



Danger Zones and Stepping Stones Diagnostic Assessment Tool

3.0 Service Provider
Self-Assessment

Introduction

This assessment tool has been developed following extensive research into young people's experiences of service-provided accommodation. In line with the Danger Zones and Stepping Stones model, it will support you to identify elements of your service that may be putting young people at risk of harm as well as ways your service could better support young people on their journey away from homelessness. The tool can be used to evaluate a wide range of service provided accommodation environments including but not limited to: small supported accommodation projects, large mixed needs hostels, and night-by-night emergency shelters.

Our research has shown that experiences of temporary living arrangements are highly subjective, meaning one young person's experiences of the same accommodation may be very different to another's. For this reason, this assessment will not categorise your service. However, the insights you gain will enable you to understand the accommodation you provide according to the Danger Zones and Stepping Stones categories:



Storm Shelters:

Low risk / Low support



Stepping Stones:

Low risk / High support



Danger Zone:

High risk / Low support



Minefield:

High risk / High support

It is important to note that the use of this tool does not require information to be gathered directly from young people. There is no substitute for young people's voices when assessing their experiences of temporary accommodation, so issues arising from the assessment should always be further explored through direct consultation with young people. Where possible, providers are encouraged to utilise our other tools (the 'Self-assessment tool for young people' and the 'Temporary living arrangement assessment tool').

To ensure that this assessment offers valid insights into the accommodation you provide you must answer the questions as honestly as you can. By doing so you will be able to identify potential areas of improvement that will keep young people within your service safe from harm and empower them to take steps towards more suitable accommodation.

Section A

Identifying Risk



Factor 1: Previous incidents of harm

Our research has shown that experiences of harm within a temporary living environment tend to be ongoing; meaning that one incident of harm to a young person is likely to lead to another if there are no changes made. Similarly, an environment that has been harmful to young people in the past is likely to pose considerable threat to the safety of others.

Please consider the frequency of harmful incidents in your accommodation to answer the question below. To help you think through how to respond please refer to the 'Things to consider' box to the left. If you answer 'Very frequent' or 'Frequent', your service would be considered high risk according to the Danger Zones and Stepping Stones Model.

Harmful incidents within the accommodation are:

☐ Very frequent
 ☐ Fairly frequent
 ☐ Fairly infrequent
 ☐ Very infrequent

Things to consider:

- › Is there a satisfactory process in place for recording incidents that may result in harm to young people?
- › How frequently are incidents that result in harm to a young person recorded within the accommodation?
- › Are you aware of incidents of harm that are not recorded?
- › Do young people in your service have sufficient opportunities to disclose harm they may have experienced whilst in the accommodation?
- › Do you have reason to believe that harm is occurring that young people are not disclosing for some reason?

Notes for service improvement/further investigation:



Our research helped us identify a further five factors that affect the likelihood a young person will experience harm whilst in temporary accommodation. The following statement-based questions encourage consideration of each one in turn.

Please state how much you agree that each statement is true in relation to your accommodation with. As before, the ‘Things to consider’ boxes will help you think through your responses.



Factor 2: Power imbalances



Your service is designed to help young people feel a sense of control over their support, environment and relationships within the accommodation.

- ☐ Strongly agree (5)
- ☐ Slightly agree (4)
- ☐ Neither agree nor disagree (3)
- ☐ Slightly disagree (2)
- ☐ Strongly disagree (1)

Things to consider:

- › Is there a satisfactory process for young people to report concerns about the accommodation?
- › Do young people feel able to report concerns without fear of repercussions?
- › Are conflicts between members of staff and young people dealt with in a formal process that respects the young person's position?
- › Is there a clearly communicated eviction procedure which can be challenged internally?
- › Does the service actively support those who may be at risk of harm due to intimidation/bullying?
- › Does the service specifically support young people who may face additional struggles due to their identities? (LGBTQ+, young women, care leavers, those from ethnic minority backgrounds, those who experience disabilities and/or learning difficulties).



Factor 3: External relationships



Your service is effective in ensuring that the relationships young people have with people outside of the accommodation do not pose a threat to their wellbeing.

