Surrey Joint Housing Protocol for Care Leavers

**Version v17**

**Approved by PLT**

**Date: 13.11.23 Local PLT and 27.11.23 PLT**

# About this document

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Intended Audience

This document has been issued to the following people for Review (R) Information (I) and Review and Sign off (S).

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# INTRODUCTION AND OVERVIEW

1.1 This Protocol is agreed between the 11 District and Borough Councils in Surrey, and Surrey County Council’s Children, Families and Lifelong Learning Directorate. It outlines the statutory duties and agreed responsibilities of all partner agencies.

1.2 Leaving care, like leaving home, is a critical transition for young people and supporting them through this transition into adulthood is a major responsibility for us as corporate parents. We recognise that young people mature at different stages and therefore will need varying levels of support when considering accommodation options.

1.3 This Protocol outlines the service offered to Care Leavers to support them in achieving safe and suitable accommodation with the aspiration to create stability and continuity for each young person as part of their journey to independence. The document should be considered alongside Surrey’s Local Offer to Care Leavers. Accommodation needs of care leavers are outlined and reviewed in Surrey’s Sufficiency Strategy.

1.4 The protocol contains a list of key contacts responsible at [Appendix A](#appa) which will be reviewed annually and updated in line with staffing changes.

1.5 For the purposes of this Protocol, the term Care Leaver refers to the definition provided in The Children (Leaving Care) Act 2000, please see section 4 for more detail.

1.6 Agencies will strive to jointly commission services and share resources so that the interests of the young person are paramount and develop a strategy, in partnership, to provide a range of accommodation to meet the needs of Care Leavers.

1.7 All colleagues supporting Care Leavers have a responsibility to familiarise themselves with this Protocol to ensure that they are aware of the housing needs of young people leaving care and the obligations of each agency to address these needs. Professionals supporting Care Leavers should also be familiar with the [Corporate Parenting Principles](https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/applying-corporate-parenting-principles-to-looked-after-children-and-care-leavers) established in the Children and Social Work Act 2017. A programme of training will be delivered to practitioners across social care and housing to understand the application of the protocol in practice.

1.8 The separate joint protocol for 16 and 17 year olds who are homeless or at risk of homelessness should be read in conjunction with this protocol (Please click [here](https://proceduresonline.com/trixcms2/surreycs/doc-library/#collapse3_4) for the Protocol)

1.9 The protocol will be implemented in November 2023 and will be reviewed initially 6 months after in May 2024 and then annually.

2 Surrey’s Care Leaver’s service comprises of six teams, two asylum Care Leaver teams working across the county based in Reigate and Walton and four Care Leaver Teams located in Guildford, Woking, Walton and Reigate. The teams work with 11 District and Borough Housing Authorities located across Surrey and with Local Housing Authorities where Care Leavers are placed outside of Surrey.

# LEGISLATION, STATUTORY GUIDANCE AND FRAMEWORK

2.1 The following legislation and statutory guidance emphasises the need for joint working between Surrey County Council’s Care Leavers Service, Housing Authorities from the 11 Districts and Boroughs, and other statutory, voluntary and private sector partners in tackling homelessness, housing and support needs more effectively:

Legislation:

* Children Act 1989 (CA89)
* Children (Leaving Care) Act 2000 (CLCA)
* Housing Act 1996 – Part 6 and Part 7 as amended by the Homelessness Reduction Act 2017
* The Homelessness (Priority Need for Accommodation) (England) Order 2002
* The Children and Social Work Act 2017 – sections 1,2 and 3

Statutory guidance:

* Homeless Code of Guidance
* Applying corporate parenting principles to Looked After Children and Care Leavers
* Children Act 1989: care planning, placement and case review.
* Children Act 1989: transition to Adulthood for Care Leavers
* Extending Personal Adviser Support to all Care Leavers to age 25
* Local offer guidance (Please refer to [here](https://www.surreycc.gov.uk/children/support-and-advice/youth-voice/care-leavers))

# AIMS AND OBJECTIVES

3.1 The joint Protocol applies to young people eligible for support from the Surrey Care Leaver’s service. It covers the support available to Care Leavers to identify suitable, safe and sustainable accommodation options that respond to varying need. In addition, the Protocol considers joint working responses between the Local Housing Authorities and the Care Leaver’s Service to prevent and/or relieve homelessness for this vulnerable group.

3.2 The Protocol aims to support practitioners across the Care Leaver’s Service and Local Housing Authorities to identify the activities they need to undertake to support Care Leavers in securing suitable accommodation options and maintaining their tenancies.

3.3 Both the Care Leaver’s Service and the Local Housing Authorities have a responsibility towards the practical application of this Protocol within their relevant services. Both services will regularly review this Protocol, initially 6 months after implementation and then annually. This will be to identify what is working well, any gaps or challenges and any changes in legislation. Service leads within the Care Leaver’s Service and Local Housing Authorities have overall responsibility for its implementation via their teams and front-line workers.

# ELIGIBLITY

4.1 This Protocol outlines the process for meeting the accommodation needs of young people defined as Care Leavers by The Children (Leaving Care) Act 2000 including the following:

* Eligible young people aged 16 or 17 who are either subject to a Care Order or who are accommodated by the Local Authority for at least 13 weeks since their 14th birthday and on or after their 16th birthday.
* Relevant young people aged 16 or 17 who are no longer Looked After but for whom Children's Social Care are responsible for maintaining in suitable accommodation and providing financial support. These young people cannot, subject to some exceptions due to a disability or being a parent, claim welfare benefits under the age of 18.
* Former Relevant young people aged 18 to 25 who have previously been either eligible or relevant. These young people can access benefits but continue to receive Leaving Care support services.
* Qualifying children under 21 who stopped being Looked After, after the age of 16 and are in full time higher or further education. This also includes young people who are subject to a special guardianship order.
* Unaccompanied Asylum Seekers who are eligible for a Leaving Care service and have been granted refugee status. Also, those who qualify and given leave to remain up to the age of 20 or an extension beyond the age of 18 for a minimum of one year.
* Care Leavers in custody.
* Care Leavers from Surrey but residing outside of the Surrey area.
* Care Leavers where another Council is the corporate parent, but they have been living in Surrey for 2 years, providing some of this time was prior to their 16th birthday.

More information can be found in the [Leaving Care and Transition Policy](https://www.proceduresonline.com/surrey/cs/p_leaving_care.html)

# IMPLEMENTATION & DEVELOPMENT

5.1 The Protocol will be embedded via information sharing sessions across all services working with Care Leavers. This will include:

* Information sessions outlining the key aspects and statutory duties of relevant services. It will be the joint responsibility of the Care Leaver’s Service and the Local Housing Authorities to arrange these sessions. One of the sessions will be recorded so that all staff have access to this information.
* Inclusion in induction training and information packs for new members of staff working with Care Leavers or within Local Housing Authorities.
* Team meetings.
* A link to this Protocol will be included in the Care Leavers local offer.

# TRANSITIONS PLANNING FOR CARE LEAVERS BEFORE THEY LEAVE CARE

6.1 Surrey County Council and its Districts and Boroughs are committed to ensuring that Care Leavers are supported to access suitable accommodation. To achieve this, it is important that planning starts as early as possible and that the Care Leaver is fully involved as well as carers and others with responsibility for providing services and support. We recognise that care leavers will have varying needs and levels of maturity and will not all be ready to manage alone at a certain age. Planned moves into independence will take account of individual needs and any support available. We are committed to offering a range of accommodation options that can provide appropriate support and accommodation to meet varying needs. These options are outlined in section 7 below.

6.2 Each young person’s personal advisor will be responsible for completing an independence checklist as part of the pathway planning process which will outline the areas of focus in their preparation for independence. Based on the areas identified in this checklist, young people will be provided with the relevant sections of the Care Leaver’s Service ‘independent living skills’ pack for completion. Evidence that the young person has engaged with the information in this pack is used as one of the indicators of their readiness for independence together with their Pathway Plan. The personal advisor will also attend the last two Looked After Child review meetings immediately prior to the young person’s 18th birthday.

6.3 Within Looked After Review meetings, Independent Reviewing Officers will ensure young people are aware of their housing options, that they are fully registered with housing authorities, and they have a realistic understanding of the options available to them for accommodation arrangements post 18.

6.4 Alongside listening to the wishes and feelings of the Care Leaver, Surrey County Council will ensure:

* All young people eligible for the Care Leaver’s Service are allocated a personal advisor (PA) on or around their 16th birthday.
* All Care leavers are assisted with applying for the housing register at their chosen local authority as close to their 16th birthday as feasible.
* All Care Leavers will have a ‘Pathway Plan’ in place within 3 months of their 16th birthday. Part of this plan will detail accommodation needs and the housing related support that the young person may require.
* That based on the individual needs of each Care Leaver, all relevant and appropriate partner agencies are involved in transition discussions.

