

Joint Housing Protocol for Care Leavers

Children & Young People in Care

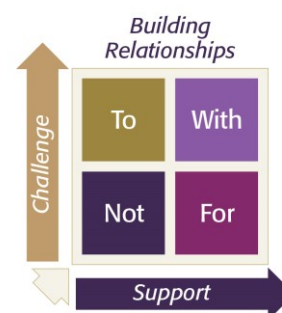
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	1.0	Joint Housing Protocol for Care Leavers	
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This system of recording review dates is designed to ensure staff at all times use the correct version of the up to date Policy. This system is used on all City of Wolverhampton Council – Children & Young People Policies and Procedures.			

CONSULTATION
The following people have been consulted on this policy: - Supported Accommodation Manager - Registered Service Manager, Supported Accommodation - Head of Homeless Services - Reach Team Manager - CYPIC Head of Service - Wolverhampton Homes - Care Leavers Independence Collective

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Joint Housing Protocol, Housing, Care Leavers, Accommodation.

RESTORATIVE PRACTICE

This Policy is underpinned by relationship building and repairing harm, fundamental principles of restorative practice which weaves throughout our social work practice. Restorative Practice means strengthening relationships as well as strengthening social connections within communities. In Wolverhampton, we are committed to restorative core beliefs and principles, embedding restorative practice as a fundamental part of our work within social care. Part of this work should focus on building relationships with children, young people and their families and the society in which they live. It not only helps us to better understand their needs, but also establish positive and sustainable working relationships to improve outcomes.



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1.0 INTRODUCTION

Young people leaving care require safe and suitable accommodation to help them make a positive transition into adulthood. Good housing and tailored support around emotional well-being and life skills underpins success in other areas of life. We understand 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 we all want to ensure young people are well equipped and understand their own level of skill and aspirations for their future. Having access to suitable accommodation is key to young people achieving positive outcomes, however it is much more than just finding a place to stay.

2.0 PURPOSE OF THIS PROTOCOL

This protocol outlines how the City of Wolverhampton Council will work together with partners across the city to support care leavers as they transition into independent living. All partners within the City of Wolverhampton will together meet their statutory duties and corporate parenting responsibilities and provide a supportive and safe pathway to independent living.

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.

This protocol was jointly developed with representatives of the City of Wolverhampton's care leavers and with front-line officers from both Homeless Services and the Reach Leaving Care Teams.

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

3.0 AIMS AND OBJECTIVES

1. To ensure all care leavers achieve a successful transition into independent living through support, preparation, and the provision of suitable accommodation.
2. 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.
3. 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.
4. 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 on-going joint training, a robust induction process and opportunities for shadowing.
5. To ensure care leavers are awarded priority status on local housing allocations policies at the time a young person is ready (as outlined in the Pathway Plan) to prevent the need to go through the homeless route.
6. To ensure that the accommodation needs of young people leaving custody are appropriately planned.
7. 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.

4.0 LEGISLATIVE FRAMEWORK

This protocol refers to the following legislation:

- Housing Act (1996) Parts 6 and 7, as amended by the Homelessness Reduction Act 2017
- Homelessness (Priority Need for Accommodation) (England) Order 2002
- Children Act 1989
- Children (Leaving Care) Act 2000
- Sections 1,2 and 3 of the Children and Social Work Act 2017
- Equality Act 2010
- Supported Accommodation (England) Regulations 2023

Statutory guidance that this document refers to:

The Homelessness Code of Guidance (2018) – <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/homelessness-code-of-guidance-for-local-authorities>

Statutory Guidance on applying corporate parenting principles to looked after children and care leavers (2018) – <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/applying-corporate-parenting-principles-to-looked-after-children-and-care-leavers>

The Children Act 1989 guidance and regulations Volume 2: care planning, placement and case review
[https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/441643/Children Act Guidance 2015.pdf](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/441643/Children_Act_Guidance_2015.pdf)

The Children Act 1989 guidance and regulations Volume 3: planning transition to adulthood for care leavers 4
<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/children-act-1989-transition-to-adulthood-for-care-leavers>

Extending Personal Adviser support for all care leavers to age 25 (2018)
<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/extending-personal-adviser-support-to-age-25>

Local Offer Guidance – <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/local-offer-guidance>

Ofsted Guide to the Supported Accommodation Regulations – [https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/media/6514400088281e000db4e965/Guide to the supported accommodation regulations including quality standards.pdf](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/media/6514400088281e000db4e965/Guide_to_the_supported_accommodation_regulations_including_quality_standards.pdf)

This protocol covers:

- **Eligible children**

A young person aged 16 or 17 and who has been in care for at least 13 weeks since the age of 14 and who is still a young person in care.

- **Relevant children**

A young person aged 16 and 17 who has been in care 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 were previously 'eligible' or 'relevant'.

- **Qualifying children**

A young person under 21 who stopped being in care, after the age of 16 and is in full time higher or further education. This also includes 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 City of Wolverhampton Council and who has been granted refugee status. Also, 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** who are the responsibility of another local authority but who reside in the City of Wolverhampton and can show a local connection will fall within the remit of this protocol

5.0 OUR CORPORATE PARENTING PLEDGE

Being a corporate parent means the council and its partners, do everything they can for the children and young people in, or leaving the council's care, to give them all the opportunities that other children and young people get. We are ambitious for the children and young people in our care and care leavers, we want to encourage them to dream big.

The City of Wolverhampton's Pledge to care leavers is:

- To respect and honour your identity
- To listen to you
- To always believe in you
- To keep you informed
- To support and guide you
- To find you a safe home
- To be your champion
- To be realistic and honest

6.0 OUR OFFER TO YOUNG PEOPLE LEAVING CARE AND CARE LEAVERS

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 City of Wolverhampton Council alone cannot meet the needs of care leavers and has worked with partners to implement this offer to care leavers. The City of Wolverhampton's local offer "Reach" can be accessed here: [REACH Local offer](#)

Our accommodation offer:

We want you to feel safe and secure where you live to help you achieve this:

- You can have access to a range of supported accommodation: hostels, supported lodgings and social housing.
- You can access the children and young people in care training flat to help you trial living independently.
- You can access a Housing Support flat when you are 16-18-years old if this is right for you. You will receive support from a housing support worker who will support you between 10 – 30 hours per week.
- You can access the emergency accommodation pad in an absolute emergency.
- We work closely with City of Wolverhampton Council Homeless Services, under their evictions protocol, to ensure that you will not be declared intentionally homeless when you are living in a Wolverhampton Homes managed property.
- We work in partnership with Wolverhampton Homes to support you in securing a tenancy when you turn 18.
- If you live in a Wolverhampton Homes managed property and are care leaver you will receive the equivalent to three weeks rent on to your account to use at any time during the life of your tenancy. This is to support you if you are experiencing financial hardship e.g., when you start a new job or if you need to apply for benefits and there is a gap in you receiving payments.
- If you live in a Wolverhampton Homes managed property and are a care leaver tenant, you can get support in receiving essential items for your home from the hardship fund.
- If you are a care leaver who lives in Wolverhampton you are fully exempt from Council Tax up to the age of 25.
- You will receive up to £3000 Setting up Home Grant when you move into your accommodation.

- You will be awarded a priority banding on the council's choice-based lettings scheme, (Band 1) on the housing register.
- You will have the opportunity to 'Stay Put', with your foster parent(s) until you are 21.
- If you are leaving custody, you will have a visit from the Custody Champion to ensure you have a suitable accommodation on release.

7.0 KEY AGENCIES INVOLVED IN THE PROTOCOL

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

7.1 CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE IN CARE SERVICE

The Reach Leaving Care Team supports young people leaving care up to the age of 25, whether they are in education or training or not.

