



Protocol for Transition from Children's Services to Adult Housing Related Support and (Semi) Independent Living for people over 18.

1.0 Purpose

1.1 Overview

The purpose of this document is to define the arrangements that need to be in place within the Local Authority (primarily between Children's Services, Adult Care and Community Wellbeing), and District Councils but also including other stakeholders such as Department for Work and Pensions [DWP] in relation to when a young person soon to turn, or already, 18 years of age, or 21 years if a care leaver, is receiving support within the Children's Services Commissioned Youth Housing contract. It should be read in conjunction with the Single Gateway Protocol developed by Children's Services and District Councils covering 16-17 year olds presenting as, or deemed to be at risk of, being homeless. **For further information about the referral process for accessing services for a homeless 16 and 17 year old – please see: [THIS LINK - Homeless protocol](#)**

This Protocol has been jointly developed and agreed between Lincolnshire Children's Services, Adult Care and Community Wellbeing, District Councils, DWP and Nacro.

If you are looking for guidance on *Duty to Refer homelessness*, please see attached document or visit <https://live.housingjigsaw.co.uk/alert/duty-to-refer>



FINAL Lincolnshire
Duty to Refer Protoccc

1.2 Contents

This protocol outlines the:

- statutory responsibilities of Lincolnshire County Council (LCC) and District Councils
- current support available for 16/17yr olds and care leavers up to 21yrs within Children's Services and from District Councils
- provision currently in place and able to assist young people still needing support as they turn 18 (or 21 if a care leaver and up to 25, where applicable), or for those who may be able to go on to live independently
- transition process for a young person soon to turn 18, or 21 if a care leaver, to access Adult Housing Related Support services already commissioned by Lincolnshire County Council via established referral pathways i.e. The Avenue
- transition process for a young person through District Councils to access alternative accommodation, both private sector and social housing, for those young people who can live independently

1.2 Guiding Principles

Local authorities must have regard to the seven corporate parenting principles identified in section 1 of the Children and Social Work Act 2017 when exercising their functions in relation to looked after children and care leavers.

The principles are applicable to all local authorities in England whether they are, or were the local authority looking after a particular child/young person. They apply to the whole local authority and not just to children's services functions. They apply only to local authority functions that are exercised in relation to looked after children and care leavers.

The principles state that in order to thrive, children and young people have certain key needs that good parents generally meet. The corporate parenting principles are as follows:

- to act in the best interests, and promote the physical and mental health and well-being, of those children and young people
- to encourage those children and young people to express their views, wishes and feelings
- to take into account the views, wishes and feelings of those children and young people
- to help those children and young people gain access to, and make the best use of, services provided by the local authority and its relevant partners
- to promote high aspirations, and seek to secure the best outcomes, for those children and young people

- for those children and young people to be safe, and for stability in their home lives, relationships and education or work, and
- to prepare those children and young people for adulthood and independent living.

2.0 Contracts and Arrangements

2.1 Children's Services

Supported Accommodation or Support Hours with accommodation is commissioned for homeless young people and young people aged 16/17yrs, or up to 21yrs if a care leaver, via a contract agreement with Nacro Lincolnshire NEST. Nacro has held the contract since 2015 and are a well experienced provider of excellent supported accommodation. The new Nest contract was launched in January 2021

Hundreds of young people have been supported each year via the Youth Housing contract, around 70 at any one time, thus removing the risk of homelessness and helping all councils within Lincolnshire to meet their statutory requirements.

In the last 12 months 70% of young people were supported to move-on within twelve months of accessing supported accommodation with 98% of those recording a 'positive' move-on i.e. a planned move helping to move-on to suitable and appropriate accommodation, including returning home.

2.2 Adult Care and Community Wellbeing

Adult Care and Community Wellbeing Housing Related Support Services commenced in Oct 2020.

The service model comprises of:

- accommodation-based support for homeless adults (18yrs +)
- a county-wide 'floating' support service for those at risk of homelessness

The Housing related support service also known as the Lincolnshire Housing related support partnership is delivered countywide by Framework (lead provider), Longhurst Group, The Salvation Army and Nacro .

The provision of housing related support is time limited to 6 months.

Referrals will all come from the District Council and be managed by the CAP team based in Lincoln City. CAP disseminates the referrals to the service located in the young person's chosen area.

