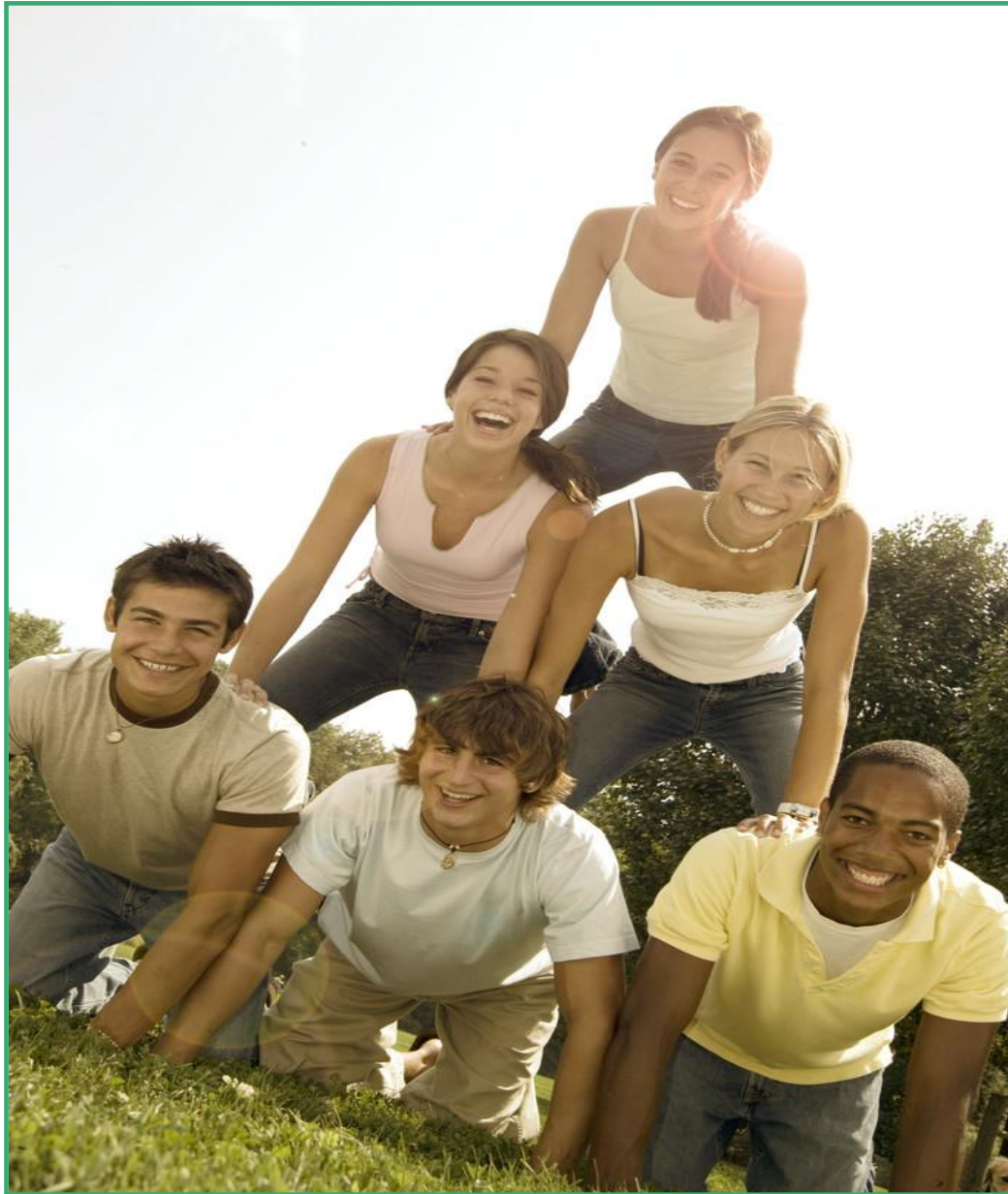


16+ Service



**Herefordshire
Council**



Herefordshire

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HOUSING

Herefordshire 16+ Service Statement of Purpose

1.1.1 Introduction

This policy has been produced in accordance with the Care Leavers (England) Regulations 2010 and is referred to as the “Statement of Purpose”.