6.5 Surrey County Council and the Local Housing Authorities will also work together to ensure:

* All Pathway Plans include a contingency plan in case the proposed plan breaks down.
* All Looked After Children and Care Leavers will be offered a housing options meeting as part of their pathway planning process. This will generally be 12 months before their 18th birthday, or earlier where this is possible. The meeting will be requested by the personal advisor through the relevant Local Authority Housing options email (as shown in [Appendix A](#appa)). To ensure that this reaches the appropriate team the subject of the email should state ‘**Housing Options/Pathway Plan joint meeting request’.** The meeting will be to advise on housing options available post 18 from both Children’s Services and the Local Housing Authority, including staying put arrangements; supported housing; private rented housing; social housing. It is important that young people understand that the availability of housing is limited and changeable and therefore need to think carefully about their options moving forward. Any measures outlined in the District or Borough’s allocations policy regarding the refusal of accommodation offered should be discussed to ensure that this is understood.
* That there is a shared understanding between the Care Leavers Service and District and Borough housing teams about the individual needs of Care Leavers and how those needs can be best met through housing, taking appropriate action to deliver and support with this.
* When care leavers experience difficulties in managing their tenancies, a Managing Accommodation Plan meeting will be convened quickly to review what support is needed to maintain the tenancy. The meeting will involve the care leaver, the accommodation provider, Surrey’s Homelessness Prevention Officers, the personal advisor and any other multi agency professionals working with the care leaver as agreed who may be able to provide additional support.
* That the role of Surrey Adults Matters in providing suitable accommodation options available in an emergency is understood, including how care leavers will be provided with appropriate support to sustain any new accommodation arrangements arising.

6.6 Young people aged 16 and above and in the care of Surrey County Council will be assisted by their social worker to apply for the housing register with their chosen district and borough as soon as possible from their 16th birthday. Young people can also choose to sign a consent form allowing their social worker or personal advisor to complete this application on their behalf. The Pathway Plan should confirm the date that the young person applied to join the appropriate housing register and any further actions and dates in respect to renewing or updating the application. It is essential that social workers progress all aspects of the housing register application fully and in conjunction with the young person, liaising with housing colleagues to understand if aspects remain incomplete. This task should be completed as close as possible to 16 and for those who become looked after post 16, ahead of a young person transferring to the Care Leavers Service. The exception to this is likely to be young people seeking asylum who have not received a decision on their asylum status ahead of 18. Once the young person has been allocated a personal advisor, they should check to ensure this has happened, if it has not the social worker should conclude the housing registration process including supplying all required supporting documentation required by the Local Housing Authority to process the application.

6.7 All Care Leavers will be supported to access and understand Surrey’s Local Offer to ensure they know what support and services are available to them up to 25.

6.8 Young people who have or are likely to have ongoing social care needs beyond their 18th birthday, should be [referred to the Transition Team](https://orbispartnerships.sharepoint.com/sites/adult_social_care/SitePages/ASC-Transition-Team.aspx) by their social worker as soon as possible once they have turned 14 in line with the Care Act 2014. The young person must have an Education, Health and Care Plan (EHCP), and a diagnosed learning, physical or sensory disability and/or autism for the referral to be accepted. Once a personal advisor has been allocated, if appropriate, they should check if the young person is known to the Transition Team. If the young person does not have an EHCP and a diagnosed disability, but may need additional support, they should be referred to the District or Borough locality team for support.

6.9 The Transition Team will help to ensure Children’s and Adult’s services work together to achieve the best outcomes for the young person where this is appropriate. Once allocated, the young person’s personal advisor will work alongside the Transition Team to offer support.

# ACCOMMODATION OPTIONS

7.1 It is important that Care Leavers are supported to access accommodation that best meets their individual needs. Assessments of suitability should consider the young person’s wishes and feelings as well as their independent living skills while following guidance from Children Act 1989: [Care Planning Guidance – volume 2](https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/children-act-1989-care-planning-placement-and-case-review) (pages 74-80) and volume 3 (7.12-7.18) and [Homelessness code of guidance](https://www.gov.uk/guidance/homelessness-code-of-guidance-for-local-authorities) – chapter 17 and sections 22.24-22.29

7.2 The Care Leavers Service and Local Housing Authorities will put arrangements in place to check the suitability of accommodation, in line with the above, before a young person moves into a property.

* Surrey County Council are part of a regional framework for semi-independent accommodation and support, called the Commissioning Alliance. Subsequently, any contracted accommodation provider must secure accreditation and meet compliance and practice standards, helping to ensure appropriate accommodation suitability. Yearly quality assurance visits are also undertaken. Local Housing Authority representatives will be included in quarterly contract monitoring meetings to review the lived experience and outcomes for children and young people housed by the provider. The Local Housing Authorities will also be consulted when arrangements are recommissioned so that any concerns or comments can be shared.
* Surrey County Council will always use an accredited provider where this is possible, however there will be instances where a non-contracted provider will need to be used. Where this happens, the Gateway to Resources team complete a due diligence process to ensure the suitability of the accommodation for the young person and will also complete a quality assurance visit once the young person has moved in. Providers will also be expected to register with the Commissioning Alliance. For any unregistered placements, weekly quality assurance visits will happen initially, with these reducing in frequency as the young person becomes more settled and their needs are being appropriately met and supported.
* Local Housing Authorities have a statutory responsibility to undertake suitability assessments for all accommodation offered to young people and in instances where a young person is accessing private rented accommodation as part of a rent deposit support scheme.
* Where a young person known to the Surrey Care Leavers service is seeking private rented accommodation, but is not known to the Local Housing Authority, it is the responsibility of the personal advisor, as part of their due diligence, to contact the appropriate Local Housing Authority to ask for their input on the suitability of the accommodation. The personal advisor should do this via the Housing Options team for each District or Borough ([Appendix A](#appa)).
* Where private rented accommodation has been deemed suitable, the personal advisor should complete a tenancy checklist ([Appendix C](#appc)) with the young person before they move in.
* Surrey Care Leaver’s Service and the Local Housing Authorities reserve the right not to offer financial support for private rented accommodation if this has been deemed unsuitable through the channels outlined above.
* Surrey Care Leaver’s Service and the Local Housing Authorities should ensure that when a young person moves into private rented accommodation, they are made aware that they can request a [safe and well visit from the Surrey Fire & Rescue Service](https://www.surreycc.gov.uk/community/fire-and-rescue/community-safety/home-safety/preventing-fires-at-home/safe-and-well). Care leavers will be actively encouraged to engage with such visits.
* Care leavers residing in Spelthorne, Elmbridge and Runnymede with either a social housing or privately rented tenancy may be eligible for support in tenancy management from North Surrey Floating Support Service please see [Appendix H](#apph) for further details.
* Care leavers residing in Tandridge, Epsom and Ewell and Reigate and Banstead may be able to access Parashoot Housing Support please see [Appendix H](#apph) for further details.
* At the point of accepting a social housing tenancy, it is important that care leavers understand the level of support available to them. This may differ according to the District and Borough the care leaver is residing in. For example, Surrey Heath has a mandatory floating support offer for all care leavers accepting a social housing tenancy which will remain in place for the first 6 months of the tenancy. For specific details of who to contact in each District and Borough please see [Appendix H](#apph).
* All care leavers are asked to provide their landlord with details of their personal advisor so that in the event of any issues arising there is an early opportunity to provide support and resolve any potential issues which could place the care leaver’s tenancy at risk. This activity would be undertaken only after the landlord had gained consent from the care leaver to make contact with the personal advisor.
* Care leavers who have sourced their own private rented sector accommodation independent of the local authority may be able to secure rent deposits via the District and Borough they are living in. Details of schemes operating can be found on the websites of each District and Borough. This information will also be given at the young person’s housing options appointment.
* Local Housing Authorities can signpost care leavers to the support that is available to young people in buying their first property including Shared Ownership Schemes operating in the respective District and Borough.

7.3 Due to the individualised needs of each young person, Surrey County Council and the Local Housing Authorities understand the need to offer a range of accommodation and support options. Those available include – but are not limited to:

* Staying put arrangements (enabling care leavers to remain with their former foster carer when they leave care), available until the young person’s 21st birthday. If a young person is still completing an agreed programme of education when they turn 21 years old, the arrangement can be extended until this is completed. For details of the assessment process which determines suitability, the support and how the placements are continually reviewed post 18, please see [Surrey’s Staying Put policy](https://proceduresonline.com/trixcms2/surreycs/doc-library/#collapse4_8))
* Supported lodgings arrangements, available until the young person’s 21st birthday. If a young person is still completing an agreed programme of education when they turn 21 years old, the arrangement can be extended until this is completed (up until the age of 25)
* Specialist accommodation such as self-contained accommodation with personal assistance support (for young people, including care leavers, with particular support needs such as disabled young people, pregnant households or single parents) – referrals to this accommodation will be made through the Gateway to Resources Team at Surrey County Council or the relevant Local Housing Authority.
* Foyers and other supported housing/accommodation which combines accommodation with opportunities for education, training and employment – Surrey County Council commissions a range of supported accommodation, for looked after children and care leavers aged 16-21 (extending to 25 in exceptional circumstances), with the expectation that care leavers will be supported and enabled to move to their own tenancies at the earliest opportunity.

Accommodation types commissioned include:

* supported accommodation with 24-hour support;
* single-gender accommodation with 24-hour support;
* individual units with floating support;
* shared houses with floating support;
* and unplanned same day accommodation, including for unaccompanied asylum-seeking children.

For all provision types, except for unplanned same day accommodation, the expected length of stay is 0-2 years. For unplanned same day accommodation, the expected length of stay is 6-8 weeks.

