

Multi agency Process Guidance:

Supporting Young People aged 16 or 17 years old who are at risk of homelessness

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1. Introduction

- 1.1 Being homeless at any age is a traumatic experience, but young people aged 16-17 who have been told to leave home face a frightening time trying to access safe support. The best place for most young people is at home and most young people and families can resolve their difficulties with help. In exceptional situations, this is not possible and this guidance seeks to clarify what young people (and those services working with young people to support them) can expect if they make contact with Nottingham City Council (NCC).
- 1.2 Nottingham City Council recognises and accepts that it has a corporate responsibility towards young people with regard to housing and homelessness issues. Through the joint protocol (*Nottingham City Council Joint Protocol for Children and Young People in Need of Housing*), the aim is to provide an effective joint working approach to ensure the delivery of services meet local demand (within available resources).
- 1.3 Nottingham City Council has a commitment in accordance with the spirit of the Southwark ruling that any 16 or 17 year old presenting as homeless will be given a package of support regardless of the outcome of their Child in Need assessment.
- 1.4 This guidance was first written in 2015 and has been reviewed 2019 to consider the changes in working practices which align with the new duties under the Homelessness Reduction Act 2017.
- 1.5 The main concern of Nottingham City Council and partners is that the young person gets the right support at the right time. A good quality holistic assessment is essential to identify the right support, advice and housing to improve the outcomes for young people.
- 1.6 Within the parameters of safeguarding duties, support plans resulting from assessments will be developed using a person centred approach; involving the young person and taking account of their wishes.
- 1.7 This guidance has been developed by a partnership of statutory and non-statutory services to set out clearly the processes that take place in response to a young person aged 16 or 17 who may present as homeless.
- 1.8 Nottingham City Council Children's Services and Housing Aid have agreed who will assess and respond to applications from homeless young people in a range of situations to ensure that they work effectively and young people know who is helping them.

2. Referrals

- 2.1 When 16 and 17 year old young people present as homeless to a non-statutory agency a MARF (Multi Agency Request Form) [here](#) will need to be completed, this should be emailed through to Children and Families Direct CandFDirect@nottinghamcity.gov.uk
- 2.2 The information within the completed MARF will be used for referrals between agencies during the assessment process to avoid duplication of assessments. The consent

section of the form should be used to ensure the referral agency can receive updates about the young person. Agencies should make it clear to the young person that they do not have to give their consent for NCC to feedback to the referring agency if they do not want to and the referral can still be made without the consent being given. The referring agency must stress to the young person the importance of providing contact details, which Children's Services are able to reach them on.

- 2.3 The agency should (as far as appropriate) establish homelessness, risk assess a return home on a temporary or permanent basis and begin to look for other immediate or future housing options with friends and family members (or via Nottingham Nightstop). The agency can contact Children's Services to check that a placement with specific people is safe.
- 2.4 The agency may determine one of the following three situations:
- That the young person is not homeless and can return home but that there may be a future risk of homelessness or precarious housing choices if support is not offered
 - That parents are saying the young person can return home but the young person feels that they cannot
 - That parents are telling services the young person can return home but are telling the young person they cannot
- 2.5 The agency should at first establish whether the young person is an open case to Children's Services. This should be via a telephone call to Children and Families Direct on (0115) 8764800.
- 2.6 If the young person is already an open case to Children's Services then the allocated social worker will need to be contacted by the referring agency. If the social worker is not available, then the team's duty Social Worker or Team Manager for that team will need to arrange for consideration of the new and additional information and deal with any homelessness issue for that young person. If there are circumstances where this process is problematic, the escalation process should be used (see 7.1)
- 2.7 The agency should make a referral to Children and Families Direct, when:
- the young person is considered by them to be homeless
 - the young person is not known to Children's Services or is a closed case to Children's Services
- 2.8 The referral should be made by a telephone call accompanied by an email containing the completed MARF. Where possible, an assessment appointment will be booked at the time of the telephone referral and the details given to the referring worker. In addition, Children and Families Direct will send a referral acknowledgement email / letter to the referring agency. This letter will confirm details of any assessment appointment made.
- 2.9 Children and Families Direct will contact Housing Aid (0115 8763300, housing.aid@nottinghamcity.gov.uk) with the details of the assessment appointment in order to arrange a joint assessment with Housing Aid if appropriate.
- 2.10 Children and Families Direct will establish full details and circumstances and if they confirm that the young person is aged 16 or 17 and at risk of homelessness then the case will be passed to the Duty Team to complete an assessment of need (to include

