

LBTH PROTOCOL BETWEEN HOUSING AND CHILDRENS SOCIAL CARE FOR CHILDREN AGED 16/17 WHO PRESENT AS HOMELESS

A guide for Housing Options Officers and
Social Workers

Version 1. Review date: November 2025



Tower Hamlets Children's Services and Homeless Services have a joint statutory duty to meet the needs of young people aged 16 and 17 who are homeless or at risk of becoming homeless. The purpose of this is to ensure a consistent joint response from Housing and Children Social Care that seeks to promote the best interests and welfare of children.

THE PATHWAY APPROACH

1. Scope of Joint Protocol

- 1.1 This protocol establishes a joint, collaborative agreement between Housing Option Service and Children Social Care. It outlines the roles and responsibilities of Children Social Care (16/17-year-olds Homeless), Housing Department towards homeless and / or potentially homeless 16- and 17-year-old children. This protocol aims to provide timely and appropriate support, preventing young individuals from falling through the gaps in services.
- 1.2 Both Children Social Care and Housing Department have statutory duties towards children aged 16 and 17 years old, this joint protocol clarifies their respective responsibilities. By working together, the protocol aims to ensure efficient and effective assistance for these vulnerable young individuals.

2. Purpose

2.1. The joint protocol will lead to:

- Enhance safeguarding measures for homeless and at-risk children.
- Improve homelessness prevention strategies.
- Establish clear roles and responsibilities for workers and agencies.
- Minimise the risk of children experiencing inadequate services.
- Foster better relationships and collaboration among agencies.
- Provide children access to suitable accommodation, thus preventing future homelessness. g) Optimise the utilisation of limited resources and time.
- Ensure the effective use of the Children Social Care Assessment and Intervention Service.
- Establish clear protocols in and out of the services for children.

3. Legal and Policy context

- 3.1 The council has various duties and powers towards homeless 16- and 17-year-olds, with which these joint assessment and referral arrangements must comply. Relevant legislation, case law and statutory guidance has been considered when developing this protocol.
- 3.2 Children's Social Care are responsible for:
 - Accommodating homeless children in need (Children Act 1989,)
 - Assessing and meeting the needs of children who are 'care leavers.'
- 3.3 Housing Services are responsible for:

- Providing housing assistance to homeless people who are eligible and in priority need, including young people aged 16/17, and care leavers aged 18-21 (Housing Act 1996, as amended by Homelessness Act 2002).
- Adhering to the Homeless Reduction Act, 2017 wherein greater focus was given to the prevention of homelessness.

3.4 The House of Lords Judgment *G vs. Southwark* in May 2009 clarified that Children and Young Peoples Services have a duty to provide accommodation for homeless 16 and 17-year-olds under the Children Act 1989, prioritising it over the duties in the Housing Act 1996. In April 2010, joint guidance from the Department for Education and Communities and Local Government summarised the responsibilities for homeless 16 and 17-year-olds under both acts.

3.5 Section 17 of the Children Act 1989 outlines the general duty of local authorities to safeguard and promote the welfare of children in need. Section 20 requires local authorities to provide accommodation for children in need, especially those without parental responsibility or facing abandonment.

3.6 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).

3.7 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 permanently, and for whatever reason) from providing suitable accommodation or care.

3.8 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 him with accommodation.

3.9 Section 20(4) states 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 Children and family services and Local Housing Authorities (LHA) to meet the needs of children and young people.

3.10 Section 27 of the Children Act 1989 Act empowers CFS 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.

3.11 Children Act 2004 – requires co-operation between relevant statutory services to improve outcomes for children and young people. This includes co-operation to safeguard children and young people.

3.12 The Housing Act 1996, as amended by the Homelessness Act 2002, defines homelessness and priority need. Specific duties are outlined for housing and Children Social Care to work together in supporting 16- and 17-year-olds at risk of homelessness. Homelessness or at risk of homeless is defined in the act as:

- 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.

3.13 The primary responsibility for homeless 16–17-year-olds lies with Children’s Services and housing departments, providing advice, guidance, and support. In most cases, a homeless 16–17-year-old is considered a child in need.

