

# Joint protocol

to address the needs of  
homeless young people  
aged 16 to 21 in Kent



## Between:

- Kent County Council – Children’s Social Services
- Local Housing Authority Housing Services
- Catch 22
- Connexions Kent and Medway
- Kent Primary Care Trusts
- Voluntary Sector Agencies
- Kent Youth Offending Service
- Supporting People



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- Catch22 16plus service
- Connexions Kent & Medway
- Kent Primary Care Trusts
- Voluntary sector agencies
- Kent Youth Offending Service
- Supporting People

## 1. Aims

- To clarify the statutory duties and agreed responsibilities under the protocol of partner agencies.
- To establish a system that ensures a seamless service to vulnerable young people, irrespective of which agency they present to first or which district in Kent they live in.
- To promote co-operation and joint working between the partner agencies.
- To ensure that, through methods such as mediation, reconciliation between young people and their families/carers is achieved wherever possible.

## 2. Young people covered by the protocol

2.1 This protocol is designed to cover the following groups of young people:

- Single people aged 16 and 17 years;
- Single people aged 18 to 21 years who are in need or vulnerable (Children Act 1989) or are entitled to after care services under the Children (Leaving Care) Act 2000;

- Young people who are in priority need and subject to Housing and Homelessness Legislation (2002 Homelessness Act);
- Couples where one or both partners are aged 16 or 17 years or are aged 18 to 21 years and are entitled to after care services under the Children (Leaving Care) Act 2000;
- Pregnant 16 to 21 year olds;
- Young offenders aged 16 to 18 years;
- Young parents aged 16 to 18 years, or up to 21 if entitled to after care services under the Children (leaving Care) Act 2000;

### 3. Context

- 3.1 This protocol covers the assessment and provision of support to homeless young people aged between 16 and 21 years.
- 3.2 Children's Social Services have a duty under section 20(3) of the Children Act 1989 to accommodate any child in need aged 16 and 17 whose welfare is likely to be seriously prejudiced without the provision of accommodation.
- 3.3 Local Housing Authorities (LHAs) are required under the Housing Act 1996 (as amended by the Homelessness Act 2002) to secure accommodation for people who are unintentionally homeless, eligible for assistance and in priority need. The assessment under the housing act can only be made once it is known whether the young person is a child in need (Section 17, Children Act 1989) and is owed a duty under section 20 of the Children Act 1989. It is reasonable to assume that most homeless 16/17 year olds would likely be deemed to be in need and therefore an assessment should be carried out by Children's Social Services to determine that issue and whether the child is owed a s20 duty, before housing services can determine if the child has a priority need (House of Lords judgement in R v LB Southwark 2009).
- 3.4 The Children (Leaving Care) (England) Act 2000, the Homelessness Act 2002 and Statutory Instrument 2002 No 2051 (the Homelessness Priority Need for Accommodation) (England) Order 2002, have underlined the need for those with responsibility for Social Services and Housing to work more closely together to prevent and manage homelessness in relation to young people.
- 3.5 Section 27 of the Children Act 1989 relates to co-operation between authorities and empowers Local Authorities to ask other authorities, including any local housing authority, to help in the exercise of any of their functions under Part 111 of the 1989 Act. The requested authority must comply with the request if it is compatible with their own statutory or other duties and does not unduly prejudice the discharge of their own functions. Co-operation to improve wellbeing is also covered by Section 10 of the Children Act 2004, which names District Councils as partners with Children's Services Departments.

## Children's Social Services' responsibilities towards homeless young people

- 3.6 Children's Social Services have a duty under section 17 of the Children Act 1989 to assess the needs of a child who presents to them as homeless. There is a duty to provide accommodation under section 20 of the Act if that child is assessed as a child in need and requires accommodation as otherwise his welfare would be seriously prejudiced (S20(3) of the Children Act 1989) OR because:
- There is no one with parental responsibility for him
  - He is lost or abandoned; or
  - His carer is prevented for whatever reason from providing him with suitable accommodation or care, be it temporarily or permanently (S20(1) of Children Act 1989)

## Children in Need

- 3.7 Children in Need are defined in section 17 (10) of the Children Act 1989 as:
- Those who are unlikely to achieve or maintain a reasonable standard of health and development, unless the local authority (that is Social Services) provides services;
  - Those whose health and development is likely to be significantly impaired, unless the local authority (that is Social Services) provides services;
  - Disabled children;
- 3.8 If an initial assessment of a young person identifies that the young person is both in need and requires accommodation as a result of those reasons identified in s20(1) or (3) as set out above, then Social Services will carry out their duties under Section 20 of the Children Act 1989; that is, they will arrange the provision of a "looked after child" placement. The assessment should be in accordance with the guidance given in the Framework for the assessment for Children in Need and their Families (DOH 2000).
- 3.9 The provision of Social Services accommodation can only be provided if:
- the young person (if deemed competent\* and making an informed decision) gives their consent to this form of accommodation (section 20 (6) Children Act 1989) and to therefore becoming a 'looked after child'; and
  - this is a proportionate response to meet their needs. Specific consideration should be given to placement options for young people accommodated under section 20 whilst living with a partner. For example, placement in an alternative arrangement such as a self contained property with visiting support may be appropriate

