

CLEARING HOUSE

Nomination Guidance

Monitoring

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

1. Introduction

1.1. The nomination process involves the key stakeholders in the Clearing House service; the client and Referring Agency, Clearing House team, TST and the Housing Provider. It is essential that all agencies involved work in partnership in this process to ensure the best outcome for the client and that a good service is provided.

2. Aim

2.1. Ensuring that the needs of the client are paramount and central to decision making process. All agencies approach the process sensitive to the client's needs and with the understanding that this is potentially a challenging and anxious time for the client.

2.2. The requirements of each agency involved are understood by the others and that each agency works to meet the needs of the others as well as the needs of the client.

2.3. Open and inclusive discussion and involvement of all agencies with good communication and dialogue throughout the nomination process. Providing full and clear information when requested, responding promptly, fully and clearly to requests and queries.

2.4. Ensuring a positive approach to meeting the client's needs and managing their risks. Investigating and exploring with all agencies how risks can be managed and the needs of the client can be met.

2.5. Making the process positive for the client, even in instances when nominations do not result in a tenancy start by providing detailed reasoning and offering full and clear explanations and reassurances.

3. Nomination guidance and good practice

Scheme issues:

3.1. The nomination process is divided into stages and is initiated when the Housing Provider requests (via Clearing House system) a new nomination to a void RSI property:

- The Clearing House's target is to nominate to the void unit within three working days of being notified of the void by the Housing Provider.

3.2. Ensuring that all information about the scheme is made known is critical to Clearing House nominating appropriately to a property; updates from the Housing Provider and TST on this matter are essential. Details could include incidents of anti-social behaviour including any drug dealing and use or noise nuisance, or serious incidents of violence or tenancy hijacking, for example.

- When notifying Clearing House of a void property the ready to let date should be informed by a voids assessment or an estimate based on the condition of the property.
- When notifying of a void and ready to let property the Housing Provider is required to update Clearing House of any current or recent (within the last 6 months) housing management issues. The specific issues should be outlined to give a clear picture of issues at the property, rather than simply stating 'no drugs', for example.
- TST workers are requested to contact Clearing House with relevant updates on a scheme at the point a tenancy ends to inform the decision around the next nomination to the property. TST's input at this stage can be crucial in ensuring that Clearing House nominate appropriately to the property and will prompt discussion with the Housing Provider around issues at the scheme.

3.3. Once Clearing House has nominated a client to a property a notification email with all relevant information is sent to the Housing Provider, TST and Referral Agency. The TST will lead on the assessment process arranging and agreeing assessments and viewings with relevant parties.

- The TST will contact all agencies involved to initiate this process within two working days of the nomination being made.
- The target time for the process is to have all assessments, interviews and viewing concluded within 14 days.

Timescales for the process:

3.4. All partner agencies in this process are responsible for ensuring that the actions and responses are timely and any information is provided as requested by other partner agencies. In instances where a response is not timely or appropriate, the matter should be escalated within the agency to the relevant manager.

- For example, if the TST worker has been unable to contact the Referral Agency worker to arrange assessment, this should be raised with the Referral Agency manager. The Clearing House will be able to provide contact details for managers within all agencies from our database.

- It should be noted that the Housing Provider will be sustaining significant loss of rental income while the property remains void.

3.5. While there are different pressures on ensuring the process is resolved within set timescales, flexibility is required when working with vulnerable clients. It would be expected that in some instances the complexities of a vulnerable person's life may make agreeing and keeping appointments slightly more difficult.

- TST and Housing Providers should agree meeting dates with Referring Agencies – in some instances Referral Agencies would require time to inform the client and agree an interview date as well as prepare the client for the assessment.
- Referral Agencies and TST should inform Housing Providers of any potential delays or issues that could impact on the nomination process.

Assessments, interviews and viewings:

3.6. TST will arrange an initial assessment meeting with the client prior to which additional information is collected from the Referral Agency, where required. Housing Providers will subsequently complete their own interview and viewing with the client.

- Where possible, TST should request specific information about the client and most recent support plan and risk assessment from the Referral Agency. Be targeted and specific when requesting additional information and use the referral agencies forms to prevent delays in getting the required information.
- Consider the location of the assessment and interview – is it appropriate? Clients may be quite anxious about being assessed in their current homes. It may be best to check with Referral Agencies as to the most appropriate and convenient place.

