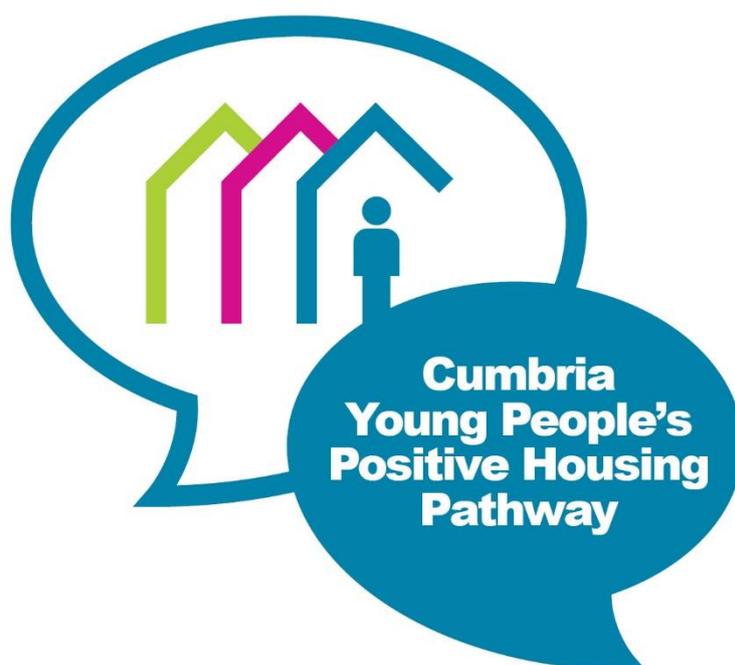


Positive Housing Pathway Annual Report April 2020 – March 2021



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INTRODUCTION

In 2019, we undertook a service review of our commissioned supported accommodation services for young people; we looked at models of national best practice and choose to adopt a Positive Housing Pathway (PHP) model, as devised by St Basil's. From 1st April 2020, the County Council's service response to young people who are homeless or threatened with homelessness has been delivered through our Positive Housing Pathway model, and in conjunction with our providers – Impact, Project John and Depaul UK.

PATHWAY AMBITIONS

Our ambition for the young people in our service is that:

- Young people receive the right help at the right time.
- Young people receive a service that is personalised to their individual needs, from a service offer which is consistent across the county.
- Young people who access our services go on to experience a bright and fulfilling future, free from the risk of homelessness.

Our ambition for this service is that, from the first point of contact with a young person who is experiencing homelessness/at risk of homelessness, everyone working in this service area sees the potential in that young person and plays their part in moving that young person from a point of crisis, to give them hope for the future.

Cumbria has adopted a Signs of Safety approach and this has been built into the commissioned services and the processes of the Pathway; this enables us to adopt a consistent, strengths-based approach with our young people.

