



## **Barnet Care Leaver's Housing Protocol 2023 - 2026**



<b>POLICY NAME</b>	Care Leaver Housing Protocol		
<b>Document Description</b>	This protocol outlines how Barnet Homes, Family Services, Revenues and Benefits and other key agencies each play a full role in providing the resources and support to care leavers to support a successful transition to independent living.		
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# 1. Introduction

## Our Corporate Parenting Pledge

In 2016, Barnet's Full Council heard and agreed [Corporate Parenting Pledge](#) for Children in Care & Care Leavers.

Our Corporate Vision and Corporate Parenting Pledge for Children in Care & Care Leavers agreed by full Council in 2022 takes most seriously its corporate parenting role in championing the needs of children in care and care leavers. One such element of this is ensuring that the borough has sufficient high-quality placements, accommodation and support to meet the needs of all our children in care and leaving care, hearing their voice, safeguarding them from harm, supporting them to achieve positive outcomes and enabling them to achieve their aspirations and make a positive contribution.

### From the Corporate Parenting Strategy 2021 – 2023 Pledge:

We will support you to become independent and prepare for adulthood through continuing to deliver:

- For 15/17-year olds through our stepladder programme, that includes financial management. And for all of you, supporting you to develop independent living skills as part of the support you receive in your alternative home.
- A home with support that is based on what you need, not your age, and that prepares you for independence:
- Together with you, we plan for where you will live when you get older, preparing for independence (we call it pathways). Where it is the right choice for you, you can remain with your foster family post 18 as part of a "staying put" arrangements.
- We are currently piloting our in-house Moving Forward offer; this is where you live together with other young people in a home, where staff offer you support on developing your independent living skills.
- Barnet Supported Living Service helps those of you with learning disabilities to live as independently as possible in their own home.

## Care leaver housing protocol

Moving forward from Local Authority care is a particularly important and sometimes challenging transition. Young people can become adults in one area of their lives, but not in others. For many young adults, their transition to adulthood can be extended and delayed until they are emotionally and financially ready, and they have the qualifications they need and aspire to. Securing suitable accommodation for care leavers is therefore much more than just finding them somewhere to stay.

Care leavers should expect the same level of care and support that others would expect from a reasonable parent. Barnet Council is responsible for their care and should make sure that they are provided with the opportunities they need. It is important to remember that there is no one appropriate pathway for young people to move to independent living. Leaving care too early presents looked after young people with significant challenges which will impact on their life chances. Care leavers, like all young people, will make mistakes and require support to learn from their experiences. Young people leaving care may need longer to achieve some of their goals than their peers who have not been in care.



Research has identified that the following support helps care leavers to make a positive transition to independent living (Stein, 2010)<sup>1</sup>:

- Housing and Children's Services need to identify problems with accommodation early on, have clear contingency arrangements – including sufficient emergency accommodation to prevent homelessness – and specialist accommodation for young people with higher support needs.
- Care leavers want and benefit from support services matched to their needs, including leaving care services, out-of-hours support, mentoring and positive family and kinship contact.
- Care leavers also need practical support with moving and setting up in accommodation.

Good housing underpins success in other areas of life. Secure, safe and stable accommodation is an essential building block for success and achievement in education, training and employment, and has a direct impact on emotional health and wellbeing. It is therefore essential that a multi-agency approach is adopted when securing accommodation for care leavers; agencies must work together to meet their statutory duties and corporate parenting responsibilities, in order to provide a safe and supportive pathway to independent living.

Care leavers need to be well prepared to live independently and their housing needs must be addressed before they leave care via pathway planning and joint assessment. We are therefore proud to publish this protocol and will ensure that Barnet Homes, Family Services, Revenues and Benefits and other key agencies each play a full role in providing the resources and support to care leavers.

This protocol will also ensure that every effort is made to avoid using the homeless route which is inappropriate when assessing and meeting the housing needs of care leavers.

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<sup>1</sup> Stein M (with data annexe by Morris M) (2010)  
C4EO Knowledge Review 3: Increasing the number of care leavers in 'settled, safe accommodation' (September 2010).

## 2. Purpose of the Care Leaver Housing Protocol

This joint Protocol is an agreement between Barnet Homes (and their agents providing the homeless/housing advice services), Family Services and Revenues and Benefits to:

- Set out our commitment to developing services (our local offer) to care leavers;
- Establish the roles and responsibilities towards care leavers and define the roles of the statutory agencies within the legislative framework.
- Develop a "corporate parenting" approach towards care leavers, providing a shared commitment from Family Services, Barnet Homes and Revenues and Benefits to ensure our young people achieve the best outcomes possible;
- Identify how the Family Services, Barnet Homes and Revenues and Benefits can, by working together, meet the needs of care leavers, effectively discharge our duties in line with government guidance and benchmarked good practice, ensuring that there are no gaps in services and that resources are effectively used; and
- Ensure all officers using this protocol are mindful of the roles and responsibilities of organisations working with young people and the need for multi-agency working to secure positive outcomes.

## 3. Who does this policy apply to?

'The local authority is the corporate parent of Children in Care and therefore has a legal and moral duty to provide the kind of support that any good parent would provide to their own children'.

This is a legal responsibility which extends to all departments within the council.

All local authorities have a statutory duty to ensure all eligible and relevant care leavers are placed in suitable accommodation when leaving care. This protocol applies to this cohort of young people.

The definitions are:

### **Eligible child**

A child aged 16 and 17 who have been looked after for at least 13 weeks since the age of 14 and who are still looked after.

### **Relevant child**

A child aged 16 and 17 who have been looked after for at least 13 weeks since the age of 14 and who have left care. This also includes young people who were detained (e.g., in a youth offending institution or hospital) when they turned 16 but immediately before that were looked after.

## Former relevant child

A young person (YP) over 18 who was previously 'eligible' or 'relevant'. Local authorities support this group at least until age 21, or some duties until age 25.

## Legislative Framework

The *Children (Leaving Care) Act 2000* and *The Homelessness Act (2002)* require local authority Family Services and Housing departments to work together to ensure the accommodation needs of care leavers are met.

*Volume 3 of The Children Act (1989) - The Planning Transition to Adulthood guidance (2010)* states on page 4 that research and practice shows that YP who have been looked after will have the best chance of success as adults if those providing transitional care and other support take the following principles into account in talking to the young person and when making any decision:

- Is this good enough for my own child?
- Providing a second chance if things don't go as expected.
- Is this tailored to their individual needs, particularly if they are more vulnerable than other young people?

