



Joint Protocol for working with with care experienced young people in Middlesbrough

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Foreword

As Corporate Directors of Children’s Services and Adult Social Care we are delighted to present our Joint Housing Protocol for working with care experienced young people in Middlesbrough.

We are committed to promoting and continuing the essential joint working between Children’s Social Care and the Housing Solutions Team in Middlesbrough. When things get tough, we work to ensure the effective management of housing crises for Care Leavers wherever and whenever they occur and to prevent homelessness.

As Corporate Parents, we are ambitious for our Care Leavers, and we want the best for them. We know how important suitable accommodation is to delivering that vision and we understand that good housing underpins success in all other areas of life. As leaders we are committed to working together in partnership, and also in engaging and partnering with all other corporate and community partners who can help us to support Care Leavers to succeed and prosper.

Annabel Bates, Corporate Director of Children's Services



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Louise Grabham, Corporate Director of Adult Social Care and Health



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Introduction

This protocol outlines how Middlesbrough Council and partners work together to support care leavers as they transition from placements funded by Middlesbrough Council to independent living.

It is recognised that the journey from care can often be difficult for young people, and the degree of success can have an impact on outcomes well beyond early adulthood.

As corporate parents, the partners want to ensure young people are well equipped and understand their own level of skill and aspirations for their future. Having access to safe and appropriate accommodation is key to young people achieving positive outcomes, however this is much more than just finding them a place to stay.

We want to ensure care leavers are aware of the full range of options available to them, by doing so the hope is young people will be more likely to gain stability in other areas of their lives, such as relationships, education or work and improved physical, mental health and well-being

We will ensure that every effort is made to avoid using the homeless route to access accommodation that is inappropriate when assessing and meeting the overall needs of care leavers.

Aims and objectives

The overarching aim of this protocol is to support positive outcomes for care experienced young people threatened with homelessness.

- To ensure all care experienced young people achieve a successful transition into independent living through support, preparation, and the provision of suitable accommodation.
- To jointly assess and meet the diverse housing and support needs of young people leaving care, through the application of a clear and consistent process.
- To ensure young people are not subjected to numerous assessment processes, and that they do not have to negotiate their way through the range of agencies.
- To jointly ensure that all staff are aware of the housing needs of young people leaving care and the obligations of each partner agency to address these needs. This will include ongoing joint training, a robust induction process and opportunities for shadowing.
- To provide clear guidelines on the management of difficult tenancies which will include contingency arrangements.
- To ensure that the accommodation needs of young people leaving custody are appropriately planned.
- To identify gaps in service provision for young people and to work together with other partner agencies to address these gaps feeding information into the relevant strategies.

Partner Agencies

This protocol involves the following key organisations, but it is recognised that other organisations will also play a part in addressing the overall needs of care experienced young people.

- Middlesbrough Council
- Changing Lives
- Home Group
- Thirteen Group

- North Star Housing
- Nacro

Corporate Parenting principles

When exercising their functions in relation to children in care and care leavers, Middlesbrough Council recognise and have regard to the seven Corporate Parenting principles identified in the Children and Social Work Act 2017.

These are:

- a) To act in the best interests, and promote the physical and mental health and well-being, of those children and young people.*
- b) To encourage those children and young people to express their views, wishes and feelings.*
- c) To take into account the views, wishes and feelings of those children and young people.*
- d) 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.*
- e) To promote high aspirations, and seek to secure the best outcomes, for those children and young people.*
- f) For those children and young people to be safe, and for stability in their home lives, relationships and education or work.*
- g) To prepare those children and young people for adulthood and independent living.*

Role of the Corporate Parenting Board

It is the role of the Corporate Parenting Board to advise, guide and provide leadership to the council on issues relating to looked after children, care leavers and its corporate parenting responsibility. The Corporate Parenting Board is required to work to ensure that the council and our housing partners have relevant key plans, strategies and associated resources identified and that they make explicit the contributions that they make to targets agreed for improvement.

The Corporate Parenting Board is there to ensure that our looked after children receive appropriate opportunities. The board needs to ensure that there is correct membership to ensure that there is leadership in place to make budgetary decisions and create opportunities for better joint and better offers to children in care and care experienced young people.

Scope of the Protocol

This protocol covers:

- **Eligible children**
A young person aged 16 or 17 and who has been looked after for at least 13 weeks since the age of 14 and who is still being looked after.
- **Relevant children**
A young person aged 16 and 17 who has been looked after for at least 13 weeks since the age of 14 and who has left care. This also includes young people who were detained (e.g. in a youth offending institution or hospital) when they turned 16 and who were look after immediately before being detained.
- **Former relevant children**
A young person aged between 18 to 25 who was previously 'eligible' or 'relevant'.
- **Qualifying children**
A young person under the age of 25 who ceased to be looked after or accommodated in any setting or was privately fostered. This also includes those young people who are under a special guardianship order.
- **Unaccompanied Asylum-Seeking young people**
A young person who qualifies for a leaving care service from Middlesbrough Council and has been granted refugee status. In addition, those who qualify and are given leave to remain up to the age of 21 years or who have an extension beyond the age of 18 for a minimum of one year.
- **Care leavers supported by another Local Authority**
Care leavers who are the responsibility of another local authority but who reside in the Middlesbrough area, and can show a local connection with a local housing authority district will fall within the remit of this protocol. Whilst the parent local authority will retain responsibility Middlesbrough has a commitment to working in partnership with the parent authority and subject to consent, contacting them to involve the relevant Personal Advisor in joint planning, pathway plan reviews and , where homeless personalised housing plans.

For the purposes of this protocol, care experienced young people will be referred to as young people throughout this document.

Early Planning and Preparation

This protocol will cover the journey for care experienced young people aged 16 years and over. However, preparation and support during the transition to adulthood should not only start on their 16th birthday. Planning for beyond their time in care should be integral to the care planning process throughout a young person's time in the care of the local authority.

Children's Social Care must ensure all 'eligible' and 'relevant' young people in Middlesbrough Council's care are provided with suitable accommodation until their 18th birthday. The Pathways Team will continue to support young people themselves to access suitable accommodation until their 25th birthday.