All referrals will undertake an initial triage assessment to ensure they meet the necessary eligibility criteria. This can be completed by the organisation working with the individual or by a housing officer at the local authority.

Priority is based on the level of need outlined via the triage tool and leaving care status.

As with the Young Peoples contract, it is important to note that Adult Care and Community Wellbeing only fund support. Where support is accommodation- based the accommodation is funded through the service user paying rent, often through housing benefit provided by District Councils.

2.3 District Housing Authority's arrangements and housing options

District housing authorities are required to provide a housing advice service to those who are resident in their area; this is extended to those who may live outside the area but have a local connection.

Each local housing authority in England must provide or secure the provision of a service, available free of charge to any person in the authority's district, providing information and advice on:

- preventing homelessness
- securing accommodation when homeless
- the rights of persons who are homeless or threatened with homelessness, and the duties of the authority
- any help that is available from the authority or anyone else for persons in the authority's district who are homeless or may become homeless (whether or not they are threatened with homelessness), and
- how to access that help.

The service must be designed to meet the needs of persons in the authority's district including, in particular, the needs of:

- persons released from prison or youth detention accommodation
- care leavers
- former members of the regular armed forces
- victims of domestic abuse
- persons leaving hospital
- persons suffering from a mental illness or impairment, and
- any other group that the authority identify as being at particular risk of homelessness in the authority's district.

The service covers a household's housing rights and responsibilities, and the options available. There is a variety of assistance available such as to assist with remaining in their current home, how to access suitable alternative accommodation, support to negotiate with landlords/family members, managing debts, domestic abuse, discretionary housing payments, and rent advance or deposit guarantee schemes etc.

3.0 Statutory Responsibilities

3.1 In accordance with Guidance from Secretary of State Housing Act 1996 – Part 6 Allocation of Accommodation

- s159 a local authority shall comply with the provisions of Part 6 in allocation housing accommodation
- s162 every local housing authority shall establish and maintain a register of qualifying persons (the housing register)
- s166 a local housing authority shall secure that advice and information is available free of charge to persons in their district about the right to make an application and any necessary assistance in making such an application is provided
- s167 every local housing authority shall have a scheme (their allocation scheme) for determining priorities and as to the procedure to be followed, in the allocating housing accommodation.

Housing Act 1996 – Part 7 Accessing services

- In accordance with s179, as amended by the Homelessness Act 2002 and Homelessness Reduction Act 2017, to provide an advice service to residents in their area
- In accordance with s184, if the housing authority has reason to believe the applicant may be homeless or threatened with becoming homeless, they will make enquiries as to whether they are eligible for assistance and if so, what duty is owed.

Children Act 1989 – Part 3

- The primary responsibility for a child in need who requires accommodation, including a 16 and 17 year old who is homeless, lies with the relevant children's services authority. The Children Act 1989 (section 20) places a duty on children's services authorities to accommodate a child in need, and in almost all circumstances a homeless 16-17 year old will be a Child In Need (CIN -S17).
- **For further information about the referral process for accessing services for a homeless 16 and 17 year old – please see:**

[THIS LINK - Homeless protocol](#)

- A Duty under section 20 of the 1989 Act takes precedence over the Duties of the 1996 Act in providing for children in need who require accommodation.

Children & Social Work Act 2017 - Section 3

- A new duty which requires the Local Authority to offer Personal Assistance (PA) support to all care leavers up to age 25, irrespective of whether they are engaged in education or training. This includes care leavers who return at any point after the age of 21 up to age 25 that request PA support.

4.0 Current Provision

4.1 Children's Services

4.1.1 Support Offer

The Lincolnshire NEST contract currently delivers support to homeless 16/17 year olds, and 16 and 17 year olds Looked After young people, up to 21 if a care leaver, as laid out in Table 1 below.

This service is designed to meet the needs of Low to Intensive Need Young People including Young Parents', placements are informed by a cumulative risk approach. The service includes three dedicated independent units of accommodation for Intensive Need and High Risk Young People in Lincoln City, with other accommodation in Lincoln, Boston and Grantham providing a mix of shared houses dispersed in the community, self-contained flats and units within 24 hour hub buildings.

Access to this support is via the Single Gateway described in more detail within section 5.0 of this document.

