



HEALTH, SOCIAL CARE AND WELLBEING SCRUTINY COMMITTEE - 22ND OCTOBER 2013

SUBJECT: HOMELESS YOUNG PEOPLE JOINT PROTOCOL

REPORT BY: ACTING CORPORATE DIRECTOR SOCIAL SERVICES

1. PURPOSE OF REPORT

- 1.1 To seek Health, Social Care and Well-being Scrutiny Committee's endorsement of the revised Homeless Young People Joint Protocol between Social Services and Housing which has been developed in consultation with key Officers in both service areas.
- 1.2 The revised protocol, attached at Appendix 1, outlines the responsibilities from both Housing and Social Services perspective.

2. SUMMARY

- 2.1 In September 2013 the Leaving Care Team was re-developed to become the 16 Plus Service.
- 2.2 It was felt that developing a 16 Plus Service would have the potential to achieve a high quality consistent service for care leavers. There will be clarity of roles with the Social Workers within the Children Services long term teams and a continuum of care will help support a drive to improve good outcomes for young people. There would also be the opportunity to develop extensive knowledge and improved skill base within the management and staff group.
- 2.3 The plan was that over the period of September 2013 the 16 Plus Service would take responsibility for all Looked After Children who are 16 plus, and all homeless 16/17 year olds.
- 2.4 Following independent training regarding homelessness in response to the Southwark Judgement it was agreed that the 'Caerphilly County Borough Council Homeless Young People Joint Protocol' needed to be reviewed and revised.
- 2.5 As the 16 Plus Service was taking on responsibility for this group of young people it was felt an appropriate time to review the protocol along with Housing colleagues. It was acknowledged that working relationships could be strengthened in order to improve outcomes for this vulnerable group of young people.

3. LINKS TO STRATEGY

- 3.1 The Children Act 1989 and 2004.
- 3.2 The Children and Young People's Plan.
- 3.3 Children (Leaving Care) Act 2000.

3.4 Southwark Judgement (Law Lords May 2009).

3.5 Housing Act 1996.

3.6 Homelessness Act 2002.

4. THE REPORT

4.1 The 16 Plus Service has replaced the Leaving Care Team. As a result there has been an increase in the staffing resources within the team to ensure an improved service is offered and the needs of all 16 Plus young people are met within Caerphilly County Borough Council.

4.2 One of the areas that required development and reviewing was the Homeless Protocol for 16/17 year olds within the Borough.

4.3 Relationships needed to be improved between Social Services and Housing colleagues to ensure a consistent response to young people aged 16/17 years old presenting as homeless.

4.4 Earlier this year Housing Staff, Supporting People Staff and 16 Plus staff from Social Services attended independent training on the Southwark Judgement. This training gave the authority the impetus to review the existing working arrangements to ensure they were fit for purpose and reflected current working practices and standards.

4.5 As a result a number of policies and procedures needed to be reviewed and the Homeless Protocol was felt to be the priority due to the team taking on the assessments for these young people and in light of the recent training received.

4.6 There have been a number of meetings between Housing and Social Services Staff to review and revise the protocol which is attached at Appendix 1. The significant changes to the protocol relate to the improved joint working arrangements including joint assessment processes.

4.7 The key principles of the protocol are:

- To ensure decisions in respect of young people leaving care are informed by accurate and current information regarding realistic housing options.
- To support planned moves from care into suitable accommodation to prevent homelessness.
- To establish a single referral route through the 16 Plus service for young people aged 16/17yrs who may be homeless or at risk of becoming homeless.

4.8 The revised protocol has been presented to Children's Services Divisional Management Team and is scheduled to be presented to Housing Services Management Teams and Scrutiny Committee in the near future.

5. EQUALITIES IMPLICATIONS

5.1 This report relates to the revision of an existing protocol and the Council's Equality Impact Assessment does not need to be applied.

6. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 6.1 Consultation has taken place with the Finance Team. There are no direct financial implications arising from this report though the costs of accommodation for homeless young people are included in the budget for the 16 Plus Team.

7. PERSONNEL IMPLICATIONS

- 7.1 There are no Personnel implications arising from this report.

8. CONSULTATIONS

- 8.1 The views of those consulted have been incorporated into the report.

9. RECOMMENDATIONS

- 9.1 It is recommended that the content of the report be noted and that Health, Social Care and Well-being Scrutiny Committee endorse the revised Homeless Young People Joint Protocol.

10. REASONS FOR THE RECOMMENDATIONS

- 10.1 To appraise members of the Health, Social Care & Well-being committee of the Homeless Protocol drawn up between housing and social services.
- 10.2 To assure Health, Social Care and Well-being Scrutiny Committee that the Protocol ensures that Caerphilly County Borough Council is compliant with the Southwark Judgement.

11. STATUTORY POWER

- 11.1 Children (Leaving Care) Act 2000.
- 11.2 Homelessness Act 2002.

Author: Lisa Curtis-Jones, Service Manager
Consultees: Social Services Senior Management Team
Cllr Robin Woodyatt, Cabinet Member, Social Services
Children's Services Divisional Management Team
Janine Edwards, 16 Plus Service Team Manager
Steve Jenkins, Manager of the Personal Advisor Service, 16 Plus Service
Sadie O' Conner, Housing Advice Officer
Sue Cousins, Principal Housing Officer
Lee Clapham, Emergency Housing Officer
Rhian Iles, Accommodation Officer, 16 Plus Service
16 Plus Service Social Workers and Support Workers
Shelley Jones, Commissioning & Development Officer, Supporting People
Ben Davies, Solicitor, Legal Services
Mike Jones, Senior Accountant, Finance
Anna Whelan, Southwark Trainers

Background Papers:
CCBC – Homeless Young People Joint Protocol

Appendices:
Appendix 1 – CCBC – Homeless Young People Joint Protocol.