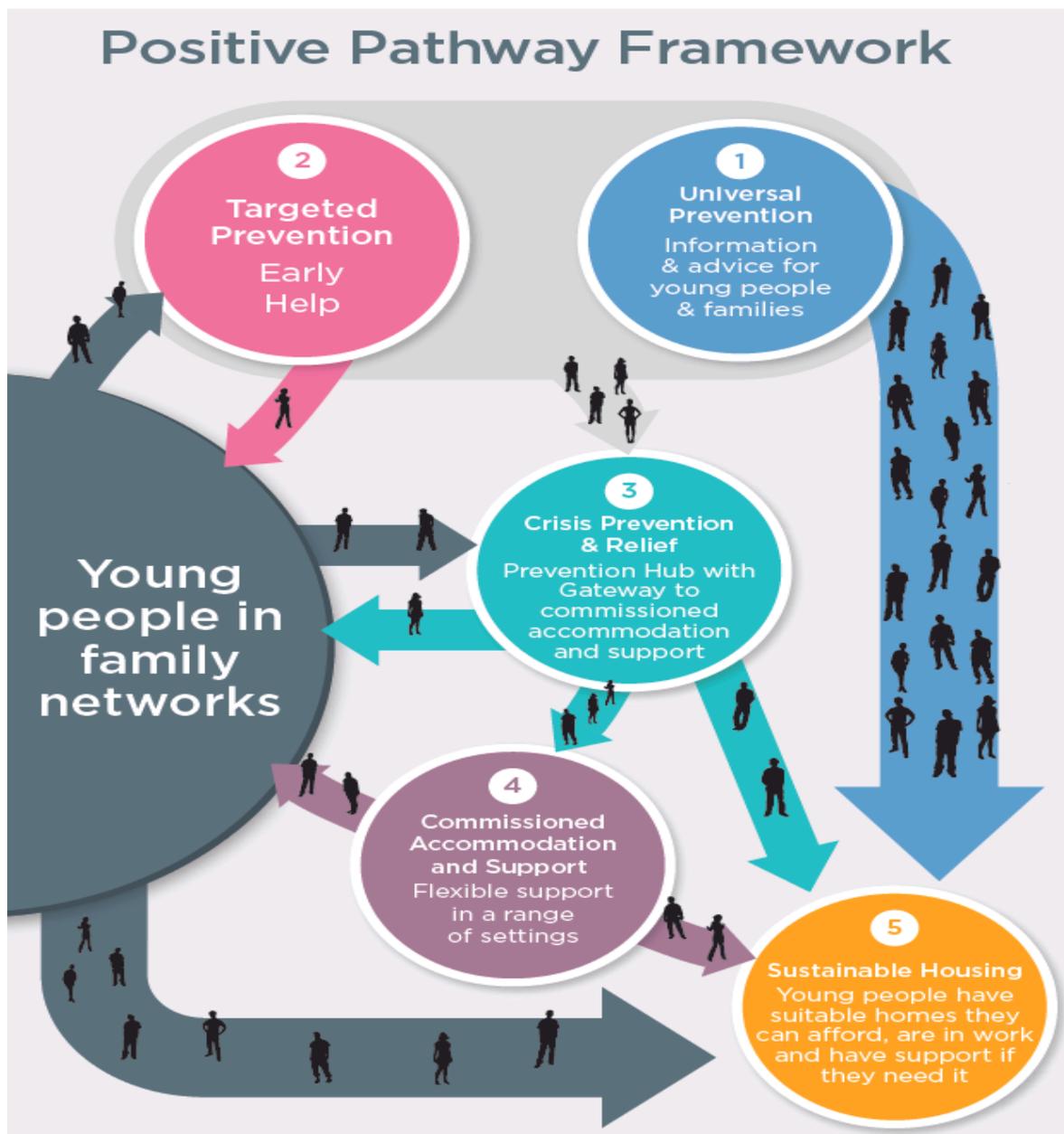
CUMBRIA YOUNG PEOPLE'S POSITIVE HOUSING PATHWAY: OVERVIEW

PRIORITY GROUPS

Priority is given to:

- Young people for whom the Council has a statutory duty (16 and 17 year olds at risk of homelessness).
- Young people for whom the Council has a statutory duty (formerly looked after children).
- Young people aged under 18 leaving custody.

Eligibility will remain for young people aged 18-24 years, dependant on capacity.



1. Universal information and Advice

We have a website www.cumbria.gov.uk/yphousing which features information targeted at 3 core groups:

- Young people.
- Parents/carers; and
- Professionals.

The website features short film clips of young people, who have been in the service, talking about their experience and giving advice to other young people in their situation. All sections contain information about our Joint Protocol and contact details for the County Council Youth Homelessness and Housing Officers, who work

to support young people aged 16+ who are homeless or threatened with homelessness.

The website has the most current version of the First Contact Scripts, these can be completed by any professional to help identify a young person's needs and to start their referral into the Pathway.

We have developed two "Tackling Homelessness" lesson plans, which have been accredited by the PSHE Association and are available free of charge on their [website](#). These aim to make young people aware of the realistic housing options for young people living independently aged 16+, talk about the financial aspects of living independently at an early age, and signpost them to relevant support. We are happy to co-deliver these in local schools, colleges or to other targeted groups.

2. Early Help (Targeted)

In addition to offering general advice and information, our Youth Homelessness and Housing Officers work with young people who are threatened with homelessness, to explore their options and find an outcome that works for them. Our starting point is always that young people are better off living at home or in the wider family network, if it is safe for them to do so. We have well-established partnership working to ensure that the right agencies are supporting young people, based on their assessed need. If additional support is needed for a young person or the risk around a young person is felt to be escalating, we can take these young people for discussion at one of our Early Help Panels (with the young person's consent) to problem solve with a wide range of partner agencies.

3. Gateway Group (Single Point of Access)

From 1st April 2020, we have had a Gateway Group, this is our single point of access for the County into the Young People's Housing Pathway. The Gateway Group meets fortnightly (via telephone conferencing) to discuss and allocate referrals into the Pathway; these referrals can be for emergency accommodation, short-term accommodation, homeless prevention and/ or flexible support. The Gateway Group is solution focussed; it facilitates multi-agency discussions based around the needs of the young person and the sustainability of the support.

