

**Cumberland  
Young Adults'  
Positive Housing  
Pathway:  
An Overview**

**March 2024**

## **Cumberland Young Adults' Positive Housing Pathway**

### **CONTEXT**

In 2019, we undertook a service review of our commissioned supported accommodation services for young adults. We also looked at models of national best practice and choose to adopt a Positive Housing Pathway model as devised by St Basil's. From 1<sup>st</sup> April 2020, the Council's service response to young adults who are homeless or threatened with homelessness will be delivered through our Positive Housing Pathway model.

The purpose of this leaflet is to clarify the service offer at the different stages of this model.

### **PATHWAY AMBITIONS**

Our ambition for the young adults in our service is that:

- Young adults receive the right help at the right time.
- Young adults receive a service that is personalised to their individual needs, from a service offer which is consistent across the county.
- Young adults who access our services go on to experience a bright and fulfilling future, free from the risk of homelessness.

Our ambition for this service is that, from the first point of contact with a young adult who is experiencing homelessness/at risk of homelessness, everyone working in this service area sees the potential in that young adult and plays their part in moving that young adult from a point of crisis, to give them hope for the future.

### **PRIORITY GROUPS**

Priority will be given to:

- Young adults for whom the Council has a statutory duty (16-17 year olds at risk of homelessness);
- Young adults for whom the Council has a statutory duty (formerly looked after children);
- Young adults aged under 18 leaving custody.

Eligibility will remain for young adults aged 18-24 years, dependant on capacity.

# CUMBERLAND YOUNG ADULTS'S POSITIVE HOUSING PATHWAY: STAGES

## 1. Universal information and Advice

We have a website [Youth Homelessness | Cumberland Council](#) which includes information targeted at 3 core groups:

- Young adults;
- Parents/carers; and
- Professionals.

The website features short film clips of young adults who have been in the service talking about their experience and giving advice to other young adults in their situation. All sections contain information about our Joint Protocol and contact details for the Youth Homelessness and Housing Officer(s), who will work to support young adults aged 16+ who are homeless or threatened with homelessness.<sup>1</sup>

The website has the most current version of the First Contact Script, this can be completed by any professional to help identify a young adult's needs and to start their referral into the Pathway; this must be completed by the referrer in conjunction with the young adult. There are two First Contact Scripts to be used dependent on the age of the young adult. The link for both First Contact Scripts can be found on [this](#) page of the website.

We have developed two "Tackling Homelessness" lesson plans, which have been accredited by the PSHE Association and are available free of charge on their [website](#). These aim to make young adults aware of the realistic housing options for young adults living independently aged 16+, talk about the financial aspects of living independently at an early age and signpost them to relevant support. We are happy to co-deliver these in local schools, colleges or to other targeted groups. For further details, please contact your local Youth Homelessness and Housing Officer.

## 2. Early Help (Targeted)

In addition to offering general advice and information, our Youth Homelessness and Housing Officers will work with young adults who are threatened with homelessness to explore their options and find an outcome that works for them. Our starting point is always that young adults are better off living at home or in the wider family network, if it is safe for them to do so. We have well-established partnership working to ensure that the right agencies are supporting young adults, based on their assessed need. If additional support is needed for a young adult or the risk around a young adult is felt to be escalating, we can take these young adults for discussion at one of our Early Help Panels (with their consent) to problem solve with a wide range of partner agencies.

### **3. Gateway Group (Single Point of Access)**

From 1<sup>st</sup> April 2020, we have a Gateway Group, this is our single point of access for Cumberland into the Young Adults' Housing Pathway. We discuss and allocate referrals into the Pathway; these referrals are for emergency accommodation, short-term accommodation, homeless prevention and/ or flexible support. It oversees all the stages of the Pathway from referral to termination of support. It is solution focussed; it facilitates multi-agency discussions based around the needs of the young adult and the sustainability of the support. The Group meets fortnightly via Teams in order to maximise attendance and minimise travelling. The Group is chaired by the Service Lead for Youth Homelessness in Cumberland and core members include housing partners, short-term and emergency housing providers and other relevant local partners.

#### **Positive Housing Pathway Process**

First Contact Script completed by referrer (either 16-17 or 18-24 years). [First Contact Scripts](#).

(If young adult is homeless or at risk of homeless within 56 days, referrer to request consent for Public Duty to Refer (this is for ages 18+ or those who will be 18 within 56 days). Links for Duty to Refer are: [Carlisle, Allerdale, Copeland](#)).

Youth Homeless and Housing Officer picks up First Contact Script from group mailbox and processes the referral. Young adult is added to the Gateway Group tracker and a Gateway Group referral is sent to Business Support to be added to the Gateway Group Agenda.

For urgent referrals, see Urgent Referrals Procedure. Referrer telephoned Safeguarding Hub (if YP is aged 16-17). Youth Homeless and Housing Officer progresses accommodation discussions, including emergency accommodation.

Getting to Know You (mapping) assessment completed by the provider, either:

- Prior to the Gateway Group as urgent referral
- Prior to the Gateway Group as non-urgent referral
- After Gateway Group as action.

Gateway Group meeting takes place. Actions are recorded and distributed within two days.

Cumberland has adopted a Signs of Safety approach and this has been built into the commissioned services; this will enable partners to adopt a strengths based approach with our young adults.

#### **4. Commissioned Accommodation and Flexible Support**

In the Positive Housing Pathway, young adults will receive a package of support based on their individual needs, which will be reviewed regularly. This support will

enable the young adult to move on as a self-sufficient adult, able to manage their own tenancy. Young adults will be discussed by the Gateway Group at the point of referral and providers will be able to bring young adult, who are experiencing problems in their tenancy or who have unmet needs, back to the Group for discussion and/or identification of relevant actions/other sources of support. Providers will be expected to fully engage in the Gateway Group discussions and to be proactive about bringing back those young adult experiencing problems so that we can actively manage tenancies and retain the young adult within the Pathway as much as possible.

From 1<sup>st</sup> April 2020, we have a flexible support offer, in addition to the specialist support offered by the Youth Homelessness and Housing Officer. This post will operate alongside the Youth Homelessness and Housing Officer and will offer tenure neutral flexible support to young adults. This will mean that for older young adults (18+), who may not wish to live in supported accommodation, we will work with our district partners to look at alternative housing solutions, including the private rented sector, and will attach support to the young adult to give them the best chance of succeeding in their chosen tenancy. Flexible support will be allocated via discussions at the Gateway Group and could even be used to offer additional support to a young adult in supported accommodation, based on their unmet needs.

## **5. Range of Housing Options**

We work closely with our district partners and with our supported accommodation providers, to assist young adults to move on to suitable accommodation. The partnership working which has evolved through the past several years of developing and implementing our Joint Protocol has meant that we have good networks in place and can find creative solutions to enable our young adults to progress through to a home, whether that is in social housing, the private rented sector or whether that equates to a return home. Our flexible support offer means that we will offer young adults who are moving into their own independent tenancy for the first time, a period of support through that transitional period so that they are supported to get everything in place that they need.

## **Cumberland Council Youth Homeless and Housing Officer Contact Details**

### **Allerdale and Copeland Localities**

Helen Walker

Contact number: 07825 340628

Email: [helen.walker@cumberland.gov.uk](mailto:helen.walker@cumberland.gov.uk)

### **Carlisle Locality**

Lisa Williams

Contact number: 07825 097991

Email: [lisa.williams@cumberland.gov.uk](mailto:lisa.williams@cumberland.gov.uk)

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