



Assessment of Homelessness

Information for young people
16-17 years old

Working with Next Steps - what is Section 20?

To help us understand what help you might need you will be allocated a social worker who will undertake an assessment. As part of the assessment, your social worker will explain what your options are.

Your options will include becoming looked after under section 20 or continuing to be supported under section 17. This leaflet should explain and answer some of the questions you may have about this.

Together for Children have a responsibility to offer this support under a legal framework and this is explained below. This information is from the Children Act 1989. Your responsibilities are also described.

What should I do?

Read the following carefully and discuss your thoughts with your social worker or pathway's team support worker. We can only offer housing or care within this legal framework, so we want to help you take the lead in telling us what's best for you. Should you feel neither of these frameworks apply to you we may be able to signpost you to alternative support such as mediation to help you stay with family or friends.

Section 17 - child in need

- We can provide you with support however this will not include care
- You can have support from a social worker or Pathway's support worker

- A Child in Need plan will be created for your future with you and will look at all the areas you need support
- This will include support with education, training or employment
- If you need it, you will be supported to apply for the correct benefits and budget this
- Accommodation will be sourced by Together for Children
- You could live in semi-independent accommodation or supported lodgings. We can give you information about both options in detail
- We will expect you to be involved and ideally lead your own planning. This means working with us, staff where you live and anyone else relevant
- The support from any social care team will end when you are 18 years old or before if you no longer need/want help.

Section 20 - looked after child

- There will be shared responsibility for your care with Together for Children until you are 18. We will share Parental Responsibility with your parents and be your Corporate Parent
- Support is offered by a social worker and they will visit you a minimum of 6 weekly
- A Child Looked After plan will be created for your future with you and will look at all the areas you need care
- An IRO (independent reviewing officer) will review this plan at intervals of 28 days, 3 months and every 6 months after this, they will also meet with you separately to hear your views

- You will have access to our Child Looked After health service including a health assessment and will be supported to attend by your social worker
- Your plan will be reviewed every 6 weeks with you and the people working with you
- You could live in a foster placement, residential children's home, semi-independent accommodation or supported lodgings
- When you have been in care for 13 weeks, you will be entitled to support until you are 21 and will have a leaving care personal advisor who will support you after 18
- You will have support with housing when you leave our care.

Next Steps homeless assessment

After you have spoken with your social worker about your needs and you feel confident you understand what section 20 and section 17 mean then it is important that you consent as to which section (if any) you would like to receive support from Together for Children under.

Please make sure you have read the information leaflet and discussed this with your social worker before deciding. Together for children can also refer you to an Independent visitor or advocacy should you want independent support.

An assessment is an ongoing process and if at any point you change your mind or feel differently please tell your worker.



Your acknowledgement and decision

I confirm that I am homeless and have no appropriate alternative accommodation available to me. I understand the responsibilities and duties of becoming a 'looked after child' (S20), but do not wish to agree to this and would like to seek support without this being progressed.

Signed:

Name:

Date:

Witness:

I confirm that I am homeless and have no appropriate alternative accommodation available to me. I understand the responsibilities and duties of becoming a 'looked after child' (S20) and I wish to become accommodated under Section 20 and agree to engage in the services open to me as a 'looked after child'.

Signed:

Name:

Date:

Witness:



Frequently asked questions

What is the Childrens Act?

The Childrens Act is a document which provides a set of goals and provides information to local authorities to safeguard and provide the best care and support to children and young people.

Who are Next Steps?

Next Steps are a team of social workers and personal advisors who provide support to Care Leavers and 16-17-year olds who have been allocated to the team for a homeless assessment. We have our own office and provide a 'duty' service to all our young people. Our focus is to keep you safe, get you help with the things you need and get you ready for independence.

What does a Personal Advisor do?

If you become a Looked after Child then at 18 years old, you will be introduced to your Personal Advisor. It is their job to keep in touch with you, check that you are alright and help you get what you need. To do this they must make sure that your Pathway Plan is followed and reviewed with you at least every six months.

What happens if I change my mind about a CIN assessment?

A child in need assessment can only be carried out with your consent. If you change your mind about the assessment, please speak with your social worker who can listen to you and talk about what this may mean.

What happens if I change my mind about section 20?

If at any point you feel that you want to change your mind about being looked after, then please speak with your social worker or IRO. They will listen to you and talk with you about your alternative options and what would change.

What is semi-independent accommodation?

If you moved into Semi independence you would have your own room within a shared building. There would be staff present 24/7 to help you learn the skills that you would need to live independently. You would pay rent and buy your own food and be supported to move into your own tenancy when ready.

What is Supported Lodgings?

If you moved into Supported Lodgings you would have your own room in a family home environment, you would pay rent and help would be given from the Supported Lodgings carer to get you ready and confident for your own independence.

Please ask your Social Worker if you have any questions or would like more clarity on anything.

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