

HERTFORDSHIRE JOINT HOUSING PROTOCOL



ARRANGEMENTS FOR:

1. Homeless 16 and 17 Year Olds
2. Care Leavers
3. Intentionally Homeless Families with Children

Publication Date: 20th May 2015



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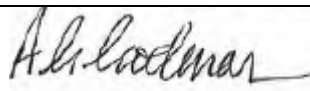


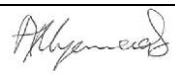

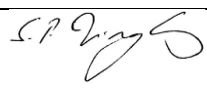
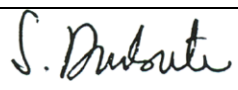



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The Joint Housing Protocol has been authorised in 2015 by all the participating organisations detailed below

Organisation	Name	Signature
Hertfordshire County Council	Jenny Coles, Director of Children's Services	
North Herts District Council	Andrew Godman, Head of Housing and Public Protection	
Three Rivers District Council	Kimberley Grout Housing Manager	
Watford Borough Council	Alan Gough, Head of Community and Customer Services	
Hertsmere Borough Council	Tina Nyamaah, Homeless Manager	
Stevenage Borough Council	Jaine Cresser Head of Housing Management	
Borough of Broxbourne	Stephen Tingley, Head of Housing and Benefits	
St. Albans City & District Council	Karen Dragovic, Head of Housing	
East Herts District Council	Simon Drinkwater, Director of Neighbourhood Services	
Welwyn & Hatfield Borough Council	Sian Chambers, Head of Housing and Community	
Dacorum Borough Council	Julia Hedger, Group Manager, Strategic Housing	
Herts Young Homeless (hyh)	Helen Elliot, Chief Executive Officer	

Introduction

This Protocol forms a working agreement between the ten District and Borough Councils in Hertfordshire and Hertfordshire County Council. The Protocol aims to ensure that by working together, agencies will prevent youth homelessness and/or young people entering the care system where inappropriate. As part of the prevention agenda it also sets out the joint arrangements and services aimed at providing opportunities to help strengthen families and options for young people to move to supported accommodation in a planned manner. The Protocol also sets out the arrangements for young people leaving care to register with the housing authority and access housing. Finally, the Protocol aims to support families with children who are at risk of homelessness or who present themselves as already homeless and those who are deemed intentionally homeless.

The Joint Housing Protocol has been developed in compliance with legislation and guidance which require Housing and Social Care Authorities to work together. It outlines the joint responsibilities of the signatories concerning the assessment of need and provision of accommodation and services to homeless 16/17 year olds, care leavers aged 16-21 (25 if in higher education), and homeless/intentionally homeless families.

The Joint Housing Protocol is based upon the Homelessness Code of Guidance for Housing Authorities, issued in 2002 (Homelessness Order 2002) and reissued in 2006 to take account of the Section 11 Children Act 2004 duty, as well as the responsibilities of Children's Services to safeguard and promote the welfare of children in need as a core statutory function. Section 11 of the Children Act 2004 requires Housing Authorities to co-operate with arrangements established by the Children's Services Authority to safeguard and promote the welfare of children.

The Protocol has, more recently, been informed by the guidance jointly issued by the Department for Communities and Local Government and the Department for Education (DfE) (May 2008) "*Joint working between Housing and Children's Services, 'Preventing homelessness and tackling its effects on children and young people'*". The guidance noted "the negative impact that homelessness can have on people's lives" and emphasises the need for joined up strategies, policies and procedures, including joint or co-ordinated assessment processes.

This update of the Protocol takes account of the Judgment in the House of Lords, *R (G) v Southwark LBC*, May 2009 and subsequent Guidance jointly issued in April 2010 by the Department for Children, Schools and Families and the Department for Communities and Local Government. The Judgment clarified that the Children Act 1989 has primacy over the Housing Act 1996 in providing services for homeless children in need.

Both the Judgement and the Guidance emphasise the continuing duty of Housing and Children's Services to collaborate in the discharge of their duties to children and young people.

The Protocol has also been aligned to the arrangements for Integrated Practice (IP), Working Together to Safeguard Children (which incorporated and superseded the Assessment of Children in Need and their Families), the Common Assessment Framework (CAF and [family e-CAF]) and the Team Around the Family (TAF) framework. This document should be read in conjunction with Hertfordshire Social Work Procedures Manual, CAF, family e-CAF and TAF guidance.

Further details and guidance on Integrated Practice and the family e-CAF can be found at <http://www.hertsdirect.org/services/advben/resprof/integrated/ippractice/>

The Legal Framework for Working Together

The following legislation provides the wider framework for the work of the agencies party to this Protocol, the majority of which specifically emphasise the need for joint working between housing authorities, Children's Services and other statutory, voluntary and private sector partners in tackling homelessness more effectively.

- Housing Act 1996
- Homelessness Act 2002
- Homelessness Code of Guidance for Local Authorities 2006
- Supplementary Guidance on the homelessness changes in the Localism Act 2011 and on the Homelessness (Suitability of Accommodation) (England) Order 2012
- Localism Act 2011
- Local Government Act 2000
- Children Act 1989
- Children Act 2004
- The Children and Young Persons Act 2008
- Working Together to Safeguard Children 2013
- Care Planning, Placement and Case Review, Regulations and Guidance 2010
- Planning Transition to Adulthood for Care Leavers, Regulations and Guidance 2010
- National Health Services and Community Care Act 1990
- Human Rights Act 1998
- Immigration and Asylum Legislation
- Immigration Act 2014
- Criminal Justice Act 1991
- Youth Justice Board National Standards
- Health and Social Care Act 2012
- Legal Aid, Sentencing and Punishment of Offenders Act 2012
- United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child
- National Health Service & Community Care Act 1990
- Data Protection Act 1998
- Sex Discrimination Act 1975, 1979, and 1986
- Race Relations Act 1976 and Amendment Act 2000
- Disability Discrimination Act 1995 and 2005
- Equality Act 2010
- Mental Capacity Act 2005
- Children and Families Act 2014
- Case law including M vs. LB Hammersmith and Fulham 08 and G v Southwark 2009
- Provision of Accommodation for 16 and 17 year old young people who may be homeless and/or require accommodation - DfE/DCLG, issued April 2010
- Hertfordshire Multi-Agency Protocol for working with Vulnerable Adolescents (2015)
- Meeting the Needs of Children and Families in Hertfordshire (2014)

Vision

The vision of the Joint Housing Protocol (JHP) is that by working together, agencies will provide an effective and coordinated service to prevent homelessness amongst families and young people, enable care leavers to move to appropriate accommodation in a planned manner and to enable these groups to access a range of services which enhance their life chances and ensure they can sustain independent accommodation. The Protocol is based upon a common commitment to a partnership approach and collaborative working to ensure that all Hertfordshire councils give every child the opportunity to thrive:

- In their families;
- In their schools;
- In their communities.

It is recognised as essential for all members to communicate clearly and in a timely way with colleagues, responding to requests for information and queries regarding referrals within the spirit of collaboration and co-operation.

Monitoring of Working Arrangements under the Joint Housing Protocol

Children's Services, Housing Authority and **hyh** (Herts Young Homeless) Liaison and Steering Groups have been established in order to ensure that difficult cases can be discussed.

Steering Group meetings will be held quarterly in order to address strategic development issues regarding the JHP and to ensure these are placed on the agenda of the Strategic Partnership Accommodation Board. Agenda items will include:

- Agency updates;
- Information sharing;
- Issues and successes for homeless 16 – 17 year olds (including the effectiveness of operational practice);
- Issues and successes for care leavers;
- Issues and successes for homeless families;
- AOB.

JHP Liaison Groups will be held six weekly. These will be held at local level and will address issues or difficulties experienced at a local level and take any broader developmental issues to the JHP Steering Group. Agenda items will include:

- Agency updates;
- Information sharing;
- Issues and successes for homeless 16 – 17 year olds (including specific case discussion around Housing Support meetings and outcomes);
- Issues and successes for care leavers;
- Issues and successes for homeless families;
- AOB.

Terms of Reference for these groups can be found at Appendix 4.

Aims and Objectives

By working together the participants of this protocol aim to:

- Enable children and young people to remain living within their family wherever possible;
- Provide young people and families with the support and services they need to achieve positive outcomes;
- Treat young people and families with respect and understanding of their situation;
- Ensure young people and families have the right to freedom from abuse, neglect and hardship;
- Ensure young people and families have equal access to services, which meet their individual needs, whatever their race, gender, religion, disability, sexuality or family background;
- Ensure young people and families have their needs met, including their needs for housing, support, food, education and leisure;
- Ensure that young people in care make a successful transition to independent living;
- Ensure young people and families are aware of their responsibilities with regard to their behaviour to abide by the rules and regulations governing any accommodation that is provided;
- Ensure young people are not subjected to numerous assessment processes and that they do not have to negotiate their own way through the broad range of agencies that support them.

Prevention of Homelessness

Hertfordshire County Council and Hertfordshire's ten local housing authorities are committed to working together with their partner agencies to prevent families and young people becoming homeless. Early intervention may enable homelessness to be prevented, or delayed sufficiently to allow for a planned move to appropriate accommodation to be arranged.

Underlying causes of homelessness can take a long time to build up: for example a loss of employment which can lead to tensions within households as well as difficulties paying rent or a mortgage.

A number of different personal and social factors can also contribute towards people becoming homeless. These may include one or more of the following (although this list is not exhaustive):

- Lack of qualifications;
- Lack of social support;
- Debts – particularly rent or mortgage arrears;
- Poor physical and mental health;
- Relationship breakdown;
- Involvement in criminality at an early age;
- Difficult family backgrounds including family disputes, sexual and physical abuse in childhood or adolescence;
- Living in families with drug or alcohol problems;
- Previous experience of family homelessness;
- Having an institutional background including having been in care, the armed forces or a young offenders institute or prison.

Tackling these problems can be very complex and can require support from a variety of different agencies, friends and family, combined with work from the individual, family and/or associated support services. Support may include intervention, advice, counselling, training or provision of alternative accommodation by a local authority where appropriate.

Prevention of homelessness should involve advice and assistance for people threatened with homelessness before they reach the point of crisis.

Co-operation and flexibility is required between services to work holistically to meet housing and support needs.

Within Hertfordshire there are many resources available to support children, young people and their families prior to a crisis point. Please see Appendices 5 and 6.

Procedure for Disputes

All staff involved in delivering services set out within this Protocol should be aware that it is everyone's responsibility to work positively together in the best interest of the child, young person or families concerned. By all staff working together to deliver the Joint Housing Protocol, it is hoped that disputes over roles and responsibilities will be minimised. However, it is recognised that on occasions, there will be a difference of professional opinion regarding the implementation of the Protocol or its recommendations. These disagreements could arise from any professional working with the young person, including **hyh** or other supported accommodation providers.

Such differences should, where possible, be resolved through further discussion between those staff directly involved. However, if a resolution cannot be agreed within two days, the reason for the disagreement should be put in writing and then escalated to the relevant manager.

Relevant contacts for escalation for all agencies signed up to this Protocol can be found at Appendix 7.

Participating Agencies

The participating agencies to the Joint Housing Protocol are listed below. It is widely acknowledged that children/young people, wherever possible, are best cared for within their families. Where young people leave home as a result of crisis, abuse, family breakdown, or poverty it is often unplanned. In order to improve outcomes for this group of young people and for families who present as homeless, it is vital that all agencies work together to provide appropriate services to address family difficulties and where appropriate provide access to suitable accommodation.

Below is a brief description of each agency's responsibilities as they apply to this protocol.

Children's Services

Hertfordshire County Council Children's Services have a duty to promote the welfare of children in need, including the provision of services to prevent homelessness, to assess need and ensure plans are in place for those assessed needs to be met.

Children's Services functions may be carried out on their behalf by other agencies such as **hyh**. However, an assessment of need under the Children Act 1989, including those relating to homelessness can only be finalised by the statutory Children's Services authority. Information and tasks pertinent to the assessment may be undertaken by agencies on behalf of Children's Services (**hyh**).

In Hertfordshire, assessments of homeless young people are carried out by the Targeted Youth Support Service and assessments of lone parent 16 & 17 year olds are carried out by the area Assessment Teams in conjunction with the Targeted Youth Support Team. The assessment of homeless families is undertaken by the Specialist and Safeguarding Teams.

Family Safeguarding Teams (Locality Teams), Disabled Children's Teams & Children Looked After Teams

The Family Safeguarding (Locality), Disabled Children and Children Looked After Teams provide support to a range of children in need and children looked after. From the age of 16 any child who has been looked after for the pre-requisite 13 weeks (from their 14th to 18th birthday), plus 24 hours aged 16 & 17 is deemed an 'Eligible' child. The social worker for Eligible or Relevant 16 & 17 year olds is also deemed their leaving care personal adviser. All 'Eligible' children are required to have a Leaving Care Assessment of Need and Pathway Plan which sets out the individual arrangements for leaving care, making the transition to adulthood and accessing housing authority accommodation.

The Social Worker/Personal Adviser with assistance from the Brokerage Senior Placements Officer will assist the young person to make an application to the housing register of their originating housing authority, as detailed in Appendix 16.

All Eligible and Relevant young people are the responsibility of the local authority Children's Services and should be provided with safe and appropriate accommodation, the costs of which will be paid for by the local authority Children's Services until the young person has attained the age of 18 years.

Brokerage Services

The Brokerage Accommodation Team (BAT) within Children's Services matches (requests for placements) children looked after to suitable placement options, both within Hertfordshire provision (fostering, children's homes) and within external providers (semi-independent accommodation).

Brokerage, via the 16 Plus Accommodation Team and the Senior Placements Officer are responsible for identifying placements for 16 & 17 year olds and for managing the housing registrations of children looked after aged 16 & 17 and the care leaver move-on arrangements for care leavers aged 18 and above.

The Children and Young People Commissioning Team

The Children and Young People Commissioning Team are responsible for ensuring that Hertfordshire County Council has a range of placements and accommodation available that can meet the needs of children looked after and care leavers.

Brokerage and the Children and Young People Commissioning Team monitors the use of external placements procured from private providers and registered social providers for safety, quality, and value for money.

Targeted Youth Support Services Teams

The Targeted Youth Support Service provides a comprehensive range of services to children and young people aged 13 to 21/25.

- Preventative services to support children and families – where children are aged 13 to 18, including 16 & 17 year olds who present as homeless.
- Short term children looked after services for those where prevention and sustainment within families as above is not possible and prior to transfer to the Children Looked After Service.
- Youth Offending – support to children and young people involved in the youth offending framework.

- Care Leavers – support to care leavers aged 18 to 21/25.

Youth Connexions and Learning Disability Teams

Youth Connexions provides youth work services, information, advice, guidance and support for young people aged 13 and 19 (up to 25 for young people with learning disabilities). It also provides support for young people leaving care, up to the age of 21, through the Youth Connexions One Stop Shops. A Youth Connexions One Stop Shop (OSS) is a venue where local partners come together to deliver a wide range of services for young people. The benefit is that young people can gain access to a number of professionals on one site providing a seamless service across agencies. Specific services include sexual health, condom provision, chlamydia testing and pregnancy testing; jobs and careers guidance including preparing for interview, writing applications, apprenticeships and job matching; opportunities to undertake own research or be signposted to specialist agencies.

Youth Connexions One Stop Shops are an initial point of access for housing advice in Stevenage, Watford, Hatfield, Hemel Hempstead, Cheshunt and Borehamwood and can support young people who are homeless or threatened with homelessness by:

- Providing space for local Housing Associations to meet young people;
- Supporting contact with the Job Centre Plus for those young people applying for benefits;
- Providing support for new tenants to access money advice, budgeting and life skills information;
- Providing information and supporting young people with living independently;
- Supporting contact with HYH, and supporting young people to access their services;
- Referring young people for more detailed housing advice to the Housing Authority.

Specialist and Safeguarding Teams

In circumstances where a family is deemed intentionally homeless or potentially homeless and the housing authority has no duty to provide accommodation, a referral will be made to the relevant Assessment Team via the Customer Service Centre. Information and advice will be offered to the family, in order to prevent homelessness. An assessment of need will be made if the family remains homeless at a point seven days prior to the end of the housing authority housing duty.

District (and City) and Borough Councils

There are ten District and Borough Councils in Hertfordshire, whose housing and homelessness duties are set out in the Housing Act 1996, Homelessness Act 2002 and subsequent legislation and guidance. Under this guidance, the local housing authority has a duty to provide interim accommodation to a person when they have reason to believe that person is homeless, eligible, and in priority need. However, a formal decision must then be made and there is no certainty that an interim duty will lead to a permanent duty to provide accommodation.

Certain functions of some housing authorities may be carried out by a partner housing association acting as registered social landlord. However, the housing authority will remain responsible for the discharge of its duties under the relevant housing legislation, and in their assistance to Children's Services in the execution of its duties in relation to homeless young people aged 16 & 17 under the Children Act 1989.

Herts Young Homeless (hyh)

hyh is an independent countywide charity enabling young people to secure and maintain appropriate accommodation through prevention, crisis intervention and tenancy sustainment.

Prevention of homelessness is inherent to all the services that **hyh** provide. These include A) an Advice, Information and Mediation Service, B) a Crashpad Service, and C) a Floating Support Service. **hyh** also employs a specialist Young Offenders Support Worker and works in conjunction with Aldwyck Housing Group to provide the Floating Support Service. As part of the **hyh** prevention work, an Education and Service User Involvement Project is also provided.

In addition, **hyh** has a broad range of services including a health project (**hyh** Health) which provides support to homeless people or people at risk of homelessness aged 16 and above. A Dual Diagnosis Support provision (mental health and substance misuse problems), a Homeless Prevention Worker and a Housing Specialist Worker based within an Acute Mental Health Ward.

Other services provided are:

- Single Homeless Advice and Information Workers – Working within a number of local housing authorities to assist single, non-priority, 18 to 65 year olds with housing advice and accommodation options;
- Young Person's Caseworker – Working within some housing authorities to assist with the prevention of homelessness of 16-24yrs olds;
- Tenancy Sustainment Officer - providing tenancy sustainment to young people, with a variety of needs, within the remit of funders service level agreement;
- Ex-Offenders Floating Support Worker (in conjunction with St Mungo's) – Providing floating support to ex-offenders and those leaving custody to secure and maintain accommodation.

hyh will initially conduct an independent assessment to identify the needs of a young person with the aim of preventing homelessness. **N.B** The **hyh** assessment does not constitute an assessment under the Children Act 1989, but can be used to contribute towards any statutory assessment.

Supported Housing Providers

Hertfordshire has a comprehensive range of supported housing providers (registered social landlords) who provide support and accommodation to young people aged 16 to 24, or 18 to 24, including Aldwyck Housing Association, Central Herts YMCA, East Herts YMCA, Watford YMCA, Paradigm Foyer, Hightown Praetorian, Irish Centre Housing. They provide supported accommodation to which some District and Borough councils have all nomination rights depending on a local connection, eligibility and a referral. A small number of these supported accommodation provisions can be accessed by young people without a local connection within a given area.

Several of the provisions will provide placements to children looked after aged 16 & 17, following a referral from the Brokerage Team.

Supported accommodation providers are responsible for ensuring that young people are supported so that they do not have to leave the accommodation in an unplanned manner. Every effort will be made to ensure that all appropriate actions are taken to support young people to maintain their tenancy. They have a role in alerting Children's Services staff where a young person is at risk of losing their tenancy, in order that additional support can be provided.

Housing Related Support – Integrated Accommodation Commissioning Team (Health and Community Services HRS)

Housing Related Support (previously Supporting People) provides funding to a range of organisations that provide housing related support services to a range of vulnerable people in the community in order to improve their quality of life through greater independence. Housing related support can prevent problems that may lead to homelessness and can help young people moving to independent living after leaving care.

Housing related support includes:

- Advice and guidance on managing independent accommodation;
- Helping to develop life and social skills;
- Support in resolving or preventing debts;
- Guidance about safety and security in the home.

Contracts for agencies commissioned to provide housing related support are held, and monitored, by the Children and Young People Commissioning Team and the Integrated Accommodation Commissioning Team within Hertfordshire County Council.

Groups Covered by this Protocol

The Joint Housing Protocol applies to all groups listed below. For each group there are specific statutory functions that apply, which each agency must fulfil.

Section 1

- Homeless 16 – 17 year olds

Section 2

- Care Leavers

Section 3

- Homeless families with children

Guidance and Arrangements for Homeless Young People Aged 16/17

1. Introduction and Purpose

This section of the Joint Housing Protocol aims to ensure that by working together, agencies will prevent youth homelessness and/or young people entering into care wherever possible and safe to do so. This Protocol outlines the joint vision and agreed roles and responsibilities for all parties involved in assessing and supporting homeless 16/17 year olds.

This area of the Joint Housing Protocol takes account of the judgement in the House of Lords, *R(G) v Southwark LBC*, May 2009 and subsequent guidance jointly issued in April 2010 by the Department for Children, Schools and Families and the Department for Communities and Local Government. Both the Judgement and the Guidance emphasise the continuing duty of both Housing and Children's Services to collaborate in the discharge of their duties to children and young people.

2. Aims and Principles

This section of the Protocol aims to ensure that young people's needs (aged 16 and 17) are appropriately assessed and services are delivered in line with their identified needs.

The following principles are agreed by all agencies signed up to this Protocol:

- All parties commit to having an open, flexible and accountable way of working;
- All parties commit to ensuring that young people are not passed back and forth between services and that once a 16 or 17 year old approaches any professional as homeless, that professional will immediately follow the Protocol in order to minimise delay and the need for the young person to share the same story numerous times;
- As a general principle young people are often best cared for within their own family;
- All parties will endeavour to carry out a home visit for all young people at imminent risk of homelessness (subject to risk assessment);
- It is recognised that accommodating 16/17 year olds may not improve an individual's outcomes, therefore, wherever possible and appropriate, accommodation solutions will be found within the family or wider support network;
- Although it is recognised that young people are often best cared for within their family home or extended support network, young people should not be left in a situation that places them at serious risk of harm;
- All parties commit to attending multi-agency meetings and participating fully in Joint Housing Support meetings;
- All parties commit to responding to requests for information in a timely and appropriate manner, in line with data protection requirements;
- All parties agree to participate in, facilitate and support multi-agency training and ensure that all staff are fully aware of and understand the Protocol, including new starters;
- All parties are committed to valuing equality and diversity and ensuring that services are accessible equally to all, which may include providing an interpreter or ensuring visits are physically accessible to young people.