The service consists of social workers and young personal advisers (YPA) who help young people to prepare to live independently and offer advice and support as they leave care. YPAs support young people and work alongside the social worker to support the young person in developing their Pathway Plan, putting in place the support young people are entitled to at the earliest appropriate stage. Once a young person turns 18 the YPA then becomes the primary support for that young person and continues to encourage them to update their pathway plan regularly and support them with their transition into adulthood.

The Supported Accommodation Team consists of the Housing Support Service, the Wolverhampton House Project, and the Supported Lodgings Service. The three services work together with social workers's, YPA's and young people to ensure that they have somewhere suitable to live when they leave care. The team offers a range of internal accommodation and support options to young people leaving care.

7.2 WOLVERHAMPTON HOMELESS SERVICES

Wolverhampton Homeless service delivers the housing and homeless service within the Council. Care leavers will be assessed in accordance with the City of Wolverhampton Council's Allocation Policy and, where needed, the homeless legislation governed by the Homeless Reduction Act 2017 and part 7, Housing Act 1996. Care leavers will be offered suitable accommodation that meets their assessed needs.

Wolverhampton Homes also provides a housing management function, the Young Persons Team, to care leavers in its introductory and secure tenancies and understands the need to work with the Children and Young People in Care Service to support the needs of care leavers. The role of the Young Persons Team is to assess applications for housing from young people and advise on the most suitable solutions.

Providing advice, information, support, and practical help to young tenants and enable them to settle into their accommodation and successfully maintain their tenancy. They work in partnership with other agencies to ensure young people are fully supported to live independently and to assist in the prevention of homelessness.

The Young Persons Team monitor and support young people leaving care and moving to independence. Children & Young People in Care will receive priority band 1 when ready for independence and the additional security of 1 months' rent in advance (three weeks from Wolverhampton Homes and one week from Children and Young People in Care services) Support is available for young people for up to 2 years or longer if required. See: [Wolverhampton Homes | Care leavers](#)

7.3 P3, PEOPLE, POTENTIAL, POSSIBILITIES

P3 are a commissioned accommodation and support providers for care leavers aged 18-25. They provide supported accommodation within the city, with the overarching aim of providing effective support to young people which is needs led and will enable them to successfully move on and manage their lifestyle and own accommodation / property.

Referral to access this accommodation will be made through the Roof Over our Heads Panel. (see section 12)

8.0 PLANNING FOR TRANSITION FOR CARE LEAVERS

The transition to adulthood for all young people can often be complex and confusing and the support they receive during this period can play a significant role in a successful transition. Young people leaving care are known to be particularly vulnerable due to their previous life histories. Young people will have the best chance of successfully transitioning from care to independence if those supporting them take the following principles into account when talking to the young person and/or making decision regarding the future:

- Is this good enough for my own child?
- Providing a second chance if things don't go as expected.
- Is this tailored to their individual needs, particularly if they are more vulnerable than other young people?

The young person and the professionals responsible for contributing to the care/transition plan must concur that they have developed the skills necessary to manage any transition to more "independent living" where, as a result, less support will be provided. The Children and Young People in Care Service must ensure that the young person's needs are subject to on-going assessment and review, so that the authority's intervention puts them on the pathway to success as they make their transition to adulthood.

8.1 CARE PLANNING

Transition to adulthood for children and young people in care does not start on their 16th birthday; preparation for a time when they will no longer be looked after should be integral to the care planning process throughout their time in care.

The Pathway Plan should build on information and services set out in the Care Plan, incorporating the services that will be provided to the young person. The plan supports young people to develop their resilience and equip them to make a positive transition to adulthood enabling them to manage the challenges of more independent living.

Where there is any proposal for the young person to move to different accommodation, as part of the process to prepare for their transition to adulthood, then the plan must include an assessment of the support they need to develop the skills that they will require to be ready for this significant change. The plan must also include a thorough assessment as to the suitability of the potential accommodation for the individual young person.

8.2 PLANNING CONSULTATIONS

The Supported Accommodation Manager from Children and Young People in Care's Service meets regularly with Team Managers to look at the plan for each young person in care when they reach 15 and a half years of age. The plan for transition will be discussed, focusing on the young person's current foster home, assessment of their current independence skills, taking into consideration the aspirations of the young person, and looking at educational needs and support networks.

The Supported Accommodation Manager will provide the Social Worker with a range of accommodation options available (see Section 7). Social Workers can refer to the House Project or Housing Support flats using the referral form – Appendix VI

The plan for transition will also take into consideration:

- The young person's financial capabilities and money management capacity, with strategies to develop the care leaver's skills in this area.
- Details about the kind of support that the young person can expect their social worker/personal advisor to provide.
- Scope for contingencies that might be required to be followed as the relationship changes over time.

9.0 HELPING CARE LEAVERS TO PREPARE FOR INDEPENDENT LIVING

A key principle of corporate parenting is a responsibility to prepare children and care leavers for adulthood and independent living. 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. The Reach Leaving Care team support young people leaving care with the following:

- 1:1 direct work session with young people to target a specific area of need regarding developing independence skills i.e., a budgeting session or work on keeping safe online.
- YPA's support care leavers with any pre-tenancy workshops they need to complete in order to gain a tenancy and complete a move on grid (see Appendix I) with the young person to highlight their independence skills and work out which areas need support.
- Independence skills are assessed every 6 months through the pathway planning process and targets agreed with the young person on how to develop the lower scored areas.
- Multi agency pathway plan reviews take place to provide a holistic approach to support a young person to develop their independent skills.
- Care leavers can access a grand mentor to help support with building confidence, getting out and about in the community as well as encouraging future goals and supporting the young person to think of ideas on how they can reach those goals.
- Young people living out of area can receive the same 1:1 session with their YPA, YPA's will work closely with any carers/support workers to ensure that they are supporting the young people to develop their independence skills. YPA's will also look into any resources that may be local to them.
- Young parents can access a Parent Champion to support with parenting. This can include access to universal services and budgeting.
- Families working together for 17-year-olds to ensure that young people have the support from family and important others in preparation for leaving care.
- Hold a weekly drop in, "The Reach Café" where young people can access support from YPA's, Housing, Sexual Health agencies, DWP and the Care Leaver nurse.

For young people in custody, some 1:1 work can still be completed during visits from the YPA, however these may be more paper based/conversational rather than practical. Young people are encouraged to work within the prison where possible and take any opportunities to practice their independence skills where possible.

9.1 QUALIFYING YOUNG PEOPLE

A qualifying care leaver is defined in section 24 of the Children Act 1989 as a person who;

- (a) Left care before 1st October 2001
- (b) Left care after 1st October 2001 after the age of 16 but are not 'eligible' or 'relevant' because they were not in care for a full 13 weeks from their 14th Birthday and upon their 16th birthday
- (c) Were accommodated, in a variety of other settings, for example, residential education or mental/health provision or private fostering or special guardianship or remanded to custody

The City of Wolverhampton Council ensures that all qualifying young people remain open to the service. These young people are allocated to a virtual qualifying worker and monitored every three months by the Reach Team who writes to them to ensure they are aware of their rights to advice and assistance.

If a qualifying young person needs a service, they are entitled to request an assessment of their needs and receive advice and support.

10.0 ACCOMMODATION AND SUPPORT OPTIONS FOR CARE LEAVERS

The City of Wolverhampton offers a variety of accommodation options to children and young people leaving care and care leavers.

