Operational Statement

Centrepoint Independent Living Programme – Genuinely Affordable Homes for working adults aged from 18yrs up to 25yrs

Mount Road, Gorton, Manchester

On behalf of Centrepoint the UK's leading youth homelessness charity

November 2023

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CONTENTS

1. JOINT STATEMENT: Centrepoint & Greater Manchester Youth Federation
2. INTRODUCTIONS
3. VISION
4. MANAGEMENT
5. MOVE ON AFTER INDEPENDENT LIVING

1 JOINT STATEMENT

1.1 Greater Manchester Youth Federation and Centrepoint are committed to improving the lives of young people and this unique partnership brings 2 special charities together to create an opportunity that will offer young people dynamic living spaces combined with a state of the art sports facility. This partnership will ensure that the young people of Gorton are supported with their education, life choices, employment and wellbeing. Greater Manchester Youth Federation and Centrepoint have been committed to improving the lives of young people for a combined total of over 150 years. They have now combined their knowledge and expertise to create a unique partnership enabling them to offer young people dynamic modern, secure and purpose built living spaces for Independent Living on a site owned by GMYF within the neighbourhood of Gorton, Manchester.

1.2 GMYF will grant Centrepoint a long lease at a peppercorn rent and in turn, Centrepoint will use funds specifically raised for the project to build 36 state of the art single occupancy studio apartments. The apartments will be easy to maintain and low cost to run. The young people will be supported with their education, life choices, employment and wellbeing.

1.3 The location of the apartments has been specifically chosen to have main road frontage and adjacent to the new youth and community centre so as to encourage the young people to feel embedded and safe in their community. GMYF will always have an 'open door' for the Centrepoint customers and will welcome them to participate in volunteering activities, outdoor education opportunities, physical and well being offers being run at the Centre.

1.4 This is only the second project of its kind developed by Centrepoint and the first outside of London. Both GMYF and Centrepoint are excited to bring this project to Manchester and to be able to support our young people on their journeys into fulfilling and fruitful adult lives.

2 INTRODUCTION

2.1 This Operational Statement has been prepared by Centrepoint, UK's leading youth homelessness charity in relation:

- 36 purpose built Independent Living Programme properties at the Mount Road site in Gorton

2.2 It sets out Centrepoint's Independent Living Programme – Stepping stone accommodation plan, it details the management of its Mount Road facility.

Centrepoint, the UK's leading youth homelessness charity

Our History

2.3 The charity started out as a London night shelter,. In the centre of London's Soho in December 1969, the Revered Ken Leech opened a night shelter in the basement of his church to give young homeless people a safe place to sleep.

2.4 Back in 1969 our founders looked at the number of young people sleeping on the streets and instead of saying 'something should be done' they thought 'what can I do?' From this attitude Centrepoint was born and while the way we deliver our services has changed, we remain true to our roots – supporting young people out of homelessness and on to the future they rightfully deserve.

2.5 Centrepoint has grown over the last 50 years and reaches out and supports young people in a range of areas across the country with a large assessment and support offer in central Manchester.

Alongside partners, we support over 16,000 young people every year and campaign to end youth homelessness by 2037. Across the United Kingdom, we estimate that 129,000 young people aged 16-24 presented to their local authority as homeless or at risk of homelessness. Included in that number is 17,000 young people in the North West alone.

In September 2005, Prince William, HRH, The Prince of Wales, became patron of Centrepoint. The Prince of Wales met young people and made a speech at a celebratory event in 2008.

He recalled the days he visited us with his mother, Princess Diana. He said: "That example of selfless service that Centrepoint represents has stayed with me, and that is why it was the first charity that I wanted to be associated with." He also said he had witnessed, first hand, "the extraordinary courage of so many of Centrepoint's young people in rising to meet such seemingly insurmountable challenges in their lives."

Current Status

2.6 The charity owns and leases homes and property across the North West, Greater London, Sunderland and Yorkshire, supporting each young person to recognise the skills they already bring. We work with them to develop more skills, and access support that enables each person to find a safe home to live in and training or an apprentiship placement enabling each young person to become job ready and independent enough to live without ongoing support.

2.7 Centrepoint has an ambitious development strategy with its focus being right sized homes for homeless young people. We have a number of live developments shaping and supporting local authorities to address the needs of homeless young people who have presented for support in their localities. Centrepoint works in partnership with others to:

- Prevent homelessness
- Deliver innovative programmes that allow young people to live and be independent
- Amplify the voices of homeless young people
- Optimise our capacity by investing in people, buildings and technology
- Link into wider networks and scope out joint working opportunities

The Site

2.7.1 The site has come forward as part of a wider proposed development at Land at Mount Road, Gorton in Manchester.

2.7.2 The proposals will see the existing vacant site, and former playing fields, redeveloped to bring forward 36no independent living accommodation owned and managed by Centerpoint Charity, 2no football playing pitches, community and sports facilities and 267no high quality residential dwellings for rent and sale.

