



Department for Children, Adults and Health

Principles and procedure for 16/17 year olds presenting as Homeless

Principles of Practice – 16/17 year olds presenting as Homeless

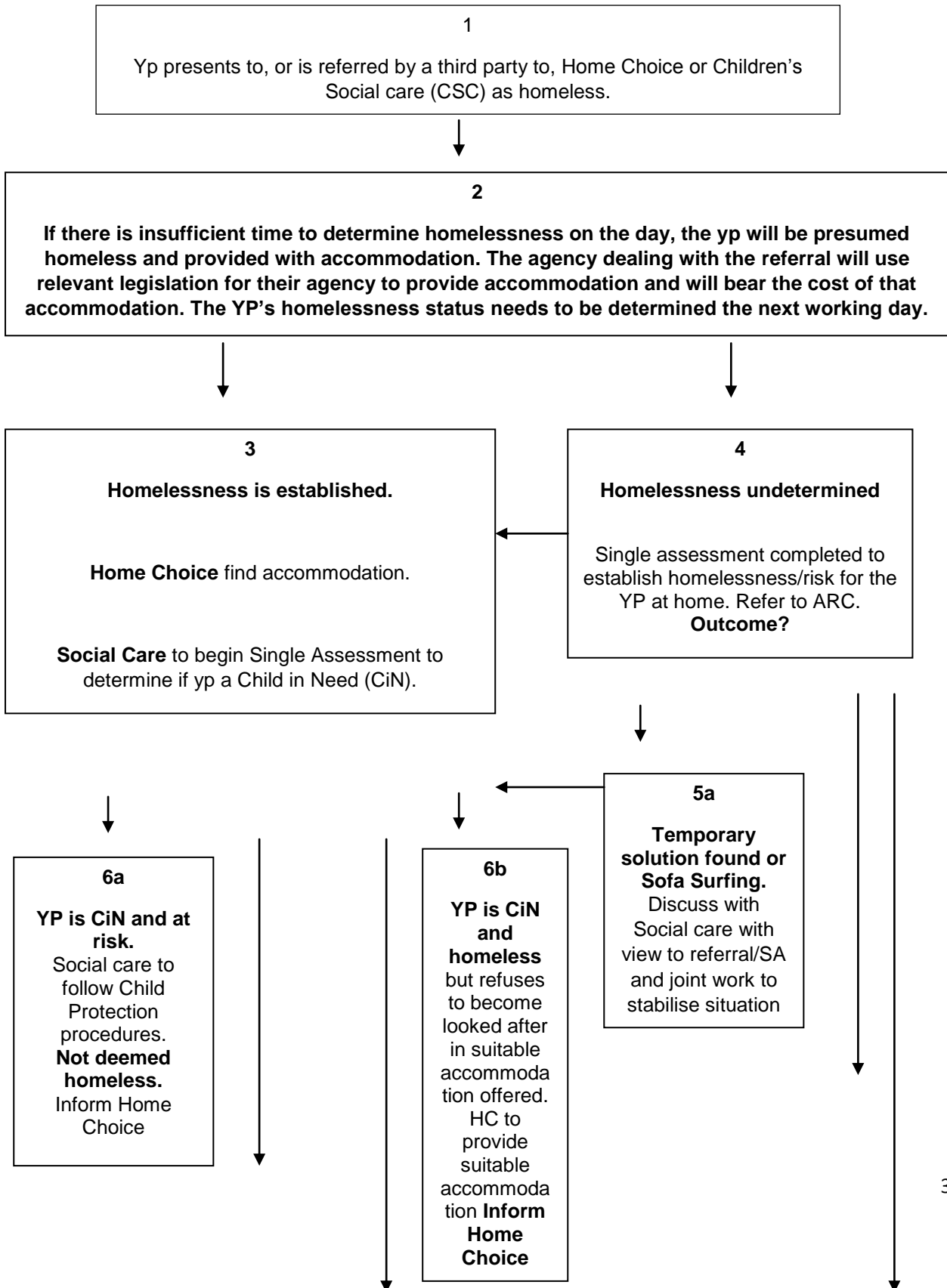
- 1) Any 16/17 year old will be regarded as a young person first and foremost and will be assessed on that basis for whatever their presenting problem is.
- 2) Children's Social care is the lead agency within the local authority for this group of young people.
- 3) Case law has clearly established that a 16/17 year old who is homeless is assumed to be a child in need unless they are determined otherwise through a single assessment process.
- 4) If a young person is assessed as homeless and vulnerable, their needs are best met as a looked after child under S.20 of the Children Act 1989, both at that point in time and for their longer term prospects¹.
- 5) 16 and 17 year olds will be offered suitable accommodation, including independent living accommodation and foster care. It is this Council's view that Bed & Breakfast is not suitable accommodation for any 16/17 year old in any circumstance.
- 6) The Council shall have a range of accommodation available including foster care, supported lodgings, semi-independent living, independent living.

