

Young Persons' Housing Plan

The Gateshead Housing Company
2006 - 2009



October 2006

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Foreword - Bill Fullen, Chief Executive

I am delighted to introduce The Gateshead Housing Company's Young Persons' Housing Plan 2006 – 2009, which sets out our priorities and commitments over the next three years.

The Plan has been developed in consultation with our partners from the public and voluntary sector, young people living in Gateshead and the Council. It builds on the priorities outlined in the 2006 Children and Young People's Plan.

The Gateshead Housing Company has a commitment to help support and maintain appropriate levels of support, advice and accommodation for young people across the borough. To assist us to achieve this a housing information resource in the form of a website has been designed with young people to ensure information is available and accessible. This offers information, advice, and details of what support is available to assist young people with housing in Gateshead. It is hoped that this will be a useful information and signposting resource for young people when they are considering living independently or moving home.

The key targets for The Gateshead Housing Company detailed within the Plan will be achieved by working in partnership with the Council and a range of local organisations.

We believe the Young Persons' Housing Plan reflects the needs of young people in Gateshead and emphasises our commitment to improving our services to better meet their needs.

Responsibilities

The Gateshead Housing Company manages Gateshead Council's housing stock and provides access to council owned housing services. This includes responsibility for local housing offices, neighbourhood relations, rent and income, leasehold services, refurbishments, repairs and maintenance and other housing management services.

Gateshead Council has strategic responsibility for all housing services in Gateshead. This includes council housing; private landlords; housing associations; other social landlords, private house builders; shared equity schemes and the provision of support services for people in Gateshead.

The Gateshead Housing Company

What is The Gateshead Housing Company?

The Gateshead Housing Company is an Arms Length Management Organisation (ALMO) set up to manage properties separately from Gateshead Council's control. ALMOs are favoured over housing transfers to a brand new landlord, or bringing in a private finance partnership to run the housing as it allows the Council to keep ownership of their housing stock. 94% of local people who took part in a questionnaire in late 2003 said they were in favour of setting up an ALMO

An ALMO is a not-for-profit organisation run by an unpaid board of directors that includes councillors and tenant representatives. It takes over running the housing service day-to-day, things like ordering repairs and collecting rent and it gets extra cash to spend on improvements if it performs well. The Council continues to own the homes and tenants stay as council tenants and keep all their legal rights.

The Gateshead Housing Company will ensure that all of its policies and activities support the objectives of all relevant Council strategies including the Community Strategy. The Company is keen to ensure that this plan feeds into the wider housing strategy for Gateshead, the Homelessness Strategy, Social Inclusion Strategy and Children and Young Persons' Plan. The Gateshead Housing Company will contribute towards the Council's future vision for Gateshead Towards 2010.

Vision

The company's standard vision is:

“Working with the community to provide excellent homes, communities and housing services”.

The modified version of our vision for young people is:

“Working with young people to provide excellent homes, communities and housing services to the tenants of tomorrow”.

Mission Statement

We aim to provide excellent and efficient services working in partnership with residents and the wider local community to create homes and neighbourhoods that meet the aspirations of the people of Gateshead.

Values

- **Being customer focused, innovative and professional** – *involving customers in what we do.*
- **Being honest, accountable and transparent** – *delivering excellent services with integrity*
- **Caring and respecting** – *the people we work for and with.*
- **A commitment to all our employees** – *celebrating our successes.*
- **Being positive and responsive** – *constantly striving to achieve excellence.*
- **Being motivated, trained, and committed across the company** – *delivering efficient and effective services.*
- **Embracing equality** – *valuing difference.*
- **Being a listening and learning organisation** – *staying in touch with what customers want.*

Aim and Objectives

Who are young people?

When referring to young people within this plan this includes people aged 16 to 24 years old, however many points made in this document will also be equally relevant to people just outside of this age range.

Aim of the Plan

The aim of the Plan is to determine priorities, resources and partnerships to improve the housing opportunities for young people in Gateshead, which The Gateshead Housing Company is able to provide. It will also aim for the company's employment, recruitment and selection processes to be more positive about young people and pro-actively target board opportunities to young people, offering training appropriate to their needs.

It seeks to develop a plan, look at best practice and raise awareness of the issues facing young people in need of housing or those in housing who require support to sustain their tenancies. In addition to this it aims to provide an accessible housing information resource for young people that provides useful information, advice and guidance about living independently, and supports young people towards sustaining their tenancies.

Why was the Plan developed?

The Audit Commission inspected the company's services in September 2005 and services for young people were identified as an area that needed further development. In addition, consultation with young people during the development of the Children and Young People's Plan identified housing as one of their top ten priorities. As a result of this and the company's commitment to improve services for young people further consultation was undertaken and the need for a housing plan for young people was proposed due to the variety of issues young people identified.

Objectives

The objectives of the plan have been developed from consultation with young people. This plan will look to improve services young people receive from The Gateshead Housing Company and identify improvements that can be made by Gateshead Council and other partners and stakeholders. The Audit Commission's Key Line of Enquiry (KLOE) and the Equality Standard for Local Government have been used as a framework to develop the objectives and an action plan.

- 1 The company has a corporate commitment to young people's issues.
- 2 The governance of the company is accessible and encourages the representation of young people.
- 3 Any barriers to accessing services are identified and appropriate solutions found.
- 4 Young people have access to advice and information about housing services and options in Gateshead.
- 5 Young people participate in various involvement activities at different levels and receive training.
- 6 The company embraces partnership working with: the Council, Connexions and young people's support organisations and groups.
- 7 The company's workforce recruitment and selection processes are positive about young people.

Consultation

The Gateshead Housing Company has undertaken research into what young people in Gateshead think about housing services, what they would like to receive, and where and how they would access housing services. In addition to this views were collected on the standard and availability of information and if this covered the subject areas they would like information on. The results of this consultation can be found in Appendix 2.

The Gateshead Housing Company would like to thank the young people, organisations, forums and stakeholders that took part in the consultation, completed surveys and expressed their views when the company was developing the plan. This includes but is not restricted to:

- The Gateshead Housing Company tenants 16-24 years old (1335 tenancies)
- Young Women's Outreach Project
- Youth Information Services
- Gateshead Youth Assembly
- Connexions Youth Engagement Service
- Gateshead College
- Hit Squad – young disabled persons' group
- Skills for People - young disabled persons' group
- Learning Support – Gateshead College disabled persons group
- Black and Minority Ethnic (BME) Youth Forum
- Gateshead Bangladeshi Association
- Gateshead Muslim Society
- Gateshead Carers Association
- Gateshead Youth Offending Team

Partnership Working

The Gateshead Housing Company would like to thank the various partners who were consulted and expressed their views during the production of this plan. We will continue to work with and support Gateshead Council, The Children and Young People's Partnership, and various other organisations highlighted below to ensure young people's issues continue to be high on the agenda. We will work towards resolving the housing issues young people have identified and support the various organisations agencies and partners to deliver their strategic objectives.