Young people who are well prepared and supported through the transition will have greater resilience and be less likely to become homeless after they leave care. Our commitment is to ensure:

- All eligible young people aged 16 or above will have a Needs Assessment in place detailing the advice, assistance and support they will need when leaving care. This should consider a young person's independent living skills, ability to manage own finances and their views and wishes to ensure they leave care at a time that is right for them.
- By the age of 16 years 3 months, the allocated social worker will prepare an initial Pathway Plan. Each young person will be central to drawing up their own Pathway Plan and will be supported to set goals and how to achieve them.
- The Pathway Plan will be kept under regular review with a contingency plan in place in case the proposed plan breaks down
- Up until the age of 18, while they remain in care all young people will have an Independent Reviewing Officer whose role is to ensure goals set are being met in a timely way and that the care plan reflects the young person's needs.
- All care leavers will be eligible for support from a Personal Advisor from the age of 16 years until their 25th birthday; this includes care leavers who return for support from the Pathways Team after the age of 21 years with consent of the young person. The role of the personal advisor is to support young people to prepare to live independently and offer advice and support. Sometimes for those young people under the age of 18 the role of the PA is undertaken by a social worker.
- From the age of 12 years all young people in care will start working on their '[Passport to Independence](#)' to develop their independent living skills. This toolkit will be used as evidence when applying to local housing authorities for social housing. Where providers of semi-independent accommodation have their own life skills toolkits, it will be important to ensure they cross reference with the Passport to independence. To ensure a joined-up approach the progress of the Passport to Independence will be reviewed and monitored at each statutory Looked After Child (LAC) review by the allocated Independent Reviewing Officer.

The Transition Process

Below outlines the process and details of the support and services available to young people who are working with the leaving care service in Middlesbrough.

- All Pathway Plans will outline the young person's accommodation pathway, taking into account their individual aspirations and support needs. The independent Reviewing

Officer will ensure any goals set are achievable and happening within a set time scale, along with a robust contingency plan.

- Where it is recognised that a young person is not ready to move to independent living, their Social Worker will complete the referral form and risk assessment form to enable the young person's panel to seek suitable semi-independent accommodation a minimum of six months before a young person's 18th birthday.
- All accommodation options (outlined in section 8) will be discussed with the young person and where appropriate their foster carer/key worker. Young people will also be encouraged and supported to visit the different semi-independent provision available to them.
- If alternate suitable accommodation is not secured by the young person's 18th birthday, then consideration will be made by an Assistant Director in Children's Social Care for an extension in placement, this will be for a time limited period and reviewed regularly.
- It is recognised that not all young people will be able to gain social housing at the age of 18 years or be ready for complete independence. It is important this is discussed by the Social Worker as part of their move on plan to ensure the young person has realistic expectations.
- The Personal Advisor (PA) will ensure the young person has an up-to-date Pathway Plan in place. The PA will obtain an information sharing consent form from the care leaver to share relevant sections of the Pathway Plan with local housing providers where requested.
- It is recognised that young people need time to develop the skills for independence. Semi-independent accommodation offers that gradual stepping stone towards sustainable tenancies. Where this is identified as a suitable option the Personal Advisor will refer the young person into the Young Person's Supported Accommodation Panel.
- At the earliest opportunity the young person will be registered with Tees Valley Home Finder.
- It is important that young people have a degree of choice in where they want to live. Young people will be supported to make an informed choice in where they apply for housing, taking into account local connection. This is especially important for those young people residing outside of the borough, ensuring they are supported in their decision to either stay in the area they are currently residing or return to Middlesbrough
- Young people requiring a transition into Adult Social Care will be heard at the Transitions Forum to ensure that their needs under the Care Act 2014 are considered alongside this protocol.
- The young persons allocated social worker or personal advisor will ensure, where appropriate all claims for benefits are submitted when the young person turns 18. To avoid unnecessary delays the young person will need to have appropriate ID, bank account and National Insurance Number in place.
- Young people, who are of EEA nationality, will be supported to apply for settled status as early as possible to ensure no delay in their eligibility for public funds.

Accommodation and support options

Young people will be encouraged and supported to remain in positive, supportive care settings until they are ready to move on. We want to ensure young people are given the time to build up the skills and knowledge needed to live independently.

We will ensure that accommodation provided for care leavers is suitable for their needs. All accommodation placements will be based on a thorough assessment of the young persons need which includes ascertaining his/her wishes, feelings and aspirations.

Types of Accommodation

- **Staying Close**

This is provided in the Local Authority in house services and offers residential care until the age of 18 with an extensive independent living programme. This provides the reassurance of moving to independent living with floating support.

- **Semi Independent accommodation**

There are a variety of supported accommodation types in Middlesbrough. This can include a hostel, shared house or self-contained flat with in house or outreach support. Young people can stay up to 2 years before moving on to independent living and will receive Key Worker support throughout their stay.

All referrals for young people under the age of 18 must go via the Young Persons Panel.

For young people over the age of 18, the allocated Social Worker or personal advisor will need to complete the Housing referral form for commissioned providers and send direct to providers. Referrals for those aged 18 to 24 can also be considered at the young Person's Panel, particularly for those with complex needs.

- **Living with family, friends, or relatives**

For some young people it might be the right option to return to living with family. When a young person identifies that they want to return home conversations will take place around the suitability, safety and longevity of this option. Family members will be fully involved in the planning process and will understand how to access support where the placement may not be successful. When a return home takes place practitioners will closely monitor and have a contingency plan in place should this break down. This will include presenting the young person's case to the Young Person's Panel alongside making preparation for the return to the family home. Family placements will also be supported using initiatives such as Middlesbrough Family Group Conferencing.

- **Social Housing**

All young people who are assessed as ready for independent living through the passport to independence, the Care V support tool and based on feedback from staff in accommodation settings, will be eligible to apply for social housing. The waiting time will vary in each area and so the pathway plan will need to reflect this, along with what will happen if the young person needs to move on from their current placement before a property is secured.

Before applying for social housing, the allocated social worker or personal advisor will need to take into account:

- Does the young person understand the responsibility of managing their own tenancy.
- Have they completed their Passport to Independence
- Do they have a local connection to the area they want to apply.

- **Private Rented**

Another option to live independently is to rent privately from a landlord, this allows more flexibility in location and timescale. Accommodation can be found either through a letting agent, directly with a landlord or with support from the Housing Solutions Team. Middlesbrough Council offers support with rent in advance.

To ensure the property is affordable, the allocated social worker or personal advisor will check the local housing allowance for the area <https://lha-direct.voa.gov.uk/Search.aspx>

Care leavers are eligible for the Local Housing Allowance single room rate until their 25th birthday, where it will reduce to the shared room rate. The Pathway Plan needs to reflect this and outline what support will be available to the young person during this time.