¹ S.20 Children Act 1989

Section 20 (1): Every Local Authority shall provide accommodation for any child in need within their area who appear to them to require accommodation as a result of:

- (a) There being no person who has parental responsibility for him;
- (b) His being lost or having been abandoned;
- (c) The person who has been caring for him being prevented (whether or not permanently, and for whatever reason) from providing him with suitable accommodation or care.

**16-17 year old Homeless Young People
Procedures Flowchart**



6c

YP is CiN and agrees to become “looked after” in suitable accommodation offered. Follow looked after procedures and inform HC and TCT. Young person’s legal status becomes Looked After, S20. Social Worker completes Pathway Plan and PIR. Book Statutory Review of Arrangements and Health Assessment.

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6d

YP is deemed to be not CiN but is homeless. HC to provide suitable accommodation.

5b

Not Homeless as Family / Friends provide suitable long term living arrangement.
No further action or CIN.

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5c

Not homeless & not at risk. Able to return home or has suitable independent accommodation
No Further Action or CIN.

PROCEDURES

Box number	Situation	Explanatory notes
1	<p>YP presents to Home Care or Social Care Locality Office</p> <p>Homelessness needs to be determined either by Home Choice or CSC depending on which agency the YP presents to.</p>	<p>A young person aged between 16-17 years presenting as homeless or due to become homeless within 28 days should receive the same response, regardless of whether they present at Home Choice or Social Care locality Team. Once presented however, CSC will take the lead in case coordination, as the agency with overall responsibility.</p> <p>Staff who are the first contact will enquire of the YP as to the nature of the reason for their presenting as homeless. If the yp presents to Social care, staff will ensure the presenting facts are correct and there is no underlying risk to the yp.</p> <p>A minimum of verification is required to confirm homelessness. This includes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • proof of identity • proof that any adult accompanying them is their parent/guardian • proof of the ordinary residence of the YP and who is the householder <p>The Home Choice officer or social worker will take responsibility for the determination task if the YP presents to their agency.</p> <p>The Home choice officer or social worker will contact the parents to establish homelessness and to attempt to ascertain any risk being present at home. Both agencies should attempt to facilitate a reconciliation and support the family to find an alternative permanent accommodation within the extended family.</p>
2	<p>Yp presents as homeless on the day</p>	<p>If proof that the yp is homeless cannot be determined on the day and the YP has presented to Home Choice, then the Yp will be presumed to be homeless and offered services under Section 188 (Housing Act). A referral will be made to Social Care for an assessment of need and the Housing Dept will fund the placement at least until</p>

		<p>this assessment is completed.</p> <p>If proof that the yp is homeless cannot be determined on the day and the YP has presented to First Point or Social Care, then the Yp will be presumed to be homeless and offered services under Sec 20 Children Act. Social Care can request support from their colleagues in Home Choice with regards to their identifying suitable and available accommodation. Once identified, Social Care will fund the placement at least until a 15 day single assessment of need has been completed.</p> <p>The question whether any substantive duty is owed under section 20 of the Children Act or Part 7 of the Housing Act 1996 will depend on the outcome of the assessments undertaken by Children’s Social Care and the Housing Dept.</p> <p>In these cases, the YP should be dealt with by the agency to which they present and not be sent to the other agency. The YP must not yo-yo between agencies. However, communication between First Point, Social care and Home Choice is essential and the agency receiving the referral should immediately let the other agency know.</p> <p>Homelessness needs to be determined as per section 1, either by Home Choice or CSC, depending on which agency the YP presents to.</p> <p>The cost of the accommodation will be borne by the receiving agency until the homelessness status of the yp is determined by the Social Care single assessment.</p>
<p>3</p>	<p>Homelessness is determined</p> <p>Locality Social Worker completes SA</p>	<p>If homelessness is determined, or a level of risk is suspected if the yp returns home, they should be referred to the accommodation team in Home Choice for accommodation and the Locality duty social worker will undertake a single assessment. The assessment is to be undertaken as per CYP procedures to determine whether the young person is a “child in need”.</p> <p>Once an appointment has been arranged for a social worker to meet the YP, the date of this appointment needs to be communicated to Home Choice by email.</p> <p>The timescale for completion is 15 days. The timescale commences on either the day the yp presents to First Point or social care, or when the referral from the Housing Dept is received. If Home Choice are not notified of the outcome of</p>

