

**ARE YOU 16 OR 17
AND HOMELESS OR AT
RISK OF BECOMING
HOMELESS?**

YOUR ENTITLEMENTS

lancashire.gov.uk



This booklet has been given to you because you are 16 or 17, you might not be able to live at home with your parents or carers, and you are homeless or at risk of becoming homeless.

Sometimes young people cannot live at home with their families as the relationship with them has broken down and they are at risk at home. If this is the situation you are in, you may be able to get help from Lancashire County Council's Children's Social Care or your local District Council's Housing Department.

What should you do?

You should speak to someone you trust and can talk to. This could be:

- A teacher
- A youth worker or support worker
- A homeless prevention or advocacy service
- Another professional you may be working with
- A housing advice worker from your District Council's housing department
- A social worker from Children's Social Care
- A trusted adult
- A friend that has had similar experiences

They should help you look at possible options, such as:

- Sorting things out and going back home
- Living with other relatives like a gran or uncle or sister for a while
- Finding anywhere else you could go and live
- How your District Council's housing department or Children's Social Care might be able to help you

Prevention Services

In some districts, there are local third sector organisations who are providing a combination of preventative support to young people/ families. For Key and The Homelessness Awareness and Prevention Interventions (HAPI), they also act as the first point of contact for local districts for young people who need emergency accommodation.

Home | Ynot Aspire

Youth Homelessness | Ynot Aspire

HAPI – Positive Action in the Community (PAC) (p-a-c.org.uk)

Home - Key Unlocking Futures (keycharity.org.uk) What should I do if I'm worried about being homeless?

Family Group Conferencing Support

It may be possible for you and your carers to access Family Group Conference Support. This is one way of trying to resolve the issues that you and your family are experiencing and can help you to talk to each other. If you would like this, please ask your support worker. If you are uncertain about what is best for you, you can also contact an advice service such as Shelter which offers an online chat service and free helpline, open 365 days a year.

If you go to Children's Social Care or the District Council housing department to explain you have nowhere to live, you will be offered a "joint assessment" which means that children's social care and the housing department will work together to find the best options for you.

In order to do this, the law says that Children's Social Care and the District Council's housing department must provide you with support in two possible ways. It is important for you to understand the difference between these.

How you can be supported

If you are 16 or 17 and you are homeless, Children's Social Care must assess your needs and you will be involved in the decision making. This is usually a "joint assessment" between children's social care and the district housing team. If you are found to be homeless then Children's Social Care can offer you support under Section 17 of the Children Act 1989 where you will be known as a "child in need" or Section 20 of the Children Act 1989 where you will be known as a "child looked after by the local authority".

Section 17

If you decide that you do not want to become looked after then you should still receive support from Children's Social Care as a 'child in need' and you can get support from your District Council housing department to address your housing needs.

You will be visited by a social worker every 4 weeks and be involved in meetings known as CIN meetings which will take place every four- six weeks with relevant people involved in supporting you. Every 16–17-year-old assessed as being a child in need, but who does not wish to be accommodated under section 20, should have a child in need plan setting out the services that will be provided to meet their needs.

If you continue to be supported by Children's Social Care, support will be stepped down to universal services when you turn 18 and Children's Social Care will close your case.

Section 20

If Children's Social Care (CSC) or you decide for you to be accommodated under Section 20 then you will become known as a "Child Looked After" (CLA) by the Local Authority and will be offered support for you;

- Health needs
- Accommodation needs
- Educational needs
- Any other support needs you have

You will have a Social Worker who visits you and an Independent Reviewing Officer (IRO) who is responsible for overseeing your care plan and you will have regular review meetings to see how you are doing. This is because the Local Authority has clear rules they must follow about how they look after children in their care and these processes must be followed by both Children's Social Care and the young person.

It is important that you take part in these review meetings, visits and other important CLA processes which includes working with any support offered. This means you should be in either Education, Training, or Employment. You will also need to have a full health assessment so the Local Authority can arrange health support if it is required.

More about Advocacy

The National Youth Advocacy Service | NYAS

Advocates are independent from professionals such as social workers and your parents/ carers.

NYAS advocates listen to what you want, inform you of your rights and empower you to get your voice heard. They ensure that your wishes and feelings are expressed and acted upon to improve your situation.

An advocate from NYAS can;

- Explain your rights and entitlements
- Explain how a meeting will happen
- Help you communicate how you feel
- Come to a meeting with you, if you ask
- Help you to understand what decisions are made about you
- Support you for free and it is confidential

Contact 0808 808 1001



Jargon Buster

Advocate - An advocate will meet with you and focus on what the problems are and what you would like to happen. They will inform you of your rights and make sure your voice is heard. Your advocate may also help you to make a complaint if things have not been sorted out and you feel this is something that you wish to do.

Assessment - A close look at your situation, your needs and what support you may need.

Care (being in care, being looked after) - Being in care or being a looked after child means the same thing.

A child or young person can be in care for three main reasons:

- If there is a care order saying that Children's Social Care should look after them.
- If the parents, or the young person if they are aged 16 or 17, agree that Children's Social Care will look after them.
- If young people aged between 12–17 are living on a secure remand in a secure children's home, a Secure Training Centre or a Young Offender Institution.

It doesn't matter where they are living, i.e. living in foster care, a children's home, in semi-independent accommodation or even at home.

Care Plan - A plan made when you are in care about your immediate and long term future based on your needs assessment*. This should cover: personal support, accommodation, education and training, employment, family and social relationships, practical and other skills, financial support, health needs. You should play a key role in devising your care plan.

Child in Need - A child or young person who needs help from Children's Social Care to make sure that they have a reasonable standard of physical or mental health or development. Children with disabilities are always considered to be children in need.

Pathway Plan - It is very similar to a Care Plan (see opposite page) but it is more focused on preparing you to live independently.

Priority Need - A term used by the District Council housing department to identify who should have priority accessing council housing.

Review - A look at previous assessments and decisions made about your care to check that things are still relevant and/or needed, and to make changes if necessary. There is usually a meeting with the people involved in your life.