1. Overview and Purpose of the Joint Housing Support Meeting

A 16 or 17 year old may present as homeless to any agency including Children's Services, a housing authority or **hyh**. It is important that the young person and their family receive a consistent message from all parties involved regarding the process that will take place following their approach and that prevention and a planned move will be fully explored by all agencies. As part of the joint approach, it is also important that the young person and family fully understand the role that each agency plays. At the heart of this Protocol is the intention to achieve good outcomes for all young people by working closely together to minimise the need for the young person to reiterate their circumstances to several agencies.

2. Responsibility of the Agency where the Young Person first presents as Homeless

When a young person (aged 16 or 17) presents as homeless or at risk of being homeless to any agency, an initial assessment of need should be carried out to establish whether there is a need for urgent temporary accommodation whilst a Joint Housing Support Meeting is arranged. It is the responsibility of the agency where the young person first presents (referring agency) to ensure the young person has interim accommodation whilst a Joint Housing Support Meeting is arranged. However, where a young person presents to **hyh** and a solution cannot be found on that day, they will liaise with Children's Services regarding an interim arrangement. Whilst the principle is that the agency where the young person first presents takes initial responsibility for providing interim accommodation, it is recognised that this Joint Housing Protocol promotes a joined up approach, which may result in a request for support from a partner agency to another partner to provide interim accommodation. It is a key principle that a young person should not be sent directly to a partner agency for them to assist with accommodation without liaison taking place. If interim accommodation is provided to the young person, all parties recognise that Bed & Breakfast accommodation is not appropriate for this age group and as such, should endeavour to not use B&B as a solution.

In the spirit of joint working, and where available, housing authorities will provide interim accommodation for up to 10 working days to enable a Joint Housing Support Meeting to take place. If a housing authority provides interim accommodation whilst a Joint Housing Support Meeting is arranged, this interim accommodation can be extended to 15 working days in exceptional circumstances and where it is jointly agreed as a need by professionals during the de-brief following the Joint Housing Support Meeting.

Both Children's Services and housing authorities may also refer to **hyh** to help identify /provide emergency accommodation with Crashpad, which can last up to 28 days. This provides a setting for the young person where both Children's Services and the housing authority are able to undertake the Joint Housing Support Process in order to determine what support is required for the young person. See Appendix 8 for Crashpad referral form. If the young person first presents to **hyh** and requires interim accommodation and the young person is not suitable for Crashpad, **hyh** will contact and send an emergency referral to Children's Services and the specific housing authority.

When a young person first presents as homeless, they will be provided with a Housing Support Pack. This pack provides information for the young person and their family on the Joint Housing Support meeting and JHP process. The pack contains a leaflet regarding the Joint Housing Support Meeting for the young person (see Appendix 10), a Guide for Homeless 16 and 17 year olds and a consent to sharing information section (see Appendix 10). The guidance sheet explaining the Joint Housing Support Meeting also highlights the importance of

sharing information between agencies and doubles as a consent form to be used by all agencies for the duration of this process. It is the responsibility of the referring agency to obtain consent and share this consent form with the other two parties so that it can be held by all three parties.

When a young person initially presents as homeless, the referring agency will contact the other two agencies (by telephone) to arrange a time, date and venue for the Joint Housing Support Meeting so that these details can be given to the young person before they leave their office. These telephone calls will then be followed up by the referring agency with any relevant paperwork such as a completed referral form and consent form. Details for referral pathways for housing, TYSS and **hyh** can be found at Appendix 11.

3. Process for Joint Housing Support Meeting

In order to provide a consistent approach all 10 housing authorities and all 5 Targeted Youth Support Service (TYSS) teams along with **hyh** have agreed a single model of intervention with agreed timescales. This document can be found at Appendix 11.

A Joint Housing Support Meeting between the young person, parents/carers (if appropriate), TYSS, housing authority and **hyh** will take place at an agreed venue within 5 working days of the young person first presenting as homeless (this meeting should be arranged as soon as possible). This meeting will be split into three sections.

Part One: The first part of the meeting will be for the professionals to share information (in line with the consent form signed by the young person), identify risks and safeguarding concerns, highlight previous interventions and any discussions already held with the young person and their family. The meeting will identify any possible outstanding pieces of work and finally agree the agenda and who will chair the meeting with the young person and parents/carers.

Part Two: The second part of this process is the actual meeting itself with the young person and then with the young person's parents/ carers (if appropriate). This will be an opportunity for the young person to explain their current situation and for professionals to clarify information.

Part Three: Finally, the professionals will have a de-brief meeting where they agree an action plan with timescales and roles and responsibilities along with any initial decisions. This will be signed by the professionals present, copied and given to all parties. A copy of the agenda with action plan and outcomes/decision sheet can be found at Appendix 9. The risk assessment document can be found at Appendix 12. Questions 1 – 5 of Appendix 9 should be completed during every Joint Housing Support Meeting. Questions 6 – 8 of Appendix 9 should be completed by the social worker following the Joint Housing Support Meeting, if and when relevant and then shared with all parties, as indicated on the form.

4. Decision Making and Outcomes

If the Joint Housing Support Meeting indicates a need for a Child and Family Assessment to be completed by Children's Services, TYSS will complete this assessment as soon as possible and in line with the agreed timescale. This may require the assessment to be completed in a few days or, depending on the young person's immediate housing circumstances, it may allow the assessment to be completed within a longer timescale. The TYSS Manager will determine the appropriate length of time for the Child and Family Assessment giving consideration to the young person's current living arrangements. The agreed timescale for the assessment will be set out in the meeting documentation. However, the assessment timescale can be no longer than the 45 days as set out in the Working Together 2015 Guidance.

The Child and Family Assessment will specify whether there is a duty owed to the young person under Section 20 or Section 17 of the Children Act 1989, or if there is no duty owed to the young person.

5. Assessment under Section 17 of the Children Act 1989:

A 16 or 17 year old is deemed a Child in Need under Section 17 if:

- He/She is unlikely to achieve or maintain, or to have the opportunity of achieving or maintaining, a reasonable standard of health or development without the provision of services under this section of the Act;
- His/Her health or development is likely to be significantly impaired, or further impaired, without the provision of such services;
- He/She is disabled.

Therefore, if a 16 or 17 year old is a child in need of support, rather than in need of support and accommodation, the young person would not meet the criteria for Section 20, but they could be supported under Section 17 of the Children Act 1989.

6. Assessment and Accommodation under Section 20 of the Children Act 1989:

A 16 or 17 year old is likely to be deemed to be in need of Section 20 accommodation if:

- The applicant is a child;
- The child is a Child in Need (Section 17 of the Children Act 1989);
- The child is in need due to requiring accommodation by the Local Authority;
- This need is as a result of Section 20 (1) being met; i.e.
 - there being no person with parental responsibility for him/her, or because
 - s/he is lost or abandoned, or because
 - the person who has been caring for him/ her is prevented, for whatever reason, from providing suitable accommodation or care; or as a result of
- Section 20 (3) being met; the child's welfare will be seriously prejudiced if they are not provided with accommodation;
- The child's wishes and feelings regarding the provision of accommodation have been ascertained and consideration (having regard to the child's age, understanding and capacity) is duly given to those wishes and feelings.

Where a Child and Family Assessment indicates that the young person is owed a duty under Section 20 of the Children's Act 1989, the social worker will be required to attend Hertfordshire Access to Resource Panel (HARP) in order to seek authorisation for funding for a placement for the young person. Requests for authorisation of a placement may be sought in emergency situations and agreement can be given by the Delegated Manager until the next HARP date. The social worker will ensure the relevant Housing and **hyh** representatives are aware of the HARP date and that the housing representative is invited to attend, if available. The social worker will also ensure that feedback is given to the family, housing and **hyh** following the HARP outcome.

If a placement is authorised and identified, the social worker will proceed with the relevant Children Looked After process.

If HARP does not authorise a placement, the social worker will inform housing so that housing can make a decision in respect of any duty owed to the young person under the Housing Act 1996.

Section 2 of the Outcomes/ Decision Sheet (Appendix 9) will be filled in by the social worker along the way and shared with housing and **hyh** representative upon completion of the Child and Family Assessment so that all three parties can hold this on file.

7. No Duty Owed under the Children Act 1989

Where a Child and Family Assessment indicates that the young person does not meet threshold for accommodation under Section 20, or support under Section 17, TYSS will advise all parties that no duty is owed under Section 20 or Section 17 of the Children Act 1989. Housing will then make a decision on any duty owed under Housing Act 1996. Other support may be provided to the young person / family by TYSS, **hyh**, or other community organisations.

8. Dispute Resolution Process

All staff involved in delivering this Protocol are aware that it is everyone's responsibility to work positively together in the best interest of the young person concerned. By all staff fully participating in the Joint Housing Support process, it is anticipated that few disputes will arise. However, it is recognised that on occasions, there will be difference of professional opinion regarding the implementation of the Protocol or recommendations within the joint assessment. These disagreements could arise from any professional working with the young person, including **hyh** or other supported accommodation providers.

Such differences should, wherever possible, be resolved through further discussion between those staff directly involved, which may involve a phone call, email or meeting. However, if a resolution cannot be agreed within 2 working days, the reason for the disagreement should be put in writing and then escalated to the Targeted Youth Support Service manager as well as the nominated housing manager and **hyh** manager, as appropriate, for discussion at management level in order to try to resolve the disagreement.

If a resolution cannot be found at management level within a further 2 working days, the matter should be escalated to the Vulnerable Young People Policy Manager and/or Head of Service for Housing (nominated JHP manager), who will review all information presented from Children's Services and Housing in order to determine if there is any need to review the decision reached in light of this information. The Policy Manager/Head of Service for Housing (nominated JHP manager) will make a decision within 2 working days and then communicate this response to both Children's Services team and Housing Department. Relevant contacts for escalation for Housing, TYSS and **hyh** can be found in Appendix 7.

If any young person is dissatisfied with the outcome of the joint assessment or service provided, s/he has the right to complain through the existing complaint procedures.

Special circumstances

(The following circumstances will be assessed in line with criteria outlined above)

1. Homeless Couples where One or Both Parents are Age 16/17

The needs of a 16 and 17 year old for accommodation should be assessed in the context of their relationship with any 'partner'. In some cases it may be appropriate for a 16 or 17 year old to be accommodated in a situation where they can live with their partner. This should not prevent Children's Services from accommodating a 16 or 17 year old under Section 20 where the young person is owed a duty under this section. Specific consideration should be given to placement options for young people accommodated under Section 20 whilst living with a partner. For example, placement in an alternative arrangement such as a self-contained property with visiting support may be appropriate.

It will also be important to have contingency plans in place in case the relationship breaks down.

2. Homeless 16/17 Year Olds with An Unborn Baby or Child

In circumstances where Children's Services receives a referral for a homeless 16/17 year old that is pregnant, this referral will be sent both to Targeted Youth Support Service (for the 16/17 year old) as well as Assessment Team (for the unborn baby). Any assessments completed must take into account a family's rights to family life under the Human Rights Act, as well as the needs of the unborn baby. This may mean that a mother and baby unit is given consideration as part of the Joint Housing Support Meeting and subsequent recommendations.

In these circumstances, a Joint Housing Support Meeting will be arranged and will also include the allocated worker for the unborn baby. The usual Joint Housing Support Meeting procedure will be followed, but will include the allocated worker for the unborn baby as well as the TYSS worker for the parent. TYSS will lead on the Joint Housing Support Meeting whilst the Assessment Team worker will contribute to this Meeting and lead on the assessment and planning for the unborn baby.

When Children's Services receives a referral where a homeless 16/17 year old has a child, this referral will only be sent to the Assessment Team. The Assessment Team worker will be responsible for undertaking any relevant assessments regarding the child and will also be responsible for following the Joint Housing Support Meeting procedure.

3. Homeless Young People from Another Area

Where a 16/17 year old who was living in one Children's Services area moves to another Children's Services area and seeks assistance from services in that area, the duty to assess falls on the Children's Services area from which they seek assistance. The Children's Services authority undertaking the assessment has a duty to consider the young person's immediate needs and cannot expect them to return to the authority in the area presumed to be their 'home' district.

Where a 16/17 year old presents as homeless to a housing authority, the housing authority has a duty to assess the young person's homelessness application. However, even if the outcome of the assessment is that the young person is found homeless, the housing authority undertaking the assessment can refer the young person to the housing authority from where they came and where they have a local connection.

Depending on the length of time the young person has resided in Hertfordshire, the young person may be referred to the housing authority where they have a local connection or may remain supported by Hertfordshire. Housing authorities should liaise with Children's Services to ascertain the responsibilities of the young person's 'home' housing authority and if any support is being provided by Hertfordshire Children's Services on behalf of the home housing authority.

4. 16/17 Year Olds who are Deemed Intentionally Homeless

All possible steps will be taken jointly by parties in order to prevent a young person from becoming intentionally homeless. However, where a young person becomes intentionally homeless, they will be advised of their right to a review of this decision. Advice and assistance will be provided by the housing authority and an appropriate referral will be made.

Where a housing authority believes that a 16 or 17 year old is at risk of becoming intentionally homeless, an urgent referral will be completed and sent to Children's Services and **hyh** to undertake an assessment and support the young person to identify alternative provision. Support may be provided by **hyh**.

In most cases, a decision of intentional homelessness under the Housing Act 1996 will lead to a Child and Family Assessment under the Children Act 1989, unless the intervention by **hyh** resolves the young person's accommodation and support needs.

5. Homeless 16/17 Year Olds who are known to Youth Justice

The same Joint Housing Support Meeting process will be followed when a 16 or 17 year old presents as homeless and is open to the Youth Justice Service. The Youth Justice Service is located within the Targeted Youth Support Service; therefore, it may be that the same worker who is supporting a Youth Justice Order, also completes the Joint Housing Support Meeting process. However, if two separate workers are allocated, it is important that the worker enforcing the Youth Justice Order communicates with the social worker completing the Joint Housing Support Meeting to ensure all relevant information is shared.

Young people who are released from custody will have a Release Plan in place. Although the development of the Release Plan may involve meetings with housing, it would not be under the normal Joint Housing Support Meeting process as plans need to be in place prior to the young person being released from custody.

6. Data Collection - 16 & 17 Year olds

Children's Service, the 10 housing authorities and **hyh** use a data collect tool to record the number of 16 & 17 year olds who are presenting as homeless; the agency where they present and information about their level of need and subsequent outcome. The data collection tool has been developed to avoid double counting and to ensure data is recorded consistently across all authorities and agencies.

See Appendix 13.

Additional Guidance for Homeless Young People age 16 or 17:

1. Children Under the Age of 16 Years Old

All children under the age of 16 years remain the exclusive responsibility of their parents, and if in need, of Children's Services. If a homeless child under the age of 16 approaches any one of the other signatories to the Protocol, Children's Services should immediately be contacted so that Children's Services can undertake an immediate assessment.

2. Young People Presenting to a Local Housing Authority

Whether any substantive duty is owed under Part 7 of the Housing Act 1996 will depend in part on the outcome of the assessment by Children's Services, and whether any duty is owed under Section 20 of the Children Act 1989. Housing services can continue to secure accommodation under section 188 (1) until they have notified the young person whether any substantive duty is owed under Part 7 of the 1996 Act. When a young person first presents to housing, they will initiate the Joint Housing Support Meeting process. Wherever possible this should be undertaken within the 10 day interim accommodation timescale.

3. Funding of Interim/Temporary Accommodation

When interim accommodation is provided under Section 188 (1) of the Housing Act 1996, it is important that support is put in place to aid that young person with their benefits claim as soon as possible. **hyh**, the housing authority and/or the Targeted Youth Support Service worker can all assist the young person to claim their benefit entitlements.

Young people placed in temporary accommodation by a housing authority (via a S188 assessment) will be funded by that authority and/or by housing benefit. Subject to an assessment of need, a temporary Section 17 payment may be made whilst the young person is establishing their personal benefit claim and/or during the Children's Services assessment period.

If and when a Section 20 decision has been made, Children's Services will become responsible for the young person's financial support and their benefit claims should cease, unless the young person is in receipt of disability or lone parent benefits. The local authority housing department will invoice Children's Services for subsequent housing costs until the young person has been placed elsewhere. HARP will be responsible for approving the cost of the interim accommodation at the point that the decision is made and subsequent invoices should be sent to the nominated officer in Brokerage.

Young People Presenting Directly to Herts Young Homeless (hyh)

Many young people either self-refer to **hyh** or are signposted by other agencies. Capacity allowing; **hyh** will complete a Children's Services information gathering form to be returned within 2 days to Children's Services. The process involves undertaking 1) an **hyh** initial assessment or 2) an advice only assessment to ascertain the situation and begin prevention work. **hyh** will assess the circumstances of the young person, and will refer to Crashpad accommodation where necessary, if appropriate and where available. If Crashpad is not appropriate or available, **hyh** will liaise with Children's Services regarding an interim arrangement, interim accommodation (from the Housing Authority) and will also initiate the Joint Housing Support Meeting process.

If safeguarding concerns are identified, **hyh** will make a safeguarding referral to Children's Services. Any safeguarding concerns should be assessed by Children's Services before **hyh** are able to promote a return home, as it may not be safe to advise the young person to return home at this stage.

hyh will work with the young person, their immediate and extended family to assess homelessness and prevent family breakdown. Where a young person is able to remain at home, but parents/carers are in support of the young person moving to supported accommodation as a matter of choice, this work will be undertaken and will not need to be referred to Children's Services for a Child and Family Assessment.

Where possible, **hyh** will arrange for the young person to stay with family or friends, if safe to do so, pending the availability of supported accommodation. If the young person does not wish to be referred to Children's Services for an assessment, **hyh** may refer to the relevant housing authority and/or to local supported accommodation hostels.

Where appropriate, **hyh** will follow the e-CAF process working with other agencies involved to support integrated practice. Where additional support needs are identified, this may include calling a team around the child/family (TAC/TAF) meeting where appropriate. If the young person's situation remains unresolved and homelessness cannot be prevented, and the young person agrees, **hyh** will refer to Children's Services for an assessment under the Children Act

1989, sending a CAF (or Single Service Request) and a **hyh** Initial Assessment Form and will initiate the Joint Housing Support Meeting process.

In an emergency, and where a young person is deemed at risk of being immediately street homeless, **hyh** will send either a **hyh** Initial Assessment or an e-CAF to Children's Services (and/or a Single Service Request Form depending on capacity) to advise them of this emergency and ask for an assessment under the Children Act 1989. If time constraints do not allow for this paperwork to be sent immediately, **hyh** will telephone Children's Services and request to speak to a duty worker/manager. **hyh** will also request interim accommodation from the Local Housing Authority. If interim accommodation is not available, **hyh** will request emergency accommodation from Children's Services. **hyh** will initiate the 'Joint Housing Support' process.

Where the young person has less than 20 weeks before their 18th birthday, **hyh** will refer immediately to Children's Services, so that should the young person meet the Section 20 criteria, their entitlement to leaving care support is not prejudiced.

Where appropriate, **hyh** will also make a referral to local Registered Social Landlords for accommodation in anticipation of Children's Services making a decision regarding Section 20. This will reduce the delay in the young person accessing accommodation as a result of waiting lists. The young person may take up this option if either they do, or do not become accommodated under Section 20, if the assessment determines that this type of provision would best meet their needs.

If the young person is assessed and meets the criteria for Section 20, but refuses to accept Section 20 accommodation, **hyh** will then refer the young person to their local housing authority to make a homeless application and offer support as needed.

Young People Presenting Directly to Children's Services

Where a young person presents as homeless directly to Children's Services, Children's Services will initiate the Joint Housing Support Meeting process.

1. Referrals to Children's Services for an Assessment of Need

Referrals and enquires may be made to the Customer Services Centre in writing, by telephone (0300 123 4043), or by email to:

protectedreferrals.cs@herts.gcsx.gov.uk

The above is a secure email address and can only be used by GCSX users.

Non GCSX users – *protectedreferrals.cs@hertfordshire.gov.uk*

Postal address: Customer Service Centre (CSC), PO Box 153, Stevenage, Herts, SG1 2GH.

A telephone call should always be made to alert the Customer Service Centre of an impending referral (if the referral is made by e-mail/ writing).

The Customer Service Centre, on receiving the referral, will make relevant enquiries regarding the circumstances of the young person. Referrals will be directed to both **hyh** and Targeted Youth Support Services for both support and assessment. If the young person is also a lone parent the referral will be directed to the Assessment Service.

Children's Services have a responsibility to assess the needs of young people living within their area, who appear to be children in need.

Assessment and Accommodation under Section 20 of the Children Act 1989

Children's Services has a duty to offer support and assistance to prevent family breakdown and/or to enable the young person to be cared for by his/her parents or extended family. This duty may be carried out on behalf of Children's Services by commissioned agencies, i.e. **hyh**.

Section 17 of the Children Act 1989 includes the power to provide a broad range of support to a child, young person or their family to address their needs which may include temporary payments and the provision of a deposit to avoid homelessness.

Children's Services will undertake a 'Child and Family Assessment' to establish the above direction within given timescales (15 or 35 working days). Where the needs of the young person indicate, the assessing social worker should alert Brokerage to make an advanced referral to a local Registered Social Landlord supported accommodation provision which may be pursued if the young person meets the Section 20 criteria or not. **hyh** may already have initiated an application to a registered social landlord hostel.

After being looked after for 24 hours the young person will become a Qualifying child, after being looked after for 13 weeks the young person becomes an Eligible child – Care Planning, Placement and Case Review Regulations and Guidance 2010 and Planning Transition to Adulthood for Care Leavers - Regulations and Guidance 2010.

Where a young person is provided with interim accommodation by the housing authority, accommodation by a registered social landlord, Crashpad (host or hostel) accommodation or is able to stay with suitable family or friends whilst the assessment is completed they will only be deemed 'Accommodated' under Section 20 upon the completion of the assessment, should the outcome be a recommendation of 'Accommodation under Section 20' and this recommendation is approved by HARP.

