



THE
HOUSE PROJECT
Lancashire

Young People's Guide

2023/24

Version 1



You should read this guide before you apply to join the House Project Lancashire.

It tells you:



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1 WHAT'S THE HOUSE PROJECT LANCASHIRE?

The House Project Lancashire is part of the National House Project. We work in partnership with the Children in our Care Teams and Leaving Care Teams and offer a different approach to supporting young people to create their own homes and live connected and fulfilling lives.

House Projects are co-designed with young people, and we build strong, caring and supportive relationships with our young people. We emphasise the importance of a peer community of young people moving into their first home.

Once a year, we provide support to a small group of about 12 young people aged 16 or 17 years old who are 'children in our care' to develop the knowledge, skills and confidence to manage independent living and a tenancy safely and well. We meet once a week as a group and you also meet your facilitator every week to work on your individual knowledge, skills and confidence. You need to attend these sessions with us and contribute to the project so you can develop your skills and become part of the House Project community. Once you have successfully completed your House Project Programme, we can support you to find the right LHP Home for you. We work with four Registered Social Landlords in the Preston area who have committed to offering young people a studio or one-bedroom social housing property. We will spend some time together with you to paint and decorate the flat how you want it to look like and you can access our LHP Home Grant for the painting, decorating and furnishing of the flat.

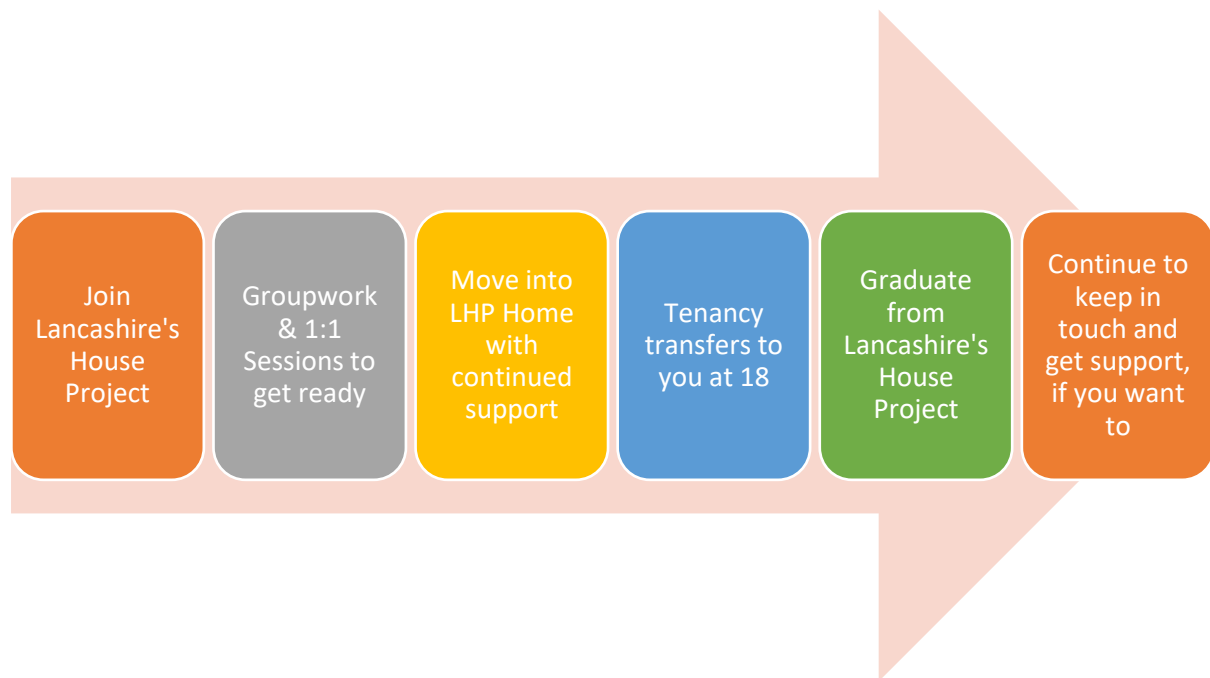
Only when you are ready and we, your social worker and the Registered Social Landlord think so, too, we can support you to move into a Local House Project (LHP) Home. For most young people this is around the time they are 17 ½ years old. Your allocated LHP Facilitator will continue to support you for at least a year after you have moved into your LHP Home and you can access support from us up to your 25th birthday.

