

**Joint protocol for
the provision of
accommodation
for care leavers in
Gloucestershire.**

Revised 2026

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1. Foreword

As an ambassador advocating for the welfare of vulnerable children and young people, I am honoured to contribute to the ongoing development and implementation of this protocol. Having navigated the challenges of transitioning from care to independent living myself, I understand firsthand the critical importance of comprehensive support systems during this pivotal phase of life.

This protocol embodies a commitment to the well-being and empowerment of care leavers across Gloucestershire. It reflects a collective dedication to ensuring that every young person leaving care receives the guidance, resources, and opportunities necessary to thrive as they embark on their journey to independent adulthood.

Transitioning from care can be a daunting experience, often fraught with uncertainty and obstacles. Yet, with the right support networks in place, young people leaving care can overcome these challenges and realise their full potential. This protocol recognises the diverse needs and aspirations of care leavers, providing a framework for tailored support that fosters resilience and self-sufficiency.

As a care experienced individual, I commend the dedication and compassion demonstrated by all those involved in the development and implementation of this protocol. Together, we can make a meaningful difference in the lives of care leavers, empowering them to build brighter futures and achieve their dreams.

I am proud to endorse this protocol as a testament to our shared commitment to the well-being and success of care leavers in Gloucestershire. Let us continue working together to uphold the principles of corporate parenting, promote positive outcomes, and champion the rights of every young person leaving care, providing the right intervention at the right time.

Katie, Ambassador for Children & Young People

2. Introduction

This protocol outlines how Gloucestershire County Council and its six partner housing authorities in Gloucestershire will work together to support care leavers as they transition from placements funded by Gloucestershire County Council to independent living.

It is recognised that the journey from care can often be difficult for young people, and the degree of success can have an impact on outcomes well beyond early adulthood.



As corporate parents the partners want to ensure young people are well equipped and understand their own level of skill and aspirations for their future. Having access to safe and appropriate accommodation is key to young people achieving positive outcomes, however this is much more than just finding them a place to stay.

We want to ensure young people leaving care are aware of the full range of options available to them, including having the

option to remain in their care setting until they are ready to move on (e.g. Gloucestershire's Staying put offer). By doing so the hope is young people will be more likely to gain stability in other areas of their lives, such as relationships, education or work and improved physical, mental health and well-being.

This protocol was jointly developed with representatives of Gloucestershire's care leavers and with front-line officers from both housing options and leaving care teams across Gloucestershire. This process will work in each district, mixing consistent practice with flexibility around local partnerships and accommodation options.

We will ensure that every effort is made to avoid using the homeless route to access accommodation which is inappropriate when assessing and meeting the overall needs of care leavers.

3. Aims and objectives

1. To ensure all care leavers achieve a successful transition into independent living through support, preparation and the provision of suitable accommodation¹
2. To jointly assess and meet the diverse housing and support needs of young people leaving care, through the application of a clear and consistent process
3. To ensure young people are not subjected to numerous assessment processes, and that they do not have to negotiate their way through the range of agencies
4. To jointly ensure that all staff are aware of the housing needs of young people leaving care and the obligations of each partner agency to address these needs. This will include on-going joint training, a robust induction process and opportunities for shadowing
5. To minimise the use of the homeless route by awarding priority status to care leavers on local housing allocations policies, at the time a young person is ready (as outlined in the Pathway Plan).
6. To provide clear guidelines on the management of difficult tenancies which will include contingency arrangements
7. To ensure that the accommodation needs of young people leaving custody are appropriately planned
8. To identify gaps in service provision for young people and to work together with other partner agencies to address these gaps feeding information into the relevant strategies

4. Partner agencies

This protocol involves the following key organisations, but it is recognised that other organisations will also play a part in addressing the overall needs of care leavers:

- Gloucestershire County Council
- Cheltenham Borough Council
- Cotswold District Council
- Forest of Dean District Council
- Gloucester City Council
- Stroud District Council
- Tewkesbury Borough Council

¹ The suitability of accommodation for care leavers is covered in the Children Act 1989 Care Planning guidance, volume 2 (pages 74 – 80) and volume 3 (7.12 – 7.18)

5. Corporate Parenting principles

When exercising their functions in relation to children in care and care leavers, all local authorities in Gloucestershire recognise and have regard to the seven Corporate Parenting principles identified in the Children and Social Work Act 2017. These are:



6. Legislative framework

This protocol refers to the following legislation:

- Housing Act (1996) Parts 6 and 7, as amended by the Homelessness Reduction Act 2017
- Homelessness (Priority Need for Accommodation) (England) Order 2002
- Children Act 1989
- Children (Leaving Care) Act 2000
- Sections 1, 2 and 3 of the Children and Social Work Act 2017
- Equality Act 2010

6.1 Statutory guidance

Guidance	Year	Link
The Homelessness Code of Guidance	2024 (Updated 2026)	https://www.gov.uk/guidance/homelessness-code-of-guidance-for-local-authorities/download-this-guidance
Statutory guidance on applying corporate parenting principles to looked after children and care leavers	2018	https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/applying-corporate-parenting-principles-to-looked-after-children-and-care-leavers
The Children Act (guidance and regulations Volume 2)	1989 (Updated 2021)	https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/1000549/The_Children_Act_1989_guidance_and_regulations_Volume_2_care_planning__placement_and_case_review.pdf
The Children Act (guidance and regulations Volume 3)	1989 (Updated 2025)	https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/children-act-1989-transition-to-adulthood-for-care-leavers
Extending Personal Adviser support for all care leavers to age 25 (2018)	2018	https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/extending-personal-adviser-support-to-age-25
Local Offer Guidance	2018 (Updated 2025)	https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/local-offer-guidance

6.2 Children covered by this protocol

Eligible children

A young person aged 16 or 17 and who has been looked after for at least 13 weeks since the age of 14 and who is still being looked after.

Relevant children

A young person aged 16 and 17 who has been looked after for at least 13 weeks since the age of 14 and who has left care. This also includes young people who were detained (e.g. in a youth offending institution or hospital) when they turned 16 and who were look after immediately before being detained.

Former relevant children

A young person aged between 18 to 25 who were previously 'relevant' or 'eligible' when they reached the age of 18.

Qualifying children

A young person under 21 who stopped being looked after, after the age of 16 and or is in full time higher or further education² up to the age of 25.

