

Clearing House Frequently Asked Questions



These FAQ's have been updated following the new eligibility rollout in Autumn 2022. Please use the table below to navigate to the relevant section, or alternatively contact the helpdesk if your answer cannot be found in this document.

Helpdesk

Open during regular office hours

T: 020 3856 6008

E: ch@mungos.org

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Criteria change Autumn 2022 – Eligibility Requirements

What are the eligibility requirements for clients to access the Clearing House?

Clearing House Eligibility Requirements

1. The referral worker must attend a Referral Induction Session and obtain a log-in to the Clearing House Portal **AND**
2. The clients' support needs can be met by 1 hour of fortnightly support from the Tenancy Sustainment Team **AND**
3. The client either;
 - a. has a history of rough sleeping **OR**
 - b. is resident in an accommodation based service that primarily supports rough sleepers.

How is a history of rough sleeping verified?

This can be verified in two ways;

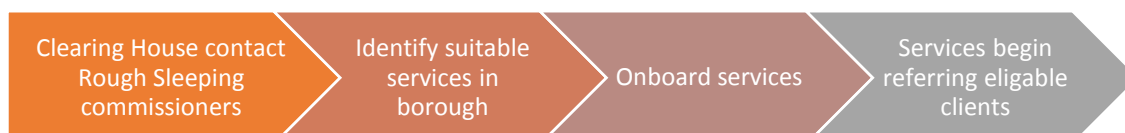
- ➔ The client has a verified CHAIN number.
- ➔ The client has self-reported their history of rough sleeping, and the referral worker is confident this is accurate.

Self-reported rough sleeping needs to be evident in the Housing History section of the referral form. The Housing History asks for five years of addresses, if the rough sleeping occurred six years ago or more this can still be added in as an entry. In order to avoid imposing arbitrary measures for clients to prove their rough sleeping, the Clearing House aims to be flexible and reasonable in the types of ways rough sleeping can be self-reported. The expectation is the referral worker is confident the disclosure of rough sleeping accurately reflects the clients' experience.

What do you define as a 'majority' in relation to services supporting rough sleepers?

Roughly 50%, although we want to be flexible and avoid arbitrary measures which may not allow clients to access the service. Each service will be individually reviewed, our process is transparent and we will have all decision making processes documented in our policies in our resource library [here](#). Each decision can also be appealed.

How will you roll out the new criteria?



For existing services the main change will be the ability to refer clients in without a CHAIN number. We aim to communicate this via email, phone and attending relevant team or borough meetings.

For new services, we will ask the commissioners or borough leads to identify which services in their pathway would be most useful for us to approach. Ideally this is a service with a number of suitable clients, where move on into clearing house will support throughout in your pathways. A member of the CH team will meet with the services to assess if their clients will need chain numbers or can self-disclose rough sleeping history, then offer training and support to the staff.

When will you come to our service?

The Clearing House is aiming to meet with all borough leads by early 2023. As there are 33 London boroughs, plus Pan-London commissioning, we want to meet leads and services as soon as possible but are mindful this rollout will take time. It is worth noting that any service which is already referring to Clearing House will be able to continue to do so.

Are there new properties to meet the increased demand from broadening the criteria?

There are a large number of housing providers working with the Clearing House to supply properties. The stock changes continually however due to the commitment to Clearing House from providers, the availability has been gradually increasing. There are roughly 4000 properties in the Clearing House scheme. There are also measures in place to manage the waiting list and this is constantly monitored by the management team and GLA.

Referring Organisations

I work in a local authority-commissioned hostel for rough sleepers, can I refer in?

Yes, you can refer in any of your clients for whom you think the service is appropriate, regardless of whether they have CHAIN numbers. Any referral must come from a staff member who has attended the referral induction session and your service needs to be verified on the CH system.

I work in a non-commissioned supported housing service, but we only take referrals from our local outreach team, can I refer in?

Yes, you can refer in any of your clients for whom you think the service is appropriate, regardless of whether they have CHAIN numbers. Any referral must come from a staff member who has attended the referral induction session and your service must be verified on the CH system.

I work in a mental health service. Most of my clients do not have a history of rough sleeping, but one of them has a CHAIN number, can I refer in?

