



Response to Request for Information

Reference FOI 091516
Date 03 September 2015

Accommodating Homeless Young People

Request:

Please provide me with a copy of your local authority's guidance around accommodating homeless young people under the age of 18, including any specific guidance relating to the use of bed and breakfast accommodation. I'm looking for the guidance issued to your children's services and housing departments.

Response:

In response to your request, we would like to inform you that Wolverhampton City Council follow guidance issued by Central Government as per the Housing Act 1997 and the Homelessness Act 2000.

However, please also find below our Protocol which is currently in the process of being reviewed.

Homeless Young People and Care Leavers Joint Working Protocol

Adult Social Care and Housing Support

Children and Family Support

Connexions Wolverhampton

Approved by – Children and Family Support Management
Team/ Adult Social Care and Housing Support (14th August
/16th August 2012)

Published – 20th August 2012

Review Date – August 2014

REVIEW LOG			
Date	Version	Comments	Approved by
August 2012	1.3	Protocol reviewed. Sections: 1.4, 4.2 and 5.0 amended.	Children and Family Support Management Team/ Adult Social Care and Housing Support
January 2011	1.2	Protocol reviewed (CAF added)	Children and Families Management Team
December 2009	1.1	Protocol amended in light of the Southwark Judgement.	Children and Families Management Team
January 2007	1.0	Protocol introduced	

CONSULTATION
<p>The following people have been consulted on this policy:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Housing Protocol Working Group - Children and Family Support Management Team - Assistant Director – Adult Social Care and Housing Support

STATEMENT OF PURPOSE

To achieve the best outcomes for vulnerable young people by committing to effective joint working, by achieving a clear understanding of each others' roles and responsibilities, and through a robust yet flexible approach to finding solutions.

Where it is safe and suitable to do so, the expectation will be that 16-17 year olds will remain within the family wherever possible.

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1.0 Introduction and Context

In 2002, the Homelessness Act¹ recognised for the first time for 16 and 17 year olds (and 18, 19 and 20 year old care leavers) to be owed a homelessness duty on the grounds of their age alone. However, research has shown that the provision of housing alone is not sufficient to meet many vulnerable young people's needs. Emphasised by the Southwark Judgement varying levels of advice, education, and on-going support, to help young people successfully maintain a tenancy and become independent are also required.

In Wolverhampton, it is recognised that the Local Authority holds a clear duty as a corporate parent to looked after young people who are homeless or at risk of homelessness. However, beyond this we recognise that effective homelessness prevention for all young people is best tackled through very early intervention. Young people who leave home in unplanned moves, or as a result of other circumstances and are vulnerable may need timely and responsive support from the Local Authority beyond the provision of somewhere to live. In order to provide an effective service to young people, the Local Authority recognises that the needs of these young people are best met by a range of agencies and these will comprise both statutory and voluntary services.

The voluntary sector has a significant role to play in providing accommodation, advice and support to young vulnerable people. Consequently, we are seeking the commitment of the voluntary sector in approving and endorsing this Protocol, to help deliver its aims.

This Protocol is designed to clarify these support systems and responsibilities, which will lead to better working arrangements between organisations and agencies, the development of consistent and effective procedures, and the clarification of roles and responsibilities undertaken by the signatory organisations. While it is recognised that each organisation will have its own procedures and mechanisms in place to deliver services, this Protocol provides a framework by which common

¹ Homelessness (Priority Need for Accommodation) (England) Order 2002

concerns and practices can be best effected. Overall, the aim of this Protocol is to ensure better outcomes for young people who find themselves in housing need.

Ultimately, the Local Authority will retain and meet its statutory obligations and this protocol shall not in any way disadvantage any young person seeking assistance as a Child In Need. It is envisaged that the protocol will improve and enhance the service received by our young people.

1.1 Who is covered by this Protocol?

This Protocol is designed to cover:

- All 16/17 year olds who are homeless or at risk of homelessness including:
- Care leavers aged 16/17 years, who are owed a statutory duty by either the Housing Authority or Children's Services;
- Young offenders and those at risk of offending;
- Children who are over 16 and still in compulsory education.

Children under the age of 16 are specifically excluded from this Protocol.

Definitions:

Parental Responsibility: Under normal circumstances, legal responsibility for young people up to the age of 18 years rests with their parents. Other carers may gain parental responsibility via a court order and a LA may gain shared parental responsibility, again by a court order.

