



Portsmouth
CITY COUNCIL

HOUSING AND SOCIAL CARE SCRUTINY PANEL

**AN ASSESSMENT OF SUPPORT SERVICES FOR
PEOPLE AGED 16-25 LIVING IN ISOLATION**

Date published: 24 March 2016

Under the terms of the Council's Constitution, reports prepared by a Scrutiny Panel should be considered formally by the Cabinet or the relevant Cabinet Member within a period of eight weeks, as required by Rule 11(a) of the Policy & Review Procedure Rules.

PREFACE

Isolation among the elderly has, understandably, attracted a lot of attention in recent years. There is a lot of great work going on around Portsmouth in this area, although more can always be done.

Isolation among 16-25 year olds is less remarked upon, but nonetheless real. That is why this Panel chose this topic.

We would like to thank everyone who has taken part in this exercise. Panel members have heard from a wide range of organisations and people about the real problems that face young adults.

The Panel has been clear that it wanted to look at the reasons for isolation, the barriers that stop services being as good as they could be and what can be done to improve them. We want to pay tribute to everyone working in this field for their work in the current challenging climate.

Some of the answers they gave us make uncomfortable reading; others are truly inspiring. Many are included in this report. The Panel is clear that we need to come up with deliverable solutions and we would like to thank Owen Buckwell and Robb Watt for leading challenge sessions that have helped us do that, we believe.

I would like to thank all the panel members who have taken part: Gemma New, Ryan Brent, Alicia Denny, Phil Smith, Sandra Stockdale and Margaret Foster. I would also want to pay special thanks to our Scrutiny Officer, Lucy Wingham, for her conscientiousness and endless patience with all of us.

Councillor Darren Sanders
Chair, Housing and Social Care Scrutiny Panel.
Date: 24 March 2016

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY.

1. To identify whether people aged 16-25 living in Portsmouth experience feelings of isolation.

The panel heard from a number of partners who are involved in the care and support of young people living in Portsmouth aged between 16 and 25, and also visited a supported housing facility for residents who are homeless and evidence showed that young people who are experiencing feelings of isolation are often experiencing a family relationship breakdown.

2. To understand the reasons why people feel isolated.

Isolation can refer to the lack of social or family contact, community involvement or access to services. Young people can often feel isolated because of their personal circumstances. For example; experiencing a family relationship breakdown, becoming a young parent, being a young carer. The majority of issues for young people have a root cause, which can often lead to mental health issues, alcohol or drug misuse.

3. To examine the symptoms of isolation.

Isolation is the sense of feeling alone, the experience of being separated from others, such as the family. The internet, phone and video games all contribute to the lack of social interaction with other people, which can cause feelings of being alone as they replace face to face contact.

4. To assess what support is available.

Youth clubs and adventure playgrounds provide a valuable refuge from life at home for many young people. They are often located in areas of deprivation. Children's centres are also an essential base for young people to access support services and to meet other young people who are experiencing similar feelings.

The network of support, and accommodation, provided at The Foyer is essential to enable young people to develop life skills required to moving forward in their lives.

5. To assess the possible barriers to accessing support services.

The housing benefit rules state that young people under the age of 35 can only go into shared accommodation, a bed-sit or a single room. Rent is often required in advance.

It was noted that there are fewer services for young people to access north of the city. There are plenty in the city but many young people cannot afford the bus ride into the city.

CONCLUSIONS.

Based on the evidence and views it received during the review process the panel has come to the following conclusions:

- Recognised that young people can feel isolated for a number of reasons but particularly if they are separated from their families and their peers.
- Noted that the council has made the decision to end the council funding of the non-statutory elements of the current Integrated Youth Support Service (ITYSS). This service supported 13-19yrs, and up to 25 with special needs, by providing advice and guidance about issues affecting young people.
- Was pleased to note that there are many types of support from various agencies for young people. Community wardens and the Youth Offending Team as well as other agencies can be involved. The council has a high support unit in Victoria Road South.
- Is concerned that trying to find private sector housing for vulnerable young people is really difficult and often a guarantor is needed to secure a tenancy.
- Noted that the Portsmouth Foyer provides a unique community for vulnerable and disadvantaged young people aged 16-25. It provides accommodation and an extensive network of support to enable young people to develop the life skills required to move forward towards independence. The support offered includes education and training programmes, developing and improving life skills and developing self-worth and confidence enabling the young people to move forward with their lives in a positive way. The services provided at the Foyer should be accessible in other areas.
- Recognised the importance of knowing where support services, advice and help can be accessed is important in looking to empower individuals to tackle their issues. Having a positive destination in terms of employment and higher education can have an impact on the emotional health and wellbeing of a young person.
- Recognised that early intervention and prevention is key.
- Accepted that it is impossible to eliminate young people from isolation completely. There will always be the 'hard to reach' who stay in their bedroom playing on gaming equipment on their own. However it is possible to be isolated without being lonely as this can be a result of their choosing.
- Young people need a sense of purpose and a focus.
- Recognised that feeling isolated is a common issue for young carers because they give up many social opportunities, work and leisure activities due to the demands of their caring role.