Yes, you can refer in any of your clients for whom you think the service is appropriate, if they have a CHAIN number. You will not be able to refer clients who do not have a CHAIN number or other clear evidence of a recent rough sleeping history. Any referral must come from a staff member who has attended the referral induction session.

Can I refer from Housing Options?

No, the Clearing House does not accept referrals directly from Housing Options. Clients who are accessing support from their local authority while also engaging with other services are potentially eligible to be referred in by relevant outreach services or day centre staff.

Who is the Clearing House service best suited to?

The Clearing House is best suited to clients being referred from accommodation based services for a number of reasons;

1. Their tenancy support needs are best identified by a worker with a long term relationship with the client who is able to assess them in an accommodation based setting. The better understanding of support needs, the better understanding the Tenancy Sustainment Team (TST) working with the client will be able to work with them.
2. The TST worker meets clients roughly once every fortnight. For clients coming directly from the streets, their initial needs may be too acute to be met by the level of support of TST.
3. Clients and their workers need to be easily contactable throughout the process. Viewings, sign ups and moving in can require a lot of back and forth communication that is very challenging with clients on the street, or in very short term accommodation.

Despite this, clients from housing options, day centres and outreach teams are able to access the service and there are many examples of successful tenancies. The Clearing House will work with the team and referring organisation to support where possible.

I work in outreach, can I refer in?

Yes - If your outreach team is London based, and you have a suitable referral worker who has attended a Referral induction session, and the client has a CHAIN number.

Can I refer in from a day centre?

Yes - If your day centre is London based, and you have a suitable referral worker who has attended a Referral Induction session, and the client has a CHAIN number.

I work for a non-commissioned, volunteer-led LGQBTQIA+ organisation supporting young adults, can I refer in?

If you have a suitable referral worker, yes. The CHAIN number requirement for the client will depend on if the services supports a majority or minority of rough sleepers (a Clearing House team member will support your organisation with this).

Can I refer in from a Rehabilitation service?

If a client exiting Rehabilitation is able to access some form of temporary accommodation or a staging post, this will enable Clearing House to match the person with the right property and support a smooth transition. Please speak to a Clearing House manager via the helpdesk to discuss individual cases.

Referring Staff / Referrals

How do I refer a client to Clearing House?

1. Attend a Referral Induction Session

These sessions provide detailed information about the service the Clearing House offer, how to make a successful referral and how the nomination process works. Currently these are 2-hour sessions run online via Google Meets monthly. Please email ch@mungos.org to book onto an induction session

2. Refer in a client via the portal

The Portal is the online system for making referrals, requesting nominations and managing cases can be accessed by logging in at <https://clearinghouse.force.com/login>. Referral workers are given a login once they have attended the referral induction session.

Who can attend the Referral Induction Session/who can be a referral worker?

- an employee of an appropriate referring service,
- be regularly working in a client facing role completing key working activities,
- and have the knowledge and skill to make an accurate assessment of a client's support needs.

Alternatively, referring staff may be a suitably qualified professional who, despite not seeing a client regularly in a homelessness setting, is in a position to form sound judgement and liaise with others in the client's support network and gather information related to their homelessness e.g. a client's allocated probation worker. It is still expected they would have ongoing and involved contact with the client.

Can you train everyone in a staff team?

No, we recommend each service having 1 or 2 'Clearing House Champions'. We suggest this to a) manage our capacity, and b) so there are staff who become practiced in high quality referrals and therefore reduce the back and forth with referrals.

What is a Clearing House Champion?

In order to manage capacity for the Clearing House team, and to increase the skill set within the referring service, there are limits on the staff numbers from each team able to access the Clearing House system and attend the training. These staff members are known as Clearing House Champions. The aim is they will attend the Referral Induction Session, and then become practiced and skilled in submitting Clearing House referrals. They are not able to share their log in details but are encouraged to collaborate with colleagues to submit referrals for clients in their service.

Referral induction sessions are organised via contacting the [helpdesk](#).

Can staff share their log in?

No, however we encourage Clearing House Champions to support their colleagues to collect the information and then jointly work on the referral.

Why is your referral form so long?

We have an in-depth referral form to aid us in matching clients with the best possible tenancy. Our stakeholders, the social landlords and tenancy sustainment teams, also require comprehensive information about the tenants in order to provide the best support.