10.1 STAYING PUT

This enables care leavers to remain with their former foster parent(s) when they turn 18 years old. Staying Put enables young people who are in a stable, supportive foster home the opportunity to pursue education, training, and employment, without the disruption of having to move to independence during this critical period of their lives. The benefits are primarily about extending a familiar relationship where the young person continues to experience security and stability. Young people who are in foster care can benefit from Staying Put regardless of whether they are in education, training, or employment before turning 18 years old. When both the young person and foster parent(s) agree to a Staying Put arrangement and where such an arrangement is assessed as being appropriate then all young people and foster parent(s) will be supported to ensure that this arrangement is pursued.

The Children and Young People in Care Staying Put Policy outlines these decisions should be made clear in their pathway plan and the written agreement covering the staying put arrangement. More specifically, staying put arrangements are designed to:

- Ensure that young people can experience a transition to adulthood similar to that of their peers, within a supportive family environment.
- Ensure that young people are not obliged to leave their former foster family before they feel ready to move into greater independence
- Help care leavers to maximise opportunities for education, employment, or training.
- Reduce the likelihood of periods of homelessness
- Ensure that care leavers develop the necessary emotional and practical skills before they are required to live independently.
- Reduce the likelihood of social exclusion.

10.3 SEMI-INDEPENDENT AND INDEPENDENT – OFSTED REGULATED ACCOMMODATION

In 2023 the supported accommodation regulations were introduced and Wolverhampton became registered with Ofsted in August 2024. These regulations

define supported accommodation and set out some exclusions as to what would be considered supported accommodation and extended powers to the Secretary of State to make further regulations in respect of supported accommodation. ([Guide to the supported accommodation regulations including quality standards \(publishing.service.gov.uk\)](https://publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/614242/guide-to-the-supported-accommodation-regulations-including-quality-standards.pdf))

Supported accommodation for children in care and care leavers caters for children aged 16 and 17 who have relatively high or increasing levels of independence, who are ready to gain further skills in preparation for adult living, and who do not need or want the degree of care or type of environment provided in a children's home or foster home. For young people who are ready for it, high-quality supported accommodation that provides a nurturing and protective environment can be a place where they can thrive and prepare for greater independence. The principles upon which supported accommodation is delivered are important elements that underpin the Regulations. These principles were developed with care-experienced young people. They are written in the first person from the perspective of a young person and promote young people's rights and entitlements and reflect what they say is important to them.

The key principles focus on the voice of the young person:

1. I feel safe and secure where I live and in my wider environment.
2. My voice is respected, heard and advocated for, so I can influence the support I receive.
3. I have confidence that the adults who support me understand me, are skilled and work effectively together to best meet my needs.
4. I have my own space that I feel proud of and live in a comfortable, well maintained, and stable accommodation.
5. I receive high-quality, tailored support that sustains my health and wellbeing.
6. I have strong, trusting, and meaningful relationships within my support system and can rely on the adults around me.
7. I feel supported to learn and apply skills for independent adult living.
8. I feel positive about my future and opportunities as a result of the support I receive.

10.4 CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE IN CARE'S SUPPORTED ACCOMMODATION TEAM

These options can be found on the Wolverhampton Children in Care Website [Accommodation](#) and are:

10.5 HOUSING SUPPORT SERVICE

The Supported Accommodation Team's Housing Support Service situated within the Children and Young People in Care Service offer training flats. The service currently operates with a total of 33 properties, with 2 training flats and 2 crash pads included within the service. Housing Support Workers (HSW) provide a maximum of 30 hours' intense support per week with the young person in their allocated unit of accommodation. There is a structured plan of support which is needs led and in accordance with the Pathway Plan where appropriate, and shall be signed off by the Young Person, Social Worker, YPA and HSW. The support focuses on the following areas:

- Setting Up Home
- Keeping themselves safe.
- Support with Personal, Emotional and Mental Health
- Substance misuse (if applicable)
- Support and guidance in Self Care Skills
- Support and guidance in preparation for independent living (Support to develop general household skills)
- Budgeting and Money Management
- Managing Tenancy and Accommodation
- Support to access education, work placements, employment, and social activities
- Motivation and Taking Responsibility
- Social Networks and Relationships

This is also supported by the completion of the ASDAN Short Course, Living Independently; that both the young person and HSW will work together to complete and will be evidence based. Completion of the ASDAN also provides the young person with an accreditation.

10.6 TRAINING FLAT

Within the Housing Support Service, there are two training flats where young people in care and care leavers can have the opportunity to trial living independently but with the benefit of having support to identify strategies to manage the practical and emotional demands of living alone, without compromising their future housing options. They can also signal to young people that they're on the path to living independently, helping them to visualise independence as their end goal.

Children and Young People in Care, who are approaching the transitional time in their life when they are getting ready to leave care, can stay in the training flat for a period of up to two weeks as part of their preparation for independence. The time spent in the flat must be part of an on-going plan of independence training as identified in their Pathway Plan and/or their Reviews. A stay in the training flat should not be viewed as the final preparation for independence.

Priority will be given to 16-17 years olds (who have left education), however, all Care Leavers who are ready to take the step into independent living and want to access their priority banding, will need to access the training flat to evidence that they have the skills to progress. This stay will be instrumental in the completion of their move on evidence grid with Wolverhampton Homes. Referrals for training flat stays are completed by either their Social Worker or Young Person's Advisor, direct to the Supported Accommodation Team.

10.7 CRASH PADS

The local authority does not endorse the use of B&B for care leavers. The Children and Young People in Care's Supported Accommodation Team has two emergency

crash pads located within the city to provide temporary, emergency accommodation for Care Leavers. The crash pads consist of studio accommodation with bathroom and kitchen. Both properties are provided with bed, bedding and sufficient cooking and bathing facilities.

A designated Housing Support Worker is allocated to provide daily support to the young person during their stay in the crash pad to ensure that their emotional wellbeing and needs are met. The use of this provision should be for a maximum of 24-48 hours whilst a suitable alternative is found. Consideration into extending the stay for up to two weeks can be requested if a suitable move on plan is in place or the young person is awaiting suitable planned accommodation.

10.8 THE WOLVERHAMPTON HOUSE PROJECT

[About our Project](#)

The House Project takes a ground-breaking approach through its commitment to young people's ownership to enable young people leaving care to achieve successful independence. The Project was co-designed with young people from the start and works on co-operative principles through which adults and young people in and leaving care work together to refurbish properties that become their homes and build a long-term community of support. In October 2019, the City of Wolverhampton Council launched its local House Project.

The House Project works on a theory of change known as the Orchids practice framework. This offers a supportive safe base to young people to explore their world and build a positive future to enable them to: take ownership of their decisions, take responsibility for keeping themselves safe, build a community of support, have their own homes, gain independence skills, gain a sense of developmental direction, and have a positive sense of wellbeing.

Links are built with local housing providers which enables the House Project to have access to properties. Links are built with companies and training providers engaged locally in building and associated trades. Through these connections, young people learn to project manage any decoration works necessary to make their allocated property a home.

When the young people have furnished their property, they move into their home, initially on an introductory tenancy, with a view to them having a long-term tenancy within 6 – 12 months. As excellent tenants, when they 'graduate' from the House Project, they retain the property that they have made into a home. They continue to be a member of the House Project community for as long as they wish. Landlords get good tenants and LA's have a long-term, sustainable housing solution to meet the needs of young people leaving the care system. Additional support is provided via Wolverhampton Homes Young Persons team who will monitor their rent accounts and provide support/offer intervention alongside HP staff.

10.9 SUPPORTED LODGINGS

The Children and Young People in Care Services offers an internal supported lodgings service. The scheme seeks to enable young people in care, aged 16 -21, to make as smooth a transition as possible to independent living by offering a steppingstone of independent living with support, thus promoting positive planning and preparation for independence in line with the Pathway Plan for each young person.