- **Home ownership**

In Middlesbrough we encourage the aspiration for young people to own their own properties. We will have conversations about future planning and the steps involved in owning your first home, which may include moving into employment.

For those currently in employment, home ownership will be discussed and support will be provided to access mortgage advice.

Care leavers and prison release

A coordinated approach will need to be taken for those care leavers who are due to be released from custody in order to prevent homelessness. The allocated Social Worker or Personal Advisor will ensure they work closely with the prison, probation and youth offending services and housing solutions team, where possible at least 6 months prior to release.

Early notification will be supported by the development of working relationships with local prisons.

Upon sentencing we will discuss accommodation upon release and will continue to do so upon direct prison visits. A contingency plan will be created by Children's Social Care should early release or late notification of release arise.

Good practice guidance in relation to this practice area can be found at [HMPPS Care Experience Matters](#)

Care leavers living outside of Middlesbrough

Early planning will take place to determine the young person's intentions to remain in the host area or return to Middlesbrough. This will be led by the Independent reviewing Officer (IRO) to enable targeted advice to be given, mirroring the processes followed for those currently in area.

Reciprocal arrangements are in place with most neighbouring authorities to ensure that young people living outside of Middlesbrough are exempt from Council Tax charges until the age of 25. Such arrangements will also be pursued if young people are living outside of the Tees Valley area.

Working together to enable successful tenancies

Young people often need support when they take on a tenancy, and this is even more important for a care leaver. Every partner's aim is to ensure tenancies are sustained; however, it is important to recognise that young people may find the transition to independence overwhelming. Where a young person is struggling to sustain a tenancy, we will commit to working together and with partner agencies to implement an enhanced package of support to address any difficulties identified.

- Prior to a young person taking on any tenancy, the Social Worker/Personal Advisor will take into account each young person's individual support needs. Ensuring appropriate support is available where needed. A financial assessment carried out by the Social Worker or Personal Advisor will help to ensure accommodation is affordable. The Personal Advisor can also offer budgeting plan support.
- We will ensure young people are aware of their tenancy rights and responsibilities.
- Where requested, the young person's Personal Advisor, carer or other responsible adult will accompany young people to all viewings and tenancy signups. Young people will be encouraged and feel supported to not have to go alone.
- For any young person moving into unregulated accommodation (including their own tenancy), a Pathway Plan review will be completed within 28 days of the young person

moving into their property. Any concerns (such as support needs/property condition) will be raised with the landlord.

- With consent, the Personal Advisor will contact the new landlord within a month of the young person taking on the tenancy, to ensure joined up working and any problems with the tenancy can be addressed early.
- As part of the Pathway Plan review, the Personal Advisor will ensure young people are supported to register for all utilities, to ensure they get the best rates and tariffs and to avoid any unexpected bills (no later than 28 days of moving into the property).
- Young people will be offered the option of setting up an alternative payment arrangement with the DWP or if appropriate direct payments to the landlord for rent payments.
- All care leavers, who are solely liable for council tax will be exempt of payment until their 25th birthday. The PA will support the young person to follow procedures to ensure exemption is applied for.
- Where it is recognised that a young person is struggling to manage their tenancy, their Personal Advisor can look to request extra support from either the landlord (if social housing) or refer to Middlesbrough ACT Community Interventions Team.
- In the event that a tenancy begins to break down, contingency plans will be followed which includes early referral back to the Young Person's Panel, consideration of a return to supported accommodation and use of the Housing Solution's Team's homeless prevention resources.

Homelessness

Young people leaving care are some of the most vulnerable in society. Without support from parents, many will struggle to adapt to independent life. One of the most common features of a poor transition to adulthood is housing instability, risk of homelessness and actual homelessness.

We want to ensure we are working together, and much earlier to prevent this outcome

Response to homelessness

Care leavers under 18:

- Care leaver's under 18s will be managed outside of the homeless pathway, utilising the young person's panel to plan for onward accommodation.

Care leavers over 18:

- Where a care leaver is aged between 18 and 25, at the time a Personal Advisor is made aware of a care leaver who is homeless or at risk of homelessness within 56 days, with the consent of the young person a referral will be made to the housing solutions team of their choice as early as possible through the [Duty to Refer](#) process

- Following the referral, a joint assessment will take place within 5 working days*. The meeting is to include the Personal Advisor, Housing Solutions Officer and young person to look at how homelessness can be prevented or relieved (see appendix 3 overview of Homeless Reduction Act 2017).
*a same day approach will be taken to assessment where the s.188 duty to provide interim accommodation is triggered.
- No care leaver will be asked to make a homeless application without support from their Social Worker or Personal Advisor.

The Housing Act 1996 & Homeless Reduction Act 2017

- All care leavers under 25 an automatic priority need to signify the LA's investment in those we are the corporate parents for.
- A Personalised Housing Plan (PHP) will be completed with all young people who make a homeless application, and (with consent) shared with the Personal Advisor. The PHP should outline the reasonable steps that the local authority and young person will take to prevent or relieve homelessness. Subject to consent the PHP should be informed by the young person's Pathway Plan.
- Where homelessness cannot be prevented and interim accommodation is required, the Housing Solutions Team will work with the Personal Advisor to secure suitable temporary accommodation inside of Middlesbrough before anything is considered outside of the border. For clarity, any young person under the age of 18 will be accommodated by Children's Social Care.
- Bed and Breakfast/hotel accommodation for care leavers aged 18 to 25 years, should only be used in emergencies where there are no alternative options available. When used this should be for as short a period as possible and oversight from senior managers. Bed and Breakfast/hotel accommodation will not be used for any homeless 16 or 17-year-old.
- Where homelessness cannot be prevented or relieved, young people will be supported by the Personal Advisor to ensure the Housing Solutions Team has all relevant information required to consider whether the young person is owed a full homelessness duty under the 1996 Act.
- With regard to intentionally homeless decisions [strategic guidance](#) states that all attempts should be made by housing authorities to avoid the impact of intentionally homeless decisions in relation to care leavers. We fully support this principle and have a clear commitment to continued joint working as corporate parents to ensure a plan for the young person's future housing is in place. As a result any intentionally homeless decision requires joint senior level sign off across Children's Social Care and ACT Middlesbrough. Decisions will be recorded using the [template](#) developed to support the decision making process.