RECOMMENDATIONS.

The panel made the following recommendations:

- To consider providing a support mechanism for those young people and their families who have been forcibly isolated and to encourage the integrated and cross departmental working.
- Part of any voluntary sector transition fund be utilised to examine the process to work holistically towards an integrated path by groups (including churches).
- The council to continue to work with the private sector landlords to encourage the take up of younger tenants.
- The council should work proactively with other agencies to manage the impact of legal highs in our accommodation.
- Provide further training to enable teachers, youth workers and health visitors to identify and tackle the 'hidden isolated' in schools and classrooms.
- Schools are encouraged to teach more PSHE and publish how much they are currently doing on the council's website.
- The council to work with partners to explore the feasibility of establishing a hub to allow access to support service and advice, ideally using existing facilities. Services like those provided at the Foyer to be available elsewhere in the city.
- Young carers to be included in any decisions affecting respite care which may impact on them.
- The council to assess the impact for charging affordable market rent.

PURPOSE

The purpose of this report is to present the Cabinet with the recommendations of the Housing and Social Care Scrutiny Panel's assessment of the support services for people aged 16-25 living in isolation in Portsmouth.

BACKGROUND

This review was started by the Housing and Social Care Scrutiny Panel which comprised:

Councillors Darren Sanders (chair)
 Alicia Denny
 Hannah Hockaday
 Phil Smith
 Sandra Stockdale
 Alistair Thompson

Standing Deputies were: Councillors Michael Andrewes, Simon Boshier, Margaret Foster, Stuart Potter and Gerald Vernon-Jackson.

Following the annual Council meeting on 19 May 2015 Councillor Darren Sanders was re-appointed as chair and the panel comprised:

Councillors Ryan Brent
Margaret Foster
Gemma New
Stuart Potter
Phil Smith

Standing Deputies are: Councillors Dave Ashmore, Jennie Brent, Hannah Hockaday, Ian Lyon, Lynne Stagg and Matthew Winnington.

Following the city council meeting on 13 October 2015 Councillor Sandra Stockdale was appointed to the panel in place of Councillor Phil Smith and Councillor Alicia Denny was appointed in place of Councillor Stuart Potter.

At its meeting on 16 January 2015, the Housing and Social Care Scrutiny Panel (henceforth referred to in this report as "the panel") agreed the following objectives for the review:

- To identify whether people aged 16-25 living in Portsmouth experience feelings of isolation.
- To understand the reasons why people feel isolated.
- To examine the symptoms of isolation.
- To assess what support is available.
- To assess the possible barriers to accessing support services.

The panel met on six occasions between 6 February and 8 October 2015. A list of meetings held by the panel and details of the written evidence received can be found in appendix one. A glossary of terms used in this report can be found in appendix two. The minutes of the panel's meetings and the documentation reviewed by the panel are published on the council's website.

OBJECTIVES

1. The panel invited various witnesses as listed in appendix A, to provide information to identify whether people aged 16-25 living in Portsmouth experience feelings of isolation.

During the review it became apparent that from the evidence gathered the following were experiencing induced feelings of isolation; young parents, young people thrown out of the family home or left by the family, young carers and young people leaving foster care.

- 1.1 The Housing Options Manger explained to the panel that it is often the case that a teenager is 'just being' a teenager but that the parents cannot tolerate disruptive behaviour. The parents do not know how to deal with the young person so relationships tend to break down in the family unit. The council has had some cases where the family have actually moved out and left the young person in the property. The troubled families' services can support families with parenting issues but both the parents and the young person need to engage with the support offered for the situation to be capable of improvement. If there is a lack of engagement, the support is ineffective. If

families can be kept together and support can be provided whilst the children are growing up, the council could save money in the long term.

