

**Sheffield City Council**  
**Children and Families Service**

**Homeless Prevention for 16/17  
year olds presenting as homeless  
Guidance for Practitioners and Managers**

Publication Date: January 2020



## About this Document

<b>Title</b>	<b>Homeless Prevention for 16/17 year olds presenting as homeless. Guidance for Practitioners and Managers</b>
Purpose	To set out how Sheffield City Council Children will support 16/17 year olds presenting as homeless
Replaces	
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Owners role	Director of Children and Families
Approved by	Peoples Portfolio Leadership Team
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This practice guidance has been developed in line with the functions of Sheffield Children's Social Care and Housing Services when a young person seeks help or support from agencies around homelessness. Sheffield Children's Social Care and Housing Services have a joint working agreement in how in which to support 16/17 year olds presenting as homeless, and accept that any assessment should be completed jointly.

The aim is to achieve better outcomes for young people and reduce the numbers of those 16 and 17 year olds who are homeless or threatened with homelessness.

### **When a young person presents as homeless at Howden House First Point**

Where a 16 or 17 year old presents to Housing Solutions a joint assessment will be undertaken by a Social Worker from Children Young People and Families (CYPF) and a Housing Solutions Duty Officer.

- The young person is seen at First Point by the Customer Services Advisor (CSA) and if the presenting issue is related to homelessness the CSA informs the Housing Solutions Duty Officer. Alternatively, an appointment can be made by telephone
- The Housing Solutions Duty Officer will contact CYPF Safeguarding HUB to find out if the young person is currently allocated to a Social Worker or not.
  - If the case is open to an allocated Social Worker, they will be contacted by Housing Solutions directly to discuss the need for a joint assessment. If this is needed the allocated Social Worker is best placed to undertake this with the Housing Solutions Officer.
  - If the case is not open, the Housing Solutions Officer will make contact with the young person and parent to establish if they are homeless. This conversation is to verify if Housing Solutions have a duty towards the young person. When this is established the Housing Solutions Officer will make an appointment for a joint housing assessment to be completed with the Social Worker for Homelessness and Prevention
- At this stage there is also the opportunity for the Housing Solutions Officer to make a referral to Roundabout Prevention Service. This referral can be made if it is not deemed that the 16/17 year old is currently homeless, but to assist in preventing them becoming homeless in the future and offering the family support to remain together

### **Joint Housing Assessment with Social Worker for homeless and prevention**

A face to face meeting with the Social Worker and Housing Solutions Officer takes place at Howden House with further exploration of the possibilities of the young person remaining at home or with extended family members.

*The Joint Housing Assessment template is kept in documents on the child's electronic file.*

### **Provision of accommodation under section 20 or section 17 of Children Act 1989**

- Case law states that where a young person is identified as a child in need (including in need of accommodation) they should be offered accommodation by CYPF under section 20 of the Children Act 1989 therefore making them 'looked after' voluntarily
- The guidance is clear that Children's Services cannot choose whether to support a young person via section 17 rather than section 20 (CA1989)
- A young person is however, able to make the decision providing it is an informed decision and clearly evidenced through their wishes and feelings
- If the young person decides that they wish to be supported by CYPF via section 20 (CA1989), accommodation must be offered. Please refer to and follow the Scheme of Delegation to inform appropriate Managers if this is to occur.

### **Acceptance of young person to Supported Accommodation provider**

- If the young person refuses section 20 (CA1989) accommodation an assessment under the Housing Act is undertaken. Housing Solutions will have opened a homeless case at the initial assessment and when it is established that section 20 (CA1989) is not required, Housing Solutions will complete their enquiries and offer the young person supported accommodation through partner agencies – for example - Roundabout, Cherry Tree, Sheffield Foyer, YWCA, Young Woman's Housing Project or Depaul. Through the completion of the joint housing assessment an agreed outcome will be jointly devised between Housing Solutions and CYPF based on the needs of the young person
- The Housing Solutions Officer will confirm the authorisation of a place in supported accommodation with the Duty Senior Housing Solutions Officer
- The Housing Solutions Accommodation Team should receive information about the availability of bed spaces provided by Supported Accommodation on a daily basis

- The joint assessment form and housing electronic form is sent to the identified supported accommodation provider by the accommodation team
- The Housing Solutions Accommodation Team telephones the provider to check they have received the referral through their pathways system and confirm their acceptance within the hour with the young person
- The Housing Solutions Accommodations Team will discuss the location of the supported accommodation establishment with the young person and provide bus fare or a taxi if needed for them to travel to the accommodation
- If there is no provision of supported accommodation available same day to the young person there are suitable interim arrangements that can be made. This includes -
  - 'crash pad' at Roundabout Supported Accommodation
  - If the joint assessment is taking place before 4pm then a bed space offered by Nightstop should be considered with the young person's agreement
  - The young person should be moved into a bed space in supported accommodation as soon as one is available
- If there is no alternative accommodation available, the young person may need to become a looked after via section 20 (CA1989) and CYPF will need to support in locating suitable accommodation

### **Ordinary Residence**

Where young people who are ordinarily resident elsewhere present as homeless in Sheffield, they may be encouraged to return to their own area where the home Local Authority can take responsibility for completing the assessment processes as outlined in their own area.

There is a duty to respond to children 'within the area' and managerial advice should be taken if this occurs. There are many reasons for why this may occur and are subjective. A lack of connections in the area, combined with a young person who will not return to their home area, can still be assessed in Sheffield.

### **Out of Hours/Emergency Referrals**

Where 16 and 17 year olds present as homeless out of office hours, the priority must be the safety and well-being of the young person. Where needed, accommodation will be provided (either by CYPF or Housing Solutions) until the next working day. The CYPF EDT team will undertake initial enquiries. There should be clear communication between EDT and Housing Solutions to ensure

there are appropriate arrangements for the young person until the next working day. On the next working day the joint assessment process will continue to be followed by the Housing Solutions Officer and a Social Worker.

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