

Market engagement - Lancashire House Project

Accommodation Opportunities for care leavers or young people preparing to leave care

1. Background and purpose

Lancashire County Council is exploring opportunities to increase the range of accommodation available for our care experienced young people who have left our care or are preparing to leave our care. This supports our whole council approach to Corporate Parenting.

Lancashire County Council is fully committed to supporting our care- experienced young people, in partnership with a wide range of stakeholders to ensure they get the most appropriate and meaningful support, giving them the skills and confidence they need to move towards independence.

Eligible young people will continue to receive support from Lancashire County Council's Leaving Care Service, in line with their assessed needs and statutory entitlements. Support may include a Personal Adviser and wider multi-agency assistance with accommodation, tenancy sustainment, education, employment, training, finances, health and wellbeing, and independent living skills. This support will remain available if a young person chooses not to take it up immediately.

All care leavers are eligible to receive support through the Care Leaver Local Offer- more information can be found at [Care leavers local offer - Lancashire County Council](#).

We are keen to understand what current or future provision may be available across Lancashire.

Overall aims of the Lancashire House Project

- Enable care-experienced young people to create a safe, stable, affordable and good-quality home that can remain their home for as long as they require.
- Build confidence, resilience and the practical skills needed for successful adult life and sustainable independence.
- Promote ownership, responsibility, community connection, interdependence, direction and wellbeing through the National House Project Orchid Framework.
- Give young people meaningful choice and influence over their home, support arrangements and future.
- Deliver a supportive transition from care within Lancashire County Council's corporate parenting responsibilities and the Supported Accommodation (England) Regulations 2023.
- Lancashire House Project is registered under the Supported Accommodation (England) Regulations 2023 and subject to Ofsted Inspection.

Eligibility criteria

- Young people are normally aged 16 or 17 at the point of referral and are preparing to leave care.
- Lancashire County Council are the young person's corporate parent.
- Suitability is assessed individually, including the young person's needs, wishes, safety, readiness to participate and ability to engage with the programme.
- Admission and move-on are subject to cohort and suitable property availability, with a maximum of two cohorts normally facilitated each year.

Service Offer and Support

- **Preparation and learning:** At least five months of individual and group support covering wellbeing, education, employment, finances, home management, community safety and independent living.
- **Personalised planning:** Psychological formulation and Orchid, Learning and Safety Plans guide support and readiness to move.
- **Home choice:** The young person works with relevant partners to choose a suitable area and property.
- **Tenancy support:** Guidance covers rights, responsibilities, agreements, concerns and access to advocacy.
- **Moving in:** Young people help furnish and decorate their home using their Setting Up Home Allowance.
- **Ongoing support:** Facilitator and Leaving Care support continues after the move, based on need and statutory entitlement.
- **Participation:** Young people help shape the project and decisions about their home and future.

Through this Market Engagement, Lancashire County Council is seeking to understand the opportunities, capacity and interest within the landlord and accommodation provider market.

2. Who we would like to hear from

We welcome responses from organisations that own, manage, develop, lease or provide accommodation:

- Already provide accommodation for young people
- Have existing or planned accommodation that may be suitable
- Could adapt or repurpose accommodation for this cohort
- Are interested in developing new provision
- Would be willing to explore partnership arrangements with the Council

This will help inform future discussions about how we can work collaboratively to develop flexible and sustainable accommodation options

3. What we are looking for

We are looking for existing, planned or potential accommodation that can provide a safe, stable, welcoming and affordable home for care leavers and young people preparing to leave care.

Accommodation should:

- Be located in a safe and suitable area
- Have good access to public transport, education, employment and essential services
- Provide appropriate privacy and personal space
- Be well maintained, welcoming and suitable for independent living
- Meet relevant property, health and safety and fire safety requirements
- Include appropriate safety and security arrangements
- Provide reliable digital connectivity
- Promote stability, wellbeing and connection to the local community
- Respond to individual or accommodation needs where required.

When accommodation is intended for young people aged 16 or 16, relevant regulatory requirements will need to be met

4. Geographic areas of interest

We welcome accommodation opportunities from across Lancashire where respondents can demonstrate that the accommodation and its immediate surroundings would be suitable for the intended cohort. Specific areas which have currently identified for further exploration include:

- Cadley (top recommendation)
- Greyfriars
- Lea and Larches
- North- west Ingol and Cottam Boundary

For further information, please below 'Accommodation Requirements'.

