

Part I: System Overview

Part II: Coordinated Access Network Appointment: Diversion and Service Linkages

Part III: Tool You Can Use

Information and Referral Subgroup

Co-Chairs:

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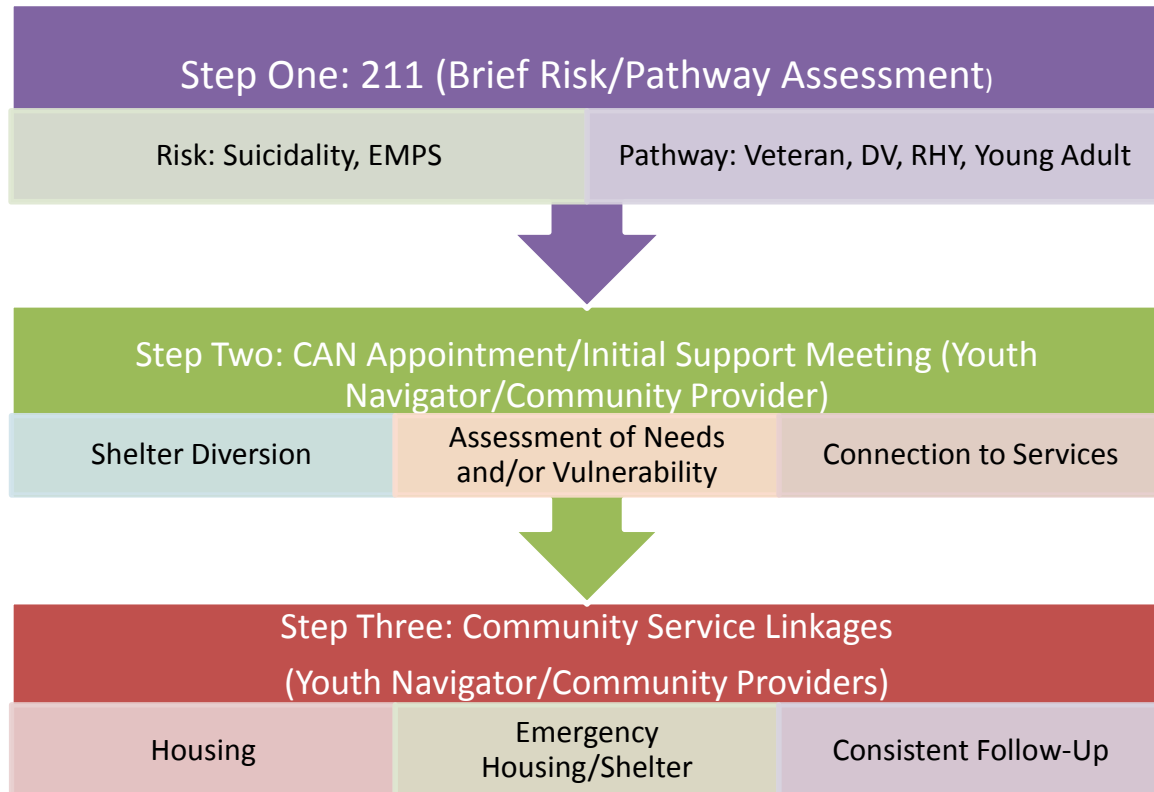
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Member Participants:

PART ONE: SYSTEM OVERVIEW: Crisis Response System for Unstably Housed and Homeless Youth

The Information and Referral Subgroup, a collaborative committee tasked with crafting an effective response system to meet the needs of youth and young adults experiencing homelessness, has created a protocol to help quickly connect young adults with community services. The proposed three-step process is shown below:

Diagram of Coordinated Entry Process for Young Adults



Step 1: First Access – Determining Risk, Service Pathways, and Alternative Supports (211/Outreach/Drop-Ins)

Initial phone screening by 211 or other Coordinated Access Network provider responding to calls and serving unstably housed and homeless young adults will focus on 3 primary components: immediate risk/safety, appropriate pathways for services, and alternatives to shelter when appropriate. This initial contact would include a brief assessment for immediate crisis assistance, including:

- a. Suicidality
- b. Emergency Mental Health Services
- c. Domestic Violence/Sexual Assault
- d. Veteran Status
- e. Have you tried to harm yourself or others?

