



# **Lancashire Joint Protocol - Joint Working Arrangements for Meeting the Needs of Homeless Young People**

## **Additional Guidance**

### **Guidance for Providers Managing Access to Block Contracted Supported Housing Schemes**

**16<sup>th</sup> March 2018**

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## 1. Introduction

- 1.0 As stated in LCC's joint protocol, "It is widely recognised that young people are generally best placed living with their families. Every effort will be made to assist young people to remain in their family home through a range of interventions. However, it is acknowledged that there are situations where a young person cannot remain at home and alternative accommodation and ongoing support must be provided". **See separate guidance relating to the prevention of homelessness**
- 1.1 Where mediation has not facilitated a return home and alternative accommodation is being sought, then Children's Social Care (CSC)/Access to Resources Team (ART), district councils and providers will follow the Lancashire Joint Protocol 2017-2020.
- 1.2 Where looked after children are seeking a planned transition to independence from care and are seeking to access supported accommodation, the process to be followed is outlined in section 7.3
- 1.3 This document provides guidance for providers of supported accommodation, in relation to managing **initial access** to supported housing schemes which are block funded.
- 1.4 Some providers offer crisis beds, short term supported and move on provision within the one service or building, often as a core and cluster model. The prioritisation criteria relates to **initial access** into the service. Once an applicant has moved into the service, the provider can transfer residents between flats in line with the needs of the individual and the service. (see section 10 regarding implications for payments )
- Where providers are seeking to make referrals to a different supported housing service as part of a move on plan or owing to other reasons, then the priority bands (see section 6) will apply in order to ensure equity and transparency.
- 1.5 Whilst the general eligibility and prioritisation policy applies to initial access to all services, it has to be recognised that services vary in terms of level of staffing, service model and design of buildings. ART and providers will work together to ensure that there is an understanding of the service models and the needs of people who can safely be accommodated in individual services.

## 2. Eligibility

- 2.1 The service can be accessed by:
- Young people aged 16-21 who are homeless or threatened with homelessness\* (see note below)
  - Children who are looked after and are in transition to leaving care
  - Care leavers (see section 6 for definition)

- 2.2 When determining if a young person is homeless regard should be had to the Homelessness Reduction Act 2017 and associated guidance. This details the duties that a district housing authority is required to consider when determining its statutory responsibilities towards a young person. The social worker/provider should liaise with the district housing authority in determining this. **Where it is safe and reasonable to do so, the main focus should be on working with the family to prevent homelessness or to reunite young people with their parents, carers or family.** Further guidance / direction will be available through local launches/joint meetings
- 2.3 Applications will be prioritised in line with the criteria outlined under Section 6 below.
- 2.4 As outlined under point 1.5 above, whilst the general eligibility policy applies to initial access to all services, it has to be recognised that services vary in terms of level of staffing, service model and design of buildings. ART and providers will work together to ensure that there is an understanding of the service models and the needs of people who can safely be accommodated in individual services.

### 3. Local Connection

#### 3.1 Care leavers

The draft Homelessness Reduction Act Code of Guidance for Local Authorities includes the following proposals:

"A young person owed leaving care duties under section 23C of the Children Act 1989 will have a local connection to the area of the children services authority that owes them the duties. If the children services authority is a county council and not a housing authority, the young person will have a local connection with every housing authority district falling within the area of the children services authority.

Where a care leaver is aged under 21 and normally lives in a different area to that of a local authority that owes them leaving care duties, and has done for at least 2 years including some time before they turned 16, the young person will also have a local connection in that area"

- 3.2 The above definition has been used to define local connection within this guidance
- 3.3 Where a looked after child or care leaver up to the age of 21 who does **not** have a local connection with LCC, as defined by the Homelessness Reduction Act, seeks to access supported accommodation in Lancashire, an assessment of their individual circumstances will be made. The application must be shared with ART and agreement reached regarding the most appropriate response. The young person will only be considered eligible in exceptional circumstances. Where this applies, low priority would be awarded.

