



# **Homelessness Prevention Pathway Approach For Accessing And Moving On From Housing Related Support Services**

## **August 2020**

# **Homelessness Prevention Pathway Approach**

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# **Homelessness Prevention Pathway Approach**

## **Introduction**

This document has been developed as a ‘toolkit’ to highlight the Homelessness Prevention Pathway Approach processes and assist providers and citizens when accessing supported housing projects, and also when moving on to independent living.

Each process is laid out in flowchart format with a list of more detailed guidelines to accompany them. This should make following the processes easy and understandable for every stage.

The process supports the commissioning priorities through the analysis of supply and demand, and will indicate housing needs; it is not intended to replace the expertise or independence of service providers, and will not replace the needs assessments carried out by providers. However, the referral system will ensure that referrals are made to appropriate services and that those services are carrying out transparent and appropriate assessments of needs and allocation. Providers will need to look at working with citizens with varying need and risk if their needs match the service provision.

The Homelessness Prevention Pathway Process will reduce waiting lists and the aim is to ensure that rather than keep referrals on waiting lists, they can be referred to other appropriate services that may have vacancies. The Pathway Team will have a database of those who have been referred and accepted into projects, and will be able to identify referrals when a project has vacancy. It is paramount that providers inform the coordinator of any vacancies that are coming up or have become available.

If you require any further information relating to the Homelessness Prevention Pathway, please contact the relevant officers as follows:

Queries for accessing supported accommodation, i.e. referrals, allocations, and complex cases, contact the Pathway Team: [hppathway@denbighshire.gov.uk](mailto:hppathway@denbighshire.gov.uk)

## **Homelessness Prevention Pathway & Prioritisation of Services**

Denbighshire’s Homelessness Prevention Team are committed to ensuring that clear and transparent arrangements are in place to support fair and equitable access to all forms of housing related support projects.

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The pathway has been developed to be inclusive i.e. accessible to all who may be vulnerable, homeless or potentially homeless and are in need of support to sustain their accommodation/tenancy. As each case is considered on its merits we would suggest you speak with the team to enable the case can be considered for both pre tenancy support and to be housed in a Supported Housing Project if appropriate.

Services provided are not just for those who are owed a statutory duty. Housing related support services can complement statutory services but should not be used to discharge a duty, for example, in relation to after care services.

The pathway aims to:

- Ensure one pathway for citizens accessing services
- Offer more choice and control for citizens requiring services and clear information
- Prioritise referrals and match needs to support services
- Ensure more efficient use of Support Worker and Provider time by reducing inappropriate and duplicate referrals
- Positive experience for the citizen by not being signposted to several providers
- Ensure that resources are used to support citizens who need them most
- Help target and meet the needs of the local population
- Reduce time spent for other professionals involved in the referral process
- Ensure a collaborative, consistent and coordinated approach is taken to meeting the housing and support needs of vulnerable citizens who have a housing need
- Ensure citizen's housing and support needs are considered jointly by the appropriate agencies to ensure fair and equitable access to housing and support services
- Ensure citizen's skills, knowledge and experiences are used efficiently and effectively to aid the development of needs led responses and collaborative interventions
- Ensure housing solutions and interventions are agreed and provided by the most appropriate citizens utilising a diverse range of resources available to them
- Ensure a more coordinated and consistent approach is taken to mapping and analysing unmet need for vulnerable groups requiring housing and support
- Ensure a more strategic approach is taken to developing sustainable service responses and housing solutions.

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## **Prioritisation**

The Homelessness Prevention Team will not instruct providers who can and who cannot access a specific project but will ensure that the referral is eligible and appropriate, and will challenge those referrals that are not accepted without justifiable evidence. It is the responsibility of the provider for the gathering of all referral information and to ensure that a risk/needs assessment is completed fully. The Homelessness Prevention Pathway Team IS NOT responsible for assessing the need of individual referrals but is responsible for signposting to the appropriate service. The coordination of referrals is to ensure that current and emerging needs are met and the housing related support programme is responding to them. Housing related support services are a scarce and valuable resource and must be targeted at those in the greatest need and at greatest risk.

The Homelessness Prevention Pathway Team will ensure that the referral has housing related support needs. If the referral does not evidence housing related support needs, they will contact the referrer and discuss the referral, if it is felt that there are no housing related support needs the referral will not be referred to support providers.