their wishes). The purpose of this assessment is to determine whether the young person is;

1. Homeless
2. Under 18
3. Resident in Nottingham
4. A Child in Need (CiN)

- 2.11 The assessment will be completed by a social worker in the Duty Team. The assessment will be completed within the target of 48 hours but will happen on the day of the referral if the young person is at risk of being homeless that night. The assessment will be jointly undertaken between social care and housing where appropriate.
- 2.12 If a young person presents as homeless in the first instance to Housing Aid, they will contact Children's Services to arrange a joint assessment. This assessment will combine Children's Services duty and Housing Aid's homelessness prevention duty under s.195 of the Homelessness Reduction Act 2017. The result of the assessment will be a personalised housing plan outlining the steps the young person, Children's Services, Housing Aid and any other identified agency will take in resolving the risk of homelessness for the young person.
- 2.13 There should not be circumstances where an agency is aware of this guidance but wishes to refer to Children's Services and Housing Aid at the same time. This should be avoided to minimise complications including the duplication of assessment.
- 2.14 If the young person is due to be released from a Youth Offending Institution, the below process (from 3.1) should be followed **56 days in advance of the release date**.

3. Assessments

- 3.1 A worker from the Duty Team will be allocated to undertake an assessment, establishing if the young person has an immediate housing need that day or if a Children's Assessment can be booked for a later date (but always within 48 hours). This may be the case if they have somewhere to stay that night.
- 3.2 The worker from the referring agency can accompany the young person to an assessment, if the young person wants this, to offer some continuity of support.
- 3.3 16 and 17 year olds who drop-in to Loxley House, will be seen in an appropriate environment. They will not be seen in the open reception area however, a private room may not always be available. A young person will not be refused an assessment or kept waiting for over an hour only because a private room is not available. A suitable alternative location to conduct the assessment within Loxley House will be sought.
- 3.4 A young person / referring agency can request that the Children's Assessment take place at an alternative location more convenient to the young person (e.g. college). However, the circumstances for why they cannot attend Loxley House must be fully explained and a decision will be taken by Children's Services, which will be dependent on their judgement and service capacity at the time.

