**Cumberland Council Young People’s Positive Housing Pathway Gateway Group:**

**Terms of Reference**

**August 2023**

1. **PATHWAY AMBITIONS**

Our ambition for the young people in our service is that they:

* Receive the right help at the right time.
* Receive a service that is personalised to their needs, from a service offer which is consistent across the county.
* Go on to experience a bright and fulfilling future, free from the risk of homelessness.

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

1. **PURPOSE OF THE GATEWAY GROUP**

The Gateway Group is the single point of access for the County, for referrals into the Young People’s Positive Housing Pathway (PHP).

It will discuss and allocate referrals into the Pathway; these referrals will be for emergency accommodation, short-term accommodation, homeless prevention and/ or flexible support.[[1]](#footnote-1)

It will oversee all the stages of the Pathway from referral to termination of support. It will be solution focussed; it will facilitate multi-agency discussions based around the needs of the young person and the sustainability of the support.

1. **GATEWAY GROUP MEETINGS AND ATTENDANCE**

Attendance at meetings will be via telephone conference and dial-in instructions will be sent out with invites.

Members of the Gateway Group will have operational oversight and (ideally) decision making authority and must come to the meeting with the relevant service information to enable actions to be identified for each individual young person.

If staff are unable to attend due to sickness or leave, ideally a deputy should attend on their behalf; if this is not possible due to staffing capacity, information could be shared with the Chair in advance of the meeting. Terms of reference for the Gateway Group will include key organisational contacts (job titles).

1. **MEMBERSHIP**

**Core membership:**

**Westmorland and Furness Council**

* Youth Homelessness Service Lead (**CHAIR)**
* Youth Homelessness & Housing Officers
* Housing Intervention Support Workers
* YJS

**Council Housing Teams**

* Housing Options/Homelessness team representatives from Cumberland Council

**PHP Providers**

* Riverside Association
* Depaul

**By invitation**

Additional staff and professionals may be invited; this will be on a case by case basis and in an advisory capacity only; these may include, but is not be limited to:

* DWP;
* Inspira;
* Children’s Services, Social Care;
* Police;
* Education

Other relevant support organisations.

1. **OWNERSHIP AND PROCESSES OF THE GATEWAY GROUP**

The Gateway Group will be chaired by Cumberland Council.

All documentation should be submitted to the Gateway Group Administrator a minimum of 2 working days prior to the Gateway Group. All documents will be sent via secure emails.

The Administrator will be responsible for drafting the Gateway Group Agenda, scheduling the cases for presentation, confirming times with the presenting non-core professionals, circulating the documentation and actions for the meeting to Group members.

The Administrator will record all decisions and actions.

The Gateway Group Chair will authorise the decisions and actions prior to circulation to Group Members.

Copies of the individual decisions will be sent to the young person’s Pathway accommodation provider by the Administrator within 5 working days.

The Gateway Group Tracking Tool will be used to track all decisions and actions and inform the agenda of the next Group. Where urgent decisions are made outside the fortnightly Gateway Group, the decision will be recorded on the Tracking Tool. All decisions will be confirmed via secure email.

Where a young person is not making expected progress through the Pathway, or a young person is experiencing problems in sustaining their accommodation, it is the responsibility of the Pathway accommodation’s provider to contract the Administrator and request that the case is added to the next agenda (See STEP Procedure for further guidance).

When a young person, who has been in supported accommodation, is moving on to live independently and the Pathway accommodation provider feels that additional support may be required through their transition period, the onus is on the Pathway accommodation provider to refer the young person back to the Gateway Group for a discussion about what additional support (e.g. Flexible Support) can be offered.

1. **REFERRALS INTO THE PATHWAY**

Allreferrals will be discussed at the Gateway Group, which will prioritise based on the Pathway’s priority groups, young people’s needs and wishes (e.g. location), as well taking account of what individual services can offer.

The First Contact Script will continue to be used as a consistent response to all young people who present as homeless and this will be used as the referral form to the Gateway Group.

All First Contact Scripts will be sent to the relevant Youth Homeless and Housing Officer for the young person’s district, who will be responsible for undertaking necessary checks before forwarding to the Administrator to add to the agenda for the Gateway Group. There are two First Contact Scripts, one for 16-17 Year Olds and one for 18-24 Year Olds, They can be found on this [page](https://legacy.cumberland.gov.uk/yphousing/professionals/protocol.asp).

If the application is non-urgent, the relevant Youth Housing and Homeless Officer will begin drawing together information from all available sources and mapping this into the Signs of Safety assessment and planning framework in advance of the Gateway Group meeting and in line with the Authority’s Signs of Safety practice approach.[[2]](#footnote-2) Initialisation of this work prior to a Gateway Group meeting will enable more information to be gathered about individual young people’s strengths, ensure a better understanding of their needs and therefore more informed decision-making. Where appropriate and/or possible, young people’s Getting to Know You visits to schemes may be carried out prior to Gateway Group discussions.

Priority will be given to:

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

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

Referrals to the service may include young people:

* Who reside in Cumberland;
* With offending backgrounds with bail or licence conditions or people at risk of offending;
* Using substances and alcohol;
* Who are self-harming and/or have other mental health needs;
* With multiple needs;
* With a low level learning disability;
* With Autism (including people with Asperger’s Syndrome);
* Who are at risk of sexual exploitation;
* In unhealthy/abusive relationships.

Urgent referrals will be dealt with by the Urgent Referral Procedure.

1. **CONFIDENTIALITY**

Confidentiality will be maintained between Group members in the discussion of individuals and the sharing of information in line with the Positive Housing Pathway’s Information Sharing Agreement. A copy of the confidentially agreement must be signed and emailed to business support. Any breach of this should be reported to the Chair of the Gateway Group. Similarly, if anyone is aware of a conflict of interest (that they know a young person who has been referred on a personal basis - or as a colleague), they should make the Chair aware of this and may stand down from that discussion.

1. **RECORDING**

Proceedings at the Group will be recorded by the Gateway Group Administrator. All records will be subject to data protection and data sharing protocols. The recording from each Group will be maintained on the agreed format. Following each meeting, decisions and actions from the meeting will be circulated to all members via secure email.

1. **MONITORING AND IMPACT**

The data collected will routinely be collated and analysed. Summary information and analysis will be shared with strategic partners as part of the Council’s commitment to continuous development of the Positive Housing Pathway programme. This data may be cross-referenced with HCLIC data to ensure a consistent approach.

1. **DISPUTE RESOLUTION**

The Group is reliant on a trusting and problem solving ethos. It is envisaged that collective agreement can be reached on the significant majority of cases discussed. However on the rare occasions where this cannot be achieved, the Cumbria Safeguarding Children Partnership’s Escalation and Conflict Resolution Procedure will be followed.[[3]](#footnote-3)

1. **REVIEW**

These terms of reference will be reviewed annually.

1. If referrals are urgent, they will be dealt with via the Urgent Referral Procedure and discussed at the next Gateway Group meeting. [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. For information on the Council’s Signs of Safety approach, please see Appendix 1 [↑](#footnote-ref-2)
3. <https://cumbrialscb.proceduresonline.com/chapters/p_conflict_res.html> [↑](#footnote-ref-3)