Successful delivery of this Plan relies upon joint working between key agencies, these include but are not confined to:

Gateshead Council – Housing Services	Gateshead Action on Homelessness
Gateshead Housing Partnership	Gateshead Bangladeshi Association
Gateshead Council – Learning and Children	Gateshead Voluntary Organisations Council (GVOC)
Connexions Youth Engagement Service	Teenage Pregnancy and Parenting Partnership.
Connexions Tyne and Wear	Interface Young Women's Group
Gateshead College	Byker Bridge Housing Association.
Youth Offending Team	Gateshead Citizens Advice Bureau.
Children & Young People's Partnership	Centrepont
Youth Information Service	North East Night Stop.
Youth Organisations Council.	Shelter North East.
Teenage Parents Housing Forum	Gateshead Law Centre.
16-24 year olds living in property managed by the company	Gateshead Women's Refuge.
Young Women's Outreach Project	Nomad Housing Group.
Gateshead Youth Assembly	NORCARE.
Hit Squad – young disabled people	North British Housing.
Skills for People – young disabled people	Stepping Stones.
Learning Support – Gateshead College	Three Rivers Housing
Black and Minority Ethnic Youth Forum	24:7 Gateshead Drug and Alcohol Team
Gateshead Carers Association	Streets Ahead Youth Project.
Aquila Way Housing Association	St Bedes House.
Gateshead Primary Care Trust	The Avenues Project.
	Home Housing Group

Statutory Duties in relation to Housing

The Housing Act (1996) states very clearly that housing and social services departments must work together. Recent proposals contained in the Government's 'Every Child Matters' Green Paper require an even greater degree of joint working.

The Gateshead Housing Company works in partnership with Gateshead Council to deliver housing services in Gateshead and supports the Council towards achieving its strategic aims and objectives in relation to social housing.

1. The Housing Act (1996)

The Housing Act 1996 is a major piece of legislation on housing and homelessness. Part VII of the Act specifically covers homelessness, eligibility for assistance and duties to provide accommodation. This was updated by the Homelessness Act 2002.

2. The Children Act (1989)

The Children Act 1989 implemented in 1991 lays down the duties of local authorities to 'children in need'. In terms of accommodation the Act placed new duties and responsibilities on local authority's Social Services departments to provide accommodation for care leavers and other young people deemed to be 'in need'.

3. The Children (Leaving Care) Act (2000)

The Children (Leaving Care) Act 2000 came into effect on 1st October 2001. The aim was for children in care to receive the same support as children living at home. It tries to ensure that children do not leave care until they were ready and to make sure that effective support is in place once they do leave.

4. The Homelessness Act (2002)

The Homelessness Act 2002 makes up the main part of the Government's strategy for tackling homelessness. The Act provides greater protection for people considered to be 'priority need' for housing, such as families, 16 and 17 year olds, and 18 to 21 year olds leaving care. It requires all local authorities to carry out a homelessness review, develop a strategy to prevent homelessness and provide accommodation and/or support for people who are or may become homeless. It also puts a duty on authorities to improve choices for tenants by allowing people to express a preference in the allocation of their housing.

5. Every Child Matters (2003) Victoria Climbié Report

Responding to the enquiry into the death of Victoria Climbié, this Green Paper proposed a number of measures to reform and improve children's care. It requires local authorities to bring together services for children in one place under one service. At the same time it suggests real changes in the way those we ask to do this work carry out their tasks. The paper puts forward ideas on a number of ideas that are important to improve children's health and security.

6. Children's Act (2004)

The Children Act 2004 places a duty on agencies to work together to promote the wellbeing of and safeguard children and young people. It forms the legislative framework that establishes the direction for a programme of change in the delivery of services that support children, young people and their families.

The Local Context

Children and Young People's Plan

The Council has a Children and Young People's Plan that was launched in 2006. It highlights that there are 45,600 young people (0-19) in Gateshead, approximately a quarter of Gateshead's population, which is similar to the rest of the country.

Consultation with young people and practitioners while developing the Children and Young People's Plan identified housing as one of the top 10 priorities. Young people want to be able to access housing that is appropriate to their needs and is of a decent standard.

Gateshead's Children and Young People's Plan (2006) highlights that:

- 45,600 young people aged 0-19 live in Gateshead - 29,000 of these are of school age
- 59% of young people identified improved housing as a key factor in making their neighbourhood a better place to live.
- 90% of children born in Gateshead are likely to live in a house or bungalow with 12% likely to live in overcrowded accommodation
- 5% of young people said they have a health problem or disability which limits their daily activities
- 2.4% of young people are from an ethnic minority background. Out of around 1,000 asylum seekers currently, in Gateshead, 216 are school age children. Within the Jewish community there are over 1,000 children and young people under 16.
- 21% of parents/carers would find more information upon housing and meeting their financial needs useful.
- The average length of stay in bed and breakfast accommodation in Gateshead is 3.09 weeks, this is shorter than the national average of 7 weeks.

Interesting facts about young people in Gateshead include:

- Recorded youth crime has fallen year on year over the past three years.
- 8% of 16 to 19 year olds are unemployed, or not in further education or training.
- Gateshead's GCSE results are in the top ten best in the country.
- The percentage of young people aged 16 leaving school with no qualifications has been reduced from 8% in 2001 to 4.7% in 2005.
- Under 18 conception rates are down by 22%, this is the best performing area in Tyne and Wear and far exceeds the national average in England 11%.

The 2001 Census

The 2001 Census indicates that 19,411 young people aged 16 to 24 years live in Gateshead. This represents 10.2% of the population of Gateshead.

The 2001 Census indicates that 5,424 young people aged 16-24 live in a home managed by the Gateshead Housing Company. 660 (12.2%) of the young people indicated they have a limiting long-term illness.

Housing Needs and Support Survey

The Housing Needs and Support Survey aims to identify housing markets and understand their drivers, consider the support needs of residents and provide a thorough and robust evidence base to support the development of Gateshead's housing strategy and planning policies.

Needs of specific groups have been considered within this survey including needs of young people at risk / leaving care; ex offenders and people at risk of offending; homeless and hidden homelessness and BME & Faith groups.

Young Offenders In Gateshead

The numbers of youth offenders has reduced year on year over the past three years (33% overall) with youth crime falling by 22% in Gateshead. Most recent re-offending rates show an 8% reduction. Between April 2004 and March 2005, 659 Gateshead young people were charged, warned and reprimanded because of their offending, *source: Tyne and Wear Research (2006)*.

The Gateshead Youth Offending Team works with The Gateshead Housing Company's Neighbourhoods Relations Team who have a role in vetting young offenders. They also work closely with Gateshead Council's Supported Housing Team and Byker Bridge Housing Association to provide housing support to young offenders. At the beginning of April 2006 one third of young offenders with housing issues being dealt with by The Gateshead Youth Offending Service were re-housed by the local authority.

The Gateshead Youth Offending Team performs consistently high and is currently the second best performing nationally against key performance indicators.

Young Parents in Gateshead

The Gateshead Teenage Pregnancy and Parenting Partnership works closely with The Gateshead Housing Company, the Council, other social landlords and housing support services to provide support to teenage parents in Gateshead.

The Gateshead Teenage Pregnancy and Parenting Partnership annual review (2006) highlights conception rates in Gateshead for under 18s are down by 22% and under 16's conception rates are down by 24% since 1998. Gateshead is the best performing local authority area in relation to conception rates for both under 16s and under 18s in comparison to all of the Tyne and Wear areas and also performs very well when compared to national statistics.

Gateshead has a higher percentage of lone parents and a higher percentage of teenage mothers without any qualifications compared with other Tyne and Wear areas. However, in 2005 Gateshead made good progress in reducing the percentage of boys (5.8%) and girls (3.7%) who leave school without any GCSE passes

A recent survey completed for the Children and Young People's Partnership indicated that 21% of parents would find more information on housing and meeting their financial needs useful.

