Best Practice in the Commissioning and Delivery of Emergency Accommodation in Scotland for Children and Young People Who Run Away
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Executive Summary

Introduction

- This report outlines the findings of a project commissioned by the Scottish Government to identify best practice in the commissioning and delivery of emergency accommodation in Scotland for children and young people who run away. The report is designed to support local authorities in the effective commissioning and delivery of emergency accommodation in line with best practice.
- The term running away describes children and young people under the age of 16, or aged 16 to 18 where they are looked after or looked after and accommodated, who are absent from where they live without permission of those responsible for, or in charge of, them. The term is also used to describe those who are forced to leave. It is estimated that one in nine children under the age of 16 run away for at least one night each year in Scotland. A proportion of these children are in need of a safe place to stay whilst away from home or care.
- Section 22 of the Children Scotland Act 1995 places a general duty of local authorities to safeguard and promote the welfare of children in need by providing a range and level of services appropriate to the child’s needs. It is this overarching duty that allows for emergency accommodation to be provided by a local authority where a young person has run away and is in need of support.
- The purpose of emergency accommodation is to provide children and young people with somewhere safe to stay for a short period, with access to support to address the circumstances that led to the need for emergency accommodation and to reconcile the child with their family or carers or to divert the child to other suitable accommodation.
- Section 38 of the Children (Scotland) Act 1995 provides for the provision of refuge to children and young people who appear to be at risk at home and request refuge.
- Refuge is a form of emergency accommodation. Its purpose is to provide children with a safe place to stay and access to support and advice for a period of time to resolve the crisis leading to the child or young person seeking refuge.
- All services which seek to deliver improved outcomes for children and young people in Scotland should reflect the principles which underpin the Getting it right for every child approach to children’s services. Services should be delivered in a way that is tailored to meet the individual needs of children and with their best interests at heart.
- There is a small body of literature addressing learning relating to emergency accommodation for children and young people. A significant proportion of this literature relates to fixed refuge as this is the most developed and tested model of emergency accommodation.
- The first refuge for young people opened in Coatbridge in 1984 and ceased operating in 1990. ROC Refuge opened in 2004 providing three refuge beds in Glasgow. Action for Children provide a service in Moray offering emergency accommodation for 72 hours that can be accessed by children and young people who run away.
- The contents of this report are drawn from the following key sources:
literature addressing emergency accommodation;
consultation with professionals with experience of commissioning and delivering emergency accommodation in Scotland; and
consultation with young people with experience of accessing refuge and emergency accommodation in Scotland.

Different models of emergency accommodation

• Emergency accommodation for children and young people in the UK has been provided in fixed refuge or in flexible forms of refuge such as the foster care model (see page 18) or the crash pad model (see page 19).
• The lack of models of emergency accommodation projects in Scotland is a challenge to delivering emergency accommodation and meeting the needs of children and young people who run away.
• There are strengths and weaknesses of all models of emergency accommodation. Evidence suggests that children and young people overwhelmingly prefer fixed refuge although there is recognition that the foster care model is appropriate for younger children. The crash pad model is the least tested and unpopular with children and young people. There are also concerns relating to the lack of confidentiality afforded by this model.

Commissioning of emergency accommodation

• In line with good practice, when commissioning emergency accommodation projects commissioners should request tendering organisations to provide information relating to:
  o evidencing and meeting need;
  o competent skills and expertise; and
  o delivery, accountability and reviewing processes that include children and young people.
• Good practice in the commissioning of emergency accommodation projects should also include:
  o commissioning agencies with experience of delivering services to young runaways;
  o building upon existing services for children and young people who run away;
  o identifying achievable outcomes;
  o identifying the best ways to commission emergency accommodation services;
  o consideration of options for accommodation whilst resolving family conflict;
  o ensuring emergency accommodation projects for children and young people who run away are used appropriately; and
  o the provision of funding that allows for services to develop.
• ‘Cluster models’ of emergency accommodation (see page 24) should be explored as they have the potential to reduce costs, increase accessibility to emergency accommodation and increase service co-ordination.
• When planning the commissioning and delivery of emergency accommodation it is necessary to acknowledge that it can take from one to two years to develop emergency accommodation projects.
• There is need to provide sustainable funding for emergency accommodation.
Costs relating to emergency accommodation

- Misperceptions of the costs of providing emergency accommodation alongside the gaps in information about costs of emergency accommodation can act as a challenge. Assumptions tend not to compare like with like and to fail to include the wrap-around costs of providing emergency accommodation and recognising post accommodation work. To accurately identify costs of emergency accommodation, it is necessary to include the costs of providing an accessible referral route, initial needs assessment and post accommodation work.

- Estimates of costs of different models of emergency accommodation range from £470,000 to £680,000 a year dependent upon sets of assumptions of need and service provision. Costs of the ROC Refuge reveal that fixed refuge can be provided at lower costs than these estimates.

- Significant costs are incurred from failing to respond to children and young people who run away; these can be as much as half a million pounds per child or young person. There are also costs to consider in terms of the well-being of children and young people.

- Emergency accommodation can play an important role in reducing costs relating to future episodes of running away, future offending, substance misuse, school attendance and youth homelessness.

- The value added of refuge stems from the capacity of refuge providers to:
  o divert children and young people away from the care system;
  o provide time and space to reflect and focus upon children and young people’s needs;
  o use specialist skills to meet children and young people’s needs;
  o facilitate a return home, where appropriate, or support with a care placement; and
  o direct children and young people to other services, as required.

The role of emergency accommodation in achieving positive outcomes for children and young people who run away

- Refuge can play a significant role in achieving positive outcomes for children and young people, supporting them to be safe, healthy, achieving, nurtured, active, respected, responsible and included. Such services support the prevention of harm and the ensuring of children’s safety as well as improving general well-being, mental health and attendance and achievements at school. Additional positive outcomes can also include:
  o reductions in running away, offending and substance misuse;
  o increased support in transitions to care;
  o increased awareness of support services amongst children and young people; and
  o improved relationships with both the family and with professionals from other services.

- Factors that support the achievement of such outcomes include:
  o project staff and their ability to develop rapport and trust with children and young people;
relationships between project staff and external agencies and the ability to refer children and young people to other services;

- the confidential location of refuge services;
- post-refuge work; and
- the willingness of children and young people to engage.

Factors that hinder achieving positive outcomes include:

- a lack of understanding of refuge and the need for a confidential location;
- a lack of response from other agencies;
- turnover of staff in other agencies;
- different perceptions of child protection issues;
- a child or young person failing to make a self-referral to refuge following a professional attempting to refer a child or young person to refuge;
- issues relating to children and young people’s peers and family or carers; and
- factors relating to children and young people such as being mistrustful of adults, unwilling to engage with workers or leaving before planned work is completed.

**Key components of good practice in the delivery of emergency accommodation**

- Key components of good practice in the delivery of emergency accommodation include:
  - recognising that whilst statutory agencies have the potential to deliver emergency accommodation for children and young people, evidence suggests that the third sector is best placed to deliver emergency accommodation because of perceptions of children and their families around the manner in which the third sector is able to deliver its services;
  - ensuring that emergency accommodation is part of an integrated service to meet the needs of children and young people who run away;
  - providing targeted awareness-raising about emergency accommodation with children and young people;
  - undertaking training and awareness-raising with professionals about running away, emergency accommodation and the legislative and policy framework for refuge.
  - consideration of the physical layout of emergency accommodation projects;
  - addressing a range of diversity issues;
  - ensuring a focus upon access issues as they are key to providing support and ensuring its effectiveness;
  - acknowledging that emergency accommodation should not be used as an extension of the care system but in line with the criteria for emergency accommodation;
  - recognising the importance of locating emergency accommodation projects in a confidential location;
  - assessing risk;
  - sharing information between providers of services for children and young people;
  - ensuring a timely response to children and young people;
  - considering issues relating to parents and carers;
o providing support for children and young people after leaving emergency accommodation;
o working with Social Care and Social Work Improvement Scotland to facilitate understanding of emergency accommodation and constructive working relationships;
o evaluation; and
o working with children and young people who do not achieve positive outcomes or do not wish to access emergency accommodation.
Section 1: Introduction

This report outlines the findings of a project commissioned by the Scottish Government to identify best practice in the commissioning and delivery of emergency accommodation for children and young people who run away. The report forms the Scottish Government’s response to a recommendation of the National Working Group on Young Runaways which reported to Scottish Ministers in the spring of 2008.

The aim of this report is to support local authorities to effectively commission and deliver emergency accommodation for children and young people who run away by identifying:

- best practice in the commissioning and delivery of emergency accommodation;
- the challenges that hinder the commissioning and delivery of emergency accommodation;
- the role of emergency accommodation in achieving positive outcomes for children and young people who access emergency accommodation.

All services which seek to deliver improved outcomes for children and young people in Scotland should reflect the principles which underpin the *Getting it right for every child* approach to children’s services. Services should be delivered in a way that is tailored to meet the individual needs of children with their best interests at heart.

For ease of reading the report, the term ‘emergency accommodation’ is used to describe all emergency accommodation for children and young people who run away except when it is explicitly stated that the term emergency accommodation is used in relation to local authority emergency accommodation under Section 22 of the Children (Scotland) Act. The term ‘refuge’ is used to describe particular forms of emergency accommodation, as fitting with Section 38 of the Children (Scotland) Act. When this term is used, it is to describe learning or practice that relates to refuge projects for children and young people who run away.

Evidence from research and practice consistently supports the need for emergency accommodation for children and young people who run away:

“This project has again highlighted the need for, and potential value, of a national network of emergency accommodation for young runaways which can provide an effective safety net for young people in all geographical areas.”
(Rees et al, 2009; 72.)

“A critical ingredient for a successful response to young runaways is safe, direct-access, emergency accommodation”
(ECOTEC & Duckett, 2010; 7.)

1.1 Young runaways in Scotland

The Scottish Government defines a runaway as:

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1 Further information on the Government’s response to the range of recommendations made by the Working Group can be found at www.scotland.gsi.gov.uk/childprotection.
2 This project is the national consultation addressing emergency accommodation for young runaways, commissioned by the Department for Children, Schools and Families (DCSF), Scottish Government and Welsh National Assembly.
A child or young person, under the age of sixteen, who is absent from their domicile without the reasonable authority of those responsible for, or in charge of, them, and who needs a service either to find and return them to that place (where it is safe or in the child’s interests to do so), or to
(a) keep them safe
(b) ensure an appropriate and proportionate response to their needs
(c) meet statutory requirements

Children between the ages of 16 and 18 will be included in this definition when
(a) they have a history of running away which predates their 16th birthday
(b) they are looked after, or looked after and accommodated

The term ‘young runaway’ is used to describe children and young people who run away from home or care and those who are away from home or care through being forced to leave or ‘staying out’ without parental or carer permission. It is important to note that whilst some children and young people who run away are reported as missing to the police by parents and carers, it is not appropriate to use the terms ‘running away’ and ‘going missing’ interchangeably. This is because the majority of children and young people who run away are not reported as missing to the police. In addition, missing children also include those who are taken against their will. There are a number of sub-groups of children and young people who run away, each with different experiences and needs, who require diverse responses.