☐

Strongly agree (5)

☐

Slightly agree (4)

☐

Neither agree nor disagree (3)

☐

Slightly disagree (2)

☐

Strongly disagree (1)

Things to consider:

- › How frequent are incidents of harm involving people from outside the accommodation?
- › Does the service conduct an assessment of young people's external relationships?
- › Does the service actively support young people to make healthy decisions about the relationships they choose to maintain outside of the accommodation?
- › Does the service have a satisfactory visitor policy in place?
- › Does the service support young people to take legal steps against those who may pose an ongoing risk outside of the accommodation (injunctions, restraining orders etc.)?



Factor 4: Exposure to substance abuse



Your service is effective in preventing young people being exposed to substance abuse which may pose a threat to their wellbeing.

☐

Strongly agree (5)

☐

Slightly agree (4)

☐

Neither agree nor disagree (3)

☐

Slightly disagree (2)

☐

Strongly disagree (1)

Things to consider:

- › How frequent are instances of harm relating to substances?
- › Does the service actively support young people to engage with supportive programmes relating to substances?
- › Are young people educated to make informed and healthy decisions in relation to their use of substances?
- › Does the service have clear policies relating to substance abuse that set appropriate boundaries?
- › Does the service actively safeguard those within the accommodation who may be at risk due to other resident's use of substances?
- › Is there a clear procedure which outlines action to be taken should young people use substances inappropriately within the accommodation?



Factor 5: Accommodation standards



Your service provides physical standards of accommodation that ensure young people's mental and physical health needs are being met.

☐

Strongly agree (5)

☐

Slightly agree (4)

☐

Neither agree nor disagree (3)

☐

Slightly disagree (2)

☐

Strongly disagree (1)

Things to consider:

- › How frequent are instances of harm relating to the physical standards of the accommodation?
- › Does the service practice high levels of hygiene and cleanliness?
- › Does the service provide young people with a private place to sleep?
- › Are the young people within the service able to maintain privacy when needed?
- › Does the service take a psychologically informed approach (PIE) which promotes the mental wellbeing of the young people?
- › Does the service ensure that the young people have adequate space to store their personal possessions?



Factor 6: Practical security provisions



There are sufficient practical security provisions within your service's accommodation to keep young people safe (security cameras, locks, security guards etc.).

☐

Strongly agree (5)

☐

Slightly agree (4)

☐

Neither agree nor disagree (3)

☐

Slightly disagree (2)

☐

Strongly disagree (1)

