Communities
and Local Government

ADP Pilots for Teenage Mothers

Lessons and Good Practice

ADP Pilots for Teenage Mothers

Lessons and Good Practice

Sue Pollock, Jacqui Croft and Alex Marsh
School for Policy Studies, University of Bristol

On 5th May 2006 the responsibilities of the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister (ODPM) transferred to the Department for Communities and Local Government

Department for Communities and Local Government
Eland House
Bressenden Place
London
SW1E 5DU
Telephone: 020 7944 4400
Website: www.communities.gov.uk

If you require this publication in an alternative format please email alternativeformats@communities.gsi.gov.uk

Department for Communities and Local Government Publications
PO Box 236
Wetherby
West Yorkshire
LS23 7NB
Tel: 08701 226 236
Fax: 08701 226 237
Textphone: 08701 207 405
Email: communities@twoten.com
or online via the Department for Communities and Local Government website:
www.communities.gov.uk

January 2007

Product Code: 06SP04287C

CONTENTS

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Background and purpose

In October 2002 the then Office of the Deputy Prime Minister, now Communities and Local Government, commissioned the School for Policy Studies, University of Bristol, to evaluate the Safer Communities Supported Housing Fund (SCSHF) and the Approved Development Programme (ADP) pilots for teenage mothers. This guide draws on an evaluation of the ADP pilots for teenage mothers funded in the 2000/2001 funding round. Its purpose is to discuss key lessons that can be drawn from the experience of developing and initially operating the pilots and to highlight aspects of good practice.

Schemes funded under the SCSHF and the ADP were expected to produce the following general outcomes for residents: maintaining a successful independent tenancy; participation in education, training or employment; reducing offending (or re-offending) behaviour or instances of being a victim of crime; and reducing drug and alcohol misuse. For teenage mothers additional outcomes were the avoidance of further unplanned pregnancies and the adoption of a healthy lifestyle for mothers and children.

Three distinct designs were used for the six ADP pilots. The designs were: self-contained accommodation with own kitchen, bathroom and front door; a bedsitting room, with own bathroom but communal kitchen and shared living space; and two families sharing a two-bedroomed unit. The support model operated by the schemes differed, but all were based around some version of keyworking.

This reports sets out the key lessons that we draw from the experience of the projects, and also makes recommendations on what the projects suggest to be good practice in the provision of supported accommodation for teenage parents.

Scheme location and design

- Scheme location is vital, particularly in relation to physical safety, acceptability of the neighbourhood and accessibility. Location is crucial in making schemes a reasonable and desirable option for residents and thus avoiding vacancies. There is little point in developing a well-designed scheme in a location where no one wants to live.

- Few of the young women spent much time during the day at the scheme and relied on family and friends for social contact and support. Location in relation to transport, amenities and distance from friends and family were therefore critical issues.

- Location of the schemes in culturally diverse areas was important for women from ethnic minorities, or those with babies of mixed heritage.

- Scheme design needs to focus on usable space and consider issues of equity in access to space.

- Communal space can play a key role in the way the scheme functions, in particular in encouraging peer support. The way in which shared space is managed – whether formally or informally – can significantly influence the residents' experience of living in the schemes. Make sure that communal space is large enough to allow group meetings and safe play for children, but sufficiently private to allow it to feel personal and homely.

- Location and design, such as the lack of a communal front door reducing the scope for supervision, can contribute to some of the problems experienced with antisocial behaviour.

- Exterior access arrangements – individual or communal front doors – exemplify the balance schemes must strike between independence and supervision.

- Consider models of support at the design stage. Scheme design needs to strike the balance with great care between independence and supervision, and between independence and the encouragement of peer support.

- Security is an important issue, but monitoring should not be intrusive.

- Attention to small details is important to ensure that spaces, fixtures and fittings are child-friendly and accessible to pregnant women.

- User involvement in developing the design and specification is recommended.

Accessing schemes, assessing applicants

- A well functioning application process is vital. Good communication with prospective residents and other key stakeholders, such as families, partners and professionals, is vital during the access and application process. Managing and clarifying expectations is central. Residents must be very clear about the need to engage with the model of support being operated, including the keyworking process.

- The application process itself should be as streamlined as possible. In particular, within the confines of relevant statutory responsibilities and data protection requirements, working to remove all unnecessary duplication of information collection is highly desirable.

- Keeping allocations policies under review can play a role in addressing negative incidents, such as bullying, during scheme operation.

- Initial needs assessments may not always highlight the full extent of the residents' need. Ongoing processes need to be attuned to the gradual disclosure of needs.

- Formal monitoring should be complemented by a more qualitative understanding of residents' needs. Informal processes are likely to be as important as, if not more important than, formal monitoring systems.

PROVIDING SUPPORT

- It is vital to be clear from the outset regarding the aims and objectives of the scheme and how these translate into a model of support that builds from a positive empowering philosophy. There can be tensions involved in providing support that need to be recognised and managed consciously.

- The women's relationships and support networks *outside* the scheme were of great significance to them, but tended to be downplayed by scheme staff.

- It was unusual for schemes to involve the fathers of the babies or other significant family members in scheme activities. This seems to be a missed opportunity. It must, however, be recognised that the fathers' presence in the schemes may be problematic, depending on scheme design.

- Young women are clear about the importance of informal support networks of friends and family, both during their stay in the supported housing project and in providing a community to return to when they move on. Young women often turned to their families in times of greatest need, for instance when ill in pregnancy. Staff need to recognise and support these networks.

- Schemes need to be flexible enough to accommodate sometimes extended absences. Yet, schemes can also be seen as safe havens from dysfunctional families. Better relationships with parents and siblings often evolved once the young woman was no longer living at home.

- There may be a gap between *providing* and *accepting* support. Many respondents felt, even when they were new to the scheme, that they did not need the level of support offered and had often agreed to accept their tenancy there because the alternatives were less attractive or more restrictive. In our second round of interviews there was evidence that several residents' views had changed: whereas initially they did not feel they needed support, they had come to recognise that there was support available that was beneficial, and were feeling that the help they received made a difference to them. Innovative approaches are needed which combine clear expectations of participation written into tenancy agreements and negotiation with individuals and the resident group.

- The way that support is offered appears to be a key factor in determining whether it was taken up and seen as useful by the young women. Two factors of particular significance are the extent to which support is perceived as intrusive and the role of informal support.

- During the period of the evaluation, staff to resident ratios at some schemes tended to increase as the demands on staff and the requirements for running an effective service became clearer.

- Reflecting upon and keeping the model of support under review is important in ensuring effective delivery of services. This may require flexibility in the level and use of resources.

- The nature of the relationships between residents and members of staff with different roles can differ subtly. For example, night staff can be perceived as 'more friendly' and the relationship with them more informal because they do not have keyworking responsibilities.

- The *complexity* of living in a group, as well as the *value*, needs to be recognised.

- It is important to find creative ways back into education for young people whose educational experience and aspirations may have been disrupted. It is important to move at the young person's pace: to recognise when progress has to be gradual, but equally to recognise when the young person is ready to make the next step and to encourage them to make it.

- Good keyworking practice is described as comprising regular sessions that are enforced as an expected part of the tenancy, while the content needs to be explicitly negotiated with the tenant and seen as specific and relevant. The degree of structure and formality of the sessions themselves need to be sensitive to the preferences, needs and experiences of the residents.

- Keyworking sessions alone are unlikely to address all personal and emotional issues. Formal sessions need to be seen as part of a structure of support that also includes informal contact. Such informal support can be key to developing supportive, trusting relationships, but may be difficult to quantify.

- Workers need to be constantly aware of where they are striking the balance between support and independence. Residents move toward independence at their own rate, relative to their needs. Workers must be able to identify when it is time for a resident to move further toward independence and be willing to take appropriate action to facilitate this move.

Feeling settled

- A sense of home and feeling settled is important for young women in early parenthood, but many residents did not feel 'at home' in the pilot schemes. They felt more as if they were 'looking after' accommodation that remained the property of others.

- Residents of supported housing schemes realise that they will only live in the scheme temporarily, but creating a sense of security and a feeling of belonging among the users can further the scheme's objectives. Particular care needs to be taken over how the scheme rules are designed and the way staff use the scheme facilities and shared space.

- Rules that are well-intentioned can be perceived as oppressive by residents. Rules around visitors can be particularly problematic. There may, however,

be real tensions between rules that are necessary in order to ensure a calm safe environment for all residents, some of whom may have been in violent or abusive relationships, and the desire to minimise the risk that the rules are perceived as oppressive by some.

The contribution of joint working

- The model of support operated by the ADP schemes required inputs from other agencies, and hence successful joint working arrangements were vital.

- Joint working relating to *individual residents* requires good communication/planning with other agencies at the point of entry to the scheme. This allows the scheme to build on previous work and to ensure continuity of support.

- Other agencies need to be clear about their respective responsibilities in relation to the support offered by the scheme to avoid either duplication or a failure to address areas of difficulty.

- Effective informal relationships can often be central to service delivery in the early months of operation. However, setting up more formal understandings and agreements can be important to ensuring continuity of service and clarity of roles. It is important to put inter-agency involvement on a formal footing because this does not depend too greatly on personal contacts and brings clarity and transparency to the relationship.

- Collaborative working requires clear lines of communication and responsibility between scheme and partner agencies: lack of clarity can create uncertainties in individual cases.

The transition to independent living

- Shortages of appropriate local RSL tenancies for move-on accommodation can create difficulties for schemes. Young women can remain in a scheme longer than they thought their support needs warranted. And others who would benefit from support may not be able to access it.

- The lack of an appropriately timed move to suitable, more independent accommodation can start to undermine the work that schemes have done to build independence.

- The process for accessing move-on accommodation needs careful thought. Clarity is needed over what the scheme workers will do for users in the process of securing move-on accommodation and what the scheme expects the users to do for themselves. It is an area in which creative collaboration with the local housing department can be highly beneficial.

- The nature of the property – its location, type and condition – offered as move-on accommodation can influence the chances of a young mother making a success of living independently.

- Even if their capacity to live independently had been enhanced during their stay at a pilot scheme, the majority of residents leave with on-going support needs. Not all of these women went to new accommodation where it was known that appropriate floating support would be available. Maintaining informal links after moving on offers the possibility of the scheme being used as a valuable resource on an 'as-needed' basis by ex-residents.

- It is good practice to provide the option of floating support after young parents leave supported housing. Providing the service from within the scheme makes good use of existing trusting relationships during the period of transition when young people may be particularly vulnerable. Tapering off the support in a planned way ensures that autonomy is enhanced and an abrupt withdrawal is avoided.

Organizational issues

- It is necessary to reflect actively upon and evaluate provision regularly in order to maximise learning. Aims and objectives, policies, procedures and the level and use of resources may all need modifying in the light of experience and the changing demands on the service.

- Learning is best achieved through a mixture of formal periodic review and continuous reflection on day to day experience.

- Schemes need to put in place effective formal and informal mechanisms for reflecting upon and evaluating performance. Scheme activities at both the broad policy and the detailed procedural level may require modification in the light of experience.

- Self-evaluation is particularly significant for schemes in their early months, but with schemes that operate in a constantly changing environment the process of learning never stops.

- Monitoring systems need to be designed with care so that they can recognise the variability of the support required by residents, and capture the qualitative nature of much of this support.

- Where 24-hour staffing is part of the project's remit, specific attention needs to be given to the management of staff working unsocial hours.

- Projects need to consider the value of diversifying roles within the staff group. The specialist role of 'housing and re-settlement worker' was seen as particularly valuable.

- Project staff need specific training tailored to their needs in order to both increase their professional competence and raise their credibility with inter-agency partners. Specific training in housing and re-settlement was seen as particularly helpful.

- Staff need to abide by clear procedures on the handling of confidential information.

CHAPTER 1

Introduction

Background and purpose

1.1 In October 2002 the then Office of the Deputy Prime Minister, now Communities and Local Government, commissioned a research team from the School for Policy Studies, University of Bristol, to evaluate the Safer Communities Supported Housing Fund (SCSHF) and the Approved Development Programme (ADP) pilots for teenage mothers.

1.2 This guide draws on an evaluation of the six ADP pilots for teenage mothers funded in the 2000/2001 funding round. Its purpose is to discuss key lessons that can be drawn from the experience of developing and initially operating the pilots and to highlight aspects of good practice. Separate reports set the findings of the work with the ADP pilots in the context of the evaluation as a whole, and draw a broader range of good practice lessons regarding the provision of accommodation-based support to a range of vulnerable households.[1]

The objectives of the evaluation

1.3 The evaluation of the ADP pilots was concerned with assessing:

● the effectiveness of the accommodation and support provision funded under the ADP pilots in meeting the housing and support needs of teenage mothers.

● the success of the provision in terms of the outcomes.

● the success of the provision in terms of outcomes for all client groups relative to the cost of provision. The scope for addressing this third dimension proved to be extremely modest.

---

[1] *Providing Housing and Support: An Evaluation of the Safer Communities Supported Housing Fund and the Approved Development Programme Pilots for Teenage Mothers*, Communities and Local Government, 2007. *Providing Housing and Support: Lessons and Good Practice*, Communities and Local Government, 2007.

1.4 The supported housing schemes funded under the SCSHF and the ADP were expected to produce the following general outcomes for residents:

- Maintaining a successful independent tenancy;

- Participation in education, training or employment,

- Reducing offending (or re-offending) behaviour or instances of being a victim of crime; and

- Reducing drug and alcohol misuse.

1.5 For teenage mothers these outcomes were supplemented by the following:

- Avoidance of further unplanned pregnancies

- Adoption of a healthy lifestyle for selves and children (ie. preventing smoking; promoting breastfeeding and healthy eating).

Evaluation criteria

1.6 Evaluation is made more complicated by the lack of an unambiguous statement of the objectives for the ADP stream of funding. The (then) DETR identified a clear role for ADP funding in providing social housing for teenage parents, linking to the Social Exclusion Unit's 1999 strategy toward teenage parents.[2] Thirteen schemes for teenage parents (a total of 128 units) were funded in the 2000/01 round of the ADP. Of these, 6 were chosen as pilots on the grounds that they represented a range of models of supported accommodation for this user group.2 The Housing Corporation issued guidelines in August 2000 for teenage parent schemes applying for funding in the 2001/2002 funding round. Referring to the pilot schemes from the previous year (that is, the schemes being evaluated by this project), the guidance states that new applicants would be expected to:

- Meet local needs, in accordance with local housing strategies and priorities and following consultation with teenage parents about their needs and wants;

- Fit in with local teenage pregnancy strategies;[3]

- Work in partnership with local agencies, with a provisional steering group in place at the time of the bid and using multi agency approaches to the provision of support services;

---

2 Department of the Environment, Transport and the Regions (2000) *2000 Housing Investment Programme:* Annex A: the policy context, Available at http://www.odpm.gov.uk/stellent/groups/odpm_housing/documents/page/odpm_house_602366.hcsp. Accessed 5 April 2004.