The Local Authorities work with young people is underpinned by the statutory duties outlined in the Care Leavers (England) 2010 Regulations in helping them with the transition into adulthood and to ensure they are given advice and support.

This policy outlines the aims and objectives of the Herefordshire 16+ Team in meeting the statutory requirements and providing a service to care leavers in Herefordshire.

This policy aims to describe the services which care leavers are entitled once they have been looked after by the authority for 13 weeks or more from the age of 14 years

1.1.2 Aims and Objectives

Herefordshire 16+ Team takes its responsibility to young people seriously and aims to provide the support and guidance necessary for them to attain independence in a safe and managed environment.

We will ensure:

- Young people are not discharged from care until they are ready and prepared to do so
- That every Care leaver from the age of 16-21 will have a pathway plan that sets out their wishes for the future and a clear plan as to how to achieve this. This will be completed in consultation with the young person.
- Every young person has a Personal Advisor who can offer practical and emotional support and guidance to enable the young person to reach independence and succeed in their aims identified through their pathway plan.
- That every young person is financially supported until they are 18 and beyond if they are in further or higher education.
- That every young person is consulted and included in shaping their pathway plans and their views are listened to and respected.
- That we will work within a multi agency context to ensure that the needs of young people can be met with a range of different services.

1.1.3 The Legal Framework

The 16+ Team's work with young people and care leavers is driven by the Care Leavers Regulations 2010 which has replaced the provisions issued through the Children leaving Care Act 2000. The 2010 regulations came into force on April 2011.

The Act gives a framework for care leavers to enable them to achieve their potential and to support the transition into adulthood. The Act enables the 16+ Team to achieve this through effective planning, intervention and personal support.

1.1.4 Organisational Structure

Location

The Herefordshire 16+ Team is located at Bath St, Hereford.

The team is part of the Look After Children's team who are based at the same premises.

Management Structure

The Director of People's Services is the decision maker within the service and has an assistant Director who has delegated responsibility for children and young people's provider services.

The Children and Young People's Head of Service is responsible for the Looked After Children's service. The Team Manager of the Looked After Children Team is the manager of the 16+ service.

The 16+ Team employs the following staff.

- 1 Full time Manager (Looked After Children)
- 1 Full time Assistant Team Manager (Looked After Children/16+)
- 1 Full time Qualified Social Worker
- 5 Full time Personal Advisors
- 2 Part time Personal Advisors
- 1 Full time Family Support Worker
- 1 Team Clerk

The Team Manager and Assistant Team Manager are professionally qualified Social Workers with a degree in Social Work or equivalent. All qualified

Social Workers within the team are expected to be registered with the General Social Care Council.

The Personal Advisors are qualified to NVQ Level 3 or equivalent. The Personal Advisors within the 16+ team have a range of different experience and skills that include Youth Workers, Residential settings for children and young people. This range of experience and skills enables the 16+ team to provide advice, support and guidance to young people with a range of different needs and backgrounds.

1.1.5 Definitions and Statutory Obligations

Eligible children/young people

A 16 or 17 year old who is looked after and has been looked after by the Local Authority for a period of 13 weeks or periods amounting to 13 weeks which began after they reached 14 and ended after they reached 16.

Every eligible young person is allocated a LAC Social Worker who will remain the lead worker. The young person will be allocated a personal advisor to work alongside the social worker in supporting any objectives set out within the care plan and pathway plan.

‘The local authority has the same statutory obligations in relation to eligible children as they do towards other children looked after by them, including a duty to maintain their care plan, carry out regular reviews of their case and appoint an independent reviewing officer for the child. In addition they must:

prepare an assessment of the eligible child’s needs with a view to determining what advice, assistance and support it would be appropriate for them to provide him (both while he is still looked after and after he stops being looked after) [paragraph 19B(4) of Schedule 2 to the 1989 Act; the requirements for carrying out the assessment are set out in regulation 42 of the Care Planning Regulations]

as soon as possible after the assessment of needs is completed, prepare a pathway plan (which includes the child’s care plan) [paragraph 19B(4) of Schedule 2 to the 1989 Act; the requirements for preparing the pathway plan are set out in regulation 43 of the Care Planning Regulations]

keep the pathway plan under regular review [paragraph 19B(5)] (Volume 3: Planning Transition to Adulthood for Care Leavers)

Relevant young people

A 16 or 17 year old who is no longer looked after and was formally an eligible child/young person. This category also includes young people who at the age of 16 were detained in a remand centre, young offenders institute, secure

training centre or in hospital and previously been in care for a period of at least 13 weeks after they reached 14 years old.

