

**Joint Protocol between Kent County Council (KCC),
Kent Housing Group (KHG) and the Joint Policy &
Planning Board for Housing (JPPB)
for
16 & 17 Year Olds who Present as Homeless**

Agreed by:-

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06.10.17



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06.10.17



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06.10.17



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Joint Protocol to Address the Needs of Homeless Young People aged 16 and 17 in Kent

1. Introduction

This protocol relates to the prevention of homelessness of young people aged 16 – 17, who have presented as homeless.

This protocol aims to safeguard children and prevent homelessness through effective partnership arrangements between:

- (i) Kent County Council's Children, Young People and Education service, undertaken by:
 - Early Help & Preventative Services (EHPS) which include the Central Youth Justice Team
 - Specialist Children's Services (SCS) who have the statutory responsibility for Children In Need, Children in Care and Care Leavers and line manage the County Duty Team and the Out of Hours Service
- (ii) Kent's 12 District and Borough Councils (Local Housing Authorities – LHAs) undertaken by:
 - Housing Teams

This protocol recognises that the welfare of the child is paramount and all parties will work together to ensure young people are safe and have their needs met. (Working together to safeguard Children 2015).

1.1 Local Authority – Specialist Children's Services

It acknowledges the statutory duties of the Local Authority under the Children Act 1989 to assess Children In need (Section 17) and to provide accommodation under its duties outlined in Section 20.

Section 17

Section 17 of the Children Act 1989 sets out responsibilities of local authorities to provide services for children in need and their families. It is the general duty of every local authority to:

- Safeguard and promote the welfare of children within their area who are in need; and so far as is consistent with that duty, to promote the upbringing of such children and their families by providing a range and level of services appropriate to those children's needs.

Section 17(10) of the Children Act 1989 Act defines a child in need if:

- They are unlikely to achieve or maintain, or to have the opportunity of achieving or maintaining, a reasonable standard of health or development without which the provision for them of services by a local authority under this Part;
- Their health or development is likely to be significantly impaired, or further impaired, without the provision for them of such services; or
- They are disabled.

The duties described in section 17 apply to all children in need in the area of the local authority. A child is any person under the ages of 18 (section 105 (1) of the 1989 Act).

Section 20

Section 20(1) requires that every local authority shall provide accommodation for any child in need within their area who appears to them to require accommodation as a result of:

- there being no person who has parental responsibility for them;
- being lost or having been abandoned; or
- the person who has been caring for them being prevented (whether or not permanently, and for whatever reason) from providing suitable accommodation or care.

Section 20(3) requires that every local authority shall provide accommodation for any child in need within their area who has reached the age of sixteen and whose welfare the authority considers is likely to be seriously prejudiced if they do not provide the young person with accommodation.

Section 20(4) provides that a local authority may provide accommodation for any child in their area (even though a person who has parental responsibility for him is able to provide him with accommodation) if they consider that to do so would safeguard or promote the child's welfare.

There is a clear legal framework for co-operation between the Children, Young People and Education service services and LHAs to meet the needs of children and young people. Section 27 of the Children Act 1989 Act empowers Local Authorities to ask other authorities, including any LHAs, for "help in the exercise of any of their functions" under Part 3; the requested authority must provide that help if it is compatible with their own statutory or other duties and does not unduly prejudice the discharge of any of their own functions.

Section 20 (5) A local authority may provide accommodation for any person who has reached the age of sixteen but is under twenty-one in any community home which takes children who have reached the age of sixteen if they consider that to do so would safeguard or promote his welfare.

1.2 Housing Authority

This protocol also acknowledges the statutory duties of the Housing Authorities under the Housing Act 1996 and the Homelessness Act 2002 and the new Homeless Reduction Act 2017. (The Homeless Reduction Act 2017 comes into force in April 2018 which sees significant amendments to the existing homeless legislation. The Act introduces several new statutory duties to ensure that Local Housing Authorities take steps to prevent or relieve homelessness. This protocol will be reviewed in 2018 to ensure that these new statutory duties are incorporated into the protocol).

The Housing Act 1996 (as amended by the Homelessness Act 2002) Parts VI and VII set out the legal framework for allocating housing and assisting homeless people and clarifies eligibility for 16 and 17 year olds outlined in the Priority Need Order.

Children aged 16 or 17

- (1) A person (other than a person to whom paragraph (2) below applies) aged sixteen or seventeen who is not a relevant child for the purposes of section 23A of the Children Act 1989.
- (2) This paragraph applies to a person to whom a local authority owes a duty to provide accommodation under section 20 of that Act (provision of accommodation for children in need).

Section 175: A person is homeless if they have no accommodation available in the UK or elsewhere, or if they cannot secure entry to it, or it is not reasonable for them to occupy it.

Section 189: A person is in priority need if they or their partner are pregnant, have dependent children, are aged 16 or 17 years old, are vulnerable due to old age, mental illness or handicap or physical disability or other special reason, or are homeless or threatened with homelessness as the result of an emergency.

Section 191: A person becomes homeless intentionally if they deliberately do, or fail to do, something that causes them to lose their accommodation in circumstances where it would have been reasonable for them to have continued to occupy that accommodation. New guidance is awaited on the amended Homelessness Act 2002 (Homelessness Reduction Act 2017) on managing intentional homeless particularly for 16 and 17 year olds.

1.3 Southwark Judgement

This protocol also takes into account of the House of Lords judgement of May 2009 in the case of G v LB Southwark and the subsequent statutory guidance issued by the Department for Children, Schools and Families,(DCSF) and the Department of Communities and Local Government (DCLG) Department in April 2010. These clarified the legal responsibilities of Children and Young People's

Services towards homeless 16 and 17 year olds and the interrelationship between duties under the Children Act 1989 and homelessness legislation.

Southwark Judgement

This judgement restated and clarified the legal position as to whether a young person should be assisted under section 20 or Part 7. The judgement confirmed that section 20 should take **precedence** over Part 7 in providing for children in need who may be homeless. The judgement also confirmed the duty under section 20 takes **precedence** over the duty under section 17.

Kent County Council (KCC) and the twelve Local Housing Authorities (LHAs) are committed to meeting the safeguarding, social housing needs and promoting the welfare of young people who are at risk of homelessness and who are unable to live with their (wider) family or suitable friends.

This protocol specifically guides the joint working of KCC and Kent's 12 LHAs in respect of young people aged 16 and 17 who are at risk of homelessness or who are homeless. It does not cover care leavers aged 16-21 moving to independent living.

1.4 Why Have We Created This Protocol?

The Young and Homeless Report 2014 (www.homeless.org) reports that *“without adequate support homelessness can significantly affect young people’s lives. Young homeless people are more likely to become homeless again when they are older and also face greater difficulties finding work....Preventing homelessness is key and there is an increasing recognition that young people who are supported to remain with their immediate family or other family members have better outcomes than young people who end up as homeless. For many young people the response they need is some time and space away from immediate family pressures followed by advice and mediation support to encourage a planned return.”*

The Joint Policy and Planning Board (JPPB) working on behalf of the twelve local housing authorities and Kent County Council (Specialist Children’s Services and Early Help and Preventative Services) have developed this protocol so that we can work together to protect and prevent 16 and 17 year old young people becoming homeless and promote effective joint working.