You need to know that properties are not always available in your top priority area because availability depends on the housing market, i.e. how many properties exist in



an area and how many people are moving out in order for a property to become available.

When you turn 18, the social housing tenancy will be transferred over to you and, providing you follow the tenancy agreement, you can continue to live in your home for as long as you like.



Our provision is registered with and inspected by Ofsted under the Supported Accommodation (England) Regulations 2023 and comes under the category of "supported accommodation in a self-contained unit, where the accommodation is for the sole use of the child [...]".

For information about the National House Project: <https://thehouseproject.org/>

For information about Lancashire's House Project:

<https://lancashire.thehouseproject.org/>

2 HOW WE SUPPORT YOU.

We start a group once a year in September. If you would like to join the House Project Lancashire, you need to **apply**, because we think it's important that it is your choice to join us.

You can either ask your social worker to register an interest with us on your behalf or drop us a line directly (see our webpage or contact details below under 'Meet the Team'). We will offer you loads of support with the application process and work with your social worker, so you don't need to worry about it.

We will allocate you a Local House Project (LHP) Facilitator who runs the groupwork sessions with the other facilitators and meets with you for 1:1 sessions. Your Facilitator will support you to develop your independent living skills to get ready to move into a LHP Home.

The Facilitator will also work with your social worker, personal advisor, significant members of your family and other professionals to achieve this.

You will have support from your allocated Facilitator for at least 5 months before you move into your LHP Home and at least 12 months after you have moved.

The Orchid – a reflective conversation about how you are doing

The Orchid is the National House Project's framework to evaluate and identify your strengths and areas of development. It stands for:

ORCHIDS	What does this mean?
Ownership	I make decisions and have control over my life
	As part of a team, I make decisions and have control over the project
Responsibility	I take responsibility for getting things done
	I take responsibility for sorting things out when they go wrong



Community	I feel I am part of a community that supports and cares about me
	I support and care about other people in the project
Home	I feel safe
	I feel I have a place I can call my home
Independence	I can sort out practical stuff [cooking, money, travel] on my own
	I know how to get help and support when I need it
Direction	I am confident in my plan and goals for my future
	I feel I have the skills and confidence I need to make progress towards my goals
Sense of well-being	I feel good

Your Facilitator will meet with you shortly after you join our project to have a reflective conversation and complete your first Orchid. This will inform how we support you over the coming months. Before you move into a LHP Home, your Facilitator will complete the second Orchid with you to look at how far you have come and what support you are likely to need once you have moved into your LHP Home. We will continue to update the Orchid with you every 6 months to make sure the support is right for you.

The House Project Programme – developing interdependence and independent living skills

The aim of our House Project Programme (HPP) is for you to develop the knowledge, skills and confidence to move into a LHP Home. The programme is AQA registered which means it is a certified programme. There are a number of modules you need to complete, and you need to collect evidence for your portfolio. Your Facilitator will support you in doing this as part of the groupwork and 1:1 sessions. We will make sure that all sessions are delivered in the right way for you and respect who you are. Sometimes, we will ask other professionals to help us with this. The modules focus on the following areas:



- Health & Wellbeing
- Education & Employment
- Interdependence & Independent Living Skills
- Money Matters
- Keeping Safe in the Community
- Maintaining a LHP Home

Stable and loving relationships

Our service is inclusive, and we promote and respect the identities of young people from all backgrounds. We are sensitive to the impact of the many experiences our young people have had in their lives both leading up to becoming looked after and whilst in care. We focus on building on their strength and support them to find solutions to the challenges they face. We are mindful of everyone's individual learning needs and can access translation services where needed.

We develop strong, caring and supportive relationships with our young people because we spend a lot of time with them and encourage their active involvement in the project. We are here to support you for at least 18 months after joining our project and you can access support from us up to your 25th birthday.

We also support you to build a supportive relationship with the other young people in the project, to become part of the house project community and to establish links with local communities.

For many young people, family and friends are really important. We will always support you in building or having a positive and supportive relationships with members of your family and friends and include significant members of your family in any planning, where you want us to and where this is the right thing to do. However, for groupwork and 1:1 sessions you should be on your own so we can support you the best.

Our relationships are based on respect – both ways. Conflict and disagreement can be part of normal life and can be healthy and help when building relationships. We will



help you to do this in a positive way and need you to be respectful to the other young people and us while everyone in the project will be respectful to you.

