

CASE STUDY:

Railway Meadow

A helping hand
for young parents.



With the number of homeless 16-24 year olds increasing year on year, many local authorities are starting to look at new ways of addressing the needs of vulnerable young people. At Railway Meadow, a new partnership is delivering accommodation and ongoing support for young parents at risk of being homeless.

The partnership

Three neighbouring district councils in Essex - Epping, Brentwood and Uttlesford - have pooled their resources to deliver this specialist service. Pooling resources led to a stronger service for young parents.

With our experience in providing mother and baby units in our foyers and our links to local family services through our seven Epping Children's Centres, East Thames was selected to deliver this project. Working with David Wilson Homes (part of the Barratts Group) on the construction, the homes were opened in early 2011.

The funding arrangement

The scheme has been funded through the three councils and with a grant of £835k from the Homes and Communities Agency.

The service

The purpose built scheme provides supported housing for 13 young parents from the Epping Forest, Brentwood and Uttlesford districts. The flats are self-contained to allow parents their privacy before and after the birth. The communal play room, kitchen and garden allow parents to socialise, learn and support each other.

The scheme provides mothers and fathers with a safe and secure environment for the first few months of their baby's life, as well as support, education and training. The aim is for parents to move into a permanent home after about nine months.

The support focuses on developing good parenting skills, general life skills and finding work. The scheme works closely with services offered from the local Children's Centre and the onsite support staff are shared with our local women's refuge.



“ Railway Meadow resident, Samantha, 17 said: “Coming here has given me and my daughter Michaela a new life, I feel like I have a bond with her and I’m amazed at the change I have seen in myself. Staff here support me in every way and I can’t wait to get back in to college. I am forever thankful, I couldn’t be happier”.

“As those of us with children will know, alongside the joys of parenthood, there are lots of challenges in looking after, and bringing up, a young child. Imagine, therefore, how much more difficult this enormous responsibility must be for young people - especially if they have no support from other family members. Now that Railway Meadow is here, all the partners are confident that the support and skills the young parents receive during their stay at Railway Meadow will set them up for the rest of their lives, to live independently, and to build a brighter future for their family.”

– Epping Forest DC Housing Portfolio Holder, Councillor David Stallan