Care Leavers

The Young People's Service, Leaving Care Team provide help and support to approximately 140 care leavers at any given time. This covers young people from 16 to 21 years old, who are still in care, or previously in care of the local authority at the age of 16 or 17. Agreements are in place to ensure young people leaving care or coming out of foster placements are offered a property in an area of their choice. The tenancy support service at Gateshead Council work with various agencies to arrange floating support when required.

One third of care leavers will move on to live with family and two thirds will require housing and assistance when moving towards living independently. 95% of those leaving care remain in contact with Leaving Care Team at age 19.

Evidence from the Young People's Service highlights that the majority of care leavers who move on to live independently live in council or Registered Social Landlord accommodation, although many access this through supported accommodation schemes.

72.73% of care leavers are engaged in education, employment or training at age 19 (2005) – a significant increase on the equivalent figure for 2002/03 (24.7%). In 2005/06 95% of care leavers were housed in suitable accommodation at age 19.

Looked after Children

There are currently 2,364 children in need in Gateshead. This represents a **low** number of looked after children 60.4 per 10,000 populations under the age of 18 in comparison to national figures.

Profile of The Gateshead Housing Company's young tenants

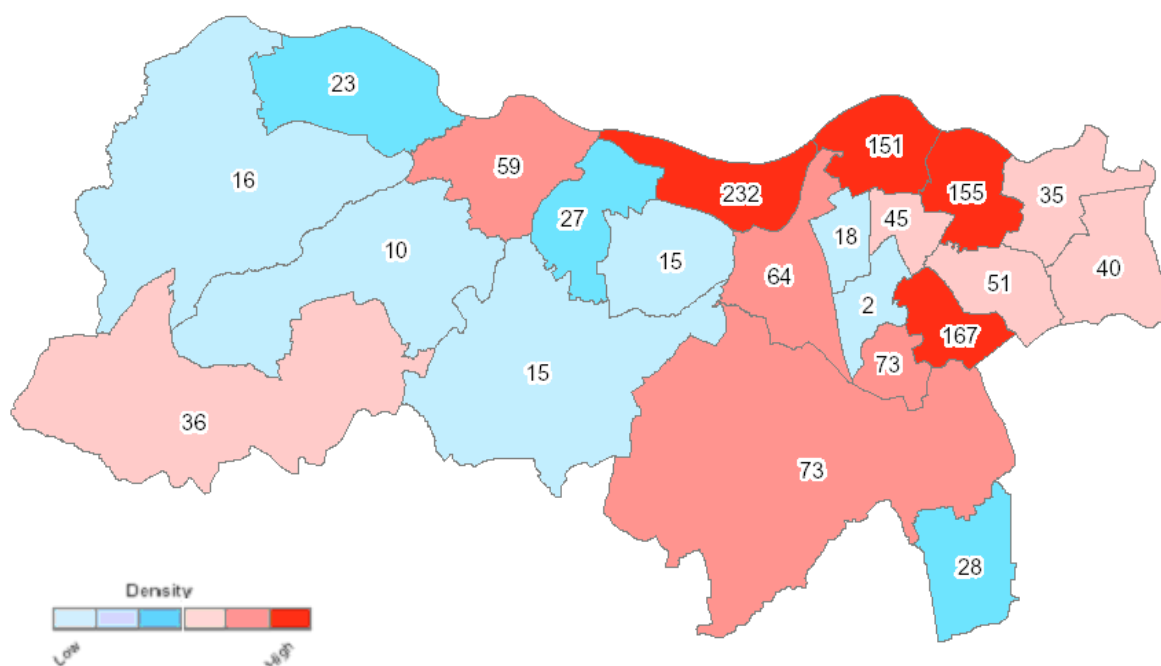
As of 1st April 2006 The Gateshead Housing Company managed 1335 tenancies occupied by young people aged 16 to 24 years old.

Young Tenants by Ward Area

The map of the borough of Gateshead below highlights the number of young people in each ward area. The number represents the amount of tenancies that young people have in each area and the colour represents high and low density of young people with tenancies compared with other areas in the borough.

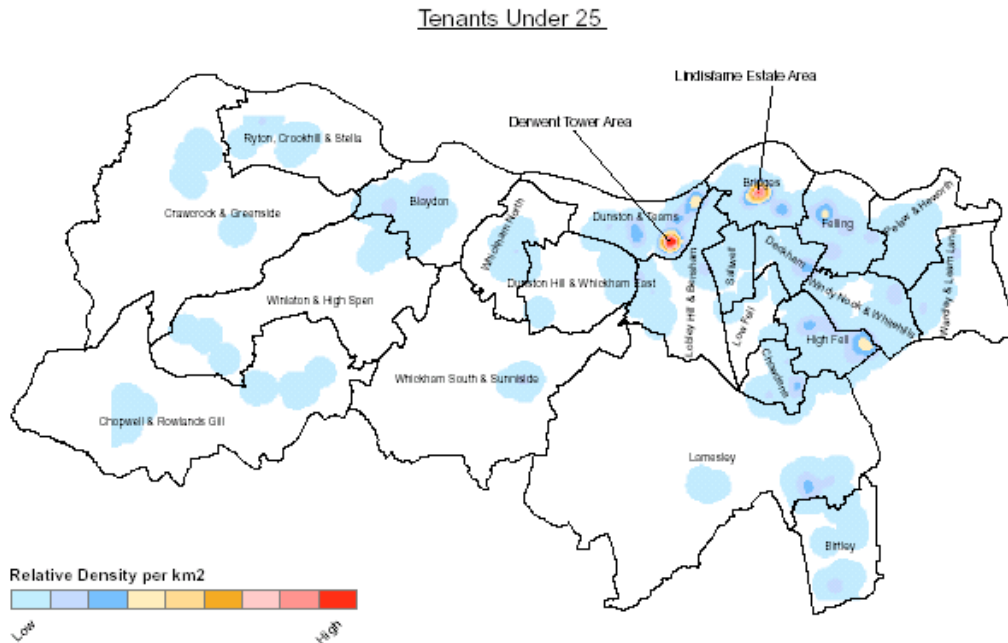
The map clearly shows that the ward areas that have the highest density of young people with council tenancies are Dunston and Teams, Bridges, Felling and High Fell wards. The lowest density areas of young people with council tenancies are Low Fell, Saltwell, Dunston Hill and Whickham East, Whickham South and Sunnyside, Winlaton and High Spen, and Crawcrook and Greenside. The West of the borough has a particularly low density of young people with council tenancies, this is likely to be due to the low number of single persons' accommodation available in this area.