*\*A competent child is one who has sufficient maturity and intelligence to make a decision about what is in their best interests. For example, a 16/17 year old who is considered mature and able to articulate strong and reasoned views about whether to accept LAC status or not, will likely be deemed competent.*

- 3.10 If the young person is ordinarily resident in another area, then the assessment should be done, and accommodation provided irrespectively. Responsibility may then be passed on to the area where s/he is ordinarily resident under section 20(2) of the Children Act 1989 or the cost of provision recouped under section 29(7).

### **Local housing authorities' responsibilities towards young people**

Statutory Instrument 2002 No. 2051 extended priority need to a number of new categories including all 16 and 17 year olds (except 'looked after/relevant children') (Children Act 1989/Children (Leaving Care) England Act 2000), and those assessed as both a 'child in need' and owed a duty under section 20 of the Children Act 1989 and care leavers aged 18 to 21 years.

- 3.11 An interim duty to accommodate exists if the local housing authority (LHA) has reason to believe that the young person may be eligible, homeless and in priority need. The authority may carry out initial enquiries to satisfy themselves there is a reason to believe the applicant is homeless, before an interim duty arises.
- 3.12 (i) if the LHA is satisfied that the applicant is eligible; threatened with homelessness; in priority need; unintentionally homeless and has a local connection they have a duty to ensure that accommodation does not cease to become available to the applicant;
- (ii) if the LHA is satisfied that the applicant is eligible; homeless; in priority need; unintentionally homeless and has a local connection, they have a duty to ensure that accommodation is available for the applicant's occupation (the full housing duty);
- (iii) if there is no local connection the young person may be referred to an area where they do have a connection. Housing authorities aim to complete inquiries within 33 working days.

### **Intentional homelessness**

- 3.13 Young people who are assessed as being in priority need and intentionally homeless are entitled to advice and assistance and to accommodation for a reasonable period to give them the chance to secure accommodation for him/herself with the assistance of Social Services. A decision by a competent young person not to be looked after should not be treated as a deliberate action that has contributed to him/her becoming intentionally homeless, provided that decision is an informed and considered one. (Ref: DCSF Guidance on Provision of Accommodation for 16 and 17 year old young people who may be homeless and/or require accommodation issued 1 April 2010, paragraph 4.11). A copy of the decision letter re intentional homelessness will be forwarded to Social Services and to Connexions as soon as the decision is made.

## Homelessness prevention

- 3.14 The LHA's first duty under homelessness legislation is to try to prevent homelessness, and other statutory agencies are able to assist with prevention and mediation. Under the housing options approach, the procedure for households likely to be eligible and in priority need for homelessness assistance is now likely to be operated as a two stage process, with options and prevention considered first, but with safeguards in place where a person is eligible for and requires assistance under homelessness legislation.
- 3.15 The Homelessness Code of Guidance states that local housing authorities should consider the possibility of family reconciliation, e.g. family mediation, for all 16 and 17 year olds (except those for whom Social Services have responsibility).
- 3.16 The Homelessness Code of Guidance acknowledges that the process of reconciliation may take time; therefore the normal 33 working day target for completing inquiries may need to be extended.
- 3.17 If it appears that it might be unsafe for the young person to return to their last settled address because of violence or abuse, consultation must take place as soon as possible with Social Services and the police where appropriate. Their advice on whether attempts at reconciliation are appropriate must be taken into consideration.

## Leaving Care and Catch 22 (16 plus) Service

- 3.18 Catch22 provides services for Kent's eligible, relevant, former relevant and qualifying children (under section 24 of the Children Act 1989), on behalf of Kent County Council. They work alongside the Disabled Children's Service and Service for Unaccompanied Asylum Seeking Children to provide a leaving care service for young people in accordance with requirements under the Children (Leaving Care) (England) Act 2000. This service has a duty to maintain and support them, and secure suitable accommodation.
- 3.19 Since the introduction of the Children (Leaving Care) (England) Act 2000, 16 and 17 year old care leavers (relevant children) (except lone parents and disabled people) are no longer entitled to claim state benefits. In Kent, Catch22 16plus service is responsible for meeting the accommodation and maintenance needs of these young people.
- 3.20 Catch22 16plus service is responsible for providing or funding vacation accommodation for young people aged 18 to 21 in full time education if their term time accommodation is not available to them. This duty extends to age 24 if the agreed course begins before the age of 21.
- 3.21 Catch22 16plus service's duty to provide/pay for accommodation ends after the young person reaches 18 years, the remaining duty is to advise and befriend.

