



South Essex
Rape & Incest
Crisis Centre

Joint protocol regarding homeless Victims/Survivors of violence in Thurrock



thurrock.gov.uk

1. STATEMENT OF COMMITMENT BY PARTIES/SIGNATORIES TO THE PROTOCOL
2. INTRODUCTION
3. VIOLENCE AND HOMELESSNESS
4. KEY GOOD PRACTICE ISSUES
5. TRAINING
6. CONTACTS
7. SIGNATORIES TO THIS PROTOCOL
8. APPENDICES
 - Appendix 1 Definitions
 - Appendix 2 Referrals for Housing (Flowchart)
 - Appendix 3 Move on from Refuge (Flow chart)
 - Appendix 4 Refuge referral – 28 days' notice
 - Appendix 5 Refuge referral - immediate notice

1. STATEMENT OF COMMITMENT BY PARTIES/SIGNATORIES TO THE PROTOCOL

- 1.1. The protocol detailed in this document provides guidance for officers and agency workers in contact with tenants, applicants, homeless persons or others affected by violence who are facing homelessness.
- 1.2. "Violence" referred to in this document includes but is not limited to sexual violence, domestic violence, forced marriage, female genital mutilation, honour based violence, human trafficking, sexual exploitation and gang related violence. Definitions are provided in Appendix 1.
- 1.3. Victims/ Survivors of violence can be of any age, gender or race.
- 1.4. The aim of the protocol is to promote good practice and guidance to ensure the safety of those experiencing violence and their children by establishing a consistent, safe and effective response.
- 1.5. All signatories to this protocol are committed to taking positive action on violence by ensuring that the good practice detailed in this document is followed.
- 1.6. All signatories commit to ensure that the protocol is consistent with their other related policies and procedures.
- 1.7. All signatories agree to follow the processes within the appendices to this agreement.

2. INTRODUCTION

- 2.1. Violence can have profound consequences on the lives of individuals and their families, detrimentally affecting their physical and emotional wellbeing and impacting quality of life.
- 2.2. It occurs across all aspects of society and is predominantly perpetrated by men against women. It creates complex personal and social problems which impact on the wider community as well as on those directly affected. It is recognised both nationally and internationally as a significant social, economic and public health problem.
- 2.3. Violence is not simply a wide range of unacceptable behaviours; it is a substantially under reported and often hidden crime within which victims/survivors often suffer in silence and isolation.
- 2.4. Research shows that nationally:
 - Domestic violence accounts for almost a quarter of all violent crimes
 - At least two women are killed each week by their current or former partner
 - One in four women will experience domestic violence in their adult lives

- 54% of UK rapes are committed by a woman's current or former partner¹.
- It is estimated that one in every five women faces some form of violence during her lifetime, in some cases leading to serious injury or death
- Estimates of the number of trafficked persons range from 500,000 to two million per year, and a few organisations have estimated that up to four million persons are trafficked every year. Although women, men, girls and boys can become victims/survivors of trafficking, the majority of victims/survivors are female²

2.5. The high correlation between child abuse and domestic violence is recognised through child protection procedures and it is acknowledged that children are emotionally damaged through witnessing domestic violence. It is also widely acknowledged that the long term effect on children living in a violent and abusive household, whether they directly witness domestic violence or not, strongly influences their behaviour and their cognitive and social skills. Children can be used by the abuser to manipulate and put pressure on the victim in order to exercise control.

3. VIOLENCE AND HOMELESSNESS

3.1. Local housing authorities must investigate whether they have a rehousing duty towards people who approach them as homeless. In so doing they must carry out any necessary enquiries.

3.2. A rehousing duty is owed where the person is

- Eligible for assistance
- Homeless
- In priority need
- Not intentionally homeless

3.3. Legislation³ provides that local authorities must treat as having a priority need those people who are "vulnerable as a result of ceasing to occupy accommodation because of violence from another person or threats of violence from another person which are likely to be carried out"

3.4. Where a person who is believed to have a priority need is also eligible for assistance and has no accommodation available that is reasonable to occupy, the local authority has a duty to provide interim accommodation pending the investigation into any further rehousing duties.

3.5. In many cases involving violence the person may be very distressed and it is essential that appropriately trained officers carry out the interviews. This includes the option of being interviewed by an officer of the same gender.

3.6. Qualified Independent Sexual and Domestic Violence Advisors are available in the

¹ Walby, Sylvia and Allen, Jonathan (2004) *Domestic violence, sexual assault and stalking: Findings from the British Crime Survey* (London: Home Office Research, Development and Statistics Directorate)

² (Referred to by Mara Jos Alcal et al. State of World Population 2006. A Passage to Hope. Women and International Migration. UNFPA. 2006).

³ Housing Act 1996 as amended by the Homelessness Act 2002

Thurrock area; they are able to provide independent support and information to the survivor in relation to any issues affecting victims/survivors of violence. These are specialist services with qualified staff to provide ongoing support and information to victims/survivors

3.7. Where a full rehousing duty is not owed, the local authority will offer advice and assistance and consider all available housing options.

