



**Property Acquisition and Letting Procedure for Young People’s
Supported Accommodation Service: OCC in-house 16/17-year-old
service**

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1 CONTEXT

Response have been awarded the contract to acquire and deliver property management support for OCC’s in-house YPSA service for 16 and 17 year olds. There are 27 properties delivered under this contract, which offer a minimum of 80 beds to vulnerable young people aged 16 and 17 years old.

This document has been written for Response and OCC staff to outline the acquisition and property letting procedure, including roles and responsibilities between the two organisations.

It is expected that this document will be reviewed and updated as required over the life of the contract.

2 PROPERTY PREPARATION

1. YPSA 16 &17 year old contract property requirements for each district are passed to our property finders who are responsible for sourcing homes to add to the portfolio to fulfil the contract requirements of Oxfordshire County Council (OCC).

2. The selection criteria for location is as detailed below:

| County | Location |
|--------|----------|
|--------|----------|

| | |
|-------------------|--|
| Oxford City | Oxford not Cowley Road or Iffley Road areas |
| Cherwell | Banbury and Bicester |
| West Oxfordshire | Witney is preferred location. |
| The Vale | Abingdon is the preferred location. Wantage and Farringdon will be considered. |
| South Oxfordshire | Didcot is the preferred location. Wallingford and Henley will be considered. |

3. Properties must have a separate dining and living room or kitchen diner and living room. Bedrooms must reach space standards as detailed in Housing of Multiple Occupation (HMO) requirements.
4. All properties will meet HMO requirements (fire risk assessments carried out, gas and electric safety checks, etc) and licences will be applied and obtained to evidence compliance.
5. Properties are identified and passed to Response's Housing Team for approval to progress with negotiation of the lease and terms. At the same time, property details are passed to OCC via the Joint Commissioning team to Thames Valley Police (TVP) to check there are no known historical / current issues in the immediate locality which would put residents at risk. TVP will categorise the property as a red, amber or green rating based upon the information they gather.
6. Once the intelligence check on the property has been completed and categorised as red, amber or green by TVP and returned to OCC, the outcome is forwarded to Housing (email: ypsastockandrepairs@response.org.uk). A red rating means that we will not pursue further negotiation with the landlord due to the level of risk raised. Properties being returned as amber will be considered for use for 18 – 24 year old contract following discussion with OCC Joint Commissioning team or where approval is given for their use for 16 and 17 year olds, additional security measures will be put in place which includes fortnightly property checks (reducing to monthly as appropriate) and consideration as to whether additional CCTV equipment is required. For green rated properties, Response will continue to negotiate, obtain and sign leases.
7. Once a lease agreement has been signed, all keys are handed to Response and should the Landlord require future access, they are required to give Response at least 48 hours' notice to allow all parties to be notified and present as applicable.
8. Key safes are fitted to the front of every property which contain front and back door spare keys. Key safes are also fitted to the internal building for every property which contain spare bedroom keys. OCC's in-house YPSA team will have details of all key safe codes at the time of the property being ready for



letting. The key safe code should NOT be provided to any young person and is for access by professionals only. Other teams such as children's social care Emergency Duty team (EDT) or the Unaccompanied Children's team will also have key safe information for the Welcome Assessment placements for placement of unaccompanied young people arriving in Oxfordshire out of hours that require urgently placing.

9. If any keys are given to the resident from either safe by a worker, OCC should ensure that replacements are cut and replaced within 48 hours.
10. Lease details are set up on our housing management IT system and compliance and kit out requirements are ordered. Each property can vary around the level of work that is required which means ready for let (RFL) dates can be variable, these are forecasted on a weekly basis to OCC so that the in-house YPSA team can endeavour to have staff available to sign off the properties as ready for use.
11. Progress on property status will be regularly fed back by the Housing team to OCC to enable them to plan and feedback to the young people that are waiting to move into the property.
12. When a property is RFL the Repairs Administrator will carry out a property final inspection to check all items are in place and completed. They will then arrange for an OCC staff member to attend the property to familiarise themselves with the building, ask questions and sign-off the checklist (See appendix 1).
13. The checklist will be forwarded to OCC Joint Commissioning by the Repairs Administrator, the OCC officer who attended the sign-off meetings and Response's Finance team as confirmation it is RFL. OCC's Joint Commissioning team will forward sign-off confirmation to the in-house YPSA team managers, the Brokerage team and the transition team. If there are issues flagged by the attending OCC worker and they are unable to sign off the property, this information will be sent to Response in writing via the following email ypsastockandrepairs@response.org.uk, then Response will confirm when the works can be completed and then OCC will be notified of completion and a worker can attend to property to confirm that they are now able to sign the property off.
14. The Repairs Administrator and Support Worker will then introduce themselves to the neighbours either side by way of courtesy and being a good neighbour. They will be provided with the contact information sheet (see appendix 3).

