

Young Persons' Strategy



2008 to 2013

Purpose

St Vincent's Housing Association wants to develop the work we do with young people, these include our employees and customers or who live in the neighbourhoods in which we work.

Young people are our future customers and make up 21% of the population in the areas we work– we need to make sure that they are a desirable place to live and somewhere that families and individuals want to stay.

To achieve this we aim to raise the skills level, self confidence and self esteem of young people through employment, training and volunteering opportunities and we want to provide positive activities that encourage citizenship and may reduce antisocial behaviour.

Through these activities we can develop sustainable communities and promote community cohesion by helping young people feel that they have a stake in both their neighbourhood and home – listening and consulting young people will help us to future proof our business and raise the profile of the organisation amongst young people and of young people amongst the organisation.

The purpose of this document is to set clear strategic objectives and to define how they will be delivered by the organisation.

Our Vision

For the next five years

The development and direct delivery of housing and support services for young people in most need – preventing homelessness;

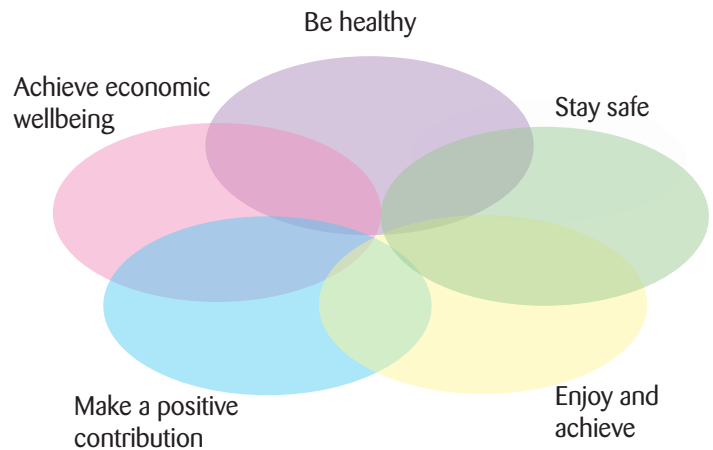
- to develop and increase move on provision using a variety of models;
- to prevent worklessness through the development of training and work experience opportunities within the organisation and through its contractors;
- to encourage citizenship with young people and children in the communities in which we work through a variety of activities and through work with schools and other young person's groups; and
- to enable and encourage young people to have a 'voice' and for their voice to be heard by the organisation



The Aim of the Strategy

- To ensure a strategic approach to the housing and service provision for young people (16 -25 years)
- To develop a proactive rather than reactive approach to the provision of housing and support services for young people
- The strategy should help us maximise resources and improve the coordination of provision across different functions within the association
- To develop opportunities for young people within the organisation through training, employment and volunteering as appropriate
- The strategy will articulate the associations 'VISION' for young people and our aims for meeting their needs, and as well as including all operational stakeholders within the association it will also address the strategies of local authority partners and take into consideration the views of young people receiving our services.

The strategy will address these areas whilst considering the five core principles from 'Every Child Matters' which are to enable young people to –



Research

The terms of reference were agreed to include a range of research on the young persons agenda which considered; - demographics; government policy within the scope of the national and local context– with particular attention to our areas of operation (Blackburn with Darwen, Rochdale, Manchester, Bolton and Calderdale Borough Councils); literature review; an audit of SVHA current provision for young people – including a SWOT analysis; consider good practice and to consider the organisations future 'offer' for young people.

During the development of this strategy the Young Person's Services Manager researched and considered both primary and secondary information which was relevant to this strategy and the young person's agenda - a range of research techniques were used which included one to one and focus group meetings with staff from various levels and functions within the organisation, partner agents, stakeholders and service users.

Findings

In 2007 there were 12.4 million young people aged between 0-19 and this figure is projected to rise to 12.8 million by 2017.