District	Total Number of Units
Boston	8
Grantham	12
Lincoln	52
Total	72

4.1.2 Criteria

Lincolnshire County Council and all 7 District Councils share the duty to support homeless young people. LCC leads on ensuring looked after children are accommodated appropriately and ensuring that support to care leavers to access suitable accommodation is on offer. All Local Authorities are committed to ensuring there is sufficient and suitable accommodation across Lincolnshire; this is achieved through regular needs analysis and the commissioning of appropriate services.

The focal points within the contract are:

- effective assessment of need
- care pathway and support planning
- outcomes focused and young person centred support
- collaborative working to support vulnerable young people
- timely, appropriate, and effective move-on

Young people's needs may be complex and/or multiple, requiring joint assessment with other relevant and/or specialist agencies through mechanisms such as Team Around the Child (TAC). For example, the young person could be in the criminal justice system; and/or be experiencing substance misuse; and/or have mental health issues; and/or have a learning difficulty etc.

NEST will provide young people with varying levels of support according to the needs of the individual. All young people help to create and agree their own support plan, which is reviewed every 12 weeks. Support is expected to reduce as the young person's skills and confidence increase aiming to deliver agreed outcomes in time for the young person's move-on arrangements. To facilitate this young people are supported to develop independent living skills e.g. budgeting and maintaining a tenancy through NEST's life skills programme.

Where it is identified that a young person will need on-going housing related support beyond their 18th birthday, or 21st birthday if a care leaver (i.e. as they move from Children's Services towards adulthood), if they meet the eligibility criteria and it is felt that Adults Housing Related Support is the best option for that young person, NEST and Leaving Care Services (where applicable) will help the young person to present at the relevant local district and request an application is made to Adults Housing Related Support (described in more detail in Section 4.2)

If it is considered that a young person at this time can live independently and they will no longer require supported accommodation, a dedicated NEST Transition worker will help the young person consider all their housing options including housing applications to the relevant district and the private sector. Or, if it is

identified the young person requires on-going support to maintain a tenancy before gaining long term independent accommodation, depending on availability, NEST will support the young person to move-on into Nacro's Step Forward Service (non-commissioned move on bed spaces). Where Nacro does not have availability within Step Forward NEST will explore accommodation with all other providers in Lincolnshire who offer Intensive Housing Management services. This accommodation does not offer any support hours beyond any housing intensive management arrangements the provider may have in place.

Where appropriate, Children's Services will consider, upon request from housing partners, relevant financial support for care leavers up to the age of 21 years in (semi) independent accommodation to help them transition to, and sustain, their tenancy. See Appendix 1.

4.2 Adult Care and Community Wellbeing

4.2.1 Housing Related Support

Adult Care and Community Wellbeing's Adults Housing Related Support is shown in Table 2 and Table 3 below (NB: the unit amounts are for all Adults aged 18yrs plus, not exclusively for young people leaving Youth Housing).

Support can only be accessed through the District Council.

Provider & Area Covered	Units of Accommodation	Total hours of service per week	Location
Framework – Boston	24	197.6	Boston
Framework – Lincoln	48	364.8	Lincoln
Framework – South Holland	20	152	Spalding and Holbeach
Salvation Army – East Lindsey	28	212.8	Skegness
Longhurst – North Kesteven	19	136.8	Sleaford
Longhurst – West Lindsey	16	121.6	Gainsborough
Nacro – South Kesteven	25	190	Grantham

Table 3 - Floating support		
Accommodation units	Contracted amount of hours of support	Location(s)
	Floating Support	
128	995.3	Countywide

4.2.2 Support Offer

Services will provide housing related support to individuals, in line with an agreed support plan, including but not limited to:

- Supporting individuals to access and engage with services to address mental health issues and are better able to manage their mental health.
- Support individuals to access and engage with services to improve physical health issues and are better able to manage their own physical health.
- Support individuals to access and engage with services to address drug and/or alcohol misuse and are better able to manage their substance misuse issues.
- Support individuals to better manage risk of harm from self and others (including improved feeling of safety).
- Support individuals to develop new/improved skills to manage a tenancy/mortgage independently of support services.
- Support individuals to have more choice control and involvement in their own support process.
- Support individuals to improve and manage their own economic wellbeing.

