

Report for: Community Safety Partnership– 14 July 2021

Title: Update on Rehousing Households in Urgent Circumstances

Report
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Ward(s) affected: N/A

Report for Key/
Non Key Decision: Non-key

1 Purpose of the briefing paper

For discussion.

2 Introduction

2.1 Due to the levels of violence in the borough, there may be situations where individuals or their families need to be urgently re-housed elsewhere from their home. They may reside in one of the following: -

- Their own property.
- Council accommodation as a Secure tenant.
- Temporary Accommodation.
- The Private Rented Sector.
- Housing Association accommodation.
- None of the above due to being homeless and/or roofless.

2.2 For Secure tenants, section 15.13 of Haringey Council's Housing Allocations policy states as follows: -

2.2.1 15.13.1 In exceptional circumstances, tenants of Haringey Council and tenants of certain partner Registered Providers (where Haringey Council has nomination rights) may be provided with an emergency management transfer. This will occur when a Management Transfer Panel has determined that a transfer to alternative social housing offers

the most appropriate way of ensuring the personal safety of the tenant, members of their household and/or the local community.

2.2.2 15.13.2 Although most of the transfer requests that are approved relate to extremely serious incidents involving domestic violence, intimidation and harassment, hate crime or threats to kill, the Management Transfer Panel will only approve a transfer where it is satisfied that all other ways of resolving the problem have been exhausted and that it would not be reasonable to expect the tenant to continue living in their home.

- 2.3 The Housing Demand directorate within Homes for Haringey who deal with homelessness applications will have regard to the housing options available to households affected by violence. See **Appendix 1: Housing Options for Households Experiencing Violence Outside the Home.**
- 2.4 To improve the response to households and young people who need to move because of violence, Haringey Council and Homes for Haringey have reviewed existing processes and agreed proposals and these are detailed below.

3 Process for re-housing in urgent circumstances.

- 3.1 On receipt of a request for a management transfer (a transfer from a social housing tenancy to an alternative property), the case will be immediately allocated to an appropriate Co-Ordinating Officer within Homes for Haringey:-
 - 3.1.1 For tenants in Secure accommodation and their family members, this will be the Tenancy Caseworker. They will need to take into consideration that secure (social housing) tenants are likely to have the most complex needs in respect of a move, due to the potential implications of losing their Secure tenancy.
 - 3.1.2 For those in a Housing Association property, Homes for Haringey will work with the Housing Association so that they (Housing Association) can lead on their cases.
 - 3.1.3 For those in Temporary Accommodation, this will be the Move on Officer.
 - 3.1.4 For homeowners and those in the Private Rented Sector and who are facing homelessness, this will be the relevant Housing Needs Officer.
- 3.2 The Co-Ordinating officer will ensure there is constant liaison with the Police, Adult Social Care, Children's Services, Community Safety and Enforcement,

(incorporating the Integrated Gangs Unit (IGU)) and any other relevant internal/external agency. This will be to ensure there is a multi-agency, solution focused approach.

4 Management transfers to other Council housing stock:

- 4.1 The Tenancy Caseworker will manage and co-ordinate the case to make sure that: -
- 4.2 Any requirement for emergency accommodation to keep the household safe is immediately investigated and a decision made, pending the outcome of a decision for a longer-term move: -
 - This will include either re-housing the member of the household who is at risk of violence or the entire household, as appropriate.
- 4.3 The tenant(s) will receive regular updates on their case. This will include the following: -
 - Managing their expectations and emphasising that only one offer of accommodation will be made on a 'like for like' basis.
 - Arranging appropriate support when necessary.
 - Working with them to clear their arrears, as appropriate.
- 4.4 The Tenancy Caseworker will arrange for the requisition of written supporting documentation from external agencies such as the Police, Adult Social Care and Community Safety and Enforcement, (incorporating the Integrated Gangs Unit (IGU)). Such requests should be made **within one working day** of a request being received for a management transfer. It should direct the external agency to be specific about the information to be provided so that an informed decision on the alternative accommodation can be made.
 - 4.4.1 The external agency should be required to return the written supporting documentation **within five working days** of the request being made by the Tenancy Caseworker.
- 4.5 Regular contact will be maintained with external and internal agencies such as the IGU, to manage risk and to assess any changing requirements. E.g., if a son or daughter who is at risk of gang violence and is the reason for the management transfer, moves elsewhere on a temporary or permanent basis.