Supported Lodgings Providers (Hosts) may be very different from each other and come from many different walks of life. Each will have their skills and strengths but what providers will have in common is that they enjoy having young people around; understand the difficulties faced by looked after young people and care leavers and a desire to make a difference to their lives by equipping them with the skills and confidence to live independently.

The aim is to support young people to gain the practical and emotional skills that they will require to achieve success when living independently. It is intended for young people with low level needs e.g., young people who are responsible, have independence skills and have no major behaviour difficulties.

Supported Lodgings is designed to help young people mature and develop by enabling them to experience being part of a supportive living environment. It is anticipated that they can benefit from a level of freedom and responsibility whilst still sharing a home and time with an adult(s) who are positive role model/models providing guidance, advice, and support in a consistent and positive manner.

The aim will be for the young person to reach a point where they are able to move on to less supported accommodation and to have developed the skills necessary for independent living, thereby ultimately moving on to their own tenancy.

10.10 STAYING CLOSE

Staying Close is a programme that provides extra support for young people leaving care from children's homes, by taking a coordinated and multi-agency approach. Care Leavers are offered a choice of whether or not to engage with Staying Close. Those who choose to engage receive support via a Staying Close Plan which offers tailored support to their circumstances and needs. The young person may identify a member of staff from their home to continue to support them when they move into more independent accommodation.

10.11 LIVING WITH FAMILY

A number of young people leaving care return to live with their birth family. For many young people this is a positive and successful outcome, and where it is appropriate and planned the young person should be supported to return. In the event of a potential breakdown in relationships, the YPA will attempt to mediate. If this is unsuccessful, they will support the young person to source alternative accommodation.

11.0 SUITABILITY OF ACCOMMODATION

Section 23B of the 1989 Act requires the local authority to provide relevant children with, or maintain them in, suitable accommodation and to ensure that when placing young people in such homes they receive appropriate supervision and contact from the authority. Ofsted Regulations (2023) state that “The accommodation must be safe, comfortable, and suitable for young people, with appropriate facilities and furnishings. It should also be well-maintained and meet relevant health and safety standards” <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/providing-supported-accommodation-for-children-and-young-people#:~:text=Details,private%20and%20charitable%20sector%20organisations>

Suitable accommodation is classed as:

- Accommodation that is as far as reasonably practicable, is suitable for the young person in light of their needs, including health needs.
- In respect of which the responsible authority has satisfied itself as to the character and suitability of the landlord or other provider.
- Complies with health and safety requirements related to rented accommodation.
- In respect of which the responsible authority has, so far as reasonably practicable, taken into account the young person's wishes and feelings, and their education, training or employment needs.

The City of Wolverhampton internal Supported Accommodation Service provides a variety of choice in suitable accommodation options which are monitored internally for their suitability through monthly health and safety checks

If a care leaver needs support and is unhappy with the accommodation provided, they should in the first instance, speak to their Social Worker or Young Person's advisor and or Independent Reviewing Officer. On the occasion that they are still not satisfied then a complaint can be made via the following link:

[haveyoursay@wolverhampton.gov.uk](https://haveyoursay.wolverhampton.gov.uk) or by telephone: 01902 553115

12.0 REFERRAL ROUTES FOR SUPPORTED ACCOMMODATION

Access to supported accommodation within the City, outside of the internal Supported Accommodation Service, is made through a single point of contact and reviewed fortnightly via the Roof Over our Heads Panel. This single point of access panel has been devised to respond to the housing need of the young people in Wolverhampton, those who are homeless, threatened with homelessness or are living in unsuitable accommodation. The purpose of the panel is to review applications for accommodation and support from young people between the ages of 16 -25 and to ensure that there is an effective time responsive offer of accommodation made to them. The group will look at each referral and consider all solutions to young people accessing accommodation. Priority is given to care leavers.

The Panel is delivered using a holistic and collaborative approach to ensure that the identified needs of young people are met and thus prevent homelessness. In addition, it's aim is ensure that young people establish and maintain independence by supporting them to move-on to suitable alternative accommodation. (See appendix ii for terms of reference).

13.0 KEY CHALLENGES FACED BY CARE LEAVERS WHEN LIVING INDEPENDENTLY

Most care leavers move on from care into independent accommodation without being put at risk of becoming homeless and can sustain their own accommodation with or without support. This protocol recognises that there will always be a need for contingency planning and a readiness to respond to emergencies, including the loss of accommodation.

13.1 RENT ARREARS

Within Wolverhampton Homes the Tenancy Officer and Income Officer will be alerted to a young person who has left care and is now living a Wolverhampton Homes managed property by way of an indicator on the young person's tenancy file. This will enable any issues relating to any non-payment of rent or other housing-related charges to be immediately flagged with the young person, their YPA and/or member of WH Young Persons Team.

Taking tenancy action will be the last resort, with all reasonable steps being taken to reduce the likelihood of the tenancy failing and/or the young person being evicted. Under no circumstances will a warrant for eviction be issued without the express permission of the Assistant Director for Housing or the Assistant Director of Homeless Services.

13.2 ANTI-SOCIAL BEHAVIOUR

Anti-social behaviour (ASB) covers a wide range of behaviours. Experiencing ASB can be distressing and affect the enjoyment of home. Wolverhampton Homes Anti-social behaviour team take reports of ASB very seriously and are committed to tackling it swiftly, firmly and fairly.

ASB is described as behaviour that causes harassment, alarm or distress to a person. This can include:

- threatening, intimidating or discriminatory behaviour
- criminal activity, including drug dealing and [hate crimes](#)
- domestic violence
- persistent shouting and arguing
- persistent loud noise (TV, music) that can be heard outside the home

If a care leaver experiences anti-social behaviour from someone living in their community, then can contact the ASB Team a number of ways. [Wolverhampton Homes | Anti-social behaviour](#)

By telephone: 01902 551188

Or via email: asbu@wolverhamptonhomes.org.uk

13.3 REPAIRS

The landlord is generally responsible for most repairs within your home, you should check your tenancy agreement for responsibilities and who to contact. In relation to Wolverhampton Homes you can report your non urgent repairs a number of ways:

By reporting it directly online: homes.direct@wolverhamptonhomes.org.uk

Or by telephone: 01902 556789

13.4 IN AN EMERGENCY

If you have a housing emergency between 5pm and 8:30am, on a weekend or on a bank holiday, please contact Wolverhampton Homes calling their emergency out of hours number.

- 01902 552999

If someone is in danger, always call the emergency services on 999 straight away.

Your YPA can support you to contact your landlord with any issues that you may face whilst living independently.

13.5 CONTINGENCY PLANNING

It is particularly important to have strong contingency plans in place for care leavers who are identified as being at risk of homelessness. This would include care leavers with a history of foster home breakdown, and/or those with additional needs such as mental health issues, learning disability, attachment disorder, substance misuse and experience of offending behaviour.

Pathway plans will outline the young person's accommodation pathway, taking into account their aspirations and support needs. The Independent Reviewing Officer will ensure any goals set are achievable, along with a robust contingency plan.

14.0 CARE LEAVERS LEAVING CUSTODY

Care leavers leaving custody will need additional support to secure suitable accommodation on release. The Senior Housing worker from the Supported Accommodation Team meets with the Reach Leaving Care team quarterly to ensure that plans are identified early for care leavers leaving custody. The Leaving Care team have 6 weekly meetings with all YPA's supporting a person in custody and the Housing Champion to discuss plans for when they are released.

Wolverhampton is also part of a project, [Always Hope](#), for all care leavers. All professionals involved with the young person participate in a multi-agency, integrated plan for options upon release. The Resettlement Team in the prisons will also meet with the young person and invite the YPA 12 weeks before release to plan for options upon release, including accommodation. Where accommodation is not in place 56 days prior to release, the YPA can submit a Duty to Refer to ensure a homeless application is processed to ensure some accommodation is available on release.