Responsible Authorities: Agencies that have a statutory responsibility towards young people, through direct intervention, or advice and support services. For the purposes of this protocol they are:

- Children and Family Support Service including the Youth Offending Service
- Connexions;
- Primary Care Trust (PCT);

- Adults Social Care and Housing Support
- Registered Providers.

Voluntary Agencies: Agencies who offer support, advice and advocacy to young people in relation to their housing needs. They may also provide accommodation, either through direct access or through an agreement with the Local Housing Authority, provide outreach or floating support, and help with education and training in housing related matters.

Presenting Authority: The Responsible Authority where the young person presents as homeless, or as being threatened with homelessness.

Home Authority: Where a young person has crossed Local Housing Authority borders, the Local Housing Authority from where the young person has moved.

Ordinary Residence: The place where a person normally lives, voluntarily. This may include the parental home for young people, but not care homes or residential educational facilities, quarters while in the armed forces, or prison. Residence may be for a long or short duration, provided that it provides settled accommodation². Time spent in temporary accommodation pending a decision by the Local Authority qualifies as a period of residence³.

Intentional homelessness: The circumstances whereby homelessness is caused through an applicant's own action or inaction, for example, antisocial behaviour, criminality or rent arrears.

² In *R v Barnet London Borough Council, Ex p Shah* [1983] 2 AC 309, 343 "a man's abode in a particular place or country which he has adopted voluntarily and for settled purposes as part of the regular order of his life for the time being, whether of short or of long duration".

³ *Hammersmith & Fulham LBC v Mohammed*, [2001] UKHL 57

1.2 Legislative Framework

Although this Protocol is rooted within the legislative framework set out below, it is also designed to reflect the spirit of the law, as well as the letter of the law.

The Children Act (1989)

- Under the Children Act, local authorities are under a general duty to safeguard and promote the welfare of children in need in their area.
- There are four sections of the Act which are relevant to housing and homelessness:
- Section 17, Provision of Services for children in need, their families and others;
- Section 20, Provision of accommodation for children: general;
- Section 24, Advice and assistance for certain children (leaving care practice);
- Section 27, Co-operation between authorities.

The Children (Leaving Care) Act (2000)

- The Leaving Care Act amends and supports the Children Act and prescribes a duty on social services to financially support and meet the housing needs / costs of 'eligible' and 'relevant' young people until the age of 18. The Act is issued with **Guidance and Regulations** which are mandatory (published under s7 of Local Authority Social Services Act 1970). Only in exceptional circumstances will the authority be able to justify diverging from the guidance.

The Act aims to:

- Improve the life chances of young people living in care and leaving local authority care;
- Delay young people's discharge from care until they are prepared and ready to leave;
- Improve the assessment, preparation and planning for leaving care;

- Provide better personal support for young people after leaving care;
- Improve the financial arrangements for care leavers.

The Housing Act (1996) (as amended by Homelessness Act 2002)

Part VII of the 1996 Housing Act as amended by the Homelessness Act 2002.

The Homelessness legislation prescribes a number of duties:

- A duty to provide interim accommodation for applicants whom the Local Authority has reason to believe may be homeless and vulnerable, pending further enquiries;
- A duty to house those who are statutorily homeless, in priority need or assessed as vulnerable, and are not intentionally homeless;
- An enhanced duty to advise and assist those who are not vulnerable;
- A duty to try to prevent homelessness where it is threatened;
- A duty to ensure access to advice on the prevention and relief of homelessness;
- A power to house non-priority applicants in temporary accommodation, in order to prevent homelessness, or to assist other agencies to meet their statutory duties.

The Homelessness Act (2002) has three elements:

- A new obligation on local authorities to carry out a homeless review and develop a homelessness strategy;
- A range of changes to the homelessness legislation;
- Changes to the framework for allocations, moving towards a choice based approach.

In addition, new 'priority need' categories have been introduced by Statutory Instrument, which may be relevant to young people. These categories include:

- **Most people aged 16 and 17;**
- **Certain care leavers;**
- **Other people who are particularly vulnerable**, for example those leaving prison, young offenders' institutes or the armed forces,

people who have had to leave their home because of violence or the threat of violence, those with physical or mental illnesses or disabilities, rough sleepers, or those with drug, alcohol or other substance misuse. Vulnerability is not an automatic priority need category; Children's Services, Under the Children Act will assess whether a young person's circumstances makes them vulnerable for the purposes of this legislation. If a decision of no vulnerability is made, it may be challenged by the applicant within 21 days of receiving the written notification of the decision.