- 3.22 A needs assessment should be undertaken by a Catch22 16plus service Team within the three months after the young person's sixteenth birthday, or at the point at which the young person becomes an eligible child if this is later than their 16th birthday, in order to prepare a Pathway Plan as soon afterwards as possible. The assessment forms the basis of planning towards the young person's independent living. It will take account of the young person's needs for support, health care, education/training or employment. A central issue will also be future accommodation needs and where the young person hopes to live.
- 3.23 The Pathway Plan sets the young person's route to independence and is reviewed regularly, at least every six months, continuing after they cease to be looked after and potentially to their twenty-first birthday (or to the age of 25 if they are in higher or further education).
- 3.24 Following the young person's final review, Catch22 16plus service will notify the LHA six months in advance if they will require alternative accommodation. This will enable a planned move to be facilitated and ensure appropriate support is in place to help the young person sustain any tenancy that is offered.

### **Services for Unaccompanied Asylum Seeking Children**

- 3.25 SUASC is a county wide service with a duty team, two reception and assessment centres and two Looked After Children and Care Leavers Teams.
- 3.26 Unaccompanied Asylum Seeking Children are provided with accommodation and support under Section 20 Children Act 1989 by the Services for Unaccompanied Asylum Seeking Children (SUASC) as they have no parent or customary care giver and therefore become the responsibility of the local authority as abandoned children and young people.
- 3.27 Although SUASC are subject to immigration control their rights and entitlements are the same as any other looked after, relevant or former relevant young person, depending on their immigration status.

### **Disabled young people**

- 3.28 Disabled Looked after Children who are allocated to a practitioner in the Disabled Children's Service do not transfer to Kent's 16+ Leaving Care Service provided by Catch22. Therefore, the responsibility for preparing the young person for adulthood will rest with the allocated social worker in the Disabilities Service.
- 3.29 A Pathway Plan should be completed with all disabled young people who are looked after in long term placements or placements over 120 days prior to their 16th birthday. The Pathway Plan may be combined with the young person's person centred transition plan (see Transition Protocols) so that they do not have two separate plans. The pathway planning process will be where arrangements for continuing support of contact will be agreed.

- 3.30 Multi-agency Transition Protocols set out the processes for disabled children including the transfer of young people from Children’s Social Services Disabled Children’s Service to Kent Adult Social Services. Young people between the ages of 14 years and 18 years who require a social work service will need to have a transition plan in place.
- 3.31 Any disabled child or young person presented to the Joint Allocation Resource Panel for funding either of a complex support package or because they are considered to be in need of residential provision will be automatically brought to the attention of Adult Social Services.

## 4. Other organisations’ roles and responsibilities

### Kent Youth Offending Service

- 4.1 Kent Youth Offending Service (YOS) is a multi-agency partnership established by the Crime and Disorder Act 1998. The purpose of the Youth Offending Service is to prevent offending by children and young people. Kent YOS works with young people aged between 10 and 17 years who are offending or at risk of offending, and who have been referred by either the police or courts.
- 4.2 The service has five locality based teams:
- Maidstone/Swale
  - Dartford/Gravesham
  - Tonbridge/Tunbridge Wells/Sevenoaks
  - Canterbury/Thanet
  - Ashford/Folkestone/Dover
- 4.3 A Kent YOS performance measure monitors the effectiveness of the Service to enable the accommodation needs of those 16/17 year olds to be met. The measure focuses on both the whole age group and more specifically those returning to the community following a custodial sentence.
- 4.4 YOS has a County Accommodation Officer and an Accommodation Lead in each of-the Locality Teams. Each young person will have a case manager who has responsibility for the planning and delivery of the intervention, which will include addressing any accommodation need.
- 4.5 A protocol between YOS & Children’s Social Services (most recent version is dated July 2009) requires a YOS case manager to refer a homeless 16/17 year old, including those in custody, to Children’s Social Services for a “child in need” initial assessment (S17, Children Act 1989). YOS, together with their partners are committed to preventing homelessness.

## Connexions Kent & Medway

- 4.6 Connexions Kent & Medway provides information, advice and support services for all 13 to 19 year olds (or up to age 25 for those with a learning/physical or other disability). This includes guidance on choosing courses and careers and help on a broad range of issues, for example: health, teenage pregnancy and homelessness with progression to ETE as a key focus.
- 4.7 All young people have access to a Connexions Kent & Medway Personal Adviser, which for some will involve in-depth support. Personal Advisers work in schools, colleges, Connexions Kent & Medway Access Points and in community outreach locations.
- 4.9 All 16 to 17 year olds who do not have Looked After status and are claiming Job Seekers Allowance (Hardship) must be registered with Connexions Kent & Medway, providing a link between some of the more hard to reach clients and specialist Personal Advisers.
- 4.10 Underpinning Connexions Kent & Medway's work is a partnership and multi-agency approach, which seeks to address the many challenges that face young people today.