The Base – our young people's space

We are based at 182 Marsh Lane, Preston. It's a five minutes' walk from the Train Station nearer Fishergate and County Hall. The Base is our young people's drop in and learning space. The furniture were chosen by our young people. It's open during normal office hours so you can drop in Mondays to Fridays between 9 and 5 and we use it for some of our groupwork sessions and meetings with young people. Our staff office is in the same building next to the base.

The LHP Home – your home for good

You have to be 17 years old and shown that you have the knowledge, skills and confidence to be safe and do well living independently before we can support you to move into a LHP Home. Your Orchid will help you to know when it is the right time for you to move. Your Facilitator will also complete a Safety Plan with you before you move so you know how to deal with difficult situations and who to contact for help when you live by yourself.

The LHP Homes that we provide come from four Registered Social Landlords (RSL):



These are studios or 1-bedroom flats that are in most areas of Preston. When you join the House Project, your Facilitator will support you to choose an area so that the Registered Social Landlord has time to do a property search and get an empty property ready for when you are ready to move in. We cannot promise where and when a property becomes available, because this depends on the housing market, but we will work with you and the Registered Social Landlord to find a location that you are happy with.

All properties from our Registered Social Landlords meet statutory health & safety standards, we do a Health & Safety check and a Location Assessment before you move in. This makes sure the property meets the accommodation standards for supported accommodation, it tells you what's available to you in the local community such as shops, transport links, pay points, leisure centres, libraries etc. We include this information in the Handbook you receive from us when you move in. The Location Assessment also tells us if there are any issues we need to be mindful of to make sure you are safe when you live independently.

Before you move, we will work with you to decorate and furnish your flat, so it is homely for when you move in. You can access our LHP Home Grant for this. We will support you to communicate with the landlord with any flat issues and to set up and understand how to pay your utility bills.

The LHP Home is your home in that it is your place to feel at home, but you don't own the property and you are not yet the legal tenant. Lancashire County Council act as a trustee and we give you permission to live in the property until you turn 18 on the condition that you follow the support agreement you sign with us before you move in and act like a responsible tenant.

This is why no other person is allowed to live in the property. You can have visitors, but they cannot be under 16 (unless they are immediate family) and all visitors have to be pre-agreed by your social worker. You are expected to keep the home clean and tidy and follow the expectations of the support and tenancy agreement which means to be respectful to your neighbours, not to cause excessive noise or noise late evening/night time, anti-social behaviour, damage and not to do anything illegal in the property. You are not allowed to smoke in the property, or to have or consume alcohol or drugs in the property. **Breaching these conditions means that you might lose your LHP Home and because this is a social housing property you are highly likely to be barred from social housing for some time. This can seriously increase your risk to become homeless as a young adult.** You will be expected to sign a Support Agreement with us that summarises the support we provide to you, the rules and responsibilities for you and how you can make a complaint if you are not happy with the service we provide or worried about anything else.



You hold the keys to the property and are responsible to manage its front door while we hold a second key in case of emergencies. Should we have a concern for your, or anyone else's immediate welfare, or have a legal reason to provide access, we will enter the LHP Home without advance notice and without your permission.

Once you turn 18, the tenancy will be transferred to you and you become the official and legal tenant of your home.

Your Learning Plan – making progress towards your goals

Supporting you to access or progress in education or employment is important to us. We know this can be difficult at times and in particular when moving into independent living. That's why your Facilitator will look at your learning plan with you to see how you are getting on with the House Project Programme, explore things you would like to do as well as progressing with more formal education or employment opportunities.

We work together with your social worker, personal advisor, the Employment Support Team from the Virtual School/Lancashire County Council and other professionals to look at how we can best support you. We will attend your Personal Educational Planning Meetings with you and other meetings about your education or training. We also support young people with Education Health Care Plans (EHCP), contribute to those and include relevant advice from it in the way we support those young people.

We speak with you about the location you choose for your LHP Home and how this may affect your education or employment, support you to keep a good routine for your education and employment and help you to gain the confidence to use public transport to get around, if you are not yet familiar with it.

Being Healthy and Safe

We will help you to register with a GP, if you move areas, support you to attend your annual health assessment and dental and eye appointments. We can speak with the Children Looked After Nurse, to get any advice for you and support you to access health and wellbeing services in the community.