Every relevant young person will be allocated a personal advisor who will support the individual in their independence and review their pathway plan.

‘The local authority that last looked after the relevant child must:

take reasonable steps to keep in touch with the relevant child [section 23B(1) of the 1989 Act]

prepare an assessment of the relevant child’s needs with a view to determining what advice assistance and support it would be appropriate for them to provide him (unless they already did so when he was an eligible child) [section 23B(3)(a) of the 1989 Act; the requirements for carrying out the assessment are set out in regulations 4 and 5 of the Care Leavers Regulations]

as soon as possible after any assessment of needs is completed, prepare a pathway plan [section 23B(3)(b) of the 1989 Act; the requirements for preparing the pathway plan are set out in regulation 6 of the Care Leavers Regulations]

keep the pathway plan under regular review [section 23E(1D) of the 1989 Act; the requirements for carrying out reviews are set out in regulation 7 of the Care Leavers Regulations]

appoint a personal adviser for the child (unless they already did so when he was an eligible child) [section 23B(2) of the 1989 Act; the functions of the personal adviser are set out in regulation 8 of the Care Leavers Regulations]

□ safeguard and promote the relevant child’s welfare by maintaining him, providing him with or maintaining him in suitable accommodation and providing assistance in order to meet his needs in relation to education, training or employment as provided for in his pathway plan [section 23B(8) of the 1989 Act and regulation 9 of the Care Leavers Regulations; regulation 9 also makes provision about the meaning of “suitable accommodation”].’(Volume 3: Planning Transition to Adulthood for Care Leavers)

Former Relevant young people

A young person who is aged 18 and above who has previously been defined as a relevant young person previously. The young person defined within this area will be supported until they are 21 years old or until 25 if they are in further or higher education above the age of 21.

‘The local authority that last looked after the former relevant child must:

take reasonable steps to keep in touch with the former relevant child, and if they lose touch with him, to re-establish contact [section 23C(2) of the 1989 Act]

continue to keep the pathway plan under regular review [section 23C(3)(b) of the 1989 Act; the requirements for carrying out reviews are set out in regulation 7 of the Care Leavers Regulations]

continue the appointment of the personal adviser for the child [section 23C(3)(a) of the 1989 Act; the functions of the personal adviser are set out in regulation 8 of the Care Leavers Regulations]

if his welfare requires it, provide financial assistance by contributing to the former relevant child's expenses in living near the place where he is, or will be,

employed or seeking employment [sections 23C(4)(a) and 24B(1) of the 1989 Act]

if his welfare and educational and training needs require it, provide financial assistance to enable him to pursue education or training [sections 23C(4)(b) and 24B(2) of the 1989 Act]

if the former relevant child pursues higher education in accordance with his pathway plan, to pay him the higher education bursary [section 23C(5A) and the Children Act 1989 (Higher Education Bursary) (England) Regulations 2009].’ (Volume 3: Planning Transition to Adulthood for Care Leavers)

Persons qualifying for advice and assistance

A person who is between the ages of 16 and 21 who is under a special guardianship order (or was in force when they reached 18) or if they have been for a period within foster care for periods less than 13 weeks. This also includes any person 16 or 17 that has been provided with accommodation by the Local Authority.

‘The relevant local authority (as defined in section 24(5) of the 1989 Act) must consider whether the person needs help of a kind the local authority can give:

under section 24A - to advise and befriend and give assistance, under section 24B - to give financial assistance – see above; or where the person is in full time further or higher education, is under the age of 25 and qualifies for advice and assistance, or would have done if he was under 21, assistance in relation to securing vacation accommodation [sections 24A(2) and (3), ’ (Volume 3: Planning Transition to Adulthood for Care Leavers)

1.1.6 Services provided

Personal Advisor

All young people that are receiving a service through the 16+ team will be allocated a Personal Advisor. The Personal Advisor will act as the focal point to support young people in reaching independence and ensuring that they have the guidance to reach their goals. These will include employment/education, independent living, self care skills and the skills to cope with upset and trauma.