* Self-contained accommodation with floating support
* Living with family, friends or relatives – the suitability of this will be assessed via the pathway planning process with the care leaver
* Private rented accommodation/tenancy as described in section [7.1](#sevenone)
* Social Housing via a housing register application
* Living away at University and needing vacation accommodation
* Sharing a house with other people
* Training/test flats (short term training flats for care leavers to gain a sense of responsibilities that come with independent living and also experience the reality of living alone)

7.4 Surrey County Council and the Districts and Boroughs acknowledge that shared Bed and Breakfast (B&B) accommodation (privately owned accommodation in which residents share cooking and sanitary facilities with other individuals or households) is not a suitable option for Care Leavers. All other options for accommodation must have been explored and exhausted before considering this. The Gateway to Resources team have supported accommodation options that can be accessed to try and prevent the use of B&Bs. However, if using B&B accommodation is unavoidable, it must only be used in exceptional circumstances as a last resort and as a short-term solution with careful planning in place to ensure the safety and welfare of the young person and with a clear move on plan compiled and agreed by the Personal Advisor and the Housing Officer within five working days. This is not applicable to self-contained nightly accommodation where there are individual sanitary and cooking facilities.

7.5 Where emergency B&B accommodation is used and the young person does not have access to their own sanitary and cooking facilities, it will be the responsibility of both the Personal Advisor and housing officer to maintain close contact with the young person. The Personal Advisor will contact a minimum of twice per week with the Housing Officer contacting weekly, to ensure a more sustainable alternative is found and ongoing support is being provided to the young person by the Care Leaver’s Service. These arrangements will also be reviewed fortnightly at the children’s services area resource panel, until the young person has moved out of B&B accommodation.

7.6 It is the combined responsibility of the young person, their social worker, personal advisor, housing officer and any other relevant agencies involved to ensure that the right accommodation option is identified for the young person prior to their 18th birthday.

# ADDITIONAL SUPPORT TO CARE LEAVERS

8.1 Tenancy/Licence Guarantees

8.1.1 Surrey County Council Children’s Services can act as a guarantor for Care Leavers who meet the criteria established in the rent guarantor scheme. The rent guarantor scheme can be found in the [Surrey Children’s Service Procedures Manual](https://proceduresonline.com/trixcms2/surreycs/doc-library/#collapse4_8) by searching ‘rent guarantor’ in the document library.

8.2 Housing register applications

8.2.1 Where Local Housing Authorities hold housing registers and have renewal arrangements for housing applicants, no housing application will be cancelled where the Care Leaver does not renew their application. Where a young person does not renew or update their application as required, the Local Housing Authority will inform the young person’s personal advisor who will contact the young person and ensure that the necessary renewal or update is completed. It is essential that the personal advisor ensures that the young person is aware that without the correct information, their application will be suspended and subsequently impact on suitable accommodation being identified. Where information continues to be outstanding, the young person will also be raised at the quarterly accommodation planning meeting. Where a young person is raised for this reason in successive meetings, this will be escalated to the Assistant Director of the responsible service area by the Care Leaver’s Team Manager chairing the meeting. The Local Housing Authority will not withdraw the housing application without agreement from the Care Leaver’s Service. In circumstances where the young person requests that their application is withdrawn, the Local Housing Authority will action this but not without informing the Care Leavers Service of the request.

8.2.2 All Local Housing Authorities will agree to accept any Surrey Care Leaver on their housing register regardless of local connection. Priority within that housing register will be at the Local Housing Authority’s own discretion in accordance with their allocation policy ([Appendix D](#appd)). Factors such as local connection and readiness for independence may have an impact on priority status. Any priority given to Care Leavers will be reviewed at the young person’s 21st birthday. For Care Leavers aged 21-25 the offer of priority status will be considered on a case-by-case basis by Local Housing Authorities, with consideration given to whether they are receiving extended support from the Care Leaver’s Service. This applies to unaccompanied asylum-seeking young people who have received a positive decision in respect of their asylum claim. As outlined in the Children and Social Work Act 2017, for eligible care leavers over the age of 21, it is at their request that they continue to receive support from the Care Leavers Service, there is no mandatory requirement for them to do so. They retain the status of care leaver through to 25 irrespective of whether there is active involvement from the service. A care leaver without active involvement from the Care Leaver’s Service may still approach a Housing Authority for assistance. This will be considered by the housing team on a case-by-case basis.

8.2.3 Unaccompanied Asylum-Seeking Young People are not able to join the housing register of any District or Borough until they have been granted their immigration status by the Home Office. It is not possible for this to be backdated as before this date they would be considered ineligible for Part VI accommodation. However, once status has been granted Care Leavers will receive the same banding as other care leavers on local housing registers until their 21st birthday. Care Leavers aged 21-25 will be considered on a case-by-case basis by Local Housing Authorities with consideration being given to whether they are receiving extended support from Care Leavers Service.

8.3 Council tax reduction/exemption

8.3.1 Care leavers living within Surrey and receiving support from the Surrey Care Leavers Service can apply for a council tax exemption of up to 100% as a means of financial support on their journey to independence. Care Leavers will apply directly to the local Districts and Boroughs who will then confirm their eligibility with the Care Leaver’s Service.

8.3.2 Care leavers living outside of Surrey can apply for a council tax reduction of 75% of their final bill for sole occupancy, and 75% of their portion of the final bill if living in shared accommodation. Care Leavers will liaise directly with the Care Leavers Service and Surrey County Council will arrange reimbursement or payment. Care Leavers and personal advisors should check with the local District and Borough Council within which the Care Leaver resides, whether the Care Leavers local offer for that area has an arrangement that all Care Leavers living in the area can benefit from full Council Tax exemption.

8.4 Personal advisors meet regularly with care leavers to review their pathway plans and evaluate their independence skills and where further support is required. Personal advisors will have completed an independence skills checklist to consider readiness to manage independence, this will also have been supplemented by keyworker sessions provided via accommodation providers. The Care Leavers Service is also able to support with referrals onto voluntary agencies and charities for e.g. Money House to support with financial literacy and tenancy management. There are a range of online resources also referred to in the Local Offer which further support care leavers. Personal advisors are able to check any welfare benefit queries with Surrey Welfare Rights to ensure young people have the correct benefit entitlements. Personal advisors also receive tenancy management training to enable them to ensure care leavers are supported with this process.

8.5 Each District and Borough has a slightly different support offer available to care leavers which ranges from Tenancy Support to Floating Support. Common to all is a recognition that when a care leaver requires additional support to manage their tenancy this will be provided in a timely way to ensure maximum support to the care leaver to avoid any issues with the maintenance of their tenancy.

8.6 Care Leavers are able to access the Grandmentors scheme where they are matched with a mentor relevant to the skills they are seeking to develop. The Surrey Virtual School have also developed an initiative with You Explore to ensure that all care leavers have a CV in place to support with employment opportunities.

8.7 Carers are able to access an independence guide developed by staff within Surrey’s residential homes to support care leavers with their independence journey, this covers all elements of the journey to adulthood including practical tips, advice and signposting.

8.8 Providers who are members of the Commissioning Alliance are expected to work with care leavers via key working sessions to promote their independence. Many of the providers follow the Outcome Star framework, key working reports are provided to the personal adviser on a monthly basis which document progress and ongoing areas for development.

8.9 Two homelessness prevention officers (H.P.O’s) work alongside personal advisors in the service to prevent homelessness. HPOs have a generic email address which personal advisors can refer to with any issues which could potentially create instability in tenancy arrangements. The HPOs respond quickly to enquiries and work alongside personal advisors and young people to ensure the right support is provided quickly. This can include visits to the young person, explaining to them the implications of their actions and negotiating with housing providers plans to avoid homelessness. HPOs also attend area resource panels and accommodation panels in order to identify at an early stage any potential issues arising and provide advice regarding measures to support the care leaver. Personal advisors encourage young people to provide their details to landlords in order to ensure that where issues arise the service is notified of them and can respond promptly to address the concerns.

# THE ACCOMMODATION PLANNING MEETING

9.1 Surrey County Council and its Districts and Boroughs recognise that careful planning, assessment of need and listening to the young person’s voice is essential to effective transition work and avoiding homelessness for Care Leavers. The Accommodation Planning meeting supports the process of identifying appropriate housing options for Care Leavers in line with their needs.

9.2 It is the responsibility of the social worker to refer the Care Leaver for discussion at the Accommodation Planning meeting and this will be discussed in supervision with the relevant team manager holding line management responsibility for the care leaver. For relevant Care Leavers, personal advisors will be responsible for ensuring this is progressed.

9.3 The meeting is held every other month and is separated into two parts. The first section, chaired by the Looked After Children’s Service Manager, will focus on those who have recently turned 17 years and their accommodation plans. Attendees will include the social worker, Team Manager, allocated personal advisor and housing officer. The second part of the meeting will be chaired by the Care Leavers Team Manager and include the Housing Needs Manager (or designated representative), personal advisor and Care Leavers Homelessness Prevention Officers. This section of the meeting will review accommodation plans for Care Leavers and ensure appropriate preparation for when they are ready to move on, it will also include a review of HCLIC data as recommended by The Department of Levelling Up, Housing and Communities, identifying any relevant themes emerging from that data which may warrant further audit activity by Children’s Services and Housing and whether any practice improvements are required

9.4 Meeting attendees will be responsible for updating a shared document two weeks prior to the meeting. This will be shared via one drive by the chair of the meeting with details of all Care Leavers and their accommodation needs to ensure that they are on appropriate housing registers. The updates on this document will determine the agenda for the meeting. All young people discussed at The Accommodation Planning meeting will have a management oversight and/or case note recorded on LCS. Where applicable to the needs of the Care Leaver, relevant partner agencies will be invited to attend the meeting to inform accommodation planning for the young person.