3.8. Where a full rehousing duty is owed but the person has no local connection to the borough the local authority may consider referring to another borough however, the person cannot be referred to another area if he or she, or any person who might reasonably be expected to reside with him or her, would be at risk of violence in the district of the other housing authority

3.9. The appendix to this protocol lays out the process for referring a survivor of violence to the Council for assistance with housing

4. KEY GOOD PRACTICE ISSUES

All signatories to this protocol are committed to providing a consistent, supportive and informative approach to those experiencing violence. This will include:

- Giving priority to the safety of those experiencing violence and their children;
- Recognising that individual experiences of violence are different, and require a believing and sensitive approach and support; where possible, the victim should have the choice of gender of the officer who deals with their case;
- Offering a referral to specialist services when a disclosure of violence has been made; those fleeing violence are particularly vulnerable and may need additional help and a supportive environment;
- Maintaining accurate and confidential records; All partners will ensure that personal data is processed fairly and lawfully and kept securely according to their policies and procedures as perpetrators of violence often endeavour to manipulate staff to disclose information and are known to use a variety of tactics to elicit information about the whereabouts of their victims/survivors; information should only be shared on a “need to know” basis. Computer records will be locked down to ensure only those with appropriate security clearance have access to their contents;
- Working with other agencies in partnership to support inter-agency information sharing protocols and services; this includes eviction panels and provision of quality and empowering advocacy services and accurate information about referral pathways to other agencies, as well as local and other services.
- The Independent Sexual Violence Advocate (ISVA) or Independent Domestic Violence Advocate (IDVA) will act as the main point of contact between the victim and statutory services, therefore preventing victims/survivors having to disclose their experience to numerous professionals;

- Liaising with Thurrock Multi Agency Safeguarding Hub (MASH).

5. TRAINING

- 5.1. Training opportunities will be shared to raise staff awareness of sexual violence, domestic violence, forced marriage, female genital mutilation, honour based violence, sexual exploitation and gang related violence.
- 5.2. A nominated member of staff will circulate training opportunities to ensure all staff are involved and are kept regularly updated.
- 5.3. Awareness training will be extended to include all staff members who come into contact with tenants e.g. maintenance, repairs, security and reception staff

6. CONTACTS

South Essex Rape & Incest Crisis Centre (SERICC)

The Hall, West Street, Grays,
Essex RM17 6LL
01375 381322

Changing Pathways (Formally Basildon Women's Aid)

Advice Line
01268 729 707
Email: referrals@changingpathways.org
General Enquires
Phone: 01268 729 707
Email: welcome@changingpathways.org

Thurrock Council – Housing safeguarding Team

Civic offices, New Road, Grays RM17 6SL
E Mail: HousingSafeGuarding@thurrock.gov.uk
Tel: 01375 652277

Safer places

PO Box 2489, Harlow Essex
Phone: 03301 025811
Email: info@saferplaces.co.uk

Forced Marriage Unit

fmu@fco.gov.uk
Telephone: 020 7008 0151
From overseas: +44 (0)20 7008 0151
Monday to Friday, 9am to 5pm
Out of hours: 020 7008 1500 (ask for the Global Response Centre)

FORWARD

Telephone: +44 (0)20 8960 4000
E-mail: forward@forwarduk.org.uk

National Stalking Helpline

Open Monday to Friday 9:30am – 4pm (except Wednesdays we open at 1pm).
0808 802 0300
advice@stalkinghelpline.org

Men's Advice Line

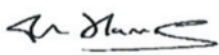
mensadvice.org.uk

Mankind

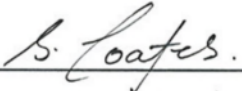
<http://new.mankind.org.uk/>
01823 334244

7. SIGNATORIES TO THIS PROTOCOL

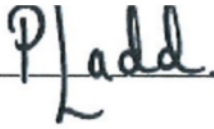
Thurrock Council

Name	Roger Harris
Position	Director, Adults, Housing & Health, Thurrock Council
Signature	
Date	14 th September 2016

SERICC

Name	Sheila Coates
Position	Director, South Essex Rape & Incest Crisis Centre
Signature	
Date	26 th September 2016.

Changing Pathways

Name	Philippa Ladd
Position	Chief Executive, Changing Pathways
Signature	
Date	20th September 2016