Those people leaving custody will be provided with a custody release pack. This includes essentials such as toiletries and a £50 voucher to buy food for the first few days of release. Support may also be provided to purchase a cheap mobile phone.

15.0 YOUNG PEOPLE LIVING OUTSIDE OF WOLVERHAMPTON

For young people living outside of Wolverhampton, each local authority has their own criteria for allocating properties, and this may not be the same as the City of Wolverhampton. The Reach Leaving Care team can provide support to its Care Leavers who wish to apply for accommodation or housing in another local authority area.

Any care leavers living outside of Wolverhampton will be supported in making a housing application to the LA where they are living. For those placed prior to their 16th birthday, the host authority should be approached upon the young person reaching the age of 16 to clarify if the young person can join the local Housing Needs register and awarded priority need, rather than make an approach for a homeless application. Wherever possible, the young people should be encouraged to use their priority need access via part 6 rather than via a part 7 homelessness application.

Social Workers and YPAs must identify remaining out of area as the young person's move-on plan to enable early intervention through a Staying Close Plan and the Housing Champion supporting to identify appropriate local accommodation.

Any young person that wishes to return to Wolverhampton for their long-term accommodation will be prioritised as a Care Leaver as outlined in the City of Wolverhampton Council Housing Allocations Policy:

16.0 MOVING INTO INDEPENDENCE

Once a care leaver is identified as being ready to move into independence the following process will be followed by the Young Person's Advisor, the young person and Wolverhampton Homes:

1. Young person is identified as ready to move on
2. Homes in the city application made via Wolverhampton Homes - [Homes in the City](#)
3. Watch and confirm the are you ready videos on the homes in the city website - <https://www.wolverhampton.gov.uk/housing/homes-in-the-city/getting-you-ready>
4. Wait for registration letter (via e-mail) which confirms the application is live.
5. Send completed move on evidence grid to youngpersons.team@wolverhamptonhomes.org.uk for assessment and re-banding

The evidence grid is used to show the young person is ready to move on and has all the resources in place to take on a tenancy and should be completed by both the referrer and young person in partnership (See Appendix III).

17.0 LOCAL CONNECTION AND RESIDENCY REQUIREMENTS

The Homelessness Reduction Act introduced amendments to the way local connection is assessed for care leavers who are homeless. Care leavers have a local connection in the Children Services local authority that looked after them. They also have a local connection, until the age of 21 with a local authority area where they have lived for at least 2 continuous years, at least some of which fell before their 16th birthday, even if placed there by another local authority.

Care Leavers also may have a local connection if they are under 25 and receive advice and support from that local authorities' Children's Services under a pathway plan.

If that pathway plan is provided by a County Council, they will be entitled to a local connection in every local housing department in that area.

18.0 PRIVATE RENTED SECTOR ACCOMMODATION

Care leavers may prefer a private sector tenancy to a social housing property and will be fully supported with this choice. A suitable property can be identified by the Children and Young People in Care team, the Young Persons team or by the care leaver themselves. Once a private rented sector property has been found, contact will be made with Wolverhampton Homes' Visiting Officers to support the process. The Visiting Officer will make contact with the landlord or letting agent and will assess the suitability and affordability of the property in conjunction with the care leaver's

assigned support officer. If the property is agreed to be suitable and affordable, the Visiting Officer will conduct negotiations with the landlord or letting agent to secure the tenancy.

The Visiting Officer will also assist the care leaver to access Wolverhampton Homes' bond scheme, when accepted by the landlord, or with a rent in advance payment. This will enable the care leaver to sign for the property and secure their tenancy. Continued support, including tenancy sustainment, will then be provided to the care leaver by their assigned support officer.

In the UK, people over the age of 18 are also able to enter into an agreement with a bank for a mortgage to buy their own home. A deposit is required to secure a mortgage but there are schemes available to support with this. Central Government run a number of affordable home ownership schemes, such as Lifetime ISAs, low interest loans and shared ownership programmes. Equity loan schemes are also available to first time buyers.

The Shared Accommodation Rate (SAR) limits the level of housing costs available to care leavers through housing benefit or universal credit to the cost of a room in a shared house. Care leavers are exempt from SAR until they reach the age of 25.

19.0 SUPPORT TO PREVENT AND RELIEVE HOMELESSNESS

Early Intervention tools to prevent homelessness

Care leavers accessing independent accommodation will be able to access tenancy sustainment or floating support services at the start of their tenancy with Wolverhampton Homes via the Young Persons Team. Other social landlords such as Midland Heart will also offer this service. The Housing Champion will liaise, with young persons' permission, with local social housing providers to ensure they are aware of tenants who are care leavers. This will provide a support mechanism in the early stages of a new tenancy and during a tenancy life.

As part of the application process and following the awarding of the priority banding, there will be an indication to Wolverhampton Homes on the application of care leaver status, this will enable tenancy management officers to ensure that any issues can be addressed early. Alternative payments arrangements (where appropriate) will be requested to arrange the housing costs component of Universal Credit to be paid direct to the landlord.

19.1 JOINT WORKING TO DELIVER HOMELESSNESS REDUCTION ACT DUTIES

The Homelessness Reduction Act 2017 introduced a new duty on specified public bodies in England to refer consenting people, who they believe to be homeless or threatened with homelessness to the local authority. Where a care leaver is eligible for assistance and is threatened with homelessness within 56 days or has become homeless, they are entitled to receive support from the local housing authority to either

prevent or relieve their homelessness.

Under the Duty to Refer, if a Young Persons Advisor is made aware that a care leaver is homeless or is likely to be homeless within 56 days, then they have a duty, with the consent of the care leaver to carry out a referral to Wolverhampton Homes Homeless Services. (See Appendix IV)

Before making a referral, the referring public body must:

- Have consent for the referral form from the care leaver being referred
- Allow the individual to identify the housing authority in England to which they would like to be referred
- Have consent that the care leaver's contact details can be given so that the housing authority can contact them regarding the referral

The Homeless Services Team will contact the care leaver referred, to assess them under the Homeless Reduction Act 2017, provide housing advice and support and where required, take a full homeless application. As part of this process, they will allocate a case worker who will carry out a housing assessment and develop a personal housing plan with the person. The aim is to help them secure suitable accommodation for at least six months. If it has not been possible to prevent or relieve a person's homelessness the caseworker will determine whether the person qualifies for the Main Housing Duty. If they are eligible, in priority need and not deemed to be intentionally homeless.

If a care leaver is roofless that night, the YPA will contact Homeless Services directly and request the young person is contacted the same day for an assessment of their homelessness and to assist with finding somewhere suitable to stay that night. Homeless Services will involve the Young Person's Advisor in decisions about the suitability of accommodation and inform them prior to making any offer of accommodation.

19.2 ROUGH SLEEPING

Joint working between the children's services, housing authority and local rough sleeping outreach services run by P3, to ensure that necessary steps are taken to identify care leavers and support them into suitable and sustainable accommodation with the required level of support. P3 carry out strength-based assessments, if anyone identified as a care leaver contact will be made with child or adult social services as appropriate.

19.3 PERSONAL HOUSING PLANS

The Homeless Reduction Act 2017 introduced duties for housing authorities to assess the support needs of all applicants who are homeless or threatened with homelessness and agree a personalised housing plan which will include reasonable steps required by both the applicant and the caseworker to secure long term accommodation. The Personalised Housing Plan (PHP) will also identify any housing and support needs to be taken into consideration for accommodation. Homeless Services will involve the Young Person's Advisor in the assessment

process with the young person's consent. The PHP should also be part of the pathway plan.