3 At local level, multi-agency partnerships have developed 10 year Teenage Pregnancy Strategies in response to the Social Exclusion Unit's 1999 national strategy. The ADP pilots are particularly relevant to the support strand of the Strategies aimed at reducing the social exclusion of teenage parents.

- Accommodate a range of different levels of support need;

- Be sensitive when considering appropriate types of accommodation, with self-contained flats or small houses seen as likely to be most appropriate;

- Staff the schemes appropriately, with perhaps an on-call scheme for out of hours cover or, if appropriate to the needs of the residents, 24 hour cover;

- Offer a range of support services to aid the move to independent living, including eg. parenting skills, tenancy sustainment skills such as budgeting and cooking and access to training and education;

- Provide continuing, but tapered, support services after moving on.[4]

1.7   The criteria used in evaluating the pilot schemes encompassed the outcomes set out in paras 1.4 and 1.5 and an examination of the pilots' experiences in the light of the expectations laid out by the Housing Corporation for the assessment of subsequent bids.

Methods and scope

1.8   The research on the six ADP pilots proceeded in parallel with the larger project examining the SCSHF and employed a similar method. The core of the method was three rounds of visits to the pilot schemes. The first round of visits occurred in early 2003. The purpose was to interview scheme staff with knowledge of the background and development of the scheme and the management and operation of the scheme. The second round of visits was to interview up to six service users in each scheme. In the case of the ADP pilots a total of 29 service users were interviewed. The third round of visits was planned to occur six months after the second round. The aim of this round was to re-interview users interviewed in round two, with a view to exploring how circumstances had developed and changed and the users' views on the contribution, impact and effectiveness of the schemes. Where it was not possible to re-interview a user – either because they were unwilling or unable to participate or were not contactable – then the substitution of an alternative user, matched as far as possible with the non-participant in respect of the length of their participation in the scheme, would be attempted. In practice, securing re-interviews proved difficult in some cases. We were able to re-interview 15 of the original sample, most of whom were still resident at the scheme, and interviewed three additional users, all of whom were still resident in the schemes. Regardless of whether the interviewees had moved on from the scheme at the time of the second interview, they were generally willing to reflect upon their time at the scheme and were better placed to assess the experience. The fact that some had not moved on, even though they may have been ready to do so, and as a result felt 'stuck' is a significant lesson and allows additional insight into the experience of living in the schemes.

---

4   Housing Corporation (2000) *Teenage Mothers: Guidance for supported accommodation*, London: The Housing Corporation.

1.9   In four schemes the timing of the research meant that it involved a group of residents who had, largely, all moved in at the same time. The start up of any new scheme will always involve a bedding down period during which staff and multiple new residents need to establish ground rules and ways of working together. At the same time the new residents are usually experiencing significant life changes. This research may therefore have caught a particular aspect of life at these schemes. This might alter over time as residents leave and new ones arrive and the mix of residents at different stages of their transition to motherhood and independent living changes.

1.10   In addition to scheme visits, for each pilot we aimed to interview, usually by telephone, a selection of key stakeholders. The aim was to capture the strategic, referring agency and operational partner perspectives. Appropriate stakeholders were typically identified in discussion with scheme staff. Scheme staff were also asked to complete and return a monitoring form each time a resident arrived or left their scheme. This was to allow us to construct a profile of the population of scheme users and to understand more about the dynamics of the resident populations.

Structure of this guide

1.11   After a chapter introducing the ADP pilot programme and the pilots funded under the first round of funding, the chapters in the main body of this guide are arranged broadly thematically. Each chapter opens with a statement of key lessons on the theme to emerge from the evaluation and closes with selected good practice points that we draw from the experience of the pilots. We begin with issues related to scheme development (Chapter 3) before considering questions of access and needs assessment (Chapter 4). Chapter 5 is the largest chapter in the report and focuses on providing support. In Chapter 6 we raise the important issue of the extent to which residents, who typically live in a scheme for a matter of months, feel settled while they live there. We then consider the contribution that joint working makes to the model of support operated by the schemes (Chapter 7). Chapter 8 discusses moving on from supported accommodation – a key element in shaping the success of a model of support. The final chapter examines a selection of organizational issues of particular significance in shaping scheme activities.

CHAPTER 2

The ADP pilot programme

The nature of the schemes

2.1 Three distinct designs existed for the six ADP pilots. The designs being used were: self-contained accommodation with own kitchen, bathroom and front door; a bedsitting room, with own bathroom but communal kitchen and shared living space; and two families sharing a two-bedroomed unit. The schemes were located in London, Nottingham (x 2), Oldham, Sandwell and Stoke-on-Trent. Brief descriptions of the schemes are provided in the boxes below. Further scheme characteristics are presented in the tables in Annex 1.

2.2 The support model operated by the schemes differed, but all involved some version of keyworking. Keywork has a range of interpretations, but generally involves one to one meetings between the resident and their keyworker on a prearranged and, usually, regular basis. The sessions are used to identify and address support needs and action points, which are usually incorporated into a support plan, with timescales given for any further action. Keyworking sessions can be used to identify action points for the resident as well as the keyworker. The formality of the sessions varied from scheme to scheme, but always involved the negotiation of such a plan, which then guided future support work. Keyworking was generally negotiated with residents according to need. Funding under Supporting People emphasizes needs-led support planning of this type and service reviews expect evidence of user acceptance of support plans.

Scheme 1 comprises nine new build two-bed flats on ground and first floors, at one end of a larger new build estate. Each unit has its own kitchen, lounge and bathroom with bath and shower. All flats have some built in storage space and first floor flats have additional storage available at ground floor level for buggies. Washing machines are provided. The tenth unit is used partly as an office, but also comprises an additional small communal lounge and a kitchen (shared with staff). There is a large, brightly painted and well- equipped play room. External funding had secured a soft play area within the extensive and often-used shared garden. Support is available during office hours from the project manager. At a minimum, weekly keyworking sessions are obligatory when a resident arrives at the scheme, but these can become less frequent later, according to support needs. Group learning sessions, run by both project staff and external providers, take place on-site and other group learning sessions also occurred off-site.

Scheme 2   comprises eight refurbished one-bed units, each with its own kitchen, lounge and bathroom. One of the units is used partly as an office (two rooms), plus a small communal lounge and a shared kitchen with laundry facilities (also used by staff). The communal lounge is decorated with a large mural and has some play equipment, but is considered by staff to be too small for their needs. There is a shared garden to the rear of the property, accessed from rear doors, where occasional gatherings such as barbecues are held. Support is available on-site 24 hours a day, with tenants able to 'drop in' to the office at any time. More formal keyworking sessions occur at a minimum once a week and could occur every day when a resident first arrives at the scheme, depending on need. Group learning activities do not feature strongly in the model of support: restricted space was identified as a key reason.

Scheme 3   is a new build scheme on a larger estate, comprising seven two-bed flats on ground and first floors. Each has its own kitchen, washing machine and bathroom. There is also a shared kitchen, used by staff and by residents for cooking/healthy eating sessions and occasional shared meals. This has an adjoining communal area, which was decorated by the residents during the course of the research project and was well used by them at all times of the day. The scheme has a well-equipped and brightly decorated internal play room and a soft play area in the garden. Cover is available on-site 24 hours a day, with 24 hour back up. Keyworking is used flexibly according to need but is part of a more formal system of monitoring. The staff have an 'open door' policy for residents and the scheme places considerable value on informal contact. The office is well-sited to facilitate this, being next to the communal lounge. Group learning sessions are offered on-site by external providers, with some also open to other young women from the estate. Further group learning sessions provided by scheme staff were being planned at the time of the research. Staff at this scheme also provided lower levels of support for two move-on houses on the same estate.

Scheme 4   is a refurbished property comprising seven units: six one-bed flats and one two-bed. Each unit has its own kitchen and bathroom. There is no shared kitchen but laundry facilities are provided communally and accessed through the communal lounge which adjoins the office and is shared with staff. The scheme is accessed solely through this communal area which helps staff to monitor the comings and goings of residents and their friends and provides an important opportunity for informal staff/resident contact. There is no shared internal play area, but the scheme has a garden to the rear of the office which was used occasionally for gatherings such as barbecues in the Summer. Support is available on-site primarily during office hours Monday to Friday, with some flexibility at evenings and weekends.

Keyworking sessions occur every three weeks as a minimum, depending on need. Staff do not run group learning sessions, but residents have access to an extensive programme of group learning opportunities provided both on-site and off-site run by external providers.

Scheme 5   is split over two sites (one staffed, due to the location of the office and the other with only visiting staff presence) and comprises five refurbished one-bed units. While each unit has its own bathroom, kitchen and laundry facilities are shared. The scheme has communal living space and both an internal play area and a garden. Support is available during office hours and flexibly at other times. This is the only scheme that had any childcare on-site: it employed a half-time children's worker, but during the evaluation period this post became vacant and was not filled for some time. A one hour-long keyworking session each week is obligatory. Group learning opportunities are provided by scheme staff, and external providers (such as the local FE college) both on- and off-site and were obligatory.

Scheme 6   comprises four new build two-bed units on first and second floors, with residents occupying one bedroom each and sharing an adjoining bathroom and kitchen with one other family. There is an office, laundry facilities and a shared kitchen (also used by staff) on the ground floor. A large, bright communal living area was being used in the evenings by some residents, but there is no designated internal play area. Some toys are available for the children to share. The garden, to the rear of the property, has some play equipment, but this space was rarely used. Support is available on-site during office hours, with keyworking sessions occurring fortnightly. Additional, regular informal contact was reported by staff. Some group learning sessions are provided on-site and, to a limited extent, off-site by external providers.

2.3   The staff-user ratios range from 1:9 to 2:5 during the day. Where night time on-site cover is provided (two schemes), the ratios are 2:8 and 2:7. Where on-site staffing is not provided on a full time basis, on-call cover is available in all but one scheme. Here, the residents are given all of the relevant local emergency numbers which they may need.

2.4   In all but one location there was some ethnic diversity among the schemes' staff at different times. Such diversity was generally recognised as valuable in raising cultural awareness and two schemes in particular mentioned the importance of providing positive Black role models for mixed heritage children and their White mothers.

2.5   Residents typically occupied their properties on assured shorthold tenancies, although in one instance they held licences for up to two years and in another they started on a licence before moving to an assured shorthold tenancy.

2.6   At the time of the first round of interviews with staff, the schemes had been open for between four weeks and 18 months.

Restrictions on entry

2.7   The main criterion for entry was age. All schemes had a lower limit of 16 years; one scheme had an upper age limit of 18 years, while most had an upper limit of 25. Gender was the other main criterion for entry in four of the six schemes – only two were willing to consider young fathers.

2.8   Apart from these criteria, no scheme said that they would refuse an applicant outright. However, several schemes were clear that they could not accommodate parents with very high support needs such as severe learning difficulties or multiple child protection concerns. One scheme would not take applicants with problems around mental health or drug or alcohol abuse, or where there were child protection concerns. With few exceptions all applicants were interviewed and assessed for suitability and compatibility with the services the scheme could offer.

The residents interviewed

2.9   As part of the evaluation the research team interviewed a total of 32 service users. 29 service users were interviewed during the first round of interviews. Their ages ranged from 16 to 20+, with an average age of 18 years. Half had been resident in the scheme for less than four months at the time of the first interview. Five women were currently pregnant, three with their first child. The age of the children ranged from newborn to 2+ years, with most of the babies being between 4 and 12 months old.

2.10   The majority of the women were not in education or training at the time they moved to the scheme or at the time of the interview. However, at the first interview there was a clear move towards becoming established in some sort of education or training after entry to the scheme. Most of the young women had left school at the age of 16, but a substantial minority (28%) had left school earlier due to difficulties such as bullying, or being obliged to leave because of the pregnancy. About half the sample had had a stable school career, with no unanticipated changes of school. The other half had had a more disrupted school career with several changes of primary and secondary school, often because of family moves. Three young women had been permanently excluded from school and two had had temporary exclusions.

2.11   Just over half the young women had achieved GCSEs while at school (A-E grades). At the first interview, 20 were studying in some form and six residents had enrolled in college for the next term. These courses were sometimes leading to formal qualifications, others were educational modules undertaken in the schemes, taught in collaboration with local colleges, for which certificates were awarded. A full profile of the education/training profile of the interviewees is provided in Annex 2. The majority of the women (86%) were not employed, but few defined themselves as being unemployed, and had not sought work because of educational or childcare commitments.

2.12   In the second round of interviews, we re-interviewed fifteen of the original sample and interviewed three additional residents. All the additional interviewees were still resident in the schemes. Of those not re-interviewed, four were under 18 and seven were eighteen and over. All had moved on. All but one (an instance of eviction) was a planned move.

2.13   Ethnic diversity among the residents at the schemes did not reflect that of the local community in four cases. This was acknowledged by the schemes, but mostly explained as a consequence of the way some ethnic minority communities take different approaches to teenage pregnancy. However, where some diversity was seen within the schemes, this was viewed positively because it presented residents with the opportunity to learn from each other.

CHAPTER 3

Scheme location and design

<div style="border:1px solid">

Key lessons

- An inappropriate location can significantly affect the popularity of a scheme and the quality of life of its residents. Yet, sites and properties considered for schemes such as the pilots are in some cases considered precisely because they have already proved themselves to be less than popular as general needs housing.

- Few of the young women spent much time during the day at the scheme and relied on family and friends for social contact and support. Location in relation to transport and distance from friends and family were therefore critical issues for many of the young parents, particularly after the baby was born and getting around was more complicated.

- Location of the schemes in culturally diverse areas was important for women from ethnic minorities, or those with babies of mixed heritage. Several of these women reported racist comments and feelings of unease where schemes were situated in mainly white areas.

- The ADP does not pay for space for the purpose of 'care', as a result money is not available through this route for anything deemed to relate to childcare. If it is not possible to provide an internal crèche as a consequence, as was the case for one pilot, then this makes location and access to suitable local facilities even more important.

- Scheme design needs to focus on usable space and consider issues of equity in access to space. Arrangements for exterior access – individual or communal front doors – exemplify the tension schemes must address in striking the balance between independence and supervision.

- Communal space can play a key role in the way the scheme functions, in particular in encouraging peer support. The way in which shared space is managed – whether formally or informally – can significantly influence the residents' experience of living in the schemes.

- Location and design can contribute to some of the problems experienced with antisocial behaviour.