4. Key Principles

4.1 The Protocol has the overall aim of reducing homelessness among 16/17-year-olds. More specifically it is intended to provide an effective service response to young people who present to the Council as homeless or threatened with homelessness.

4.2 Work within the Protocol should be carried out according to the following principles:

- The safety and welfare of the young person is paramount - effective homelessness prevention work is at the heart of the approach of helping potentially homeless 16- and 17-year-olds.
- 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, this is in line with the vision of Childrens Services
- It is usually best practice to prevent a young person from leaving home in the first instance by dealing with the causes that are leading to the threat of homelessness.
- The threat of homelessness can affect a young person’s self-esteem, confidence and identity. It is important that the Council’s response to young people who are at risk of homelessness is quick and effective.
- Staff will work in an open, honest and accountable way with young people and their families.
- If a Safeguarding concern is identified, this must be reported to Children Social care MASH team for investigation in line with children social care safeguarding procedures.

- Social Care and Housing staff will collaborate to deliver an integrated service response to the young person so that the young person is not passed back and forward between services. Where disagreements occur, they will be dealt with quickly and they will not be allowed to affect the service offered to the young person.
- For young people who do need it, the council will provide suitable accommodation with the sufficient support to meet the levels of assessed need.
- Young people who request a service will be expected to agree to arrangements to share information with other agencies for the purposes of delivering an appropriate service to the young person. They will also be expected to co-operate with assessments and attend meetings as appropriate.
- It is the council's view that if a 16–17-year-old cannot live with their own family, because they have been kicked out or their relationships have broken down, then they are not 'homeless', they are a child in need of care and should be accommodated under S20, unless they refuse it (and provided there are no safeguarding or wellbeing concerns).
- The Council will continue to develop a range of long-term housing options for those young people who are assessed as needing to access independent housing.

5. **Accepting or refusing a Section 20 duty**

- 5.1 If a young person accepts a Section 20 duty, they will become a looked after child. Legal requirements will apply to all children looked after, including a review after 20 working days by an Independent Reviewing Officer (IRO). If, at a later date the child no longer wishes to be looked after under Section 20, this duty will cease, although Section 17 services under the Children Act 1989 may continue.
- 5.2 Some young homeless people would prefer not to be accommodated under Section 20. In these circumstances a young person may be housed under the Housing Act 1996.
- 5.3 The Council will give full advice and guidance to the young person before they make this decision and will consider their wishes and feelings. There may be occasions where a young person decides they do not wish to become looked after following impartial information on their options and entitlements, but the Council conclude that they do not have the capacity to make this decision. This judgement may be at odds with the young person's wishes; However, the Council are responsible for making a decision that meets the welfare needs of the young person.
- 5.4 Young homeless people aged 16/17 are in 'priority need' as defined by the Housing Act 1996 and are therefore entitled to assistance. Under Part 7 of the Housing Act 1996, every local authority should provide accommodation for young people that are eligible for assistance, are homeless or threatened with homelessness, are in priority need and are not intentionally homeless. If the young person does not have a local connection to the borough, they may be referred to another area where they do have a connection, so long as it is safe for them to return there. Under Part 7, a young person may be owed the following duties:
- To ensure that accommodation is available for his/her occupation.
 - To take reasonable steps to ensure that accommodation does not cease to be available for his/her occupation.
 - To ensure accommodation is available for occupation for such period as will give the young person a reasonable opportunity of securing accommodation for his occupation.
 - To provide advice and assistance in any attempt the young person makes

to ensure accommodation becomes available for his/her occupation.

6. The pathway

6.1 Referrals can come from one of three sources:

- Young people **not** currently open or known.
- Young people currently receiving services at tier 2 of the London Continuum of Need. These young people will have a Lead Professional and an integrated plan of intervention but will not have an allocated social worker within Specialist Services.
- Young people currently open to children's social care or specialist services

6.2 Young people not currently open to the department:

- The first point of contact for this group is a referral to Childrens social care (MAST)
- A "contact" is recorded on Mosaic.

