

# Staffordshire Joint Housing Care Leavers (18-25) Protocol

August 2023

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## 1. Introduction

Transition from care to adulthood is often a worrying and uncertain time for young people, and often happens sooner in life. Care leavers should expect the same level of support that others would expect from a reasonable parent. Staffordshire County Council and Local Housing Authorities should make sure that young people are provided with the opportunities they need, as well as an understanding that they are likely to make mistakes and that second chance opportunities are provided to them.

Securing suitable accommodation for care leavers is more than just finding them somewhere to stay. Housing is one of the main areas that can underpin a positive transition to adulthood, and care leavers need somewhere safe, secure, and suitable to live, with as smooth and planned transition as possible. Safe and planned transitions should be a building block to success for our care leavers, enabling them to achieve in education, training, and employment. In addition, this can have a direct impact on a person's health and wellbeing.

In its 2019 Manifesto, the Government made a commitment to commission a review of the care system. In March 2021 the independent review of children's social care led by Josh McAlister, began. The extensive review concluded in 2022, with the final report being produced in May 2022.

The findings identified:

The average age that young people leave their parental home in England has gradually increased during the last 50 years. In 1997, 50% of 21-year-olds had left home (Office for National Statistics, 2019). By 2020, the average age to leave home had increased to 23 years old (Office for National Statistics, 2022). However, young people leaving care are often faced with the stark realities of adult life at a much earlier age. Whilst there have been several positive developments in recent years that have increased entitlements up to age 25, many young people leaving care at 18 are reliant on their Local Authority to provide them with suitable accommodation. Whilst having a secure, safe and affordable home is an essential foundation to a good childhood (Cross et al., 2021), the transition between leaving care and having your own home is just as critical; yet it is at this moment that the foundation is abruptly removed. There are big gaps in official statistics on the number of care experienced people who experience homelessness. However, the latest data from the Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities (DLUHC) found that 26% of the homeless population had spent time in care (Ministry for Housing, Communities & Local Government, 2020. (The independent review of children's social care – Final report Research report May 2022)

The review identified five missions to support children in care and care experienced people, with mission 4 being the most pertinent to this protocol:

Mission 4: Reduce care leaver homelessness now, before ending it entirely.

The recommendations following this are:

- There should be a range of housing options open to young people transitioning out of care or who need to return, such as Staying Put, Staying Close and supported lodgings. Staying Put and Staying Close should be a legal entitlement and extended to age 23 with an 'opt-out' rather than 'opt-in' expectation.
- Introduce a stronger safety net against care leaver homelessness by removing the local area connection test, ending intentionally homelessness practice, providing a rent guarantor scheme and increasing the leaving care grant to £2,438 for care experienced people.

In Staffordshire, we already have a policy which will enable the Local Authority to act as guarantors to support our young people. We have also increased our Setting UP Home grant to £3,000.

This protocol sets out the steps that the Staffordshire County Council and Local Housing Authorities, will take to ensure they meet the above recommendation.

## **2. Corporate Parenting**

2.1 The principle of corporate parenting means that the Local Authority has a legal and moral duty to all its children in their care and those who have left their care, similar to that, that any good parent would provide for their child. Corporate parenting does not just involve Children's Services, it includes Staffordshire County Council as a whole (including elected members and all officers), and all partner organisations including Local Housing Authorities, Department for Work and Pensions & Youth Offending who are expected to have regard to seven principles when designing and delivering services:

- to act in the best interests, and promote the physical and mental health and wellbeing, of those children and young people
- to encourage those children and young people to express their views, wishes and feelings
- to take into account the views, wishes and feelings of those children and young people
- to help those children and young people gain access to, and make the best use of, services provided by the local authority and its relevant partners
- to promote high aspirations, and seek to secure the best outcomes, for those children and young people
- for those children and young people to be safe, and for stability in their home lives, relationships and education or work; and
- to prepare those children and young people for adulthood and independent living.

The Corporate Parenting principles, above, are underpinned by one key question which runs through the core of this document.

## Would this be good enough for my child?

### 3. The Local Offer:

All local authorities must publish up-to-date information about the services it offers for care leavers and other services which may assist care leavers in, or preparing for, adulthood and independent living. The local offer should cover health and wellbeing; relationships; education and training; employment; accommodation; participation in society. This information should also include how relevant services that can be accessed by its partner agencies and include District Councils where relevant.

Staffordshire has published its local offer. This was after extensive co-production with the Voice Project, wider partners and corporate parents at a county and district level. The Offer will continue to be reviewed and enhanced.

[Care-Leaver-Local-Offer \(staffordshire.gov.uk\)](http://staffordshire.gov.uk)

### 4. Aim and Objectives of the Protocol:

4.1 The aim of this protocol is to clearly define the roles and responsibilities of Staffordshire County Council Children's Services and the Local Housing Authorities of Staffordshire; and to increase the effectiveness of their joint working.

The objectives are to:

- Set out our commitment to developing services (our local offer) to care leavers.
- Establish the roles and responsibilities towards care leavers and define the roles of the statutory agencies within the legislative framework.
- Develop a "corporate parenting" approach towards care leavers, providing a shared commitment from Staffordshire County Council and Local Housing Authorities to ensure our young people achieve the best outcomes possible.
- Identify how the Staffordshire County Council and the Local Housing Authority can, by working together, meet the needs of care leavers, and effectively discharge our duties, ensuring that there are no gaps in services and that resources are effectively used.
- Ensure all officers using this protocol are mindful of the roles and responsibilities of organisations working with young people and the need for joint working to secure positive outcomes.
- Put the young person at the centre of the transition, allowing them choice as much as it is reasonably possible to do so.
- Create a countywide approach to the transition from care for all 'our children and young people' so no matter where a young person wants to live in Staffordshire, there is a similar approach.

- Ensure care leavers are supported into suitable and sustainable accommodation, at the right time when the young person is ready.
- Emphasis 'staying put' if young people have got a network of support in a specific area
- Ensure that Care Leavers are not presented as homeless unless as a last resort for young people in crisis and not routinely used as a mechanism to meet a young person's needs that can be anticipated and planned for. Local Allocation Policy will be the primary vehicle to be used but all available housing options will be considered.
- Help plan for the future, looking at anticipated demand for accommodation options and support. For example, staying put, supported lodgings, supported accommodation, tenancy agreement with Council or Social Landlord, transitional accommodation such as hostels, foyers etc. Making sure this is reflected in Staffordshire County Council Sufficiency Strategy and associated partner documents.
- Assess our young people's needs, to ensure that we provide the right level of support to help them to become responsible and successful tenants and to improve tenancy sustainability and reduce the risk of homelessness. Needs will be assessed via the Pathway Planning process, and Staffordshire County Council will share information about the young person's needs with housing colleagues during the housing application and planning process.
- To make sure, if a care leaver is ever homeless, that an intentionally homeless decision is the last resort.

#### **4.2 Guiding Principles:**

All young people should be:

- The shared responsibility of their Corporate Parent, with reference to the seven principles.
- Given as much information, control and choice as possible and in a timely manner prior to leaving care.
- Listened to and their feelings and wishes be taken into account.
- Able to make mistakes, learn from them, and be given a second chance, and perhaps more.
- Given flexible and personalised support to meet their needs.

#### **5. Pathway to Housing:**

5.1 The following pathways will be used when independent housing is identified as the most appropriate option:

1. The young person will be supported to complete The Staffordshire Independence Programme prior to their 18<sup>th</sup> birthday, this will allow them to build theoretical and practical skills to be able to live independently.
2. The young person will have a Pathway Plan (see Appendix 4) soon after their 16<sup>th</sup> birthday to prepare and support them into independence.