Tenants Under 25 numbers by Ward



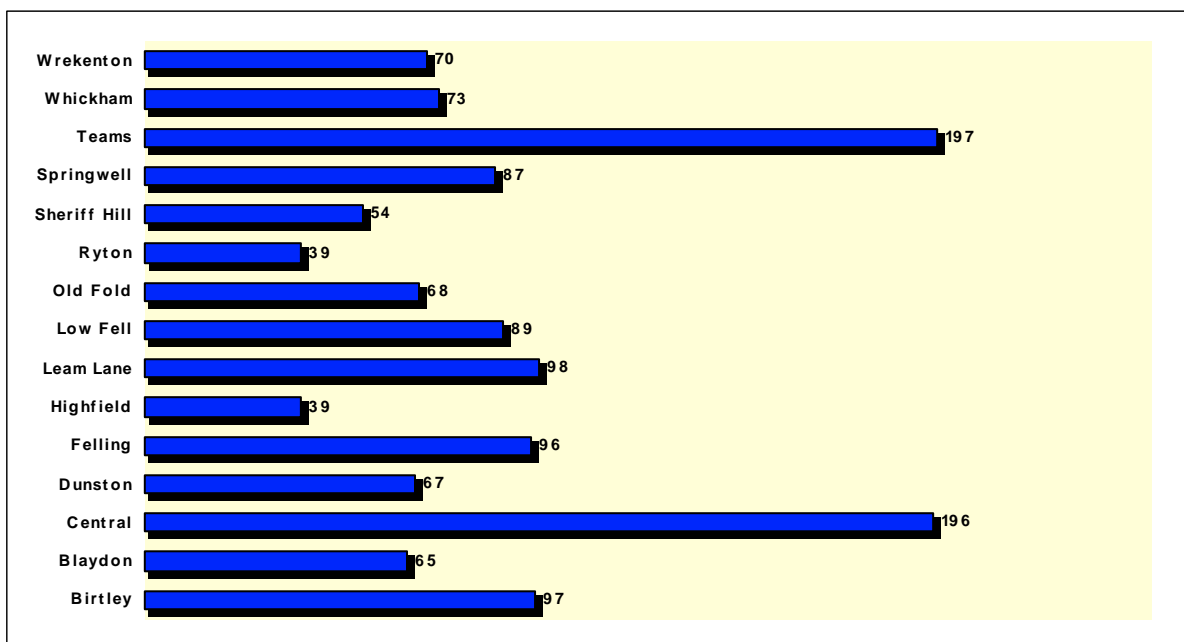
Density of young tenants

The map of the borough below shows the density of young people with council tenancies in Gateshead. The white and light blue areas show low density and the darker blue, orange and red areas indicate a higher density of young people with council tenancies. This clearly shows that many young people live in multi storey blocks located in Dunston, Teams, and the Lindisfarne areas of the borough.



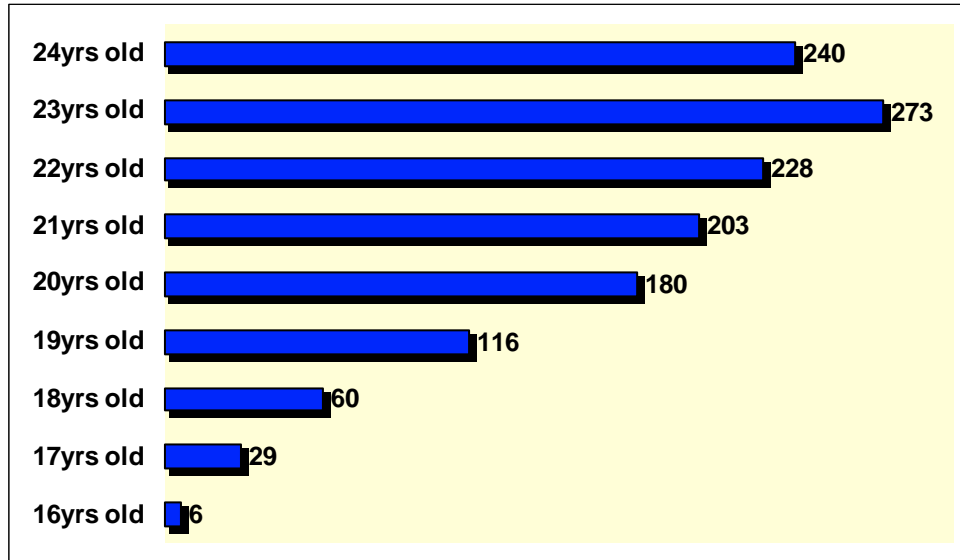
Tenancies of young people by housing office area

The company's housing offices with the highest number of tenancies to young people are Teams and Central Housing Office. The areas with the lowest number of tenancies to young people are Ryton and Highfield. As an area the west of the borough have a particularly low number of tenancies occupied by young people.



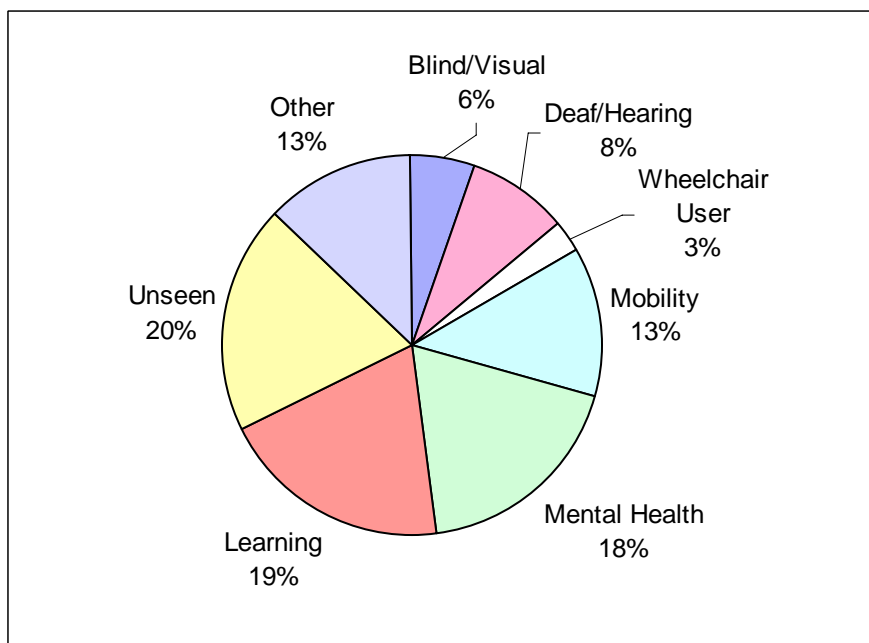
Age Profile

Young People aged 16 to 19 years represent only 15.8% of young people with tenancies in Gateshead. 22 to 24 year olds represent 55.5% of younger people with council tenancies. This indicates that 16 to 19 year olds are less likely to have a council tenancy than other age groups within the age range.



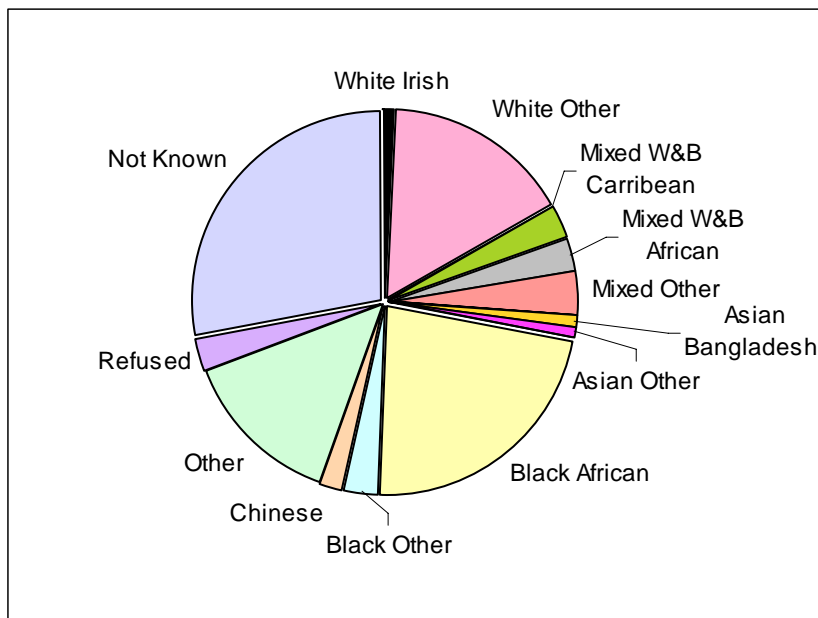
Disability Profile

Young disabled people represent 4.87% of young people who have a council tenancy. From this the most common types of disability are unseen disabilities, learning disabilities and young people with mental health issues. The least common disabilities are young people who are wheelchair users, blind/visually impaired, or deaf/hearing impaired. The most likely company housing office areas for young disabled tenants to live are the Teams and Central housing office areas.



