and standards of accommodation
4. **Pressure to move** – families feeling pressurised to move out of borough and to move their child to a school close to their TA.
5. **Information and communication** – ensuring that families have access clear and accurate information.

1.7 In addition to the above, Members may wish to ask questions on the following:

- Creating homework and play spaces in hostels
- How the Location Priority Policy is reviewed
- Advice/support Housing gives to homeless families, including information available to older children
- Information available on the council website
- Checks on the quality and state of repair of Private Rented Sector accommodation
- Gathering feedback from residents and complaint handling
- Homeless 16 & 17 year olds
- What other support is available to families in TA?

## 2. Recommendations

2.1 Members of the Select Committee are asked to:

- note the evidence provided at Appendix A of this report;
- gather evidence from Housing officers present at the meeting; and
- consider making recommendations to Mayor and Cabinet, either at this meeting or at the next meeting of this Committee.

## 3. Legal implications

3.1 The report will be submitted to Mayor and Cabinet, which holds the decision making powers in respect of this matter.

## 4. Financial implications

4.1 There are no direct financial implications arising out of this report. However, the financial implications of any specific recommendations will need to be considered in due course.

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## **5. Equalities implications**

5.1 There are no direct equalities implications arising from the implementation of the recommendations set out in this report. The Council works to eliminate unlawful discrimination and harassment, promote equality of opportunity and good relations between different groups in the community and to recognise and to take account of people's differences.

For more information on this report please contact Emma Aye-Kumi, Scrutiny Manager, on 020 8314 9534.

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