- 3.5 The worker will undertake the Children's Assessment to establish support needs and risks. If the young person is able to return home then this will be recommended, if any support needs are identified then a support package will be agreed, this may be through Children's Social Care or stepped across to the Targeted Family Support Service.
- 3.6 An assessment outcome letter will be sent via email to the referring agency. This letter will contain details about the assessment including an overview of the next steps in providing accommodation and / or support. Social workers are asked to evidence that they have sent assessment outcome letters as a standard part of their supervision.
- 3.7 If the young person fails to attend an appointment for a scheduled assessment, the worker will make all possible attempts to contact the young person. However, if this does not result in a rescheduled and attended appointment then the case will be closed. Under these circumstances, an outcome letter will automatically be sent to the referring agency to advise them. The referring agency can then discuss this with the young person should they have further contact. Additionally, the details of the referral will be retained by Children's Services to remove the need to repeat information on a re-referral.
- 3.8 **Scenario a.**
If the young person is assessed as a Child in Need (CIN) and is homeless that night then Children's Services will identify appropriate accommodation and support, and the young person will be accommodated. In this situation, Children's Services will accept a responsibility for ensuring a young person is accommodated. However, they do not have to be the provider of accommodation. The type of accommodation provided will be determined by suitability and availability that day and Children's Services may request that Housing Aid support them in the provision. If this is the case, the young person will be expected to attend Housing Aid for a homelessness prevention assessment which will result in a personalised housing plan being developed (and for referral into supported accommodation if required).
- 3.9 **Scenario b.**
If the young person is assessed as a CiN and is threatened with homelessness but is not homeless that night¹ then Children's Services will determine the most suitable accommodation option for the young person and make the arrangements for this to be provided as soon as possible. Children's Services will determine and arrange the appropriate level of support required for the young person and update the referring agency with an outcome letter sent via email. Children's Services will obtain the young person's consent and refer the young person via ALERT (under section 213b of the Homelessness Reduction Act 2017) to Housing Aid for a homelessness prevention assessment which will result in a personalised housing plan being developed. Children's Services should ensure a copy of the Children's Assessment, alongside the original referral forms, are emailed to Housing Aid as part of this referral.
- 3.10 **Scenario c.**
If the young person is not a CiN but is homeless that night then Children's Services should obtain the young person's consent and use the agreed method to refer the young person (under section 213b of the Homelessness Reduction Act 2017) to Housing Aid for a homelessness prevention assessment. Children's Services should ensure a copy of

¹ For example, in a situation where the referring agency has assisted in securing somewhere for the young person to stay on a temporary basis.

the Children's Assessment, alongside the original referral forms, are emailed to Housing Aid as part of this referral. Housing Aid will complete their assessment and produce a personalised housing plan with the young person. The personalised housing plan will include the agreed steps that the young person, Housing Aid and any other identified agency will take to secure emergency accommodation (as well as to fulfil the longer-term plan to prevent or relieve homelessness for the young person). Children's Services will determine the appropriate level of ongoing support required for the young person and update the referring agency with an outcome letter sent via email.

3.11 Scenario d.

If the young person is not a CiN, is not homeless that night but is at risk of homelessness Children's Services should obtain the young person's consent and use the agreed method to refer the young person (under section 213b of the Homelessness Reduction Act 2017) to Housing Aid for a homelessness prevention assessment. Children's Services should ensure a copy of the Children's Assessment, alongside the original referral forms, are emailed to Housing Aid as part of this referral. Housing Aid will complete their assessment and produce a personalised housing plan with the young person. The personalised housing plan will include the agreed steps that the young person, Housing Aid and any other identified agency will take to fulfil the longer-term plan to prevent or relieve homelessness for the young person. Children's Services will determine the appropriate level of ongoing support required for the young person through Children's Social Care, Targeted Family Support Team or other Universal or Targeted provision and update the referring agency with an outcome letter sent via email.

3.12 Scenario e.

If the young person is not a CiN, is not homeless and is not threatened with homelessness, the social worker will determine the appropriate support and will transfer to a long term social work team or make relevant referrals to Targeted Family Support Team or other Universal provision. The support provider will fulfil the support plan and be responsible for updating authorities if the situation changes. The referring agency will be updated with an outcome letter sent via email.

4. Support arrangements

- 4.1 If a young person has been accepted as a CIN, a referral will be immediately made to a 'social work' team for support and support will commence straight away. The Team Manager will allocate the case within their team and the required support will be provided.
- 4.2 if the young person has not been determined to be a CIN but is in need of targeted Support, the Targeted Family Support Team can work with young people and their families around mediation or other support needs. They will continue to work with the young person regardless of whether the family is engaged. The young person will be provided with written information about the Targeted Family Support Team to help them understand who they are going to be supported by.
- 4.3 The referral to the Targeted Family Support Team will happen immediately after assessment. The Team will then determine how immediate the support is required and support will commence as soon as possible depending on the situation and urgency. This might be within 24 hours and will be no later than 7 days after receiving the referral.