As a staff team, we attend a Psychological Formulation with a clinical psychologist for every young person that joins the House Project so we better understand how we can support you and we access a monthly consultation from the clinical psychologist. These meetings don't include you, but this is something you should know about.

Even though it is exciting to move into your first home, we know it can be worrying and lonely for some young people. That's why we support you for a minimum of 5 months before you move so you can be as ready as possible, have strong and supportive relationship with us to ask for help when you need it, help you to strengthen your relationships with others and become actively involved in the House Project community. Your Facilitator will develop a Wellbeing Plan with you to look at what might help you to manage some of your emotions better and we can help you to find ways to improve your physical and emotional wellbeing. If you need a specialist service, we can signpost and help you with an introduction.

We help you to create a Safety Plan with your Facilitator before you move into a LHP Home so you know how to deal with difficult situations and who to contact for help when you live by yourself. We will also work with you to know how to keep yourself safe in the community. It is extremely important that you keep in touch with us so we know you are safe and well, and we can support you. We have a Safeguarding Policy and Missing Young Person Policy to help us safeguard you in difficult, dangerous or risky situations. These are available on our internet page under Our Policies & Procedures (<https://lancashire.thehouseproject.org/our-policies-and-procedures>). If you are not available for visits and don't respond to our calls, we will be worried that you are a missing person. There are many risks linked to being a missing young person and that is why young people who don't work with us and go missing frequently cannot join the House Project or continue to be a part of it.

Getting Extra Help

If you need more support than what we can provide, we will speak with you and your social worker to agree who could help. If you need support from other services, we can signpost and help you with an introduction.



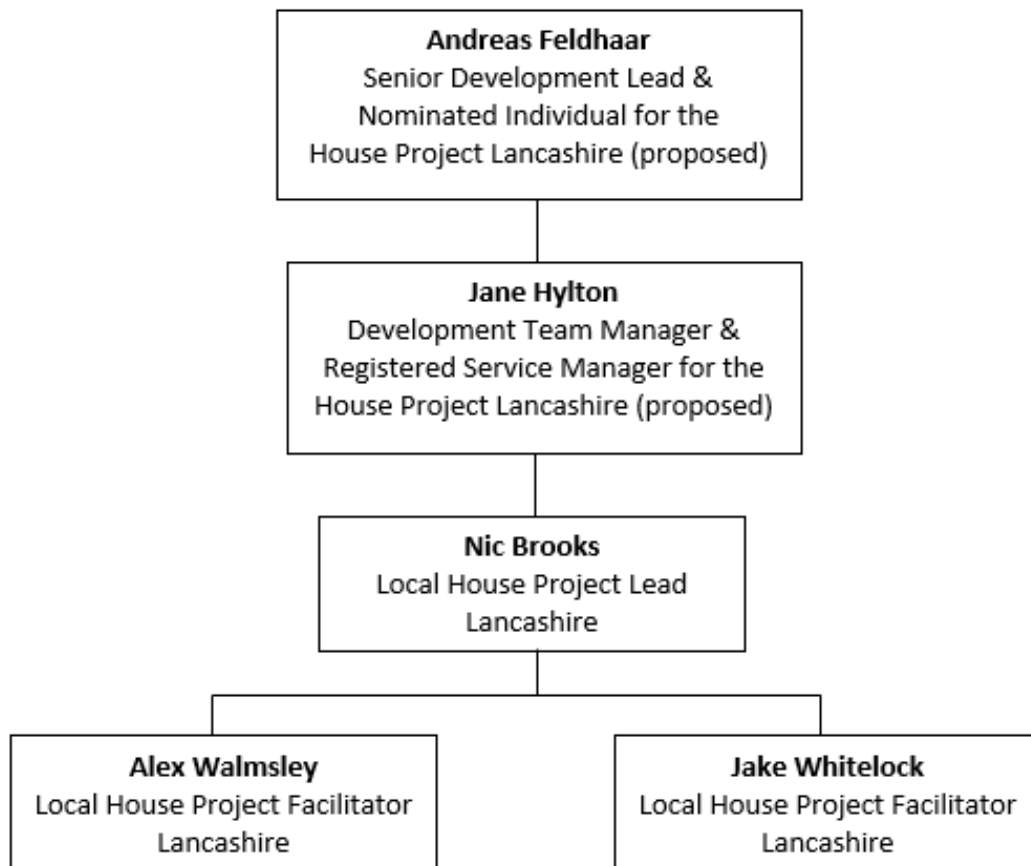
We only provide support Mondays to Fridays between 08:45 hrs and 17:00 hrs and not on weekends or bank holidays, e.g. Easter, Christmas or New Year. If you need any help outside of these hours, you can contact Children's Services' Emergency Duty Team on 0300 123 6722 at anytime for help and advice.