Care Leavers who are Rough sleeping

When the Rough Sleeper Team identifies that a young person, rough sleeping is a Care Leaver, they should immediately conduct further enquiries with the individual to establish who their parent LA is in order to (with consent) make urgent contact with them to advise of the situation. We would then apply all of the established process around assessment and off-street accommodation in order to further these enquiries and work with our Pathways Team (if from Middlesbrough) or their Parent Local Authority to establish what support they will offer in order to assist the Rough Sleeper Team to progress their accommodation options in Middlesbrough or return them to their parent Local Authority area, if appropriate.

Escalation process

If any point in the practical working of this joint protocol, or associated procedure, there is disagreement between Children's Social Care and the Housing Solutions Team, then either or both parties should escalate this to their direct line manager, or where this is not possible, to the next management tier as appropriate.

Disagreements could arise in a number of areas but are most likely to arise around:

- Thresholds for services
- Roles and responsibilities
- The need for action and completion of assessments
- The proposed offer of accommodation
- Communication

Problem resolution is an integral part of professional co-operation and joint working to safeguard and promote the well-being of children and young people. While often a positive sign of developing thinking within a dynamic process this can be reflected in the immediate term as a lack of clarity in procedures or approaches. Professional disagreement is only dysfunctional if not resolved in a constructive and timely fashion.

Attempts at problem resolution may leave one worker or agency believing that the child remains at risk of significant harm. This person or agency has responsibility for communicating such concerns through agreed channels.

It is the responsibility of every professional to "problem solve". The aim must be to resolve professional disagreement at the earliest opportunity and as swiftly as possible always keeping in mind that the child and young person's safety and welfare is the paramount consideration.

If a professional disagreement arises and the issue cannot be resolved between practitioners, the matter must be referred to the Line Manager who will discuss with their opposite number in the other agency in the hope that the issue can be resolved.

Failure to resolve disagreements between line managers must be further escalated to the Head of Service within the respective organisations. If there continues to be no resolution,

then the matter should be escalated to the Director of Children's Social Care for consideration.

A clear record of decision making should be recorded against the child's file and the appropriate case management system in other agencies.

Implementation of the joint protocol

Briefings in relation to the protocol will take place across the council and will be provided to key Stakeholders throughout 2025/2026. The protocol will be accessible on the Middlesbrough Council website.

Training

The Housing Solutions Team Manager will attend quarterly Children's Services team meetings to discuss the protocol and the Housing Solutions Team meet with new/agency staff as part of their induction to make sure they are familiar with the protocol in addition to offering shadowing opportunities.

Reviewing this joint protocol

This protocol will be reviewed quarterly from November 2026 to November 2027.

Thereafter it will be reviewed annually or sooner if required due to changes in legislation and/or government guidance.

Operational reviews will be held between managers of Children's Social Care and the Housing Solutions Team.

Monitoring

Monthly operational meetings will be held which consider:

- The number of Duty to Refer referrals received
- The number of young people placed in temporary accommodation/B&B/in unsuitable accommodation
- The number of young people heard at the Young Person's Panel
- The overall number of homeless applicants who are care experienced up to the age of 30
- Number of young people who are prison leavers
- Number of young people who are rough sleeping

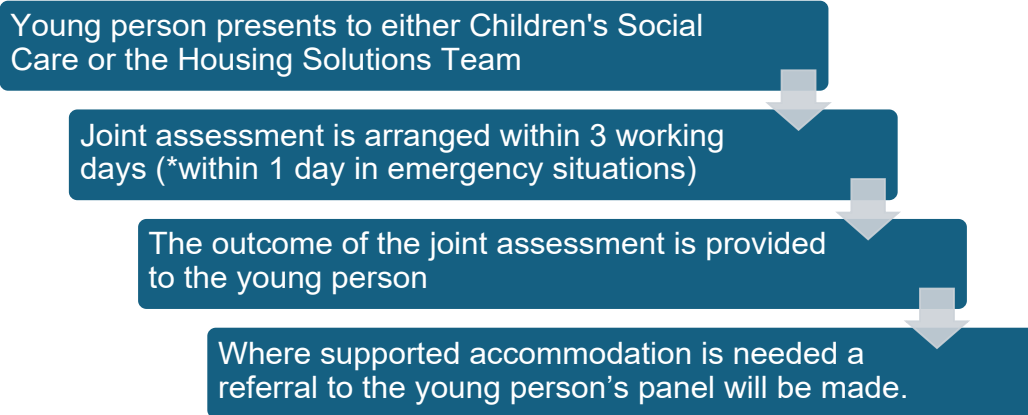
Data will be used to a to identify trends and develop service improvements.

Feedback will also be provided to the Corporate Parenting Board and to the Director of Children's Social Care.

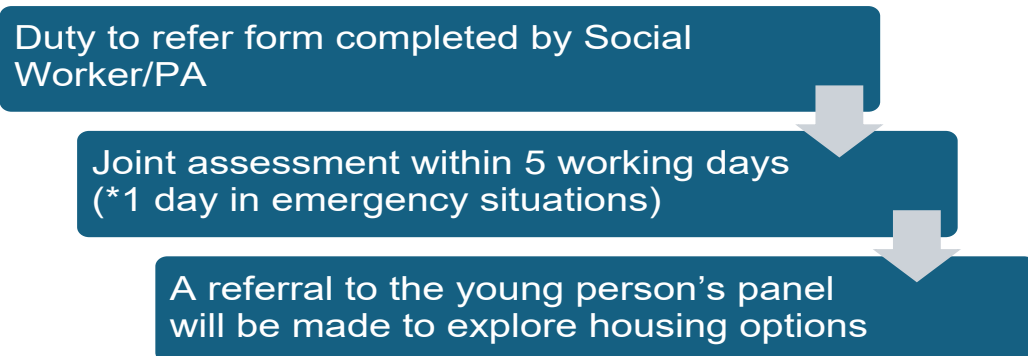
APPENDIX 1

Process Pathways

Under 18



Aged 18-25



APPENDIX 2

Young person's Panel Referral Form

YOUNG PERSONS PANEL REFERRAL FORM

Accommodation and Support for Young People

This form is for Supported Housing and Floating Support Services in Middlesbrough
For young people aged 16 to 24 years.

Date of Referral:

Office use only:

Panel Date:

.....

Time:

.....

WHICH SERVICE DOES THE APPLICANT REQUIRE?

Supported Housing Floating Support Services not sure

Has a homeless assessment has already been carried out?