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If the young person is at risk and emergency services are required, 211 or provider will dispatch immediate emergency assistance as needed. If the young person indicates they are currently involved with domestic violence or trafficking and are at risk, 211 will connect them to the domestic violence provider in their region. DV providers will assist with emergency safe housing in these cases. If a young person is identified as a veteran, 211 will connect them with housing services through the Veteran's Administration.

In addition, during the initial screen, if the young person self-identifies as LGBTQ, in particular transgender, they are at increased risk and 211 will offer to connect them with an LGBTQ provider in their region. If possible, 211 will also collect information so additional follow-up, including a "warm transfer" to the designated regional LGBTQ support organization as needed. (see list of providers under LGBTQ section)

The 211 Call specialist and/or initial contact person should also be trained in shelter diversion and explore with the young person possible alternatives to shelter such as natural supports or other types of assistance that can help avert the crisis, like utility assistance or eviction prevention.

If the young person's housing crisis cannot be addressed through other pathways or preliminary shelter diversion strategies, and the young person is literally homeless or within 14 days of homelessness, the 211 Call Specialist will create an HMIS profile and set up a local CAN Appointment. If the young person does not have transportation, 211 will contact the designated CAN YETI young adult coordinator/navigator/outreach/provider to help make arrangements.

Expanded Eligibility for Young Adult CAN Appointments: Category 4 (Fleeing Domestic Violence) for youth is defined more broadly and should include not only survivors of domestic violence but also youth who are trafficked, verbally abused for sexual orientation, and other forms of violence. In some cases, 211 will refer directly to the local homeless youth provider rather than the domestic violence provider.

If the young person is not eligible for housing related services, 211 will connect with other services as needed.

Step 2: CAN Appointment - Initial Support Meeting (Diversion and Link to Services)

After initial phone call, young adult presenting through 211 (or other access points) with a housing crisis that cannot be resolved and will be connected to a Coordinated Access Network appointment in their respective CAN region. At this appointment, an "Initial Support Meeting" will take place with a focus on diversion and community service linkages. During the Initial Supportive Meeting, the young adult will have a trauma-informed, active listening session to assist young person in identifying housing solutions (shelter diversion) and begin immediate linkages to support services. Throughout the session, staff are asked to collect information to determine service needs and eligibility for various types of supports. The goal will be to provide mental health or addiction services, educational supports, DCF services, or DDS assistance. This listening session will help case managers/navigators understand the unique service needs of the client and be able to connect them to those service providers who can be of assistance. The intention will be to gather information on key areas that a youth might need assistance to help resolve their housing crisis and help them stabilize. These areas include:

- Department of Mental Health and Addiction Services
- Department of Children and Families (if eligible)
- Education Employment
- Department of Developmental Services
- Benefits/Department of Social Services
- Domestic Violence
- Sexual Assault
- Trafficking

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- LGBTQ/Transgender
- Substance Use
- Conflict Resolution/Mediation
- Veteran status

If the young adult is determined through this pre-screen to be a possible candidate for particular services, the staff person conducting the ISM will contact or help the young adult contact the service providers in that region who can be assistance. For mental health and addiction services, for instance, the Young Adult Services coordinator in that region will be contacted for a brief consult and a plan for connecting the young adult to appropriate mental health agencies in the region will be made. The CAN staff will set up an appointment (and transportation if needed) to any intake. Follow up protocol for each of the sets of questions are described in the attached sheet. The CAN staff will continue to work with young adult on housing if this continues to be a need.

Step 3: Making the Community Service Linkages Work

After the Initial Support Meeting, the Youth Navigator or designated person working with the youth would begin the process of connecting the youth with services and assuring that those services linkages were working. If emergency housing was needed, then the Youth Navigator would seek an immediate solution and continue to work with the young person once they are placed to assure that they are moving towards a permanent housing solution. If emergency housing is unavailable in their CAN region, alternative options should be sought in other CAN regions if young person is open to this.