2.7.3 Our Operational Statement relates to the management and operation of the 36no independent living accommodation only.

3 VISION

3.1.1 This section envisions how Centrepoint's Independent Living Programme will ensure the proposed scheme contributes to the local community by providing safe, appropriate accommodation for working young people before they move onto their forever homes.

3.1.2 Centrepoint's aspirations for all its developments and programmes of work, are to enhance the opportunities available for young people by:

- Building more one bedroom and studio social housing, specifically for young people who are ready to be in paid work and can demonstrate that they can live independently.
- Asking local authorities to allocate more social housing to vulnerable young people.
- Providing more funding and support to organisations, such as Centrepoint, St Basil's and YMCA England and Wales, who are developing innovative schemes aimed at housing homeless young people.
- Empowering vulnerable young people living in supported housing to access employment, gain work experiences in order to contribute and feel more connected to the communities they live in.

4 MANAGEMENT

4.1 This section details how the homes will be managed and supported by Centrepoint's Independent Living Programme Service (ILP), which will include standard operational hours, out of hours/emergency support and other security measures.

Centrepoint colleagues & Housing Management offer

4.2 The Mount Road ILP scheme will have a dedicated Independent Living Housing Officer (ILO). This role takes the lead on managing people, property and place.

The ILO has onsite responsibility for the general scheme management, day to day customer guidance and housing management, community liaison with those living near to the scheme as well as ongoing timely contact with the onsite GMYF team and other relevant stakeholders.

In addition, Centrepoint Charity has a large, well established local offer with our head office based on Oldham Street in Manchester's Northern Quarter, which is a short distance away from the Mount Road scheme. This additional local support enhances the offer and ongoing support for all allocated customers living in the ILP scheme and ensures that there is back up staffing or additional support at busy times or if an ILP customer requires more intense guidance for a period of time.

Each ILO is responsible for active tenancy management, overseeing all stock tasks including regular monitoring of property condition, with a focus on managing relationships with other customers, neighbours and stakeholders within the local community. Our ILOs are intentionally visible, easily contacted and well managed to offer an integrated, locally focused housing management service.

In addition, all ILP customers are matched with a local Independent Living Advisor (ILA). This is a Centrepoint Volunteer role that offers a range of ongoing support and advice on career development, engagement, move on and supports each ILP customer to network and increase connections pertinent to their planned life goals. ILAs work with our customers at a time that is convenient to them and outside standard work hours to ensure we do not impact on each customer's commitment to paid work.

Criteria and Eligibility to Independent Living Programme schemes

4.3 The Independent Living Programme (ILP) is designed to provide medium-term accommodation for single working young people aged 18yrs up to 25yrs old – i.e. not

couples or families - offering a maximum of up to 5 years fixed term tenancy including a probationary period of 12 months for those requiring increased housing management guidance.

Tenure of 2 years + 1 + 1 + 1 (subject to individual circumstances with a maximum period of 5 years)

Provided tenancy conditions have been kept, at the end of the probationary period the tenancy will continue for the remainder of an agreed fixed term.

Centrepoint's Independent Living programme is not for young people who require structured or enduring support services.

Our service and offer is focused towards young people who are ready to live independently and have made the transition into employment or apprentiship training, but require that final step of an affordable home in order to become truly independent.

To ensure that the programme delivers planned outcomes for young people, Centrepoint has developed the following broad criteria that will determine a young person's suitability:

- A young person who is in full time employment or completing a registered apprenticeship role.
- Who has lived successfully within supported accommodation and has very low or no enduring support needs and does not require support from a Key Worker or is at risk of homelessness (recently left home, sofa surfing or staying with friends or family)
- And can demonstrate that they have and can live independently.
- Who understand that ILP accommodation is not a home for life but a stepping stone option for people under the age of 25yrs old onto permanent accommodation outside the Centrepoint Charity.

Prospective applicants will go through a robust and rigorous assessment process to determine that they are ready to live independently, can manage their home and paid employment without increased levels of ongoing housing management or increased support and that they understand that the ILP offer is not a permanent, forever home – this is a final step into true independence before a long term or forever home is accessed during the final stage of their time on the programme.

Allocations/Nominations

4.4 Centrepoint is happy to receive nominations directly from MCCs housing department. All nominations/referrals must meet the age and working young person criteria set out above.

Each referral will be assessed initially using a standard desk based assessment to ascertain suitability to the published criteria before being invited to attend a face to face assessment to discuss their application, ILP housing need and future housing aspirations.

