



Joint Housing and Social Care Protocol for Homeless 16 & 17 Year Olds

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

**Blackburn with Darwen Borough Council – Children’s
Services and Education Department**

SCOPE OF THE PROTOCOL

The protocol covers young people aged 16 and 17 who are not:

Currently looked after by Blackburn with Darwen Children's Social Care
Leaving the care of Blackburn with Darwen Children's Social Care
Relevant Children
Eligible Children

Young people from out of borough will be referred back to their previous borough where this is safe and practicable.

PROCEDURE

The flowchart helps to show how the procedure works when a young person aged 16/17 in need of accommodation presents to an agency

If a young person presents or is referred to **Housing Needs** the Young Persons Housing Officer will undertake a housing options interview; this will involve checking with Children's Social Care that the young person is not a 'relevant or 'eligible' child

Housing needs will also attempt to reconcile the young person with his or her family by mediation if appropriate*

If the young person has no where to sleep that night, then temporary accommodation will be arranged under S188 of the Housing Act 1996

If the young person has come from another borough and they do not wish to be assessed by Children's Social Care, Housing Needs will reconnect him or her with the appropriate borough under homelessness legislation. If the young person does wish to be assessed by Children's Social Care he or she will be referred

The young person will be provided with information on the options open to them and if s/he wishes, a request for a Child in Need assessment will be made to Children's Social Care

If after receiving the information, the young person does not wish to be assessed by Children's Social Care and the housing advice worker considers that the young person has made an informed choice, a homelessness enquiry will be undertaken

If the young person presents or is referred to **Children's Social Care** they will carry out an assessment but where Housing Needs makes the referral this will be accompanied by any housing options assessment that may have been made.

* The delivery of mediation services is to be discussed by Housing Needs and Children's Social Care

Reviewed JANUARY 2014

If the young person has nowhere to sleep that night, Children's Social Care will arrange emergency accommodation under S20 of the Children Act 1989

The young person will be provided with information on the options open to them and if s/he wishes, a Child and Family assessment will be arranged

If after receiving the information, the young person does not wish to be assessed by Children's Social Care and the social worker considers that the young person has made an informed choice and is not at risk of harm, a referral will be made to Housing Needs

If the young person is engaged with the **Youth Offending Team**, his or her case worker will make a referral to Children's Social Care unless the young person does not wish this to happen

If the young person approaches **Connexions** a **Voluntary, Community or Faith Sector Agency** the agency staff will refer the young person to Children's Social Care for a Child and Family assessment

If the young person does not wish to be assessed under the Children Act and the agency worker considers that s/he has made an informed choice and is not at risk of harm, a referral to Housing Needs will be made and the referring agency will notify Housing Needs that the young person has refused a Child in Need assessment

If requested, a Child and Family assessment will be completed by Children's Social Care within 10 working days from the date of request

If a young person is accommodated under S20, Children's Social Care will notify the referring agency and may co-ordinate a planning meeting with the relevant partners

Children's Social Care will also provide a pathway plan and maintain contact with the young person

Children's Social Care will continue to seek reconciliation with the young person's parent(s) or carer(s) or identify a suitable relative for the young person to live with

If the young person is not accommodated under S20, Children's Social Care will notify Housing Needs in writing of their decision and the reason(s) for the decision. This notification should also include any relevant information that has been obtained during the assessment process in order to assist and inform the housing options assessment

Reviewed JANUARY 2014

NB If a young person aged 16 or 17 is provided with accommodation by Children's Social Care under S.20 s/he will become an '**eligible**' or '**relevant**' '**child**'

OUT OF HOURS

Where 16-17 year old young people access emergency accommodation outside of office hours, a staff member will make the appropriate referral the following day.

EMERGENCY CONTACT NUMBERS

In case of emergency, e.g. a young person arrives at emergency accommodation outside office hours and finds that it is full; the following contact numbers should be used:

Emergency Duty Team (Children's Services)
Tel. 01254 587547

Out of Hours Emergency Homeless Service (Housing Needs)
Tel. 07739 454978

ACCOMMODATION COSTS

If the young person presents at or is referred to Children's Social Care, that agency will be responsible for temporary accommodation costs as part of the assessment (section 17)

If the young person becomes a Looked after Child, Children's Social Care will continue to be responsible for accommodation costs up to the young person's 18th birthday

If the young person presents at or is referred to Housing Needs then Housing Needs will be responsible for temporary accommodation costs up to the time when a decision has been reached upon the homelessness enquiry or where a referral has been made for an assessment, until the assessment has been completed or 10 working days from when the assessment was requested which ever is sooner.

If the young person is referred by Housing Needs to Children's Social Care for an assessment, Children's Social Care will assume responsibility for temporary accommodation costs from the date the assessment commenced.

If the young person is accepted as statutorily homeless, Housing Needs will continue to be responsible for temporary accommodation costs until the homeless duty is discharged

DISPUTE RESOLUTION

The key to implementing this joint protocol is direct communication between frontline workers working in partnership

Reviewed JANUARY 2014

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