PART II: Guidelines for CAN Appointment/Initial Support Meeting - Questions, Follow-Up Protocol, Resources, and Feedback

During this initial meeting with a Youth Navigator or other Coordinated Entry staff working with young people, the main focus should be on identifying natural supports, possible alternatives to shelter, and beginning the service linkage process as soon as possible. The format should be the same as a shelter diversion appointment (see [Shelter Diversion training](#) on cceh.org website or email training@cceh.org for more information on shelter diversion training) with additional attention paid to reconnecting with natural supports and linking young people to helpful services as soon as possible.

Goal 1: Identify Natural Supports and Possible Housing Solutions through Shelter Diversion Strategies

For helpful resources on shelter diversion, including introductory script, an initial support meeting conversation guide, and additional tools such as the [Natural Support Map](#)

Some questions to assist in identifying if natural supports exist:

- Do you have a safe place to go to in an emergency?
- Are any friends or family aware of your housing crisis?
- Is there someone we can call to let them know you're safe?
- Who did you live with when you were last stably housed?
- Where is somewhere you can go when you need someone to talk to?"

If there are indications that there are natural supports, assist the young person in thinking through whether they can be re-housed with someone within their network if it is safe and appropriate. If family conflict is a contributing factor, ask if it would be ok to have someone contact them to learn more about some services that might help (contact training@cceh.org to find out more about the STRIVE mediation specialists in your region).

Goal 2: Connect Quickly to Support Services: Determining Eligibility & Need, Follow-Up Protocol, Resources and Training, and Feedback Loop

Young Adult Services/Department of Mental Health and Addiction Services:

Determining Need/Eligibility for Mental Health resources:

Conversation starter: Have you ever been told that you had a mental health diagnosis, or felt like there was something going on with you that you might talk to a therapist about?

Questions to Answer: (for Mental Health resources)

1. Does the youth currently have a diagnosis that includes any mental health issues (such as depression, bipolar disorder, PTSD, psychotic disorder, schizophrenia)?
2. Did the youth have any psychiatric hospitalizations or out of home placements, i.e. residential/group home?
3. Has the youth ever been prescribed medication for mental health related issues (see conditions above)
4. Before they turned 18, did they experience any trauma such as physical abuse, sexual abuse or neglect?

Follow-up Protocol:

- Contact the Local Mental Health Authority in your region (refer to [YAS Regional contact list](#) for consultation and to connect young person to services) if the young person answers yes to any of the above questions. The LMHA can help do further screening to determine if the young adult is eligible for additional services in their Young Adult Services program, including housing and on-going supports.

Resources and Training:

- CCEH Webinar on [Services for Young Adults Webinar by Department and Mental Health and Substance Abuse](#)

Feedback on Service Linkage:

Please [click here](#) to provide feedback about service linkages.

Substance Use (DMHAS):

Determining Need/Eligibility for Substance Use Resources:

Questions to Answer:

1. Does the youth want to be connected to services for substance use assistance?

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2. If youth is pregnant and using substances, are they willing to be connected to a health provider and services to assist them?
3. Are there substances that you've been using to deal with the stress of your housing situation? How do you feel about your substance use?"

Follow-up Protocol

If yes to either of the above, caseworkers or front line staff who need information on what level of care an individual may need or to connect them to services should call the Access Line (1-800-563-4086) or visit www.ct.gov/dmhas/walkins for a list of walk-in centers. The Access Line is available 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, please click [here](#) for more information.

Resources and Training:

[CCEH Substance Use Services Webinar](#)

[DMHAS Access Line Enhancements and Transportation Information](#)

Feedback on Service Linkage:

Please [click here](#) to provide feedback about service linkages.

Services of the Department of Children and Families (DCF)

Determining Need/Eligibility:

Questions to Answer:

1. Was the young adult committed to DCF upon turning 18, currently unmarried, not on active duty in the military, and under the age of 21? If yes, the youth can apply for DCF Re-entry services by contacting the DCF Careline at 1-800-842-2288. If unsure of the youth's status regarding any of the above criteria, the DCF Careline can still be contacted to request Re-Entry and a DCF Careline social worker can assist with completing the initial screening.
2. If yes to the above and they are in the military, they are ineligible for DCF Re-entry services and first point of contact should be the Department of Veteran Affairs. Crisis housing might be available. For more information, contact the Veteran's Advocacy and Assistance Line at 1-866-928-8387.

