

Supporting vulnerable young people into independent futures

mhs homes' third foyer
at Russell House

July 2021



mhs homes: trusted local housing provider

Our ultimate ambition is to

**Help end the housing crisis in
north Kent by providing safe and
sustainable homes**



*Because everyone should have a decent
home*

mhs homes: trusted local housing provider

- We are a charitable housing association
- We provide and manage 9,500 homes for over 25,000 customers
- Our core business areas include affordable rented homes, shared ownership, **foyers** and supported living for older people
- Our board is committed to opening a third foyer as part of its 2021-4 strategic plan

What is a foyer?

- Foyers support young people aged 16-25, to live, learn and make the transition to independent adulthood
- They combine safe accommodation with tailored support responding to the young person's needs
- Referrals come through council housing team and children's social services
- 2 year tenancy in the form of a licence

What is the mhs track record in running foyers?

20 years experience in running foyers

We currently have two foyers for 36 young people

- Springboard – Rochester; Endeavour – Chatham
- The only local provider giving 24/7 service

High ratings in Council run Quality Assessment Framework ratings: A rated for safeguarding, health and safety and needs assessment and support

Zero tolerance policy to drug taking

No reduction in support throughout CV19 lockdowns

What is the mhs track record in running foyers?

In the last 3 years:

- 70% of young people supported into employment, education and training– varied paths including
 - University graduate
 - mhs apprentice now permanent in our DLO
 - Care assistants
- 28% of foyer residents have moved on successfully to be full mhs tenants
- We are proud to make a difference to young people's lives - a former foyer resident said:
"The staff were amazing they all went above and beyond to help residents make the most of themselves"

Do we need more foyer places locally?

Council supplied figures show in 2021:

- There are 225 young people in Medway needing this provision
- Of these, 38 are high priority in imminent danger of harm

Why Russell House in Luton?



Why Russell House in Luton?

- Older people's housing bed sits no longer fit for purpose for long term housing
- An area under significant social pressure in need of investment and multi agency working
- £3m investment in foyer designed to be catalyst for improvement - as a community facility as well as a home for young people

Our vision for Russell House

- Home to 30 young people with personalised support plans and named support worker
- Safe accredited community learning facility for young people and the community – up to level 2 qualifications
- Community spaces for local people, Arches Local and other organisations
- The base for collaboration across agencies to support regeneration in Luton – eg office space for PCSOs

We have thought about potential risks and how to address them

We commissioned a Secure By Design assessment – and built its recommendations into our planning applications

- ✓ Enhanced cctv and external lighting
- ✓ Removal of walls to open up the area and lines of sight
- ✓ Cutting down trees and bushes

We purchased the bank running up to Luton High Street behind Russell House – currently ASB hot spot – and incorporated this into the design of the scheme

We have thought about potential risks and how to address them

New entrance to the building to improve safety

Secure parking for Russell House residents

Public right of way through the site maintained to respond to concerns about KFRS access

Locality impact assessment carried out with local councillors

24/7 365 days a year on site presence

Building resilience in young people so they stay safe

Experienced, well trained staff used to working with young people with challenging backgrounds

A model that builds and encourages resilience and independence in young people and empowers them to make lasting change

Holistic support from health and well being, employability, life and social skills, financial management to move on skills

How can we work together to make the foyer a force for change for young people and Luton?