4. Commissioned Accommodation and Flexible Support

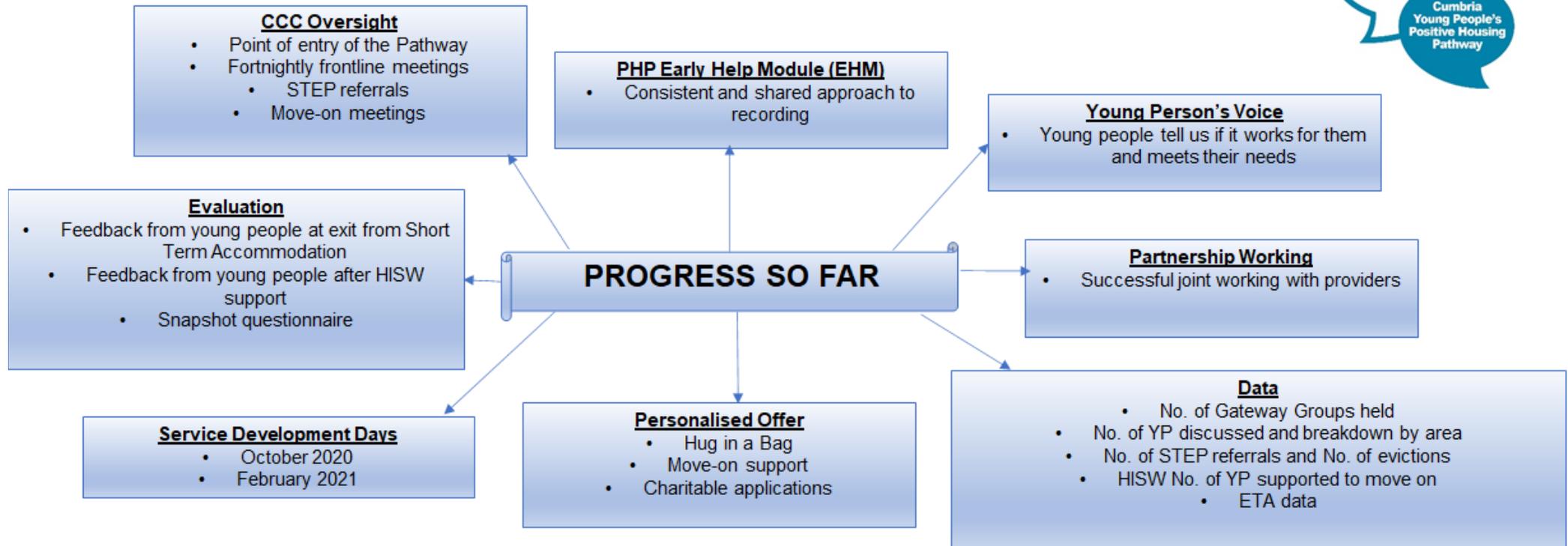
In the Positive Housing Pathway, young people receive a package of support based on their individual needs, which will be reviewed regularly (every 6 weeks). This support enables the young person to move on as a self-sufficient adult, able to manage their own tenancy. Young people are discussed by the Gateway Group at the point of referral and providers are able to bring young people, who are experiencing problems in their tenancy or who have unmet needs, back to the Group

for discussion and/or identification of relevant actions/other sources of support. These are known as STEP (Sustaining Tenancies and Eviction Prevention) referrals.

In line with the introduction of the Pathway, we have expanded our offer to include flexible support, in addition to the specialist support offered by the Youth Homelessness and Housing Officers. These posts operate alongside the Youth Homelessness and Housing Officers and offer tenure neutral flexible support to young people. This means that for older young people (18+), who may not wish to live in supported accommodation, we can work with our district partners to look at alternative housing solutions, including the private rented sector, and can attach support to the young person to give them the best chance of succeeding in their chosen tenancy. Flexible support is allocated via discussions at the Gateway Group and can be used to offer additional support to a young person in supported accommodation, based on their unmet needs.

5. Range of Housing Options

We work closely with our district partners and with our supported accommodation providers, to assist young people to move on to suitable accommodation. The partnership working, which has evolved through the past 5 years of developing and implementing our Joint Protocol, has meant that we have good networks in place and can find creative solutions to enable our young people to progress through to a home, whether that is in social housing, the private rented sector or whether that equates to a return home. Our flexible support offer means that we offer young people who are moving into their own independent tenancy for the first time, a period of support through that transitional period so that they are supported to get everything in place that they need.



PROGRESS TO DATE

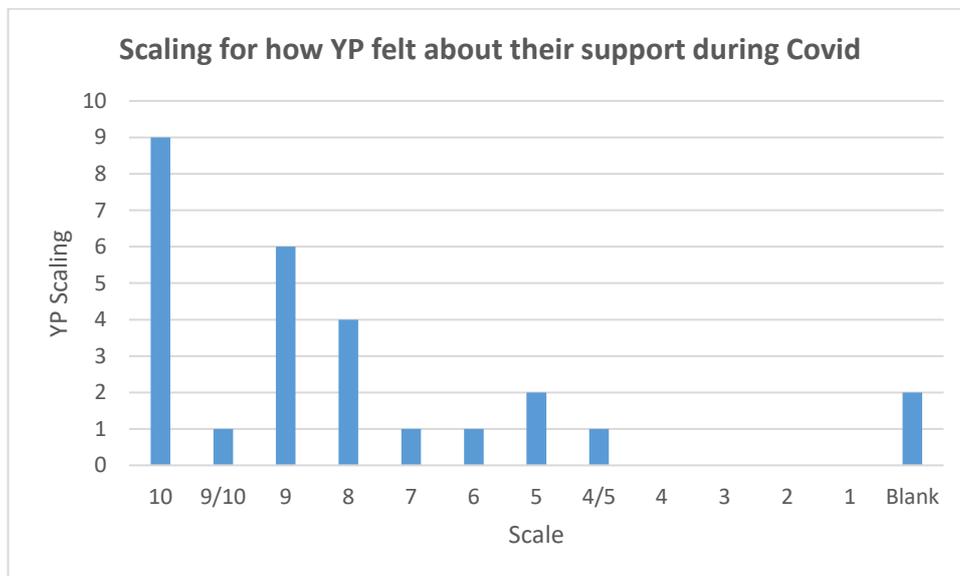
PHP Early Help Module (EHM)

One of the core ambitions of the new approach is closer joint working and a seamless service for young people, regardless of who they are speaking with. An integral element to this is our joint recording on a specialist PHP Early Help Module, which enables more effective sharing of information, case recording and monitoring of outcomes. This was introduced on 12th October 2020 and can be accessed by the CCC Youth Homeless & Housing Team, Impact, Project John and Nightstop.