- 1.2 The Manager of the Young Persons Support Team ("YPST") informed the panel that there is usually a history attached to the family. There will have been involvement with various agencies over a period of time and it is usually the case that the behaviour of the young person is not being managed. That behaviour tends to get worse once the young person leaves the family, particularly if they are placed in a hostel with other young people with behavioural issues. It is quite often down to the parents, not setting boundaries and not dealing with the situation. Sometimes there may be mental health problems with family members, domestic abuse or substance misuse.
- 1.3 The Operations Director representing All Saints Young Persons Hostel informed the panel that many of the young people have experienced chaos in their family life or substance misuse. Benefits are only paid to young people if they are in employment, education or training. It is often difficult for the young people to commit to something and to continue with it because of their background. They might not have had any ambition instilled in them nor had any boundaries set.
- 1.4 The Positive Family Futures Transformation Team ("PFFTT") explained to the panel that 'the team' have been working in Paulsgrove since May 2014 following some work sponsored by the Public Service Board, which brings key partners in the city together. Despite a huge amount of money being spent on families there is sometimes very little positive change in the family status. One particular family had up to 50 professionals involved. The Public Services Board sponsored a team to look at services from a family perspective using the Vanguard Method. The Troubled Families programme was seen as an opportunity to understand what happens for families before they become troubled.
- 1.5 Feelings of isolation can also be experienced by families when they first arrive in the community. If they are not connected with the local services then things can quite quickly start to unravel. This is seen as a 'wobble point'. If they are not registered with a GP then the family might find it difficult to access any health support. The system then introduces a single case holder, from existing services, which will ensure that the right service and support is available for the family, known as the Navigator. The Housing Service now undertakes a welcome visit and identifies any support necessary at the very earliest point of concern. As an example, parents are advised about the Children's Centres, community centres and youth groups etc. Families now feel linked in and know where to go for support. The Navigator becomes a positive contact for these families. Both Radian and First Wessex housing associations are also keen to work with the council. This model maximises support for families in the community from, universal services which are already in place to support residents. This is a simple model based around one visit which then introduces people into the community which will reduce any feelings of isolation.

2. To understand the reasons why people feel isolated.

- 2.1 The Housing Options Manager explained that family breakdown is the biggest contributory issue to young people experiencing feelings of isolation. This could be relationship issues often around teenage behaviour but it could also be property related such as overcrowding. The welfare benefit system and how it works for young people can also have an effect. The housing benefit rules state that young people under the age of 35 can only go into shared accommodation, a bed-sit or a single room. Rent is often required in advance which is a barrier. Young people are often evicted from hostels because they do not adhere to the requirements of residency, ie going into training so therefore the job seekers allowance stops and they then get into arrears. The aim is to try to motivate young people to keep them in accommodation and help them to prepare for future life. Drug use in the hostels in the city is also an issue. Portsmouth does have a high level of accommodation for young people compared to other areas. There are approximately 90 bed spaces for under 25s, mainly accommodating those in the 16-21 year old bracket. The council does try to encourage these young people to follow a pathway, hostel accommodation>training>addressing identified support needs>leading to more suitable long term housing solutions. When placements are failing, a panel of experts will look at every possible alternative to prevent evicting a young person. Unfortunately the council cannot prevent every single eviction.
- 2.2 The Housing Options Manager continued to explain that overcrowding in accommodation is a big issue in the city. The council does not have enough three and four bedroom properties. People's expectations are difficult to meet. The council has a large amount of stock which is under occupied. Some families do not want to move from social housing into privately rented accommodation or areas despite the fact that this would immediately alleviate overcrowding issues and/or relationship issues primarily because social housing offers more security. In the private sector rents could be higher, properties often have a garden and are bigger but they are not offered long term lets. Landlords, understandably, are not keen to offer anything other than a six-month term tenancy initially to a new tenant, due to possible risks. Although most private sector landlords are looking for long term tenants, tenants are naturally concerned about the lack of known security. There is an affordability issue too, with private rents being higher than social rents, although the new affordable rents are not much lower than private sector rents. Higher rents increase the risk of living in poverty.
- 2.3 The Positive Activities and Participation Manager explained that it is often a shock to young people that at 18, support is not automatically provided. They have to use their own resources to pull themselves together and some cannot do this. More affordable rents are required to assist young people. For young people in work, the levels of rent in supported housing services is a barrier to taking lower paid employment. Many young people only get part time working hours.
- 2.4 The Leasehold and Commercial Services Manager, for the council's Housing and Property Services explained that the youth clubs do try to attract and keep young people so that as many as possible are supported and tracked. However when young people reach 16 there becomes a period of calm in their

lives. They go from being in the school environment, of having to attend every day and being taught in a classroom, to suddenly not having to do either. Young people need guidance. It is essential for these young people to have a support network. Young people living in a stable family environment are more likely to continue on a structured path with the involvement of their parents encouraging them to either attend college or find work. Young people from care and supported living often reach 16 and just want to leave services alone.