All parties accept their corporate parenting responsibility to work together in the interests of Kent’s young people and the moral obligation to provide the support that any good family would provide to address homeless issues.

This protocol document updates and replaces the 2010 Young Persons’ Homeless Protocol and provides an operational model for staff of all organisations. The protocol outlines:

- The agreed process, roles and responsibilities of the signatories concerning the assessment of need and provision of accommodation services to homeless 16 and 17 year olds
- Governance and performance monitoring
- When and how all parties will share and record information

The protocol is designed to work alongside existing processes in each organisation and does not remove the responsibility of all parties to adhere to safeguarding policies and procedures.

1.5 Context and the Case for Change

It is envisaged that this new protocol will increase consistency of approach across all services for young people aged 16 and 17 who present themselves as homeless in Kent.

The impact of the Southwark Judgement has affected Upper and Second Tier authorities. Preventing homelessness remains a priority for all.

The statutory guidance regarding homeless 16 and 17 year olds can be found at: https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/8260/Provision_20of_20accommodation.pdf

2. Governance Arrangements and Monitoring

Specific data collection and sharing requirements are required of all partners to enable effective monitoring (Appendix 1).

Good quality, co-ordinated data will enable monitoring and evaluation reviews to focus on facts rather than 'hearsay' and enable a clear picture of the way the protocol is working and outcomes.

The protocol will be subject to an operational review end of March 2018 and evaluation process which will be overseen by Kent Joint Planning and Policy Board for Housing (JPPB). The impact of the Protocol will be regularly monitored in Specialist Children's Services and the responsibility sits with Corporate Parenting, Assistant Director who will ensure collaboration across internal Children's Services Departments. Updates on the protocol will be agreed through:

- JPPB
- Joint Chiefs
- Appropriate management groups within partner organisations

Lead responsibility for quarterly monitoring and reporting on the implementation of the Protocol will be the JPPB and Kent County Council (Specialist Children's Services); the following will also be accountable for contributing to the **annual review**:

- Assistant Director for Corporate Parenting including as necessary information from Assistant Director responsible for the Central Referral Unit, KCC
- Kent Housing Options Group
- KCC Management Information Unit
- Commissioners of children's services, KCC

2.1 Information Sharing Governance

All parties will adhere to the government guidance "Information Sharing Advice for practitioners providing safeguarding services to children, young people, parents and carers March 2015".

https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/419628/Information_sharing_advice_safeguarding_practitioners.pdf

2.2 Data Sharing

All parties will adhere to the Data Protection 1998 (DPA) legislation and ensure that appropriate technical and organisational measures are in place when sharing personal information.

Data will be collected on a quarterly basis to support the performance management and evaluation of the protocols

3 The Kent Model

The Kent model seeks to ensure that we deliver the requirements of joint DCLG and DCSF guidance 2010 paragraph 2.1 – 2.2.

'2.1 It is in the best interests of most young people aged 16 or 17 to live in the family home, or, where this is not safe or appropriate, with responsible adults in their wider family and friends network. Local authority responses to 16 and 17 year olds seeking help because of homelessness should explicitly recognise this and work pro-actively with young people and their families to identify and resolve the issues which have led to the homelessness crisis. This could involve family support such as family mediation or family group conferences.'

'2.2. It may be possible for children's services to prevent a young person from having to leave home at all, or it may take much longer to work through significant family tensions and problems while the young person is accommodated by the local authority. It is therefore important that services are designed to enable this family focus to begin on day one and continue throughout the processes of assessment and, where necessary, the provision of accommodation'

The protocol aims to build on previous work developed between Kent County Council services and the 12 LHAs with a view of addressing the recent Ofsted recommendation:

“Ensure that homeless young people aged 16 and 17 years are aware of their right to become looked after, assessments of risk are completed and there is adequate accommodation to meet their needs”. (Ofsted 2017)

A review and evaluation of the new protocol will be carried out at the end of March 2018 reported back to the individual agencies which are party to the agreement, the JPPB and the Kent Joint Chiefs.

What we want young people and their families to experience:

- A consistent, high quality service across the county which promotes the idea that ‘where possible, home is best’
- A same day response to any homeless presentation by 16 and 17 year olds in Kent
- Targeted interventions at the right frequency and intensity for the individual
- Prevention of homelessness and repeat occurrence

What it Means

- A standardised county wide approach to 16 and 17 year olds presenting as homeless
- Staff trained in managing the homeless assessment process
- Commitment to a weekly case progression discussion to ensure appropriate resource allocation in the Children, Young People and Education service.
- Commitment to regular review and monitoring meeting between the Children, Young People and Education service and the local Housing Authorities
- A clear direction and transparent plan for all cases
- A focus on reducing risk of coming into care and supporting families where it is appropriate to do so.
- Quick access to specialist services in the highest risk cases
- Support and input from peers, managers and expert practitioners across all the partners

Key Principles

The signatories to this protocol have agreed the following key principles:

- It is in the best interests of the majority of young people aged 16 or 17 to live in the family home, or, where this is not safe or appropriate, with responsible adults in their wider family and friends network.
- Helping families stay together is therefore a key focus.
- Early identification of need and effective early intervention can reduce the number of young people becoming looked after and / or having to manage the challenges of independent living.
- Where young people are unable or unwilling to return to their immediate families they should be supported to explore wider kinship care where their needs can be met.

- All parties to this protocol will work pro-actively with young people and their families to identify and resolve issues which have led to the homelessness and provide support to prevent re occurrence.
- Bed and Breakfast accommodation is unsuitable for 16 and 17 year olds and should not be used.
- The equalities policies of KCC and District Councils will be followed
- The views of the young people will be taken into account have appropriately considered before any decisions are made.

4. 16 and 17 Homelessness Process

At each stage of the process outlined below, practitioners should consider the vulnerability of and risks the young person presents and ensure their actions seek to minimise them. It should be noted that the risk of sexual and other types of exploitation of young people who are 'staying with friends' or 'sofa surfing' is potentially high.

4.1 Presentation by Young Person as Homeless

A young person aged 16 or 17 may present themselves as homeless due to a number of underlying reasons (from having a verbal argument with their parent or carer, being asked to leave home by carer or parent due to behavioural difficulties and conflict or experiencing significant abuse). As a result, they may first present at a variety of places, such as the local District/Borough Housing Department, the local Gateway, KCC Childrens Service offices, Local Early Help centres such as Youth hubs or Children's Centres or other community resources.

It is important that wherever the young person first makes contact that they receive a consistent approach from the initial person they have contact with.

The member of staff who has this initial contact with the young person is referred to as the 'first contact officer' in this document.

