

CLEARING HOUSE

Nomination Policy & Procedure

Monitoring

This policy is reviewed every two years or in line with service changes, whichever comes first.

1. Purpose of the policy

This policy sets out clear expectations and guidelines for stakeholders and Clearing House staff around the nomination of clients to RSI properties. The Clearing House aims to match clients with appropriate properties based upon the preferences and criteria previously specified on the referral form (by the Referral Worker) and the nomination request form (by the Housing Provider). The nomination policy and procedure is in place to ensure this happens.

2. Policy statement

The Clearing House will work with Housing Providers, Referral Agencies and TSTs to ensure that a suitable nomination is made. Nominations will be based on the information received about the property from the Housing Provider and TST, and about the client from the Referral Agency (or TST in the case of a transfer). The nomination process relies on all parties adhering to principles of good practice about information sharing as well as fairness and consistency, efficiency (whilst ensuring thoroughness), good communication and partnership working.

3. Applicability

The procedure is intended for Referral Agencies, Housing Providers, TST, clients and the Clearing House Team.

4. Getting Help

For help and advice about this policy or procedure please contact a member of the Clearing House Team on 020 3856 6008 or at ch@mungos.org.

5. Related policies and references for more information

- Complaints and Appeals Policy & Procedure
- Minimum Standards for Referrals Guidance
- Nomination Procedure Guidance
- Appendix A – Allocations and prioritisation

1. Overview

- 1.1. The Clearing House will carefully consider which client to nominate to a particular void property based on the information we hold about the client and the void property. The Clearing House uses the information provided at the point of referral and subsequent periodic risk and support needs assessments to make informed nominations. The Clearing House will use the information available to make one nomination per client to an RSI property.
- 1.2. Other than in exceptional circumstances, clients on the Clearing House waiting list will be offered only one property. Properties will be either a one-bed flat or a studio flat; unless specific requirements have been stated.

2. Areas of responsibility

- 2.1. All Clearing House, Housing Provider, Referral Agency and TST staff are responsible for the implementation of this procedure.
- 2.2. Clearing House staff are responsible for appropriately assessing the information available to them and nominating clients accordingly.
- 2.3. Clearing House stakeholders (including Housing Providers, Referral Agencies and TSTs) are responsible for ensuring that Clearing House staff have the most appropriate and up-to-date information about the client or property. They are responsible for informing the Clearing House about any change in circumstance (or upon request in the case of TSTs).
- 2.4. Referral Agencies are responsible for submitting periodic risk assessments and support needs information about their clients on the waiting list. Failure to do so will lead to their clients being ineligible for nomination and ultimately removed from the waiting list. Clearing House will never nominate a client without the benefit of complete and up-to-date assessments.

3. Procedure

3.1. General

- 3.1.1. The Clearing House will match a client from the waiting list to an available RSI property based on the information provided by the Referral Agent and Housing Provider prior to nomination.
- 3.1.2. Except in exceptional circumstances, the Clearing House will make **one** nomination per client on the waiting list based on the information available.

3.2 Prior to nomination

- 3.2.1 At the point of referral, Referral Agencies will be expected to provide details about the client's eligibility, housing history, debt, income, support needs, support networks, preferred areas, risk and monitoring information. This information must be submitted at the time of referral and kept up-to-date while the client is on the waiting list.
- 3.2.2 The system will prompt the Referral Agency to renew the risk and support needs information at least every six months.
- 3.2.3 Only the information provided prior to nomination can be used when making a nomination to a property. Failure to provide up-to-date information could result in:
- A delay in nominating the client to a property e.g. if periodic risk assessment information is not completed.
 - A client being removed from the waiting list following a refused nomination as a result of incorrect or missing information.
- 3.2.4 All information about the client e.g. medical evidence or changes to borough preferences must be submitted by the referral worker **prior** to nomination. Any information submitted to the Clearing House after a nomination has been made cannot be taken into account in allocating a property.
- 3.2.5 Housing Providers must ensure that the nomination request 'Housing' form is accurately completed, including floor level and any current or recent housing management issues. Housing Providers should also provide accurate information about when the property is expected to be ready to let (although it is understood that an exact date may not always be possible). Incorrect information may result in an inappropriate nomination and cause the property to remain void for longer than necessary.
- 3.2.6 Where the Housing Provider has identified risks or issues (e.g. ASB) at a void property the Clearing House Team will routinely contact the local TST to confirm this and gather any additional information possible. Clearing House will also tend to contact the Referral Agency prior to making nominations to such properties to discuss the suitability of their client.

3.3 The nomination

- 3.3.1 When a property and client have been matched by Clearing House, a nomination notification email will be sent out to the Housing Provider, the Referral Agency and the TST for that property. The information will include details about the client and property, and will provide contact

details for the various stakeholders involved in the nomination. All parties should log onto the Clearing House system where full details are available.