When you turn 18

This is a big day for you. Exciting and sometimes a bit scary because a lot can change. So it might be good to hear that there is not a lot that will change for you with the support you are getting from us, because you can continue to access support from us until your 25th birthday. We will arrange with you for the tenancy of your LHP Home to be transferred to you, but it's already been your place for some time and nothing new. We will also support you to set up the right payment arrangements to pay rent for your home, but you have already managed other utility payments for some time so it's not really anything new either.



Meet the House Project Team



The LHP Lead supervises and develops the LHP Facilitators. He ensures you are actively involved in the continued development of the House Project Lancashire, in the decision making about your House Project Plans and makes sure the actions agreed as part of your House Project Plans are followed through. The LHP Lead is supervised by the Development Team Manager/Service Manager.

The LHP Facilitators provide direct support to you and you will have a Facilitator who is allocated to you. They support you to develop the knowledge, skills and confidence to live well and safely in a LHP Home. The LHP Facilitators are supervised by the LHP Lead.

All staff of the House Project Lancashire are police checked (Enhanced DBS), experienced in working with young people, have completed a thorough induction process, attended relevant training and follow our Workforce Development Plan to ensure their knowledge and skills are kept up to date and the best they can be to support you.

We are based on the 1st floor of 182 Marsh Lane, Preston and you can get in touch with us during normal business hours (Mondays to Fridays 9 to 5).

Our LHP Facilitators are:

- Alex Walmsley (☎ 07890 899224)
- Jake Whitelock (☎ 07966 741264)

Our LHP Lead is:

- Nic Brooks (☎ 07929 652803)

Our Service Manager is:

- Jane Hylton (☎ 07768 324756)

You can find more information about the team on our webpage:

- <https://lancashire.thehouseproject.org/meet-the-team>

3 YOUR RIGHTS AND VIEWS

We want you to be an active part of the House Project community and for your voice and views to shape our service. That's why we don't simply accept a referral but young people have to apply to become part of the project. We want you to be in control to decide whether the House Project Lancashire is the right thing for you or not and whether or not you want to become a member of it.

We continue to give you the opportunity to share your views and shape our service as part of our groupwork and 1:1 sessions and you have the opportunity to develop a network event about what's important to you as a group with the other young people of the House Project.

Before you move into a LHP Home, your Facilitator will update your Orchid and develop a safety plan with you that looks at how you are using the support around you which tells us when it is the right time for you to move into a LHP Home.



We want you to get the best opportunities to live independently. We will support you to understand your rights as someone with care experience, what the Care Leaver's Local Offer is and support you to access your rights and entitlements as a care experienced young person.

We can support you to speak with your Social Worker, Personal Advisor or Independent Reviewing Officer to share your views or if you think any of the plans for you are not right. We will also support you to access your statutory entitlements as a young person looked after which includes being involved in decision making about your care plan, access an annual health assessment and to have an up to date Personal Education Plans.

Two of our young people represent the House Project Lancashire at the Care Leavers National Movement which is the young people's steering group of the National House Project and we are due to have a Peer Mentoring scheme which cannot only help you, but also helps us to know what we could do better. We have links to Lancashire's Care Leaver Forum and can help you to become a member of it, if you would like to.

We will provide you with information on Corporate Parenting and support you to receive support from Lancashire County Council as a Corporate Parent including relevant partners and the wider corporate family as set out in the Corporate Parenting Strategy.

We can support you to self-refer to NYAS – National Youth Advocacy Service, if you would like to access independent Advocacy Services, even if you are not happy about something we have done.

4 WHAT WE EXPECT OF YOU

There are some expectations we have of you so that we can support you:

- 1) We work **with** but not **for** you to prepare you to live independently in a LHP Home.