- 4.6 The Tenancy Caseworker will arrange for such cases to be considered by Homes for Haringey's Housing Decisions Panel (HDP), by completing an assessment form to include whether the tenant(s) should be moved immediately or as soon as reasonably practicable. The Tenancy Caseworker will then present the case at a meeting/electronically to members of the HDP. (NB see **appendix 2** – the operation of the HDP).
- 4.7 The tenant(s) is/are advised and when necessary, any external agencies including the IGU informed of the outcome of the HDP's decision, **within one working day** of this being made.
- 4.8 The Lettings Team within Homes for Haringey will facilitate the direct offer of suitable alternative social housing accommodation, **within six weeks** of the HDP's decision.
- 4.9 If at the **end of the six-week period**, the tenant has not been re-housed, the case will be reviewed by the Tenancy Caseworker. This will be to decide whether: -
- The time limit should be extended.
 - The priority of the case should be changed. This could mean considering if it is more urgent than others, if it is already in band A.
 - The tenant should be made one final offer of accommodation.
- 4.10 In reaching the decision, the Tenancy Caseworker will consider whether it is reasonable to extend the time limit. This will include looking at the availability of the type of property required, whether the tenant has unreasonably refused an offer of alternative accommodation or is no longer considered to be at risk.

5 Management transfers out of the borough:

- 5.1 The Tenancy Caseworker will consider alternative arrangements via the following routes: -
- 5.1.1 Pan London housing reciprocal: This includes where appropriate, support for those at high risk of harm from gangs through Safer London's London Gang Exit (LGE) programme. LGE is a pan-London service designed to support gang involved or affected young people, complementing and enhancing existing local services across London. Such cases would need to be considered by the HDP.
- 5.1.2 The Greater London Authority (GLA) Housing Moves scheme: This is a choice-based lettings scheme, managed by the GLA. The scheme is

designed to help social tenants in London move from one part of the capital to another.

5.1.3 Homefinder UK: This is a non-profit national mobility scheme that specialises in finding permanent homes for homeless households and social housing applicants.

6 Households in Temporary Accommodation requiring housing in or out of the borough:

- 6.1 The process for moving households from their Temporary Accommodation will not be considered by the HDP.
- 6.2 Their Housing Management Officer or Move-On Officer will consider the case and assess the risk to determine whether a move is required. They will submit a transfer request form to the Move-On Team Manager within Homes for Haringey, detailing the reasons for the request. This will normally be **within one working day** of receiving a request for alternative accommodation.
- 6.3 Any requirement for emergency accommodation to keep the household safe must be immediately assessed and a decision made by the Move-On Team Manager or Head of Service, pending the outcome of a decision for a longer-term move.
 - 6.3.1 This decision will include either re-housing the member of the household who is at risk of violence or the entire household, as appropriate.
- 6.4 If the request for alternative accommodation is approved, the Move-On Manager will add the family to the Temporary Accommodation transfer list with a suitable priority. Where there are issues of domestic abuse, safeguarding issues, or a request for a management transfer, the highest priority (band A) will be applied.
- 6.5 A weekly transfer report will be generated and within this, the Lettings Team will look to move households that have been placed on the transfer list, once a suitable property becomes available.
- 6.6 If the household's housing application is post the Localism Act 2011 (i.e., their application was accepted after 9 November 2012), then a move to an Assured

Shorthold Tenancy would be the preferred outcome for the family. This will enable them to be in new, settled accommodation in preference to alternative temporary accommodation.