*The Housing Act 1996 as amended* states that a YP who is threatened with homelessness, has a priority need for housing if they are a person:

- under 21 who was (but is no longer) looked after by the Local Authority between the ages of 16 and 18.
- A person 21 or over who is vulnerable as a result of being looked after.

The *Children and Social Work Act (2017)* sets out corporate parenting principles for the council as a whole to be the best parent it can be to children in its care. Local authorities are required to publish their local offer to care leavers. Significantly, the legislation requires local authorities to appoint personal advisers to provide support to care leavers up to the age of 25, except where the young person no longer wants a personal adviser. Such support should be based on the needs of the YP as per their statutory Pathway Plan.

The *Homelessness Reduction Act (2017)* places a new duty on Local Authorities to help prevent the homelessness of all families and single people, regardless of priority need, who are eligible for assistance and threatened with homelessness.

Local Authorities are required to assess an applicant's case and develop a personalised plan to identify appropriate actions to prevent or relieve the applicant's homelessness. In performing these duties, the Secretary of State considers that housing authorities should adopt a positive and collaborative approach toward applicants, taking account of their particular needs and making all reasonable efforts to engage their cooperation.

The full government guidance can be found [here](#).

## Unaccompanied Asylum-Seeking Children

Under the Children Act 1989, asylum applicants below the age of 18 who arrive in the UK without close adult family members, either accompanying them or already in the UK who they can join, may be provided a service by the local authority social



services departments, regardless of immigration status. This may be under s.17 of the Children Act 1989, and therefore the young person may or may not be looked or former relevant child after as a result.

- Unaccompanied young people that are former relevant children

When an unaccompanied asylum seeker that is an eligible or relevant child reaches of 18, the local authority has the power to assist them as a Former Relevant Child to the extent that her/his welfare requires it, and this includes the power to provide accommodation. In some cases, the local authority will be obligated to provide assistance to ensure the Former Relevant Child's welfare is not compromised.

In assessing the need for accommodation, the Local Authority cannot take account any accommodation that could be provided by the UK Border Agency (UKBA) as the UKBA are not required to provide accommodation if the asylum seeker (or failed asylum seeker) is entitled to accommodation under another statutory regime.

- Unaccompanied young people who are not former relevant children

If the asylum seeker reaches the age of 18, and is not a Former Relevant Child when s/he turns 18, any duty to accommodate will fall to the UKBA, unless s/he is in need of care and attention and is 'destitution plus', when social services would have a duty to accommodate under section 21 of the National Assistance Act 1948.

Asylum seekers are not eligible for homelessness assistance from the Local Authority under Part 7 of the Housing Act 1996 unless granted some form of leave to remain that makes them eligible (e.g. humanitarian protection). If their asylum claim is accepted, they are granted refugee status and become eligible for homelessness assistance from the local authority.

### **Children from the European Economic Area**

The UK residence rights and immigration requirements for European Economic Area (EEA) nationals and their family members have significantly changed following the UK's departure from the European Union (EU). From 1<sup>st</sup> January 2021, new immigration and eligibility rules apply.

EEA nationals and their family members who did not apply to the EU Settlement Scheme before the end of the grace period (30 June 2021) will now be unlawfully present in the UK and at risk of losing access to benefits, employment, and other entitlements, although may be able to make a late application if they can show that they have a reasonable excuse for missing the deadline. People with pending EU Settlement Scheme applications should be able to retain their entitlements whilst they are waiting for a decision.

### **Children who resided in the UK before 31<sup>st</sup> December 2020**

The Withdrawal Agreement protects the rights of EEA citizens and their family members who were lawfully residing, or frontier working, in the UK before 11pm on 31 December 2020, including access to social housing and homelessness assistance. They will need to apply to the EU Settlement Scheme (EUSS) before the deadline of 30 June 2021 to continue residing in the UK.



Those granted settled status under the EUSS will have the same access to social housing and homelessness assistance as comparable British citizens. They should be eligible provided they can demonstrate habitual residence in the Common Travel Area, under provisions in Regulation 3(c) and Regulation 5(1)(c) of the Eligibility Regulations.

Those granted pre-settled status will be eligible if they meet the eligibility rules under Regulation 4 and Regulation 6 of the Eligibility Regulations:

- Regulations 4(1) and 6(1) which prescribe the classes of persons from abroad who are to be treated as ineligible for an allocation of housing accommodation or for homelessness assistance, respectively; and
- Regulations 4(2) and 6(2) which prescribe the classes of people from abroad not subject to immigration control who are to be treated as eligible for an allocation of social housing and homelessness assistance.

#### Children moving to the UK from 1 January 2021

Newly arriving EEA citizens, moving to the UK from 1 January 2021, will have the same access to social housing and homelessness assistance as non-EEA migrants, unless they are a family member joining an EEA citizen who was residing in the UK by 31 December 2020.

All non-British nationals (excluding Irish citizens) who arrive in the UK from 1 January 2021 will be able to apply for an immigration status under the new points-based immigration system. They will require leave to enter or remain in the UK and will generally have no recourse to public funds, as is currently the case now for other third country nationals. This means they will not be eligible for an allocation of social housing or homelessness assistance, unless covered by the exemptions in our Eligibility Rules (for example, having a refugee status), or until they are eligible and are granted indefinite leave to remain (typically after 5 years continuous residence in the UK).

## 4. Key strategies, policies and protocols

This protocol should be read in conjunction with the following strategies, policies and protocols which inform our practice and support in relation to care leavers:

- **HOUSING**  
[Barnet Housing Allocations Scheme](#)  
[Local Tenancy Strategy](#)
- **CHILDREN'S SOCIAL CARE**  
Staying Put Policy (currently being revised. Link to be added when complete)  
[Finance Policy for Care Leavers](#)
- **COUNCIL TAX AND BENEFITS**  
[Benefits advice – Barnet Homes](#)  
[Care Leaver Council Tax Reduction policy](#)  
[DHP Guidance](#)



- **ADULT'S SOCIAL CARE**  
[Shared lives scheme](#)

## 5. Key agencies for care leaver's housing

### Children in Care

The children in care team supports children and young people in care, until the age of 18. The children in care social workers are responsible for all aspects of the young person's care, including annual reviews, health, education and future planning.

When a young person is 15 and a half years old, they will be supported by a social worker from children in care, alongside support from Onwards and Upwards. This helps ensure a smooth transition to the leaving care service for the young person.

### Onwards and Upwards

The leaving care service Onwards and Upwards (O&U), supports young people leaving care. Depending on the young person's support needs, this can be up to the age of 25, and thereafter with advice and guidance from the duty service.

The Onwards and Upwards service is located at the Leaving Care hub in North Finchley. This is a safe space for care experienced young people to access onsite support, advice and guidance in a welcoming environment.

