



JOINT WORKING AGREEMENT/PROTOCOL FOR HOMELESS 16 AND 17 YEAR OLDS

Taunton Deane Borough Council
South Somerset District Council
Sedgemoor District Council
Mendip District Council
West Somerset Council
Somerset County Council Children's Social Care
Somerset Youth Offending Team and The Targeted Youth Support Team

P2i Partnership Board and Providers:

- Somerset Coast YMCA
- Mendip YMCA
- Knightstone Housing Association
- Taunton Association for the Homeless

P4A Partnership Board and relevant Providers:

- Langley House Trust
- Rethink

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1. Statement of Purpose

- 1.1 To ensure Somerset's response to youth homelessness is Young Person centered, preventing young people being passed from one agency to another. This document will clearly identify the role of each agency in line with their statutory responsibilities which have been reaffirmed by case law and create an agreed and robust process aimed at finding solutions.
- 1.2 Where it is safe and suitable to do so and in line with government guidance, the expectation will be that these young people should be supported to remain within the family wherever possible

2. Statement of commitment

- 2.1 All signatories to this document commit to upholding the processes outlined within the Protocol. Where a young person presents to any organisation signed up to this protocol, they will be treated with respect and not passed to another agency until they have been assessed as having suitable accommodation and/or appropriate appointments have been made.
- 2.2 Partners commit to working together to seek the best possible outcome for each individual young person. We pledge to work with the client to resolve their housing difficulty whether this is returning home, emergency accommodation or a planned move, but request acknowledgement that the client or agency may not get the outcome they would ideally wish.
- 2.3 We commit to working professionally, openly and flexibly to achieve the aims of this Protocol.
- 2.4 We commit to respecting the professional position of our partners, even where it conflicts with our own, and will work to resolve such conflicts quickly and appropriately within the terms of this Protocol.
- 2.5 We commit to attend multi-agency panel meetings and to respond to requests for information in a timely and appropriate manner (where data protection requirements have been met and permission has been obtained).
- 2.6 We commit to participating in and facilitating multi-agency training and awareness programmes relevant to this Protocol, in order to increase understanding of the terms of the Protocol, and the role that different organisations and agencies have in delivering its aims.
- 2.7 Each agency also commits to ensuring that its staff and officers are aware of and understand the terms of the Protocol, including its aims

and objectives, and will ensure that appropriate timely training is given to new staff to assure its effective operation.

Signatories

Organisation	Name and Position of signatory	Signature
Taunton Deane Borough Council		
South Somerset District Council		
Sedgemoor District Council		
Mendip District Council		
West Somerset Council		
Somerset County Council Children's Social Care		
Somerset Youth Offending Team and The Targeted Youth Support Team		
Somerset Coast YMCA		
Mendip YMCA		
Knightstone Housing Association		
Taunton Association for the Homeless		
Langley House Trust		
Rethink		

3. Introduction

- 3.1 Somerset County Council, the five District Councils across Somerset and the Pathways to Independence (P2i) Providers recognise their responsibilities towards homeless young people aged 16 and 17. Collectively we embrace the belief that the key to addressing youth homelessness is through early intervention in schools and families. Helping parents/carers to recognise and fulfil their responsibilities. We also acknowledge that for some young people living with their family, or with a friend is no longer an option and have therefore produced this protocol to strengthen the cross-agency approach to dealing with this group of people.
- 3.2 The primary objectives of this protocol are:
- to prevent homelessness wherever possible
 - to create, as far as possible, a seamless and uniform service for young people facing, or at risk of homelessness across the County. Wherever the young person presents they should receive the same level of service
 - to contribute towards a flexible, speedy, responsive service to young people in Somerset with both housing and social care needs
 - ensure all agencies fulfil their statutory responsibilities
 - to match young people where possible to the type of accommodation which will best meet their differing needs
 - where necessary, to provide temporary accommodation while more permanent plans are made
- 3.3 This protocol outlines the legal responsibilities of each agency under the specific legislation, and identifies their roles in the provision of accommodation for young people. It also sets out the agreed process for access to emergency and planned services. This protocol also recognises the contribution of P2i Commissioned Providers, in partnership with other voluntary agencies, to the solution. They are key in the provision of appropriate accommodation, advice and support to this group of young people. It should be recognised that processes outlined in this protocol are not exhaustive or exclusive and that many organisations also have discretionary powers that they may wish to use in meeting the aims of this Protocol.