Where a local housing authority has provided interim accommodation pending the assessment of the young person by Children's Service and it has been determined that the young person will be accommodated under Section 20, Children's Services will notify the housing authority of the decision. This is done in order to inform the housing authority that this young person has become looked after and will be owed a housing duty as a care leaver. Where accommodation is to be provided under Section 20, Children's Services will make arrangements for the young person to move to a new placement as quickly as possible (this may be a Registered Social Landlord placement). In some cases this will be via a referral for housing provision accessed by the local housing authority.

Exceptions to the Section 20 Criteria:

A homeless 16 or 17 year old does not require accommodation under Section 20 under the following circumstances:

- a) Where the child does have a home to go to, whether on his own or with a family or friend, but needs help in getting there, getting into it, or in having it made habitable or safe. Such a child simply needs 'help with accommodation' rather than needing accommodation.
- b) A child who has been living wholly independently for some time with a job and somewhere to live and then becomes homeless. His case would not fall within the criteria set out in Section 20. Accordingly he would come within the Homelessness Act 2002 Order and be in 'priority need' under the Housing Act 1996. Depending on his/her level of vulnerability they may come within the scope of Section 20 (3)

- c) Section 20 (6) requires a local authority to ascertain and give due weight to a child's wishes and feelings before providing him with accommodation under Section 20. If a competent, homeless 16 or 17 year old refuses to be accommodated under Section 20 that status cannot be forced upon him: accordingly he would be a child with a 'priority' need under the Homelessness Act 2002.

Guidance: It will be a matter for Children's Services to assess whether the young person has actually been living independently. A young person who had been "sofa surfing" should not be considered to be living independently.

It is possible that a duty under Section 17 may arise in the instance of a young person who has been living independently, but has lost this accommodation in circumstances which would be likely to deem him/her intentionally homeless. Where a local housing authority believes a young person is eligible, homeless and in priority need, the young person may make an application under section 188 of the Homelessness Act 2002, and be provided with temporary accommodation whilst enquiries are being made. A young person who has been deemed intentionally homeless may well be a child in need, and should be referred to Children's Services to assess his or her needs as such. In such circumstances it is likely they will be deemed Section 20 (1).

Guidance in relation to c) above: homeless young people who do not consent to be accommodated under Section 20 – the young people's competence to make such a decision must be evaluated. It is recommended that Children's Services and **hyh** meet with the young person and their parents/carers to ensure they have been provided with the information on which to make an informed decision. Children's Services, **hyh** and the housing authorities have produced an explanatory leaflet for young people, which can provide useful information for parents too.

Workers assessing 16 & 17 year olds must be aware that this group of young people are covered by the Mental Capacity Act 2005 and as such a 'Capacity' Assessment should be undertaken to gauge their ability to make an informed decision.

Children's Services may assist the young person to meet their other assessed needs under Section 17. Applicants cannot be considered to have become homeless intentionally because of failing to take up an offer of accommodation; homelessness is only capable of being 'intentional' where the applicant has ceased to occupy accommodation that it would have been reasonable for him or her to continue to occupy.

Where a 16 or 17 year old has secured accommodation under Part 7 of the Housing Act 1996, Children's Services should work closely with the housing authority/service to ensure that the young person is provided with sufficient support to ensure he or she does not become homeless intentionally in the future, for example, as a result of accruing rent arrears or being evicted due to bad behaviour. In Hertfordshire 16 & 17 year olds can be supported by **hyh**, the Targeted Youth Support Services and a range of universal services.

Young People Aged 16 and 17 who were Living Independently and who are Deemed Intentionally Homeless

The decision of intentionally homeless will be affected by reasons for the intentionality; including the age, maturity and level of understanding of the young person. In cases where the young person has been violent or caused extreme anti-social behaviour within temporary accommodation, the period of notice could be less than 28 days.

Children's Services will undertake an assessment of the young person's needs including their need for accommodation, and provide services to meet the need as appropriate under Section 17 or Section 20. The assessment should include a consideration of whether the young person

had been living in accommodation not provided under Section 20 of the Children Act 1989 and whether it could be argued that this accommodation and support did not in fact meet their needs.

It is important that Children's Services, the housing authority and other agencies e.g. **hyh** work closely throughout this process, sharing information and collaborating to secure appropriate resources and outcomes for the young person.

Young People Released From Custody

For further information, please see section on 'Young People Looked After, Custody and Leaving Care'.

Youth offending workers will mediate with the young person and their family, and/or signpost to other partner agencies e.g. Parent Line Plus, Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services (CAMHS), Targeted Youth Support Services or **hyh**. If mediation has been exhausted, youth offending workers who work within Targeted Youth Support Service will liaise with their line manager for an assessment under the Children Act 1989, and will continue to support the young person.

Implications for a Young Person being Looked After and their Leaving Care Entitlement

A 16-17 year old who is looked after under Section 20 of the Children Act 1989 for at least 24 hours becomes a Qualifying child in the first instance and then after 13 weeks s/he becomes an Eligible child and at age 18 a Former Relevant child. Eligible children/young people require a pathway plan and a qualified social worker and from the age of 18 they will be transferred to a leaving care personal adviser. Young people remain Former Relevant until their 21st birthday or until the education or training they are engaged in on their 21st birthday ceases. Young people can also return to the local authority to commence or resume education or training at any point between their 21st and 25th birthday. Former Relevant young people are an automatic priority group for local housing authorities, between the ages of 18 and 21. Qualifying young people, who have been looked after at some point at the age of 16 or 17 are also accepted as a priority for local authority housing, as they turn 18. Qualifying young people, who have been looked after at some point aged 0 to 16, but who were not looked after at all aged 16 or 17 may also be deemed to be in priority need if they are considered more vulnerable than the average homeless person. See Homelessness Code of Guidance Chapter 10.

Accommodation Pathways and Housing Arrangements for Care Leavers

Introduction to the Care Leaver Section

The following section deals with the arrangements for registering children looked after and care leavers aged 16 & 17 with their 'local connection' and 'host' housing authority and the subsequent procedure and framework for planning a pathway into social housing or the private sector.

Wherever possible, the information within this section covers arrangements across all ten housing authorities in Hertfordshire. However, given the changes resulting from the Localism Act 2011 each housing authority has slightly different arrangements for how applicants join the housing register and how move-on planning is organised. Information regarding each housing authority's specific approach is set out at Appendix 16.

1. Children Looked After & Relevant Care Leavers aged 16 & 17

This section refers to young people aged 16 or 17 who are children looked after and care leavers. If a child has been looked after for more than 13 weeks since their 14th birthday and remains looked after at the age of 16/17 they are deemed an 'Eligible' child, if they cease to be looked after they are deemed a 'Relevant' child. See Appendix 18 for detailed definitions of the care leaver categories.

Article 3(2) of the Homelessness (Priority Need for Accommodation) (England) Order 2002 excludes this group from priority need, for the purposes of the homelessness legislation, a child aged 16 or 17 to whom Children's Services owe a duty to accommodate under Section 20 (or is accommodated under Section 20 or is a Relevant care leaver).

In Hertfordshire children looked after and care leavers aged 16 to 21/25 are supported and case managed by a range of Children's Services' Teams - Children Looked After Teams, Targeted Youth Support Service Teams, Disabled Children Teams, Learning Difficulties and Disability Team and Family Safeguarding Teams.

Hertfordshire Children's Services has the responsibility for the provision of a 'placement' or accommodation for all children looked after aged 16 & 17 and care leavers aged 16 & 17. In situations where one of these groups of children/young people presents as homeless to a housing authority, they should be referred back to Children's Services. Please see section 2 below.

It is the responsibility of the relevant (social work) case holding team to assess the readiness of each child looked after aged 16 & 17 and care leaver aged 16 to 21 as to their ability to manage independent living. The relevant case holding team (via the Senior Placements Officer, based in the Brokerage Service) will ensure that all children looked after and care leavers aged 16 or older will be assisted to make an application to the housing register of their originating local authority (or with whom they have a local connection) and their 'host' authority where they are placed (if different to their local connection authority area). The application should be made immediately after, and within three months of their 16th birthday, or within three months of becoming looked after, if this occurs after their 16th birthday. Each housing authority has slightly different procedures regarding applications to join the housing register; these local variations can be found within Appendix 16.

The Senior Placements Officer within the Brokerage Service will contact the housing authority at least 6 months before the young person's 18th birthday, or when it has been agreed that independent housing will be needed, if later and complete a 'Move-On' planning form.

Where a young person becomes looked after at the age of 17½, the application will be made as soon as possible.

All children looked after and care leavers aged 16 and 17 should have a housing register application lodged within three months of becoming 16 years old, or within three months of becoming looked after if this occurs after their 16th Birthday. All 16 & 17 year old children looked after should have an application lodged with their 'local connection' housing authority and, if placed outside of their 'local connection' area their 'host authority area'. In certain situations children looked after who have a 'local connection' in one area, may be able to join the housing register in a different area, for detailed information contact the Senior Placements Officer within the Brokerage Service.

Children's Services and the specific housing authority will work together to make arrangements for the young person to be offered the most appropriate housing and ongoing support. The case holding social worker or leaving care personal adviser will ensure that a comprehensive Pathway Plan is in place, and provide relevant information from the Plan, or a copy of the Plan where appropriate (with the consent of the young person), to the housing authority.

Where a young person leaving care is approaching the age of 18 and will not have access to housing authority or housing association independent accommodation, a deposit and rent in advance will be available to enable them to access the privately rented accommodation sector. This is primarily aimed at supporting young people to remain in the area they were placed, which may be outside of Hertfordshire and where a young person does not have a 'local connection'.

In situations where a housing authority is placing a young person into the private sector the Housing Authority will be responsible for the deposit/rent bond. In situations where Children's Services is placing a young person into the private sector they will be responsible for the deposit and rent in advance.

Children's Services may act as a guarantor for children looked after and care leavers aged 16 or 17, following an assessment of need and all other possible guarantors being explored and ruled out. Where necessary, Children's Services will meet the costs of the tenancy agreement. The level of deposit and rent in advance provided must not exceed the Local Housing Allowance rate for the given area.

In situations where Children's Services act as a guarantor for 16 and 17 year olds, a new tenancy agreement should be produced when the young person reaches their 18th birthday, so that the liability and responsibility for the condition and the cost of the accommodation is transferred to the young person.

A young person leaving care who has been looked after by Children's Services outside Hertfordshire and has a local connection under the Housing Act 1996 with a housing authority within Hertfordshire will remain the responsibility of Hertfordshire Children's Services and their originating housing authority. The young person may also make an application to another authority if they have a local connection or are eligible to join their register.

2. Relevant Care Leavers aged 16 or 17 Presenting as Homeless

Children's Services are responsible for the provision of a placement or the financial means to secure accommodation for all 'Relevant' care leavers aged 16 & 17. In circumstances where a

'Relevant' care leaver presents to a housing department as homeless they should be referred to Children's Services. The responsible case holding team will assess the placement and accommodation needs of the 'Relevant' care leaver. Depending on an assessment of need, Children's Services can act as a guarantor for Eligible and Relevant 16 & 17 year olds and may provide a deposit (and rent in advance).

3. Funding of Temporary Accommodation where a decision is made to Accommodate under Section 20

In situations where a 16 & 17 year old is placed in temporary housing authority accommodation and subsequently becomes Accommodated by Children's Services the responsibility for funding the accommodation will transfer to Children's Services on the date the Section 20 decision is made. At the point the decision is made Children's Services will become responsible for the young person's financial support and their benefit claims should cease, unless the young person is in receipt of disability or lone parent benefits. The local authority housing department (or the temporary accommodation provider) will invoice Children's Services for subsequent housing costs until the young person has been placed elsewhere. However, placement should be found as soon as possible as the housing authority will not have the resources to accommodate long term. Children's Services – Hertfordshire Access to Resources Panel (HARP) will be responsible for approving the cost of the interim accommodation at the point when making the Section 20 decision, invoices should be sent to the nominated officer in Brokerage.

4. Access to 'Suitable Accommodation' Under Section 20

Once it has been assessed and decided that a young person meets the Section 20 criteria, the allocated Children's Services case worker will make an immediate referral to the Brokerage Service to identify and provide a placement suitable to meet the needs of that young person. All relevant information, including a risk assessment and any information from **hyh** will be provided via the Brokerage Service on a placement referral form (PRF). Where appropriate and in order to reduce delay, an early referral should be made to local registered social landlord supported accommodation services by the Children's Services worker, unless **hyh** has already done this, and the Brokerage Service informed.

The allocated social worker and Brokerage Service will determine how the accommodation needs of the young person should best be met. The Brokerage Service will consider a range of resources, both in-house and external, e.g. supported lodgings, registered social landlord supported accommodation, private sector semi-independent living with support in accordance with the assessed needs of that young person and taking into account information provided by partner agencies gathered in the course of the assessment process.

The placement planning process should involve an exchange of appropriate information gathered during assessment process, so that the accommodation and support provider has a full understanding of the young person's needs and their role in meeting these needs.

Children's Services should only provide 16 & 17 year olds with supported accommodation which is deemed suitable and meets the 'Other Arrangements' requirements. 'Other Arrangements' is the term for all placements for children looked after aged 16 & 17 that are regulated outside of the Care Standards Act 2000 and are thus not inspected by Ofsted.

A range of different types of accommodation may provide suitable accommodation for 16 and 17 year olds who cannot live with their families, carers or guardians. In order for services to work well it is important that Children's Services work closely with housing and support providers to ensure that a range of suitable supported accommodation placements are available for young people in their area, whether or not they are looked after children.

Stemming from the Children and Young Person's Act 2008 Hertfordshire has a Children Looked After Sufficiency Statement which sets out the range of placements available to meet the needs of children looked after requiring placements in Hertfordshire.

Children's Services will take account of the views and wishes and feelings of the young person, and of their parents when assessing the placement needs of individual young people. However, it is for the local authority to determine the type of placement required to meet a young person's needs. The placement identified will depend on the availability of accommodation provision in a given area, and it is not always possible to provide accommodation in the area preferred by the young person. Children's Services will provide information to the young person and their parents about the consequences of being a looked after child; a leaflet has been prepared for this purpose.

Children's Services will work with the young person and their parents to develop a holistic care plan / pathway plan and placement plan covering the full range of their needs, including plans for their education, employment or training, and for their health needs to be met.

Where possible, plans should explore supporting the young person to return home if appropriate.

Children's Services will always seek to place a young person in, or near their originating housing authority, and/or where their family resides, in order to maintain their family and local connections and support network unless this would not be in the young person's interests. Given the number of suitable placements this is not always possible and an interim arrangement may have to be offered elsewhere.

5. Access to Housing Provision for Children Looked After & Care Leavers Aged 16 & 17 via the Local Housing Authority

Section 27 of the Children Act 1989 empowers the local authority Children's Service to request assistance from another authority, including a local housing authority, and states that an authority whose help is so requested shall comply with the request if it is compatible with their own statutory or other duties and obligations and does not unduly prejudice the discharge of any of their functions.

For example; in Hertfordshire, Children's Services and housing authorities work together to enable care leavers aged 18 to 21/24 to access social housing via priority arrangements in order to avoid presenting as 'homeless'.

Where the assessment indicates that a young person who is to be 'Accommodated' under Section 20 has low to medium support needs, Brokerage may contact the originating housing authority regarding supporting a referral to a registered social landlord within that area.

The Brokerage Service and the case worker will provide relevant information to support the application, either via the housing department or directly to the registered social landlord. Information should include details of any support package to be provided to the young person. Children's Services will confirm that the young person is accommodated under Section 20 and that they will be supported in the accommodation by Children's Services. If this referral is accepted and suitable accommodation is provided by the registered social landlord, the rental costs will be invoiced to Children's Services. Children's Services may act as guarantor or hold the tenancy in trust (for a 16/17 year old), as per the agreed arrangement with that particular local housing authority, until the young person reaches the age of 18.

Once a young person is accommodated under Section 20, Children's Services will assist the young person to join the housing register for their originating authority. This can be important as time on the register in some housing authority areas helps to increase a young person's

priority when they start to 'bid' (Choice Based Lettings) on properties around their 18th birthday. For example, in some housing authorities if two people within the same priority band are 'bidding' on a property, the person who has been longest on the register will be the successful 'bidding' applicant.

Where a young person meets the Section 20 criteria but has less than 13 weeks to their 18th birthday, they will not become a Former Relevant child at the age of 18, but will continue to be deemed a Qualifying child. This group of looked after children and care leavers are deemed in 'Priority Need' within housing legislation.

6. The Provision & Funding of Housing Related Support (Children and Young People Commissioning Team & Integrated Accommodation Commissioning Team)

In Hertfordshire, the following arrangements have been agreed for the funding of the support costs of young people aged 16 & 17 who are looked after and placed in registered social landlord accommodation where the support element is funded by Children and Young People Commissioning or Integrated Commissioning Team.

- a) Children's Services fund the rent element.
- b) Children's Services provides a one-off per year grant to the Children and Young People Commissioning/Integrated Accommodation Commissioning Team to cover the support related costs for children looked after aged 16 or 17.

From the age of 18 all care leavers are covered by the Children and Young People Commissioning/Integrated Accommodation Commissioning Team funding framework.

7. Young People Looked After & Leaving Care - Housing Entitlements

A young person who is looked after under Section 20 for at least 24 hours becomes a Qualifying child in the first instance and then after 13 weeks they become Eligible and at age 18 Former Relevant young people. Eligible young people require a pathway plan and qualified social worker and from the age of 18 they will be transferred to a personal adviser. Young people remain Former Relevant until their 21st birthday or until the education or training they are engaged in on their 21st birthday ceases.

Young people can also return to the local authority to commence or resume education or training at any point between their 21st and 25th birthday. Former Relevant young people are an automatic priority group for local authority housing, from age 18 to 21. Qualifying young people reaching the age of 18 who were looked after for at least 24 hours at the age of 16 or 17 are deemed in priority need as care leavers. Qualifying young people, who have been looked after at some point, but who were not looked after aged 16 or 17 may also be deemed to be in priority need if they are considered more 'vulnerable' than the average homeless person. See Homelessness Code of Guidance Chapter 10 priority need section 10.2.2, v and vi.

After being looked after for 24 hours the young person will become a Qualifying child, after being looked after for 13 weeks the young person becomes an Eligible child – Care Planning, Placement and Case Review Regulations and Guidance 2010 and Planning Transition to Adulthood for Care Leavers – Regulations and Guidance 2010.

8. Young People Leaving Care & Access to Move-on Independent Accommodation at Age 18

Children's Services and the 10 District and Borough Councils of Hertfordshire have agreed the following Housing Needs Register application procedure to ensure that young people leaving care at the age of 18 are accepted as a priority for local social housing or private

accommodation. It aims to improve the transition of children looked after and care leavers onto their originating local authority housing needs register (HNR) and to help plan for their future accommodation needs.

The procedure enables young people to move to independent accommodation in a planned way, and avoids the use of temporary accommodation. Housing departments require sufficient information to properly assess a young person's needs, including all relevant history and any relevant risk factors that may affect the decision about the location or the type of suitable accommodation.

9. Summary of Actions Required by the Children's Services Worker Regarding Accommodation Planning for Care Leavers

1. Social Worker/Personal Adviser in consultation with the Senior Placements Officer (Brokerage) to complete an on-line housing application form with the young person at the age of 16 or at the point of becoming looked after where this occurs after their 16th birthday. The majority of housing authorities within Hertfordshire require an on-line application form.
2. Collect and submit the young person's proof of identity, address and supporting letter/information to the Senior Placements Officer based within the Brokerage Service.
3. When the young person is ready for independent accommodation (from the age of 17½), the social worker/personal advisor should complete the Brokerage Service Move-on Form found at Appendix 14, and attach the current pathway plan and risk assessment. Send to the Senior Placements Officer based within the Brokerage Service.
4. All housing application forms for young people will need to be sent for checking and advice first to the Senior Placements Officer based within the Brokerage Service.

10. Housing Application Process

All care leavers aged 16 or 17 who are either Eligible or Relevant children (either looked after now or have been looked after for at least 13 weeks since the age of 14 and for at least a day beyond their 16th birthday), must be placed on their originating and host local authority's Housing Needs Register (HNR). Host housing authorities may have specific criteria regarding people joining the HNR who do not have a local connection. In such situations social workers/personal advisers should work with the Senior Placements Officer (Brokerage) to demonstrate the care leavers 'connection'. Care leavers who are Qualifying children should also be placed onto the HNR but they may not be granted any additional priority points or banding.

Young people should be placed on the housing register as soon after their 16th Birthday (or becoming looked after if age 16/17) as possible – the target being within 3 months.

Each housing authority has a different system for prioritising applications once they are deemed to be 'ready' to manage an independent tenancy. Some authorities grant care leaver priority need status and place into a priority band for Choice Based Lettings, others refer the young person to a panel that allocate a priority need.

Young people apply to East Herts District Council when they reach the age of 17. Contact the Senior Placements Officer (Brokerage) for specific advice as to process to follow for registering East Herts applicants.

See Appendix 16 for arrangements regarding specific local arrangements related to individual housing authorities.

11. Originating Housing Authority & Local Connection

Children looked after have a 'priority need' for the provision of housing from a local authority housing department when they reach age 18. The area that they lived prior to becoming looked after is known as the 'Originating Authority'. This is where they will have a 'local connection'.

Where a 'looked after' young person is placed in accommodation (or a placement) by Children's Services in an area other than the housing department area where they were living when they became Accommodated or 'In Care' (Section 20 or Section 31), they are unlikely to have a local connection in that new area, within the duties laid down by the Housing Act 1996, Homelessness Act 2002 and the Code of Guidance.

A young person can be placed on two local authority housing registers if they qualify. Children looked after who are placed outside of their local connection area should be placed on the register where they have a local connection and on the register where they are living (host authority) if they qualify.

Within Hertfordshire there are informal arrangements between Children's Services and the 10 housing authorities regarding priority needs access for care leavers who do not have a local connection in the area they have been placed. Where a young person can demonstrate that they have developed substantial local links and networks that amount to a local connection, the host authority will generally treat the application favourably where a case is made at an early stage. However, this decision lies with the housing authority. Social workers and the Brokerage, Senior Placements Officer should produce evidence of local links and networks and meet with the host housing authority shortly after the young person reaches the age of 16 as part of the housing registration.

