

## Homeless Link 7-minute briefings

These briefings are intended to be short, snappy breakdowns of reports, practice guidance, case studies and briefings. This briefing provides an overview of actions Cumbria County Council have taken to prevent youth homelessness through improving young people's ability to access housing and homelessness support. It provides an overview of how the County Council applied best practice to their own local need.

### 7. Further information

The above elements are only part of the Cumbria County Council's Positive Housing Pathway for young people aged 16 – 24yrs, which includes homeless prevention work, advice & information, emergency temporary accommodation, commissioned supported housing, flexible support and move on assistance.

See:  
<https://www.cumbria.gov.uk/yphousing/>

### 1. Background

In 2019 Cumbria County Council conducted a service review, exploring their housing and homelessness offer to young people across the county.

The ambition for the services is that every professional plays their part in moving young people at risk from a point of crisis, to give them hope for the future.

They looked at best practice nationally and chose to adopt a Positive Housing Pathway model as developed by St Basil's.

### 2. The challenge

Cumbria County Council covers a rural area with a dispersed population. Having evaluated their services quickly realised that the one stop shop model with a physical hub that has worked in other councils in England would not be appropriate.

Instead, the rural geography, dispersed population of the county and districts, and public transport networks meant this model would increase barriers for young people to access support.

### 3. The solution

Cumbria adopted a "No wrong door" approach. Working in partnership across the different districts the pathway includes:

**An online information hub** for young people, parents and carers and professionals featuring short film clips of young people who have been in the service talking about their experience and giving advice to other young people in their situation.

### 4. The solution

**The Cumbria County Council Youth Homelessness & Housing Team offers an Early-Help service.**

Youth Homelessness and Housing officers, act as the single point of contact for young people and professionals in the six districts and make referrals into the

Where a young person is homeless or at risk of homelessness, they are referred to the multi- agency Gateway Group, the single point of access for the County into the Young People's Housing Pathway.

### 5. What works

#### Youth centred approach

The Gateway Group is solution focussed; discussions are based on the needs of the young person and the sustainability of the support.

There is a youth advocacy service available for all young people, or they can choose a person from their life they would like to represent them at the Gateway Group.

Services within the Pathway work with young people to develop tailored support plans, which are built around the options available for young people, their wishes and strengths, in order to find an outcome that works for them.

### 6. What works

**Dedicated officers:** "I have felt very supported especially by the Youth Homeless & Housing Officers. The Gateway Group is run well and is a useful tool when needing additional support with a YP especially as everybody's voice is heard, and ideas shared."

**Multi-agency working:** "Partnership working is really proactive and efficient. Agencies being accountable for specific actions is effective."