</div>

Scheme location

3.1 Securing an appropriate location for a scheme can have an impact upon the degree to which residents are able to feel secure in their accommodation but also on the success of the model of support provided. Three elements of location can be identified:

- Popularity

- Accessibility

- Acceptance

POPULARITY

3.2 Residents in five schemes said that they did not like the area in which they were living. One scheme is located in an area which is generally perceived as 'racist'. This not only caused concerns for residents who are themselves members of ethnic minorities, but also for women who had babies of mixed heritage, or who had partners, friends or family at whom racist remarks or threats were directed.

3.3 Three schemes were located in areas which were locally acknowledged to be unpopular. This can mean that actual and potential residents often do not want to come to live in the scheme. One staff member noted:

> '[this location] *does create problems for the staff, because they do interview young women for whom this would be an ideal place ... to live in terms of the staff support that they'd get and the level of service that they get and all the rest of it. And they choose not to come here in the end because they don't want to live here.'*

ACCESSIBILITY

3.4 Much of the day to day support residents receive comes from family and friends. As a consequence, residents could spend much of the day away from the scheme visiting. Fostering residents' independence requires that they have access to facilities and services necessary to maintain a home and provide and care for themselves and their babies. Schemes therefore need to be sited within safe and easy reach of local amenities – such as shops, health services, child care facilities and parks – and on a major bus route that will allow access to areas in which existing social networks are located. In most cases the ADP pilots were well located in this respect, but the staff at one scheme felt that the housing association had little choice over location and that the scheme is less than ideally sited: it is not on a bus route and is in an area which has a poor reputation for safety.

3.5 The majority of residents – and all those in one scheme – felt continuing contact with friends and family to be difficult. This was partly to do with distance, but also connected with poor public transport connections to the areas they wished

to visit and the difficulties associated with travelling with a baby. Three of these women commented that they would like to 'pick up the scheme and move it'. Another felt 'like we've just been dumped here'.

ACCEPTANCE

3.6 Considering how a scheme will integrate into the local community is an important issue when planning provision. It may require having an overview of existing patterns and concentrations of provision for vulnerable households, particularly those at risk of negative stereotyping, and addressing preconceptions or concerns expressed by existing communities.

3.7 Two pilot schemes met with local opposition to setting up schemes, either in the current location or at another location that was subsequently not used:

> [The main objection was] *just that it's already a problem in terms of people walking through here and causing problems, you know by their behaviour … chucking litter about and all the rest of it. And their perception was this would make it worse because there'd be even more people passing through to visit, but also it would attract – people always say this about women's schemes – it will attract undesirable males and it'll get worse.'*

> '[There was difficulty obtaining planning permission because] *there were objections from the local community, because there's a lot of supported housing already in that area. So it wasn't so much about what we were using it for, it was the fact it was another supported accommodation, so there were objections to that.'*

3.8 One scheme was situated in a predominantly Asian residential area and some concern was expressed that a stigmatised view of unmarried teenage parenthood made it unlikely for Asian women to feel safely housed there. However, it is not clear whether this comment was based on specific example.

Scheme design

3.9 Scheme design encompasses both internal layout and exterior access. While a range of permutations is possible, three distinct designs existed among the six pilot schemes:

- self contained accommodation with own kitchen, bathroom and front door

- a bedsitting room, with own bathroom but communal kitchen and shared living space

- two families sharing a two-bedroomed unit.

3.10 In five schemes, there is a shared external entrance with an entry system and individual units having front doors within that complex. In the sixth, the front door of each unit opens onto the street. It was felt by some scheme workers

that having their own bathroom, kitchen and front door was an important factor in maintaining harmony among the residents.

INTERNAL LAYOUT

3.11   A key element in facilitating the success of a scheme is the internal design. In particular, it is important to consider:

- the availability of *usable* space

- creativity and flexibility in the use of space

- privacy

3.12   Pilots encountered a number of issues in relation to internal design. A key concern must be whether available space is usable and suitable for its intended occupants. In one pilot the hallway was too narrow to accommodate buggies comfortably, while in another, there was much wasted space in hallways. In both, the limited size of the communal spaces had hindered efforts to bring in external services. However, the latter scheme had been particularly innovative in using the hallway space when delivering training. Some of the problems could have been anticipated: in one scheme there was felt to be more stairs than was ideal for young mothers carrying babies. Other issues only emerged through experience: one scheme had come to realise that the internal layout of their first floor flats meant that lounges and bedrooms were overlooked by neighbours. This had become a particular concern after neighbours had been upset by several incidents and began monitoring the activities of the scheme's residents. One scheme was considering whether an extension was necessary to facilitate better use of their facilities and to enable them to run a crèche.

3.13   Despite some aspects of design being less than ideal residents in all schemes generally deemed their scheme to be suitable for raising children. The design of, and facilities at, the schemes was generally viewed as good. In one scheme there were reservations expressed at the size of rooms: they were felt to be too small for a mobile baby. There can also be equity issues raised in schemes where flats or rooms are different sizes: this was commented on by residents in one (converted) scheme. This is more likely to be a potential issue for schemes planned for converted properties because there is less flexibility over internal layout at the planning stage. An awareness of this aspect of the social dynamics of a scheme can be important when identifying properties suitable for conversion.

3.14   Internal design is not simply about physical space. The good decorative state of the schemes was particularly appreciated in the new build schemes. However, the quality of fixtures and fittings was an issue for several residents at one scheme, as well as in one of the converted properties. In particular, rough carpets were felt to be inappropriate for crawling babies. This type of issue could have been avoided relatively easily by more thought and user involvement at the design and specification stage. Indeed, it was more generally the case for the pilots that greater user involvement during the design, planning and specification stage tended to lead to more positive assessments of design by residents.

EXTERIOR ACCESS AND SECURITY

3.15   The issue of exterior access is particularly significant because it can shape the nature of relationships not only within the scheme but also with the local community. Designing the exterior access to a scheme involves reconciling the issues of security and independence:

- Should access be communal or should each resident have their own external front door?

- Should access be monitored through, for example, the use of security cameras, which may be experienced as highly intrusive?

3.16   The experiences of one pilot illustrate the tensions. The scheme did not have a communal entrance and had experienced some difficulties with local youths. This created concerns among some residents, both at the scheme and in neighbouring properties, about noise and other antisocial behaviour. The design of the scheme raised further health and safety implications for staff who were trying to deal with those problems. Security cameras had been installed to improve the ability of staff to monitor security. However, although the scheme had experienced problems, one stakeholder commented that the design was more conducive to independence than a scheme based around a shared entrance. In contrast, schemes with shared external entrances give an opportunity for internal front doors to be left open, with residents and children moving freely between each others' flats.

3.17   Ensuring security is not simply about physical design and security systems, however. It also entails all residents following agreed rules on visitors. However, the implications for other residents of violations of such rules depend on the physical design: they can be more serious and unsettling for those living in more communally accessed and structured schemes.

Sharing space

3.18   Privacy is about more than whether a scheme is inappropriately overlooked by neighbouring properties. More significant is the extent to which residents are able to live independently or are required or expected to share rooms and facilities.

3.19   The sharing of rooms or facilities can be the product of physical constraints or be an integral component of the model of support operated by a scheme. It will affect the dynamics of a scheme and needs careful handling. Key issues are:

- Is sharing managed informally or formally?

    The greater the formality – for example, the imposition of detailed rotas for use of facilities such as the washing machine – the greater the risk of residents feeling that supervision and structure is a problem and constraining their scope for independence.

- How freely can residents access communal facilities?

  Where, for example, access to the communal kitchen or washing machine is via a communal lounge, this can be problematic – especially if the communal lounge is also sometimes used for meetings or locked out of hours.

3.20　For residents of the pilot schemes sharing rooms or facilities was mostly unproblematic. Generally, for those who used it, the sharing of the communal space was seen positively: it gave valuable contact with other residents and staff, as well as opportunities for shared play with other children and an impetus for less confident mothers to socialise with their peers. It allowed scheme staff to create opportunities to encourage residents to participate.

3.21　Where the communal space included gardens, these were used with differing regularity. Access to a garden can be an asset to a scheme: in one scheme the garden included a vegetable plot, tended by staff, from which produce had been used in shared cooking sessions. Another was regularly used in summer for informal gatherings and for the children to play: this was the only scheme where all front doors opened into the shared garden space. In two schemes, the gardens were social spaces which were used primarily by smokers. This led to the less positive outcome for one resident who had felt pressured to take up smoking again in order to feel part of this regular and informal social gathering.

3.22　Residents share space with staff as well as other residents. The way in which staff use shared space can be very significant in shaping the residents' experiences of the scheme. It can influence directly the extent to which residents feel the scheme is their home. We discuss this more fully in chapter 6.

3.23　The way these design features – location, internal design, external access, and the sharing of space by residents and neighbours – are combined will shape the success of a scheme. Box 3.1 provides a portrait of one of the pilot schemes that indicates the way in which it is possible to get most of the ingredients right but find that the success of the resulting scheme is not complete.

Box 3.1 Location and design: the difficulties in getting it right

One attractive new build pilot scheme was designed as a group of two storey houses, each split into a ground floor and a first floor flat. Bathrooms contained both a bath and shower (identified through user involvement as essential for pregnant women and babies). Storage cupboards and space in hallways for buggies were included. The houses were grouped around a grassed area with pathways to the individual front doors and there was a soft-paved area with children's play equipment. Residents reported this garden space to be well used in the summer months. The shared entrance into the scheme was overlooked by the staff office. A large, bright playroom was equipped with toys and was large enough to enable meetings or training sessions to be held there. The entrance to the playroom was not overlooked by staff. No CCTV was installed here and staffing was not 24 hour. Although there were some concerns voiced about the quality of the build, the design was generally seen as very good.

However, the location of the scheme was felt by residents to be inappropriate, with concerns about safety, acceptance by the local community and isolation. Additionally, some (disputed) complaints about the residents' behaviour had been received from people in an adjoining new build, privately owned estate.

Location and design: Good practice points

- Scheme location is vital, particularly in relation to physical safety, acceptability of the neighbourhood and accessibility. Accessibility needs to be considered in terms of both facilities and the location of the social networks of likely service users: from where are the users likely to originate? Location is crucial in making schemes a reasonable and desirable option for residents and thus avoiding vacancies or properties being in low demand. There is little point developing a well-designed scheme in an area in which no one wants to live.

- Focus on usable space. In particular, make sure that communal space is large enough to allow group meetings and safe play for children, but sufficiently private to allow it to feel personal and homely.

- Models of support need to be considered at the design stage. Scheme design needs to strike the balance between independence and supervision, and between the fostering of independence and the encouragement of peer support, with great care.

- Security is an important issue, but monitoring should not be intrusive. Design a scheme in such a way as to facilitate non-intrusive informal contact, eg office located next to communal area or shared entrance.

- Attention to small details is important to ensure that spaces, fixtures and fittings are child-friendly and accessible to pregnant women.

- User involvement in developing the design and specification is recommended.

CHAPTER 4

Accessing schemes, assessing applicants

Key lessons

- It is vital to ensure that the application process is functioning well. Central to a well functioning process is managing and clarifying expectations: residents must be very clear about the need to engage with the model of support being operated, including the keyworking process. It can also involve addressing broader policy issues such as trying to ensure that local housing allocations policy does not produce an imbalance of needs among residents.

- Schemes can benefit from a clear vision of the resident profile that will mesh with the particular model of support they are proposing. This can assist in managing the flow of referrals to the scheme. This can, in turn, go some way to avoiding the problems that can develop if residents have a higher average level of need than that for which the model of support was intended.

- Keeping allocations policies under review can play a role in addressing negative incidents during scheme operation. At two schemes, the bullying of one resident by another was partly attributed to the mix of residents at the time: not only had evictions occurred as a result of the bullying but allocations policies had been reviewed as a result.

- Initial needs assessments may not always highlight the full extent of the residents' need. Monitoring systems that rely only on assessments at the point of entry to the scheme, as can be the case under *Supporting People*, may therefore understate need. Formal monitoring should be complemented by a more qualitative understanding of residents' needs. Ongoing keyworking processes need to recognise and reflect the gradual nature of disclosure.

Allocations policy and the applications process

4.1 In contexts where there is excess demand for services from those with high levels of need it is necessary to balance the competing imperatives to:

- keep a balance of higher and lower need residents within the scheme in order to create a sustainable community

- fill vacancies as soon as they arise in order to minimize vacancies and rent loss.

4.2 Where higher need applicants form an increasing proportion of referrals – because, for example, the source of referrals changes over time – there may be a need to review the allocations policy and, ultimately, the sustainability of the model of support being operated. A scheme where most residents have high levels of need is likely, for example, to require additional staffing. It may also, depending on how it is managed, not represent an environment that is particularly conducive to parenting. Even without a change in the composition of referrals it is good practice to keep allocations policy and the application process under review. Four of the six pilot schemes had revised lettings policies and procedures in light of experience. In one instance, new processes had been imposed by a change in local authority policy, resulting in applicants needing to have an additional interview at the application stage.

4.3 It is vital to ensure that during the application process expectations are managed and responsibilities on both sides clarified. On the basis of their experiences, the pilots made changes to increase clarity including:

- improving communication with potential residents during the application process.

- all potential residents being interviewed at their current place of residence as part of their application process, with their current partners included in the process and other agencies referred to for information (where appropriate and with permission).

- the ethos of the scheme being pointedly discussed with applicants prior to acceptance.

- revising the way in which the keyworking system was explained.

The aim was to ensure that applicants thought about the implications of being in a supported scheme – and the need to engage with the accompanying keyworking – before making the choice to move in.

Support needs, assessment and monitoring

4.4 All schemes undertook a needs assessment on entry to the scheme, but they varied in the formality of this process and the extent to which they attempted to gather information prior to an applicant moving into the scheme. This was not

always straightforward: the manager of one scheme noted that residents could arrive with the *'same issues but very different needs'*. Among the residents interviewed for the evaluation the most frequently mentioned support needs, at the time of arrival at the scheme, were budgeting and help with accessing grants and benefits (Table 4.1). General living skills and emotional support were also high on the list. Yet, nearly half the young women interviewed described themselves as having low support needs at the time of arrival.