3. The Independent Reviewing Officer (IRO) will oversee this plan, and make sure it meets the needs of the young person and that all duties are undertaken.
4. If the young person is not identified as Staying Put or similar, the young person will look towards a move to Supported Accommodation to begin obtaining their independence skills. This will be evidenced through the provider and any work undertaken via the Staffordshire Independence Programme. This can be evidence to the Local Housing Authority and Housing Providers to demonstrate the young person's understanding of living independently.
5. Prior to the young person reaching 17 ½ years, the Children in Care and Care Leavers Team (via the Senior Practitioner for Personal Advisor's) will notify the nominated manager/lead officer at the Local Housing Authority of this.
6. At 17 ½ years, the young person and their Personal Advisor will complete the housing application and submit any supporting information required, such as appropriate documents confirming the young person's status under the Children (Leaving Care) Act 2000. Personal Advisors will provide support in line with each individual housing process, for example, bidding or direct matching.
7. Once completed, the young person will be registered and placed in appropriate priority banding. If there is reason to exclude the young person from the housing register, then an urgent professional meeting shall be called.
8. Any allocation will be discussed with the young person and their Personal Advisor. The young person will need to give consent for this information to be shared with their Personal Advisor in the first instance. Once consent is given, then all correspondence to the young person must cc the Personal Advisor (and vice versa), to enable the young person to be supported effectively.
9. In the event of a property being allocated prior to the young person's 18<sup>th</sup> birthday, there will be discussion between the Senior Practitioner/Team Manager and Personal Advisor. Staffordshire County Council will act as guarantor (see below section & Care Leaver's Guarantor's guidance). If a young person is under 18 with a child, the local allocation policy will be referred to.
10. Floating support could be provided on an individual basis, subject to additional approval. If it is felt that the young person will need floating support, this needs to be discussed at the earliest opportunity to allow for planning, preferably to be made clear when the housing application is first submitted and when initial discussions with housing colleagues and Staffordshire County Council take place.
11. Once a property has been allocated a pre-sign-up support meeting will be arranged by the Personal Advisor. This will be with all parties; the young person, the Personal Advisor and representatives from the appropriate



- housing provider/department. At this meeting, any support arrangements will be discussed, if not done already as part of the above process
12. If applicable, tenancy support will be discussed, and an additional support plan will be drawn up.
  13. Should a young person not be allocated a property prior to their 18<sup>th</sup> birthday, it is possible that they may be able to remain in the accommodation that is currently being provided to them by Staffordshire County Council, until alternative accommodation is sourced. This will depend on the type of accommodation they are currently living in. If a young person does need to remain in their accommodation post 18, a claim for Universal Credit / Housing Benefit will be made to contribute towards the cost of their current accommodation. Any agreements for a young person to remain in the under 18 accommodation post 18, will be time limited and kept under review. This process will be monitored by Staffordshire County Council via weekly care planning meetings. Local Housing Authorities will be updated following each review.
  14. The Independent Placements Overview Panel meets weekly and will track young people in transition from supported accommodation into housing arrangements and offer scrutiny advice and support where necessary. Any concerns will be escalated to Senior Managers both in Staffordshire County Council and the Local Housing Authority.

### **Homeless Pathway**

1. In the event that the young person is threatened with homelessness within 56 days or are homeless, then a homelessness referral will be made under the 'Duty to Refer' [A guide to the duty to refer - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk/guidance/duty-to-refer) to the relevant Local Housing Authority such that the young person will be assisted to make a homelessness application. Contact details for each Local Housing Authority can be found in Appendix 3. A homelessness application should be the exception and not the usual route into housing. A referral will also need to be made to the Housing Personal Advisor.
2. Young people, post 18, will be asked for their consent to enable a landlord to contact their Personal Advisor if any concerns arise regarding the tenancy. This would enable the Personal Advisor to work with the young person to resolve any issues at an early stage, thus preventing any escalation, preventing a build-up of rent arrears etc and potential eviction.
3. If a young person has been assisted under the process as laid out above and then subsequently presents as homeless at a later date, they will be given further opportunity to engage with any support available and will retain their status as a care leaver. This extends to people aged 21 or more who are vulnerable as a result of having been looked after, accommodated or fostered. Those who are returning for support can also be referred to the Housing Personal Advisor.
4. All attempts should be made by Local Housing Authorities to avoid the impact of intentionally homeless decisions in relation to care leavers aged

18-25. The Local Housing Authority will make all attempts to avoid the impact of an intentionally homeless decision, for instance with assistance under prevention and/or relief duties as per the [Homelessness code of guidance for local authorities - Guidance - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk/guidance/homelessness-code-of-guidance-for-local-authorities) . To inform the assessment, the Local Housing Authority will consult with Children's Services and obtain advice and information as to the young person where possible and consented.

5. Should a young person be assessed as being intentionally homeless; the Personal Advisor will ensure they have a Decision Letter that gives the reasons for the decision, to assist if any challenge can be made. This would take into account the age of the young person, life experiences that may have impacted upon their ability to maintain a tenancy and if they need support in seeking legal advice. The Personal Advisor would also explore if they are able to access any Bond Scheme to secure a private tenancy.

## **6. Monitoring, Governance and Implementation**

- 6.1 Regular review meetings take place in each area locality with representatives from the Local Housing Authorities, Senior Practitioners from the relevant children in care and care leavers team, any registered providers, and others where applicable. It is expected that any young person aged 17 ½, and due to turn 18, would be monitored, as would the potential numbers of young people turning 18 in each locality. These reviews will also discuss any potential tenancy and support issues.
- 6.2 In addition to these meetings, Staffordshire Housing Partnership (Young People) will meet three times per year to discuss the embedding of this protocol and begin to look at the wider issues affecting care leavers and housing.
- 6.3 The governance of this protocol will be kept under review by the Care Leavers Strategic Board, chaired by the Head of Service for Children in our Care and Care Leavers. This protocol will be reviewed on an annual basis, or when there is a change/update in legislation.
- 6.4 Training around the principles of the protocol will be rolled out to existing staff within Staffordshire County Council and the Local Housing Authority, this will be carried out by an external training provider to key staff initially. For new starters for whose role the protocol applies to, it will form part of the induction process.
- 6.5 Care experienced young people will be consulted on the development of this protocol through the Voice Project and in any future reviews to the protocol.

## **7. Staffordshire County Council – Guarantors**

- 7.1 Staffordshire County Council may decide to act as a rent guarantor on behalf of a young person, where there is no family member or other suitable person

willing, or able to do so. A tenancy can only be granted to someone who is over 18. Each situation will be considered on an individual basis.

- 7.2 Any guarantee provided is as a last resort and is intended as a short-term measure to allow the young person time to address the financial issue that is preventing them from entering into a tenancy without a guarantor.
- 7.3 The young person's Personal Advisor will complete a Guarantor Application Form with the young person to ensure that they are able to demonstrate a clear understanding and accurate account of their financial situation.
- 7.4 If there is an occasion where a Personal Advisor will need to use the above, they will need to use the staff guidance and seek approval from the relevant District Lead.

