



STOCKPORT
METROPOLITAN BOROUGH COUNCIL

Supported Housing Improvement Programme (SHIP)

Good Practice Guide

February 2024



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Good Practice Guide- Supported Accommodation

Introduction (National Context)

According to Supported Housing: National Statement of Expectations (October 2020) the general overview of what constitutes best practice with respect to Supported Housing is as follows:

Housing Facilities:

Accommodation is welcoming and is designed to feel like a home, rather than an institution. Residents are consulted on changes to their spaces such as redecoration or use of communal areas.

Care is taken to consider additional facilities or spaces which can improve outcomes (e.g., communal areas or private spaces for meetings with support workers).

Clear signage where needed, such as to communal areas (e.g., gym).

Housing, Safety and Building Conditions

A planned programme is in place to minimise preventable deterioration of the buildings, accommodation, grounds, equipment, and furnishings, and that all such are well maintained and in good working order. This includes a preventative maintenance and repair programme and schedule with regular inspections to check building and equipment conditions and to ensure repairs and servicing takes place.

Timescales for non-emergency repairs may be agreed with residents to create a more resident-focussed approach.

Housing and property managers examine the physical buildings on a regular basis to identify problems areas in safety and security.

Housing staff inspect property units whenever a new resident moves in, and at least annually.

Each property has a safety plan, with a clear reporting line for responding to building emergencies. Residents are engaged on issues related to safety through existing or dedicated committees including residents, housing, and support staff.

Supported accommodation – general expectations and suitability.

Accommodation is located near to amenities and transport, supporting social inclusion.

There are efforts to engage the local community, for example over the standards of housing and housing services, or by allowing access to any facilities such as gyms, as appropriate.

Residents are empowered and supported to engage with neighbours and the local community if they choose to.

Tenancy and licence agreements

All residents are helped by housing staff to understand their rights and responsibilities under the tenancy.

Housing staff assist residents with managing rental payments and rent arrears where needed.

There are procedures in place to prevent the need for eviction ever arising, where possible.

Resident communication and engagement

Staff actively seek resident feedback on the housing and housing services, ideally through a range of methods such as informal chats, meetings, surveys, and suggestion boxes.

Prospective residents are provided with an information pack including information on all rents and service charges, including notice periods for increases, and procedures for complaints and redress and dispute resolution. The pack could also list all routines and house rules.

All written material for residents is in plain English and staff are able to help explain if needed.

There is assistance for residents whose first language is not English, who are non-verbal or who have limited understanding.

Prospective and new residents are shown around and orientated on first arrival, including providing details of the move-in conditions and emergency exits.

A nominated person (e.g., family member) is able to be appointed to assist with all accommodation issues.

Background (Local Context)

As part of the Supported Housing Improvement Programme (SHIP) it was established during co-production sessions, that a Good Practice Guide would be a useful way of collating and sharing the good practice observed during visits undertaken by the team.

The Guide will encompass all aspects of care and support delivery within supported living and will include observations in addition to policies and processes, where the outcome has been positive for the individuals concerned.

The Guide will be circulated to all stakeholders:

- Individuals who live in supported accommodation
- Families of individuals who live in or are considering moving to supported accommodation.
- Service User Groups
- Support Providers
- Landlords and Housing Officers
- Adult Social Care and the Integrated Care System (inc. social work teams, Quality Team, Safeguarding, BI and Transformation Board)
- Advocacy and Healthwatch
- Housing Benefits Team and Housing Standards and Strategic Housing

What is Good Practice?

Good Practice is the minimum standard we should all expect with respect to support providers and Landlords, as well as the people who work directly with individuals.

The SHIP Team have gathered examples of where good practice has been observed, so that this can be shared with other providers and Landlords, so that everyone can expect the same high standards of care, support and accommodation.

The headings relate to the key areas of focus within the Think Local Act Personal Making It Real (2018) publication in order for them to be incorporated into outcomes for individuals within each service.