The first contact officer will make initial enquiries with the young person and their family to ascertain the reason as to their presentation. If following these enquiries it is evident that the situation can be resolved easily through an immediate short term piece of work, (such as phone mediation with parent(s) / carer(s) or through signposting the young person to a universal service), then this will be completed by the first contact officer.

If upon making further enquiries it is clear that the issues cannot be resolved at point of first contact and the young person:

- Is aged 16-17 years of age
- Normally resides at a home address within Kent
- And are presenting with difficulties that are leading to family breakdown / risk of homeless / or have immediate safeguarding concerns

Then the first contact officer will refer into KCC's Central Duty Team (CDT). If the first contact officer is based within a universal community setting and the young person is presenting with housing needs then they will advise and if necessary support the young person to contact KCC's CDT.

If the young person is disclosing to the first contact officer that there are clear safeguarding concerns then a direct referral should be made to CDT who will pass direct to Children's Services (relevant area Adolescent Support Team AST) for a statutory response. Ensure the young person is safe and consider police involvement if the matter requires an emergency response.

If the first contact officer is a KCC employee, then they will refer direct to CDT.

During office hours 8.30am – 5.00pm Monday – Friday CDT 03000 411111
centraldutyteam@kent.gcsx.gov.uk

Out of Hours - the 'Out of Hours Duty Team' should be contacted on 03000 419191

oohswteam@kent.gcsx.gov.uk

When KCC CDT receives a referral they will check to see if the young person is an 'open case' to the department.

If the case is open to the Children, Young People and Education service they will immediately notify the allocated worker and team of the referral into CDT so the allocated worker and team can liaise with the first contact officer and offer advice and support accordingly.

NB: All Unaccompanied Asylum Seeking Children (UASC) young people aged 16 and 17 are 'open cases' to the Children, Young People and Education service. The key is to ensure they are an open case to Kent Social Care as opposed to another local authority. All UASC are managed as S20 under the Children Act 1989.

CDT will also notify the relevant area Adolescent Support Team (AST) so that they can support the allocated worker through either providing consultation support and additional worker support to the allocated worker.

If the case is not open to the Children, Young People and Education service, CDT will pass the referral direct to the local area AST team so that the case can be allocated to begin the assessment process.

Information on the role of the Children, Young People and Education Service

When a young person presents to a CDT for an assessment because they are homeless, KCC's Children, Young People and Education service will provide an assessment and undertake significant intervention to support a young person to remain living with their family where it is safe to do. There are a number of services that are in place and provided by KCC to ensure that there is concentrated support by staff to intervene and work with families to enable young

people and carers to remain together. In particular Adolescent Support Teams provide rapid and intensive support to ensure that families are able to consider their circumstances and gain insight into what might help support a young person remaining at home. This work will take place prior to any referral to housing for a joint assessment and is undertaken following appropriate safeguarding and risk assessments. If a young person is at risk of significant harm, the local authority recognises its responsibility to provide appropriate accommodation under S20 Children Act 1989. The local authority will contact LHAs only when the option of a return home has been exhausted and there is no alternative for the young person except a joint housing assessment. If, during the work done by the ASTs it becomes clear that young person is more likely than not to be homeless, the AST will inform the local LHA of this likelihood as soon as possible.

If the first contact officer is based within the local Housing Team LHA or they have received a referral from a community agency then they will follow the procedures: listed below

4.2 Housing Responsibility at First Contact

If the young person has presented at the local housing office, and if following the initial enquiries above, the young person is not already open to the Children, Young People and Education service and they believe a young person may be homeless they must treat that approach / referral as an application for assistance under Part 7 of the Housing Act 1996. The LHA will decide whether there is reason to believe the young person may be homeless or likely to become homeless within 28 days (section 184 of the 1996 Act) and, if so, the authority will make inquiries to determine whether any duty is owed under Part 7 of the 1996 Act. The LHA must make a referral CDT for a child in need assessment. Housing Officers will inform the young person that a referral has been made to the Children, Young People and Education service for a joint Housing assessment and this joint assessment should be completed within 3 working days, and the written outcomes shared with the LHA within 5 working days of the JHA. The LHAs are unable to complete their homelessness enquiries until the outcome from the child in need assessment is known.

If prevention is not possible and no other suitable accommodation can be found with extended family or friends, emergency temporary accommodation under S188 of the Housing Act 1996 (as amended by the Homelessness Act 2002) will be arranged for the young person by the local housing authority and the proprietor or host will be informed of any special issues known about the young person.

In some cases, it may not be necessary for the young person to be accommodated by the LHA, if the young person can stay safely in the short term with friends or another family member or some other temporary arrangement.

The Secretary of State considers that Bed and Breakfast accommodation is unsuitable for 16 and 17 year olds and should not be used.

4.3 Central Duty Team Responsibilities at First Contact

Where a 16 or 17 year old seeks help from Children's Services, or is referred to Children's Services by some other person or agency as appearing to be homeless or at risk of homelessness, or they are an unaccompanied asylum seeker without a parent or guardian with responsibility for their care, then Children's Services must assess whether the young person is a child in need under s17, and determine whether any duty is owed under s20 of the Children Act 1989, to provide the young person with accommodation.

Children's Services have a statutory duty to safeguard and assess the needs of children. It may not be necessary for the young person to be accommodated by Children's Services. Their needs may be met by providing other services, for example, support to enable the young person to return to the care of their family or other responsible adults in the young person's network. If Children's Services conclude that the young person does not require accommodation for this reason, they must consider whether they should provide services under section 17 of the 1989 Act, which could include financial support under section 17(6) to sustain any plan for the young person to live with members of their family.

Where a 16 or 17 year old seeks help or is referred, and it appears he or she has nowhere safe to stay that night, then Children's Services must secure suitable accommodation for them. This will mean that the young person will become looked after (under s20 (1)) whilst their needs, including their need for continuing accommodation and support, are further assessed.

Bed and breakfast accommodation is not considered suitable for 16 and 17 year olds even on an emergency accommodation basis.

Where those young people are already open to a service in the Children, Young People and Education service, work with the young person is carried out by the allocated Social worker or the team duty cover if the worker is unavailable. Consultation support and additional worker support may be provided by the area AST.

The allocated SCS worker will contact the LHA to request a joint housing assessment (JHA to be completed within 3 working days of request). The assessment should be completed within this timescale as sufficient work will have been carried out by staff in the Children Young People and Education service to ensure only those young people in need of housing will require assessment.

Written outcomes from the JHA must be shared with the LHAs.

Where those young people are not already open to the Children, Young People and Education service those individual cases will be passed from CDT to the Adolescent Support Team (AST) for immediate response.

AST will start the process of completing a C&F assessment and will arrange to meet with the young person as a priority (same day response).

AST will also contact the Children, Young People and Education service to support the assessment process with a view that the Children, Young People and Education service help may well be able to support the young person returning safely home through ongoing CiN / Early Help support.

Where it is clear following this initial meeting and through the assessment process that the young person is homeless and unable to return home then the social worker will notify the Housing Authority and request a joint housing assessment (JHA) (JHA to be completed within 3 working days of request).