The Homelessness Code of Guidance for Local Authorities (2006)

- This does not have statutory force, but Local Housing Authorities must have due regard for it in making their decisions. Where deviation from the Guidance is made, it must be clearly justified, as legal challenge can result. Failure to give regard to the Guidance can result in a decision being deemed unlawful. Social Services authorities in England are also required to have regard to the Guidance when exercising their functions in relation to homelessness and the prevention of homelessness (s.182 (1)). This protocol aims to build and improve upon existing good practice within Wolverhampton and, where appropriate, with partners across the West Midlands.

Case Law

- There is much relevant case law which influences the assessment process and ways in which the Acts and Guidance above are interpreted, which should be referred to in individual cases where necessary; One key piece of case law is known as the Southwark judgment which emphasised the need for a *whole child assessment*.

1.3 Strategy Framework

This protocol is designed to complement and support a range of other strategies and policies that are already in place within the City, in particular:

- Children and Young People Plan;
- Wolverhampton Supporting People Strategy;
- Local Authority Homelessness Strategy;

- Local Authority Housing Strategies;
- Black Country Connexions Strategy.
- Young Persons Housing Strategy
- Every Child Matters

1.4 Capacity

Capacity relates to the ability of a young person to be able to cope with the stresses and realities of independent living, and their means of being able to support themselves financially and emotionally, albeit with floating or other support where appropriate.

The capacity of a young person should be assessed on an individual basis, and can include such factors as risk of emotional harm, physical capabilities and whether the young person understands the consequences of their application. It is the duty of the Local Housing Authority to assess whether an individual has the capacity to make a homelessness application under Part VII of the Housing Act. A check must be made to see if a CAF or other specialist assessments are being undertaken and if not a pre-CAF checklist should be undertaken in-conjunction with the Housing Assessment; this duty remains with the Local Housing Authority.

Where there is any uncertainty regarding capacity, a professional consultation from Social Care should be sought.

Young people who have limited capacity can be helped through this Protocol, but it is essential to establish their support needs, including educational, financial and emotional needs, as early as possible through the pre-CAF assessment.

If as a result of the pre-CAF assessment, accommodation under section 20 needs to be considered then the young person will be referred to Duty & Assessment. Duty & Assessment will then undertake an initial assessment.

It is important that all agencies work together to find the most effective solution to the young person's needs within the spirit of this Protocol.

Statement of commitment

All signatories to this document, listed in Appendix A, commit to upholding the processes outlined within the Protocol, to working together in constructive dialogue with other partners, and to seek the best possible collective outcome for our young people, that sometimes this may not mean immediate re-housing (other than where a clear duty to accommodate is apparent) and that the young person or agency may not get the outcome they would ideally wish.

We commit to working professionally, openly and flexibly to achieve the aims of this Protocol.

We commit to respecting the professional position of our partners, even where it conflicts with our own, and will work to resolve such conflicts quickly and appropriately within the terms of this Protocol.

We commit to attendance at Multi-agency Planning Meetings where they are called, and to respond to requests for information in a timely and appropriate manner (where data protection requirements have been met, and permission has been obtained).

We commit to participating in and facilitating multi-agency training and awareness programmes relevant to this Protocol, in order to increase understanding of the terms of the Protocol, and the role that different organisations and agencies have in delivering its aims.

Each agency also commits to ensuring that its staff and officers are aware of and understand the terms of the Protocol, including its aims and objectives, and will ensure that proper timely training is given to existing and new staff to assure its effective operation.

2.0 Roles and Responsibilities

It is fundamental to the successful delivery of the aims and objectives of this Protocol that the roles and responsibilities of each organisation are clearly defined and understood by all parties. The table below shows the main duties and responsibilities for each of the organisations who will ensure its implementation, although it should be recognised that these are not exhaustive or exclusive and that many organisations also have discretionary powers that they may wish to use in meeting the aims of this Protocol.