Young People's Voice

We asked young people in supported accommodation to complete questionnaires on their experiences during Covid-19 and how the pandemic affected them. We had responses from 27 young people in our supported accommodation; this was a 47% response rate.

- All 27 said they felt supported by their ILW/Support Worker during lockdown.
- 25 said they received food and support packs during lockdown to help them (2 didn't respond).
- All 27 said they were given information on how to keep themselves safe during the pandemic.



Within the questionnaires, we managed to capture the voices of the young people about their experiences...



The full Covid-19 questionnaire report can be found in Appendix 1.

Capturing the young people's feedback more systematically is an area of development for the future.

Partnership Working

A core feature of the PHP is a seamless service to the young people, regardless of organisation and, as a result, we work much more closely with our commissioned providers; we feel strongly that this delivers better outcomes for our young people. We asked our providers to compare the way of working in the PHP with the previous contract.

What is Working Well?

- Partnership work.
- Accountability across agencies and internal teams has improved.
- Clear and structured process for referrals and support.
- EHM - One clear system and unified paperwork.
- I like the fact that all information is in one place i.e. EHM.
- I like the multi-agency working with the move ons. It feels like Andy and Lisa are a part of our team – work that well they that don't feel like an external team.
- Better communication between Diane's team and Impact teams.
- The Gateway Group meetings: these are working well as a process.
- The process is very clear from GTKY to end, easy to navigate.
- EHM is a one stop shop for information about the YP
- Referral process seems to work much better

- The appropriate people are involved at the GG and their involvement at this stage means better communication with agencies to support the YP once they have been housed
- ILW's feel they have a closer relationship with the wider organisation and as a result of this 'things happen quicker'
- Having a Youth Homelessness and Housing Officer based within the centre.
- Having a Housing Intervention Officer based in the centre.
- A supportive Contract Manager.
- That we can be honest as an agency and that we can discuss concerns and we are listened to.
- Development Days so Support Workers and Managers can come together and share ideas and build on partnership work.

Personalised Offer

The introduction of the Housing Intervention Support Workers' role has enabled a more personalised package of support to be offered to young people at the point at which they are setting up home. The Housing Intervention Support Workers (HISWs) offer support to young people – assisting them to find and access new properties, securing additional funding for them to enable them to move with furniture/starter packs and in some instances helping them practically to move. This has led to the HISWs developing a network of contacts and a stock of household items to assist young people when they are ready to move on. In addition to this we worked in partnership to secure funding for “Hug in a Bag” sets. These sets contain the basic items a young person needs when they first move into supported accommodation (especially if they have left home abruptly): a wash bag containing basic toiletries; a duvet, pillows, sheet and duvet cover; a towel bale and face cloths.

Housing Intervention Support Workers: Carlisle Example

During the lockdown, the CCC Youth Homeless & Housing Team were able to secure furniture, appliances (including cooker, washing machine, microwave, kettle and toaster), cutlery and bedding from a house, which the Resettlement team were no longer going to be able to use.

HISWs liaised with the Building Assistants at Cumbria House and they collected the items to store them at Warwick Square (supported accommodation scheme in Carlisle). All this was carried out whilst adhering to all COVID policies and procedures.

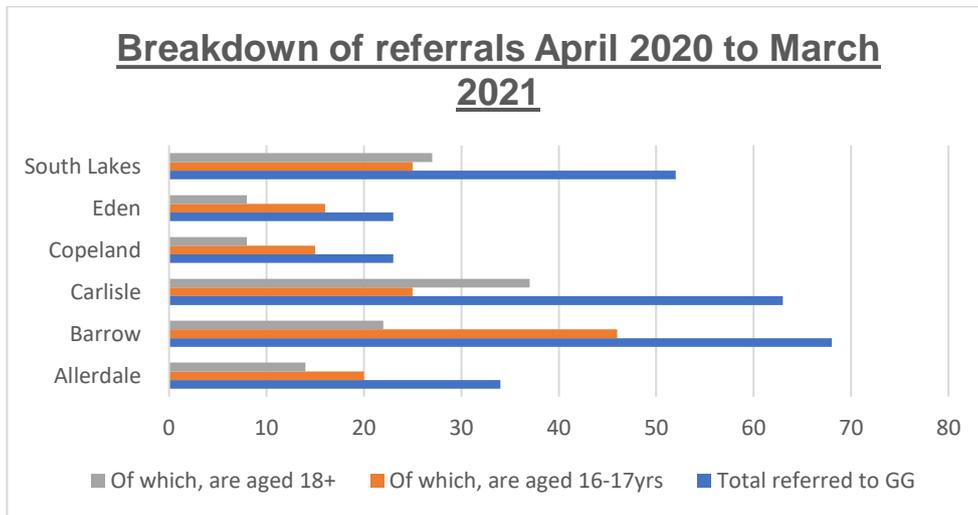
Having stored the items, HISWs worked with providers to identify those young people ready to move on into their own accommodation. One such young person was able to move into a property in a timely manner. Without the support from the HISW and practical assistance to move items that had been sourced, the young person would have been waiting for a wide range of items, instead the young person was able to move into the property, with a brand-new cooker, washing machine and sofa as well as a chest of drawers and cupboard. This young person moving onto independence in a timely way, has allowed another homeless young person to then move into the supported accommodation, creating much needed capacity, especially during the initial lockdown, when move on opportunities were scarce.