9.5 The Accommodation Planning meetings will be used to consider:

* Whether all eligible Care Leavers have been registered for housing as close to their 16th birthday as possible
* The most appropriate accommodation options for the young person, with the Pathway Plan and engagement with the ‘independent living skills’ pack informing these discussions. Additional factors such as historical behaviour, location and known risks will also be considered.
* The accommodation history for all 17-year-old Looked After Children prior to transfer to Care Leaving Service to ensure that their support needs are identified and taken into account in their accommodation plan and any changes made to reflect their needs.
* The progress of Care Leavers in semi-independent provision to ensure move on into independent accommodation is timely.
* The support available from the Local Housing Authority to young people in securing appropriate accommodation, including when they can access a rent deposit bond to support with private renting. (Each District and Borough have their own offer, please see [Appendix B](#appb)).

9.6 If during meeting discussions, it is felt that a Care Leaver meets the criteria for support from [Surrey Adults Matter (SAM)](https://www.healthysurrey.org.uk/community-health/making-every-adult-matter), it is the responsibility of the personal advisor to explore whether the young person may meet the threshold for support and make a referral to the service where this is appropriate. SAM is part of the Making Every Adult Matter (MEAM) approach to provide support to adults with multiple disadvantages.

9.7 When considering the suitability of accommodation options, The Care Leaver’s Service and the Local Housing Authority representative must carefully discuss any referrals to ensure that this is made by the correct service, in line with the nomination rights of the Local Housing Authority. If the referral is best placed to come from Children’s Services, then this will need to be discussed at the area resource panels in Children’s Services. Once appropriate referrals have been agreed and actioned, the young person will be supported to visit the provider and ensure that they understand their responsibilities in the accommodation.

9.8 When moving into new accommodation, a young person will be visited by their personal advisor in the first week (in line with [the Children Act 1989 guidance volume 3, chapter 3](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/1051441/CA1989_Transitions_Guidance.pdf)), to ensure they are settling in. For young people in supported accommodation, their allocated keyworker from the accommodation provider will also produce a monthly report on their progress and work closely with their personal advisor to support the young person. This report should be shared during the Accommodation Planning meeting to inform of the young person’s progress. If a young person is struggling, a maintaining accommodation panel (MAP) meeting will be held to establish what further support could be offered to help maintain the tenancy. It is the responsibility of the lead worker (either the social worker for care leavers aged under 18 or personal advisor for care leavers over 18) to convene this meeting, representatives from both the Local Housing Authority and the Care Leaver’s Service will be present.

9.9 To support with maintaining any new tenancy, Care Leavers will complete a list of ‘important contact details’ (see [Appendix E](#appE)) with their lead worker, so that they know who to contact if they have any concerns.

9.10 It is the responsibility of the personal advisor to ensure that the young person is aware of the terms of their tenancy and any potential consequences of not adhering to these. If any potential difficulties arise with a tenancy, it is the responsibility of the provision/landlord to notify the young person’s personal advisor and the Local Housing Authority at the earliest opportunity. If there is evidence that a tenancy is unlikely to be sustained, prompt communication between agencies is essential and a review of the Pathway Plan will be undertaken identifying current and future need. The Pathway Plan must be updated whenever any significant changes occur. Additional tenancy review meetings should be arranged if required. The Care Leaver’s Homelessness Prevention Officers will play a key role in supporting tenancies, liaising with housing colleagues and focussing on early intervention to prevent tenancy breakdowns. The Care Leaver’s Homelessness Prevention Officers will have contacts in each of the 11 Districts and Boroughs with whom they can discuss options for young people without delay.

9.11 When it is felt that a young person is ready or will soon be ready for independence, further discussions will take place at the Accommodation Planning meeting to ensure appropriate planning to avoid the risk of homelessness due to not having a suitable place to move on to.

# MOVE ON PROCESS

10.1 Before a Care Leaver can be considered as ready for their own tenancy, the lead worker must consider the skills, strengths, vulnerabilities and needs of the young person. There must be evidence that the Care Leaver has engaged with the ‘independent living skills’ pack, evidenced by appropriate completion of the independence checklist with their personal advisor, as well as sufficient evidence in the Pathway Plan. The young person’s personal advisor will provide a copy of their independence checklist to the Local Housing Authority, who in turn will be able to share this with any landlord that the young person is referred to.

10.2 When it is identified that a Care Leaver aged between 18 and 21 is ready for independent living, a housing options meeting will be held with the young person, lead worker and relevant housing authority, to discuss housing options for the young person going forward. It is important that Care Leavers are encouraged to progress their accommodation options before they reach 22 years old as they are not considered to have priority need by Local Housing authorities after this time. As part of pathway planning, Care Leavers will be supported to explore all accommodation options which would include social housing and private rented accommodation, including options of sharing with others given this is a pragmatic solution for many young people moving into their own accommodation.

10.3 If it is agreed that a young person is ready to move on, their lead worker will re-present the young person at the Accommodation Planning meeting to ratify this plan and action a move on arrangement.

10.4 If there is agreement at the planning meeting that a Care Leaver is ready for independent living and has not already completed a housing register application, it is the responsibility of the personal advisor to support them to complete the relevant application. However, it must be explained to the young person that it is unlikely that an application submitted at this stage would result in a successful offer of social housing being made in the short term due to social housing waiting lists.

10.5 Where unaccompanied asylum-seeking young people may still be waiting for a decision about their immigration status by 20 years 6 months, a Human Rights Assessment will be undertaken. If a decision remains outstanding at 21, they will be referred to the Home Office for financial support. A personal advisor will still be allocated, however there is no duty for the local authority to provide accommodation under extended duties outlined in the Children and Social Work Act 2017 in this context. Care Leavers falling within this group cannot join a housing register until a decision confirming their eligibility to remain in the UK has been made and therefore, they must be made aware of the other options available to them throughout the pathway planning process.

10.6 Where a young person is ready to move on, and they have a local connection to that area, they will be placed in a banding on the District or Borough Housing register which could lead them to being rehoused into social housing, subject to the Care Leaver bidding on properties and availability of stock (some Local Housing Authorities may not require a local connection for this purpose). This is not a guarantee that they will be offered social housing before the end of the care placement.

10.7 Care Leavers will be supported to bid for social housing by their personal advisor. Priority within that housing register will be at the Local Housing Authority’s own discretion in accordance with their allocation policy ([Appendix D](#appd)). It is the responsibility of each District and Borough to keep The Care Leaver’s Homelessness Prevention Officers updated with any changes in their allocations policy, so that this information can be provided to Care Leavers. Any priority given to Care Leavers will be reviewed at the young person’s 21st birthday. Care leavers aged 21-25 will be considered on a case-by-case basis by Local Housing Authorities with consideration being given to whether they are receiving extended support from the Care Leavers Service.

10.8 A Care Leaver, where Surrey is the corporate parent, will retain Care Leaver priority status on the housing register up to the age of 21 regardless of the tenure that they reside in. This will not apply if they have already been offered, accepted and moved into social housing which is considered adequate for their needs. Priority status for Care leavers aged 21-25 will be considered on a case-by-case basis by Local Housing Authorities with consideration being given to whether they are receiving extended support from the Care Leavers Service.

10.9 If a Care Leaver does not meet the criteria of the Local Housing Authority allocation policy and is therefore ineligible for social housing, advice and assistance to access private rental accommodation will be offered. Each Local Housing Authority may be able to assist with advice and guidance for Care Leavers around affordable housing as well as advice on potential support with rent deposit bonds. (Each District and Borough have their own offer, please see [Appendix B](#appb)).

10.10 If a Care Leaver is ineligible for social housing due to pending immigration status, and they have been living in the UK for more than one year, it may be possible for them to submit a right to work and/or right to rent request via their solicitor. If this is granted, the young person will be offered advice and assistance to access private rental accommodation from the Local Housing Authority.

10.11 The young person will be informed of the decision made at the Accommodation Planning meeting in writing, explaining the reasons for the decision. The minute taker will formulate the letter to the young person on behalf of the chairperson. If a young person is not satisfied with the decision, they can appeal. The young person must wait to be formally notified of the decision. Once received, the young person must provide a written request for reconsideration, outlining the reasons why they feel the decision is not appropriate. Appeals will then be submitted and presented again at the next Accommodation Planning meeting by the lead worker to be discussed by attendees in more detail, to decide if the decision should be changed. The young person will receive notification of the outcome within 28 days.

# RESPONDING TO CARE LEAVERS IN CUSTODY/LEAVING CUSTODY

11.1 Surrey County Council and the Local Housing Authorities recognise the need to ensure appropriate planning is in place for Care Leavers who are due to be released from custody, to ensure a smooth transition into safe and suitable accommodation.