This process of liaison with local housing authorities regarding local links and networks should also take place where children looked after are placed outside of Hertfordshire.

Decisions regarding local connection are made at the discretion of the local housing authority. Such a connection may be accepted in the case of family members living in a given area, but the housing authority may not award priority status. Family members are defined as immediate family, i.e. parents or siblings, although in some cases relatives or long-term foster parents who have brought up a young person and who are regarded as family, may be accepted if they have lived in that area for 5 years or more. Specialist health care needs or religious needs may also be considered.

The Brokerage Service, Senior Placements Officer will liaise with the relevant housing manager about any exceptional circumstances.

Senior Placements Officer will also keep a record of when these have been agreed so that the consistency of approach of each housing authority is reviewed.

12. Information Required with Housing Application Forms

The following information must be sent to the Brokerage Service, Senior Placements Officer following the housing application being completed online, as the application cannot be processed without them:

- a) Two Forms of Identification. This can include a birth certificate, driving license, passport, work ID card, HM forces ID card with photo, EU ID card, proof of age card with photo, approved immigration status documents.

NB: Dacorum Borough Council and Three Rivers District Council needs a passport photograph attached to application form and Proof of National Insurance number.

- b) Two Proof of Residence in Local Housing Authorities Area. This can include utility bills, (Gas, Electric, Telephone, Water, Council Tax) mobile phone bills, bank / credit card statement, driving licence (unless already used for ID).
- c) Supporting Letter.
A letter from Children's Services must be included with the form confirming the young person's legal status and leaving care category i.e. Relevant, Eligible, Former Relevant or Qualifying. This is required to confirm to the housing department that the young person should be considered in priority need as per the Housing Act 1996, as amended by the Homelessness Act 2002. It is also important to confirm that the housing authority is the originating authority with details of where a young person was living immediately prior to becoming 'looked after'.
- See Standard Supporting Letter Appendix 15, which can be adapted for individual young people to cover their age and leaving care status.

Please note that this letter can also be used as a form of identification for a young person if the other identification/proof of address options above are not available.

All care leavers aged 18 to 21 or until the completion of the education/training course being undertaken on their 21st birthday can be awarded priority if homeless and if the housing authority is satisfied that the young person is ready and can maintain independent accommodation. If aged over 21 and not in education/training they may be assisted by the housing department if deemed to be vulnerable as a result of having been looked after. However, this is a decision that will be made by the housing authority.

Applications on behalf of care leavers over 21 years should state whether they remain a Former Relevant Child.

Once the form has been received by the Brokerage Service, Senior Placements Officer, it will be processed and checked for all documentation, recorded on the Brokerage Service database of care leaver housing registrations, and sent to the relevant housing department.

13. Care Leavers – Data Collection, Monitoring Arrangements and the Care Leaver Database

The Brokerage Service, Senior Placements Officer maintains a database of all care leavers in order to track the progress of all children looked after aged 16 & 17 applying to join the housing register and the progress of their application. The Brokerage Service, Senior Placements Officer will check that the young person is placed on the register and note the renewal date.

The database will be used to assist the local housing authority to plan for the number of care leavers requiring accommodation within a given period.

See Appendix 13.

14. Housing Register Renewals

The majority of local authorities housing departments' require an applicant to re-register on the anniversary (yearly) of the initial housing application. Generally a reminder letter is sent by the local housing authority to the applicant. If the applicant fails to re-register, their application is cancelled. To avoid this, the Brokerage Service, Senior Placements Officer will liaise with the nominated contact in the housing department, to record the date of the re-registration. The

Brokerage Service, Senior Placements Officer will send a reminder to the young person's social worker/case worker regarding re-registration.

If a young person changes address, they will need to complete a renewal/change of address form for their local housing authority.

The social worker/personal adviser should complete the form with the young person and send it via the Brokerage Service, Senior Placements Officer to the appropriate housing authority.

15. Ready for Accommodation

The Brokerage Service, Senior Placements Officer will assess the young person's 'preparedness' for independent accommodation. If the young person is deemed to be ready, the Brokerage Service, Senior Placements Officer will contact the housing department and advise that the young person will need accommodation within 6 months, (i.e. from the age of 17½). This process can be delayed by agreement, depending upon the young person's needs and accommodation needs (Staying Put, attending university, living in supported lodgings or registered landlord accommodation).

In exceptional circumstances care leavers aged 18-21 can be placed within the **hyh** Crashpad scheme if suitable, while more permanent accommodation is sourced. This will be by agreement between the Brokerage Service, Senior Placements Officer and the Crashpad Manager.

A standard 'move on form' will be sent to the housing department which can be obtained from the Brokerage Service, Senior Placements Officer (see Appendix 14). At this stage any relevant information that has not previously been provided should be given to the housing department.

A copy of the current pathway plan, or up-dated pathway plan and risk assessment should be included with the move-on form.

The pathway plan may require up-dating prior to the move to the new accommodation and should set out how the young person will be supported to sustain the accommodation and address any behaviours that may create tenancy sustainment difficulties.

The young person's application will then be considered by the housing authority. Each housing authority deals with this process in a different way, e.g. some will award priority on receipt of the information; some will ask the young person to attend an interview. The housing authority will make their own decision regarding awarding priority based on the information provided (and interview etc., if done) and if prioritised they will be issued with a Choice Based Lettings bidding code. Most housing authorities will also impose a time limit on the young person bidding, if they have not obtained accommodation via the bidding process at the end of the time limited period they will be allocated a 'direct let'.

Social Workers/Personal Advisers may be required to assist young people in the bidding process, or, in some cases bid on their behalf, especially if time limited bidding applies as priority can be withdrawn at the end of the timeframe if the young person does not bid. The process should be discussed with the Brokerage Service, Senior Placements Officer.

To ensure young people are supported appropriately to sustain accommodation a social worker or personal adviser should attend the 'tenancy sign-up' process with the young person and the housing officer/worker. This will provide a named social worker/personal adviser/housing officer/worker who can liaise should the young person be experiencing difficulties. Housing officers/workers should contact social workers/personal advisers where a young person is

experiencing housing and tenancy sustainment difficulties or rent arrears amounting to four weeks or more.

16. Support in Independent Accommodation

Care leavers will continue to have the support of an allocated leaving care personal adviser from Children's Services up to the age of 21 or until the completion of the education or training being undertaken on their 21st birthday. In addition, for care leavers with significant support needs, a referral may be made to **hyh** for additional support with sustaining their tenancy and related issues.

17. Young People Looked After, Young People Leaving Custody & Leaving Care

The duty placed on local authorities by the Children Act 1989 to consider the needs of young people who leave custody was previously clarified by Local Authority Circular LAC (2004) 26 "Safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and young people in custody".

The circular was issued under Section 7 of the Local Authority Social Services Act (1970) the effect of which is that the local authority must comply with the circular unless circumstances indicate exceptional reasons which justify a variation.

The Southwark Judgment (May 2009) clarified that the Children Act 1989 has primacy over the Homelessness Code of Guidance for local housing authorities, which defines a person who is vulnerable as a result of having been in custody or detention as having a priority need for accommodation.

The circular and aspects of the judgement were clarified in the requirements relating to looked after, children, formerly looked after children and remanded children set out in:

- Care Planning, Placement and Case Review - Regulations and Guidance 2010 (and the Looked After Children and Youth Justice Supplement 2014)
- Local Authority Responsibilities Towards Former Looked After Children in Custody – Regulations and Guidance 2010
- The Legal Aid, Sentencing and Punishment of Offenders Act 2012 (LASPOA)

The above Legislation and Guidance requires Local Authorities, Youth Offending Services and the Secure Estate to work in partnership to ensure services are in place to support young offenders, those on remand and those who are sentenced.

As a result of LASPOA and changes to the Care Planning, Placement and Case Review Guidance in 2014, all young people remanded by the courts become looked after, regardless of whether they were looked after prior to the remand.

- Young people who were looked after prior to the period of remand continue to have a Care/Pathway Plan and will have a Detention Placement Plan.
- Young people who become looked after as a result of being placed on remand will have an assessment of their need and a Detention Placement Plan. This should set out the roles and responsibilities of the staff within the Youth Detention Accommodation, Children's Services, Social Worker and the TYSS Worker.
- Where a young person receives a custodial sentence and is subject to a section 31 Care Order they remain looked after whilst in custody.
- Where a young person was looked after under Section 20 (Accommodated) prior to their remand, they will cease to be looked after if they receive a custodial sentence. If they had

completed 13 weeks as a looked after child (after their 14th birthday), on reaching the age of 16 they become a Relevant child. As a Relevant child they require a pathway plan and a personal adviser and should be placed on their local connection housing register, on release, if prior to their 18th birthday their placement needs fall to the Responsible Authority (Children's Services if a CLA by Hertfordshire). On release after their 18th birthday, the personal adviser should liaise with the local connection housing authority regarding arrangements for the provision of accommodation as a care leaver

- Where a young person becomes looked after as a result of the remand, they cease to be looked after upon receiving a custodial sentence. If they have completed 13 weeks as a looked after child (after their 14th birthday), they too will become a Relevant child on reaching the age of 16 if they remain in custody.
- Young people who were looked after (under age 16) and receive a custodial sentence without a period of remand are covered by the - Local Authority Responsibilities towards Former Looked After Children in Custody – Regulations and Guidance 2010.
- All planning for remanded and sentenced young people will include planning for release and either a return to family or the need for a placement/accommodation.
- The Care Planning, Placement and Case Review - Regulations and Guidance 2010 (and the Looked After Children and Youth Justice Supplement 2014) provides a roles and responsibilities framework for the local authority children's services social worker and the YOT case worker for young people on remand, those who receive a custodial sentence and young people on release into the community.

Social workers and Targeted Youth Support case workers will, via the Brokerage Senior Placements Officer, plan for the release of Eligible, Relevant and Former Relevant Care Leavers and their placement/accommodation and housing needs.

For further guidance and specific procedures see the Hertfordshire County Council, Children's Services Social Work Procedures Manual.

SECTION 3

Homeless Families with Children – Intentionally Homeless Families

The local authorities housing departments have a legal responsibility to help people who are homeless or threatened with homelessness within 28 days. This responsibility ranges from providing advice and assistance to providing accommodation. If there are no other options for a homeless family with children, for instance assistance from family or friends, they may be temporarily housed whilst their situation is assessed.

However, individual housing authorities must consider if an applicant is eligible for assistance in accordance with the legislation. This usually refers to an applicant's immigration status in the Country or if they are habitually resident. This is a decision that must be made by the housing authority. Issues that will be looked at are:

- Do they have leave to remain?
- Are they a British citizen?
- Are they a European Economic Area (EEA) worker?
- Are they habitually resident?

Eligible families with **dependent** children are usually considered to be in 'priority need'. This is usually up until their children are aged 18, or until they complete full time education.

Whilst in temporary accommodation, the housing department would investigate to determine:

- Are they actually homeless;
- Whether the applicant is in a priority need group;
- Whether the applicant is intentionally homeless;
- Whether there is a local connection in the area.

The Housing Department will also ascertain:

- Whether the family can be assisted by their own friends or family;
- Their financial circumstances;
- Access to debt counselling.

Homeless families in the UK who fulfil the criteria of Part 7 of the Housing Act 1996 (as amended by the Homelessness Act 2002) will be the responsibility of the local housing authority to provide them with housing. A referral/notification to Customer Services will only be made if there are concerns around Child Protection, the family is considered to have made themselves intentionally homeless or the housing authority has discharged any duties owed to the applicant, i.e. they have refused a permanent offer of accommodation.

1. Consent

Housing authorities are obliged under the relevant guidance to make a referral/notification to Children's Services under the above circumstances. However, a referral/notification to Children's Services will only be accepted without consent from the children's parents if the referral relates to child protection concerns, and good practice would recommend that parents are informed, even if there are child protection concerns, unless to do so would place the child at further risk of harm. If the referral/notification relates to concerns regarding homelessness it is best practice to seek consent at all times.

2. Not Entitled/Eligible to Support from Housing Authority

Families requiring accommodation because they are homeless will only be excluded if they are considered to be:

- Not Eligible;
- Not homeless;
- Not in priority need (e.g. another carer for the children has accommodation available);
- Intentionally homeless;
- Have no local connection to the Authority they have approached in which case they would be referred to the area they do have a local connection with (unless it is not safe to do so).

If a family with children is intentionally homeless – they have deliberately done or not done something which has resulted in homelessness – the housing authority has no duty or power to provide social housing. The housing authorities' duty in this instance would be to offer advice and assistance. Some housing authorities can help with private rented accommodation or a financial loan/deposit bond, but this is a decision for the housing authority if applicable. A referral/notification will always be made to Customer Services (Children's Services) where an intentionally homeless decision is made or the housing authority has discharged its duty to provide accommodation.

The housing authority will provide 28 days' notice to Customer Services of the duty to provide temporary accommodation coming to an end. The family must be advised of this referral/notification in advance. Advice and assistance is always offered during this time. Families are able to request a review of the ending of the housing authority duty. However, the housing authority is not duty bound to provide temporary accommodation whilst the review is being undertaken. The review of the decision must be completed within 56 days unless an extension has been agreed by both parties.

The referral/notification to Children's Services will be made at the point of issuing the 28 day notice of withdrawal of accommodation. The agreed standard Hertfordshire County Council – District/Borough Council Referral/Notification Form will be used (Appendix 19). The form should be sent to Hertfordshire County Council Customer Services Centre via protectedreferrals.cs@hertfordshire.gov.uk along with the relevant decision letter from the housing authority.

Customer Services will pass the referral/notification to the Targeted Advice Service (TAS)[during 2015 TAS will be superseded by MASH, see information below]. TAS will send a letter of acknowledgement to the housing authority within 5 working days. TAS will make contact with the family, offering information and advice and enquiring how the family plan to resolve their homelessness/accommodation situation. If the family have identified alternative accommodation, TAS will cease their involvement, but will advise them to contact Children's Services again 10 working days before the accommodation duty ceases should their plans change. The acknowledgement letter provided to the housing authority will also include a summary of the steps TAS has taken to that point.

A letter will also be sent to the family confirming receipt of the referral/notification from housing and offering details of agencies that may be able to help.

Housing and Children's Services have developed two leaflets confirming each agencies duty.

If the family is still without housing or potentially homeless 7 days prior to the ending of the accommodation duty, TAS will refer the family to the Assessment Service. TAS will also contact the relevant housing authority to inform them of the referral/notification, giving details of which team the case has been forwarded to and the team manager's name. If the family is still

potentially homeless 7 days prior to the ending of the housing authority accommodation duty, the Assessment Service has a duty to assess their situation.

The designated Assessment Team will inform the housing authority by e-mail of the outcome of the assessment prior to the ceasing of the housing authorities accommodation duty. Information about the outcome of the assessment and any ongoing duty will be provided.

The Assessment Team will be in receipt of the decision letter from the housing authority so will not need to check that the family is intentionally homeless given the housing authorities decision. The Assessment Team will, however, ascertain what checks housing have completed in order to prevent duplication. The checks required are:

- whether housing advice services such as **hyh** and Shelter have been consulted;
- whether the applicant has sought any further advice or assistance from the housing authority;
- ensure that the family have sufficient finances to support private renting.

Section 17(1) of the Children Act 1989 places a general duty on local authorities to safeguard and promote the welfare of children 'in need' and to promote the upbringing of such children by their families. Section 17 of the Children Act 1989 defines a child as being in need in law if:

- he or she is unlikely to achieve or maintain or to have the opportunity to achieve or maintain a reasonable standard of health or development without the provision of services from the Local Authority (Children's Services);
- his or her health or development is likely to be significantly impaired, or further impaired, without the provision of services from the Local Authority (Children's Services);
- he or she has a disability.

In meeting this duty, Children's Services are empowered to provide a wide range of services for those children's needs.

Therefore a family at risk of homelessness may be supported by a local authority Children's Services in order to safeguard and promote the welfare of the child or children in that family.

In each case the local authority must assess the needs of the child on an individual basis and the child's right to family life.

If following a referral/notification there are questions from a housing authority regarding particular families, these should be directed to TAS through the MASHHousingEnquiries@hertfordshire.gov.uk

During 2015 TAS will be superseded by the Multi Agency Safeguarding Hub (MASH). All agencies will be informed of the new arrangements as they take effect.

3. Not Entitled to Support from Children's Services

Certain categories of person's are excluded from accessing support under Section 17 of the Children Act 1989 by Schedule 3 of the Nationality, Immigration and Asylum Act 2002, including:

- those granted refugee status by another EEA state and their dependants;
- EEA nationals and any dependents;
- refused asylum seekers who have failed to comply with removal directions;
- people who are unlawfully present in the UK (this includes people who have overstayed their visas or failed asylum seekers who made their initial claim in this country).

However, Schedule 3 does not apply to children and support (from Children's Services) may be provided to parents if it is assessed, in a human rights assessment, that to withhold or withdraw support would breach the family's human rights under the European Convention on Human Rights or their Community Treaty Rights.

Therefore a 'child in need' assessment, under the Children Act 1989, and human rights assessment must be carried out when working with migrant families who cannot support themselves and become homeless .

Where asylum seeking families with children have no recourse to public funds, the housing authority would:

- Refer/notify to Children's Services Customer Services department;
- Customer Services will use the Customer Services, Children's Services Guidance to refer to the appropriate service or team.

The Notification/Referral should be made using the standard Hertfordshire County Council – District/Borough Council Referral/Notification Form (appendix 19). The Form should be sent to the Hertfordshire County Council Customer Services Centre via protectedreferrals.cs@hertfordshire.gov.uk and should be followed by a phone call to the Customer Services Centre on 0300 123 4043, particularly if the family is at risk of homelessness on that day. The referral/notification will be forwarded to the Safeguarding Service for an assessment/action.

In situations where a person/family with dependent children who were provided with accommodation has their asylum status withdrawn, loses an asylum appeal and/or loses their recourse to public funds they will immediately be referred to Children's Services. The referral/notification should be made following the process above.

A process chart can be found at Appendix 20.

4. Data Collection

The Customer Services Centre, based within Children's Services will be the recipient of all referrals/notifications of intentionally homeless families with children. A record will be kept of all referrals/notifications, including the housing authority that made the referral/notification and whether the housing authority is a non-Hertfordshire housing authority. Information will be recorded regarding the outcome of the referral/notification. Where required; detailed information will be gathered from the Targeted Advice Service and/or the Assessment Service regarding the outcome of the referral/notification.

See Appendix 13.

SECTION 4 - APPENDICES

Appendix 1 - Contact Details in Children's Services

<p>Sue Williams Director of Family Safeguarding County Hall Pegs Lane Hertford SG13 8DF Tel: 01992 555271 Email: sue.williams@hertfordshire.gov.uk</p> <p>Andrew Simmons Deputy Director for Children's Services, Education – including TYSS County Hall Pegs Lane Hertford SG13 8DF Tel: 01438 555034 Email: andrew.simmons@hertfordshire.gov.uk</p> <p>Ross Williams Head of Family Safeguarding East County Hall Pegs Lane Hertford SG13 8DF Tel: 01438 843685 Email: ross.williams@hertfordshire.gov.uk</p>	<p>Marion Ingram Operations Director, Specialist Services County Hall Pegs Lane Hertford SG13 8DF Tel: 01992 588755 Email: marion.ingram@hertfordshire.gov.uk</p> <p>Nicky Pace Interim Operations Director, Safeguarding County Hall Pegs Lane Hertford SG13 8DF Tel: 01992 555871 Email: nicky.pace@hertfordshire.gov.uk</p> <p>Mayank Joshi Head of Family Safeguarding (West) Apsley 2 Brindley Way Hemel Hempstead HP3 9BF Tel: 01442 453259 Email: mayank.joshi@hertfordshire.gov.uk</p>
<p>Andy Lawrence Head of Disabled Children Services and Children's Brokerage Team Farnham House Six Hills Way Stevenage SG1 2FQ Tel: 01442 454225 Email: andy.lawrence@hertfordshire.gov.uk</p>	<p>Nick Dinnage Head of Children Looked After Apsley Two Brindley Way Hemel Hempstead HP3 9BF Tel: 01442 453053 Email: nick.dinnage@hertfordshire.gov.uk</p>
<p>Stefan Chapleo Head of Assessment County Suite Lower Ground Floor County Hall Pegs Lane Hertford SG13 8DF Tel: 01438 843336 Email: stefan.chapleo@hertfordshire.gov.uk</p>	<p>Lindsay Edwards Head of Services for Young People Farnham House Six Hills Way Stevenage SG1 2FQ Tel: 01438 843877 Email: lindsay.edwards@hertfordshire.gov.uk</p>

Jeanette Williams Youth Offending Service Youth Offending Policy Manager County Hall Pegs Lane Hertford SG13 8DF Tel: 01992 556894 Email: jeanette.williams@hertfordshire.gov.uk	Nick Smith Youth Justice Service Services for Young People Manager, Youth Justice Service Adolescent Resource Centre Greenhills Tenzing Road Hemel Hempstead HP2 4HS Tel: 01442 388755 Email: nick.smith@hertfordshire.gov.uk
Rebecca Haasch Vulnerable Young People's Service Policy Manager Farnham House Six Hills Way Stevenage SG1 2FQ Tel: 01438 845416 Email: rebecca.haasch@hertfordshire.gov.uk	Abigail Cope Senior Placement Officer Brokerage Accommodation Team 1 st Floor, Robertson House Six Hills Way Stevenage SG1 2ST Tel: 01442 454385 Email: abigail.cope@hertfordshire.gov.uk
Targeted Advice Service, Practitioner Consultation Line 01438 737511	

Appendix 2 - Contact Details - Targeted Youth Support Service Teams

<p>Welwyn, Hatfield and Hertsmere Lynn Stickings, Mundells, Welwyn Garden City AL17 1FT Tele: 01707 897440 Email: lynn.stickings@hertfordshire.gov.uk</p> <p>Team Email: tyst.whh.referrals@hertfordshire.gov.uk</p>	<p>Watford and Three Rivers James Hodgson, Apsley, Brindley Way, Hemel Hempstead HP3 9BF Tele: 01442 454054 Email: james.hodgson@hertfordshire.gov.uk</p> <p>Team Email: tyst.w3rreferrals@hertfordshire.gov.uk</p>
<p>St. Albans and Dacorum Maggie Wiggins, Greenhills, Tenzing Raod, Hemel Hempstead HP2 4HS Tele: 01442 388755 Email: maggie.wiggins@hertfordshire.gov.uk</p> <p>Team Email: tyst.dacorumstalbans@hertfordshire.gov.uk</p>	<p>East Herts and Broxbourne Daryl Quinn, Room 27a County Hall, Pegs Lane, Hertford SG13 8DF Tele: 01992 555095 Email: daryl.quinn@hertfordshire.gov.uk</p> <p>Team Email: tys.broxbourneeastherts@hertfordshire.gov.uk</p>
<p>Stevenage and North Herts Elaine Smith, Postal Point SFAR 116, Farnham House, Stevenage, SG1 2FQ 01438 844201 Email: elaine.smith@hertfordshire.gov.uk</p> <p>Team Email: tysteam.stevenage&northherts@hertfordshire.gov.uk</p>	

Appendix 3 - Contact Details - Local Housing Authorities

Three Rivers 1 - Alan Marsden alan.marsden@ThreeRivers.gov.uk 01923 727068 2 - Hannah Morris hannah.morris@threeivers.gov.uk 01923 727062	Dacorum 1 - Natasha Brathwaite natasha.brathwaite@dacorum.gov.uk 2 - Isabel Connolly isabel.connolly@dacorum.gov.uk 01442 228000
Watford Kay Parritt kay.parritt@watford.gov.uk 01923 278169	St Albans 1 - Susan Hughes susan.hughes@stalbans.gov.uk 2 – Richard McLellan richard.mclellan@stalbans.gov.uk 01727 819355
North Herts Kate Burgess kate.burgess@north-herts.gov.uk 01462 474682	Hertsmere Siobhan Robinson siobhan.robinson@hertsmere.gov.uk
East Herts 1 - Elaine Hickles elaine.hickles@eastherts.gov.uk 01992 531536 2 - Claire Bennet claire.bennett@eastherts.gov.uk 01992 531603	Stevenage 1 - Kerry McDermott kerry.mcdermott@stevenage.gov.uk 2 - Matt Ewan matt.ewan@stevenage.gov.uk 01438 242242
Welwyn & Hatfield 1 - Jagdish Jethwa j.jethwa@welhat.gov.uk 01707 357352 2 - Dawn Murphy d.murphy@welhat-cht.org.uk 01707 357644	Broxbourne Katy Leman katy.leman@broxbourne.gov.uk 01992 785567

Terms of Reference and Objectives for the Joint Housing Protocol Liaison Group:

Objectives of the Group

- To assist with partnership working and communication between key agencies providing services to families and young people in each TYSS double district and housing area.
- To ensure that all parties have a clear understanding of roles and responsibilities of each organisation.
- To ensure that the JHP/Duties under the Children's Act/Housing Act and **hyh** working arrangements are being adhered to.
- To share information on successes/problems and agree future working arrangements to ensure continued partnership working.