- 4.4 If other support is identified within the personalised housing plan, Housing Aid will make a referral to the Independent Living Support Service (ILSS) for coordination.
- 4.5 In any of the above scenarios, the outcome of the Children's Assessment will be emailed by the social worker to Housing Aid.
- 4.6 A Team Around the Child Meeting is to be arranged by the social worker where additional needs are identified.
- 4.7 Family Network Meetings are to be convened by the Social worker or Targeted Family support worker and Targeted Support Team (who provide the Family Network service) when the family network consent to such a meeting to support the young person.

5. Accommodation arrangements

- 5.1 Children's Services may accept a duty to ensure that a young person is accommodated. However, they do not have to be (and the majority of the time, won't be) the providers of this accommodation. During the individual assessment of need and circumstance it will be determined which accommodation options are suitable and arrangements will be made with the relevant agencies to ensure that this accommodation is provided.
- 5.2 In an emergency situation it is likely that the accommodation will be arranged by Housing Aid (including use of hostels, emergency rooms and Nottingham Nightstop). If this is the case, the young person will be expected to attend Housing Aid so referral into supported accommodation can be facilitated. Children's Services may also make use of friends or relatives of the young person and foster care placements. There is agreement amongst partners that the use of Bed and Breakfast accommodation or hotel accommodation is undesirable and should never be used for a prolonged period of time. However, in an emergency situation where all alternative options have been exhausted and there is absolutely no alternative, there could be rare occasions where a hotel is used overnight to prevent street homelessness, this would be arranged and funded by Children's Services.
- 5.3 Longer term accommodation arrangements will include placements with other relatives or supported accommodation via the homelessness prevention gateway where they can remain until they are aged 18 and beyond. NCC assesses suitability to live independently. This will be provided alongside any appropriate support arranged via Children's Services.

6. Ongoing partnership arrangements

- 6.1 A cross-sector working group met regularly during the first year following the development of this guidance to discuss case issues where the process had not been appropriately followed or where the process had not resulted in successful outcomes. The group was dissolved in 2017 following a lengthy period of time where no cases of concern had been highlighted.
- 6.2 The Homelessness Prevention Strategy Implementation Group (SIG) is the city's partnership forum focussed on homelessness prevention. Annually, a representative from Housing Aid and Children's Services will be invited to the SIG to report on:

- Shared learning from any issues that have arisen from cases of concern
- Identification of any emerging themes and re-occurring trends and find ways to address these to improve working together.
- Opportunities for continued development of positive communication and partnership working between service areas
- Recommendations for further working arrangements within the Young Persons Pathway

6.3 Team managers will monitor issues raised via the escalation process as set out in section 7. The team manager will call an exceptional meeting of the cross-sector working group to address any re-occurring themes.

6.4 Further opportunity for partnership discussion is possible at the Homelessness Prevention Stakeholder Forum which will be introduced on a quarterly basis from 2019. Further information about these sessions is available from suzanne.combes@nottinghamcity.gov.uk

7. Monitoring, governance and review

7.1 It is essential that any issues that arise in the implementation of this guidance on a case-by-case basis are dealt with in real time to prevent any risks to the young person arising. If there are safeguarding concerns agencies should follow their organisational procedures.

7.2 If there are instances where it is felt that any party has failed to follow the process as set out in the guidance, the issue should be escalated to the relevant team manager, service manager or senior manager.

7.3 If the issue is regarding Children and Families Direct not accepting a referral or, if a referral acknowledgement email has not been received, Team managers Caroline Hose or Claire Wakeman should be contacted – Caroline Hose is available at caroline.hose@nottinghamcity.gov.uk or on 0115 8762690 and Claire Wakeman is available at claire.wakeman@nottinghamcity.gov.uk or on 0115 8762875.