3 RESIDENT SELECTION (REFERRALS)

15. Placements into the in-house YPSA will be made during office hours by the Brokerage team (welcome assessment houses for newly arriving unaccompanied young people are the only exception to this). Emergency bed placements will also still be expected to only be made during office hours by the Brokerage team, in conjunction with the in-house YPSA team.
16. Placements into the welcome assessment houses for newly arriving young people can be made outside of office hours by children's social care EDT or in-house YPSA team. EDT/in-house YPSA team must ensure that they inform the Brokerage team and the in-house YPSA team that the placement has been made. The in-house YPSA team will liaise with Response's Estate officer and the Unaccompanied Children's team via email so that sign up can be arranged during the next available working day.
17. Priority for access will be determined by the Brokerage Team based upon need and availability. A new referral for in-house YPSA services will be sent to the in-house YPSA team managers with the relevant information. A property and room number will be identified for the young person, a YPSA support worker allocated and a move in date agreed. This information will be provided to the Estate Officer at Response to arrange sign up.

4 RESIDENT SIGN-UP OF LICENCE

18. OCC's in-house YPSA team and the Estate Officer will liaise regarding the earliest date to carry out signing of the licence with the incoming resident. Where applicable Language Line will be used (codes and guidance issued to Response around usage- see appendix 4 for guidance).
19. Once the licence agreement (see appendix 2) sign up has taken place the Estate Officer will forward details to Response's Housing Co-ordinator to set them up on the IT system. Where a young person is eligible to access benefits (a supporting professional will be able to confirm this as it links to if a young person is legally in the care of the local authority or not), their contributions to their rental and service charges will be explained as part of this process.
20. The Estate Officer will liaise with OCC to carry out a 2 weekly or 4 weekly (which will be dependent on need) initial Welcome Visit to ensure the new residents understand everything regarding the licence and for any other matters they wish to discuss. Ongoing regular house visits will then commence. Where applicable Language Line will be used (codes and guidance issued to Response around usage).
21. The Brokerage Team will work with the in-house YPSA team, Young People, Social Workers/Personal Advisors or other professionals to de-escalate and resolve issues as they arise within placements or when concerns are raised by professionals or the young person about individual provision (the Brokerage team do not undertake direct work with the young people). Serious issues and safeguarding concerns will be reported to the Quality and Contracts team and discussed through performance reporting.

22. If there are known historical issues with a young person who has held a licence for one of Response's properties previously, then a restorative meeting may be required with the young person and professionals involved to understand and agree the support/ strategies that will be in place to keep the young person and others safe in the property prior to agreeing sign up of a licence agreement.
23. The Estate Officer is responsible for following up any issues of Anti-Social Behaviour (ASB) which takes place at any property. This will be done with full liaison and inclusion with OCC. Where there is ASB, Response's aim is prevention any eviction from a property as a last resort, all action possible will take place by the Estate Officers to prevent this from occurring with OCC fully involved in this process.
24. Response are responsible for collecting all ineligible service charges for residents who are not legally in the care of the local authority. These young people will be supported to sign on for benefits by Response and the in-house YPSA team. These young people will be identified by the professional at sign up and the charges will be explained to the young person. Response are responsible for ensuring rent, eligible and ineligible service charges are collected. Young people legally in the care of the local authority cannot claim benefits so all costs will be met under the contract and no charge made directly to the young person. These young people in local authority care, will be encouraged by YPSA workers to save £10 a week from their allowance to prepare them for charges that will be made when they turn 18 years, if they are still in the YPSA.
25. Response will forward payments collected from the residents to OCC once per quarter.

5 REPAIRS AND QUERIES

26. During the office hours Monday – Friday 9 – 5pm and Friday 9 – 4pm) repairs and queries can be reported by young people and professionals by calling our housing team on 01865 664058 or email ypsaenquiries@response.org.uk . This information will be clearly visible for residents in each property and will be discussed at the licence sign up meeting
27. Repairs timescales are detailed below:



| Response 16/17 year old Contract with OCC | |
|---|---|
| Maintenance Targets | |
| Type of Defect | Hours or Calendar Days to Complete Repair <small>(clock starts from time defect reported to repairs & maintenance team)</small> |
| Front or rear doors & windows not secured, including broken glazing | Same Day (12 hours) |
| Fire alarm/detector systems in state of disrepair | 24 hours |
| Toilet (out of use) | 24 hours |
| Breakdown of heating and hot water | 2 days (48 hours) |
| Kitchen (water supply) | 2 days (48 hours) |
| Bathroom (water supply) excluding toilet | 2 days (48 hours) |
| Kitchen appliances | 3 days |
| Complaint about rubbish in and around the property | 7 days |
| General disrepair | 14 days |
| Damp and mould growth | 28 days |

28. Where Response have attempted to carry out a repair on 3 occasions and each time, they have been abortive visits as they have not been able to access the property or room as needed, Response will close the repair and a resident will have to report the item again as a new job request to the repairs team.

