

**Title of Report:** Response to the prevention of 16-17 homelessness

**Report of :** Lisa Wood – Practice Lead – Innovation, Transformation & Vulnerable adolescents

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### **Purpose of the report**

1. To share the response and activity to date of the joint working protocol between Housing Services and Children's Social Care. Which was launched in September 2024

### **Background**

2. The Department of Education and Department of Levelling Up, Communities and Housing (DLUCH), produced a statutory guidance document for both Children's Services and Housing Services covering how both services should work collaboratively to support and accommodate 16-17 year olds who are homeless or threatened with homelessness.
3. The ['Provision of accommodation for 16 and 17 year olds who may be homeless and or require accommodation'](#) mainly outlines that where a 16-17 year old is owed duties under Section 20 of the Children Act 1989, this takes precedence over the duties in the Housing Act 1996. However, Housing Services also have duties towards young people who are homeless or threatened with homeless, and duties owed by each service will depend on a range of factors, therefore it is essential that children's services and housing services work together.

### **The Joint Protocol for 16 and 17-year-olds who are homeless or threatened with homelessness in Gateshead**

4. The protocol which is attached in appendix 1,
  - Children's Social Care and Housing Services agreed to adopt a one front door approach which aims to ensure that there is a consistent approach to all 16- and 17-year-olds who seek help from the Council who are homeless or threatened with homelessness. All these children will be referred to the Integrated Referral Team (IRT), Assessment and Intervention, Children's Social Care.
  - If the young person is homeless or at risk of homelessness, a Children and Family assessment will be offered to the young person to find out whether the young person may have any other additional needs that would warrant Children's Social Care intervention and assistance under the Child in Need framework other than housing.

- The allocated Social Worker will co work with the Young Persons Homelessness Prevention Worker (YPHPW) jointly assessing what support is required. The key aim is to avoid homelessness and allow young people to remain in the family home where possible, as this will be in the long-term best interests of most young people.
- A mosaic contact record (Children’s Social Care system) will be created for every young person that is assessed and deemed homeless or threatened with homelessness, which details the concerns regarding the young person.
- The YPHPW will also create, log and maintain details of each case on NEC (Housing Services system) in line with HCLIC specification and within the parameters of the homelessness framework.
- If the young person does not wish to become a child in our care, and/or refuses a Children and Families Assessment, and accommodation is required, the YPHPW will determine which Duty is owed to the young person. They will explain to the young person and identify, all suitable accommodation options available, including the Housing Services, Supported Accommodation & Independent Living Service pathway and process (SAILS), which is specifically for Young People under 25 years old.
- The Protocol will be reviewed annually and when changes in legislation determine by both Children’s Social Care and Housing Services. The protocol will also be reviewed following the Housing Improvement Programme and development of a new placements Model. Shared key performance measures need to be developed which will be reviewed and revised over time.

### **Performance and Impact Apr 23 – Mar 24**

- 5 Further work is needed to develop agreed data sets, preliminary data information has been sourced from case recordings and does not include all consultations or advice, support for those young people who were not deemed as threated homeless within 56 days of the referral. This will be included in future performance reports.

No. of YP’s on the edge of homelessness	16
No. of YP’s presenting as homeless	7
No of YP – NFA (no consent gained)	1
No. of YP’s supported to remain with family/network	10
No. of YP’s Housed - Supported living arrangement	11
No. of YP’s who entered care	4

### **Learning from Audits and reviews**

- 6 A thematic audit was undertaken in January 2024. The audit focused on the last 10 YP’s who had presented as homeless. Outcome from the audits told us that:

- Some Inconsistencies in the compliance to the new procedures for 16-17 homelessness

- For most young people they receive the right service at the right time to prevent young peoples homelessness
- Amendments need made to the step within mosaic , so we can clearly map and record the journey and outcomes for the YP

7 improvement areas for action have been monitored via the Service Quality Assurance Group.

### **Future Developments**

8 The YPHW has been working with young people with lived experience to create an information leaflet which explains to young people their rights and responsibilities when threatened with homelessness or become homeless.

9 Review current case management workflow in Mosaic to ensure we are capturing information required to understand the needs and response to 16-17 homelessness and be able to provide quality reports.

10 Annual Review of the Joint protocol – 16-17 homelessness. Ensure read across with identified actions from the newly agreed Joint Housing Protocol for Care Experienced Young People, this includes the ‘emergency resource meetings’ facilitated to prevent unsuitable placements. Also review in line with any changes to accommodation pathways as a result of the recommissioning exercise.

11 Joint re-audit with Housing Solutions Service Manager to be undertaken to track compliance and service improvements.

12 Members are asked to

- Note the contents of the report
- Note the progress and performance in reporting year 2023-24

Appendix 1 – Joint Protocol 16/17 yr old homeless



FINAL Joint Protocol  
for 16\_17 year old H\_

### **Consultees:**

The following officers have been consulted on the preparation of this report:

Lynn Ritchie, Housing Solutions Service Manager, Housing Services  
 Vicky Sibson, Housing Strategy Manager, Housing Strategy  
 Deb Tindle, Projects & Funding Office, Housing Strategy