Lancashire House Project

Accommodation Requirements

Ofsted Priorities

Requirements under the Supported Accommodation Regulations (England) 2023

[Guide to the supported accommodation regulations including quality standards](#)

As stated in the Regulations;

'Looked After Children and Care Leavers are often some of the most vulnerable children and young people in society, and we must work together to do all that we can to ensure that they have access to suitable accommodation that can meet their needs and keep them safe. For most children who are not yet ready for greater levels of independence, and especially those who require increased care due to high needs, or who have additional needs, this is best achieved through a placement in foster care or a children's home... However, for some young people aged 16 or 17, living in supported accommodation can be the best option to meet their needs, with the aim of supporting them to develop their independence as they approach adulthood, ahead of leaving the care system'.

The Standards

As part of the Supported Accommodation Regulations (England) 2023, the Regulations set out four Standards ('the Quality Standards') that must be met by supported accommodation.

- Leadership and Management
- Protection
- Accommodation
- Support

The Quality Standards describe outcomes that each young person must be supported to achieve while living in supported accommodation. Each standard contains an overarching, aspirational, outcome statement with young people at its heart, followed by a set of underpinning, measurable requirements that providers and settings must achieve in meeting each standard.

As part of the Protection Standard, it is stipulated that the accommodation must offer;

- Stability
- Be safe
- Effectively protect young people from harm.
- Young people should not feel isolated as a result of their accommodation or support.

The accommodation should enable a sense of belonging for young people, who should be supported by staff to participate in positive relationships in the local community.

Accommodation Standard (Regulation 6)

Detailed information relating to the Regulations on the topics below is found in the Guidance from p.26.

- **Location Risk Assessment**

To be updated annually to ensure that homes are located in safe areas and meet the requirements set out within the Standard. This includes; being accessible, safe, secure and well- maintained.

- **Welcoming and Homely Environment**

The home is adequately maintained so as to provide a welcoming and homely environment.

- **Tailored Design**

Where required, and in response to the individual needs of young people, the suitability of a home should be discussed and agreed. The home should be appropriately designed to ensure that children and young people are able to develop the skills required for independent living.

- **Providing Personal Space**

The home should offer a comfortable, positive and nurturing environment, respecting children and young peoples need for privacy.

- **Safe and Secure Environment**

The home must comply with all relevant health and safety and fire safety legislation and are designed/ furnished and maintained to remove avoidable hazards.

In order to maximise opportunities for young people through the Lancashire House Project, the following requirements should be considered, in line with the Regulations.

1. Location

- Within walking distance of colleges, universities, or training centres or public transport to get to these places.
- Easy access to employment areas and Preston City centres
- Safe neighbourhood with good lighting and low crime levels
- Nearby supermarkets, pharmacies, and healthcare services

2. Transport Links

- Bus stops within 5 minutes' walk
- Safe cycling routes and secure bike storage
- Reasonable parking provision if appropriate

3. Essential Amenities

- Ideally no facilities shared with other residents (i.e. laundry rooms)
- There are no special access or adaptations required for anyone. However, one young person may need a ground floor flat in group 4.

4. Accommodation Standards

- Single bedroom accommodation
- Must meet and be maintained to Decent Homes Standard
- Affordable rent levels – either Social or Affordable Rent
- For young people aged 16/17- the Supported Accommodation Regulations (England) 2023 should also be met.

5. Community and Wellbeing

- Outdoor space or nearby parks
- Access to leisure facilities, gyms, and sports centres

6. Educational and Employment Access

- Less than 30 minutes travel time to colleges or universities
- Direct public transport routes where possible
- Good transport connections to major employment hubs

7. Digital Connectivity

- Reliable mobile signal and potential for fibre broadband
- Strong Wi-Fi coverage throughout the building

8. Safety and Security

- Smoke alarms and fire safety systems
- Carbon monoxide detectors
- Secure entry systems (key fob, intercom, CCTV)

These priorities are essential in order for young people to establish themselves within local communities and be able to maximise their opportunities. We want to support our

young people to attend college, seek and maintain employment and build a positive network around them.

To achieve this, homes must be located in safe and affordable areas. The authority would be welcome providers to consider a wide range of areas within Preston, taking into account the priorities outlined above.

Whilst the authority will review all options, there are some areas in the PR2 3 areas that would need more careful consideration due to range of factors including geography, appropriate types of accommodation, crime and connectivity.