The Personal Advisor will participate in a young person's pathway plan. The Personal Advisor will work with the young person and any other professional, family member or friend that may be identified to formulate a plan to enable progression.

The Personal Advisor will make contact with the young person through letter, telephone, email or face to face to ensure that the young person is supported and to develop a positive working relationship.

The Personal Advisor will visit the young person in line with the requirements set out in the pathway plan. In cases where young people are in distress or develop more complex problems then these visits will be more frequent and the Personal Advisor will respond in a flexible way in order to provide appropriate support.

The Personal Advisor will keep accurate and up to date records of contact with the young person and other professional agencies. This will include an up to date copy of the young person's pathway plan.

Pathway Plan

The pathway plan is a document that outlines the needs of the young person and what is needed to assist their transition to adulthood and achieve their goals and aspirations. The plan will identify services needed to enable the young person to reach their objectives, who will achieve this and realistic timeframes for these to be completed.

All young people within the leaving care service will have an up to date pathway plan that is reviewed on a 6 monthly basis or before this timeframe if needed.

The Pathway Plan must be completed when the young person is 16 and completed by the social worker alongside the young person and their personal advisor.

All relevant and former relevant young people will have an up to date Pathway Plan that is reviewed every 6 months. This plan will be based upon an up to date assessment of their needs, abilities and objectives to enable them to achieve or continue independence.

The pathway plan is completed alongside the young person who will be a participant and the plan will reflect their wishes, feelings and views. Where appropriate, and with the young person's consent it should also involve other professionals and family members to help shape the plan and meet its objectives.

'The 1989 Act requires that a pathway plan must be prepared for all eligible children and continued for all relevant and former relevant children. Each young person's pathway plan will be based on and include their care plan and will set out the actions that must be taken by the responsible authority, the young person, their parents, their carers and the full range of agencies, so that each young person is provided with the services they need to enable them to achieve their aspirations and make a successful transition to adulthood. This plan must remain a "live document", setting out the different services and how they will'(Volume 3: Planning Transition to Adulthood for Care Leavers)

Duty system

The 16+ team offer a duty service for young people Monday to Friday (except for public holidays). The duty system is open from 9am until 5pm with a duty worker available during these times to offer advice and assistance to young people who are receiving a service from the 16+ team.

The duty service will also support, advise and assess any young person presenting themselves as homeless who are 16 or 17 years old. There is a commitment to providing the most appropriate form of support for this age group and as such a joint partnership with housing and an allocated housing officer has been appointed to the 16+ service.

Advice and Guidance and functions of the Personal Advisor

The Personal Advisor will offer guidance and advice on a range of subjects to a young person qualifying for a service within the 16+ team. This will involve advice around the following areas;

- Accommodation issues
- Finance
- Health, including how to access targeted and specialist health services (e.g. information, advice and support about mental health, or sexual health)
- Emotional needs
- Family/social relationships,
- Education and employment

- Information about leisure, sporting and cultural opportunities
- Practical skills

The Personal Advisor will also work closely with other agencies and signpost the young person to relevant services for advice and support.

‘The local authority must, however, appoint a PA to support them. The PA will act as the focal point to ensure that care leavers are provided with the right kind of personal support. All care leavers should be aware of who their PA is and how to contact them, so that throughout their transition to adulthood’(Volume 3: Planning Transition to Adulthood for Care Leavers)

Training

The 16+ service will actively support and seek training courses for care leavers to help them prepare for independent living. The courses will aim at giving practical advice on budgeting, cooking and day to day living needs. The 16+ service will work with professionals to access a range of different knowledge and resources that will aid young care leavers in particular with a focus on health, career advisors and housing officers.