4.2.3 Eligibility

To be eligible for these services, applicants must meet the following criteria:

- be living in any housing tenure (floating support)
- be aged 18yrs and above
- have a local area connection to the area referred to (unless have leaving care status or referring to floating support)
- have recourse to public funds
- Have a clear need for housing related support and can be evidenced through the initial triage assessment.
- be willing to engage with the service

4.2.4 Criteria

All accommodation and floating support is time limited to a maximum of 6 months.

For accommodation based housing related support the individual must have a local area connection (unless have leaving care status)

For cases open to Children's Services, local access will apply as the young person is open to the tier 1 Authority. Accommodation based housing related support offers a 2 month resettlement period of support following move-on. If it is assessed that further support is needed a referral can be made to floating support for a further period of support.

Countywide floating support is available across all housing tenures within Lincolnshire to enable people with a range of support needs to maintain and sustain their accommodation and independence and/ or gain access to independent accommodation. This support is available for up to 6 months.

All of the above durations can be extended, on an individual basis, through agreement by Adult Care and Community Wellbeing, where necessary to enable a positive move either towards or into independent living.

Referrals can only be made by the District Councils. All referrals will be managed by the CAP team located in Lincoln City who will check for irregularities and consistency before disseminating them through to the relevant service.

4.3 District Councils

Social housing is provided by a range of providers in Lincolnshire, not just District Councils. To access social housing, households need to join the Housing Register; it is important to note that it is usual for applications to be prioritised by a confirmed local connection to each individual's district area.

Lincolnshire care leavers will automatically have a local connection with all Districts within Lincolnshire meaning they should be eligible to go on any of the individual housing registers. Some housing registers require the applicant to be 18 years of age or over and many housing providers will not offer a tenancy to a minor without a guarantor. District Councils may have a policy framework that enables them to exercise discretion on a case-by-case basis with regard to 16/17 year olds and/or care leavers who are on the housing register in relation to their relative priority status but must comply with housing legislation and code of guidance. Further details can be found within each Districts Housing Allocation Scheme.

Reasonable preference is given to those who are homeless or threatened with homelessness. Availability of social housing is limited and predetermined Lettings

Policies balance housing needs local to their area. Tenancy types will vary between providers.

Care leavers up to the age of 25 years will be awarded at least the level of reasonable preference prevailing Codes and Statutory Instruments required when applying to go onto the housing register or presenting as homeless

Personal Housing Plans will be directly linked to a care leaver's Pathway Plan through partnership working with Lincolnshire Leaving Care service and the care leaver themselves.

All parties agree that care leavers should be afforded the reasonable preference prevailing Codes and Statutory Instruments as all local authorities have signed up to promote the seven corporate parenting principles referenced in section 1.2. All reasonable efforts will be made to prevent a care leaver being classified as intentionally homeless through intensive work on the care leaver's personalised housing plan, which shall be aligned with their Pathway Plan.

In circumstances where a care leaver is in danger of being categorised as intentionally homeless, prior to any such decision, District Councils will request to convene a multi-agency meeting involving the care leaver and/or their key worker to seek to overcome the barriers to the successful implementation of their Housing/Pathway Plan chaired by the Corporate Parenting Manager or Leaving Care Team Manager.

District Councils can also help facilitate access to suitable affordable accommodation in the private sector, through landlord liaison and/or financial assistance. Landlords will usually request a copy of support plans to provide assurance that the tenancy will succeed.

5.0 Transition from Commissioned Youth Housing to Adult Housing Related Support

5.1 Adult Care and Community Wellbeing Referral Pathway

Adult Housing Related Support services are for people of 18yrs and above who are homeless or at risk of homelessness and have housing related support needs. Full eligibility for this support is already given within clause 4.2.3 of this document.

Most referrals for young people are made via the relevant NEST provider.

Adult Care and Community Wellbeing contracts will be reviewed to enable the following:-

