 

**Protocol for temporary accommodation placements between Kent and Medway local housing authorities.**

**Current Context**

Due to the lack of temporary accommodation in all areas of Kent and increasing demands on Local Housing Authorities, in times of emergencies placements of vulnerable households are sometimes made outside of the Local Authority area.

It is recognised that there needs to be a collective responsibility to support vulnerable households who are placed outside of the Local Authority area to ensure that they have access to vital services; including access to education for children.

There are also concerns over the lack of control and inadequate coordination of these placements and the risks that this might expose vulnerable people including children.

This protocol has regard to the case law and guidance on the placements of households into temporary accommodation:

**Homelessness Code of Guidance (2006):**

With regards to suitability, Section 17.41 of the Code states that, “the location of the accommodation will be relevant to suitability and the suitability of the location for all the members of the household will have to be considered. Where, for example, applicants are in paid employment account will need to be taken of their need to reach their normal workplace from the accommodation secured. The Secretary of State recommends that local authorities take into account the need to minimise disruption to the education of young people, particularly at critical points in time such as close to taking GCSE examinations. Housing authorities should avoid placing applicants in isolated accommodation away from public transport, shops and other facilities, and, wherever possible, secure accommodation that is as close as possible to where they were previously living, so they can retain established links with schools, doctors, social workers and other key services and support essential to the well-being of the household.”

**Responsibilities of Local Housing Authorities (LHAs)**

1. LHAs will adhere to this protocol when making placements of temporary accommodation.
2. Each Local Authority will use its best endeavours to ensure that it has access to emergency accommodation within its own area.If emergency accommodation out of an authority’s own area is essential, this should not be within the Thanet wards of Cliftonville West and Margate Central. This is because these wards contain two of the most deprived lower super output areas within England, ranked 4th and 21st[[1]](#footnote-1) respectively.
3. In all occasions, before arranging a placement of temporary accommodation outside of the Local Authority area, the placing authority will ensure that the accommodation provider has checked with the host Local Authority whether they have the need for the unit of temporary accommodation that day.
4. Where it necessary for Local Authorities to place households outside of their area they should ensure that those households are reconnected with their originating area as soon as reasonably possible and that they are assisted to return.
5. The placing Local Authorities will use their best endeavors to contact the receiving authority to establish whether the identified accommodation has any category 1 hazards before placing, and that where applicable, the temporary accommodation is appropriately licensed.
6. Receiving authorities must be notified in writing of all cases placed in temporary accommodation both at start of placement and at point of move-on. Out of hours placements should be notified to the relevant authority as soon as is practically possible, if it is intended that the placement will be continued past the next working day. This notification should include the following:
   * Name and date of birth of applicant
   * Name and date of birth of all other persons who normally reside with him as a member of his family or might reasonably be expected to reside with him,
   * the address of the accommodation,
   * the date on which the accommodation was made available to the household
   * which function under this Part the authority was discharging in securing that the accommodation is available for the applicant’s occupation
   * name of the landlord or housing supplier
   * Details of any services supporting the household, including MAPPA; MARAC; Specialist Children’s Service’s; history of gang involvement;[[2]](#endnote-1) and Community Mental Health Team.
   * Nightly cost of accommodation
7. There must be disclosure of full information that is available at time of referral to the receiving authority and to notify of any changes/further information as and when available. There is an expectation that all relevant authorities will share relevant confidential information as appropriate and that the applicant’s confidentiality is not breached.
8. Where households are placed into temporary accommodation in another local authority area the placing authority will remain the lead Authority in the event of multiple homelessness application.. On conclusion of the application where a household is unable to return to the area of origin, i.e. in cases of domestic abuse, the placing authority can refer to another Local Authority as appropriate, for assistance in discharging the main housing duty.
9. If a Local Authority decides after placing a household in temporary accommodation outside their area, that they do not have a housing obligation to that household, it will provide support and assistance to the household in finding alternative accommodation.
10. Households placed into temporary accommodation remain the responsibility of the placing authority, until the authority has exhausted its duties to the applicant and taken steps to assist the household in finding alternative accommodation.

11. Local Authorities should also adhere to the following Kent Protocols:

* + Intentionally Homeless Protocol for Families with Children
  + Young Persons’ Homelessness Protocol
  + Multi-Agency Protocol for Resettlement and Housing of Offenders
  + Mental Health Protocols

12. Local Authorities must have regard to the Homeless (Accommodation) Suitability Order 2003 regarding placements of families with dependent children in bed and breakfast accommodation, only placing in emergencies and for no longer than six weeks.

13. Local Authorities should have regard to the Young Persons Homeless Protocol (2017) when placing 16 and 17 year olds into temporary accommodation.

14. Local Authorities when ending the temporary accommodation, for any reason, will notify the receiving authority of the reason the provision of temporary accommodation has been brought to an end.

# Support and Links between Agencies

1. Many households placed into temporary accommodation are vulnerable and therefore external agencies, such as floating support, should be utilised when placing a vulnerable household in emergency accommodation to provide additional support and expertise to people in crisis.
2. It is acknowledged that a move is likely to cause disruption to the household’s access to appropriate services; therefore the referrer should try to ensure that those households maintain links with those services wherever possible. Any referrals must be done with the full agreement of the client, unless there is a child protection issue in which case a referral must be made to Children’s Social Services.
3. Where appropriate, statutory agencies should be informed when a household leaves emergency accommodation.

**Review of Protocol**

This protocol will be subject to a review in April 2018 to take account of the Homelessness Reduction Act 2017.

1. [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. Definition of street gangs by Kent Police: a relatively durable, predominantly street-based group of young people who see themselves (or are seen by others) as a discernible group; engage in criminal activity and violence; lay claim over territory; have some form of identifying structural feature and; are in conflict with other, similar gangs.’ [↑](#endnote-ref-1)