Priority will also be given to those who are motivated and willing to engage in support. The person making the referral must ensure that they have spoken to the citizen about the referral, the citizen has agreed to the referral and is willing to engage with housing related support. If there are two referrals for one allocation, the allocation will be given to the citizen who is willing to engage and accept support. The referrer must ensure that all the information provided on the pathway referral form is accurate, up to date and that all risks are identified and that all sections of the referral form are completed. An incomplete referral will not be accepted.

It is the responsibility of the provider to ensure that a thorough needs assessment has been completed and that the allocation can be audited and is transparent. For self-referrals it is the responsibility of the provider to ensure that they have communicated with any services who may be working with the citizen or who have in the past to ensure that the allocation process is evidenced on valid information and is transparent and can be audited.

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The Homelessness Prevention Pathway Team will ensure that those deemed to be in greatest need/ risk are signposted to the most appropriate service known to be available, this is mostly done through the complex case meetings. This will ensure 'reasonable preference' is given to vulnerable citizens who want and need support to establish and sustain a tenancy. The approach will take into account individual needs and circumstances based on the risks they may be exposed to should a timely response not be available to them. This will determine who is most eligible and a priority within the available resources. Where they are equivalent needs, priority will be given to those with a local connection.

Providers must inform the Pathway Team of any voids capacity on projects and if any notice periods are issued to citizens, to allow for the Coordinator to send a referral preventing voids for providers. Voids and notice periods should be reported using the central email contact [hppathway@denbighshire.gov.uk](mailto:hppathway@denbighshire.gov.uk).

Reasonable preference citizens with:

- Domestic abuse
- Learning difficulties
- Mental health
- Alcohol dependency
- Drugs/substances dependency
- Physical/sensory disability
- Vulnerable young citizens
- Offending history
- Generic support needs
- Chronic illness
- Vulnerable older citizens

The following factors will be taken into account when establishing priority:

- Needs/Risks associated with homelessness
- Willingness to engage with support
- Needs/Risks a citizen may present to self and or others
- Needs/Risks of offending or re offending

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- Needs/Risks with age, ability, life experience
- Needs/Risks associated with limited support networks
- Needs/Risk associated with personal and emotional wellbeing
- Needs/Risks presented to the project on balancing needs and risks
- Needs/Risks exposure to actions or inactions of others
- Needs/Risks entering institutional care

## **Homelessness Prevention Pathway Process - Accessing Housing Related Support Services**

1. Referral and void information to be sent to Pathway Team
2. Pathway Team to identify relevant provider considering citizen's views and preferences
3. Provider to assess Referral Form, carry out Risk Assessment and gain permission to share information
4. a. If not appropriate, send back to [hppathway@denbighshire.gov.uk](mailto:_hppathway@denbighshire.gov.uk) to repeat step  
a. If appropriate, inform Pathway Team and the referring agency of referral outcome
5. If support refused, send copy of the initial referral & assessment forms back to the Pathway Team for further action

## **Guidance Notes for the Homelessness Prevention Pathway Process - Accessing Housing Related Support Services**

All referrals for supported housing and floating support will come through one single access point. Referrals will be accepted for appropriate citizens who are willing to engage with support. A coordinated and transparent referral process is an important element of how housing support services will be accessed. The process is:

1. Referrer to complete the Housing Related Support Referral Form (Appendix A) and email to the Pathway Team [hppathway@denbighshire.gov.uk](mailto:_hppathway@denbighshire.gov.uk). Referrals will not be accepted if this form is not completed fully and if the data protection box at the end of the referral form is not ticked. If providers receive referrals from other sources, they

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are to provide the referrer with the form and ask them to email it to the Pathway Team. The referral form is also to be used when citizens self-refer to a project.