6.6.1 NOTE 1: Where a homelessness application was received after 9 November 2012, the Council has the power to end its full housing duty by providing the household with a suitable assured shorthold tenancy, with a fixed term of at least 12 months.

6.6.2 NOTE 2: The full housing duty for applications made prior to 9 November 2012 is likely to be ended with the provision of a suitable social tenancy, or a qualifying offer with the consent of the applicant.

6.7 If the household's application was made prior to 9 November 2012, they are likely to be transferred to alternative temporary accommodation, pending their move to settled, social housing.

7 Households in the Private Rented Sector requiring housing in or out of the borough:

7.1 Housing Needs staff within Homes for Haringey should liaise with the landlord to ascertain whether the risk at the current accommodation can be mitigated by additional security measures to avoid the need for a move. If the property cannot be made safe, Housing Needs staff will explore whether they have any alternative accommodation that can be offered to the tenant.

7.2 If homelessness cannot be prevented, then the steps outlined in **section 9** will be followed.

8 Housing Association tenants requiring accommodation in or out of the borough:

8.1 A number of Housing Associations have the ability to utilise their own stock for internal management transfers. However, Housing Associations have no statutory duty to move a tenant(s) on management grounds.

8.2 Some also have housing stock in areas beyond Haringey and may use these properties to assist moves outside the borough.

8.3 Their tenants are further able to access the Pan London reciprocal scheme and can also be considered for the Housing Moves scheme. (**See section 5**).

8.4 On occasions, a Housing Association may submit a case to the HDP. If they agree to a management transfer, a reciprocal move can be arranged.

8.4.1 Homes for Haringey will work with Housing Associations in the borough to achieve a consistent approach for all Housing Association tenants.

9 Homeless applicants requiring accommodation in or out of the borough:

9.1 Homeless applicants can make an application to another borough outside of Haringey where for example, they are fleeing domestic violence.

9.2 Housing Needs staff will try to encourage people to make an application in an area where they feel they will be safe.

9.3 If they have nowhere to go, Housing Needs staff will seek to relieve the Council's homelessness duty by considering a range of options and pursue the most appropriate option. For example, offering a private rented sector (PRS) property, if there is suitable and affordable accommodation available. This will either be in or out of the borough.

9.4 Alternatively, a request for emergency accommodation will be made.

9.5 Staff within the Lettings Team will seek to place the household in emergency accommodation in an area of safety. Housing Needs staff will continue to work with the household during the relief period to find a settled housing solution.

9.6 If after 56 days, homelessness cannot be relieved and a main housing duty is accepted, the applicant will be allocated a Move-On Officer.

9.7 The Move-On Officer will contact the applicant, carry out a new move-on assessment/ personalised housing plan, as well as communicating with and updating the applicant(s). This will normally be undertaken **within 5 working days** and will include arranging appropriate support when necessary.

9.8 Temporary accommodation will be provided or maintained as appropriate, and the case managed in line with **section 6**.

10 Homeowners:

- 10.1 Homeowners who are unable to remain in their property will be classed as homeless under homelessness legislation.
- 10.2 They will be treated in line with **section 9**, with additional regard given to their available financial resources.

11 Support package for affected households:

- 11.1 The support needs of every affected households will differ according to the household composition and needs of individual members of the household.
- 11.2 A multi-agency approach, involving and engaging support services relevant to the household support needs will be co-ordinated by the lead officer within Homes for Haringey.
- 11.3 Generic support that will be provided as standard to all households will include relocation support, removals, continuity of education for children in the household and referrals to relevant agencies.
- 11.4 To facilitate contact, to make sure every contact counts and to mitigate issues of isolation and continuity of education, support to maintain or obtain digital access will be discussed and explored with the household and relevant support agencies.
- 11.5 Support will be coordinated by the lead officer within Homes for Haringey.
- 11.6 COVID-19 considerations will form part of the support package provided to households who must move. This will include ensuring that moves are facilitated in a COVID-19 secure way and that any accommodation provided facilitates self-isolation for members of the household where appropriate.