- 2.5 The young carers and young adult carer workers informed the panel that social isolation is a common issue for carers as many young carers give up social opportunities, work and leisure activities due to the demands of their caring role. Many carers also struggle to share how they feel about their caring role as they do not wish to sound critical or complain about supporting their family member or friend. Some fear that people who are not carers will not understand the pressures and challenges of a caring role and therefore become isolated because they do not wish to discuss the situation.
- 2.6 The PFFT team explained from the 'check' phase of this work, the team identified that a family would often loop round, rather than move forward after a service was delivered to help the family make changes. Often, the same service would be re-delivered and so on, with little impact on the outcomes for the family. So the transformation team tried to look at something different. The Substance Misuse services in the city developed the use of Acceptance and Commitment Therapy (ACT) with people engaged with recovery services and delivers ACT based community groups to help sustain positive behaviour change in relation to their recovery, so the PFFT team looked at whether this could also apply to 'general' family life issues, including anxiety and isolation. As an example, the PFFT have been working with one particular family and have seen a huge shift with the parent who is now engaging with the community, taking responsibility for their life and making real sustained changes. Relationship building between practitioner and parent has shown itself to be vital in the initial stages of this process. Starting with what is important to the family is also crucial. With earlier intervention, the PFFT can make a positive shift much sooner. This model also helps to promote their ownership and empowerment. There are a lot of single mums living in Paulsgrove who feel or are isolated from the community, who are concerned about what might happen if they ask for help from services.
- 2.7 It was noted that the 'ACT' model is in its very early stages with the PFFT team work, however, at a recent workshop hosted by the PFFT team, over 16 representatives from community based services including schools, housing and child development had attended and were looking at how to work with families, using this approach to enable to develop this model further.
- 2.8 The manager of the Young Parents Support Services ("YPSS") explained to the panel that YPSS provides support to young people who become pregnant whilst at school or in further education. The service supports young parents through a positive pregnancy, parenting and future life chances, by working with schools so that they do not become disadvantaged. The service will pick up a young parent up to the end of Year 11 and will support them through further education, with childcare etc., to help keep their aspirations alive. Young parents can often experience feelings of isolation from their peers who

are moving on with their lives. If support services are not available young parents can fall into isolation. There are easy things for schools to do to support young mums at school during their pregnancy as they are at high risk of feeling isolated. Many young mums suffer from anxiety and mental health problems particularly with drink or drug issues in the family. There has been a lot of preventative work undertaken in schools with sex education and the teenage pregnancy figures have reduced significantly. However, there has been an increase in school age dads. This can be very hard for the boys especially if they do not tell anyone. They have the same thoughts and anxieties as the girls do. Young parents do need direct support. They need someone to go along with them to an appointment as they are unsure of where to go, how they will be treated by staff etc. This all breeds anxiety and isolation. There is a need to recognise these concerns early on and to work out how to support them.

3. To examine the symptoms of isolation.

- 3.1 The Operations Manager of the All Saints Hostel explained to the panel that many tenants have undiagnosed mental health issues. Although these are often identified by hostel staff it can be difficult for access to the appropriate services to be arranged within the six months that they live at the hostel. It is even more difficult if there are other issues with substance misuse involved because there are very few dual diagnosis services. One 17year old was evicted from the family home and the hostel was asked to 'teach her some rules and boundaries'.
- 3.2 The young carers and young adult carer workers informed the panel that carers often give up work or education to prioritise their caring role. They may struggle to maintain friendships as they have less time for social engagements. Carers often experience poor health in comparison to their non-caring peers, this may manifest as poor physical or mental health. The age group most affected by poor health is young male carers.

4. To assess what support is available.

- 4.1 The Operations Director representing All Saints Young Persons Hostel informed the panel that the Society of St James, which is based in Hampshire, provides substance misuse and mental health services, a care home for older people with an alcohol dependency as well as supported accommodation for 15-25 year olds at the All Saints Hostel. A snapshot taken in February 2015, there are currently 22 tenants in the hostel, most of who are between 15 and 17 years old. The looked after children are funded separately. The hostel has clusters of four bedrooms with a shared kitchen where the young people cook for themselves. A life skills education programme is provided, which includes advice on budgeting, nutrition and drugs. The rent is set by First Wessex at £170 per week and is for the room only. If the young person is working their housing benefit is reduced and they are liable for most or in some cases all of their rent. It can be difficult for young people to see the value of working if their unemployed peers are doing nothing but are still having their rent paid. 24 hour support staff cover is funded by Supporting People and the landlord provides day reception from 9am-4pm and night cover for housing management issues from 10pm-6am.

- 4.2 The Operations Director explained to the panel that the young people are expected to stay for a maximum of six months and then move onto the Foyer or other supported lodgings, where they receive progressively less support, so at the end they are independent. However, some return two or three times. Most young people do grow out of their challenging behaviour. However, the use of legal highs is a serious problem for the tenants of the hostel. It can make people seriously ill, cause long-term mental health issues and be a gateway for taking other drugs. First Wessex does work with the hostel staff regarding tenants' behaviour but as it does not ban the use of legal highs, which are often the cause of the unacceptable behaviour, which includes abuse and damage to the property, this is not addressed.
- 4.3 The Manager of the YPST explained that there is often a lot of multi-agency support available. Community wardens and the Youth Offending Team as well as other agencies can be involved. The families tend to be known to services throughout their life. However it is often the case that services will stop when the family reaches a certain level but sometimes a consistent low level of support is needed rather than a short term, higher level of support. This is difficult to manage when services are working with budgetary constraints and certain criteria/procedures. The YPST do try to access services at the earliest stage but it is often about changing the mind set of both families and the young people.
- 4.4 The Manager of the YPST informed the panel that when young people come from being 'looked after' whether it is from a family or foster care, they do struggle living alone. The council does have a high support unit in Victoria Road South and other housing pathways for young people. However, some young people do struggle with their tenancy. Some may have been evicted from The Foyer or All Saints and trying to find private sector housing for these young people is really difficult and often a guarantor is needed to secure a tenancy. A great deal of time is spent trying to help these troubled young people but there does reach a point where there has to be consequences for their actions and the behaviour. Some behaviour is dangerous not only to the individuals concerned but also to others. The service does try to support them and find them accommodation, and to work with them in small steps. Many young people have a number of problems including mental health issues, some drug use or just low aspirations and motivation. Most young people do want to go back to their families. There is a feeling of isolation not being part of the family. The YPST support the young person on a pathway, based on assessment and planning.
- 4.5 The Operations Director from the All Saints Hostel explained that finding accommodation can be difficult as landlords are often reluctant to rent out their properties to young people, particularly those who have been homeless in the past. Young people are referred from the Housing Panel which meets regularly and plans are tailored to suit the individual. It is acknowledged that it is often hard for young people to take responsibility for themselves at such a young age. However, for rent arrears and unacceptable behaviour, three warnings are given to the person concerned and 28 days' notice to quit. If the tenants' behaviour improves these can be rescinded. There has been some discussion