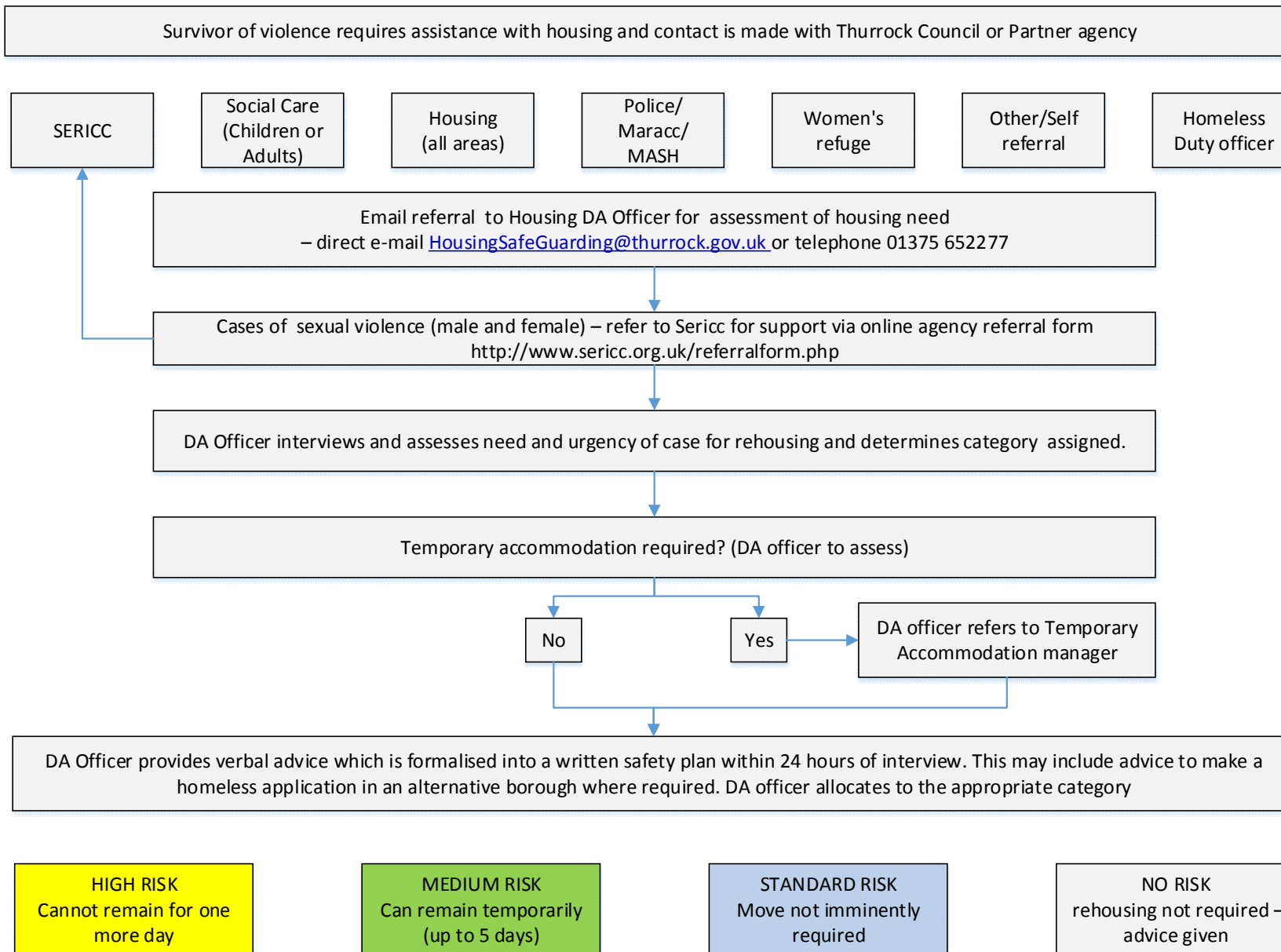
APPENDIX 1 – DEFINITIONS

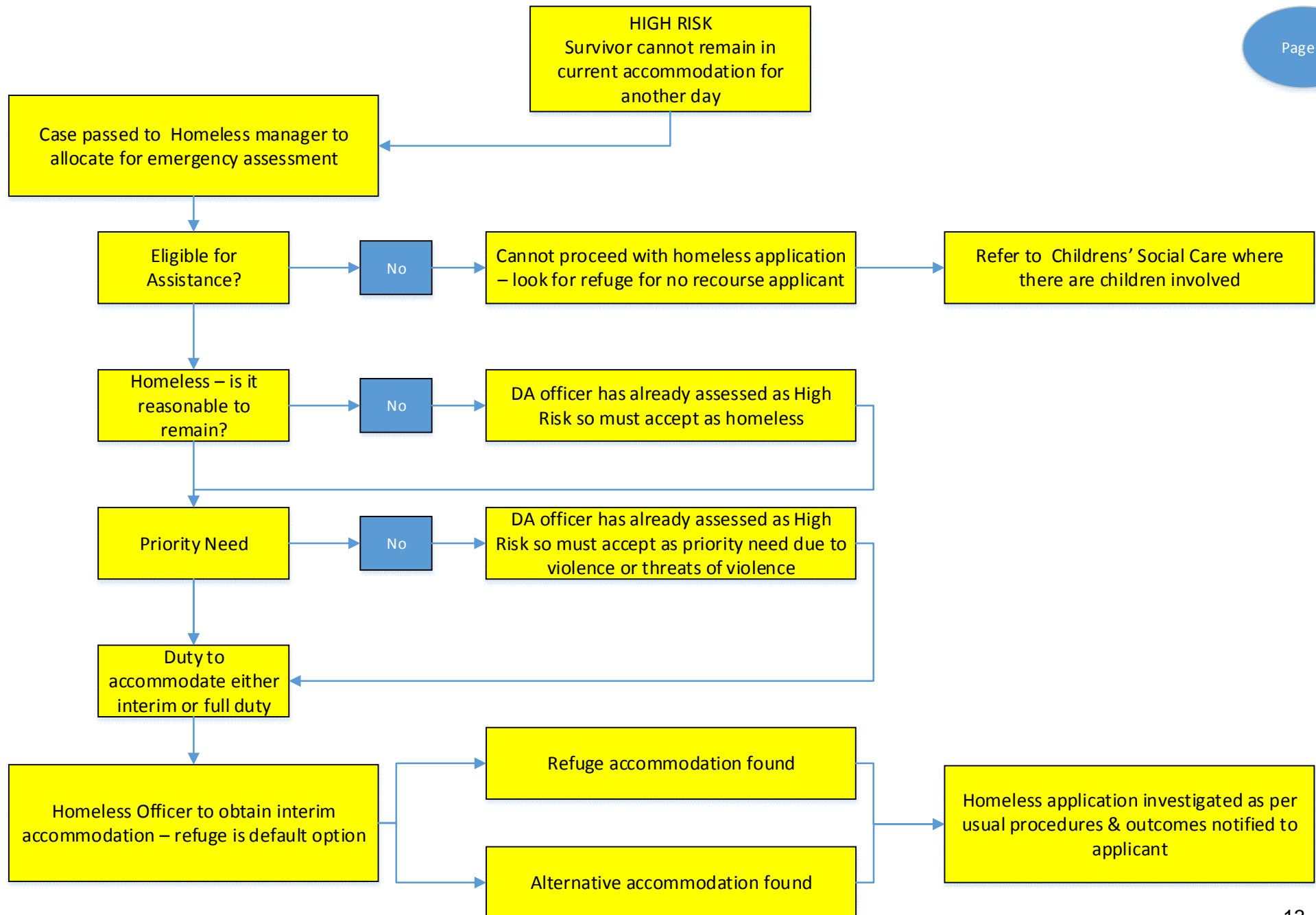
Domestic violence	<p>Any incident or pattern of incidents of controlling, coercive, threatening behaviour, violence or abuse between those aged 16 or over who are, or have been, intimate partners or family members regardless of gender or sexuality. The abuse can encompass, but is not limited to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • psychological • physical • sexual • financial • emotional <p>Controlling behaviour is a range of acts designed to make a person subordinate and/or dependent by isolating them from sources of support, exploiting their resources and capacities for personal gain, depriving them of the means needed for independence, resistance and escape and regulating their everyday behaviour</p> <p>Coercive behaviour is an act or a pattern of acts of assault, threats, humiliation and intimidation or other abuse that is used to harm, punish, or frighten their victim.</p>
Violence against women and girls	<p>Any act of gender-based violence that results in, or is likely to result in, physical, sexual or psychological harm or suffering to women, including threats of such acts, coercion or arbitrary deprivation of liberty, whether occurring in public or in private life.</p> <p>Violence against women shall be understood to encompass, but not be limited to, the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Physical, sexual and psychological violence occurring in the family, including battering, sexual abuse of female children in the household, dowry-related violence, marital rape, female genital mutilation and other traditional practices harmful to women, non-spousal violence and violence related to exploitation; • Physical, sexual and psychological violence occurring within the general community, including rape, sexual abuse, sexual harassment and intimidation at work, in educational institutions and elsewhere, trafficking in women and forced prostitution; • Physical, sexual and psychological violence perpetrated or condoned by the State, wherever it occurs.