4.4 First Contact with Youth Offending Service (YOS)

If a young person aged 16/17 is receiving support from YOS within the community and they have presented as homeless then the YOS officer should follow the guidance as outlined above for initial enquiries and support.

If it is clear that the young person is homeless then they should make a referral through to CDT for appropriate support and intervention.

If a young person is in custody and homelessness has been identified as an issue to be addressed as part of the release and resettlement plan, then the YOS worker should refer through for a joint housing assessment as per the guidance set out in the joint YOS and SCS protocol 2017. The protocol states that the joint assessment should take place at least 28 days prior to release. Therefore the referral via CDT should occur as soon as it is clear a young person is at risk of homelessness on release, and no later than 28 days prior to release. Where a young person is unable to return home, the assessment by Children and Young Peoples Services will ensure that there is appropriate provision in place either through s20 Children Act 1989 or housing and the pathway for the young person will be clear 28 days prior to release.

4.5 Time Scales for Joint Meetings and Decisions

Actions will need to be timely and carried out as below:

Any approach to Housing or Children's Services must result in initial enquiries being made immediately.

Following initial enquiries a decision should be made about whether the individual appears to require immediate help and further assessment.

If there is an immediate need for accommodation, because the young person is homeless and has nowhere safe to stay that night, the organisation who was approached first will provide this.

If the initial approach is to the LHA and it is considered the young person is homeless and requires further assistance, then the LHA will refer and request a joint housing assessment through CDT (request to be made within 24 hours).

A joint housing assessment between a qualified social worker and a housing officer should be completed within 3 working days of this request being received. During this time the Children, Young People and Education service will be able to assess whether they require further time to intervene with the young person and their family providing intensive services to prevent homelessness.

If the initial approach is to the Children, Young People and Education service and the case is already open, then the allocated worker or team will carry out an initial response and request a JHA with the LHA (JHA to be completed within 3 working days of this request).

Children, Young People and Education service will complete Children in Need Assessments in a timely manner, and ensure the provision of services necessary to safeguard and promote the young person's welfare will not be delayed because an assessment has not been completed.

There is no statutory timescale for making a homeless decision. Best practice states 33 working days is acceptable and enquiries cannot usually be completed until a decision is made on whether a s20 Children Act 1989 duty applies. These timescales will be informed by the new Homelessness Reduction Act 2017.

4.6 Contact / Support (Same Day)

When a referral has been received by the AST team they will endeavour to meet with the young person to gain information relating to their homeless presentation on the same day. All attempts should be made to immediately mediate for the young person to return home unless there are safeguarding issues which cause concern for the professionals involved and the risks require alternative provision to be in place.

A conversation with the parent or carer will be held to facilitate the young person's return.

Further follow up with the family through either telephone conversations or home visiting will be considered where necessary to ensure that the home situation is sustained and to reduce repeat homelessness presentations.

The local area AST team will also contact the relevant Early Help District team and request a joint C&F assessment

4.7 Home Visit (Same Day)

If a verbal agreement between the young person and the parent/carers for an immediate safe return home cannot be achieved, a home visit will then be

arranged to take place on the same day. This will enable a further evaluation of the situation and mediation to return home.

The intended outcome from this contact is for the young person to be returned home. The only reasons for the young person not returning home are:

- it is considered unsafe for the young person to return home immediately
- there is no home for the young person to return to (i.e. the parents have abandoned the young person)
- the young person refuses to return
- the parents/carer refuses to allow the young person to return

A family arrangement should be explored with the young person and their family members if the young person is unable or unwilling to return to their immediate family i.e. staying with extended family members / friends.

If at this stage it is clear that the young person is genuinely homeless and no alternative arrangements can be found then the Children, Young People and Education service may provide emergency accommodation (section 20), whilst also contacting Housing to request a JHA. This assessment will then be completed within 3 working days.

4.8 Return Home and Wrap Around Support to Prevent Repeat Homelessness

If the young person returns home the Children, Young People and Education service will assess through the Children and Family assessment process whether any further support is needed for the young person or the family to prevent a repeat homeless presentation and will make arrangements to put the support in place promptly. Discussions with the young person and their family about further support as a CiN (including referral to Family Group conference service, where appropriate) or support through Early Help will be held.

4.9 Non-Return Home

If the young person can go home but refuses to do so and no alternative family arrangement is available the Children, Young People and Education service will discuss with the young person the need for a statutory joint housing assessment by the Children, Young People and Education service and district housing officers which will be undertaken within 3 working days.

It is essential that the young person at the point of the joint assessment have all options explained to them and the implications of their choices are explored to them so that they can make clear informed decisions.

If there are concerns at this stage about the young person's capacity to make informed choices, through mental illness / drug / alcohol misuse than consideration will be given to the Mental Capacity Act 2005.

4.10 Addressing Safeguarding Concerns

If, at any time during this process, it is identified that it is unsafe for the young person to return home, a formal statutory social work assessment will be completed by the AST team and where there is suspected abuse a social worker will contact the police for a strategy discussion and consideration to Section 47 investigation.

The Children, Young People and Education service will ensure that the statutory guidance regarding homeless 16 and 17 year olds is followed:

https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/8260/Provision_20of_20accommodation.pdf

4.11 If the Young Person Refuses to Engage with the Children, Young People and Education Service.

Section 20(6) of the Children Act 1989 states:

(6) Before providing accommodation under this section, a local authority shall, so far as is reasonably practicable and consistent with the child's welfare—

- a) ascertain the child's wishes and feelings regarding the provision of accommodation; and
- (b) give due consideration (having regard to his age and understanding) to such wishes and feelings of the child as they have been able to ascertain.

A young person cannot be compelled to engage with the Children, Young People and Education service. If they refuse to engage and remain homeless then the homelessness legislation stands alone. A young person should be offered support through S17 and understand they can have support to meet their needs without being accommodated under s20 Children Act 1989. The young person making a decision not to engage with the Children, Young People and Education service would therefore have no s20 duty owed but may still meet the priority need category under Homeless legislation. A s20 refusal by a young person is also not grounds for an intentionally homeless decision.

If a young person subsequently refuses a s20 duty, the Children, Young People and Education service must inform the LHA formally. The young person should also be advised to contact the LHA and assisted to do so, and also be advised of independent advice provided by agencies such as CAB, Shelter and Action for Children. The young person can revisit this decision at a later date if they continue to be vulnerable

However, it should be noted that if a return home has been assessed as safe for the young person however, they refuse to return then this could be interpreted as making themselves intentionally homeless and therefore the Local Housing Authority no longer owes them a housing duty.

In terms of best practice, it is important to ensure that every effort is made to ensure the young person understands their options and the consequences of the decision they are taking.

A young person should have access to independent advocacy and support to assist them in weighing up the advantages and disadvantages and coming to a balanced decision.