The service consists of social workers and personal advisers (PA) who help young to prepare to live independently and offer advice and support as they leave care. Young people transition to this team from the children in care team. PAs get involved in discussions about young people's needs and ensure they have an up to date Pathway Plan, putting in place the support young people are entitled to at the earliest appropriate stage.

### Barnet Homes

Barnet Homes delivers the housing and homeless service on behalf of the Council. Care leavers will be assessed in accordance with the Council's Housing Allocation Scheme and where needed the homeless legislation governed by part 7, Housing Act 1996 and the Homelessness Reduction Act 2017. Care leavers will be offered suitable accommodation that meets their assessed needs. Barnet Homes provides a housing management function to those households in its secure or flexible tenancies and understands the need to work with Family Services to support the needs of care leavers.

### Revenues and Benefits Service

The Revenues and Benefits service collects Council Tax and processes claims for Housing Benefit and Council Tax Support (In some cases Housing Benefit will be claimed from the DWP as part of a claim for Universal Credit). In addition, they process claims for Discretionary Housing Payment and award the Care Leavers Council Tax Discount.

## 6. The protocol

### SECTION 1 – Barnet care leavers with recourse to Public Funds

#### Step 1 – identify young person's needs

Children in Care Social Worker Identify young person's eligibility for local authority housing by age 16.5 years old, in conjunction with staff from Onwards and Upwards.

For young people who become looked after their 16th birthday, this protocol should be followed immediately after coming into care.

#### Step 2 – Settled Accommodation nomination

Young person and allocated worker completes Settled Accommodation nomination with support from Onwards and Upwards nomination form can be found in Appendix 2.

Allocated workers should ensure relevant supporting documents are attached to the nomination, such as proof of ID, signed consent, evidence of community contribution/education and other relevant supporting information.

Risk assessment to clearly indicate risks including areas of risk for the young people to live in and risks to staff working with them.

Nomination form to be sent to the Housing Options Managers at Barnet Homes via [HousingTriageTeams@Barnet.gov.uk](mailto:HousingTriageTeams@Barnet.gov.uk)

Within 5 days of receipt Barnet Homes will allocate the nomination to the Housing Options Officer (HOO) who will register the young person as a care leaver, and assess the young person within 33 days.

The young person's housing assessment can take place in a variety of ways, to ensure young people are not needing to seek housing in an unplanned way. Assessments can take place via:

- Teams Email
- Telephone
- Assessments can take place face-to-face as required

The young person's Personal Advisor should be invited to attend the housing assessment, if the young person would like this.

The resident's requirement of 5 years address history in the borough does not apply to Care Leavers who were looked after by Barnet Council children's social care and supported by a Barnet Council social worker.

After assessment, young people will be placed in a housing band. This is the priority that a young person has under the Council's housing scheme. For Care Leavers living in Barnet this is band 2, unless there are specific urgent, medical or other needs which means the young person should be placed in band 1.

Young people will be shortlisted for available properties when they are available and when Onwards and Upwards agree the young person is ready for their long-term tenancy.

For young people living outside of Barnet, each council has their own criteria for allocating properties and this may not be the same as Barnet Council. Barnet Council's children's social care can provide support to its Care Leavers who wish to apply for housing in another local authority area. However they are unlikely to be eligible for priority care leaver banding outside of Barnet.

Any young person that wishes to return to Barnet for their long-term accommodation will be prioritised as a Care Leaver as outlined in the [Council's Housing Allocation guidance](#).

### Step 3 – Develop plan for when young person turns 18

As part of pathway and independence planning for the young person, the allocated worker should discuss with the young person the options for the young person, assess their housing needs which will form their pathway plan. This process should take place regularly from the age of 15.5 onwards, and include everyone who knows the young person well, and the young person. This is reviewed as part of the Children in Care review process.

The following temporary accommodation options are available to Barnet care leavers, and are based on assessment of need:

- A. Staying Put
- B. Shared Lives
- C. Supported Lodgings
- D. Foyer
- E. Interim Housing options (Settled Accommodation application)
- F. The Moving Forward project – in house interim accommodation with floating support

There may be variations of these options available to young people living in other areas, but the social worker for the young person is responsible for exploring these options and working with the local authority services and agencies to, wherever possible, ensure the young person can 'stay close', if this is their wish. Examples include:

- *The Pan-London Housing Reciprocal agreement*  
This is a voluntary collaboration between local authorities and registered housing providers in London. It increases options for people with social housing tenancy in London and is an opportunity for local authorities to house young people to whom they owe a duty, who are ready for independent living, but cannot remain in Barnet

### Step 4 – Moving into long-term accommodation

#### Nominations

It is important to note suitable settled accommodation will not only be Barnet Homes properties, they could also be:



- Private sector properties: these are properties which are owned by a private landlord.
- Registered Providers (RP): Registered providers' properties include local authority landlords and private registered providers, such as not-for-profit housing associations and for-profit organisations.

Long term temporary accommodation: long term temporary accommodation will be used for as long as it remains suitable to the household's needs.

Barnet Homes can fulfil their duty to house Barnet care leavers through these options, as well as their own properties.

The Nomination team will flag the Care Leaver status to the Voids and Lettings team and other landlords who arrange viewings.

The allocated Onwards and Upwards worker will be informed of any viewing dates and will attend with the young person.

If the allocated Onwards and Upwards worker is unobtainable, the duty team will be advised on 0208 359 6220 or [leavingcare.teamduty@barnet.gov.uk](mailto:leavingcare.teamduty@barnet.gov.uk).

Barnet Council operate a 'one offer' policy, however, it is important to note that the young person may be offered more than one viewing before they are made a long-term housing offer.

For this reason, it is important that the *Settled Accommodation Request Form* is comprehensive and includes details of areas that the young person should not be housed, and that the allocated Onwards and Upwards worker attends the viewing.

When an offer has been made, the Voids and Lettings Team will advise the allocated Onwards and Upwards worker of the offer, as well as the young person. The young person will then be informed of the date for signing the tenancy.

Young people may be offered different kinds of tenancies:

- 5 year flexible – Barnet Homes and some housing association properties
- Long term temporary accommodation agreement
- 12 month assured short hold tenancy – private sector lets. Young people utilising this pathway do not forfeit a subsequent right to access social housing.

To act in the best interests, promote the physical and mental health of care leavers they should not be moved to independent accommodation on a Friday unless in an emergency.

### **Council Tax, Housing Benefit and Universal Credit**

An application for Housing Benefit, Council Tax Support and Universal Credit should be completed if the young person is unemployed or receiving a low income. If the young person lives alone an application should be made for a Single Person Discount which reduces their Council Tax by 25%.

