

Equality Assessment (EA)

Service Area:	Supported accommodation for care leavers
Name of service/ function/ policy/ project being assessed:	Redesign our approach to commissioning supported accommodation for care leavers to broaden the choice of local provision and support including opening the Green Leas leaving care accommodation
Officer leading on assessment:	Henry Kilpin, Head of Strategy and Programmes
Other staff involved:	Zoe Williams, Head of Policy and Research; Caroline Sakala, Operational Manager- Beverley House; Paul Coates, Operational Manager- Green Leas

BACKGROUND

1. Briefly describe the service/ function/ policy/ project:

Summary

Green Leas is a 16 bed facility near central Kingston. Until recently, it has been used by Kingston Council to provide sheltered accommodation for older people. Given that there is a surplus of this type of accommodation across the borough, the Council has taken the decision to re-purpose the building. A feasibility study was carried out at the end of 2015 to determine how best to use the facility and the decision was taken to offer the building to AfC to use as supported accommodation for care leavers. The project is considered extremely important to the organisation due to the considerable benefits it will bring. This includes:

- Generating savings;
- Improving the quantity and quality of our in-house supported accommodation provision;
- Allowing us to exercise greater control over our supported accommodation provision to ensure it is fully meeting the needs of our young people;
- Providing a home for care leavers locally which is closer to their family, friends and support network; and
- Providing care leavers with a step towards full independence.

The project will be overseen by a project lead and a project working group who will oversee the refurbishment of the building, in partnership with Kingston Council, and lead

on the development of the operating model, including agreeing a staffing structure and recruiting to the new staffing team. The project working group will include officers from AfC and Kingston Council, representatives from the design consultants and the contractors (as required), representatives from the local Residents' Association and care leavers themselves.

Detail

It has been agreed that given the large numbers of young people that will be accommodated it is appropriate that they all have a low level of need and require minimal support. As such, the following criteria will be applied to identify suitable young people to be accommodated at Green Leas:

- Care leaver;
- Aged 17 plus;
- In education, employment or training;
- Low level of need (while acknowledging there are a spectrum of needs even within a description of 'low' need); and
- May be an Unaccompanied Asylum Seeking Child (UASC).

A clear referral process will be established between the Leaving Care Team and the Supported Accommodation Team and all referrals will go through the Young People's Accommodation Panel (YPAP) that is established in Kingston. All young people considered will be subject to a risk assessment to ensure they will be comfortable within the Green Leas environment. All young people identified by the YPAP will be required to undergo an interview with the Green Leas Operational Manager and staff at Green Leas to ensure their suitability to reside there. Any concerns raised will be discussed with the Leaving Care Team and the Green Leas Operational Manager has the right to veto. Any young people who are assessed as suitable to live at Green Leas would have to have a clear exit strategy in place as the maximum stay is expected to be no more than two years.

All residents will be issued with a licence to occupy, as is the case at Beverley House (existing supported accommodation for six young people) currently.

Phases

The building will be separated into two 'phases' through the addition of secure access doors between different areas. As part of the risk assessment carried out by the YPAP, criteria will need to be established to determine which phase of the building they would be most appropriately accommodated in.

One half of the building (four flats on the ground floor and four flats on the first floor) will be allocated to care leavers who may be slightly younger i.e. only just coming up to 18 years old, or those who require more support to learn the skills required to live independently. These flats will be those that are closest to the reception on the ground floor and the office on the first floor. They will therefore be able to seek help from staff more readily if required. These young people will only be able to access the communal areas on the ground floor, and the shower and bath facilities and the laundry on the first floor that have been designated for them to use. They will not be given access to the second phase of the building.

The other half of the building (four flats on the ground floor and four flats on the first floor) will be allocated to care leavers who are older or more confident in their own independent living abilities and are close to be able to move to full independence. They will be able to access the whole building but will be asked to only use the laundry and shower facilities that have designated for their use.

The intention will be for young people to transition from the first phase to the second phase as they become more confident with their independent living skills. As part of the regular review held with each care leaver, each young person will be assessed to ascertain whether they are ready to move from the first phase to the second phase or ready to move on from the second phase to full independence.

At times, depending on vacancies, it may be necessary for some young people to delay the transition to the second, more independent phase of the building.

Emergency Bedroom

The emergency bedroom will be used to accommodate young people whose existing placement has broken down and who are in need of short-term accommodation while a more permanent option is identified. The maximum stay for any young person in the emergency bedroom will be seven days. It may be appropriate to put in place a charge if any young person in the emergency bedroom overstays the maximum stay.