6.3 A single assessment is undertaken to ensure full compliance with the duties outlined in the Children Act and Homelessness Reduction Act. The assessment will be undertaken by the dedicated social worker that works jointly with the relevant housing team to fully explain during interviews young people's housing options.

6.4 The Children Social Care single assessment will identify: -

- if a young person is homeless
- assess a young person's accommodation and support needs.
- work to be undertaken with the Edge of Care team workers to enable young people to remain in the care of their parents if safe to do so.
- The work needed between the Local Authority housing department, schools and social care teams.
- Preparation needs for a young person for their journey through the pathway and to independence.

6.5 Whilst carrying out the assessment, social worker/practitioners will contact all relevant professionals involved with the young person to gain a holistic and accurate assessment of the young person's needs. Where contact is not made with other professionals, the reasons for this should be recorded within the assessment.

6.6 When the assessment has been completed and there is confidence that there is enough information to make a decision, one of the following outcomes will be chosen:

- The young person can remain at home or return home and support is **not** required.
- The young person can remain at home or return home with on-going support.
- It is accepted that the young person cannot return home and that accommodation is required.

7. Partnership

7.1 Under the Children Act 2004, all agencies have a duty to co-operate to safeguard and promote the welfare of children and young people. Key to the successful implementation of the 16/17-year-old homeless Pathway is: -

- Joint work between providers (Housing Department and Children Social Care) over difficult or complex cases
- Prompt sharing of information, including assessments, in a timely manner and in line with agreements regarding confidentiality
- A good understanding of the remit of the respective services to enable effective assessment of the next steps and support to be provided outlined to be included in assessments and intervention plan/s.
- For services involved to play an active part in monitoring the young person's progress against the aims set out in their plan
- The maintenance of a reasonable level of inter-agency contact, particularly where the young person is in crisis.
- Consultation with other agencies regarding any case decisions, especially decisions to end services or discharge from care.
- Robust joint work between providers such as Youth Offending Service/ Children Adolescent Mental Health Service to be able to support the most complex young people as appropriate, to enable effective contribution to assessments where appropriate.
- Close liaison with the 16-17-year homeless Young People Social Worker, Edge of care team and housing referral Co-ordinator for this cohort over referrals in and through the assessment process.

1. When a young person aged 16/17 presents as homeless

- Contact the Children Multi Agency Support Team (MAST) 020 7364 5006 option 3, MAST@towerhamlets.gov.uk
- A duty/assessment social worker will undertake an initial screening with the young person to determine:
 - Why they are homeless, where they have been staying, what is going on at home and why they cannot return home? Understand their wishes and feelings.
 - Local connection in Tower Hamlets (Young people without a local connection may be referred to an area with a connection - unless there's evidence of harm).
 - Are they known to Children's social care? If the young person has an existing/previous Social Worker (within the last 3 months), they:
 - Support mediation and accommodation process.
 - Complete statutory Child in Need assessment.
 - Explain housing options per Southwark Judgement guidance.
 - Provide Section 17 subsistence funding if needed.
 - If allegations of violence and abuse are made, Children's services must be notified and a referral to MASH must be made making it explicit the allegations made by the child.
 - Frontline officers need to establish why the young person believes they are no longer able to live at home. Officer to explore if it is possible for Children Social Care to support the young person at home with the assistance of the Edge of Care Team and prevent homelessness?
 - Contact the parents / a person with parental responsibility to gain their views on the issue and any relevant professionals identified.

1. A) If young person is at risk of homelessness on the day of presentation and it has been established that there are NO safeguarding issues at home

- Encourage the young person to return home/family whilst Children Social Care support the young person to resolve the difficulties.
- Establish whether the young person could stay with family if it is safe.
- Are any family/friends able to assist with accommodation?
- Discussion of referral with the multi-agency safeguarding Hub (MASH) and Team Manager in Assessment & Intervention Service for consideration of mediation
- Referral to Family Group Conference.
- Social worker to refer case to Edge of Care panel.