		<p>the SA within 20 working days of the start of the SA, costs will automatically default to CSC. It is therefore imperative that the outcome of the SA is communicated in a timely fashion.</p> <p>Continue to boxes 6a/6b/6c</p>
4	Homelessness is undetermined	Where homelessness is undetermined because a temporary solution has been found to prevent homelessness, Home Choice will discuss with Social care about a joint intervention to stabilise the situation and prevent homelessness or a family breakdown. These yp will continue to be deemed as at risk from homelessness and a SA will be undertaken by Social care to ascertain the need for additional resources. The case should be referred to the ARC (At Risk of Care) panel at this point if the YP is still living at home, living with relatives or friends, or sofa surfing.
5a	Temp solution found or sofa surfing.	Social worker should complete a referral form for the Single access service at this point and send to Jackie May in Housing.
5c 5d	YP deemed not homeless	Case closed and no further action. Home Choice officer informs Social care of outcome and CSC may provide services under CIN.
6a	Assessment confirms the YP is a Child in Need	<p>If the outcome determines that the yp is a Child in need and at risk then Social care will follow the relevant safeguarding or looked after processes. Social worker to inform Home Choice of the outcome of the assessment.</p> <p>Depending on the assessment and level of vulnerability, as well as the YP's individual circumstances, the YP may or may not be deemed a Child in need. Their ability to live independently may include a wide range of options and will not mean housing in their own right. The social worker will carefully explain to the YP what it means to be 'looked after' and explain the rights, roles and responsibilities in a positive fashion. If a YP is assessed by CSC as needing accommodation under section 20, the YP will be offered suitable accommodation in either a foster placement or supported living arrangement. Social worker to inform Home Choice of the outcome of the assessment.</p> <p>If Social Care are paying for the accommodation during the single assessment but the YP is not going to remain Looked after under section 20 for whatever reason, it is essential that the Housing Dept are informed in writing so that they can begin to pick up the costs and to avoid overpayment by Social Care. Similarly, if Social Care are not</p>

		<p>funding the accommodation during the single assessment period, but the YP becomes Looked after following the SA, it is essential that Social Care pick up the funding following the assessment.</p>
6b	<p>SA determines that the YP is a Child in need but the Young person refuses to become looked after in the suitable accommodation offered</p>	<p>If the social work assessment deems that the young person is a Child in need but can live independently or semi-independently, the presumption is that they will still become section 20 'Looked after', and they should be consulted on this and informed what this means in a positive light.</p> <p>If the YP is deemed competent to make a decision and following careful discussion about becoming looked after they refuse the suitable accommodation offered by Social care, then they have the right to refuse to become looked after in this accommodation but they retain their homeless status and will be provided housing under Part 7 (Housing Act). The case may or may not be allocated within social care under section 17 but Home choice will assist with the provision of accommodation and the yp claims Housing benefit. Again, it is imperative that Social care inform Home Choice if this is the case in order that Social Care cease funding the accommodation costs. Social care cannot and will not offer Bed and Breakfast as suitable accommodation to a YP that has been assessed as section 20.</p>
6c	<p>The SA determines that the YP is a Child in need and the yp agrees to become looked after in the suitable accommodation offered by CSC.</p>	<p>Social worker to accommodate the yp following the Looked after procedures. A Pathway plan is to be started, initially focussing on the care plan element, and PIR one completed. The LAC review and Health assessment should be booked. The Locality social worker to inform the TCT manager of YP by sending the completed single assessment, and begins to arrange the transfer.</p> <p>Every effort to continue to facilitate a rehabilitation home should be made during this period as appropriate to the yp's situation. Due regard should be made to the continuing education or employment needs. Work and mediation with the parents is essential to facilitate any return home.</p> <p>The Pathway plan should be partially completed by the 5-8 week stage, prior to transfer to the TCT.</p>
6d	<p>Assessment determines that the young person is not a child in need.</p>	<p>An example of those young people who are not deemed to be a Child in need may include a 17 year old who has been living independently for a substantial period, either alone or in a relationship, and become homeless. Even in these cases professional judgement may determine the young</p>

		<p>person to be a Child in need.</p> <p>Home Choice Office is alerted to the outcome of the assessment. If Social Care have been funding the accommodation during the assessment period, this needs to then cease.</p> <p>The young person is assisted to attend the Home Choice Office for suitable accommodation to be explored.</p>
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Roles

Accommodation Team – based in Home Choice. Team is responsible for finding accommodation (not care) in an emergency for any household in need of a placement on the day and for accessing temporary accommodation provided in discharge of any duty under Part VII Housing Act 1996. Contact – Michelle Anderson x 4141 or Tony Bressington x 5499