Accommodation

Hereford Local Authority has commissioned a service with a social housing organisation (SHAC) to offer independent living accommodation to young people who are leaving their foster placements and are ready to move to their own tenancy and accommodation. This service also extends to 16 or 17 year olds that are regarded as homeless and in need of local authority support, and have been made subject to section 20 of the Children Act. Support is provided to this group of young people by the 16+ team. Further information about this project can be accessed through the 16+ service and is described at the end of this document

Supportive Lodgings are a way of providing young people with a semi independent living environment where they can learn and develop their skills in readiness for their own tenancy.

The supported lodgings providers are supported through SHYP (a commissioned service with the third sector). The Local Authority also has its own supportive lodgings provision which is services and supported by the fostering team. A young person will be identified for a support lodgings and a referral for a placement is made to the Placement Panel which meets on a weekly basis. Any emergency needs for a support lodgings placement or accommodation must be agreed by the Head of Service.

Working in partnership with housing colleagues there is a commitment in Herefordshire that all care leavers are given priority housing status at 17.5 yrs. The Personal Advisor can assist in order to ensure this process is completed at

this stage for those care leavers who do not intend to stay in education and therefore will need to move on to independent living post 18.

In exceptional circumstances the LA will act as a guarantor for young people who are over the age of 16 and under the age of 18 where evidence is available that independent living is in the young person's best interest's and appropriate support is available. In these circumstances the LA will provide the deposit for the accommodation which is suitable and financially appropriate to the young person's related income, and they can continue to live in the same accommodation after the age of 18.

Vacation Accommodation

Any young person who is attending university will be entitled to vacation accommodation when taking a break from their studies. The arrangements for this can be identified by the pathway plan before the young person starts the course. Any young person who has joined the armed forces at the age of 16 and living with foster carers can continue to return to the carers (if all parties agree) in the holiday period. Accommodation during vacation can include family and friends care, foster care, supported living arrangements.

1.1.6 Financial Policy

The principle which underpins this policy relates to 'care leavers' that are relevant and former relevant.

The finance arrangements for eligible young people will continue to comply with the fostering regulations and those young people will receive the same financial package of support that they did prior to their 16th birthday and until they are 18 or until they cease LAC status.

The following breakdown of financial arrangements relate to those young people who are living in a supportive lodging arrangement, independent in their own property, in supported housing or in university accommodation.

Allowances

Eligible and relevant young people between the ages of 16-17 are unable to claim benefits and therefore the Local Authority provide an income allowance to aid their day to day living. Any eligible or relevant young person living in Supported Lodgings receives a weekly sum of £51.00 (means tested against Job Seekers allowance) which is paid directly into their bank account. £17.50 of this amount is deducted and given to the supported lodgings provider who will ensure that this is spent on food and toiletries. The remaining amount of money is then held by the young person to fund clothing, leisure etc.

Any eligible or relevant young person who is living independently away from supported lodgings is given the weekly sum of £51 in line with what they would receive if they were entitled to Job Seekers Allowance. This sum of money is for clothing and basic needs.

Food/Subsistence

There will be a small subsistence fund available to the team manager to approve food vouchers in an emergency.

Understanding that it is important for care leavers to develop a relationship with their personal advisor the team manager will use discretion to approve funds for refreshments and appropriate funds for meeting with their care leavers and engaging in positive activities which aid independence skills.

Leaving Care Grant

Every young person who has previously been looked after can receive a discretionary Leaving Care Grant of £1000. This grant is for a young person who is moving into their own accommodation/tenancy and is to help to finance essential items such as bedding, cooking appliances and furniture. The grant can be applied for as and when required and does not necessarily require payment in one lump sum. The ethos underpinning this policy endeavours to apply good parenting and ensure that that the young person is equipped throughout their care leaver's career and not necessarily at one point in time.

Clothing allowance

Clothing allowance is paid weekly as part of the income allowance paid to the care leaver within the allocated £51.00 per week.

Birthdays

Each care leaver will receive a gift up to the value of £25

Christmas

Each care leaver will receive a gift up to the value of £25

Passports

The team will provide the funds and support to ensure that each care leaver has a passport.

Identification

To enable young people to set up bank accounts and receive benefits or wages they must have formal identification. The 16+ Team will support relevant young people in accessing a passport and provisional driving licence and will support with the costs incurred to ensure that they are in receipt of formal identification.