Unaccompanied asylum-seeking young people

A young person who qualifies for a leaving care service from Gloucestershire County Council and who has been granted refugee status. Also, those who qualify and are given leave to remain up to the age of 21 years or who have an extension beyond the age of 18 for a minimum of one year.

Care leavers who are the responsibility of another local authority

If the young person resides in the Gloucestershire area and can show a local connection with a local housing authority district, they will fall within the remit of this protocol.

For the purposes of this protocol, care experienced young people will be referred to as young people throughout this document.

7. Early planning and preparation



This protocol will cover the journey for care leavers aged 16 years and over. However, preparation and support during the transition to adulthood should not only start on their 16th birthday. Planning for beyond their time in the care should be integral to the care planning process throughout a young person's time in the care of the local authority.

Young people who are well prepared and supported through the transition will have greater resilience and be less likely to become homeless after they leave care.

- By the age of 16 years and 3 months, all eligible care leavers will have a Needs Assessment in place as to the advice, assistance and support they will need when leaving care. This should consider a young person's independent living skills, ability to manage own finances and their views and wishes to ensure they leave care at a time that is right for them.
- Young people entering care aged 16+ will have a Needs Assessment in place as to the advice, assistance and support they will need when leaving care within 3 months of entering care.

² The 1989 Act requires that a local authority ensure that any local authority care leaver in full time residential further education or higher education, regardless of whether they are a former relevant child or qualifying child, has suitable accommodation if they need it during a vacation.

- As soon as possible after the Needs Assessment is completed the allocated social worker will prepare an initial Pathway Plan.³ Each young person will be central to drawing up their own Pathway Plan and will be supported to set goals and how to achieve them.
- The Pathway Plan will be kept under regular review⁴ with a contingency plan in place in case the proposed plan breaks down.
- Up until the age of 18, while they remain in care all young people will have an Independent Reviewing Officer whose role it is to ensure goals set are being met in a timely way and that the care plan reflects the young person's needs.
- All care leavers will be eligible for support from a Personal Adviser from the age of 16 years until their 25th birthday, this includes care leavers who return for support from the leaving care team after the age of 21 years.
- The role of the personal adviser is to support young people to prepare to live independently and offer advice and support. Sometimes for those young people under the age of 18 the role of the PA is undertaken by a social worker.
- From the age of 12 years young people in care will start working on their Independent Living Skills to develop their skills in preparation for living independently. The completing of this programme will be used as evidence when applying to local housing authorities for social housing.
- Where providers of semi-independent accommodation have their own Independent Living toolkits, it will be important to ensure they cross reference with the local authority Independent Living Skills programme. To ensure a joined-up approach the progress or completion of the Independent Living Skills programme will be reviewed and monitored at each statutory Child in Care review from the age of 16 by the allocated Independent Reviewing Officer.
- All young people will be supported to access an Independent Living Skills module on accommodation which will include tenancy awareness and living independently provided by Gloucestershire County Council and supported by the Youth Housing Advice Service. This will need to be completed no longer than 6 months prior to moving to independence and agreed by the Leaving Care Team Manager.
- Childrens Services will ensure all 'eligible' and 'relevant' young people in Gloucestershire County Council's care are provided with suitable accommodation until their 18th birthday. The Leaving Care Team will continue to support young people themselves to access suitable accommodation until their 25th birthday.

³ Requirements for preparing a Pathway Plan are set out in regulation 43 of the Care Planning, Placement and Review Regulations 2010.

⁴ <http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukxi/2010/2571/part/2/made>

- Young people who have been assessed under the Care Act⁵ as having a need for care and support, will be tracked by the Transitions Oversight group from the age of 17 onwards to ensure there is a smooth transition between services and appropriate support in place when the young person needs it.
- The young persons allocated social worker or personal adviser will ensure, where appropriate all claims for benefits are submitted 4 weeks prior to the young person turning 18. To avoid unnecessary delays the young person will need to have appropriate ID, bank account and National Insurance Number in place.
- Young people who are of EEA nationality, will be supported to apply for settled status as early as possible to ensure no delay in their eligibility for public funds.
- All care leavers will be supported to access and understand Gloucestershire's Local Offer⁶ to ensure they know what support and services are available to them up until the age of 25. This will start at the initial Needs Assessment and followed up at each review.

8. The transition process and housing options

All partners to this protocol recognise the importance of working together to ensure our young people feel well supported and able to access a range of accommodation options as they leave care.

Below outlines the process and details of the services available to young people who are entitled to support from the leaving care service in Gloucestershire.

- All Pathway Plans will outline the young person's accommodation pathway, considering their individual aspirations and support needs. The independent Reviewing Officer will ensure any goals set are achievable and happening within time scale, along with a robust contingency plan.
- Social workers and/or personal advisers and district housing teams will meet regularly to preview upcoming cases that may be turning 18 or ready to move. The panel discussions will inform the pathway plan to ensure plans are in place to avoid crisis situations.
- Where it is recognised that a young person is not ready to move to independent living, but they are unable/or do not want to remain in their current placement beyond the age of 18, their Social Worker will complete a risk assessment and START form to enable the housing advice Team to seek suitable semi-independent accommodation 3 months before a young person's 18th birthday.

⁵ <http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2014/23/part/1/crossheading/assessing-needs/enacted>

⁶ <https://www.gloucestershire.gov.uk/health-and-social-care/children-young-people-and-families/care-leavers/>