If yes, please state the date:

If no please contact, the housing solutions team on 01642 726800 to arrange an appointment.

REFERRAL AGENCY DETAILS

Referral Agency:

Contact Name:

Tel No:

Email:

APPLICANTS DETAILS:

Full Name: D.O.B: Age:

Address:

Post code:

Contact No: NI NO:

Gender: Male Female Transgender

AGENCIES INVOLVED WITH THE YOUNG PERSON

Social Worker

Contact Name: Tel No:

Email:

Probation/YOS Worker

Contact Name: Tel No:

Email:

CPN /Psychiatrist

Contact Name: Tel No:

Email:

Health Visitor

Contact Name: Tel No:

Email:

Other

Contact Name: Tel No:

Email:

HOUSING HISTORY (Please give previous addresses up to 6 years)

Address (most recent first)	Tenure/Landlord	Dates to & from	Reasons for leaving

CURRENT HOUSING SITUATION (Please indicate with an x in any boxes required)

Is the applicant pregnant? Yes/No. If yes what is the expected date of delivery?

Please give details of any children who will be included in the application:

Name(s)	D.O.B.	Does the applicant have parental responsibility?
		Y/N
		Y/N
		Y/N

Are any of the children on the Child Protection Register or are there any Child Protection concerns?

If yes please give details

Has a Child in Need assessment been undertaken? Is the young person a Care Leaver or under S17?

If yes please give details

Does the applicant consider himself or herself to have a disability?

If yes please give details

FINANCIAL DETAILS

Is the applicant eligible for Housing Benefit? Yes/No

Does the applicant receive any other benefits? If yes which?

Does the applicant receive any other income? If yes, what income is received?

Does the applicant have a bank account?

SUPPORT NEEDS (Please indicate the areas where support may be needed)

<p><u>Achieve Economic well Being</u></p> <p>Claiming benefits <input type="checkbox"/></p> <p>Reducing debt <input type="checkbox"/></p> <p>Sorting out utilities <input type="checkbox"/></p> <p>Budgeting <input type="checkbox"/></p> <p>Obtaining paid work <input type="checkbox"/></p> <p><u>Be Healthy</u></p> <p>To develop daily living skills <input type="checkbox"/></p> <p>Advice on healthy eating <input type="checkbox"/></p> <p>To manage your physical health <input type="checkbox"/></p> <p>To manage your mental health <input type="checkbox"/></p> <p>Help with substance misuse <input type="checkbox"/></p> <p><u>Make a Positive Contribution</u></p> <p>Develop confidence <input type="checkbox"/></p> <p>Contribute in services and wider community <input type="checkbox"/></p>	<p><u>Enjoy and Achieve</u></p> <p>Participate in training/education <input type="checkbox"/></p> <p>Participate in informal learning activities <input type="checkbox"/></p> <p>Participate in leisure/cultural/faith <input type="checkbox"/></p> <p>Participate in work-like activities <input type="checkbox"/></p> <p>Gain contact with services/family/friends <input type="checkbox"/></p> <p><u>Stay Safe</u></p> <p>Support to maintain a tenancy <input type="checkbox"/></p> <p>Minimise offending behaviour <input type="checkbox"/></p> <p>Prevent causing harm to self <input type="checkbox"/></p> <p>Prevent causing harm to others <input type="checkbox"/></p>
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ANY OTHER INFORMATION

(Use this space to provide any other areas of support required, priorities or any further information on the areas highlighted above).

RISK ASSESSMENT (This section must be completed or the referral will NOT be considered)

Please use the categorisation below to assess the likelihood of the risk occurring:

LOW Isolated or occasional instances of non-significant incidents and/or a low potential of incidents reoccurring.

MEDIUM More frequent/regular incidents and/or a more significant nature

HIGH Likely, severe or significant

Does the applicant have a history/is there a risk of any of the following?

(Risk to self and others)

	L, M or H		L, M or H
Violence & Aggression – this includes physical/sexual assault.		Damage to property/Arson	
Verbal Aggression		Drug misuse	
Anger Management		Alcohol misuse	

Describe below potential triggers and who is at risk:

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.
- 4.

Is there a history of or risk of any of the following?

	L, M or H		L, M or H
Suicide		Self-harm	
Accidental overdose		Misuse of/non compliance with medication	
Abuse from others		Vulnerability	
Mental health issues			

If any identified, please give further information including triggers, details of incidents below:

Is there a history of difficulties regarding previous tenancies?

	L, M or H		L, M or H
Rent arrears/debts		Behaviour of friends	
Neighbour disputes		ASB	
Evictions		Harassment	
Other			

If any identified, please give further details below:

Any Police Involvement

Offence	Date	Caution	Conviction	Spent	No further action

As a professional how long have you know the applicant? Years Months

Is it safe to visit the applicant at home?

If not, is there another safe place?

Is the applicant suitable to share accommodation with other young vulnerable people?
Yes/ No

Has the Applicant ever been refused support? If yes, please state why.

Please provide any other relevant information:

CONSENT

I confirm the information contained in this application is true and includes all relevant information required to assess my referral.

I am aware that if I am applying for supported housing that this referral form will be forwarded to the young person’s panel for consideration.

I give my consent for agencies to obtain further information from all relevant agencies which may include, for example, landlords, police, probation, benefits agencies etc.

I understand that this information will only be made available to providers/organisations that are able to assist me to obtain the correct level of support and enable me to sustain a tenancy.

Signed: (Applicant)..... Date:.....

Signed: (Referral Agency)..... Date:.....

Equal Opportunities Monitoring Form

The Panel Co-ordinator aims to make sure all applicants are treated equally. In order to ensure the effectiveness of our equal opportunities policy it would be appreciated if you would complete your details below.

The information given is entirely confidential and forms no part of any assessment process.

Gender

- Male
- Female

Do you have a disability?