## 4. Who Can Refer?

- 4.1 The provider shall consider referrals from:
- All 12 district councils within Lancashire
  - Lancashire County Council's Access to Resources Team and Emergency Duty Team (EDT)
  - VCFS service providers - where an agreement has been established between the VCFS provider and the district council regarding the service to be delivered by the provider on behalf of the district council (see 4.5 below)
  - Supported housing providers who are seeking to move existing clients on to other services in order to enable them to step down to less intensive support, or where an individual is required to move to another setting which is better able to meet their needs
- 4.2 In general, during office hours, providers should only be accepting referrals from the ART. This means that they should not accept referrals directly from social workers.
- 4.3 It is accepted that there will be exceptional circumstances where social workers will need to place directly during office hours e.g. where a social worker has been allocated a young person late in the day. Where this occurs, the provider should notify ART that a placement has been made by the county council outside of the normal referral routes.
- 4.4 EDT can place directly and will advise ART of any placements made. Where this occurs, the provider should also notify ART that a placement has been made by EDT.
- 4.5 Where a young person **approaches the provider directly**, the Joint Protocol should be followed in order to ensure clarity in relation to pathways and payment for accommodation. This means that:
- 16/17 year olds must be referred to CSC local social work teams unless there are formal local arrangement in place which describe a different approach. (e.g. where an agreement has been established between the VCFS provider and the district council regarding the service to be delivered by the provider on behalf of the district council)
  - 18/24 year olds – there must be communication between the district council and the provider. Detailed guidance will be developed locally in each district regarding the communication requirements and the roles and responsibilities of each agency.
- 4.6 Any referrals received by providers for children looked after and care leavers who do not have a local connection, as defined by the Homelessness Reduction Act, with Lancashire (12 districts) must be shared with ART and agreement reached regarding the most appropriate response.
- 4.7 CSC are required to use existing CSC forms as the form reflects the format of the IT system. However, district councils and providers can develop a common form for their own use. This action will be taken forward by the Housing Reference Group.

## 5. Duration of service

- 5.1 Young people who are assessed as high priority or medium priority (see 6.1) can access the service for up to 2 years. However the actual duration of the support received by people using the service will reflect individual needs and the age in which they enter the service. Providers are expected to move young people on to more independent living as soon as individuals have the skills to maintain a tenancy or live with lower levels of support. In addition moving back to the family home should continue to be an option where this is considered to be the most appropriate outcome for the young person
- 5.2 Young people who are assessed as low priority (see 6.1) will be offered 56 days of accommodation and support, with an option to extend on a weekly basis if capacity is available. Available capacity is defined as accommodation not being required for young people assessed as high or medium priority.
- 5.3 As priority must be given to young people assessed as high or medium priority, the provider will be required to manage occupation and throughput by young people assessed as low priority band in conjunction with local district councils, and in line with guidance included in this document (see section 11)

## 6. Prioritisation

- 6.1 The provider must award priority to applicants in line with agreed multi-agency priorities as outlined in the table below. Once an applicant has moved into the service, the provider can transfer residents between flats in line with the needs of the individual and the service. **Where a transfer to an alternative flat requires a change in the cost of the provision for a young person being funded by Lancashire County Council, the provider must notify the Social Worker by providing the relevant breakdown of charges and start/end dates in order to ensure payments can be made.**

	Needs of Individuals	Duration of Service
High Priority	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Under 18 year olds who are homeless (16-17 year olds)</li> <li>Children looked after who are in transition to leaving care (16-17 year olds) (eligible or relevant child as defined by legislation – see notes below )</li> <li>Young people in this group may have needs relating to Special Educational Needs and Disability (SEND) and may have or previously had an Education Health and Care Plan (EHCP) or Statement of Special Educational (see separate guidance)</li> </ul> <p>AND</p> <p>have a connection with Lancashire</p>	<p>Up to a maximum of 2 years; however the actual duration of the support received by people using the service will reflect individual needs*.</p> <p>Providers are expected to move people on to independent living as soon as individuals have the skills to maintain a tenancy or live with lower levels of support.</p>