Follow Protocol: If youth is under the age of 21 and they were committed to DCF on their 18th birthday, contact the DCF Careline to request Re-entry. If the youth meets initial screening criteria, the Re-Entry application will be assessed by a regional DCF Re-Entry liaison for eligibility regarding housing, educational, mental health, case management or other DCF services.

Resources and Training:

- DCF Website – includes list of Regional Offices
- Mandated Reporter Training (link needed)
- [“Public and Private Partnership in Ending Youth Homelessness”](#)

Feedback on Service Linkage:

Please [click here](#) to provide feedback about service linkages. You can also call the DCF Ombudsman office at toll-free: 1-866-637-4737. For more information about the Ombudsman office, click [here](#):

For general feedback, [click here](#).

Developmental Disabilities (Department of Disability Services, DDS)

Determining Need/Eligibility:

Questions to Answer:

1. Did the young person receive Special Education Services in school?
2. If yes, have you ever been diagnosed with having an intellectual or developmental disability or Autism Spectrum Disorder?

Follow-up Protocol:

- If yes to the intellectual or developmental disability in previous question, connect with DDS. If yes to Autism Spectrum Disorder, connect with DDS (or DSS if strictly seeking Medicaid eligibility). Anyone under the age of 21 can also apply for services through Beacon Health Options. Behavioral treatment services are available to Medicaid-eligible children under the age of 21 and Peer Specialist and Care Coordinator services are available to individuals of any age with ASD and their families. To Access Services by phone: 1/877-552-8247 or via e-mail: <http://www.ctbhp.com>
- If no to both 1 & 2, and you believe there might be some issues, you can also ask "Do you have reason to believe you have an undiagnosed intellectual disability?"
- If yes to the question about being undiagnosed, then they should be referred to DDS. If it is suspected that the young adult has Acquired Brain Injury, they should be referred to DSS regional offices and not DDS.

Resources and Training:

[Department of Developmental Services: List of Program and Services](#)
[Making Good Choices About Your DDS Services and Supports](#)

Feedback on Service Linkage:

Please [click here](#) to provide feedback about service linkages.

Education

Determining Need/Eligibility:

Questions to answer:

1. Is the unaccompanied young person currently enrolled and/or attending school?
2. Where is the school or institution of learning (name and location) that you are enrolled in, last attended or graduated from?

Follow-Up Protocol:

- If the young person is under age 18, ask if they have been expelled from school:
 - If yes, determine when the youth is allowed to return to school. If the young person needs legal advocacy, refer him/her to local legal services organization.
 - If no, then contact the local McKinney-Vento Liaison for assistance in keeping/returning the young person to school:
<http://www.sde.ct.gov/sde/cwp/view.asp?a=2678&q=333702>
- Any young person 18-20 years old that has not graduated from high school and is still active in school – refer youth to the local McKinney-Vento Liaison:
<http://www.sde.ct.gov/sde/cwp/view.asp?a=2678&q=333702>

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- Any unaccompanied homeless young person under 21, that has not graduated from high school, has any concerns about his/her education and needs or may need special education may request the appointment of a Surrogate Parent (educational advisor)]. Refer to CSDE to request the assignment of an IDEA surrogate parent:
http://www.sde.ct.gov/sde/lib/sde/pdf/deps/homeless/surrogate_request_form.pdf
- If the young person is 21 or older, refer to [insert SPOC language here] or One Stop for employment assistance.

Resources and Training:

- [Www.Youth-help.org](http://www.Youth-help.org)

Feedback on Service Linkage:

Please [click here](#) to provide feedback about service linkages.