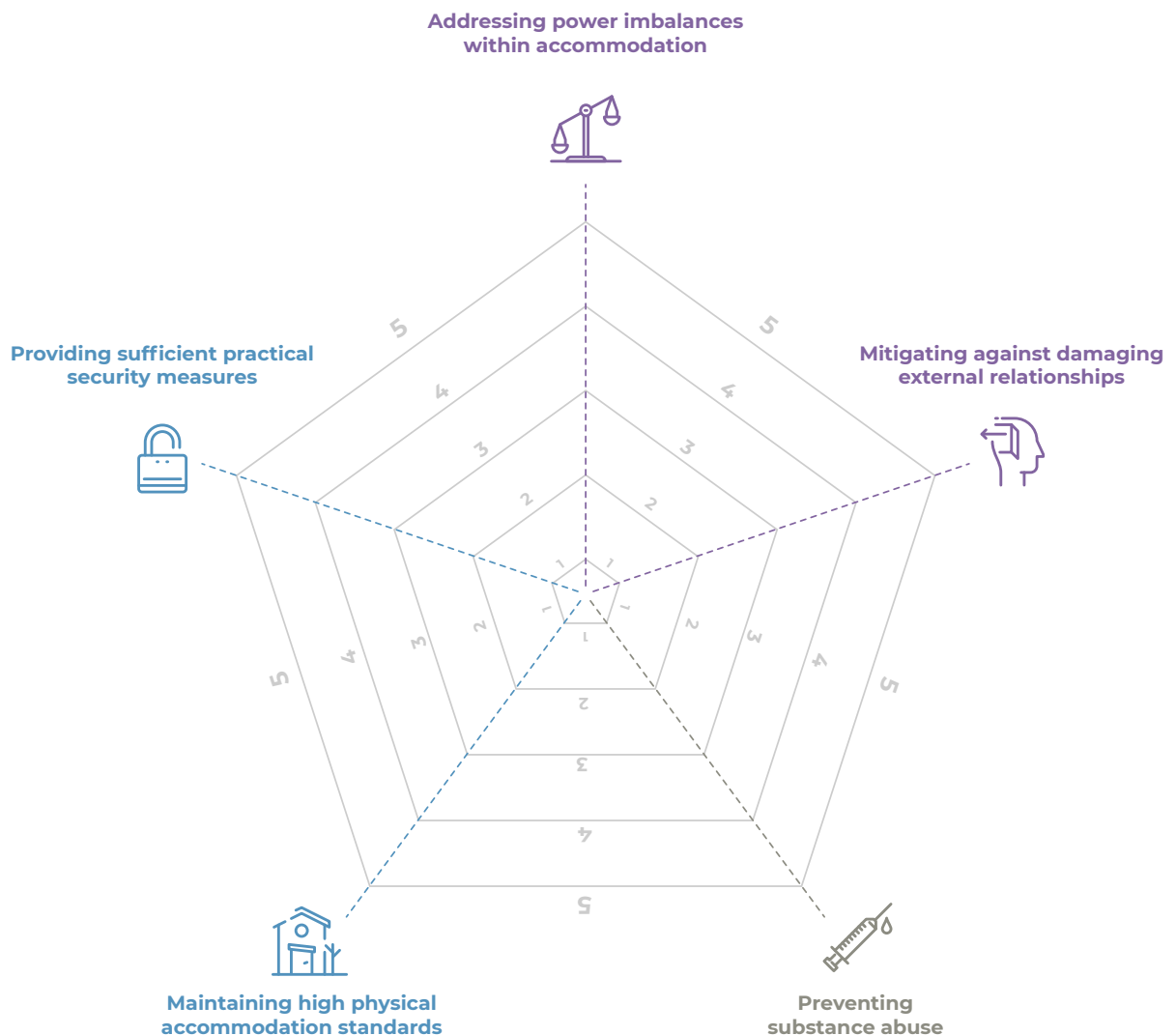
Things to consider:

- › What practical security provisions are in place to prevent instances of harm to young people?
- › Are there security cameras in communal areas?
- › Does the service ensure that all visitors clear safeguarding checks?
- › Does the service ensure that all residents have locks on their doors/to private spaces?
- › Does the service have a clear process for young people to raise security issues?
- › Is it communicated clearly to the young people why security measures are needed within the accommodation?

3.0 Service Provider Self-Assessment

The answers that you have provided for each statement (Factors 2-6) correspond to a score line on the risk-based strengths map below. Each score should be plotted on the corresponding 'score line' and linked together to create an overview of how your service is performing in relation to keeping young people safe. Scores of five suggest that your service is doing well and is adequately mitigating against harm. Conversely, lower scores highlight areas for improvement.

Risk based strengths map:



Priority notes for service improvement:



Section B

Assessing Move-on Support



Through our research, we identified six factors that are likely to significantly impact the likelihood young people will move on successfully from a temporary living environment. Responding to the following six statements will enable you to assess how well your service is doing in relation to these factors and identify areas for improvement.



1. Support from those within the accommodation

Homelessness professionals within your service provide young people with quality support and guidance to move on to suitable accommodation.

☐

Strongly agree (5)

☐

Slightly agree (4)

☐

Neither agree nor disagree (3)

☐

Slightly disagree (2)

☐

Strongly disagree (1)

Things to consider:

- › Do young people housed in the accommodation receive regular support sessions designed to help them move on successfully?
- › Are young people able to ask questions relating to move-on easily and do they receive a quick response?
- › Are young people given practical support regarding move-on? E.g. accompaniment to appointments where necessary.
- › Are expectations adequately managed so young people are able to make informed decisions about where they may look to live in the future?
- › Are young people signposted to appropriate external agencies who can feed into the move-on plan?
- › Are young people given emotional support to encourage them through the challenges of finding suitable move-on accommodation?



