

# SAFE Service Review - Executive Summary

SAFE was commissioned by Derbyshire County Council's Derbyshire Accommodation and Support Team (DAST) to provide a housing-related support service across the whole of Derbyshire, from October 2012, for young people aged 16-24. A two year contract was awarded with the possible extension of up to three years following successful performance.

A full service review was undertaken in January 2014 and this Executive Summary highlights the main points.

## What is SAFE?

SAFE is a partnership between three voluntary sector organisations working in Derbyshire; Stonham, Adullam and Framework. All three have extensive experience of supporting young vulnerable people and a track record of providing first class housing related support services.

## What does SAFE do?

SAFE provides housing and related support to an increasingly vulnerable and growing population of 16-25yr olds across all of Derbyshire, including urban and rural areas. This doesn't only help to prevent homelessness, it helps young people to get into work, education and training, improve their finances and reduce debts, deal with mental and physical health problems, reduce substance use issues, reduce anti-social behaviour and offending, and well as learn vital life skills.

## The need for SAFE

The need for SAFE is high and likely to grow in the future. Youth homelessness is increasing (Homeless Link 2012) and the issues that contribute to homelessness are at critical levels and are likely to remain so. These include lack of access to education employment or training (NEET), mental health issues, and substance misuse, particularly with the rise in usage of 'Legal Highs'. The impact of welfare reform does hit young people the hardest and domestic abuse in that age group is on the rise.

## The young people SAFE supports

SAFE had housed and/or supported 589 young people in Derbyshire in the first year of operation. All of the young people SAFE works with have additional needs that means without support their problems will almost certainly worsen. So homelessness increases and becomes a long term problem; drug and alcohol issues increase, as does offending and anti-social behaviour; employment prospects diminish, disconnect from education and family networks increases.

## Working with young people with multiple and complex needs

SAFE works with young people with high need levels. A snapshot survey of SAFE Service Users, conducted in December 2013 found typically they will most likely "hidden homeless" principally sofa surfing. In addition almost three quarters were NEET when first arriving at the service and a similar proportion had an offending background. Fifty One per cent had a mental health issue and one third a drug or alcohol issue. Many had experienced abusive relationships in the past. SAFE data suggests almost 40% of young people using the service would require statutory provision if SAFE were not in place This could represent a longer term cost to the Authority that is greater than any saving produced by reducing funding to SAFE.

The service is great help and supports me to look at the positive things that are happening in my life. Without the service everything would go back to how things were with my mental problems I'd end up self-harming or suicide.  
*SAFE service user, 21*

## Reaching very vulnerable young people

A key group that SAFE works with are young people who may have slipped through the net of usual service provision. This is especially true of SAFE Floating Support which plays a key preventative role through a great variety of actions including helping young people in a crisis, stopping exploitation of vulnerable young people, helping cope with welfare reform, developing life skills, being good parents and working with food banks.

## Exceptional outcomes

Based on comparison with data from the Centre for Housing Research National Supporting People database SAFE exceeds the national average performance for all 20 Outcomes, with an average success rate of 98.1% of all identified needs support needs being met. This includes 98.3% of Service Users with a need, successfully supported to maintain accommodation compared to 82% for similar services nationally, and of 87% of Service Users with a need obtaining/experiencing work compared to 34.5% nationally.

## Payment by results

Derbyshire is the biggest contributor to the Department for Communities and Local Governments, Payment by Results Pilot (PBR) in Supported Housing. Meeting the requirements of PBR was tough at first, but the experience gained from involvement has been invaluable. It is clear that participating in the PBR has been a major factor in contributing to the very high levels of outcomes achieved by the SAFE.

## Overcoming barriers

In addition to PBR, initial challenges included working with “hard to engage” young people, many of whom have complex needs, and working across dispersed settings – small units spread across a large, often rural, geographical area. SAFE has made huge great improvements to overcome these challenges, and consequently there has been a steady upward curve in performance to the point where targets are routinely met each quarter.

## The consortium model

The consortium approach to contract delivery has been crucial to the success of SAFE. The partners; Stonham, Adullam and Framework are able to share their expertise and resources. Each member also places an emphasis on communication, both with each other and Commissioners. This ensures good co-ordination, as this can be a weakness in consortium working. A joint Quality Assessment Framework and peer audits mean that standards are consistent and allow for the dissemination of best practice.

## Stakeholder feedback

Feedback demonstrates that SAFE is considered a vital, high quality service in Derbyshire and that relationships with partner agencies are very good. In turn all stakeholders are valued by SAFE and their support is appreciated. SAFE will continue to foster new relationships and maintain existing ones going forward.

## A bleak future without SAFE

The current proposal to reduce SAFE's size by 85% will have very damaging consequences. This is the case not just for the hundreds of young people in Derbyshire who will no longer receive the support they need, but also for the Local Authority and other statutory services who will be faced with much higher costs in the longer term. Figures from the County Council show it is estimated that for every £1 spent on providing housing related support to young people in Derbyshire, £8.94 is saved from statutory provision in the realms of criminal justice, social care and A& E admissions amongst others.

“Before SAFE I was in a dark place, no home, no house. I felt deprived.” *Stonham service user*



housing and support for young people

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