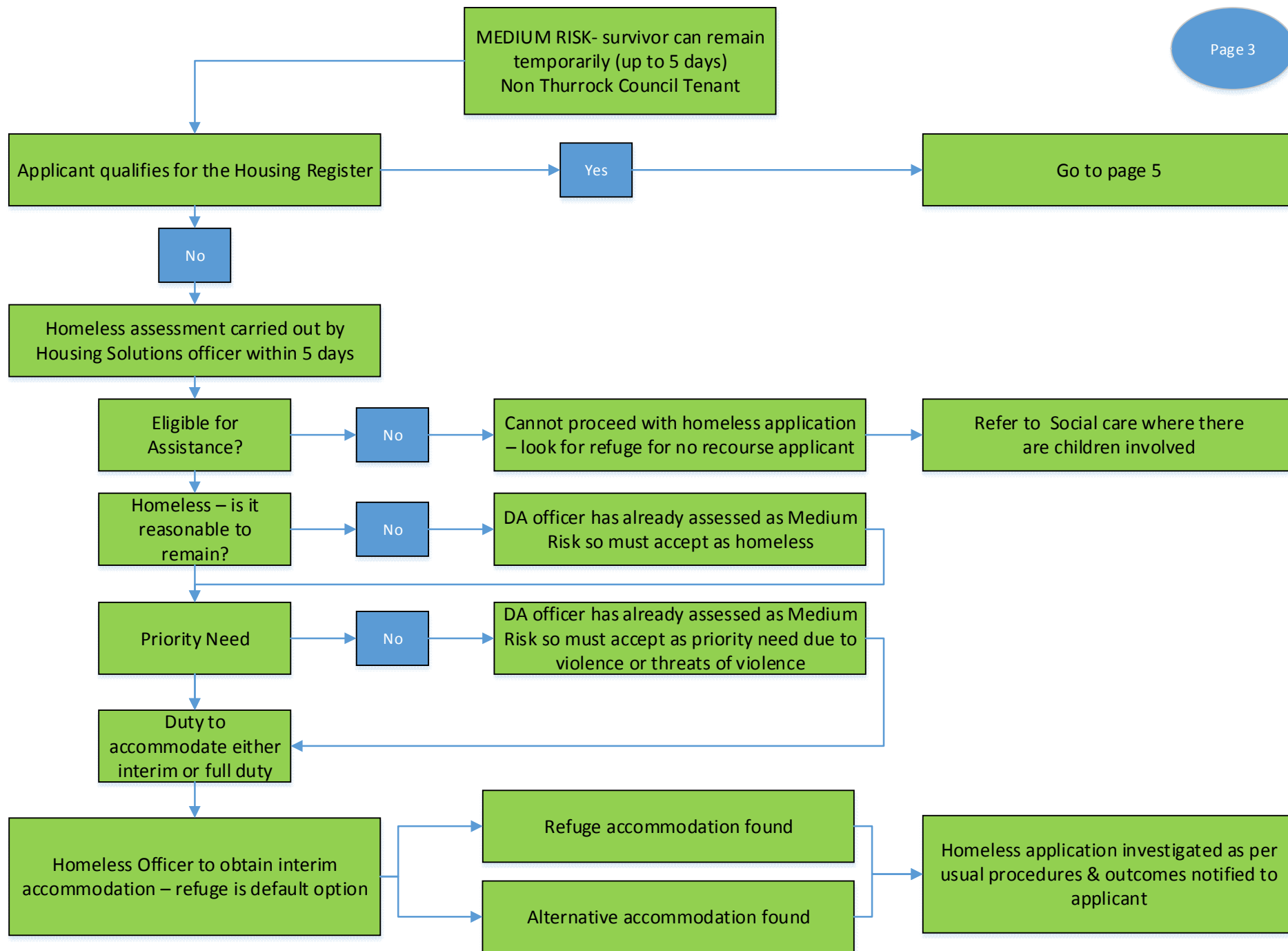
Sexual assault	An act of physical, psychological and/or emotional violation, in the form of a sexual act, which is inflicted on someone without consent. It can involve forcing or manipulating someone to witness or participate in any sexual acts, apart from penetration of the mouth with the penis, the penetration of anus or vagina (however slight) with any object or the penis, which is rape.
Sexual harassment	<p>A form of discrimination under the Equality Act 2010.</p> <p>Unwanted behaviour which you find offensive or which makes you feel intimidated or humiliated and the behaviour is of a sexual nature. You don't need to have previously objected to something for it to be unwanted.</p> <p>Sexual harassment can include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • sexual comments or jokes • physical behaviour, including unwelcome sexual advances, touching and various forms of sexual assault • displaying pictures, photos or drawings of a sexual nature • sending emails with a sexual content.
Forced marriage	<p>Where one or both people do not (or in cases of people with learning disabilities, cannot) consent to the marriage and pressure or abuse is used.</p> <p>It is an appalling and indefensible practice and is recognised in the UK as a form of violence against women and men, domestic/child abuse and a serious abuse of human rights.</p> <p>The pressure put on people to marry against their will can be physical (including threats, actual physical violence and sexual violence) or emotional and psychological (for example, when someone is made to feel like they're bringing shame on their family). Financial abuse (taking your wages or not giving you any money) can also be a factor.</p>
Female Genital mutilation (FGM)	Also known as female circumcision or female genital cutting, is defined by the World Health Organisation (WHO) as "all procedures involving partial or total removal of the external female genitalia or other injury to the female genital organs for non-medical reasons.