## Health

- 4.11 Young people presenting as homeless may have unmet health needs. Emergency treatment should be accessed through the Accident and Emergency Department of the local hospital. Non-emergency treatment can be accessed as a temporary patient at a GP Surgery. If a young person experiences difficulty in registering with a GP they should contact Kent Primary Care Agency on 01622 655 000 who will arrange for them to be allocated a GP.
- 4.12 Young people who are homeless may have a multitude of complex problems requiring a multi agency support package, there is now a mechanism through the Common Assessment Framework (CAF) to ensure a young person receives a multi agency assessment for support and intervention. Staff in schools, community health and many other settings have been trained to complete the CAF.
- 4.13 A significant proportion of homeless young people will lack confidence in accessing mainstream services, including sexual health and contraceptive clinics. There are sexual health outreach workers who can support young people on a 1-1 basis and their contact details can be found on the website [www.foryoungpeople.co.uk](http://www.foryoungpeople.co.uk).
- 4.14 Young parents and their children may be particularly vulnerable and are likely to need a significant amount of support. It is essential that a young family is well linked into the advice and services offered by the staff within the local children's centre, the health visiting service, floating support workers and voluntary organisations such as Homestart. These contacts will be area specific but will be available from local health and children centres. If a family has been moved to a new area they may need support in accessing new services.

## Voluntary Sector/Schools

- 4.15 The voluntary sector and schools fulfil a crucial role in the provision of services to young people. Many young people are more likely to initially approach a voluntary sector organisation for advice or support in dealing with housing related difficulties than their local housing authority or Children's Social Services Department.
- 4.16 This protocol recognises the importance of voluntary sector services/schools and seeks to fully involve the providers of these services as part of a holistic approach to delivering seamless services to homeless young people.
- 4.17 Around Kent there are a number of voluntary sector organisations providing support, advice and accommodation to homeless young people. It is vital that these services are used appropriately and to their full potential.

## 5. Procedure

### Approaches to Children's Social Services – CSS

- 5.1 If a young person approaches Children's Social Services first or Kent Contact & Assessment Service - KCAS (see 5.17) then:
- 5.2 The CSS Duty Officer or KCAS will;
- Check the Children and Families Information System, Integrated Children's System (ICS) and Youth Offending Service Information System (Careworks) to see if the young person is already known to services.
  - A referral will be created.
- 5.3 If this check reveals that the young person is the responsibility of Catch22 16plus service or the SUASC then the duty officer will:
- Make immediate contact with the local Catch22 16plus service Team or SUASC Team by telephone.
- 5.4 If the young person is not the responsibility of Catch22 16plus service or the SUASC then the Duty Officer will attempt to mediate so that they young person can return to the family home
- If the parent/guardian is insistent that the young person cannot return home, but it is safe for them to do so, the duty social worker will attempt to facilitate return to the family home, at least until the child in need assessment has been carried out. The assessment will take up to 10 working days to complete and the parent/guardian should be advised of the timescales.
  - If the parent/guardian is refusing to have the young person back into the family home at all, the duty officer will ascertain whether the young person can stay with a suitable family member or friend until the child in need assessment has been carried out. The family member/friend should be advised of the timescales of the assessment.

- A referral should be made to the Family Group Conference service.
- The social worker will advise the young person that if they are unable to return home, they will be assessed under Section 17 of the Children Act 1989, and will explain the implications and benefits of being considered 'looked after'. The young person will be provided with a leaflet explaining this information in a clear and easy read format.
- If the young person is requesting accommodation and consents to becoming a "looked after child" the duty social worker will arrange accommodation pending the completion of a core assessment.
  1. If the young person is not consenting to becoming an accommodated child but in need of emergency accommodation, Children's Social Services will arrange temporary accommodation using its provision under s 17 of the Children Act 1989 until assessments by Children's Social Services and Housing have been undertaken to establish future need.
  2. The duty on CSS to accommodate remains until it is determined that the young person is not a Child In Need. If the young person is assessed as not being a Child In Need or is a competent young person making an informed decision to refuse to accept s20 accommodation, a referral should be made to the LHA for an assessment under the homelessness regulations.

The social worker will then:

3. Complete (as fully as possible, including any relevant information obtained via Careworks) the Kent Joint Young Persons Homelessness Protocol Housing Referral Form (see Appendix C).
    - Fax a copy of the referral form to the LHA in the area where the young person originates or now resides to arrange a joint initial assessment.
- 5.4.1 Joint assessment will be a requirement of this protocol, but where LHAs and CSS teams have local arrangements which go above and beyond this, these arrangements should be left in place.
- 5.5 Children's Social Services' Children and Families Teams will retain responsibility for any young person, who after assessment by them, is judged to be a child in need and owed a s20 duty or where there are child protection concerns in accordance with the Kent assessment matrix. If appropriate the Children and Families Team may request the assistance of the LHA in accessing suitable accommodation for the young person. The LHA will provide any further advice required to enable the Children and Families Team to access suitable accommodation. This may be supported accommodation, private rented accommodation (in which case the young person will need support), or LA accommodation if appropriate and available, whereby the young person will also need support. The Children and Families Team will meet the cost of such accommodation.