Table 4.1 Self identified support need on arrival at the project	
Support need	**Number**
Budgeting	9
Accessing grants and benefits	7
Encouragement/emotional support	6
General living skills eg cooking, literacy	6
Parenting skills	5
Information or advice in other areas	5
Support with baby's illness	5
Finding courses	4
Making contact with other residents	4
Transfer of utilities etc	3
Mediating relationships	3
Diagnosed mental health issues	2
Low support needs from outset	13

4.5   Formal monitoring of need and outcome is considered to be good practice and was routine among the pilots. However, it is a complex process. Establishing systems that can satisfactorily capture both the multidimensional nature of residents' need and the subtle qualitative changes in their capabilities and capacities is a challenge. It is also essential to be sensitised to the fact that apparent initial compliance on the part of a resident may mask disclosure of real needs and uncertainties about future goals:

> '[With] *your initial* [monitoring form] *… sometimes you find with the young girls, they give you answers that they think you want to hear. Whereas by the time you've got to know them a little bit better you know you can perhaps get down to basics and say 'Well do you want to get back into education?'* [and they'll say] *'Well no actually really I don't, but I thought I need to … I want to have my baby first and then I want to look at that.'*

4.6   Residents' support needs are often higher than those established at the outset of the tenancy. At least three reasons can be identified for this:

- Some needs cannot be articulated until a trusting relationship has been established and so they will not be identified at the time of arrival at the scheme

- Residents can need some time to reflect on past events and develop greater understanding of their situation

  As one worker commented: 'If you're actually developing a support plan and what have you, that also depends on the insight that the client has into their problems.'

- Gaps in communication

  For example, the full care history of a resident not coming to light because information was not passed from agencies in different local authority areas.

4.7 There is further complexity when perceptions of need differ: whose perception is most accurate? This has implications for how and when support is offered, and whether the support is welcomed. As one worker summarized: *'I think one of the greatest stumbling blocks is this…dilemma between **offering** support, **wanting** support and **needing** support.'*

4.8 A resident's need for support is rarely constant, nor can it be expected to gradually but progressively decrease. Peaks and troughs across time are to be expected and planned for. Generally, needs were high at first – especially around the time of the birth – before settling down while at the scheme. The need for support then increased again when moving into supported move-on accommodation (if used) and peaked again at the time of the final move into an independent tenancy. Consequently the way support services are provided must be flexible.

4.9 For these reasons, formal monitoring is no substitute for getting to know the young people over time in order to build up a realistic picture of their capacities and aspirations. As one worker noted:

  'The key thing is to listen every single day. If somebody knocks on that door, you have to put your pen down and listen to what they've got to say, because they could go away and not tell you about it and it could be something really important'.

Access, application and assessment: Good practice points

● Good communication is vital during the access and application process. This has a number of aspects. Schemes should:

  – keep potential residents informed about how their application is progressing.

  – prepare new residents for their move into the scheme by providing advice and information about the moving process.

  – Involve key people in the discussion about moving into the scheme and assessment of need (family, partners, professionals as appropriate).

  – be clear to prospective residents regarding what is to be expected of living in the scheme (e.g. expectations about involvement in keyworking sessions/group living/length of stay) so that the young parent is making an informed choice about entry.

● The application process itself should be as streamlined as possible. It may be upsetting for applicants to have to recount their story. This will be compounded if they are required to have two or more interviews with different agencies – for example the referring agency and the scheme – as part of the application process. Within the confines of relevant statutory responsibilities and data protection requirements, working to remove all unnecessary duplication is highly desirable.

● An initial needs assessment is likely to reveal only a partial picture of a resident's support needs. Ongoing processes need to be attuned to the gradual disclosure of needs. In this respect informal processes are likely to be as important as, if not more important than, formal monitoring systems.

CHAPTER 5

Providing support

Key lessons

EXTERNAL SUPPORT

- The women's relationships and support networks *outside* the scheme were of great significance to them, but tended to be downplayed by scheme staff.

- It was unusual for schemes to involve the fathers of the babies or other significant family members in scheme activities. This seems to have been a missed opportunity. It must, however, be recognised that the fathers' presence in the schemes may not be unproblematic, depending on the physical design of the scheme and the composition of the resident group – some young women may find the presence of the other residents' partners in their shared home uncomfortable. This is a tension that needs to be managed with care and suggests the need for closely integrated thinking about scheme objectives, models of support and physical design at the planning stage.

- Young women often turned to their families in times of greatest need, for instance when ill in pregnancy. Schemes need to be flexible enough to accommodate absences which sometimes lasted several weeks: the pilots were able to, and this was valued by the mothers. Yet, the schemes were also seen as safe havens from dysfunctional families. Better relationships with parents and siblings often evolved once the young woman was no longer living at home. Again, this was valued highly.

THE RESIDENTS' SUPPORT NEEDS

- Many respondents felt, even when they were new to the scheme, that they did not need the level of support offered and had often agreed to accept their tenancy there because the alternatives were less attractive or more restrictive. This raises the question of whether resources were being under-used, or whether the young women were able to assess accurately their needs for support, or whether the pressure to fill vacancies was contributing to lettings to women who could have been more appropriately supported through other means, such as schemes offering a lower level of support or independent tenancies with floating support. In our second round of interviews there was evidence that several residents' views had changed: whereas initially they did not feel they needed support, they had come to recognise that there was support that was beneficial, and were feeling that the help they received from the scheme had value and made a difference to them.

THE MODEL OF SUPPORT

● The way that support is offered appears to be a key factor in determining whether it was taken up and seen as useful by the young women. Two factors of particular significance are the extent to which support is perceived as intrusive and the role of informal support. The dominant practice is to structure support around keyworking, but the degree to which keyworking processes are formally structured can vary and sensitivity to the appropriate tone for such meetings can be important for maximising participation. It may be necessary to develop more structured mechanisms to ensure that residents participate in keyworking because some will avoid it in order to avoid facing difficult issues.

● During the period of the evaluation, staff to resident ratios at the schemes changed, tending to increase as the demands on staff and the requirements for running an effective service became clearer. One scheme recognised the need for 24-hour staffing, while others were also reviewing staffing by the end of the research project. Elsewhere it was suggested, including by local stakeholders, that a higher staff to resident ratio was likely to improve the scheme's success. One alternative to 24-hour staffing suggested was multi-agency staffing which would provide a wider range of appropriate support provision during working hours and help residents' needs to be better met.

● Reflecting upon and keeping the model of support under review is important in ensuring effective delivery of services. This may require flexibility in the level and use of resources. For example, one scheme was set up with all the members of the day staff involved in the full range of tasks. It quickly became evident that an alternative model would work better: dedicated keyworkers were necessary to manage workload more effectively and ensure continuity for residents.

● The nature of the relationships between residents and members of staff with different roles can differ subtly. One scheme described how the lack of management or keyworking responsibilities meant that the night staff were generally perceived as 'more friendly'. The relationship which residents had with night staff was more informal.

● There needs to be openness about how information will be shared and used within the scheme, in order to maintain trusting relationships between all residents and staff.

● The *complexity* of living in a group (eg issues of rivalry, competition etc), as well as the *value* (companionship, peer group learning, developing friendships which may continue after leaving the project), needs to be recognised.

The model of support

5.1   There are many dimensions across which the model of support embedded in a supported housing scheme for teenage mothers can vary. A checklist of the key questions that need to be considered is set out in Box 5.1. Implicit in these questions are a number of potential tensions: for example, between fostering independence and encouraging peer support. Every scheme needs to resolve these tensions in practice, but they may not always do so consciously. Yet, the likelihood of moving rapidly to a scheme that is able to operate effectively is enhanced by developing a coherent view, during the planning stage, of how the scheme will address these topics.

5.2   The model of support operated by the pilot schemes shared core features:

●   Similar underlying objectives, which one staff member summarized as: *'providing information, removing barriers and motivating residents to do things'*.

●   A structure based around keyworking, although schemes evolved different ways of working outside of the formal keyworking session.

●   They focused predominantly on young women as individuals, subordinating the parenting role and focusing on the need to develop autonomy and independence and engage with education or training

●   While developing parenting skills was widely acknowledged as desirable, there was little systematic focus on parenting skills or the development of the young women's relationships with the father of the child as a 'parenting couple'. A focus on the importance of family life was noticeably absent.

5.3   However, while core features may be shared, schemes can situate themselves differently in relation to the delivery of services:

●   They can rely heavily on networking with other community resources and signposting the young people to them, rather than providing these services in-house. One pilot respondent neatly encapsulated this approach: *'Staff don't do it, we get the experts to do that – we feel we're the **access** experts'.*

●   Schemes can make great efforts to tailor support to the young people's needs, by either providing services themselves or encouraging service providers to come on-site to work with the residents' groups.

Box 5.1 Developing a model of support

Key questions that should be answered when developing a model of support include:

- How is independence to be understood? Is it primarily a question of the skills to live independently or does it include changing aspirations or shaping life chances through encouraging participation in education or training? If the latter, at what stage of motherhood is this appropriate?

- When is the most appropriate time to start building a relationship with the young woman – early in pregnancy or after the birth?

- Where is the focus of the scheme to be – the mother, the child, or, where relevant, the 'parenting couple'?

- Where should the balance be struck between support and autonomy?

- To what extent should a scheme aim to provide support in-house or rely on other agencies?

- How should the balance be struck between individual and group support?

- How should formal and informal support interact and combine?

- What is the role of the peer group in providing support?

- Should the potential contribution of partners and other family members be recognised and integrated into thinking about the model of support offered?

- What are the implications of the preferred model of support for the physical design of the scheme? If there is not complete freedom in determining the physical design, what implications does that have for the proposed model of support? Are the two compatible?

THE PHILOSOPHY OF SUPPORT

5.4   What is the scheme's underlying understanding of why support is being provided? Does it flow from a perception that users are 'deficient' in some way – that there is something 'wrong' that needs to be corrected or something missing that needs to be added? Or does it flow from a more positive orientation that seeks to build upon users' capabilities and resources and overcome barriers that prevent them from achieving their potential? Differences at this fundamental level can shape the whole ethos of a scheme.

SUPPORT VERSUS AUTONOMY

5.5   All schemes must strike the difficult balance between providing support and encouraging autonomy. This balance can be struck in very different places. This manifests itself both in terms of what the young women can expect by way of 'hands on' formal and informal support during their stay in the scheme and the way in which the scheme approaches the issue of moving on:

- For example, it is possible to take a firm line that staff should never take responsibility for childcare or to take the view that it is vital to demonstrate flexibility, with staff then happy to look after a crying baby for a while to let the mother have a bath or pop down the road to the corner shop.

- It is possible to take the view that a fixed period – such as 12 months – is sufficient to 'mature' the young women to the point where she is able to leave, and that a longer stay would be seen as a backwards step potentially

leading to dependency. This approach carries implications for the speed at which residents need to move toward readiness to move-on – they are expected to conform to an external timetable. In contrast, schemes can shape the timescale for moving on around the young person's own pace of development and their feeling of readiness to make the transition. The former approach may be more appropriate where there is a belief that the key to living independently is acquiring skills. However, where there are other issues – such as emotional health barriers – to be addressed before it is possible to consider independent living it may not be possible to work to a strict timetable. Similarly, the impact of changing life roles – to motherhood – upon a young woman's capacity to move to independent living quickly can vary and cannot necessarily be predicted.

5.6   In practice the timing of departure from a scheme is often contingent upon factors other than the young parent's readiness, such as local housing supply.

5.7   Beyond the broad orientation of different schemes it is necessary to recognise that different residents are starting from different positions and are likely to move toward independence at different speeds. One resident of a pilot scheme commented that living in a supported housing environment was not helping her to budget because everything here was covered by the rent and service charges, *'not like outside'*. Several complained that staff did too much for them. The implication of these comments seems clear: the residents viewed themselves as ready and able to act more autonomously. While it is necessary for staff to treat such views critically, it is vitally important that they identify and accept when a woman is ready to move to the next stage.

How to offer support

5.8   The way support is provided is crucial to the way it is received by residents. At the broadest level this relates to important differences in the overall ethos of schemes:

- Regular contact with residents can be maintained through internal management practices, such as reminding residents individually of meetings, checking in with residents first thing in the morning, being a central collection point for incoming mail and following up ongoing issues with residents. This approach was operated by one of the pilot schemes and was generally found to be intrusive. One ex-resident stated of her scheme: *'they were in your business too much'.* Nonetheless, the formal contact of keyworking in this type of scheme was viewed as useful.

- Alternatively a more hands-off reactive approach can be adopted, relying on an 'open door' policy and speaking to residents informally, for instance, as they passed by the office. Residents at a pilot scheme adopting this approach spoke of *'having'* to do more themselves.

5.9   It is possible to identify three broad mechanisms for providing support:

- formal keyworking sessions

- formal group sessions on- and off-site (such as workshops)

- more opportunistic, informal methods (eg just dropping into someone's flat to say hello)

5.10 Significantly, the latter can be unexpectedly successful. As one pilot worker commented:

> *'I do think as an organisation there ought to be a way of logging … those cups of tea or those 'Hiyas, are you OK?' … There's a lot of formal support aims but I think that there's a lot of informal stuff that happens that might have an impact.'* (eg by noticing and valuing young people who have not been noticed or valued in the past)

5.11 The provision of informal, opportunistic support can be facilitated by the design of the scheme. Examples include:

- locating a comfortable room next to the office where people could linger and chat

- the location of the washing machine and ironing board close to the office, so that women could leave their flats ostensibly to do their washing and then talk over a problem that had been troubling them

- provision of group sessions (eg on sexual health) in a playroom which the mother might happen to be using for another purpose – not having had the confidence to 'book up' for a session.

FORMAL KEYWORKING SESSIONS

5.12 The keyworking system revolves around an initial assessment of need and the formulation of an action plan. Initially keyworking practices focus on more immediate short term need, but the plan should be kept under regular review: as short term goals are achieved emphasis can shift towards the longer term.

5.13 Keyworking is appreciated by residents as a time to voice areas of difficulty; to *'have a chat'* about how residents were faring. Keyworkers are seen as particularly good at confidence and self esteem building. But these are activities that require workers to have time to devote their attention to individuals: residents can tell when resources are stretched and workers are under time pressure.

5.14 While the dominant practice is to structure support around keyworking, the degree of formality with which keyworking processes are structured can vary. This can be a significant issue for those young women who had been through the care system: formal meetings can feel like previous meetings with social workers that had felt impersonal or disempowering. Some of the approaches adopted by the pilots are illustrated in Box 5.2.

5.15   Attendance at keyworking sessions is expected, but not automatic. Some residents forget to attend. Others resist or avoid attending. This may be a result of a desire to avoid difficult issues that had to be confronted (eg the need to pay fines imposed by the scheme). One young woman interviewed during the research did not like keyworking sessions, but recognised that it motivated her to do things *'like go to the bank'*. Similarly, some young women who do not necessarily see the value of keyworking during their time at the scheme can become more positive about the support they had received once they move on and gain a different perspective on what the scheme was trying to do. Schemes may have to put in place mechanisms – such as making attending a certain proportion a condition of the tenancy – to ensure regular attendance at keyworking sessions.