19.4 INTENTIONAL HOMELESSNESS

Although housing authorities have a duty to try and prevent or relieve homelessness for all eligible applicants, the Main Duty is only owed a long-term housing duty (the 'main' homelessness duty) is only owed to applicants who have priority need and who have become homeless through no fault of their own and are not considered 'intentionally homeless'.

The Homelessness Code of Guidance (section 22.17) states that local authorities should do all they can to avoid the impact of intentionally homeless decisions on care leavers; and through joint working between housing and children's services consider the needs and vulnerabilities of the young person. This would include taking into account the young person's emotional and mental well-being, maturity and general ability to understand the impact of their actions.

A robust system to manage when there is potential for an intentional homeless decision to be made has been developed (See Appendix V). The aim is for robust scrutiny around negative decisions and assistance that may be provided to care leavers.

19.5 PRIORITY NEED

A Young Person under 21 who was looked after between the ages of 16 and 18 would be priority need. A Young Person who was looked after when aged 16 or 17 will be in priority need when they are 18, 19 or 20 years old, whether or not they qualify for care leaving services from a children's services authority. Within Wolverhampton, any Wolverhampton care leaver under the age of 25 will be deemed as priority need.

We would also consider:

- (a) the length of time that the applicant was looked after, accommodated, or fostered.
- (b) the reasons why they were looked after, accommodated, or fostered.
- (c) the length of time since the applicant left care, and whether they have been able to obtain and maintain accommodation during any of that period.
- (d) whether the applicant has any existing support networks, particularly including family, friends, or a mentor.

19.6 OFFERS OF ACCOMMODATION

When owed a homeless duty, care leavers will be made one offer of reasonable, suitable and affordable accommodation. If they accept or refuse this offer, the homeless duty will end. If care leaver is considering refusing this offer, or they believe

it is not reasonable, suitable or affordable, they should discuss this with their YPA and Homeless Services caseworker first to address any concerns.

19.7 RIGHT TO REVIEW

If a care leaver does not agree with the decision made by the Homeless Services or they think that something they have been asked to do is unfair or unreasonable, they can ask for it to be looked at again by requesting a review. The review must be requested within 21 days of the decision being made.

20.0 MONITORING

The Supported Accommodation manager or Housing Champion will review quarterly H-CLIC stats with City of Wolverhampton Council to identify care leavers who are approaching Homeless Services, their reason for homelessness and last known accommodation. This will help to identify ways to prevent reoccurrences in future.

21.0 TRAINING AND DEVELOPMENT OF THIS PROTOCOL

Training will be provided to all staff to ensure that this protocol is embedded within the City of Wolverhampton Council and with its stakeholders. This will be delivered by the Children and Young People in Care's Supported Accommodation Manager and YPA Housing Champion, Reach Team.

In addition, this protocol will be distributed by the local authority's QA team and held within the corporate policies. It will also be included within the induction process of any staff within the Council and its partners where relevant.

21.1 REVIEW OF THIS PROTOCOL

This protocol will be reviewed annually with stakeholders involved in its production and annual with the Department for Levelling up. In addition, the Supported Accommodation Manager and YPA (Housing Champion) will review regularly during supervisions.

This protocol has been reviewed and approved by the City of Wolverhampton's Care Leaver's Independence Collective.

APPENDIX I

Age
16
to
17

The young person is supported, encouraged and enabled to remain in a supportive and positive care setting where they will be able to build their skills to live independently.

Where a young person can remain in their current foster home i.e. Staying Put then the lead worker will ensure all relevant paperwork is completed and all benefits claims submitted in a timely way where appropriate

Accommodation needs, options and aspirations will be considered through the care journey. Discussions will be held with Supported Accommodation Manager around options available, including supported accommodation options from the age of 15 and a half

Referral to the
Taste of
Independence
Training flat

Housing
Support flat

Referral to
the House
Project

House Project
flat

Referral to
Supported
Lodgings

Referral to the Roof
Over our Heads Panel
(in readiness to move
when 18)

Age
18
to
25

Where it has been agreed that a young person is ready for independent living, the lead professional will contact the relevant local housing authority as to where the young person wants to live and has a local connection



Homes in the City application completed with WHomes, Move Evidence On Grid completed by lead professional and young person. Are you Ready for a Tenancy videos completed? YPA will follow other Housing providers protocol if out of city



Once accepted onto the housing list, the young person will be supported by the YPA or HSW to ensure they are able to access the bidding system and bidding appropriately (where bidding applies)
The Young Persons Team (WHomes) will ensure they work with the YPA/HSW where there are concerns with bidding



The young person will be supported to visit any accommodation offers



Upon signing the tenancy agreement (of either social housing, private rented or house share) the YPA will carry out a visit to the home to support the young person to set up bills and where available use the setting up home grant to purchase items for the home.
Visits will continue at a minimum of every 8 weeks , from 21 visits are 12 weekly

The YPA/HSW will support the young person or ensure they have support available to set up the tenancy and sustain it. (within 28 days of them moving in). This support will include.

- Applying for Universal credit (where appropriate) providing a copy of their tenancy agreement for the housing element (housing benefit if in supported accommodation). Apply for the Big Difference Scheme with Severn Trent.
- Setting up/requesting direct payments to the landlord from UC where there are budgeting concerns
 - Applying for Council Tax exemption where applicable
- Contacting relevant utility companies and providing metre readings



Where there are concerns during the tenancy and the young person is struggling, extra support will be explored. Where appropriate a multi-agency meeting with the landlord will take place to agree how to appropriately support the young person and they are aware of any concerns and what is expected of them before any legal action/steps to evict happens. YPA to discuss with YPA Housing Champion



Where it is agreed the young person is not coping, then 'safe surrender' should always be discussed as an option before any notice is served. If this was to happen the YPA would need to ensure appropriate alternate accommodation is secured for the young person beforehand.

Where a notice is served, the YPA will make a referral to the Local Housing Authority under Duty to Refer. This can be made up to 56 days prior to homelessness and made to the area of the young person's choice with consent



Following the referral, a joint meeting will take place with housing within 5 working days, to include the housing options officer, young person and YPA where accommodation options will be discussed. Can homelessness be prevented/relieved? A Personalised Housing Plan will be provided and shared with both the young person and PA (where the young person gives consent)

APPENDIX II

CITY OF WOLVERHAMPTON COUNCIL

Wolverhampton Young Persons Supported Accommodation ‘Roof over Our Heads’ Panel Terms of Reference

Purpose and Scope

- The purpose of the ‘Roof over Our Heads’ Panel is to review referrals made for supported accommodation from young persons between the ages of 18 -25, including young families, and to ensure that there is an effective time responsive offer of accommodation made to them. The panel will look at each referral and consider all available solutions to young people accessing accommodation.
- The ‘Roof over Our Heads’ Panel will be delivered using a holistic and collaborative approach to ensure that the identified needs of young people are met and thus prevent homelessness. In addition, its aim is ensuring that young people establish and maintain independence by supporting them to move-on to suitable alternative accommodation.
- The work of the ‘Roof over Our Heads’ Panel will be guided and overseen by the City of Wolverhampton’s Commissioning team. The ‘Roof over Our Heads’ Panel will share information within the bounds of GDPR in order to ensure effective service delivery and to identify any trends or gaps within the service provision.
- The Chair will be responsible for the production and distribution of the minutes and any reports made to commissioning. All members agree to provide relevant information required to produce such reports on request.
- The ‘Roof over Our Heads’ Panel will share relevant and appropriate information on providers’ performance in terms of service delivery and quality of care.
- The ‘Roof over Our Heads’ Panel will work, flex and align processes to meet the local strategic commissioning priorities.