12 Existing/Available multi-agency support for affected households.

- 12.1 A total of 217 households applied for housing assistance over the last two financial years (2018/2019 and 2019/2020) because of violence or harassment.
- 12.2 Homes for Haringey already contributes to several key multi-agency meetings to support affected households. These include the Haringey Partnership

Problem Solving Group (PPSG) and the Haringey Community Multi-Agency Risk Assessment Conference (CMARAC).

- 12.3 Haringey PPSG is a multi-agency group comprising key internal (Haringey Council and HfH) and external stakeholders. The PPSG meets monthly to discuss and develop action plans around ongoing or emerging anti-social behaviour, crime hotspots and locations of concern.
- 12.4 Haringey Community MARAC is a multi-agency group made up of key internal (Haringey Council and HfH) and external stakeholders. The CMARAC meets monthly to discuss vulnerable tenants who require key support to maintain their tenancies.
- 12.5 Both the PPSG and CMARAC have access to and share information that helps identify and provide confirmation of imminent threat to life, as well as provide support to households who need to move in urgent circumstances.
- 13 Further suggestions to enhance the support available to affected households.**
 - 13.1 A Housing in Urgent Circumstances Panel is being set up comprised of senior officers from Homes for Haringey, Community Safety, Children's Services and Youth Justice etc. The intention is that representatives from the appropriate agencies would come together at short notice, to discuss high risk referrals and develop an action plan. This would enhance existing multi-agency working arrangements and support timely responses to those needing to urgently move.
 - 13.2 When set up, the Housing in Urgent Circumstances Panel would take an approach that is similar to strategy meetings organised by Children's Services in response to a safeguarding issue.
 - 13.3 The panel will meet when required either in person or via digital media with the objective of ensuring that safeguarding risks posed to the individual/family are prioritised. This will ensure a speedy response to households who need to move urgently.
 - 13.4 It is anticipated that the panel will be up and running in the autumn of 2021. The panel will make decisions to ensure the immediate safety of affected households and provide/arrange immediate support whilst longer term alternative housing options and required support are pursued.

- 13.5 Support for affected households can also be further enhanced by improving the effectiveness of the Pan-London reciprocal arrangement so that it is responsive to the urgent need to rehouse households in urgent circumstances.
- 13.6 The suggested enhancement could look at the use of void properties across London boroughs, that can be made available at short notice to keep affected households safe.
- 13.7 The Pan-London Reciprocal scheme (see appendix 1, page 11), has been operational for several years. However, it needs to evolve into a scheme which can facilitate the availability of safe alternative accommodation at short notice, away from an area of immediate danger.

Appendix 1

HOUSING OPTIONS FOR HOUSEHOLDS EXPERIENCING VIOLENCE OUTSIDE THE HOME	
TYPE OF TENURE BEING OCCUPIED	OPTIONS
Council Tenancy*	<u>Move to alternative social tenancy (known as Management Transfer)</u> Case can be presented to Homes for Haringey Housing Decisions Panel and if approved, the household will be made one offer of like-for-like accommodation within Haringey. A household will normally remain in their current tenancy until an offer of alternative accommodation can be made. In exceptional circumstances, the household may be placed into temporary accommodation pending an offer of alternative property. This option is not suitable if it has been determined that the household is unsafe in the borough. <u>Private sector</u> A household can be supported with a move into the private sector. This could be to an area of safety and/or choice but would need to be affordable. In the majority of cases this will mean finding a property at local housing allowance level. Financial support is available for a deposit and rent in advance and/or landlord incentive. <u>Homefinder UK</u> This scheme advertises social housing and private rented accommodation available across the UK and is open to all households who have been assessed as homeless or threatened with homelessness. The majority of properties available are in the north of the country. There is financial support available for some relocation costs. Households fleeing violence are prioritised for properties.