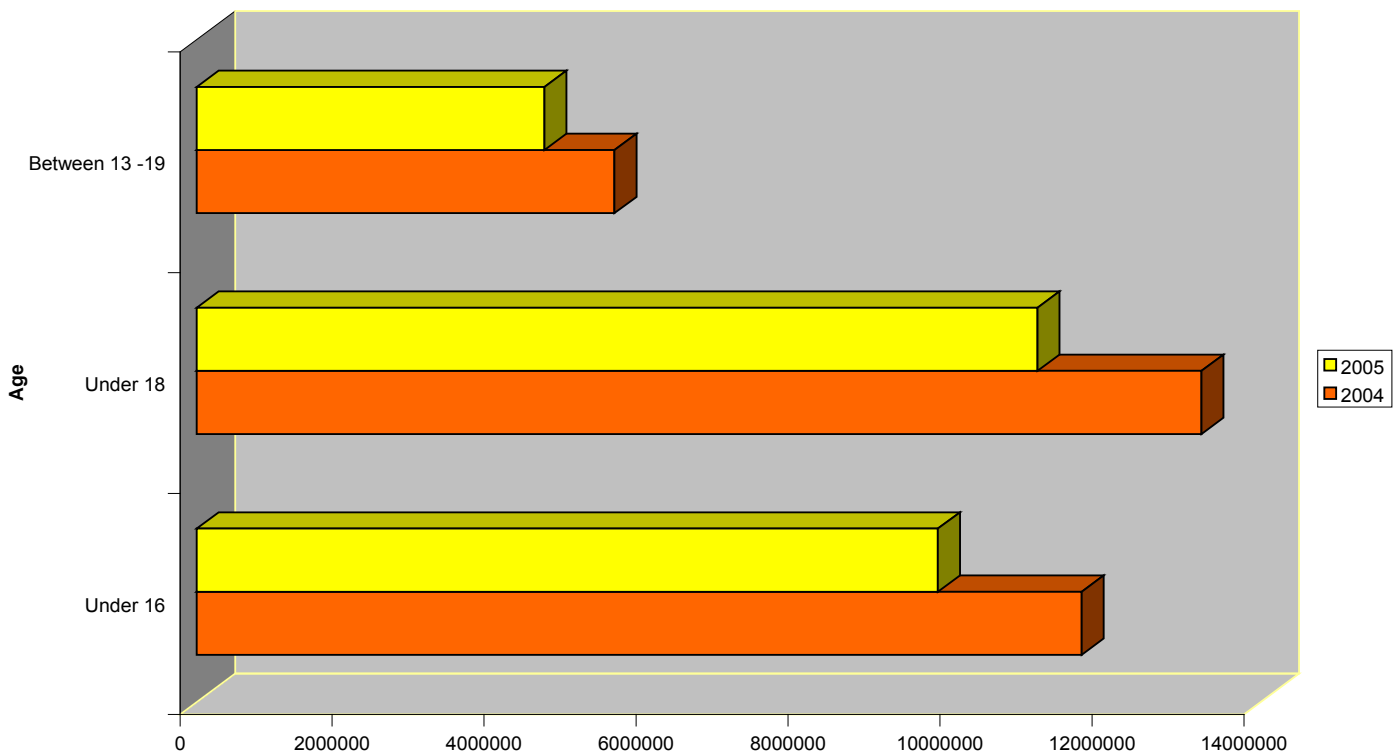
In 2005/06 8,350 young people aged 16 -17 (together with 18-20 year old care leavers) were accepted as unintentionally homeless by their local authority, this represented 9% of all homeless acceptances in England during that period.

On the 31st of March 2006 – 19,000 young people were receiving housing related support services. Receiving Supporting People funding, accounting for a spend of £141 million in 2005 -06. (NOT including services accessed by young people that were for single homeless, drug or alcohol support and domestic abuse.)

Tackling Youth Homelessness (2008)

Key Legislation and Literature

- Children Act (1989 and 2004)
- The Children Leaving Care Act (2002)
- Housing Act (1996)
- Homelessness Act (2002)
- Every Child Matters : Change for Children (2003)
- Youth Matters (2005)
- Aiming high for young people:
- A ten year strategy for positive activities (2007)
- Tackling Youth Homelessness – Policy Briefing 18 (2008)
- Youth Homelessness in the UK: A decade of progress (2008)
- Towards Skills for Jobs – What works in tackling worklessness (2007)
- No one written off – Reforming welfare to reward responsibility (2008)



The Local Context

Local Authorities are committed to working with young people in need of housing and support services through a number of Government initiatives and agenda's as previously outlined.

The 'Every Child Matters' agenda outlines the need for every local authority area to develop a strategy for all children and young people following the five core principles and which must cover their housing and support needs -

Following research carried out by the YPSM a number of gaps have been identified through both local housing and supporting people strategies in these areas for young people with more complex needs including the need for direct access emergency accommodation and that of suitable and affordable move on accommodation.

Vision Group

A 'Young Person's Housing Offer' Focus Group met twice during April and May 2008 in order to establish the direction and development of a 'Vision' for the organisation and set the priorities for the organisation in order to direct the work required over the next five years.

The group was chaired by Peter Smith CEO and the consisted of four Board Members and a representative number of staff from different functions.

Staff Focus Group

Staff from all functions and levels within the organisation met to discuss the work they currently undertake with young people and to discuss the future offer in line with the Vision. This information was used within the research findings and also within the action plan

Young Voice

A pilot young person's focus group was developed called 'Young Voice' – all young people accessing services through the organisation were given the opportunity to join the focus group and help to look at important issues to be addressed through the strategy.(10 young people participated)

Through discussion and small exercises the group looked at the five 'Every Child Matters' principles and discussed what these meant to them , discussed issues around accessing services, positive activities, training and development, citizenship and how they want to be heard and involved in the organisation in the future.