Travel

Any relevant or former relevant young person who requests support with travel costs will be looked at on a case by case basis. Support can be given for young people who are in need to visit family members out of county for a pre arranged visit or in times of a crisis. This will be arranged through the safest and cost effective mode of transport.

For education travel costs please see education.

1.1.7 Education

The 16+ Team recognises that education is a vital part of a young person's development and transition into adulthood. The team supports education for young people both practically and emotionally to ensure the young people we work with have the best opportunities in which to succeed. The 16+ team will give advice and guidance to young people to help them access and make informed choices regarding their education. The 16+ Team can also support young people with any travel costs to and from college. This is decided on a case by case basis and will use the most effective and safest method of transport.

As part of the provision for looked after children the education liaison service for looked after children will support and work with 16+ young people who are or have been looked after by the authority.

Further Education

For 16-18 year olds that are attending further education at a college, training provider or apprenticeship, they will be entitled to financial support to support them in their education. This will also include ensuring that they have appropriate accommodation whilst they are completing their educational studies. For young people that are 18 or over and continue their studies the 16+ team will continue to support and provide appropriate accommodation for them if needed.

Any educational needs should be identified within the pathway plan where appropriate plans can be made. Within the plan any costs should be identified. If a young person needs certain equipment for their course then this will be

identified within the plan and support can be given to ensure these items are available. An example of this is a young person starting a construction course.

University

The 16+ Team will support young people who are attending University as part of their education. If they are at University over the age of 21 the Local Authority has a duty to continue financial and practical support up to the end of the course or until they are 25.

Any young person who is attending University will be entitled to the following financial support.

- We will fund accommodation and deposits in line with the care leavers regulations over the duration of the University course.
- Care Leavers will be entitled to a £2000 bursary (in line with care leavers regulations) which will be paid over the academic year on a weekly basis. This will be £38.46 per week. This policy decision is made in recognition that at this age it is sometimes difficult to establish consistent budgeting skills and this method of payment aims to develop these skills.
- Care leavers are entitled to apply for a Student Loan, which will pay for the tuition fees.
- They can apply for a maintenance grant that can cover living costs – this is £2,906 which is paid in lump instalments (not weekly).
- They can also apply for a Maintenance Loan which will have to be paid back much like the student loan when they are earning a level of income.
- We will help fund reasonable costs for any books, materials etc.
- We will ensure that the YP has alternative accommodation (if needed) in summer/holiday breaks from University (in line with the new regulations).

1.1.8 Non engagement

Some of the young people that are over the age of 18 do not feel or want an ongoing service from the 16+ Team. When a young person is identified as not engaging with the team or the service that is offered a letter will be sent to them asking if they want a continuing service from the team. If they confirm they do not, then their case will remain open but not actively worked on by the personal advisor. Contact will be made with the young person after 6 months to confirm this arrangement and to see if there is any help or support the young person needs.

It will be made clear to the young person that should their circumstances change and they feel they need support before the 6 months then they can contact the team and the case will then become active. Requests for financial support if a former relevant young adult between the ages of 18-25 reengages in education will be made on an individual case by case basis.

'In every case where a care leaver requests this support, authorities will need to assess the appropriateness of the education or training course and how it will help them to achieve their ambitions. This assessment could well draw on the information about the young person's skills and capabilities which will have been set out in pathway plans up to age 21. The extent of practical and financial assistance provided will depend on the authority's assessment of the young person's needs and will reflect the type of course, whether it is full or part time and the young person's existing income.' (Volume 3: Planning Transition to Adulthood for Care Leavers)

1.1.9 Partnership Working

It is recognised that to ensure the best possible outcomes for young people that receive a service with the 16+ team then it is vital that close and productive working partnerships are established with local agencies. The 16+ Team promote close joint working with these agencies that consists of regular telephone contact, multi agency meetings and joint visits to young people.