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TYPE OF TENURE BEING OCCUPIED	OPTIONS
	<u>The Greater London Authority (GLA) Housing Moves scheme</u> This is a scheme managed by the Mayor of London. Each Local Authority commits a number of lettings annually to support the cross-London mobility of social tenants. Cases are prioritised by factors linked to local connection to a borough. E.g., employment, family association. The scheme is subject to 'equalisation' to ensure boroughs import and export the same number of households. Haringey does not achieve equalisation because more tenants wish to leave the borough than move in with the consequence that there is often a restriction on us accessing the scheme. <u>Pan-London Reciprocal scheme</u> Managed via Safer London and supports social housing tenants experiencing violence to move to a different Local Authority. It is reliant on the receiving Local Authority accepting the nomination request because the scheme is totally discretionary. <u>London Gang Exit</u> Only for individual/couples aged 16-24 who are gang involved/gang affiliated and committed to exiting the lifestyle. The scheme is administered through Safer London. It is unlikely to be useful for cases where an emergency resolution (housing) is required. <u>Homelessness application to another Local Authority</u> Households fleeing violence are able to present to any Local Authority to make a homelessness application. The household would need to approach the Local Authority directly, because there is no process to make a

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TYPE OF TENURE BEING OCCUPIED	OPTIONS
	referral. The Local Authority approached, will consider whether the household is eligible and homeless. If they are satisfied of these two things, a 'relief duty' will be triggered and interim (emergency) accommodation provided if the household is in priority need. <i>*Homes for Haringey does not support Mutual Exchange as a solution for tenants fleeing violence, because they believe that this poses a risk both to the vacating and incoming tenant.</i>
Housing Association/Registered Social Landlord Tenancy	<u>Move to alternative social housing</u> The tenant should initially liaise with their current landlord to explore a move within the organisation's own stock. Most Housing Associations/Registered Social Landlords have stock across a wider area than Haringey and are best placed to offer an internal management transfer. If this is not possible, the case can be presented to Homes for Haringey's Housing Decisions Panel and if approved, the household will be made one offer of like-for-like accommodation within Haringey. The household will normally remain in their current tenancy until an offer of alternative accommodation can be made. In exceptional circumstances, the household may be placed in temporary accommodation, pending an offer of alternative property. This option is not suitable if it has been determined that the household are unsafe in the borough.

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	<u>Private sector</u> A household can be supported with a move into the private sector. This could be to an area of safety and/or choice but would need to be affordable. In the majority of cases this will mean finding a property at local housing allowance level. Financial support is available for a deposit and rent in advance and/or landlord incentive. This would only be available if the case had been approved by the Housing Decisions Panel. <u>Homefinder UK</u> This scheme advertises social housing and private rented accommodation available across the UK and is open to all households who have been assessed as homeless or threatened with homelessness. The majority of properties available are in the north of the country. There is financial support available for some relocation costs. Households fleeing violence are prioritised for properties. <u>The Greater London Authority (GLA) Housing Moves scheme</u> This is a scheme managed by the Mayor of London. Each Local Authority commits a number of lettings annually to support the cross-London mobility of social tenants. Cases are prioritised by factors linked to local connection to a borough. E.g. employment, family association. The scheme is subject to 'equalisation' to ensure boroughs import and export the same number of households. Haringey does not achieve equalisation because more tenants wish to leave the borough than move in with the consequence that there is often a restriction on us accessing the scheme.

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	<u>Pan-London Reciprocal scheme</u> Managed via Safer London and supports social housing tenants experiencing violence to move to a different Local Authority. It is reliant on the receiving Local Authority accepting the nomination request as scheme is totally discretionary. <u>London Gang Exit</u> Only for individual/couples aged 16-24 who are gang involved/gang affiliated and committed to exiting the lifestyle. The scheme is administered through Safer London. It is unlikely to be useful for cases where an emergency resolution is required. <u>Homelessness application to another Local Authority</u> Households fleeing violence are able to present to any Local Authority to make a homelessness application. The household would need to approach the Local Authority directly because there is no process to make a referral. The Local Authority approached, will consider whether the household is eligible and homeless. If they are satisfied of these two things, a 'relief duty' will be triggered and interim (emergency) accommodation provided if the household is in priority need.
Private Rented Sector Tenancy	<u>Private sector</u> A household can be supported with a move into the private sector. This could be to an area of safety and/or choice but would need to be affordable. In most cases, this will mean finding a property at local