All young people accommodated in the emergency bedroom will have at least 1:1 support, if not 2:1. Staff supporting these young people will be in addition to the existing staff at Green Leas. They would be expected to be awake all night in case of emergency and will therefore be located in the office on the first floor overnight.

It is likely that the young people accommodated will have a higher level of need than the other residents at Green Leas. However, given the level of support and staffing that will

be on site at all times to support the young people, it is considered that the impact on other residents will be minimal.

A clear process will be established to ensure there is effective communication between the Leaving Care Team and the Supported Accommodation Team in relation to the emergency bedroom. The Supported Accommodation Team will have to be included in any discussions and final decisions about which young people to accommodate.

2. Why is the equality assessment being undertaken?

The project is included in Achieving for Children's Business for 2014-17. As such, it is necessary to complete an Equalities Assessment to assess its potential impact on the protected characteristics group.

3. What sources of information have been used in the preparation of this equality assessment? (e.g national research, local needs assessment, user feedback) Please provide the details in the table below:

<i>Information source</i>	<i>Description and outline of the information source</i>
Green Leas Project Documentation	Project documents relating to the Green Leas projects.
Green Leas presentations and reports to AfC Senior Leadership Team (SLT)	Progress updates given to SLT throughout the project.

ANALYSIS OF IMPACT

4. Assess the relevance of each protected characteristic group to the service/ function/ policy/ project and explain what the data, customer feedback, complaints or discussions with stakeholder groups tells you about the impact.

Other questions to consider:

- *How well are diverse needs met?*
- *Have any differences in access to services/functions been identified for any group?*
- *Has the area identified any disadvantages experienced by groups, which need to be addressed?*
- *Have there been any complaints about a failure to receive an appropriate and fair service?*
- *Is there any other evidence of differential impact or different outcomes which needs to be addressed?*
- *Is there any evidence that participation in areas of public life is disproportionately low for any particular relevant protected characteristic group?*
- *Have the needs of disabled people been identified and addressed where these are different from the needs of non-disabled people?*
- *Have you identified any need to tackle prejudice or promote understanding between different relevant protected characteristic groups?*

Remember that equality assessment is not simply about identifying and removing negative effects of discrimination but it is also an opportunity to identify ways to advance equality of opportunity and to foster good relations.

<i>Protected Group</i>	<i>Findings</i>
Age	Green Leas will provide accommodation for care leavers aged between 17+ and 21. Given the size of the building, it is not considered appropriate to accommodate young people any younger than 17.

	<p>The new staff team will be trained and experienced in communication with young people.</p>
<p>Disability</p>	<p>The cohort of care leavers accommodated will have a low level of need. This will mean they are equipped with the skills to live in supported accommodation but still require some support before they move into full independence. As such, it is unlikely that any of the young people who live at Green Leas will have any level of disability.</p> <p>The building is not suitable for accommodating young people with a physical disability who require a wheelchair- the corridors and bedrooms are not of sufficient size and there is no lift to the first floor. Consideration was given to making the building more accessible but the costs relating to the work required made it unviable and the data relating to the needs of the cohort suggested there was no need for it to be fully accessible.</p> <p>The emergency bedroom at Green Leas will be used to accommodate young people whose existing placement has broken down and who are in need of short-term accommodation while a more permanent option is identified. It is likely that the young people accommodated will have a higher level of need, and this could mean they have a learning disability or a physical disability (not in a wheelchair due to the lack of lift and size of rooms). Additional support, either on a 1:1 or 2:1 basis will be put in place as a requirement of the referral being accepted. This is to ensure the young person accommodated in an emergency, and the young people who permanently reside at Green Leas, are in a safe and pleasant environment. The individualized support will be provided in addition to the core Green Leas staff team and they will be sufficiently experienced and trained in supporting young people with this level of need.</p> <p>The core of the Green Leas staff team will have training in working with young people who may have a mild disability if required.</p>
<p>Gender (Sex)</p>	<p>Green Leas will be able to accommodate both males and females. Initially, it is likely to be mostly male due to the make-up of the cohort that are likely to be placed there.</p> <p>Policies and procedures will be put in place to safeguard all the young people accommodated to prevent unacceptable</p>