FORMAL GROUP LEARNING SESSIONS

5.16   It is typically necessary to supplement day to day support with externally provided training or information sessions, and structured group learning or training sessions are typically held at the scheme itself. Attendance can be variable and staff may need to be active in encouraging participation. As one worker commented: *'We have to be as creative as possible … we have to not nag people but we have to … make people think that it's their idea, involve them in planning and feedback.'* One approach used by a pilot to encouraging attendance was to offer a certificate for attendance.

5.17   It is vital to keep the provision of training courses for residents under review to ensure they are effective. For example, in two pilots a conscious decision was taken to remove in-house sessions so that residents needed to access courses run by external agencies on the external agencies' premises. In one case this was a result of comments from residents, while in the other it was because of declining enthusiasm for in-house sessions.

Types of support provided by the scheme

5.18   The support that schemes can provide for their residents can address a wide range of issues. It typically falls under the following broad headings:

- General life skills

- Education and training

- Support with parenting

- Emotional support

> **Box 5.2** Exploring approaches to keyworking
>
> The way keyworking meetings are structured is important in communicating and establishing their relevance to the young women. Pilots experimented with the formality of the process:
>
> - One scheme had tackled the problem of resistance to accepting help by re-naming keyworking sessions 'chat time' and leaving it up to the young women to schedule when, where and if the session took place. This scheme had a strong ethos of engaging *informally* with the residents as a group through social activities and communal participation both in residents' meetings and, at first, in the production of a magazine.
>
> - Another scheme had discussed the issue of keyworking at a residents' meeting and had renamed the service 'One to One' at the residents' suggestion – implying a less authoritarian structure to the meeting, despite the fact that attendance was a non-negotiable part of the tenancy agreement.
>
> - A third scheme moved away from a formal keyworking structure (timed, regular appointments) to a more informal approach (keyworking as and when), but this was not liked by residents. As a consequence the scheme moved back to a (more popular) formal approach.

GENERAL LIFE SKILLS

5.19   Young people arrive at schemes with a different range and level of life skills, but the skills with which some need support include:

- Financial

    This includes developing budgeting skills, which is a topic that has to be handled sensitively and non-judgementally. It can also include help with transferring bills or helping residents access grants and benefits. This help is generally well received, although a minority of residents can feel that help with budgeting does not improve significantly their ability to manage their very limited incomes.

- Liaison with official agencies

    While residents are encouraged to make contact themselves, they may initially need to learn through watching and listening to a staff member making contact on their behalf.

- Finding information

    Scheme staff can be a source of information about college courses, given the context in which some residents may not be motivated to seek it further afield. As one resident commented: 'I don't think I'd have bothered if I didn't live here.' *Staff can be a useful source of information on other topics, such as benefits or issues around pregnancy. One reason they are valued in this respect is as a source of* reliable *information.*

- Literacy

    Literacy was a problem for a minority of residents in the pilot schemes. They all required the support of staff and one noted that without their help she 'wouldn't know where to start'.

5.20   General living skills such as cooking were actively sought by very few residents of the pilot schemes: most were happy with their ability to cook, clean and generally run the home. Group cooking sessions can have a mixed reception and be a source of disagreement over participation.

EDUCATION AND TRAINING

5.21   All the ADP pilot schemes placed emphasis upon enabling residents towards participation in education, training and/or employment. But it is essential to do so at a pace that is appropriate for young women who may have had difficult previous experiences of formal education and may have disengaged completely from education: '…*they've got to want to do it, you can't push them into something they don't want to do.*' To raise the issue of education too soon could be to present the resident with what appears an insuperable barrier. Schemes need an approach that embodies a complex understanding of the psychological hurdles that may need to be overcome before formal learning could recommence: there may be a range of other support – such as building self-confidence or self-esteem – that residents need before they can contemplate returning to learning. It may be necessary to get young women back into *thinking* about learning as much as learning itself – to counter the frame of mind which says *'I don't need to do anything else now because I've had this bab*y'.

5.22   One way of doing this is to introduce the idea of learning slowly through informal courses on topics such as baby massage or baby first aid and hands-on sessions around activities such as baby care, beauty or cooking. The aim is to build confidence and encourage further participation in skills-based learning through demonstrating its relevance and value. The next step toward formal education might then be an on-site workshop series that entail coming for sessions over an extended period such as eight weeks, or enrolling for something that doesn't seem quite like 'education' such as the Prince's Trust. Completing these types of activities will not only indicate that residents can manage their time and establish a routine, but also give them a sense of having achieved something.

5.23   One scheme included a study in which the residents could access computer facilities to assist in searching for courses or preparing paperwork.

5.24   When a resident is ready to return to education or training then provision of good quality affordable childcare is crucial in facilitating this move, but this is an area in which considerable difficulties can be encountered.[5]

---

5   Our evaluation was largely conducted before the *Care to Learn* scheme for childcare support for under 19s undertaking any publicly funded learning came into operation. Our second round of interviews did, however, pick up on the availability of this funding. The Care to Learn scheme may well have a positive impact upon participation, although, as with the pilot schemes, the issue of the relative location of provision needs to be borne in mind: whether childcare is located near a college or the scheme, or not conveniently situated for either, for example, will affect whether provision is available in practice to residents of schemes like the pilots.

SUPPORT WITH PARENTING

5.25   Support with parenting is not necessarily a major ongoing component of the work of schemes for teenage mothers. A combination of a lack of acknowledged need and support from other sources is significant here. Most residents of the pilot schemes felt confident in their parenting skills, although some were receiving considerable support from their own parents. Parents were also seen as key in supporting some mothers immediately after the baby had been born. Several mothers had gone to stay with parents after the birth and some had had parents staying with them at the scheme for a short while after leaving hospital. Yet, where babies had been unwell the support of the staff was generally appreciated.

5.26   The safety of the teenage parents' children is paramount and robust child protection procedures need to be in place. Child protection-related intervention is always very sensitive, but in the context of supported housing schemes has to be handled with particular care. Intervention can be seen by residents as in conflict with, or undermining of, the longer term process of trust building, support and advocacy. Such intervention with one young parent has the potential to undermine relationships between staff and other residents.

EMOTIONAL SUPPORT

5.27   Providing emotional support is complex: some staff appear to have a particularly good record. The ability to relate flexibly but reliably – not pushing people too hard and following things through consistently – is particularly important.

5.28   Key aspects of emotional support provided by pilot schemes include:

- Being positive with residents

  All pilot schemes felt this was extremely important. One worker summarized what works well as: 'Respect. Empowerment. Motivation. Don't tell them how bad they are and how bad they did it. Tell them how good they are, what they can achieve, what they have achieved'.

- Allowing residents the space to disclose and discuss problems on their own terms and at their own pace.

- Mediating difficult relationships with parents or partners

- Providing support at night

  This was particularly significant in one scheme. One mother commented: 'I like the idea of the support here, … because it helps you with that transition to living on your own. Because I think it would have come as a big shock if I'd have just been thrown in at the deep end. So I like that. And I like the fact that there is always somebody here. So at three o'clock in the morning, if I can't sleep, and I want to come down and have a brew and it's nice to have somebody there.'

5.29   Treating information sensitively is a vital part of the support relationship. This is particularly significant in relation to emotional support: residents may disclose very personal information and information relating issues or incidents that continue to cause distress. This information is offered on the basis of trust and staff must be sure to handle this information discreetly and, unless there are overriding reasons to the contrary, confidentially. Failure to do so can undermine trust and reduce the effectiveness of the support relationship.

Support from other sources

5.30   Although scheme staff provide a variety of support, this needs to be embedded in an understanding of, and be complementary to, residents' other sources of support. The women's contact with their own networks is crucial, particularly in supporting parenting and providing the emotional support which might not be forthcoming in the schemes. To summarize the support received from other sources:

- *Fathers of the children.* The involvement of fathers in the lives of their new babies and children is crucially important for many mothers, but living at a supported housing scheme could make this difficult because of limitations on contact. It is discussed below.

- *Parents.* Parents can be a significant source of support for most residents, particularly as in many cases the relationship between the resident and their parents improves once they leave home. However, some residents will have an ongoing problematic relationship, or no contact, with parents.

- *Parents of partners/Grandparents.* The parents of partners or grandparents of some mothers housed in the pilot schemes were supportive and provided help. However, support from the father's family may not be available, especially in cases where they do not know about the baby: the fathers of several babies in this study had not made their families aware of the pregnancy, even though they had some contact with their children.

- *Other family members.* Aunts and uncles, cousins and siblings can also be called on for support. Types of support received by residents of the pilots included help with shopping, meals, babysitting, general advice and emotional support.

- *Other external support.* Friends are a source of support for many women, especially during the daytime. Other sources of support used by residents of pilot schemes included Connexions and Women's Aid. Residents of pilots located in one of the 35 local authorities running Sure Start Plus pilots were also able to draw on support from that source.

Peer support

5.31   A key benefit of being in a supported housing scheme is companionship – that of staff, other residents, or both. Almost all residents see having someone around to help out or advise when they had a problem, or even when they just

wanted to talk, as valuable. The value of companionship extended to their children having other babies to play with. This is perhaps inevitably more of an issue for those not in education or training than those who are away from the project regularly.

5.32   Schemes can also assist residents in learning to mix better with people. As one scheme resident said, being there made her '*more tolerant, accepting of others*'. Clearly the physical design of the scheme can influence the extent to which residents mix. Adequate and appropriate communal space is particularly important. The pilot schemes where this feature was remarked upon most frequently were schemes of similar design: a shared access, communal space and each flat having its own front door. Both had experienced, at times, some difficulties between residents but staff had taken a low key but proactive approach to mediation.

5.33   Developing the capacity to offer and profit from peer support was a goal of all the ADP pilots. It is one of the advantages that accommodation-based projects are seen as having over floating support schemes. Peer support can be encouraged through activities such as cooking meals together, social occasions and joint learning and discussion groups on-site. The fostering of peer support needs to be integrated into the overall model of support. For example, how does the encouragement of peer support mesh with 24-hour staff cover on-site? Could certain models of 24-hour staffing actually compromise the young people's motivation to look to each other for support, thereby undermining the development of resourcefulness so necessary when professional support is withdrawn?

5.34   Group living can have negative as well as positive aspects. Social dynamics can be complicated: tensions and problems can arise. Over the course of the evaluation the reports of tensions reduced and this was almost wholly connected with residents having learned to deal with the problems, but also in some part because the responsibilities of motherhood had given the young women a different perspective: '*[Being here] has improved my attitude and everything. […] I used to have a really bad attitude problem. Anybody who spoke to me, I'd slap them, or anything, shout. […] I had to calm down, because I had a [baby]*'. Staff need to be aware of the dynamics of group living and act not only to diffuse tensions but also to facilitate this learning process where possible.

Working with fathers

5.35   An issue for all schemes working with young mothers is how actively they are prepared to work with fathers. Work with fathers can be facilitated or hindered by the physical design of a scheme, and hence it is important to be clear on this issue at the planning stage. Working with fathers can also be in tension with other aspects of the model of support proposed.

5.36   There is a continuum of engagement with fathers running from a position of no active engagement – which can be construed as discouragement by residents – through minimal engagement – such as encouraging fathers to attend parenting workshops – through to seeing it as part of the scheme's remit to work with

both parents where possible. One ADP pilot scheme adopted this latter approach and at the time of the interviews the scheme had one young couple resident and another two fathers actively involved in their child's care. This was made possible by the self-contained design of the living space.

5.37 More typically overnight stays are controlled and limited. There was a feeling that fathers were expected to keep a low profile. There is a need to recognise the difficulty of having men in communal living areas, particularly when the scheme might also be housing women who don't want men around. The rules about visiting imposed by schemes – partly driven by the benefit rules – can be a key issue for scheme residents. The rules can create tensions in the relationship and lead to partners becoming upset when they have to leave their baby. However, the rules are not wholly negative: being in a scheme which had rules about visiting can help young women to manage their relationships with babies' fathers, where they did not want them *there all the time*.

5.38 There can be a tension between a model of support aimed at maximising the benefits of building up young women's self esteem through group living and peer support and encouraging active participation by men in their lives or their child's care. The issue was explained by one scheme:

> *'It's important I think that we do work with partners …* [but] *our remit is to work with young women … to provide resettlement and training … it's about being valued as a woman for just a small amount of time … to build up basic confidence and self-esteem … because they're going to be out there a lot longer than they're in here … Harsh as it may seem in some cases, but 5 years down the line the baby's father might not even be in the picture. So working on* [the women] *and working on their self esteem and their confidence is what we do, or try to do.'*

The participation of families

5.39 Most schemes have constraints on usable space. This imposes limits on activities that involve those beyond the residents, babies, and staff. Consequently there may be few perceived opportunities for extended family to become involved in life at the schemes. Where families are invited it is, for example, to barbeques or table top sales. However, space constraints may mean residents are forced to choose between inviting partners or other family members to events. The size of individual flats, coupled with rules about numbers of visitors, may prevent residents from holding dinner parties or other family get-togethers. While physical design may mean that there is no way to avoid these issues, staff needed to be alert to them and be able to deal with any friction they may cause.

Providing support: Good practice points

THE NEED FOR CLARITY

● It is vital to be clear from the outset regarding the aims and objectives of the scheme and how these translate into a model of support that builds from a positive empowering philosophy. There can be tensions involved in providing support – such as between building independence, providing round the clock support and fostering peer support – that need to be recognised and managed consciously.

SUPPORT WITH RETURNING TO EDUCATION

● It is important to find creative ways back into education for young people whose educational experience and aspirations may have been disrupted. It is important to move at the young person's pace. It may be necessary to embed the idea that learning has relevance and value through informal activities and courses before introducing the possibility of a return to formal education. A return to any form of learning which includes an acknowledgement of participation (eg a certificate) may be a stepping stone to further achievement.

ENCOURAGING INFORMAL NETWORKS OF SUPPORT

● Young women are clear about the importance of informal support networks of friends and family, both in sustaining them during their stay in the supported housing project and in providing a community to return to when they move on. Staff need to recognise and support these networks (eg through informal participation in the scheme's activities) in order to build on women's strengths in preparation for their exit.

KEYWORKING AND INFORMAL SUPPORT

- There may be a gap between *providing* and *accepting* support. Innovative approaches are needed which combine clear expectations of participation written into tenancy agreements and negotiation with individuals and the resident group. In particular, there is a clear need to negotiate with residents the boundaries of confidentiality with regard to information sharing between staff in the schemes.

- All support mechanisms should pay attention to how intrusive they are perceived to be.

- Good keyworking practice is described as comprising regular sessions that are enforced as an expected part of the tenancy, while the content needs to be explicitly negotiated with the tenant and seen as specific and relevant. The degree of structure and formality of the sessions themselves need to be sensitive to the preferences, needs and experiences of the residents.