Whilst it is difficult to obtain official estimates of numbers of children and young people who run away in Scotland, it is estimated that at least one in nine children and young people under the age of 16 run away for one night or more. Reasons for running away include family conflict, abuse and other problems at home alongside issues relating to schooling, peers, substance misuse and offending.

It is estimated that one in six children and young people will be harmed through either physical or sexual abuse while away from home. Children and young people who run away are therefore extremely vulnerable. There are also significant numbers of children and young people who become detached from parents, carers and other formal sources of support for significant periods of time, often spending time living on the streets and being particularly at risk from dangerous survival strategies and from others seeking to harm them. Research and practice has highlighted how a proportion of children and young people who run away require a safe place to stay whilst they are away from home or care. In recognition of this need, there have been a small number of emergency accommodation projects established for children and young people who run away in the UK.

1.2 Legislation in Scotland for emergency accommodation

Section 22 of the Children (Scotland) Act 1995 places an overarching duty on authorities to safeguard and promote the welfare of children in need by providing a range and level of services appropriate to the child’s needs. This includes assistance in kind and, in exceptional circumstances, cash. It could also include the provision of accommodation where necessary. It is this overarching duty that allows for emergency accommodation to be provided by a local authority where a young person has run away and is in need of support.

Section 38 of the Children (Scotland) Act 1995 offers legal provision for refuge. Provision of refuge can only be given where the local authority or authorised provider is satisfied that the child appears to be at risk of harm and requests refuge. Refuge provides children and young people with somewhere to stay, access to advice and help for a short period of time to resolve the crisis leading to the child or young person seeking refuge and works to
reconcile him or her with family or carers or to divert the child or young person to alternative suitable accommodation or services. Children and young people may seek refuge as a response to many different problems including being in conflict with their family and being abused, neglected or distressed by their circumstances. Children and young people may already be living in local authority accommodation, be experiencing difficulties relating to school, substance use, pregnancy or offending. Section 38 of the Children (Scotland) Act 1995 states that refuge services should be able to respond promptly and sensitively to a wide range of issues causing children and young people to seek their services.

The responsibility for approval of a place of refuge lies in the first instance with the local authority in which the refuge is situated. Children can access such provision for a period of up to seven days, or 14 days in exceptional circumstances. Whilst a child is provided with refuge, certain enactments relating to harbouring and related offences do not apply.

Section 38 of the Children (Scotland) Act 1995 allows for three forms of refuge for children or young people:

- residential establishments designated as a suitable place of refuge by the local authority that are controlled or managed by the local authority;
- the household of a foster family or other approved carer identified by the local authority as a suitable form of refuge; and
- residential establishments, registered under Section 61 of the Social Work (Scotland) Act 1968, run by a voluntary or private agency for the purpose of providing refuge.

In the case of the latter form of refuge, the owner or staff of registered residential establishments may provide a child or young person with refuge at the child’s request if the child appears to be at risk of harm. When a child or young person enters this form of refuge, refuge providers must notify the local authority within which the refuge is situated and an authorised police officer within 24 hours.

The legal status of children does not change because they are provided with refuge and any measures, such as supervision requirements, remain in force. Children and young people’s parents retain parental responsibility and rights in respect of the child although their capacity to exercise parental responsibility is limited during the period of refuge. Where refuge for a child or young person is provided in an approved and designated household, the child or young person is not regarded as a foster child for the purposes of the Foster Children (Scotland) Act 1984 solely because they are provided with refuge. Whilst a child or young person is in refuge under Section 38 of the Children (Scotland) Act 1995, the local authority is still required to exercise their other responsibilities under the Act.

Refuges are required to register in accordance with the Regulation of Care (Scotland) Act 2001 and regulated by Social Care and Social Work Improvement Scotland (SCSWIS).

There are two important distinctions between Sections 22 and 38 of the Children (Scotland) Act 1995 in relation to the provision of emergency accommodation. Firstly,

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3 The Scottish Commission for the regulation of Care (the Care Commission) held responsibility for regulation of refuges until 1st April 2011. From this date the Care Commission will be merged into the Social Care and Social Work Improvement Scotland (SCSWIS) who will undertake the Care Commission’s existing responsibilities.
under Section 38, a child or young person is not placed in refuge by a local authority or any other agency. Instead, the young person has to agree to come into refuge. This principle does not apply where emergency accommodation is being provided by the local authority under Section 22. Secondly, Section 22 allows for a flexible approach to be adopted by the local authority, with the potential for emergency accommodation to be provided with a family other than that of the child, with a relative or any other suitable person. Section 38 does not provide for this approach to be adopted in respect of refuge.

1.3 The development of emergency accommodation in Scotland

Up until now, provision in this area has predominantly taken the form of refuge. In Scotland in 1984 a four bed refuge was established in the Monklands District of Coatbridge by Strathclyde Regional Council with a grant from Urban Aid4. This refuge was for young people aged 14 to 17 who had run away or were forced to leave home and designed as short term stay for adolescents. Work was carried out with young people and their families on a voluntary contract basis with the aim of preventing family breakdown and thereby reducing the number of young people placed in care or presenting as homeless5. This refuge ceased operating in 1990.

In July 2004 the ROC (Running Other Choices) Refuge opened in Glasgow, established as a national pilot project providing refuge for children and young people who run away or are temporarily unable to remain at home, under the terms of the Children (Scotland) Act 1995. The ROC Refuge provides three of the five refuge beds5 for children and young people who run away in the UK.

It should be noted that whilst the two projects outlined above are the only emergency accommodation services dedicated to providing accommodation for children and young people who run away, local authorities can provide emergency accommodation for children and young who run away in existing bed spaces in children’s homes and foster care. It is also worth highlighting an Action for Children service, commissioned by Children’s Services in Moray, which provides emergency accommodation for any children and young people in at risk of harm and can provide emergency accommodation for children and young people who run away. The self-contained accommodation is part of a residential unit. As highlighted in a 2009 consultation addressing emergency accommodation commissioned by the Scottish Government, Welsh Assembly and Department of Children, Schools and Families (DCSF)xi, this service demonstrates a model of emergency accommodation that can be used to meet the needs of children and young people who run away.

1.4 Learning about emergency accommodation

There is now a significant body of research and evaluation literature addressing running away in general and specific aspects of running away. A smaller body of literature exists in relation to emergency accommodation for children and young people6. However there has been a lack of evaluation of emergency accommodation for children and young people who run away7 and there are significant gaps in the evidence base. The majority of learning in the report focuses on fixed refuge which is a model of emergency accommodation provided in a building in a fixed location solely for the purpose of providing refuge for children and young people who run away. Fixed refuge has been the most

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4 Prior to Section 38 of the Children (Scotland) Act 1995, Section 61 of the Social Work (Scotland) Act 1968 gave statutory provision for a voluntary or independent organisation to operate a residential establishment providing refuge, if approved by the local authority.
5 SAFE@LAST’s SAFE PLACE Refuge provides two beds for young runaways in South Yorkshire.
6 Further details of the body of literature addressing emergency accommodation can be found in Appendix One.
developed and tested form of emergency accommodation for children and young people that run away. There is limited learning related to the foster care model of refuge and the crash pad model\(^7\). There is very little learning gathered about local authority provision of emergency accommodation meeting the needs of young runaways. Due to the majority of learning addressing emergency accommodation for children and young people focusing upon refuge, this learning has informed significant parts of the best practice identified in this report.

1.5 Approach to gathering evidence of best practice in commissioning and delivery of emergency accommodation in Scotland

There were three stages to the approach of gathering evidence of best practice:

1. Learning from existing literature was collected around themes and issues relevant to the aims of the project alongside any other significant learning that relates to the commissioning and delivery of emergency accommodation. As learning relating specifically to emergency accommodation in Scotland is limited, learning is also included from research literature addressing emergency accommodation projects across the UK for children and young people who run away.

2. To address gaps in the body of literature, telephone and face-to-face interviews were carried out with key professionals with experience of commissioning and delivery of emergency accommodation in Scotland. This process also enabled consideration of some of the issues and themes identified in existing literature to develop further learning. Key professionals were from the statutory and third sector and included representatives from the police and health, children’s services managers, commissioning officers, child protection officers and service delivery managers.

3. As there is a focus upon outcomes achieved for children and young people who have accessed emergency accommodation it was important to consult with children and young people who have experienced emergency accommodation in Scotland for children and young people who run away. Children and young people also participated in this part of the project with experience of running away and staying in emergency accommodation provided under Section 22 of the Children (Scotland) Act 1995.

\(^7\) These forms of refuge are defined in Section Two.
Section 2: Defining the Purpose and Different Forms of Emergency Accommodation

This section of the report outlines the purpose of emergency accommodation and describes the different models that can be adopted when providing these services as well as their key strengths and weaknesses. Best practice identified in Section Two reveals that:

- Emergency accommodation for children and young people who run away should provide somewhere safe to stay, access to support and reconciliation with parents or carers or, where this is not possible, diversion to other suitable accommodation.
- Emergency accommodation can be provided to children and young people who run away in the form of residential care, in the homes of families other than the child's or with relatives or other suitable individuals.
- There needs to be sufficient provision to meet the needs of children and young people who run away if emergency accommodation is to be effective.
- Emergency accommodation can also be provided through refuge. Up until now, three models of refuge have existed in the UK: fixed refuge, foster carers and crash pad.
- Fixed refuge with a flexible staffing structure possesses a number of strengths as well as being consistently favoured by children and young people who run away.
- There is limited experience of the foster care model with only minimal learning having been gathered. However, the learning that is available suggests that this model of refuge is particularly suitable for younger children. There are concerns relating to confidentiality of this form of provision in rural areas.
- The crash pad model of refuge is subject to a number of challenges relating to statutory requirements, issues relating to confidentiality and a lack of popularity with children and young people. These challenges reduce the viability of this model as a robust form of emergency accommodation.

2.1 The purpose of emergency accommodation

The purpose of providing emergency accommodation under Section 22 of the Children (Scotland) Act 1995 is to safeguard or promote the welfare of children. The Children (Scotland) Act 1995 guidance describes the purpose of emergency accommodation in the form of refuge as follows:

"Refuge will provide children with somewhere safe to stay and access to advice and help for a short period in order to resolve the crisis which led to the child seeking refuge and to reconcile him or her with family or carers or to divert the child to other suitable services or accommodation." xiii

The identification of the purpose of emergency accommodation can overlap with a discussion of what the key components of this provision must be. The following have been identified in the literature as important elements of emergency accommodation irrespective of the model adopted:

- a safe place to stay in a confidential location that enables the child or young person to be protected from others wishing to harm them or from children and young people’s own actionsxiv;
- preventing children young people from having to remain ‘on the streets’xv;
- support;
- a warm and relaxing environmentxvi;
• ‘time out’ or breathing space xvii,
• respite for carers who also need a break xviii,
• someone to talk to who is supportive and non-judgmental xix;
• care workers and project workers who are professional and able to build good rapport with marginalised young people xx;
• assessment xxi,
• access to advice and support in order to address the circumstances and reasons why the young person ran away and any associated issues xxii;
• reconciliation of the child or young person with his/her family where possible or appropriate xxiii; and
• diversion of the child or young person to other suitable services or accommodation where a return home is not possible xxiv.