Housing Benefit and Council Tax Support and Single Person Discount can be applied for online at [www.barnet.gov.uk/council-tax](http://www.barnet.gov.uk/council-tax) [www.barnet.gov.uk/benefits-and-grants/housing-benefit/apply-housing-benefit](http://www.barnet.gov.uk/benefits-and-grants/housing-benefit/apply-housing-benefit) or [www.gov.uk/apply-universal-credit](http://www.gov.uk/apply-universal-credit)



Further information can also be found here on other reductions that may be applicable such as student discounts.

Eligible care leavers are exempt from Council Tax up to the age of 25.

It is important for the young person to know whether they can claim Housing Benefit or whether they need to apply for Universal Credit. Under current guidelines a new claim for Housing Benefit can only be made if they fall into one of these categories:

- You live in supported exempt accommodation
- You have been placed in temporary accommodation by Barnet Homes
- You are currently in receipt of the Severe Disability Premium as part of an existing claim for JSA(IB), ESA(IB), Income Support or Housing Benefit, or you have received the Severe Disability Premium in one of these Benefits within the last month.

If the young individual does not fall into one of these categories, they should make an application for Universal Credit via support available from the DWP Care Leaver Work Coach and their allocated PA, via their local job centre, or online using the link above.

Young people will be supported by their leaving care worker to apply for the care leaver council tax exemption.

A requirement of receiving the Care Leavers Council Tax Discount is that any other reductions the young person may be entitled to have been applied for. It is therefore important that the applications detailed in the previous paragraph are made promptly to avoid any delay in awarding the Care Leaver Council Tax Discount

In circumstances out of anyone's control, such as a serious incident or when a young person is at immediate risk, an email will be sent to Housing Duty Seniors (email address included above) and relevant Barnet Homes team as soon as possible.

If a housing needs assessment has not yet been completed, due to the unforeseen nature of the incident, then Onwards and Upwards will liaise with the housing duty seniors to arrange for the young person to be seen as an emergency and arrangements to be made for the young person to be offered suitable temporary accommodation.

As mentioned, following the housing needs assessment the young person will be placed into band 2 and the nominations team will then start to nominate the young person to suitable properties.

### **Temporary Accommodation (TA) for young people with recourse to public funds**

Temporary Accommodation (TA) is usually required when a young person turns 18, and either cannot remain in their current accommodation, such as semi-independent provision, staying put or supported lodgings or have been away and returned to the borough.

In these instances the Section 24 form should have been submitted prior to the young person turning 18 and the allocated Housing Options Officer is to be given as





much prior notice as possible so that they can liaise with Barnet Homes to request a suitable emergency accommodation. which will meet their needs. The Housing Options Officer will open an application for the young person and will send them for banding once requested documents have been returned, The Housing Options Officer will request temporary accommodation for the young person when this is required.,.

Wherever possible, this accommodation will be in Barnet or a neighbouring borough, and the young person will remain there until the long-term accommodation is secured. However, where a young person is placed out of borough, they will be prioritised for a transfer back into the Barnet area if it is safe to do so, and this is in line with the young person's wishes.

The booking of a temporary accommodation is requested through the submission of a request email to [housingdutyseniors@barnethomes.org.uk](mailto:housingdutyseniors@barnethomes.org.uk) The duty manager will sign off the TA request and refer the young person to a housing options officer in the TA team

Consideration will always be given to the suitability of the accommodation for the young person. Bed and Breakfast, including hotels and nightly paid accommodation with shared facilities is not an option for care leavers under 25 and should only be used in exceptional circumstances and if necessary for short periods.

The relevant paperwork will be generated by the Housing Options team who inform the TA team of the need for accommodation that day.

### **Young people in university**

We have high aspirations for all Barnet care leavers, and wherever possible and desired by the young person we support them to progress to Higher Education. We want young people to reach their full potential and enjoy the full university experience.

It is important that care leavers are supported to financially plan for university. For students eligibility for housing benefit and universal credit is restricted to certain groups , and therefore alternative financial arrangements need to be made to pay for housing costs, such as, Student Finance.

#### *a) Young people coming back from university and Settled Accommodation nomination*

For young people who are planning to go to university, a Settled Accommodation nomination will still be made, however, Barnet Homes are able to delay allocation until the young person has returned to Barnet after completing their course.

At the point of nomination, Onwards and Upwards should inform the Nominations Team that the young person will be going to university.

When a young person is in the final year of university, the allocated Onwards and Upwards worker should confirm the housing plan with the young person as part of their Pathway Plan meeting in their final year of University. Once a plan has been confirmed, if the young person is ready and wants to return to Barnet and have a long-term housing offer, the Nominations team should be informed.

Young people going to University are generally advised not to request their long-term housing offer, unless there is a specific reason that meets their needs, to ensure they can make full use of and enjoy the University experience.

*b) Going to university when you have your own home*

For young people who go to university and have already been offered and live in their long-term home, the allocated Onwards and Upwards worker should support the young person to select an appropriate university and course, which they can manage alongside their long-term tenancy. Young people should be supported to fully understand the responsibilities they will have as a student with their own tenancy, such as through attending open days and liaising with student finance.

Once a young person has been accepted onto a course the allocated Onwards and Upwards worker should be supported to apply for student finance within the deadlines outlined. This will avoid delays in payment, and resulting financial difficulties for the young person.

Financial support that care leavers can access whilst at university are outlined in the care leaver finance policy.

For young people who wish to attend a university outside of London, and have an existing tenancy with Barnet Homes, they can seek agreement from Barnet Homes to surrender their tenancy for the duration of their course. Upon completing their course, and returning to Barnet, Barnet Homes will source accommodation accordingly. The young person's personal adviser should ensure housing have sufficient notice of the young person's intended completion date.

Young people who do not wish to surrender their tenancy when going to university, will need to ensure that they can manage travelling to their place of study from their home.

### **Young People at risk of/involved in Gangs, Offending and Exploitation**

Young people who are engaged in offending or who are gang-involved may be at risk of harm to others and still present with a high level of vulnerability to serious youth violence and exploitation.

The Youth Offending Team or probation must always be consulted when a young person is open to their service and is in need of accommodation. This includes young people at risk of homelessness on release from a custodial setting (see below). The highest priority is always to ensure a young person will be safe, and risk of harm to others is minimised by making adequate checks to ensure that gang-involved young people are not placed in the vicinity of rival or other high-profile gang affected areas, or that other very vulnerable young people are not sharing the same placement/accommodation.

The same principal applies to young people who are at a high risk of going missing and are vulnerable to child sexual and other forms of exploitation.