2. Support from wider social networks



Your service actively attempts to connect young people to those within their wider support networks (e.g. friends and family) who can help them to move on to suitable accommodation.

☐

Strongly agree (5)

☐

Slightly agree (4)

☐

Neither agree nor disagree (3)

☐

Slightly disagree (2)

☐

Strongly disagree (1)

Things to consider:

- › Where appropriate, are family members and close friends contacted and involved in move on plans?
- › Are young people within the accommodation explicitly encouraged to seek support from those around them relating to their move-on options?
- › Are young people supported to connect to their wider social systems through the use of technology in a safe/supportive way?



3. Knowledge relating to housing options



Your service improves young people's knowledge about their housing options so they can quickly and effectively negotiate their journeys to more suitable accommodation.

☐

Strongly agree (5)

☐

Slightly agree (4)

☐

Neither agree nor disagree (3)

☐

Slightly disagree (2)

☐

Strongly disagree (1)

Things to consider:

- › Does your service offer any specialist education programmes designed to improve young people's personal knowledge in relation to their housing options?
- › Are all realistic move-on options explained in detail to young people in a way that enables them to make informed choices?
- › Does the service educate young people about private rented accommodation?
- › Does the service educate young people on benefit entitlement so they are aware of what they may be able to afford to rent in different earning scenarios?
- › Can young people easily raise concerns/queries they may have regarding move-on options and do they receive a quick and thorough response?
- › Does the service facilitate young people's education around housing options from external sources?



4. Development of independent living skills



Your service ensures that young people develop the independent living skills that they need to live on their own (cooking, cleaning, money management, etc.).

- ☐ Strongly agree (5)
- ☐ Slightly agree (4)
- ☐ Neither agree nor disagree (3)
- ☐ Slightly disagree (2)
- ☐ Strongly disagree (1)

Things to consider:

- › Does the service offer specialist education programmes/sessions around independent living skills?
- › Does the service encourage young people to take responsibility for hygiene and cleanliness?
- › Does the service actively support young people to improve how they manage their money?
- › Are young people supported to learn how to shop for food and cook independently?
- › Are young people able to openly raise issues they may be facing around independent living skills without fear of judgement?



5. Stability and a clear pathway out of homelessness



Young people in your accommodation feel both stable in their current accommodation and clear on the steps they need to take move on.

☐

Strongly agree (5)

☐

Slightly agree (4)

☐

Neither agree nor disagree (3)

☐

Slightly disagree (2)

☐

Strongly disagree (1)

Things to consider:

- › Are young people fearful that they may be asked to leave?
- › Are young people aware that there is a formal process that would need to be followed if they were to be asked to leave and what that process is?
- › Do young people feel settled enough in the accommodation to focus on future plans.?
- › Is the pathway to move on made clear to young people at the start of their placement within the accommodation?
- › Are move-on plans developed in partnership with young people to ensure they are in line with the specific requirements of each individual?
- › Does the service have a strategy about when young people should be taking steps towards more suitable accommodation and is this communicated to young people?



6. Sufficient practical provisions within the accommodation



Young people in your accommodation have access to the practical provisions they need to take steps towards successful move-on (Wi-Fi, mobile phone access, computer access, etc.)?

☐

Strongly agree (5)

☐

Slightly agree (4)

☐

Neither agree nor disagree (3)

☐

Slightly disagree (2)

☐

Strongly disagree (1)