4. Statutory and Legal Guidance

- 4.1 Department for Children Schools and Families and Communities and Local Government guidance 2010, following Case law (R (G) v. LB Southwark (2009) UKHL 26), clarified the relationship between the duties of Local Authorities children's services under Section 20 Children Act 1989 and Housing Authorities under Part 7 of the Housing Act 1996 for 16 and 17 year old young people who present as homeless or at risk of homelessness. That is, if, following an assessment by Children's Social Care services, the young person is deemed to be a Child in Need and requires accommodation, that accommodation is to be provided under Section 20 even if the accommodation provided is semi/independent living arrangements (see appendix 5 for other support available to a young person assessed as a 'Child in Need'. The only exception to this is if the young person themselves did not wish to be accommodated and Children's Social Care are satisfied that the young person is competent to make that decision.
- 4.2 A Child In Need is defined by Section 17 of the Children's Act 1989 as a child/young person whose health and wellbeing would be significantly impaired if not provided with a service by the Local Authority. If a young person is not deemed to be a Child In Need they may be provided with accommodation through the area P2i Hub or under homelessness legislation and receive financial support via the Benefits Agencies and other support via a referral to an accommodation related support service. If a Child In Need does not wish to be accommodated under Section 20 they can also access these services, as well as those provided by Children's Social Care under Section 17 and Section 24. Appendix 1 outlines in summary the roles & responsibilities of local Housing Options Services and Children's Social Care for 16/17 young people presenting as homeless in Somerset- **It doesnt now it is Hub and Childrens services**
- 4.3 The Local Housing Options Service and Children's Social Care should work in partnership for each to fulfil their obligations. To achieve this, the Accommodation section of the Children and Families Assessment for will be conducted jointly between the area P2i Social Worker and Housing Options Team staff within the P2i hubs, and a copy forwarded to the Housing Options Team for their file.
- 4.4 As shown in the procedure diagram in Appendix 2, a young person should present to a P2i hub within their local area who will carry out a triage assessment with them, and their family if appropriate, to establish whether there is a real reason to believe that they are homeless or will potentially be so within 28 days. Reconciliation services will be engaged if appropriate.
- 4.5 For any 16/17 year old who is considered homeless or likely to be so, an immediate referral to the P2i Social Worker via Somerset Direct

may be made. The Social Worker will arrange to meet with the young person and their family, as appropriate, as soon as possible in order to establish if they are a Child In Need. For those over statutory school age they will also contact the Housing Options Team to arrange for them to be included in the initial interview.

- 4.6 The outcomes of the Children and Families Assessment conducted by the P2i Social Worker could be:
- No Further Action if the young person is found not to be homeless or a Child In Need for any other reason
 - A Care Diversion meeting with relevant family members
 - Further family negotiation/intervention with P2i staff with the aim of reconciliation
 - A specialist assessment
 - Referral to another agency and or another part of the Children & Young People's Directorate for support
 - Short-term services to the family/network which could include a payment/s to facilitate a proposal that the young person or their family has made for them to stay with a relative or friend
 - Accommodation

In all cases the Social Worker should inform the Local Housing Options Service and where appropriate the P2i Provider of the assessment outcome

- 4.7 If it is established that a young person is a Child In Need and requires accommodation, the Social Worker will need to ~~recommend~~ **assess** whether their needs indicate a regulated setting i.e. in residential or foster care, or in a semi/independent one within P2i. If the young person is deemed able to live semi/independently a further decision is required about whether the accommodation is provided under the Children's Act or housing legislation, **when support may be offered by Somerset County Council under S17 Children Act if appropriate**. The young person will need to make an informed choice about whether they wish to be in the care of the local authority under Section 20, or **not** ~~apply for accommodation through P2i or under homelessness legislation~~. Workers should only provide facts and must not unduly influence the decision of the young person. If S20 accommodation is required, the Social Worker should refer to ~~recommendation is that accommodation is to be offered under Section 20 of the Children's Act, this will need to go to the~~ **next available** Children's Social Care Placement Panel. **If accommodation is required in an emergency or before prior to the next panel, the relevant senior should be consulted**. The table presented in appendix 5 may assist staff in explaining some of the differences between the two options and the implications of each
- 4.8 Where a young parent is provided with accommodation by Children's Social Care and become looked after under Section 20, it does not follow that their child will also be looked after. This is an issue for a separate assessment based on the needs of the infant.

- 4.9 If a 16 or 17 year old young person decides that they no longer wish to be looked after under Section 20, they are entitled to discharge themselves at any time by notifying Children's Social Care staff. If the young person was not looked after for 13 weeks, they are eligible for welfare benefits and return to a P2i hub to discuss their accommodation options.

5. Homelessness Prevention

- 5.1 The purpose of this section is to outline the considerations that should be undertaken in assessing the housing needs of young people aged 16 and 17 presenting as homeless or at risk of homelessness. Where homelessness can be prevented this should be considered the first and best option.
- 5.2 **Information sharing** - Agencies should refer to the P2i information sharing protocol to ensure there is no misunderstanding between agencies when assessing the needs of the young person. Government Guidance¹ produced by the Department of Education advises professionals to consider seven questions when considering whether or not it is appropriate to share information. These are:
- Is there a clear and legitimate purpose for sharing information?
 - Does the information enable a living person to be identified?
 - Is the information confidential?
 - Do you have consent to share?
 - Is there sufficient public interest to share information?
 - Are you sharing information appropriately and securely?
 - Have you properly recorded your information sharing decision?
- 5.3 **Early Intervention with the young person's family** - Somerset embraces the notion that, generally speaking, the best place for young people to be is at home, as long as it is safe and appropriate for them to be there. **Wherever possible, if it is reasonable for the young person to return home, this will be the preferred option.** Consequently, careful assessment of family circumstances should be made, to investigate whether reconciliation can be made.
- 5.3.1 Factors such as overcrowding or financial problems may have lead to a young person being asked to leave the family home. In these cases, referral to other agencies may be appropriate. For example for issues such as debt management it may be that referral to a specialist advise agencies could prevent homelessness, or if the family is overcrowded a referral to Homefinder Somerset, Somerset's choice based lettings scheme my be appropriate. This action should be recorded as an outcome of the contact with the family.
- 5.3.2 **Family negotiation/reconciliation** in relation to homelessness prevention can be beneficial in helping a young person to return to the family home. This may be on a permanent basis, or as part of a planned transition into independent living. Family negotiation with an aim of reconciliation may be arranged through P2i services. P2i is Somerset's Youth Housing Provision (see appendix 3 for contact details).