Where there is any doubt about a 16 or 17 year olds capacity to judge what may be in his or her best interests, e.g. whether they should become looked after or seek alternative assistance, there must be a further discussion involving the Children, Young People and Education service, the LHA, the young person concerned and their family, to reach agreement on the way forward.

If, in the course of their homelessness investigation the LHA become aware of any possible safeguarding concerns they will obviously need to refer to the Children, Young People and Education service even if the young person does not want them to, explaining what they are doing and why.

4.12 Outcome of Statutory Assessment

If the young person refuses an assessment or assessed status to become 'looked after' or a 'child in need', they will be referred to the relevant LHA for alternative suitable accommodation as available. Wrap around support from the Children, Young People and Education Service can be provided where a young person is refusing Section 20 accommodation; services can be provided alongside the LHA under Section 17 Children Act 1989.

During any part of the C&F assessment the relevant member of the Children, Young People and Education service staff may well contact the relevant housing members of staff and arrange a joint interview with the young person in order to establish a joint view of their circumstances and feelings.

In some cases, it may not be necessary for the young person to be accommodated by the LHA, if the young person can stay safely in the short term with friends or another family member or some other temporary arrangement.

Any other referring agency or partner organisation involved with the young person will also be contacted, as will the young person's parents or those with parental responsibility for the young person if it is safe to do so and the young person consents.

Consideration for a Family Group conference will also be considered to help establish if there is any extended family support that can be provided to support the young person.

At the earliest opportunity the Children, Young People and Education service will inform:

- Housing, Early Help and any other referring agencies of their decision.
- The young person and where relevant their parent/carer and inform them of their right to complain if they are unhappy with the decision.

Actions to be taken by Children's Social Care (following determination of duties under the Children's Act)

If a duty is owed under Section 17 AND Section 20 applies the procedure is as follows:

- Discuss assessment outcomes and options for the future with the young person, ensuring that they have the opportunity to make a fully-informed decision on whether to accept the offer of assistance under Section 20.
- Based on the assessed needs of the young person discuss with the ART team, the availability of foster / supportive lodgings / semi-independent providers

If the young person accepts the offer of assistance under Section 20

- Inform the housing options team and any other referring agency.
- Arrange a placement in suitable accommodation, taking over financial responsibility for the young person's accommodation if they have previously been placed by the housing options team. Put in place a care plan and allocated social worker for the young person under LAC procedures.

If the young person does not accept the offer of assistance under Section 20 Children Act 1989.

- Advise the young person they are entitled to housing and children and young peoples' services will help and support the young person to access the right support from the housing options team within 24 hours. The young person has an entitlement to S17 child in need assessment and services even where they do not want s20 Accommodation.
- Inform the housing options team or appropriate partners, including the reasons for the young person's refusal of assistance.
- Prepare a child in need plan for Section 17 support.

i. If a duty is owed under Section 17 BUT Section 20 does NOT apply

- Inform the young person, housing options team and appropriate partners that Section 20 does not apply, and include the reasons why.
- Prepare a child in need plan for Section 17 support

1. Action to be taken by Local Housing Authorities

- i. If a duty is owed under Section 17 AND Section 20 applies the procedure is as follows:**

If the young person has accepted the offer of assistance under Section 20

- Determine duties owed under Housing Act 1996 (no duty owed).
- Local Housing Authority will assist children's services in finding suitable Section 20 placement options, if requested to do so.
- If the young person has previously been placed in emergency accommodation by the housing options team, notify the benefits team that housing benefit entitlement has ceased and the proprietor/host that invoices should be directed to children's services from now on.

If the young person has not accepted an offer of assistance under Section 20

- treat the young person's application in the same way as if a duty is owed under Section 17 but section 20 does not apply (see immediately below).

ii. If A Duty Is Owed Under Section 17 BUT Section 20 Does NOT Apply

- Determine duties owed under Housing Act 1996.
- Assist young person in completing a housing benefit claim form if they have been occupying emergency accommodation as a children's services placement.
- If a duty is found to assist under the Housing Act 1996 follow local housing authority procedures for interim accommodation and support, and eventual discharge of duty.
- If no duty is found to assist under the Housing Act (for instance, if the young person is found to be intentionally homeless), follow local procedures to end emergency accommodation (if any) allowing the young person a reasonable time to make alternative arrangements. The young person should be referred back to children and young people's services; providing they consent to do so. where there are safeguarding concerns including mental health and substance misuse then regardless of consent the Housing Authority should refer back to Children and Young people's services indicating their concerns and their housing duties are discharged. It is likely that following the new Homelessness Reduction Act 2018 that intentional homelessness will decrease.
- Discuss the decision and the young person's future housing circumstances, if necessary, re-refer the young person for further assessment with consent or as above consider safeguarding issues.
- It should be noted that para 2.34 of the DCSF and DCLG joint statutory guidance (April 2010) states that in some cases, it may not be necessary for the young person to be accommodated by Children's services because the young person's needs can be met by providing other services – for example, support to enable the young person to return to the care of their family or other responsible adults in the young person's network.

4.13 Reunification or Move-on Accommodation

After the statutory assessment has taken place and it has been determined that the young person could return home with support, the young person will be supported to return home. The Children, Young People and Education service will

agree on the relevant support package (as identified through the C&F assessment), to enable the young person to return and remain at home. This is likely to be support as a Child In Need, through section 17 support or through provision of support through the Children, Young People and Education service.

If after the statutory assessment it is identified the young person will not be returning home but will be moving into alternative accommodation, then the Children, Young People and Education service and the relevant LHA will work together to identify suitable move-on accommodation and support for the young person. It is imperative at this time that all parties are clear as to who has lead responsibility and what actions they will be taken.

The LHA will complete a formal decision on the homeless application. They will inform the young person of their decision and the right to review in writing.

If the young person is subsequently housed under the Housing Act 1996 then the Section 17 assessment should be widened to specifically include housing need and identify what continuing support will be provided by the Children, Young People and Education service. (Unless the young person has refused to engage).

Examples of Support may Include:

A young person refusing the Children, Young People and Education service support but is eligible for appropriate housing support, may receive support from the LHA and the Children, Young People and Education service, (if they consent) to support a move into a semi independent living provider's accommodation.

A young person moving in with a close family relative may receive support through the Children, Young People and Education service as a family arrangement.

A young person moving into extended family that has been identified and supported by the Local Authority may receive support from the Children, Young People and Education service through a connected person's assessment.

4.14 Resolution of Disputes

This protocol is intended to minimise disputes and encourage open and respectful dialogue as well as promoting collaborative work and opportunities for joint work between Districts and KCC.

Differences of opinion over the responsibility and proposed actions should be dealt with by the caseworker in each team (service). If the issue cannot be resolved at this level the matter should be referred jointly to the respective team managers for resolution. All dispute resolution and resulting decisions will be taken in spirit of this protocol and recognising the need for effective interagency working.

If still unresolved, then the matter will be referred to Heads of Service for each service involved. Legal advice may be taken.



