

## **Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs)**

### **1. When do these changes come into effect?**

- **1 September 2026:** Duty to notify schools, GPs and Health Visiting Services when children are placed in temporary accommodation.
- **30 September 2026:** New protections for eligible care leavers regarding intentional homelessness decisions.

### **2. Do we need to start making notifications now?**

No. The new notification duty does not commence until 1 September 2026. We are currently developing the local process and guidance. Staff will receive instructions before implementation.

### **3. Which children will require notifications?**

This will apply where children are living in temporary accommodation secured under homelessness duties.

### **4. What information will be shared?**

We are working with Information Governance, Education and Health colleagues to determine the information that will need to be provided. Staff should not create local processes independently and should await the agreed procedure.

### **5. Who will be responsible for making notifications?**

This is likely to fall on Housing Options Officers. We will issue clear guidance on responsibilities, timescales and recording requirements before 1 September.

### **6. Will the notifications replace safeguarding referrals?**

No. The new notification requirements do not replace existing safeguarding responsibilities. Staff must continue to follow safeguarding procedures and make referrals where concerns exist.

### **7. What does the care leaver change mean in practice?**

From 30 September 2026, eligible care leavers will have additional statutory protections and cannot be found intentionally homeless. This means homelessness assessments and decisions involving care leavers may need to be approached differently than they are currently.

### **8. Who is considered a care leaver?**

Section 23A Children's Act - Meaning of "relevant child"

A **relevant child** is generally a 16 or 17-year-old who:

- Is no longer looked after by the local authority; and
- Was looked after for at least 13 weeks after the age of 14, including some time after age 16.

### **Former Relevant Child**

#### **Section 23C - Continuing functions in respect of former relevant children**

A **former relevant child** is generally someone aged 18 to 25 who was previously a relevant child and continues to be entitled to leaving care support, including:

- A Personal Adviser.
- A Pathway Plan.
- Assistance with accommodation.
- Support with education, training and employment.

Care leavers who fall within these categories can no longer be found intentionally homeless from 30 September 2026, making it important that officers establish at assessment stage whether an applicant is a *relevant child* or *former relevant child* and liaise with Leaving Care Services where necessary.

### **9. What should I do if I am working with a care leaver now?**

Continue to work in accordance with current legislation and guidance until the new provisions come into force. However, please ensure strong partnership working with Leaving Care Services and discuss any complex cases with your team leader.

### **10. Will Jigsaw and our procedures be updated?**

We are speaking to MRI to see whether the system can assist us with this.

### **11. What support will be available?**

We will provide written guidance and discuss at HOO meetings

### **12. Who can I contact if I have questions?**

Please raise any questions through your Team Leader or Service Manager in the first instance. We will continue to develop guidance with our partners and will share further updates as they become available.

Thank you for your continued commitment to supporting vulnerable children, young people and families across North Yorkshire.