- Yes
- No

Age range

- Up to 25
- 26 -35
- 36 - 45
- 46 -45
- 56 and over

Marital Status

- Single
- Married
- Divorced
- Living with partner
- Separated

If you have a disability please give details:

Sexual Orientation

- Heterosexual (sexually attracted to member of the opposite sex)
- Bisexual (sexually attracted to both men and women)
- Gay
- Lesbian
- Undecided

Economic Status

- Job Seeker
- Govt. training scheme/New Deal
- Not seeking work
- Long term sick/disabled
- Full-time work (24 hours or more per week)
- Part-time work (less than 24 hours per week)
- Full-time student

My Nationality is

My Ethnic Origin is:

White	<input type="checkbox"/> British <input type="checkbox"/> Other	<input type="checkbox"/> Irish
Mixed	<input type="checkbox"/> White & Black Caribbean <input type="checkbox"/> White & Asian	<input type="checkbox"/> White & Black African <input type="checkbox"/> Other
Asian or Asian British	<input type="checkbox"/> Indian <input type="checkbox"/> Bangladeshi	<input type="checkbox"/> Pakistani <input type="checkbox"/> Other
Black or Black British	<input type="checkbox"/> Caribbean <input type="checkbox"/> Other	<input type="checkbox"/> African

Chinese	<input type="checkbox"/> Chinese
English Gypsy/Romany	<input type="checkbox"/>
Irish Traveller or other ethnic group	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> Other
Prefer not to answer	<input type="checkbox"/>

Please return with your application.

Thank You

Young Person's Accommodation Panel

Terms of Reference

Version 3 July 2025

1. Purpose

- 1.1 The Young Person Accommodation Panel is a forum to discuss the housing and support options for all Young People aged between 16 and 24.
- 1.2 The Young Person Accommodation Panel will act as gateway for Young People into supported accommodation

- 1.3 To provide a joint approach between Housing Solutions and Children's Services to review in detail and follow the progression of the following groups of young people's with the ultimate aim of them having secure long term accommodation.

2. Aims

- 2.1 In a multi-disciplinary forum, consider the accommodation and support needs of Young People in a person-centred way with an overall aim to prevent future homelessness.
- 2.2 To ensure that referrals for Young People are coordinated in a timely and efficient way and are allocated the most suitable accommodation.
- 2.3 To promote communication and partnership working between service providers, referral agencies, and statutory services.

3. Scope of the Panel

- 3.1 The Panel will be split into two sessions limited to considering:

Part 1 - Supported Accommodation Panel

- Referrals that meet the panel eligibility criteria (below)
- Vacancies in Accommodation and Support Services for Young People (below)
- Move-on from Accommodation and Support Services for Young People.

Part 2 – Care Leavers Accommodation Panel

- 16/17-year-olds still in care (regardless of whether they are in the borough or not) to identify and plot the progress of their path to independence.
- 18–24-year-olds in crisis who are former care leavers (such as homeless, in totally inappropriate accommodation or at risk of losing their home)
- Those in staying put arrangements to identify and help progress their path to independence.
- Those in university/educational tied accommodation to identify and help progress path to independence when their course finishes.
- Those in supported accommodation to identify and help progress their path to independence.
- Young People in Young Offenders Institutions to identify and help progress their path to independence.

4. Panel Eligibility Criteria

- 4.1 For consideration at the Young Persons Supported Accommodation Panel, applicants should meet the following criteria:

For Supported Accommodation:

- Aged 16 to 24 years on application

- Be leaving care, homeless, threatened with homelessness, or otherwise at risk for example due to experience of domestic violence.
- Currently live in Middlesbrough, want to live in Middlesbrough and can demonstrate a local connection or are looked after by Middlesbrough Council.
- Have a demonstrable need for a level of housing related support. This will be included on the referral form and discussed at panel by the referring agency representative.
- Have recourse to relevant benefits, grants or private funds to ensure payment for the support service and accommodation in accommodation-based services. Is the young person already claiming Universal Credit?
 - If not, referring agency to make sure I.D. is available prior to placement. If the young person is under 18 and has been referred from children's services/pathways please confirm at panel that Middlesbrough Council will pay the personal allowance for four weeks until the Universal Credit is in pay, this will help towards service charge, Food and personal care items (This will not exceed £250). This will mean the young person does not start with debt they cannot get out of.

For Dispersed Accommodation with Floating Support:

- Aged 18 to 24 years on application.
- Require support sustain the tenancy.
- Be a resident of Middlesbrough.

N.B. Where an application has been discussed at Panel and Members are unable to allocate an appropriate supported housing placement, floating support maybe then allocated where it is felt that the young person still requires support due to their situation in order to broaden housing options.

For Care Leavers Accommodation Panel:

- Any Young Person aged 16-25 who is or has been Looked after by Middlesbrough Council.
- Any Young Person currently resident in Middlesbrough or who has demonstrable local connection but open to another LA as a Looked After Child or a Care Leave with another Local Authority and their Social Worker wants to explore their accommodation options within the borough.

4.2 Referrals that do not meet the panel eligibility criteria will not be accepted.

4.3 Where an applicant is accepted by the panel and is referred to a particular Service for further consideration, the eligibility criteria specific to that Service will also need to be met. Providers have the right not to accept a referral to a Service even though the person referred may meet the criteria. In this event the Young Person will be referred back to the panel for further discussion.

4.4 Applicants accepted to the panel for consideration may not be guaranteed access to a service, due to service waiting lists. In this event applicants will be placed on a waiting list held by the Service Provider of the service they have been allocated.

4.5 The panel offers a range of housing and support options for Young People and it is the panel's intention to match their housing-related support needs with the type of housing and

support available from a service. In the event that two (or more) people are eligible for a service and have similar housing-related support needs, priority will be given according to length of time on the waiting list. The following priorities also apply:

For accommodation-based services priority will be given in this order:

1. 16 / 17 year old applicants who are homeless or leaving care with a demonstrable need for supported housing (for example due to lacking independent living skills, experience of domestic violence or exploitation).
2. 18 – 24-year-olds who are homeless or leaving care and have a demonstrable need for supported housing (for example due to lacking independent living skills or experience of domestic violence).

For floating support services priority will be given in this order:

1. 18 – 21 year old applicants ready to move on from other accommodation based services.
2. 18 – 24 year old applicants who are leaving care.
3. 18 – 25 year old applicants with support needs (for example due to lacking independent living skills or experience of domestic violence).

Services offering accommodation to under 18's must be Ofstead registered.

5.0 Accommodation and Support Services

5.1 The Accommodation and Support Panel for Young People acts as a gateway to the services listed below. Referrals to Panel will be given priority into these services:

Commissioned Provider	Service Name	Physical Description	Service Description	Length of service
Changing Lives	Erimus House	30 Self Contained units within Erimus House (including 2x Crashpads) 25 Dispersed Accommodation units with Floating Support	24 Hour staffing within Erimus House. Housing related Support	Up to 2 years
Home Group	Single Key	10 self-contained flats with shared communal areas	24 hour housing related support	Up to 2 years
North Star Housing	Rainham House & Hestia	Female Only Service (18+) Rainham -10 Self-contained 2-bedroom units & 1 Crash Pad Hestia – Units of dispersed accommodation with floating support.	24 Hour staffing in Rainham House. Housing related Support	Up to 2 years – Hestia properties converted to tenancies upon being ready for independence.