11.2 When a Care Leaver is identified as due for release from custody, a planning meeting will be held with all agencies involved, including Her Majesty’s Prison and Probation Service/Youth Offending, their personal advisor, the Care Leavers Housing Officers and the appropriate Local Housing Authority. This will inform assessing needs and helping to identify appropriate accommodation options upon release. This meeting will be held **12 weeks prior** to scheduled release in line with Offender Management in Custody (OMiC) guidelines.

11.3 If during completion of the above actions there remains a likelihood of a Care Leaver being homeless on release, a Duty to Refer should be made to the Local Housing Authority by the young person’s lead worker 12 weeks prior to their release. Local Housing Authorities will agree to consider this referral, even if received in excess of 56 days prior to release.

11.4 On receipt of a DTR the Local Housing Authority should undertake an initial Housing Options Assessment in order to consider whether any prevention or relief duty is owed to the client. This will be notified to the young person and to their personal advisor and any other agencies involved.

11.5 Where the person is found to be owed the prevention or relief duty a personal housing plan will be produced and shared with the young person, their personal advisor and any other support agencies who may request it. Where there is an accommodation duty owed to the young person by the Local Housing Authority, the expectation is that an address will have been confirmed and submitted to HMPPS a minimum of **two weeks prior to the release date.** This allows the address to be verified as suitable and the licence and other paperwork to be completed. The discharge review meeting to finalise release plan and the resettlement plan takes place 10 days prior to release.

11.6 Where the local housing authority refers the young person to supported housing providers, they will be expected to assess the young person whilst they are still in custody to ensure a planned approach to supported accommodation. The provider will also be invited to a professionals meeting to discuss how any support needs will be met by other agencies involved with the young person.

11.7 The Care Leavers circumstances will then be discussed at the Accommodation Planning meeting following the process as outlined above. Any additional services working with the Care Leaver, such as probation, will be invited to attend. The plan will then be ratified, and appropriate plans actioned.

11.8 Where Housing have been unable to identify suitable accommodation, consideration will be given to the local authority and local housing authority joint funding suitable accommodation for the care leaver for a maximum of three months whilst efforts are ongoing to secure suitable accommodation. The Gateway to Resources team will support with the accommodation search and agreement for this will be sought at the care leavers accommodation panel in advance of the young person’s discharge from custody.

11.9 For care leavers in custody each institution has a slightly different offer. Personal advisors will need to make contact with the relevant institution and discuss with them the core education offer and the types of vocational skills that the establishment has on offer. This will vary according to the type of prisoners held and the needs of that population. For care leavers serving longer sentences some prisons may offer access to Open University courses for higher level education (subject to funding being agreed by the education provider within the establishment). Some establishments will offer short courses covering independence skills. The personal adviser will maintain contact with the responsible officer throughout the care leaver’s time in prison until they are either released or no longer open to the service and ensure the care leaver is visiting regularly and supported appropriately when their sentence is concluded.

# RESPONDING TO CARE LEAVERS WHO ARE HOMELESS OR AT RISK OF HOMELESSNESS

12.1 Surrey County Council and the 11 Districts and Boroughs have a duty under both Homelessness legislation and as corporate parents to ensure the best interests of the young person are promoted in accordance with the [Corporate Parenting Principles](https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/applying-corporate-parenting-principles-to-looked-after-children-and-care-leavers). Further information regarding Homelessness legislation and Care Leavers can be found in [Chapter 22 of the Homelessness code of guidance.](https://www.gov.uk/guidance/homelessness-code-of-guidance-for-local-authorities/chapter-22-care-leavers)

12.2 Where a Care Leaver is found to be rough sleeping or is at high risk of doing so, either in the home authority area or elsewhere, the local housing authority will identify where the Care Leaver has a local connection.  If this is with another area and is considered to be a safe connection, a S198(A1) referral will be made to the Local Housing Authority of that area. Where necessary, accommodation will be provided until a response to this referral is received. As part of this process contact will be made with the Care Leaver’s Service of the parent authority and local rough sleeping outreach services. Contact will also be made with Surrey’s Care Leaver’s Service to notify them of the Care Leaver so that support can be given when approaching the parent authority.

12.3 All eligible Care Leavers aged 18 to 21 are automatically considered to have priority need for assistance. Care Leavers over this age will also be considered to have priority need if they are considered by the Local Housing Authority to be vulnerable as a result of being accommodated or in care.

12.4 Former relevant children aged between 18 and 25 (defined under the Children’s Act, Volume 3: planning transition to adulthood for care leavers) may present at a Local Housing Authority if they are homeless or at risk of homelessness. The Housing duty worker should carry out their assessment to determine homelessness. Where a homelessness application is submitted for a Surrey Care Leaver or the young person has a local connection to Surrey, the Surrey Care Leaver’s Service will be notified. Where the young person is from another area, and does not have a local connection to Surrey, the Care Leaver’s service with responsibility for the Care Leaver should be notified. The duty worker should inform the young person of this. The Local Housing Authority should work in conjunction with the responsible Care Leaver’s Service to prevent homelessness or to identify suitable alternative accommodation.

12.5 Discussions will take place at the Accommodation Planning meeting to put plans in place for those identified as at risk of homelessness and ensure these plans are regularly reviewed. These plans will try to prevent evictions where possible and monitor and share information about vacancies where it is not possible to maintain current placements.

12.6 The Local Housing Authority should consider whether there is a duty owed to the Care Leaver under Part 7 of the 1996 Act to secure accommodation. Housing may wish to consult with personal advisors to discuss suitability and vulnerabilities of young people before considering whether an accommodation duty is owed and if so, what the offer of accommodation should/could be.

12.7 When a Housing Authority believes that a homelessness application has been triggered, they are required to conduct a full Housing Assessment after which a personal housing plan (PHP) will be created. The young person’s personal advisor should be consulted to ensure that this is in line with the young person’s Pathway Plan. If a young person has a PHP, this should be recorded on LCS. Any emergency accommodation arrangements must be regularly reviewed to ensure that a long-term and stable option is put in place as soon as possible.

12.8 If a young person is not engaging with the steps in their PHP, the Local Housing Authority should inform their personal advisor at the earliest opportunity. The personal advisor will then be responsible for reminding the young person what is needed from them and to let them know what might happen if they do not engage.

12.9 All attempts should be made by the Local Housing Authorities and the Care Leaver’s Service to avoid the impact of intentionally homeless decisions in relation to Care Leavers through joint working between housing and children services and to ensure full consideration is given to the needs and vulnerabilities of the young person. This would include taking into account the young person’s emotional and mental well-being, maturity and general ability to understand the impact of their actions. However, if an intentional decision is likely, the housing authority will send the young person a ‘minded to’ letter, to which they will have 7 working days to respond. The personal advisor will be copied into this letter and should support the young person to seek further advice where required.

12.10 All intentional homeless decisions will have been signed off by a senior housing officer and Director of Children’s Services (delegated to the Assistant Director for Looked After Children and Care Leavers) before being made and must include ongoing plans by each agency regarding support to the Care Leaver.

12.11 Any Care Leaver who is homeless or deemed to be at risk of homelessness should be signposted to [advocacy from Reconstruct](https://www.reconstruct.co.uk/advocacy/) by their Local Housing Officer or personal advisor.

# DUTY TO REFER

13.1 The Homelessness Reduction Act 2017 placed duties on Local Housing Authorities to intervene at earlier stages to prevent homelessness and provide homelessness services to all those who are eligible. The duty to refer will help to ensure that services are working together effectively to prevent homelessness by ensuring that young people’s housing needs are considered when they come into contact with public authorities.

13.2 If a young person’s personal advisor or any partner agencies become aware that a Care Leaver is at risk of homelessness within 56 days, they must contact their housing colleagues ([Appendix F](#appf)) as soon as possible via the [Duty to Refer](https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/homelessness-duty-to-refer/a-guide-to-the-duty-to-refer) process. A copy of the pathway plan should also be provided. The Care Leaver must be made fully aware of the purpose of the duty to refer and give consent to share and submit the required information. There will then be agreement of immediate steps and action so the Local Housing Authority can undertake the “assessment of circumstances and needs” and to agree joint working arrangements.

13.3 The Local Housing Authority should ensure that the young person is made aware of the next step in the process and that an assessment will be carried out to verify the next course of action to be taken.

13.4 Information on Duty to Refers received will be shared at the Accommodation Planning meeting for further action to be taken as necessary.

# CARE LEAVERS LIVING OUTSIDE OF SURREY

14.1 Some Care Leavers may live outside of Surrey due to this being in line with their wishes or being in their best interests. This may be due to the young person already living in a foster/residential placement out of the area and being settled there; being assessed as presenting at increased risk if accommodated in Surrey due to previous experiences; requiring university vacation accommodation outside of Surrey; wanting to live near to a family member or former carer or moving away to take up employment or training.

14.2 If a Care Leaver is living outside of Surrey, careful planning must take place to ensure that their accommodation needs are suitably met. The young person should be discussed as soon as possible at the Accommodation Planning meeting.

14.3 The personal advisor should contact the Local Authority where the young person resides to explore what accommodation options may be available in advance of them leaving care.

14.4 The Local Authority may wish to contact the authority in which the young person resides with the consent of the young person. This can assist with joint planning for the future accommodation needs of the young person in particularly when they need support from adult social care or mental health services.