The homelessness team have built up working relationships with local Op Shop in order to source all further items needed for a positive move on for the young people. They have also worked with Ways to Welfare to source additional funding for young people to furnish homes as they move on.

During lock-down, ASDA and Morrison's donated weekly shopping to both Close Street and Warwick Square (supported accommodation schemes in Carlisle) to ensure that young people had access to food. Working together with colleagues from the Focus Family team, CCC Youth Homeless & Housing Officers/Housing Intervention Support Workers also linked with a local food provider in order to source ice cream for the young people in the supported accommodation. The team arranged for collection and delivery to the young people (all done adhering to Covid policies and procedures). This was done a few times during lock-down as treats for the young people, who were coping really well.

Data

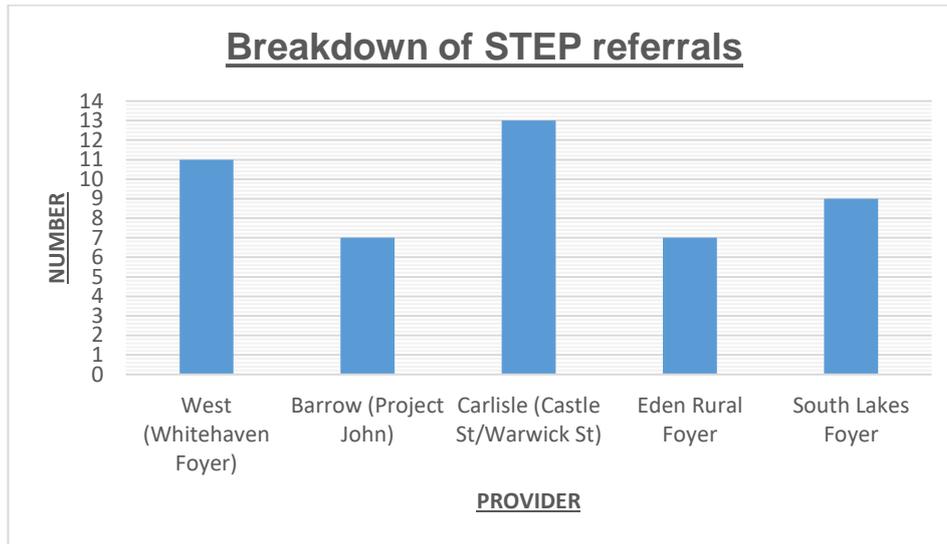
Between the 1st April 2020 and the 31st March 2021, we have held 27 Gateway Groups, discussing 263 young people. Of these young people referred, 147 have been aged 16 or 17 years whilst 116 have been aged between 18 and 24 years.



Year One totals	Total referred to GG	Of which, are aged 16-17yrs	Of which, are aged 18+
Allerdale	34	20	14
Barrow	68	46	22
Carlisle	63	25	37
Copeland	23	15	8
Eden	23	16	8
South Lakes	52	25	27
TOTALS	263	147	116

Gateway Groups are attended by core members, who include providers (short-term and emergency accommodation), district housing teams and the CCC Youth Homeless & Housing Team. Additional attendees are invited, dependent on the needs of the young person and/or relevant persons with whom the young person has an existing relationship. Additional attendees at Gateway Groups have included Social workers, YOS case workers, education and health representatives.

Between the 1st April 2020 and the 31st March 2021, discussions have been had on an additional 47 occasions for young people, who already had tenancies in supported accommodation and who needed additional support; these referrals came through under the Sustaining Tenancies and Eviction Prevention (STEP) Procedure and came from providers. These discussions aim to identify unmet needs and bring additional support to young people to hold them in the Pathway and enable them to remain in safe and suitable accommodation.



- Notices

One of our core aims in introducing the Positive Housing Pathway, was to better hold young people in the Positive Housing Pathway and to have a common focus across services, on enabling young people to sustain tenancies, rather than end them. This relates to our STEP Procedure above and this is being well-used. Despite this, we have still had occasions when we have been unable to hold the young person within the Pathway, and notice has been served.

Impact Carlisle: one young person was served notice. This young person did not engage in the support, they refused to pay any personal charge or adhere to any rules in the scheme (including those relating to COVID lockdown). The young person was supported to return home.

Impact Eden: 2 young people were served notice; one young person was able to turn this around and has successfully moved onto a non-supported unit in the Foyer. The other young person, who was served notice, had brought drugs into the scheme, had repeated anti-social behaviour, had refused to engage in the support, and there was non-payment of personal charge as well as non-payment of gas and electric. PHP staff worked together with the young person's social worker to find more appropriate accommodation for them. The young person was accommodated under Section 20 and placed with a specialist Leaving Care provider for more intensive support.