LGBTQ Services:

Determining Need/Eligibility:

Questions to answer:

1. Does the young person identify as LGBTQ? Recommendation is to ask the question simply "Do you identify as being LGBTQ?"
- When identifying young people, it's best to ask them if they fit under the LGBTQ umbrella, rather than specifically asking for sexuality or gender identity status. This makes it so the question is less direct and easier to answer. Some people might get defensive if they're asked a more personal question about gender identity. Also, some people might have difficulty identifying as transgender or are unsure and choose "safer" options.
 - If the young person says that they are, they might be at higher risk and it is recommended that the person conducting the ISM assess if someone is high risk by asking the following questions:
 1. Safety (Physical, emotional, stability)
 1. Have you recently tried to harm yourself?
 2. Have you recently been Physically Assaulted? Verbally assaulted?
 3. Question about recently having used substances.
 4. Recently been kicked out of your home.
 5. Recently dropped out of school/stopped going.
 2. If they answer yes to one or more of these risk factors, there is cause for concern.

Follow-Up Protocol: If there is cause for concern, this young person requires immediate assistance and should be linked to safe, LGBTQ-friendly emergency housing, local LGBTQ services, and additional emergency connections as needed.

Resources and Training:

- [LGBTQ Resources CCEH Webpage](#)

Feedback on Service Linkage:

Please [click here](#) to provide feedback about service linkages.

Benefits: (Department of Social Services – DSS)

Determining Need/Eligibility:

1. Complete the DSS survey on the 211 website and assist young person in connecting to benefits they are eligible to receive. Go to: <http://www.211navigator.com/> to complete form.

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Follow-up Protocol: Based on eligibility, help young person apply for food assistance, healthcare, income, utility assistance, etc. If needed, contact legal services to assist.

Resources and Training:

- Legal Aid
 - www.CTLawHelp.org
 - www.speakupteens.org
 - New Haven
 - Hartford
 - Bridgeport
- [SOAR](#) training
- [CT Services for Young Adults \(CCEH Webinar\)](#)

Feedback on Service Linkage:

Please [click here](#) to provide feedback about service linkages.

Domestic Violence/Trafficking/Sexual Assault

Although 211 or other access point should always do an initial screen for possible domestic violence or sexual assault, during the CAN Appointment/Initial Support Meeting the young person should be assessed again for possible service needs in this domain.

Many young adults might be reluctant to share information on this issue, so asking questions in a more general format is helpful.

Protocol & Resources Domestic Violence, Trafficking, and Sexual Assault:

Domestic Violence:

Determining Need/Eligibility: Survivors of domestic violence are can be reluctant to share because of fear of repercussions from perpetrator, fear of child welfare involvement, or other factors like shame and hopelessness. Phrasing can be crucial in how coordinated entry staff obtains information about possible domestic violence. Some helpful wording is included below to assist in finding out information about whether or not a young person is currently facing a domestic violence situation and should be directed to a DV provider. For a more indirect approach, here are some possible phrasings:

- “Because unfortunately violence is so common, I started asking everyone I see if this has been a factor in their housing crisis.”
- “I don't know if this is a problem for you, but so many people I see are dealing with abusive relationships. Some are too afraid or uncomfortable to bring it up themselves, so I just started asking about it with everyone.”

If it seems appropriate, here are some more direct ways to ask about domestic violence:

- Good general lead-in, “Is there anyone that you have been spending time lately with that has led to you feel insecure or unsure of yourself?”
- Are you afraid of your partner? Do you feel you are in danger?

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- You mentioned your partner's problem with temper/stress/drinking. When that happens, has he ever threatened or hurt you?
- Has anyone at home hit you or tried to injure you in any way?
- Is anyone close to you threatening or hurting you?
- Has anyone ever made you to do something sexual when you did not want to?
- Do you feel safe where you are?

Follow-up Protocol: If a young person indicates they have been or are a victim of domestic violence, they should be connected with the local domestic service provider. United Way 211 screens for domestic violence but might not always catch all cases during their calls. If someone has experienced domestic violence, they should be connected to specialized services to assist with temporary housing that provides safety and confidentiality precautions. Connect with 211 again for assistance to identify a local domestic service provider in your region. Legal connections should also be made with assistance from the local DV provider.