- 3.3.2 Once the nomination notification email has been received by TST, the allocated TST worker will contact the Housing Provider, and also Referral Agency to arrange interviews with the client. The interviews should be completed no more than 2 weeks after the nomination is received.
- 3.3.3 Unless the Clearing House has clearly nominated someone who does not match the criteria specified by the Housing Provider about the scheme and bed space, then the TST and Housing Provider should always interview the nominee before reaching a decision on the nomination.
- 3.3.4 The Referral Worker or another representative from the Referral Agency should support the client at all stages of the assessments and interviews and should attend all such appointments with the client until the tenancy has been signed.

3.4 Accepting a nomination

- 3.4.1 In order to advance to the stage of signing a tenancy agreement, the nomination must have been accepted by all three parties; the TST, the Housing Provider, and the client.
- 3.4.2 The TST will signal their acceptance following their face-to-face assessment with the client; the Housing Provider will do so following the TST acceptance and their own interview with the client (or other appropriate face-to-face process); and the client will do so following the TST and Housing Provider acceptance, and within 24 hours of viewing the property.

3.5 Refusing a nomination

- 3.5.1 If a client refuses a nomination to an RSI property and the reason for refusal is justifiable (as specified below) then the Clearing House will return the client to the waiting list. The waiting list is based upon the date that a referral is accepted onto the waiting list; to ensure that a client in this circumstance does not lose their position on the list their original acceptance date will be used when being returned to the list.
- 3.5.2 If a client refuses a nomination to an RSI property and the reason for refusal is not justifiable (as specified below) then the client will be removed from the waiting list. The client can be referred again to the Clearing House after a period of 1 year or after a successful appeal has been made. See **Complaints and Appeals procedure**.

- 3.5.3 Following their interview with the client, the Housing Provider can refuse the nomination if significant concerns come to light (e.g. of the client's readiness for independent living or appropriateness for the property) and these concerns cannot be satisfied by the client or referral worker. To do this the Housing Provider must log on and provide a nomination outcome.
- 3.5.4 Following their assessment with the client, the TST can refuse the nomination if significant concerns come to light (e.g. that TST would not be able to provide the level of support necessary for the client to maintain the tenancy, or that the client would pose an unacceptable risk to themselves or others) and these concerns cannot be satisfied by the client or referral worker.
- 3.5.5 **Justifiable reasons for refusal**
- 3.5.6 Only exceptional reasons for refusing a nomination will be accepted as justifiable; these may include:
- The condition of the property:
 - The property is not structurally sound or requires major repairs.
 - The property has damp.
 - Water supplies, gas and/or electricity supplies are not in place.
 - The doors and windows are not in place or not secure.
 - The property has an infestation.
 - The property is squatted.
 - The property does not have a working toilet and bath or shower.
 - An error in nomination by Clearing House or the Housing Provider.
- 3.5.7 Harassment - If on viewing the flat the client and/or worker is subjected to racist/ sexist/homophobic abuse by neighbours, or if the agency and/or client can show that if the client did take up the tenancy s/he would be subjected to such abuse.
- 3.5.8 The property is still not ready for letting 8 weeks after a nomination is made.
- 3.5.9 The property is unsuitable due to on-going Anti-Social Behaviour, drug dealing/usage or other similar issue which might cause a tenant to relapse or their tenancy to fail. Workers must provide evidence of how such an issue would have a negative effect on a client, based on their support needs and information provided prior to nomination.
- 3.5.10 The Clearing House reserves the right to verify any of the above reasons

for refusal with the Housing Provider and TST.

3.6 Unjustifiable reasons for refusal

- 3.6.1 Clients declining nominations will not be returned to the waiting list where the refusal reason is not deemed justifiable by Clearing House; these may include:
- 3.6.2 Change of circumstance - Once a nomination has been made it will not be acceptable for the Referral Agency to then tell the Clearing House that the client's preferences or circumstances have changed. The obligation remains with the agency to ensure that the Clearing House is fully aware of the client's circumstances while on the waiting list.
- 3.6.3 Failing to attend an interview or viewing with the Housing Provider or TST. Once nominated the client must attend any interview or viewing of the flat which is arranged where reasonable warning is given, unless there are specific circumstances conveyed before the day of the interview or viewing.
- 3.6.4 Size of flat - A refusal of a studio/bedsit on the grounds of the size of the property will not be acceptable. It will be acceptable to refuse if the client can demonstrate the need to have an extra room - for example, if they have a health problem have a carer to stay or if they have a non-dependent child to visit and evidence of this is provided to the Clearing House prior to nomination.
- 3.6.5 Minor repairs/redecoration - If minor repairs or redecoration are needed, the Referral Agency and client must agree what will happen about these with the Housing Provider.
- 3.6.6 Lack of central heating - If central heating is not available in the flat and there is other acceptable heating in place (e.g. storage heaters) this is not an acceptable reason for refusal.
- 3.6.7 Pets – A refusal of a flat on the grounds that it is inappropriate for a pet is not acceptable if the Clearing House are advised that the client has a pet after the nomination has been made. All such declarations should be made prior to nomination.