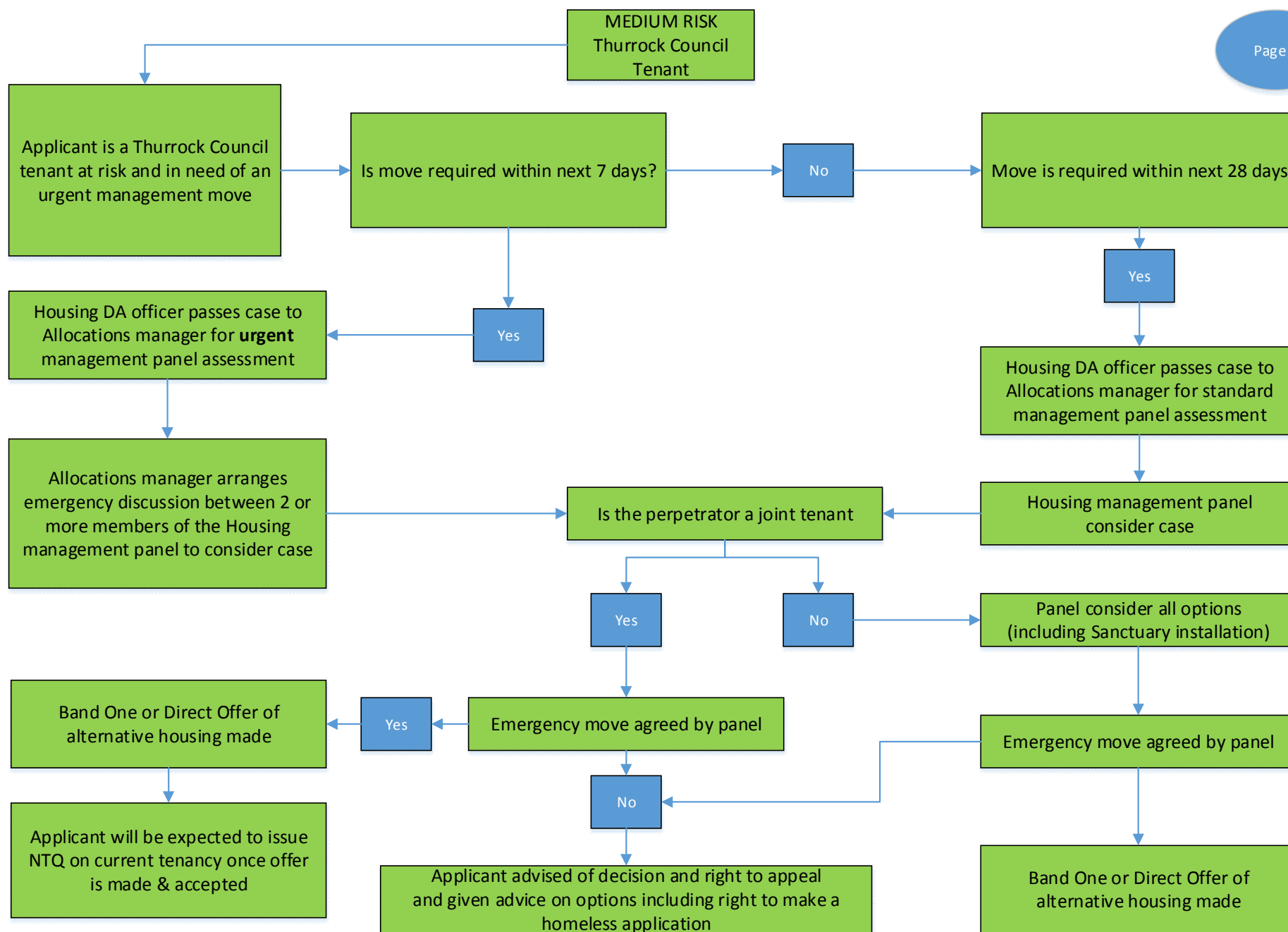
Human trafficking	<p>The recruitment, transportation, transfer, harbouring or receipt of persons, by means of the threat or use of force or other forms of coercion, of abduction, of fraud, of deception, of the abuse of power or of a position of vulnerability or of the giving or receiving of payments or benefits to achieve the consent of a person having control over another person, for the purpose of exploitation.</p> <p>Exploitation shall include, at a minimum, the exploitation of the prostitution of others or other forms of sexual exploitation, forced labour or services, slavery or practices similar to slavery, servitude or the removal of organs.</p>
Honour based violence (HBV)	<p>A collection of practices, which are used to control behaviour within families or other social groups to protect perceived cultural and religious beliefs and/or honour. Such violence can occur when perpetrators perceive that a relative has shamed the family and/or community by breaking their honour code.</p>
Gang related violence	<p>Violence or a threat of violence which occurs in the course of, or is otherwise related to, the activities of a group that:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) consists of at least 3 people; and, b) has one or more characteristics that enable its members to be identified by others as a group.”
Child sexual exploitation	<p>Sexual exploitation of children and young people under 18 involves exploitative situations, contexts and relationships where young people (or a third person or persons) receive ‘something’ (e.g. food, accommodation, drugs, alcohol, cigarettes, affection, gifts, money) as a result of them performing, and/or another or others performing on them, sexual activities.</p> <p>Child sexual exploitation can occur through the use of technology without the child’s immediate recognition; for example being persuaded to post sexual images on the Internet/mobile phones without immediate payment or gain. In all cases, those exploiting the child/young person have power over them by virtue of their age, gender, intellect, physical strength and/or economic or other resources. Violence, coercion and intimidation are common, involvement in exploitative relationships being characterised in the main by the child or young person’s limited availability of choice resulting from their social/economic and/or emotional vulnerability.</p>