1. B) If young person is at risk of homelessness on the day of presentation and it has been established that there ARE safeguarding issues at home

- The social worker will update their line manager.
- Alternative provision will be identified within the wider extended family members where appropriate, where this is not possible other considerations will be made including provision of accommodation under S20 whilst an assessment is undertaken.

1. C) If young person is at risk of homelessness on the day of presentation and they are known to children's social care

- The MAST team will notify the allocated worker and team manager.
- A contact on open case will be uploaded to Mosaic.
- The allocated worker/ team manager will address and review the concerns and new emerging needs as part of the ongoing intervention plan.
- The case manager is expected to implement the LBTH protocol for homeless 16/17 children as per the pathway in Appendix 1.

2. If it is accepted that the young person cannot return home and accommodation is required (all scenarios)

- The duty Social Worker is responsible for clearly explaining to the young person their accommodation options and must understand their wishes and feelings regarding such provision.
- This discussion must cover the difference between being accommodated under Section 20 of the Children Act 1989, including the support they would receive as a care leaver, and being accommodated under Part VII of the Housing Act 1996, and the services and support that the young person will be entitled to, if they choose, either of these options and depending on the outcome of the child and family assessment (are there safeguarding concerns etc)
- Whilst the young person is deciding whether they wish to be accommodated under Section 20 of the Children Act 1989 or under Part VII of the Housing Act 1996 they will be directed to Coram Voice an independent advocacy service who can offer an impartial explanation of the housing options available to them under S.20 and Part VII. [Getting young voices heard - Coram Voice](#)



Adobe Acrobat
Document

- When the young person has made a decision on whether or not to pursue accommodation provided under Section 20, they will be asked to sign a document stating their decision and confirming that the options and all relevant information was discussed with them (see link to pdf and appendix 2).
- The signed document will be stored securely and uploaded onto Mosaic.
- The outcome of the joint interview should be recorded on Northgate and Mosaic. Young people will be informed that their records will be kept by both Housing and Children's Social Care and that information will be shared between the services.
- Social workers must give a copy of the completed child and family assessment to the young person's parent/legal guardian, after consulting with and gaining consent from the young person. The parent/legal guardian's feedback must be recorded in the assessment.

Is the homelessness situation an emergency or out of hours?

- In an emergency the allocated social worker to refer a young person to access the Crash pad at the Assessment centre
- Allocated Social worker to complete a referral form to Crash pad.
- Children Social Care to provide the young person with section 17 support.
- Children Social Care to accompany the young person to place them at Assessment Centre.
- If the young person is placed by the Out of Hours Service, the young person will be provided with section 17 support.
- Where the young person presents to the Housing Options team the above steps should be explored with the young person. If this fails, Children social Services should be contacted so that a Child in Need assessment is carried out alongside the assessment carried out by Housing.

16/17 who are pregnant/ with children presenting as homeless. Joint response from Housing and Children Social Care.

- Children Social Care to complete referral form for mother and baby unit.
- Joint working with housing to move young mother and babies to appropriate accommodation through the housing quotas.

8. Assessment Centre

8.1 The Assessment Centre service supports Tower hamlets young people aged 16-21 who are homeless or at risk of becoming homeless who have identifiable support needs.

8.2 The service assesses the needs of each young person and provides them with one-to-one support during their 12 weeks stay at the centre. To support them with their need they will be expected to follow a programme which enables them to develop the skills they need to gain independence, before working with the borough's pathway coordinator to secure a suitable move on placement within the boroughs supported housing pathway.

8.3 The Assessment Centre accommodates up to 12 young people. There is also a crash pad facility which can be used for up to two days. Specialist staff are on site 24 hours a day.

8.4 Key Services Offered by Assessment Centres:

- Emergency Accommodation (Crash Pad): Available 24/7 in emergencies.
- 12-Week Joint Assessment: Conducted with Children Social Care to determine eligibility for the hostel pathway or potential return to the family home.
- Key-Worker Support: Provided to help young people access universal credits.

8.5 Specialist Service Function:

- Provides a safe and secure environment for developing independent living skills.
- Facilitates engagement in education, training, and building positive relationships.