3.7. Referral Agencies are required to confirm and agree interview dates with TST and Housing Provider and inform both should potential issues arise that may delay the process.

- Referral Agencies should ensure that clients are accompanied to their assessment interviews with TST and Housing Provider by staff who know them well, so that they are able to meaningfully contribute to the assessment process.
- Referral Agencies must ensure that as soon as the client receives a nomination they discuss the nomination process and that clients (and referral workers) must try and make themselves available for assessment and interview meetings.

3.8. Housing Provider assessment and viewing will be conducted following the TST's initial assessment. Where particular issues relating to a tenant's support needs are of potential concern to the Housing Provider, TST should ensure that the Housing Provider is aware of these matters to help inform their own interview process with the client and the housing provider's decision on the nomination.

- The Housing Provider's assessment should be conducted at an appropriate location, in most instances this will be the Housing Provider's offices. The interview should be conducted prior to and separate from the viewing of the property. Following their assessment of the client, the Housing Provider will have the final decision regarding the outcome of the nomination; whether the tenancy will go ahead or to decline the client's nomination.
- If an offer of accommodation is made to the client, the client will be afforded 24 hours to consider the offer. The Referral Agency must support the client in informing the housing provider of their decision (to accept or decline the offer) within this timescale or the nomination may be withdrawn.

Issues and concerns during assessment process:

3.9. In some instances through the process of the TST and Housing Provider's assessment of the client, details emerge relating to changes in the client's support needs that were not fully or clearly stated in the Clearing House referral form. This may be due to the client's support needs changing since the support needs update was provided.

- Referral Agencies are responsible for informing Clearing House of significant changes to the client's circumstances that are likely to impact on the client's ability to live independently. This is in addition to providing periodic support needs updates.

3.10. If the concern is related to significant discrepancy between the client's presentation and the referral information these issues and concerns must be raised at the assessment interview and fully discussed with the Referring Agency. Additionally, Clearing House should be notified of the specific concerns.

- TST will request additional information relating to the client's support needs from the Referral Agency. TST will detail specific areas where further clarification is required.
- The Referral Agency should give a clear response to these issues; provide additional supporting documentation and clarification.
- TST must ensure that Clearing House is made aware of issues with nominations so that where appropriate Clearing House is able to address issues with Referral Agencies in relation to the quality and accuracy of the information submitted.

3.11. Although emphasis is placed on preventing a client being nominated inappropriately, it may happen in some instances. When issues relating to the bed space or the immediate locality have come to light the stakeholder with these concerns must communicate them to all parties immediately to ensure a consistency in approach to the nomination.

- Where concerns are raised regarding issues at the property, these must be clearly and specifically detailed with clear reasoning as to how these issues are likely to impact on the client negatively. These issues should be raised and discussed during the assessment interview with the client and referral agency.
- If the issues at a property come to light after the assessment interview, they should be raised with the Referral Agency directly and the Referral Agency and client given the opportunity to respond to the concerns.
- The Referral Agency should have the opportunity to provide additional information to support the client's nomination, where they feel the client can manage at the scheme even with the issues there that have recently come to light.

3.12. The aim should always be to put the client's needs at the centre of the decision making process. When concerns around a client's nomination to an RSI unit arise, stakeholders work together to try to reach agreement as to the best way to proceed.

- Open dialogue that ensures all agencies are kept informed of the issues and have the opportunity to input and feedback into the process.
- Responding clearly to an agency's queries or concerns clearly and taking into consideration feedback from the agency.
- Arranging to contact clients directly to explain decisions around the withdrawal of nominations, offering clear reasons and reassurance.
- While agencies can make an appeal at any point, every effort should be made to resolve disagreement through discussion and dialogue.

4. Dispute resolution

4.1. Where there are repeated shortcomings with a particular partner agency in the process, Clearing House should be notified so that the issue can be addressed either through retraining and/or other measures.

4.2. Where there is a complaint, the relevant partner agency's external complaints procedure should be implemented.

4.3. Clearing House will endeavour to mediate, where appropriate, in instances of disputes between partner agencies to support an appropriate outcome.

5. Getting Help

For help and advice about this policy or procedure please contact a member of the Clearing House Team by logging a case using the online system, calling 020 3856 6008 or emailing ch@mungos.org.

6. Related policies, references and forms

- Nomination Policy
- Complaints and Appeal Policy & Procedure
- Dispute Resolution Guidance