Membership:

The meetings will cover all 3 areas of the Joint Housing Protocol for each double district (Watford/ Three Rivers; Welwyn, Hatfield/ Hertsmere; Stevenage/ North Herts; St Albans/ Dacorum; Broxbourne/ East Herts) and therefore will include:

- **hyh** – Advice, Information & Mediation Manager/Head of Service, Advice and Information worker for the area. **hyh** worker will consistently chair Liaison meetings
- **LHA** – Housing Needs Manager (or a representative from each housing authority)
- **TYS** – Nominated Housing Lead from TYS team
- **Children's Services Brokerage**- Senior Housing Officer (lead for Care Leavers)
- **Children's Services Assessment Team**- Nominated manager
- **Thriving Families**- Nominated manager
- **Additional members** – To be discussed / reviewed and other relevant parties invited as required.

Minutes – All parties to draft and circulate minutes on a rota between **hyh**, LHA and CS

Frequency – Meeting to be held 6 weekly and to be time limited to 1.5hrs.

Agenda Items:

- Agency updates /information sharing
- Issues/successes for homeless families
- Issues/successes for homeless 16/17 year olds (including specific case discussion around JFD meetings and outcomes)
- Issues/successes for care leavers

Terms of Reference and Objectives for the Joint Housing Protocol Steering Group:

Objectives of the Group

- To ensure that the JHP/Duties under the Children's Act/Housing Act/**hyh** working arrangements are being adhered to across Hertfordshire.
- To share information on successes/problems and agree future working arrangements to ensure continued partnership working.
- To review themes and trends coming out of liaison meetings in order to take action quickly and develop solutions

Membership:

The meetings will cover all 3 areas of the Joint Housing Protocol and will provide an overview of the county wide arrangements for joint working. In order to support joint working, this meeting will be co-chaired by LHA and TYSS.

- **hyh** – Advice, Information & Mediation Manager/Head of Service, Advice and Information Worker for the area.
- **LHA** – Nominated Housing Lead
- **TYSS** – Nominated Housing Lead from TYSS
- **Children's Services Brokerage**- Senior Housing Officer (lead for Care Leavers)
- **Children's Services Assessment Team**- Nominated manager
- **Thriving Families**- Nominated manager
- **Additional members** – To be discussed/reviewed and other relevant parties invited as required.

Minutes – All parties to draft and circulate minutes on a rota between **hyh**, LHA and CS

Frequency – Meeting to be held quarterly and to be time limited to 1.5hrs.

Agenda Items:

- Agency updates/information sharing
- Issues/successes for homeless families
- Issues/successes for homeless 16/17 year olds (including specific case discussion around JFD meetings and outcomes)
- Issues/successes for care leavers

**Community drug and alcohol teams
ADASH – Adolescent Drug and
Alcohol Service in Hertfordshire**

Confidential Service offering specialist
help for young people

Telephone 01992 531917

TXT 07770537227

Email: A-DASH@nhs.net

**CRI – Confidential Service offering
specialist help for adults with drugs
and alcohol issues.**

0800 652 3169

**Community Learning Disability
Teams**

Promoting the health and wellbeing of
individuals with Learning Disabilities
living within the local community.

Hertfordshire County Council

Community Services 01992 588820

Hertfordshire Community Protection

It is generally accepted that anti-social
behaviour is that which has caused
harassment, alarm or distress. There is
a Community Protection Team based
within Hertfordshire County Council.

Telephone 01701 292541

Community Mental Health Teams

Will provide support and advice for
professionals and members of the
community regarding people who may
be experiencing mental health
difficulties - Single Point of Access 0300
777 0707

Money Advice Unit – Useful

information about benefits and debt
advice, this can be found on their
website www.hertsdirect.org/benefits

Resources for professionals can be
found at www.pfeg.org Personal
Finance Education Group is a financial
education charity, providing resources
and lesson plans, help and advice to
anyone teaching children and young
people about money.

Thriving Families

Thriving Families has been established to provide
co-ordinated support to the most vulnerable
families with a range of needs. An early
intervention model is used.

**Accessed through Customer Services 0300
123 4043**

Domestic Abuse

**Herts Sunflower Web Based resource (out of
hours) and helpline**

Hertssunflower.org helpline 08 088 088 088

Support is available for those affected by
domestic abuse through partnerships with a
number of services and organisations.

hyh – This organisation's objective it is to prevent
homelessness amongst young people (aged 16 to
24) and where they do become homeless,
support them to access accommodation and
support appropriate to their needs.

Telephone: 08448 330933 (Advice Line)

Stevenage and North Herts. 07971 071848

East Herts. and Broxbourne 07968298873

Welwyn, Hatfield and St. Albans 07920722051

Watford, Three Rivers, Dacorum, Hertsmere

07932151316

If young person is from out of county, please
phone 01701 251 384

www.hyh.org.uk

Targeted Youth Support Service

The Targeted Youth Support Service will work
directly with vulnerable children, young people
and families with additional or complex needs to
prevent escalation to specialist services.

Accessed through Customer Services 0300 123
4043

Centrepoint

Centrepoint aims to ensure that no young person is at risk because they do not have a safe place to stay.

Telephone 0845 466 3400

Address: Central House, 25 Camperdown Street, London E1 8DZ

Website: <http://www.centrepoint.org.uk>

CRISIS

Crisis is a national charity dedicated to the relief of poverty and distress among single homeless people. Its mission is to end homelessness through practical action to help homeless people move towards a secure, sustainable home.

Telephone 0844 251 0111

Address: 64 Commercial Street, London E1 6LT

National Women's Aid website and 24hr help line

womensaid.org.uk

Free 24 hour helpline 0808 2000 247

Charity working to end domestic violence against women and children.

The Crisis Private Rented Sector

Directory can be used to search for private rented section schemes.

Shelter Homeless Act website

Shelter's Homeless Act website offers free registration and gives members details of the provisions of the new Homelessness Act, the new categories of Priority Need and the implications of both for local policy and practice.

Website: <http://homelesspages.org.uk/>

Homeless Link

Homeless Link is the membership organisation supporting and representing more than 700 agencies working with homeless people across England and Wales.

Telephone: 020 7960 3010

Address: First Floor, 10 - 13 Rushworth Street, London, SE1 ORB

Website: <http://www.homeless.org.uk>

Citizens Advice Bureau – give free, independent, impartial and confidential advice and information on a range of subjects including money, housing and legal advice
03444 111 444

Discretionary Housing Payment

Where applicants are entitled to some Housing Benefit, a Discretionary Housing Benefit can be requested. This is designed to assist if further financial assistance is required to help meet rent payments. Local Housing Authorities should be contacted where such assistance is required.

Rent deposit schemes

Rent deposit schemes help people who could not otherwise afford a rent deposit to rent from a private landlord. Rent deposit schemes are usually run by a local council or housing association, or sometimes a charity.

Shelter

Shelter provides advice, information and support to people with housing problems throughout Britain.

Telephone: 0808 800 4444 or 020 7505 2000 (operates 24 hours a day)

Address: 88 Old Street, London, EC1V 9HU

Website: <http://shelter.org.uk/knowyourrights>

Useful Resources for Professionals

Homeless Pages website

Homeless Pages is a comprehensive guide to information about single homelessness in the UK. It includes information about publications, training courses and websites on homelessness and related issues.

Telephone: 020 7939 0648

Address: Resource Information Service, Bramah House, 65 – 71 Bermondsey Street, London SE1 3FX

Website: <http://www.homelesspages.org.uk>

also

<http://homelessuk.org/details.asp?id=LP10>

Appendix 7 - Relevant Contacts for Case Escalation Issues

Housing

Broxbourne Borough Council

Katy Leman- Homelessness Assessment
and Prevention Manager
katy.leman@broxbourne.gov.uk
01992 785567

Dacorum Borough Council

Natasha Brathwaite
HousingOptions@dacorum.gov.uk
01442 228000

East Herts

Elaine Hickles
elainehickles@eastherts.gov.uk
01992 531536

Hertsmere

Siobhan Robinson
siobhanrobinson@hertsmere.gov.uk
0208 2072277

North Herts

Kate Burgess
kate.burgess@north-herts.gov.uk
01462 474682

Three Rivers District Council

Kimberley Grout- Housing Manager
kimberley.grout@ThreeRivers.gov.uk
01923 727375

St Albans City and District Council

Susan Hughes- Housing Options Co-
ordinator
susan.hughes@stalbans.gov.uk
01727 819355

Stevenage

Kerry McDermott
kerry.mcdermott@stevenage.gov.uk
01438 242242

Targeted Youth Support Service

Watford & Three Rivers

James Hodgson
james.hodson@hertfordshire.gov.uk
07795 368854

Broxbourne & East Herts

Daryl Quinn
daryl.quinn@hertfordshire.gov.uk
01992 555095

Welwyn, Hatfield & Hertsmere

Lynn Stickings
lynn.stickings@hertfordshire.gov.uk
01707 281441

Dacorum & St Albans

Maggie Wiggins
maggie.wiggins@hertfordshire.gov.uk
01442 388755

North Herts & Stevenage

Elaine Smith
elaine.smith@hertfordshire.gov.uk
01438 844201

Policy Manager, Vulnerable Young People, Children's Services

Rebecca Haasch
rebecca.haasch@hertfordshire.gov.uk
01438 845230

Herts Young Homeless

Sally Scott
sally.scott@hyh.org.uk
Sam Martins
sam.martins@hyh.org.uk
01707 251384

Watford

Kay Parritt

kay.parritt@watford.gov.uk

01923 278169

Welwyn and Hatfield

Jagdish Jethwa

j.jethwa@welhat.gov.uk

01707357352

Dawn Murphy

d.murphy@welhat-cht.org.uk

01707 357644

Children's Services**Care Leaver Issues**

Abigail Cope

abigail.cope@hertfordshire.gov.uk

01442 454385

**Intentionally Homeless Families with
Children Issues**

Clare Williams

clare.williams@hertfordshire.gov.uk

01438 843421

Appendix 8

Homeless 16/17 Year Olds Crashpad Referral Form and Request for Information

hyh Form CP V1 - 2015

Targeted Youth Support Services – Further Information Request Criminal Activity & Behaviour Checks (CA&BC)

Crashpad provides emergency accommodation to 16 & 17 year olds.

- All Crashpad hosts are volunteers.
- Crashpad hosts could be a single person, couples and or families.
- Crashpad hosts could also be providing accommodation to other vulnerable people.
- Hostel placements are offering accommodation to other vulnerable people.

To ensure we provide appropriate Crashpad placements for young people, hosts and hostels please could you provide the information requested below for the potential service user.

Name of Young person	Click here to enter text.	Date of Birth	Click here to enter a date.
Address	Click here to enter text.	NI Number	Click here to enter text.
Information request	From: Click here to enter a date. To: Click here to enter a date.		

Has the above named person historically been known to TYSS/TAS/Thriving Families?	Yes <input type="checkbox"/>	No <input type="checkbox"/>
Please provide further information to what capacity the above named person was known to TYSS/TAS/Thriving families with dates and context: Click here to enter text.		

Is the above named person open to TYSS/TAS/Thriving Families now?		Yes <input type="checkbox"/>	No <input type="checkbox"/>
In what context is the case open to TYSS/TAS/Thriving Families i.e. Assessment, YOT etc.		Click here to enter text.	
Does the above named person have an allocated Case Worker?		Yes <input type="checkbox"/>	No <input type="checkbox"/>
Name	Click here to enter text.	Phone number	Click here to enter text.
Email Address	Click here to enter text.		

General behaviour historical (please click in the square to place a cross if there is any information on any of the topics below)	
Issues at school	<input type="checkbox"/>
Drug & Alcohol issues	<input type="checkbox"/>
Mental health issues	<input type="checkbox"/>
Suspicion/actual stealing from family home/current placement	<input type="checkbox"/>
Gang related issues	<input type="checkbox"/>
Further Information regarding the above including dates and contexts: Click here to enter text.	

Any other Intelligence:

[Click here to enter text.](#)

General behaviour current (please click in the square to place a cross if there is any information on any of the topics below)

Issues at school ☐

Drug & Alcohol issues ☐

Mental health issues ☐

Suspicion/actual stealing from family home/current placement ☐

Gang related issues ☐

Further Information regarding the above including dates and contexts:

[Click here to enter text.](#)

Any other Intelligence:

[Click here to enter text.](#)

Offending behaviour (please click in the square to place a cross if there is any information on any of the topics below)

NFA's ☐

RJR's ☐

ERJR's ☐

Police warnings ☐

Bail ☐

Court hearings ☐

Any pending cases ☐

Recorded criminal activity ☐

Further information regarding the above including dates, incident(s) and context:

[Click here to enter text.](#)

Systems which have been checked (please click in the square to place a cross if the system has been checked)

ICS (Social care system) ☐

IES (Early intervention system) ☐

Childview (Youth justice system) ☐

Local Police intelligence ☐

PNC ☐

If not all systems have been checked please give reasons why:

(Please note on systems need to be checked, in order for Crashpad to complete their risk assessment of risk, the only exception is PNC - this is required if the young person/their family are well known to TYSS or has criminal activity recorded or if the young person has lived outside Hertfordshire).

[Click here to enter text.](#)

Please indicate the perceived risk that the above named person pose to themselves, Crashpad hosts and their families or any other individual that may reside at the Crashpad residence.

Low	<input type="checkbox"/>	Medium	<input type="checkbox"/>	High	<input type="checkbox"/>
-----	--------------------------	--------	--------------------------	------	--------------------------

Name of person checking that all details requested above has been provided: <u>Must be Duty Manager</u>	Click here to enter text.	Phone number	Click here to enter text.
Email address	Click here to enter text.		

Please email this form back to crashpad@hyh.org.uk
 Crashpad will be unable to assist this service user until this form is received and completed fully.
 Therefore a prompt response is appreciated. Thank you.

Appendix 9

hyh/Housing/TYSS - Joint Housing Support Meeting Agenda

Prior to this meeting, the Young Person should have been given the joint housing support pack by the agency where they first presented as homeless and signed consent should have been gained and shared with all parties involved.

Meeting between hyh, Housing and TYSS	
<p>This meeting should take place before meeting with the young person / family members to clarify information, risks and roles/ responsibilities.</p> <p>Agenda</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensure necessary consent has been given and share information between agencies (including work completed so far, previous interventions, discussions held with family) • Identify any risks / safeguarding concerns by completing attached risk assessment form and implement any measures necessary • Look at potential options / any pieces of work that may need to be completed or are outstanding / Anything in particular that may need to be discussed / Information to be shared • Decide how to manage the meeting / chair etc. 	<p>People Responsible</p> <p>All</p>
Meeting with Professionals and Young Person	
<p>This meeting is to give the young person an opportunity to 'tell their story' from their perspective.</p> <p>Agenda</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensure the young person understands why the meeting is being held • Ensure the information shared so far is correct • Find out / measure the young persons' wants / expectations • Discuss any fears that the young person may have regarding the meeting with their parent / relative / carer 	<p>People Responsible</p> <p>All, but nominated Chair to lead</p>

Meeting with Professionals, Young Person and Parent	
<p>This meeting is for information gathering / sharing between all parties to ensure that all the relevant information is gathered and further actions / outcomes can be looked at / discussed as a group.</p> <p>Agenda</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Clarify current situation • Explain expectations regarding 'parental responsibility' (e.g. parents have an obligation to provide accommodation until 18 years – Also highlight difficulties post 18yrs and importance of planned move on with their support where possible) • Explanation of each service and their role • Explanation of assessment process and Sect. 20, if appropriate • Identify any immediate needs, risks and actions to be taken • Provide date for follow up/ feedback meeting where decision and outcome will be shared 	<p>People Responsible</p> <p>All, but nominated Chair to lead</p>
De-Brief between TYSS, Housing and hyh	
<p>This de-brief is to ensure that all parties are clear on what actions now need to take place, paperwork that needs to be completed and who is responsible for each one. All agencies to liaise / share information as agreed.</p> <p>Agenda</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Agree Actions, timescales, responsible parties- fill out action plan below (including dates for completion of questions 6,7,8 from outcomes form) • All parties to complete questions 1-5 of outcomes/ decisions sheet <p>Ensure all parties leave with copies of action plan and outcomes form</p>	<p>People Responsible</p> <p>All</p>

This agenda is a guide and should be adapted as needed depending on the needs of the family / risk factors / safeguarding / options available etc.

Date for all parties to feedback to Young Person/ family: _____

Action Plan for: _____ **Date:** _____

Date for feedback: _____

Action required	Who by (with signature of professional responsible)	By when

Outcomes/ Decisions Sheet

Section 1: to be completed at Joint Housing Support Meeting (copy to be given to all parties)

Recommendation It is important to fully detail reasons for the recommendation made (a yes or no answer only is not sufficient)	1. Is this young person a child in need? (if not, give reasons)
	2. Is there an immediate risk or safeguarding concerns for Young Person?
	3. Reasons why the young person is homeless or threatened with homelessness and cannot return home
	4. Is accommodation needed today? (if yes, are there any specific requirements)
	5. Is interim accommodation required? (if yes, what interim accommodation can be provided, who will provide this, for what length of time and is this suitable for the young person)

Section 2: to be completed by the social worker following completion of Child and Family Assessment (it is the social worker's responsibility to send questions 6 to end to all parties via password protected email upon completion of the Child and Family Assessment)

	6. Recommendation regarding accommodation duty owed under Section 20 Children Act 1989 (please comment on 7 tests: is this a child, is young person a child in need (s17), is that need because s/he requires accommodation, is that need the result of section 20 1(a-c) or s20 3, does s/he usually reside within the area, what are his/her wishes and feelings regarding the provision of accommodation for him/her, what considering(having regard for age and understanding) is duty to be given to those wishes and feelings)
	7. If the social worker's recommendation is that a duty is owed under Section 20, the decision and outcome from Hertfordshire Access to Resource Panel (including date presented and date Housing representative/hyh informed)
	8. If Section 20 threshold is not reached, the outcome regarding accommodation duty owed under Housing Act 1996

If any decision above is not agreed by all parties, parties to follow the dispute resolution process.

Day 1-2 (Discussion between Professionals involved)

Who: _____

When: _____

Outcome (if not resolved, continue below):

Day 3-4 (Discussion between Line managers)

Who: _____

When: _____

Outcome (if not resolved, continue below)

Day 5-6 (Decision made by Heads of Service/ Policy Manager)

Who: _____

When: _____

Final Outcome

Appendix 10

Joint Housing Support Meeting – Guidance for Young People

A joint housing support meeting is our way of ensuring that Herts Young Homeless (**hyh**), Children's Services and Housing work with you to understand your situation and think about the best way forward for you.

A joint housing support meeting has been arranged for _____ and will include someone from Herts Young Homeless, someone from Children's Services and someone from Housing.

Herts Young Homeless, Children's Services and Housing will meet first to share information on any discussions held with you so far and then they will meet with you together so that you have an opportunity to share your experience and what has led to your current housing situation.

After the joint housing support meeting, Herts Young Homeless, Children's Services and Housing will take the information you shared and create an action plan around how to best support you with your housing difficulties. They will arrange to speak to you following this meeting to inform you of the outcome. If you disagree with this outcome, they will give you the opportunity to explain why you disagree.