## Approaches to Catch22 16plus service Teams/Service

- 5.6 If a young person under the age of 18 approaches a Catch22 16plus service Team/SUASC first then the Duty Officer will:
- Establish immediately whether the young person is their responsibility. If they are, Catch22 16plus service Team will accommodate the young person using the resources available to the team.
- 5.7 If the Catch 22 16 plus service Team do not have responsibilities toward the young person then:
- A referral will be made immediately to the Children's Social Services' Duty Team.
- 5.8 If the Catch22 16plus service Team have responsibility for the young person but are unable to access suitable accommodation then they may request the assistance of the LHA. The LHA will provide any further advice required to enable Catch22 16plus service Team to access suitable accommodation. Catch22 16plus service will meet the cost of such accommodation.
- 5.9 To do this the young person's allocated social worker will:
- Complete the housing referral form in Appendix C;
  - Fax this to the Housing Needs Team at the local housing authority along with:
    - A copy of the information sharing consent form;
    - A written request for assistance in accessing suitable accommodation for the young person;
    - Details of the young person's care plan and named social worker; and
    - Recommendations as to the type and location of accommodation that would adequately meet the young persons' needs.

## Approaches to Services for Unaccompanied Asylum Seeking Children (SUASC)

- 5.10 If a young person under the age of 18 approaches SUASC first then the Duty Officer will:
- Establish immediately whether the young person is their responsibility. If they are an unaccompanied asylum seeking child or intend to seek asylum, SUASC will accommodate the young person using the resources available to the team.
- 5.11 If the young person is not seeking asylum and therefore SUASC do not have responsibilities towards them then:
- A referral will be made immediately to the Children's Social Services' Duty Team using the child in need referral form in Appendix C.

## Approaches made to Local Housing Authority

- 5.12 If a homeless young person approaches the LHA Housing Options and Advice Team for assistance, the housing officer will immediately interview the young person and establish the following:
- The reason for homelessness from the young person's perspective
  - Where the young person stayed the night before
  - Contact the parent/guardian to confirm the young person's homelessness and their perspective
- 5.13 In the interview, the housing officer will attempt to mediate so that the young person can return to the family home.
- 5.14 As part of the initial assessment the housing officer will:
- Establish whether the young person is the responsibility of the Catch22 16plus service. If the young person was looked after on or after their sixteenth birthday then an immediate referral will be made by telephone to the local Catch22 16plus service Team.
  - If in doubt, ring the local Catch22 16plus service Team and the referral can be made at the same time;
  - Establish whether the young person is known to disabled children's services
  - Establish whether the young person is the responsibility of the SUASC (Services for Unaccompanied Asylum Seeking Children). If so then a referral should be made to the relevant SUASC Team by telephoning the Duty and Assessment Team on 01304 222023;
  - Make a simultaneous referral, for all 16 to 19 year olds, to their local Connexions Kent & Medway Access Point, using the referral form for children in need within 48 hours.
- 5.15 If the parent/guardian is insistent that the young person cannot return home, the housing officer will attempt to encourage that the young person returns to the family home, if it is deemed safe for him to do so, at least until the child in need assessment has been carried out. The assessment will take up to 10 days to complete and the parent/guardian should be advised of the timescales.
- 5.16 If the parent/guardian is refusing to have the young person back into the family home at all, or it is not safe for the young person to return, the housing officer will ascertain whether the young person can stay with a suitable family member or friend until the child in need assessment has been carried out. The family member/friend should be advised of the timescales of the assessment.
- 5.17 The Children's Social Services Child in Need & Child protection Referral Form (Inter-Agency Referral Form) and Information Sharing Form (see Appendix A and B) will

then be completed and faxed to the Kent Contact & Assessment Service – KCAS) on 01233 652261 or e-mailed to **kcassecur@kent.gcsx.gov.uk** (if Housing Authorities have Government Secure Extranet - GSX) . This form will prompt a child in need initial assessment to be carried out and give details of where the young person is currently and temporarily staying.

5.18 If the housing officer is unable to prevent homelessness, prior to placing the young person into interim accommodation, they will make a referral to CSS.

5.19 Upon receiving this referral Children’s Social Services will:

- Contact the young person within 2 working days so that an initial assessment and risk assessment can be arranged
- Liaise with the housing officer to ensure the initial assessment takes place jointly.
- Payments under Section 17 of the Children’s Act 1989 may be considered for essential items.

5.20 Upon receipt of the referral the Children and Families Initial Assessment Team will:

- Contact the young person within 2 working days and offer an appointment for an initial assessment, which must be completed within 10 working days. (If child protection issues are identified by the housing officer, this assessment can be completed in less than the 10 working days); and
- Share the outcome of the initial assessment (including reasons for their decision) with the LHA within one working day after completion, by faxing a copy of the assessment to the Housing needs/advice Team.

In the event that Children’s Social Services do not complete the assessment within 10 working days, notifying the LHA of the outcome, then Children’s Social Services will be responsible for the cost of interim accommodation after day 10, until the assessment concludes whether the S.20 duty applies. This does not necessarily infer that the S.20 duty will apply, and, where it does not, Housing will then take over the cost until they have assessed the duty owed under the housing legislation.