<i>Agency</i>	<i>Role</i>	<i>Responsibilities</i>
Housing Support	To assess the accommodation and support needs of young people	To identify the accommodation and support needs of young people presenting <i>In Need</i> . To undertake a Pre-CAF checklist.
Children and Family Support Service	Assistance to 'Relevant children'	<p>Children and Family Support have a duty to financially support and cover the housing costs of 'relevant children'. We also have a duty to provide a range of services appropriate under the Leaving Care Act.</p> <p>Relevant children are young people aged 16-18 who have been looked after for a minimum of 13 weeks after their 14th birthday, with some of that period being after their 16th birthday, but who have now left care. While they are under the age of 18 they are not entitled to assistance under the homelessness legislation.</p> <p>After the age of 18, they become 'former relevant children' and do qualify for financial assistance from the Local Housing Authority.</p>

	Assistance to 'children in need'	<p>A 16/17 year old who is considered to be 'in need' and is owed an accommodating duty under s.20 of the Children Act is the responsibility of Children and Family Support.</p> <p>A child in need is defined under s.17(10) Children Act 1989. This states that a child shall be taken as being in need if:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) <i>he is unlikely to achieve or maintain, or to have the opportunity of achieving or maintaining, a reasonable standard of health or development without the provision for him of services by the local authority...;</i> b) <i>his health or development is likely to be significantly impaired, or further impaired, without the provision for him of such services; or</i> c) <i>he is disabled.</i> <p>Guidance issued with the Act specifically does not lay down firm criteria or set general priorities, as the Act requires that each local authority sets its own level and scale of services within their area.</p>
<i>Agency</i>	<i>Role</i>	<i>Responsibilities</i>
Children and Family Support	Duty to care leavers 16-17	<p>Children and Family Support shall assist those owed a Duty under the Children Leaving Care Act (2000) where the young person is deemed Eligible or Relevant under the Act.</p> <p>WLCS shall ensure that all steps are taken to avoid care leavers becoming homeless. In the event that the young person does become homeless, WLCS shall procure temporary accommodation where required and shall liaise with Housing Support to procure an appropriate supported placement via a Pathway Plan.</p> <p>In order to improve outcomes for care leavers, it is imperative that action is taken to ensure that appropriate accommodation and support are procured for the young person before their 18th birthday. Close liaison between WLCS and Housing Support and any other appropriate agency will be undertaken in order to prevent homelessness and to secure positive outcomes for the young person.</p>

Agency	Role	Responsibilities
Housing Support	Statutory duties	To determine whether an applicant is eligible for assistance under the Housing Act.
	Assistance to Children's Services	To assist Children and Family Support in their assessment of the needs of young people when requested to do so, and to provide relevant information as part of that assistance. Assistance could also be given in the provision of temporary accommodation while an assessment is being carried out, where requested to do so.
	Advice	<p>To give advice and assistance regarding housing options for Young people, housing benefits, and support.</p> <p>Advise parents and carers about issues in the home that have lead to the young person moving out, for example debt advice, housing options, violence.</p> <p>Advice to parents about their responsibilities, and help with preparing for planned moves can also be offered.</p> <p>The Local Authority may also 'signpost' to other organisations that offer help and advice, such as the Citizen's Advice Bureaux or other appropriate services.</p>
	Mediation	To liaise between Young people and families / carers to find ways in which the young person could return home, if it is safe and appropriate for them to do so. Although this is not a statutory duty, some Local Authorities provide this service, either directly or through partnership with other agencies. Where mediation is required Parent Support Advisors should be considered as an option for mediation support.
	Temporary accommodation	To provide temporary accommodation where appropriate, to enable investigation and assessment to be carried out while ensuring the young person is in a safe environment.

	Providing suitable accommodation	<p>To assist the Young person to find secure and safe accommodation where it is appropriate for them to do so.</p> <p>This may be through council / housing association stock, hostel accommodation or supported lodgings, private sector accommodation or by enabling them to return to the parental (or primary carer's) home, or that of a relative or other appropriate individual.</p>
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Agency	Role	Responsibilities
Connexions	Advice and advocacy	<p>To provide advice, information, guidance and support to children and young people of school age (13-19), or up to the age of 25 where a statement of educational need is in place, or a disability. Advice is principally around employment, education, and training (EET) advice may address complex housing needs, where this is relevant to obtaining and sustaining EET.</p> <p>A Connexions Personal Advisor is responsible for:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Engaging with the young person and establishing his/her wants and needs • Enabling the young person to understand his/her entitlements • Co-ordinating the range of available support to ensure there is cohesion in its delivery • Advocating on behalf of the young person within the educational system and with any other relevant service provider • Supporting the young person and his/her parents/carers where relevant • Working with the young person to secure change • Supporting the young person in his/her transition towards independence • Brokering relevant services and resources to support the young person and meet his/her needs • Working with other agencies and the community to support the young person • Carry out a pre-CAF assessment