2.2 Models of emergency accommodation

As highlighted previously in Section 1.2, emergency accommodation can be provided by the local authority to children and young people in the form of residential care, in the homes of families other than the child’s or with relatives or other suitable others. Emergency accommodation can also be provided through refuge. As identified in the introduction of the report, there have been very few models of emergency accommodation in Scotland. The present lack of emergency accommodation projects in Scotland has been identified by professionals as a challenge as many children and young people who are at risk through running away cannot access services to address their needs. This lack of availability of emergency accommodation for children and young people who run away can result in children and young people remaining in police offices for long periods of time whilst a safe place for them to stay is identified.

When defining refuge, a distinction is often made between ‘fixed refuge’ and flexible’ refuge. Fixed refuge, defined in the introduction to the report, refers to a model of refuge where refuge is in a fixed location in a building that operates solely as a refuge and which is open 24 hours a day. The term ‘flexible refuge’ is used to describe other forms of refuge that are not open 24 hours a day but respond to demand by providing by refuge when a child or young person is identified as being in need of refuge. Foster carer and crash pad models are examples of flexible refuge. However, as refuge models have developed, the distinction between ‘fixed’ and ‘flexible’ refuge has become less fixed xxv. For example, some recent refuge projects have been established in fixed locations which operate solely as refuge but which adopt a flexible approach to staffing, meaning that the resource is only staffed when a child or young person is in refuge. This approach clearly incorporates elements of both “fixed” and “flexible” refuge. In the past, flexible models of refuge were viewed as being more cost effective than fixed refuge xxvi although practice has revealed less difference in cost than may be assumed xxvii.

2.2.1 Fixed refuge

As mentioned in the introduction to the report, fixed refuge has been the most commonly developed and tested model of emergency accommodation in the UK for children and young people who run away. Accordingly, much of the learning focuses on this approach. Positive feedback about fixed refuges has previously been identified:

“Three areas or regions covered by the interviews and consultation events currently had some form of refuge in operation – Glasgow, South Yorkshire and London. Feedback from local authorities and police within these areas about the projects was generally positive. The refuges in these areas had clearly succeeded in establishing positive and collaborative relationships with other local agencies and were seen as being a valuable component of
the overall network of provision for young people.”
(Rees et al, 2009; 51.)

In many ways refuge provided in one fixed location is easier to operate than foster care accommodation and crash pad provision because the support needs of children and young people are met in one location. However, there are both drawbacks and strengths associated with groups of children living together in one location. For example, addressing group dynamics can have a significant impact upon staff resources and children and young people may be introduced to new risky activities by others in refuge. Nonetheless, these risks can be counterbalanced by supportive relationships between children and young people. A flexible admissions policy plays a crucial part in meeting the needs of children and young people and minimising the behaviours of individuals in refuge impacting negatively upon others.

Statutory professionals recognise that fixed refuge plays an important role for children and young people who run away. For example, despite having respite foster care provision for emergency accommodation, Glasgow City Council has invested in emergency accommodation specifically for young runaways in the form of the ROC Refuge. This decision was partly based recognition that children and young people placed in foster care can have separate needs to young runaways and that refuge can be accessed by children and young people without involving social services:

“Children and young people run away who are not known to social services or whose social workers do not know that they have run away or the full extent of their circumstances. Therefore refuge can be accessed by those not known to social services or without the knowledge or consent of their social worker.”
(Professional from the statutory sector)

Fixed refuge is consistently the most popular model of emergency accommodation with children and young people who run away. A consultation with 73 children and young people in South Yorkshire revealed that fixed refuge was the preferred form of emergency accommodation. Children and young people with experience of accessing emergency accommodation in Scotland also highlighted how fixed refuge is overwhelmingly the preferred form of emergency accommodation. When comparing fixed refuge with foster care provision, children and young people preferred fixed refuge provision because it offers the opportunity for ‘space’ that cannot be provided in a foster career’s home:

“In refuge you can have your own space. … (in foster care) that’s somebody’s house and you’d feel out of place. … It would be a bit weird. … In the refuge, when you’re staying there, they (staff) always say to you ‘it’s your house’. … Even if a foster carer said that, you’d still feel a bit weird staying there because it’s somebody else’s house.”
(Young person with experience of accessing emergency accommodation)
The example of the ROC Refuge is given to demonstrate how a fixed refuge operates:

The ROC Refuge is a static refuge situated in a confidential location in Glasgow, open 24 hours a day seven days a week but only staffed by project workers when a child or young person is in refuge. When refuge is not in use, project workers carry out outreach work with children and young people. Project workers also undertake awareness-raising activities in schools and other locations accessed by children and young people to ensure both children and young people and professionals working with them are aware of the refuge and the services it provides. When a child or young person is in refuge, the project team carries out targeted work to address the child or young person’s needs and circumstances, undertaking assessment and link the child or young person into other services as necessary. Where appropriate, project workers continue to work with children and young people after they have left refuge.

2.2.2 Emergency foster care

There have been attempts to provide flexible refuge in the form of foster care placements specifically for children and young people who run away. Children and young people are accommodated in the home of adults who receive training to enable them to provide high quality support to children and young people who run away. Whilst foster carers provide a caring role to meet the child or young person’s physical and practical needs, focused problem-solving work is carried out outside of the foster placement by, for example, project workers or social workers. This is a flexible form of refuge as the refuge service is provided when required by a child or young person who has run away. So far, the numbers of children and young people using such foster care refuge projects have been very low\textsuperscript{xxxiv} and there has been minimal learning gathered about this form of emergency accommodation.

It is generally accepted within the research literature that foster care provision should be available as an alternative to fixed refuge for some children and young people. This form of emergency accommodation for runaways has limited support amongst professionals\textsuperscript{xxxv} including those with experience of commissioning and delivery of emergency accommodation in Scotland. Concerns about this form of emergency accommodation for children and young people who run away centre upon:

- the shortage of foster care in many areas;
- the ability of emergency foster carers to provide the required specialist support for young runaways; and
- recognition that some children and young people do not want to be accommodated so would not be willing to receive emergency accommodation in the form of respite foster carers.

Some of these concerns could be addressed by ensuring that there is a specialist project for young runaways where children and young people are taken during the day so that project workers are able to work with them to address these needs and by developing a network of foster carers separate to those provided by the local authority. There is also need to address issues relating to training, payment, retention and the provision of support for foster carers providing emergency accommodation. Finally, consideration also needs to be given to the issue of confidentiality when providing foster care emergency accommodation in rural areas as it is recognised that children and young people could potentially be more easily identified in such settings.

Children and young people consistently perceive foster care accommodation as being generally unsuitable for young people but possibly appropriate for younger children.
To illustrate how a foster care model of refuge operates, the example of The Porth Project is given:

From 1993 to 1999 The Children’s Society offered flexible refuge in Newport, South Wales, through The Porth Project. Accommodation was provided for children and young people who run away through a pool of foster carers recruited specifically to provide this service who were subject both to approval as foster carers by The Children’s Society and to certification as a refuge under Section 51 by the Welsh Office. Young people stayed at the refuge carers’ homes except during week day office hours when they were brought to a project base where project staff worked with them to address the issues that had caused them to run away. Whilst this project was shown to be particularly effective at times it appears that the resources required to operate this model were initially under-estimated and the project experienced considerable difficulties in maintaining an adequate pool of refuge carers, thereby resulting in a sporadic service and the project closedxxxvi.

2.2.3 Crash pad model

The term ‘crash pad’ has been used to describe a model of emergency accommodation for children and young people who run away where accommodation is provided in the same building as a project and/or office base that provides general support for young runaways. Whilst the care needs of the child or young person are provided by staff working in the crash pad, work to address the child or young person’s needs and circumstances is carried out by project staff. Once again, this is a flexible model of refuge because a crash pad model is only open and staffed when a child or young person requires refuge.

There is evidence that children and young people do not favour this model of emergency accommodation xxxvii due to the lack of confidentiality afforded by the location of the provision. This concern is reinforced by research:

“Location of the accommodation in the same building of a project for young runaways is likely to act as a deterrent to some children and young people to accessing the accommodation. … Children and young people have highlighted the importance or any refuge provision being in a safe location to ensure that young runaways seeking refuge feel safe and it recognised that maintaining a secret location is … not possible when the accommodation is part of a project for runaways.”
(Smeaton, 2008; 16.)xxxviii

This view was also echoed in the consultation with children and young people that was undertaken as part of this project.
The crash pad model has so far only been developed in one location and is described below in order to outline how a crash pad model may operate:

### The South Coast Runaways Initiative (SCRI) was a Children Society project based at Checkpoint, an advice and drop-in centre in Torquay, with a history of providing services for children and young people who run away. SCRI was successful with a bid to the Department of Health (DoH) to develop one of six pilot community-based refuge projects in England. An extension was built to the Checkpoint project which provided a one-bed refuge for children and young people who run away for a maximum of four nights in one stay. The crash pad was designed to be staffed by a part-time registered manager and by sessional managers with a key worker who co-ordinated, took a lead role in the child or young person’s planning and provided support such as advocacy and referral. Work also took place with parents and carers and internal referrals were often made to refer the child or young person to Checkpoint to address other issues in a child or young person’s life post-refuge. There were a number of issues related to the location of the refuge being in the same building as a drop-in centre for children and young people and relating to staffing the project with sessional staff. Whilst there were a number of factors that support the development of this project, there was very limited uptake of the accommodation by children and young people and the project ceased operating.
Section 3: Commissioning Emergency Accommodation

This section of the report addresses the commissioning of emergency accommodation for children and young people. Due to the intrinsic relationship between commissioning and funding, funding issues are also addressed in this section of the report. Best practice highlighted in Section Three suggests that:

- There is a range of information that commissioners of emergency accommodation should request from organisations tendering to delivery emergency accommodation relating to:
  - evidencing and meeting need;
  - competent skills and expertise; and
  - delivery, accountability and reviewing processes that include children and young people.
- Commissioners of emergency accommodation should consider a range of issues relating to:
  - access;
  - commissioning agencies with experience of delivering services to young runaways;
  - identifying achievable outcomes;
  - options for accommodation whilst resolving family conflict;
  - appropriate use of emergency accommodation projects;
  - building on existing services for children and young people who run away; and
  - provision of funding that allows for the service to develop.
- There are a number of benefits to the cluster model of refuge model including reducing costs, increasing availability of emergency accommodation for children and young people who run away and increasing service co-ordination.
- The time taken to develop and establish emergency accommodation should be acknowledged and accounted for.
- Ensuring sustainable funding for four to five years needs to be given significant consideration by commissioners of emergency accommodation. This will allow for sufficient time to develop the provision, establish awareness and usage and undertake evaluation.

3.1 Good practice in commissioning emergency accommodation

The literature highlights a range of learning relating to good practice in the commissioning of emergency accommodation. When commissioning such projects, it is recommended that commissioners should request tendering organisations to provide evidence of:

- meeting local need;
- access to competent skills and expertise;
- delivery, accountability and reviewing processes;
- meeting the needs of children and young people; and
- including children and young people in gathering evidence of ‘what works’.

The following is also highlighted as good practice in the commissioning of emergency accommodation for children and young people who run away:

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8 This is addressed further in Section 3.2.
• There is a need for every local authority to detail how young people at risk on the streets can access safe emergency accommodation xlii.