We do recognise the form needs updating and our next project is to consult and address this. Please contact the [helpdesk](#) with 'Referral Feedback' as the title with any comments or to be involved in feedback groups.

How can we reduce the time taken for clarifications? (When the referral form has missing information and gets sent back and forth)

- I. Firstly, the Clearing House is running a Training Improvement Plan to change the online Referral Induction Sessions. The aim is to make them more engaging, more relevant and more accessible.

2. Secondly, the referral form is going to change. Please contact the [helpdesk](#) with 'Referral Feedback' as the title with any comments or to be involved in feedback groups.
3. Thirdly, having Clearing House Champions (see above) will allow for someone in your team to really learn the CH system and build on making quality referrals, therefore reducing the time between clarification and nomination.

What is the timeframe for a client to get housed?

The timeline is dependent on a number of different factors, including a client's are selection, support needs, and availability of properties. The average time can be anywhere between 1 month to 6 months.

Properties

Why are some properties unfurnished?

This depends on the housing provider, some will provide white goods, furniture and carpet, some will not. For properties without, the TST worker and the referrer will need to collaborate to apply for grants for these items.

Where are most of the properties?

The stock and availability of properties changes constantly. There are properties in every London Borough, with the inner London boroughs tending to have the longest waiting list, and the outer boroughs having shorter waiting lists.

Are pets accepted?

Yes, although not by every provider so please be aware if you/your client has a pet this will significantly increase their time on the waiting list.

Are couples accepted?

Yes.

Support

How often does the TST worker meet with the client?

The support is roughly one hour every two weeks.

What type of support do TST offer?

- ➔ Sustaining tenancies - Providing support and advice on housing difficulties, e.g. rent arrears, disrepair or neighbour disputes, as well as crisis intervention for people under the threat of eviction
- ➔ Preventing loss of independence - Providing specialist help when an independent lifestyle is at risk due to serious ill health or custodial sentences.
- ➔ Promoting health and well-being - Facilitating access to health services, encouraging attendance at appointments and promoting healthy eating and exercise.
- ➔ Maximising income - Providing benefits advice, support to maximise income or reduce debt and helping with budget planning.

What happens after 2 years?

The TST worker and the client will do a tenancy review and if the client is ready, they will move on into independent accommodation. This will either be private rented sector, general needs housing with a social landlord, or via a scheme supporting Clearing House such as Housing Moves.

The client is not automatically evicted after 2 years and all moves are coordinated with support.

Training

What sort of training do you offer? What formats is it available?

The Clearing House offers a range of options;

- Referral Induction Sessions – this is currently online monthly, bookable via the website and helpdesk.
- Bespoke Coaching – our experienced officers can come to your service to deliver group training to a particular service. Requirements and needs to be discussed on a case by case basis with our team. Contact the helpdesk on 020 3856 6008 or at ch@mungos.org.
- Online Videos and Guides – we have a range of videos and guides via our website. <https://www.mungos.org/our-services/clearing-house/>

Is there a charge for training?

No! It's completely free.

Can you come and do a refresher for our team?

Yes we can, please contact us to organise.

Reports/data

What sort of reports and data do you offer? How often can I get them?

We can create quarterly automated reports for Local Authority Leads and Commissioners detailing;

- ➔ Service uptake within your borough, including the number of people who have moved into Clearing House (CH) from your services.
- ➔ Engagement with referrals (how many people referred in, how many accepted/rejected)
- ➔ CH associated services such as TST PRS.

How can I request this?

This can be discussed and agreed at the initial meeting between Clearing House Managers and borough leads. However you are also welcome to contact the Partnerships and Evaluation Manager, or the Evaluation and Impact Coordinator via the helpdesk (020 3856 6008 or at ch@mungos.org)

Can you help me understand it?

Yes! We want any reports we create to be as accessible and useful to you as possible. We can work with you and your managers initially to create a clear understanding, we can change formats and the way the information is presented to best suit you. We are also on hand to offer support during regular working hours via the helpdesk, whenever you need it. (020 3856 6008 or at ch@mungos.org)

Is there a charge for the reports?

No, its free and part of our service offer.