	(as defined by the Homelessness Reduction Act)	
Medium Priority	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Former relevant care leavers aged 18-24 years old who are homeless</li> <li>Qualifying care leavers aged 18-21 years old who are homeless</li> <li>Young people aged 18-21 years old who are homeless and were formerly assessed as a Child in Need/Section 17 as a result of being homeless (i.e. through the Joint Protocol process)</li> <li>18-21 year olds who are homeless and are eligible for assistance under the Care Act</li> <li>Young people in this group may have needs relating to Special Educational Needs and Disability (SEND) and may have or previously had an Education Health and Care Plan (EHCP) or Statement of Special Educational (see separate guidance)</li> </ul> <p>AND</p> <p>have a connection with Lancashire (as defined by the Homelessness Reduction Act)</p>	<p>Up to a maximum of 2 years; however the actual duration of the support received by people using the service will reflect individual needs*.</p> <p>Providers are expected to move people on to independent living as soon as individuals have the skills to maintain a tenancy or live with lower levels of support.</p> <p>Young people are expected to have moved on from the service in a planned way by their 25 birthday, apart from in exceptional circumstances.</p>
Low priority	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>22-24 year old qualifying care leavers who are homeless and have a local connection with Lancashire and where a social care assessment identifies a need for supported housing. (Local connection as defined by the Homelessness Reduction Act)</li> <li>18-21 years old who are homeless and have not been previously known to social care (i.e. don't fall into any of the above categories) and have a connection with Lancashire</li> <li>16-21 year children looked after or care leavers from other local authorities who are homeless and do not have a local connection with Lancashire as defined in the Homelessness Reduction Act (see section 3)</li> </ul>	<p>Initially 56 days and then extend on a weekly basis if capacity available</p> <p>Young people are expected to have moved on from the service in a planned way by their 25 birthday, apart from in exceptional circumstances.</p> <p>(only exception would be where the design of the building/nature of the occupation means that the minimum term which can be offered is a six month assured shorthold tenancy)</p>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Young people in this group may have needs relating to Special Educational Needs and Disability (SEND) and may have or previously had an Education Health and Care Plan (EHCP) or Statement of Special Educational (see separate guidance)</li> </ul>	
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*\*In exceptional circumstances an individual could stay for longer than two years; however this would need to be agreed by the district, provider and LCC and a move on plan would need to be in place.*

- 6.2 The age relates to the age of the applicant when first accessing the service e.g. if an applicant enters the service when they are 17 years and 9 months then they will be given high priority and an occupancy agreement which reflects high priority. The priority and type of occupancy agreement will be maintained whilst they are receiving support and will not be adjusted so as to reduce the level of security when he/she turns 18.
- 6.3 Where a young person moves on to another supported housing service either due to stepping down to less support or for other reasons, the age when they first entered the original supported accommodation will determine their priority band.
- 6.4 Definitions of category of care leaver identified in the above table are as follows:
- **Eligible child** is a child aged 16 or 17 who has been looked after by the LA for at least 13 weeks, since the age of 14 and who is still being looked after.
  - **Relevant child** is a child aged 16 or 17 who has been looked after for at least 13 weeks since the age of 14 and who have been looked after at some time after their 16th birthday who has left care. This also includes young people who were detained (e.g. in a youth offending institution or hospital) when they turned 16, but who were looked after immediately before being detained.
  - **Former relevant child** is a young person over 18 who was previously 'eligible' or 'relevant'. Councils support this group until aged 21 or up to 25<sup>th</sup> birthday should they require a service
  - **Qualifying child** is any young person under 21 (or 24 if in education or training) who stops being looked after or accommodated in a variety of other settings, or being privately fostered, after the age of 16. However, they are not relevant or eligible as they don't fulfil the 13 week rule
- 6.5 Where a young person aged 18 or over applies for supported accommodation and states that they were homeless when aged 16 or 17 and accessed supported accommodation, but a statutory assessment did not take place then the individual circumstances will be considered and a decision made as to whether medium priority should be awarded. The individual circumstances would need to be considered by the provider, district council and LCC.