• When commissioning agencies to deliver emergency accommodation for children and young people who run away, commissioners should commission agencies with previous experience of meeting the needs of children and young people at risk through running away xliii.

• There is requirement for emergency accommodation provision to support clear and identifiable outcomes whilst at the same time recognising that in contemporary commissioning, a range of variables and uncontrollable factors must also be recognised. This approach will allow commissioners to ensure that, as well as working towards intended outcomes, there is also recognition of potential unintended consequences.

• Emergency accommodation should not be subject to unnecessary forms of inspection which slow down the setting up process and development of a project xliv.

• Commissioners of emergency accommodation should consider having in place options for children and young people, such as specialist foster care, where children and young people can live safely and have time to work with professionals to resolve family conflict xlv.

• Emergency accommodation for children and young people should not be used when other measures are required to meet the needs of children and young people xlv.

• Where possible, commissioning of emergency accommodation for children and young people who run away should be built on already existing services xlvii.

• Emergency accommodation needs to be funded for more than the short term to allow the service to develop xlviii.

In learning specifically relating to refuge, the following is highlighted in the literature as good practice in the commissioning of refuge:

• Refuge appears to work best when located in major conurbations to serve several local authority areas. There is evidence that these services can act as a ‘hub’ for surrounding locally-based services xlix.

• There should be recognition that fixed refuge may be cost-effective in the long run as it appears to be the most acceptable to young people and potentially limits damage, achieves positive outcomes and reduces longer-term costs i.

In practice, there are some differences in how emergency accommodation projects have been commissioned in the UK as illustrated through the following examples:

Many emergency accommodation projects in the UK for children and young people who run away have been initiated by third sector organisations who then seek commissioning from the local authority and other providers of funding. For example, Aberlour initiated the ROC Refuge as their practice with young runaways in Glasgow revealed the need for refuge. Once the idea was developed and the refuge established, ROC sought commissioning arrangements with local authorities via a spot-purchasing model.
The refuge in Coatbridge and the emergency accommodation provision in Moray are exceptions to this as the commissioning organisation was the local authority. The Action for Children emergency accommodation service based in Moray developed from conversations between the local authority and Action for Children that took into account the rural nature of the locality and recognised that that there are times when emergency accommodation is required and that it is inappropriate to place children and young people in emergency accommodation with others who are in longer-term residential care. Similarly the refuge in Coatbridge developed from practice-based evidence of need for refuge for young people.

The DoH also commissioned six pilot community based refuge schemes for young runaways in 2004 to 2006 as part of a pilot in England.

3.2 Scoping activity to identify local need for emergency accommodation

It is important to carry out scoping activity in a local area before developing emergency accommodation projects. This allows commissioners to ensure that:

- provision will meet the needs of children and young people who run away;
- emergency accommodation projects are appropriate for the local area; and
- the provision of such services translates into effective use of resources.

Best practice indicates that significant scoping should be undertaken but it is recognised that there are not always resources available for such activity. To support with scoping activity to assess need in the local area, it is useful to once again quote some of the key figures relating to running away in Scotland:

- One in nine children and young people will have run away overnight one or more times before the age of 16.
- There is no significant difference in the likelihood of children and young people running away in city, towns and rural areas.

Evidence also suggests that a significant proportion of young runaways require a safe place to stay and support with meeting their needs:

“In the region of 20% to 25% have nowhere to stay for some or all of the time that they are away from home. This includes young people who sleep rough and also those who sleep with friends or relatives but also reported being hurt or harmed. … This evidence suggests that some form of immediate support should be made available and accessible to these young people whilst they are away from home.”
(Rees et al, 2009; 19.)

Using this information, it should be possible for commissioners to estimate the numbers of young runaways in their area and, more specifically, the proportion of these young people that require emergency accommodation. Consideration of the geographical nature of the local area and issues relating to diversity will also support with the development of suitable provision.

One of these projects was registered as a refuge under Section 51 of the 1989 Children’s Act and five projects were registered under Section 20 or Section 17 of the 1989 Children’s Act.
As an example of best practice, the scoping activity that SAFE@LAST undertook in South Yorkshire is described:

Before developing its services for children and young people who run away, including emergency accommodation, SAFE@LAST commissioned an action research project composed of a number of components. A schools survey was undertaken with 14 to 16 year olds to provide reliable estimates of the scale of running away in South Yorkshire. A consultation with children and young people took place which had a specific focus gaining children and young people’s views on models of emergency accommodation. The final element involved the gathering of information from agencies in the local area. The findings of this action research project influenced the development of SAFE@LAST’s services and led to a two bed refuge being established in the local area.

3.3 Future commissioning

There is some evidence that effective commissioning of emergency accommodation could include a model of refuge that serves a number of areas and is financed through joint procurement arrangements. Such a model could include inter-agency and cross-boundary commissioning. As mentioned previously in this section of the report, there is some evidence that refuges that serve a number of local authorities can act as a ‘hub’ through which locally-based services working to meet the needs of children and young people who run away can interconnect.

When supported by a number of areas, the model of refuge is described as a ‘cluster model’. Whilst there is need for further consideration of cluster models of refuge, such a model is likely to reduce costs as costs are shared across a cluster of local authorities, increase accessibility to emergency accommodation for children and young people who run away and increase service co-ordination. The model can be of particular use for smaller local authorities. Its potential is linked to the geography of regions and the relative size of local population in terms of population base. However, there are some indications that cluster approaches are less likely to be appropriate in rural areas due to size and the need for localised responses.

3.4 Funding emergency accommodation

Funding is an essential consideration when commissioning emergency accommodation for children and young people. Accordingly, the approach taken to funding needs to be explored in some detail by commissioners. Experience suggests that the innovative nature of refuge projects can often result in issues around funding. The fact that, at the present time, the impetus for development of refuge services has lay predominantly with third sector organisations has also proven a factor in funding issues, as have issues around patterns of usage of this type of provision:

“Funding is always going to be an issue if you’ve not got something that’s commissioned and as a result of that, your usage, to a greater or lesser extent, determines your viability.”

(Professional from the third sector)

Key stakeholders from statutory agencies explicitly acknowledged that the spot purchasing model of funding works in favour of local authorities as they only pay for refuge when a

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10 As indicated previously in the report, there is recognition that emergency accommodation projects for children and young people who run away will sometimes be empty as refuge is only required by relatively low numbers of children and young people and that work often takes place to meet a child or young person’s needs in ways other than providing refuge.
child or young person is in refuge. However, professionals with experience of commissioning and delivering emergency accommodation for children and young people overwhelmingly recognised that sustainable long-term funding is required for emergency accommodation. One of the identified challenges to the commissioning and delivery of emergency accommodation projects is the time required for development of emergency accommodation projects as it can take considerable time to develop and register emergency accommodation\textsuperscript{xi}. Experience has revealed that the developmental phase of emergency accommodation can take one to two years\textsuperscript{xi} before work with children and young people can take place\textsuperscript{11}. The lengthy time required to develop and establish emergency accommodation projects is also identified by evidence-based findings from research which:

“Point to the need for longer-term funding arrangements and it suggested that a four to five year period would be a realistic initial time scale in order to set up an emergency accommodation project, establish a reasonable level of awareness and usage, and undertake an evaluation to assess its effectiveness.”
(Rees et al, 2009; 68.)

\textsuperscript{11} There is potential for this time to decrease as greater experience and knowledge of the processes of developing emergency accommodation projects develops.
Section 4: Costs relating to Emergency Accommodation

This section addresses costs of emergency accommodation for children and young people who run away, the costs of failing to provide emergency accommodation, and the role that emergency accommodation can play in reducing costs. The value added of emergency accommodation is also considered. Discussion of costs and emergency accommodation identifies the following as best practice:

- To accurately assess costs it is necessary to account for the full range of services provided alongside counterbalancing strengths and weaknesses of operational issues and benefits to children and young people.
- There is need to recognise that costs of fixed and flexible refuge projects are representative of population size, likely levels of need and different models of provision for children and young people who run away.
- It is important to consider the costs of failing to provide emergency accommodation for children and young people who run away as these can be significant in terms of financial costs and in the costs experienced by children and young people.
- Likewise, it is important to consider the role that emergency accommodation can play in saving costs.
- Investing in emergency accommodation can ensure value added to local authorities and to the police.

The misperceptions and gaps in information relating to costs of emergency accommodation have been identified as a challenge to the commissioning and delivery of emergency accommodation. Cost of refuge has been a contentious subject throughout the history of refuge provision and there are a number of misconceptions of cost and gaps in available information about the costs of emergency accommodation. For example:

“Assumptions about the relative costs of different models stem from the tendency not to compare like with like. For example, a fixed refuge model including a 24 hour contact, immediate meetings with young people, provision of accommodation, initial crisis resolution and follow-up work will inevitably be much more expensive than the per person night cost of emergency foster care because the refuge is providing a range of relevant services ‘wrapped around’ the provision of accommodation.”

(Rees et al, 2009; 64.)

When considering the cost of refuge, there is often a lack of recognition upon the work that takes place after the child or young person has left refuge. Therefore to accurately assess costs of refuge, it is necessary to include the costs that are involved in, for example, providing an accessible referral route, initial needs assessment and the work that takes place with a child or young person after they have left refuge. It is also important to consider the counterbalancing strengths and weaknesses of operational issues and benefits to children and young people.

4.1 Estimates of the costs of emergency accommodation

Previous attempts to gather learning about the costs of emergency accommodation have been hindered by the lack of information addressing costs and there is need for future evaluations and reviews of emergency accommodation projects to gather learning about costs and for providers of emergency accommodation to share this information. In the absence of such information, attempts have been made to estimate costs of emergency accommodation. The estimated yearly cost for fixed refuge, based upon sets of
assumptions of needs and provision of service\textsuperscript{12}, is in the region of £680,000 and in the region of £470,000 for flexible refuge. However, it is important that the difference in the costs of fixed and flexible refuge are contextualised by considering, for example, population size, likely levels of need and different models of provision for children and young people. To highlight costs of refuge and other forms of emergency accommodation, and provide some context of costs, the costs of the ROC Refuge and the Action for Children emergency accommodation in Moray are discussed\textsuperscript{13}. The costs of the ROC Refuge, for example, reveal that fixed refuge can be provided at lower costs than those estimated:

\begin{tabular}{|l|}
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The yearly cost of ROC Refuge and all the services it provides is £445,514\textsuperscript{14}. The spot purchasing cost of the refuge is £408 per night. This cost per night does not include the work that ROC often continues with a child or young person after they have left refuge. Some representatives from the local authority and third sector expressed the opinion that the cost of the ROC refuge compares favourably to that of other accommodation services for children and young people as the ROC Refuge provides “high quality assessment, work in the refuge and outreach work and offers good value.” (Professional from the statutory sector). The cost of the ROC Refuge is also less than other specialist accommodation provision for children and young people. \\

The costs to the local authority of the Action for Children emergency accommodation in Moray is in the region of £340 for a 24 hour period with one member of staff. These costs cover staff time and do not cover other costs of providing emergency accommodation which are met by Action for Children. If the needs of the child or young person were such that two members of staff were required, the cost of emergency accommodation would be in the region of £600 for a 24 hour period. \\
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\textbf{4.2 Costs of failing to provide emergency accommodation}

When examining the costs of providing emergency accommodation, it is important to consider the costs of failing to respond to children and young people who run away. For example, when a child or young person’s needs are not met and they are forced to spend time on the streets (often relying upon criminal survival strategies) the average total cost to the criminal justice system, health system and the victim is half a million pounds\textsuperscript{15} for each young person.\textsuperscript{lxix}

There are other costs of failing to provide emergency accommodation for children and young people who run away. For example, in Glasgow, prior to the existence of the ROC Refuge, respite foster care was the only possible provision for children and young people where there were low level concerns and children and young people required ‘time out’ before they could be reunited with their family. In many cases the local authority was not able to provide respite foster care, resulting in a smaller likelihood of improved outcomes for those children affected.