- Keyworking sessions alone are unlikely to address all personal and emotional issues. Formal sessions need to be seen as part of a structure of support that also includes informal contact on an open-door basis which responds to need as it arises. Such informal support is seen as being key to developing supportive, trusting relationships but may be difficult to quantify and may be overlooked in monitoring of the project's work.

- Workers need to be constantly aware of where they are striking the balance between support and independence. Residents move toward independence at their own rate, relative to their needs: workers must be able and willing to facilitate their move forward.

GROUP LIVING

- Workers need training that helps them to understand and contain the potentially volatile group dynamic within schemes in order to avoid the escalation of difficult situations.

WORKING WITH FATHERS

- Projects need to be clear about their remit to work with fathers and partners and to develop explicit strategies to pursue this aim where a more inclusive approach to working with men is desired.

- The physical layout of projects can either facilitate or impede the inclusion of men. Where communal space is integral to the design of the scheme, the presence of men can be perceived as a threat, particularly in the evening. Self-contained flats with own kitchen and bathroom are more likely to encourage men's participation in the care of their child and the development of shared parenting.

CHAPTER 6
Feeling settled

Key lesson

- A sense of home and feeling settled is important for young women in early parenthood, but many residents did not feel 'at home' in the ADP pilot schemes. They felt more like they were 'looking after' accommodation that remained the property of others. Scheme rules, and the way staff used communal space and facilities, can influence this sense of ownership.

A sense of home

6.1 Fundamental to supported housing of the type provided by the ADP pilots is the idea that living there is a stepping stone to independent living. The residents typically hold assured shorthold tenancies and recognise that their stay is temporary. Most residents' have their sights firmly set on moving on.

6.2 Yet early parenthood is a period when the need to feel safe and settled is important. There are a number of reasons why residents might not feel 'at home' in a supported housing scheme. These feelings arise from a combination of sources:

- The knowledge that they needed to move on

- Rules about decorating and making changes to their flats/rooms

- More general rules in operation

- The insensitive use of communal space and facilities by staff

- The combination of the office base of the scheme workers with the residents' home

6.3 While the first – and to some extent the second – of these factors may be unavoidable, schemes need to think carefully about how they treat the others: the operation of the scheme can shape the degree to which residents feel settled. The alternative is to encounter residents who characterise their situation thus: *'you … end up feeling a bit kind of like stuck in a hotel room. Like being in a chalet on holiday.'*

6.4 The consequences of residents not feeling at home can be that:

- Many young women spending very little time at the scheme during the day, preferring to visit friends and family than stay in their rooms.

- Residents who stay in the scheme not feeling at ease, feeling bored and depressed.

These consequences have the potential to undermine scheme aims such as increasing self-confidence and social engagement and reduce the scope for fostering peer support.

Staff use of space and facilities

6.5 Care in both the planning and operational procedures associated with staff use of space and facilities is vital. There is a range of ways in which the presence of staff can inhibit residents feeling at home:

- Residents may see it as hard to feel at home when the scheme is also an office base for scheme workers – so it is important to consider the balance and design of space devoted to each function.

- The sheer number of staff on-site may make it difficult to feel at home.

- The way in which workers use the sitting room or kitchen may give the residents the impression that they are provided primarily for the benefit of staff.

- Staff using communal facilities – such as the washing machine – provided for the residents can feel like an intrusion and undermine the sense that it is the residents' home.

- Staff making and enforcing rules on issues such as cleanliness can feel alienating.

- Staff staying at the scheme after hours can be resented – eg a scheme worker, waiting for a lift, might sit and watch TV in the sitting room and this can feel like an infringement.

6.6 A consequence of staff acting in one or more of these ways can be that the residents perceive they are required to fit around the staff. It is not then surprising that they do not feel at home.

Rules and regulations

6.7 Schemes need to frame their rules and regulations very carefully. Too many rules and regulations are generally resented. Practices that are perceived to be unnecessarily intrusive can lead to residents acting to circumvent them and this can undermine the scheme's objectives. Whether residents find a particular set of rules oppressive will depend on their expectations and previous experiences

– some may, for example, find even a relatively rule-bound regime less arduous than that operated by their parents.

6.8   Some rules – such as using the laundry room according to a rota – were common and can contribute positively to group living. But they have to build in a degree of flexibility. In one pilot scheme the use of the laundry room was not only severely restricted it was also non-transferable between residents. This was a particular difficulty if your baby had been unexpectedly ill or you'd missed your turn.

6.9   While some practices are no doubt underpinned by good intentions and aimed at supporting the residents, this may not stop them appearing as intrusive surveillance to the residents. Schemes need to question themselves and be sure why they engage in such practices. Examples of activities that some residents do not receive positively include:

- Staff monitored letters that arrive

  This can create the suspicion that they are invading privacy. A young woman in one of the pilot schemes had important letters sent to her grandmother's address as a consequence.

- Staff entering flats without warning or invitation

- Asking personal questions about visitors

  This can be resented even when it is accepted that visitors had to be monitored to some extent. In one pilot scheme, visits by one baby's father had been prevented by his inability to meet the scheme's insistence that he must be able to show he had a permanent address.

6.10   Residents are often, however, aware of the tension between observation and support. They may not like being observed or having a file kept on them, but they do appreciate having someone around to discuss problems with and for help with difficult issues such as benefits, where support might be reliant on information in the file that is being kept.

6.11   Neighbours in nearby housing can make the feelings of observation worse if they observe the residents, note down their activities and report them back to the staff. Regular and ongoing attention to relations with neighbouring properties, and swift and sensitive response to any issues that do arise, may be sufficient to prevent such a situation arising.

Feeling settled: Good practice points

- Residents of supported housing schemes realise that they will only live in the scheme temporarily, but creating a sense of security and a feeling of belonging among the users can further the scheme's objectives. Two key factors over which care needs to be taken are:

  - how the scheme rules are designed

  - the way staff use the scheme facilities and shared space

- Even if done inadvertently, if staff do not respect scheme space as the residents' home then this can undermine the residents' sense of belonging. Attention is needed at both the level of planning and operational procedures to minimise this risk.

- Rules that are well intentioned can be perceived as oppressive by residents. Rules around visitors can be particularly problematic. Scheme staff need to be sure they are clear not only why each of the scheme's rules exists but also how the rules, both individually and taken as a whole, will be perceived by residents. Care is needed to avoid inadvertently creating a demanding regime that is resented by residents.

CHAPTER 7

The contribution of joint working

<div style="border:1px solid black">

Key lessons

- The model of support operated by the ADP schemes required inputs from other agencies, and hence successful joint working arrangements were vital.

- Effective informal relationships can often be central to service delivery in the early months of a scheme's operation. However, relying on informal relationships can present difficulties when, for example, staff move on. Setting up more formal understandings and agreements can be important to ensuring continuity of service and clarity of roles.

- Collaborative working can break down when, for example, referring agencies assume that referring a user to a supported housing scheme effectively handed responsibility on, but the scheme requires and was expecting continuing inputs in order to deliver its model of support. This is one illustration of the importance of clear lines of communication and responsibility between scheme and partner agencies: lack of clarity can create uncertainties in individual cases.

</div>

Joint working as integral to service provision

7.1   Young parents seeking supported accommodation typically have a variety of support needs, some of them substantial. Even when a supported housing scheme opts to provide a lot of personal support in-house, other agencies are important in providing additional services that are beyond the remit and expertise of scheme staff. This provision ranges from statutory services – such as Social Services Child Care Teams and After Care Services or Youth Offending Teams – providing individual work around risk and vulnerability, to community-based programs such as Toy Libraries which provide play equipment to enhance the opportunities for residents' children. Close links with health visiting and midwifery services, which provided a range of innovative clinical, educational and advice services on–site, can be an important component of the model of support. To some extent supported housing schemes provide a *'captive audience'* for the delivery of key services.

Links with other agencies

7.2   Informal links with other agencies are important in distinct ways:

●   Inception

The impetus for supported housing schemes can often come from informal contact with other agencies around a particular set of housing needs that are not being met locally.

●   Embedding and co-ordinating

A networking role can raise awareness of a new scheme and liaise with other possible support providers, which can help embed a scheme in the local landscape of provision. It can contribute to counteracting any tendency on the part of referring agencies to think that they can pass on responsibility for meeting the users' needs because they make erroneous assumptions about the services the scheme is providing. Networking can also be invaluable in identifying and mobilising existing local resources which may be poorly coordinated and often underused.

7.3   Good informal relationships with other agencies rarely arise overnight. They are often built up over many years of working in the voluntary sector. It can be necessary to put in considerable effort to building up good networks of personal contacts with other support providers. It may eventually become second nature: *'You network without thinking about it because you know you can't do everything. So you automatically pick a phone up … it's just how it is in the voluntary sector.'*

7.4   There is, however, a danger in relying too heavily on informal contacts. Specifically, it means that a service comes to depend on individual members of staff. If key staff move on to new jobs then it can be difficult to keep the service on track and, more particularly, to maintain the quality of the relationships with key partners. Partners can be left unsure about their role in providing the service. While it might be appropriate to rely on informal contacts during the development of a new service it is a good idea to move towards more formally structured relationships between partners as a means of helping to ensure continuity.

7.5   As a scheme grows it may become necessary to consider the need for agreeing formal service level standards with partner agencies in order to put the partnership on a more formal footing. This can be linked directly to the impact of the continuing evolution of a service: *'In some ways we haven't needed [them up till now] because we've had such good personal relationships. But people will move on and things will change so it would be useful to have everybody signed up…'*

7.6   Formal partnerships with other support providers can be helpful in:

●   Overseeing the development and provision of a service

- Coordinating existing services

- Establishing new and more productive ways of delivering services.

7.7 In addition to the well-established practice of involving an inter-agency steering group in the process of setting up a scheme, a steering group can be helpful in the operational phase through, for example, sharing responsibility for management of risk in schemes where there is no 24-hour cover provided. Steering groups are also valuable as a forum for advice and support on individual cases.

7.8 Supported housing schemes are in a good position to offer a focus for a broad range of services for young, vulnerable parents. Ensuring schemes are linked in, informally and possibly formally, at the earliest opportunity with local teenage parent strategies or agencies such as Connexions can be of considerable value. There is always the potential to extend such links, although most links require some degree of maintenance and consequently available resources may impose limits.

7.9 Collaborative working flourishes in an environment of mutual respect. It is not assisted when, for example, a scheme run by a housing association has its credibility questioned when trying to access local services, on the grounds that it is not staffed by health or social work professionals. It may be necessary to engage other agencies in dialogue to build trust and respect, thereby laying the groundwork for successful collaboration.

Joint working in individual cases

7.10 Young people with particularly complex needs will often come to a scheme with the ongoing involvement of statutory services. Schemes need to be proactive in engaging with social workers to plan work jointly and ensure continuity when the young people move on. This is the best way to capitalize on work that has already been done. One option that can work well for continuity of support is formally building in three way meetings – between the resident, the keyworker at the scheme and the referring worker -on a monthly basis as part of the keyworking system.

7.11 When carrying out joint planning in relation to individual cases it is important to have a realistic assessment of the planning processes and capacity for delivery across the organizations involved. In planning at this level it is vital to clarify responsibilities and commitments:

> *'We don't just assume that someone's going to do something, we tend to make sure. We would speak to the social worker and say 'Are you going to take responsibility for sorting this out or are we going to take responsibility for it?' Otherwise you find it doesn't get done.'*

7.12 Supported housing schemes need to be alert to the possibility that the referring agency, while possibly committing to an ongoing involvement, will in practice look to pass responsibility for the service user on to the scheme itself. They may then find themselves left to manage difficult issues on their own:

'… there can be major crises and so we phone … because they are the other agency that's supposed to be supporting this young person. You hear all this wonderful stuff about how they're going to do this, this and this and how they'll keep in contact. After they've moved in, that's it 'Bye Bye' and off they go.'

7.13　Clarifying procedures for sharing information is a key task when planning processes for joint working. Ensuring that they operate as planned can be vital to successful service delivery. Joint working can require information to flow both ways and there needs to be opportunity to discuss developments. Information needs to be shared in accord with the confidentiality agreements in place. It may be that there are benefits to such agreements restricting particular information flows. For example, confidentiality agreements in place at one pilot scheme meant that information was not routinely shared between Health Visitors and staff, but this meant that young women could talk with the Health Visitor, in confidence, about issues that they felt unable to tell staff at the scheme. A similar approach may be required where a Connexions worker makes on-site visits to run sessions on returning to education.

The contribution of joint working: Good practice points

- Joint working relating to *individual residents* requires good communication/planning with other agencies at the point of entry to the scheme. This allows the scheme to build on previous work and to ensure continuity of support. Initial joint planning should be followed by monthly contact where appropriate, in negotiation with the young person.

- Other agencies need to be clear about their respective roles and responsibilities in relation to the support offered by the scheme to avoid duplication or failure to address areas of difficulty in individual cases.

- At the *project level*, even though informal contact can be very valuable, it is unwise to rely on it. It is important to put inter-agency involvement on a formal footing which does not over-depend on personal contacts and which specifies the nature and purpose of the inter-agency contact. This can clarify responsibilities and increase transparency and accountability.

CHAPTER 8

The transition to independent living

Key lessons

- Shortages of appropriate local RSL tenancies for move-on accommodation can create difficulties for schemes. Among the pilots delays in allocations were common and young women were remaining in the schemes longer than they thought their support needs warranted. This creates a mismatch between local structures of provision, those requiring support and those receiving services. This means poorer utilisation of the schemes because new residents, often with high need levels, cannot be accommodated.

- Not being able to ensure an appropriately timed and smoothly conducted move to suitable, more independent accommodation can start to undermine the work that schemes have done to build independence.

- The structure of the process for accessing move-on accommodation needs careful thought. It is an area in which creative collaboration with the local housing department can be highly beneficial.

- The nature of the property that is offered as move-on accommodation can influence the chances of the young mother making a success of living independently. It may be necessary for scheme staff to work on the residents' behalf to avoid the resident being rehoused in property of unsuitable type or location.

- The majority of residents leaving the pilot schemes had on-going support needs. Not all of these women went to new accommodation where the appropriate level of floating support was known to be available. This suggests that there is scope for further collaboration and co-ordination between service providers.

Moving on

8.1   For supported housing schemes such as the ADP pilots to achieve their maximum effectiveness it is important that they are integrated into wider structures of provision. Such integration would be most clearly demonstrated in ready availability of suitable accommodation for residents to move into when

they are prepared to make their next step towards independence. Yet, shortages of appropriate local RSL tenancies for move-on accommodation affected all ADP pilot schemes. As a result residents often felt that they were over-ready to move by the time they were allocated their tenancy.