	<p>behaviour.</p> <p>The new staff team will be trained and experienced in communication with both males and females and will be representative of both genders wherever possible.</p>
Gender reassignment	<p>If required, Green Leas could accommodate a young person who is undergoing gender reassignment, provided they meet the eligibility criteria.</p> <p>Staff will be given training in working with young people who are undergoing gender reassignment if required.</p>
Marriage and civil partnership	<p>This project is considered to be of low relevance to marriage and civil partnerships.</p>
Pregnancy and maternity	<p>This project is considered to be of low relevance to pregnancy and maternity.</p> <p>Green Leas will not accommodate teenage mothers as it is not considered an appropriate environment for a mother and baby.</p>
Race/ethnicity	<p>Race and ethnicity will not taken into account as part of the eligibility criteria for being accommodated at Green Leas. However, given the make-up of the current leaving care cohort, it is likely that a number of young people accommodated are UASC. The new staff team will be trained and experienced in working with UASC and meeting their needs i.e. liaising with the Home Office regarding residency and immigration.</p>
Religion and belief including non-belief	<p>Religion and belief will not taken into account as part of the eligibility criteria for being accommodated at Green Leas. However, the new staff team will be expected to support the religious needs of young people accommodated as far as is possible.</p>
Sexual orientation	<p>This project is considered to be of low relevance relevant to sexual orientation.</p>

5. Summarise the key findings of the equality assessments of impact- have you identified any data gaps in relation to the relevant protected characteristics and relevant parts of the duty?

Other questions to consider:

- ***Are there findings of unlawful discrimination?***
- ***Can you address any identified adverse impact?***
- ***Can you mitigate any negative impact?***
- ***Please provide rationale if you are unable to address any adverse impact.***
- ***Have you identified any ways of advancing equality in this area? For example, meeting diverse needs?***

- ***Is there a need for any actions to promote understanding between different protected groups?***

The project has the potential to deliver many benefits- not least a higher quality, local provision for care leavers in Kingston which will enable them to learn the independence skills they need so they can move into fully independent provision in the near future.

The Green Leas staff team will have sufficient experience and training to enable them to provide support to young people from a variety of different backgrounds and across the protected characteristic groups.

Update- July 2018

The feedback from the local community since the provision has opened has been largely positive, and the residents' association has worked closely with the Green Leas Operational Manager to ensure a close working relationship between the residents and people living nearby.

Feedback from the young people who are accommodated at Green Leas has been extremely positive- they are enjoying the new facilities and are pleased to be contributing to key policies and procedures so they are able to influence how the provision is run.

CONSULTATION

6. What consultation have you undertaken with stakeholders or critical friends about the key findings? What feedback did you receive as part of the consultation?

There has been a significant amount of consultation activity as part of the project to date. This includes:

- Public consultation during the initial stages of the project where a senior manager from AfC, the project lead, and the Head of Leaving Care attended a public meeting to share information about the project and to address any concerns. At the same time an online consultation survey was carried out by Kingston Council. This included a video explaining the project that was developed with, and featured, current care leavers. Overall the responses were favourable and supportive of the project.
- The project working group which was established to oversee the project and lead on decisions around the design and fit of the building and the operating model includes representatives from the local Residents' Association and care leavers. This means the local community and the young people who may be residing at Green Leas are able to influence the development of the project.
- Specific consultations have been carried out with young people as and when required during the project so far- for example, presentations were made to the Children in Care Council, the Youth Council and meetings were held with groups of

care leavers to make decisions about floor coverings and wall and door colours.

- There are plan for the young people living at Green Leas to be involved in the review of key policies and procedures relating to the provision, such as the residents' handbook, which sets out the rules and regulations when living there.

ACTION PLANNING

7. What issues have you identified that require action?

<i>Issue identified</i>	<i>Planned action</i>	<i>Lead officer</i>	<i>Completion Date</i>
No issues were identified.			

MONITORING AND REVIEW

8. How will the actions identified above be monitored and reviewed and where will the actions be captured i.e. Business Plan, project plan, service and improvement plan, service plan poster or Personal Development Plan?

The delivery of services at Green Leas will be overseen by the Operational Manager and the Associate Director for Provider Services, who manages the Supported Accommodation service. Should any issues arise, this oversight will ensure that action can be taken promptly to deliver a resolution.

PUBLISHING THE COMPLETED ANALYSIS

When completed, the equality assessment should be approved by a member of AfC Management Team and published on the Achieving for Children website. Please provide details below:

Approved by	Ian Dodds, Deputy Chief Executive
Date of approval:	June 2018
Date of publication:	July 2018