Professionals with experience of commissioning and delivering emergency accommodation in Scotland stressed the importance of emphasising the need to consider

\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{12} Full explanation of these figures and the service provided for children and young people who run away can be found in the appendix of Rees G Franks M Medforth R & Wade J (2009) \textit{Commissioning, Delivery and Perceptions of Emergency Accommodation} London: Department for Children, Schools and Families.
\item \textsuperscript{13} It should be noted that these costs are not comparable as the services provided by the two projects differs in many ways.
\item \textsuperscript{14} This figure is based upon the financial year 2009 – 2010.
\item \textsuperscript{15} These figures are similar to those in the US when accounting for the costs of high risk youth.
\end{itemize}
costs in terms other than ‘cold cash’. For example, when considering the costs of placing a child or young person out of area, financial costs rise and ‘emotional’ costs are also incurred for a child or young person that cannot be measured in financial terms. Personal well-being and happiness of children and young people is identified as an important factor when assessing costs. Comments from children and young people who have accessed emergency accommodation in Scotland who run away reveal how the provision of refuge prevented them from experiencing costs to their personal well-being:

“If I hadnae have had the refuge to go to … I’d have had to go to X (name of an older male) whose got his own flat and he would be expecting something back in return … I’d have to have had sex with him.”

“I’d probably be staying in friends of friends’ houses, strangers’ houses … I’d probably be just staying about house to house or in the town; something like that in much more dangerous environments. … Now that there is the refuge, I’ve not had to stay in those dangerous places.”

“If there wasn’t the ROC refuge, I’d probably be like what I was like before I came into refuge the first time: … not caring about anybody other than myself, getting drunk all the time and not caring about what anybody else felt; I just cared about myself. … I’d probably still be like that; I know I’d still be like that.”

4.3 The role of emergency accommodation in reducing costs

Emergency accommodation is potentially able to support with longer-term savings relating to prevention of repeat running away incidents, reductions in on-going demand for other services and possible longer-term benefits in terms of links between running and, for example, offending, substance misuse, school attendance and youth homelessness\textsuperscript{lx}. When emergency accommodation is able to provide safety and prevent further incidents of running away, as well as benefiting children and young people, their families, services and wider society, there are also a range of potential savings relating to:

- reduction of the cost to both the individual and society when a child or young person is harmed during an incident of running away;
- other health costs that are incurred through running away;
- costs to the police when a child or young person is reported as missing (estimated to cost an average of £1000 to £2000 pounds\textsuperscript{16});
- cost benefits in terms of reduction in missed days of schooling;
- prevention of repeat running away costs; and
- reductions in on-going demand for other services as early intervention may, for example, prevent a child or young person going into care at a later date\textsuperscript{lxii}.

\textsuperscript{16}These figures are based on estimates from Lancashire and Leicestershire Police.
Refuge can play an important part in reducing costs\textsuperscript{xxii} as Ciaron’s\textsuperscript{17} case study reveals\textsuperscript{18}:

Ciaron’s mother and stepfather misused substances and, from being a young child, Ciaron was neglected, lived in abject poverty and abused by his mother. Ciaron started misusing alcohol at 11 and, by the time he was 12, was smoking cannabis, stealing from shops, fighting and engaging in vandalism. Aged 13 Ciaron was stealing cars and selling stolen goods. He was identified as a child at risk. Through criminal activity Ciaron accrued costs to the criminal justice system relating to at least £221,436\textsuperscript{19}. When he was fourteen, Ciaron told his social worker about his parents’ substance misuse and being abused. Sharing this information did not result in any change for Ciaron and he stopped going to school and started running away. After sleeping rough for five weeks, Ciaron contacted the Emergency Duty Team who gave Ciaron the free-phone number of the ROC Refuge. Ciaron was offered a place in refuge and stayed for ten days. Refuge staffs worked with social services to ensure Ciaron’s needs were met and he was accommodated in a children’s residential unit and returned to school. ROC continued to work with Ciaron for three years and, during this time, Ciaron had a second stay in refuge. After receiving support from ROC whilst in refuge and post-refuge, costing just under £15,000, Ciaron has ceased offending and now contributes financially and socially to society in a positive manner.

4.4 Value added of emergency accommodation

The value added of a service is often an important part of the consideration of whether or not to invest in meeting the costs associated with provision. To exemplify how emergency accommodation can provide value added, the perspectives of commissioners of the ROC Refuge are offered:

Value added of the services provided by ROC Refuge is provided by the role that the refuge plays in diverting children and young people away from the care system through providing a genuine response and focused engagement upon the young person’s needs. The value added of refuge therefore includes time for reflection, structure, focus and to accelerate efforts to engage with young people and their families which can be beneficial in a range of ways. A stay in the refuge is often identified as being more positive for children and young people than entry into the care system and to result in focused activity to address the child or young person’s circumstances:

“Young people in refuge do not languish in the same way that young people can be left to languish in care as when a young person is taken into care, there is often a sense that ‘that’s the crisis over with’ and a lull in the work that takes place therefore leading to young people languishing in care.”

(Professional from the statutory sector)

“Local authorities tend to back off at the time of accommodation, thinking that the fix is in the accommodation, just at the time when there is specific need for reappraising and reflecting.”

(Professional from the statutory sector)

As well as preventing children and young people from entering care, the ROC refuge was also identified as facilitating a child or young person’s entry into the care system where appropriate:

“The model of refuge is a good crisis intervention model that can provide both preventative work that helps not to accommodate a child or young person but also to accommodation where child protection issues render it necessary to do so.”

(Professional from the statutory sector)

\textsuperscript{17} The name of the young person has been changed to provide anonymity.

\textsuperscript{18} This case study was drawn from a young person who stayed in the ROC Refuge and gave permission for his ‘case’ to be used for a cost benefit analysis exercise and is taken from Smeaton E (2010) Counting the Costs: Children and Young People on the Streets in the UK Sandbach: Railway Children.

Other perspectives addressing value added centre upon the refuge provider’s expertise and specialism of running away, and the needs of children and young people who run away, and their ability to work to enable a child or young person to return home or direct them for support from other services:

“The value add of refuge is the understanding of the team of the needs of young runaways, ROC’s work with the family, the focus upon the young person’s needs and the focus upon the reasons for running away, the potential to work to return a child home or to refer for other accommodation or for other services.”

(Professional from the statutory sector)

From a police perspective, the police have a duty of care to all vulnerable children and young people including those that go missing. The provision of emergency accommodation supports the police to fulfil this duty by ensuring that support is made available in those instances where a child or young person has run away and there may be concerns about their well-being.

The value added of refuge is one of the reasons that local authorities who have their own general emergency accommodation for young runaways also invest in such provision:

“It’s (refuge) short-term. You’ve got a beginning and an end and there’s no opportunity for young people to languish which they’re at significant risk of in they go into looked after accommodation. … (refuge) actually works with young people whilst they’re in refuge so it’s focused, targeted work. … (refuge) helps inform local authority assessments … raise child protection referrals. … It’s not just a bed for the night.”

(Professional from the third sector)
Section 5: The Role of Emergency Accommodation in Achieving Positive Outcomes for Children and Young People Who Run away

Section five considers the role of emergency accommodation in achieving positive outcomes for children and young people and identifies those factors that both facilitate and hinder achieving such outcomes. As mentioned in the introduction to the report, there is limited learning about outcomes for children and young people who access emergency accommodation as existing learning only relates to refuge.

Best practice requires that positive outcomes are achieved for children and young people who run away and learning presented in this section of the report reveals that:

- There are a range of positive outcomes experienced by children and young people who have accessed refuge.
- There are a number of factors that facilitate the achievement of positive outcomes that should be factored into practice when delivering emergency accommodation.
- There are also factors that hinder the achievement of positive outcomes with children and young people. It is important to work to address these factors and reduce their impact upon the effective delivery of such services.

5.1 Positive outcomes for children and young people who access refuge

Examination of outcomes of children and young people who access refuge revealed that refuge supports achieving the following outcomes:

- preventing children and young people from being in dangerous situations and harmed;
- linking children and young people into support services to ensure they receive appropriate support to meet their needs;
- alleviating children and young people’s worries;
- improving behaviour and achievements at school;
- enabling children and young people to become more stable;
- providing children and young people with the safe space to think about what is taking place in their lives and allowing them to make informed choices and feel supported;
- improving mental health;
- improving self-esteem;
- supporting children and young people to make a realistic assessment of their behaviours, their impact and the risks these behaviours expose them to and, as a consequence, becoming enabled to make more positive choices;
- reducing/ceasing running away;
- reducing/ceasing offending;
- reducing substance misuse;
- developing children and young people’s awareness of support being available for them should they experience future difficulties;
- enabling a child or young person to understand why they were being taken into care and settle into their care placement;
• improving communication between children and young people and parents and carers;
• improving relationships with family;
• children and young people in need and at significant risk not previously known to services becoming linked to appropriate support to enable their needs to be addressed; and
• children and young people becoming able to trust professionals and developing positive relationships with other support workers from a range of agencies.

It is important to acknowledge that whilst a stay in refuge supports with achieving positive outcomes, the work undertaken post-refuge also plays an important role in achieving sustainable outcomes for children. For example, as well as post-refuge work supporting with delivering those outcomes outlined above, children and young people who have stayed in refuge also consider that such support can offer a “safety net” and additional support through having “someone to talk to”. Children and young people, parents, external professionals and project workers have all identified the benefit to children and young people who have stayed in refuge of knowing there is on-going support once they have left

Outreach support, from refuge workers in the short and long-term also assists children and young people in developing resilience. Children and young people are also more likely to ‘ride out’ difficulties when they had the support of a ‘significant other’, whether it be a professional or an informal helper.

On-going availability of support from refuge staff potentially assists young people in this respect as well through contact with the refuge and outreach work.

When consulted, young people who have accessed refuge in Scotland identified many of the above as outcomes of their stay in refuge. For example, young people identified how refuge staff worked with them to prepare for a move to a residential unit:

“They tell you what to expect and what it will be like and tell you that you can contact them if you’re having any problems. It makes it (moving into a residential unit) all a bit easier. … It’s a big change (going from the refuge to a residential unit) because it’s all so calm and relaxed in refuge and when I went into the home for the first time, somebody flung a plant in a plant pot from the upstairs window and I was like ‘god, it’s a bit mad in here’.”