## **8. The Independence Programme**

*Care leavers who are well prepared and supported through the transition will have greater resilience and be less likely to become homeless after they leave care.*

- 8.1 Consultation conducted by The Voice Project highlighted that Staffordshire Care Leavers do not feel readily prepared for the move to independent living. Staffordshire has developed and implemented an Independence Programme that helps to prepare young people for the move to independence, this will be communicated through the young person's Personal Advisor.
- 8.2 The programme is made up of twelve modules that focus on different independence-related skills ranging from 'Shopping and Cooking' and 'Home Safety' to 'Managing your Tenancy and Avoiding Debt'. Care Leavers will have the opportunity to start working through the programme from 16 years of age. It is the responsibility of those working with the young person from the age of 16, including but not limited to: their Foster Carer; Residential Worker; Semi-Supported Accommodation Provider/Support Worker; Social Worker and Personal Advisor to encourage and support the completion of the Staffordshire Independence Programme. Successful completion of the modules will increase the chances of positive outcomes for young people leaving the care of Staffordshire County Council and encourage successful independent living. The aim is for young people to complete all twelve modules by the time they turn 18 or move into independence.

## **9. Staying Put**

- 9.1 For many young people, staying put with Foster Carers or with a host family via supported lodgings is a very stable option and often in a young person's best interest. Where this is the case, an application should still be made to the Local Housing Authority, but the bidding/allocation process should not be initiated until such time that the young person plans to move out of Staying Put/Supported Lodgings. If there is a sudden change in the young person's accommodation need, they have therefore completed the earlier and time-

consuming steps of the application process, and so would not need to worry about this in any potential crisis. This will therefore reduce the need of the 'homeless safety net' and the young person can move in a more planned way or when they feel they are ready. These young people will be discussed in locality meetings and plans put in place.

## **10. Leaving Custody**

Care leavers leaving custody will need additional support to secure suitable accommodation on release. Staffordshire County Council will map out how it will work in partnership with other services to ensure that the availability to suitable accommodation is agreed as part of pre-release planning.

Staffordshire's Care Leavers in Custody Policy (see Appendix 6) document highlights the role of the Personal Advisor to ensure adequate pre-release planning is in place and that suitable accommodation forms a central part of this. Upon release from custody a referral to the Housing Personal Advisor should be made to support resettlement efforts.

A pre-discharge meeting will be held 4 weeks before release date, involving the young person and partner agencies (such as housing, Youth Offending Service, probation etc). This will formulate the accommodation plan and identify post-release support, which will be included in an updated Pathway Plan.

## **11. Roles and Responsibilities in Relation to Young People Leaving Custody**

- 11.1 Both the Children (Leaving Care) Act 2000, Children and Social Work Act 2017, DfE statutory guidance and the Homelessness Act 2002 amongst other guidance and legislation state that it is the joint responsibility and duty of Housing and Children's Services to work together to support a young person into independence.

In the event that the young person is threatened with homelessness then a homelessness referral will be made under the 'Duty to Refer' [A guide to the duty to refer - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](#) to the relevant Local Housing Authority

### Roles/Responsibilities for Housing

- Process housing application and homeless application if applicable in a timely manner.
- The landlord to contact the Personal Advisor as soon as there are any potential issues with a tenancy.
- Only reach an intentionally homeless decision once all other avenues have been explored.
- Work in partnership with children's services to plan for young people's transitions out of care into suitable accommodation.
- Inform children's services, subject to consent, when a care leaver presents for homelessness assistance and work jointly to support the young person.

### Roles/Responsibilities for Children's Services

- Make sure the young person has a Pathway Plan as soon as they are eligible.
- The Pathway Plan will begin to decide and articulate the wishes and feeling of a young person's transition from care.
- Make sure the young person is completing the necessary independence work.
- Post 18, Personal Advisor's will visit the young person every 8 weeks at least and, with the young person's consent, will check with housing provider directly to identify any potential issues that may require early intervention and allow homelessness to be prevented.
- Make sure young people are aware of the housing options available to them on leaving care and what support they can access.
- Ensure that districts are involved with and kept updated on the transitions planning in place for young people.
- All new staff will receive training in respect of the policies as part of their induction.
- The protocol will be reviewed annually, or when there is a change in legislation / significant case law rulings, to ensure the document is kept "live". Staff will also be updated on any changes.

### Roles/Responsibilities for Youth Offending

- Ensure information relating to housing and suitability of address is recorded.
- All children within the custodial estate have a clear plan and actions in place to identify suitable accommodation on tier release from custody.
- Ensure all relevant referrals are made in a timely manner to identified practitioners/services to secure suitable accommodation for those in need.
- Work in conjunction with partner organisations partners to ensure that suitable accommodation is secure.
- Advocate/support children in the process of secure suitable accommodation

### Roles/Responsibilities for Care Leaver

- It is the responsibility of any care experienced individual to engage in the housing process within their chosen Local Housing Authority.
- This will include (but not limited to)
  - Attending all appointments
  - Providing requests for further information/proofs
  - Where applicable, bidding on suitable properties in a timely manner
  - Having open and honest conversations with representative from housing

- To play an active part in their pathway planning
- To make sure the Staffordshire Independence Programme modules are being completed as appropriate.
- Seek support from their Personal Advisor if they are unsure of anything that is being asked of them.

## 12. Living outside Staffordshire

In some instances, it may be beneficial for care leavers to move to, or remain in, another authority's area if:

- They are already living in a foster or residential placement out of the area and being settled there.
- They have been assessed, or presenting, at risk if accommodated in the local area.
- They are requiring university vacation accommodation outside the authority area.
- They are wanting to live nearer to a family member or former carer.
- They are moving away to take up employment or training.

Where a care leaver resides in a different Local Authority area, the Local Housing Authority will seek to support the young person in looking for accommodation in that area.

Pathway planning work should set out what options may be available for care leavers to settle in another area where they choose to do so. This should include the Personal Advisor contacting the Local Housing Authority where the young person resides to explore what accommodation options may be available in advance of them leaving care.

Housing Personal Advisor referral will be made when challenging issues such as local connection, care leaver status, and priority banding. Help is also available via the Right to Move. [Right to Move and social housing allocations - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk/government/consultations/right-to-move-and-social-housing-allocations)

## 13. Suitable Accommodation

13.1 A range of accommodation options will be required to address diverse need.

13.2 National and Legal context

Part 4 of The Care Leavers (England) Regulations 2010 defines suitable accommodation as;

For the purposes of section 23B(10) of the Childrens Act 1989, "suitable accommodation" means accommodation—

(a) which so far as reasonably practicable is suitable for the relevant child in the light of their needs, including any health needs and any needs arising from any disability,

(b) in respect of which the responsible authority have satisfied themselves as to the character and suitability of the landlord or other provider, and

(c) in respect of which the responsible authority have, so far as reasonably practicable, taken into account the relevant child's—

(i) wishes and feelings, and

(ii) education, training or employment needs.

Further to this recent Homeless Code of Guidance 2018 & The Children Act 1989 guidance and regulations Volume 3: planning transition to adulthood for care leavers highlights the use of B&B is unsuitable for care leavers aged under 25 and should only be used in exceptional circumstances and for short periods.

### Staffordshire Context

For care leavers who are ready for living independently Staffordshire County Council and the Local Housing Authorities believes in suitable accommodation in all forms for its care leavers are;

- Friends or relatives (would need appropriate approvals if arranging prior to 18).
- Staying put with former foster carers.
- Supported Lodgings post 18.
- Provisions obtained by Adult Social Care.
- Accommodation with work.
- Supported accommodation.
- Social housing tenancy with or without support (where appropriate).
- Private rented accommodation\*

\*another option to live independently is to rent privately from a landlord, which gives flexibility in location. Young person's Personal Advisor can assist in checking the Local Housing Allowance for the area. Care leavers are eligible for the one-bedroom rate until their 22<sup>nd</sup> birthday, where it will reduce to the Shared Accommodation Rate.