1. Information Sharing: Guidance for practitioners and managers - <https://www.education.gov.uk/publications/standard/Integratedworking/Page1/DCSF-00807-2008#downloadableparts>

5.3.3 Where it is not possible for the young person to return home, intervention may still be appropriate to form a new type of relationship between the parents / carers and the young person. This new relationship can be beneficial in helping the young person settle into independent living by having family support during the transitional period. This is not to be seen as a replacement for professional support where it is required.

5.4 **Emergency Response** – When a young person presents as homeless or at risk of being homeless to any agency, a P2i triage assessment of need must be carried out to establish whether there is a need for urgent temporary accommodation. This may require contact with the parents or last residence of the young person to verify that the information being given is accurate, and that both sides of any dispute are acknowledged. When making this assessment, the following factors may be taken into account:

- Can homelessness be prevented?
- What were the circumstances surrounding the young person's decision, or requirement, to leave the parental or last home?
- Is the young person at risk of harm if they return?
- Where did the young person sleep last night?
- Do they have somewhere safe to sleep tonight, i.e. other family / friends, if they cannot return?
- Does the young person have the capacity to cope on their own
- Are there other significant factors which are relevant to this case, such as risk of harm to other family members or the public, a return to offending behaviour, or increased risk of substance abuse?

Each case must be assessed on its own individual circumstances and the list above should not be seen as exhaustive.

5.4.1 Safeguarding issues, such as the vulnerability of other siblings in the home, could also be a factor, and detailed assessment of a family's circumstances should be investigated. If there is a safeguarding concern, a referral should be made to Somerset Direct immediately (see appendix 3 for contact information), using the P2i triage safeguarding form contained within the triage assessment, and stating clearly the urgency of the situation.

5.4.2 The use of an authority's discretionary powers may be requested if this will help resolve an issue to the benefit of the young person (including dependants or families). It is expected that authorities will be flexible in their approach to resolving difficulties within the bounds of their statutory duties, where they have a recognised responsibility, and in the spirit of this Protocol.

- 5.4.3 Wherever possible, contact with the young person's family should be made to assess the home circumstances and to verify information, unless it is felt that this would endanger the young person or others in the household.
- 5.4.4 When a return home or prevention is not successful, P2i emergency host family accommodation as a preference, or P2i emergency units should be utilised. Under no circumstances should a 16 or 17 year old young person be placed in Bed and Breakfast accommodation without explicit agreement from the relevant Children Social Care manager and the Housing Options area manager. The Children and Families Assessment should continue.
- 5.4.5 P2i accommodation options can be used as a resource to meet the statutory requirements of both Children's Social Care and Housing services, but where there is no availability, or the resource is considered inappropriate, Children's Social Care, Housing Options Team, or The Emergency Duty Team will be required to identify an alternative.
- 5.5 **Managing young people's expectations** - When a young person approaches any of the organisations that are available to give advice and assistance it is vital that the expectations of the young person are managed appropriately from the start. Many young people have false beliefs about what is available to them; what the duties and obligations of the statutory agencies are, and therefore what their own rights and responsibilities entail. They may also be ill-prepared for dealing with the realities of independent living, facing issues such as loneliness, poverty and peer-pressure without adequate support.
- 5.5.1 It is therefore important to make sure that young people understand
- What homelessness is and that the preferred option for an agency will always be prevention
 - The responsibilities/consequences of making homelessness application, or living away from home
 - The likelihood of obtaining accommodation
 - What type of accommodation may be available to them (i.e. hostel, foyer, shared accommodation)
 - Financial responsibilities/management i.e. rent, bills, benefits, or wages
 - Their need for emotional support, and healthy living
 - Education, training or employment status and aspirations having an impact on a young person's accommodation requirements, for example having space to study or unwind

- Information about anti-social behaviour and/or offending behaviour and the consequences of losing their accommodation through their own actions
- Support available to help young people to remain at home

5.5.2 Professionals can use the Somerset leaflet *'Are you aged 16 or 17 and thinking of leaving home? A guide to help you when you are considering leaving home or living on your own in the Somerset area'*, to help the young person to understand what they can expect.

5.5.3 Until a young person reaches the age of 18, they are the responsibility of their parents or legal guardians. It is important that both the young person and their parents are aware of this, as it has an impact on the services or benefits that a young person is able to access. If a parent/carer/guardian is unable to continue to accommodate the young person they need to state clearly in writing the reasons why. Contact with parents or carers should be made to set out the realistic options available, and dispel myths about duties owed to young people. Ideally home visits are the best method, but this is not always practical.

5.5.5 Within all agencies lead officers should take responsibility for ensuring that front-line officers have sufficient levels of understanding and knowledge to give accurate and up to date information to young people, parents, carers and others, for example through interagency meetings and training sessions. Professional consultation from Children's Services or the Local Housing Options Service should be made if there is any uncertainty in advice or information given. All relevant agencies can receive regular updates from attendance at the area Youth Housing Panels.