(Young person with experience of accessing refuge)

A couple of young people described how they received support with mental health issues. For example, one young person received support relating to depression and an anxiety disorder and was linked into therapeutic interventions which resulted in the young person ceasing to self-harm. The support that parents received was also identified as a positive outcome by young people as this parental support facilitated improved relationships with their parents. Young people also identified how refuge staff worked with them to recognise the consequences of their actions and to identify alternative options where young people are involved in risky behaviour. As an example of this, one young person described how the work with refuge staff has had a positive influence on his attitude towards education:
“Before I went into refuge, I didn't like school and I wasn't interested in education but being in refuge made me want to get into social work so I study that at college now and I'm doing really well with it.”

(Young person with experience of accessing refuge)

5.2 Factors that support positive outcomes
A number of factors have been identified that facilitate positive outcomes for children and young people who stay in refuge\textsuperscript{xxvii}. These include:

- children and young people feeling safe whilst in refuge;
- the provision of an environment that provides ‘time out’ or breathing space for children and young people to consider their circumstances and work with others\textsuperscript{xxviii};
- provision of a warm and relaxing environment;
- staff who are available to talk when children and young people want to talk;
- developing a positive rapport with staff;
- refuge staff ‘going the extra mile’ to work in the child or young person’s best interests;
- positive working relationships between refuge staff and other agencies;
- post-refuge work;
- children and young people’s knowledge that there is a safety net providing somewhere to go and someone to talk to;
- working with children and young people who are able and prepared to engage;
- a history in the local area of the refuge provider’s organisation delivering services for children and young people who run away;
- a self-referral process allowing children and young people to self-refer to refuge;
- the ability to link children and young people into other services; and
- setting boundaries in an appropriate manner that does not restrict access.

5.3 Factors that hinder positive outcomes
A number of factors have also been identified that may hinder achieving positive outcomes for children and young people who stay in refuge\textsuperscript{xxix}. These include:

- professionals' lack of understanding of refuge;
- professionals' lack of understanding about the need for refuge to be in a confidential location;
- loss of knowledge about refuge provision within local agencies occurring as a result of staff turnover;
- lack of response from external agencies to referrals;
- different perceptions of what is considered a proportionate and appropriate response to the needs of a child or young person;
- the lack of self-referral by the child or young person;
- a child or young person leaving refuge in a short timescale before planned work has been carried out in the agreed timescale;
- a lack of change in parents’ or carers’ behaviour;
- issues relating to other significant people in children and young people’s lives such as parents or carers who refuse to engage with refuge staff, the impact of peers or, where sexual exploitation features, persistent grooming of children and young people;
• children and young people’s mistrust of adults;
• children and young people’s unwillingness to change their behaviour; and
• children and young people running away to be with someone.
Section 6: Good Practice in Delivery of Emergency Accommodation

This section of the report highlights key components of good practice in the delivery of emergency accommodation. It focuses upon factors to be addressed in the development of emergency accommodation including: diversity; issues relating to access; practice with children and young people; working with Social Care and Social Work Improvement Scotland (SCSWIS); evaluation; and working with children and young people at risk who refuse to access emergency accommodation. The following are key components of good practice when delivering emergency accommodation:

- Although Section 38 of the Children (Scotland) Act 1995 is identified as useful legislation, there are issues relating to extent of knowledge of this section. Training addressing Section 38 and general running away issues is recommended to address the lack of knowledge.
- Whilst the statutory sector has potential to deliver effective emergency accommodation, evidence suggests that the third sector is best placed to deliver this particular service for children and young people.
- Refuge projects should be used in accordance with Section 38 of the Children (Scotland) Act 1995 and not as an extension of the care system.
- To ensure positive outcomes for children and young people, emergency accommodation cannot operate in isolation but should be one component of a continuum of services which requires partnership working and the development of protocols.
- Measures should be taken to ensure effective sharing of information in order to ensure the needs of children and young people who access emergency accommodation are being met.
- The physical layout of emergency accommodation is important to children and young people and should be considered, firstly, to ensure children and young people are able to access their own space and, secondly, to avoid the perception that children and young people are being kept against their will.
- There are a number of issues relating to diversity that need to be taken into when considering location and delivery of services, responding to culturally sensitive issues and embedding anti-discriminatory practice into consistent use.
- There are also a range of issues relating to access that address:
  - awareness-raising amongst children and young people and professionals;
  - ensuring perception of independence from the statutory sector;
  - providing emergency accommodation in a confidential location and the importance of raising awareness of the need for a confidential location amongst commissioning agencies and referring professionals;
  - the role of telephone helplines;
  - direct access;
  - self-referral;
  - the first contact with children and young people; and
  - adopting a child-centred approach.
- The importance of effective risk assessment is highlighted as a key factor in ensuring the delivery of appropriate, proportionate and timely responses to the needs of children and young people who run away.
- There are a number of benefits to engaging with parents which need to balanced against recognition of the need for a child-centred approach.
- Post-accommodation work plays an important part in achieving positive outcomes.
for children and young people who access emergency accommodation.

- Constructive working relationships between Social Care and Social Work Improvement Scotland and providers of emergency accommodation are critical to ensure the delivery of high quality services.
- Both internal and external evaluation of emergency accommodation is advised due to the support this activity plays for development of emergency accommodation projects, in achieving positive outcomes for children and young people who run away and supporting with future funding.
- Refuge has not always been successful in achieving positive outcomes for children and young people who become detached from parents and carers and those involved in sexual exploitation. Therefore it is important to seek alternative approaches with some children and young people and develop alternative responses to children and young people who do not wish to access emergency accommodation.

6.1 Advantages of third sector provision of emergency accommodation

There is acknowledgement that the delivery of emergency accommodation should be more about ‘how’ it is delivered rather than by ‘whom’ it is delivered\(^{xxx}\). However, whilst statutory services should be involved in emergency accommodation and have the potential to deliver emergency accommodation for children and young people, there is evidence that there are a number of advantages of third sector provision of emergency accommodation. This is largely because of the reluctance on the part of some children, young people and families to access statutory help, particularly when child protection issues may be the focus of work\(^{lox}\). Emergency accommodation provided by the third sector is perceived to be more attractive for many children and young people who run away\(^{lox}\). This view is reinforced by professionals involved in commissioning and delivery of emergency accommodation:

> “Young people and their parents and carers do view voluntary sector providers; they’re less threatened by third sector providers.”

(Professional from the third sector)

There is evidence that the third sector is able to operate in a way that lends itself to child centred approaches often successful with children and young people. For example, because of the need to work in partnership with the child or young person whilst in emergency accommodation, there is a need to establish ground rules and form a contract with the child or young person through negotiation. The role that the third sector can take in relation to acting as an advocate for children and young people has also been identified:

> “It allows us (the third sector) to advocate strongly on behalf of their (children and young people’s) needs so that they get the right service. If we were a service that was part of a local authority, it would be harder for us to advocate against the wishes of our own organisation.”

(Professional from the third sector)

The third sector is also able to receive funding from a range of statutory agencies and other funders that may not be accessible to statutory agencies.

There are also instances where a child or young person accesses emergency accommodation and it is possible to resolve issues without involving statutory agencies.

Finally, statutory services can also experience benefits as a result of the third sector delivering emergency accommodation:
“An emergency accommodation model that straddles local authority boundaries is good for children and young people as they (children and young people) cross boundaries. It works for local authorities to have a partner based in the voluntary sector who works across boundaries because individual local authorities inevitably work in favour of the host authority’s children. In addition, children and young people are better served by the voluntary sector. … Having the voluntary sector deliver emergency accommodation also allows statutory services to reflect on their own processes.”

(Professional from the statutory sector)

6.2 Emergency accommodation as part of an integrated service for children and young people who run away

Emergency accommodation cannot operate in isolation. Instead it should act as one component of a continuum of integrated services which deliver positive outcomes for children and young people. These services should be delivered in a way that is both joined up and focussed specifically on the needs of the individual child – the key principles which underpin the Getting it right for every child approach. If emergency accommodation provision is well integrated with local services and processes there is a greater likelihood that young people will benefit from:

- improved and easier access to emergency accommodation; and
- improved access to other support whilst in, and moving on from, emergency accommodation.

To achieve the above, and support with effective partnership working, it is important to develop protocols identifying:

- which children and young people emergency accommodation is appropriate for;
- referral procedures;
- admission procedures; and
- how agencies will work together to meet the needs of children and young people.

Embedding processes and practice in protocols also has the benefit of avoiding reliance upon the knowledge of individual professionals who may leave their post.

Providers of emergency accommodation often experience difficulties in accessing information about the needs of children that they are supporting. This can regularly lead to an increased reliance being placed on the information shared by the child or young person, which may be limited for justifiable reasons. To address this challenge to the effective delivery of emergency accommodation, when providing short-term emergency accommodation, information must be effectively shared within and across agencies in order to enable the delivery of the best possible support for the child or young person.

Establishing steering groups that include external professionals from agencies working with children and young people in crisis also support with effect partnership working.

6.3 The physical layout of emergency accommodation projects

The physical layout of emergency accommodation has been identified by young people as having a key role in ensuring its effectiveness. As well as providing a warm and homely space, it is important that emergency accommodation projects are able to provide space for children and young people to be on their own when they require time alone away from project workers and other children and young people. Whilst all emergency
accommodation projects should provide a bedroom for the child or young person that they have to themselves, children and young people have often been critical of those projects where the bedroom is particularly small and/or is adjacent to the space inhabited by project workers. In addition it is important that the physical layout of refuge projects reflect that children and young people choose to enter refuge and are also able to leave at will. The learning suggests that all emergency accommodation projects for children and young people who run away do not in any way enforce the perception that children and young people are kept against their will.

6.4 Diversity
It is important to address the issue of diversity whenever emergency accommodation is provided. This means taking into account the different backgrounds and characteristics of children and young people who run away, their experiences whilst away and the diverse responses required to meet their needs. Different models of emergency accommodation should be considered that take into account the local context as different responses may be required to meet the specific needs of individual children and young people.

6.4.1 Location and delivery of services
Different models of emergency accommodation for children and young people who run away are suited to different geographical settings. It is also important to consider the possible impacts that the location of emergency accommodation may have on the child or young person. For example, a young South Asian girl may feel she has high visibility if she is accessing refuge in a mainly white area. It is therefore important to ensure that diversity issues and confidentiality issues have been carefully addressed prior to decisions being taken around the location of refuge provision. As mentioned previously, the importance of ensuring emergency accommodation projects are placed in a confidential location is paramount as children and young people from all backgrounds need to feel safe whilst in refuge.

6.4.2 Providing culturally sensitive services
The diversity of children and young people who run away highlights the importance of offering culturally sensitive services that are able to respond to a range of needs. Findings from research suggest the importance of recognising cultural differences when considering how best to support children and young people who run away. Although children and young people across cultures may run away for similar reasons, where, for example, family honour and its ramifications for extended family is an issue, there may be a need for particularly high levels of confidentiality and trust building. There are also other ramifications for service delivery. For example, children and young people who experience heightened family surveillance when forced marriage and family honour issues are at stake might prefer to use text as a means of accessing emergency accommodation as ‘people would think you were texting your mate’. In such situations, it may be that children and young people who run away have a need to prepare and rehearse their getaway and a break with their family is likely to be final and result in isolation from their families and communities. These children and young people may have a very specific set of needs that requires appropriate responses.