- 10 weeks prior to 18th birthday (or 21st birthday for care leavers) appropriate young people eligible for housing related support services should be referred to Adult Care and Community Wellbeing
- Adult Care and Community Wellbeing will request the known providers to confirm a place. All eligible young people in transition will be accepted into the pathway. Adult Housing Related Support providers will seek to offer the support as required within the confines of the overall available provision but if the provider states they cannot meet need, a multi-agency meeting will be initiated to establish what needs to happen to enable the placement including who might be best placed to help meet those needs.
- Time planning may be needed to manage this element as all residents in Adult Services have binding tenancy agreements, but statutory duties will remain the priority - Lincolnshire County Council must ensure that their statutory obligations in relation to children and young people take precedent. To help facilitate this it is therefore imperative to ensure that sufficient notice has been provided to the service providers to allow for a planned move into the service
- Where a Housing Related Support service declines a young person in transition due to a lack of capacity, and it can be proven that sufficient notice has been given, the following steps should be taken to ensure the young person is accommodated:
 - Review of existing tenants to identify those who are due to move-on into independent accommodation, including the provider's own move-on accommodation, within the timeframes given for the young person in transition entering the service. In this instance, information (i.e. a positive notice that the tenant no longer requires supported accommodation) may be given to the relevant district council to expedite the availability of suitable accommodation
 - Where the provider can give assurances that accommodation will become available within a reasonable time frame, and the young person in transition is in NEST accommodation, a discretionary extension of up to two weeks will be granted for the young person to remain while waiting for the accommodation to become free
 - Where there are still capacity issues within the young person's chosen location the referrer will work with the young person to try to identify suitable supported housing accommodation elsewhere in the county, taking into account key issues such as employment, education, support networks and sufficient travel options available to them

- Young people in transition cannot be refused a place or evicted without a multi-agency discussion, which will be attended by Children's Services and Adult Care and Community Wellbeing. All options to support a placement will be explored
- When transitioning from Children's Service to Adults Housing Related Support, young people will not be considered by LCC or District Councils as being intentionally homeless due to a lack of move on provision.
- In addition, Lincolnshire Leaving Care Service (Barnardo's) will support care leavers where appropriate to ensure the Housing Benefit element of Universal Credit is paid direct to the landlord

5.2 Transition to Housing via District Councils

To align with the timescales for referral to Adults Housing Related Support, appropriate young people in transition to (semi) independent living within Children's Services commissioned accommodation will be referred to the District Council Housing Register preferably 12 weeks prior to their 18th birthday with eligibility prior to attaining the age of 18 being determined by the relevant District Council. In addition, Young Parents aged 16/17 years will be referred at the point where they are ready for independent living so that parent(s) and children can start family life in long-term accommodation. Where appropriate, young people may be referred simultaneously to The Avenue for floating support services.

Wherever possible, District Councils want to avoid a crisis situation and would like to be involved with households from an early stage to ensure all options for a planned move-on are considered and appropriate to the individual, this may include invitations to TAC meetings for instance.

If there is no TAC arrangement in place, a housing options interview should take place to enable the individual's housing rights, responsibilities and options to be explored. At the housing options interview it will clearly be explained whether or not there is likely to be a housing duty to the individual, should they become homeless i.e. whether the housing authority would be required to provide accommodation or not. Advice and assistance is also available to help individual's access to suitable alternative accommodation.

Together with providers it is important there is a clear assessment of on-going support needs, if applicable, to ensure the right housing options are considered prior to and during the transition to adult commissioned support services and/or (semi) independent living accommodation.

Whilst there is a lot of consistency across local district housing, due to local variances it is important to note that the following assistance to facilitate move-on

accommodation and/or transition to employment, education and training opportunities may be subject to local eligibility assessments and budget availability. However, District Councils will look to advise and, where possible, support, through their own policy frameworks, care leavers and 18yr olds in transition wherever possible through:

- Assistance to access private sector accommodation e.g. Tenancy Assistance Schemes, Rent Advance and deposit guarantee schemes
- Discretionary housing payments (if already in receipt of Housing Benefit)
- Homeless prevention payments (may be grants or repayable)
- Assistance to join the Housing Register

As referenced in Section 6.1, Lincolnshire Leaving Care Service (Barnardo's) will look to support care leavers, where appropriate, to ensure the Housing Benefit element of Universal Credit is paid direct to the landlord. Furthermore, and as referenced in Section 4.1.2, where appropriate, Children's Services will consider, upon request from housing partners, relevant financial support for Care Leavers up to the age of 21 years in (semi) independent accommodation to help them transition to and sustain their tenancy.