8.6 Progression through the assessment centre:

To enable successful progression through the 16-17 years homeless pathway provided at the assessment centre, the will following will need to be met by the young person:

- Sustained engagement with support plans and on-going assessments
- Participation and engagement with identified service interventions and support programmes
- Engagement and participation with activity and community programmes as agreed in support plans.

8.7 Support with complex needs at assessment centres:

Exploitation, offending and sexual violence or abuse:

8.8 Young people who are identified as involved in or the victim of offending, gang activity or sexual violence or abuse are supported by providing them with access to the Youth Offending Service, Co-Offending Group co-ordinator., Child at Risk of Sexual Exploitation co-ordinator, and the Gangs Co-ordinator. This will be undertaken by Children Social Care using the Child Sexual Exploitation Risk Assessment.

Mental Health needs:

8.9 Young people with mental health needs are supported through close working collaboration between Children Social Care, Housing Department, Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services (CAMHS) and other professionals to coordinate a robust support plan. Referrals to be made by children's social care to Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services (CAMHS)/Docklands outreach for mental health needs.

Young Parent (mother (or expectant mothers and baby)

8.10 In parallel to the statutory social care assessment, a referral to the Family Nurse Partnership service and early help services needs to be made. This will equip young parents with the care and support they need to live independently in the community with their child.

8.11 Services will work closely with community and health partners to support young people to make healthy choices for themselves and their child/ren and reduce social isolation. A single assessment to be completed by Children social care in partnership with the housing department to determine the level of needs and the requirement for ongoing statutory social care input.

Young people in custody

8.12 Young people aged 16 and 17 who are leaving custody and may be homeless or at risk of homelessness have suitable accommodation available on release and this will be jointly considered during resettlement planning.

Multiple needs

8.13 Services will be flexible and responsive to service users with multiple needs including:

- Young People with substance misuse issues
- People with chaotic lifestyles, including those displaying anti-social behaviour.
- People at risk of offending and or with a current offending history
- People deemed to be vulnerable and at risk.
- Unaccompanied minors
- Modern slavery

9. Move from the assessment Centre.

9.1 Housing services must demonstrate innovation and creativity in assisting young people who are ready to transition to independent accommodation: The following steps will be applied:

- The Assessment centre to identify the young people that mediation did not work for and are unable to return home.
- The Pathway Manager will support the young person to progress in the pathway journey by assessing and identifying the appropriate sideways move into another hostel.
- Where the Young Person is 18 years old and they will need continued support in the hostel, arrangement will be made by the HOST team to take a HRA application from the young person.

- At the 6 weekly meetings, the Pathways Manager will discuss the move on options for the young person and they will be supported to access the appropriate move on housing options.