The following are examples of diversity issues that should be addressed when delivering emergency accommodation:

- a perception that workers are making too much effort and being ‘overly nice’ to certain individuals, thereby emphasising issues of difference;
- meeting skin and hair care needs of children and young people;
• location of emergency accommodation in an area predominantly populated by one group from a particular ethnic or religious background - for instance, a ‘white’ area\textsuperscript{xcv}, and
• recognition of the impact that events linked to a young person’s culture or religion can have. For example, young Muslims away from home during Eid (an important Muslim religious festival and family celebration) may feel particularly isolated\textsuperscript{xcvii}.

There is still a research gap in relation to diversity issues of sub-groups of young runaways including disabled young people and gay, lesbian and bisexual young people. However, there are common concerns from young people in minority groups about potential discrimination and victimisation in residential settings\textsuperscript{xcviii}. These need to be taken into consideration when providing emergency accommodation. For some, emergency foster placement for children and young people who run away may be preferable to refuge because of fear of intimidation and feeling safer in a family home\textsuperscript{xcix}.

6.4.3 Anti-discriminatory practice

Given the issues of diversity outlined above, a key component of any service is to ensure access to all irrespective of ethnicity, religion, sexuality, disability, gender and sexual orientation. An open attitude and commitment to anti-discriminatory practice needs to be practiced by all staff involved in the provision of emergency accommodation. To promote good practice in addressing diversity, five key measures\textsuperscript{c} should be addressed by providers of emergency accommodation:

• ensuring that services are promoted as being for all children and young people;
• ensuring a safe environment for all children and young people;
• having a staff team from diverse backgrounds;
• ensuring that staff are culturally aware; and
• referring children and young people to specialist services where appropriate.

Because society and communities are in a constant state of change, on-going learning from practice should be accumulated and disseminated to staff. Training relating to diversity issues should also be on-going for staff working in emergency accommodation projects.

6.5 Issues relating to access

Access to emergency accommodation for children and young people is key to providing support and ensuring the effectiveness of such projects:

“It is vital that there are accessible means of young people self-referring to runaways services that they perceive as credible and that they are able to trust; such services should be well-publicised and include referral routes that are available 24 hours a day.”
(Rees et al, 2009: 40)\textsuperscript{ci}

There are a number of factors that require consideration to ensure best practice in access to emergency accommodation.

6.5.1 Reaching children and young people who require emergency accommodation

Emergency accommodation services need to engage in constant high quality awareness-raising to young people, families, professionals and agencies that can direct and support children and young people to use emergency accommodation when needed\textsuperscript{cii}. Awareness of emergency accommodation provision, on the part of children and young people, leads to self-referral, a mode of referral which results in better outcomes\textsuperscript{ciii}. It is important to
acknowledge that the most effective means by which emergency accommodation projects become known to children and young people is through word-of-mouth recommendations. For this communication to develop, emergency accommodation projects need to operate for significant periods of time.

Many children and young people who run away are not known to child protection services nor receive support to address their needs despite having a range of serious issues in their lives. As described previously, at least two thirds of children and young people who run away are not reported as missing by parents and carers. Therefore best practice involves outreach to inform children and young people of the availability of refuge who may not be known to services or aware of how to approach services for support. For example, research has revealed that many Asian girls who run away from home in Glasgow are members of families that keep:

"their distance from social workers and other agencies of the government and so had little information about whom to approach with their problems." (Jha, 2004; 71.)

Evidence also suggests the importance of being able to provide early and effective intervention to children and young people to prevent escalating needs. Emergency accommodation can play a key role in addressing the needs of young people before they escalate to the point at which more intensive support is required from statutory agencies. Therefore creative means need to be considered when seeking to raise awareness amongst children and young people who have perhaps not previously come into contact with other statutory services. Whilst awareness-raising in schools is important, many children and young people who run away have limited attendance at school. It is therefore important that consideration be given to developing other means of awareness-raising.

Strategies for awareness-raising also need to consider the impact of gender as females are, firstly, more likely to seek support than males and, secondly, disproportionately represented in emergency accommodation projects. Increasing awareness-raising amongst males is one way of increasing the number of young males who self-refer to, and access, refuge.

6.5.2 Work with other agencies and professionals to raise awareness of issues relating to running away and emergency accommodation

In the same way that it takes time to raise young people’s awareness, it also takes time to inform professionals’ awareness of the need for emergency accommodation. Therefore targeted awareness-raising should be undertaken so that other agencies and individual professionals are aware of:

- the need for emergency accommodation;
- the importance of maintaining the confidential location of emergency accommodation projects;
- referral criteria and processes for emergency accommodation; and
- the need for partnership working to achieve positive outcomes for children and young people.

Work should also be undertaken with agencies and professionals to increase understanding of the legislative and policy framework for refuge and running away

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20 This issue is discussed precisely in Section Three.
amongst children and young people. The general lack of awareness of issues relating to running away and the extent of running away amongst children and young people has been noted as a challenge. This is reinforced by findings from research representing divergent views amongst professionals regarding numbers of young people running away and the level of need for emergency accommodation or other forms of immediate support within their local areas. In addition, there are incorrect perceptions of running away and need for emergency accommodation in rural areas. Some of the perceptions of professionals working with children and young people therefore do not fit with data gathered by a number of research studies and evidence from practice with children and young people who run away. To address this challenge:

“There is a need to more effectively communicate with key local stakeholders and decision makers regarding the learning from the last two decades or research and practice with young runaways.”
(Rees et al, 2009; 77.)

Professionals in Scotland with experience of commissioning and delivery emergency accommodation for children and young people who run away note that whilst the legislative and policy framework for refuge does not hinder the commissioning and delivery of emergency accommodation for children and young people who run away, hindering factors exist in relation to awareness of the legislative framework, implementation of Section 38 of the Children (Scotland) Act 1995 and the lack of funding to implement the legislation. Despite the lack of awareness and use of Section 38 of the Children (Scotland) Act, many professionals recognise that it is very useful legislation:

“In terms of Section 38, it is not a well utilised piece of legislation. … a lot of people don’t know about it. …. It’s an excellent piece of legislation because if young people, irrespective of any other piece of legislation they may be subject to, it doesn’t get in the way. They can be on a Place of Safety Order but they can still access refuge. They can be in residential care or on a supervision order but they can still access refuge. They can be a young person who is going through an asylum-seeking process but they can still access refuge. Their legal status doesn’t matter at all.”
(Professional from the third sector)

Professionals identified how awareness of Section 38 of the Children (Scotland) Act 1995 needs to be raised amongst professionals, including the police and social workers, who work with children and young people. Professionals also identified issues relating to how Section 38 of the Children (Scotland) Act 1995 is implemented on the ground. This lack of awareness could be addressed by the provision of training addressing implementation of Section 38 of the Children (Scotland) Act 1995, alongside running away issues, and use of emergency accommodation.

6.5.3 Perception of independence

A key ingredient to success with children and families is the perceived independence of emergency accommodation from statutory agencies. This stems from the reluctance of some children, young people and adults to access statutory help, as previously highlighted in the report. For some the concern may be a sense of ‘stigma’ attached to social service provision or concerns about rules in statutory provision causing young people to be treated as children. Emergency accommodation for children and young people provided by the third sector, as previously identified, can appear more attractive but clearly attention needs to be given to the balance between this perceived independence and the need for strong links with the range of other services in place to support young people. Therefore it recommended that:
“The potential for developing multi-agency and multidisciplinary approaches is seriously considered in future service developments.”
(Rees et al 2009:78.)

6.5.4 Confidential location and access

Providing a confidential location is a crucially important characteristic of emergency accommodation. This stems from the risk that, were their location known, children and young people could be found and forced home or to another place where they were at risk of harm. Furthermore, it is important that children are, and feel, safe from physical harm and are at risk of being drawn into dangerous activities. For some groups of children and young people, and staff working with them, the confidential location is paramount to safety and well-being. Indeed, for some children and young people, fears that emergency accommodation will not be confidential will prevent them seeking access.

Whilst the need for emergency accommodation for children and young people who run away is often accepted, the confidential location of such accommodation projects appears to often be a stumbling block for some professionals and is one of the challenges to adopting best practice in the commissioning and delivery of emergency accommodation. It is particularly important to raise awareness of the crucial importance of emergency accommodation being in a confidential location to keep children and young people safe and for professionals to understand this importance and accept that the location of emergency accommodation for children and young people who run away will often not be known by commissioners of, and referral agencies to, emergency accommodation.

6.5.5 Access and telephone helplines

Access to emergency accommodation can be facilitated through both local and national telephone helplines. A number of emergency accommodation projects for children and young people provide a free-phone number for children to self-refer. In some cases, these local free-phone numbers are linked to national helplines such as Missing People’s Runaways’ Helpline.

There is also evidence that national helplines for children and young people can play a role in directing them towards emergency accommodation projects when they have run away. To illustrate, during a 12 month period, Childline Scotland received 461 calls where running away was a main issue and a further 410 where running away was an additional issue. Children and young people may then go on to make self-referrals based upon advice from national helplines. However, it is important to note that the ability of national helplines to support young people in accessing provision can sometimes be hindered by a lack of services to provide a response.

Developments in technology have extended the range of ways in which young people can contact helplines and emergency accommodation projects, including text and e-mail as well as telephone. These routes facilitate help-seeking by young people whose home environments make it difficult for them to find privacy to make telephone calls.

6.5.6 Direct access

Direct access to emergency accommodation projects is vital to providing support and improving outcomes for vulnerable children and young people:

“There is a concern that without direct-access emergency accommodation the needs of the most vulnerable young people will not be met.”
(ECOTEC & Duckett, 2010; 5.)
Children and young people have consistently noted the importance of emergency accommodation being easy to access \(^{24}\) hours a day \(^{24}\). Children and young people have also drawn attention to the importance of access to emergency accommodation. Part of the ease of access relates to provision being based in the local area \(^{27}\) rather than at a location requiring the child or young person to travel outside of their local area.

Children should not be required to disclose detailed information about their circumstances as a condition of access to a refuge. Emergency accommodation project staff will need to balance the need for information to assess the risk of harm to a child with the need to ensure that admission processes do not discourage vulnerable children and young people from seeking help.

### 6.5.7 Self-referral

As touched upon previously, the self-referral aspect of emergency accommodation for children and young people who run away is of paramount importance. The impact of self-referral upon positive outcomes for children and young people who access projects for is highlighted in the research literature \(^{28}\) and by professionals with experience of commissioning refuge. The element of choice in a child or young person’s decision to access emergency accommodation is intrinsic to this. However, it is important to understand the nuances of self-referral as experience has revealed that there are instances when a referral to refuge has been made from a professional requesting refuge on the child or young person’s behalf. When it has been explained to the professional that the referral has to come directly from the child or young person, there have been incidence where no referral follows from the child or young person \(^{29}\).

### 6.5.8 Importance of the first contact with children and young people

The nature of the first contact between children and providers of emergency accommodation is important. The nature of the initial engagement by staff with children and young people will inform whether or not the child trusts the staff \(^{30}\) and will have an impact upon potential future work:

> It is essential that this initial ‘crisis response’ conversation with young people is handled carefully as it can have longer-term implications for young people’s confidence in helping agencies. (Rees et al, 2009:39) \(^{31}\)

### 6.5.9 Adopting a child-centred approach and accessibility

To ensure accessibility, emergency accommodation projects need to operate in a child-centred manner. Therefore it is necessary that children and young people:

- give consent and choose to stay \(^{32}\);
- feel able to trust the person they are talking to \(^{33}\), and
- feel they are being taken seriously \(^{34}\), not sidelined \(^{35}\) and their assessment of the situation is listened to \(^{36}\).