8.2 Delays in moving on can be the result of one or more of a number of factors including:

- An absolute shortage of accommodation

- Available accommodation only being available in undesirable locations

- Local policy not according overriding priority to teenage mothers

- Rent arrears caused by housing benefit errors or delays

8.3 There is a limited amount that can be done about the first of these factors, the second may be a product of absolute shortage or a policy that leads to young mothers being offered less desirable properties. If the situation is the result of local policy then negotiation may lead to a change in priorities. It is likely that such negotiation would have to occur at a strategic level. Similarly, it may also be possible to identify mechanisms – such as the allocation or reweighting of 'community care' points in allocations systems – that could address the third problem and bring about more rapid rehousing for teenage mothers. One scheme had a specific agreement that the local housing office would view tenancies at their scheme as temporary housing, to preserve the homelessness status of residents during their stay at the supported scheme. Re-ordering local policy priorities or securing agreements of this type is again likely to require negotiation at strategic level. Greater emphasis upon assistance from scheme workers with form filling may address the fourth issue, but it may be a symptom of broader problems with local systems and processes. If this is the case then there may be limited scope for action at scheme level to deal with the problem.

8.4 Addressing the issue of moving on from the outset with each resident and re-visited it regularly during the young person's stay can be motivating. For many young people moving into their own accommodation was seen as a measure of their success in the scheme and a cause for pride. In practice the decision about timing and readiness to move can be complex.

THE PROCESS OF TRANSITION

8.5 The process of applying for move-on properties needs careful thought and structuring. There is a need to avoid offers of accommodation arriving abruptly and requiring residents not only to respond rapidly but also to move-on with relatively little notice. It is unreasonable to expect young mothers, particularly those trying to balance the competing priorities of childcare and participation in education, to arrange move-on in a week without any notice, as was the case in one of the pilot areas. This is a field in which collaboration with the organization making the offer of future accommodation is paramount. The broad alternatives available are:

- Residents applying for accommodation when they are ready to move on

  The problem with this approach is that they will then have a period in the scheme when they do not feel they need to be there.

- Residents applying before they are ready to move, in the hope that when a vacancy arises they will be at the point that they are ready to move on

  This approach raises questions about the emotional impact on residents and the possibility of being offered something too soon.

8.6   One pilot scheme arrived at a novel way of dealing with the problems inherent in both these approaches (see Box 8.1)

8.7   Partnership with the Housing Department could be used creatively to ensure as smooth a transition as possible. For example, in one pilot scheme there was an agreement that the keyworker would always attend when the tenancy agreement for move-on accommodation was signed and the scheme undertook to support every young person for a minimum of one month after the move. In another scheme the keyworker would contact the Housing Department as soon as the scheme thought the young person was ready and the two agencies would work together to ensure continuity of support from both sides. There can also be a role for scheme workers, particularly where a one- or limited-offer only policy is in operation, in negotiating with housing offices to ensure that they give reasonable offers.

Box 8.1 Managing moving on

Finding appropriate move-on accommodation for residents at the right time and in the right place was generally difficult. Having had some difficulties with residents remaining in the scheme for too long, the management team at one pilot scheme approached their local authority to discuss options. They were able to negotiate a flexible arrangement whereby applications for rehousing would be submitted up to three months before it was anticipated that residents would be ready to move. In order to moderate the impact on residents of inappropriate early offers, it was agreed that offers would be channelled through the scheme manager, with opportunities to refuse offers which were unsuitable.

While this approach could help manage the stresses of moving on felt by residents, it raises some sensitive questions. First, there are issues of confidentiality and autonomy to be negotiated. Second, there is the important question of whether workers' understandings of 'readiness' to move correspond to those of residents – and, if there is a mismatch, how it should be handled.

8.8   While some residents will feel that they have the necessary skills to live independently, the process of moving on can be daunting for others. All the pilot schemes provided practical support with, for instance, the application process, identifying and viewing properties, getting ready for the move, changing utilities, or applying for grants and benefits. In one pilot some of this support was provided through weekly resettlement workshops. One scheme had a half time resettlement worker to help residents through the process, while more typically this work was done by the keyworkers themselves.

8.9   There is a difficult balance to be struck at this stage in the relationship between staff and resident. How much support is it appropriate for the staff to give to

young women who are, by the very fact that they are in the process of exiting the scheme, considered to be ready for greater independence? It is difficult to resolve this to the satisfaction of every exiting resident: some will feel staff should have done more.

8.10   What is apparent is that the quality and location of the accommodation to which the resident moves can have a major influence on their quality of life and their ability to establish a settled home in the short term: whether they are able to access such accommodation by acting alone or only with assistance is likely to depend in part on a combination of the resident's level of independence and the way local housing policies operate.

After moving on

8.11   Many residents moving on from supported housing schemes require some ongoing support, at least in the early stages of living more independently. Hence, alongside the identification of an appropriate property to move to it is necessary to establish an appropriate support package. This can be made more complex if residents are moving on across administrative boundaries. Typically such support is provided by a floating support service. In the case of the ADP pilots, this was provided from within the same housing association.

8.12   Thought needs to be given to the appropriate point at which the floating support worker makes contact with the exiting resident. When should they start building that relationship? Is there benefit in a period of overlap – in the run up to a move the resident is supported by both the scheme-based and floating support workers? This was the model adopted by one pilot in an attempt to ensure a smooth transition and continuity of support.

8.13   Floating support should be oriented towards what the user requires, but it is necessary to decide how structured the support will be. In particular, is support going to be consciously tapered in some way – for example, intensive support at first, followed by a progressive reduction of support to the point of, perhaps, access to telephone support only, before finally ceasing the formal support relationship? One scheme that operated this type of staged withdrawal felt that it worked well.

8.14   The provision of floating support needs to be viewed in the context of other support available to the woman once they have moved on. For some floating support may be set up but little used – they discover they are better able to cope than anticipated. If a young woman is able to move on to a property near her existing social networks then floating support may play a secondary role to support from other sources. One mother commented on the contrast with living at the scheme:

> *'If you were unhappy and needed someone to talk to and needed just to get something off your chest, you could just talk to someone. And they were there and they listened. Now, when you've got a problem, it's like "Mum, can I talk to you?"'*

8.15 Continuing contact with a scheme can act as a partial substitute for floating support. It can have a range of benefits for the ex-residents. Box 8.2 describes the experiences of ex-residents of one of the ADP pilots.

Box 8.2 Keeping in touch

Although one of the pilot schemes had no formal aftercare support for ex-residents, the young women who left the scheme stayed in touch and visited for birthday parties and other celebrations. This contact was encouraged by the circulation of a monthly newsletter from the scheme, keeping the ex-residents informed of what was going on. All the young women interviewed spontaneously mentioned the newsletter. One said '*it's nice not to be forgotten*'. Staying in informal contact meant that the scheme was seen as a resource and two of the young women said that they would phone the scheme if they had any queries or needed help in writing a letter – it was felt that there was help there in the background if it was needed. At the same scheme, one ex-resident had been asked to participate in organising a Black women's day by one of the workers at the scheme. The request was valued as a sign of her worth – that she was now seen as someone who had something to contribute.

The transition to independent living: Good practice points

MOVING ON

- There needs to be a pro-active attempt by all parties (eg project staff, housing providers) to provide a co-ordinated service to ensure smooth and timely transitions into independent tenancies. Without effective co-ordination there is the risk of young people becoming frustrated and alienated by remaining too long in projects. This is not a good use of scarce resources.

- There needs to be clarity over what the scheme workers will do for users in the process of securing move-on accommodation and what the scheme expects the users to do for themselves. Where the balance is struck is likely to depend on the stage the young women have reached in their move towards independence.

FLOATING SUPPORT/AFTERCARE

- It is good practice to provide the option of floating support after young parents leave supported housing. Providing the service from within the scheme on a time-limited basis makes good use of existing trusting relationships during the period of transition when young people may be particularly vulnerable. Tapering off the support in a planned way ensures that autonomy is enhanced and an abrupt withdrawal is avoided. For a few young parents, referral for continuing floating support may be necessary.

- Maintaining informal links after moving on offers the possibility of the scheme being used as a valuable resource on an 'as-needed' basis by ex-residents.

CHAPTER 9

Organizational issues

Key lessons

- All newly established services evolve over time and it is necessary to reflect actively upon and evaluate provision regularly in order to maximise learning. Aims and objectives, policies, procedures and the level and use of resources may all need modifying in the light of experience and the changing demands on the service.

- Learning is best achieved through a mixture of formal periodic review and continuous reflection on day to day experience.

The need for reflexive practice

9.1 It is important for schemes to take an active and reflexive approach to evaluating their services. This is particularly significant for newly-established schemes for which the understanding of the task and the context are likely to be evolving rapidly over time. The approaches taken by pilot projects are often, by definition, untested and there are always lessons to learn as schemes go about their business. As one pilot scheme worker put it, they were *learning all the time*. This type of performance evaluation was evidence among the pilots and can lead to modification of:

- aims and objectives

- policies

- procedures

- the level of available resources

- the way in which existing resources are used.

9.2 Schemes should put in place at the earliest opportunity mechanisms for performance review. However, formal procedures for regular review, via steering groups or through internal practices, are only part of the picture: in practice schemes need to keep activities under constant review through day to day contact with the residents and through discussion at house meetings. All but one of the pilot schemes held regular house meetings. In the sixth, space precluded them from doing so and staff relied on daily contact for consulting with residents.

9.3   Areas in which the pilots demonstrated this sort of reflexive approach during the early months of operation typically related to specific incidents such as:

- complaints about anti social behaviour

- problems with particular visitors to the schemes

- incidents of violence

- child protection issues.

9.4   All schemes are likely to experience some difficulties with residents' behaviour. In some cases the problems may involve disagreements within wider social networks, involving both residents and the local community. Conflicts within the schemes were easier to handle than those involving non-residents, as in the latter case there are more restricted opportunities for mediation via the scheme's workers.

9.5   Many of these occurrences are both emotionally and procedurally difficult for those involved. The incidents need to be proactively handled. But they should also be a trigger for the review of policies and internal procedures. Reflection on individual incidents can lead to major modifications such as revising allocations policy to change the profile of residents.

9.6   A range of other substantial changes were made by the pilot schemes following reflection on events, feedback from residents, or, in some cases, opinion within the steering group (see Box 9.1). These include:

- Changing from operating on the basis of office hours cover plus on-call out of hours cover, to 24 hour on-site staffing.

- Employing a half time resettlement worker to assist in the transition to independent tenancies.

- Reconfiguring staff responsibilities to move away from relying on generalists and creating more specialist roles.

- Reviewing 'curfew' rules when requested by residents.

- Reviewing staffing strategies in the light of staffing difficulties.

- The introduction of overlapping day and night shifts.

- New mechanisms for closer liaison between day and night staff, with handovers and 'incident' books being used to maintain the flow of information.

- Reviewing procedures for handling confidential information.

9.7   Does this process of learning cease at the point when a scheme becomes well established – clear on what it is doing and how it is doing it? It is undesirable to think in these terms because it can lead to complacency. It is also unlikely that

many schemes would ever find themselves in this position. The context in which they operate – in terms of policy, the profile of needs, available resources – will be changing continuously. As a consequence it is necessary to remain open to the possible need for change. A staff member at one of the pilot schemes said that their methods '*stopped evolving each day once we found out what worked*', but it was evident that working practices at this scheme were nonetheless still proactively monitored. Staff generally accepted that they were '*learning all the time*'.

> **Box 9.1** Stocks of good practice
>
> One feature of most pilot schemes was a willingness to change and, in particular, to respond to residents' preferences. As it was realised that something was no longer working, other ideas were tried out. One scheme had experienced some success with involving residents with training sessions in the past but realised that, over time, residents' preferences had changed. When residents told them that the in-house sessions were not particularly welcomed, they switched to using outside providers at off-site venues. In another scheme, residents' reluctance to attend a local training facility led to a successful search for an alternative, more teen-oriented provider.

Staffing

9.8 Staff changes are relatively common in supported housing schemes. This can mean recruitment of additional staff, repeated staff changes or coping with staffing difficulties.

9.9 Having clear and agreed procedures for managing the rearrangement and reallocation of workloads and the way in which new staff fit into line management structures is vital.

9.10 All changes that affect frontline service provision need to be handled sensitively because continuity in relationships with service users is important in building trust and too much change can undermine the effectiveness of support.

Training

9.11 Staff for supported housing schemes are typically selected on the basis of the 'best person for the job', based on experience. They need specific training tailored to their needs. This can include encouraging workers to work toward NVQ qualifications. Ongoing programmes of training and skills updating not only enhance organizational effectiveness but also raise the credibility of schemes with partner organizations from other sectors. Where staff are expected to provide residents with reliable information on a range of issues such as benefits or the local availability of services then there needs to be opportunity for regular updating of knowledge.

9.12 Schemes need to think through how access to training will interact with ongoing service provision, particularly in schemes where cover is permanently required. There is a danger that staff absence to attend off-site training can place considerable burdens on those continuing to provide the service or, for small schemes, lead to breaks in coverage.

9.13   One issue of central importance upon which training may be necessary is the handling of confidential information. The support relationship is built on trust and this requires staff to show discretion and sensitivity in relation to confidential information that residents might share with them. It is not possible to guarantee total confidentiality – if the information shared gives rise to child protection concerns, for example, then this may require information to be passed on – but it is important to establish clear protocols regarding the use and dissemination of information and for staff to understand the significance of adhering to them. The consequence of not doing so is that residents do not trust the staff and are not willing to share with them. This in turn can potentially impede support provision.

Monitoring systems

9.14   Much of the support that is highly valued by the residents was informal. However, it is difficult for this type of support to be reflected adequately in monitoring systems, particularly those that are oriented toward quantification such as that associated with *Supporting People*.

9.15   For monitoring systems to be of maximum value in understanding organizational performance it is important to ensure that they adequately reflect the variable nature of support to an individual, and the flexible nature of the response required.

Cost effectiveness

9.16   The experiences of the users of the ADP pilots demonstrated that the pilots' activities were, in large part, effective in achieving their local aims, and these in turn were closely aligned with broader aims of policy in this area. Beyond the issue of effectiveness, however, are questions of cost and cost effectiveness. How much did it cost to provide these supported housing services?