As part of this joint housing support meeting process, information will be shared between Herts Young Homeless, Children's Services, Housing and any other relevant professionals that you or your family identify. The information that will be shared will include:

- Details of any prior or current involvement with Children's Services
- Any known risks
- Involvement of other professionals and reason for their involvement
- Offending history
- Health and disability
- Any previous support around housing
- And anything else that may be relevant

This information will be used to ensure that an assessment is completed that captures your needs fully and that any decisions and recommendations meet your needs. You should also know that we have a legal duty to share information with other agencies if we believe it will protect you, prevent harm to someone else or prevent/detect a crime.

Declaration by young person to share information:

I hereby give Herts Young Homeless, Children's Services and Housing Department (or their representatives) in Hertfordshire permission to discuss information in relation to me with each other and with third parties and for third parties to provide and share information about me. This consent will be valid until this housing issue is resolved.

If you do not understand anything that has been discussed, please ask before signing below.

Signed: _____

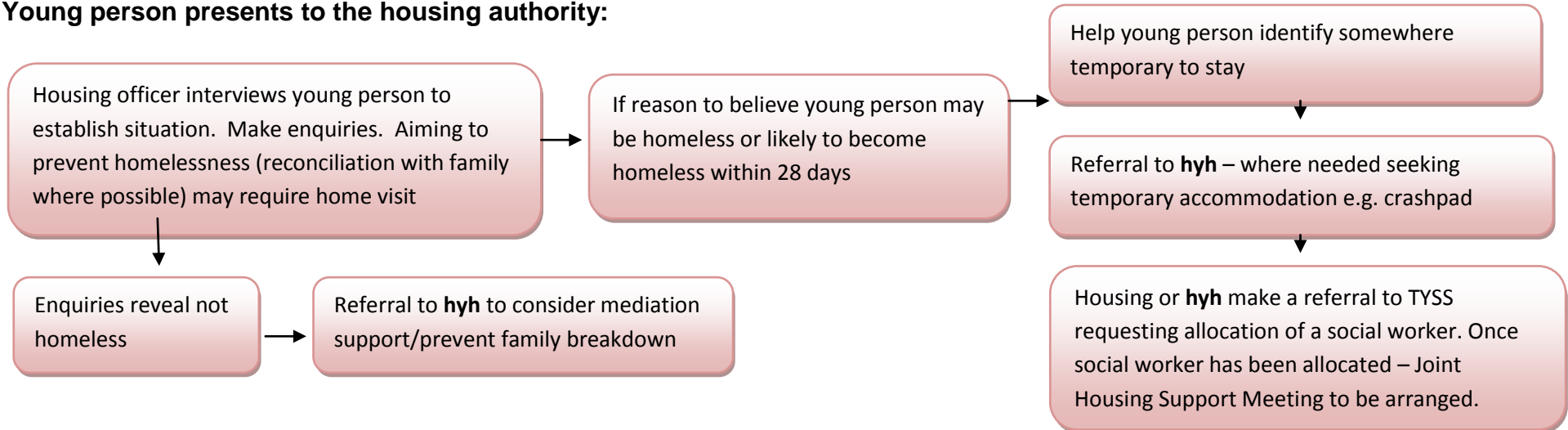
Name (young person): _____

Date: _____

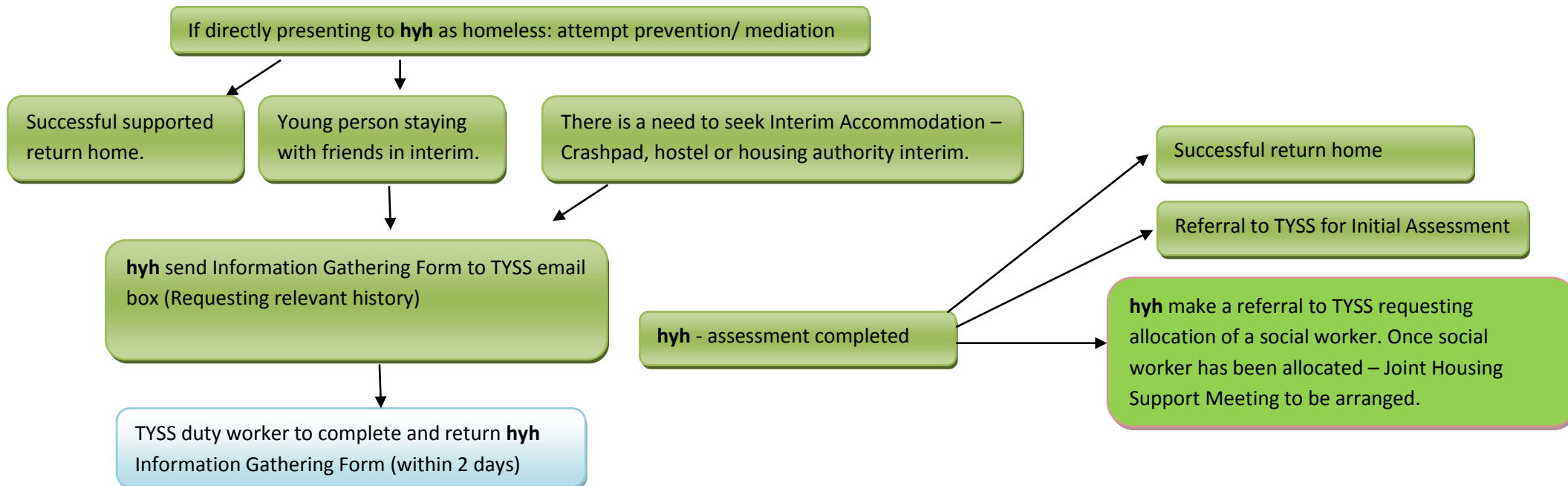
Appendix 11

Homeless 16 or 17yr olds and those at risk of homelessness (referral process)

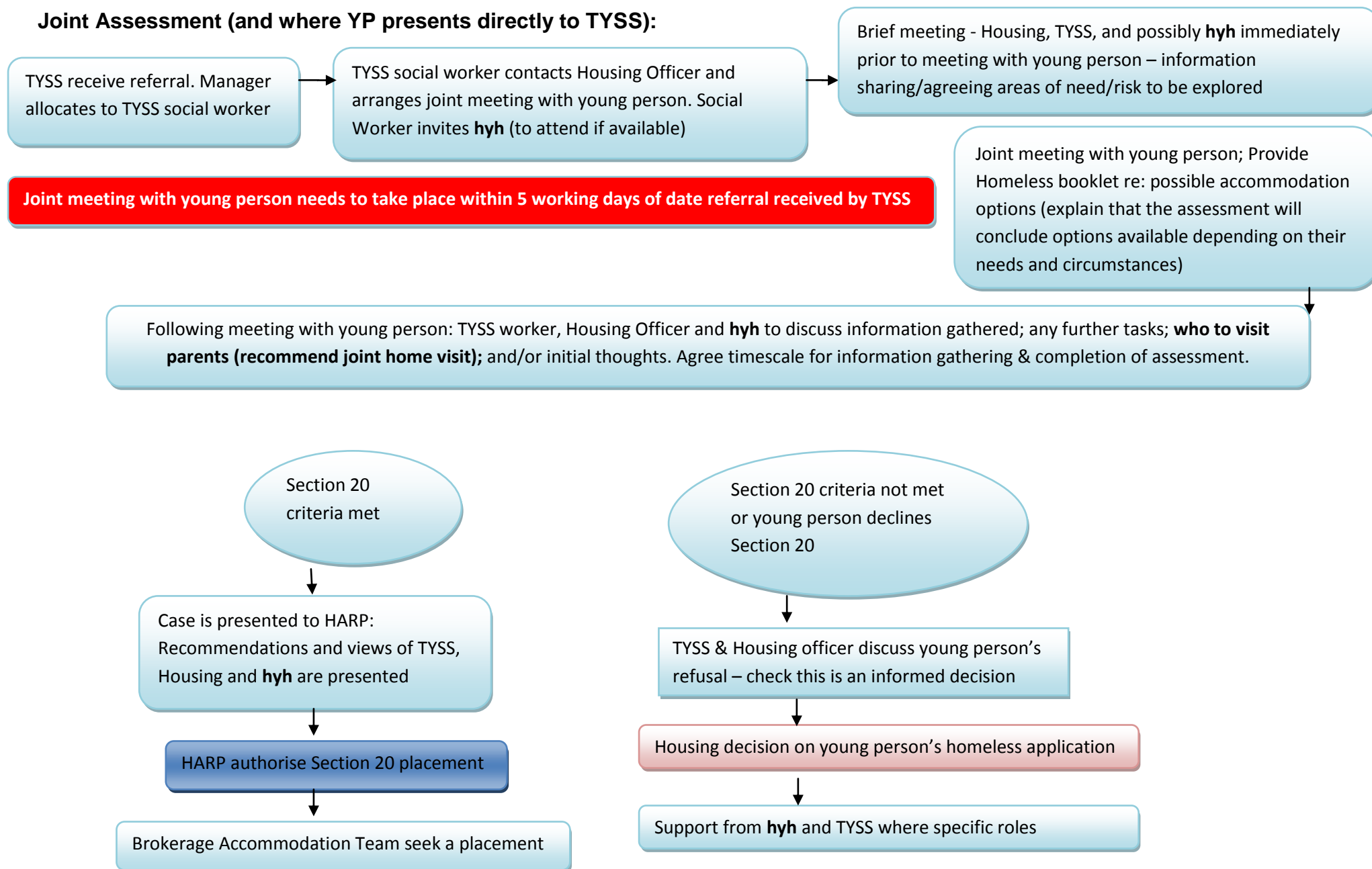
Young person presents to the housing authority:



Young person presents as homeless/at risk of homelessness to hyh (or referral from housing authority):



Joint Assessment (and where YP presents directly to TYSS):



Appendix 12

Joint Housing Support Meeting - Risk Assessment

Prior to the Joint Housing Support meeting all agencies should check to ensure that there are no immediate risks posed in inviting the young person / relevant family members to the meeting. This risk assessment should then be fully completed as part of the joint housing support meeting by all agencies involved to identify any risks posed to or by the young person and any other relevant family members involved in the assessment process.

Following this risk assessment, any control measures that need to be put into place should be agreed and adhered to by all parties. It is the responsibility of each agency to ensure that this information is shared as needed with any other colleagues involved in the case.

If the outcome of the Joint Housing Support meeting is that a Children's Services assessment will be completed – A full and comprehensive risk assessment will be completed as part of this process.

Section 1: to be completed by/ with the young person

Name of YP:								
	NONE	✓	LOW	✓	MEDIUM	✓	HIGH	✓
Significant risk of dangerous behaviour to self	I feel my mental health is good		I feel low because of the current situation		My GP is treating me for depression or other mental illness		I am currently being treated by the mental health team	
Chaotic mental health / Substance misuse concerns	I never use drugs or alcohol		I use drugs / alcohol occasionally / recreationally		I use drugs / alcohol 2-3 times per week		I am using drugs / drinking daily	
Anti-social/Risky/ Unpredictable behaviour	None		Has previous offending history		Inappropriate peers / ongoing offending behaviour / other		ASBO in place/High offending/ Risky sexual activity/Gang/Other	

Running Away from home/ Care	Never		Once		Flees to known addresses		Persistent absconder	
VIOLENCE / DOMESTIC VIOLENCE	No family member/partner is violent to me		A family member/partner has been violent to me in the past		A family member/partner has been violent to me recently		A family member/partner is being extremely violent to me now	
	Physical and Verbal I am not violent to any family member/partner		I have been violent to a family member/partner in the past		I have been violent to a family member/partner recently		I am being extremely violent to a family member/partner now	

VIOLENCE – OUTSIDE THE HOME	No-one is being violent to me outside the home		I have been threatened by someone in the past		I have been assaulted by someone recently		I have been seriously assaulted by someone recently	
	I am not involved in violence outside the home		I have threatened someone in the past		I have assaulted someone resulting in police involvement		I have been convicted of a violent offence	

ADDITIONAL NEEDS	I have no additional needs		I have a mild disability		I have a moderate disability		I have a severe disability	
	Please state:							

Section 2: to be completed by professionals working with the young person

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION ON THE YOUNG PERSON: Please provide any other information you feel may be able to help assess the needs of the yp, for example, accusations of abuse or inappropriate behaviour either within the home environment or outside the home or physical ill-health	
SPECIALIST AGENCY INPUT Please identify other agencies you are currently working with:	1. 2. 3.
ADDITIONAL INFORMATION ON ANY RELEVANT FAMILY MEMBERS: Please provide any other information you feel may be able to help assess the risks that other family members may pose during the assessment process	
IF YOU HAVE SCORED MEDIUM OR HIGH PLEASE USE THIS BOX TO EXPLAIN YOUR RATIONALE	

Low	No further action required
Medium	Any control measures agreed and monitored by all agencies – List below
High	Escalate to line managers as needed to agree a risk management plan / Control measures – List below

Risk Management / Control measures to be put in place

1.
2.
3.
4.
5.

Risk Assessment Agreed By

hyh Worker Name:

Signature.....

Housing Worker.....

Signature.....

TYSS/CS Worker.....

Signature.....

Appendix 13

Joint Housing Protocol - Data and Monitoring Arrangements

Context

A range of data is collected by Children's Services, housing and **hyh** to monitor the effectiveness of the Joint Housing Protocol and associated arrangements. Data on the three groups covered by the Protocol will be used to review the effectiveness of the Protocol and to plan for service improvements or changes. The data will be used to inform the:

- Joint Housing Protocol Operational Groups
- Joint Housing Protocol Steering Group
- The Strategic Partnership Accommodation Board
- The Heads of Housing Group

The data will be collated and stored by Children's Services in line with Data Protection requirements.

1. 16 & 17 Year olds

Children's Service, the 10 housing authorities and **hyh** use a data collect tool to record the number of 16 & 17 year olds who are presenting as homeless; the agency where they present and information about their level of need and subsequent outcome. The data collection tool has been developed to avoid double counting and to ensure data is recorded consistently across all authorities and agencies. Data will be collected on a quarterly basis and all participating agencies will send their completed spreadsheet to Children's Services at - jhp@hertfordshire.gov.uk.

2. Care Leavers – Data Collection, Monitoring Arrangements and the Care Leaver Database

The Brokerage Service, Senior Placements Officer maintains a database of all care leavers in order to track the progress of all children looked after aged 16 & 17 applying to join the housing register and the progress of their application. The Brokerage Service, Senior Placements Officer will check that the young person is placed on the register and note the renewal date.

The database will be used to assist the local housing authority to plan for the number of care leavers requiring accommodation within a given period.

3. Intentionally Homeless Families with Children

The Customer Services Centre, based within Children's Services will be the recipient of all referrals/notifications of intentionally homeless families with children. A record will be kept of all referrals/notifications, including the housing authority that made the referral/notification and whether the housing authority is a non-Hertfordshire housing authority. Information will be recorded regarding the outcome of the referral/notification. Where required; detailed information will be gathered from the Targeted Advice Service and/or the Assessment Service regarding the outcome of the referral/notification.

4. Use of Data

Data will only be collected and used for a) monitoring the quality of joint working arrangements and b) ensuring service improvements.

Appendix 14

Care Leaver Move on Planning Form – Brokerage to Housing Authorities

This form should be completed when a young person (who is already on the housing register) is assessed as able to manage independent living and approximately 6 months prior to requiring independent accommodation (i.e. from the age of 17½)

Please complete and forward to the Senior Placements Officer, Brokerage Service, Accommodation Team, Children's Services, Hertfordshire County Council.

Please attach a copy of the young person's current Pathway Plan and an updated Risk Assessment.

Please complete all sections; failure to complete sections may delay the move on process.

Full Name

Date of Birth

Age

Current address

Is this accommodation (please circle)

Parents/relatives Friends Lodgings Foster Care Staying Put

Supported Accommodation

Semi Independent Accommodation

Supported Lodgings

Other (please state) _____

Do they pay rent at this address? Yes/No

If yes, how much?

Date moved to this address

Mobile Number

Social Worker/Personal Adviser

Name and Contact Number

NI Number

Are they a UK Citizen? Yes/No

Are they subject to immigration control Yes/No

Are they part of a couple?

Do they live with them now? Yes/No

If no, where?

Are they pregnant? Yes/No

If yes, when is the due birth date?

**Involvement with Children's Services or any other agency, please give details
– state whether eligible/relevant/former relevant child.**

Name of originating Housing Authority

If originating Authority not the same as the housing authority applying to, state reasons for referring to current authority

Has the applicant applied to a council or housing association for housing before? Yes/No

If yes, please state:

When

Where

Reason they need to leave/move-on from their current accommodation?

What date will they need to leave?

Will they have anywhere else to live at that point? Yes/No

If yes please give details

Important

Information about the young person's details may be shared with other Local Authorities for the prevention and detection of fraud.

This may also include undertaking a search with an agency to obtain information about where the young person has been living. Any searches will be recorded but no other agency/company will be able to use them.

Declarations

PUBLIC SAFETY

In the interests of public safety we need to know whether any members of the household included have any criminal convictions.

If YES, please give details (date of conviction and offence):

Young Person's Signature:

Date:

Social Worker's / Leaving Care Personal Adviser's
Signature:

Date:

Appendix 15

Care Leaver – Move-on Planning Form – Supporting Letter Confirming Looked After and Care Leaver Status

Housing Registrations

Children's Services
Brokerage Accommodation Team

ADD COUNCIL NAME

Tel

Date

06 March 2018

Dear Sir/Madam

Reference

Add Full Name, DOB, Placement Address and Address at Point of Becoming Looked After.

I would like to refer **ADD NAME** to you for inclusion on your housing register as a looked after child/care leaver.

Legal status

A. **Add Full Name** is 'Looked After' by Hertfordshire Children's Services and is 'Accommodated' under Section 20 of the Children Act 1989.

B. **Add Full Name** is 'Looked After' by Hertfordshire Children's Services and is subject to a Section 31 Care Order under the Children Act 1989.

Delete as applicable

Add Full Name is an '**Eligible**' child - '**Relevant**' child as defined by the Care Planning, Placement and Case Review Regulations and Guidance 2010 and Planning Transition to Adulthood for Care Leavers (England) Regulations and Guidance 2010.

Accommodation/Placement

Add Full Name became looked after on **Add Date** and is currently placed in (**Add Type of Placement**).

Add Full Name ceased to be 'Looked After' on **Add Date** and will continue to receive practical support and, in specific circumstances, financial help from Hertfordshire Children's Services under Section 24 of the Children Act 1989 or Section 23C of the Planning Transition to Adulthood for Care Leavers (England) Regulations and Guidance 2010. Section 23C and Section 24 payments must be declared when claiming benefits but are not be counted as income for welfare benefit purposes. Whilst **Add Full Name** is establishing **his/her** welfare

Local Connection

Add Full Name became looked after in **Add Area** and as such has a 'Local Connection' in your local housing authority area.

Support package

Add Full Name ceased to be 'Looked After' on **Add Date** and will continue to receive practical support and, in specific circumstances, financial help from Hertfordshire Children's Services under Section 24 of the Children Act 1989 or Section 23C of the Planning Transition to Adulthood for Care Leavers (England) Regulations and Guidance 2010.

I would request that you add **his/her** name to your housing register, we will contact you and provide the move-on paper work six months prior to it being assessed that he/she is able to manage independent living.

If you require any further information, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Yours sincerely

Senior Placements Officer
(Brokerage Accommodation Team)

Appendix 16

Housing Application Process for Children Looked After & Care Leavers (April 2015) [Local Arrangements]

The following sections set out the arrangements across the 10 Hertfordshire District, Borough and City Councils and their respective Housing Departments for the provision of accommodation to Hertfordshire care leavers. This section should be used in conjunction with the Housing Application Procedure – CSF0105 Set out in the JHP. The Contact details for the 10 Housing Departments are included below. In the first instance enquires within Children's Services regarding care should be directed to: –

Abi Cope, Senior Placement Officer

Brokerage Accommodation Team

Children's Services, Hertfordshire County Council.

Email – Abigail.cope@hertfordshire.gov.uk

Telephone – 01442 454385

As a result of the Localism Act 2011 all of the 10 Housing Authorities in Hertfordshire have up-dated their Allocation's Policy. The information in this appendix sets out the key changes in regard to care leavers as of April 2015. The information in this section is subject to change as each housing authority updates their policies.

Broxbourne Borough Council

- 1) Age a looked after child/care leaver can be placed on the housing register.**
From the young person's 16th Birthday.
- 2) The contact person to manage looked after children/care leavers housing applications and move on forms-**

Contact 1

Julie Halle

Email – jah.housingneeds@broxbourne.gov.uk

Telephone: 01992 785570

3) Housing Allocation Policy (Local Connection arrangements)

Web address for Allocations Policy –

<http://www.broxbourne.gov.uk/resident-housing/joining-housing-register>

Care leavers are considered as having a local connection if they were in Broxbourne area when they were placed into care (became looked after). A care leaver will need to have '**originated**' from Broxbourne. They will then be deemed to have a local connection even though they may not have lived in the area recently. If they have lived in a care placement i.e. foster care, residential care (within Broxbourne) this will be their '**host authority**' this will be taken into consideration by the Housing Needs Team. Further information will be required to evidence links to the area if trying to demonstrate priority under a '**host**' authority' i.e. length of time in foster care, social

networks in the area, education, training, employment, ongoing support from carers/family members.

4) Anti-Social behaviour arrangements/specific issues

Applicants must disclose all ASBO's, ASBI's, criminal convictions past, present and pending. See criminal convictions 2.7 and other eligibility Criteria 3.2 paragraph 3 of the allocations policy. However, all cases will be considered on an individual basis and in consultation with Children's Services and B3 Living. It is therefore important to highlight the context of any behaviours/needs that may give rise to any housing concerns.

5) Bidding Arrangements

Broxbourne operate a direct offer system. This will be after a period in Britannia Foyer (if appropriate to the young person's needs).

Priority Band or Points – Outside of the points system. Receive a direct offer.

Property Size –Single people are offered Bedsits/studios . (unless there are exceptional circumstances) Applicants with a child/children will be offered 2 Bedrooms.

Age care leaves can start bidding – 18yrs.

6) Ready for Independence

The social worker will assess the young person's ability to live independently. If deemed able, the senior placement officer in Brokerage will contact the Housing Department and advise that the young person will be ready for accommodation within the next 6 months. A move on form, risk assessment and pathway plan part 2 is then submitted to the contact within the Housing Department. The Housing Department will then assess this information and decide whether the young person has demonstrated the necessary skills to live independently. If the decision is negative then a discussion should take place with the senior placement officer and consideration given to meeting with the housing contact. In certain circumstances an appeal can be lodged.