- Social workers and/or personal advisers and district housing teams will meet regularly to preview upcoming cases that may be turning 18 or ready to move. The panel discussions will inform the pathway plan to ensure plans are in place to avoid crisis situations.
- All accommodation options (outlined in section 8) and the journey to independence guide will be discussed with the young person and where appropriate their foster carer/key worker. Young people will also be encouraged and supported to visit the different semi-independent provision available to them.
- If alternate suitable accommodation is not secured by the young person's 18th birthday, then a request will be made to the Head of Service and the 16+ Panel for an extension in placement, this will be reviewed regularly.
- Once a young person is ready to live independently, this should be evidenced by satisfactory completion of the Independent Living Skills and tenancy awareness course. Their allocated social worker or personal adviser will assist the young person to register on Homesearch and upload the information required including proof of ID, National Insurance Number, benefit entitlement/employment details, 5 years housing history along with any details of support needs and the support package in place to meet these needs.
- It is recognised that not all young people will be able to gain social housing at the age of 18 years or be ready for complete independence. It is important this is discussed during the housing options meeting to ensure the young person has realistic expectations and the social worker/personal adviser can plan accordingly.
- The Personal Adviser will ensure the young person has an up-to-date Pathway Plan in place. The PA will obtain consent from the young person to share relevant sections of the Pathway Plan with local housing authorities where requested.
- In Gloucestershire, care leavers will be given the choice of local connection to any of the six partner housing authority areas when ready to move on from care placements or supported accommodation. It is recognised that young people need time to develop the skills for independence and semi-independent accommodation offers a graduated pathway towards independence and sustainable tenancies. Where this is identified as a suitable option the Personal Adviser will support young people to complete Homesearch application to join the relevant housing authorities housing register.
- This approach to Move on will extend to care leavers up to the age of 25.
- It is important that young people have a degree of choice in where they want to live, young people will be supported to make an informed choice in where they apply for housing, considering local connection (Appendix 3). This is especially important for those young people residing outside of the county, ensuring they are

supported in their decision to either stay in the area they are currently residing or return to the county.

- A coordinated approach will need to be taken for those care leavers who are due to be released from custody. The allocated social worker or personal adviser will ensure they work closely with the prison, probation and youth offending services and housing options teams where possible at least 2 months prior to release.
- Both Children's and Housing Services will work to identify a young person's support needs and act accordingly to help them secure and sustain accommodation options. Where the services identify a higher level of support is required, they will consider employing a multi-agency approach to ensure the correct support is delivered. Some cases may require more intensive ways of working to achieve positive outcomes and this will be led by both services.

9. Accommodation and support options



Young people will be encouraged and supported to remain in positive, supportive care settings until ready to move on. We want to ensure young people are given the time to build up the skills and knowledge needed to live independently

We will ensure that accommodation provided for care leavers is suitable⁷ for their needs. All accommodation arrangements will be based on a thorough assessment of the young persons need which includes ascertaining his/her wishes, feelings, and aspirations.

9.1 Staying Put

Gloucestershire County Council has a staying put offer for care leavers up until the age of 21 years, for those young people currently in a foster placement. The allocated social worker will ensure this option is discussed during their review to ensure young people and foster carers understand the process and any possible financial implications of a staying put arrangement.

9.2 Staying close, staying connected

Gloucestershire County Council is committed to offering a staying close arrangement for young people living in residential care where this is possible. All requests will be made via the 16+ Panel.

9.3 Supported lodgings

Gloucestershire County Council are currently developing a Supported Lodgings scheme; requests will be made via the 16+ Panel.

⁷ Children Act 1989 Care Planning guidance, volume 2 (pages 74-80) and volume 3 (7.12-7.18)

9.4 Semi-independent accommodation

There are a variety of supported accommodation types in Gloucestershire. This can include self-contained accommodation within a supported setting or accommodation with some shared facilities; levels of support also vary. For information on supported accommodation in Gloucestershire please talk to a member of the Youth Housing Advice Service who will be able to give up to date information on what is available for young people over the age of 18. To access this provision the allocated social worker or personal adviser will need to complete a START Application Form with the young person for County-commissioned provision or relevant referral for other provision.

9.5 Living with family, friends or relatives

For some young people it might be the right option to return to living with family where young people choose to return to live with family consideration should be given to the support that might be needed, this could include for example a Family Group Conference. Joint working will still be necessary where longer-term housing need remains.

9.6 Social housing

All young people who are assessed as ready for independent living will be eligible to apply for social housing. The waiting time will vary in each area and so the pathway plan will need to reflect this, along with what will happen if the young person needs to move on from their current placement before a property is secured.

Before applying for social housing, the allocated social worker or personal adviser will need to consider, does the young person understand what is required of them, and are the following points reflected in the Pathway Plan:

- Understand the responsibility of managing their own tenancy.
- Completed their Independent Living Skills Programme.
- Completed a tenancy awareness course .
- Have a local connection to the area(s) they want to apply to confirmed or awarded by the relevant Local Housing Authority as part of the plan in consideration of their future support needs/opportunities to thrive.

9.7 Private rented

Another option to live independently is to rent a room in a shared house or self-contained accommodation privately from a landlord, this allows more flexibility in location and timescale. Accommodation can be found either through a letting agent, directly with a landlord or through arrangements put in place by the local housing authority. Gloucestershire County Council offers support with rent in advance/deposit and if required can be a guarantor.⁸

⁸ GCC will not ordinarily offer an open-ended guarantee. A limited guarantee will be agreed with Head of Service and landlords will have a responsibility to notify GCC immediately if arrears start to accrue.

To ensure the property is affordable, the allocated social worker or personal adviser will assess the affordability of any property considering available income and expenditure commitments.

Care leavers are eligible for the one-bedroom housing benefit/Local Housing Allowance rate until their 25th birthday, where it will reduce to the shared room rate. The Pathway Plan needs to reflect this and outline what support will be available to the young person during this time.

If a Care Leaver moves into private rented to live independently, the care leaver should retain their Gold Move on priority through choice-based lettings, to enable an opportunity of securing longer term settled accommodation.

9.8 University halls/vacation accommodation

Most universities will offer accommodation in student halls or residence for the first year, and in some universities care leavers are able to remain in halls beyond year 1.

Gloucestershire offer young people attending University a yearly bursary and a grant towards living costs. Where care leavers are unable to remain in their student accommodation during vacations support will be offered to help them secure vacation accommodation.

10. Partners working together across Gloucestershire

Young people often need support when they take on a tenancy, and this is even more important for a care leaver. Every partner authority's aim is to ensure tenancies are sustained; however, it is important to recognise that young people may find the transition to independence overwhelming. Where a young person is struggling to sustain a tenancy, they should be supported to secure more suitable accommodation with consideration given to their needs and vulnerabilities.