2. The Pathway Team to identify relevant provider for the referral and email the complete form to at least 2 key people within the relevant provider agency. Providers are to provide Pathway Team with the two named people or to a group email address. This will ensure receipt if there is any staff sickness or annual leave.
3. The provider to follow their own initial Needs and Risk Assessment Process (as they do currently) when assessing the referral. Permission from the citizen MUST be obtained to share information with other providers. This information will be required if the case is refused for support. The timescale for the assessment is 3 – 4 days, with the outcome of the referral known within 7 days where possible.
4. a. If not accepted, provider to refer back to Pathway Team. The responsible Pathway worker will then refer on to another relevant provider. At this stage, all of the above assessment paperwork MUST be sent with the referral to the pathway which must contain as much information as possible.  
b. If accepted, provider to inform the pathway team in an email. However, if the needs of the citizen are immediate, rather than place on the waiting list, please refer back to the pathway team who will then refer onto another appropriate provider who may have vacancies.
5. Support is refused – Send copy of the initial referral and assessment paperwork to the pathway team who will then discuss the reasons for refusal with the provider, and decide the best way forward.

**Please Note: Complex Needs** – The Pathway Team will arrange a complex meeting to identify and ensure that wrap around services are able to support the allocation of the citizen. It is the responsibility of the provider to manage, identify and complete the risk assessments. The role of the coordinator is to arrange the Coordinator meeting and work alongside relevant services. It is not the responsibility of the coordinator to manage the risk for the Provider, but to support the provider and ensure that wrap around services are in place. Please see diagram and guidance notes for the Complex Case Pathway on the following page for further detail.

The Housing Support Coordinator will keep a database of all referrals and outcomes.

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## **Complex Case Meeting: Access to Support - Pathway-In for Supported Housing Services**

1. Referral received – if complex the Pathway Team will organise a meeting
2. Providers to assess referral and can also establish whether citizen's needs are complex
3. Refer to Pathway Team – Complex Case worker to organise Complex Case Meeting
4. Identify lead person for the case
5. Pathway Team / Complex Case Worker to work with and alongside the referral agency and lead person
6. Identify appropriate support

### **What is meant by a complex case?**

- Repeat presentations
- Evictions
- Abandonment
- Complex needs
- High risk

### **Guidance Notes for the Complex Case Process**

1. Referral received.
2. The provider receiving the referral undertakes the initial needs and risk assessment, and if it is assessed that the referral has complex support needs, the following steps should be taken. In some cases, the Pathway Workers will arrange a complex case meeting in order to share information and work with multiple providers to establish an appropriate project according to needs identified.
3. Forward the referral along with all relevant assessment paperwork containing as much detail as possible to the Pathway Worker who will organise and facilitate a complex case meeting.
4. During the meeting, members will identify the lead person, usually the referrer. The lead agency will work in partnership with the other services involved to ensure that the citizen has the best chance possible of succeeding.

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5. The Pathway Worker and other group members will work together and establish the best possible way to reduce the potential for complex citizens not accessing, or engaging, in support services.
6. The complex meeting will identify the correct support provider and wrap around services to ensure the allocation/support is coordinated, and a clear pathway is established

**Please Note:** There are no specific timescales allocated to this process due to the variance of cases and officer availability. The complex process is not to be used as a tool to manage risk, it is the provider's responsibility to assess the risk and the complex process will identify the wrap around services required to support the allocation.

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## **Appendix A – Housing Related Support Referral Form**

### **Housing Related Support Referral Form**

#### **Person this form is about**

First name	
Last name	
Date of birth	
NHS reference number	
Local Authority reference number	
Address	
Postcode	
Telephone	
Email	
Gender: Male / Female / Other	
Preferred language	

Are you a current / former member of the UK armed forces? Yes / No

#### **Person completing this form**

First name	
Last name	
Job title	
Organisation	
Section	
Address	
Postcode	
Telephone	
Mobile	
Email	
Professional relationship	

#### **Household**

Please give details of any adults who live with you:

First name	Last name	Date of birth	Relationship to you

Do you have any dependent children who live with you? Yes / No: \_\_\_\_\_

If yes, how many dependent children? \_\_\_\_\_

Are you pregnant? Yes / No: \_\_\_\_\_

If yes, what is your due date? \_\_\_\_\_

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## Current and historical services

Please give details of any services you currently or previously received. If relevant, please also indicate where a service is involved with other members of the household:

Service	Contact name	Contact details	Currently involved: Yes / No / Not known
Local Authority Homelessness Prevention Team			
Adult Social Services			
Children & Family Social Services			
Probation Service / Youth Justice			
Substance Misuse			
Mental Health			
Domestic Violence Support			
Other – please give details			

## Accommodation history

Please tick all that apply.