5.21 Upon receiving the referral the Connexions Kent & Medway Service will:

- Contact the young person to offer Connexions Kent & Medway service support.

5.22 The outcome of the Children and Families initial assessment will be considered by the housing authority when reaching their homelessness decision and to aid their decision on what might be considered suitable accommodation.

5.23 The LHA will notify the Children and Families Team Leader in writing within two working days of the outcome of their homelessness inquiries for all young people who have had a Children and Families’ initial assessment.

- 5.24 If the young person is found to be intentionally homeless, Social Services and Connexions must be informed immediately this decision is made.

## **Approaches to Health, Connexions Kent & Medway, YOS and the Voluntary Sector**

- 5.25 If a young person who meets the protocol criteria approaches health services, Connexions Kent & Medway, YOS or a voluntary sector agency to ask for assistance due to homelessness then the agency approached will:
- Fax a copy of the initial assessment and referral form for children in need (Appendix A) and signed information sharing consent form (Appendix B) to the local Children's Social Service team; and
  - The CSS will carry out the same process set out from 5.1
- 5.26 The referring agency should contact the CSS by telephone for updates on the child in need assessment.

## **6. Provision of support**

### **Floating support**

- 6.1 All young people who are owed a full housing duty under the protocol will be referred for floating support services to the Supporting People Team as a minimum, by the LHA in keeping with the Floating Support referral protocol; phone 08458 247100 or fax 01622 694 746 or email [floatingsupport@kent.gov.uk](mailto:floatingsupport@kent.gov.uk). This includes young people placed in B & B's and other temporary accommodation.
- 6.2 The young person's floating support provider will be responsible for developing a support plan for the young person. This will include:
- Details of the referrals made to other agencies;
  - Who is involved in providing support to the young person; and
  - How often the young person will be seen and contacted by the floating support service
- 6.3 The Floating Support provider will ensure that a copy of the support plan will be given to, and kept by, the LHA or housing association landlord to assist in maintaining the temporary accommodation/tenancy.

### **Connexions Kent & Medway**

- 6.4 All young people aged 16 to 19 years (and up to 25 years in some cases) will have been referred by the local CSS team/ local housing authority to the Connexions Kent & Medway service who will allocate the young person a named Personal

Advisor (PA). The PA will link with the young person in an appropriate manner, for example by mobile phone, at an Access Point or in a mutually agreed safe place.

6.5 The Connexions Kent & Medway PA will:

- Monitor the progress of the child in need assessment/homeless investigation, as appropriate;
- Notify the appropriate authority if the young person's housing placement is breaking/breaks down or the young persons circumstances change; and
- Develop an action plan with the young person.

6.6 The interim action plan or CAF will include:

- Ways to involve any other agency working with the young person e.g. YOS;
- Guidance on training, job seeking, career options;
- Address any health related needs e.g. drug/alcohol issues, mental health and general well being;
- Give specific details on support for pregnant teenagers/teenage parents; and
- Later consideration of generating a CAF if the young person is not deemed a Child in Need.

6.7 With the young person's consent, the contents of this action plan will be shared with other agencies working with the young person where appropriate to assist in maintaining the young person's tenancy or temporary accommodation. A written copy to be provided to either CSS or the LHA, as appropriate, within two working days of the action plan.

## **Voluntary sector**

6.8 All young people to whom the LHA does not owe a full re-housing duty will be referred to the most appropriate local housing advice/support service. Whichever voluntary sector service is involved at this point will endeavour to secure accommodation/support for the young person.

## **7. Monitoring**

7.1 CSS Team managers and LHA housing options needs managers will be responsible for collation and feedback to the Joint Planning Manager of the Joint Policy and Planning Board on a quarterly basis.

7.2 LHAs and 16plus teams to monitor timescales as in para 3.22.3.

7.3 Social services' District Managers will be responsible for collating feedback at their meetings with their local team managers.

- 7.4 Social services' District Managers and LHA Housing needs/Options Managers to have quarterly contact in order to monitor the protocol.
- 7.5 Connexions Kent & Medway to give feedback to LHA Housing needs/Options Managers.
- 7.6 All feedback will be given to the Joint Policy and Planning Board for Housing (JPPB) via the Joint Planning Manager on a six monthly basis.

## **8. Review**

The protocol will be reviewed periodically to ensure that it is up to date and appropriate. The effectiveness and continuing relevance of this protocol will be reviewed annually.

Monitoring arrangements will be established by the JPPB and Kent Children's Trust for: numbers of referrals, assessments carried out by children's services; housing; and jointly; numbers of young people accommodated; successful rehabilitation; type of accommodation used.

## **9. Resolution of Disputes**

Disputes over assessment timeframes, responsibilities for provision of accommodation will be referred to the Children's Services District Manager and the Housing Options Manager in the first instance. If not resolved the issue should be referred on to the relevant Head of Children's Services and Local Authority Housing Department Head of Service.