Membership

Members of the ‘Roof over Our Heads’ Panel are representatives from stakeholders and commissioned providers, including:

- Children’s Commissioning Team (Chair)
- Statutory Social Care Representation (Team Managers rota basis)
- Supported Accommodation Manager

- Wolverhampton Homes
- Commissioned Providers
- YMCA (Emergency and Homeless Prevention for 16–17 year-olds.)

Depending on the agenda, attendance might be widened to council officers who have relevant input or knowledge e.g. Personalised Support Team, Adult Social Care or Adult Commissioning. Any additional attendees must be confirmed by the Chair.

Responsibilities of Members/Accountability

- Provide updates on any placement activity undertaken between meetings and any ongoing issues of concern.
- Agree actions with clear timescales and lines of communication before the next meeting.
- Learning achieved through the 'Roof over Our Heads' Panel is disseminated to relevant teams and individuals.
- The 'Roof over Our Heads' Panel will produce annual reviews to Children's Social Care Leadership Team. Any documents created or processes/systems designed within the 'Roof over Our Heads' Panel will be submitted to Children's Social Care Leadership Team for scrutiny and sign off.

Frequency of Panel

- The 'Roof over Our Heads' Panel will meet fortnightly. Additional meetings may be set where specific developments/issues require further input.
- Meetings will be held in hybrid format via Microsoft Teams virtually and face-to-face when required.
- The Chair will be responsible for ensuring meetings are arranged in good time, actions are followed through and timescales met.
- Meeting agendas will consist of a number of standing items (e.g. information sharing) and matters arising as they are raised by the group. Each member is encouraged to suggest agenda items to the Chair for consideration and inclusion.
- Papers for meetings will be circulated via email at least 1 week in advance of the meeting taking place.
- The Chair will be responsible for arranging business support to take minutes for meetings and update action logs.
- Minutes of the meeting will be circulated within 1 week of the meeting, allowing sufficient time for people to follow up on any actions. Minutes will be uploaded onto SharePoint for record purposes.

Working Methods & Young People in Supported Accommodation Tracking

- The 'Roof over Our Heads' Panel will adopt a shared learning approach so that officers and providers can build better working relationships and develop effective collaboration to ensure:
 - A Whole System approach for commissioning supported accommodation
 - Young persons' wellbeing
 - Success in semi-independent living in preparation for adulthood
- The 'Roof over Our Heads' Panel will track all supported accommodation placements using a Referrals and Placements Log. For the emergency placements, they will be monitored using a RAG rating system in terms of length of stay (1 night to 2 weeks **GREEN**, 2 weeks to 2 months **AMBER**, 2 months + **RED**) and a different longer RAG rating system for the other contracts / areas, etc.
- Does there need to be a monitoring of the voids turnaround/waiting times

Sharing of Information and Resources

- Information will be shared via email/telephone contact and shared documentation.
- The 'Roof over Our Heads' Panel will share information within the bounds of GDPR in order to ensure effective service delivery and to identify any trends or gaps within the service provision.
- The 'Roof over Our Heads' Panel will assist the Chair on routine data analysis to monitor any commissioning and quality assurance concerns at a provider level.
- Materials created by the panel will be the property of the panel.

Referrals Pathway

Referral Type	Referral Route
Non-Emergency	Social workers will complete referrals and present them to the 'Roof over Our Heads' Panel for decision.
Emergency / Out of Hours	1. Social workers to contact CWC Supported Accommodation Team. If no suitable availability, social workers to contact commissioned providers. • YMCA (Emergency and Homeless Prevention for 16-17 y.o.) 2. Social workers to update the 'Roof over Our Heads' Panel with placement details on the next working date.

	3. Social workers to take case to the next 'Roof over Our Heads' Panel for tracking and monitoring.
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Referrals must be made by any Social Work or Leaving Care teams in the City of Wolverhampton Council or Wolverhampton Homes. Referrals are limited to through the 'Roof over Our Heads' referral process only with the exception of direct access emergency or out of hours referrals.

- In some circumstances, referrals via other routes can be considered. This will be subject to prior authorisation from the City of Wolverhampton Council.
- Due to the timescale of 5 working days between receipt of the referral and the required assessment, commissioned providers will present all referrals received to the 'Roof over Our Heads' Panel fortnightly. The 'Roof over Our Heads' Panel will have the right to refuse whether a referral continues subject to the following criteria:
 - Must be a single person aged 16 +
 - Must be a Wolverhampton child in care or care leaver
 - Must be homeless, threatened with homelessness, living in unsuitable accommodation or a care leaver.
 - Eligible to receive public funding
 - Live or have connection to Wolverhampton
- Unsuccessful referrals will have the right to request a review of the decision made by the 'Roof over Our Heads' Panel. The review request must be sent to the panel by social workers within 7 days of the decision. At this point, the review will be heard by the panel, and a final decision will be made. This decision is final.
- Exemptions will be considered on a case by case basis and will be the last resort following the exploration and exhaustion of other preventative interventions. All relevant stakeholders, including the council through the 'Roof over Our Heads' Process, will be informed at the earliest opportunity of potential exemptions. All exemptions will require to be recorded and reported to the City of Wolverhampton Council when stated within the contract service specification.
- If none of the internal provisions or commissioned provisions can meet the need of a referral, social worker will seek permission from the 'Roof over Our Heads' Panel to conduct a search under the West Midlands Supported Accommodation Framework Contract by the Personalised Support Team.

Review

The panel will review its Terms of Reference annually to ensure it remains aligned to the purpose and scope of the panel outlined above, as well as looking at membership and reviewing governance arrangements.

APPENDIX III



Pre-Tenancy Support Grid

The grid is to indicate that a homeless person has a plan in place to support them into their tenancy. Please provide as many details as possible and ensure the customer's comments are included.

Name of Customer:

Name of Support Worker:

Goal	Key tasks	Details/evidence or reasons not provided.	Key workers comments	Service users' comments
Life Skills Audit	Prepare a meal			
	Shop and budget			
	Maintain property			
Financial Check	Bank/credit union account Type			
	Debt details			
	Rent balance Arrears/ credit /FTA's			
	Income details			
	Savings			

	If UC claimant/working 1 months' rent required in advance.			
Health Audit	Registered with local GP			
	Registered with NHS dentist			
	Substance misuse status			
	Lifestyle choices discussed?			
	Mental Health diagnosis			
	Named Midwife/Health Visitor			
Moving on	Homeless or Housing Application details	Reg No:		
	RSL applications made			
	Private rented options explored			
	Affordability assessed			
	LHA discussed			
	Budgeting plan made/ Pre-tenancy stage one "managing your money" completed.			

	Completed “are you ready” and certificate attach to application for lettings.				
	Proof of ID and NI				
Household Furniture & items	Yes/No- Tick each item	Money saved to buy/ install	Location of items i.e. Storage	Removal Van	Notes/Comments. Follow Up Actions
Bedroom: Beds, Mattresses, bedding, Pillows, wardrobes, bed side cabinets					
Kitchen Basics Pots, Plates/Cups, Cutlery, Can opener, Microwave, kettle, toaster, Bin					
Soft Furnishings Curtains/ Blinds/Poles/					
White Goods: Fridge, cooker, freezer, washing machine					
Living Room: Sofa, coffee table, dining table					
Carpets Lounge, Stairs, bedroom, hall					

Rent in advance					
Money to top-up Pre-Meters					
Food and Toilet toiletries to move in.					
Light bulbs					
Other	Careers advice				
	Engaged in Education/Employment/Training				
	Support required? Support arranged?				
	Has an e-mail address				

Additional Information:

APPENDIX IV

Duty to Refer

1. Young Person's Advisor submits Duty to refer form, which is currently submitted via Wolverhampton Homes website [Wolverhampton Homes | Homeless - duty to refer form](#)
2. If the young person is likely to be in need of accommodation the same day the YPA will contact Homeless Services immediately to make a direct homeless application.
3. If the young person has secure accommodation, the YPA will contact Homeless Services within 48 hours to ensure it has been received and the young person will be contacted.