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	housing allowance level. Financial support is available for a deposit and rent in advance and/or landlord incentive. The applicant's case would need to have been approved for the scheme by the Housing Needs Service. <u>Homefinder UK</u> This scheme advertises social housing and private rented accommodation available across the UK and is open to all households who have been assessed as homeless or threatened with homelessness. The majority of properties available are in the north of the country. There is financial support available for some relocation costs. Households fleeing violence are prioritised for properties. <u>London Gang Exit</u> Only for individual/couples aged 16-24 who are gang involved/gang affiliated and committed to exiting the lifestyle. The scheme is administered through Safer London. It is unlikely to be useful for cases where an emergency resolution is required. <u>Homelessness application to another Local Authority</u> Households fleeing violence are able to present to any Local Authority to make a homelessness application. The household would need to approach the Local Authority directly because there is no process to make a referral. The Local Authority approached, will consider whether the household are eligible and homeless. If they are satisfied of these two things, a 'relief duty' will be triggered and interim (emergency) accommodation provided if the household is in priority need.

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Temporary Accommodation	<u>Move to alternative temporary accommodation</u> Homes for Haringey's Move-on team will consider whether a move to alternative temporary accommodation will resolve the issue. This is not a feasible option in cases where there is a risk that covers a large geographical area of Haringey. It is not an option to place households into temporary accommodation outside the borough because there is no exit strategy in these cases. <u>Private sector</u> A household can be supported with a move into the private sector. This could be to an area of safety and/or choice but would need to be affordable. In the majority of cases, this will mean finding a property at local housing allowance level. Financial support is available for deposit and rent in advance and/or landlord incentive. Applicant cases would need to have been approved for the scheme by the Move-on team of the housing demand directorate. <u>Homefinder UK</u> This scheme advertises social housing and private rented accommodation available across the UK and is open to all households who have been assessed as homeless or threatened with homelessness. The majority of properties available are in the north of the country. There is financial support available for some relocation costs. Households fleeing violence are prioritised for properties.

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Owner-Occupiers	<u>Sell property</u> A household can sell property and buy an alternative property or rent in the private sector. <u>Rent property out and find alternative</u> A household could consider renting their property out to tenants and finding their own private rented accommodation.

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	<u>Lease property to the Council and be assisted to move into the private sector</u> A household could explore the option of leasing their property to Homes for Haringey and moving into the private sector.
Living with family/friends	<u>Private sector</u> A household can be supported with a move into the private sector. This could be to an area of safety and/or choice but would need to be affordable. In the majority of cases this will mean finding a property at local housing allowance level. Financial support is available for a deposit and rent in advance and/or landlord incentive. The applicant's case would need to have been approved for the scheme by the Housing Needs Service. <u>Homefinder UK</u> This scheme advertises social housing and private rented accommodation available across the UK and is open to all households who have been assessed as homeless or threatened with homelessness. The majority of properties available are in the north of the country. There is financial support available for some relocation costs. Households fleeing violence are prioritised for properties.

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Appendix 2: The operation of the Housing Decisions Panel (HDP)

1. The HDP has been set up (with discretionary powers granted to it by the Allocations Policy, to award additional priority and approve offers of housing (including management transfers) in exceptional circumstances.
2. The HDP meets on fortnightly basis but can make decisions electronically in emergency situations when an urgent decision is required.
3. The HDP comprises senior managers from both Housing Demand and Housing Operations directorates within Homes for Haringey. It will have a rotating Chair from the following designations: Service Manager: Housing Needs, Service Manager: Occupancy Management, Service Manager: Hearthstone, Head of Tenancy Services/Tenancy Team Manager.