Commissioned Provider	Service Name	Physical Description	Service Description	Length of service
Riverside	Stages Academy	42 Units of accommodation for single people age 18-65	24 Hours staffing. Housing related Support	Up to 2 years
Middlesbrough Council	Service Name	Physical Description	Service Description	Length of service
	Community Interventions Team	Officers from within ACT Service to carry out homeless prevention and tenancy sustainment work.	Housing related support, floating support for resettlement, ensuring tenancy sustainability moving forward	Flexible depending on level of need.

5.2 Should it be agreed that more than one service can meet the needs of an applicant then the applicant will have the choice to choose which service they would like.

6. Membership of the Panel

6.1.1 **The Supported Accommodation Panel** will consist of representatives from the Service Providers listed at 5.1 and appropriate representatives and referrers from Children’s Social Care, Housing Solutions Team, Community Interventions Team, Pathways, and Registered Social Landlords.

The panel will be chaired consistently as below:

Chair: Housing Service Strategic Lead

Vice Chair: Housing Solutions Team Manager

Alternative: ACT Lead Officer

6.1.2 **The Care Leavers Accommodation Panel** will consist of representatives from Children’s Services and Housing and will be chaired and attended consistently as below:

Chair - Service Manager of Corporate Parenting

Vice Chair - ACT Lead Officer

Team Managers – Pathways

Housing Solutions Team Manager

Team Managers 0-19 Service

Fostering Service Manager / representative

Strategic Housing Lead

Community Interventions Team Manager

6.1.3 **Business Support:**

Business Support for the Young Persons Supported Accommodation Panel will be provided by ACT Middlesbrough and will support the Chair by:

- Setting Agenda for meeting based on referrals
- Maintain an action log/ tracking of cases.
- Recall cases for review based on timescales set by the chair/vice chair

- Monitoring housing nominations
- Sending out action list following panel meeting

Business Support for the Care Leavers Accommodation Panel will be provided by Children's Services and will support the Chair by:

- Updating tracker of cases
- Maintain an action log/ tracking of cases.
- Recall cases for review based on timescales set by the chair/vice chair
- Monitoring housing nominations
- Sending out action list following panel meeting

Separate agenda's and attendance to ensure information sharing is done on a "need to know" basis. The use of emails for agenda's will be kept to a minimum and will be managed through the use of Share Point Connect with each service providing details of who should have access to the relevant information.

- 6.2 Provider representatives *must* be authorised by their organisation to accept nominations from the panel for further assessment. Provider representatives should be encouraged to attend panel meetings whether or not there are vacancies in their services, to ensure continuity and clarify queries arising from previous meetings.
- 6.3 Appendix 1 gives example of an agenda for the overall YP Panel.
- 6.4 Panels will be held weekly on a day mutually agreed by panel members and can be reviewed to support service needs.

7. Referral Routes

- 7.1 Referral's and enquiries related to the Young Persons Accommodation panel should all be sent to YPpanel@Middlesborough.gov.uk
ACT Services can refer to the panel using the referral form built in to CDP and using referral 3.10 – Young Person's Supported Accommodation Panel and by completing in built referral form.

8 Responsibilities of Referral Agencies

- 8.1 Referral Agencies have a key role to play in ensuring the smooth administration of the panel. They are particularly responsible for:
- Ensuring that potential applicants meet the panel eligibility criteria.
 - Using the panel referral form to make referrals to the panel.
 - Ensuring that all sections on the referral form are completed and that any additional risk assessments and other relevant information such as a care plan, psychiatric/psychologist/OT/Care Coordinators reports are made available to the Service Providers within two weeks.
 - Ensuring that potential applicants give their informed consent to sharing the information contained within the referral form and relevant needs and risks being discussed with

statutory agencies and at the accommodation and support panel and having their information recorded on ACT Middlesbrough recording system CDP

- Consulting with other agencies involved in the applicants support network, particularly the relevant care manager if applicable, to gather relevant information on needs and risks prior to making a referral to the panel.
- Introducing the applicant to the service provider as appropriate
- Notifying the panel coordinator of any change in circumstances affecting an applicant's status on the panel waiting list

8.2 Representatives from referral agencies must attend panel meetings to provide information and clarification on specific referrals – ideally this will be the referrer themselves, who should arrange for a colleague or manager take their place if they are unable to attend

9. Responsibilities of Middlesbrough Housing Solutions Team

The Housing Solutions Team are responsible for:

- Carrying out homeless assessments and prevention work where necessary.
- Working with Children's Services/Care Leavers team for young people under the age of 18 adhering to the agreed protocols.
- Representing any applicant at Panel who they have assessed and who does not have a suitable referrer.
- Forwarding all completed supported housing referrals back to the Panel coordinator within 5 days.

10. Responsibilities of ACT Middlesbrough

10.1 The Front Door Team and the Panel chair are responsible for:

- Informing referral agencies of panel dates.
- Collating referral papers and summaries for panel representatives.
- Establishing whether referrals to the panel are existing or previous users of housing and support services.
- Maintaining a list of existing housing and support service users.
- Recording reasons for not accepting referrals and monitoring the ethnicity of these referrals.
- Providing feedback to referrers regarding the outcome of their referral to the Panel and waiting list status if applicable.
- Taking and distributing minutes of Supported Accommodation Panel meetings.

11. Responsibilities of Service Providers

11.1 The service providers are responsible for:

- Informing the ACT Middlesbrough of vacancies and allocations in services as and when they arise and at the panel meeting.
- Carrying out assessments of referrals made to their service against the eligibility criteria for that service.
- Promoting vacancies and panel dates to referral agencies

- Providing feedback to the original referrer and the Panel Coordinator regarding the assessment of referrals to schemes.
- Referring to the panel service users who require move-on from accommodation based services as early as possible, in consultation with other relevant stakeholders.
- Where a service provider is unable to meet the needs of an existing service user the Service Provider should refer back to Panel before notice is served/service ended.