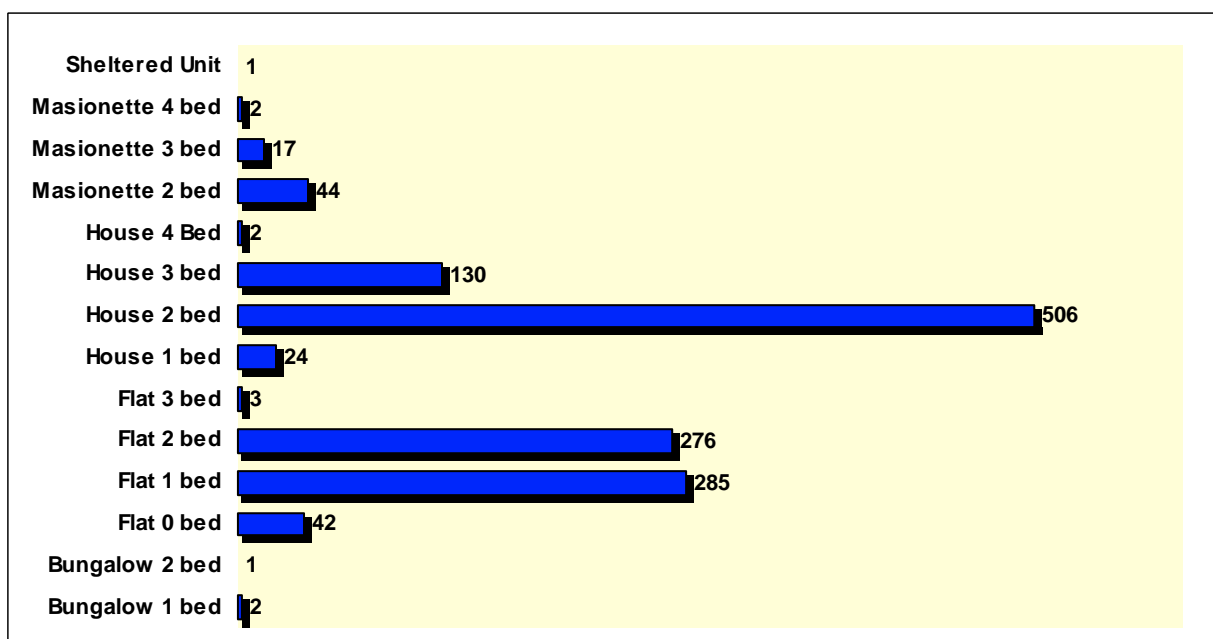
Ethnic origin profile

Young people that have informed us they are non-White British represent 5.4% of council tenancies to young people in Gateshead. The largest non-White British ethnic groups are Black African, White Other, and Other ethnic groups. The housing office areas that are most likely to house people of non-White British ethnic origin are Central and Teams housing office areas.



House types occupied by young people

The property types most likely to be occupied by young people in Gateshead are two bedroom houses, and one or two-bedroom flats. Young people are unlikely to have a tenancy in a bungalow, sheltered unit, three-bedroom flat, four-bedroom house or four-bedroom maisonette, this is mainly due to the council's lettings policy.



Problems Faced by Young People

The Crisis Survey of Young People (1999) indicates that people aged 16 to 24 years old are most likely to need housing advice and support. A recent study by the Law Commission (2006) confirms this, finding young people aged 18 to 24 years old are more likely to have housing problems, however they found this group are also less likely to access help.

16 to 24 year old people have specific housing needs and can encounter different housing problems to other age groups. These include:

- Homelessness and rooflessness
- Having few financial resources
- Poor or no credit rating
- No bank account
- Unemployment
- Low pay
- Under 25s Housing Benefit regulations
- Lack of knowledge of how to access housing services and assistance
- High rents in the private rented market
- No furniture
- Lack of experience of living independently
- Limited Welfare and Housing Benefits
- Lack of experience managing a tenancy

The Gateshead Housing Company has designed a young persons' advice and information service that is accessed through the company website. This has considered the above themes and the company will endeavour to address or provide signposting information on these themes to assist young people and ease hardship.

Key Issues for Young People

From the results of the consultation undertaken in February and March 2006 with various groups of young people, the key issues that young people in Gateshead face are:

Information and Guidance

- More effective promotion of housing services available to young people
- Appropriate information is needed to help young people make informed decisions when considering finding a new home
- Improved access to information and advice about housing services

Help and Support

- More help and support on setting up a home and maintaining a tenancy is required
- A lack of accessible information and advice on what help and support is available for new young tenants
- A perceived lack of supported housing for younger people

Partnership Working

- The need for closer inter agency and partnership working
- Developing a 'forum' or some other way of enabling housing service providers and young people to more effectively work together to develop services

Supply of Permanent and Temporary Accommodation

- Waiting lists are long and it takes too long to get offered a property
- A lack of available Council accommodation in areas where young people want to live
- Young people are often offered accommodation outside of their preferred area detached from family and support networks.
- Lack of emergency accommodation for young people

Housing Management

- Poor condition and appearance of some houses and estates.
- Problem neighbours are a concern for young people
- The repairs service is perceived as doing poor quality repairs and taking too long to complete repairs

What Young People Want?

The results of the survey completed by 16 to 24 year old council tenants and non-tenants indicates that young people in Gateshead would like:

1. Houses, estates and communities to be safe and secure
2. To live in a clean house in a clean area
3. To live in a house that has been refurbished
4. To have more support available in Gateshead and promote the support that people can currently access
5. To live in a nice house in a nice area.
6. To have a furnished tenancy
7. To have more housing options, many young people feel restricted by their current options
8. Different opening hours, or alternative ways of accessing services. opening Hours was identified as a barrier to accessing services
9. A new lettings system, the current 'points' system was seen as difficult to use and understand
10. More information on housing options and services available to them

Issues perceived as poor by young people Referred to Gateshead Council - Housing Services

A number of issues were raised during the consultation that fall under the responsibility of Gateshead Council or they has a joint responsibility to deliver with the company. The issues young people perceive as problems with housing services include:

Promoting Services

Housing services need to be more effective in promoting support available to young people

Support

Gateshead has a lack of Supported Housing services available to young people, in addition it was highlighted that people require more support to manage and maintain their first tenancy.

Partnership Working

Closer inter-agency and partnership is deemed to be necessary by young people to improve housing services and gaps in support/information.

Supply of permanent and temporary accommodation

Concerns about the lack of emergency accommodation available to young people and the long waiting lists and long time periods people have to wait to be offered accommodation. Young people identified a lack of housing in areas where they want to live, close to support networks and families and highlighted this as a further challenge to maintaining and managing their first tenancy.