Agency	Role	Responsibilities
Youth Offending Team	Services to young offenders	To work with other agencies, in the statutory and voluntary sector, in improving the outcomes for homeless young offenders. To advocate on behalf of young offenders and ensure they receive the appropriate service from these agencies. To continue highlighting homeless young offenders as a priority group under the Homelessness legislation.
	Advice to Local Housing Authority / Children's Services	To provide information and assistance to the Local Housing Authority or Children's Services in finding suitable and appropriate accommodation for young offenders and ex-offenders, including assessing potential risk and support needs.

Agency	Role	Responsibilities
Voluntary Sector	Advice	To give advice about housing and homelessness to Young people.
	Advocacy	To enable young people to make informed choices through representational support, including liaising with Statutory organisations such as the Department of Work and Pensions and Local Housing Authority.
	Supported Accommodation	Some voluntary sector organisations will provide accommodation, usually with some support, either through direct access, or through a referral arrangement with the Local Housing Authorities.

Agency	Role	Responsibilities
Housing Support & Social Inclusion	Floating support	Provision of funding for person-centred housing related support. Floating support is not attached to accommodation, but is available to an individual to enable them to live independently within the community.

	Accommodation based support	Provision of funding for housing related support given within an accommodation setting, usually as part of the tenancy agreement.
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2.1 Lead Officers

To ensure a seamless and continuous service to young people, it is essential that a named lead officer, at a sufficiently senior level, be assigned responsibility for the successful operation of the Protocol, and to ensure appropriate training for staff is given and refreshed on a regular basis. This responsibility should be detailed in job descriptions, to ensure that it is undertaken, and passed on to successors in the event of job changes.

Lead Officers are:

Wolverhampton City Council – Housing Support	Young Persons & Tenancy Sustainment Co ordinator	01902 551042
Wolverhampton City Council	Homelessness Co-ordinator	01902 554738
Children and Family Support (Duty & Assessment)	Duty Manager	01902 555392
Wolverhampton Youth Offending Team	Duty Manager	01902 553722
Wolverhampton Probation Services	Duty Manager	
Connexions Wolverhampton	Team Manager	01902 773040
Multi Agency Support Teams (MASTs)	MAST Manager	01902 556952
Transition Team (Care Leavers)	Manager	01902 572555

3.0 Protocol Framework

3.1 Information sharing

Information Sharing is key to the Government's goal of delivering better, more efficient public services that are co-ordinated around the needs of the individual. We all need to feel confident that our personal information is safe and shared only where essential to our best interests.

We have to remember, however, that there can be as many significant consequences to NOT sharing information as there may be to sharing it. The Data Protection Act is not a barrier to sharing information but is the framework to ensure that information:

- Is shared appropriately and responsibly;
- Is managed in a sensible way;
- Maintains and strengthens safeguards;
- Preserves the privacy of individuals, and
- Balances public protection against the benefit of the individual.

All information shared will be in accordance with the Wolverhampton Information Sharing Protocol agreed by the Children & Young People's Strategic Partnership. The protocol gives a framework to work within and sets out the principles that all practitioners need to work to when sharing information.

3.2 Common Assessment Processes/ Multi Agency Planning Meeting

An element of this protocol is the use of Common Assessment processes.

In the first instance the Joint Protocol Officer will check to see if the young person is known to Social Care or if a YOT ASSET Assessment and if not will proceed as follows.

A Pre-CAF checklist will be completed to determine if a full CAF assessment is required.

A CAF Meeting will then be called by the Joint Protocol Officer, within seven days of the initial contact by the young person. The young person should be involved with this assessment process, with advocacy support, unless this is specifically refused by them. If support is refused, this should be recorded in the meeting notes.

The CAF meeting should address:

- The young person’s health and development needs;
- Education, employment or training needs;
- Support from, or issues to do with family or other personal relationships;
- Financial needs;
- Practical and other skills required to live independently;
- Needs for care and/or professional support.