5.6 **The Capacity of the young person to manage independent accommodation** – Agencies need to assess the ability of a young person to be able to cope with the realities of independent living, and their means of being able to support themselves financially and emotionally, albeit with floating or other support where appropriate.

6. P2i Provider Roles and Responsibilities

- 6.1 Pathways to Independence (P2I) is a multi-agency integrated housing related support service for young people aged 16-25 who reside in, or have a local connection with the Somerset area. The service is designed to allow young people with housing related needs to progress along a pathway of outcome focused needs led provision until they are able to live independently without the need for support. First and foremost however it will attempt to prevent the need for a young person to step onto the pathway at all, through targeted prevention measures.
- 6.2 A P2I Hub, in each District will serve as the main access point and will provide advice and information on a range of issues. It will also assess and coordinate housing and accommodation related support for young people according to need (for contact details see appendix 3)
- 6.3 All young people requiring any P2I service must be referred to the P2I Hubs. Following a triage process each young person entering the pathway will have an integrated and holistic independence plan reflecting their individual needs, outcomes and preferences. This may or may not include access to supported housing.
- 6.4 The primary focus of the P2I Hubs is to provide information, advice, support and guidance to help young people make positive choices about their future housing related requirements with an emphasis on homelessness prevention and sustainable progression options.
- 6.5 To ensure the young people accessing the P2I Hub receive a holistic service aimed at addressing the source of their housing related issue, the P2I Hub will assist young people with the following basic functions:
 - Advice and information about learning opportunities, raising their aspirations and helping them find direction, including opportunities to volunteer
 - Enabling young people, through appropriate referrals, to make safe and informed choices about their health and wellbeing
 - Identify opportunities for young people, particularly the most disadvantaged, to develop their social and emotional skills through positive activities and informal learning
 - Identify vulnerable young people and provide support to turn around their lives in an attempt to prevent their problems becoming more serious
 - Enable all young people to have a real influence over provision and be actively involved in deliveryThis list is not exclusive.
- 6.5.1 The P2I Hubs will achieve these functions through:
 - Responding appropriately to all young people who present to the service
 - Identify young people's needs through assessments
 - Allocate appropriate resources according to need

- Record and monitor young people's experiences and progression.
- 6.6 The P2I Hub will respond to the range of issues young people have, ensuring they know where to go to get the help they need and that workers understand the core issues presented by the young people.
- 6.7 **Outcomes** for young people will be linked to the six service standards, which are also the key outcomes for the P2I service model. The change will have successfully reshaped our youth housing related support services if we can show we have:
- Prevented young people from becoming homeless and/or from needing to enter the care system.
 - Enabled young people to access safe environments and have an understanding of how to keep themselves safe
 - Helped young people develop an understanding of their health and wellbeing requirements and how to maintain a healthy lifestyle
 - Raised young people's aspirations and enabled them to work towards economic wellbeing and financial security
 - Encouraged young people to make a positive contribution to their community and to their future
 - Helped young people achieve and maintain independent living
 - Created increased opportunities for young people to access other services
 - Improved the quality of services from the perspective of young people
 - Increased the variety of ways for young people to make use of youth support services
 - Ensure that the young people most in need are able to access the P2I services
 - Improved young people's satisfaction rate of services
- 6.8 **Process for Young People moving from an institution (For example, Mental Health or prison).** Some young people will be seeking move on solutions from institutional environments, such as mental health units, or prison. These young people will require careful management and a clear plan on action will need to be in place to help the young person to adjust to their new surroundings and to give them the best chance of successfully sustaining their accommodation.
- 6.9 **Process for Instant Eviction.** As eviction prevention is a key expectation within P2I, evictions should be kept to an absolute minimum. However the service is designed to deal with all young people and it is realistic to expect that situations may arise which causes young people to behave in a way which is unacceptable. It is envisaged that such behaviour is likely to include violence, Sexually criminal/inappropriate behaviour, or an action which places other people working or living in the accommodation at immediate risk. In

this circumstance it may be necessary for the young person to be evicted as a matter of urgency.

6.10 Decision/Escalation Process. Where action is agreed and straightforward the P2I Hub staff will have the authority to arrange for the deployment of necessary resources. Decisions will always be made using the checklist contained and using the priority matrix contained within appendix 6.

6.10.1 Where there is a disagreement within the P2I Hub, as to the type or level of resource needed, or there are two possible young people for one resource, a decision should be escalated to the P2I Coordinator who will have designated responsibility from the P2I budget holder. If Children's Social Care Officers or District Council Officers are not satisfied with the decision of the P2I Coordinator, decisions should be escalated to the P2I budget holder, who will consult the Head of Children's Social Care.