10. Governance Arrangements

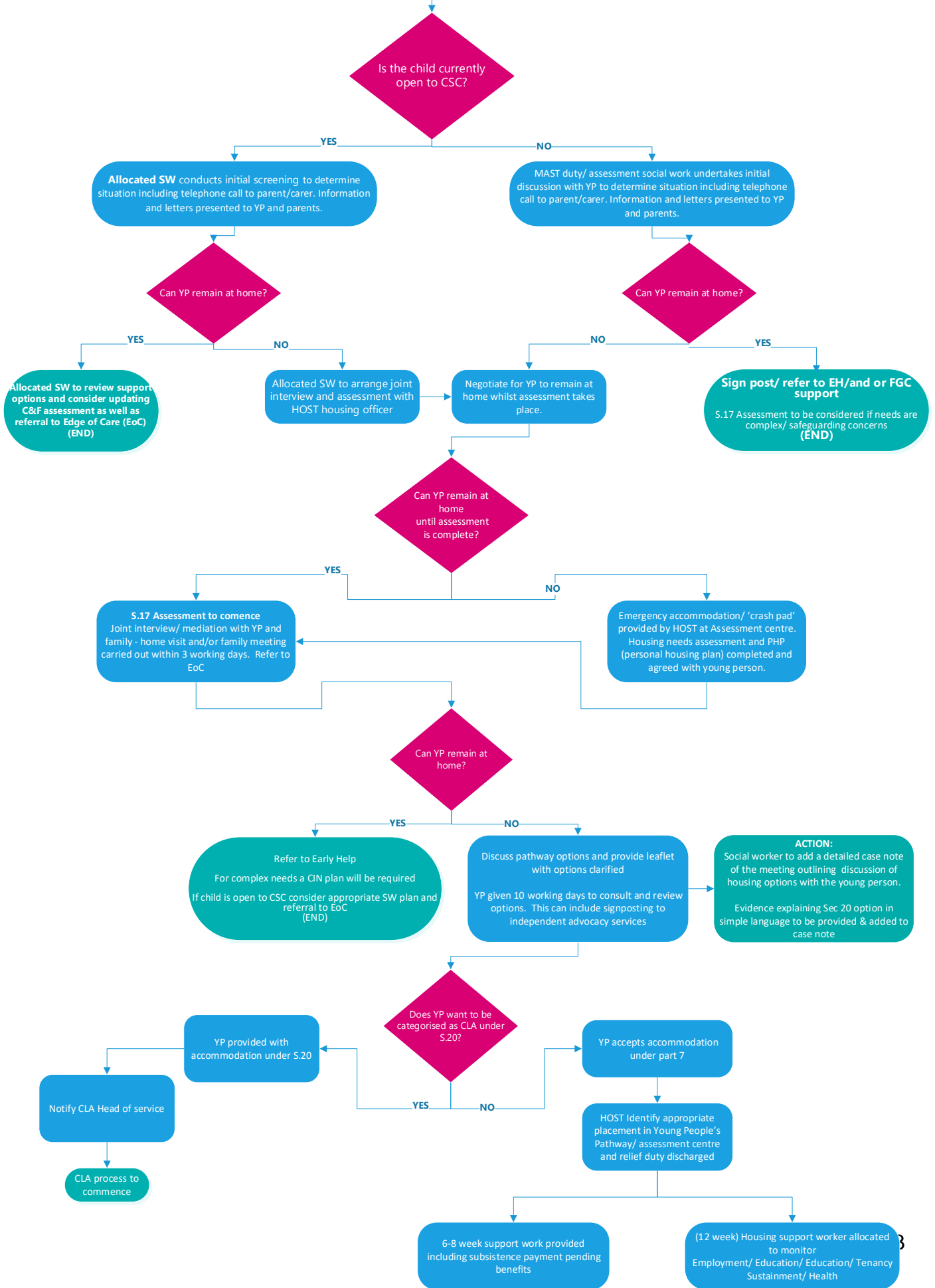
- 10.1 Individual partners engaged in the joint assessment and support of 16-17 homeless young people will continue to be responsible for their own line management and supervision of staff engaged in this work.
- 10.2 Recognising the importance of effective collaboration to ensure that the current and future housing needs of young people are met, the Housing and Children Social Care Young Person Supported Housing Group will meet on a quarterly basis. The group will monitor, review and to ensure service are responsive to the changing support needs of young people.

11. Resolution of disputes/escalation:

- 11.1 The aim of this protocol is to encourage decisions to be taken jointly and to ensure that the needs of young people are addressed by the most appropriate agency within the framework of legislation and good practice. In the event that professionals and agencies disagree with any decisions taken by another agency, this should be raised at first instance with the HOST Caseworker and the Social worker. The officers should aim to resolve the dispute at the initial stage to find a resolution.
- 11.2 If a resolution cannot be achieved at the initial stage, then matters should be escalated to the staff members line manager.

Appendix 1: Pathway flow chart:

Young person (16-17) presents as homeless



ADVICE FOR 16- & 17-YEAR OLDS WHO ARE AT RISK OF BEING HOMELESS

Are you 16/17 years old
and have nowhere to
stay?



It's normal to feel scared or confused if you don't have a place to stay or have to leave home suddenly. Don't worry!

We will help you understand the options available to you and support you.

Here to help...

If you don't have a safe place to stay, you're staying on a friend's sofa or feeling scared at home, it's really important to tell someone you trust about it as soon as you can.