Young people on a custodial sentence



For young people being released from custody who have not accessed their long-term tenancy – The PA should liaise with the prison and probation to ascertain the release date and notify the temporary accommodation team.

When the court requires an address in advance, The Onwards and Upwards service will meet the rent cost until the young person is able to make an application for Housing benefit.

If, in circumstances where a young person receives a custodial sentence for more than 6 months, and they are advised, due to the length of their sentence, to return their property, they will retain an entitlement to priority social housing as part of their resettlement to the community.

Where a secure or flexible council tenant is imprisoned for a period of more than 6 months and would therefore either accumulate rent arrears or possibly lose their tenancy, they can voluntarily give up their tenancy.

Upon release, they would be made a direct allocation of a secure tenancy that meets their needs. The size of accommodation would be the same as their previous tenancy, or a size that meets their needs under the terms of this Allocations Scheme, whichever is smaller. This will not apply to tenants who have been imprisoned in relation to a crime that would enable the Council to seek repossession of their accommodation - where this applies the Council will normally take repossession action.

### **Young people in Armed Forces**

Where a secure council tenant is enlisted within the armed forces for a period of more than 12 months and would therefore either accumulate rent arrears or possibly lose their tenancy, they can voluntarily give up their tenancy.

Upon release, and up until the age of 25, they would be made a direct allocation of a secure tenancy that meets their needs. The size of accommodation would be the same as their previous tenancy, or a size that meets their needs under the terms of this Allocations Scheme, whichever is smaller. This will not apply to tenants who have been imprisoned in relation to a crime that would enable the Council to seek repossession of their accommodation- where this applies the Council will normally take repossession action.

### **For care leavers who become parents**

Where young people have been supported to access their long-term accommodation and subsequently become a parent, they will be eligible for a further housing assessment of need. This can include a priority assessment for a larger/2-bedroomed accommodation. To access this support, Care Leaver parents will need to request further assessment via their allocated Leaving Care Personal Advisor (PA), who will present their case to the Care Leaver Housing Panel for consideration. Those young people closed to an allocated PA should contact Leaving Care duty team who will progress their referral to the Care Leaver Housing Panel. Care Leaver parents will be eligible to access this provision to the age of 25.

### **Appeals**

If the young person does not want to accept the property offered they must let the viewing officer know immediately stating their reasons why. The property will be held available whilst the appeal is considered where this is not likely to lead to an

unreasonable delay in letting the property. The appeal will be dealt with within 48 hours with a decision being issued explaining the options available to the young person in accordance with the Housing Allocation Scheme and homeless legislation if relevant.

## Step 5 – When young people are living in their own accommodation

It is important that every effort is made to ensure that a tenancy does not break down as research shows that there is a higher risk of this happening in the first months of living independently.

### Young people in Temporary Accommodation

For TA, the Temporary Accommodation team advise Income Collection Team of all new tenancy sign ups with rent accounts being flagged that the occupier is a care leaver. This will enable any issues around rent arrears or anti-social behaviour to be flagged to Onwards and Upwards. During the sign-up process for the property the young person will be explained their obligations and the need to behave as a good tenant to their neighbours.

### Young people in long-term tenancies

The Tenancy Review and Project Officer will be advised of all care leavers signing Barnet Homes flexible tenancies. Rent accounts will be flagged showing that tenant is a care leaver. This will enable any issues around rent arrears or anti-social behaviour to be flagged to Onwards and Upwards.

If Barnet Homes tenancy a new tenant visit will be made by a neighbourhood housing officer within 4 – 8 weeks of tenancy start date.

### Young people at risk of tenancy breakdown

- *Young people in private rented accommodation*

Where a young person is placed in private accommodation, the allocated worker will make themselves known to the landlord with a view to being a point of contact, if the young person agrees to this. The allocated worker will initially monitor the situation, but if there is a risk of breakdown in the tenancy, the landlord will notify the allocated worker immediately with an indication as to how critical the situation is so that they can raise the issue with the Care leaver and consult with the landlord and housing officer as needed.

The allocated worker should contact the young person to ascertain what further support is needed with immediate effect and action this immediately in a severe crisis. The allocated worker will notify the Barnet Homes immediately. A meeting will be scheduled by the allocated worker with the tenancy management team and young person, to agree actions to resolve the situation and ensure that the young person is appropriately supported going forward so that the tenancy can be sustained.

- *Young people in Barnet Homes secure or flexible tenancies*

Barnet Homes provides a housing management function to tenants in their secure or flexible tenancies. This includes responding to disrepair, antisocial behaviour and rental income enquiries. Care leavers will be flagged on the QL housing management database so that any housing staff can identify that the tenant is a care leaver.

A breach of tenancy conditions could lead to formal action being taken to end the tenancy with the service of a notice of seeking possession. Formal action is only proposed after careful consideration and when alternative dispute resolution options have been exhausted. Where a formal notice is being proposed the Neighbourhood Housing Officer, Anti-Social Behaviour Officer or Rental Income Officer will inform the Tenancy Review and Project Officer to enable the case to be taken to the multi-agency housing partnership meeting. The partnership will discuss cases and agree action plans around the young person to try and prevent escalation of any proposed eviction proceedings.

- *Young people in arrears*

Living independently is challenging for all young people due to the high costs of living and relatively low incomes that they can obtain. Rent arrears in any form of tenure are a real risk and it is important that the signs that a care leaver is struggling are identified at an early stage. The Rental Income Team will advise the Onwards and Upwards adviser when arrears reach £500 so that action can be taken to jointly engage with the young person and put in place steps to reduce the debt.

Some young people may have multiple debts and it is important that they are referred to relevant debt advice services to help them manage their finances. Cases that are more complex and are at risk of possession action will be taken by the allocated Leaving Care Personal Advisor or Social Worker to the multi-agency housing partnership meeting to agree joint action plans to try and prevent escalation of eviction proceedings.

- *Young people at imminent risk of homelessness*

*If the young person already has a tenancy, they will be assisted by the Tenancy Sustainment Team who can work with the young person and their landlord to mediate and try prevent homelessness by sustaining their current tenancy.*

If the tenancy cannot be sustained and the care leaver is at risk of becoming homeless, a planned homeless application will be made to Barnet Homes via the Housing Options Team.

Consideration will be given to the reasons why the care leaver has been evicted and the support that was put in place prior to them losing their home. If such a decision is to be made it can result in any rehousing duty being discharged and will therefore (require the authorisation of a Housing Needs Manager to ensure that such a decision is balanced and references the vulnerabilities and support needs of the young person.