7. Care Leavers and Preparation for Leaving Care

- 7.1 A **needs assessment** will be undertaken by a Social Worker in order to prepare a **Pathway Plan** when the young person is 16. The Pathway Plan will be reviewed regularly, at least every six months, continuing after they cease to be looked after. The Pathway Plan is the basis for planning towards the young person's independent living, and will take account of the young person's needs for support, health care, education / training or employment. At this stage future accommodation needs and where the young person hopes to live will be a central issue.
- 7.2 When the young person is 16 they will be allocated a **Personal Advisor**. The Personal Advisor acts as the focal point to ensure that the young person is provided with the right kind of personal support as they make their transition to adulthood.
- 7.2.1 It is usual Somerset County Council practice that the Personal Advisor for 16 and 17 year old young people will be their allocated social worker and for a 16 or 17 year old in supported accommodation there will also be an allocated Leaving Care Worker..
- 7.2.2 In exceptional circumstances someone else may take on the role of Personal Advisor, if that is in accordance with the young person's wishes. This person must be suitably qualified and appointed by a manager within Children's Social Care. If that is agreed, there will also be an allocated Leaving Care Worker
- 7.3 It is important that there is P2i Local Provider and District Housing Department involvement and discussion at this early stage, at least 6 months before they leave care if possible. As a minimum this would involve relevant details of the young person and their future needs being provided to the Department, and may involve someone from the Department or another appropriate housing agency attending a planning or review meeting.
- 7.4 The young person should be encouraged to register on Homefinder Somerset as soon as they are ready to live independently, whilst considering all other options available. If they are 16, but have not yet left school, they will be unable to register until after they have officially left school. The on-line application form should be completed as part of their transition preparations, and assistance with completion offered. The Homelessness Act 2002 amended the Housing Act 1996 to state that a reasonable preference must be given to people towards whom the Council has accepted a duty to secure accommodation under homelessness and Care Leavers provision, and this is reflected in Homefinder Somerset's Banding Policy¹.

1. Homefinder Somerset Policy:

<http://www.homefindersomerset.co.uk/Data/Pub/StreamTemp/pp1iqabq.pdf>

- 7.5 **Homefinder Somerset and Young People Leaving Care** – From October 2011, young people leaving care will be awarded bronze level until they reach the age of 18. When the young person reaches 18, and it is agreed within a young person approaching 18 meeting, or via written confirmation that they are ready to move on to independence, the young person will be placed onto the Gold Band. If the young person is still 16 or 17, but ready to move to independent accommodation, Children's Social Care and the Local Housing Options Team can discuss the case and, if deemed appropriate the young person can also be placed onto Gold Band, prior to their 18th birthday. This may be particularly appropriate where a young person is 16 or 17 years old and also a young parent. It is important that the young person has a pathway plan in place.
- 7.5.1 Children's Social Care or the young person's family may be required to act as a guarantor, or hold the young person's tenancy in trust in these cases. This will need to be agreed on a case by case basis.
- 7.6 **Emergency Assessments** - Where a young person presents themselves as homeless and seeking accommodation to either the District Housing Department or The Children and Young People's Directorate, and states they were previously looked after, it will be important to establish as a first step that this is a **relevant** young person, and which local authority last provided care (as this will determine who will have financial responsibility).

8. Other Vulnerable Groups of Young People

8.1 Teenage parents - Local Authority departments such as education, Children's services and youth support services have a crucial role in working together and with key partners such as health and the voluntary sector to reduce teenage pregnancy rates. But the housing needs of these young people who become parents needs to be considered a priority.

8.1.1 Access to good quality housing with support is crucial as this has a considerable impact on achieving better outcomes in terms of parenting, re-engagement with learning and young parents and babies' health.

8.1.2 Agencies with responsibilities for this group of young people should work together to ensure that:

- No 16-17 year old teenage parents are placed in unsupported accommodation, but are referred to suitable supported accommodation or suitable accommodation with a referral to appropriate floating support packages
- Supported accommodation is monitored and offers a quality service to young parents
- Continue to carry out consultation with young parents and ensure they are involved in service delivery

8.2 Young people coming out of custody - The procedure for this group of young people is much clearer if the young person is a care leaver. It is good practice that from the very beginning of a young person's time in custody, all key staff involved with the young person should begin planning for release and resettlement. This process should be led by the Youth Offending Team and it is their responsibility to secure the involvement of the local Housing Options Service or registered social landlord where housing is required. The Youth Offending Team or Probation Service must call a multi-agency meeting prior to release. It is important to note that the local Housing Options Service may not have a duty, unless the young person is eligible and in priority need.

8.2.1 When a care leaver enters custody, both Youth Offending and Children's Social Care colleagues should contribute to the plan for the young person's resettlement on release. The young person should be provided with suitable accommodation, with the appropriate degree of support. If the young person is remanded or serving a short sentence, consideration should be given to retaining the young person's accommodation placement for their return on release. If the young person is in receipt of benefits, it is important that the lead agency contact the local housing benefits department to explore the implications for their continued rent payments. If this is not possible or appropriate, arrangements should be made to store the young person's belongings.

8.2.2 A review of the pathway plan should be carried out at least a month before release in order to give sufficient time for pre-release planning. For a 16/7 year old, it should be exceptional for a review not to take place. Ideally no later than 14 days before release, a care leaver must know:

- who is collecting them;
- where they will be living;
- the reporting arrangements;
- sources of support – including out of hours;
- arrangements for education or employment;
- arrangements for meeting continuing health needs;
- arrangements for financial support;
- when they can expect to see their Personal Advisor;
- the roles and responsibilities of the respective leaving care and youth offending staff.

8.2.3 In all cases the responsible P2i provider will be within the place where the young person's was last resident.

9. Escalation process and conflicts of interest

9.1 This protocol is designed to reduce conflict between agencies to ensure the best possible outcome for homeless young people. As stated above, there are a number of strategies and policies alongside which this protocol must work, and it is important to recognise that there may be conflicts between different organisations' duties, policies and practices. There are four main areas where conflict of interests can occur:

- Where the interests of the young person conflict with the needs of related persons, such as siblings, partners, and dependents (including unborn children);
- Where the roles and professional ethos of agencies conflict, such as intervention / advocacy / statutory duties;
- Where financial constraints result in funding priorities not being aligned between responsible authorities;
- The capacity of the young person.

