



## Harlow Mental Health Service & Harlow Housing partnership

### Summary:

This protocol describes the procedures that are to be followed in assessing what type of accommodation is most suitable for in- patients being discharged from hospital and who may be homeless or require accommodation. The procedure describes responsibilities and actions for staff in and the Housing Assessment Team. This extends to mental health services in the community when supporting service users with housing issues.

Date of Issue: **26/01/2021**

Agreed on behalf of the Housing Service by Nick Powell  
Agreed on behalf of Harlow Mental health Services by Gail Burrell

Date of Review: Annually

### Legislation, Regulations and Guidance:

- Housing Act 1996 Parts VI and V11 as amended by the Homelessness Act 2002.
- Housing Act 1996 as amended by the Homelessness Act 2002
- Link Documents:
- Harlow lettings and transfer policy:  
[http://www.harlow.gov.uk/download/downloads/id/7640/housing\\_allocations\\_scheme\\_1\\_dec\\_2015](http://www.harlow.gov.uk/download/downloads/id/7640/housing_allocations_scheme_1_dec_2015)
- On line LOCATA application:<https://locata.org.uk/harlow>

### TABLE OF CONTENTS

1	Introduction and Purpose.....	2
2	Scope.....	3
3	Procedure.....	4/5
4	Community Health Services.....	5
5	Contact numbers.....	6

### Appendices

Appendix A - Pink Housing Medical Needs Form  
Appendix B – Inpatient's Supporting Letter  
Appendix C – Housing Supporting Letter

## 1) Introduction and Purpose

This introduction sets out the purpose and scope of the protocol and sets the context for staff.

### Purpose

- To promote effective joint working to ensure an appropriate assessment of housing needs for people with mental health problems.
- To prevent homelessness.
- To address the housing needs of in-patients at the Mental Health Unit at the earliest possible stage in their admissions.
- To minimise delays in discharge from inpatient settings due to housing difficulties caused by housing problems and in particular homelessness.
- To maximise the proportion of people with mental health problems in settled accommodation. Settled accommodation is defined as any accommodation with a tenancy and excludes residential care and hospital beds.
- To promote clear and effective communication between Harrow Mental Health Services and Harrow Council's Housing Department.
- To set out good practice guidelines for the services involved and encourage working together in the assessment and care planning for people with mental health problems and housing need at an early stage.
- To aspire to provide a seamless service to all service users where possible avoiding duplication or repetition in providing services to the user.
- To act in an anti-discriminatory way and ensure equality of access to assessment and care planning services.
- To maximise socially inclusive outcomes for service users.

## 2) **Scope**

This protocol is for staff in housing, social services and in the mental health trust.

- It outlines the procedures to be followed when people with mental health needs are experiencing housing or accommodation problems which may lead to a delay in discharging them from hospital.
- It addresses issues of confidentiality and sharing of information. Confidentiality can never be an absolute principle and the law recognises that information can be shared on a need to know basis.
- Service users are central to the protocol. Procedures are in place to ensure the maximum involvement of service users and carers in the processes.
- The protocol applies to clients of Harrow Mental Health Services who are aged 18 and above and for whom Harrow Council retains the responsibility for providing accommodation; or who are entitled to an assessment of housing need by Harrow Council.
- The existing protocol between children services and the housing department will apply to any 16 and 17 years old in contact with Harrow Mental Health Services

### **3) Procedure for addressing housing problems of In-Patients at Northwick Park Hospital, including homelessness.**

- Housing-related issues must be identified at the Initial Assessment (when the patient is first admitted to hospital) or as soon as practicable thereafter. It is essential that the named nurse or allocated worker identify any housing issues as above at the earliest stage. This is essential as there may be tenancy sustainment work that needs to be carried out, such as informing the Benefits Agency and the Housing Benefits service that a service user is in hospital. It is not uncommon for benefits to be cancelled and a service user evicted because no one knows where he/she is and it is assumed they have gone away.
- Whilst the service user is an inpatient, the hospital staff or named worker in the community must take all steps to protect the service user's accommodation. When agreed by the service user and if occupying a council tenancy; housing management must be informed so that the relevant steps are taken to protect the property whilst the service user is in hospital email [housing.residentservices@harrow.gov.uk](mailto:housing.residentservices@harrow.gov.uk) This will also enable Housing Management to provide support and assistance to the service user where possible. If the property is deemed unsuitable Housing will take the necessary steps to aid a move for the service user.
- It is expected that all service users will return to the address from which they have been admitted. Mediation can be explored through Harrow Council / third party if there are relationship issues. CNWL housing liaison officers will speak to the service user to identify such issues.
- The Pink Housing Medical Form must be fully completed as soon as it becomes apparent that the service user may not have an address she/he can be discharged to and emailed through to the Housing Assessment Team at [housing.advice@harrow.gov.uk](mailto:housing.advice@harrow.gov.uk). The form will then be allocated by the Housing Assessment Team Manager (on the next working day) to a Housing Advice officer, who will forward an online housing assessment link. The housing officer will give a provisional decision on whether the council have a housing duty toward the applicant, within 7 working days.

- An up to date risk assessment must be attached to the Pink Housing medical needs form.
- Referral needs to be on the basis of the service user's potential for recovery and independent living and not on the basis of their current presentation
- If it is agreed by the Housing Assessment team that the service user will have a priority need, under homelessness legislation, if required he/she will be offered interim emergency accommodation. If there is no priority need, the case will be assessed and assistance provided in accordance with homeless legislation. To be considered for social housing the service user will need to make a housing register (Locata) application by visiting [www.locata.org.uk/harrow](http://www.locata.org.uk/harrow)
- In order that a service user can be properly assessed, the pink form must be fully completed and all relevant documents forwarded to Housing Assessment team at [housing.advice@harrow.gov.uk](mailto:housing.advice@harrow.gov.uk)

**General documents required are:**

1. Proof of Identity, i.e. passport, or full birth certificate
2. Proof of income, i.e. benefits award letters, 2x monthly payslips and last 2 months of bank statements.
3. Proof of last settled accommodation, i.e. utility bills, tenancy agreement, housing benefit claim or letter from landlord/or home owner.
4. Confirmation of immigration if service user is not a British national

**4) Community Mental Health Services**

If a service user in the community face housing issues requiring Harrow Housing assistance in the first instance liaise with the Housing Liaison officers employed by CNWL; if there is a need to refer to housing thereafter then the named worker mental health practitioner / outpatient Doctor will need to forward a report outlining the following: diagnosis, prognosis, medication, risk to self or others, vulnerability. If the CMHT named worker has a service user admitted to the inpatient setting then the above will apply.

## 5) **Contact Telephone Numbers**

### **NHS**

Fernley Ward                      0208 869 2255 / 2256

Eastlake Ward                    0208 869 2270 / 2272

Generic email                    [northwickparkbedmanager.cnwl@nhs.net](mailto:northwickparkbedmanager.cnwl@nhs.net)

Bentley House                    0208 424 7701 (Community mental health services)

Single Point Access            0800 0234 650

Website <https://www.cnwl.nhs.uk/services/mental-health-services/adult-and-older-adult/single-point-access>

### **Harrow Council**

Housing Assessment    0208 424 1093 option 1  
[housing.advice@harrow.gov.uk](mailto:housing.advice@harrow.gov.uk)

Housing Management (via Access Harrow) 0208 901 2630  
[housing.residentservices@harrow.gov.uk](mailto:housing.residentservices@harrow.gov.uk)

Housing Benefit (via Access Harrow) 0208 901 2630

Housing Repairs (via Access Harrow) 0208 901 2630