Staffordshire County Council and the Local Housing Authorities believe unsuitable accommodation for its care leavers is:

- Sofa Surfing, and other insecure accommodation
- Custody
- Bed and Breakfast accommodation
- Homeless Hostel, this is alike to non-commissioned hostel type accommodation.
- No fixed abode

Although defined as 'unsuitable' the above accommodation is used as an absolute last resort. Where this is the case then there should be management oversight to ensure that support and move on planning is in place.

## **Dispute Resolution**

The protocol aims to minimise disputes and encourages open and respectful dialogue. Conflicts may arise from the young person's initial assessment and any of the three parties, Staffordshire County Council/Local Housing Authority and/or the young person may escalate their concerns about the decision or practice of any other agency.

A dispute may be escalated through the stages below to seek resolution:

1. Discussion between operational front-line practitioners
2. Discussion between direct-line managers to explore strategic solutions and compromise.

If a resolution cannot be reached, a discussion will take place between the relevant district operational leads.

Staffordshire Safeguarding Children Board's 'Escalation Procedure' (2019) will be utilised to take forward the most serious concerns or intractable problems. See SSCB Inter-agency procedures: Section 7 - Appeals/Professional Disagreements.

A record of any disagreement which is escalated to Stage 3, or later will be submitted to the Steering Group for consideration.

A third-party complaint from a family member received by either authority will be subject to the authority's internal complaint's process to examine the actions of their officers, considering the aims of the protocol.



## **Appendix 1 - Legal Context**

### **Relevant legislation and statutory guidance**

This document refers to the following legislation:

- [Housing Act 1996 - Part 6 \(Allocations\) and Part 7 \(Homelessness\), as amended by the Homelessness Reduction Act 2017](#)
- [Homelessness \(Priority Need for Accommodation\) \(England\) Order 2002](#)
- [Children Act 1989](#)
- [Children \(Leaving Care\) Act 2000](#)
- [Children and Social Work Act 2017 - sections 1, 2 and 3](#)

The following is a list of statutory guidance that this document refers to:

- [Homelessness code of guidance](#)
- [Applying corporate parenting principles to looked after children and care leavers](#)
- [Children Act 1989: care planning, placement and case review](#)
- [Children Act 1989: transition to adulthood for care leavers](#)
- [Extending Personal Adviser support for all care leavers to age 25](#)
- [Local offer guidance](#)

### **Children and Social Work Act 2017**

The [Children and Social Work Act 2017 \(CSWA\)](#) strengthened the role of local authorities as corporate parents and applies to all local authorities as set out in section 1(3) of the Act.

Corporate parenting means local authorities doing the most they can for looked after children and care leavers, to give them the same opportunities as other children and promote the best possible outcomes.

The Act sets out corporate parenting principles to be applied when supporting children in care and care leavers. In carrying out their functions, the local authority must have regard to the following needs:

- To act in the best interests, and promote the physical and mental health and well-being, of those children and care leavers
- To encourage those children and care leavers to express their views, wishes and feelings

- To take into account the views, wishes and feelings of those children and care leavers
- To help those children and care leavers gain access to, and make the best use of, services provided by the local authority and its relevant partners
- To promote high aspirations, and seek to secure the best outcomes, for those children and care leavers
- For those children and care leavers to be safe, and for stability in their home lives, relationships and education or work
- To prepare those children and care leavers for adulthood and independent living

The DfE statutory guidance on applying corporate parenting principles to looked after children and care leavers stresses the importance of joint working in supporting care leavers to navigate their way through the transition to adulthood:

Good preparation, a gradual transition and flexible ongoing support are key to helping care leavers achieve a successful move to independent living. The most effective local authorities establish joint working arrangements between children's services, housing and other specialist services to help care leavers prepare for the realities of living independently, involve them in planning and decisions about their housing options, ensure suitable housing and support is in place and are ready to respond with contingency arrangements if things do go wrong. (Applying corporate parenting principles to looked after children and care leavers - Chapter 2).

The CSWA also extended the provision of Personal Adviser support to care leavers up to the age of 25, whether or not they are in education or training, which the care leaver can choose to take up. Local authorities have a duty to provide care leavers with Personal Adviser support and a pathway plan up to their 21st birthday.

For care leavers aged 21 or over the duty to assess needs and develop and keep under review a pathway plan – apply only where the young person requests support.

It is therefore important that joint housing protocols cover the support available from a local authority area to care leavers up to the age of 25.

### **The local offer**

Local authorities are required under section 2 of the Children and Social Work Act 2017 to publish a local offer, which sets out the services and the support available for care leavers.

The local offer should include information on how care leavers are supported to access suitable accommodation, including the support available from housing services. Joint housing protocols should be aligned with the local offer and can help to ensure that the commitments to support care leavers to access and sustain accommodation are met.

Local authorities should consider providing a link to the joint protocol within the local offer so that care leavers, advocates and other professionals can have access to the document.

## **The Homelessness Reduction Act 2017**

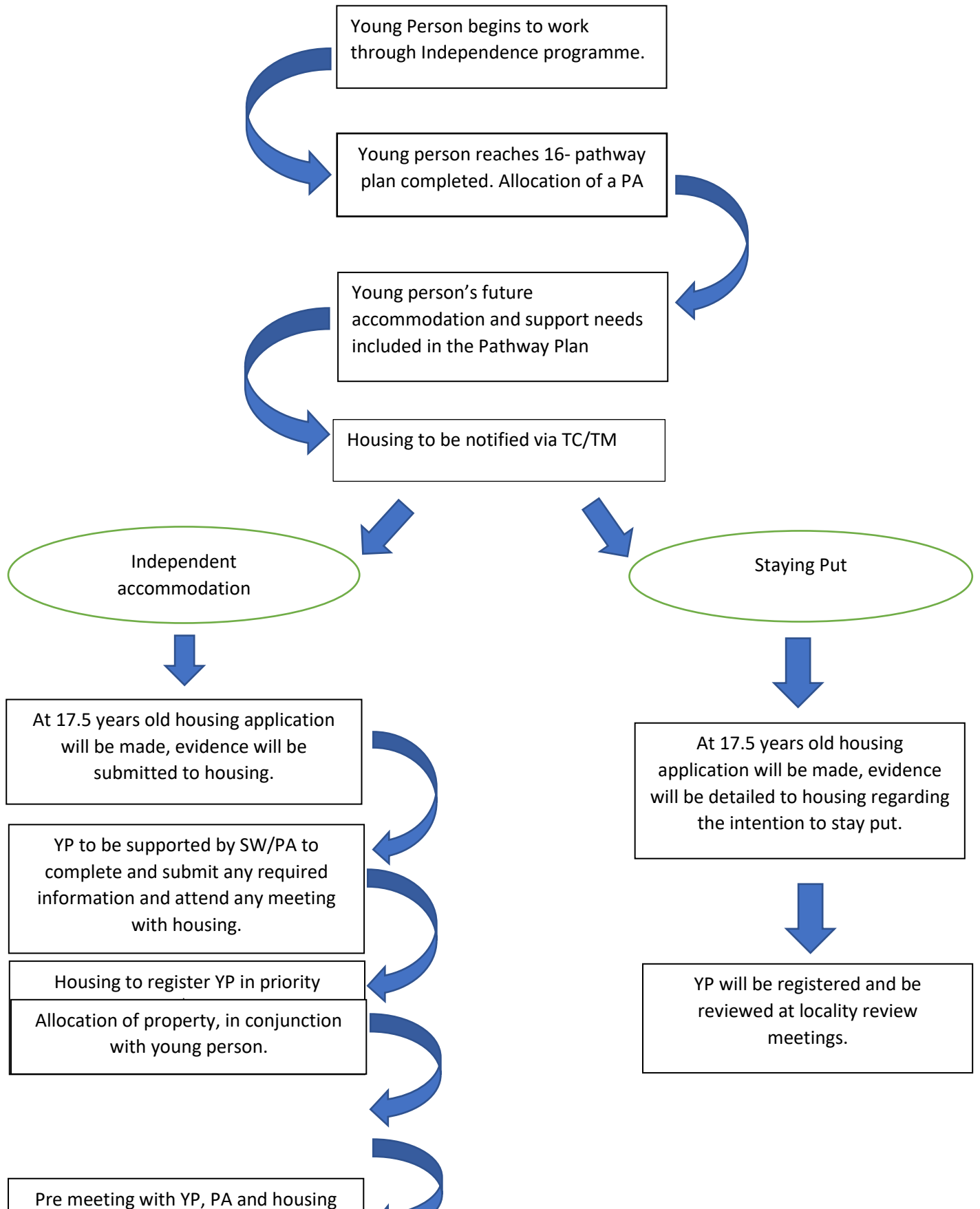
The [Homelessness Reduction Act \(HRA\)](#) amended the Housing Act 1996, introducing significant new duties for local housing authorities and partners. Particularly relevant for care leavers are:

- a duty to provide advice and information on homelessness free of charge to all residents, including advice to meet the needs of care leavers
- duties to help prevent and relieve homelessness for those who are eligible irrespective of priority need or intentional homelessness. Provision of a Personalised Housing Plan to applicants threatened with homelessness or actually homeless, which sets out the steps the local authority and applicant will take to prevent or relieve homelessness
- changes in local connection requirements for care leavers which provide more choice to those who have lived out of the placing authority area, or who are looked after by a county council within two-tier areas
- a duty to refer placed on specified public bodies, including children's services, where their service users are homeless or threatened with homelessness

The Homelessness code of guidance was revised in 2018 to reflect changes introduced by the HRA. [Chapter 22 of the Code](#) focusses specifically on care leavers. The Code outlines the importance of joint working when planning housing options for care leavers and states that:

“By working together, housing authorities and children's services authorities can better ensure that as a corporate parent, the appropriate accommodation and support is available to care leavers. (Homelessness code of guidance - Chapter 22: Care leavers)”

## Appendix 2 – Process Flowchart.



## Appendix 3

### Useful Contacts and Key Partners

| Organisation  | Address   | Phone/Other contact   |
|---|---|---|
| Cannock Chase District Council                      | Civic Centre<br>PO Box 28<br>Beecroft Road<br>Cannock<br>WS11 1BG   | 01543 462621<br>Out of hours emergencies: 01543<br>462621<br><a href="http://www.cannockchasedc.gov.uk">Housing   Cannock Chase District Council (cannockchasedc.gov.uk)</a>  |
| East Staffordshire Borough Council                  | Customer Service Centre<br>Market Place<br>Burton Upon Trent<br>DE14 1HA  | 01283 508120<br>Out of hours emergencies: 01283<br>508126<br><a href="http://www.eaststaffsbc.gov.uk">Housing and property   ESBC (eaststaffsbc.gov.uk)</a>   |
| Lichfield District Council                          | District Council House<br>Frog Lane<br>Lichfield<br>WS13 6YX  | 0333 220 3088<br>Out of hours emergencies: 01543<br>574480<br><a href="http://www.lichfielddc.gov.uk">Housing and homelessness (lichfielddc.gov.uk)</a>   |
| Newcastle-under-Lyme Borough Council                | Newcastle Housing Advice<br>Castle House<br>Barracks Road<br>Newcastle-under-Lyme<br>ST5 1BL                                    | 01782 717717<br>Out of hours emergencies: 01782<br>615599<br><a href="http://www.nhaoptions.co.uk">Newcastle Under Lyme - Home (nhaoptions.co.uk)</a>   |
| South Staffordshire District Council                | Wolverhampton Road<br>Codsall<br>Wolverhampton<br>WV8 1PX   | 01902 696504<br>Out of hours emergencies: 01902<br>696504<br><a href="http://www.sstaffs.gov.uk">Housing   South Staffordshire District Council (sstaffs.gov.uk)</a>  |
| Stafford Borough Council                            | Civic Centre<br>Riverside<br>Stafford<br>ST16 3AQ   | 01785 619000<br>Out of hours emergencies: 01785<br>619170<br><a href="http://www.staffordbc.gov.uk">Housing   Stafford Borough Council (staffordbc.gov.uk)</a>  |
| Staffordshire Children's Advice and Support Service | <a href="http://www.staffordshire.gov.uk">Staffordshire Childrens Advice and Support Service - Staffordshire County Council</a> | Tel: 0300 111 8007<br>Out of hours 0345 604 2886  |
| Staffordshire Housing Personal Advisors             | Staffordshire Place 1<br>Stafford<br>ST16 2DH   | Vicky Manley<br><a href="mailto:Victoria.manley@staffordshire.gov.uk">Victoria.manley@staffordshire.gov.uk</a><br>07773792359<br>Robert Walmsley<br><a href="mailto:Robert.walmsley@staffordshire.gov.uk">Robert.walmsley@staffordshire.gov.uk</a><br>07811697428 |
| Staffordshire Moorlands District Council            | Moorlands House<br>Stockwell Street<br>Leek<br>Staffordshire<br>ST13 6HQ  | 0345 605 3012<br>Out of hours emergencies: 0808 1692<br>333   |

|                                    |  |  |
|------------------------------------|--|--|
|                                    |  | <a href="#">Housing - Staffordshire Moorlands District Council</a><br>( <a href="http://staffsmoorlands.gov.uk">staffsmoorlands.gov.uk</a> ) |
| Tamworth Borough Council           | Marmion House<br>Lichfield Street<br>Tamworth<br>Staffordshire<br>B79 7BZ                        | 01827 709709<br>Out of hours emergencies: 01827 709709.<br><a href="#">Housing   Tamworth Borough Council</a>                                |
| Centrepoint                        | Offering advice to anyone aged 16-25.  | 0800 800 0661<br><a href="#">Centrepoint</a><br>Webchat (Mon-Fri 10-4pm)   |
| Shelter                            | Advice, support and legal services for young people struggling with bad housing or homelessness. | 0800 800 4444<br><a href="#">Shelter</a><br>Webchat (9-5pm weekdays)   |
| CGL Staffordshire Advocacy Project | <a href="#">Specialist children and young people's advocacy - Staffordshire County Council</a>   | 07809 587007<br>sscrs@cgl.org.uk   |

Appendix 4

**MWV**  
**Pathway**  
**Plan**

# Young Person's Name

## My Details

Name

Person ID

Gender

DoB

Age

Address

Religion

Ethnicity

Email

Telephone

Personal  
Advisor

|                          |  |
|--------------------------|--|
| Personal Advisor Tel No. |  |
| Leaving Care Status      |  |
| Young person known as    |  |

|                  |  |
|------------------|--|
| Where do I live? |  |
| Date I moved in  |  |

|                                 |
|---------------------------------|
| <b>Passport number</b>          |
| <b>NI number to be included</b> |
| <b>NHS number</b>               |
| <b>Citizen card</b>             |
| <b>Birth certificate</b>        |
| <b>Provisional licence</b>      |



|                   |  |
|-------------------|--|
| Are you a parent? |  |
|-------------------|--|