9.17   Pilots were asked to provide an overview of their annual running costs. However, the scope for developing a sophisticated understanding of the cost-effectiveness of the schemes was rather limited. There are three principal reasons for this. First, determining the full cost of the model of support operated by each scheme would require costing inputs from a range of organizations including, for example, social services, health visitors, Sure Start Plus and probation services. Second, to treat residents as receiving an 'average' level of support from the schemes would result in misleading inferences about the costs of support to particular to residents with particular levels or types of need. This is especially the case when much of the support is provided informally. It can result in a service appearing relatively expensive for low need users and relatively cheap for high need users, but that is largely a product of inappropriate apportionment of costs. However, the design of the research upon which this guide is based did not incorporate the type of diary keeping exercises by scheme workers that would be necessary to attribute costs more accurately to different residents. Third, in some cases scheme budgets were set and managed within the central management structure of the housing associations, with limited devolved budgeting or devolved responsibility to the

scheme managers themselves. Our enquiries to head office regarding financial information did not typically prove productive. However, one Association is currently looking at devolving budgets to the scheme level and for three pilots information could be supplied relating to actual income and expenditure for the first full year of operation. We discuss below the information provided by these three schemes to illustrate the nature of the costs and revenues associated with this type of scheme.

9.18   The first observation is that the schemes operated on very different scales: while one had revenue funding of £77,610 for its first year of operation, the second received revenue funding of £186,030 and the third a total of £229,108. In two cases scheme budgets incorporated attributed central costs, which were estimated at 6.7% and 8.5% respectively, and in the third case it was stated that the budget incorporated a standard overhead of 75%. The information provided suggested that the revenues received were not sufficient to cover costs in two cases, but sufficient to cover costs in the third.

9.19   In two cases a detailed disaggregation of revenue sources was not possible. However, there were differences between the two schemes. The funding of the first scheme was relatively simple, being split 49%:51% between resident charges (including housing benefit) and *Supporting People* funding. These sources in combination accounted for 79% of revenue for the second scheme. In addition, scheme funding came from social housing management grant (14%) and joint finance and donations (7% in total). In the third case, the major source of revenue funding was local authority grant (46%), with the remainder of the funding coming from transitional housing benefit/Supporting people (21%), Housing Benefit (16%) and other sources (16%), including a small amount from donations.

9.20   The expenditure side of the accounts was, perhaps not surprisingly, rather more complex. In Box 9.1 we provide an overview of the composition of expenditures for the first year of operation of the three schemes. While the schemes were not able to provide information under quite the same set of headings, one of the most striking features is that direct housing costs appear to account for very different proportions of total costs (ranging from 10% to 26.5%). Staffing accounts for a considerably higher proportion of the revenue for Scheme B than for Scheme A, but they account for fully 78% of the costs of scheme C. The shift in balance between housing and support costs relates to the level of support the schemes provide: those with higher overall revenue costs and a greater proportion of expenditure devoted to support operate more intensive support models eg. 24 hour rather than office hours only on-site cover.

Table 9.1 Illustrations of the composition of revenue costs for supported housing schemes

	%	
	Scheme A	Scheme C
Housing management costs (including staffing)	4.3	11.1
Maintenance costs – cyclical	4.4	1.1
– day to day	5.8	(combined)
Mortgage/rent	26.5	15.7
Housing service costs	8.6	0.7
Care, support and welfare – staffing costs	31.5	67.1
– other costs	2.2	1.7
Other non-housing costs (inc attributed costs)	16.7	2.6
Total	100	100

	%
	Scheme B
Salaries	59.9
Security/On call	3.9
Maintenance costs	2.8
Housing management charge	3.9
Rent and service charge	10.0
Other housing costs	3.3
Non-housing revenue costs and consumables	4.4
Training	1.4
Contents/Liability insurance	1.0
Audit and IT costs	2.8
Attributed Charges	8.5
	100

Note: Percentages do not add up to 100% due to rounding.

9.21   Other housing costs can include insurance, council tax, costs of heat and light, portable appliance testing, cleaning, gardening and the costs of renewal and replacement of furniture and white goods. Non-housing consumables and revenue expenditure covers a wide range of costs. These include printing and stationary, advertising, travel or vehicle hire, and telephones and post. They can also include tenant participation, covering uninsured risks, and the cost of putting in place an ASBO and associated legal fees.

9.22   The pilots reported that neither the balance of costs nor expenditures had changed significantly since the first year of operation, although in one instance social housing management grant was no longer received. Hence we can take the figures presented above as a reasonable indication of revenue requirements, rather than being substantially influenced by financial factors specific to the set up period. They also reported that the scheme had secure mainstream funding for the medium term (defined as up to three years).

Organizational issues: good practice points

SELF-EVALUATION AND MONITORING

- Schemes need to put in place effective formal and informal mechanisms for reflecting upon and evaluating performance. Diverse aspects of scheme activities – both at the broad policy level and the detailed procedural level – may require modification in the light of experience. This was the experience of the ADP pilots.

- Self-evaluation is particularly significant for schemes in their early months, but with schemes that operate in a constantly changing environment the process of learning never stops.

- Monitoring systems need to be designed with care so that they can recognise the variability of the support required by residents, and capture the qualitative nature of much of this support.

STAFFING

- Where 24-hour staffing is part of the project's remit, specific attention needs to be given to the management of staff working unsocial hours.

- Staff working out of hours and overnight need to be clearly designated as having a *support* rather than a *security* function in order to attract and retain *Supporting People* funding.

- Projects need to consider the value of diversifying roles within the staff group. The specialist role of 'housing and re-settlement worker' was seen as particularly valuable.

TRAINING

- Project staff need specific training tailored to their needs in order to both increase their professional competence and raise their credibility with inter-agency partners. Specific training in housing and re-settlement was seen as particularly helpful.

- The handling of confidential information is another area in which staff need to have access to, and abide by, clear procedures.

ANNEX 1

Profile of pilot schemes

Table A1.1 Scheme design						
	Project 1	**Project 2**	**Project 3**	**Project 4**	**Project 5**	**Project 6**
No. of units	9	8	7	7	5 over two sites	4
New build/ refurbished	New build	Refurbished	New build	Refurbished	Refurbished	New build
Bedrooms/unit	2	1	2	6 x 1 bed, 1 x 2 bed	1	2
Own kitchen?	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	No
Own bathroom?	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	No
Shared kitchen?	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	Yes	Yes
Communal living area?	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes – but limited space	Yes	Yes
Internal play area?	Yes	Yes, in communal living area	Yes	No	Yes	Yes, but small
Outside play area?	Garden and soft play area	Garden	Garden and soft play area	Garden	Garden	Garden with play equipment
Washing machine in each unit?	Yes	No	Yes	No	No	No
Washing machine provided communally?	No	Yes	No	Yes, also shared iron, Hoover	Yes	Yes
Furnishing	Part furnished	Fully furnished	Part furnished	Fully furnished	Fully furnished	N/a
Within 5 mins of bus route?	Yes	Not on bus route	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Within 5 mins of shop?	Yes	Chemist available	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Design faults?	None voiced	Location and building design had contributed to local problems with youths etc, plus some local opposition to the scheme. Stairs in flats difficult. Communal space smaller than would like	None voiced	Would prefer larger communal room and play space indoors	Design not perfect (eg steep stairs), but project staff voiced a commitment to providing a realistic housing experience	Wanted crèche but funding wouldn't allow. Too many stairs
Suitability of office accommodation (privacy vs accessibility)	Very well situated, able to see entrance, tenants can drop in and private space available for discussions	Small, with narrow corridors not suitable for buggies. Not able to see front doors but easily accessed by tenants and private space available for discussions	Well sited, able to see entrance. Tenants can drop in and private space available for discussions	Well sited, accessible, able to see front door. Access to comfortable seating	Private office situated on top floor of house, with more public and less used office by front door	N/a
Tenancy/licence	Assured shorthold tenancies	Assured shorthold tenancies	Assured shorthold tenancies	Start on licence and move to assured shorthold tenancy	Assured shorthold tenancy	Licence

Table A1.2 Support Provision						
	Project 1	**Project 2**	**Project 3**	**Project 4**	**Project 5**	**Project 6**
Hours of cover on site	9-5 Monday to Friday & some flexibility early evening and weekends	24 hour cover on site	24 hour cover on site	9–5 Monday to Friday & some flexibility evenings and weekends	9–5 Monday to Friday & very flexible at other times	9-6 Monday to Friday
Hours on call	Nil	24 hour backup	24 hour backup	24 hour emergency contact no.	24 hour emergency contact no.	Project manager on call at other times.
Payphone on site?/mobile phones supplied?	Payphone	All residents supplied with mobile phone	N/A	Yes and pre-programmed numbers to support agencies (eg NHS Direct)	Yes, payphone, all girls given £1.00 in case of emergency. Call points being installed in every room – direct line to central call centre	N/a
Access to childcare on site?	No	No	No	No (would like this, but no room)	Children's worker ½ time will develop and facilitate a babysitting group	No
Access to childcare off site?	No specific resource	No specific resource	No specific resource	Asian women's crèche 5 mins away, used a lot	Local college offers free childcare when enrolled for course	Tried to identify, but very expensive. Involved with *Care to Learn*, which offers funding to cover the costs of Ofsted Registered childcarers, including childminders, to mothers engaged in learning.

Table A1.3 Internal formal support

	Project 1	Project 2	Project 3	Project 4	Project 5	Project 6
Keyworking system?	Yes (1 x per week obligatory minimum at outset, could be less frequent later)	Yes (1 x per week obligatory minimum, could be every day to begin with)	Yes ('Chat time' very flexible, leave it to girls to arrange). Part of a more formal system	Yes (every three weeks minimum)	Yes ('One to One' 1 hour/week obligatory)	Yes, 1 per fortnight starting second week of residence
Formal Needs Assessment?	Yes. Use formal monitoring tool but this can seem quite daunting at first	Individual work starts with support assessment using checklist and interview sheet. Leads to written agreement with time frames	Yes, formal monitoring tool used	No formal tool used but action plan agreed at first keyworking session and written agreement produced	Initial risk assessment on entry + informal needs assessment using checklist. Support plan produced	Needs assessed on entry and support plan drawn up with user.
Regular formal review of needs?	Yes. Use same monitoring tool at regular 3 monthly intervals	Constant review at weekly keyworking sessions. Exit questionnaires on leaving	Yes. Reviewed at 6 weeks and 3 months and regularly after that OR when necessary (formal and informal 'rolling assessment')	Action plan updated at every keyworking session	Review of support plan at regular intervals using flow chart	Action plan goes with user throughout stay. Reviewed on a three monthly basis.
Group learning sessions run by project staff on site?	Yes (Confidence and Self-Esteem Building; Parenting Skills)	Rare because limited space. Have run groups on parenting and sexual health	Currently being planned Emphasis on *informal* sessions with staff (see below)	No	Yes (Resettlement; Baby Massage; Cookery; Sexual Health; Making Christmas Cards)	Greater emphasis upon informal contact.
Group learning sessions run by external providers *on site*?	Yes (Sexual health; Contraception; Personal Risk Awareness; Play sessions, Connexions sessions on return to education)	No due to limited space	Yes (Ante natal clinic by local midwife, sexual health sessions; Baby Massage; Yoga; First Aid) Other women from estate invited to all sessions	Yes (Baby Massage; Baby First Aid; Self Defence; Cookery; Budgeting; Assertiveness; Complementary therapies; & other Adult Education sessions leading to formal certificate)	Yes (Parenting Skills; Health Workshops from Health Visitor) – but encourage women to go out into the community/to college for courses	Yes (eg. Parenting Skills; Careers advice)
Group learning sessions run by external providers *off site*?	Yes (Return to Education/ training; Sexual Health; Drugs awareness)	None mentioned	No	Many courses run at Asian Women's Centre & local College – both have crèches. Residents encouraged to attend	Local women's college runs many courses with crèche. Residents encouraged to attend	Healthy living centre (taking users to the gym).
Proactive work with fathers/ partners?	Yes. One couple resident. Actively encourage men to participate in sessions and workshops on site. Have two fathers actively involved in children's care	Yes. Usually work with men as part of the couple, not on their own	Yes on an informal basis. Get to know them when they stay over	Yes. Fathers invited to any classes focussed on parenting the baby. Work hard to build a rapport with them when they stay over, make time to chat if they approach staff with problems or worries	Little focus on the fathers as relationships tend to be tenuous; focus is more on the woman herself	Services based around young mothers. Little emphasis upon fathers. Accommodation not suitable for couples, overnight stays only in exceptional circumstances

Table A1.4 Internal Informal Support						
	Project 1	**Project 2**	**Project 3**	**Project 4**	**Project 5**	**Project 6**
Childcare by staff?	No	No	Will help out informally if necessary	Yes, on an informal and brief basis. A way of building up a relationship with baby and informal monitoring of child's wellbeing	Yes, if mother in need of rest	No
Informal monitoring of tenants	Yes, through daily contact	Key worker sessions held in flats – helps in monitoring of illegal drug use	Yes through daily contact. Particular focus on weekly budgeting. Also active in monitoring children's wellbeing if there are child protection concerns (eg through use of a food diary)	Yes, through daily contact with women. Children's wellbeing monitored through occasional care	Yes. Particular attention to women and children's nutrition. Monitored informally through communal food preparation and eating using shared kitchen and dining room	Yes, through regular contract.
Provision of goods (eg food and clothes)	Yes, occasionally. Food donated from local church at harvest festival	None mentioned	Never really let girls struggle – share out the milk and tea bags	Yes – provision of second hand baby clothes and equipment from previous residents and other projects	Yes. In emergency will provide food and donated clothes and bedding. Church gives food from harvest festival	None mentioned
Project and social activities	Being planned at time of interview	None mentioned	Yes an integral part of the project (eg communal cooking, baking, bingo, art group, games evenings, producing a magazine)	Yes, a way of getting to know the residents and promoting peer group relationships (eg BBQ's in summer, cooking and eating meals with residents)	Yes – integral to project's philosophy (eg producing newsletter, informal discussions groups on sexual health, prizes for best rent payer, video evenings, communal meals. Funding for group holiday secured)	None mentioned, apart from resident meetings

ANNEX 2

Education/training profile of interviewed residents

Table A2.1 Numbers in education/training at the time of move to the project and at the time of interview			
Education/ training status	**At time of move**	**At time of interview**	**At time of second interview**
Not in education/training	22	17	14
Secondary school (attending)	1	0	0
Secondary school (not attending)	1	0	0
Other secondary school provision	1	1	0
FT college (attending)	0	2	2
FT college (not attending)	1	1	0
PT college (attending)	3	2	0
PT college (not attending)	0	0	0
Other education/training	0	6	0
N/K	0	0	2
Total	29	29	18

Note: Six interviewees were enrolled to start new college courses within four weeks of their first interview.

Table A2.2 Highest level of qualifications achieved before entering Project and qualifications for which currently studying at time of first/second interview			
Qualifications	**Before entering project**	**Studying towards at 1st interview**	**Studying towards at 2nd interview**
None	9	22	14
Awaiting results	3	3	0
GCSE or equivalent	15	0	0
A level or equivalent	1	2	0
Degree/diploma	0	1	0
Other qualification	1	0	2
NK	0	1	2
Total	29	29	18