regarding the possibility of purchasing a shared house for tenants who do not feel able to live with a large number of people.

- 4.6 The Positive Activities and Participation Manager explained to the panel that many people use the youth clubs, which are often located in areas of deprivation. These can be a valuable refuge from home. In some areas, where there has been a club for many years, generations of families attend.
- 4.7 The Portsmouth Young Persons' Services Manager, Two Saints Ltd explained that the Portsmouth Foyer provides accommodation and a network of support for homeless young people. The support network is essential to enable young people to develop life skills required to move forward in their lives. The young people can be care leavers or come from a challenging dysfunctional family, and go from the school environment to a hostel environment. The Foyer allocates a community involvement worker to an individual who will tailor a package (pathway) to their individual needs and their personal interests. The Foyer offers support in many ways from education and training programmes, developing and improving life skills and developing self-worth and confidence.
- 4.8 The following are anonymous case study examples (2015):

Child A is a 14year old male living in Paulsgrove who is too old for holiday clubs. He doesn't want to attend Hillside Youth Club due to the reputation of the troubled youngsters who use the facility. His is basically 'on his own' either at home feeling isolated or hanging around getting into trouble during the school holiday period. His school does not provide any holiday services. This is a crucial period i.e. 14-16yr old age and child A could quite easily take the wrong path, purely due to boredom and the lack of facilities and services available to this age group.

Child B is from a stable family background but dropped out of college and didn't know what they wanted to do. She experienced pressure from her parents to return to college or find work. She chose to volunteer at her local riding stables which she knew well. This gave her the confidence to pursue further higher education.

- 4.9 Two social work students who were based at the Portsmouth Foyer and attended one of the scrutiny panel meetings offered their views from their work place experiences which included the following points:
- They did not feel that services are accessible to young people.
 - Young People often have an aspiration but do not know how to access that service to get involved.
 - There are also fewer services for young people to access north of the city. There are plenty in the city but many young people cannot afford the bus ride into the city.
 - The services which are provided at The Foyer should be accessible in other areas.
 - There is a pocket of children which early intervention misses. There needs to be something for them to do to prevent them from taking the wrong path.

- They felt that there is a Facebook/Xbox generation who although are on their own in their home they are interacting with other peers.
- In their opinion the challenging behaviour in one of the council's children's homes was not challenged or managed, it was accepted behaviour.

4.10 The Leasehold and Commercial Services Manager, for the council's Housing and Property Services explained that both Hillside Youth Club and the Paulsgrove library are well attended by young people, some of whom do not interact well and do not attend school regularly. The youth club does attract some troubled young people but they are able to access services at the centre. The library is now run by volunteers and offers young people access to personal computers. The Leasehold and Commercial Services Manager felt that if an external influence can be added to the lives of young people they have far more chance of succeeding and taking the right path. The Army Cadet Corps and the Scout Association are good examples of this. They are very active in the council's housing areas and encourage young people to actively join in. This gives them the opportunity to interact with others, gain confidence and engage in new activities/adventures. It is a known fact that young people need a focus. Putting young people on the Somerstown community group PATCH and getting them involved has given them a sense of purpose. The school council is another avenue which gives young people a voice. With 30 plus pupils in a class, there will always be a group of pupils whose behaviour is particularly challenging and then those in the middle - the hidden isolated ones. These are the ones who just get on with it but no-one recognises them.

6.11 The National Citizen Service is another way for 15-17year olds to make friendships, learn skills they are not taught in a classroom and go on a residential. The young people learn budgeting skills, volunteering and as a result grow in confidence. There is a minimal cost of £50. Liberty Gas also takes on young people from deprived areas in the city as apprentices. These young people are working on properties they live in, are learning a trade and then going to work. This is changing the benefit mind-set of many and stopping the sit at home mentality.