14.5 If a Care Leaver is found to be owed a homeless duty outside of Surrey, the Local Housing Authority where they have presented has a statutory duty to notify the Surrey Care Leaver’s Service regarding where they have been placed and to engage with the personal advisor to ensure the Pathway Plan and PHP are reflective of the wider needs of the young person.

# CARE LEAVERS FROM OUTSIDE OF SURREY BUT LIVING IN THE LOCAL AREA

15.1 The Homelessness Reduction Act 2017 amends the way local connection is assessed for Care Leavers who are homeless. Care leavers now have a local connection with the children’s services authority that looked after them, and up to the age of 21 with a local authority area where they have lived for at least 2 years including sometime before their 16th birthday.

15.2 If a Care Leaver approached one of the Local Housing Authorities or a Duty to refer is received, and they were not looked after by Surrey, the Housing Team will look to consider if they have a local connection to Surrey as defined by The Homelessness Reduction Act 2017. If a Care Leaver has been resident in Surrey for longer than 2 years (with at least some of that time being before their 16th birthday) the young person will be offered a prevention/relief duty following the usual processes.

15.3 If the Care Leaver is found to not have a local connection to Surrey, consideration on how to best support them will take place. If the young person is actually homeless, they will be referred under S198(A1) to the area where they do have a connection, alongside discussions with the Care Leaver’s Service with responsibility for the Care Leaver and relevant personal advisor where the young person consents for these discussions to take place. The young person must also be provided details of the [Reconstruct advocacy service](https://www.reconstruct.co.uk/advocacy/).

# DISPUTE RESOLUTION

16.1 Before raising a concern about an apparent breach of duty the practitioner should first speak to the relevant professional from the partner agency, to ascertain the basis and reasons for the decision.

16.2 If this does not rectify the concern, they should discuss any queries or disputes with their own line manager. The manager should arrange for the case to be reviewed, by themselves or an appropriate colleague within **5 working days**. Part of the review should be to liaise with their counterpart to try and resolve the issue. If the line manager cannot recommend a course of action, the case should be escalated to the service manager.

16.3 A dispute should **not** result in a young person being left without accommodation or support to which they are entitled, or adversely impact their welfare.

16.4 If an agreement cannot be reached, is proving problematic or remains unresolved (on an issue pertaining to delivery of or interpretation of an issue of policy or practice in connection with this Protocol), then the managers may refer the issue to the Assistant Director for Looked After Children and Care Leavers within Children’s Services and the Housing Needs Manager for the relevant District or Borough housing department (“the relevant managers”).

16.5 The Children’s Services Assistant Directors and Housing Needs Managers may delegate the reviewing responsibility for undertaking inquiries or making a decision (or both) to another member of staff with sufficient authority to respond to the issue. If they do so, they must inform the person raising the concern.

16.6 The relevant managers will discuss the presenting issues and seek to reach agreement on what action to take and communicate their decision within 21 days of receipt of the concern.

16.7 It is envisaged that a partner will register any concerns they have informally or by using the above mechanism. However, it may be legitimate to advise a young person of their legal rights and facilitate the obtaining of independent support or legal advice and representation. For example, if it appears that a partner agency may not be complying with their legal obligations and there is a consequent risk of homelessness, or they might otherwise suffer harm or injustice.

16.8 Partners recognise that independent advice and advocacy is essential to ensure young persons’ wishes and feelings are listened to, and that their rights are respected. Surrey County Council and the Local Housing Authorities are committed to trying to offer the right support to young people from the outset.

16.9 A record of queries, concerns and disputes will be kept so that it can be used to review this Protocol.

# INFORMATION SHARING

17.1 To deliver the best possible service for young people, it is important that information is shared between agencies within the Protocol. Subsequently, the young person will be asked to sign an Information Sharing Agreement so that this can take place need-to-know basis.

17.2 Whilst respecting each agency's confidentiality policy, it must be understood that it is in the young person's best interest for all agencies to share information that will reduce the possibility of problems occurring, allowing for intervention at the earliest possible stage and enabling agencies to respond appropriately to the young person's needs. As part of this, at the start of any tenancy The Local Housing Authority and the Care Leavers service will agree with their roles and responsibilities regarding the tenancy to ensure that there is clarity for the young person.

17.3 Young people should be made aware of the [Children, Families and Lifelong Learning directorate privacy policy](https://www.surreycc.gov.uk/council-and-democracy/your-privacy/our-privacy-notices/children-families-lifelong-learning-and-culture) and should also be aware that they can withdraw the consent to share their information at any time.

# Review of the Protocol

18.1 The protocol and this document will be reviewed annually, the next review date will be May 2024.

# Appendix A - Local Housing Authority Housing Team contact details

Elmbridge Borough Council

Tel: 01372 474 590

Email: [housingoptions@elmbridge.gov.uk](mailto:housingoptions@elmbridge.gov.uk)

Web: <http://www.elmbridge.gov.uk/>

Epsom and Ewell Borough Council

Tel: 01372 732000

Email: [housing@epsom-ewell.gov.uk](mailto:housing@epsom-ewell.gov.uk)

Web: <http://www.epsom-ewell.gov.uk>

Guildford Borough Council

Tel: 01483 505 050

Email: [housingadvice@guildford.gov.uk](mailto:housingadvice@guildford.gov.uk)

Web: <https://www.guildford.gov.uk>

Mole Valley District Council

Tel: 01306 885 001

Email: [housing@molevalley.gov.uk](mailto:housing@molevalley.gov.uk)

Web: [www.molevalley-homechoice.org.uk](http://www.molevalley-homechoice.org.uk)

Reigate and Banstead Borough Council

Tel: 01737 276790

Email: [housing.advice@reigate-banstead.gov.uk](mailto:housing.advice@reigate-banstead.gov.uk)

Web: <https://www.reigate-banstead.gov.uk>

Runnymede Borough Council

Tel: 01932 838 383

Email: [housingsolutions@runnymede.gov.uk](mailto:housingsolutions@runnymede.gov.uk)

Web: <https://www.runnymede.gov.uk>

Spelthorne Borough Council

Tel: 01784 446 380

Email: [HousingAdvice@spelthorne.gov.uk](http://HousingAdvice@spelthorne.gov.uk/)

Web: <https://www.spelthorne.gov.uk>

Surrey Heath Borough Council

Tel: 01276 707 100

Email: [housing@surreyheath.gov.uk](mailto:housing@surreyheath.gov.uk)

Web: <https://surreyheath.gov.uk>

Tandridge District Council

Tel: 01883 722 000

Email: [housing-needs@tandridge.gov.uk](mailto:housing-needs@tandridge.gov.uk)

Web: <https://tandridge.gov.uk>

Waverley Borough Council

Tel: 01483 523 333

Email: [housingoptions@waverley.gov.uk](mailto:housingoptions@waverley.gov.uk)

Web: <https://www.waverley.gov.uk>

Woking Borough Council

Tel: 01483 743 834

Email: [housingoptions.enquiries@woking.gov.uk](mailto:housingoptions.enquiries@woking.gov.uk)

Web: <https://www.woking.gov.uk>

# Appendix B - Local Housing Authorities rent deposit support schemes & charity grants

**Elmbridge Borough Council** – Rentstart - <https://www.rentstart.org/>

**Epsom and Ewell Borough Council -** Rent Deposit Scheme. Via Housing Options route (see appendix B).

**Guildford Borough Council** – *Homes for You* ***–*** Request via Housing Options route (see appendix B).

**Mole Valley District Council –** Homechoice Plus scheme – available through the housing options route, see appendix B for contact details.

**Reigate and Banstead Borough Council** – Young people shouldcall the housing team to see if they would be eligible, see appendix B for details. It may also be possible to be referred to YMCA Next Step who offer support for vulnerable families with priority need, but this request would have to come directly from Reigate and Banstead Council.

**Runnymede Borough Council –** Magna Carta Lettings– Request via Housing Options route (see appendix B).

**Spelthorne Borough Council** - Rent Assure –Request via Housing Options route (see appendix B).

**Surrey Heath Borough Council –** Rent Choice Scheme – Request via housing options route (see appendix B).

**Tandridge District Council –** Tandridge can refer single homeless people to YMCA (East Surrey) Next Step who will assist with a private rented search and offer support with the rent and deposit if needed.

**Waverley Borough Council –** Via the housing options team (see appendix B).

**Woking Borough Council** - PRS Scheme– “Lets Rent Letting Service” –Request via Housing Options route (see appendix B).

You can also apply for a Discretionary Housing Payment through any local District or Borough in order to receive a top up on rent, or to support with any payments. These are on a discretionary basis and generally only considered for the short term until more affordable accommodation is sourced.

Some charities offer grants to people in certain situations. You won’t have to pay these back. Use the Turn2Us Grant Search - <https://grants-search.turn2us.org.uk/> to find out if you can get help.