- Prior to a young person taking on any tenancy, the social worker/personal adviser will consider each young person's individual support needs. Ensuring appropriate support is available where needed. A financial assessment carried out by the social worker or personal adviser will help to ensure accommodation is affordable. The personal adviser can offer budgeting plan support, reviewing 8-weekly.
- Ensure young people are aware of their tenancy rights and responsibilities.
- Where requested, the young person's personal adviser, carer or other responsible adult will accompany young people to all viewings and tenancy signups. Young people will be encouraged and feel supported to not have to go alone.
- With consent, the personal adviser will contact the new landlord within a month of the young person taking on the tenancy, to ensure joined up working and any problems with the tenancy can be addressed early on.

- As part of the Pathway Plan review, the personal adviser will ensure young people are supported to register for all utilities, to ensure they get the best rates and tariffs and to avoid any unexpected bills (no later than 28 days of moving into the property).
- Young people will be offered the option of setting up an alternative payment arrangement with the DWP or if appropriate direct payments to the landlord for rent payments.
- All care leavers, who are solely liable for council tax will be exempt of payment until their 25th birthday, care leavers who are jointly responsible for council tax will be exempt from 50% of the payment until their 25th birthday. The Leaving Care personal adviser will follow the local procedure⁹ to ensure exemption is applied for as well as ensuring any benefit entitlement is also claimed.
- Children's services and the six partner local housing options teams will ensure all support and entitlement available to care leavers is clear and easily accessible.
- Where it is recognised that a young person is struggling to manage their tenancy, their personal adviser can look to request extra support from either the landlord (if social housing) or local support providers in the area (appendix 4).
- In the event a young person wants to leave their tenancy as the tenancy is at risk of failure, they will be supported by their personal adviser to surrender the property back to the landlord once a suitable alternative has been found. This will help reduce the level of rent arrears, potential damage and court costs to both parties as well as the mental and physical wellbeing of the young person. Advice from housing options teams can be sought if required.
- Following the Ministerial Statement in May 2023 setting out that the planning system should not be a barrier to providing homes for the most vulnerable. Planning applications for new homes will consider opportunities for social housing developments to deliver units to be prioritised for care leavers.



⁹ https://gloucestershirechildcare.proceduresonline.com/files/financial_pr_yp_leav_care.pdf

11. Homelessness

Young people leaving care are some of the most vulnerable in society. Without support from parents, many will struggle to adapt to independent life. One of the most common features of a poor transition to adulthood is housing instability, risk of homelessness and actual homelessness.

We want to ensure we are working together, and much earlier to prevent this outcome.

11.1 Intentional homelessness

In response to the emerging Children's Wellbeing and Schools Bill, Local Housing Authorities in Gloucestershire will not consider a person to be intentionally homeless if:

- A. the person is a relevant child within the meaning given by section 23A(2) of the Children Act 1989, or
- B. the person is a former relevant child within the meaning given by section 23C(1) of that Act and aged under 25.

We currently do not find many young people 'Intentionally Homeless' and will actively seek a solution before this decision has the potential to affect a young person's outcomes. Due to the impact a negative decision can have on a young person, if it is likely an 'intentional' decision is to be made, then a meeting will take place between the young person, their personal adviser and housing options officer as soon as concerns around possible intentionality are identified by any party. This meeting should be used to consult with the relevant children's services authority and obtain advice and information as to the young person's emotional and mental well-being, maturity and general ability to understand the impact of their actions in regard to the loss of previous accommodation. Local authorities should be satisfied that the support and accommodation provided thus far have sufficiently met the care leaver's needs to consider they should be held accountable.

Before any decision is taken to find a care leaver intentionally homeless (other than the exceptions described above at points A and B), senior leaders (Assistant Director or Director) in both children's social care and housing should review the circumstances that have given rise to the decision and take full account of their corporate parenting responsibilities. Where a negative intentional homelessness decision is agreed by senior leaders the personalised housing plan should be reviewed and, the housing authority, Personal Adviser, or other trusted and connected persons and other relevant officers should work together with the young person to try and resolve the issues as a priority, to avoid the impact of an intentional homelessness decision wherever possible.

The above process for Intentional Homeless decisions will extend to young people aged 18-24.

11.2 Further guidance on homelessness

- A young person who was looked after when aged 16 or 17 will be in priority need when they are 18-24 years old, whether or not they qualify for care leaving services from a children's services authority. This not only reflects the Homelessness Code of Guidance (Sections 22.22-22.24) but also removes the need for assessment of vulnerability for those age 21-24.
- At the time a personal adviser is made aware of a care leaver who is homeless or at risk of homelessness within 56 days, with the consent of the young person a referral will be made to the housing options team of their choice as early as possible through the Duty to Refer¹⁰ process
- Following the referral, a joint planning meeting will take place within 7 working days. The meeting is to include the personal adviser, housing options officer and young person to look at how homelessness can be prevented or relieved. (Appendix 5 overview of Homeless Reduction Act 2017)
- No care leaver will have to apply as homeless to a local authority without support from their Social Worker, Personal Adviser or Youth Housing Support Worker
- A Personalised Housing Plan (PHP) will be completed with all young people who make a homeless application, and (with consent) shared with the Personal Adviser. The PHP should outline the reasonable steps that the local authority and young person will take to prevent or relieve homelessness. Subject to consent the PHP should be informed by the young person's Pathway Plan
- Where homelessness cannot be prevented and interim accommodation is required, the local housing options team will work with the personal adviser to secure suitable temporary accommodation inside of Gloucestershire, preferably within the district they present to, before anything is considered outside of the border.

11.3 Bed and Breakfast

Bed and Breakfast (and other private, nightly paid accommodation) accommodation for care leavers aged 18 to 25 years, should only be used in emergencies and for short periods¹¹ Bed and Breakfast accommodation will not be used for any homeless 16 or 17-year-old¹². Where the social worker or personal adviser is aware of alternative accommodation that could be used instead of Bed and Breakfast, for example a crash pad, they will inform the responsible district council to help reduce unnecessary use of Bed and Breakfast.

¹⁰ <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/homelessness-duty-to-refer/a-guide-to-the-duty-to-refer>

¹¹ HRA Code of Guidance, Chapter 22, 22.27

¹² Section 23B of the 1989 Act requires the local authority to provide relevant children with, or maintain them in, suitable accommodation. Bed and Breakfast accommodation is not considered to be suitable other than for very exceptional emergency circumstances

Should homelessness not be able to be prevented or relieved, young people will be supported by the personal adviser to ensure the housing options team has all relevant information required to consider whether the young person is owed a full homelessness duty under the 1996 Act (S.184 decision¹³).