1. Living the Life I want, keeping Safe and Well (Wellbeing and Independence)
2. Having the information, I need when I need it (Information and Advice)
3. Keeping Family, Friends, and Connections (Active and Supportive Communities)
4. My Support my own way (Flexible and Integrated Care and Support)
5. Staying in Control (When things need to change)
6. The People who support me (workforce)

1. Living the Life I want, keeping Safe and Well (Wellbeing and Independence)

Accommodation:

- Landlords should have a schedule of updates to facilities i.e., general re-decoration every 2 years. This should also include replacement of kitchen and bathroom facilities and laminate flooring. The schedule should be available to residents, families, and support providers.
- Tenants should be offered choice in re-decoration where possible, such as choice of colours for paint etc regardless of who is funding the decoration.
- Any signage within the property should be in keeping with the property being someone's home.
- Fire Risk Assessments should be shared with the support provider by the landlord as soon as they are issued.

Holidays:

- Holidays should be included as part of the support plan, with a clear outline of views, wishes and plans to meet the outcomes of individuals who wish to take a holiday supported by staff.
- Where appropriate, individuals should be supported to take holidays with family or friends if this is their choice. To be discussed at advocacy meetings and reviews.
- Funding arrangements need to be clear and transparent with involvement of social workers where practical to support BI decisions.
- Costs for holidays - Where there are ISF's, and hours can be banked for absences such as individuals staying with family members with agreed notice periods; these hours can be utilised to fund staffing for holidays
- Where an individual is being supported to go on holiday with their tenancy team hourly support costs should be calculated taking account of any one-to-one hours, the person would have been entitled to in that time period.

Pets:

- During our co production sessions, access to pets/animals was a priority for the people we spoke with.
- There should not be a blanket ban on owning pets – each situation should be risk assessed and where ownership is not appropriate, clear reasons should be provided and alternative solutions explored, including visiting animal organisations, staff members and family members being able to bring their pets in and visits to animal sanctuaries or charities (Noah's Ark, The Donkey Sanctuary, Zoo2U).

2. Having the information, I need when I need it (Information and Advice)

- Landlords should complete a Handover pack for providers with details of processes, who to contact etc.
- Landlord and Housing Officer details should be displayed in the property with photos for tenants.
- An introductory letter should be provided to the tenant at the signing up meeting with details of who to contact and when.
- All information should be easy read and accessible as appropriate to the individual.
- Tenants' handbooks should be in place in easy read versions targeted to the tenants who reside or will reside in the property and include tenants, landlords, and support provider responsibilities, being a good neighbour information. health and safety information, fire safety, information on how tenants can raise concerns including safeguarding concerns.

In addition, they should cover:

- Tenants' rights and responsibilities – right to have visitors, right to live without fear, responsibilities of paying bills. Maintenance of property, use of shared areas in the property, furnishing and decorating own room etc
 - Being a good tenant – e.g. can play music / tv in own room / lounge but need to consider how loud this is at night for other tenants, considering others when using the shared areas – turn taking in choosing TV programmes on shared TV etc.
 - Being a good neighbour e.g. not leaving rubbish in shared alleyway, not being too loud especially at night.
 - Visitors to the property – tenants' rights to have visitors and how behaviours from visitors should not impact on other tenants.
 - How to raise a complaint or concern and who with
 - How to raise a safeguarding and who with
- Tenants should wherever appropriate be involved in fire alarm testing and evacuation practice.
 - Service charges should be with the tenancy agreement – this can assist the provider and tenant in knowing what should be done by the landlord.
 - Tenancy agreements a copy should be kept within the property for reference.
 - Shared Expenses – tenants/appointees should be aware of what is included in the budget for shared expenses.
 - Where possible support providers and landlords should ensure that bills are in the name of either organisation, not in the name of individuals, Support providers are responsible for ensuring that outgoings are fair and equitable.
 - Tenancy staff should be proactive in managing the home with consideration to best value and this may include changing utility provider as needed following consultation with all interested parties. Using lighting and heating to meet needs and not excessively.