## Plan Summary

Please provide a brief update from the last planned review

|  |
|--|
|  |
|--|

|                  |  |
|------------------|--|
| Date of Plan     |  |
| Next Review Date |  |

## Money and Finances

How do you budget and manage your money?

|  |
|--|
|  |
|--|

Let's consider your income and whether we can support you to increase it

|  |
|--|
|  |
|--|

## Where You Live

Are you happy with where you live?

|  |
|--|
|  |
|--|

## Education, Training and Employment

This is about how you are doing in training/education or work and planning for the future

|  |
|--|
|  |
|--|

## Health

|                            |  |
|----------------------------|--|
| What is your GP's address? |  |
|----------------------------|--|

|                                 |  |
|---------------------------------|--|
| What is your dentist's address? |  |
|---------------------------------|--|

**How is your general health? Can we support you with any worries that you have?**

|  |
|--|
|  |
|--|

**Can we support you with any additional worries you may have about your health such as substance misuse, alcohol use, addictions?**

|  |
|--|
|  |
|--|

## Family and Friends

**Who are the important people in your life?**

|  |
|--|
|  |
|--|

**Do you need support with any of your friendships or relationships?**

|  |
|--|
|  |
|--|

## Identity

This section is all about you. How would you describe yourself?

|  |
|--|
|  |
|--|

### Independence

How are you getting on living independently? What support can we offer to assist you with your independent skills?

|  |
|--|
|  |
|--|

### My Aspirations

How can we support you to achieve your goals?

|  |
|--|
|  |
|--|

### Unaccompanied Asylum-Seeking Children Information

|   |  |
|---|--|
| Has the young person ever been an Unaccompanied Asylum Seeking Child? |  |
|---|--|

### Personal Advisor Analysis

Please summarise the plan

|  |
|--|
|  |
|--|

| Actions to complete | Who needs to deliver the actions? | Date to be completed by |
|---------------------|-----------------------------------|-------------------------|
|                     |                                   |                         |

### Contingency plan

|  |
|--|
|  |
|--|

### Useful contact details

|                             | Name | Telephone number |
|-----------------------------|------|------------------|
| Next of Kin                 |      |                  |
| Preferred emergency contact |      |                  |
| GP                          |      |                  |
| Dentist                     |      |                  |
| Opticians                   |      |                  |
| Accommodation support       |      |                  |
| Health professionals        |      |                  |

|            |  |
|------------|--|
| EDS number |  |
|------------|--|

### Other contacts

| Role/relationship | Name | Telephone number |
|-------------------|------|------------------|
|                   |      |                  |

## Signatures

### Personal Advisor

|           |  |
|-----------|--|
| Name      |  |
| Signature |  |
| Date      |  |

### Management oversight

|  |
|--|
|  |
|--|

### Team Manager/Team Coordinator

|      |  |
|------|--|
| Name |  |
|------|--|

|           |  |
|-----------|--|
| Signature |  |
| Date      |  |

A typed name constitutes the signing of this document

## Children in Care and Care Leavers

### Consent to Share Information and Work on Young Person's Behalf

Social Workers and Personal Advisors will sometimes make contact with other agencies that you are involved with. When we do this we will need to share information with them. This is so that:

- It will help to get you a better service from them
- It will make things safer for you
- It will mean that you don't have to keep giving the same information over and over again
- It helps us to do our job better

When we have concerns for your care, protection and safety we don't need your permission, but at all other times we do.

We will always keep you informed about the information we give out and any that we receive.

Arrangements can be made for you to see information in your file unless for some reason it is deemed restricted but you will be provided with a reason if this is the case.

Please sign two copies of the consent form below, one is for you to keep and the other will be kept with your Through Care records.

---

I give permission for my Social Worker/Personal Advisor to contact the following agency/organisation/relevant party and exchange information about me as part of an assessment, planned work, to make referrals or to work on my behalf:

- Other Children & Families Departments
- Entrust
- Housing Providers
- Education Providers
- Youth Offending Service
- Probation Service
- SOVA (Mentoring Project)
- Potential Employer
- Employment Service
- NHS/Health Care Providers
- Job Centre/DWP
- Solicitors

Please specify any other organisation/agency:

---

I understand that this information will be recorded and may be shared with other agencies/professionals as necessary. I understand that where there are concerns about my care, safety and protection Staffordshire County Council may contact other agencies without consent.

I authorise Children in Care and Care Leavers to work on my behalf.

Young  
Person

Signed

Date

Personal  
Advisor

Signed

Date

A parent or adult may be able to sign this if the Young Person is not able to understand and give consent.

---

**Pathway Plan Receipt and Agreement**

Name of Young Person

I agree that the Pathway Plan dated \_\_\_\_\_ is correct.

Signature of Young Person \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

---

**Comments**

**Young Person's comments**

# Staffordshire's Care Leavers in Custody Guidance

Version number v1.0

Document owner: Lynsey Dawson Care Leavers Offer Team Manager

Responsible officer: Claire Cartwright Head of Children in Care and care Leavers

## 1. Introduction

### 1.1. Purpose

The purpose of this guidance is to ensure that our Leaving Care Personal Advisors are aware of what their roles and responsibilities are in relation to our young people who are in custody, and also what the expectations are in terms of multi -agency working and planning for release.

The guidance is also to ensure that our young people who are in custody are fully supported whilst in custody and to ensure that they have plans in place for their release.

### 1.2. Scope

This guidance does not cover visiting frequency for Social Workers. Social Workers will need to refer to their own guidance in relations to statutory visits for children in care.

### 1.3. Supporting documentation

- Personal Advisor (PA) Offer guidance.
- Social Work visit guidance for Children in Care in Custody
- Youth Offending Service (YOS) protocol, Children in Care custody resettlement planning and delivery requirements.

## 2. Keeping in touch

- 2.1. Personal Advisors (PA) visits to young people 18 plus in custody should be at least every 8 weeks. Visits to young people aged 16/17 please refer to PA offer guidance.



- 2.2. If there are any problems with PA's booking prison visits, this will need to be discussed with the Senior Practitioner (SP) at the first opportunity and this will need to be escalated by the PA with the prison service
- 2.3. PA's will need to request that their work mobile phone number is put on the young person's contact list. Where possible the PA will set up weekly times to talk to their young people. The PA is responsible for notifying the young person if they are not at work due to annual leave. The SP will be responsible for notifying the young person if the PA is off sick. If required a duty PA will be asked to contact the young person while their PA is off.
- 2.4. The PA is to have a discussion with their young person about 'Email a Prisoner'. This is a quick, efficient, secure alternative method of communication for those in custody, meaning they can receive more frequent and varied communication. If the young person agrees to be contacted through this service, the PA can use this as a way of contacting the young person weekly, as an additional contact, or if they have not been able to talk to them on the phone. <https://www.emailaprisoner.com/>
- 2.5. The PA can also book 'Purple Visits', this is a video call with a young person in custody using the Purple Visits App. A video call can be made via mobile phone or tablet and can last up to 30 minutes. <https://www.purplevisits.com/purple-visits-for-prisons/>
- 2.6. The PA is to ensure that the prison is aware that the young person is care experienced. The PA is to ensure they make links with the prison and have regular contact with the young person's Custody Offender Manager Officer.
- 2.7. The PA is to ensure that they attend any meetings arranged by the prison, and if for any reason they can't attend request the SP or duty PA attend on their behalf.
- 2.8. Social Worker (SW) visits please refer to Social Work visit guidance for Children in Care in Custody.

