

1 The Duty to Refer

The Homelessness Reduction Act 2017 introduced a **legal duty** requiring specified public authorities to refer service users that may be **homeless or threatened with homelessness within 56 days** to Local Housing Authorities in England.

2 Specified Public Authorities

The following are all identified as specified public authorities in the Act:

Hospitals	Secure Colleges
Social Service Authorities	Job Centre Plus
Prisons (Public and Private)	Accident and Emergency Depts
Youth Offender Institutes	Youth Offender Teams
Secure Training Centres	Urgent Treatment Centres
Secretary of State for Defence	Probation Services

3 Making a Referral

Seek consent from the individual to place a referral.

Allow the individual to identify the housing authority in England which they would like the referral to be made to.

Obtain consent from the individual for their contact details to be shared so the housing authority can contact them regarding the referral.

4 How to Refer

Each Local Authority website will have information relating to the Duty to Refer.

You can also find all Local Authority email addresses at www.gov.uk.

Local Authorities within the North East region have a standardised referral form and procedure which can be found on your nearest Local Authority website.

5 Local Connection

The individual may choose which Local Authority to be referred to but should be advised of the implications of being referred to an area where they have no local connection as, if homeless, they may then be referred on to another Local Authority (where they do have a connection).

Local connection requirements may be disregarded in cases where a person is fleeing violence and is at risk in that area.

Local connection to an area does not apply if the person is in prison or an institution in that area unless one of the above criteria applies.

6 Local Connection Criteria

Someone is defined as having a local connection to an area if they have:

- Lived in that area for six of the last twelve months
- Lived in that area for three out of the last five years
- Been employed in that area on a permanent basis
- A strong family connection

7 Local Authority actions on receiving the referral

Once the referral has been submitted to the Local Authority they have 5 working days to respond, they will contact the individual and complete a homelessness assessment.

If the individual is homeless that night it is advisable to contact the Local Authority to notify them of this, after sending the referral, so they can contact the individual immediately.

Find out more about Homelessness and the Duty to Refer

<https://www.crisis.org.uk/>

<https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2017/13/contents/enacted>

<https://england.shelter.org.uk/>