6.12 Hostel Visit

On the 23rd March 2015 the panel visited the All Saints Hostel and were met on site by the Operations Manager. It was an opportunity to understand the role of the hostel and the services it provides to its users. It was explained to the panel that All Saints is a supported housing facility for residents who are homeless or at risk of homelessness with high support needs that lie between those at the Foyer and those at Victoria Road South. The people in the target group used to be able to turn up and ask to be admitted. However, this is now conducted through a housing panel that allocates provision based on need. There are procedures in place to deal with those who present themselves outside of normal office hours and these are led by the council's housing options team. Entrants are asked to pay two weeks rent upfront (£10.74) as part of its tenancy arrangements. First Wessex operate a policy whereby if anyone residing in any of the three centres who is in arrears, even if it is less than £100, cannot be transferred to any of the other centres regardless of need. Since the Southwark judgement a few years ago which allowed

teenagers who had been evicted from their parents' home the right to approach the local authority for a home and to be given it if they were deemed to need 'Looking After', the number of 16 and 17 year olds at the centre has increased. Previously it was usual to see two or three 16 or 17 year olds a year. Now there are times when almost all 22 residents are 16 or 17.

- 6.12.1 The Operations Manager continued to explain that some young people arrive at the hostel because their parents have said that they are old enough to look after themselves and they don't want to have to. Sometimes they want the hostel to teach their son/daughter the life skills they did not. In other cases, there has been abuse or neglect by the parents, leading many of the young people to be lacking boundaries in what they can and cannot do in life. Part of the role of the staff at the hostel is to teach them these.
- 6.12.2 The All Saints Hostel comprises of a communal room on the ground floor and three floors of bedrooms, 22 in all. Each floor has a kitchen and showers for those living there. The ground floor can be used for people with some physical disabilities. Each room has a small sink, a work desk, bed, room to hang clothes and drawers. First Wessex provides bedding and a starter pack with plates and cups to get the young people started. All kitchens should contain pots and pans for cooking. Staff are on duty to support the young people 24/7 and regular checks of the building are made to maintain safety. It is imperative that staff undertaking these checks are not viewed as security guards constantly invading the residents personal space. Residents are able to come and go as they please with some limits imposed. Alcohol and tobacco are allowed but other drugs are not.
- 6.12.3 It was noted that sometimes, people with mental health conditions will self-isolate so they need extra services, which the hostel provides. Especially in the early stages, staff are in regular contact with residents, often multiple times in a day, and will work on a plan to get them back into some form of mainstream life. Bearing in mind that staff are dealing with people who have often been let down by the ones that they love and thought they trusted. This makes many of them angry, especially when they see complete strangers offering to help. All staff are very sensitive to that and try to put together plans with them early on. Although it is often the case that other key aspects are discovered along the way.
- 6.12.4 There are some things which could reduce isolation among residents whilst they are staying in the hostel. One of which would be to have access to the CCTV in the building. Under the Data Protection Act only the landlord is able to access the CCTV footage, which means staff at the hostel are less able to spot trouble. This is particularly noticeable on the floor which does not have the office on it. The second would be to have full disclosure of information at the start of the process. This has not always happened and staff have discovered things after an individual has been sent to the hostel that affects how individuals are handled. This can be very frustrating for staff.
- 6.12.5 Ideally, and if funding were available, all cases would remain open to social care for the first couple of weeks after young people arrive at the hostel so as to be able to provide consistent support and to be able to respond to issues as they arise. This would help the staff at the hostel and at the council to

assess properly what help is needed and whether the work the hostel provides is right for them. It would also be helpful to have a financial system that helps people with the sort of chaotic lifestyles experienced by many people who come to the hostel. The Society of St James' has set up a fund to pay the upfront rent First Wessex requires. This means people who need help cannot be turned away by the landlord because they cannot pay the rent in advance at the point they become homeless because they have no income in place. Instead now the St James' Society will pay the rent in advance to the landlord to enable them to access homeless accommodation quicker and reduce the level of stress associated with being young and homeless. Ideally the hostel would also like to provide a 'grace period' of up to six weeks, whereby the young people who arrive can receive the sort of benefits they would if they were at college while a plan is agreed with them. Too often, they cannot go out because they have no money when they arrive and are being told to get training and a job the second after they have been told to leave their parents' home, a really traumatic experience. That makes them sink into themselves. If they could have a transitional period where the finance arrangements are more favourably arranged, then they will be able to find their feet without this extra stress. The fact that the hostel has to go through a Housing Panel, rather than having direct access to the accommodation, minimises the possibility of fraud.