Project John: 2 young people were served with notice, both relating to the same incident. The first young person is a Care Leaver, with significant mental health needs and suspected undiagnosed learning needs. The young person's behaviour included threatening other young people (including other tenants in the shared building and other students at college), threatening behaviour towards Project John staff and College staff, cannabis use within the property, repeatedly breaking lock-down and other issues relating to the running of the tenancy. Notice was served after an incident at the property to which the Police were called. The young person has remained in the property during the notice period. There have been regular meetings with professionals during this time, including Adult Safeguarding meetings

and a number of STEP discussions at the Gateway Group. The young person will continue to be offered support from Project John and they have now been allocated an Adult Social Worker with safeguarding meetings underway.

The other young person, who was served with notice, was initially housed in South Lakes Foyer. After moving into the Kendal scheme, the young person withdrew from Kendal college and was repeatedly returning to Barrow. A move within the Pathway, was negotiated for the young person in order to safeguard them and better meet their needs; the young person was supported to move to accommodation in Barrow. The young person was being supported by a social worker throughout this time as there were pre-existing concerns about the young person's vulnerability and risk. Following on from notice being served, the young person was placed in a Homestays placement under Section 20 - it was identified they weren't ready for independent living and this was deemed the safest and most appropriate option for them at this time. The young person has been invited to take part in Project John's Wellbeing and Tenancy Groups so that they may consider them for accommodation again in the future.

- Flexible Support: Housing Intervention Support Workers (HISWs)

Recruitment to the HISW posts was slow, partially due to COVID; posts in the North and West were in place for most of Year 1, whereas the Barrow post was filled in December. The number of young people, the HISWs have been able to support in Year 1 stands at:

North – 22.

West – 23.

South – 12.

- Emergency Temporary Accommodation

Our emergency, temporary accommodation is provided by Depaul UK in the form of a Nightstop service. At the beginning of the contract period on 1st April 2020, we were already in the first lock-down and the 10 Nightstop households were unable to host. As a result, the Service Lead for the Positive Housing Pathway worked with the Nightstop co-ordinator to identify an alternative for emergency accommodation for young people aged 16-17 years (with young people aged 18+ years able to access emergency accommodation through the district councils). We linked in with social work colleagues to consider what ASC (Approved Support Care) foster carers could offer as an interim solution.

More recently a funding bid was submitted to Cumbria Community Foundation Covid Response Fund to enable an alternative scheme to be provided. Nightstop Cumbria, working together with Impact, were able to source £7,820.00 to sub-let a void unsupported (non-commissioned) flat at Eden Rural Foyer to provide a crashpad. Referrals are submitted as usual to Nightstop, who manage the risk assessment process and make the offer of bed nights. Since the crashpad has been available, there have been 18 referrals, with the offer of 50 bednights, of which 45 were used.

Service Development Days

In the first year of the contract, we have held 2 Service Development Days (SDD), the first in October 2020 and the second in February 2021. These SDDs aim to develop the service in a consistent way, regardless of organisation, and to identify future developments. The days are planned by the managers of all services (commissioned and non-commissioned) and use participants' feedback to shape future sessions. We start by asking attendees to do a check-in in terms of what is working well, what are you worried about and what needs to happen. At the end of each SDD, managers feedback on check-in and discuss next steps to address any issues raised.

The SDDs have featured session such as

- Child Exploitation, delivered by Sharon Tingey (Team Manager, NSPCC) & Holly Murphy (CCC Partnership & Improvement Manager).
- SoS Support Planning delivered by David Carter & Louisa Day (CCC Signs of Safety Practice Development Officers).
- Channel and the Far Right, delivered by Lisa Handley (Cumbria Safeguarding Hub Service Manager and Chair of Cumbria Channel Panel) and Paul Parkes (Counter Terrorism Case Officer, Lancashire Police).
- Social work & youth homelessness, delivered by Louise Kitcher (Support & Protect Service Manager & Social Work Lead for Youth Homelessness); and
- A PHP EHM Question and Answer session with the CCC Performance Management Team.

Evaluation

Capturing the young person's voice at different stages in the process to get their feedback on what works and where we can improve, is built into the PHP processes. We ask young people for feedback at the point at which they leave supported accommodation and if they have received support from a Housing Intervention Support Worker, they will ask for feedback on the usefulness of the flexible support service, before closing the young person.

In addition to the set points for feedback above, we also planned some snapshot questionnaires. In the first year we completed the snapshot questionnaire asking young people about how supported they had felt during lockdown.

The questionnaire can be found in Appendix 2.

CCC Oversight

In contrast to the previous contract when young people could self-refer into supported accommodation, all referrals into the PHP are discussed at the fortnightly Gateway Group meetings. Gateway Groups are chaired by CCC and attended by core members (CCC Youth Homeless and Housing Team, District Councils, providers) plus other professionals, specific to the individual young person being discussed. Oversight at this point in the process means

that all young people entering the PHP, are tracked through their time with the PHP and outcomes are recorded.

At the front-line, we have recently introduced fortnightly catch up meetings between providers' Independent Living Workers/Support Workers and CCC Youth Homeless and Housing Officers; these meetings are a quick catch-up about young people in schemes as well as discussing contact with those waiting for a place. These meetings discuss whether a STEP referral is required for a young person, as appropriate and based on their needs. These meetings are supplemented by managers meeting on a bi-monthly/quarterly basis to discuss move-ons and ensure that young people are getting the right support for them to move on to live independently, at a time that is right for them. Impact have been able to develop a Move-on Pathway for their young people, helping them move from Impact's supported accommodation, which is part of the PHP, onto either Impact's or Riverside's general needs properties; this has helped create capacity in the PHP accommodation.