A qualified assessment team will discuss each application, the evidence submitted and housing need in line with available properties at the scheme.

In addition, Centrepoint are prepared to work with young people in Manchester who currently don't have a qualifying role for the ILP scheme. In partnership with our C.P Works department, the charity could guide potential future ILP applicants into available permanent employment and following a period of adjustment in that new role, support them to become eligible for the Independent Living Programme.

Tenancy Management:

4.5 Centrepoint's rent setting model for ILP properties ensures that the property payment attached to each ILP home is truly affordable.

To achieve this, Centrepoint is basing the charge for each property at around one third of the ILP customers' gross earnings. To ensure that this model remains fit for purpose and economically relevant, Centrepoint will review the rent setting policy at least every 5 years or sooner if changes in legislation require.

The real living wage, calculated by the Living Wage Foundation, currently stands at £9.50 and is the only UK wage rate based on the cost of living. Currently, around 1 in 5 jobs in Greater Manchester – roughly 200,000 – pay less than the real living wage. While the rate in some boroughs is better, Bolton, Bury, Oldham, Rochdale, Trafford and Wigan are all below the UK average for jobs that pay at least the real Living Wage.

It's also a problem that disproportionately affects women who make up 59.5% of workers earning less that the real Living Wage, while in Greater Manchester 38.2% of Black/Black British workers and 34.8% of Asian/Asian British workers are in low pay.'

There are 42,700 households in the Constituency of Manchester Gorton, which is predominantly urban. The median weekly wage for full time employees is £728.40 (it is £602.30 in the North West Region and £640.00 in the UK).

Centrepoint has a robust escalation based process for arrears management. This offers a clear and established system and process to ensure that we are taking the right actions at the right time to prevent arrears increasing and to take enforcement action when required. Our action is prompt and proportional and geared towards solving the arrears and preventing the arrears growing.

There will be some customers who may struggle with property charges from time to time but our starting point is that the agreed payment must be paid on time, every time and prompt communication remains the key element on both sides.

Anti –Social Behaviour:

4.6 All Independent Living Programme (ILP) customers are required to sign a code of conduct which sets out clear expectations of behaviour and what their responsibilities are whilst they live in an ILP property – this includes their responsibility for their guest's behaviour.

The Centrepoint approach to managing Anti-Social Behaviour is through clear and concise early intervention and prevention, non-negotiable support and strong enforcement action when necessary.

We do this in partnership with other community stakeholders such as Manchester City Council and Greater Manchester Police and also with the local community to address the quality of life impacts.

The focus of our approach to housing management is as much about supporting the complainant or witness of anti-social behaviour as work around the alleged perpetrator.

We have a zero tolerance to criminal behaviour and will always involve the Police and take legal enforcement action where crime is committed.

Property Condition:

4.7 Centrepoint have a clear relationship with ILP customers that sets out what our expectations and their responsibilities are. This includes looking after their home, following guidance to ensure that the property remains in optimum condition and all common areas including external areas are inspected on a regular basis. Our agreements require ILP customers to allow reasonable and planned access for regular inspections. Where individuals are responsible for vandalism through personal action or neglect, we will take enforcement action to protect the safety and wellbeing of an ILP customer, any guests visiting the property and/or the property asset.

Fraud, illegal occupancy and sub-letting:

4.8 Tenancy fraud can be a hidden source of Anti-Social Behaviour and disproportionately impact on the local community. Affordable housing is a scarce resource and there will be real focus from the ILP team on carrying out due diligence checks and monitoring backed up by a rigorous and efficient legal enforcement process.

Tenancy management and sustainment:

4.9 Independent Living accommodation is not for those requiring any level of enduring housing management support throughout the tenancy journey – however, the provision of information, advice, guidance and targeted, short term help can provide an important safety net to try and enable customers to re-establish payments or change behaviour. It offers a time bound opportunity to get back on track, but not deflecting away from the basic premise of meeting the terms of the tenancy agreement.

We also offer health and wellbeing services to all those accessing our services to promote healthy lifestyles, recognising that this helps remove barriers and provides a foundation for successful outcomes at home, work and in personal relationships.

Property Management:

4.10 The quality, condition and appearance of properties/estates are the first impression of how a landlord is managing their stock and whether we look after our properties and take pride in their appearance and in our services. Centrepoint know and understand that continual investment in managing all its properties and the street scene is a critical factor in supporting young people's aspirations to live out their life plans and dreams.

Security:

4.11 The design provides for secure customer entry systems (if required) with defensible space to provide security. CCTV may also be used to provide additional security in and around the properties if this is deemed appropriate for the customer base and community.

Safety and compliance:

3.10 Keeping our estates and properties safe is our first priority – all the required compliance and safety checks are properly carried out and recorded on all properties. Centrepoint has a record of 100% compliance with fire risk assessments and electrical safety inspections.