When a young person does lose their property after a period of time has elapsed and the young person is able to evidence a significant change in circumstance and behaviour consideration will be given to a 2<sup>nd</sup> chance offer of long term accommodation. There will be no situation where the Local Authority discharges its corporate parenting responsibilities or housing duty to care leavers by deeming them intentionally homeless.

### **Young people with no recourse to public funds**

Children in Care Social Worker's identify a young person's eligibility for local authority housing by the time they are 16.5 years old, in conjunction with staff from Onwards and Upwards.





If the young person has No Recourse to Public Funds, then they will not be eligible until they have gained status through a successful asylum or humanitarian protection claim or if a failure to provide support would result in a breach of their rights as enshrined within The European Convention on Human Rights

If it is agreed the young person is ready to live independently an application can be made directly to Barnet Homes for temporary accommodation – this will usually be a self-contained studio flat which will be paid for by Onwards and Upwards.

The accommodation form should be completed and sent to [EmergencyAccommodationTeam@BarnetHomes.org](mailto:EmergencyAccommodationTeam@BarnetHomes.org) clearly stating the date the accommodation is required and that the rent will be paid by Onwards and Upwards.

Where possible the allocated PA should go to the property with the young person and ensure the utility supply is on and make a note of any damage/repair issues which should be reported immediately to the landlord and Emergency accommodation team.

Barnet Homes and Onwards and Upwards do their best to ensure young people are not moved to new accommodation on a Friday in case there are any issues during the weekend. In addition, the team try to ensure that moves to new accommodation take place early in the day for the same reason.

## 7. Links to support/further information

### Care Leaver Local Offer

Leaving home and setting out on a life path is daunting enough for any young person. For young people who have been in care, there is the extra stress and pressure of feeling that they do not have the family support that their peers who have not been in care often have. We are committed to, and ambitious for, our care leavers and want to ensure that our looked after children and care leavers receive priority in our services. To make sure our care leavers have all the information they need, we created a Barnet Care Leaver's Local Offer. The document is a guide detailing all the services available for our care leavers (aged 16 - 25 years old).

The purpose of the Local Offer is to give care leavers local information about:

- advice and support groups
- financial and welfare support
- accommodation and housing
- employment, learning and career advice
- staying healthy and leisure activities
- participation in society
- useful contacts.

The local offer is published on our children in care website and can be found [here](#).

## 8. Disputes





There may, on occasion, be disagreement between workers in Family Services and officers in Housing Options or Revenues and Benefits on how the protocol is being administered or on how a young person is being advised and supported. If these cannot be resolved by team managers, then they should be escalated to the service manager for housing needs and the Head of Service for Corporate Parenting manager. Lessons learnt will be shared with staff and the Corporate Parenting Officer's Group.

Further information on dispute resolution, can be found on the [Barnet Safeguarding Children Partnership](#) website.

## 9. Monitoring and review

Implementation of this protocol will be monitored jointly bi-quarterly by the care leaver stakeholder group and via the Corporate Parenting Officer's Group.

The protocol will be subject to review annually starting from April 2019.



## Appendix 1: Settled Accommodation nomination form

### SETTLED ACCOMMODATION NOMINATION FORM

Name of young person	
DOB	
Current Address and phone number	
Address history for the last 5 years – please indicate placements provided by Children’s services.	
Is the young person a parent?	
Is the young person in education/employment?	
Legal Status	
Background information (including details of periods ‘Looked After’)	
Assessment of the young person’s independent living skills	
Specific information to be taken into account when considering housing needs	
Income	
Leaving Care Worker contact address and telephone number	<i>If unable to contact the worker named above please contact the duty team on 02083596220 or Leavingcare.teamduty@barnet.gov.uk</i>

Signature of Leaving Care Worker:

Signature of Leaving Care Manager:

Date:



## Appendix 2: DHP Application form

Applications for DHP should be submitted to the Council Tax team using the below form:



Application for DHP  
& Council Tax Discre

## Appendix 3: 50 Point Checklist

For young people living in supported and independent living arrangements.

	Please consider:	Yes/No	What needs to happen? By Whom and when?
1.	Are the young person's independent living skills being consolidated?		
2.	Does further work need to be done and what resources are required to achieve independence?		
3.	Is a mentor/advocate engaged with the young person?		
4.	Does the young person have copies of the documents they will need as an adult or do they know where to find them if they need them in the future? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Birth certificate</li> <li>• NHS Card</li> <li>• Passport</li> <li>• Student card</li> <li>• Provisional Drivers licence</li> <li>• National Insurance Number</li> <li>• Bank Account</li> </ul>		
5.	Does the young person have sufficient identification documentation		
6.	Are the services currently engaged with the young person clearly outlined in their Pathway Plan		
7.	Is the young person providing input to their pathway plan? And how are they kept aware of any changes to the plan?		
8.	Are all stakeholders, including the young person, aware of their roles and responsibilities in relation to tasks outlined in the Pathway Plan?		
9.	Has a plan for keeping the young person's significant relationships connected and maintained been developed?		
10.	Does the young person have reliable support networks?		
11.	Does the young person have regular contact with family or significant others?		
12.	What community groups could the young person be linked with to help develop wider social and support networks?		
13.	Are there any ongoing safety needs for the young person?		
14.	Does the young person know how to contact relevant people in an emergency?		
15.	Do they have a list of emergency contacts?		
16.	What are the accommodation arrangements?		
17.	Are all relevant people clear regarding these arrangements?		
18.	What services are involved that may be able to provide ongoing or one-off assistance to the young person?		

	<b>Please consider:</b>	<b>Yes/No</b>	<b>What needs to happen? By Whom and when?</b>
19.	Do they currently have stable accommodation? How long is it likely to remain stable?		
20.	Can the young person remain in their current living arrangement when they reach 18? If not, what is the plan?		
21.	Has contact been made Housing regarding available options?		
22.	What are the contingency arrangements should a placement breakdown occur? How will the young person be assisted to enact these arrangements?		
23.	What are the young person's ongoing medical and dental needs and how are they being addressed?		
24.	Is the you person engaged with a therapeutic service to support their ongoing mental health?		
25.	Does the young person have a GP, Dentist, Optician?		
26.	Does the young person need ongoing medication? If yes, do they understand how to manage this, including obtaining repeat prescriptions from a Doctor and going to the chemist to collect these?		
27.	Does the young person have a disability or special educational needs?		
28.	Does the young person need help to read and respond to letters they receive?		
29.	Does the young person understand their sexual health and how to manage this?		
30.	Does the young person have alcohol or drug issues? If yes how are these to be managed?		
31.	What are the young person's plans for the future in terms of education and employment?		
32.	Does the young person have an Education Plan?		
33.	Does the young person have a CV, and do they know how to write a job application?		
34.	Is the young person engaged with Education, Training and Employment support?		
35.	Has the young person been assisted to apply for relevant benefits?		
36.	What are the young person's financial supports?		
37.	Can the young person manage money?		
38.	What is the plan if they run out of money?		
39.	Does the young person know how to pay bills and rent?		
40.	Does the young person know how to budget for grocery and essentials shopping?		
41.	Can the young person cook?		
42.	Can the young person cope with loneliness?		
43.	Does the young person have a network of friends?		
44.	Are their friends a positive influence, if not has risk that their friends pose been considered?		