9.2 Where conflicts occur and there is no clear over-riding priority according to legislative or case-law precedent, in complex cases, or where a Professional Consultation advises, the presenting agency(ies) will call a **Multi-Agency Meeting** to discuss the best way forward. Young people and all relevant agencies will be notified of any decisions the meeting makes in writing within 5 working days.

9.2.1 Meeting notes will be taken and distributed to all agencies involved in the meeting. These notes will include:

- details of the concerns or conflict;
- identified risks (with solutions/mitigating actions where possible);
- objections raised, or justifications for refusal to take specified actions;
- any decisions taken to resolve the concern or conflict, specifying actions and timeframes;
- agreed resolution.

9.3 Where agreement cannot be reached through this means, Childrens Social Care will be responsible for arranging temporary accommodation if necessary while further investigations are carried out, and managers of the officers involved in the Planning Meeting will be called together to try and reach a solution. Children's Social care may ask the local Housing Options Team for assistance if they are unable to identify an appropriate resource. If a young person has chosen not to be accommodated by Children Social care and this

decision has been accepted, this will be the responsibility of the local Housing Service within the District Authority. Where it is agreed that the responsibility actually lays with the Authority who are not paying for the accommodation, a recharge for accommodation costs will be made.

- 9.4 If in the event of this still not resolving the issue, the case will be referred to the appropriate senior managers within the area District Council offices and within Childrens services.