A number of meetings ran between April and May 2008 which enabled feedback and discussion around key issues that affect young people.

Partner Agency Consultation

Young people living in SVHA property but receiving a support service from an external specialist partner were given the opportunity to be consulted and involved in the strategy development and implementation. This resulted in a number of small scale consultation activities being held with groups from partner agents.



Where we are now and where we want to go - Our Offer

An overview of research findings and the areas we plan to develop in the future – 2008 - 2013

- The development and direct delivery of housing and support services for young people in most need – preventing homelessness;

Where we are now

We offer a range of supported housing options for young people both directly managed and through partner agency schemes including floating support services

We directly manage two 'Foyers' – The Manchester Foyer and The Blackburn with Darwen Foyer – offering 105 units of accommodation with 8 units for young parents within The Blackburn with Darwen Foyer.

Both Foyers are well established and offer a quality service to young people – this was recently confirmed through Supporting

People Quality Assurance Framework Audits - where both Foyers have received improved scores including A and B grades

We work with a number of specialist agencies delivering supported housing options for young people throughout our areas of operation – these range from night shelters to services for young chaotic people with varying needs

We offer a floating support service through 'Mainstay' in Blackburn with Darwen and Rochdale for people requiring housing related support – aged 16 upwards. This service is not restricted to SVHA tenants but can be accessed by anyone needing support in the community

Our future 'offer'

Explore and develop a model for a 'saving / deposit' move on accommodation from supported accommodation

To deliver learning programmes to young people with a focus on 'health and wellbeing' related outcomes



To develop and increase move-on accommodation using a variety of models

Where we are now

During the last 12 months 19% of SVHA lettings within our general needs stock have been to customers under 25 years of age

Lettings to residents from our 'foyers' who are ready to move on have been low – factors include lettings policies requiring customers to be aged over 25 and lack of accommodation for single people in the areas which the foyers operate

Our future 'offer'

To look at existing SVHA property and explore options for move on from our Foyers

To develop scope for 'work incentives' for young people who live in our Foyer's or partner agency properties

To review local lettings policies and amend as required with regards to younger customers aged 16 -25

To increase the number of lettings with the use of starter tenancies within general needs tenancies for younger customers

To work with key stakeholders within the Borough's we operate and develop new services where appropriate



To prevent worklessness through the development of training and work experience opportunities within the organisation and through its contractors

Where we are now

We currently employ 8 staff under the age of 25 – this represents 5.8% of the total 139 staff working for the organisation

We do not currently have 'modern apprentices' working through the organisation;

We offer work experience placements for local schools, colleges and university placements

Our future 'offer'

To develop partnership with 'Job Centre Plus' to offer new initiatives for young people entering employment from our Foyers and to make links with other areas of operation

To develop 'YOUTHBUILD' - training scheme, to look at the scope for working with partners to provide this type activity

To look at and scope for the option of modern apprenticeships within the organisation

To continue to sponsor and work with schools and colleges to offer work experience placements

To develop further volunteering opportunities through the organisation



To encourage citizenship with young people and children in the communities in which we work through a variety of activities and through work with schools and other young person's groups

Where we are now

We employ a 'Community and Youth Liaison Worker' in Rochdale – who works in the Deeplish and Milkstone areas with young people looking at issues around community safety, health, prevention of crime and environmental issues etc....

This allows a flexible approach and links needs and solutions together – tackling issues identified by the local community and bringing in other services as required

We run the 'Urban Care Centre' in Bolton – which offers a range of advice and learning opportunities to local community, including training for people for whom English is not their first language and a range of other initiatives such as driving lessons. This facility is available for use by groups working with young people such as Connexions or youth services

We offer a range of volunteering opportunities within the organisation which are suitable for young people – this would help young people build confidence, improve self esteem and develop skills which could be transferred into employment

Our future 'offer'

Develop work with schools in neighbourhoods on citizenship and the respect agenda – through both sponsorship and classroom activities

Work with the local communities to develop positive activities through direct delivery and developing effective partnerships with specialist statutory and voluntary agencies – utilise local knowledge and working relationships to access young BME groups

Develop new initiatives with the ASB Manager to change perceptions of young people in neighbourhoods where they are perceived to be problematic – linked to the previous activity

Empower young people to undertake a range of activities such as mystery shopping, reviewing of services, policy and procedure and input into the business



To enable and encourage young people to have a 'voice' and for their voice to be heard by the organisation

Where we are now

We offer a wide range of customer focus activities – these include membership of the SVHA Board of Management, Operations and Regeneration Committees, Customer Panels, Residents Groups and other scheme specific activities