- 6.6 The homelessness assessment should be based on the legislation, guidance and case law relating to the Homelessness Act 2002. The legislation as at 1st October 2017 defines homelessness as:
- No accommodation available for occupation which the household has a legal right to occupy or threatened with homelessness in the next 28 days.
  - Have accommodation but cannot secure entry
  - Not reasonable to occupy accommodation available to the individual
- The legislation will be amended from April 2018 as a result of the introduction of the Homelessness Reduction Act. Providers will apply the new legislation when implemented, which will be outlined in guidance issued to all providers by the Housing Reference Group.
- 6.7 There must be a co-ordinated and partnership approach to allocations and prioritisation, consequently the provider is expected to communicate regularly with district council and the county council regarding individual referrals.
- 6.8 Where it is necessary to prioritise applicants who fall within the same category/band, the provider will take all relevant factors into account which includes but is not limited to:
- appropriateness of service
  - level of urgency
  - level of vulnerability/need of the individual
  - connection with area where the service is located as defined by the Homelessness Legislation in place at the time
- 6.9 The level of urgency and vulnerability will take priority over the connection with the area when applications from the same category/priority band are being considered, apart from in exceptional circumstances. Where local connection issues are deemed to be more important than urgency or vulnerability/need, ART and the relevant district councils must agree this decision.
- 6.10 Any applicant with high priority who has been provided with supported accommodation in a district to which he/she doesn't have a connection will be given high priority to move to an area in Lancashire to which he/she has a connection.
- 6.11 Any applicant with medium priority who has been provided with supported accommodation in a district to which he/she doesn't have a connection will be given medium priority to move to an area in Lancashire to which he/she has a connection.
- 6.12 When prioritising applications, the provider will also give consideration to:
- the needs of those young people already living within the service
  - any alternative options available to individuals whose applications are under consideration
- 6.13 The provider will ensure that records are maintained of the rationale for decision making to provide an audit trail for decisions made.
- 6.14 The support provider will ensure that the occupancy agreements used provide the legal basis to enable the young person to be moved on from the service in the period specified above.

- 6.15 In order to ensure a consistent approach to moving young people on, across Lancashire, where they are low priority and there is no accommodation available within the service, guidance has been included in this document in Section 11.

## 7. Referral Received by Provider from ART/EDT

### 7.1 Process for emergency referrals (same day)

- 7.1.1 ART to have a full understanding of the nature of the support offered by services and the level of need that the services can accommodate.
- 7.1.2 ART to phone the support provider to check if there are any vacancies available.

*(If the provider has already offered a property to a young person on the same day then the property is no longer vacant. However, in the case of low priority applicant, an offer of accommodation should not be made by the provider until after 2pm, so that a young person assessed as high priority or medium priority can be considered for the vacancy up until 2pm)*

- 7.1.3 If a vacancy is available, ART/EDT to send referral form received from the social worker to the provider. This includes name and contact details for both the social worker and the young person.
- 7.1.4 Provider to make initial assessment from information available on the form and decide if the referral is appropriate and the young person should be interviewed. If the young person is not going to be offered an interview then the provider should notify ART/EDT of the decision and reason for the decision.
- 7.1.5 The provider makes arrangements for the young person to visit the service for interview/assessment on same day. This can be arranged via the named social worker or by contacting the young person directly. It is preferable that the social worker is present at the interview. However, if this has not been possible, the social worker must see the accommodation on the day that the person moves in.
- 7.1.6 If the young person doesn't turn up for interview/assessment, then the provider must notify the social worker and ART/EDT. After reasonable attempts have been made to make contact with the young person during that day, the provider may decide to consider other applicants for the vacancy. The provider must notify the social worker and ART/EDT of this decision.
- 7.1.7 If there is more than one referral being sent to a particular provider by ART/EDT on the same day then ART must prioritise applications which fall within the same band
- 7.1.8 Provider to apply the prioritisation criteria outlined under Section 6 to any referrals received.

- 7.1.9 Following interview, the provider must notify the social worker and ART/EDT of the outcome and in the event that the application has been refused for same day entry, then the reason must be given.
- 7.1.10 If a property is offered, the social worker advises CSC Team Manager and seeks approval for payment of rent for up to 10 days pending the outcome of a Joint Statutory Assessment (JSA).
- (The JSA will determine whether the young person becomes Sec 20 or Sec 17 or returns home).*
- See 7.1.13 if the young person is already a looked after child.
- 7.1.11 SW to process CLA and placement status on LCS, which will automatically alert ART that the plan is updated. ART to add the costs onto LCS.
- 7.1.12 Social worker to email ART to confirm that the team manager has agreed the placement for up to 10 days whilst the JSA is being undertaken.
- 7.1.13 Where the JSA is not required as the young person has already been fully assessed as a child looked after under Section 20 then the guarantee will be for the period that they remain a looked after child
- 7.1.14 ART to confirm placement costs with the provider.
- 7.1.15 ART to send email to provider confirming rental payments for an initial period of up to a maximum of 10 days in order to provide time for the assessment to be completed. This is subject to the social worker having sent confirmation of the placement (see 7.1.12).
- 7.1.16 If there is no determination as to whether or not Section 20 or Section 17 will apply by the end of the 10 days, then ART must arrange for further written confirmation of payment to be made. The appropriate length of extension will be determined by ART and the relevant Team Manager, following consideration of the reason for the delay in completing the assessment.
- 7.1.17 The following procedure should be followed by providers when submitting Invoices:
- Providers to send invoices to the Exchequers Team using the following email address: [paymentscare@lancashire.gov.uk](mailto:paymentscare@lancashire.gov.uk).
  - If the young person has been placed in accommodation under s20, Exchequers will process the invoice.
  - If the young person is assessed as s17 and requires financial assistance, Exchequers will forward the invoice on to the Children's Social Care (Finance) Case Support
  - Rent will only be paid for a young person who has been accommodated under Section 20, as young people who are assessed as Section 17 can apply for housing benefit
  - Invoices can be submitted in accordance with the standard invoicing practice of the provider; however we would not in normal circumstances expect an invoice to be raised for periods exceeding a calendar month (i.e. invoices could be submitted weekly, four weekly or monthly)