- Properties should have suitable lockable storage for confidential files and for medication and for any finances that are managed on behalf of individuals and appropriate records should be maintained. Suitable procedures should be in place for handling of keys for locked cabinets. Measures put in place for confidential management of individuals' files should not be a barrier to access to that information for individuals or their representatives.
- Ensure those managing the property are aware of the scope of the landlords' responsibilities and theirs and are aware of what is and is not covered within the service charges.
- Repairs should be reported as soon as possible.
- Maintaining a house maintenance log/ housing book / repairs log / book detailing concerns and dates reported, who was spoken to and job number.
- Follow up dates recorded if further calls need to be made. Date repair remedied recorded.
- Having a system in place to follow up on repairs so they are not missed e.g. repairs book checked on handover etc with clear accountability for checking up.

3. Keeping Family, Friends, and Connections (Active and Supportive Communities)

- Leaflets for accessing the local community should be made available within the property and staff should familiarise themselves with events and resources.
- Accessing the local community and participating in community events will strengthen relationships with neighbours and provide opportunities for individuals to develop ties outside of their accommodation.

4. My Support my own way (Flexible and Integrated Care and Support)

- If there is wear and tear to the property due to known and existing behaviours, this needs to be shared via a tripartite agreement, detailing how repairs will be completed and who will be responsible for payment.
- Support Providers should have a finance policy which details how they will support tenants to manage both their personal finances and any joint household funds. There should be clear guidelines regarding how finances will be managed, frequency of auditing of finances and lines of accountability, and these should be shared with tenants and their representatives.
- There should be clear guidelines for how support providers support tenants with charge cards or similar payment mechanisms.
- The finance policy should also state how tenants who can manage finances or are being supported to develop their independence skills regarding finances will be supported to do this.
- All tenants should be supported to maximise their finances by being provided with guidance on best value and being supported to manage their utility bills by using heating and electricity as needed. This includes not using power excessively and being supported to understand that this is best for their finances and for the environment.
- Where tenants are not able to manage their electric and gas consumption themselves support teams should do this in the best interests of tenants.
- All spending on behalf of tenants should be based on best value and larger purchases should have evidence of consultation and best interest.
- Any joint housekeeping funds should be evaluated on a regular basis and reimbursements made and amounts adjusted to ensure funds do not build up excessively. Information on spending from household accounts should be available for and shared with individuals and their representatives.
- Support providers should ensure that any joint bills are shared fairly with consideration that people should not be paying towards things that they do not use, i.e. it is unfair for a tenant to pay towards a Sky Sports package if they do not watch sports, or towards the internet if they do not use it and it is not used on their behalf.
- Any subscriptions should be evaluated for value and usage on a regular basis to ensure tenants are maximising their finances.
- Consideration of how cultural events, birthdays etc are celebrated and financed needs to consider all tenants needs and desires with tenants being supported to make informed decisions regarding how they celebrate and associated costs.
- Where tenants are not able to make informed decisions regarding spending family or any advocate involved should be consulted to make a best interest decision.
- Any shared household accounts need to be adjusted and repaid to individuals or any individual tenant leaving the property, less an amount to cover outstanding bills. The balance should start from zero once outstanding bills are paid with existing tenants / new tenants putting in an agreed amount to ensure equity.
- Clear information needs to be shared with individuals and their family members regarding changes in household contributions due to tenants moving in or out of the property at the earliest opportunity.

- Meal Planning should be undertaken weekly to ensure that dietary and budgetary considerations are being met.
- There should be an annual review of shared finances, with tenants and their representatives, with a discussion about how best to allocated unspent funds.
- The provider should complete a financial projection based on the previous years' expenditure and adjust contributions accordingly.