- 6.13 The Positive Activities and Participation Manager for the council explained that one recent positive change is that the Personal, Social and Health Education (PSHE) agenda in schools has recently been invigorated. Young people want more PSHE in schools.
- 6.14 The Chief Executive of Motiv8 explained to the panel that over the 10 years he had been involved with the organisation it has grown. However, now it is massively contracting as there has been a significant change in funding for the organisation. Motiv8 covers three areas: Gosport/Fareham, Havant and Portsmouth. It also runs Bicycle Recycling, a social enterprise which offers repairs and servicing of bicycles, and training and employment opportunities to local young people and volunteers. Bicycle Recycling has two shops, in both Gosport and in Portsmouth. Bicycle Recycling in Gosport is also a training venue which is situated next to the Gosport ferry and the Portsmouth venue is situated in the Community Cycle Hub, Winston Churchill Avenue.
- 6.15 The Chief Executive of Motiv8 continued to explain to the panel that as an example of budget cuts affecting services and the lives of young people, the ITYSS service contract had been terminated. This service was for young people (13-19yrs) and up to age 25 for those with special needs, who were able to get advice and guidance about issues which young people face. The 'You Choose' service is also at risk. You Choose provides age appropriate positive activities, focusing on areas that have the highest need, deprivation and concentration of children and young people. The Chief Executive also felt that it was easier to be a young person living in a deprived housing area rather than the rental sector because the support and facilities for young people run by the housing service in council estates is great. He continued to explain that there are three main issues which he felt can affect young people: not having a stable place to live, not having relationships of trust and not having something positive to do (e.g. work and/or activities). Removing

one of these would lead to isolation. Motiv8 provide support and coaching to help focus and move young people to make the right life choices. Early intervention and prevention is key.

- 6.16 The young carers and young adult carer workers informed the panel that anyone who is actively caring for someone who lives in Portsmouth can access support from the Portsmouth Carers Centre from the age of five upwards. The type of support will depend on the level of caring, the impact the caring role is having and what is appropriate to that carer as an individual. Typical services provided are access to an assessment (restricted to over 18's until a new young carers assessment is in place next year), information and advice, emotional support, access to training, access to group support or positive activities (for young carers) and access to a break. Early support from the Carers Centre enables carers to stay in employment and prevents financial difficulties. It is often the case that carers minimise the impact that caring has on their life and wellbeing-they may not be coping as well as it may seem. Emotional support, carer's breaks and peer support have a positive effect on carers' mental health.
- 6.17 The Teenage Pregnancy Reintegration Officer explained that the team provides an outreach service for young parents including working with young dads. A group meets on a Wednesday at the children's centre in Cosham. Young parents are taught PSHE (personal social health and economic education) life skills to help support healthy eating, activities, education. Young people can attend these sessions from when they are pregnant up until Year 11. The schools support their attendance at these sessions. New mums are entitled to 18 weeks maternity leave from school but this is not encouraged as it would have a detrimental effect on their education. 'New' mums are encouraged to return to school within six weeks of their baby being born as this is a really significant period in their schooling. However, this does depend on childcare and how the delivery went. The team offers one-to-one work with individuals and mentoring if required. Home visits are also undertaken as it is often the case that the parents of these young parents also need some support to alleviate those fears of being a parent at such a young age. It might take a little more navigation but the young person can still achieve their aspirations. Paid childcare is available up to the age of 20. Peer influence is a factor in the feeling of isolation in young parents. Young mums often come back to the Wednesday group who are in college with their child in nursery, taking the course they want etc. which gives the new parents something to aspire to, to see for themselves what they can achieve as young parents. The future can be positive for the young parent and their child. Young parents can also access other support services from the council's children's centres as they get to know what else is available. Young dads feel that they need to get a job, leave school etc. The team always suggest that perhaps weekend work to help support financially in a small way whilst continuing school or college for the longer term. Their peer group do not understand how they feel as new parents. They need to know about labour, pain control, what to expect at the birth. Young dads are given authorisation from school to go to scan appointments and a few days off from school after the birth. Peer support is very important for young dads. As an example, when one young dad who thought he was the only 'young dad' in the city, was told he was one of three he was really surprised. He has been offered the

opportunity to meet with the other dads so that they can talk about their feelings etc. Being able to share how they feel is incredibly important and reduces feelings of anxiety and isolation.

- 6.18 The Family Nurse Partnership ("FNP") is a service for first time mothers aged 19 and under in Portsmouth which offers a free and structured home visiting service by specially trained nurses from Solent NHS Trust, the local provider of community and mental health services. Launched in November 2011 the FNP is an intensive and structured home visiting service. It is offered in the early stages of pregnancy and all the way through to the child turning two years old offering up to 64 weekly/fortnightly visits. FNP is delivered by specially trained nurses who work intensively with the families and this helps build relationships with new parents. The Family Nurse works in partnership with the client, developing an intensive therapeutic relationship, exploring behaviour change, looking to optimise health outcomes for the client and her child and breaking down intergenerational cycles of disadvantage. The programme content for each client includes: personal health, environmental health, life course development, maternal role and family and friends. The FNP is a licensed evidenced based programme and is monitored locally and by the FNP National unit. The FNP supports teenage mothers to break the cycle of disadvantage for themselves and their children, to improve long term health outcomes.