Condition and Environment

Living in a safe and secure environment is particularly important to young people, as is improving the appearance and condition of properties, estates and their environments.

Accessibility

Involvement opportunities and tenants and residents associations can be inaccessible to young people due to the timing and location of meetings and the lack of support, e.g. childcare. It was highlighted that some front line services could improve the way they communicate and deal with young people. The time taken to complete adaptations was also highlighted as a problem, it was suggested that this is often made more difficult by poor communication between social services, housing services and tenants.

Financial Difficulties

Delays in processing claims and paying housing benefit often causes young people hardship and stress. Heating costs were seen as expensive by some young people.

These issues have been referred to Gateshead Council for consideration and further action

Young Persons' Action Plan 2006-09

Objectives

- 1 The company has a corporate commitment to young persons' issues**
- 2 The governance of the company is accessible and encourages the representation of young people.**
- 3 Any barriers to accessing services are identified and appropriate solutions found**
- 4 Young people have access to advice and information about housing services and options in Gateshead**
- 5 Young people participate in various involvement activities at different levels and receive training**
- 6 The company embraces partnership working with the Council, Connexions and young persons' support organisations and groups**
- 7 The company's workforce recruitment and selection processes are positive about young people**

Objective 1

The company has a corporate commitment to young people's issues

Priority Actions

- A. Appoint a lead officer and develop a young people's priorities
- B. Ensure the company complies with key age discrimination legislation
- C. Scrutinise young people's satisfaction with services and complaints

A. Appoint a lead officer and develop a young peoples priorities				
Milestones	Lead Officer	Target Date for completion	Date Achieved	Current Position
Identify a lead officer for young people's issues within the company	Mark Johns	December 2006		
Consult with young people in Gateshead to establish their priorities and views on housing services	Mark Johns	August 2006	July 2006	Complete
Develop a young persons' plan fro the company that reflects the needs of young people in Gateshead	Mark Johns	November 2006		
Develop the Ambassador Scheme to ensure secondary schools in Gateshead have the opportunity of a visit by an ambassador from The Gateshead Housing Company	Kathleen Scott	September 2007		
Ensure young people's issues are included in the plan to achieve the Equality Standard for Local Government	Mark Johns	January 2007		
Equality Impact Assessments to be complete for policies and services that are identified as high risk	Mark Johns	April 2006	April 2006	Complete

B. Ensure the company complies with key age discrimination legislation

Milestones	Lead Officer	Target Date for completion	Date Achieved	Current Position
Review employment and vocational training practices to ensure the company complies with future age discrimination legislation	Jennifer Aston / Janice Poole / Rachel Embleton	November 2006		

C. Scrutinise young peoples satisfaction with services and complaints

Milestones	Lead Officer	Target Date for completion	Date Achieved	Current Position
Monitor complaints by young people and investigate any common issues	Stuart Gibson	From April 07 ongoing		
Monitor young people's satisfaction with services through the annual satisfaction survey and investigate any common issues	Kevin Johnson	April 2007 (then annually)		
Monitor young people's satisfaction with the repairs services and investigate any common issues	Kevin Johnson	Quarterly from April 2007		
Monitor young people's satisfaction with the decent homes refurbishment process and investigate any common issues	Andrea Wheatley, Carole Nicholson and Alan Sandey	Quarterly from April 2007		
Evaluate the effectiveness of the company in improving young people's satisfaction with services to inform the future Young Persons' Housing Plan	Kevin Johnson	March 2009		

Objective 2

The governance of the company is accessible and encourages the representation of young people.

Priority Actions

- A. Engage in a positive recruitment drive at Board level
- B. Ensure governance arrangements are accessible to young people

A. Engage in a positive recruitment drive at Board level				
Milestones	Lead Officer	Target Date for completion	Date Achieved	Current Position
Research best practice in governance issues for young people with other ALMO's and through internet best practice sites	Stuart Gibson	December 2006		
Develop a recruitment plan to target young people	Stuart Gibson	February 2007		
Send publicity material to all young people on the SX3 database that are under 25 years old.	Ian Clarkin / Stuart Gibson	April 2007		
Develop an advertising campaign to target young people to become board members	Ian Clarkin / Stuart Gibson	September 2007		

B. Ensure governance arrangements are accessible to young people

Milestones	Lead Officer	Target Date for completion	Date Achieved	Current Position
Develop joining instructions that are more accessible to young people	Stuart Gibson	October 2006		
Advertise Board vacancies to young people via the quarterly newspaper	Ian Clarkin / Stuart Gibson	as and when vacancies		
Advertise Board membership opportunities with existing young persons' forums and events	Stuart Gibson/James Moody	August 2007		
Evaluate the effectiveness of the company in improving access to governance arrangements and attracting young people to apply for board membership to inform the future Young Persons' Housing Plan	Stuart Gibson	March 2009		

Objective 3

Any barriers to accessing services are identified and appropriate solutions found

Priority Actions

- A. Identify any barriers that young people face accessing services
- B. Provide employees with information and advice about working with young people

A. Identify any barriers that young people face accessing services				
Milestones	Lead Officer	Target Date for completion	Date Achieved	Current Position
Work with existing forums to identify any access issues and implement agreed access solutions	James Moody / Linda Hopkinson	September 2007		
Work in partnership with Young People's support providers to promote access to support services	Julie McCartney	April 2007		
Monitor the profile of tenants with rent arrears, debt and in receipt of housing benefit to identify if young people are over represented, develop appropriate actions if necessary.	Tara Smith	November 2006		
Monitor the profile of abandonment by age and identify any trends relating to young people.	Craig Gandy	October 2006 (then 6 monthly)		
Develop a reward scheme targeted at young people	Kathleen Scott	March 2007		
Evaluate the effectiveness of the company in removing barriers to accessing services to inform the future Young Persons' Housing Plan	Mark Johns	March 2009		

B. Provide employees with information and advice about working with young people

Milestones	Lead Officer	Target Date for completion	Date Achieved	Current Position
Update the employee diversity resource to provide information to employees on working with young people.	Mark Johns	February 2007		
Include information in the Equality and Diversity training about working with young people	Rachel Embleton / Janice Poole	April 2007		
Ensure procedural guidance for employees includes specific guidance for improving customer services for young people	Kathleen Scott	November 2006		
Ensure Multi Agency Leaflet about Homeless Housing Help in Gateshead is distributed to all offices	Julie McCartney	March 2007		

Objective 4

Young people have access to advice and information about housing services and options in Gateshead

Priority Actions

- A. Ensure information and communications is available to young people in an accessible format
- B. Develop a web based housing information resource for young people
- C. Promote the availability of the housing resource

A. Ensure information and communications is available to young people in an accessible format and locations				
Milestones	Lead Officer	Target Date for completion	Date Achieved	Current Position
Consult with young people to establish their communication needs	Ian Clarkin / James Moody	September 2007		
Review the way the company communicates with young people based on the outcomes of the consultation	Ian Clarkin / Mark Johns	June 2007		
Develop housing advice guidance about young people for front line employees	Jackie Armstrong	April 2007		
Develop a specialised Neighbourhood Relations officer to work with young people	Deborah Ewart	September 2006		
Develop work with schools and colleges to raise awareness of the issues young people need to consider when moving out of home to live independently	Deborah Ewart	March 2007		

