

Ref. No: 2473  
Date: 30/03/26  
Subject: Homelessness and Duty to Refer

## REQUEST

- 1. Hospital Inpatients Identified as Homeless**
  - a. The total number of patients identified as experiencing homelessness while admitted to hospital during the period 1 January 2025 – 31 December 2025.
  - b. If possible, please provide a breakdown by month.
  - c. If homelessness is recorded in your patient record system, please indicate the field name or coding used (e.g., "No Fixed Abode", "Housing Status", etc).
  
- 2. Duty to Refer Referrals**
  - a. The total number of Duty to Refer referrals made to local housing authorities for patients identified as homeless during the same period 1 January 2025 – 31 December 2025.
  - b. If available, please provide a breakdown by month.
  
- 3. Service or Policy Data**
  - a. Does the trust have a dedicated homelessness liaison nurse, social worker, or specialist team?
  - b. Are there formal policies or procedures for identifying homelessness on admission and throughout treatment?
  - c. What training does the trust provide for staff on:
    - i. Identifying homelessness
    - ii. The Duty to Refer under the Homelessness Reduction Act 2017?
  - d. If available, please provide any written guidance, protocols, or discharge guidance given to staff to support patients experiencing homelessness.

## RESPONSE

1.

	January	February	March	April	May	June	July	August	September	October	November	December
SO	3	2	1	0	5	2	8	7	9	1	2	3
STHK	14	11	11	18	11	22	14	13	8	12	7	13
MWL	17	13	12	18	16	24	22	20	17	13	9	16

The numbers above have been done using the address of the patient as 'no fixed abode'.

The above numbers do include a patient more than once if they have been admitted to the Trust more than once within the year timeframe.

2.

<5 x February 2025  
 <5 x March 2025  
 <5 x April 2025  
 <5 x May 2025  
 <5 x June 2025  
 <5 x September 2025  
 <5 x October 2025  
 <5 x December 2025

3.

### STHK

If patient's are identified to be either homeless or at risk of becoming homeless, the Trust has a duty to refer to a local housing authority. **The patient MUST consent to the referral being made.**

'Duty to refer' needs to be completed for any patient that attends who has no current fixed abode or is at risk of becoming homeless, where there isn't a clinical need to admit the patient or that they require housing immediately. Each local authority has a different process. A referral can be put into the local authority that the patient chooses – however each authority likes the patient to have a link to that area, such as being registered with a GP in that area or have family in that area.

The housing authority for that local area will then contact the patient – if they have no phone provide a contact number for a next of kin, or provide the patient with the housing options' number so that they can get in touch with them.

Liverpool and Knowsley have online referral forms – search 'duty to refer' with the local authority and the form will come up.

- Liverpool Housing Options: 0800 731 6844
- Knowsley Housing Options: 0800 694 0280

St Helens is a referral form that needs completing and emailing to [dutytorefer@sthelens.gov.uk](mailto:dutytorefer@sthelens.gov.uk)

- St Helens Housing Options: 01744 675 150

West Lancashire Patient's Duty to Refer Process:

1. Complete the referral form: **West Lancashire Duty to Refer - Referral Form (Internal use only)**
2. Ensure a copy of the completed referral form is in the patient's notes.
3. Send completed referral via email to: [homelessness@westlancs.gov.uk](mailto:homelessness@westlancs.gov.uk) and [soh-tr.dischargefacilitators@merseywestlancs.nhs.uk](mailto:soh-tr.dischargefacilitators@merseywestlancs.nhs.uk)
4. Email response will be returned to the referrer and to the Discharge Facilitator Team inbox.
5. Discharge Facilitators will update discharge planning proformas Mon – Sat with outcomes.

Duty to Refer Process for Patient's from ANY other Local Authority:

### **S&O**

If patient's are identified to be either homeless or at risk of becoming homeless, the Trust has a duty to refer to a local housing authority.

The patient MUST consent to the referral being made.

West Lancashire Patient's Duty to Refer Process:

1. Complete the referral form: **Internal Link Only**
2. Ensure a copy of the completed referral form is in the patient's notes.
3. Send completed referral via email to: [homelessness@westlancs.gov.uk](mailto:homelessness@westlancs.gov.uk) and [soh-tr.dischargefacilitators@merseywestlancs.nhs.uk](mailto:soh-tr.dischargefacilitators@merseywestlancs.nhs.uk)
1. Email response will be returned to the referrer and to the Discharge Facilitator Team inbox.
2. Discharge Facilitators will update discharge planning proformas Mon – Sat with outcomes.

Duty to Refer Process for Patient's from ANY other Local Authority:

1. Complete the duty to refer via this [LINK \(internal only\)](#)
2. Ensure a copy of the completed referral is in the patient's notes
3. Send copy of completed referral via email to: [soh-tr.dischargefacilitators@merseywestlancs.nhs.uk](mailto:soh-tr.dischargefacilitators@merseywestlancs.nhs.uk)
4. Discharge Facilitators will update discharge planning proformas Mon – Sat with outcomes.

For further advice or support, please contact the Discharge Facilitator Team and/or Adult Safeguarding Team.

For veterans, there is Op FORTITUDE. We can make veterans aware of the support and they are able to refer themselves, I've included more info about it below and a link to the Riverside website who run it from the housing association point of view.

### **What is Op FORTITUDE?**

Op FORTITUDE is a referral system that has been created to help ex-service personnel find housing support. It is funded by The Armed Forces Covenant Fund and is facilitated by the social housing provider Riverside Group.

Op FORTITUDE helps connect people in the Armed Forces Community who are experiencing homelessness to a network of support. The network includes:

- housing providers
- charities, and
- local authorities.

The services that Op FORTITUDE connect people with will help individuals address their risk of homelessness by either helping them stay in their current accommodation or find new housing options.

Additionally, Op FORTITUDE will signpost to complimenting services, including:

- specialist medical care,
- connections with local communities, and
- employment services.

These connections will help individuals with other aspects of their lives that might be impacting their ability to get or keep their housing options

### **Who is eligible and how to refer**

Ex-service personnel who are experiencing homelessness, or at risk of homelessness, are eligible for support from Op FORTITUDE.

Referrals can come from a range of sources, including:

- Directly from individuals themselves.
- Armed Forces charities such as the Royal British Legion.
- Local Authorities.
- His Majesty's Prison and Probation Service (HMPPS).
- The Defence Transition Service (DTS).

Even though the process is called "referral", veterans themselves can make their own referral for Op FORTITUDE support by completing the online form or by calling the freephone number below.

By phone: [0800 9520774](tel:08009520774)

By online referral form

Riverside housing website - [Op FORTITUDE- Riverside Care and Support](#)