11.4 Rough sleeping

Where a care leaver is found to be rough sleeping or at high risk of doing so, either in the home authority area or elsewhere, further accommodation and support is available to them. This will include:

- Joint working between the children's services, housing authority and local rough sleeping outreach services to ensure that necessary steps are taken to identify care leavers and support them into suitable and sustainable accommodation with the required level of support.
- Their housing options made available including commissioned supported housing services and support to help them sustain accommodation to avoid recurring homelessness or rough sleeping.
- Opportunities for the young person to access other support, for example, elements of the local offer for care leavers and duty support from the local leaving care service.
- Where a care leaver from another parent authority is identified rough sleeping, arrangements to make contact with the parent authority should be made with consent of the young person. Where there is a safeguarding concern, consent is not required but contact should be made via the local authority leaving care service to the parent authority.

11.5 Single points of contact

Local authority and leaving care teams will provide up to date single points of contact to promote effective communication e.g. for referrals and further discussion of cases.

12. Information sharing

To provide the most effective service for care leavers, information will be shared among partners of the protocol and other relevant key partner agencies.

We will agree to work together to offer an effective service to young people leaving care in Gloucestershire. Where appropriate and in the interest of the young person not having to repeat their life story, Information will be shared safely and securely between key partner agencies.

¹³ <http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/1996/52/section/184>

In all cases young people will be directed to the children's services privacy notice on Gloucestershire County Council website¹⁴ to explain how the young person's information is going to be shared in relation to 'public task' in order to provide the service.

13. Dispute resolution

From time-to-time disputes may arise about areas of legal and other responsibility.

First it should be discussed between frontline professionals to achieve a shared understanding and agree a resolution plan. If professionals are unable to resolve differences within timescale (7 working days), the disagreement should be escalated to team managers.

If concerns remain unresolved then the relevant Service Manager and Housing Manager discussion should take place to discuss the concerns and convene a multi-agency meeting with the practitioners and front-line team managers

If professional disagreements remain unresolved, and the professional differences within the agencies concerned, the matter should be referred to senior managers by the concerned agency, who may seek to resolve the issue directly with the relevant senior managers, or convene a Resolution Panel.

14. Dissemination of this protocol to staff in partner agencies

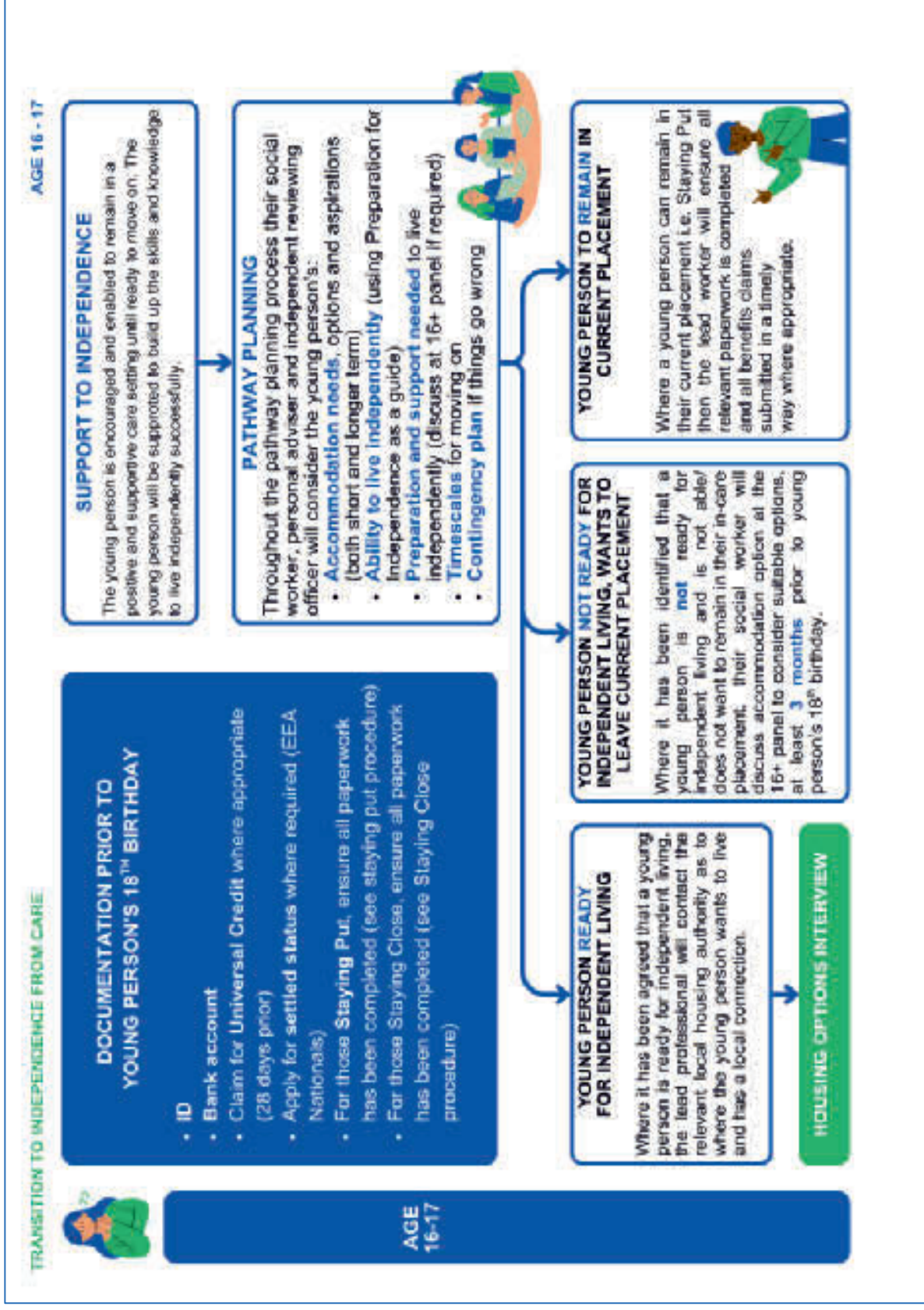
Training will be delivered to partner agency staff across the six districts; this will be jointly delivered by staff from children's social care and district housing teams. The training will cover what has been agreed within the protocol, promote Corporate Parenting principles and focus on how the partnership will work together to improve outcomes for care leavers within Gloucestershire.