Milestones	Lead Officer	Target Date for completion	Date Achieved	Current Position
Consult with and encourage young people to take part in the Major Works DVD.	Andrea Wheatley	Anticipated April 2007 (subject to discussions on production time)		
Ensure information about site health and safety is promoted in schools, youth groups.	Andrea Wheatley & Carole Nicholson	March 2007		
Look at the content of the welcome pack for new young tenants – ensure it has targeted information in, and as much help and support information as possible.	Kathleen Scott	December 2007		

B. Develop a web based housing information resource for young people				
Milestones	Lead Officer	Target Date for completion	Date Achieved	Current Position
Work with young people to identify what information, advice and guidance they need and desire.	Mark Johns	July 2006	July 2006	Complete
Get young people involved in developing a housing web site that is appealing and user friendly to young people	Mark Johns	October 2006		
Provide information via the web site on private and social housing services in Gateshead	Mark Johns	October 2006		
Provide a signposting service via the website that re-directs young people to appropriate support and advice services	Mark Johns	October 2006		

C. Promote the availability of the web based housing resource

Milestones	Lead Officer	Target Date for completion	Date Achieved	Current Position
Promote the availability of the resource in the quarterly newspaper	Mark Johns / Ian Clarkin	December 2006		
Advertise the resource via young people's forums	Mark Johns	December 2006		
Advertise the resource via Young People organisations and support groups	Mark Johns	December 2006		
Send information to Homelessness and other accommodation support providers that have services in Gateshead	Mark Johns	December 2006		
Develop a 'Z card' type housing information card that promotes the website and provides basic housing information	Mark Johns / Ian Clarkin	December 2006		
Evaluate the effectiveness of the company's information and communications to inform the future Young Persons' Plan	Mark Johns / Ian Clarkin	March 2009		

Objective 5

Young people participate in various involvement activities at different levels and receive training

Priority Actions

- A. Young persons' views are considered in decision making process
- B. Support is available to assist young people to get involved
- C. Provide training to assist young people to get involved and increase their capacity

A. Young peoples views are considered in decision making processes				
Milestones	Lead Officer	Target Date for completion	Date Achieved	Current Position
Send information to young people's support forums, groups and organisations on involvement opportunities.	Linda Hopkinson / James Moody	April 2007 (as and when updated)		
Visit young people's to establish their views and promote involvement opportunities	Linda Hopkinson / James Moody / Mark Johns	Ongoing from September 2006		
Ensure feedback mechanisms are in place to report back outcomes of any issues discussed at forums	Linda Hopkinson / James Moody	Ongoing from September 2006		
Increase the number of young people on the involvement database.	Linda Hopkinson / James Moody	From April 2006 (Annually)		
Work with ICT to put mechanisms in place to enable the company to scrutinise questionnaires by age, gender, disability, ethnicity	James Moody / David Shield	From December 2007		
Scrutinise ongoing involvement through out the company by age and target young people if not represented	Linda Hopkinson / James Moody / All employees	From April 2007		

Milestones	Lead Officer	Target Date for completion	Date Achieved	Current Position
Ensure feedback from young people's involvement is fed into the Officer Equality and Diversity group.	Mark Johns	Ongoing		
Develop new tenancy visit procedures for young people tailored to their needs	Brett Routledge	March 2007		
Develop a mystery shopping exercise that can be used with young people to help us identify their issues and needs	Henry Mayanja	August 2007		
Young people will be involved in the review of choices and incentives linked to Major Improvement Schemes	Carole Nicholson	April 2007 (then annually)		
Schools and Youth Groups/Forums will be consulted on, and involved in developing estate based Security & Environmental Schemes.	Alan Sandey	October 2006		

B. Support is available to assist young people to get involved				
Milestones	Lead Officer	Target Date for completion	Date Achieved	Current Position
Work with young people to identify their support needs	Linda Hopkinson / James Moody	April 2007		
Introduce support young people require to access involvement opportunities	Linda Hopkinson / James Moody	July 2007		

Milestones	Lead Officer	Target Date for completion	Date Achieved	Current Position
Investigate the possibility of providing creche facilities to assist young parents to get involved	Linda Hopkinson / James Moody	April 2008		
Pro-actively encourage young people to participate in estate tours and monitor participation by age	Margaret Copeland	April 2007		

C. Provide training to assist young people to get involved and increase their capacity				
Milestones	Lead Officer	Target Date for completion	Date Achieved	
Provide specific training courses via the Moving Forward training programme that assist young people to sustain their tenancies.	Linda Hopkinson / James Moody	April 2007 (Annually)		
Develop a training course aimed at young people that provides training and advice about influencing housing services	Linda Hopkinson / James Moody	April 2007		
Promote specific training through new tenancies, young peoples forums, groups and organisations	Linda Hopkinson / James Moody	From April 2007		
Advertise the Moving Forward training programme with existing young peoples organisations and forums.	Linda Hopkinson / James Moody	October 2006 (Annually from April 2007)		
Ensure young people are represented on the training steering group	Linda Hopkinson / James Moody	April 2007		
Investigate the options for developing a mentoring scheme for young people	Kathleen Scott	April 2008		

Milestones	Lead Officer	Target Date for completion	Date Achieved	
Work with the Council, Education and other partners to develop a schools park about environmental anti social behaviour issues	Deborah Ewart	April 2007		
Evaluate the effectiveness of the company in involving young people in activities and mechanisms to inform the future Young Persons' Plan	Linda Hopkinson / James Moody	March 2009		

Objective 6

The company embraces partnership working with the Council, Connexions and young people's support organisations and groups

Priority Actions

- A. Ensure the company is represented at key partnership boards, meetings, forums and groups

A. Ensure the company is represented at key partnership boards, meetings, forums and groups				
Milestones	Lead Officer	Target Date for completion	Date Achieved	Current Position
Support the work of the Children and Young Peoples Partnership Board by attending and contributing to meetings	Mark Johns	From April 2006 Then ongoing		
Attend and contribute to the Connexions achieving economic wellbeing group	Mark Johns	From April 2006 Then ongoing		
Attend and contribute to the Teenage Parents Partnership Board	Mark Johns	From April 2006 Then ongoing		
Develop closer links with Gateshead Councils tenancy support service for young people	Julie McCartney	April 2007		
Develop closer links with organisations and support groups across Gateshead that support young people.	Julie McCartney	April 2007		
Ensure young peoples support groups and networks can access an officer of the company to address particular queries on an ad hoc basis	Mark Johns	As and when required		

Milestones	Lead Officer	Target Date for completion	Date Achieved	Current Position
Ensure the company contributes to the Connexions NEET (not in Education Employment and Training) Strategy	Mark Johns	April 2007		
Contribute to the development and effective implementation of a joint housing protocol for care leavers	Neil Bouch	March 2007		
Monitor the number and length of time supported tenancies	Julie McCartney	April 2007		
Evaluate/review supported tenancies to identify any barriers or issues about accessing services	Julie McCartney	April 2007		
Develop more effective partnerships and information sharing protocols with support providers and partners	Julie McCartney	April 2008		
Monitor the effectiveness of information sharing protocols top establish if the have improved sustainability of tenancies	Julie McCartney	April 2008		
Evaluate the effectiveness of the company's partnership working to inform the future Young Persons' Plan	Mark Johns	March 2009		

Objective 7

The company's workforce recruitment and selection processes are positive about young people

Priority Actions

- A. Monitor the company's recruitment practices and acceptance on external training courses age
- B. Engage in a positive recruitment drive at workforce level