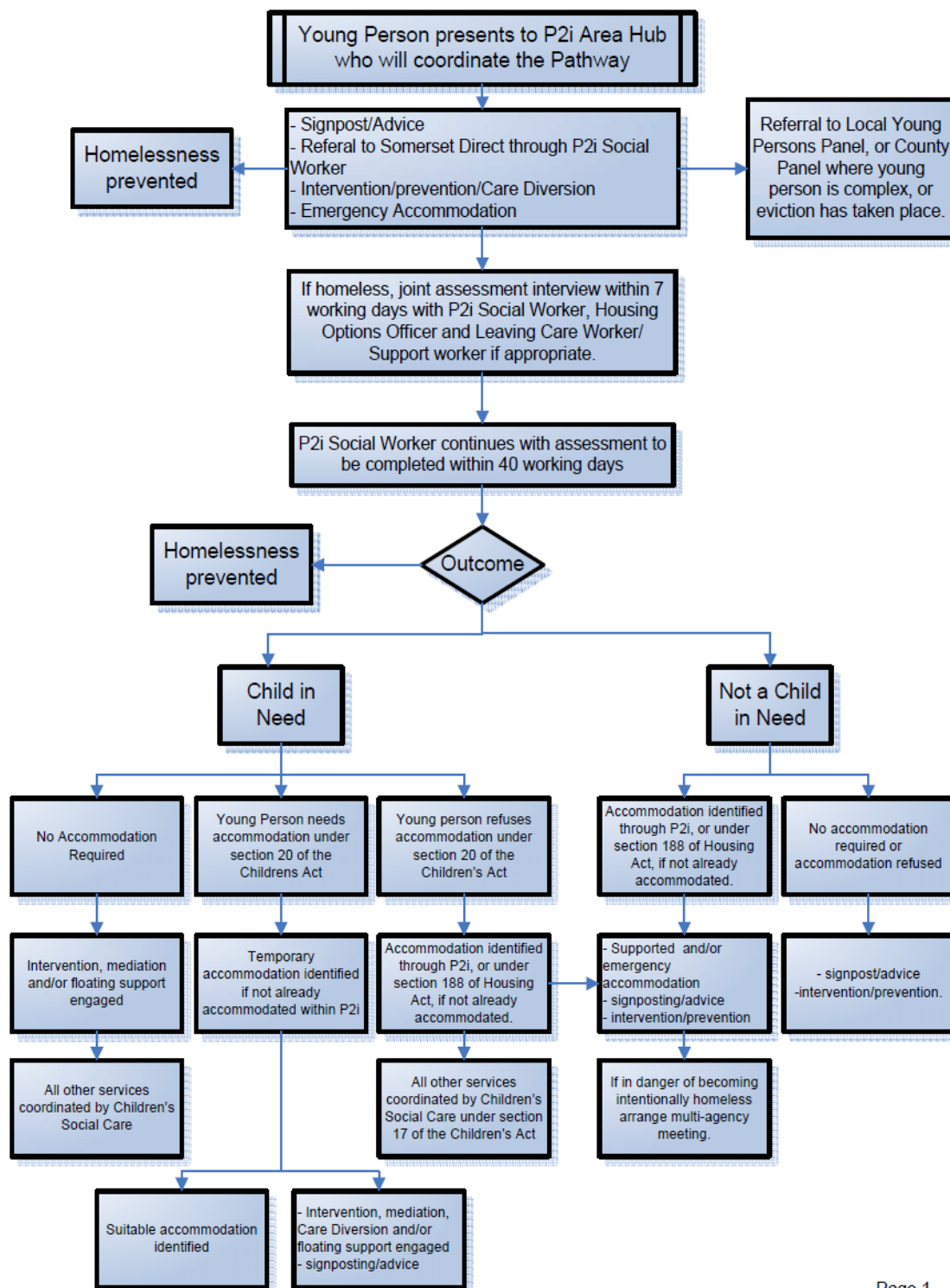
Appendix 1

Initial approach to P2i Hub		
Task	Role/Responsible Agency	
	District Council	Children's Social Care
If the young person is 16 but under statutory school leaving age, i.e. the end of Yr 11, or an Unaccompanied Asylum Seeking Child refer to Children's Social Care (via Somerset Direct if not an open case)		✓
<p>If over statutory school leaving age first ask can homelessness be prevented? Refer to P2i area Hub for prevention services.</p> <p>If prevention not successful or possible treat as 'homelessness application' Part 7 1996 Housing Act Decide if:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The young person is homeless or likely to be so within 28 days (Section 184) and • The young person is eligible for assistance • Has a priority need for accommodation if needed • Is not intentionally homeless • Has a local connection <p>Immediate duty (S18820) to provide interim accommodation if required pending a decision about whether a substantive duty is owed</p>	✓	✓
Make a referral to Children's Social Care for joint Children and Families, via Somerset Direct	✓	✓
If conclusion of Children and Families Assessment is that the young person is not a Child in Need or does not want to be provided with accommodation under Section 20 Children Act, District Council to continue to provide accommodation accommodation via the P2i, benefits and support under S17 may be provided	✓	✓
If a young person is refusing Section 20 accommodation but is deemed vulnerable, or if there is no agreement about the outcome of a Children and Families Assessment, a multi-agency meeting is to be convened by Children's Social Care as the lead agency.		✓

Referrals to Children's Services				
Task	Role/Responsible Agency			
	Somerset Direct	Area P2i Social Worker	Leaving Care	P2i Hub/District Council
For new cases, record 'contact reason code' as "homelessness"	✓	✓		
For open cases, record a new contact with 'contact reason code' as "homelessness" and link to referral		✓		
Carry out initial Child In Need assessment jointly with District Council Housing Options service in accordance with Children and Families Assessment processes.	✓	✓		✓
If, before the IA is carried out, it appears that the young person has nowhere safe to stay that night, secure suitable emergency accommodation for them.		✓		
If the outcome of the Children and Families Assessment is that accommodation under Section 20 is required, refer to placements team or Leaving Care service as appropriate. Leaving Care may request assistance from local Housing Options Services in identifying suitable accommodation.		✓	✓	✓
All Children Looked After requirements apply and Protocol processes need to be initiated.		✓		
Children's Social Care Social Worker will be the lead worker with the support of Leaving Care		✓	✓	
Financial and other practical support for young person placed in semi/independence is provided by the Leaving Care team			✓	
If a young person is refusing Section 20 accommodation but is deemed vulnerable by Children's Social Care, or if there is no agreement about the outcome of a Children and Families Assessment, a multi-agency meeting is to be convened by Children's Social Care as the lead agency.		✓		

Appendix 2

HOMELESS PROCEDURE FOR YOUNG PEOPLE AGED 16 AND 17



Appendix 3

More Details

If you would like to know more about the services being provided, or the work that led to the services being commissioned you can contact:

- Somerset County Council
Vikki Hearn, P2I Co-ordinator
01823 358682
- Somerset Coast YMCA
Sedgemoor Hub
01278 726040
- Knightsstone Housing Association
South Somerset Hub
01935 462799
- Mendip YMCA
Mendip Hub
01749 674773 or 01373 473525
- Taunton Association for the Homeless
Taunton Deane Hub
01823 271326



www.p2i.org.uk



Appendix 4

Useful Contacts

Somerset Direct **0845 345 9122**

www.somerset.gov.uk

South Somerset District Council **01935 462 462**

www.southsomerset.gov.uk

Taunton Deane Borough Council **01823 356 356**

www.tauntondeane.gov.uk

Sedgemoor District Council **0845 408 2540**

www.sedgemoor.gov.uk

West Somerset Council **01643 703 704**

www.westsomersetonline.gov.uk

Mendip District Council **0300 303 8588**

www.mendip.gov.uk

Somerset Advice Network

www.somersetadvice.net

Appendix 5

Implications of being looked after under Section 20 The Children Act 1989 or applying for accommodation under housing legislation.

	Section 20 looked after by County Council route	Homelessness route
Role of agency in relation to the young person	County Council has corporate parenting responsibilities up to age of 21 or 25 if in education, in partnership with parents whilst young person under 18. Children's Social Care is responsible for suitable accommodation while young person is 16/17.	District Council will facilitate the provision of accommodation unless young person is deemed intentionally homeless, or they are able to prevent the young person from becoming homeless. Children's Social Care to assess and plan for as long as need exists
Type of accommodation that could be provided	Immediate need <ul style="list-style-type: none"> * Foster Care * Residential Children's home * Supported Lodgings with a family * Accommodation with support on the premises * Accommodation with floating support * Emergency Host Family * Planned provision; <ul style="list-style-type: none"> * Foster Care * Residential Children's home * Supported Lodgings with a family * Accommodation with support on the premises or with floating support 	Immediate need <ul style="list-style-type: none"> * Emergency Host Family * Accommodation with support on the premises * Accommodation with floating support * Bed and Breakfast Planned provision <ul style="list-style-type: none"> * Accommodation with support on the premises or with floating support * Accommodation application via Homefinder Somerset (subject to provision of guarantor) * Privately rented accommodation (subject to provision of guarantor)
Legal requirements	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> * Allocation of a Personal Advisor until 21 (or 25 if in continuing education) * Initial and annual health assessment * Care Plan * Pathway Plan regarding the young person's best 	If a CIN, Children's Social Care will <ul style="list-style-type: none"> * Write a Child In Need plan about relevant aspects of the young person's life for as long as is required by young person.