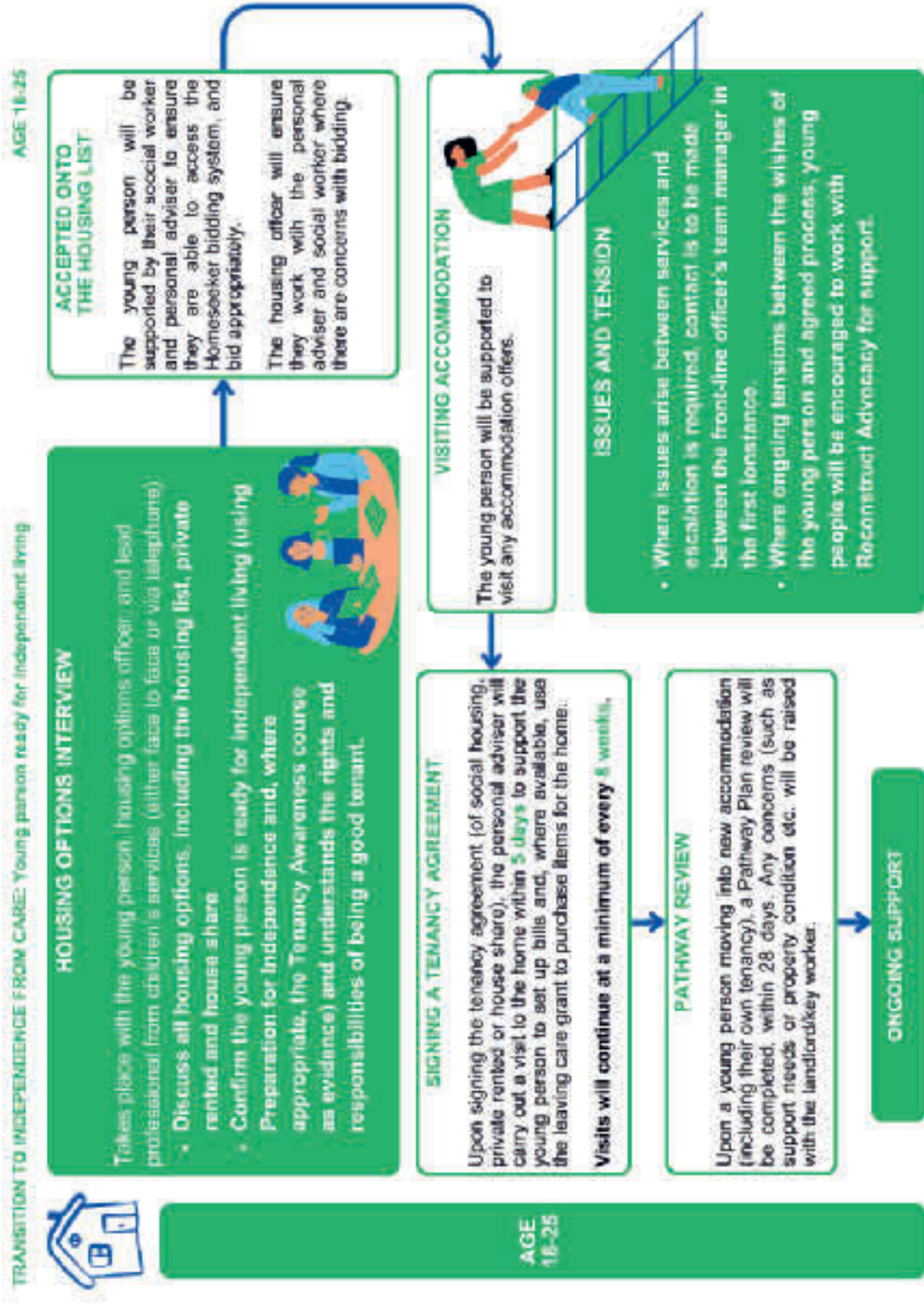
15. Review period

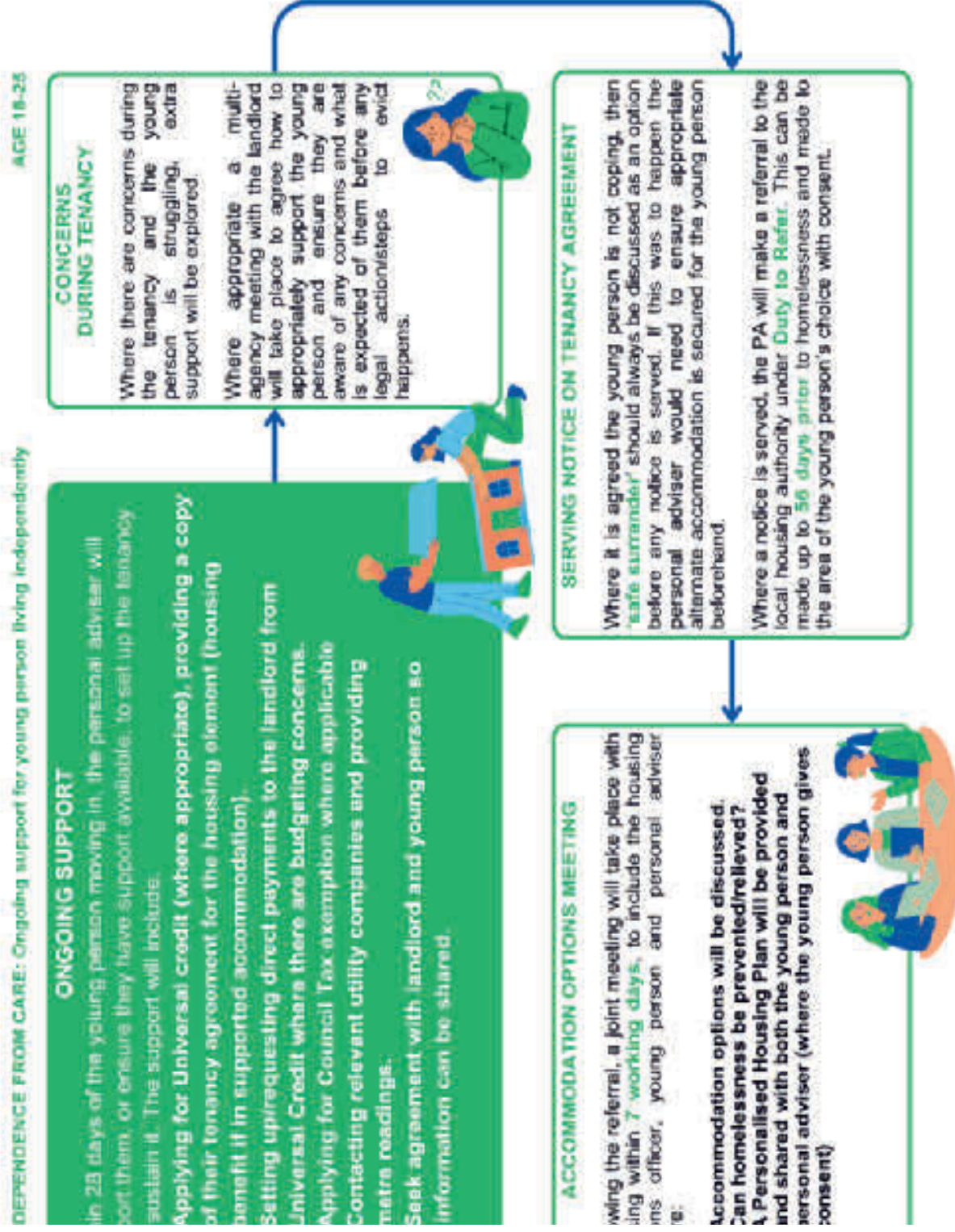
This document will be reviewed yearly by the members of the Strategic Housing Partnership in collaboration with the Leaving Care Service.