Resources and Training:

[CT Coalition Against Domestic Violence](#)

[CCEH Webinar on Housing and Serving Domestic Violence Clients](#)

Feedback on Service Linkage:

Please [click here](#) to provide feedback about service linkages

Trafficking

Determining Need/Eligibility: Young adults and youth experiencing homelessness are at higher risk for trafficking. Homeless youth are particularly at risk; a trafficker will approach one in three teenagers within 48 hours of being on the street. Research indicates approximately 10% of shelter youths and 28% of street youth have participated in survival sex to meet their basic needs. Some important indicators of trafficked youth include: any type of evidence of physical enslavement, isolation from the public or family group, confiscation of documents, false IDs, lack of documentation, someone else controls their money, moving from location to location, psychological or emotional dependency, threats of violence. Traffickers can be friends, family, girlfriends/boyfriends, gang members, pimps/madams, and massage parlor owners.

If you suspect that they have been trafficked, and feel it is ok to obtain more information from the youth, the following questions can be used to help determine their status:

2. Is there any indication that someone has forced the young person to engage in sexual acts for money or favors?
3. Has anyone asked you to do things for money that has made you feel uncomfortable?
2. Is anyone holding their passport or identification documents?
3. Has anyone threatened to hurt them or their family if they leave?
4. Has anyone physically or sexually abused them?
5. Do they have a debt to someone they cannot pay off?
6. Does anyone take all or part of the money they earn?

If YES to any of the above questions or if other indicators of human trafficking are present, follow the protocols below.

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Follow-Up Protocol: If you suspect a youth under the age of 18 is being trafficked or is engaged in survival sex, contact the DCF Careline to access the services of the Human Anti-Trafficking Response Team (HART) at 1-800-842-2288.

For young people over the age of 18, who need immediate help or if you suspect a potential trafficking situation, call the National Human Trafficking Resource Center (NHTRC) hotline at 1-888-373-7888. Ask for assistance with assessment and next steps (following all HIPAA & mandatory reporting regulations) The NHTRC Hotline is a confidential hotline, is operated 24/7, and has access to 200+ languages.

Assessment of Potential Danger: The NHTRC can assist in assessing the current level of danger. Be attentive to the immediate environment for safety concerns and follow other safety protocols if there are safety threats. Questions to consider: Is the trafficker present? What does the client believe will happen if they do not return? Does the client believe anyone else (including family) is in danger?

If there is perceived danger and the client seeks help, then discuss with the Hotline next steps. You may need to involve law enforcement for victim safety. The NHTRC can assist in determining sensitive law enforcement contacts.

Resources and Training:

- [CCEH Resource page on Homeless Youth and Trafficking](#)
- [National Human Trafficking Helpline](#)
- **Love 146**

Feedback on Service Linkage:

Please [click here](#) to provide feedback about service linkages

Sexual Assault: (Working with CT Alliance to End Sexual Violence)

Determining Need/Eligibility: Young adults and youth experiencing homelessness are at higher risk for sexual assault. If the young person indicates they are a survivor of sexual assault or you suspect that they have been, follow the protocol below.

Follow-Up Protocol: There is a statewide toll-free hotline for sexual assault in Connecticut. By dialing (888) 999-5545 from anywhere in Connecticut, the call will be automatically routed to the nearest sexual assault crisis service. En espanol, llame (888) 568-8332. Assistance in connecting to mental health provider and law enforcement should be provided.

Resources and Training:

- [CT Alliance to End Sexual Violence](#)

Feedback on Service Linkage:

Please [click here](#) to provide feedback about service linkages

Veterans

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Determining Need/Eligibility: 211 screens for Veterans during that initial call but sometimes individuals might be missed. While this is a normal part of CAN intake, all youth-specific CAN appointment sites should be familiar with the protocols for young Veterans.

Follow-Up Protocol: If someone self-reports as Veterans of the U.S. military then they should be referred to the Errera Center at 203-479-8064 to determine Veteran eligibility and resources screening.

Resources and Training:

[Veteran's Affairs CT Healthcare Systems – Resources for Homeless Vets](#)

Feedback on Service Linkage:

Please [click here](#) to provide feedback about service linkage

Employment Services (coming soon)

Determining Need/Eligibility: (Job Corps, local employment services, YouthBuild)

Follow-Up Protocol:

Resources and Training:

Feedback on Service Linkage:

Please [click here](#) to provide feedback about service linkage