7.4 If the issue is regarding an assessment outcome or, if an assessment outcome email has not been received, the contact details for the team managers are as follows:

Team	Name	Email	Telephone
Duty 1	Aisha Selassie	aisha.selassie@nottinghamcity.gov.uk	0115 8761605
Duty 2	Sam Vallee	samuel.vallee@nottinghamcity.gov.uk	0115 8762878
Duty 3	Caroline Barton	caroline.barton@nottinghamcity.gov.uk	0115 8765464

7.5 If the issue is regarding the facilitation or provision of support from the Targeted Family Support Team, the contact details for the team managers are as follows (please refer to the map attached at Appendix A. to identify the correct team manager for the area):

Team	Name	Email	Telephone
1	Lisa Ash	lisa.ash@nottinghamcity.gov.uk	0115 8762160
2	Trudy Sanders	trudy.sanders@nottinghamcity.gov.uk	0115 8764898

3	Sandra Oakley-Goodall	sandra.oakley-goodall@nottinghamcity.gov.uk	0115 8839783
4	Kirsty Davison	kirsty.davison@nottinghamcity.gov.uk	0115 8836232

7.6 If the issue is regarding the homelessness prevention assessment, personalised housing plan or the facilitation or provision of accommodation, the contact details for the managers are as follows:

Assessment	Emma James	emma.james@nottinghamcity.gov.uk	01158761116
Accommodation	Novlette Lewis	Novlette.lewis@nottinghamcity.gov.uk	01158761115

7.7 Where matters cannot be resolved they can be escalated to the Housing Aid Service Manager (Debbie.richards@nottinghamcity.gov.uk) or Head of Children's Duty and Targeted Services (Tajinder.madahar@nottinghamcity.gov.uk).

7.8 The review of this *Process Guidance: Supporting Young People aged 16 or 17 year olds who are at risk of homelessness* commenced in August 2018

7.9 The next review of the *Nottingham City Council Joint Protocol for Children and Young People in Need of Housing* will commence in April 2020.

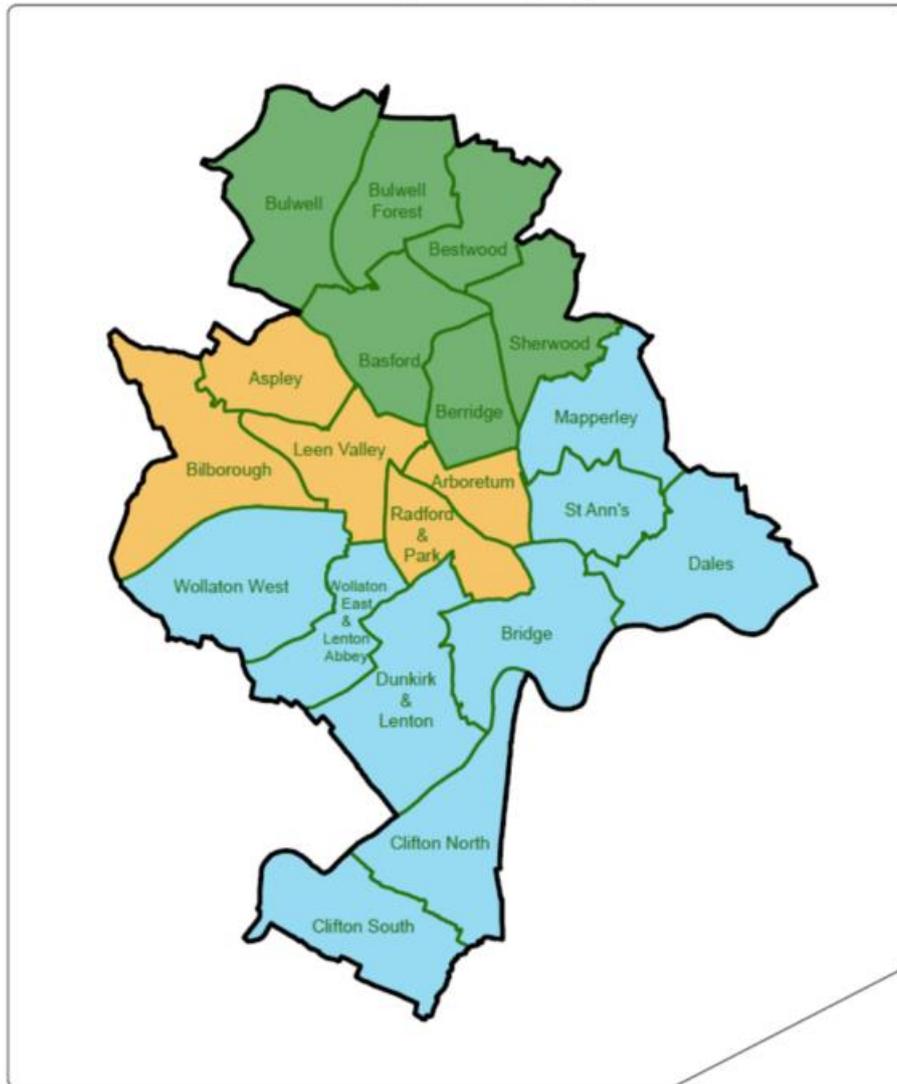
7.10 Further work is currently underway to identify housing champions for each team in Children's Services and how their role will support this process.