<i>Action</i>	<i>Responsible agency</i>	<i>Following action</i>	<i>timeframe</i>
Pre-CAF checklist / CAF Meeting	Housing Support	CAF Meeting arranged with all relevant agencies, young person and advocacy services.	Within 7 working days of first contact with young person.

If a young person is not accommodated, the joint protocol officer may still identify some unmet needs e.g. mental health, physical health and substance misuse. In such cases, the joint protocol officer will notify relevant agencies of the case e.g. MAST, Connexions, SUBS etc and suggest the casework may be best managed through the CAF process in order to ensure a holistic assessment of the young person.

4.0 **Preventing Homelessness: Considerations**

The purpose of this chapter is to outline the considerations that should be taken into consideration when assessing the housing needs of young people presenting as homeless or at risk of homelessness.

4.1 **Emergency Response**

When a young person presents as homeless or at risk of being homeless, an Housing Needs Assessment must be carried out to establish whether there is a need for urgent temporary accommodation. This may require contact with the parents or last residence of the young person to verify that the information being given is accurate, and that both sides of any dispute are acknowledged. When making this assessment, the following factors may be taken into account:

- What were the circumstances surrounding the young person's decision, or requirement, to leave the parental or last home?
- Is the young person at risk of harm if they return home?
- Where did the young person sleep last night?
- Do they have somewhere safe to sleep tonight, i.e. other family / friends, if they cannot return home?
- Does the young person have the capacity to cope on their own?
- Are there other significant factors which are relevant to this case, such as risk of harm to other family members or the public, a return to offending behaviour, or increased risk of substance abuse?

Each case must be assessed on its own individual circumstances and the list above should not be seen as exhaustive. Child protection issues, such as the vulnerability of other siblings in the home, could also be a factor, and detailed assessment of a family's circumstances should be investigated. If child protection issues are suspected, the Children and Family Support Service (normally Duty and Assessment) should be notified immediately, using agreed Child Protection procedures. Contact details can be found on the Wolverhampton City Council's web-site: www.wolverhampton.gov.uk or visit the Wolverhampton Safeguarding

Children Board Policies and Procedures
(www.proceduresonline.com/wolvesnet/scb/).

Wherever possible, contact with the young person's family should be made to assess the home circumstances and to verify information, unless it is felt that this would endanger the young person or others in the household.

If the Local Authority has reason to believe that the young person does not have a safe place to stay that night, they will arrange temporary emergency accommodation, while a full assessment of need is being carried out, or arrangements are made with the home authority.

Outside of office hours (17.00 till 8.30 Mon – Thurs and 16.30 Friday till 8.30 Friday – Mon) the Emergency Duty Team (EDT) is available to take emergency referrals. If the young person does not have a safe place to stay that night then they must be referred to the Homeless Out of Hours Service who will find accommodation.

The Family Advice and Support Team (FAST) will be advised of cases by Duty & Assessment and Emergency Duty Team (EDT).

4.2 Service Intentional

All applicants under this protocol will, in the first instance, be dealt with by the Young Persons Team Joint Protocol Officer; At this stage the application will not consider intentionality as this may disadvantage the young person. The young person will, of course, retain the legal right to make a homelessness application and will be advised of this.

If all options have been exhausted for securing accommodation, the local housing authority may decide that a young person's actions have resulted in them becoming homeless intentionally.

A person will be referred to the Homeless Service if:

1. The young person is pregnant or/
2. The young person is aged 16/17 years old and are victims of domestic violence.

4.3 Local Connection

It should be noted that the Presenting Authority will have a limited duty to the young person under the Children Act as the young person sought assistance in the presenting authority.

