

## Homeless Link 7-minute briefings

These briefings are intended to be short, snappy break-downs of reports, practice guidance, case studies and briefings.

This briefing provides an overview on actions Cumbria County Council have taken to empower every professional play a role in preventing youth homelessness across the county, and improve the consistency of support offered to young people..

### 7. Further information

The first contact scripts are completed online on the Cumbria website alongside further information about their youth homelessness pathway:

<https://cumbria.gov.uk/yphousing/professionals/protocol.asp>

For further information on the Cumbria Youth Housing pathways see:

<https://cumbria.gov.uk/yphousing/professionals/default.asp>

### 1. Background

In 2019 Cumbria County Council conducted a service review. Using the Positive Pathways documents

developed by St Basils to guide the service development they took a 'no wrong door' model. This was identified as the most suitable design due to the rural geography and dispersed population of the county and districts.

### 2. The challenge

Cumbria want to ensure that young people across the county receive the same service and level of support, no approach for help with their housing situation. This requires practitioners from different departments and sectors understanding what youth homelessness looks like, recognising the risk of homelessness and knowing how to respond appropriately to get young people the right support at the right time.

### 6. What works

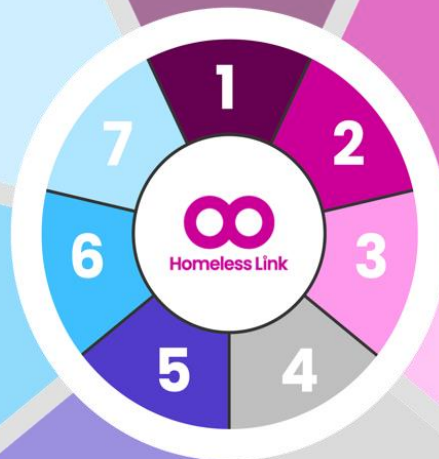
The scripts have led to improved professional confidence across the county in working with young people at risk of homelessness.

The approach is consistent with the county wide Signs of Safety approach to safeguarding, and the message that safeguarding and managing risk is everyone's business.

### 3. The solution

Two First Contact Scripts were developed to be used when a professional has their first conversation with a young person who is homeless on the night, or at risk of becoming homeless. One Script is for 16-and-17-year-olds and the other is for 18-to-24-year-olds. These can be used by any professional to identify a young person's strengths, needs and wishes and to start their referral into the Housing Pathway.

Professionals can record the conversation and once completed they can submit a referral into the youth homelessness pathway



### 5. What works

Once submitted the forms are reviewed by specialist Youth Homeless and Housing Officers who progress the young person's referral to the Gateway Group (the single point of access into Cumbria's Positive Housing Pathway). The specialist advisors can also support professionals in completing the form and will make contact with the young people to discuss their options and offer support, as appropriate.

### 4. What works

The Scripts are designed to facilitate conversations between young people and the professional they are working with, whilst also collecting consistent information about the young person's housing situation. As well focussing on needs and immediate risk of homelessness, it focuses on the young person's wellbeing, support networks, housing aspirations.

It minimises the number of times a young person has to tell their story and means the process of receiving housing and homelessness support is able to be initiated with a professional that the young person has chosen to trust and approach.