- 2) We will always listen to your views and opinions and expect you to treat the other young people and us with respect at all times. We know that things can be difficult sometimes, but we don't tolerate aggression or violence.
- 3) We know you may not be able to attend every session and meeting with us, but we expect you to be available for sessions and meetings unless you have a very good reason not to in which case we expect you to cancel and re-arrange with us before the session or meeting. We expect you to attend and engage with our sessions. Engage means to take an active role, take part in discussions, be open to try something new and to do what you have agreed to do.
- 4) We expect you to attend groupwork and 1:1 sessions by yourself and not to be under the influence of any substances.
- 5) We can only support you to move into a LHP Home, if you have the knowledge, skills and confidence to live safely and well on your own. That's why we need you to complete the House Project Programme; which is your way of showing us you are ready to live independently.
- 6) The House Project is built on young people taking ownership and responsibility. That's why we need you to be involved in and engage with the completion and review of your Orchid, Orchid Plan, Learning Plan, Wellbeing Plan and Safety Plan.
- 7) Before you can move into a LHP Home, we will set up a Support Agreement with you which sets out your rights and support, how we listen to your views, how you can make a complaint and our expectations on you while living in a LHP Home. We need you to agree and sign the Support Agreement before you can move into a LHP Home.
- 8) To make an LHP Home your home means to decorate and furnish the place according to your own taste. You have access to a LHP Home Grant for this

and we expect you to do some of the painting, decorating, shopping and furnishing of your LHP Home with us.

- 9) We know you won't be free for all of our visits and won't be able to answer every one of our calls, but we expect you to be in regular contact with us, reply to our calls or messages and to cancel and re-arrange appointments with us if you are not free.
- 10) We expect you to keep the LHP Home clean and tidy and to have a good routine for keeping it secure. Also, we expect you to keep the LHP Home safe by not tampering with any fire safety equipment (for example smoke alarms) and to report repairs without unnecessary delay to us or your Registered Social Landlord.
- 11) We will respect your privacy, but you have to give us and the landlord access to the LHP Home for pre-arranged visits and ad hoc visits (unless there is a good reason why not). This also includes any professionals or workmen accompanying us. Where there is an immediate concern for your, or anyone else's immediate welfare, or we have a legal reason to provide access, we will enter the LHP Home without advance notice and without your permission.
- 12) We expect you to only allow those visitors into the LHP Home that have been pre-agreed by your social worker. Smoking in a LHP Home is not allowed and we expect you not to have or use any alcohol or illegal drugs in the LHP Home.
- 13) We want you to be able to live in your LHP Home for as long as you want to. To avoid you being evicted we expect you to present with good tenant behaviour which means to be respectful to your neighbours, not to cause excessive noise or noise late evening/night time, anti-social behaviour and not to cause any damage.

We will always tell you when we think you are not following the rules and we will do this in writing to you when it could seriously impact on you being part of the House Project or at risk of losing your LHP Home.



5 COMMENTS AND COMPLAINTS

You can speak with anyone from the House Project Lancashire if you are not happy about the support and service we provide to you or worried about something else. Please let us know as soon as possible so we can resolve this quickly. Our contact details are provided above under 'Meet the Team' and on our webpage <https://lancashire.thehouseproject.org/meet-the-team>.

You can also speak with your social worker or Independent Reviewing Officer. We can help you to do this when you are part of our project, even if you are not happy about something we have done.

Advocacy

If you are unsure, unhappy or feel your voice not being heard, you can contact the advocacy service free of charge on 0808 808 1001, via help@nyas.net, NYAS app on Android and iOS or a call back request via NYAS website: <https://youngpeople.nyas.net/index.php/get-in-touch>. General information about the service is available via <https://youngpeople.nyas.net/>

Formal Complaints to Lancashire County Council

If you would like to make a formal complaint, you can make contact with Lancashire County Council by using any of the contacts below:

- Customer Access on 0300 123 6720
- Customer Feedback Team on 01772 539414
- Online via <https://lancashire.firmstep.com/default.aspx/RenderForm/?F.Name=eyGimecvEzJ>
- By mail to: Social Care Customer Feedback, FREEPOST RTKC-HBTA-TZRK, PO Box 1337, County Hall, Preston, PR2 0TG



Complaints to the Office of the Children's Commissioner England

Help at Hand from the Children's Commissioner is on 0800 528 0731 or
help.team@childrenscommissioner.gov.uk or via
<https://www.childrenscommissioner.gov.uk/help-at-hand/>

Complaints to Ofsted

Phone: 0300 123 1231

Email: enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk

