

Sensory and Multifunctional Room at Chaucer House

Background and Need

Children living in temporary accommodation often face challenges with emotional regulation and sensory processing, particularly following the COVID-19 pandemic. Staff at Chaucer House have observed an increase in children with attachment difficulties and possible ADHD, while parents have reported a lack of safe, calming spaces for their children. Residents also highlighted the need for a private space to meet professionals.

An unused shed in the communal garden was identified as a valuable opportunity to create a sensory and multifunctional space to support children and families in temporary accommodation and the surrounding community.

Resident-Led Development

From the outset, residents have been central to shaping the project. Parents shared insights on what sensory equipment works best for their children, and a WhatsApp group of mums is providing ongoing guidance on design, equipment, and activities. Residents will also help decide on equipment, fostering peer support and community connections.

Partnerships and Delivery

The project builds on a four-year partnership with **Elevator Arts**, who deliver drama workshops for children in temporary accommodation. During previous workshops, some children occasionally became overwhelmed in the communal lounge; the sensory room will provide a safe, calm space where they can de-stress without leaving the activity.

Contractor contributions have been crucial:

- **Bell Group** cleared and repainted the shed.
- **Sureserve** will furnish the space with sensory equipment.

Funding for summer workshops has been applied for by Elevator Arts, which would include a Special Educational Needs (SEN) worker to support children during activities.

The project is **expected to be completed by spring 2026**, in time for planned summer workshops and resident support sessions.

Uses and Benefits

The sensory room will support:

- Emotional regulation and sensory exploration for children
- Drama and creative workshops
- Parent support groups and private meetings with professionals
- Gardening activities to connect children with nature

Anticipated outcomes:

- Reduced anxiety and improved engagement for children
- Reduced stress for parents and carers
- Strengthened community connections
- Clear social value delivered through contractor involvement

Measuring Success

Impact will be monitored through:

- Parent and carer feedback on children's behaviour and mood
- Usage data and patterns of engagement
- Observations from staff, SEN workers, and workshop facilitators

Conclusion

The sensory and multifunctional space at Chaucer House demonstrates how resident voice, staff insight, and contractor social value can come together to create meaningful, lasting impact. By providing a calm, inclusive environment for sensory play, creative workshops, and private discussions, the project will strengthen families' well-being and foster a connected, supportive community.