**Tip:** try adding more details on the second page such as your occupation or health issues to find more grants.

# Appendix C - Tenancy checklist used by the Care Leavers Service

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Checklist | Yes/No | Notes: | Tasks to complete in the future: |
| Has the property been checked over by the Care Leavers HPT Team? (This includes the tenancy). If not, please make sure this is done. |  |  |  |
| Tenancy Agreement:  Did you receive a draft copy of to contact before the payment of the holding deposit is due?  Does the contract state the full name and address of the Landlord?  Does the property address match the address you have viewed?  Does it say what contract it is? (Assured Shorthold Tenancy or licence?)  Are the start dates correct?  Are the end dates correct?  Is the rent amount correct?  Does it say how the rent is paid? (Monthly, Weekly etc).  Does the rent include some or all the utility bills? Please note which ones.  Is there a break clause? Please write how much?  Have you got a witness with you to sign the agreement also? |  |  |  |
| Has the Landlord noted any restrictions against visitors, pets, noise or decorating? What are these? |  |  |  |
| Is the deposit protected under a government body? If yes, which scheme? If no, make sure to chase this within 30 days of tenancy being checked.  Once paperwork is received, please send this to your Personal Advisor so they can save a copy. |  |  |  |
| Have you received an *in-date* Gas Safety Certificate? |  |  |  |
| Have you received an *in-date* Energy Performance Certificate? |  |  |  |
| Have you received the How To Rent Guide? |  |  |  |
| Are there smoke alarms in the property? Do they work? |  |  |  |
| Is there a carbon monoxide alarm?  Where is it? Does it work? |  |  |  |
| Have you completed an affordability check in order to see if rent can be paid? |  |  |  |
| Has an inventory been completed by yourself? (Photos of all rooms and any furniture that is already in the property – please make notes of everything.  CHECK THE INVENTORY AND ONLY SIGN IT WHEN YOU ARE 100% HAPPY WITH THIS. |  |  |  |
| Read all the meters? Make a note in the right hand boxes with what the meter readings are. |  |  |  |
| Do you know how to lock all windows and doors in the property?  Have you been given the correct keys? |  |  |  |

# Appendix D - Local Housing Authority Allocations Policies

Elmbridge Borough Council

Info: <https://www.elmbridge.gov.uk/housing/applying-for-social-housing/>

Policy: <https://www.elmbridge.gov.uk/housing/housing-strategies-and-policies/>

Epsom and Ewell Borough Council

Info: <https://www.epsom-ewell.gov.uk/residents/housing/housing-needs-register/housing-allocation-policy>

Policy: [EEBC - Housing Allocations Policy and Choice Based Lettings Scheme MASTER 2020-10-15.pdf (eebc-homechoice.org.uk)](https://www.eebc-homechoice.org.uk/Data/Pub/PublicWebsite/ImageLibrary/EEBC%20-%20Housing%20Allocations%20Policy%20and%20Choice%20Based%20Lettings%20Scheme%20MASTER%20%202020-10-15.pdf)

Guildford Borough Council

Info: <https://www.guildford.gov.uk/article/25567/Who-can-apply-to-be-on-the-housing-register>

Policy: <https://www.guildford.gov.uk/article/25570/Requesting-a-review-of-a-decision>

Mole Valley District Council

Info: [www.molevalley-homechoice.org.uk](http://www.molevalley-homechoice.org.uk)

Policy: <https://www.molevalley-homechoice.org.uk/Data/Pub/PublicWebsite/ImageLibrary/CURRENT%20-%20Housing%20Allocations%20Scheme%20Juy%202020.pdf>

Reigate and Banstead Borough Council

Info: <https://www.reigate-banstead.gov.uk/info/20040/housing/158/the_housing_register>

Policy: [Housing Register & Allocations Policy | Reigate and Banstead (reigate-banstead.gov.uk)](https://www.reigate-banstead.gov.uk/downloads/download/1187/housing_register_and_allocations_policy)

Runnymede Borough Council

Info: <https://www.runnymede.gov.uk/help-find-home/join-housing-register>

Policy: <https://www.rbc-homes.org/choice/uploads/RBCAllocsScheme.pdf>

Spelthorne Borough Council

Info: <https://www.searchmoves.org.uk/choice/>

Policy: [Strategies and policies - Spelthorne Borough Council](https://www.spelthorne.gov.uk/article/17175/Strategies-and-policies)

Surrey Heath Borough Council

Info: <https://www.surreyheath.gov.uk/residents/housing/apply-housing>

Policy: <https://www.surreyheath.gov.uk/residents/housing/apply-housing/housing-register-allocation>

Tandridge District Council

Info: <https://www.tandridge.gov.uk/Housing/Finding-a-home/Apply-for-council-housing>

Policy: <https://www.tandridge.gov.uk/Housing/Finding-a-home/Apply-for-council-housing>

Waverley Borough Council

Info: <https://www.waverley.gov.uk/Services/Housing/Finding-a-home/Find-council-housing/Can-I-get-a-council-house>

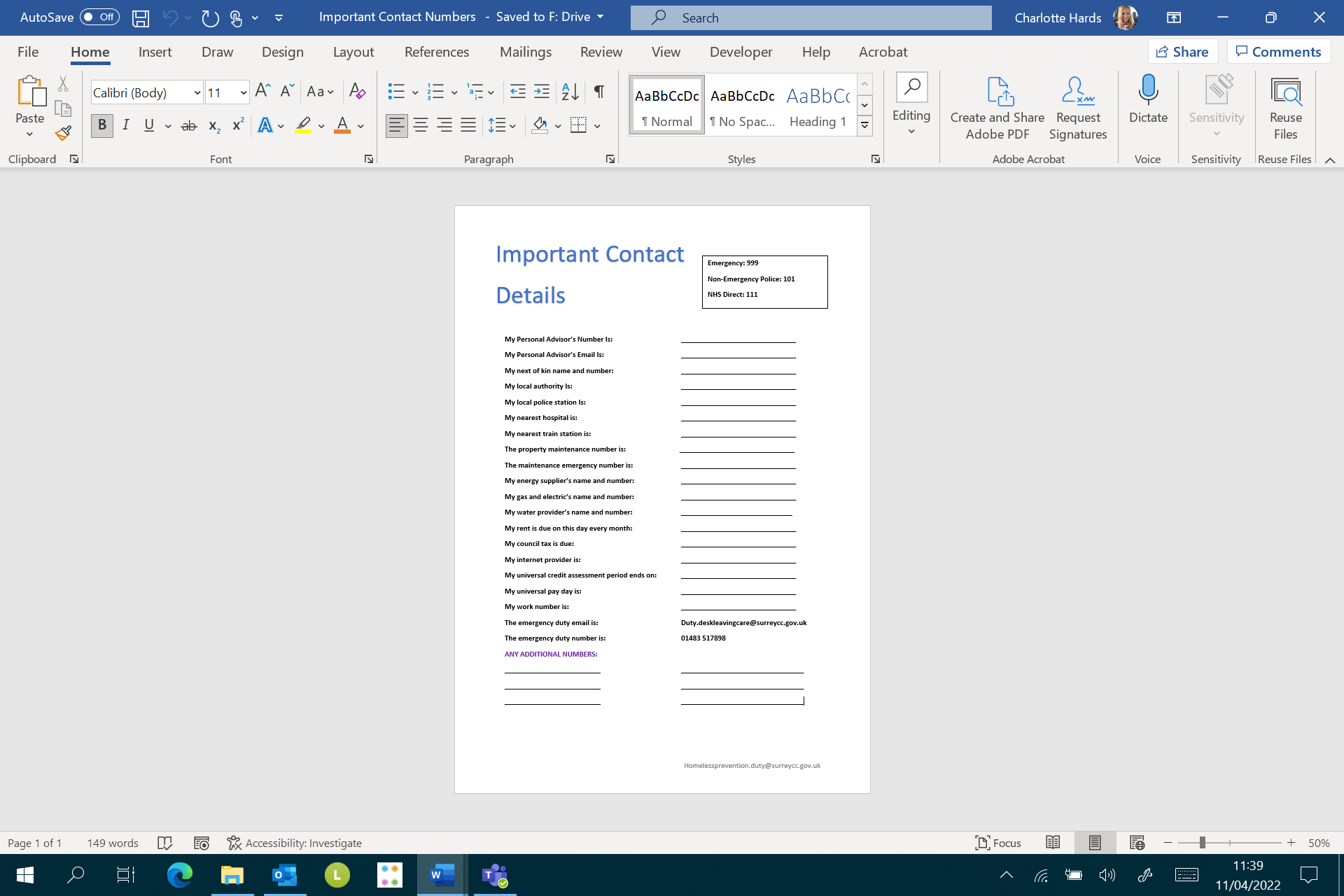
Policy: <https://www.waverley.gov.uk/Services/Housing/Finding-a-home/Find-council-housing/Can-I-get-a-council-house>

Woking Borough Council

Info: <https://www.woking.gov.uk/housing/apply-housing/how-we-allocate-housing>

Policy: <https://www.woking.gov.uk/housing/apply-housing/how-we-allocate-housing>