Dacorum Borough Council

- 1) **Age a looked after child/care leaver can be placed on the housing register.**
From the young person's 16th Birthday.
- 2) **The contact person to manage looked after children/care leavers housing application and move on forms-**

Contact 1

Natasha Brathwaite

Email – natasha.brathwaite@dacorum.gov.uk

Telephone: 01442 228840

Contact 2

Cynthia Hayford

Email – Cynthia.hayford@dacorum.gov.uk

Telephone – 01442 228061

Contact 3

Isabel Connolly

Email – Isabel.Connolly@dacorum.gov.uk

Telephone – 01442 228812

3) Housing Allocation Policy (Local Connection arrangements)

Web address for Allocations Policy –

<http://www.dacorum.gov.uk/docs/default-source/default-document-library/housing-allocations-policy---final-2013.pdf?sfvrsn=0>

Care leavers are considered as having a local connection if they were living in the Dacorum Council area when they were placed into care (became looked after). A care leaver will need to have '**originated**' from Dacorum Council area. They will then be deemed to have a 'local connection' even though they may not have lived in the area recently. If they have lived in a care placement i.e. foster care, residential care (within Dacorum) this will be their '**host authority**' this will be taken into consideration by the Housing Options Team. Further information will be required to evidence links to the area if trying to demonstrate priority under a '**host**' authority' i.e. length of time in foster care, social networks in area, education, training, employment, ongoing support from carers/family members.

4) Anti-Social behaviour arrangements/specific issues

Exclusions exist as detailed in the policy; cases are reviewed on a case by case basis.

5) Bidding Arrangements

Dacorum Council operate a Choice Based Lettings allocations scheme. Bidding can commence once the move-on form and the individual case has been reviewed and approved (unless their circumstances require that a direct offer should be made).

Website – <https://www.movingwithdacorum.org.uk>

Frequency of Choice Based Lettings. Dacorum Council operates multiple bidding cycles for general needs properties, applicants should log on each week day to view available properties.

Priority Band or points – Care Leavers are awarded priority points.

Length of time with priority – 3 months (assuming there are available properties, if not, this would be extended), if a young person hasn't bid on a property in this time, they would be allocated a direct let.

Property Size –Single people are offered bedsits, studio flats & one bedroom properties.

Age care leavers can start bidding – 17yrs. A care leaver can start bidding before their 18 birthday. If a young person is offered a property before their 18th birthday they would need a guarantor when signing the tenancy for that period (Children's Services or parent).

6) Ready for Independence

The social worker will assess the young person's ability to live independently. If deemed able to live independently the senior placement officer (Brokerage) will contact the Housing Department and indicate that the young person will be ready for accommodation within the next 6 months. At which point a move on form, risk assessment and pathway plan part 2 is submitted to the designated contact at the Housing Department. The Housing Department will then assess this information and decide whether they feel the care leaver demonstrates the necessary skills to live independently. If the decision is negative then a discussion should take place with the senior placement officer and consideration given to meeting with the housing contact. In certain circumstances an appeal can be lodged.

East Herts District Council

- 1) **Age a looked after child/care leaver can be placed on the housing register.**
From the young person's 17th Birthday.
- 2) **The contact person to manage looked after children/care leavers housing application and move on forms-**

Contact 1

Sean Corcoran

Email – sean.corcoran@eastherts.gov.uk

Telephone: 01992 531599

Contact 2

Elaine Hickles

Email – Elaine.hickles@eastherts.gov.uk

Telephone – 01992 531536

3) Housing Allocation Policy (Local Connection arrangements)

East Herts Care Leavers Procedures

<http://www.hertsdirect.org/docs/pdf/e/carleavproman.pdf>

Housing Register & Allocations for East Herts

<http://www.hertsdirect.org/docs/pdf/h/houregpol.pdf>

Care leavers are considered as having a local connection if they were living in East Herts area when they were placed into care (became looked after). A care leaver will need to have '**originated**' from East Herts. They will then be deemed to have a local connection even though they may not have lived in the area recently. If they have lived in a care placement i.e. foster care, residential care (within East Herts) this will be deemed their '**host authority**', this will be taken into consideration by the Housing Needs Team. Further information will be required to evidence links to the area if trying to demonstrate priority under a '**host**' authority request, i.e. length of time in foster care, social networks in area, education, training, employment, ongoing support from carers/family members.

East Herts will consider young people (with a local connection in a different housing authority) who have lived in foster care for at least 5 years in East Herts. The Housing Needs Manager will then decide if the applicant can be considered in these circumstances.

4) Anti-Social behaviour arrangements/specific issues

Young people may not qualify to join the housing register if the applicant, or any member of their household who wishes to be housed with them, are guilty of any unacceptable behaviour, thought serious enough to make them unsuitable to be a tenant of a Housing Authority or Registered Provider and there is sufficient evidence that this behaviour is likely to continue and create problems for the neighbouring households in the future.

In order to determine whether a person's behaviour is serious enough that they do not qualify for the housing register; the Council will consider their behaviour against what is required to prove one of the Grounds (1 to 7) for Possession for Secure

Tenancies, and determine whether, had they been a secure tenant, there would be sufficient evidence to obtain a possession order against that applicant.

Applications that do not qualify due to unacceptable and/or anti-social behaviour can submit a fresh application, one year from the date of notification of not qualifying if they feel that there is good reason why they should now qualify. Such applicants will need to show that there has been a material change in their behaviour or their circumstances.

5) Ready for Independence

The social worker will assess the young person's ability to live independently. If they are deemed able to manage independent living the senior placement officer (Brokerage) will contact the Housing Department and indicate that the young person will be ready for accommodation within the next 6 months. A move-on form, risk assessment and pathway plan part 2 is then submitted to the designated contact at the Housing Department. The Housing Department will then assess this information. Most new care leaver referrals will initially be referred to Rose Court or the YMCA for an assessment. If accepted, clients will stay at Rose Court or the YMCA until they are referred back to East Herts Council or they are ready to live independently. If a care leaver is referred to Rose Court or the YMCA this would depend on the individual client's needs. If the decision is negative then a discussion should take place with the senior placement officer (Brokerage) and consideration would be given to meeting with the housing contact regarding the individual's circumstances. In certain circumstances an appeal can be lodged.

6) Bidding Arrangements

East Herts operate a Choice Based Lettings allocations scheme. Bidding can commence once the move on form and case issues have been reviewed and approved (unless the approval states that a direct accommodation offer must be made).

Website – <http://www.homeoption.org/>

Frequency of Choice Based Lettings - Fortnightly. Bidding starts on a Friday at 9am.

Priority Band or points – Care leavers are awarded social points, 50 points maximum in steps of 10, 15, 25, 35, 50 to enable the care leaver to bid successfully.

Length of time with priority – 3 months (assuming there are available properties, if not then this would be extended). If a young person hasn't bid in this time, then they would be given a direct let.

Property Size – Single people are offered bedsits/studios & one bedroom properties.

Age care leavers can start bidding – 18yrs. A care leaver can start bidding before their 18 birthday. If a young person is offered a property before their 18th birthday they would need a guarantor when signing the tenancy for that period (Children's Services or parent).

Hertsmere Borough Council

- 1) **Age a looked after child/care leaver can be placed on the housing register.**
From the young person's 16th Birthday
- 2) **The contact person to manage looked after children/care leavers housing application and move on forms-**

Contact 1

Ruth Trentham

Email – ruth.trentham@hertsmere.gov.uk

Telephone: 0208 207 7420

Contact 2

Rhian Williams

Email – rhian.williams@hertsmere.gov.uk

Telephone: 0208 207 7400

3) Housing Allocation Policy (Local Connection arrangements) Web address for Allocations Policy –

<http://www.hertsmere.gov.uk/Documents/06-Housing--Private-Property/Housing-Register/Choice-Based-Lettings-allocation-policy-2013.pdf>

Care leavers are considered as having a local connection if they were living in the Hertsmere area when they were placed into care (became looked after). A care leaver will need to have '**originated**' from the Hertsmere area. They will be deemed to have a local connection even though they may not have living in the area recently. If they have lived in a care placement i.e. foster care, residential care (within Hertsmere) this will be their '**host authority**' and this will be taken into consideration by the Housing Needs team. Further information will be required to evidence links to the area if trying to demonstrate priority under a '**host**' authority' i.e. length of time living in foster care, social networks in the area, education, training, employment, ongoing support from carers/family members.

4) Anti-Social behaviour arrangements/specific issues

Applicants may be ineligible to join the Housing Register if they or a member of their household have behaved in such a way as to make them 'unsuitable' to be a tenant. Unacceptable behaviour includes:

- Persons who knowingly give false or misleading information;
- If the applicant, or any member of their household, has been violent or threatened violence towards a member of staff of the Council or its partner organisations;
- Persons who have rent arrears with a Registered Social Landlord/Local Authority or a private landlord and these arrears are still outstanding. In these circumstances each case will be looked at individually, and a decision based on the merits of each case;
- Persons who have caused damage to a current or previous rented property;
- Persons who owes the Council a debt from a previous Private Sector Rent Deposit placement;

- Persons who have rent arrears who are occupying temporary accommodation secured by the Council;
- Persons who owe the Council a debt from a previous temporary accommodation placement;
- Persons who are subject to Anti-Social Behaviour Orders or Contracts;
- Persons or any member of their household, guilty of unacceptable behaviour or criminal offence serious enough to make them unsuitable to be a tenant.

This list is not exhaustive and the above applies regardless of who the landlord was at the time of the unacceptable behaviour. When making decisions regarding unacceptable behaviour, the Council will consider:

- When the unacceptable behaviour took place. Consideration will be given to the length of time that has elapsed and whether there has been a change in circumstances;
- What action the landlord would have taken against the perpetrator of the unacceptable behaviour;
- Whether the unacceptable behaviour is due to a physical, mental or learning disability.

If the Hertsmere Council decides that an applicant does not meet the qualifying criteria to register for housing, the applicant will be notified of this decision in writing which will give the reasons why they are ineligible. Applicants have a right to ask for a review of the decision. The review request must be made in writing within 21 days of receipt of the original decision, and it must include the reasons for requesting the review.

5) Bidding Arrangements

Hertsmere Council operate a Choice Based Lettings allocations scheme. Bidding can commence once the move on form and the case have been reviewed and approved (unless the approval decision states that a direct offer must be made).

Website - www.hertschoicetohomes.org.uk

Frequency of Choice Based Lettings - Weekly. Applicants can place up to 3 bids on each cycle. Bids can be made every Friday from 9am and the bidding closes the following Tuesday at 12pm.

Priority Band or points – Care Leavers are placed in Band B

Length of time in Band – 3 months (assuming there are available properties, if not then this would be extended) If a Young Person hasn't bid in this time, then they would be given a direct let.

Property Size – Single people are offered studios/1 bedroom accommodation.

Age care leavers can start bidding – One month before a care leaver's 18th birthday. If a young person is offered a property before their 18th birthday they would need a guarantor when signing the tenancy for that period (Children's Services or parent).

6) Ready for Independence

The social worker will assess the young person's ability to live independently. If deemed able to live independently the senior placements officer (Brokerage) will contact the Housing Department and indicate that the young person will be ready for accommodation within the next 6 months. A move on form, risk assessment and pathway plan part 2 should be submitted to the contact at the Housing Department. The Housing Department will then assess this information and decide whether they feel the young person demonstrates that they have the necessary skills to live independently. If the decision is negative then a discussion should take place with the senior placement officer (Brokerage) and consideration given to meeting with the housing contact. In certain circumstances an appeal can be lodged.

North Herts District Council

1) **Age a looked after child/care leaver can be placed on the housing register.**
From the young person's 16th Birthday

2) **The Contact Person to manage looked after children/care leavers housing application and move on forms-**

Contact Details –

Contact 1 –

Alison Cooper

Email – Alison.cooper@north-herts.gov.uk

Telephone: -01462 474327

Contact 2 –

Sharon Garvie

Email - Sharon.garvie@north-herts.gov.uk

Telephone: 01462 474260

Contact 3 –

Kate Burgess

Email – kate.burgess@north-herts.gov.uk

Telephone – 01462 474479

3) Housing Allocation Policy (Local Connection arrangements)

Web address for Allocations Policy –

http://www.north-herts.gov.uk/index/housing/apply_for_housing/common_housing_register.htm

Care leavers are considered as having a local connection if they were living in the North Herts area when they were placed into care (became looked after). A care leaver will need to have **'originated'** from North Herts. They will then be deemed to have a local connection even though they may not have lived in the North Herts area recently. If they do not have a local connection with North Herts, but have lived in a care placement i.e. foster care, residential care (within North Herts) this will be their **'host authority'** this will be taken into consideration by the Housing Needs Team. Further information will be required to evidence links to the North Herts area if trying to demonstrate priority under a **'host'** authority' i.e. length of time living in foster care, social networks in area, education, training, employment, ongoing support from carers/family members.

4) Anti-Social behaviour arrangements/specific issues

An applicant would be found ineligible for the Common Housing Register if one of the following applies:

- Has a conviction for an offence which may be considered as anti-social behaviour or a civil order granted by a court under the Crime and Disorder Act 1988 or the Anti-Social behaviour Act 2003;
- Is subject to criminal legal action or to a court order for behaviour that may be considered as anti-social;
- Has a conviction for a crime that is likely to cause fear, distress and alarm;

- Is subject to legal action for a crime that is likely to cause fear, distress and alarm;
- Has been evicted from social housing as a result of anti-social behaviour.

The young person has the right to review this decision and has 21 days to do so, the request should be put in writing to the Housing Options Manager. North Herts always encourages applicants to provide supporting evidence where they feel they have mitigating/exceptional circumstances. When making this decision for a care leaver, the department would also contact the social worker to inform them of the decision.

If the young person is ineligible for the housing register and the young person's (care) accommodation comes to an end and they become homeless, they have the right to make a homeless application. The above criteria would not impact on the homeless application or homeless decision. However, it does mean that North Herts may look to discharge the homeless duty into the Private Rented sector.

The above framework would also apply to applicants with rent arrears to either a social landlord or private landlord and in regard to arrears with payments to NHDC under the Deposit Guarantee Scheme or arrears with the Black Squirrel Credit Union for a loan approved by NHDC.

5) Bidding Arrangements

North Herts operate a Choice Based Lettings allocations scheme.

Website – www.home4u.org.uk

Frequency of Choice Based Lettings - Weekly. Bidding opens at 12pm on a Thursday and finishes the following Wednesday at 2pm. Applicants can place up to 3 bids on each cycle.

Priority Band or points – priority points. Care Leavers are placed in Band 'B' and accrue waiting time points.

Length of time with priority – 3 months (assuming there are available properties, if not then this would be extended) If a Young Person hasn't bid in this time, then they would be given a direct let.

Property Size - Single people are offered Bedsits/studios & one bedroom properties

Age care leavers can start bidding – 17yrs. A care leaver can start bidding before their 18 birthday. If a young person is offered a property before their 18th birthday they would need a guarantor when signing the tenancy for that period (Children's Services or parent).

6) Ready for Independence

The social worker will assess the young person's ability to live independently. If deemed able to live independently the senior placements officer (Brokerage) will contact the Housing Department and indicate that the young person will be ready for

accommodation within the next 6 months. A move on form, risk assessment and pathway plan part 2 should be submitted to the relevant contact in the Housing Department. The Housing Department will then assess the information provided and decide whether they feel the young person demonstrates the necessary skills to live independently. If the decision is negative then a discussion should take place with the senior placement officer (Brokerage) and consideration given to meeting with the housing contact. In certain circumstances an appeal can be lodged.

St Albans District and City Council

- 1) **Age a looked after child/care leaver can be placed on the housing register.**
From the young person's 16th Birthday
- 2) **The contact person to manage looked after children/care leavers housing application and move on forms-**

Contact 1

Susan Hughes

Email – susan.hughes@stalbans.gov.uk

Telephone: 01727 819408

Contact 2

Richard McLellan

Email - Richard.McLellan@stalbans.gov.uk

Telephone - 01727 819410

Contact 3

Rebecca Hillman

Email – Rebecca.hillman@stalbans.gov.uk

Telephone – 01727 819586

3) Housing Allocation Policy (Local Connection arrangements)

Web address for Allocations Policy –

http://www.stalbans.gov.uk/Images/allocationspolicy_tcm15-37504.pdf

Care leavers are considered as having a local connection if they were living in the St Albans area when they were placed into care (became looked after). A care leaver will need to have '**originated**' from St Albans. They will then be seen to have a local connection even though they may not have living in St Albans area recently. If they have 'originated' from another area and been placed in a care placement, i.e. foster care, residential care (within St Albans) this will be their '**host authority**' this will be taken into consideration by the Housing Needs Team. Further information will be required to evidence links to the St Albans area if trying to demonstrate 'priority need' where the young person is within the '**host**' authority', i.e. length of time in foster care, social networks in area, education, training, employment, ongoing support from carers/family members.

4) Anti-Social behaviour arrangements/specific issues

This is considered on an individual basis and will consider any recent convictions, the nature and context of the offence and the possible impact on the young person's tenancy and neighbours etc.

The Allocation Policy sets out the following –

Applicants will be excluded from joining the housing register if the applicant or a member of their household is guilty of unacceptable behaviour serious enough to make them unsuitable to be a tenant. Unacceptable behaviour is defined as behaviour which, if the person concerned were a secure tenant, would entitle the

Council to seek a Possession Order against them. (See Appendix One of St Albans Allocations Policy for further details).

Examples of such behaviour include:

- Previous or current rent arrears;
- Breaches in your tenancy agreement;
- Previous or current property damage;
- Harassment or anti-social behaviour;
- Any relevant criminal activity.

When making decisions regarding unacceptable behaviour the Council will consider:

- When the unacceptable behaviour took place, consideration will be given to the length of time that has elapsed since the offence/behaviour and whether there has been any change in circumstances;
- What action the landlord would have taken against the perpetrator of the unacceptable behaviour. The behaviour must be serious enough for the Council to be granted a possession order;
- Whether the unacceptable behaviour is due to a physical, mental or learning disability.

5) Bidding Arrangements

St Albans operate a Choice Based Lettings allocations scheme. Bidding can commence once the move on form and the case has been reviewed and approved (unless approval states that a direct offer must be made).

Website - www.hertschoicehomes.org.uk

Frequency of Choice Based Lettings - Weekly. Applicants can place up to 3 bids on each cycle. Bids can be made every Friday from 9am and the bidding closes the following Tuesday at 12pm.

Priority Band or points – Care Leavers are placed in Band B.

Length of time in Band – 3 months (assuming there are available properties, if not then this would be extended). If a young person hasn't bid in this time, then they would be allocated a direct let.

Property Size – Single people are offered studio flats and one bedroom accommodation.

Age care leavers can start bidding – One month before a care leaver's 18th birthday. If a young person is offered a property before their 18th birthday they would need a guarantor when signing the tenancy for that period (Children's Services or parent).

6) Ready for Independence

The social worker will assess the young person's ability to live independently. If the young person is deemed able to live independently the senior placement officer (Brokerage) will contact the Housing Department and indicate that the young person

will be ready for accommodation within the next 6 months. A move on form, a risk assessment and a pathway plan part 2 should be submitted to the relevant contact in the Housing Department. The Housing Department will then assess this information and decide whether they feel the young person demonstrates the necessary skills to live independently. If the decision is negative then a discussion should take place with the senior placement officer and consideration given to meeting with the housing contact. In certain circumstances an appeal can be lodged.

Stevenage Borough Council

- 1) **Age a looked after child/care leaver can be placed on the housing register.**
From the young person's 16th Birthday
- 2) **The contact person to manage looked after children/care leavers housing application and move on forms-**

Contact 1

Sarah Morley

Email – Sarah.Morley@stevenage.gov.uk

Telephone: 01438 242956

Contact 2

Karen Miele

Email -Karen.Miele@stevenage.gov.uk

Telephone: 01438 242720

3) Housing Allocation Policy (Local Connection arrangements)

Web address for Allocations Policy –

<http://www.stevenage.gov.uk/content/15953/21310/22429/Allocations-Scheme-Final.pdf>

Care leavers are considered as having a local connection if they were living in the Stevenage area when they were placed into care (became looked after). A care leaver will need to have '**originated**' from Stevenage. They will then be deemed as having a local connection even though they may not have lived in the Stevenage area recently. If they have lived in a care placement, i.e. foster care, residential care (within Stevenage) this will be their '**host authority**' this will be taken into consideration by the Housing Needs Team. Further information will be required to evidence links to the Stevenage area if trying to demonstrate 'priority need' under a '**host**' authority' accommodation request, i.e. length of time living in foster care, social networks in the area, education, training, employment, ongoing support from carers/family members.

4) Anti-Social behaviour arrangements/specific issues

This is considered on an individual basis and will consider any recent convictions, the nature and context of the offence and the possible impact on the young person's tenancy and any neighbours etc.

An applicant is to be treated as ineligible for the allocation of housing because:

- they, or a member of their household has been guilty of unacceptable behaviour that is deemed serious enough to make them unsuitable to be a tenant; and
- in the circumstances that apply at the time their application, it is considered they are deemed unsuitable to be a tenant by reason of that behaviour.

Behaviour that can be regarded as unacceptable is defined in the Housing Act 1996 as amended by the Homelessness Act 2002, section 160A (8) as:

- behaviour that would, if the person were a secure tenant, entitle Stevenage Borough Council to a possession order under Section 84 of the Housing Act 1985, or
- behaviour of a member of their household that would, if they were living with a secure tenant of Stevenage Borough Council, entitle Stevenage Borough Council to such a possession order. It is not necessary for the applicant to have actually been a council tenant when the unacceptable behaviour occurred; nor, need there have been an actual eviction. The test is that the behaviour is seen to have been serious enough to notionally have entitled Stevenage Borough Council to an outright possession order had the applicant been a secure tenant at the time.

5) Bidding Arrangements

Stevenage Council operates a Choice Based Lettings allocations scheme. Bidding can commence once the move on form and case has been reviewed and approved (unless approval states that a direct accommodation offer must be made).