29. Once a repair has been completed, or the repair closed due to 3 repeated abortive visits, then this will be reported to the person that raised the repair via the Response carding system.

6 OUT OF HOURS EMERGENCY REPAIRS

30. Response provide an out of hour's maintenance service which can be used by the residents or OCC where there is an emergency. The out of hours service runs from 5 pm to 9 am Monday to Thursday and from 4 pm to 9 am Friday to

Monday. Emergency repairs are those which may pose a significant threat to the building or the health or well-being of the occupants. Some examples of emergency repairs are:

- Flooding
- No electricity (if there is a general failure of supply it will be the responsibility of the electricity supplier to rectify this but the issue will be investigated)
- Exposed electrical wiring
- Blocked toilet (where this is the only toilet in the house)
- Broken window where the glass is unsafe and/or broken all the way through
- No access to house through lost keys (although Response will deal with this, OCC will be charged for every call out for this purpose. The cost will vary according to the lock type).

31. All other repairs reported will be picked up the next working day by the Repairs Team who will allocate the work and timescale based on the type of repair.

32. The out of hours contact number for an urgent repair call out is 07889 590605. This number will be made visible in every house for residents (see appendix 3) and will be discussed in the resident licence sign up process.

33. The out of hours contact number for all boiler related matters it is 01256 375000 select Option 1 for an urgent call out. Option 2 to leave a message. This information will be made visible in every house for residents and will be discussed in the resident licence sign up process.

34. If a resident does not speak English and translation services are required, language line will need to be used for repair reporting and YPSA staff and Response will have the codes and guidance to be able to access this service to communicate with the young person.

7 DAMAGE TO PROPERTY

35. Where a resident has caused intentional damage it should be reported to Response as a normal repair which a resident will be responsible to pay for either in full or on a repayment plan. The young person's support worker/ manager overseeing the property will be notified of issues so that they can work with the young person and Response to agree repayment options.

36. Response will discuss and agree costs with OCC in writing and itemise all items for OCC and arrange for an invoice to be raised for payment by OCC.

37. OCC and Response will need to agree how payment will be made where money towards costs is due from the resident, with this explained and agreed by the resident.

8 MOVING OUT WITHIN YPSA CONTRACT

38. In-house YPSA worker should contact Response to advise:

- Details of the young person
- Current address and room in the property
- Where they are moving to
- That OCC will advise the young person that they can take their, bedding, duvet and towel bundle with them (where these items are left behind, they will be destroyed by Response).

39. Administration team at Response will provide the moving out information to the:

- Estate Officer (Copying in Team Leader)
- Room inspection arranged any works programmed through (Copying in Team Leader)
- Cleaning company booked / Room cleaned
- Operative/Estate Officer booked to replenish bedding, duvet & towel bundle

40. Once the young person has moved out, there will be a 3-day maximum turnaround for rooms where cleaning and minimal maintenance is required only. This is the responsibility of Response. Where damage has occurred to a room/property or significant maintenance work is required, then this work will be carried out as quickly as possible and an estimated turnaround time supplied to the in-house YPSA team, the Brokerage Team and Quality and Contracts Team. Regular progress updates will be provided to officers in these teams as applicable.

41. Once the room is ready for occupancy, a sign off form is completed by the Response Administrator and room highlighted back to OCC's Brokerage and in-house YPSA team as available. The Brokerage team or YPSA team will make themselves available for any areas which Response may need to run through which arise as part of this process.

42. Where a young person is transitioning from in-house YPSA services into the commissioned YPSA services, there is the expectation that the in-house YPSA team will work closely with the Provider of service they are moving into to ensure that this transition is smooth for the young person and that they are prepared for entering their new placement.

9 MOVING OUT TO ANOTHER LANDLORD

43. When a resident is intending to move on, OCC should provide one month's notice to Response. This can be done by the YPSA Support Worker via email



on behalf of the resident and sent to the Estate Officer ypsastockandrepairs@response.org.uk .

44. The Estate Officer will contact the resident (and their YPSA support worker) during the notice period to arrange an exit interview. This interview will allow the Estate Officer to explain how the resident should leave the property when they depart and for the Estate Officer to obtain an assessment of the level of repairs work which will potentially need to take place. The young person's YPSA support worker will be encouraged to attend this meeting.
45. The Estate Officer will advise the Repairs Team which enables them to plan for future work once the resident has departed.