8. Key contacts

Service	Contact details				
Nottingham City Council Childrens Services Children and Families Direct	Service Manager	Samantha Danyluk	samantha.danyluk@nottinghamcity.gov.uk		
	Team Managers	Caroline Hose and Suzanne Eastwood 0115 8765600	caroline.hose@nottinghamcity.gov.uk claire.wakeman@nottinghamcity.gov.uk		
	Where to refer	0115 8764800	candfdirect@nottinghamcity.gov.uk		
Nottingham City Council Childrens Services Duty and Screening Team	Service Manager	Samantha Danyluk	samantha.danyluk@nottinghamcity.gov.uk		
	Team Managers	0115 8765600	Duty 1: aisha.selassie@nottinghamcity.gov.uk Duty 2: samuel.vallee@nottinghamcity.gov.uk Duty 3: caroline.barton@nottinghamcity.gov.uk		
	Duty Social Worker	0115 8765600	duty.screening@nottinghamcity.gcsx.gov.uk		
Nottingham City Council Targeted Family Support Team	Head of Service	Tajinder Madahar	tajinder.madahar@nottinghamcity.gov.uk		
	Service Manager	Corina Ioannou	corina.ioannou@nottinghamcity.gov.uk		
	Team Manager	Lisa Ash 0115 8762160	TFST 1 Basford, Bestwood, Bulwell Forest and Bulwell	lisa.ash@nottinghamcity.gov.uk	
	Team Manager	Trudy Sanders 0115 8764898	TFST 2 Aspley, Leen Valley, Hyson Green & Radford and Arboretum	trudy.sanders@nottinghamcity.gov.uk	
	Team Manager	Sandra Oakley-Goodall 0115 8839783	TFST 3 St Anns, Dales & Mapperley and Sherwood & Berridge	sandra.oakley-goodall@nottinghamcity.gov.uk	
	Team Manager	Kirsty Davison 0115 8836232	TFST 4 Bilborough, Meadows	kirsty.davison@nottinghamcity.gov.uk	

			and Lenton Abbey and Wollaton East & Wollaton West	
Nottingham City Council Housing Aid	Service Manager	Debbie Richards 0115 8761138		debbie.richards@nottinghamcity.gov.uk
	Prevention and Assessment Manager	Emma James 0115 8761116		emma.james@nottinghamcity.gov.uk
	Accommodation and Resources Manager	Novlette Lewis 0115 8761115		novlette.lewis@nottinghamcity.gov.uk
	Duty Manager	0115 8761108		housing.aid@nottinghamcity.gov.uk

New Children's Social Care and Targeted Family Support Boundaries



Key

- NEW CSC FCT Boundaries
- Wards
- City Boundary
- CSC - North
- CSC - Central
- CSC - South

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