

## **Kirklees Council – Housing Services**

### **Homelessness and safeguarding**

The term homelessness is often identified with individuals who sleep on the streets (referred to as sleeping rough). This group of people, however, only make up a small proportion of all homelessness.

Homelessness doesn't just mean not having a roof over your head, it also includes those who live in unsuitable or insecure housing. The [Shelter website](#) has an overview of 'What is homelessness?'

#### **Preventing Homelessness: Public Authority Duty to Refer**

A 'Duty to Refer' for certain public bodies was introduced with the Homelessness Reduction Act (2017).

The Duty means that public agencies must notify a local housing authority (England) if they consider individuals or families, they are working with to be homeless, or at risk of being homeless within the next 56 days.

Consent to the referral is required and you must allow the individual/family to choose which local authority in England they want the notification to be made to.

The Duty to Refer helps to ensure services are working together effectively to prevent homelessness. It helps to keep vulnerable families and individuals safe as their housing needs are considered at the earliest point they come into contact with public authorities. ***It can be much safer and less distressing to prevent homelessness than it is to relieve it.***

Further information can be found on the Government's webpage: [A guide to the Duty to Refer](#) which gives additional detail on how to identify if someone is threatened with homelessness, as well as frequently asked questions. It also lists the public bodies that this Duty applies to.

If your service or agency is not on the list, we still want to hear from you and would like to extend the ask to all agencies operating within Kirklees. Working together is crucial if we are to prevent the misery of homelessness and bring about positive change to people's lives.

**For referrals under Duty to Refer within Kirklees, please email: [dutytorefer@kirklees.gov.uk](mailto:dutytorefer@kirklees.gov.uk). Details need to include the person's name, contact details and the reason for the referral. The individual will then be contacted by the Housing Solutions Service for a housing needs assessment.**

For questions related to Duty to Refer, please contact [Housing.Solutions@kirklees.gov.uk](mailto:Housing.Solutions@kirklees.gov.uk) and for general information on housing, please see the [Council's Housing and Homelessness webpages](#).