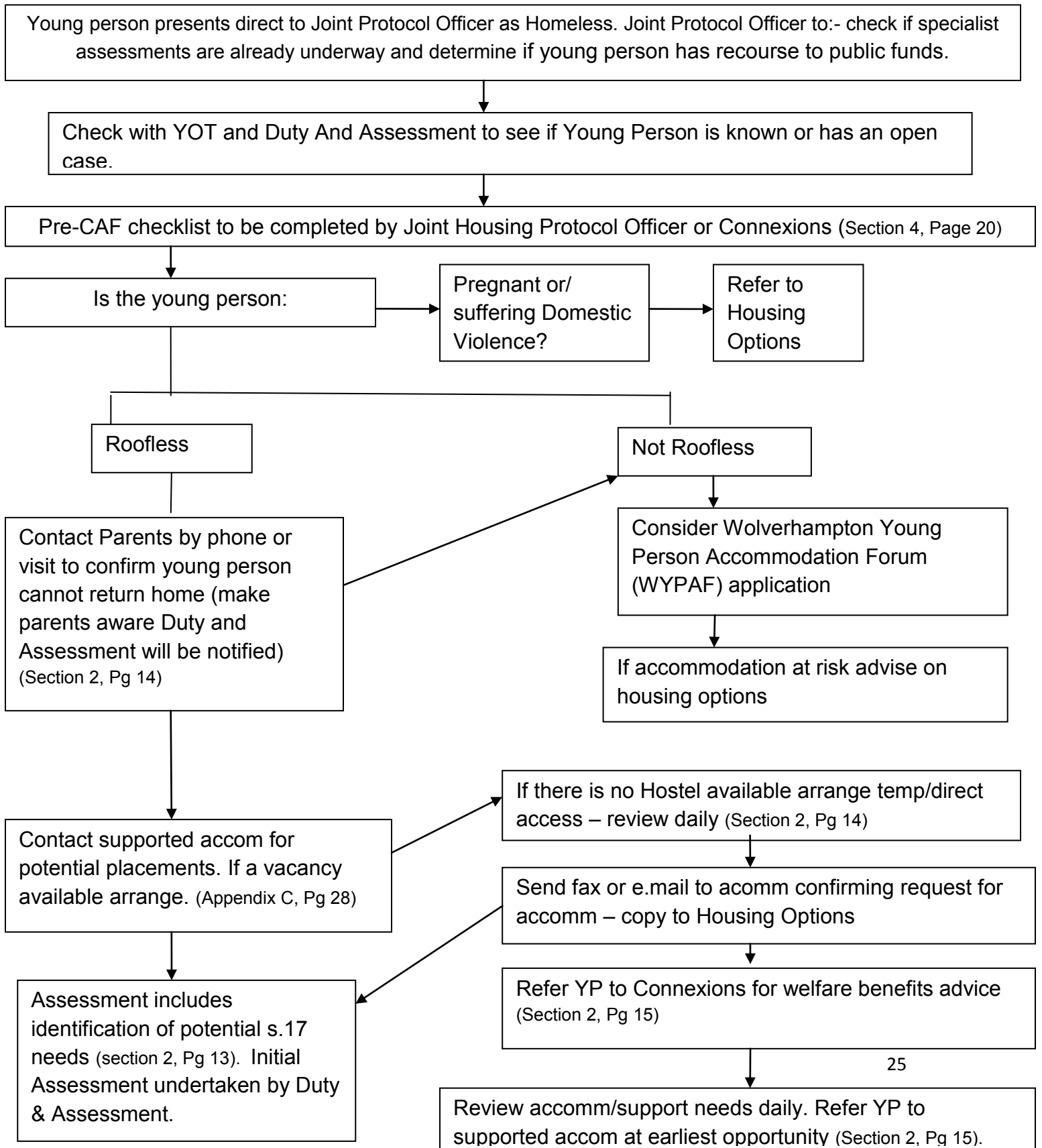
In all cases, wherever possible, the young person will be returned to their home authority, and will be referred to an authority where they have a local connection. Where a young person is able to return to their home authority, and is willing to do so, Housing Support or Children’s Services will use their discretion in providing means for them to return home.

Where it is not reasonable to return the young person to their home authority, the Presenting Authority or Children’s Services will arrange temporary accommodation and complete the assessment forms. The Initial Assessment forms will be forwarded to the young person’s Home Authority or Area Office within 24 hours of the initial contact (when this falls during a weekend or bank holiday it should be at the completed at the earliest opportunity). The Emergency Duty Team are not responsible for completing Initial Assessments.

<i>Action</i>	<i>Responsible agency</i>	<i>Following actions</i>	<i>timeframe</i>
Where a young person is unable to return home or where no suitable alternative accommodation is available, arrange temporary accommodation until return to the home authority has been arranged. A referral will be made to the home authority’s Duty & Assessment Team (or equivalent).	Housing Support or Children’s Services area office where YP presents	Housing Needs Assessment completed with YP;	Initial contact
		Liaison with Home Authority to return YP as soon as possible. Arrange appointment with YP and Home Authority and communicate this to YP, ensuring they know where to attend, what time and who they are to meet with.	Initial contact
		Housing Needs Assessment faxed/e-mailed to Home Authority;	Within 24 hours of initial contact

5.0 Housing Process Flowchart

Further detailed information is available in the Protocol; refer to the relevant sections noted in brackets.