Vehicles

- Procedures for checking vehicles before journeys should be in place, visual check - walk around – checking that tyres are not flat, is there enough fuel for journey is everything in working order etc.
- Procedures should be in place to ensure regular servicing and MOT takes place.
- Adjustments should be made to shared utility bills to account for electric car charging. So that tenants are not paying to charge a vehicle they do not use.
- Usage of vehicles should be monitored especially where there are shared vehicles. In cases where monitoring shows that vehicle use may not be offering best value discussion should take place with individuals or their representatives.
- Payments towards fuel for shared vehicles needs to be fair and based on usage. This may mean that some tenants pay more towards fuel for the vehicle than other tenants if they use the vehicle more often or for longer journeys.

5. Staying in Control (When things need to change)

- Managers to do a walk round regularly to observe issues so that things are reported in a timely manner – inside and outside of the property.
- Properties not on the schedule for redecoration can be escalated and those not needing decorating can wait.
- Any significant changes to support plans should be shared at handover with all support staff.
- Reviews should be completed with the individuals and their carers on a regular basis.
- All tenants should be supported to be able to cope with change.

6. The People who support me (workforce)

- Safeguarding – support providers should be aware of harms levels and the Stockport Safeguarding portal and policy.
- Staff induction should include empathy and empowerment training.
- The ethos should be that it is very much the tenants' home and that the support staff and other professionals are welcome visitors.
- New staff should be able to familiarise themselves with support plans and to meet individuals to understand how best to support individuals.
- Driving policy for staff should be in place. Induction into driving of vehicle should take place with staff and staff signed off as being competent before driving tenants' vehicles unsupervised.
- Staff Meals – if staff meals are to be subsidised from joint accounts, it needs to be made explicit with the individuals within the service and their advocates and appointees. If individuals/appointees offer a reasonable challenge and object to staff meals being funded from joint accounts, the provider company should respect this.

There should be guidance and limits on how much staff can spend on their own meals from joint accounts. Employers should consider providing a contribution to this budget. Staff meals should only be provided as part of a communal cooking/dining experience – households should not be funding separate staff meals. When staff are out with individuals, there should be a reasonable amount permitted to be spent on their food from household budgets or individual budget if the activity is for the benefit of one individual e.g.

- ✓ Drinks: £2.49
- ✓ Breakfast: £4.60
- ✓ Lunch: £6.33
- ✓ Dinner: £7.84
- ✓ Activities: £10.00

In terms of activities and admission to events, most will include 1 or 2 free carer tickets, and these should be utilised.

- Managers should have systems in place to make timely referrals to the correct departments in the event of:
 - Defective equipment – these should be made as soon as possible once the defect has been discovered, processes should be in place to follow up on repairs / replacements and in the event of delays to repairs / replacements alternative arrangements should be sourced without delay and risk assessments should be updated.
 - Changes in need of people being supported for example changes of support needs, moving and handling needs, eating and drinking needs. Referrals should be detailed to aid triage and should be made as soon as changes are observed, and systems should be in place to follow up on referrals made.
- Safety checks by staff should be embedded into good practice, including (but not exclusively):
 - Water temperature check charts should detail which outlet (tap/ shower / bath/ sink) checked and the temperature should be recorded each week with clear guidance detailed on the form for support workers to follow in the event of the water temperature being too hot.
 - Smoke alarm testing chart recording should detail which smoke alarms were tested each week.
 - Cleaning schedules should be in place to support the tenants.
 - Fridge /Freezer temp checks for safety - checking dates on food etc.
- Having a dedicated file relating to on call will ensure that the staff are more confident, this could contain the following information:
 - What on Call is for
 - What on Call is not for
 - Who and how to contact on call.
 - What should be expected from contacting On call
 - Steps to take as well as contacting On Call
 - What happens to the information when On Call log a call.
 - Examples of situations specific to the property are detailed and how they would be dealt with.

We would like to take this opportunity to thank all the Support Providers, Landlords, individuals and families who contributed to the production of this document.