**Kent & Medway Homelessness Duty to Refer Referral Form**

This is a referral to Housing Services made under the Duty to Refer requirement of the Homelessness Reduction Act 17 section 213B. The Local Authority approached will provide advice and assistance to anyone who is homeless or at risk of becoming homeless.

Referral should be to **one chosen Local Authority only**. See overleaf for notes from the Kent & Medway Homelessness Duty to Referral Protocol.

**Please complete this referral form electronically:**

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Customer’s Name:** | **Date of Birth:** |
|  |  |
| **Customer’s Address:** | **Phone Number:** |
|  |  |
|  | **Email address:** |
|  |  |
| **How would the Customer like us to contact them?** |  |

**Reason for referral (Please provide details of their current accommodation and why they are homeless or threatened with homelessness)**

**What date is the customer likely to become homeless?**

**Are there any known, ongoing medical conditions? If so, what are they and what medication is the customer taking?**

**Registered GP and Practice details:**

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Has the Customer consented to a** | **Date of consent** | **Consent to share obtained** |
| **referral to Housing Services?** (**Note –** |  | Yes / No |
| **you can only refer with consent)** |  |  |
|  |  |  |
| **Contact details of referrer:** |  |  |

**Are there any known risks to staff visiting the Customer at home or any other issues that we need to be aware of prior to initial contact?**

**Please email this completed form to the customer’s chosen Local Authority (LA). You may only refer the customer to one LA and you should consider the customer’s ‘local connection’ to this LA area.**

**A. Referral process**

Public authorities should notify the chosen local authority (see point B below) of any service user considered to be homeless or at risk of homelessness. Notification of a referral is by the completion of the agreed referral form, which is on line on each local authority’s website (see list in appendix 1). This referral form must be completed with the consent of the individual who has been identified homeless or at risk of homelessness.

The referral form includes the following details: name, contact details, agreed reason for referral, if the person is homeless or if and when they are likely to become homeless, if they are at imminent risk of rough sleeping, a risk assessment, and key medical information.

Completed referral forms should be emailed to the local authority the individual wishes to approach. A response acknowledging receipt of the referral will be provided within two working days. In urgent cases (where homelessness is imminent within two days), email of the referral form should be followed up by a phone call to the duty number for the local authority where the approach is being made. (See appendix 1).

**B. Choice of housing authority**

The individual can choose which local housing authority they would like the referral to made to. Wherever possible, the public authority should advise the individual to seek assistance from the most relevant housing authority (i.e. the one where they have a local connection to, unless it is not safe for them to return to that area).

The following situations satisfy a local connection. If the individual has more than one local connection, they could approach the local authority where they would like to live.

***Living in an area***

They will have a local connection if they have lived in a council area for at least:

* 6 out of the last 12 months
* 3 out of the last 5 years

Staying in emergency housing or a refuge counts. Time spent in prison or hospital does not count.

***Working in an area***

They will have a local connection if they are working or self-employed in a council area.

***Close family in the area***

They have a local connection if any of the following family members have lived in a council area for at least 5 years:

* parents
* adult children
* brothers and sisters

The council might accept a local connection based on other family members. For example, if the individual was raised by another relative and they remain in close contact.

***Care leavers***

A care leaver will have a local connection if they are under 21 and were previously in care in the area for at least 2 years (even if placed there by another council).

A care leaver will also have a local connection if they are under 25 and they get advice and support from Children Services under a 'pathway plan'. If the pathway plan is provided by a Kent County Council, then a care leaver will have a local connection to every local housing department in Kent. If the pathway plan is provided by Medway Council, they will have a local connection to Medway Council.

***Refugee status or humanitarian protection***

There will be a local connection to the last council area the individual was housed in by the Home Office under asylum support, the time of residence is irrelevant.

***Special reasons***

A local housing authority can consider a local connection for a special reason such as:

* a need to live in the area to receive specialist health care
* very important social connections with the area

Although local housing authorities must apply the prevention duty to anyone that approaches them, regardless of whether they have a local connection, local connection arrangements still apply if the local housing authority owes the main homelessness duty, i.e. to provide accommodation. If this is the case and there is no local connection to the local housing authority that accepted the original referral, they would be transferred to the local housing authority with which they have a local connection.

**C. Making early referrals**

Some public authorities have relationships with service users which will enable them to identify a risk of homelessness at an early stage. In these cases, the public authority should ensure that a referral is made to a chosen local authority as soon as a likelihood of homelessness becomes apparent, to enable the best opportunity for a solution to be found that prevents homelessness. An example of this would apply to individuals due to be released from prison, who ideally should be referred in advance of their release date. Another example is a patient discharge from hospital, again ideally the public authority should make the referral as soon as it is known the patient has no suitable home to be discharged to.

**D. Response to referrals**

When a referral is received by the local housing authority, it will be dealt with by the Housing Options Team. Response to a referral should be within two days, contacting the individual using the contact details provided in the referral form. If it is not possible to make contact with the individual information on how the individual can access advice and assistance (e.g. on the local authorities’ website or by visiting the Council Offices or Gateway) will be shared via a phone call or email.

If there is reason to believe the individual is homeless or threatened with homelessness within 56 days, this will trigger a homeless application. The local housing authority has a duty to assess their needs and will work with them to develop a Personal Housing Plan (PHPs). If the local housing authority is satisfied the applicant is eligible and homeless, threatened within 56 days or has received a valid Section 21 notice requiring possession, the local housing authority would be subject to the Prevention or Relief duty.

**E. Data sharing**

All Personal Housing Plans agreed by the local housing authority will include a data sharing consent clause as standard, this will enable early notification and sharing of data from the PHPs with the referring public authority and potentially other public authorities who are working with the individual.

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| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Local Authority** |  | **Email address/ website link** | **Duty Telephone No** |
|  |
| Ashford Borough Council | housingadvice@ashford.gov.uk  |  |
| Canterbury City Council | dutytorefer@canterbury.gov.uk  |  |
| Dartford Borough Council | dutytorefer@dartford.gov.uk  |  |
| Dover District Council | dutytorefer@dover.gov.uk  | 01304 872265 |
| Folkestone & Hythe District Council | dutytorefer@folkestone-hythe.gov.uk  |  |
| Gravesham Borough Council | dutytorefer@gravesham.gov.uk  |  |
| Maidstone Borough Council | dutytorefer@maidstone.gov.uk  |  |
| Medway Council | Housing@medway.gov.uk  | 01634 332277 |
| Sevenoaks District Council | dutytorefer@sevenoaks.gov.uk  | 01732 227000 |
| Swale Borough Council | dutytorefer@swale.gov.uk  |  |
| Thanet District Council | dutytorefer@thanet.gov.uk  |  |
| Tonbridge & Malling Borough Council | Dutytorefer@tmbc.gov.uk  |  |
| Tunbridge Wells Borough Council | dutytorefer@tunbridgewells.gov.uk  |  |