5.3 Contacts

LCC Children's Services

Youthhousing@lincolnshire.gov.uk

Key contact: Andrew Morris 01522 553612

LCC Adult Care and Community Wellbeing

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01522 553729

District Councils

Boston Housing Options Team

housing.dept@boston.gov.uk

01205 314200

East Lindsey Housing Advice Team

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01507 613135

City of Lincoln Housing Solutions Team

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01522 873777

North Kesteven Housing Options Team

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01529 414155

South Holland Housing Options Team

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South Kesteven Housing Solutions Team

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01476 40608

West Lindsey Home Choices Team
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Nacro

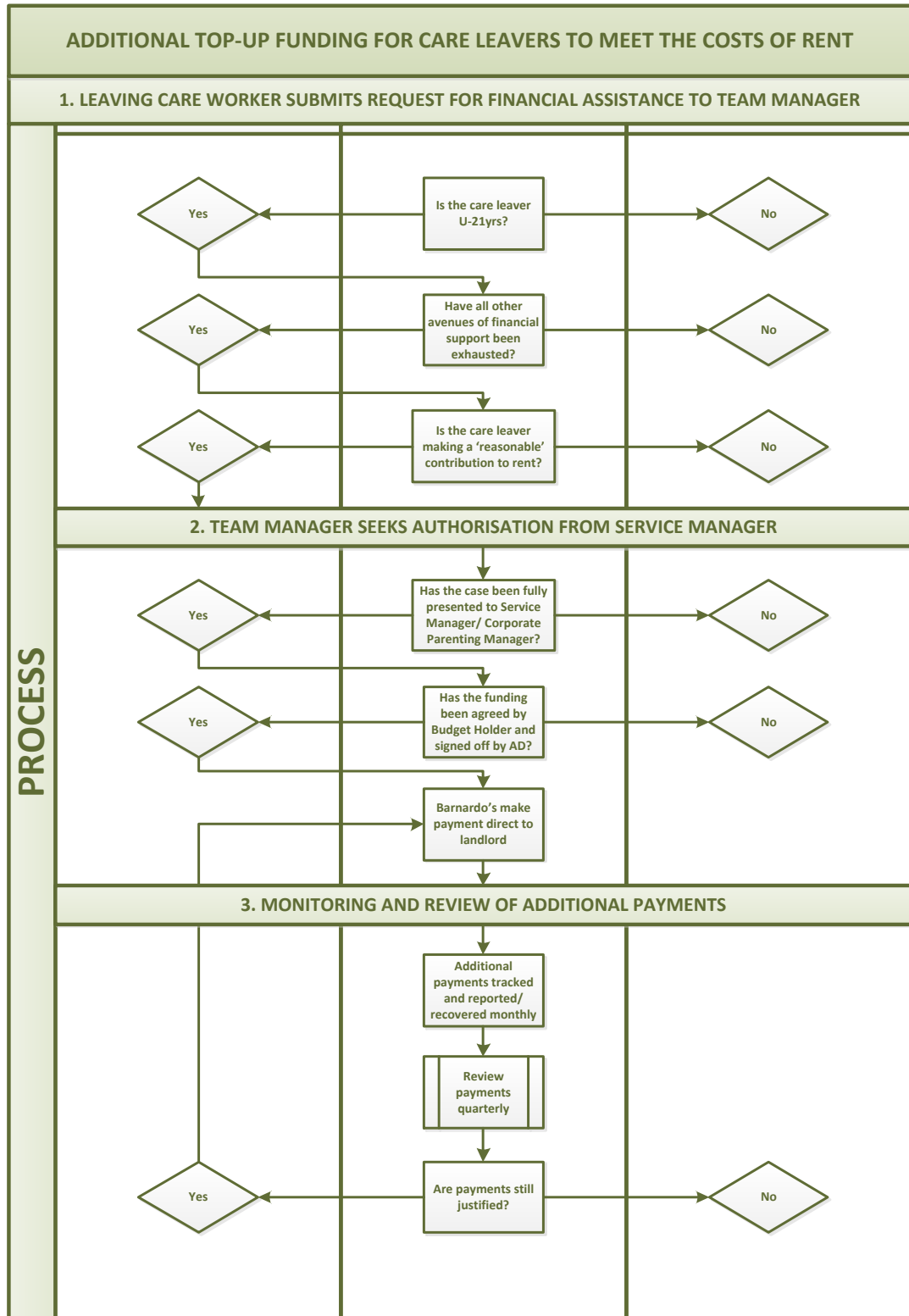
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APPENDIX 1

Process for top-up funding for care leavers to meet the costs of rent



PROCESS