¹⁴ <https://www.gloucestershire.gov.uk/council-and-democracy/data-protection/service-specific-privacy-notice/childrens-services-privacy-notice/introduction/#main>

Appendix 1: Transition to independence flowchart







Appendix 2: Tenancy awareness courses

All of Gloucestershire's care leavers will be eligible to access a tenancy awareness course. For those young people living outside of the county, every effort will be made for them to access one locally to where they reside. But, where this is not possible, they will be supported to either return to the county to complete a course or access one virtually.

Where it is outlined in the Pathway plan, and with agreement from the team manager, the allocated social worker or personal adviser book a place. Courses are held across Gloucestershire and will need to be attended no earlier than 6 months before a young person is ready to apply for their own tenancy.

Appendix 3: Local connection

Applying to join a housing list

The Localism Act gives housing authorities power to define qualifying persons when exercising their duties under Part 6 of the Housing Act

When determinising priority between households, local connection will be considered. Gloucestershire has 6 housing authorities who each hold an allocations policy, of which they will have regard to S.199 of the 1996 Act. Ensure local connection is discussed during the housing options interview

Local connection under Duty to Refer and homeless application

Where a young person is at risk of homelessness, they have the choice of approaching any housing authority they choose. Gloucestershire care leavers will have a local connection to all six housing authorities in Gloucestershire.

In section 199 of the Housing Act 1996 (local connection), after subsection (7), insert—

“(8) While a local authority in England has a duty towards a person under section 23C of the Children Act 1989 (continuing functions in respect of former relevant children)—

(a) if the local authority is a local housing authority, the person has a local connection with their district, and

(b) otherwise, the person has a local connection with every district of a local housing authority that falls within the area of the local authority

(9) In subsection 8, “local authority” has the same meaning as in the Children Act 1989 (see section 105 of that Act).

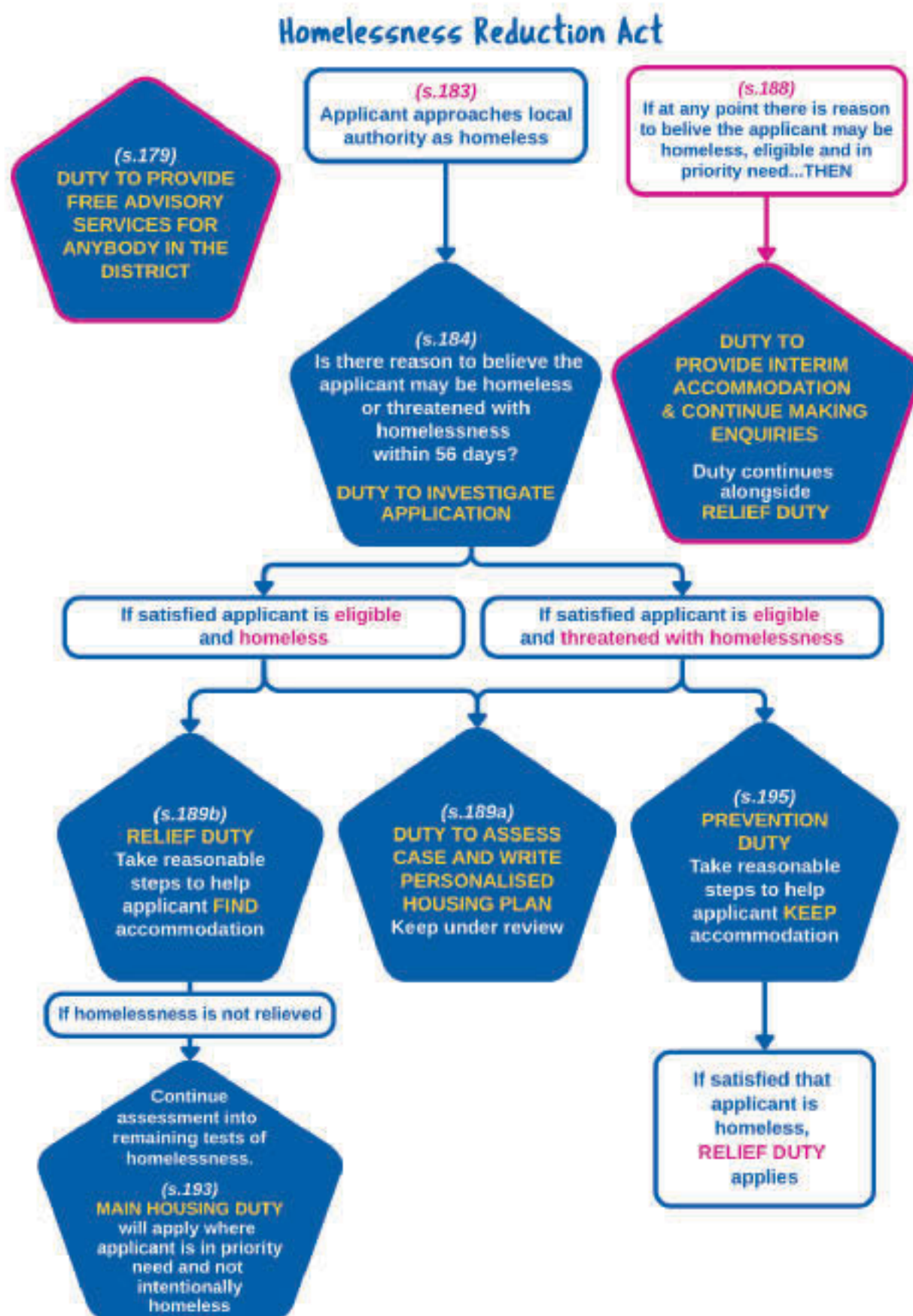
(10) Where, by virtue of being provided with accommodation under section 22A of the Children Act 1989 (provision of accommodation for children in care), a person is normally resident in the district of a local housing authority in England for a continuous period of at least two years, some or all of which falls before the person attains the age of 16, the person has a local connection with that district.