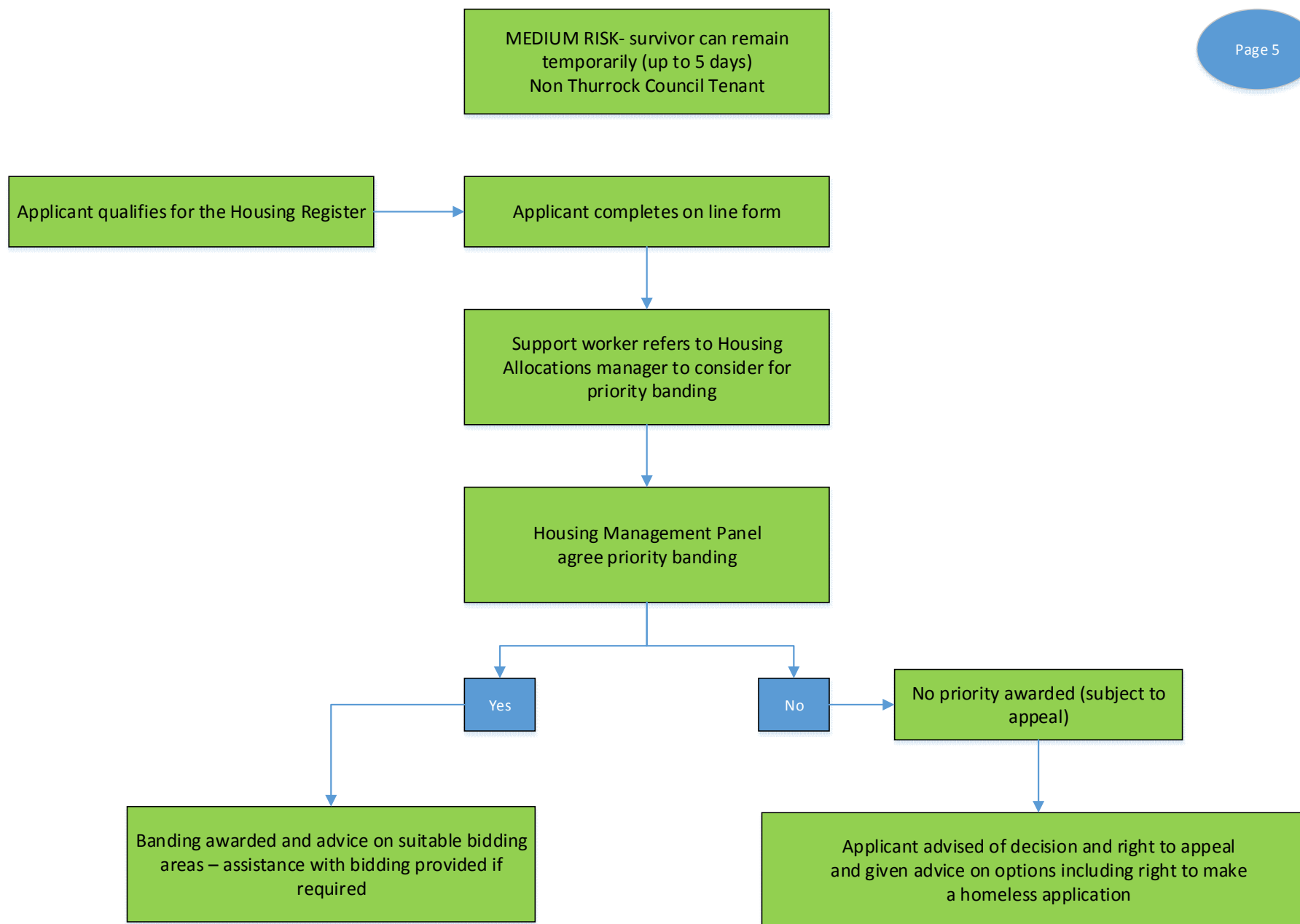
APPENDIX 2 – REFERRALS FOR HOUSING

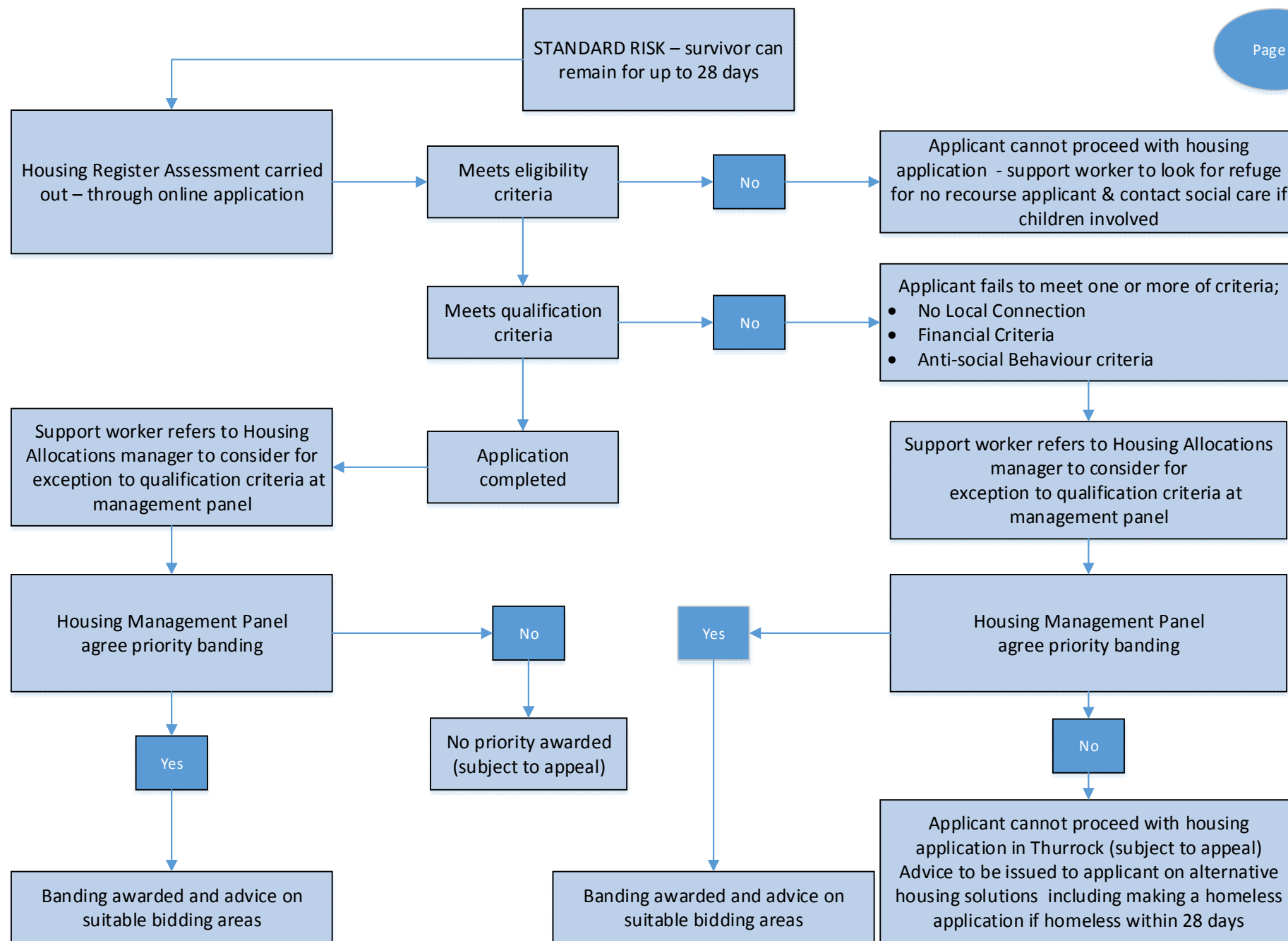