Website - www.home4u.org.uk

Frequency of Choice Based Lettings - Weekly. Bidding opens at 12pm on a Thursday and finishes the following Wednesday at 2pm. Applicants can place up to 3 bids on each cycle.

Priority Band or points – Band B

Length of time in Band – 3 months (assuming there are available properties, if not available, this would be extended) If a young person hasn't bid in this time, then they would be allocated a direct let.

Property Size – Single people are offered studio flats.

Age care leavers can start bidding – One month before a care leaver's 18th birthday. If a young person is offered a property before their 18th birthday they would need a guarantor when signing the tenancy for that period (Children's Services or parent).

6) Ready for Independence

The social worker will assess the young person's ability to live independently. If the young person is deemed able to manage accommodation the senior placement officer (Brokerage) will contact the nominated Housing Department contact and inform them that the young person will be ready for accommodation within the next 6 months. A move on form, risk assessment and pathway plan part 2 should be submitted to the relevant contact within the Housing Department. The Housing Department will then assess this information and decide whether they feel the young person demonstrates the necessary skills to live independently. If the decision is negative then a discussion should take place with the senior placement officer

(Brokerage) and consideration given to meeting with the housing contact. In certain circumstances an appeal can be lodged.

Three Rivers District Council

1) **Age a looked after child/care leaver can be placed on the housing register.**
From the young person's 16th Birthday.

2) **The contact person to manage looked after children/care leavers housing application and move on forms-**

Contact Details -

Contact 1 –

Brenda Stevens

Email – brenda.stevens@threerivers.gov.uk

Telephone: 01923 727065.

Contact 2

Alan Marsden

Email - alan.marsden@threerivers.gov.uk

Telephone: 01923 727068

3) Housing Allocation Policy (Local Connection arrangements)

Web address for allocations policy -

<http://www.threerivers.gov.uk/Default.aspx/Web/HousingAllocations>

Care leavers are considered as having a local connection if they were living in the Three Rivers area when they were placed into care (became looked after). A care leaver will need to have '**originated**' from TRDC. They will then be seen to have a 'local connection' even though they may not have lived in the Three Rivers area recently. If they have lived in a care placement, i.e. foster care, residential care (within TRDC, but have a local connection in a different housing authority area) TRDC will be deemed their '**host**' authority, this will be taken into consideration by the Housing Needs Team.

Further information will be required to evidence links to the area if demonstrating priority under a '**host**' authority, i.e. length of time in foster care, residential care, social networks in the area, education, training, employment, ongoing support from carers/family members.

4) Anti-Social behaviour arrangements/specific issues

Where there are anti-social behaviour issues regarding specific cases these should be discussed with the TRDC Housing Allocations Officer, if this does not resolve the issue a 'resolution meeting' will be arranged to explore the specific issues.

TRDC may restrict a care leaver from joining the register where a pathway plan or risk assessment sets out that a care leaver is unable to manage independent living and/or where there are recent convictions and/or ongoing criminal activities (e.g. arson, serious ASB, severe substance misuse).

In circumstances where the behaviour is likely to make the young person an unsuitable tenant and is likely to lead to an eviction (if they become a tenant) from a housing association property then alternative arrangements would need to be made.

A private sector option would need to be explored. Care leavers are eligible for housing benefit based on the Local Housing Allowance:- one-bedroom rate until they are aged 22. Local Housing Allowance Rates available at <http://lha-direct.voa.gov.uk/search.aspx>.

5) Bidding Arrangements

Three Rivers operate a Choice Based Lettings allocations scheme.

Website - <http://www.hertschoicehomes.org.uk/Choice/Login.aspx>

Frequency of Choice Based Lettings - Weekly. Applicants can place up to 3 bids on each cycle. Bids can be made every Friday from 9am and the bidding closes the following Tuesday at 12pm.

Priority Band or points - Care leavers are prioritised in Band B

Length of time in Band – 3 months (assuming there are available properties, if not then this would be extended) If a Young Person hasn't bid in this time, then they would be given a direct let.

Property Size - Single people are offered bedsits/studios & one bedroom properties. Three Rivers may consider a direct let if a suitable size void becomes available.

Age care leavers can start bidding – 17yrs. A care leaver can start bidding before their 18th birthday. They would not be granted a tenancy until they reach the age of 18.

6) Ready for Independence.

The social worker will assess the young person's ability to live independently. If the young person is deemed able to manage independent accommodation the senior placement officer (Brokerage) will contact the Housing Department and advise that the young person will be ready for accommodation within the next 6 months. A move on form, risk assessment and pathway plan part 2 should be submitted to the designated contact at the Housing Department. The Housing Department will then assess the information provided and decide whether they feel the young person has demonstrated the necessary skills to live independently. If the decision is negative then a discussion should take place with the senior placement officer (Brokerage) and consideration given to meeting with the housing contact. In certain circumstances an appeal can be lodged.

Watford Borough Council

- 1) **Age a looked after child/care leaver can be placed on the housing register.**
From the young person's 16th Birthday
- 2) **The Contact Person to manage looked after children/care leavers housing application and move on forms-**

Contact Details

Samantha Paisley

Email – Samantha.paisley@watford.gov.uk

Telephone: 01923 278157 or 01923 226400

3) Housing Allocation Policy (Local Connection arrangements)

Web address for Allocations Policy –

www.watford.gov.uk

Care leavers are considered as having a local connection if they lived in the Watford area when they were placed into care (became looked after). A care leaver will need to have '**originated**' from Watford. They will then be seen to have a local connection even though they may not have lived in the Watford area recently. If they have lived in a care placement .i.e. foster care, residential care (within the Watford area, but have a local connection with a different area) this will be their '**host authority**', this will be taken into consideration by the Housing Needs Team. Further information will be required to evidence links to the Watford area if trying to demonstrate 'priority need' under a '**host**' authority' housing request, i.e. length of time in foster care or residential care, social networks in the area, education, training, employment, ongoing support from carers/family members.

4) Anti-Social behaviour arrangements/specific issues

Depending on the nature of the behaviour or conviction a meeting would be held with a Senior Manager within the Housing Department to decide whether an acceptance on to the Housing Register can be granted, the meeting would consider the context of the behaviour/offences and any mitigating issues.

5) Bidding Arrangements

Watford operates a Choice Based Lettings allocations scheme.

Website – www.hertschoicehomes.org.uk

Frequency of Choice Based Lettings - Weekly. Applicants can place up to 3 bids on each cycle. Bids can be made every Friday from 9am and the bidding closes the following Tuesday at 12pm.

Priority Band or points – Care Leavers are placed in Band B

Length of time in Band – 3 months (assuming there are available properties, if not then this would be extended). If a Young Person hasn't bid within the time frame a young person would be allocated a direct let.

Property Size –Single people are offered bedsits, studios flats and one bedroom properties.

Age care leavers can start bidding – 17years old. A care leaver can start bidding before their 18 birthday. If a young person is offered a property before their 18th birthday they would need a guarantor when signing the tenancy for that period up to their 18th birthday (Children's Services or parent).

6) Ready for Independence

The social worker will assess the young person's ability to live independently. If the young person is deemed able to manage independent accommodation the senior placement officer (Brokerage) will contact the Housing Department and indicate that the young person will be ready for accommodation within the next 6 months. A move on form, risk assessment and pathway plan part 2 should be submitted to the relevant contact at the Housing Department. The Housing Department will then assess this information and decide whether they feel the young person can demonstrate the necessary skills to live independently. If the decision is negative then a discussion should take place with the senior placement officer (Brokerage) and consideration given to meeting with the housing contact. In certain circumstances an appeal can be lodged.

Welwyn and Hatfield Borough Council

1) **Age a looked after child/care leaver can be placed on the housing register.**
From the young person's 16th Birthday

2) **The contact person to manage looked after children/care leavers housing application and move on forms-**

Initial applications/enquiries - Housing Advice Team

Email - housingadviceteam@welhat-cht.org.uk

Telephone: 01707 357613

Contact 1 –

Dawn Murphy

Email – d.murphy@welhat-cht.org.uk

Telephone: 01707 357644

3) Housing Allocation Policy (Local Connection arrangements)

Web address for Allocations Policy –

<http://www.welhat-cht.org.uk/Allocations Policy 2013>

Care leavers are considered as having a local connection if they were living in the Welwyn and Hatfield area when they were placed into care (became looked after). A care leaver will need to have '**originated**' from Welwyn & Hatfield. They will be deemed to have a local connection even though they may not have lived in the Welwyn & Hatfield area recently. If they have lived in a care placement, i.e. foster care, residential care (within Welwyn Hatfield) this will be their '**host authority**', this will be taken into consideration by the Housing Options team. Further information will be required to evidence links to the area if trying to demonstrate 'priority need' under a '**host**' authority' accommodation request, i.e. length of time in foster care, social networks in area, education, training, employment, ongoing support from carers/family members.

4) Anti-Social behaviour arrangements/specific issues

All cases would be looked at on an individual basis based on the context of the situation/behaviour and current risk issues etc. If an applicant has been barred from the Housing Needs Register, the Senior Officer's Panel would need to review this decision, the young person's social worker/personal adviser would be asked for supporting information to revoke the barring.

5) Bidding Arrangements

Welwyn & Hatfield operates a Choice Based Lettings allocations scheme.

Website – www.hertschoicehomes.org.uk

Frequency of Choice Based Lettings - Weekly. Applicants can place up to 3 bids on each cycle. Bids can be made every Friday from 9am and the bidding closes the following Tuesday at 12pm.

Priority Band or points – Care Leavers are placed in Band B.

Length of time in Band – 3 months (assuming there are available properties, if properties are not available the 3 months would be extended). If a young person hasn't bid in this time frame they would be allocated a direct let.

Property Size – Single people are offered bedsits, studio flats & one bedroom properties.

Age care leavers can start bidding – 16yrs. A care leaver can start bidding before their 18th birthday. If a young person is offered a property before their 18th birthday they would need a guarantor when signing the tenancy for the period up to their 18th birthday (Children's Services or parent).

6) Ready for Independence

The social worker will assess the young person's ability to live independently. If deemed able to manage independent accommodation the senior placements officer (Brokerage) will contact the Housing Department and advise that the young person will be ready for accommodation within the next 6 months. A move on form, risk assessment and pathway plan part 2 should be submitted to the relevant contact at the Housing Department. The Housing Department will then assess this information provided and decide whether they feel the young person can demonstrate the necessary skills to live independently. If the decision is negative then a discussion should take place with the senior placement officer (Brokerage) and consideration given to meeting with the housing contact. In certain circumstances an appeal can be lodged.

Appendix 17

Guidance Regarding Housing Applications for Young People Living Outside of their 'Local Connection' Area.

The information below provides guidance on housing applications for young people living outside their originating housing authority:

- A. Young Person within Hertfordshire; and
- B. Young Person outside of Hertfordshire

A) Young Person within Hertfordshire

When a young person is living within a Housing Authority Area in Hertfordshire that is not their 'Local Connection' area and they would like to remain in that area at 18, the young person's social worker will need to provide evidence and make a case that the young person has developed a 'connection' and built substantive links with that area:

Evidence and information required:

- i) Length of time in placement, generally the young person would need to have been in placement in the area for at least 2 years;
- ii) Active engagement in education or training;
- iii) Part-time or full-time employment;
- iv) Ongoing links in the area that provide support and constitute a social network;
- v) Positive links with foster carers, which may also result in Staying Put
- vi) Voluntary, community and positive activities within the housing authority area;
- vii) Reasons why they can't return to their originating housing authority area.

In order to ensure a positive case is made and can be evidenced, liaison should begin with the relevant housing department contact when the young person reaches the age of 16.

The Senior Placement Officer should be made aware if the above applies and will approve the referral before contacting the housing authority.

In circumstances where a young person is placed within Hertfordshire a framework exists through the JHP to demonstrate that a young person has developed a local connection in an area they have been placed and to make representation. However, the decision is at the behest of the housing authority.

In circumstances where a young person is not granted priority need and they are unable or do not want to return to their originating authority ('local connection' area) they will need to consider the following options:

- 1) A move to a registered social landlord or supported accommodation setting that can be funded by the young person at the age of 18, (either direct payments for rent or from housing benefit);
- 2) A move to the private rented sector (funded as above);
- 3) Extending foster carer as Staying Put or moving to a supported lodgings arrangement.

B) Young People Placed Outside of Hertfordshire

The process set out above should also be followed where young people are placed outside of Hertfordshire and wish to remain in that area. Whether a housing authority accepts a local connection is within the discretion of the individual housing authority. As such, it is vital that a case for accepting a local connection is made as early as possible. It is also vital to establish whether a housing authority will or will not accept a local connection shortly as soon after the young person's 16th birthday as possible. If a housing authority will not accept a local connection then a robust accommodation pathway must be developed as soon as possible giving consideration to:

- 1) A return to Hertfordshire (which should occur before the age of 18 and at a time that does not disrupt education or training, i.e. vacations or at the end of a course);
- 2) A move to a registered social landlord or supported accommodation option that can be funded from housing benefit when a young person reaches the age of 18;
- 3) A move to the private sector;
- 4) Extending foster carer as Staying Put or supported lodgings.

Appendix 18

Categories of Care Leavers:

Care Planning, Placement and Case Review and Planning Transition to Adulthood for Care Leavers (England) Regulations and Guidance 2010

Definitions	Main Statutory Obligations
<p><u>Eligible children</u></p> <p>Defined in paragraph 19B of Schedule 2 to the 1989 Act, and regulation 40 of the Care Planning Regulations as a child who is:</p> <p>(a) looked after,</p> <p>(b) aged 16 or 17, and</p> <p>(c) has been looked after by a local authority for a period of 13 weeks, or periods amounting in total to 13 weeks, which began after he reached 14 and ended after he reached 16.</p>	<p>The local authority has the same statutory obligations in relation to eligible children as they do towards other children looked after by them, including a duty to maintain their care plan, carry out regular reviews of their case and appoint an independent reviewing officer for the child. In addition they must:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ prepare an assessment of the eligible child's needs with a view to determining what advice, assistance and support it would be appropriate for them to provide him (both while he is still looked after and after he stops being looked after) [paragraph 19B(4) of Schedule 2 to the 1989 Act; the requirements for carrying out the assessment are set out in regulation 42 of the Care Planning Regulations]▪ as soon as possible after the assessment of needs is completed, prepare a pathway plan (which includes the child's care plan) [paragraph 19B(4) of Schedule 2 to the 1989 Act; the requirements for preparing the pathway plan are set out in regulation 43 of the Care Planning Regulations]▪ keep the pathway plan under regular review [paragraph 19B(5) of Schedule 2 to the 1989 Act]▪ appoint a personal adviser for the child [paragraph 19C of Schedule 2 to the 1989 Act; the functions of the personal adviser are set out in regulation 44 of the Care Planning Regulations].

<p><u>Relevant children</u></p> <p>Defined in section 23A(2) of the 1989 Act as a child who is:</p> <p>(a) not looked after,</p> <p>(b) aged 16 or 17, and</p> <p>(c) was, before he last ceased to be looked after, an eligible child.</p> <p>Regulation 3 of the Care Leavers Regulations prescribes a further category of relevant child who is:</p> <p>(a) not looked after,</p> <p>(b) aged 16 or 17, and</p> <p>(c) at the time he attained the age of 16 was detained (i.e. detained in a remand centre, a young offenders institution or a secure training centre, or any other centre pursuant to a Court order), or in a hospital, and immediately before he was detained or in hospital he had been looked after by a local authority for a period or periods amounting in all to at least 13 weeks which began after he reached the age of 14.</p> <p>Regulation 3 of the Care Leavers Regulations also provides that a child who has lived for a continuous period of six months or more with:</p> <p>(a) his parent,</p> <p>(b) someone who is not his parent</p>	<p>The local authority that last looked after the relevant child must:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ take reasonable steps to keep in touch with the relevant child [section 23B(1) of the 1989 Act] ▪ prepare an assessment of the relevant child's needs with a view to determining what advice assistance and support it would be appropriate for them to provide him (unless they already did so when he was an eligible child) [section 23B(3)(a) of the 1989 Act; the requirements for carrying out the assessment are set out in regulations 4 and 5 of the Care Leavers Regulations] ▪ as soon as possible after any assessment of needs is completed, prepare a pathway plan [section 23B(3)(b) of the 1989 Act; the requirements for preparing the pathway plan are set out in regulation 6 of the Care Leavers Regulations] ▪ keep the pathway plan under regular review [section 23E(1D) of the 1989 Act; the requirements for carrying out reviews are set out in regulation 7 of the Care Leavers Regulations] ▪ appoint a personal adviser for the child (unless they already did so when he was an eligible child) [section 23B(2) of the 1989 Act; the functions of the personal adviser are set out in regulation 8 of the Care Leavers Regulations] ▪ safeguard and promote the relevant child's welfare by maintaining him, providing him with or maintaining him in suitable accommodation and providing assistance in order to meet his needs in relation to education, training or employment as provided for in his pathway plan [section 23B(8) of the 1989 Act and regulation 9 of the Care Leavers Regulations; regulation 9 also makes provision about the meaning of "suitable accommodation"].
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<p>but who has parental responsibility for him or,</p> <p>(c) where he is in care and there was</p> <p>a residence order in force immediately before the care order was made, a person in whose favour the residence order was made then that child is not a relevant child despite falling within section 23A(2). Where those living arrangements break down and the child ceases to live with the person concerned, the child is to be treated as a relevant child.</p>	
<p><u>Former relevant children</u></p> <p>Defined in section 23C(1) of the 1989 Act as a young person who is:</p> <p>(a) aged 18 or above, and either</p> <p>(b) has been a relevant child and would be one if he were under 18, or</p> <p>(c) immediately before he ceased to be looked after at age 18, was an eligible child.</p>	<p>The local authority that last looked after the former relevant child must:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ take reasonable steps to keep in touch with the former relevant child, and if they lose touch with him, to re-establish contact [section 23C(2) of the 1989 Act] ▪ continue to keep the pathway plan under regular review [section 23C(3)(b) of the 1989 Act; the requirements for carrying out reviews are set out in regulation 7 of the Care Leavers Regulations] ▪ continue the appointment of the personal adviser for the child [section 23C(3)(a) of the 1989 Act; the functions of the personal adviser are set out in regulation 8 of the Care Leavers Regulations] ▪ if his welfare requires it, provide financial assistance by contributing to the former relevant child's expenses in living near the place where he is, or will be, employed or seeking employment [sections 23C(4)(a) and 24B(1) of the 1989 Act] ▪ if his welfare and educational and training needs require it, provide financial assistance to enable him to pursue education or training [sections 23C(4)(b) and 24B(2) of the 1989 Act]

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ if the former relevant child pursues higher education in accordance with his pathway plan, to pay him the higher education bursary [section 23C(5A) and the Children Act 1989 (Higher Education Bursary) (England) Regulations 2009]. <p>The duties in section 23C(2), (3) and (4)(b) continue until the former relevant child reaches 21 or, where the child's pathway plan sets out a programme of education or training which extends beyond his 21st birthday, they continue for so long as he pursues that programme.</p>
<p><u>Former relevant children pursuing further education or training</u></p> <p>Defined in section 23CA(1) as a former relevant child who is:</p> <p>(a) aged under 25,</p> <p>(b) in relation to whom the duties in 23C(2)(3) and (4) no longer apply, and</p> <p>(c) he has informed the local authority that he wants to pursue or is pursuing a programme of education or training.</p>	<p>The local authority which owed duties to that former relevant child under section 23C of the 1989 Act must:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ appoint a personal adviser for that person [section 23CA(2) of the 1989 Act] ▪ carry out an assessment of the needs of that person with a view to determining what assistance (if any) it would be appropriate for them to provide him [section 23CA(3)(a) of the 1989 Act; the requirements for carrying out the assessment are set out in regulations 4 and 5 of the Care Leavers Regulations] ▪ prepare a pathway plan for him [section 23CA(3)(b) of the 1989 Act; the requirements for preparing the pathway plan are set out in regulation 6 of the Care Leavers Regulations] ▪ to the extent the person's educational or training needs require it, provide financial assistance [section 23CA (4) and (5) of the 1989 Act].

<p><u>Persons qualifying for advice and assistance</u></p> <p>Defined in section 24 of the 1989 Act as a person who is:</p> <p>(a) aged at least 16 but is under 21,</p> <p>(b) with respect to whom a special guardianship order is in force (or was in force when they reached 18) and was looked after immediately before the making of that order, or</p> <p>(c) at any time after reaching the age of 16 but while he was still a child was, but is no longer, looked after, accommodated or fostered.</p>	<p>The relevant local authority (as defined in section 24(5) of the 1989 Act) must consider whether the person needs help of a kind the local authority can give:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ under section 24A - to advise and befriend and give assistance, <p>under section 24B - to give financial assistance – see above; or where the person is in full time further or higher education, is under the age of 25 and qualifies for advice and assistance, or would have done if he was under 21, assistance in relation to securing vacation accommodation [sections 24A(2) and (3), and 24B of the 1989 Act].</p>
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Appendix 19

Hertfordshire County Council - District/Borough Council

Families with Children – Referral/Notification Protocol

Referral/Notification to Children's Services under the Children Act 1989 and in line with the Housing Act 1996 (as amended)

**Referring/Notifying
Housing Authority:**

**Referring/Notifying
Officer:**

**Contact Details (E-mail,
phone and address):**

Date:

Youngest Child's Name:

**Child's Present
Address:**

**Primary Carer's Contact
Name and Number:**

Household Composition

Name	Relationship	D.O.B.

Reason for Referral/Notification:

Intentionally Homeless ☐

Breach of tenancy (ASB) ☐

Not eligible for assistance ☐

Breach of tenancy (Arrears) ☐

Consent gained from family to refer to Children's Services and share information including supporting documentation?	Yes/No (delete as appropriate)
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Supporting Documentation: Attach a copy of the 'decision letter', plus any other relevant documents* used to reach the decision, e.g. copy of income and expenditure form. * only to be sent if consent obtained	
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Actions Taken to Identify Alternative Accommodation and/or to Address Intentionality Decision:	
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Date Required to Vacate Current Accommodation:	
Date of last/next Court Hearing or Review (if appropriate)	

SIGNED:

DATE:

Appendix 20

Process Chart – Intentionally Homeless Families with Children

