



Joint Housing and Social Care Protocol for Eligible, Relevant and Former Relevant Children

**Blackburn with Darwen Borough Council – Environment, Housing
and Neighbourhoods Department**

**Blackburn with Darwen Children’s Services – Families, Health
and Wellbeing Department**

Reviewed November 2016

SCOPE OF THE PROTOCOL

The protocol covers:

Eligible Children - Children aged 16 and 17 who have been looked after for at least 13 weeks since the age of 14 and who are still looked after

Relevant Children - Children aged 16 and 17 who have been looked after for at least 13 weeks since the age of 14, and have been looked after at some time while 16 or 17 and who have left care

Former Relevant Children - Young people aged 18-21 who have been either “eligible” or “relevant” children or both

If at the age of 21 the young person is still being helped by the responsible authority with education or training, he or she remains a Former Relevant Child to the end of the agreed programme of education or training even if that takes him or her past the age of 21

PROCEDURE

Eligible or Relevant Children aged 16 and 17 do **not** have a priority need for accommodation under either the Housing Act 1996 or the Homelessness Act 2002 and are the responsibility of Children’s Social Care

Former Relevant Children aged 18, 19, and 20 are considered to be in automatic priority need under the Homelessness Act 2002

If a young person aged 16 or 17 presents at or is referred to Housing Needs a housing options interview will take place and if the young person is found to be a relevant or eligible child he or she will be referred to Children’s Social Care. This referral will be accompanied by a copy of the housing options assessment

Any referral to Housing Needs by Children’s Social Care will be accompanied by a copy of the relevant section of the Pathway Plan. This will detail:

- The support needs required to maintain and sustain accommodation;
- An assessment of the level of the young person’s skills for independent living;
- Any risk factors e.g. relating to offending behaviour/mental health problems;
- The name and contact details of the Personal Adviser who will retain responsibility for the young person up to the age of 21

In addition a letter should be sent to Housing Needs confirming the date at which Children’s Social Care will cease to be responsible for the young person’s rent

If a young person aged 18, 19 and 20 presents at or is referred to Housing Needs the housing options interview will establish whether he or she is homeless and if so, whether the homelessness is intentional

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ACCOMMODATION COSTS

Children's Social Care, under the Children (Leaving Care) Act 2000 is responsible for the accommodation costs in full for Eligible and Relevant Children up to their 18th birthday

Housing Needs will, wherever possible, assist Children's Social Care to secure temporary accommodation for relevant and eligible children if required

Blackburn with Darwen Housing Needs is responsible for the temporary accommodation costs for Former Relevant Children if a full duty under Part V11 (section 193) of the Housing Act 1996 has been accepted

DISPUTE RESOLUTION

The key to implementation of this joint protocol is direct communication between frontline workers

If an issue cannot be resolved at this level the matter should be referred for a decision to the Housing Needs Manager and Children's Social Care Leaving Care Team Manager