### **3. Family Support**

- 3.1. It is important that the young person has regular contact with their family and friends. The PA is to identify with the young person who are their key support networks. The PA is then to ensure that these key people are aware of how to maintain contact with the young person through 'Email a Prisoner' and how to arrange visits.
- 3.2. If the young person has a lengthy custodial sentence, then the PA is to complete a Financial Needs Assessment to ensure the young person can see their family and friends. This support should not exceed the 2 times family contact per year provided within the local offer.
- 3.3. If the young person is aged 16/17 the SW will take the lead on arranging any family visits and assessing any financial need.

## 4. Multi Agency – Youth Offending Service (YOS)

- 4.1. Staffordshire Youth Offending Service take the lead on the resettlement planning of children entering custody. They work in partnership with the allocated SW to ensure best practice guidelines are adhered to, to ensure that resettlement into the community is as seamless as possible.
- 4.2. For Care Leavers aged 16/17, the Child's SW, will need to take the lead over the PA in attending these meetings and support with the resettlement from the social care perspective. The child's SW will need to ensure they keep the PA updated and ask them to attend any meetings that have been arranged. The PA visits to the young person under 18 will not exceed what is in the 16/17-year-old PA offer.
- 4.3. The Youth Offending Service supports young people up to 18, or if they are given a Detention and Training Order pre 18 years old. The Youth Offending Service will continue to work with them until the order ends; even if the order ends post 18. They will also work discretionarily with young people being released from prison just after their 18th birthday.
- 4.4. Resettlement Planning Meetings in custody are held within 10 days of sentence, the allocated SW attends this meeting alongside allocated YOS worker and parent/carer where appropriate. This meeting begins to plan for the young person's resettlement into the community regardless of length of sentence.
- 4.5. Please refer to YOS protocol, Children in Care custody resettlement planning and delivery requirements, which details support dates of when meetings will take place.
- 4.6. It is important that the SW/PA and YOS Case manager, make contact at the first opportunity, and work together to support the young person through their sentence.

## **5. Multi Agency – Probation**

- 5.1. Probation and YOS have quarterly meetings to identify any young people that will turn 18 years old imminently. These young people are identified 6 months in advance, depending on when they have been sentenced.
- 5.2. It is important that the PA and Probation Officer, make contact at the first opportunity, and work together to support the young person through their sentence.

## **6. Multi Agency – Benefits**

- 6.1. If the young person was claiming Disability Living Allowance (DLA) or Personal Independence Payments (PIP), before going to prison, the PA/SW will need to have a discussion with Staffordshire's Care Leavers Welfare Benefits Adviser.
- 6.2. The prison work coaches are responsible to ensure the young person's Universal Credit (UC) claim has been ceased. The PA will need to contact the coach to ensure this has happened.

## **7. Multi Agency – Resettlement – Housing advice/support**

- 7.1. Every young person who is post 18 that enters' custody or is due to turn 18 in custody, will need to be referred to the Housing Personal Advisor (HPA), by their PA, at the first opportunity. The HPA will need to know the reason the young person is in prison, the length of sentence, and the earliest release date.
- 7.2. If the young person is 16/17 years old the YOS team will arrange a resettlement meeting, please see above for more details. It will be the SW's responsibility to complete the Child Young Person Profile in Care Director and forward it to the Placement Referrals team to search for appropriate accommodation. This will ensure a placement is available on the young person's release. It will also be the SW's responsibility to support the young person to move on their release.

- 7.3. If the young person is post 18, then 6 months before the young person's release date the SP will be responsible for arranging a Planning Meeting. The following will need to be invited; PA, HPA, Prison, probation/YOS and depending - Family/adult services. The meeting is to ensure plans are in place for the young persons living arrangements and support on their release. These meetings will then take place every 8 weeks after to ensure their plans remain on track. Each prison will have their own protocol in place; therefore, it is important the PA liaise with them to ensure these meetings are not duplicated.

## 8. Multi Agency – Education/Training and work placements

- 8.1. The PA is to work with the young person and the prison service to ensure that the young person is able to access education and training.
- 8.2. The PA is to ensure they record in the contact form what support the young person is getting and update the status information.
- 8.3. The PA is to offer support advice and guidance to the young person leading up to release on training/college courses, where required seek support from Entrust and arrange an education meeting.
- 8.4. For young people aged 16/17 their Social Worker will be responsible for arranging a Personal Education Meeting.

## 9. Financial Support

- 9.1. Every young person aged 16/17 in custody will get an allowance of £10 per week. The SW will be responsible for arranging these payments.
- 9.2. Post 18 - Every young person in custody will get an allowance of £10 per month.
- 9.3. Currently prisons are not able to accept LA credit cards, the PA/SW will need to apply for an exemption to be able to send monthly postal orders. The young person will be exempt due to them having Care Experience.

- 9.3.1. This link can be used to get exemption information;  
<https://send-money-to-prisoner.service.gov.uk/en-gb/help/apply-for-exemption/>

- 9.4. The leisure budget of £30 per month can be accessed in prison, to buy clothing so the young person can take part in leisure activities. The PA will need to have a discussion with the young person and the prison to decide on how the young person can access these funds.
- 9.5. Young people aged 16/17 years old, a financial needs assessment will need to be completed by their SW, to see if they will require any additional funds.

## 10. Care and support needs

- 10.1. If the young person has care and support needs the PA/SW needs to ensure the prison are aware of this.
- 10.2. If there are concerns the young person may be at risk of self-harm or suicide, the PA/SW will need to request that an Assessment, Care in Custody and Teamwork (ACCT) is completed. Its primary purpose is to keep the young person safe. A dedicated Case Co-ordinator will bring together staff from across many different departments to create a plan of actions to achieve this. Plans are tailored to the people being supported and their needs, and young people will be involved throughout, in making decisions about the best support for them.
- 10.3. If the young person has care and support needs, they are to be referred to adult services in line with current procedures around age of referral. The PA is to request, Adult Services complete a Care Act Assessment before release. Adult services are to be invited to all planning meetings leading up to release.

## 11. Key Decisions

- 11.1. A Key decision should be completed by the SP every three months, on young people 18 plus including the following information –
  - 11.1.1. The reason the young person is in custody, length of sentence, and potential earliest release date. Also, confirmation that a referral been made to the HPA if release is post 18 years old.
    - 11.1.2. Confirmation that the prison is aware that the young person has Care Experience and name of the young person's case manager.
    - 11.1.3. If the young person is 18 plus, has the PA been visiting the young person every 8 weeks, if this has not been happening provide the reason.

- 11.1.4. Is the young person set up on Email a Prisoner, if not provide the reason.
- 11.1.5. Is the young person accessing the monthly allowances?
- 11.1.6. Is the young person involved in any education/training/ work, if not what needs to be done to support them? Ensure this is reflected on the status information.
- 11.1.7. What support is the young person receiving to maintain contact with family/friends.
- 11.1.8. If required, has a planning meeting been set up leading up to release.

# The LA Acting as Tenancy Guarantor to Care Leavers

## Version number v1.0

Document owner: Lynsey Dawson, Team Manager Care  
Leaver Offer Team

Responsible officer: Claire Cartwright, Head of Service, Children in Our  
Care and Care Leavers

## 1. Introduction

### Purpose

The policy will set out the Local Authority will support Care Leavers with the Tenancy Guarantor Scheme.