Children and young people have identified aspects of working style that were seen to be crucial in the delivery of emergency accommodation \(^{37}\). These include:

- time to develop trust with staff;
- friendly and welcoming staff who actively engage with young people and are consistently available and willing to talk with children and young people when they
express a need to do so and actively listen to children and young people\textsuperscript{cxxxviii}.  
- staff who provide a non-judgmental approach;
- staff who value the child or young person’s perspective;
- staff who develop good rapport\textsuperscript{cxxxix};
- staff who ensure a warm, comfortable and relaxing environment\textsuperscript{cxl}; and
- ensuring staff have appropriate skills and receive appropriate support and training to ensure they can respond effectively to meet the needs of children and young people who run away\textsuperscript{cxli}.

It is important that each of the above aspects of practice are effectively implemented whenever emergency accommodation services are being provided. It is this interface that draws a child or young person in to using the service and enables them to benefit.

Due to the range and seriousness of issues experienced by children and young people who access emergency accommodation, it is important to have appropriately qualified and experienced staff working in emergency accommodation projects who are well-supported and provided with training.

6.5.10 Ensuring appropriate use of emergency accommodation

Emergency accommodation is not appropriate for all children and young people\textsuperscript{cxlii} and it is important to ensure that emergency accommodation is provided to children and young people who meet the criteria for emergency accommodation. This can be a challenge as experience of commissioners and deliverers of emergency accommodation reveals how there can be pressure from statutory services to use emergency accommodation for children and young people who run away as an extension of the care system\textsuperscript{cxliii}. As a result, professionals within local authorities who play a significant role in managing the relationship between their local authority and the refuge have on occasion taken the role of ‘gatekeeper’ to ensuring that the refuge is used effectively in keeping with Section 38 of the Children (Scotland) Act 1995 and not as statutory accommodation.

6.6 Assessing risk

It is essential that staff working in emergency accommodation have the skills necessary to effectively assess risk and need, are aware of the need to share information and make referrals to relevant agencies where there are child protection concerns, both at the point of the initial crisis response and where post-emergency accommodation support is being provided\textsuperscript{cxliv}. In light of the importance of risk assessment, it has previously been recommended that:

“A good practice guide should be produced for professionals who are providing crisis response to young runaways, which draws together existing examples of practice, and a consideration of child protection /safeguarding duties, issues and procedures. This guide should receive official endorsement as a means of promoting consistent high quality assessment practice.”

(Rees et al, 2009:40)\textsuperscript{cxlv}

All commissioners and deliverers of emergency accommodation in Scotland should ensure that staff working in emergency accommodation projects are able to practice high quality risk assessment in line with the GIRFEC practice model\textsuperscript{21}.

\textsuperscript{21} Details of this can be found at http://www.scotland.gov.uk/Topics/People/YoungPeople/childrensservices/girfec/Practitioners/ToolsResource.
6.7 Ensuring a timely response to children and young people whilst in emergency accommodation

Professionals with experience of commissioning and delivering emergency accommodation acknowledge that there can be tensions between the voluntary and statutory sectors. Some of these tensions stem from the statutory sector having only a short time to respond to the needs of the child or young person. To reduce this tension, local authorities who commission refuge for children and young people who run away have worked with their duty teams to ensure that children and young people in refuge are prioritised and receive a speedy response from the authority.

6.8 Issues relating to parents and carers

Refuge projects for children and young people who run away can often be very successful in negotiating a return to the family home for a child or young person. Ongoing work with the child or young person and their family post-refuge is an important component in achieving this cxlvii.

A careful balance is required between ensuring the safety of children and young people and maintaining positive relationships with parents and carers alongside providing them with information about their child cxlvii. To achieve a successful return home for a child or young person, there has to be some willingness on the part of parents and carers to engage with workers delivering post-emergency accommodation work. Similarly, there has to be a willingness amongst parents/careers to address the issues that led to the child or young person seeking refuge or requiring emergency accommodation.

6.9 Support post-emergency accommodation

Research focusing on the provision of refuge has identified that post-refuge support work plays a significant role in achieving positive outcomes for children and young people cxlviii. Furthermore, the continuity provided by the same project staff working with children and young people in post-refuge support has also been identified as contributing to positive outcomes, with relationships based on trust having often been developed whilst the child is in refuge cxlix.

6.10 Working with Social Care and Social Work Improvement Scotland

Best practice suggests that Social Care and Social Work Improvement Scotland (SCSWIS) are contacted in the early stages of commissioning an emergency accommodation project and that work is undertaken with the SCSWIS through development and delivery of services. This helps to facilitate a constructive relationship based on mutual understanding between SCSWIS and providers of emergency accommodation. The experience of the ROC Refuge highlights the benefits of working with the regulators of refuge to further their understanding of emergency accommodation projects:

“The Care Commission understand the idea of refuge; they get the concept. … They understand the piece of legislation; they understand that sometimes refuge is a square peg in a round hole. We have consistently had excellent inspection reports. … We had the same Care Commission officer for five years and we now have a new officer and she gets it. Their only issue is that they would prefer to inspect with a young person in residence. … We get an announced and an unannounced inspection every year and on the unannounced inspection they will mainly look at the paperwork and the procedures etc and will give us forms for young people to complete and the next three young people who come into refuge will complete those forms. And on the announced inspection, we will endeavour

22 At the time of the consultation with key professionals, the Care Commission was the regulatory body for refuge which is why the professional quoted refers to the ‘Care Commission’ rather than SCSWIS.
to let the Care Commission officer know that morning if there’s a young person in (refuge). … When it comes to parents and carers and their involvement, the Care Commission usually just refer to the fact that it’s not a service that’s set up like that and it’s for young people. There’s common sense and flexibility to their (the Care Commission’s) approach and recognition that the refuge isn’t the traditional children’s unit model.” (Professional from the third sector)

6.11 Evaluation
Both internal and external evaluation of emergency accommodation is required. When commissioning emergency accommodation, local authorities should ensure that on-going monitoring takes place by the service delivery organisation. External evaluation should also be commissioned to identify positive outcomes for children and young people who access emergency accommodation. Similarly, evaluation should act to identify any hindering factors that impact upon the ability of services to secure positive outcomes children and young people. Evaluation findings will support development of effective emergency accommodation projects for children and young people alongside providing learning that can supporting with ensuring resources are targeted effectively to meet the aims of the project.

Finally, there is a need for evaluation to consider the longer-term impact of emergency accommodation in achieving positive outcomes for children and young people.

6.12 Working with children and young people for whom emergency accommodation does not result in positive outcomes
As previously revealed in the report, a stay in refuge often results in positive outcomes for children and young people. However, there are some children and young people for whom it is a challenge to achieve positive outcomes. Typologies of young runaways often distinguish between children and young people who are running ‘from’ something or someone and those who are running ‘to’ something or someone. To phrase this in an alternative way, the terms ‘pull’ and ‘push’ factors are often used to describe the motivations behind a child or young person’s running away behaviour. Many children and young people run ‘to’ someone - for example, a young female involved in a relationship with an older male who is grooming and sexually exploiting them.

There are complex reasons why children and young people become involved in sexual exploitation and are lured by adults who offer gifts and flattery. What is presented as ‘love’ can be very appealing to some children and young people and it can be difficult for a child or young person to pull away from this exploitative relationship. It is also very challenging for agencies to combat sophisticated grooming techniques and difficult to achieve positive outcomes in circumstances where sexual exploitation features.

It is suggested that alternative approaches are developed to respond to the needs of this particular group of young people. Evaluation findings suggest strengthening relationships with sexual exploitation experts in the local area and, where appropriate, seeking guidance from national experts to support with creative and innovative practice can prove helpful.

It is important to provide responsive support to children and young people who do not wish to access emergency accommodation. For example, detached runaways (those away from home or care for long periods of time and do not access formal sources of support) often find it difficult to adhere to more structured forms of support and conventional approaches of intervention. To respond to detached children and young people’s needs, responsive measures need to focus upon detached youth work and less formal support dependent upon building relationships based upon trust, working with particularly high levels of trust and considering responses other than child protection responses.
Appendix 1: Learning Addressing Emergency Accommodation for Children and Young People Who Run Away

To date, there has only been one evaluation of services provided by an emergency accommodation project, the SAFE@LAST Safe Place Refuge in South Yorkshire, highlighting outcomes experienced by children and young people who have accessed this project. Some learning has been gathered about the process of developing emergency accommodation services for children and young people who run away. Where evaluation researchers have used the realist approach, there has been exploration of ‘what works’ in terms of facilitating and hindering positive outcomes of interventions. Some commentators have consulted children and young people, parents and professionals in their research, evaluations and reviews addressing emergency accommodation for children and young people who run away. Including these perspectives is important in identifying best practice and recommendations for commissioning and delivery emergency accommodation in Scotland as there has been a tendency not to include in any meaningful manner the perspectives of children and young people who have accessed emergency accommodation projects in attempts to capture learning about the project and limited inclusion of the views and experiences of parents.

There is presently limited evidence-based learning about outcomes for children and young people who stay in emergency accommodation projects for children and young people who run away. Malloch reviewed the process of establishing the ROC Refuge and analysed some data about short-term impacts on children and young people. Smeaton also provides evidence-based learning about impacts and outcomes for children who have stayed in refuge. Whilst still in the process of addressing sustainable funding for the refuge and seeking funding for an evaluation, ROC Refuge has agreed an external evaluation that focuses upon capturing both immediate and longer-term outcomes for children and young people who have stayed in the ROC refuge.

Both Rees et al and Smeaton have carried out work to address the costs of refuge and also other forms of emergency accommodation alongside identifying potential savings that emergency accommodation can support to achieve.

A recent consultation, commissioned by the DCSF, the Scottish Government and Welsh Assembly was undertaken in 2009 addressing the commissioning, delivery and perceptions of accommodation for young runaways in Scotland, Wales and England.
Appendix 2: Resources to Support with Development of Emergency Accommodation in Scotland for Children and Young People Who Run Away

A number of the reports, papers and articles that are referenced in this report are available on-line free of charge:


http://www.aberlour.org.uk/rocrefugeevaluation.aspx


http://www.publicfinance.co.uk/feature/2009/12/street-life/

http://www.railwaychildren.org.uk/wcore/showdoc.asp?id=1301

http://www.railwaychildren.org.uk/wcore/showdoc.asp?id=735

http://www.childrenssociety.org.uk/all_about_us/How_we_do_it/training_and_consultancy/youn grunaways_training_and_consultancy/Research/Research_3904.htr

http://www.childrenssociety.org.uk/all_about_us/How_we_do_it/training_and_consultancy/youn grunaways_training_and_consultancy/Research/Research_3904.htr

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xv Ibid.


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Ibid.


Ibid.


Ibid.


Ibid.


Ibid.


Ibid.


Ibid.


Ibid.


Children.


Ibid.


Ibid.


Ibid.


Ibid.