Never had independent accommodation	
Supported accommodation	
History of rough sleeping	
History of abandoning tenancies	
History of rent arrears	
History of evictions	
Prison	

Please provide any further details of accommodation history or other relevant information:

## Accommodation needs

Are you currently homeless? Yes / No	
Are you at risk of homelessness within the next 56 days? Yes / No	

What are your current housing circumstances? e.g. tenant / sofa surfing / rough sleeping

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What are the reasons for your current homelessness or risk of homelessness? Please tick all that apply.

Debt	
Overcrowding	
Relationship breakdown	
Fleeing domestic abuse	
Neighbour dispute	
Abandonment	
Offending	
Current rent arrears	
Difficulty managing rent	
Landlord dispute	
Landlord issued notice	
Unable to cope	
Eviction – please give reason e.g. rent arrears, ASB	
Other – please give details	

Please provide any further details of accommodation needs or other relevant information including details of any area exclusions or preferences:

## Support needs

Do you require support to enable you to be independent? Yes / No: \_\_\_\_\_

Please explain what you would like to achieve with support. Please tick all that apply.

Preventing homelessness	
Budgeting skills	
Managing accommodation	
Feeling safe	
Safety of others	
Community involvement	
Education / employment / volunteering	
Leading a healthy and active lifestyle	
Managing relationships	
Setting up and managing first tenancy	
Other – please give details	
What do you feel would best support you to achieve your goals? Include what your friends / family / neighbours / community could do to support you	

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Do you have any support / accommodation preferences? Please tick all that apply.

Self-contained supported housing	
Shared supported housing	
Supported lodgings	
Short term hostel	
Floating support – this means that a support worker can support you while you're in your own home for up to 12 months, or on a 'pre-tenancy' basis for up to 3 months if you don't currently have accommodation. Pre-tenancy support can work with you while you look to secure independent or supported accommodation.	

Other – please give details:

## Risk

Please note that this referral form will not be accepted if this section is not completed.

Has a current risk assessment been completed, that can be shared with support providers? Yes / No	
Is the person this form is about a known risk to self? Yes / No. If yes, give details below.	
Is the person this form is about a known risk to others? Yes / No. If yes, give details below.	
Does the person this form is about have a known history of offending? Yes / No. If yes, give details below.	
Is the risk unknown? Yes / No. If yes, give details below.	

Please give details of all known risks or reasons not known:

Signature of person completing this form: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

I understand that the information I have provided will be processed by Denbighshire County Council for the purpose of referring for housing related support services.

I understand that this may involve Officers of Denbighshire County Council requesting additional information from other services. These may include (but not restricted to): Social Services, Health, Homelessness Prevention Team, Police, Probation, YOT, Housing Association, Hostel, and other places of residency. I understand that the purpose of this is to identify potential risks and to assist with identifying any support needs that I may have. I understand that the Homelessness Prevention Single Pathway Team may share this information with other agencies. I also understand that my anonymized data may be used/shared for research purposes.

I understand that the personal information I provide will be stored and processed in accordance with the Data Protection Act 1998 and that no third party recipients will be provided with my personal data without my consent unless required by law. I understand that I have the right to request a copy of the personal data held about me and to correct any inaccuracies.

Please mark this box if you consent for your information to be used in this way

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## **Appendix B - Housing Related Support Referral Guidance**

### **Housing Related Support Referral Form - Guidance for Completing the Form**

#### **1. General**

This Referral form is mandatory for all referrals to Denbighshire's housing related support services via the Homelessness Prevention Pathway. Referrals will not be accepted if the form is not fully completed.

The form collects all the relevant details needed for the Denbighshire Housing Support Coordinator to process referrals and to effectively prioritise and allocate citizens to appropriate support projects.

- The form should be completed with anyone who is referred (or presents) for a housing related support service in Denbighshire.
- This includes anyone being assessed for a statutory service who has housing related support needs.
- The form should be completed with the citizen it is about whenever possible and appropriate.
- Please ask all of the questions on the form. It is very important that as much information as possible is collected.
- The Housing Support Coordinator will keep a record of those who have been referred and accepted into projects.
- Please email all completed forms to [hppathway@denbighshire.gov.uk](mailto:hppathway@denbighshire.gov.uk)

#### **The citizen this form is about**

Please provide the NHS and Local Authority reference numbers where these are known and where the person agrees to this. These will be used to help identify duplicate forms. The reference numbers should be those most commonly used to identify cases / casefiles in your organisation (e.g. for Social Services, the PARIS reference). If the information is not available or not relevant, please draw a line through the box.