# Appendix E - List of important contact details



# Appendix F - Duty to refer contact details for each of the Districts and Boroughs

**Elmbridge Borough Council:** <https://hpa2.org/referral/FormPage.aspx>

**Epsom and Ewell Borough Council:** <https://live.housingjigsaw.co.uk/alert/duty-to-refer>

**Guildford Borough Council:** <https://live.housingjigsaw.co.uk/alert/duty-to-refer>

**Mole Valley District Council:** <https://live.housingjigsaw.co.uk/alert/duty-to-refer>

**Reigate and Banstead Borough Council:** <https://hpa2.org/referral/FormPage.aspx>

**Runnymede Borough Council:** <https://www.runnymede.gov.uk/xfp/form/206>

**Spelthorne Borough Council** <https://hpa2.org/referral/FormPage.aspx>

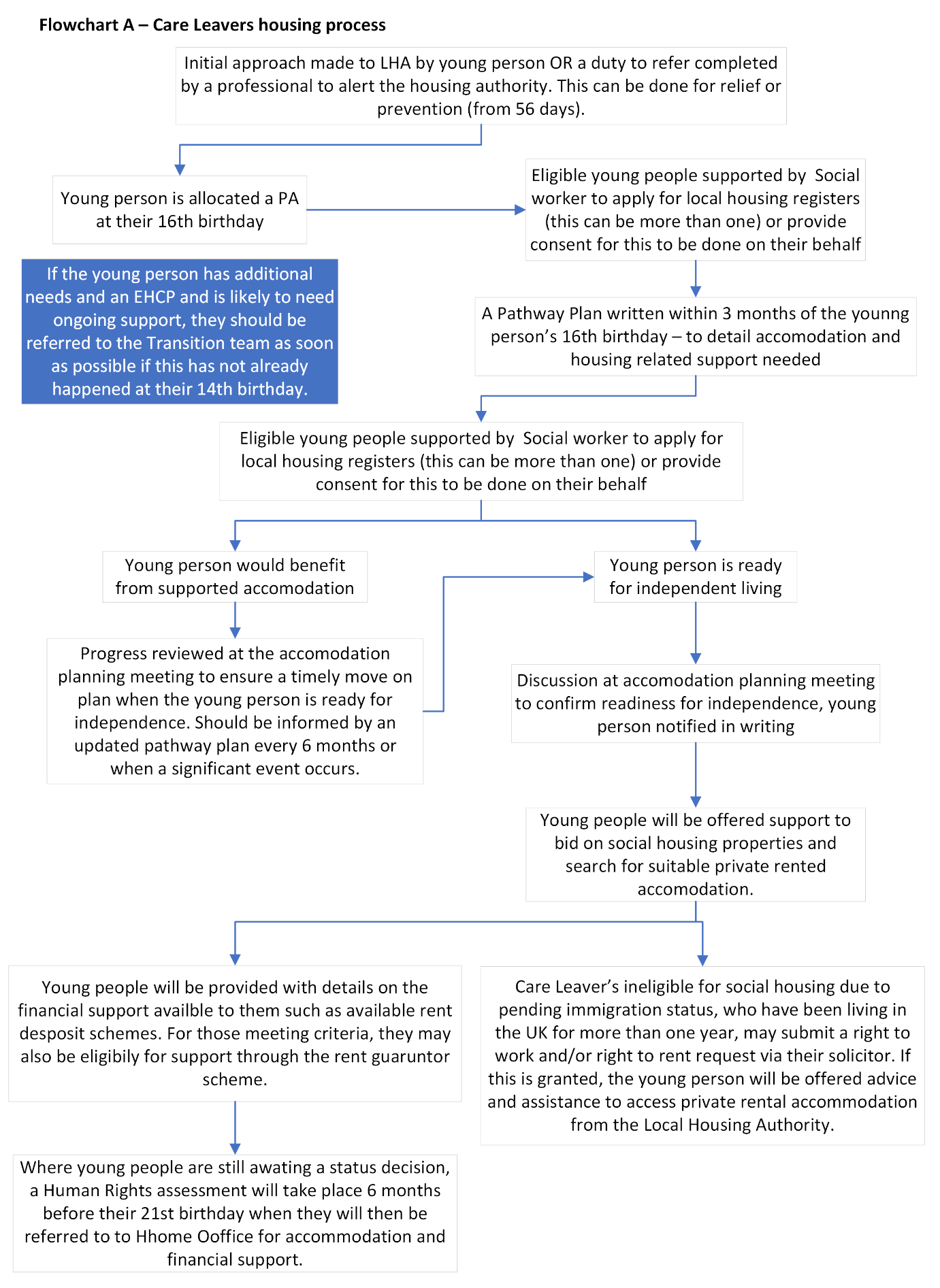
**Surrey Heath Borough Council:** <https://hpa2.org/referral/FormPage.aspx>

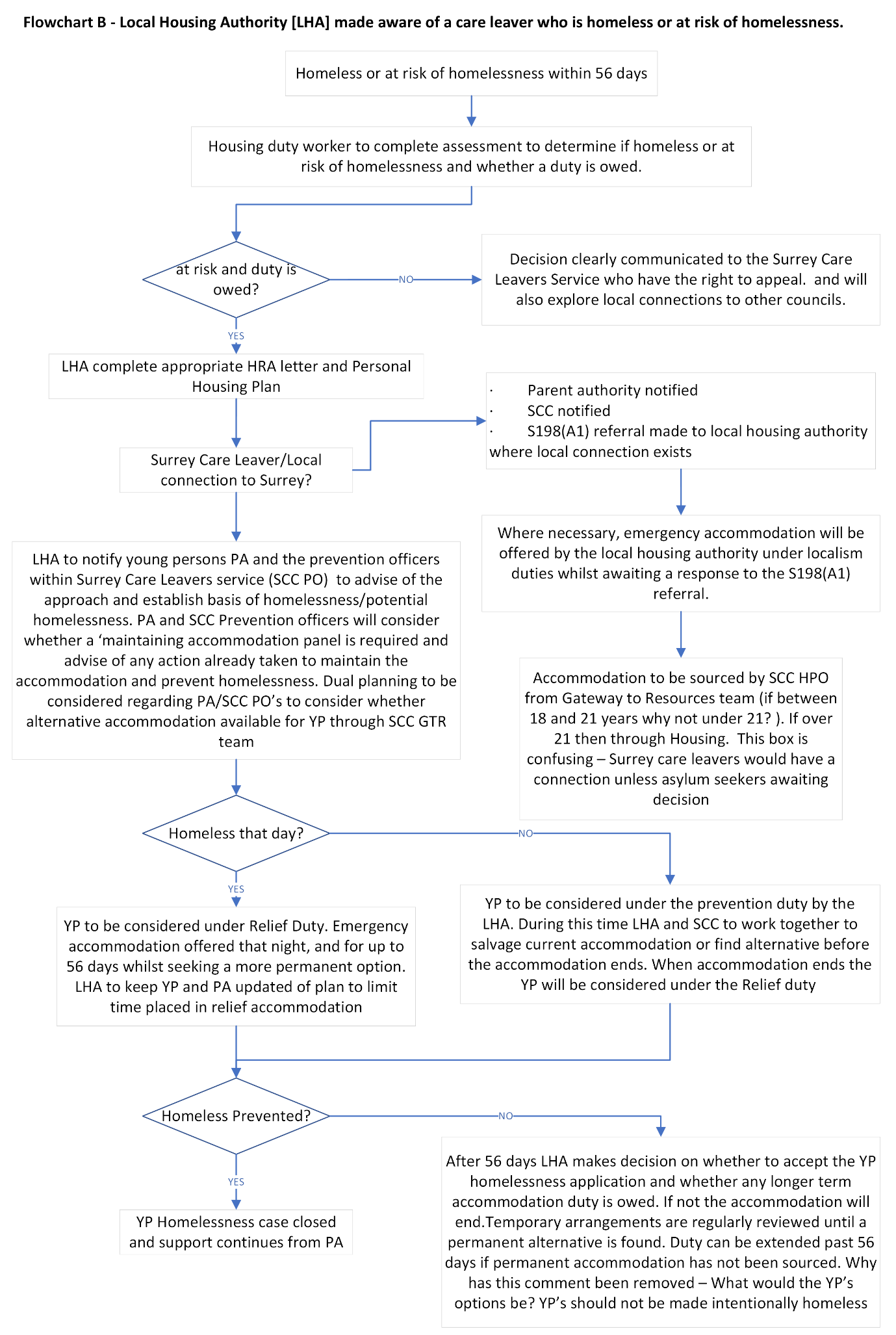
**Tandridge District Council:** <https://live.housingjigsaw.co.uk/alert/duty-to-refer>

**Waverley Borough Council:** <https://live.housingjigsaw.co.uk/alert/duty-to-refer>

**Woking Borough Council** <https://live.housingjigsaw.co.uk/alert/duty-to-refer>

# Appendix G - Flowcharts





# Appendix H – Contacts

Elmbridge, Runnymede and Spelthorne - North Surrey Floating Support Service Service Provider: Look Ahead Housing and Care Contact details: Tel: 01932 269345 Email: northsurreyreferrals@lookahead.org.uk Website: [www.lookahead.org.uk](http://www.lookahead.org.uk)

Epsom and Ewell, Tandridge, Mole Valley, Reigate and Banstead - Parashoot Housing Support Service, Raven House, 29 Linkfield Lane, Redhill RH1 1SS Call 01737 272 500 Email support@parashoot.org.uk Visit [www.ravenht.org.uk](http://www.ravenht.org.uk) [Raven-Parashoot-Leaflet.pdf (surreycc.local)](file:///\\surreycc.local\home\S\SCFSSI\Data\Downloads\Raven-Parashoot-Leaflet.pdf)