



**Cirencester Housing
for Young People**
29/31 Querns Lane
Cirencester
Gloucester GL7 1RL

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Councillor Stephen Hirst
Portfolio Holder for Housing, Health and Leisure
Cotswold District Council,
Trinity Road,
Cirencester
Glos
GL7 1PX

11th May 2018

Dear *Councillor Hirst*

COPY

Loan Made by Cotswold District Council (CDC) to Cirencester Housing for Young People Ltd (CHYP)

As you may be aware, CDC lent CHYP £80,000 in 2002 to assist in the purchase of the supported housing unit, namely 29/31 Querns Lane, Cirencester. I attach copy of the CDC letter dated 10th July 2001 which outlines the terms of the interest free loan.

In common with many Charities, CHYP is reviewing its long-term sustainability given the present financial climate where fund-raising is becoming increasingly difficult. There are now so many Charities seeking funds from trusts and other grant-making bodies, that funding is being spread more and more thinly. Average figures suggest that currently only 1 out of 10 applications is likely to be successful and these are usually one-off payments rather than multi-year funding. Also CHYP's own fund-raising events struggle to raise amounts similar to those raised twenty years ago, despite CHYP having a huge amount of community support: please see the comments made on page 11 of the recent report issued by the Gloucestershire Community Foundation: Vital Signs.

The Management Committee of CHYP is conscious that if the loan were to be called in, in 2027, then that would represent a "cliff edge" and would likely mean that CHYP would have to sell one or more of its properties in order to repay it and might even be a threat to its continued existence.

CHYP accommodates young persons who are not necessarily in priority housing need but are vulnerable to being so. The work it does helps to reduce the pressure on the CDC's statutory requirement to house all those who are unintentionally homeless : see the attached link to the helpful Briefing Note issued by Shelter.

Furthermore the Homelessness Reduction Act 2017 imposes additional duties on local authorities to "prevent homelessness" and provide support to those concerned either to stay in their accommodation or help them find somewhere else to live. The Act received the Royal Assent in April 2017 and came into force on 3rd April 2018.

CHYP is currently the only available resource of supported accommodation for 16 – 18 year olds based in the CDC area and also takes referrals from the Police Probation Service, Churn Project, Cirencester College, CAB, P3 (People Potential Possibilities) as well as self-referral, all working together to make a positive impact on homelessness in the district.

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You may also be aware that there have been a number of cases reported in recent months where the Judiciary have criticised the lack of suitable accommodation for "troubled" teenagers. In particular, the President of the Family Division, Sir James Munby, made highly critical comments in a case reported in August last year.

In summary, CHYP has not only been assisting CDC in the discharge of its statutory obligations, but also saving CDC money. CHYP hopes to continue to do so in the future but as you will appreciate, the need to put money on one side has a continuing impact on the work that CHYP is able to do and the provision of its services. CHYP therefore respectfully requests that CDC consider converting the loan into a grant, thereby removing the continuing threat to CHYP's future and helping to secure the long-term stability and viability of CHYP.

With best wishes,

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'AJ', with a small horizontal line extending from the top right of the 'J'.

Andrew Johnson
Chairman

c.c. Councillor Mark Annett, Leader, Cotswold District Council
Councillor Julian Beale, Chairman, Cotswold District Council
Nigel Adams, Head of Service, Cotswold District Council
Jenny Poole, Head of Finance, Cotswold District Council