- Where providers wish to query the progress of a payment for YP with s20 legal status, they should initially email [paymentscare@lancashire.gov.uk](mailto:paymentscare@lancashire.gov.uk) or telephone 01772 536972.
- If it's a query relating to a young person who has been assessed as s17 then contact [cypsupportfinance@lancashire.gov.uk](mailto:cypsupportfinance@lancashire.gov.uk) or telephone 01254 220333.

7.1.18 Should these payments not be made to the provider by LCC in a timely manner and contact has already been made to the relevant team under 7.1.17, the provider will in the first instance escalate to the locality CSC Single Point of Contact (SPOC), then if not resolved to the locality senior manager, and then to the district head of service should payments continue to be an issue.

## **7.2 Referral for young person who require accommodation as a matter of urgency, but not same day**

7.2.1 Where a young person doesn't require accommodation on the same day but does so as a matter of urgency, the above process is to be followed with the following exceptions:

7.2.3 Interview with young person will be as soon as possible, but this is not likely to be on the same day

## **7.3 Children Looked After-Planned transition to independence from care**

7.3.1 ART to send referral form to provider giving approximate date when supported accommodation will be required. This should normally be at least three months prior to the accommodation being required, recognising that there will be occasions when the outcome of care planning may result in an earlier referral.

7.3.2 Children looked after who are in the process of leaving care on a planned basis should be considered for access to non-emergency accommodation units on initial entry wherever possible.

7.3.3 Provider to meet with young person and leaving care worker to assess application, arrange visits and facilitate any trial stays requested.

7.3.4 Provider to liaise with leaving care worker and ART.

7.3.5 Application to be considered for planned entry in accordance with any local access arrangements e.g. panel

## **8. Referral Received by Provider from District or VCFS provider acting on behalf of the District Council**

### **8.1 Process for emergency referrals (same day)**

8.1.1 District (including emergency out of hours homelessness officer on duty) to phone the support provider to check if there are any vacancies available.

If a vacancy is available, district council to send standard referral form to the provider.

- 8.1.3 Provider to make initial assessment from information available on the form and decide if the referral is appropriate and the young person should be interviewed. If the young person is not going to be offered an interview then the provider must notify the district council of the reason for the decision.
- 8.1.4 The provider makes arrangements for the young person to visit the service for interview/assessment on same day. Ideally this should be completed as early in the day as possible, so that any decisions regarding allocations are made within office hours.
- 8.1.5 If the young person doesn't turn up for interview/assessment, then the provider must notify the district council. After reasonable attempts have been made to make contact with the young person during the day, the provider may decide to consider other applicants for the vacancy. The provider must notify the district council of this decision.
- 8.1.6 If there is more than one referral, within the same band, being sent by the district council on the same day then the district must prioritise the referrals.
- 8.1.7 Following interview, the provider must notify the district council of the outcome and in the event that the application has been refused for same day entry, then the reason must be given.
- 8.1.8 The provider must have regard to the prioritisation framework and length of stay outlined under Section 6 when making allocation decisions.
- 8.1.9 Where the young person has approached the district direct and there has been no previous involvement by CSC, then the provider must submit a housing benefit application. Where the district has been asked to assist with finding accommodation by CSC then the CSC financial arrangement will apply (7.1.10) onwards. Where for whatever reason it is not possible to determine the status of the young person because the referral/placement takes place out of hours the provider should aim to establish this the following morning.