A. Monitor the company's recruitment practices and acceptance on external training courses age				
	Lead Officer	Target Date for completion	Date Achieved	Current Position
Monitor applications received for employment by age	Jennifer Aston	April 2007 (then quarterly)		
Monitor offers of employment by age	Jennifer Aston	October 2006 (then quarterly)		
Monitor the age of employees receiving funding for training courses within the company (qualifications)	Rachel Embleton / Janice Poole	October 2006 (then annually)		

B. Engage in a positive recruitment drive at workforce level				
	Lead Officer	Target Date for completion	Date Achieved	Current Position
Research best practice and statutory obligations in recruiting younger people	Jennifer Aston	August 2007		
Work in partnership with Equality North East to identify good practice in employment practices for young people	Jennifer Aston	October 2006 (ongoing)		

	Lead Officer	Target Date for completion	Date Achieved	Current Position
Identify any barriers young people face and make reasonable adjustments	Jennifer Aston	August 2007		
Evaluate the effectiveness of the company's workforce recruitment and selection processes to inform the future Young Persons' Plan	Jennifer Aston	March 2009		

Appendix 1

The Result of the 2003/04 Status Survey (people aged up to 25 years old – 2.4% of respondents)

91.4% fairly or very satisfied	with overall services we offer (average 89.5%)
84% fairly or very satisfied	with opportunities to get involved and influence future decisions made by the company (average 90.7%)
78.3% fairly or very satisfied	with the neighbourhood they live in (average 90.7%)
74.4% fairly or very satisfied	with their home (average 90%)
73.5% fairly or very satisfied	that rent that people pay is considered to be good value for money for the services they receive.

Appendix 2

Summary of responses to Young Persons' Housing Survey 2006

The company received 200 completed surveys from a diverse range of young people. This included: people with disabilities; people from various ethnic and faith backgrounds; different age groups; and people from specific groups such as young mothers, young care leavers, young offenders, carers, etc.

For many questions respondents could provide more than one answer, for example a person may have informed us they would look for housing information at more than one location. Below is a summary of the responses:

1. Do you need more info

Yes = **63** (32%)

No = **82** (41%)

Don't Know = **55** (27%)

2. Where would you look for housing info?

The Gateshead Housing Company Offices = 75	Gateshead Council / Civic Centre = 70	Internet = 37	The Gateshead Housing Company Website = 24
Newspapers = 20	Estate Agents = 19	Connexions = 10	Council Website = 5
Property Websites = 2	School/College = 2	Housing Associations = 2	Bridging Newcastle Gateshead Website = 1
Shopping Centre = 1	Breakthru Magazine = 1	No Comment = 20	

3. What's good about housing in Gateshead?

Cheap = 33	Repairs = 17	Helpful Staff = 17	Refurbishments = 19
Gives People Housing = 12	Good selection of Areas = 12	Accessible = 12	Repairs Free = 12
Good Quality = 9	Helps Families = 6	All the info = 5	Streets are tidy = 4
Good Facilities = 3	You Can pick area = 2	Safe = 2	New Letting System = 1
Help with neighbour problems = 1	Other = 1	No Comment = 75	

4. What's poor about housing?

Repairs Time = 37	Waiting List = 30	House Condition = 17	Don't get chosen area = 14
Poor Appearance = 13	Neighbours = 13	Poor Areas = 11	Not enough houses = 9
Not enough support = 7	High Rent = 6	Local Office = 6	Estates = 5
Repairs Quality = 4	Poor Facilities = 3	Children in flats = 3	Housing Benefit Delay = 3
Cost to Heat = 3	Unhelpful Staff = 3	Will not own = 2	Racist Tenants = 2
Responding to the Public = 2	Small Houses = 2	People giving false information = 2	Homeless Help = 1
Time taken to do Adaptations = 1	Communications (Occupational Therapist & Social Workers & tenant) = 1	Opening Hours = 1	Poor Quality Service = 1
No Comment = 46			

5. What do you want?

Safety and Security = 26	Clean Home/Area = 23	Repairs on time = 22	Refurbished House = 18
More Support = 17	Live in nice house & area = 16	A house = 14	More Nice Areas = 11
More available houses/flats = 9	Furnished Tenancy = 8	More Options = 7	Reasonable Rent = 7
Help Outside/Garden = 5	Easier Access = 4	New Lettings System = 4	Help with rent = 3
More information = 3	Help Moving = 2	What I have now = 2	A better service = 2
Smaller waiting lists = 2	Improved Living Conditions = 2	Hard on anti social behaviour = 2	Information on availability = 1
Information on repair timescales = 1	Good area for children = 1	Always someone available = 1	Better Facilities = 1

6. Is a young persons housing website a good idea?

Yes = 170 (85%) No = 3 (1.5%) Don't know = 27 (13.5%)

7. Would you use a housing website?

Yes = 150 (75%) No = 18 (9%) Don't know = 32 (16%)

8. Do you have access to the internet?

82% of young people that answered this question said **yes**.

9. What's missing?

Costs = 24	Benefits Information = 17	Lettings Criteria = 13	Information on support = 12
Contact details = 9	Maps of Estates = 6	Age Restrictions = 6	Safety Information = 6
What to do if things go wrong = 5	What you can/can't do = 4	Information on right to buy = 4	Information on who is priority need = 3
Information on your rights = 3	What you get = 3	Information on Gateshead = 2	Refurbishment Timescales = 2
Pictures of Adaptations = 1	List of available properties = 1	Information on changing house = 1	

10. What else would you like included?

Local information = 18	Jobs = 7	Transport Information = 7	Entertainment = 6
Education & Training = 4	Childcare information = 4	Exchange List = 4	Information on local shops = 2
College/School = 2	Private Home information = 2	Crime Figures = 1	Quiz = 1
Search for Empty Homes = 1	Counselling information = 1	Job Centre Location = 1	Information on recreation areas = 1
Direct message = 1			

11. What should it look like?

Colourful = 75	Easy to read & use = 46	Pictures = 38	Appeal to young people = 14
Attractive to look at = 13	Informative = 12	Useful links = 10	Not too many words = 10
Font size option = 8	Pictures of houses = 7	Clear headings = 6	Free ring tone = 5
Use plain English = 3	Language options = 3	Words only option = 1	Accessible to disabled people = 1

Where have surveys come from?

BME Youth Groups - 10
Gateshead College – 72
Disabled Youth Groups - 14

Young Womens Project - 7
Youth Assembly - 19

YES Forum – 13
Tenants Survey - 65

Gender

Male - **70** (35%)

Female - **125** (62.5%)

Not known - **5** (2.5%)

Age

13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24	?
2	5	7	29	40	28	16	12	6	10	18	11	16

Ethnicity - 5% of respondents were from a BME background

White British = 186	Mixed White & Black Caribbean = 1	Mixed White & Asian = 1	Asian Indian = 1
Asian Pakistani = 1	Asian Other = 2	Asian Bangladeshi = 3	Black African = 1
Not known 4			

Disability – 13.5% of respondents said they had a disability

Blind/Visual Impaired = 0	Deaf/Hearing Impaired = 0	Mental Health = 2
Wheelchair User/Mobility = 1	Unseen Disability = 7	Learning Disability = 15
Other = 2		

Tenure – 36% of respondents said they were tenants

Tenant - 72	Leaseholder - 0	Other - 124	Unknown - 4
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