



# Youth Housing in Bristol

## A guide for young people who are aged 16/17

This leaflet is a guide to help you to understand the youth supported housing offer in Bristol. There are two routes to accessing youth housing when you are aged 16 / 17 – either you are a Child in Care (looked after), or you have had an assessment with a social worker and a housing worker and have been found to be homeless.

### Referrals to Youth Accommodation

Bristol City Council manages referrals for all of our Youth Supported Accommodation. To be referred to a waiting list, your Housing Advisor or Social Worker must complete and submit a “trusted assessment”. Your place on the list depends on your priority and how long you have been on the list for. When you reach the top of the list, you will be invited into the accommodation for a matching interview when a room becomes available.

### What accommodation is available to me?

Our accommodation is grouped into high, medium and low support.

**High Support:** This accommodation is often staffed 24 hours a day with a managed front door. It is usually in a hostel with lots of young people living together in the accommodation.

**Medium Support:** This is mostly small, shared houses with limited staff onsite and mainly visiting support. You could also live in a hostel if you need a medium level of support.

**Low support:** This is mostly small, shared houses with 1-2 hours of support offered per week from visiting staff.

**Accommodation for children in care (aged 16/17) must be Ofsted registered. This means that if you are looked after, not all our supported housing options will be available to you until you are 18. The options that looked after children can access are indicated by an \* sign on the next page.**

### What information is needed on to apply for youth housing?

A “trusted assessment” will be completed by your social worker or your housing advisor – whoever knows you best.

If you have recently had a joint assessment, the questions that the social worker and housing advisor asked are designed to help them to understand what accommodation might meet your needs.

The aim of the trusted assessment is to understand your needs and therefore to match you with accommodation that will give you the right level of support to progress towards a stable tenancy of your own.

The trusted assessment will cover things like how confident you are in independence skills, whether there are any risks posed to you in the community, and what sorts of things you might need support with.

This will make sure that you are matched with the correct accommodation. Your trusted assessment can be updated as you learn new skills, or your circumstances change.



## Emergency Accommodation

We know that sometimes young people need accommodation at very short notice, occasionally on the same day. When this happens, we usually offer emergency or short-term accommodation that you can stay in until you can be matched with a longer-term option.

Our main emergency accommodation offer for young people is our Short Stay Rooms in our Hostels for young people\*. Sometimes these are full and you may be offered alternate accommodation such as a room in a shared house, an "ESA" \* (externally supported accommodation – this may be shared or single occupancy but will be matched to your needs), or in some situations we may ask a foster carer\* to look after you whilst you wait for accommodation in the supported pathway. We try our best to keep you in Bristol, but sometimes in an emergency it may be necessary to find accommodation for you that is outside of Bristol, whilst we wait for suitable accommodation within the city.

## High Support Accommodation

**St George's House** has 22 rooms in cluster flats. The service offers 24 hours staffing where you can access ad hoc support and you will be allocated a named key worker who will offer regular 1:1 support sessions.

**Bristol Foyer \*** has 32 rooms in cluster flats. The service offers 24/7 access to support and security. You will be assigned a key worker and to live at the foyer you will be required to engage in weekly support and meaningful activity such college or workshops run at the foyer.

**High support flats:** There are two high support flats that enable young people to live independently with up to 10 hours visiting support weekly. These flats can only be accessed via a panel decision and are for 18+.

## Medium Support Accommodation

**The Projects** offer accommodation for 18–21-year-olds for up to 18 months to prepare for independent living. You will be offered 1.5 hours individual support a week, on call support during daytime and nighttime hours and regular welfare checks.

**Branch Out\*** (supported lodgings). This is for young people who are aged 16-21 who would like to live independently in a family home setting with at least one appropriately trained adult. To live with a Branch out host you must be in education or employment. The support is largely 1:1 flexible and would depend on your needs. You can stay with your branch out host for up to 2 years and will be supported to develop independence skills to be ready for your own tenancy.

## Low Support Accommodation

Our low support accommodation is in dispersed housing (houses spread around Bristol). These are usually shared with a small number of other young people who are also housed by the local authority, although there are some self-contained flats. There are 174 rooms in dispersed housing and support of 1-2 hours per week is offered to help you to access benefits, manage your finances, provide safety advice and help you to work towards your own tenancy and independence. You can stay in this accommodation for up to 2 years and the next step from this accommodation would usually be your own tenancy.

\* a small number of rooms in our dispersed houses are Ofsted registered and available to 16-17 year old children in care. \* a small number of rooms in our dispersed houses are Ofsted registered and available to 16–17-year-old children in care.



### **What happens next?**

Most young people stay in supported accommodation for around 2 years. You will be supported to prepare to have your own tenancy during this time – learning independent living skills - things like how to pay bills, arrange repairs, budget, shop, cook and clean. Be able to arrange appointments and travel to them independently. You will also be supported to achieve your work, education and training related goals. The more skills that you learn before you move into independent living, the more choice you will have about your housing options.

Some young people will only live in one of our supported accommodation options before moving on to independence. Some young people will transition from a higher support setting to a lower support setting before they move on.

### **What are my options when I am ready to move out of supported housing?**

It is important that you use your time in supported accommodation to practice the skills that you will need to live independently, and to build networks of support from friends, family and community because it can be lonely to live independently.

When your support worker and housing advisor or social worker agree that you have a need, you will be supported to find somewhere either in social housing or private rental. Which option is best for you will depend on your circumstances. It can take many years to access a social housing tenancy (via a website system called Home Choice) and for this reason, private rental tenancies are often the best option.

### **How long will I have to wait for housing?**

There is a long waiting list for all of our supported accommodation and this means that you may have to wait in emergency or temporary accommodation until you are at the top of the list.

Most of our accommodation is shared and this is usually what you will be offered when you are 16 or 17. We think that this is good because young people tell us that it can be lonely living on their own.

If you are in care or 16/17 and homeless you will have automatic "Priority 1" to access youth accommodation. But even though you will have priority status for housing, there can still be a long wait because the other children in care and homeless young people (and our care leavers) will have this priority too. So, it is important to work with the support that you are offered to develop your independence skills as this will give you the widest range of accommodation options.

### **What happens if I am refused youth housing?**

Occasionally young people are refused accommodation. This may be because you have been asked to leave previous accommodation or because sometimes it can be difficult to match a young person's needs with the accommodation available. If this happens, your social worker and / or housing advisor will think about other safe options for you and will make sure that you are provided with accommodation that meets your needs.

### **What if I don't agree with the plans or want to talk to someone independent?**

You have a right to be involved in all decisions that affect you and we encourage you to talk to your social worker or housing advisor if you are not happy about the plans being made. If you need additional support to challenge decisions that affect you, you can contact an independent advocate at: [info.reconstruct.co.uk/bristolportal](mailto:info.reconstruct.co.uk/bristolportal) (for children in care and care leavers) and at: [www.pohwer.net](http://www.pohwer.net) / 03000031162 for all other young people.