## **8.2 Referral for young person who requires accommodation as a matter of urgency, but not same day.**

- 8.2.1 Where a young person doesn't require accommodation on the same day but does so as a matter of urgency, the above process is to be followed with the following exceptions:
- 8.2.3 Interview with young person will be as soon as possible, but is not likely to be on the same day (8.1.4 above)

## **8.3 Self Referrals from 18-24 year olds**

Self-referrals to the provider from 18-24 years olds. As stated under Section 4.5 of this document, self-referrals from 18-24 year olds shall be dealt with in line with locally agreed guidelines

## 9. Referrals Received by Provider from Other Supported Housing Services/Providers

### 9.1 Process for emergency referrals (same day)

- 9.1.1 If alternative accommodation is required for a 16 or 17 year old or an 18-24 year old who has a "formal relevant" status then CSC SW, the ART and the district should be notified accordingly.
- 9.1.2 If alternative accommodation is required for 18-21 year old who has had no previous involvement with social care then the district council should be advised.
- 9.1.3 Referring support provider to phone the support provider of the service that the applicant wants to move to in order to check if there are any vacancies available
- 9.1.4 If a vacancy is available, referring support provider to send standard referral form
- 9.1.5 Provider to make initial assessment from information available on the form and decide if the referral is appropriate and the young person should be interviewed. Referring provider to be advised of decision as to whether to interview is taking place or not
- 9.1.6 If the decision is to interview, the provider makes arrangements for the young person to visit the service for interview/assessment on same day. Ideally this should be completed as early in the day as possible, so that any decisions regarding allocations are made within office hours.
- 9.1.7 If the young person doesn't turn up for interview/assessment, then the provider must notify the referring provider. After reasonable attempts have been made to make contact with the young person during the day, the provider may decide to consider other applicants for the vacancy. The provider must notify the referring provider of this decision
- 9.1.8 Allocations to be made in line with the prioritisation framework outlined under Section 6.

### 9.2 Referral for young person who requires accommodation as a matter of urgency, but not same day

- 9.2.1 Where a young person doesn't require accommodation on the same day but does so as a matter of urgency, the above process is to be followed with the following exceptions:
- 9.2.1 Interview with young person will be as soon as possible, but it is not likely to be on the same day

### 9.3 Young person placed outside local district

As outlined under section 6.9, any applicant with high priority who has been provided with supported accommodation in a crisis situation in a district to

which he/she doesn't have a connection will be given high priority to move to an area in Lancashire to which he/she has a connection.

As outlined under section 6.10, any applicant with medium priority who has been provided with supported accommodation in a crisis situation in a district to which he/she doesn't have a connection will be given medium priority to move to an area in Lancashire to which he/she has a connection.

#### **9.4. Appropriate level of need**

Whilst the general eligibility and prioritisation policy applies to initial access to all services, it has to be recognised that services vary in terms of level of staffing, service model and design of buildings. Providers will ensure that when making referrals to another project, there is understanding of the service models and the needs of people who can safely be accommodated in individual services.

## **10. Moving Young People within Service**

- 10.1 The provider will award priority to applicants in line with agreed multi-agency priorities as outlined in 6.1. However, once an applicant has moved into the service, the provider can transfer residents between flats in line with the needs of the individual and the service
- 10.2 Where a transfer to an alternative flat requires a change in the cost of the provision for a young person being funded by Lancashire County Council, the provider must notify the Social Worker by providing the relevant breakdown of charges and start/end dates in order to ensure payments can be made. The Social Worker will then contact the Case Support Finance team to ensure that costs are updated on the system. Failure to provide this information is likely to result in the payments not being processed.

## **11. Moving Young People on from Service who have been assessed as Low Priority**

This process only applies to young people who are being asked to move on because they have been assessed as low priority. Where a young person is required to leave owing to breaches of the occupancy agreement, then the standard processes operated by the provider will apply

- 11.1 Young people who are assessed as low priority will be offered 56 days of accommodation and support, with an option for the provider/landlord to extend on a weekly basis if capacity is available. Available capacity is defined as accommodation not being required for young people in the high band or medium band. Given the length of the stay, it is important that the most appropriate option is considered for young people assessed as low priority. For example, where individuals have the skills, it may be more appropriate for a young person to move directly into move on flats or a dispersed supported housing scheme where there is the possibility of a longer stay than moving into 24 hour staffed service. This will need to be discussed at a local level once there is a clearer picture in relation to supply and demand.

