

5.23 Introduction

5.23.1 Purpose of this protocol

This protocol is intended to improve joint working between the Leeds City Council's Environment and Neighbourhoods Department, Children's Services' Pathway Planning Team, Children's Asylum and Refugee Team, Gipsil and Archway support projects and the Leeds ALMOs, and outlines how referrals for rehousing of young people leaving care should be managed.

This includes referrals made for unaccompanied asylum seeking children who have been given leave to remain in the UK.

The protocol applies to the young person's initial approach for housing. If the young person makes a subsequent approach (after being rehoused by Leeds City Council or rehoused via a nomination by a RSL), their application should be dealt with in line with the lettings policy.

The protocol should be used to refer young people for a planned move into a council property, not for temporary accommodation. The protocol relates only to the rehousing of young people Leeds City Council has a corporate parent duty to.

5.23.2 Referring for council accommodation

The young person will be eligible to be considered for rehousing on the LHR from their 16th birthday or the date they became eligible.

Care leavers may be supported by one of the following agencies who can refer them for rehousing:

- Leeds City Council Pathway Planning Team (who may also make referrals for young people supported by Gipsil or Archway)
- Leeds City Council Children's Asylum and Refugee Team
- Leeds City Council Area Team – normally when awaiting transfer to the Pathway Planning Team

The Pathway Planning Team or the Children's Asylum and Refugee Team will assess the young person's housing situation and eligibility for support. Referrals will normally only be made once the young person has successfully completed their 'Passport to Accommodation' which demonstrates they are able to live independently.

If the young person needs rehousing, they will complete the following with the care leaver:

- Leeds Homes Register (LHR) application form;
- Referral form; and
- Declaration signed by the young person.

At the point of making an application for housing, housing will accept the written referral from Children's Services as proof of identity for care leavers aged 16-17. Full proofs will be required when the customer reaches the age of 18, and at point of sign up to a council tenancy.

Gipsil and Archway staff will make referrals for the young people they are supporting, and forward them to the Pathway Planning Team to confirm the council has a duty towards the young person, who will then forward the form on to Housing Support.

In a small number of cases, care leavers may be receiving support from local Social Services Area Teams, pending transfer to the Pathway Planning Team. If this is the case, it will be indicated on the referral form, with details of the Social Worker involved. The Pathway Planning Team will authorise these referrals to confirm the council has a duty to assist them.

In all cases, the referral will:

- include details of the type of accommodation which would be suitable for the young person, including details of support networks, employment and training, family contacts, as well as any geographical areas which should be avoided, and
- confirm the level of support they, and any other agencies, will be providing to the young person to help them manage their tenancy.

5.23.3 Where to refer to

The paperwork listed above should be forwarded to the nominated officer in Housing Support, who will register the form and flag the application with a User Defined Characteristic (UDC) that the customer is a 'Pathway Planner'. Contact details of the young person's Personal Adviser / Social Worker will be added to the notes on the housing application. This flag will appear on the front screen whenever the application is opened.

Staff will award 'Band A – Additional needs: children' for 120 days to enable the young person to make expressions of interest in properties advertised through the Leeds Homes choice based lettings scheme. The priority award will be backdated to the date of their 16th birthday or, where the referral is made for an unaccompanied asylum seeking child, to the date they became eligible for assistance.

Housing Support will then forward the housing application form to the ALMO office of first choice.

5.23.4 Finding a home

Care leavers will normally be expected to use the CBL scheme to secure rehousing, which may include officers placing assisted bids on behalf of the young person (see section 7.11).

Young people who have been awarded Band A priority may be offered a property relatively quickly, because the priority award is backdated to their 16th birthday. This means the young person should only bid on properties they would accept if offered.

Where a care leaver is unable to secure accommodation through the choice based lettings scheme, ALMOs can consider making them a direct offer of accommodation under the direct letting category 'Corporate Parent'.

5.23.5 Offers of accommodation

Offers of accommodation will be made in writing to the young person. Offers of accommodation must be suitable, as defined under NI 137: 'Accommodation is to be regarded as suitable if it provides safe, secure and affordable provision for young people Accommodation that clearly exposes the person to risk of harm or social exclusion by reason of its location or other factors should be coded as 'unsuitable'.'

Young people leaving care will normally be made one reasonable offer of accommodation. An unreasonable refusal may result in them losing their priority award.

16 and 17 year olds will need a trustee who will act as a 'responsible adult' who can be contacted about any tenancy issues such as arrears. The trustee is not a guarantor, and is not required to financially underwrite the tenancy. A member of the Pathway Planning Team, Children's Asylum and Refugee Team, Gipsil or Archway can act as the trustee in their professional capacity.

5.23.6 Contact details

Pathway Planning Team	Children's Asylum and Refugee Team
Hunslet Hall Annex Disraeli Terrace LS11 6AU Tel: 270 0217	Dewsbury Road One Stop Shop 190 Dewsbury Road LS11 6PF Tel: 2443477
Gipsil	Archway
27/33 Brander Street Leeds LS9 6QH Tel: 248 1301	Archway 95 Roundhay Road LS8 5AQ
Housing Support, Leeds City Council	
Housing Support 5 th Floor West Merrion House Leeds LS2 8BB Tel: 247 6384 Contacts: Aidan Smith/Antony Hodgkinson	