3.7 Recording the outcome of a nomination

- 3.7.1 The outcome of the nomination must be submitted by the Housing Provider to the Clearing House system in as soon as possible after the outcome.
- 3.7.2 In the case of a rejected nomination, the Housing Provider can request a new nomination when submitting the outcome of the nomination. Failure by the Housing Provider to notify Clearing House may result in delays in receiving a new nomination.

4 Resettlement

4.2 Pre-tenancy sign-up:

- 4.2.1 It is expected that TST staff will meet with a potential tenant being accommodated within their patch prior to the housing provider interview so as to introduce themselves and the service and begin the resettlement process.
- 4.2.2 It is expected that the Housing Provider will always assess the client once a nomination is made, unless serious concerns are raised by the Housing Provider and TST that would suggest this process would be detrimental to the client.
- 4.2.3 The client should be made aware of the TST's relationship with the Housing Provider. The responsibility of each party should be explained, including the requirement to conduct regular tenancy reviews.
- 4.2.4 The referral worker (or a representative from the Referral Agency) should accompany the client to all interviews, assessments and viewings. This worker should also ensure that the client has the appropriate documentation (e.g. personal ID, proof of income/benefit) with them as necessary.
- 4.2.5 For property viewings, it is expected that the Referral Worker and TST will be present to ensure that the client is fully supported.
- 4.2.6 Clients should be given 24 hours following the viewing to consider whether they want the property before signing any tenancy agreement. Once a tenancy agreement has been signed, the tenant becomes liable for the rent for at least the duration of any notice period. It is therefore essential that they give careful consideration before signing up.
- 4.2.7 The Housing Provider and TST should ensure the correct tenancy is issued (2 year fixed term AST). A sign up should be halted in the event the wrong tenancy is proposed.
- 4.2.8 All parties (TST, Referral Agency and Housing Provider) are responsible for ensuring the move-in action plan is completed and agreed to. This will include who will support the client in:
 - Setting-up utilities (gas, electric and water),
 - Applying for resettlement grants and loans and referrals to furniture projects,
 - Moving their possessions to the property,
 - Updating any benefits claims and transferring them to the new address,

- Completing and submitting Housing Benefit forms.

4.3 Post-tenancy start:

- 4.3.1 The referring agency should agree to deliver at least two months' resettlement support from the tenancy start date. This can take the form of monthly visits and weekly phone contact with the client; differing arrangements must be agreed with TST.
- 4.3.2 Two months after tenancy start date the TST is responsible for organising a review meeting and final handover from the referring agency. This meeting should be arranged at the tenancy sign up. The TST is responsible for contacting the client, the Referral Agency and other agencies (if involved in the support of the client) and inviting them to attend. It is vital that the client is involved in planning the way forward. This meeting will be considered the final handover to TSTs from Referral Agencies unless there are exceptional circumstances.
- 4.3.3 Every tenant will have an agreed support plan in place within 4 weeks of entering the service. The tenant should receive a copy of the support plan and where appropriate the support plan should be signed by the tenant.

5 Appeals

- 5.2.1 Any client who has been rejected for a property has the right to appeal this decision, providing they are supported by the referring agency. The worker should make the appeal on behalf of the client. If a worker intends to appeal the outcome of the nomination, their intent to do so should be communicated as soon as possible and an emailed appeal sent within 2 working days to the relevant agency and cc'd to the Clearing House.
- 5.2.2 Any client who refuses a nomination and is removed from the Clearing House waiting list has a right to appeal against the decision of the Clearing House, providing this is supported by the referring agency. The only ground for appeal is that in the view of the agency and the client the refusal of the nomination was reasonable and justifiable in line with the above procedure. The appeal should be in writing and made to the Clearing House (ch@mungos.org) in line with the Clearing House Complaints and Appeals procedure.

6 Performance indicators

- 6.2.1 Following nomination, the TST to contact Referral Agency and Housing providers within 2 working days.

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- 6.2.2 All assessments, interviews and viewings to take place within 2 weeks of the nomination being made.
- 6.2.3 Tenancy sign-up to take place within 8 weeks.
- 6.2.4 All RSI tenants will have a designated TST worker in place at the start of their tenancy and their worker's contact details.
- 6.2.5 An agreed support plan is in place within 4 weeks of moving to the RSI accommodation.