APPENDIX V - Care Leaver Process – intentionality decision

Trigger	Activity	Output	Standard	Who	When
Care Leaver approaches or is referred to Homeless Services through duty line	Assess priority and intentionality and continue with case accordingly	Young person is supported in line with the HRA	Young Person / Young Person's Advisor contacts Wolverhampton Homes The young person will be triaged by the Homeless Services Team Officer calls Young Person to complete interview. If the Young Person is eligible and homeless or threatened with homelessness, then the officer will take a homeless application and become the caseworker for the young person. Officer contacts a) WH YPT and b) CWC YPA for background info on the case as per 18+ protocol. Caseworker decides if the Young Person is in priority need as per the protocol. If there is reason to believe a care leaver approaching Homeless Services would trigger a case conference to be held within 5 working days of approach. Case conference would be set up (on MS Teams) by the YPA to discuss intentionality and would provide an overview of the Young Person. This would include any vulnerabilities and mitigating circumstances as to why the situation arose and what action has been taken. Each party to bring information to the case conference and Children's services bring the Young Person's statutory Pathway Plan.	Young Person/YPA Homeless Services Caseworker Caseworker YPA/Caseworker YPA	Immediately Immediately Same day as approach Same day as approach Within 5 working days

		Invite; (and request an email update from each attendee to help formulate the notes) YPA Homeless Services Caseworker and Team Leader; WH Young Persons Team Officer If a council tenancy and arrears – income and tenancies If ASB - ASB team Any health professional or services involved as appropriate Other managing agents and Housing Association invited if applicable Info in advance from private landlords. Case conference will decide if the customer is intentional or not and future direction of case. Notes to be sent to all attendees within 3 days following the conference, copy to charlotte.gibbons@wolverhampton.gov.uk and jazmine.walker@wolverhampton.gov.uk If Homeless Services caseworker is still considering an intentionality decision after the case conference, it must be escalated to both Heads of Service before any decision is made. The Heads of Service will discuss what decision will be made. If an agreement still cannot be reached, then this will be escalated to their respective Directors. Following the above, if a care leave is found to be intentional, Homeless Officer refers to Visiting Officers to source private accommodation. If YP is priority need and not intentionally homeless; Prevent (if applicable) – Band 2 Awarded - support to prevent homelessness provided including negotiation with landlord / family /	All present Case worker Head of Service Caseworker/ Visiting Officers	At case conference After escalation After decision
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		friends, Homeless Prevention Fund if rent arrears, support to find alternative accommodation including Rent in Advance and Bond. Relief – Band 1 awarded - support to relieve homelessness provided. Support to find alternative accommodation including Rent in Advance and Bond. Temporary accommodation provided if needed. Main Duty - Emergency Band awarded - support to relieve homelessness provided. Support to find alternative accommodation including Rent in Advance and bond. Temporary accommodation provided if needed. If YP is priority need and intentionally homeless; Prevent (if applicable) – Band 3 awarded - support to prevent homelessness provided including negotiation with landlord / family / friends, Homeless Prevention Fund if rent arrears, support to find alternative accommodation including Rent in Advance and Bond. Relief – Band 3 awarded - support to relieve homelessness provided. Support to find alternative accommodation including Rent in Advance and Bond. Temporary accommodation provided if needed. Main Duty – Band 3 stays on application - No main duty owed. Rent in Advance and Bond can be provided. Temporary accommodation provided for reasonable period after main duty date (2 weeks). Temporary accommodation taken over by Social Services after this period <i>*see notes below</i> Within the grace period – we need to ensure social care have details and costs of TA for approval to be sought If YP is non-priority and not intentionally homeless; Prevent (if applicable) – Band 3 awarded support to prevent homelessness provided including negotiation with landlord / family / friends, Homeless Prevention Fund if rent arrears, support to find alternative accommodation including Rent in Advance and bond.		
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			Relief – Band 3 awarded - support to relieve homelessness provided. Support to find alternative accommodation including Rent in Advance and bond. Temporary accommodation NOT provided. Main Duty – Band 3 stays on application. No main duty owed. Rent in Advance and bond can be provided. If YP is non-priority and intentionally homeless; Prevent (if applicable) – Band 3 awarded - support to prevent homelessness provided including negotiation with landlord / family / friends, Homeless Prevention Fund if rent arrears, support to find alternative accommodation including Rent in Advance and bond. Relief – Band 3 awarded - support to relieve homelessness provided. Support to find alternative accommodation including Rent in Advance and bond. Temporary accommodation NOT provided. Main Duty – Band 3 stays on application. No main duty owed. Rent in Advance and Bond can be provided. Under the City of Wolverhampton Council Allocations Policy, additional banding may be awarded on their Homes in the City application, depending on a individual circumstances Homeless Services Caseworker, WH Young Persons Officer if involved with the case and Children’s Services Personal Advisor to work together for weekly catch ups to resolve the Young Person’s homelessness.		
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* Homeless Services have a duty to provide temporary accommodation during the relief period which is around 56 days, it can depend on when a YP needs temp within this period, however, for an intentionality decision we cannot end the temporary accommodation within the relief duty and have to give a reasonable period we will continue to supply this after the intentionality decision is given.

The earlier we make the intentionality decision can determine how long the temporary accommodation we provide will last however

we will always add 2 weeks grace onto the end before any duty ends.

After our duty to provide temporary accommodation has been reached we will have no further duty to provide this and this is when the duty can be picked up by Social Care (this will be a social care decision)

APPENDIX VI - SUPPORTED ACCOMMODATION REFERRAL FORM

Referrer Date.....

Email address.....

Primary Worker (if different).....Email address.....

Is the referral for House Project ☐ Housing Support flats ☐

Personal details

Name:	PER Number:
Date of birth:	Age:
Legal Status, eg Leave to Remain:	National Insurance Number: Proof on Eclipse? ☐
Gender:	Ethnic Origin:
Sexuality:	Religion:
Current Address:	

Current EET circumstances

In Education ☐ Work ☐ Training ☐ NEET ☐

Details:

Has the young person completed a successful stay in the Training Flat? ☐
If yes, what dates?

Health:

NHS number: Proof on Eclipse? ☐
Please give details of any medical conditions and any medication they are taking:

Are they registered as disabled? ☐ (if yes please give details)
Registered with GP? ☐ Name and address:
Registered with dentist? ☐ Name and address:

Source of income & Details Do they have a pre-payment card? ☐	Income: £ per week/fortnight/month

Supporting Information/Comments <i>Please include most recent assessment, support plan, screening tools</i>

Involvement with other agencies

Please provide contact details of any other agency involved, eg CAMHS, YJS etc	
Name: _____	Role: _____
Organisation: _____	
Email: _____	Phone: _____
Reason for involvement: _____	
Name: _____	Role: _____

Organisation: _____
Email: _____ Phone: _____
Reason for involvement: _____

Risk Assessment

Is there a risk assessment completed within the last 12 months on Eclipse? ☐

Next of kin: Relationship: Address: Contact number:
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Signed _____ (Young person) _____ (Referrer)

Please send with an up to date risk assessment and any supporting information to:

House Project - Rapinder Sahota - Rapinder.Sahota2@wolverhampton.gov.uk

Housing Support - Brenda Murphy - Brenda.Murphy2@wolverhampton.gov.uk