**Children’s Social Services  
Child in Need and Child Protection Referral Form**



This form is to be used by all agencies when referring a child to Children’s Social Services. The more information received by Children’s Social Services at the first point of contact, the more likely it is that appropriate services will be delivered at the earliest opportunity to help children and their families.

**Before proceeding – please consider – Have you consulted within your own agency about this referral? If so, was it agreed that a referral was required?**

1. Child’s first name		Child’s surname		
Any alternative name:				
Date of birth or EDD	Gender (M/F)	Religion	First language	
Name of parents/carers:				
Home address:		Any other relevant addresses		
Postcode:		Postcode		
Phone number(s):				
Ethnic origin				
White	Mixed	Asian or British Asian	Black or Black British	Other ethnic groups

2. Other significant family members/adults		
Name	Relationship	Contact details

3. Contact Information: <i>[Please add others you think may be relevant]</i>			
Agency	Name	Address	Telephone
GP			
Health Visitor			
School			
School Nurse			
Other agency			

4. Have you had a consultation with Children's Social Services? If so, what advice were you given? Please include the consultation number and a copy (if available).

5. Has a CAF been completed in respect of this child?  
*If a CAF has been completed, please attach a copy.*

6. Why are you referring this child to Children's Social Services today? *[Please identify your specific concerns and comment on what you think the family need from Children's Services. State how long you have known the child and in what capacity, that is as teacher, doctor, etc]*

7. What information do you know about this child: *[Include all relevant information about the child, that is about their development, health, behaviour, etc. If you have information such as a chronology, body maps or centile charts, please attach].*

8. What information do you know about the child's parent(s) and wider family:  
*[Include relationships, friendships, behaviour, support, stability, safety, etc].*

9. What information do you know about the wider environmental factors which may impact on the child: *[Consider for example, housing issues, who is working in the household, financial situation, community and social involvement.]*

--

10. Any other relevant information: *[Including previous referrals.]*

--

11. Is there a perceived risk of violence or other matters that could place those making contact with this family in danger (such as an unsafe neighbourhood, persons of a violent nature, an un-tethered dog, etc)?

Yes  No  If yes, please specify what the identified risk is:

--

12. In circumstances such as where there is a risk of violence (such as domestic abuse), please provide details regarding a safe point of contact.

--

13. Have you spoken to the parent or carer about making this referral? If not, please explain why not?

--

If you are making a Child in Need referral, agreement must be sought from the parent/carer (and where appropriate the young person) to making the referral. If parental agreement is not obtained it will not be possible to progress a Child in Need referral. Wherever possible, the parent/carer should be asked to sign the referral form.

*If you are making a referral of child protection concern and are unsure about whether to advise the parent/carer about the referral, you should consult within your own agency about this issue. If you remain unsure about whether the parent/carer should be consulted/informed about the referral (that is due to evidence being compromised, or someone being placed at risk) please consult with Children's Social Services in the first instance. See Guidance Notes.*

14. Parental agreement: [See Guidance Notes before completion.]
I agree to the information in this referral being passed to Social Services.
Name of parent/legal guardian (please print)
Signature of parent/legal guardian:
Date:

15. Referrer:
Name and status (print) :
Please specify work address and contact phone number:
Signature:
Date:

*For County Duty Service Office Use Only:*

Team open to:						
Child Protection	New Referral		Case Record		Contact only Y/N	
Child in Need	New Referral		Case Record		Urgent	

Recommended Senior course of action – (if blank then standard process)									
K L		S L		MB		JD		CC	

**Kent joint young persons homelessness protocol information sharing consent form**

I give my permission for:

Kent County Council – Children’s Social Services

and/or

Rainer Kent 16plus Team

and/or

Connexions Kent & Medway

and/or

..... housing authority

and/or

..... primary care trust

and/or

..... voluntary agency

and/or

..... other agency (please specify)

to share any necessary information and make any necessary enquires about me in relation to this referral (this includes sharing the outcome of any assessment or enquiries).

Name:.....

Signature: .....

Date: .....

The terms ‘necessary information’ and ‘necessary enquiries’ mean that the agencies on the list will only share information or ask for information about you that they need in order to:

- assess their responsibilities to you;
- decide on the type and location of accommodation that will be secured for you; and
- decide with you on the type and duration of support that will be put in place for you.

All information will be processed and used in accordance with the Data Protection Act 1998.

**Kent joint young persons homelessness protocol housing referral form**

**Completed forms should be returned to the relevant local housing authority – see section 5.**

**This is a referral being made under the protocol.**

*Please ensure you answer the questions as fully as possible and obtain the young person’s permission to share information using the ‘Information Sharing Consent Form’*

**Section one – Young person’s details**

Name:	
Contact phone number:	
Date of birth:	National Insurance number:
Last settled address:	Name and address of parent/guardian:
Reasons for homelessness:	
Homeless tonight?                      Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/>	

**Section two – ‘looked after’ status**

Was the young person ‘looked after’ on, or after, their sixteenth birthday? (please circle)

Yes                       No                       (if no, go to section three)

If yes, was this by? (please tick)

- Kent County Council – Children’s Social Services; or
- another local authority

Name of authority:.....

