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| London Borough of Hammersmith and Fulham |
| Children and Young People’s Service |
| 145 King Street, |
| London, |
| W6 1DY |
| Tel: |

Date

Dear …..

As you know we *are undertaking* / *have completed* an assessment of your needs. We have concluded that without our support you would not have somewhere suitable to live; in other words, you are homeless and need to be looked after and supported by us. This letter is designed to explain to you what services and supports are available to you under the Children Act 1989 and Housing Act 1996.

As part of this process, you have been offered access to an advocate and you chose/ did not choose to take up this offer. An advocate remains available to you at any point in this process should you change your mind.

The London Borough of Hammersmith & Fulham (H&F) has a duty to provide you with assistance under section 20 of the Children Act 1989. This is the most suitable support option for most young people. If you accept this option, you will become a Child Looked After (CLA). We cannot, however, compel you to be accommodated as a CLA. H&F strongly recommends that as a homeless 16- or 17-year-old you agree to be accommodated as a CLA. If you refuse this service, you could also be accommodated under Part VII of the Housing Act 1996. This is the service that H&F applies to persons of all ages who are homeless. The differences are explained below:

1. **Section 20**

Under section 20, you are entitled to:

* Suitable accommodation up to the age of 18
* Your social worker will visit you every 6 weeks to offer advice and assistance.
* Your social worker will begin to create a Pathway Plan with you to help you prepare for adulthood.
* You will have Looked After Review Meetings with your social worker and any professionals working with you until you turn 18 to ensure that you are on the right track as regards health, education, and welfare.
* You will be required to spend every night in your accommodation provided by H&F Children’s services unless you have agreed an overnight stay with your social worker and accommodation provider and adhere to any house rules. Should you not return home of an evening and not make contact you will be reported missing to the police.
* In this option you are ‘cared for’ by us (H&F) until you are 18, after which you will receive a leaving care service.
* If you have been accommodated as a CLA for at least 13 weeks before you become a ‘former relevant child’, your social worker will continue to support you with your Pathway Plan, which will be reviewed regularly.
* Your social worker will support you to access employment, education or training and other support services and opportunities. You will be eligible for care leaver support until the age of 21, or 25 if you still need our support.
* We ask you to keep in contact with H&F’s leaving care service at least once every 8 weeks once you turn 18.
* Even if you were not accommodated as a CLA for 13 weeks before your 18th birthday, you will be eligible for some ongoing advice and support as a qualifying care leaver.

1. **Housing Act 1996 Part VII**

Under Part VII, you are entitled to:

* Support from H&F Children’s services and Housing in finding suitable accommodation in Hammersmith & Fulham for a young person of your age. This will be a place in one of H&F’s supported accommodation placements.
* Accommodation to prevent you from being homeless must be available for at least 6 months. You will be entitled to accommodation for the entire period that you are under 18.
* Support to claim Universal Credit when you turn 18. This will include a period of up to 4 weeks of financial assistance whilst your application is being processed. If your application has not been processed within this time you will be directed to apply for a Crisis Loan.
* Financial assistance in the form or vouchers or cash until the age of 18 if we take the view that you need this support.
* A key worker at the accommodation who will help you gain independent living skills such as cooking and managing bills. This support is available until you turn 24 dependant on assessment of need. The key worker will also help to support you in training, continuing education or finding work until you leave the supported accommodation.
* Ongoing support from an allocated social worker under a child in need plan. A child in need meeting will be held every 3 months and child in need visits from your social worker will take place every 6 weeks. This can include support around rebuilding/ strengthening your relationship with your family. This support will cease when you turn 18.
* When you are an adult and it is deemed that you are capable of independent living, you will be assisted in leaving supported accommodation into a Housing pathway. This will be either under the Supporting People Quota or into privately rented accommodation.
* You will be entitled to an assessment from H&F Housing to create a personalised housing plan to help you find and keep accommodation in the future; you must cooperate with Housing and follow the steps in your plan.
* If you turn down an offer of suitable accommodation made by H&F Housing under Part VII you run the risk that H&F will consider that it no longer has a duty to you under Part VII and that you will be considered to be intentionally homeless. If this happens H&F will not be under any further duty to find you accommodation as a homeless person or to relieve you from the risk of homelessness, although it will still offer you some advice. You have the right to request a review of any decision made by H&F as regards an offer of suitable accommodation or that you are intentionally homeless.

Please sign the declaration on the next page to confirm that you have understood the support and services available to you under The Children Act 1989 and Housing Act 1996 to confirm whether you are accepting support under Section 20 of the Children Act (under which you would become a Looked After young person) or under Part 7 of the Housing Act.

Yours faithfully,

*Name and Title*

Hammersmith & Fulham Children and Young People’s Service

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| **Declaration** *(please sign and date)*  I confirm that I have read and understood the above information and am able to make an informed decision regarding the support and services to be provided to me by Hammersmith & Fulham Children and Young People’s Services.  *Please tick the relevant box below.* | | |
| **I wish to receive support under s20 of the Children Act and become a Looked After Child** | |  |
| **I wish to receive support under Part 7 of the Housing Act and do not want to become a Looked After Child** | |  |
| **Signature of young person:** *(please sign and print your name)* |  | |
| **Date:** |  | |
| **Counter-signed:**  *(please sign and print your name)* |  | |
| **Job title:** |  | |
| **Date:** |  | |