No smoking is allowed within the accommodation or on-site outside of designated areas.

Grounds Maintenance:

4.11 Contractual arrangements will be in place to keep all common areas and any external communal space clean, well maintained and safe for ILP customers and the wider community.

Issues like fly-tipping or vandalism will be pro-actively managed.

Waste and recycling:

4.12 Centrepoint will implement a waste and recycling strategy and work closely with Manchester City Council to deliver on its domestic waste & recycling service expectations. Centrepoint always aims to maximise recycling opportunities with modern thinking and design. Customers will be required to agree and sign a 'green pledge' and we are committed to minimising the carbon footprint of the site through procurement and contract management.

Sustainable Transport solutions:

4.13 Centrepoint actively discourages car use where possible so there will be no specific car parking allocated to the ILP development at Mount Road. We actively promote the use of all public transport – for example our bursary offers may pay for Bee Network top ups and help access safe cycling solutions such as TfGM Bee Active to help customers get to work. We understand, however, there maybe a couple of visitor spaces adjacent to the Centrepoint development.

Community engagement and working with our local partners:

4.14 For Centrepoint, good housing management is about taking a wider view of the area – looking at the property from a landlord, housing customer and community perspective.

The community as a whole have a vital part to play in creating and maintaining neighbourhoods where we can all be proud to live and work.

We engage with all local statutory and voluntary agencies (Police, Local Authority, Social Care, local businesses and local community based organisations) where possible to assist in keeping safe and well maintained estates.

The proximity of the ILP scheme to the new sports, purpose built facility, owned and managed by GMYF increases the opportunities for ILP customers. A large number of ILP applicants already come with experience and interests in all types of sports, and interests in cricket, football and track sports remain top of the list.

The unique joint offer between GMYF and Centrepoint allows each ILP customer to access and develop sports related skills and formal training with GMYF in a facility close to their home at no personal charge to them as an individual. There simply is not an offer like this anywhere in the city.

The opportunity this affords allows ILP customers to make active choices whilst they work and live at the scheme to consider ideas about new careers, extend and attend recognised training courses.

Centrepoint has a long and successful history of supporting and growing volunteers, together we intend to support that growth using the GMYF youth sports and community hub to embed and develop that vision further. GMYF have committed to allowing free access to its office/s and other facilities which will support and allow ILP colleagues to work differently and grow how they currently work in the Mount Road community. Together we have developed an exciting plan that allows and encourages the staff from both GMYF and Centrepoint to work collaboratively on a daily basis with a shared goal of increasing access to sport, activities and other learning to enhance confidence & general wellbeing and more importantly solidifies our shared commitment to building and shaping a positive community in the Mount Road area.

Independent Living Housing officers maintain high levels of visibility - regularly visiting and walking around their patches, talking to customers and the wider community, overseeing the safety and appearance of their estates. Access to the GMYF buildings and sports facility allows ILP customers to develop a unique Mount Road offer.

Where neighbours or other stakeholders need to contact us to offer feedback, make comments or request services, we offer clear lines of communication via e-mail or phone – we aim to place decision makers as close as possible to customers so in most cases communication will be directly with the housing officer responsible for the area. We will aim to respond to all feedback and requests for a service within three working days and have the additional option of using the GMYF facility for face to face or larger group meetings.

5 MOVE ON AFTER INDEPENDENT LIVING

The Centrepoint Independent Living Programme, is not intended to be long term or a forever home. Each development is carefully designed for comfortable single person living and this point is revisited with each customer in a timely manner throughout their stay.

The property charge for each ILP property (around one third of the ILP customers' annual gross earnings) is designed so that customers are able to cover standard day to day costs and where possible save deposits as it is anticipated that most move-on's from the ILP service will be into more readily available housing options like PRS accommodation where deposits and the first month's rent will be required on sign up. The Independent Living Advisors (ILA) and Independent Living Housing Officer (ILO) will encourage saving as a sensible option for when this time comes.

Once an ILP customer is assessed and accepted into the programme, work starts almost immediately with them to plan and decide on their long term move on aspirations. We have a team of trained and experienced Independent Living Advisors (ILA's), who will be matched with an ILP customer on move in and will work with them during their stay.

Our ILOs are trained to support customers accepted onto the ILP program with a heavy focus on life plans outside the Centrepoint family when they move onto their forever homes – our focus with all ILP customers is to ensure that during their time on the programme we prepare and upskill each person to them to be and feel ready for life without support.

Where Centrepoint differs from the average landlord or developer is that we offer a full range of interventions already embedded into the organisation. We are much more than a landlord and offer additional, valuable services that support vulnerable young people, and offer increased career guidance or opportunities and investment in communities.