6.0 Monitoring and Evaluation

In order to make this Protocol work the signatory agencies agree to undertake regular training and evaluation (see appendix D), review and monitoring to ensure that the procedures and processes contained within it remain relevant and effective. Reviews will take place at a meeting on a 6 monthly basis.

6.1 Scrutiny and Responsibilities

Each agency will have its own arrangements for scrutiny of its processes, and existing internal reporting mechanisms will remain in this respect.

Each agency will also be subject to its own internal complaints procedures in respect of the application of this Protocol.

The responsible body for this Protocol will be Housing Protocol Group.

Appendix A

**WOLVERHAMPTON JOINT PROTOCOL
FOR YOUNG PEOPLE AGED 16-17**

YOUNG PERSON'S NAME:

Consent Statement:

The assessment process and multi agency approach has been explained to me. I understand what will happen, and my role in the process.

I give consent to any organisation or individual involved in this assessment to share information about my circumstances, in the pursuance of this assessment, and any actions arising from it.

Information that is relevant to this assessment may be shared with, or gathered from, the following agencies (please tick if consent given):

- Health**
- Education**
- Police**
- Probation and Youth Offending Teams**
- Local Authority Housing and Benefits**
- Connexions**
- Voluntary Sector Agencies**
- Children's Services**
- Other Agency (please state)**

This permission is given for the purposes of this assessment only and the multi-agency team that I agree to work with.

Signed (Young Person):

Dated:

Signed (Professional):

Organisation:

Dated:

Appendix B - Supported housing for young people in Wolverhampton

YMCA - BADGER Court Foyer	<i>16-25 years- single people</i>
Foyer accommodation for up to 2 years offering a wide range of support to include assistance with access to education, training or employment. Staffed 24 hours	
Midland Heart -1st Avenue/ Hearthills	<i>16-25 years-single people</i>
These two schemes offer supported accommodation and access to a wide range of support services. Accommodation provided for up to 2 years. 1 st Avenue is staffed 24 hours. Hearthills provides floating support.	
Heantun Foyer	<i>16-25 years-single people</i>
Foyer accommodation for up to 2 years offering a wide range of support to include assistance with access to education, training or employment. Staffed up to 7.00pm Monday to Friday.	
The Haven Wolverhampton	Females 16+
Refuge accommodation for women at risk of domestic violence or exploitation. Staffed 24 hours. The Haven also offer a range of services and referral to legal services	
Jericho House	Females 16+
Refuge and 2 nd stage accommodation for up to 2 years for women at risk of domestic abuse or exploitation. Staffed 24 hours	

Appendix C – Training and Monitoring Arrangements

Training

The Protocol is designed to be a working document, to which agencies can refer for guidance and assistance in providing an excellent integrated service to young people. It is also designed to be a document by which agencies can be held to account. It is therefore vitally important that good timely training is provided for new staff, or when revisions are made to the operational procedures contained within it.

In line with the ethos of the Protocol, it is considered that the most effective way of achieving a thorough understanding of its aims and purpose is to undertake multi-agency training. This will allow staff to work through issues and concerns with other agencies, increase the understanding of each others' roles in making the Protocol work, and develop interpersonal relationships across agencies.

In order to achieve the stated aims and outcomes identified in the protocol, it is vital that all staff, partners and potential partners are both identified and trained in the use of the protocol. As a minimum, all housing support, Children's Services, Youth Offending staff, Care Leaving teams and Connexions staff should be familiar with the protocol.

Monitoring arrangements

In order to ensure that this Protocol is working effectively, monitoring arrangements must be put in place. From this assessment amendments to the processes to make them more efficient and to improve outcomes will be made. It is important therefore that accurate monitoring systems are in place to gather meaningful data.

The monitoring process will be in two parts:

- **Quantative data, which records statistics and numbers;**
- **Qualitative data, which records opinions and experiences of staff and service users.**

Data concerning the joint protocol is currently recorded by the Housing Support's Joint Protocol officer and produces information of a quantative nature. Quality control information is not currently recorded.