12. Responsibilities of Children's Services

12.1 Children's Services are responsible for:

- Ensuring all the young people open to 0-19 services, Aspire or Pathways are referred into the relevant panel for discussion at the earliest opportunity
- Following the correct processes and protocols in place for 16/17 year olds
- Submitting duty to refer information to Housing Solutions for those 18+
- Identify independence work required to be tenancy ready.
- Ensure the young person has submitted a housing register application.
- Identifying young people for adult social care services.
- Identifying young people who will be 'staying put'.
- Identifying referral to YP Supported Accommodation Panel and ensuring referral forms are completed fully and with the most recent up to date information
- Identifying young people that are entering higher education.
- Reviewing the housing pathway plan and set date for next review.
- Agreeing on bidding for properties

13. Unresolvable issues, potential evictions, escalation and challenge

13.1 In cases where a positive outcome cannot be secured for a young person through the Supported Accommodation Panel or Care Leaver Panel, where there is professional disagreement or where the Young Person is at risk of eviction a referral should be made to the Escalations and Evictions Panel. The panel is chaired by the ACT Lead Officer and offers an opportunity for the case to be presented to a panel of colleagues with strategic authority to assist in the progression of cases outside of standard operating procedure and assisting to address gaps in provision where it is required. The panel also discusses potential evictions from all accommodation with a preventative focus.

14. Review

14.1 The terms of reference will be reviewed in annually.

Appendix 1 – Example Agenda

This document was classified as: OFFICIAL SENSITIVE

Young Persons Accommodation Panel

DATE

TIME (2.5 hrs allocated to meetings)

Microsoft Teams link

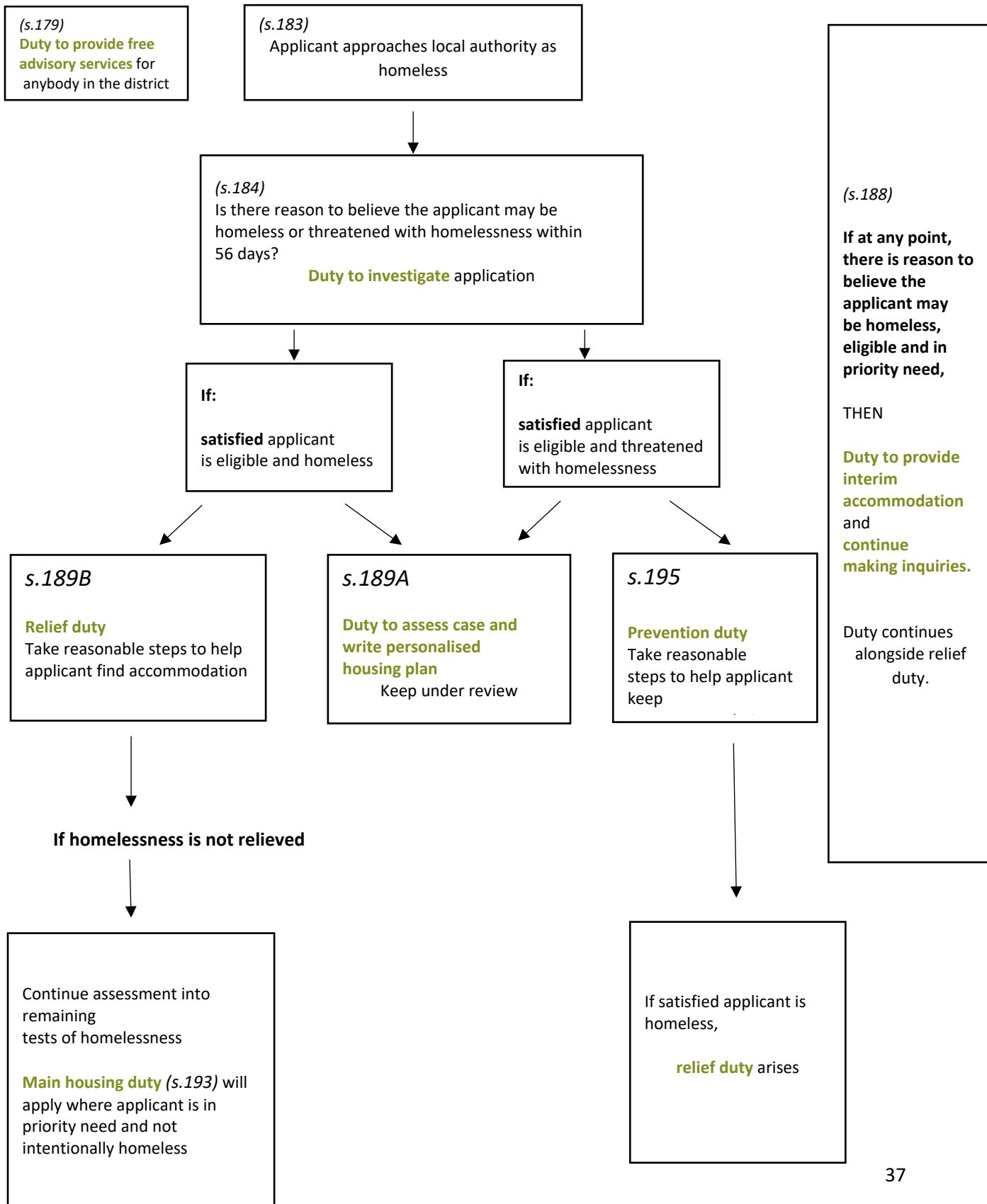
A G E N D A

Item	Supporting Documentation	Time Slot	Presented by:
YP Supported Accommodation Panel			
Introductions		13:00	Chair
Actions from previous meeting & updates		13:05	Chair
YP 1		13:15	PA
YP 2		13:25	Social Worker
YP 3		13:35	Housing Officer
YP 4		13:45	Social Worker / PA
Close of Supported Accommodation Panel		14:00	Chair
Time to allow comfort break and change over of attendees			
Care Leavers Panel			
Actions from previous meeting & updates		14:15	Chair
YPs open to Aspire Team & Accommodated		14:25	Aspire Team SW
New cases allocated to Pathways		14:35	Pathways Managers
16 / 17 year olds		14:55	0-19 team
18+		15:20	Pathways
Close		15:30	

End of Document

APPENDIX 4

Homelessness Reduction Act flowchart



APPENDIX 5

Legislative Framework

This protocol 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
- [Equality Act 2010](#)

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: transition to adulthood for care leavers](#)
- [Extending Personal Adviser support for all care leavers to age 25](#)[Local offer guidance](#)