**APPENDIX 4.4**

**INTERIM GUIDANCE – VALID UNTIL 30th JUNE 2022**

****

**Hertfordshire - Joint Housing Protocol**

**Homelessness Reduction Act 2017**

**Duty to Refer**

**Introduction**

The aim of this document is to set out the process to follow when making homeless or threatened with homelessness referrals under the ‘Duty to Refer’ requirements as set out in the Homelessness Reduction Act 2017.

**Background**

As a result of the Homelessness Reduction Act 2017, certain statutory agencies (including social services authorities (both Children’s and Adult’s)) are under a duty to refer families and individuals that are homeless and/or threatened with becoming homelessness (within 56 days). The ‘Duty to Refer’ process may follow a slightly different process across the ten local housing authorities in Hertfordshire and may require different information and/or the completion of a basic information form.

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/homelessness-duty-to-refer/a-guide-to-the-duty-to-refer>

**Consent and Recording**

A homeless or threatened with homelessness (within the next 56 days) referral can only be made with the consent of the family/individual being referred, how the consent has been given must be recorded on the family/individuals case file and where a family/individual does not provide consent, this must also be recorded. Consideration may then need to be given to the potential impact on the child/children should the family become homeless and what subsequent action/referrals may be required.

**Postcode Checker**

Use the postcode checker to clarify which area the referral should be sent (clarify any local connection information

<https://www.gov.uk/find-local-council>

**Scope of the Document**

The ten housing authorities in Hertfordshire are currently in the process of establishing their ‘Duty to Refer’ systems and processes. The aim being to develop a consistent approach, i.e. by using a common process, form and duty to refer e-mail address portal system at each local authority. As such this document provides interim guidance whist the common system is being established.

This document is valid until 30th June 2022

**Duty to Refer - Process**

1. **Broxbourne**

Broxbourne Borough Council has a ‘Duty to Refer’ form on its website, once completed it should be submitted to dutytorefer@broxbourne.gov.uk

Please follow the link below to the page on the Broxbourne website which explains the procedures; <https://www.broxbourne.gov.uk/resident-housing/duty-refer>. The form contains space to indicate whether and how the service user’s consent has been obtained.

1. **Dacorum**

Dacorum Borough Council has a ‘Duty to Refer’ form on its website (see below). Once completed it should be sent with the required accompanying information and documents to DutytoRefer@dacorum.gov.uk.



1. **East Herts**

Referrals should be made via <https://www.eastherts.gov.uk/dutytorefer>

East Herts has a dedicated email address where agencies can email the details of the family/person being referred - dutytorefer@eastherts.gov.uk

The e-mail should include the following background information:

* Name;
* Address;
* Contact details;
* Household make-up;
* A brief reason behind the referral.

The family/person must consent to this referral and the e-mail must confirm that the family/person being referred has given consent.

1. **Hertsmere**

Hertsmere Borough Council has a ‘Duty to Refer’ form on its website. To access the form follow the link:

<https://www.hertsmere.gov.uk/Housing--Private-Property/Homelessness/Homelessness-Self-Referrals-and-Duty-to-Refer.aspx>

The duty to refer email address has an automated response directing people to the website to complete the referral form via the portal.

1. **North Herts**

North Herts has a dedicated duty to refer email address set up - DutyToRefer@north-herts.gov.uk the mailbox has an auto-message directing referrals to the online portal (see web page for more info: <https://www.north-herts.gov.uk/home/housing/homelessness-referrals-agencies> )

Referrers will receive the following automated information.

“NHDC accepts referrals from all agencies via our online Housing Assistance Referral Portal only.

If you would like to refer a person who is threatened with or is experiencing homelessness our portal can be accessed from the homelessness pages on our website on the below link.

<https://www.north-herts.gov.uk/home/housing/homelessness-advice>

We aim to contact the person directly within 2 working days of receiving the referral.

This email address can be used to provide supplementary information. If you are doing so, please quote the NHDC reference provided by the portal with their Surname in the subject line.” - Housing Options Team

1. **St Albans**

St Albans City and District Council have a single point of access for the Housing Options Service through a referral portal. This portal is secure and will be responded to by the next working day at the latest. The portal captures all relevant information that the Council need for the duty to refer. The portal can be accessed at <https://hpa2.org/refer/SADC> or on the St Albans Council webpage at <http://www.stalbans.gov.uk/housing/homelessness/>. The Council also has the standard email address as requested by Government to receive referrals - dutytorefer@stalbans.gov.uk, and will receive e-mails at this address and will then respond with the request to complete the referral portal process. St Albans is also signed up to the national referral tool; ‘Alert’.

1. **Stevenage**

Stevenage Borough Council has a dedicated e-mail in box relating to the duty to refer referrals. The email address is dutytorefer@stevenage.gov.uk.

The Information required on the referral is as follows:

1. Referrers Details – Name/organisation/address;
2. Clients Details – Name/contract details/date of birth and household make up;
3. Reason for the referral;
4. Confirmation that the client has consented to the referral.
5. **Three Rivers**

Three Rivers District Council has a ‘Duty to Refer’ form on its website (see below). Once completed, it should be sent with the required accompanying information documents to dutytorefer@threerivers.gov.uk.

Please see the Three Rivers District Council Website for more detailed information about the duty to refer. The information is attached.



1. **Watford**

Watford Borough Council has a ‘Duty to Refer’ form on its website (see below).

<https://www.watford.gov.uk/downloads/file/2523/watford_-_public_body_duty_to_refer_a_homeless_person_form>

Once completed it should be sent with the required accompanying documents to dutytorefer@watford.gov.uk .



1. **Welwyn/Hatfield**

Welwyn/Hatfield Borough Council has a ‘Duty to Refer’ form on its website (see form below). Once completed it should be sent with the required accompanying information documents to dutytorefer@welhat.gov.uk

1. Name of applicant
2. Address of applicant
3. DoB of applicant
4. Contact details of the applicant
5. Reason for referral
6. Expected date of homelessness
7. Referrer details

The duty administrator will then contact the individual and where appropriate, arrange an appointment for them to come in for advice/next steps.



Version three – Tom Snell

1st April 2019 - 30th June 2022