The Kent Safeguarding Children Board “Resolving Professional Disagreements and the Escalation of Professional Concerns” policy should be followed:

http://www.proceduresonline.com/kentandmedway/chapters/p_resolution.html

Appendix 1

Data Collection for Evaluation

- No. of children presenting as homeless
- No. already known to SCS
- No. already known to EHPS
- Date of birth of young person, gender, ethnicity
- No. of children returned home and issues resolved at first contact
- No. of children receiving a home visit
- No. of days from presentation to home visit
- No. of children who have secured alternative family arrangements
- No. of children provided with emergency accommodation (housing or SCS)
- No. of children presenting as homeless getting a JHA interview
- No. of days from initial presentation to JHA interview
- No. of repeat presentations and period since last presentation
- No. of children refusing to return home when it is deemed safe for them to do so.
- No. of parents refusing child return
- Destination after leaving temporary emergency accommodation
- No. taken into care (S20)
- No. becoming Children in Need
- No. being stepped down to Early Help

Appendix 2

Initial Screening questions for young people aged 16+ presenting as homeless

- What is the young person's normal place of residence?
- Where is the Young Person currently staying?
- How long have they not been living at their normal place of residence?
- What are the reasons for them not living there now?
- What has led them to making the referral now?
- How long can they stay in their current accommodation?
- If parents are unable to have them home where else does the young person think they can stay for the short term? (explore family / friends)
- Are parents/family aware of them contacting Social Services?
- Inform young person that their parent(s) / Carer (s) will be contacted to discuss referral. Explain that if parents' consent to them returning home, and it is safe to do so, that support will be offered to return them home. They will not be offered any alternative accommodation as they are not technically homeless.
- Discuss with parents what issues are. Remind parents of their Parental responsibility. Explain that ideally young people will be supported in returning home what are their views on this?
- If not then what family arrangement can family put into place to support young person in the short term?
- Other family/friends identified?
- If after obtaining the above information, the young person meets criteria for Tier 3 CiN services, explain that a referral will be made to the area AST. The AST will be in contact and will look to set up a home visit to support a return home or will arrange a joint housing assessment with the local housing authority under Southwark within 48 Hours.

Appendix 3

Referral Form to Housing

Kent Joint Young Person’s Homelessness Protocol Housing Referral Form
(Completed forms should be returned to the relevant local housing authority)

Section One – Young Person’s details

Name:
Normal Place of Residence:
Date of Birth:
Name and Contact Details of Parent(s) / Carer(s):
Is The Young Person Threatened with Homelessness? If so, why?
Is the young person homeless today (they have nowhere available to them or reasonable for them to occupy)? If so, what has led to them being homeless today?

Section Two – SCS/Early Help

Is young person already open to SCS/YOS/ Early Help?
If the young person is involved with the criminal justice system, timely assessment and planning must be in place to meet their accommodation needs.
Contact details of worker:
A Young Person Accommodated by SCS (Section 20) Housing does not need to be involved on a statutory basis if the young person has been accommodated.

Section Three - Further information

Does the young person have any additional needs? (including health/learning needs?)
Does the young person have any other vulnerabilities / risks that Housing needs to be aware of? (i.e mental health problems, risk of child sexual exploitation, drug/alcohol issues, violence, sexual offences, fire setting?)

Appendix 4



KSCB Inter-Agency Referral Form



This form is to be used by all agencies when referring a child to Specialist Children’s Services alongside the Kent Inter-Agency Threshold Criteria for Children and Young People. The more information received 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.

REFERRAL FOR CHIN/CP Occupational Therapy (OT) BOTH
ASSESS REQUEST

BEFORE PROCEEDING- PLEASE CONSIDER

Have you consulted your Designated Person or Safeguarding

Lead within your own agency about this referral? YES NO

- If no, why not?

1.			
Child’s First Name/s:		Child’s Surname:	
Any alternative names:		NHS number (where known):	
Date of Birth or EDD:	Gender (M/F):	Religion:	First Language:
Name of Parents/Carers:			
Home Address:		Any other relevant addresses:	
Postcode:		Postcode:	
Telephone Number/s:			
Ethnic Origin (Please choose one category and select from the following:)			
White British <input type="checkbox"/>	White Irish <input type="checkbox"/>	Any other White Background <input type="checkbox"/>	
Traveller of Irish Heritage <input type="checkbox"/>	Gypsy/Roma <input type="checkbox"/>	White and Black Caribbean <input type="checkbox"/>	
White and Black African <input type="checkbox"/>	White and Asian <input type="checkbox"/>	Any other Mixed Background <input type="checkbox"/>	
Indian <input type="checkbox"/>	Pakistani <input type="checkbox"/>	Bangladeshi <input type="checkbox"/>	
Any other Asian Background <input type="checkbox"/>	Caribbean <input type="checkbox"/>	African <input type="checkbox"/>	

Any other Black Background <input type="checkbox"/>	Chinese <input type="checkbox"/>	Any other ethnic group <input type="checkbox"/>
Refused <input type="checkbox"/>	Information not yet obtained <input type="checkbox"/>	

Name and position of the person you consulted with.....

2. Please list all family/household members including other children.

Name	Relationship	Date of Birth (if known)	Contact Details

3. Professionals that you know are involved with the child, for example, GP, Health Visitor, School

Role	Name	Address	Telephone

4. Have you had a consultation with Specialist Children’s Services (03000 41 11 11)?
 If so, what advice were you given?
 Please include the consultation number and a copy (if available).

For OT: Please call the local Disabled Children’s OT Team.

5. Early Help Notification:

 Has an Early Help Notification been undertaken in respect of this child? If not, has this been considered?
 If an Early Help Notification has been completed, what was the agreed outcome of the request for support?

Please attach a copy, if relevant. N.B. If support is being provided by Early Help and Preventative Services, please contact the Unit worker prior to making this referral.

6. What are you worried about and what is the impact on the child?

Identify your specific worries and explain what you think the family needs from Specialist Children's Services. What have you done/what steps have been taken to address the worries?
How long you have known the child and in what capacity?

For OT: Please list difficulties in the home: e.g. can't use stairs etc. in as much detail as possible.

7. What information do you know about this child?

Include:

- Information on past harm
- Potential for future harm
- What is currently working well with this child and family?
- Other relevant information about the child
- About their development, health, behaviour
- Their views about the referral,
- Their views about the issues/concerns,
- If you have other information such as a chronology, body maps or centile charts, please attach.

For OT: Give diagnosis (confirmed or under investigation) and describe dysfunction, e.g. limited mobility; challenging behaviour etc. in as much detail as possible.

8. What information do you know about the child parents(s) and wider family?

Include relationships, friendships, behaviour, support, stability, safety, English is their second language, unable to read, substance/alcohol misuse, domestic abuse

9. What information do you know about wider environment factors which may impact on the child?

E.g. housing issues, who is working in the household, financial situation, community and social involvement.

For OT: Describe home - number of bedrooms, who shares, what facilitates and location: e.g. first floor bathroom, ground floor WC, internal stairs, external steps etc.

10. Any other relevant information:

Including previous referrals.

For OT: Please list equipment used and equipment child is prevented from using by home environment, e.g. has standing frame at school but unable to use at home due to space restrictions.

11. In circumstances such as where there is a risk of violence (such as domestic abuse), please provide details regarding a safe point of contact for the non-abusing parent, e.g. alternative telephone number or postal address, contact through school, children's centre, friend or relative.

12. Have you spoken to the Parent or Carer about making this referral?

If yes, what are their views?

If not, please explain why not?

13. Is there 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:*

If you are making a Child in Need referral and/or and OT Assessment request, 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.

14. Parental agreement: *(See the attached Guidance Notes before completion.)*

I agree to the information in this referral being passed to Specialist Children's Services.

Name of Parent/Legal Guardian (Please print):
Signature of Parent/Legal Guardian:
Date:

15. Referrer:

Name and Role (Please print):
Address:

Contact Tel Number:

Signature:

Date:

Please e-mail the completed Inter-Agency Referral Form to:

CentralDutyTeam@kent.gcsx.gov.uk (Secure e-mail)

Secure e-mail is accepted from the following addresses:

@nhs.net @pnn.police.uk @gcsx.gov.uk @gsi.gov.uk

Central.duty@kent.gov.uk (standard e-mail)

Please note if using this e-mail address, it is not secure. If you wish to send client level information, then you will need to password protect the document and not include in the body of the email.

If you do not have e-mail facility please fax the completed form to 03000 41 23 45.

Inter-Agency Referral (IAR) Form GUIDANCE NOTES (Revised January 2016)

The more information received by Specialist Children's Services (SCS) 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 families in the best interests of the child. Please ensure the form is fully completed and contains some analysis of both the problems and needs of the child/ren as this will inform the SCS Children's and Families Assessment.

Child Protection Referrals

If there are concerns that a child may be suffering **significant harm**, the information must be **telephoned** directly through to the Central Duty Team, (CDT) on 03000 41 11 11. The IAR Form **must** then be completed and forwarded to the CDT within two working days.

Children in Need Referral

Referrals of children with high levels of need should be forwarded to the CDT without prior telephone discussion with the CDT, unless a professional consultation is considered necessary or useful. **If you feel that a consultation should take place, the consultation should take place with your Designated Person or named Safeguarding Lead prior to any consultation with the CDT.** (See section 4 of the IAR Form).

Occupational Therapy Home Environment Assessment Request

These can be forwarded to the CDT Team separately or in conjunction with a SCS referral. Please use the same form. Requests are appropriate for any young person up to the age of 18 years with a permanent and substantial disability for an assessment of their home environment. Advice will be offered and provision of equipment and or recommendations for adaptations will be offered where the environment restricts their access to essential facilities e.g. access to toilet; access to washing; access to and from the property. *(Please see Appendix 1- Eligibility Criteria for the Children's Occupational Therapy Services for Equipment and Adaptations Service).*

Consent

In most circumstances the agreement of the parent/ legal guardian of the child must be sought before a referral is made, **providing this will not place the child at an increased risk of harm or compromise any police investigation.** The parent(s)/ legal guardian(s) must sign Section 14 of the IAR Form for Children in Need referrals and Occupational Therapy Home Environment Assessment requests.

Should a parent or guardian refuse their agreement to a referral being made, consideration should be given to the impact this may have on the level of concern for the child's welfare and the parent's or guardian's ability to meet the child's needs.

If a parent refuses/ does not give permission, this should not influence the decision to make a referral.

Sufficient information

Every effort must be made to complete the IAR Form as fully as possible as this will make it easier to make decisions about the eligibility and urgency of the referral. A succinct summary of the key concerns and critical issues for referring to SCS must be clearly stated (section 6 of the IAR Form). It should also contain as much information as possible about the child being referred (section 7 of the IAR Form). Information about family members known by the referrer should also be included (section 8 of the IAR Form).



Reports

Any additional detailed reports should be attached to the IAR Form. If reports are attached please ensure that the consent of the author has been obtained.

Third parties

Information about third parties should only be included if it is directly relevant to the referral and there is consent.

Parents' and child's views

These may be included if they are volunteered but care must be taken not to interview either parents or children about the substance of any concerns where it is possible that a criminal offence may have been committed.

Legal Proceedings

Those completing the IAR Form should be aware that the contents may be used should legal proceedings be instigated.

Appendix 5

ELIGIBILITY CRITERIA FOR THE CHILDREN'S OCCUPATIONAL THERAPY SERVICE FOR EQUIPMENT AND ADAPTATIONS SERVICES

Any young people up to the age of 18 years with a long term disability lasting 6 months or more who are registered as disabled are entitled to apply for a service.

THE FOLLOWING MUST BE SATISFIED BEFORE ARRANGEMENTS FOR THE PROVISION OF EQUIPMENT AND ADAPTATIONS CAN BE MADE.

1. Child/young person and birth or adopted parents must be permanent residents in Kent. Where a child has been placed permanently with Foster Carers by another Local Authority the provision of equipment and adaptations not eligible for Disability Facilities Grant will remain the responsibility of that Local Authority.
2. Under our responsibilities as defined in Section 2(1) (e) of the Chronically Sick and Disabled Persons Act 1970 and as further defined in Part 1 Section 3 of the Disabled Persons (Service, Consultation and Representation) Act 1986, the child/young person would be assessed by Children's OT Service to determine if eligible adaptation works could be suitable. Where provision is not considered appropriate notification will be provided.
3. The condition(s) must be of a nature which significantly affects the applicant's ability to carry out normal activities of daily living in the home environment and/or imposes abnormal demands on the carer/family.
4. Applicants must be permanently and substantially handicapped by illness, injury or congenital deformity as stated in Section 29 (1) of the National Assistance Act 1948.

Permanent means- the condition is deemed to be life-long with little prospect of improvement, and/or there is a likelihood of further deterioration.

Substantial means- the extent of the disability (caused by a person's medical condition) which significantly affects their ability to carry out one or more of the following essential activities of daily living.

Access to essential activities of daily living within the property.

- Use of WC
- Transfers in/out of chair/bed, on/off floor
- Preparation of hot drink and essential food
- Maintenance of personal hygiene
- Access to developmentally age appropriate equipment for a child over 2yrs and up to 18yrs such as seating, bathing, toileting etc. that cannot be met by purchase of readily available high street products.
- Access to/egress from the property including the garden
- Making a dwelling safe for the disabled child and for others residing in the home

We accept referrals to assess for the following needs as long as they met the criteria above:

- Seating
- Bathing/Showering
- Manual handling
- Major/Minor adaptations

- Toileting
- Housing Needs Assessments

A referral for assessment of challenging behaviour difficulties must be supported by a referral from another health or education professional following commencement of a behavioural management programme where it is identified that environmental adaptations may be required to support and aid management of the child's behavioural programme at home, or where child's learning disability means that they are unable to benefit from a behaviour programme and an adaptation may facilitate child's safety at home.