SHYPP (Supported Housing For Young People Project)

SHYPP are a third sector agency that is part of the Kemble Housing Association and provide a range of services to young people between the ages of 15-25 in relation to housing support and advice. SHYPP also provide the following services that are commissioned by the local authority and work in partnership with the 16+ Team

Supported Lodgings Placement

In addition to the Local Authority's supported lodging placements, SHYPP provide placements for relevant young people who are making a transition to independence. SHYPP recruit and support the support lodgings providers and will also provide guidance and support to the young people that live within these placements. This work is done in partnership with the personal advisor to ensure the young person is supported and they can develop their skills for independence.

SHAC (Supported Housing Aftercare Project)

SHAC is a project run in partnership with SHYPP, Kemble Housing and the 16+ Team. The project is designed to give young people who are receiving a service through the 16+ team the opportunity to live on their own within a property provided by the project and to enable them to develop their self care skills so they are able to move onto their own tenancy. The support offered to young people who receive a service through SHAC is done in conjunction with the SHAC outreach worker and the personal advisor and is identified within their pathway plan.

The SHAC project consists of 7 properties situated within Hereford and is managed through Kemble Housing.

Housing

The 16+ Team work in partnership with the Housing Department in ensuring that the accommodation needs of young people who are within the 16+ service are met within a multi agency setting. This will include housing advice and support to care leavers who are making the transition to independent living and joint assessments for 16/17 year olds that are homeless.

Targeted Youth Support

Schools will, from 2012 lead on provided support to each young person to consider their future choices as they reach the age of finishing formal education. Targeted Youth Support will play an important role in helping families remain together and offering individual and group work for young people with particular challenging and complex behaviours

Multi Agency Group Support (MAGS)

Multi Agency Groups have developed across the county in eight localities and are a key part of the process of identifying and meeting any additional needs of children, young people, families and carers identified through the Common Assessment (CAF) process. This process cultivates a holistic needs led approach across agencies and their settings. They are important in the drive to develop integrated working and strengthening resources available for early intervention to prevent needs escalating.

MAGs are business meetings of key practitioners representing different local agencies and settings, who meet to discuss children and young people who have additional needs identified by the CAF. It is likely that plans to meet these needs will involve more than one agency. MAGs bring together members of the local community to ensure swift and easy access to locally based preventative support and to co-ordinate local resources and interventions. They identify vulnerable children and young people in the locality and try to ensure they and their families receive the support they need.

Health

It is vital that the 16+ Team has a positive working relationship with Health agencies to ensure the young people's needs are met on a consistent basis. The 16+ Team work closely with a range of different health professionals that deal with health issues for young people.

Most of the young people we work with come from difficult and vulnerable backgrounds and can suffer from mental health and emotional issues. It is important that this need is identified and that services are inputted to help the individual. The 16+ Team work closely with CAMHS and the Mental Health Crisis Team to ensure that these needs are met on a regular basis and that positive joint working is promoted at all times.

The 16+ Team also ensure that young people have access to sexual health advice and information. This support can be received through the sexual health clinic in Herefordshire.

Some of the young people the team work with are young parents. We ensure that we have a close working relationship with midwives and Health Visitors to support young parents both through the pregnancy and in parenthood.

Youth Offending Service (YOS)

The 16+ Team works closely with YOS in supporting young people with their offending behaviour. This will include substance misuse, housing issues and anti social behaviour. The personal advisor will keep in regular contact with the YOS worker in respect of meetings, visits and any issues that may impact upon the young person's safety or welfare.

1.1.9 16-17 Year old homeless

Herefordshire has launched a 16+ service which will include working in partnership with housing colleagues to address the needs of 16 and 17 year olds who present themselves as homeless. The housing solutions team will be the first point of contact before a referral is made for a joint assessment to be undertaken by a housing officer and a qualified social worker in the 16+ team. In the spirit of working together and achieving the best outcome for this group of young people the housing officer will be based with the 16+ team. Together the team will aim to ensure that the right type of accommodation and service is identified. Once accepted as meeting the criteria for accommodation each young person will be allocated a social worker and access to the same benefits as a care leaver if they are living independently or the same support as other fostered children if they are living within foster care.

1.1.10 Supervision and training

The 16+ Team recognises the need for regular and effective supervision for staff that will ensure a consistent and safe support service for young people. All staff members will have monthly supervision in line with the Local Authority supervision policies. All staff will also engage in an annual staff appraisal to identify training and personal development needs.