**GUIDANCE NOTE**

**LOCAL AUTHORITY ACCOMMODATION OPTIONS FOR CHILDREN IN CARE LIVING WITH A CONNECTED/KINSHIP CARER, OR CHILDREN WHO WERE PREVIOUSLY IN CARE WHO ARE NOW SUBJECT OF A SPECIAL GUARDIANSHIP ORDER.**

**Purpose**

This guidance is written for practitioners who work with Children in Care, and Children who were formerly in care and are living with Connected/Kinship Carers. It is intended to ensure practitioners are fully informed regarding Local Authority housing pathways for Connected/Kinship Carers.

**Connected/Kinship Carers who require a larger Local Authority home**

Overcrowding

A practitioner needs to understand what is accepted as overcrowding when discussing Local Authority properties with Connected/Kinship Carers. Overcrowding will be assessed based upon the number of people within the household and according to best use of the bedrooms to reflect the criteria set out by the Department of Work and Pensions.

One bedroom will be considered suitable for:

* An Adult /Adult Couple
* Two children of the same gender under the age of 16
* Two children under the age of 10 regardless of their gender
* Any other person aged 16 or over
* Any other child that cannot be matched with the above

Please note: This assessment does not include living room space unless there is a second living room which can be used as a bedroom and it does not breach health and safety standards. Where a bedroom is being used for another purpose e.g. study or toy room, its original function as a bedroom will be used in assessing the level of overcrowding. A room of around a minimum size 9.5m2 is suitable as a double bedroom for two persons and a bedroom of 6.5m2 or above is suitable as a single bedroom for 1 person.

The main householder/s will be expected to share a bedroom with a child under the age of 12 months.

Signposting

A Connected/Kinship Carer can apply for Council properties via the hyperlink below:

[Darlington Borough Council - Applying for a council home](https://www.darlington.gov.uk/housing/finding-a-home/applying-for-a-council-home/)

A practitioner can support an individual to make a referral to Housing Options if they are at risk of homelessness, along with a duty to refer form via the hyperlinks below:

[Darlington Borough Council - Duty to refer](https://www.darlington.gov.uk/housing/finding-a-home/homelessness/duty-to-refer/)

[new-ne-duty-to-refer-form-final.pdf (darlington.gov.uk)](https://www.darlington.gov.uk/media/7660/new-ne-duty-to-refer-form-final.pdf)

**Connected/Kinship Carers who require a modification to their existing Local Authority home in order to increase the space or number of bedrooms in the home.**

Named Housing Officer

All Local Authority tenants will have a named Housing Officer who they should approach in the first instance in relation to any housing need.

If a Connected/Kinship Carer wishes to adapt their Local Authority home, for example, to create a loft conversion, or to separate one bedroom into two bedrooms, they will need to speak with their named Housing Officer.

**Connected/Kinship Carers living in privately rented accommodation**

If there are any issues in relation to a Connected/Kinship Carer/s privately rented accommodation regarding health and safety issues that require escalation, the practitioner should raise this matter to Children’s Services senior management. The relevant manager will highlight this issue with Christine Booth, Private Sector Housing Manager based in Community Services, to determine if any advice or signposting can be offered to support in resolving the issue highlighted.

Alternatively, and only in cases of emergency (such as loss of power, water, drainage or water leak) for privately rented accommodation, the practitioner can contact the team directly as follows: Housingrenewal@darlington.gov.uk or call 01325 406439.

For other queries please refer to the following for details: [Complaint or enquiry about private sector housing conditions](https://eur03.safelinks.protection.outlook.com/?url=https%3A%2F%2Fselfserve.darlington.gov.uk%2Fform%2Fauto%2Fpsh_conditions&data=04%7C01%7CJoanne.Stoddart%40darlington.gov.uk%7Ca8930e79fda54d76d88a08d973bff96c%7Cc947251d81c44c9b995df3d3b7a048c7%7C0%7C0%7C637668090895124824%7CUnknown%7CTWFpbGZsb3d8eyJWIjoiMC4wLjAwMDAiLCJQIjoiV2luMzIiLCJBTiI6Ik1haWwiLCJXVCI6Mn0%3D%7C1000&sdata=kFcHBeNWG9%2B0R6woB7jejq%2F7oj7xrkxjxDmg%2F%2BpOZ%2BY%3D&reserved=0)

For further details please refer to:

[LACORs-Guidance---Crowding-and-Space.pdf (newark-sherwooddc.gov.uk)](https://eur03.safelinks.protection.outlook.com/?url=https%3A%2F%2Fwww.newark-sherwooddc.gov.uk%2Fmedia%2Fnewark-and-sherwood%2Fimages-and-files%2Fhousing%2Fprivate-housing%2FLACORs-Guidance---Crowding-and-Space.pdf&data=04%7C01%7CJoanne.Stoddart%40darlington.gov.uk%7Cc24d16cccb62466c830908d9842f7e2c%7Cc947251d81c44c9b995df3d3b7a048c7%7C0%7C0%7C637686161795102932%7CUnknown%7CTWFpbGZsb3d8eyJWIjoiMC4wLjAwMDAiLCJQIjoiV2luMzIiLCJBTiI6Ik1haWwiLCJXVCI6Mn0%3D%7C1000&sdata=zmnf%2BqjOeBjEo8K4AuSp5hnug%2Fa9xTC5zVzh6bGPpiM%3D&reserved=0)

[Microsoft Word - Ideal Booklet final version A5.doc (derby.gov.uk)](https://eur03.safelinks.protection.outlook.com/?url=https%3A%2F%2Fwww.derby.gov.uk%2Fmedia%2Fderbycitycouncil%2Fcontentassets%2Fdocuments%2Fhousing%2FThe_Ideal_Property_HHSRS.pdf&data=04%7C01%7CJoanne.Stoddart%40darlington.gov.uk%7Cc24d16cccb62466c830908d9842f7e2c%7Cc947251d81c44c9b995df3d3b7a048c7%7C0%7C0%7C637686161795112889%7CUnknown%7CTWFpbGZsb3d8eyJWIjoiMC4wLjAwMDAiLCJQIjoiV2luMzIiLCJBTiI6Ik1haWwiLCJXVCI6Mn0%3D%7C1000&sdata=FnOJm8y6ta55h0ld2JKkvGdlkGbXNJWl7ZULMcoo9RU%3D&reserved=0)

**Quarterly Liaison Meeting between Children and Housing Services**

If there are any issues in relation to housing that cannot be resolved with the named Housing Officer, the practitioner should escalate this matter to Children’s Services

senior management who will present this at the quarterly liaison meeting for discussion and consideration.

The members of the liaison meeting are:

* Bronwen Smith – Head of Service - Children Services
* Joanne Stoddart – Head of Service – Children Services
* Lynne Westgarth – Service Manager – Children Services
* Kevin Richards - Service Manager – Children Services
* Janette McMain – Housing Manager – Housing Options and Lifeline Services
* Sarah Williams – Housing Team Leader – Housing Options and Lifeline Services
* Christine Booth – Private Sector Housing Manager