## 2. Standards

- 2.1 Having a safe and secure place to live is something that most of us take for granted. For Care Leavers, some of the most vulnerable young people in our society, this can often seem unattainable.
- 2.2 Our Care Leavers require assistance to prepare for and manage independent living and need better options if they face a housing crisis, not to be placed in insecure B&Bs or homeless hostels.

## 3. Rent Guarantees

- 3.1 Some landlords require a guarantee from a third party (a 'guarantor') that

she/he will meet the obligation under a tenancy to pay rent as a condition for letting a property to a tenant. This could be for supported housing or for social and private housing.

- 3.2 There is no restriction on when a guarantee may be required, and it's common for lettings by a private landlord to require a guarantee before entering into a tenancy with:
- students or other young people
  - people with a bad credit rating
  - housing benefit claimants, particularly where there will be a shortfall to make up
  - people who have not been in employment for six months.
- 3.3 A guarantee is the guarantor's promise to pay the rent, and possibly to fulfil the tenant's other obligations under the tenancy, if the tenant fails to do so. It is an agreement between the guarantor and the landlord and is legally binding. That means that if the tenant does not comply with his/her obligations under the tenancy the landlord can pursue the guarantor (through the Courts if necessary) for unpaid rent and, depending on the terms of the guarantee, other monies that may be due.
- 3.4 The guarantor does not become a party to the tenancy agreement between the landlord and the tenant (i.e., she/he is not a tenant), but if the tenant fails to pay the rent, the landlord can seek to recover payment from the guarantor.

## 4. The Local Authority as Guarantors

- 4.1. In certain circumstances, the Local Authority may decide to act as a rent guarantor on behalf of a young person, where there is no family member or other suitable person willing, or able to do so. A tenancy can only be granted to someone who is over 18. The Local Authority does not have a policy as to when and when not, it will act as a guarantor. Each case will be considered individually and, on its merits, and can in some circumstances apply to 17-year-olds.
- 4.2. Any guarantee provided is as a last resort and is intended as a short-term measure to allow the young person time to address the financial issue that is preventing them from entering into a tenancy without a guarantor.
- 4.3. The young person's Personal Advisor (PA) will complete a Guarantor Application Form with the young person to ensure they are able to demonstrate a clear understanding and accurate account of their financial situation. The application form also includes a summary of the skills the young person believes they should have in order to live independently. The form and other documents relating to the tenancy will, in the first instance be checked and considered by the Children in Care and Care Leaver Team Manager, who



will take an initial view as to whether it is appropriate for the Local Authority to act as guarantor. All documents will then be forwarded to the District Lead who will check and if appropriate, will approve the Local Authority acting as Corporate Guarantor.



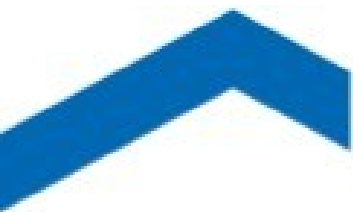
Guarantor%20Appli  
cation%20Form%20J

## 5. Rent Guarantee Arrangement

- 5.1. There is a legal requirement for a guarantee agreement to be in writing, signed by all parties to the agreement and the signatures witnessed. Each landlord or letting agent will have its own guarantee template.
- 5.2. Guarantee agreements from different landlords will be similar but won't all be the same. The Local Authority will be liable, in default of tenant, for the unpaid rent (For the fixed term of the tenancy, up to 12 months), providing the landlord notifies the Local Authority within 28 days of the young person not paying their agreed rent.
- 5.3. The guarantees that the Local Authority will give will not be uniform as they will have been drafted by different solicitors. However, they will usually be limited to the above (i.e., rent during length of tenancy)

## 6. Quality assurance

- 6.1. This policy will be reviewed on an annual basis by the Care Leaver Offer Team Manager. Audit activity and observation of practice will identify if the policy is being appropriately implemented.



# Tenancy Guarantor to Care Leavers Application

Version number v1.0

Document owner: Lynsey Dawson, Care Leaver Offer Team

Responsible officer: Claire Cartwright, Head of Service Children in Our  
Care and Care Leavers

## **Guarantor Application form – [name]:**

This form allows you to seek an appropriate guarantor. It will allow the Local Authority to gain an understanding of your financial position and emotional wellbeing in preparation of you living by yourself.

The answers that you provide to the Local Authority within this application form is part of the first stage application process for the potential of us acting as your rent guarantor.

Once you have completed this application form in **full**, please forward it to your Personal Advisor [name].

The Local Authority will aim to provide you with a response within two weeks of your application being received. When you receive a response from us, you will be provided with information on whether we have accepted your application, declined your application, or require further information to come to a decision.

If you have any further questions, please contact your PA who will be able to help.

How much can you afford to pay in rent per month? (If private rented consider applicable LHA rates: <https://lha-direct.voa.gov.uk/> & <https://www.gov.uk/benefits-calculators>

£

Please explain how you will pay your rent, e.g. wages, housing benefit, student loan:

Please tick which documents you have also attached:

- LHA Rates <https://lha-direct.voa.gov.uk/>  
Benefits Calculator: <https://www.gov.uk/benefits-calculators>
- Letter of financial support from the Local Authority

Please attach copies of your last 3 months' bank statements. If you work, please attach your last 3 months' payslips:

- 3 months' bank statements
- 3 month's payslips

Please provide us with a breakdown of your planned expenditure in order to provide evidence you have a monthly budget.

| Monthly income                    |          |
|-----------------------------------|----------|
| Wages                             | £        |
| Universal Credit (UC)             | £        |
| Housing Benefit/UC                | £        |
| Local Authority financial support | £        |
| Other, <i>please specify</i>      | £        |
| <b>Total amount</b>               | <b>£</b> |

| Monthly outgoings            |          |
|------------------------------|----------|
| Rent                         | £        |
| Gas                          | £        |
| Electric                     | £        |
| Council Tax                  | £        |
| Water                        | £        |
| TV Licence                   | £        |
| Phone / Broadband            |          |
| Food                         | £        |
| Alcohol                      | £        |
| Tobacco                      | £        |
| Going 'out'                  | £        |
| Clothes, toiletries          | £        |
| Hobbies                      | £        |
| Household/cleaning products  | £        |
| Travel                       | £        |
| Education                    | £        |
| Other, <i>please specify</i> | £        |
| <b>Total</b>                 | <b>£</b> |

Have you found a property?

Yes

No

If no, do you know which area/s you may want to live in? If so, please specify:

What research have you carried out in relation to local rent costs?

How do you plan to live?

Alone

In a shared house with friends

In a shared house with others

In student halls of residence

Other, *please specify* \_\_\_\_\_

What skills do you think are needed to live independently?

Describe how you demonstrate these skills

Have you completed Staffordshire's Independence Programme?

Yes

No

If you found yourself in financial difficulty, who would you turn to for help?

How would you financially cope if you found yourself with an unexpected bill, or you lost your job?

Please provide contact details for a supporting reference, e.g. your Personal Advisor (PA), your Social Worker, carer, employer, tutor:

| Name | Contact Number | Email | Organisation |
|------|----------------|-------|--------------|
|      |                |       |              |

Please provide any further information that you feel may help towards your application:

|                             |  |
|-----------------------------|--|
| <b>Applicant signature:</b> |  |
| <b>Date:</b>                |  |

**Note:** This form should be emailed to the relevant District Lead by the PA. Once the District Lead has considered the application, they must complete a key decision on file within 5 working days of receipt of the application, which confirms the rationale for supporting / not supporting the application. The young person must be informed of the decision without delay by the PA.