

|   |  |                |
|---|--|----------------|
| <b>5 January 2021</b>   |  | <b>ITEM: 9</b> |
| <b>Corporate Parenting Committee</b>  |  |                |
| <b>Joint Housing Protocol for Care Leavers</b>  |  |                |
| <b>Wards and communities affected:</b><br>All   | <b>Key Decision:</b><br>Not Applicable |                |
| <b>Report of:</b> Janet Simon, Strategic Lead Child in Need and Child Protection                              |  |                |
| <b>Accountable Assistant Director:</b> Joe Tynan, Assistant Director of Children's Social Care and Early Help |  |                |
| <b>Accountable Director:</b> Sheila Murphy, Corporate Director of Children's Services                         |  |                |
| <b>This report is</b> Public  |  |                |

## **Executive Summary**

This report sets out how the Local Authority will meet its statutory duties and responsibilities to young people leaving care to support them into independent living as Adults.

Protocols should clearly lay out the processes followed by Local Authorities that support Care Leavers to transition to independent living and avoid homelessness.

### **1. Recommendation(s)**

- 1.1 For the Committee to note the statutory duties of the Local Authority to support young people in obtaining suitable accommodation and how we plan to meet these duties.**
- 1.2 For the Committee to have oversight of the joint protocols and be involved in the ongoing review of delivery across Children's Services and Housing Services.**

### **2. Introduction and Background**

- 2.1 Local Authorities have a responsibility for developing and effectively delivering a joint protocol setting out how the authority will deliver the local accommodation offered to Care Leavers and prevent homelessness.
- 2.2 The [Homelessness code of guidance](#) was revised in 2018 to reflect changes introduced by the HRA. [Chapter 22 of the Code](#) focusses specifically on Care Leavers. The Code outlines the importance of joint working when planning housing options for Care Leavers and states that:

By working together, Housing Services and Children's Services can better ensure that as a corporate parent, the appropriate accommodation and support is available to Care Leavers. (Homelessness code of guidance - Chapter 22: Care Leavers).

Furthermore, the guidance also advises that authorities should have in place joint protocols which clearly outline jointly held corporate parenting responsibilities for Care Leavers. Joint protocols should cover:

- arrangements for achieving planned, supportive transitions to independent living
- identifying homelessness risk early and acting to prevent it
- providing a quick, safe, joined up response for Care Leavers who do become homeless

### **3. Issues, Options and Analysis of Options**

3.1 None

### **4. Reasons for Recommendation**

4.1 To inform members of the work being carried out jointly between Children's Services and Housing to meet the housing needs of Thurrock's Care Leavers.

### **5. Consultation (including Overview and Scrutiny, if applicable)**

5.1 The protocol will be shared with Care Leavers and the Children in Care Council and their comments invited which will be incorporated into subsequent reviews.

### **6. Impact on corporate policies, priorities, performance and community impact**

6.1 Young People who have been in care of the Local Authority are a corporate responsibility and will have an impact on wider corporate policies and performance.

## **7. Implications**

### **7.1 Financial**

Implications verified by: **David May**  
**Strategic Lead Finance**

There are No financial implications to this report.

### **7.2 Legal**

Implications verified by: **Judith Knight**  
**Interim Deputy Head of Legal (Social Care and Education)**

The Local Authority is required under section 2 of the Children and Social Work Act 2017 to publish a local offer, which sets out the services and the support available for care leavers.

The local offer should include information on how care leavers are supported to access suitable accommodation, including the support available from housing services. Joint housing protocols should be aligned with the local offer and can help to ensure that the commitments to support Care Leavers to access and sustain accommodation are met. Local Authorities should consider providing a link to the joint protocol within the local offer so that Care Leavers, advocates and other professionals can have access to the document.

The Local Authority is required to have regard to the Homelessness Code of Practice and this Code advises Children's Services and housing to have joint protocols for Care Leavers.

The provision of social housing to Care Leavers is undertaken in line with the Council's Housing Allocation Scheme as set out at Section 8 of the attached protocol.

The Local Authority must have regard to the Corporate Parenting Principles in Section 1 of the Children and Social work Act 2017 in the exercise of functions in relation to Looked after, relevant and former relevant children.

### 7.3 Diversity and Equality

Implications verified by: **Rebecca Lee**  
**Team Manager Community Development and Equalities**

The Service is committed to practice which promotes inclusion and diversity, and will carry out its duties in accordance with the Equality Act 2010 and related Codes of Practice and Anti-discriminatory policy.

### 7.4 Other implications (where significant) – i.e. Staff, Health, Sustainability, Crime and Disorder, or Impact on Looked After Children)

This policy has implications for Children Looked After and the housing support they will receive from their Corporate Parents as they transition into adulthood.

### 8. Background papers used in preparing the report (including their location on the Council's website or identification whether any are exempt or protected by copyright):

- [Care Leavers Offer - Thurrock](#)
- <https://www.thurrock.gov.uk/sites/default/files/assets/documents/housing-allocation-scheme-v04.pdf>

### 9. Appendices to the report

- Appendix 1 – Joint Housing Protocol. Included within protocol:
  - Appendix A – Definitions of Care Leavers
  - Appendix B – Legislation and Guidance
  - Appendix C – Personal Housing Plan
  - Appendix D – Housing Referral Form
  - Appendix E – Housing Allocation Scheme

### Report Author:

Janet Simon

Strategic Lead Child in Need and Child Protection