**Joint Homeless Assessment for Children aged 16 and 17**

**Operating Guidance**

The Joint Homelessness Assessment must be completed on all young people who present as Homeless. The young person may present at a variety of locations for example; at School/College, Housing, One Stop Shops or Callister Building (previously Response).

In all circumstances a referral must be made to the **Integrated Front Door** using the MARF (Multi Agency Referral Form) which can be found on the Intranet and the WSCB website. <https://wirral-self.achieveservice.com/service/Children_and_families_request_for_support_form>

Following receipt of the MARF the IFD will undertake initial checks and screening to determine homelessness. Where a return home cannot be facilitated then a referral will be sent to the relevant duty team who will liaise with Housing Options Services to arrange a joint assessment. At this point, the receiving duty team **MUST** inform the Adolescent Edge of Care Team to activate their engagement in supporting the young person to return home or assist with a plan of rehabilitation.

The joint assessment **MUST** be completed within 24 hours. However, should emergency accommodation be required pending a joint assessment then the Housing Options Service will arrange temporary accommodation under S188 Housing Act.

Should the outcome of the joint assessment determine that the young person is in need by virtue of being homeless then accommodation will be offered by Children’s Social Care or the housing department. The provision of the accommodation will usually be under S20 of Children Act 1989 unless the outcome of the assessment is that the young person has sufficient understanding, knowledge and skills to live more independently and is explicit in their views and request accommodation support under S17 Children Act 1989.

Young people should be given information about the full implications of both these options.

Completion of this initial joint assessment does not preclude the need to then complete a Single Assessment once the initial issue of legal status has been determined.

The rationale for the provision of accommodation under S20 or S17 should be clearly evidenced on the young person’s case file.

Any additional needs alongside accommodation that has been identified in the Joint Assessment and subsequent Single Assessment should be clearly outlined in the young person’s plan.

Following placement of the young person in accommodation the case must be presented to the newly established S20 Panel at the earliest opportunity.

Should the young person refuse accommodation under S20 or S17 then advice and support must still be offered to the young person. The advice and support provided by Housing Options Service and Children’s Services will ensure the young person has necessary information that informs them of access to support and services in the future should this be required.

**Please ensure that all completed joint assessments are scanned onto the young persons case records.**

**Relevant Contact details**

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| **NAME** | **DEPARTMENT** | **TELEPHONE NUMBER** | **EMAIL** |
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