Name of Social Worker (if known):
Contact address:
Phone number:
Email:

**Section three – further information about the young person**

Are there any health problems, including mental health/learning disabilities? If yes, please give details:

Are there any known substance misuse issues? If yes, please give details:

Does the client pose any known risk to themselves or to others?
Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> If yes, please give details:

Please give details of any other information you have that would assist the local housing authority's enquiries:

--

**Section four – Referrer's details**

Referrer's name:
Phone. no:
Agency:
Address:
E-mail:
Referrer's signature:

**Section five – returning the referral form**

Please fax a copy of this form to the Housing needs/advice team at local housing authority where your clients last had a settled address, and telephone the team to confirm receipt, and then post the original copy of the form. Contact details are shown below.

## District housing authority contact details

### **Ashford Borough Council**

Housing Services Team  
Ashford Borough Council  
Civic Centre  
Tannery Lane  
ASHFORD  
TN23 1PL

Tel: 01233 330 688

Fax: 01233 330 425

### **Canterbury City Council**

Housing Advice Team  
Canterbury City Council  
Military Road  
CANTERBURY  
CT1 1YW

Tel: 01227 862 142

Fax: 01227 453 780

### **Dartford Borough Council**

Dartford Housing Services  
Civic Centre  
Home Gardens  
DARTFORD  
DA1 1DR

Tel: 01322 343 822

Fax: 01322 343 084

### **Dover District Council**

Housing Needs Section  
Dover District Council  
White Cliffs Business Park  
DOVER  
CT16 3PQ

Tel: 01304 872 265

Fax: 01304 872 316

### **Gravesham Borough Council**

Housing Needs Team  
Gravesham Borough Council  
Civic Centre  
Windmill Street  
GRAVESEND  
DA12 1AU

Tel: 01474 337 366

Fax: 01474 33 7762

### **Maidstone Borough Council**

Housing Options Team  
Maidstone Borough Council  
Maidstone House  
King Street  
MAIDSTONE  
ME15 6QJ

Tel: 01622 602 440

Fax: 01622 682 938

### **Sevenoaks District Council**

Social Housing  
Sevenoaks District Council  
Council Offices  
Argyle Road  
SEVENOAKS  
TN13 1HG

Tel: 01732 227 000 - Ask for social housing

Fax: 01732 227 154

### **Shepway District Council**

Housing Options Team  
Coast and Countryside  
Housing Services  
Shepway Housing Centre  
3-5 Shorncliffe Road  
FOLKESTONE  
CT20 2SQ

Tel: 01303 853 700

Fax: 01303 853 774

**Swale Borough Council**

Housing Options  
Swale House  
East Street  
SITTINGBOURNE  
ME10 3HT

Tel: 01795 417 511  
Fax: 01795 417 265

**Thanet District Council**

Housing Options Section  
Thanet District Council  
PO Box 9  
Cecil Street  
MARGATE  
CT12 1XZ

Tel: 01843 577 277  
Fax: 01843 290 906

**Tonbridge & Malling Borough Council**

Housing Needs Team  
Tonbridge and Malling Borough Council  
Gibson Building  
Gibson Drive  
Kings Hill  
WEST MALLING  
ME19 4LZ

Tel: 01732 876 067  
Fax: 01732 876 202

**Tunbridge Wells Borough Council**

Housing Needs Team  
Tunbridge Wells Borough Council  
Town Hall  
Mount Pleasant Road  
TUNBRIDGE WELLS  
TN1 1RS

Tel: 01892 554 140  
Fax: 01892 548 053

# Useful Telephone Numbers

## Local Authority Housing Departments

<b>Name</b>	<b>Phone Number</b>	<b>Fax</b>
Ashford Borough Council	01233 330 688	01233 330 425
Canterbury City Council	01227 862 142	01227 453 780
Dartford Borough Council	01322 343 822	01322 343 084
Dover District Council	01304 872 265	01304 872 316
Gravesham Borough Council	01474 337 366	01474 337 762
Maidstone Borough Council	01622 602 440	01622 682 938
Sevenoaks District Council	01732 227 000	01732 227 154
Shepway District Council	01303 853 700	01303 853 774
Swale Borough Council	01795 417 511	01795 417 565
Thanet District Council	01843 577 277	01843 290 906
Tonbridge and Malling Borough Council	01732 876 208	01732 841 421
Tunbridge Wells Borough Council	01892 554 140	01892 548 053

## Health

Registering with a GP 01622 655 000

## Social Services

Kent Contact and Assessment  
Service (KCAS) 01233 652 261

## Services for Unaccompanied Asylum Seeking Children

Duty and Assessment Team 01304 222 023

## Supporting People

Floating Support 08458 247 100