The launch of 'Young Voice' as a Customer Panel representing younger customers who access our services

We hold an annual Customer Conference – this years event welcomed a range of customers from all age groups, the theme of the event was 'Health and Wellbeing' attracted customers to sample activities such as Wii, Hula Hooping and salsa dancing

We deliver 'Customer Road Shows' bringing St Vincent's to the local community through bespoke events that are informative, interactive and enjoyable;

We test our services through 'Mystery Shopping' exercises to be conducted by 'Young Voice' in 2008;

We publish a SVHA 'Customer Newsletter' which features news and events from the organisation. This gives all our customers opportunities to get involved with a range of activities and competitions and give us feedback. In addition we publish newsletters within schemes

Our future 'offer'

Development of Young Customer Panel – following pilot of 'Young Voice'

Develop innovative customer involvement through ICT mediums –

Work with partner agents to improve communication with our customers in managed schemes



Conclusions

It is clear from the findings of this report and through the literature review that young people's issues are a priority for both national and local Government departments and that there have been many positive changes to legislation in recent years which support positive and supportive transitions for young people who may be facing need.

Despite this accessing affordable and therefore appropriate housing still remains a problem for many young people due to the combination of low incomes, poor life skills of young people and high housing costs.

Rises in presentations of young people as homeless, for many reasons including changes to family structures combined with increased numbers of single households and an ageing population put additional pressures on housing providers and shortages of suitable supported transitional accommodation means that many young people face lengthy stays in unsuitable accommodation.

St Vincent's sees the importance of addressing the issues facing young people and are committed to developing and improving the services they provide for children and young people through the development of their 'VISION' and commitment to delivering on these aims through this strategy and action plan for the next five years.

St Vincent's is in a good position to deliver these aims through the strengths of the existing structure and the experience and knowledge within the organisation. Commitment to addressing the strengths and weaknesses of existing functions and structures, using innovative ways of listening and consulting young people and by striving to make step improvements will drive the strategy forward and help to future proof the business. Building on existing strengths will be the key to developing effective partnerships with local au-

thorities, commissioners and key stakeholders to deliver much needed support and housing services for young people.

Housing alone is not sustainable unless young people have the life skills and support that they need live independently.

A range of aims and some solutions have been identified within this strategy and form the basis of the recommendations made in our offer.

Bibliography

How registered social landlords can work with young people - A good practice guide. Shelter Publications 2006

Sustainable Communities: Settled homes; changing lives- A strategy for tackling homelessness. ODPM Publications 2005

Every Child Matters: Change for Children Department for Children, Schools and Families (DCSF). 2003

Youth Matters - Department for Children, Schools and Families (DCSF) - 2005

Aiming High for Young People - A ten year strategy for positive activities. Department for Children, Schools and Families (DCSF) 2007

Aiming High Implementation Plan Department for Children, Schools and Families (DCSF). Published on 18 March 2008

Tackling Youth Homelessness – Policy Briefing 18. Department for Communities and Local Government (DCLG)2008

Youth Homelessness in the UK - A decade of progress. Joseph Rowntree Foundation 2008

Towards Skills for Jobs- What works in tackling worklessness. Learning and Skills Council 2007. Children Act (1989 and 2004)

The Children Leaving Care Act (2002)
- Housing Act (1996)
- Homelessness Act (2002)

Web links to documents and useful sites:-

<http://www.shelter.org.uk>

<http://www.everychildmatters.gov.uk>

<http://www.communities.gov.uk>

<http://www.lsc.gov.uk>

<http://www.communities.gov.uk/youthhomelessness/>

<http://www.stbasils.org.uk/>

Corporate+and+Partnerships/National+RSL+Centre+of+Excellence.htm

<http://www.housingcorp.gov.uk/server/show/ConWebDoc.12286>

<http://www.jrf.org.uk/research-and-policy/>

<http://www.nya.org.uk/>

<http://www.blackburn.gov.uk/server.php?show=ConWebDoc.22880>

<http://www.bolton.gov.uk/pls/portal92/docs/47015.PDF>

http://www.manchester.gov.uk/site/scripts/download_info.php?fileID=1032

http://www.rochdale.gov.uk/PDF/2007-07-17_CYP_Strategic_Plan_%202006-10_v1.pdf

<http://www.calderdale.gov.uk/education/child-care/plans/children-youngpeoples.pdf>



For more information about St Vincent's Young Persons' Strategy give us a ring and ask to speak to Dawn

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જો આપને આ માહિતીનાં અનુવાદમાં સહાયની જરૂર હોય તો કૃપા કરી, આપની સ્થાનિક ઓફિસનો સંપર્ક સાધો.

اگر آپ کو اس معلومات کا ترجمہ چاہیے ہو تو براہ کرم اپنے مقامی آفس سے رابطہ کریں