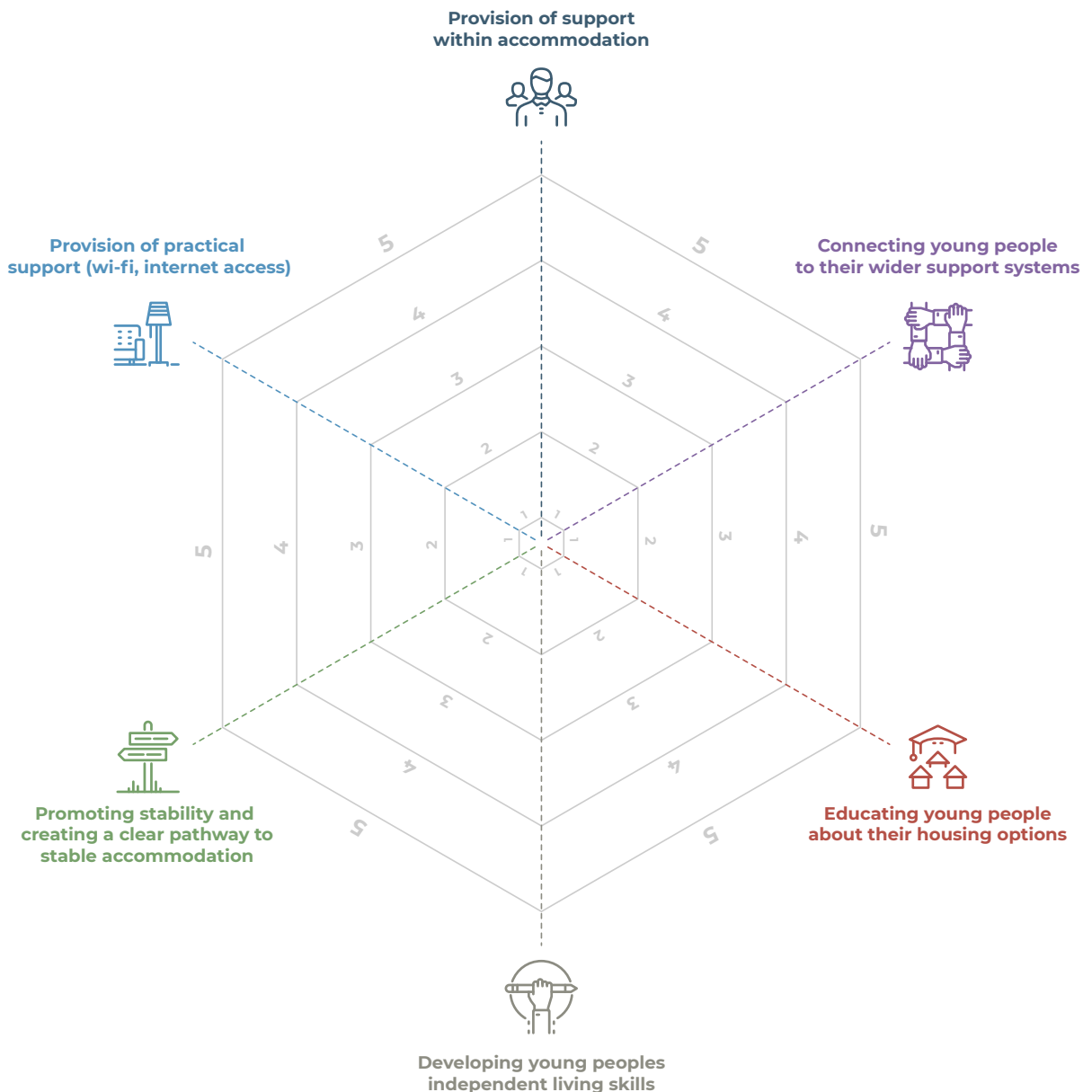
Things to consider:

- › Does the service provide young people with access to WI-FI?
- › Are young people without mobile phones supported to get them?
- › Can young people access computers within the accommodation?
- › Are young people being shown how to use technology to support them to find more suitable housing options?

3.0 Service Provider Self-Assessment

The answers that you have provided for each statement in Section B (1-6) correspond to a score line on the move-on based strengths map below. Each score should be plotted on the corresponding 'score line' and linked together to create an overview on how your service is performing in relation to supporting young people on their journeys out of homelessness. Scores of five suggest that your service is doing well and is adequately supporting young people to take steps towards suitable accommodation. Conversely, lower scores highlight areas for improvement.

Move on based strengths map:



Priority notes for service improvement:





With support from

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