	<b>Please consider:</b>	<b>Yes/No</b>	<b>What needs to happen? By Whom and when?</b>
45.	Is the young person involved in any religious or cultural groups in the community?		
46.	What do you know about these and how can they support the young person to live independently?		
47.	Is there a risk of radicalisation?		
48.	Has the young person been ostracised by their cultural or religious community?		
49.	Is the young person engaged in positive social activities with their peers?		
50.	Is the young person clear about how and when you will stay in contact with them?		





## Appendix 4: Emergency Accommodation Request Form

### Emergency Accommodation Request

Date Accommodation Required	
Name of Young Person and DOB	
Current Address and phone number	
Immigration Status	
Education/Employment Provide postcode of establishment if possible	
Recourse to Public Funds? If no confirmation that O&U will pay rent	
Reason Emergency Accommodation is required	
Support Needs	
Medical Requirements e.g. MH issues/ground floor/requires lift	
Areas of risk /conflict .Inc evidence if available	
Risks to others – professionals/neighbours/members of the public	
Name and signature of Onwards and Upwards Worker	Name:  Signed:
Approved by Team manager	Name:  Signed:



## Appendix 5: DHP Application Form

### Application for Discretionary Housing Payment

Name & Address:

Date of Issue:

Council Tax Account Number:

Email Address and Contact Number:

Housing Benefit Claim Reference:

#### **Discretionary Housing Payment and Council Tax Discretionary Relief**

**Discretionary Housing Payments (DHP)** are designed to provide short-term financial support to customers who are already getting Housing Benefit (or an element of housing costs within their Universal Credit) who need extra help with their rent.

**The DHP fund is limited so we will not always be able to help you.**

In order to apply for discretionary housing payments you must:

- Be entitled to Housing Benefit or receive housing costs within your universal credit and
- Have a liability to pay rent and
- Demonstrate that you require further assistance in order to meet your housing costs (please note: we cannot pay a DHP to help with water rates, service charges or for things like heating and lighting)

**Council Tax Discretionary Relief** is intended for customers who are suffering from hardship due to exceptional circumstances who require help to meet their Council Tax liability. **It is only used for short term assistance.**

In order to apply for Council Tax discretionary relief you must:

- Be the person responsible for paying the Council Tax and
- Demonstrate that you need financial help in order to pay your Council Tax

I am applying for (tick one only):

Discretionary housing payment.....

Council Tax discretionary relief.....

Both.....

**Please complete this form and provide all the evidence that has been requested in support of your application.** Without the information there may be a delay in our decision because we may have to write to you.

**Please complete all sections of this form**



**Section 1: Reasons for your application**

Please state why you need additional support with your housing costs (including your Council Tax):

This could be:

- To pay rent arrears (**you must provide evidence of your arrears**).
- To help you for a short period in the past due to your circumstances at that time (**you need to explain why you did not apply at that time**).
- For a short period to help you until your circumstances improve (**you need to explain what changes you are expecting in your circumstances and how long you think you will need help for**).
- To help you to move home e.g. help with removal costs, rent deposit or rent in advance (**only where you are moving from an unaffordable, unsustainable tenancy to an affordable property where you can pay the rent without needing a DHP**)

Please give full details of why you need the additional financial help, and what effects a shortfall in funds to meet your housing costs will have on you and your family

I am applying for additional support because.....

Please say what steps you are taking to improve your circumstances so that a long-term discretionary award is not needed.

**Section 2: About your household**

Please provide your details and those of your partner (if you have one) below:

Full Name	Date of Birth	NINO	Male/Female	Disabled

Please state if you are:

Sole occupier under 35 years old...     Sole occupier over 35 years old...     A lone parent...

A couple, under retirement age...     A couple, over retirement age...

An expectant mother...     Date your baby is due    \_\_\_ / \_\_\_ / \_\_\_

How many dependent children do you have living with you (under 18 or 18-20 in full-time education for whom you receive child benefit)\_\_\_\_\_.

Please give their details below (Please use a separate page if you have more than six children):

Full Name	Date of Birth	Male Yes/No	Female Yes/No	Shares a bedroom Yes/No	Disabled Yes/No

Please list all adults in your household (anyone for whom you do not receive child benefit)

Full Name	Date of Birth	Male/Female	Income Please state amount received	Disabled Yes/no

Is anyone who normally lives in your household a member of the UK armed forces: Yes...     No...   
Please provide details below:

Full Name	Date of Birth	Male	Female

Is anyone who normally lives in your household is away studying at university    Yes...     No...   
Please provide details below:

Full Name	Date of Birth	Male/Female	University	Course start date	Course end date



**Section 3: About your accommodation and your housing costs**

**Council Tax**

Do you have arrears of Council Tax? Yes.  No.  If yes, how much do you owe? £\_\_\_\_\_

Have you tried to make an arrangement to pay these arrears? Yes...  No...

If your answer is No, please explain why you have not tried to resolve your situation prior to your application?

**Mortgage**

Do you pay a mortgage? Yes.....  No.....

Are you up to date with your mortgage payments? Yes.....  No.....

If your answer is no, how much do you owe? £\_\_\_\_\_ **(You must provide proof of any arrears)**

**Rent**

Do you pay rent for your home? Yes...  No...  Who do you pay? \_\_\_\_\_

Were you able to afford the rent when you moved in? Yes...  No...

If yes, please explain what has changed:

Please state the date you moved to this address: \_\_\_\_ / \_\_\_\_ / \_\_\_\_

If this is within the last 12 months, please explain why you moved to this address

Do you have rent arrears? Yes...  No...

If your answer is yes, how much are your arrears? £\_\_\_\_\_. **You must provide proof of these arrears** (this should be a letter from your landlord and/or your latest rent statement showing the arrears), if you do not have any arrears, please explain how you have paid the shortfall in your rent?

Have you asked your landlord if he/she would accept less rent? Yes...  No...

If your answer is yes, what was the outcome?

Has your landlord/lady asked you to leave the property? Yes...  No...