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## **2. Person completing this form**

Please provide your full details so that we can contact you about the form if we need to (e.g. for further information about the referral, or to invite you to a meeting to discuss or plan an allocation to a support service).

We will also analyse this information to help understand where, how and when citizens with support or accommodation needs are presenting.

Please indicate the nature of your professional relationship with the person the form is about (e.g. are you the person's caseworker or similar?)

## **3. Reason for completing this form**

Please tick one or both boxes. Whichever box is ticked, please complete rest of the form.

This will help to identify repeat presentations. Where the person has received support before, we will make sure that the new referral is discussed appropriately with all relevant agencies and workers to ensure the most effective allocation and improve the prospects of achieving sustainable outcomes wherever possible.

## **4. Household**

Please only count dependent adults or children who usually live with the person at the time the form is completed. Please provide full details for all household members wherever possible.

## **5. Other Services**

Please tick all services which are in place at the time the form is completed and provide contact details wherever possible

## **6. Support needs**

Please provide full details of the person's support needs and any other relevant information in the space provided.

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## **7. Accommodation needs**

Please provide full details of the person's accommodation needs and any other relevant information in the space provided.

## **8. Accommodation history**

Please provide all known details of the person's accommodation history (including details of eviction, exclusion / blacklist, arrears etc.) and any other relevant information in the space provided.

This information will be used to make an effective and appropriate allocation to a suitable support project wherever possible by identifying potential issues in advance. Referrals will not be excluded automatically on the basis of a difficult or complex accommodation history. This would be contrary to the ethos of the housing related support programme. Previous eviction, exclusion/blacklist, arrears etc. may be indicators of high support needs or other issues.

However, please be aware that previous difficulties or disputes with individual Denbighshire housing related support projects may make allocations more challenging.

## **9. Preferences**

Please tick the one option which most closely describes the person's preference. If none of the available options apply, please tick the "Other" box.

Please provide full details of the person's preferences in the space provided, including preferences for particular support projects or providers. Please indicate whether the preferred service has been identified by the person completing the form or by the person the form is about.

Please note that we cannot guarantee to allocate any individual referral to any specific service and that you should make this clear to the person the form is about.

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## **10. Risk**

Please use the space provided to disclose all known information about risks associated with the person this form is about. Failure to disclose known risks may jeopardise the citizen, support staff or members of the public. This will be taken very seriously and acted upon appropriately.

If there are no known risks, please state this clearly. Do not leave this section blank.

High levels of risk will be managed appropriately wherever possible and will not automatically exclude any referral from allocation to a suitable support project where available.

Please note that information about risks will be shared with support providers where this is relevant to a proposed allocation.

## **11. Signature and data protection notice**

As the person completing the form, you must sign it and provide the date on which it was completed. If you do not sign and date the form it will be returned for you to do so.

The person this form is about must consent to their data being processed by being referred to the Homeless Prevention Team. Please be sure to read and explain this to them.

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## **Appendix C – Frequently Asked Questions**

**Q1. What about self-referrals?**

If you receive a self-referral, please complete the referral form and email it to the Pathway with the date of the assessment wrote on it. If you receive a referral from another agency, please tell them to refer via the Pathway Team.

**Q2. As a Provider do we still carry out allocation assessments?**

Yes, the provider is responsible for carrying out all assessments, allocating and completing risk assessments. Pathway Team will not complete any assessments.

**Q3. Who is responsible for Risk Assessments and Managing the Risk?**

The provider is responsible for assessing and completing the Risk Assessment, as well as managing the risk.

**Q4. Will the Coordinator tell providers who they have to accept into services?**

No the provider will need to carry out all assessments and allocate bearing in mind the current needs of the current citizens in that service. It is the responsibility of the provider to feedback to the Pathway Team the outcome of the referral.

**Q5. What about voids?**

It is the responsibility of the provider to let the Pathway Team know if a vacancy is coming up. This will ensure that the referral/allocation process can begin and prevent a void.

**Q6. Does the Citizen have a choice?**

Yes, on the referral form, the person completing the form is asked if the citizen has any preferences.