If you already have someone helping you, like a Social Worker or an Early Help Worker, you should talk to them right away. But if you don't have anyone helping you, it's okay! You can contact Tower Hamlets **Multi-Agency Support Team (MAST)** at mast@towerhamlets.gov.uk.

Tower Hamlets MAST is a special team that helps young people who might not have a home. They are located at **Tower Hamlets Town Hall, 160 Whitechapel Road, London E1 1BJ.**

An adult you know, and trust can ask for help for you by making a referral to MAST, or you can make the referral yourself.

If you're homeless and don't have anywhere safe to stay, a social worker will see you on the same day to figure out how we can help you.

What happens next?

A social worker will talk to you and your parents, carers, or guardians to understand what's happening.

This is because your parents or guardians are in charge of taking care of you until you're 18 years old. The social worker will ask you questions about why you don't have anywhere to stay and if it's safe for you to go back home. If it's not safe, and you don't have anywhere else to go, the social worker will find a safe place for you to stay right away.

The social worker will also ask if you can do things like cook, take care of yourself, and manage your money. They want to make sure you'll be okay on your own.

While we're figuring things out, the council will make sure you have a safe place to stay. It might be somewhere to stay for a little while, or you might stay with a family member if possible.

Possible outcomes after you have been assessed.

1. We may decide with you that you can return home to your family.
2. As part of this process, your Social Worker may undertake mediation work between you and your family to ensure your safe return home. It may be agreed you should go and stay with relatives or other responsible adults in your life.
3. We may decide that you need to be provided with accommodation by Children's Services and be looked after by the local authority and have an allocated social worker.
4. If you don't think you need to be looked after you may be able to apply to the council's housing department for accommodation. The social worker will need to agree you are mature enough to make this decision. You will be supported under a Child in Need Plan if you decide you want accommodation through the council's housing department and have an allocated social worker.

If you are considered homeless and decide or are assessed as needing to be in care

- We will carry on working with you/your family to support a return home and may get other services involved to help with this. In the meantime, you will be provided with accommodation and support.
- The type of accommodation and support you will be offered will depend on your needs. Your wishes and feelings will be taken into account in deciding what accommodation is best for you. For example, it may be foster care, a residential home, a placement in a family or someone else's home or a supported living hostel.
- This accommodation will be provided up to your 18th birthday. If you stay in care, you will have a care plan and a pathway plan that sets out what help you may need to achieve your longer term plans to go to college or university, into an apprenticeship or work. You will have regular visits from a social worker.
- You will receive weekly financial support from Children's Services. You will receive support for matters such as money, budgeting, education, accessing health services and learning to live independently in the community.

- Your case will be reviewed by an Independent Reviewing Officer. The Independent Reviewing Officer will check that the council is looking after you and listening to what you have to say.
- Your right to support as a Care Leaver will depend on how long you are in care. As a care leaver, you may be entitled to receive support from the Local Authority beyond the age of 18. You will be provided with support to plan you move into adult life.

If you are considered homeless and decline to be accommodated as a child in care

If you decline to be accommodated as a Child in Care you will be accommodated by the Housing Department under Part VII of the Housing Act 1996. What this means....

- Working alongside your social worker, the Housing Department will try to prevent your homelessness.
- If Housing determine that you are homeless, eligible for assistance, have a priority need and are satisfied you did not become homeless intentionally they will have a duty to ensure that you are provided with suitable accommodation.
- Housing will work with you to assess and identify your support and accommodation needs and develop a personalised housing plan which you are required to engage with to ensure you are provided the right support to manage your tenancy.
- Housing will provide you with accommodation that meets your needs and prevents you from being homeless. This may be temporary accommodation initially until supported accommodation becomes available.
- You will be allocated a support worker who will support you in your claims for benefits and help you settle and support you in temporary accommodation until you are settled in supported accommodation.
- Supported housing means that accommodation is provided alongside key work support, to help you live as independently as possible in the community.
- You will have a support worker who will help you with money, budgeting, education, training, employment, accessing health services and learning to live independently in the community.
- You will sign a tenancy agreement with your landlord and you will be responsible for paying your own rent and living costs. This is likely to mean you

If you need more help understanding your options:

<p>Coram Voice (Advocacy Service for Tower Hamlets Looked After Children and Care Leavers) Freephone: 'Always Heard' Helpline Service 0808 800 5792 Email help@coramvoice.org.uk Website: www.coramvoice.org.uk</p>	<p>Shelter 0808 800 4444 (UK) www.shelter.org.uk</p>
<p>CAB www.citizensadvice.org.uk</p>	<p>Just for Kids Law 020 3174 2279 www.justforkidslaw.org</p>
<p>New Horizon Youth Centre <u>Get help - New Horizon Youth Centre</u> www.nhyouthcentre.org.uk</p>	<p>Runaway Helpline www.runawayhelpline.org.uk This is a national, 24-hour free helpline for anyone aged 17 or under who has run away or been forced to leave home.</p>

Please sign below to show that you understand the information and what we have spoken about:

Name-----

Date-----

Appendix 3: Letter to parent/ carer



TOWER HAMLETS

Children's Services

Telephone: 020 7364 5006

Email: XXXX@towerhamlets.gov.uk

Web: www.towerhamlets.gov.uk

Date: XXXX

Dear (*name of parent/carer*)

Homelessness case - (*name of young person*)

Your child has approached Tower Hamlets Council stating that you will not allow *him/her* to return home and that they are therefore homeless.

In all cases where a young person approaches the Council seeking accommodation, the Council has a duty to first consider whether the young person is in need and legitimately homeless or threatened with homelessness. The Multi Agency Support Team (MAST) is responsible for making this decision. As part of this process a social worker and housing officer will need to carry out a visit to your family home and hold a joint meeting between you and your child.

As your child is under 18 years of age, you still have legal parental responsibility for them. Because of this, if you do not allow your child to return home, Tower Hamlets Children's Social Care will be required to undertake a full assessment of their needs and of your family situation, which you will be asked to be involved in. This assessment could result in them being looked after by the Council, and Children's Social Care being involved with your family on an on-going basis.

If the assessment concludes that your child is in need of accommodation / housing, you will be asked to give your child a reasonable period of notice to leave your home. Please note that even if your child is provided with accommodation, we will still continue to try and work with you to successfully return *him/her* to your home. Being provided with accommodation by the Council does not mean that your child will be eligible for a Council property in the future.

The council can provide you with necessary support to help you keep your child at home, including mediation between you and your child. We will work with you and your child to try and resolve any problems which may have led to your decision to ask them to leave your home or to them deciding that they want to leave home. If you agree that your child can remain at home, you can also be provided with on-going support to help ensure that that your child does not become homeless in the future.

Childrens services will be contacting you in the next few days to arrange a meeting with you. If you would like to speak to someone beforehand, please call (*insert phone number*).

Yours sincerely

(*Staff name*)

(*Staff title*)

Appendix 4: Agreement to accommodate at home for parent/carer



Children's Services

Telephone: 020 7364 5006

Email: XXXX@towerhamlets.gov.uk

Web: www.towerhamlets.gov.uk

Date: XXXX

Dear (name of parent/carer)

Homelessness case - (name of young person)

Your son/daughter (delete as appropriate) has approached Tower Hamlets Council stating that you will not allow him/her to return home and is therefore homeless.

The assessment team is in the process of assessing whether your child is legitimately homeless and should be provided with accommodation/sourcing appropriate accommodation for your child (delete as appropriate).

As your child is under 18 years of age, you still have legal parental responsibility for them. On this basis, the council is asking you to continue to accommodate your child until the assessment is complete and/or alternative accommodation is found.

During this period, the Assessment team along with the Edge of Care team will continue to work with you to help you to keep your child at home and prevent them from becoming homeless.

If you need to contact the Assessment Team during this period, please call (insert phone number).

Yours sincerely (Staff

name) (Staff title)

To be completed by the parent/carer:

I agree to allow my child to remain at home until the Council have completed an assessment / found them suitable alternative accommodation.

Name: _____

Signature: _____

Date: _____