WHAT NEXT?

Our plans for the next year in the PHP are to build on the foundations of Year 1 and further develop our joint working and consistency of approach. One element of this will be in upskilling the understanding of those working together to support young people through all staff working to achieve a YP counselling course. We will also review our data collection – in advance of developing the initial specification we worked together with providers/potential providers and other partners to look at what data we wanted to collect and what would best evidence the work of the Pathway. We had said at this time that this will be reviewed after 12 months and we will start this piece of work; this will be linked to embedding our use of the PHP EHM as this enables reporting of outcomes.

We are planning to develop the First Contact Scripts into an on-line form, like that for the Public Duty to Refer forms completed through the district councils and the Single Contact Form for the Safeguarding Hub. This online script will allow for the consistent provision of relevant information to be obtained; these online forms will continue to be sent through the Youth Homeless and Housing Officer (16yrs+) officers to then be processed.

The CCC Youth Homeless & Housing Officers have each been tasked with leading on a specific area of development for the PHP:

- Helen Walker (West) will lead on further developing our links with Leaving Care colleagues – this work has started in the West and has meant that for one young care leaver, a transitional approach to them moving from residential care to supported accommodation, has been negotiated. This will mean that for a number of weeks the young person will be able to stay 3 nights in one set of accommodation and 4 in the other; this ratio will increase until they are fully moved into the Foyer. Working creatively together in this way delivers a better outcome for the young person, supports them to be able to sustain their tenancy and can achieve a cost saving for the authority.
- Emmie Sutherland (South) will lead on developing the process side of our work. The initial piece of work to be undertaken is a complete PHP EHM Guidance document; this was discussed in our last Service Development Day and has been already started.
- Andrew Kennedy (North) will lead on ensuring that we have regular and effective ways of engaging the young people in the service and capturing their voice in a more systematic way, than simply using the snapshot questionnaires. A pilot approach to this, trialling two different approaches will take place this summer.

We want to further develop the work of the Housing Intervention Support Workers and this will include exploring whether we can build a strategic partnership with a funder to enable a more consistent move-on offer for young people, in terms of the practicalities they need when setting up home for the first time.

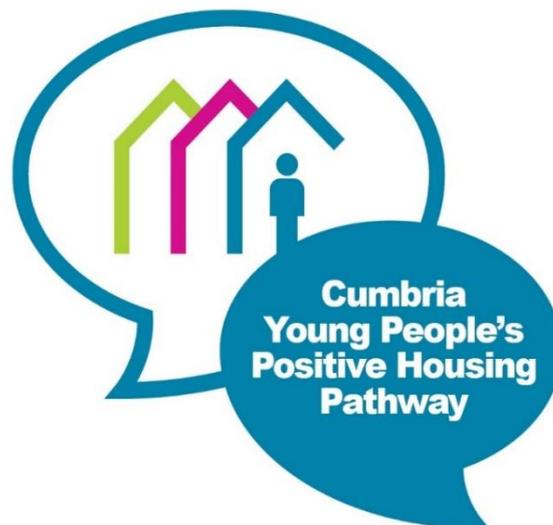
Appendix 1

Cumbria County Council



Covid-19 Questionnaires Summary

May 2021



Serving the people of Cumbria

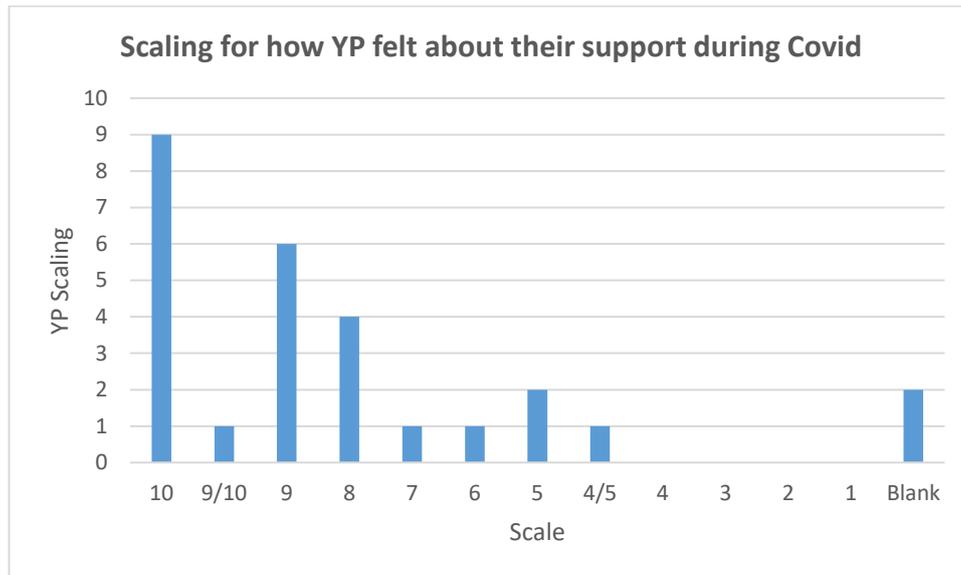
cumbria.gov.uk

Covid-19 Questionnaires Summary

We had asked young people in supported accommodation to complete questionnaires on how their experiences were during Covid-19 and how the pandemic affected them. This report outlines a summary of the findings.