- 11.2 This means that the provider will be required to manage occupation and throughput by young people assessed as being in the low priority band, in conjunction with local district councils.
- 11.3 If it has been determined that a young person, who has been assessed as low priority, is going to be required to leave the supported accommodation then a minimum of seven days' notice must be given.
- However, if the accommodation is not in the end required as the young person who has been assessed as high or medium priority no longer needs the property, then the notice can be withdrawn and the occupancy agreement can be extended or renewed as appropriate for a further 7 days.
- 11.4 If alternative accommodation has not been secured for the young person who is due to be asked to leave, then a multi-agency risk assessment **must be undertaken prior to the notice being issued** by the Provider and the District Council using the Provider's current risk assessment processes. This means:
- the assessment must be done prior to day 49 if the young person is being asked to leave at the end of the 56 days
  - it is the provider's responsibility to co-ordinate the multi-agency risk assessment process and arrange meetings where required
- 11.5 In recognition of the difficulties faced by providers when determining which young person shall be asked to leave (and to ensure there is a consistent approach across the County to the process), the young person who has been staying in the scheme for the longest period will be asked to leave the service. This applies to applicants who have moved in to the scheme after 1<sup>st</sup> December 2017. There are separate arrangements, as outlined in Section 12, for people who had accessed the scheme prior to 1<sup>st</sup> December 2017.
- 11.6 Where a young person has been referred for a social care assessment and there are delays in this taking place, the provider should take the following action:
- Where the individual has mental health issues - contact mental health services (see separate guidance for process to follow)
  - Where the individual has learning difficulties or is vulnerable, contact LCC's Customer Access Service. (see separate guidance for process to follow)
- 11.7 Where the multi-agency risk assessment determines that the statutory mental health/Care Act assessment needs to be completed prior to a 7-day notice being issued then the occupancy agreement can be extended or renewed as appropriate.
- 11.8 **Where the multi-agency risk assessment determines that the assessed risk of asking the young person to leave is unacceptably high, then a multi-agency meeting need to be called by the Provider involving the county council, district council and the provider, plus any other agencies involved with the young person, to determine the way forward. See separate guidance regarding LCC representation at multi-agency meeting.**

- 11.9 ART to monitor the activity in relation to 18 -21 year olds being requested to move on where no alternative accommodation has been found. (Client Record Data and Outcomes spreadsheet needs to be amended to reflect this).
- 11.10 It is important that any operational concerns regarding the implementation of this process are immediately brought to the attention of Talha Wadee, ART Manager, especially during the first six months of implementation. As stated below, a review of the new processes as outlined in this document will be undertaken around September 2018.**

## 12. Panels/Local Meetings

- 12.1 In order to ensure that commissioned services are used effectively, it is proposed that discussions are held locally which will include focussing on reviewing planned applications to the service (i.e. not emergency or urgent), move on from the service, relationships between services in the area. The nature of the arrangements and frequency of discussions will be determined locally to meet local needs.
- 12.2 This panel/meeting will fulfil a different function from the weekly Joint Statutory Assessment Meeting which will purely focus on assessing the needs of the individual under the Children Act. New Children Looked After will also be reviewed at the CSC Resource Panel. However, it has been recognised that the Resource Panel cannot consider the overall functioning of the service which would include considering the needs of 18-21 year olds.

## 13. Transitional Arrangements for Existing Clients

- 13.1 Given that landlords/providers will have a legal obligation to act in line with existing occupancy arrangements and it has been considered appropriate to respect the original offer made to young people, those current clients who fall into the following categories will be moved on to more independent living when they are ready to do so in line with historical practice:
- Young people aged 22-25 years.
  - Young people aged 18-21 years old now assessed as low priority

## 14. Review of Arrangements

- 14.1 This guidance will be reviewed 6 months after implementation. The review must include obtaining the views of providers, the ART, Children's Social Care and the District councils.
- 14.2 It is envisaged that there will be sufficient demand to fully utilise services. In the event that there is lower demand than expected in particular schemes or there are delays in the process which is leading to increased voids and rental loss, the provider should contact the ART immediately. ART, children's social care commissioning and the provider will agree an appropriate response.