If your answer is yes, on what date have they asked you to leave? \_\_\_\_ / \_\_\_\_ / \_\_\_\_



If you have received a written notice from your landlord asking you to leave your property please provide this.

**Section 3: About your accommodation and your housing costs (continued)**

**Foster carers**

Are you a registered foster carer who needs additional bedrooms? Yes...  No...

Are you currently fostering and have a child or children in your property? Yes...  No...

If your answer is no, please confirm the date of your last placement \_\_\_ / \_\_\_ / \_\_\_

**Adapted property**

Has your property been adapted for your or your household's disability needs? Yes...  No...

If your answer is yes, please give full details of the adaptations:

**Proof will be needed – this should be a letter from your landlord explaining what adaptations have been made to your home.**

**Alternative accommodation**

If you are a Council or Housing Association tenant, and are living in a property which is too large for your needs, please state if you have applied to transfer to a smaller property? Yes...  No...

If your answer is yes, please give details

If your answer is no, please explain why you have not asked to downsize?

Have you refused any properties that have been offered to you? Yes...  No...

If your answer is yes, please provide full details

If you are a private tenant, have you tried to find cheaper accommodation? Yes....  No....

If your answer is yes, what steps have you taken?

If your answer is no, please say why not?

Are you registered with Barnet Homes Housing Options service? Yes...  No....

If your answer is yes, what have they advised you to do?



If you have registered with Barnet Homes, are you actively bidding on alternative properties?

Yes....  No....

**Section 3: About your accommodation and your housing costs (continued)**

Can you move to a more affordable property? Yes... No....

If your answer is no, please explain why you cannot move

Do you need to live in the Borough of Barnet? Yes.... No...

If your answer is yes, please say why?

If you need help with removal expenses, a deposit or rent in advance for a new property, please say why you are moving, how much your moving expenses, deposit and/or rent in advance will be and confirm how much rent you will be charged at your new address.

**Please note:**

**You will need to provide confirmation of the above, such as estimates for removal expenses, and a letter from your prospective landlord confirming the amounts concerned before you commit to your new tenancy.**

**Your request will only be considered if you are moving from an unaffordable, unsustainable tenancy to an affordable property where you can pay the rent without needing a Discretionary Housing Payment (DHP).**

**Section 4: About your household income and outgoings - Please note: You MUST supply supporting evidence for any items marked with a \* and your last 2 months bank statements**

INCOME	How much (£)	How often	OUTGOINGS	How much (£)	How often	Office use only
Net wages (For you)			Mortgage / Rent *			
Net wages (For your partner)			Rent arrears*			
Self-employed earnings			Council Tax			
Working Tax Credit			Council Tax arrears*			
Child Tax Credit			Electricity *			
Child Benefit			Gas*			
JSA (Conts)			Arrears of fuel bills*			
JSA (IB)			Water rates			
Income Support			Child minding *			
Pension credit (guarantee)			Food			
Pension credit (savings)			School meals			
State retirement pension			Housekeeping			
Occupational / private pension			Clothing			
Maintenance received (for children)			Laundry			
Maintenance received (for self or partner)			Telephone / internet			
Incapacity Benefit			TV licence / rental			
Employment and Support Allowance			Satellite / Cable TV			
Disability Living Allowance			Travelling expenses *			
Personal Independence Payment			Road tax / car insurance			
Carers Allowance			Oil / petrol / Servicing *			
Housing Benefit			Court fines*			
Universal Credit			Prescriptions			
Contributions from children living at home			Maintenance paid *			
Contributions from any other residents			Credit card *			
Any other income			Loans / hire purchase *			
Vouchers or tokens in lieu of payment			Deductions for social fund *			
			Other deduction from benefit *			
			Catalogue			
			Cigarettes / Alcohol			
			Endowment / Life Assurance *			
			Mortgage Protection *			





			Home insurance *			
			Medical / disability related outgoings (please specify)			
			Any other outgoings			
<b>TOTAL INCOME</b>			<b>TOTAL OUTGOINGS</b>			

**Section 4: About your household income and outgoings (continued)**

Do you run a car? Yes...  No...

If your answer is yes, please explain why you need a car

Please confirm if you have any other debts outstanding? Yes...  No...

If your answer is yes, please provide full details and proof

Have you sought any advice on how to deal with these debts? Yes...  No...

If your answer is yes, please explain what advice was given to you



**Section 5: Declaration**

**Please read this declaration carefully before you sign and date it.**

- I agree that you will use the information I have previously given on benefit applications or Council Tax reduction applications to consider my request for discretionary housing payments/discretionary Council Tax relief. You may share the information I have given with other sources as allowed by the law.
- I declare that the information I have given on this form is correct and complete as far as I know
- I authorise you to check the information I have given with other sections within the Council, the VOA, other Councils or Authorities handling public funds, as long as you do so only to prevent and detect fraud and error.
- I understand that you will share the information you hold to prevent errors and detect fraud by providing information to the Housing Benefit Matching Services and the Audit Commission's National Fraud Initiative.
- I understand that if I give incorrect or incomplete information or documents, or fail to report any changes that might affect my benefit, I may be prosecuted.
- I know I must tell you immediately of any changes that may affect the amount of benefit I receive and that I cannot rely on any other organisation or person to tell the Council on my behalf.
- I agree to notify the Council immediately of any changes in my circumstances which may affect the amount of discount that I receive; e.g. changes in the amount of any benefits or allowances that I receive, changes to the number of people who live with me, children leaving full-time education or any other matter that is covered in this application
- I also agree that the DWP or Job Centre Plus may provide the Council with information about any benefits that I receive where it is relevant to this claim.
- I fully understand that if I do not notify Barnet Council's revenues and benefits service of any change to my income or household circumstances at the time of the change, my discretionary relief/discretionary housing payment will be adjusted from the date that the change happened and I will have to repay any discretionary payment that I was not entitled to.
- I accept that you may prosecute any person who gives incorrect, incomplete or misleading information to fraudulently claim benefit.

The information you have given us will be used to manage your benefit claim and will be shared with other central or local government bodies in line with the council's registration under the Data Protection Act 1998 (For details on how the council will use your information please see our privacy notice: [www.barnet.gov.uk/info/930185/privacy/240/privacy](http://www.barnet.gov.uk/info/930185/privacy/240/privacy))

Customer's signature .....

Date.....

**If this form has been filled in by someone other than the person claiming**, please tell us why you are filling in this form for the person claiming and sign the declaration below.

I declare that, as far as possible, I have confirmed with the person claiming that the answers I have written on this form are correct.

Full name ..... Relationship to customer.....  
Signature ..... Date.....