(11) A person ceases to have a local connection with a district under subsection 10 upon attaining the age of 21 (but this does not affect whether the person has a local connection with that district under any other provision of this section).”

Appendix 4: Tenancy support services

Organisation	Notes	Link
Neighbourhood Officer	If the young person is a housing association tenant, they may be able to request further support from their Neighbourhood Officer. If a young person is struggling with their tenancy, they should contact their Neighbourhood Officer or their personal adviser who will make a referral for community-based support.	https://www.police.uk/pu/your-area/how-to-contact/
Rethink Mental Illness	Offer advice and information as well as supported housing for young people over 18.	https://rethink.org/help-in-your-area/services-in-your-area/
Better Care Together	NHS working together with private landlords, Rethink and Stonham to provide short term supported accommodation for people recovering from a mental illness. Referrals can be made by a health care worker from Wotton Lawn, the recovery team, assertive outreach team or the GRIP team.	https://www.ghc.nhs.uk/our-teams-and-services/housing-information/
CCP/P3	CCP/P3 provide Community Based Support contract on behalf of Gloucestershire County Council. CCP in TBC, FOD and Gloucester; P3 in CBC CDC and SDC.	https://p3charity.org/get-support
Peer Mentoring Service	Young people can access support via a care experienced peer mentor who a mentee can turn to for help, informal support, guidance, goal setting or just someone to have a coffee with and chat about next steps as they move to independence.	cypvoice@gloucestershire.gov.uk
The Door	Mentoring service for those aged 16-25 leaving care and starting to live independently.	https://thedoorgovuk.org.uk/contact/

Appendix 5: Homelessness Reduction Act flowchart



Appendix 6: Useful contacts

District	Address	Tel	E-Mail/Contact
Cheltenham Borough Council	Municipal offices The Promenade Cheltenham GL50 9SA	01242 387615	housingoptions@cbh.org Paul Tuckey paul.tuckey@cheltenham.gov.uk
Cotswold District Council	Council offices Trinity Road Cirencester GL7 1PX	01285 623300	housingadvice@cotswold.gov.uk Thomas See Thomas.See@publicagroup.uk
Forest of Dean District Council	Council offices High Street Coleford GL16 8HG	01594 810000	housing.advice@fdean.gov.uk Thomas See Thomas.See@publicagroup.uk
Gloucester City Council	The Gateway Westgate Street Gloucester GL1 1PA	01452 396396	homeseeker@gloucester.gov.uk Michelle Wheatley michelle.wheatley@gloucester.gov.uk
Stroud District Council	Council offices Ebley Mill Westward Road, Stroud, GL5 4UB	01453 766321	housingadvice@stroud.gov.uk Julian White Julian.White@Stroud.gov.uk
Tewkesbury Borough Council	Council offices Gloucester Road Tewkesbury GL20 5TT	01684 295010	housingadvice@tewkesbury.gov.uk John Bryant John.Bryant@tewkesbury.gov.uk

Gloucestershire County Council Gloucester Leaving Care Teams	Shire Hall Westgate Street Gloucester GL1 2TG	01452 426325	Leaving Care Team 1: leavingcareteam1@gloucestershire.gov.uk Team Manager Emmy Crook emmy.crook@gloucestershire.gov.uk Leaving Care Team 2: leavingcareteam2@gloucestershire.gov.uk Team Manager Carol Hewitt carol.hewitt@gloucestershire.gov.uk Staying Close Team: stayingcloseteam@gloucestershire.gov.uk Team Manager Tina Philp tina.philp@gloucestershire.gov.uk
Gloucestershire County Council Stroud Leaving Care Teams	Redwood House Beeches Green Stroud GL5 4AE	01452 426528	Leaving Care Team 3: leavingcareteam3@gloucestershire.gov.uk Team Manager Ann Smith ann.smith@gloucestershire.gov.uk Leaving Care Team 4: leavingcareteam4@gloucestershire.gov.uk Team Manager Julie Fisher julie.fisher@gloucestershire.gov.uk
Gloucestershire County Council Cheltenham Leaving Care Teams	Grosvenor Hall Grosvenor Street Cheltenham GL52 2SG	01452 426090	Leaving Care Team 5: leavingcareteam5@gloucestershire.gov.uk Team Manager Latisha Denley latisha.denley2@gloucestershire.gov.uk Leaving Care Team 6: LeavingCareTeam6@gloucestershire.gov.uk Team Manager James Walsh james.walsh@gloucestershire.gov.uk
Gloucestershire County Council Senior Managers for Leaving Care Services	Shire Hall Westgate Street Gloucester GL1 2TG	01452 324077 01452 425076 01452 583686	Dan Jones – Assistant Director Dan.jones@gloucestershire.gov.uk Mark Bone – HOS Corporate Parenting Mark.bone@gloucestershire.gov.uk Dave Stewart – Service Manager David.stewart@gloucestershire.gov.uk