	<p>interests as defined by Every Child Matters up to age of 21/25.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> * Independently chaired Reviews of Care Plan and Pathway Plan at a minimum of 6 monthly intervals * Personal Education Plan if in continuing education. * Allocated worker to meet with young person within defined minimum requirements. * Sharing of information between a range of agencies about the young person and their family as required to carry out of statutory duties 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> * Informally review of Child In Need plan if continues over 6 months. <p>District Council</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> * Offer temporary accommodation in the first instance unless intentionally homeless * Will always look at prevention of homelessness first
Staff involved	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> * Allocated social worker * Leaving care worker * Independent Reviewing Officer * Worker in supported accommodation provision if applicable * Targeted youth support worker if not in Education, Training & Employment 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> * Worker in supported acc provision if applicable * Allocated worker within Children's Social Care if requested by young person * Targeted Youth Support Team in relation to Education, Training & Employment issues if applicable * Floating support worker if applicable
Requirements of young person	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> * Agree to necessary information sharing * Meet with staff as required by accommodation provider * Adhere to terms of placement agreement such as behaving in an appropriate way * Meet with Social Worker at least monthly * Meet with Leaving Care Worker at least weekly if not in Education, 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> * Sign on for benefits fortnightly if not in education or training? * Adhere to terms of accommodation agreement such as pay rent and service charge for utilities and behave in an appropriate way. Failure to do so may result in an intentional homeless decision. In this case Housing Options Teams will have

	<p>Training & Employment to access maintenance allowance</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> * Attend for health, care and pathway plan assessments * Meet with Social Worker, Independent Reviewing Officer and Leaving Care Worker to review Pathway Plan 	no further duty to provide accommodation
Finances	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> * Maintenance allowance at Benefit rate. Paid weekly or split over a week if not managing money correctly. May be paid in kind (e.g. food parcel, clothes shopping). This will include deductions for food, amenities and damage deposit. * Incentive if in continuing education and help with education costs subject to application for universal education benefits 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> * 16+ Benefits paid fortnightly * Children's Social care may help with education costs subject to application for assessment of need and universal education benefits
Requirement of young person's family	Involvement in assessment, planning and review processes	* None

Appendix 6

P2I Resource Decision to Accommodate Checklist

	Yes	No
Has all prevention initiatives been considered and have reasons for not progressing with prevention actions been logged. Including, where appropriate, the reason why the young person is unable to return home.		
Have all other available options been considered and have all considered options been logged.		
Does the young person meet the priorities for service criteria? If not have reasons for proceeding with the use of accommodation resource been logged with the P2I coordinator.		
Has an Action plan for support been developed and does this include multi-agency actions.		
Where a young person does not meet the criteria has time scales and an action plan for next steps been agreed with the young person		

Prioritising Young People for P2I Services

Service	Priority and criteria	Non-priority actions
Emergency Accommodation	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Young people proven to be roofless aged 16-19, or assessed as particularly vulnerable (reasons supplied), or Care leavers up to 21, or 25 if in education) 2. Young people needing to be removed from current accommodation due to behaviour, violence, at risk of violence, or as part of an eviction prevention programme 3. Young people proven to be roofless aged 20 – 25 	<p>What other emergency temporary options are available to the young person? – nightstop, negotiation with friends and family (be aware of safeguarding checks)</p> <p>Homelessness application.</p>
Supported Accommodation	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Care Leavers, or Young people proven to be roofless aged 16-19, or assessed as particularly 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Do they meet the eligibility for P4A • Homefinder Somerset County

	<p>vulnerable (reasons supplied)</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 2. Young people needing to be removed from current accommodation due to violence etc 3. Young people proven to be roofless aged 20 – 25 	<p>Council</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Private Sector scheme referral or private let • Temp solution with friends or family while P2I plan created
Mediation/ Reconciliation	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Young people aged 16-19, or assessed as particularly vulnerable (reasons supplied) 2. Young people aged 20+ 	<p>Older people where and/or other agencies could help to deliver a plan – promise mentor, coach, volunteer, support worker, Family Focus</p>
Outreach/ Floating support/ Resettlement	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Young people aged 16-19, or assessed as particularly vulnerable (reasons supplied) moving on from Supported accommodation 2. Young people aged 16-19, or assessed as particularly vulnerable as part of a reconciliation or eviction prevention programme 3. Young people requiring support as part of a tenancy sustainment programme 4. Young people aged 20 moving on from Supported accommodation 	<p>Where a young person is not a priority, look for other resource to resource a plan – Leaving Care, Targeted Youth Support, Family Focus, P4A, Promise for example – creating a joint package.</p>
Move – On	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. System for Homefinder Somerset to be agreed. – Possibly same as currently exists, or that agreed for Care Leavers. 	