7 To assess the possible barriers to accessing support services.

- 7.1 The Chief Executive of Motiv8 felt that recent personnel changes at the council had meant the council had closed the main services providing support to large numbers of young people, the most recent being ITYSS. He envisaged greater acceptance of alternative ways of working that could deliver good services for less money. An example he had given was to have relatively small (approximately 5% of specific budgets) innovation and development grants, to fund early intervention and prevention alongside the core statutory delivery. He hoped that in future there would be greater dialogue with voluntary groups about such alternatives, as many of them felt that, especially in the last couple of years, this had been lacking.
- 7.2 The young carers and young adult carer workers informed the panel that barriers may be presented by the demands of the caring role for example having to have time out to access services, the location of the service or the time provision is offered can also present barriers.

8 Equalities Impact Assessment.

A Preliminary Impact Assessment (EIA) has been completed for this report, setting out the equalities issues considered during the review, and a full EIA is not required at this stage.

9 Legal Comments.

There are no legal comments.

10 Finance Comments.

For Health & Social Care, the only financial implications relate to possible resource implications for health visitors. As health visitors are now part of the Public Health grant funding and are also under the Multi Agency Teams project, any additional resource requirements will need to be approved in advance by the Director of Public Health.

For Housing, there are no financial implications.

Budget and policy implications of the recommendations

The following table highlights the budgetary and policy implications of the recommendations being presented by the panel:

	Recommendation	Action By	Budget & Policy Framework	Resource Implications
1	To consider providing a support mechanism for those young people and their families who have been forcibly isolated and to encourage integrated and cross departmental working.	Relevant teams of the council	Within policy framework.	There are no resource implications.
2	Part of any voluntary sector transition fund be utilised to examine the process to work holistically towards an integrated path by groups (including churches).	Relevant teams of the council	Within policy framework.	There are no resource implications.
3	The council to continue to work with the private sector landlords to encourage the take up of younger tenants.	Director of Housing and Property	Within policy framework.	There are no resource implications.
4	The council should work proactively with other agencies to manage the impact of legal highs in our accommodation.	Relevant teams of the council	Within policy framework.	There are no resource implications.
5	Provide further training to enable teachers, youth workers and health visitors to identify and tackle the 'hidden isolated' in schools and classrooms.	Public Health and Children's Services and Education	Within policy framework.	Possible resource implications for schools and health visitors.
6	Schools are encouraged to teach more life skills within PHSE and publish how much they are currently doing on the council's website.	Public Health and Children's Services and Education	Within policy framework.	Ongoing within existing resources.
7	The council to work with partners to explore the feasibility of establishing a hub to allow access to support service and advice, ideally using existing facilities. Services like those provided at the Foyer to be available elsewhere in the city.	Director of Housing and Property	Within policy framework.	There are no resource implications.

	Recommendation	Action By	Budget & Policy Framework	Resource Implications
8	Young carers to be included in any decisions affecting respite care which may impact on them.	Adult Social Care Carers/Independence and Well-being Team	Within policy framework.	There are no resource implications.
9	The council to assess the impact for charging affordable market rent.	Director of Housing and Property	Within policy framework	There are no resource implications.

APPENDIX ONE

Meeting Date	Witnesses	Documents Received
6 February 2015	Elaine Bastable, Housing Options Manager Mark Rodwell, manager of the Young Persons Support Team	
27 February 2015	Jane Smith, Operations Director, representing All Saints Young Persons Hostel Sarah Reed, Positive Activities and Participation Manager	
20 March 2015	Leon Runham-Cuenca, Portsmouth Young Persons' Services Manager, Two Saints Ltd, Portsmouth Foyer Sarah McLean and Natasha Chaplin, Social Work Students currently based at the Portsmouth Foyer Jo Bennett, Leasehold and Commercial Services Manager, Housing and Property Services	
23 March 2015 Visit by the chair of the panel to All Saints Hostel.	Jane Spencer, Manager, Society of St James', All Saints Hostel	
25 September 2015	Charlie Adie, Chief Executive of Motiv8	Motiv8 Annual review 2014, ITYSS leaflet, You Choose leaflet and various Communi8 editions.
8 October 2015	Sharon George and Teresa O'Toole, Positive Family Future Transformation Team Kay Crockford, Teenage Pregnancy Reintegration Officer Lisa Caine, Manager of the Young Parents Support Service	'Customers Joining A Community' diagram. Written submission from the Carers Centre and specifically young carers and young adult care workers.

Appendix 2 - A glossary of terms used within the report

ACT	Acceptance and Commitment Therapy
FNP	Family Nurse Partnership
ITYSS	Integrated Targeted Youth Support Service
PATCH	A charity which promotes the physical regeneration of the Somerstown/North Southsea area.
PFFTT	Positive Family Futures Transformation Team
PSHE	Personal, Social and Health Education
YPSS	Young Parents Support Services
YPST	Young Persons Support Team