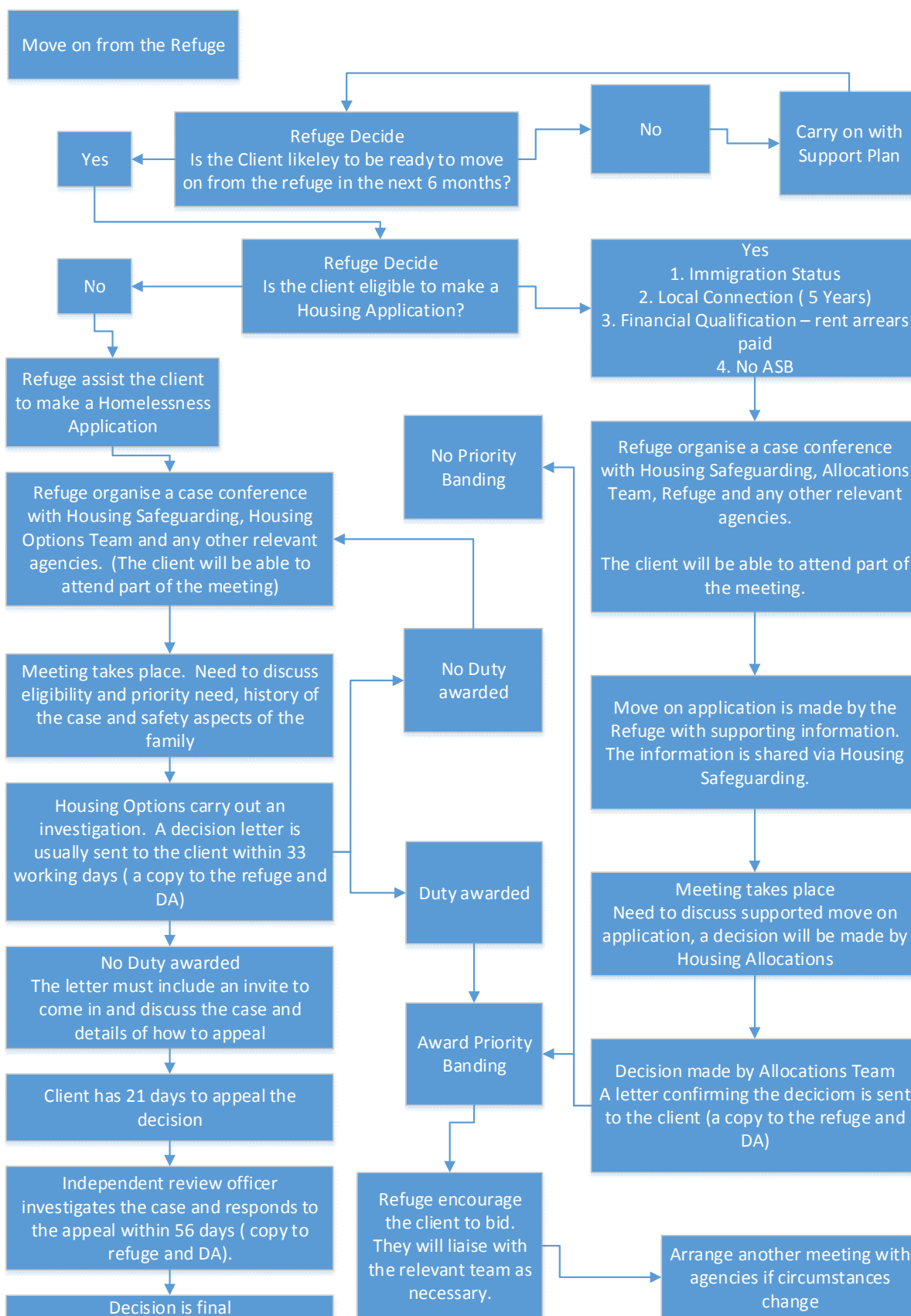




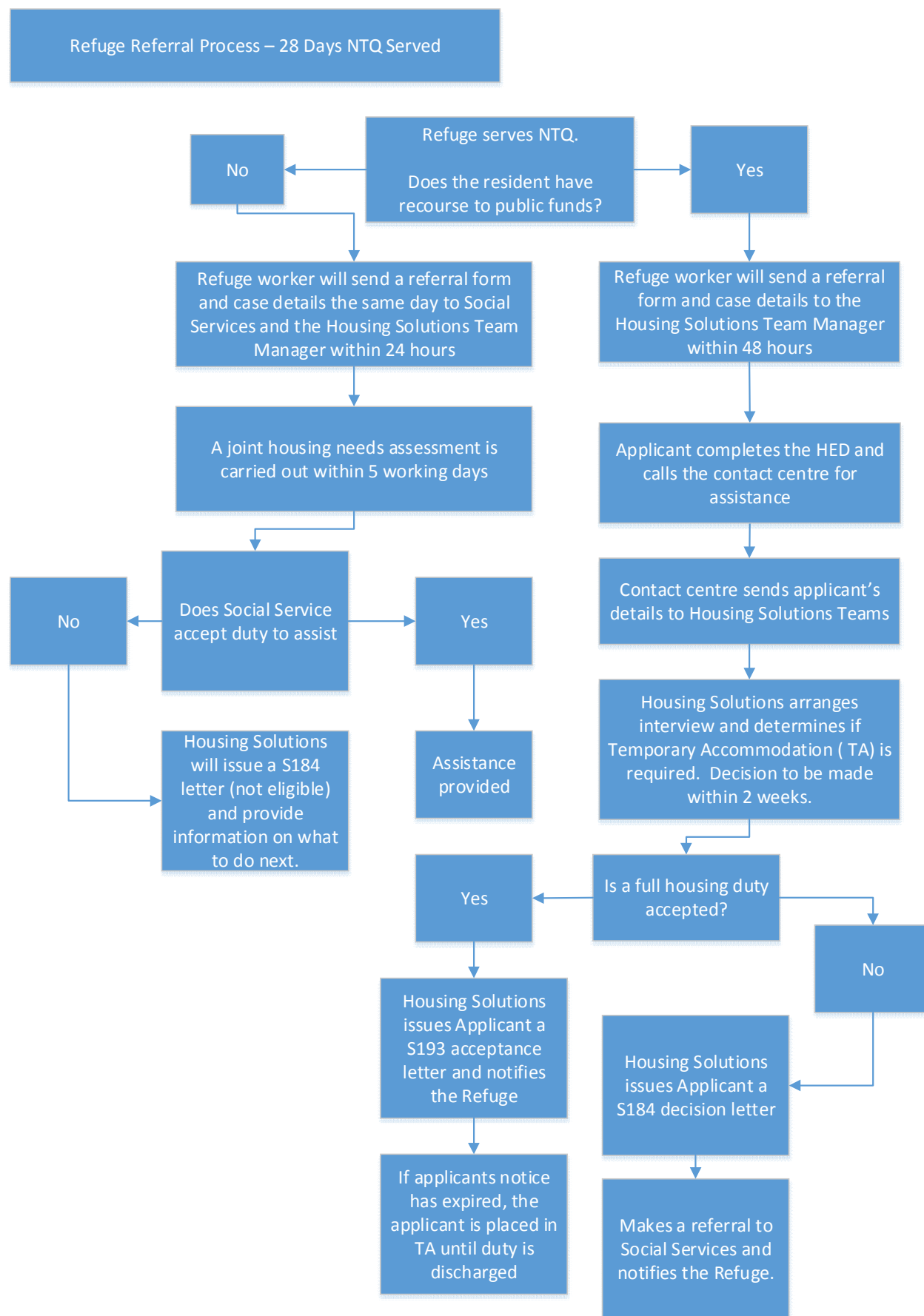




APPENDIX 3 – MOVE ON FROM REFUGE



APPENDIX 4 – REFUGE REFERRAL 28 DAYS NOTICE



APPENDIX 5 – REFUGE REFERRAL IMMEDIATE NOTICE

Refuge Referral Process – Notice on the Day