Of the questionnaires sent out **27** young people in Cumbria returned them.

- All 27 said they felt supported by their ILW/Support Worker during lockdown
- 25 said they received food and support packs during lockdown to help them (2 didn't respond)
- All 27 said they were given information on how to keep themselves safe during the pandemic



Within the questionnaires, we managed to capture the voices of the young people about their experiences...

An example of something that really worked for you or really helped you...

Keep checking up on me to see if I'm ok.

Food parcels were fantastic.

They are always there for you, seeing if you are good and have what you need. I liked the video call too.

My support worker collecting my prescription weekly for me, and constant support including the wellbeing helpline they offered.

I have been able to do my meetings on the phone.

Offering plenty of food, £100 on my gas and when I went into hospital you phoned every day and cared about me.

I was really bad with my mental health and Vicky and Catherine helped me by allowing me to change my support bubble and get support from my friend.

My support worker walking me to therapy and receiving help with food drop offs and Project John buying me a blender, fruit and yoghurt and encouraged smoothie making to support my eating disorder was really appreciated.

Going for walks with my support worker and the emotional loneliness helpline was able to access support in a crisis with Project John staff until 10pm.

Got me a taxi when having a crisis with my family and gave me face to face support to deal with this crisis and always felt supported.

What was the best thing you got or what helped you the most?

A bit of food helped out, it meant I didn't have to go out that week.

Christmas food packs and holiday time ones where great and needed as I didn't get lunch from college.

I needed a few food banks at one point and the other packs they gave me were great especially Christmas.

Yes, food and toiletries. The staff asked us if we needed stuff and that.

Vouchers for Aldi. Hug in a bag - bedding.

Massive help was the £100 on our gas to enable us to keep warm in the horrible cold months, the food hampers and parcels and brilliant xmas hamper.

There are always things available, but I didn't need much because my family supported me. Probably the Greggs that we were given, I'd have that sometimes.

Always offered homemade food made me feel really happy, but I'm a very fussy eater so refused quite often.

I received everything, it was fantastic

Overwhelmed with the amount of food received and dropped off and fantastic hamper and generous £100 on gas.

Cooked meals and M&S donation feeling like people cared.

What was your biggest worry during Covid?

Not being able to meet my friends and worrying about family members. My mental health too spending too much time on my own.

My Mum when she was tested positive for COVID 19.

I feel trapped and I cannot do anything, I have not been able to be honest about how I have struggled.

College and not experiencing my time there not only the course but socially too.

Harder to get a job.

Stress of adapting to a new life.

Not being able to see family and my son. How tight the restrictions were was a shock to me at first.

Not able to go to college, I was getting out of my routine, losing weight, and sleeping routine was bad.

Being on my own and my mental health.

Just the hospital check-ups and ensuring my pregnancy was healthy.

Messing routine up, worrying about not seeing people whilst isolating and feeling forgotten about.

Thought of losing my job at the hairdressers and my mental health.

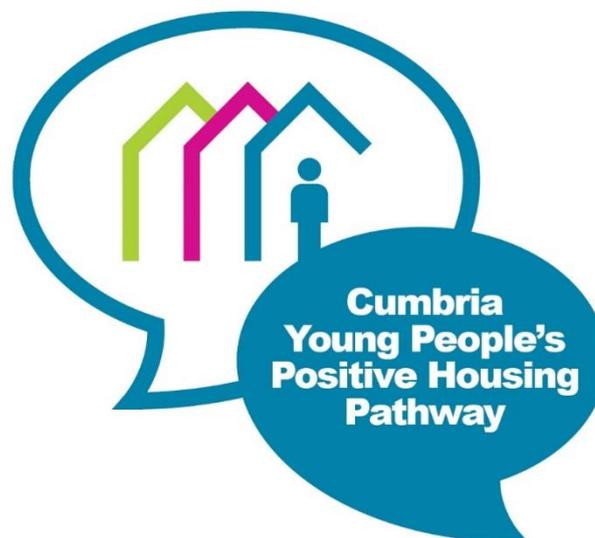
Appendix 2

Cumbria County Council



Snapshot Questionnaire

Covid-19



Serving the people of Cumbria

cumbria.gov.uk

5 Were you given information on how to keep yourself safe, i.e. isolate, keep visitors to a minimum, wear masks etc?

Yes No

6 On a scale of 0 – 10, where...

10 = I understood what was expected of me during Covid-19 in terms of lockdowns, isolating, wearing a mask etc, I had plenty of contact from my support worker, ILW and I was given provisions to help me;

And

0 = I found Covid-19 a very worrying time, I had limited support and I did not feel I received anything to help me during the lockdowns.

How would you score yourself today?

0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

7 What could we have done to help you score yourself higher than you did and support you more if there was another pandemic, such as Covid-19?

Thanks for your time 😊