The Children's Occupational Therapy Service Assessment will consider: what the child or young person's disability is; how it affects the child or young person in the home; how it affects a child's parents or carers; how it affects other members of the household; and whether eligible adaptations or equipment provision will reduce the disability or facilitate meeting the child's care needs.

Following Assessment we will provide recommendations for discussion with the child or young person and their parent or carer. These may be advice on actions the family can take and or proposed adaptations or equipment that could be provided and or other services they might access. Following agreement with the family appropriate provision and or referrals for other services can be completed.

Where adaptations are recommended for the home:

Children's Occupational Therapy Service may identify equipment for provision. This will be provided from within Kent County Council (KCC) stock of equipment in the first instance or it may be specially purchased either via KCC or through the provision of a Direct Payment made to the parents or carer. (*See Direct Payments Policy*). Equipment that is readily available from the high street is not provided by SCS as it is expected that parents should make reasonable adjustments to provide for their children's welfare.

We are unable to accept singular referrals for the following items:

- Specialist beds and cots - NHS Staff are responsible for these in accordance with their criteria.
- Routine Equipment reviews of equipment initially prescribed by other health professionals.
- Feeding and dressing equipment - small aids cannot be funded by SCS.
- Car seats/Safety Harnesses/Transport.
- Wheelchair/Buggy/Mobility Aids.
- Postural seating assessment only.
- Child under 2yrs only requiring equipment - NHS staff are responsible for this provision under their criteria.

Or in the following situation:

- With behavioural problems alone due to social/environmental factors, (i.e. not associated to disability)
- With a diagnosis of a specific learning difficulty of Dyslexia alone
- Where the primary need is described as being related to social factors, e.g. parenting difficulties, difficulties with siblings, overcrowding
- Where the request is for therapeutic treatment



Appendix 6

Consent Form

**Kent Joint Young Person’s Homelessness Protocol Information
Sharing Consent Form**

I give my permission for:

Kent County Council – Specialist Children Services

and/or

..... Housing authority

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 secure for you;
- 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

Appendix 7

Abbreviations

AD	Assistant Director
AST	Adolescent Support Team
CAB	Citizens Advice Bureau
CDT	Central Duty Team
C&F	Child and Family Assessments
CIN	Child in Need
CLG	Communities and Local Government
DCLG	Department for Communities and Local Government
DCSF	Department for Children, Schools and Families
EHPS	Early Help & Preventative Services
JHA	Joint Housing Assessment
JPPB	Joint Policy and Planning Board
LAC	Looked after Child
LHAs	Local Housing Authorities
SCS	Specialist Children's Service
UASC	Unaccompanied Asylum Seeking Children

Young Person's Flow Chart

I am 16 / 17 years old and I have no where safe to stay.
What are my housing options?

You will be offered support and possible accommodation either by Housing Dept or by the Local Authority (LA) Specialist Children Service (SCS) depending on your circumstances and your wishes and feelings

INITIAL CONTACT

Wherever you present (housing office / Early help youth hub / SCS) you will be asked some basic questions to assess your situation and ensure you receive the right support at the right time

1 – confirm you normal place of residence is within Kent

2- confirm your age

3 –discuss your situation re difficulties at home leading to family breakdown / street homeless.

4 confirm whether you are receiving any support already

5 – gain your consent to discuss your information with relevant agencies.

As part of this work the worker will want to talk to your parent(s) and carer(s) about what has happened

If it is not possible for you to return home safely at this time then you will be entitled to a

Joint Housing Assessment (JHA)

Whilst setting up this joint assessment it may be that you need to stay somewhere in an emergency.

You will be asked whether there are any other family members / friends that you can stay with safely whilst the joint assessment is being organised. Where no alternatives can be found you may be provided with emergency accommodation whilst the assessment is undertaken. This will be provided by either the Housing Dept or the Local Authority Children Services depending on where you first presented and what your needs and wishes and feelings are.

It should be suitable, i.e. near college or school, work, etc and safe.

It should not be a bed and breakfast.

A JHA is a joint assessment between a qualified social worker and a housing officer to assess your needs and ascertain your wishes and feelings so that an informed decision can be made an a suitable plan put into place. (should take place within 3 working days of referral)
Decision will be made following this assessment whether you will return home / receive housing accommodation or receive accommodation from the Local Authority (s20)

Return home

It may be after these discussions with yourself and your family that things at home are resolved and that you feel you can return safely home with some support.

This can be done and you may receive some ongoing support from your housing officer/Early help worker / SCS worker (depending on who you made contact with and whether you are already receiving support from one of them)

The LA – SCS has a duty to assess whether you are a Child In Need. This is under Section 17 Children Act 1989

Every local authority has a general duty to:

- (a) Safeguard and promote the welfare of children within their areas who are in need; and
- (b) Promote the upbringing of those children within their families by providing a range and level of services appropriate to those children's needs.

You are a Child in Need if:

- (a) Without services from your local authority you will not be able to maintain a good standard of health and development;
- (b) Without such services your health and development are likely to suffer; or
- (c) you are disabled.

The LA can provide accommodation to Children in Need under Section 20

- a) there is no one who has parental responsibility for you; or
- (b) you are lost or have been abandoned; or
- (c) the person that normally cares for you is, for whatever reason, prevented from providing accommodation for you.

Section 20 (3) Every local authority shall provide accommodation for any child in need within their area who has reached the age of sixteen and whose welfare the authority consider is likely to be seriously prejudiced if they do not provide him with accommodation

Accommodated under section 20 by SCS

You are a Looked After Child and may be placed with foster carers / placed in supported lodgings or semi-independent living – based on your level need.

You will have an allocated social worker

Whilst s 20 – SW will look at possible mediation home where safe to do so

Family Group conferencing – (FGC) will be set up to ask your wider family / network to support you .

Pathway plan which will set out how LA will support you up to 18 and possibly beyond depending on care leaving status

Attend regular review meetings

SCS pay for your accommodation and ensure you have some basic income equivalent to ELA

Unable to claim benefits whilst Looked After

The Housing Dept has a duty to house you under the Housing Act 1996 and the Homelessness Act 2002 if you meet certain criteria:

You must be:

- * Homeless (or likely to be homeless within 28 days); and
- * Eligible for assistance (this is about your immigration status); and
- * In priority need for assistance. Certain people are considered in priority need for housing:

If you or your partner are pregnant,
If you have dependent children,
If you are aged 16 or 17 years old,
If you are vulnerable due to old age, mental illness or have physical disability or other special reason,
If you are homeless or threatened with homelessness as the result of an emergency.

* And you are not intentionally homeless. (this means that you did not lose your last accommodation through any fault of your own), e.g. not paying your rent

Accommodated by Housing:

Placed in semi-independent living provision within community.

Support from housing officer and possible floating support.

Expectation to pay own bills through benefits / income

Claim benefits – HB

When 18 – no further support from housing officer – although you may have own accommodation