

Tenancy Support Service Handbook



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The Tenancy Support Service

The tenancy support service is managed and delivered by St. Leger Homes. Here is some information about St. Leger Homes and the tenancy support service.

Who is St. Leger Homes?

St. Leger Homes is an award winning company which provides housing services across Doncaster. We work in partnership with Doncaster Council, other agencies, and customers to build confident communities.

We are an Arm's Length Management Organisation, or 'ALMO', created by Doncaster Council in 2005. We achieved a 3 star rating from the Audit Commission in 2010 and have been recognised with a range of awards and accreditations from independent bodies.

We place our tenants and customers at the heart of everything we do.

What is tenancy support?

Tenancy support is a short term support service for people who are homeless or threatened with homelessness and who have housing related support needs.

Housing related support services help people to live independently or move on to independent living.

The service is free to those clients who are accepted into the service.

Here are some of the ways in which tenancy support can help you:

- setting up and maintaining your home or tenancy
- managing safety and security of your accommodation
- maintaining your health and wellbeing
- developing your daily living skills and domestic routines such as shopping and cooking
- applying for welfare benefits and developing your budgeting skills
- accessing other services
- getting advice and advocacy in connection with housing or tenancy matters

As a tenancy support provider, we aim to provide you with the skills to live independently and to deal with day to day life and situations.

We offer support through:

- one to one support
- group skills sessions (to be introduced)

Unfortunately, we are unable to help you with such things as:

Cleaning; doing your laundry; personal care such as bathing or giving you your medication; nursing care.

However, we can provide advice and guidance about these services or help you find an agency that can help.

Who is tenancy support for?

The service is designed to help people live independently or move on to independent living. There are many different groups of people, who may benefit from our service, including:

- Older people or frail elderly
- People with mental health problems
- Homeless people
- People at risk of domestic abuse
- People with substance misuse problems
- Offenders and ex-offenders
- Young people and teenage parents
- People with physical or sensory disabilities
- People with learning disabilities

How do I access the service?

You can access the services in a range of ways. You can:

- Apply directly yourself to the service by telephoning the service on 01302 862050 or emailing HOTS@doncaster.gov.uk
- Be referred by a professional person, such as a doctor, housing officer, social worker, health worker or probation officer.
- Be referred by a voluntary organisation.
- Refer someone you may know by telephoning the Home Options Service on 01302 862050 or emailing them on HOTS@doncaster.gov.uk

Who is eligible for support?

In order to be eligible for the service you must:

- Be aged over 18 years or older
- Be homeless, or at risk of homelessness
- Be having difficulty maintaining your tenancy which could result in homelessness
- Have a need for support to help you resettle after a period of homelessness or very unsettled housing
- Require support to help you live independently
- Have a commitment to work with us and engage with our offer of support

All applications will be treated on an individual basis and considered according to the support needed. Applications will not be refused on the grounds of:

Age; disability; gender reassignment; marriage and civil partnership; pregnancy and maternity; race; religion or belief; sex; sexual orientation

How do you get support?

We are a popular and successful service so at times we do have a waiting list. Once a referral has been made to the tenancy support team they will arrange a mutually convenient appointment to assess your application and support needs.

Once your circumstances have been assessed a decision will be made as to whether you would benefit from the service, and if you are eligible for our support. We will then write to you with our decision and also advise you of any other options you may have to best meet your needs.

How we prioritise referrals for the service

In order to be fair and transparent it is important that we are clear how we prioritise applicants wishing to access the tenancy support service.

We will assess your application into one of three categories: High Priority, Medium Priority or Low Priority Based upon your circumstances at the point of referral here is how we will determine your priority:

High Priority:

The individual referred for support is:

- Roofless
- Care leavers/veterans
- Homeless
- Causing a delayed discharge for a hospital bed
- Has been offered a tenancy and is unable to move into a tenancy until housing support is in place
- Has experienced domestic abuse

Medium Priority:

- The individual referred already has a tenancy, but is in danger of losing it imminently if housing support is not provided.
- The individual is a young person 18 – 25yrs
- A Care Leaver 18yrs+

Low Priority:

- The individual referred already has a tenancy, which he/she is not in immediate danger of losing, but their situation is likely to deteriorate without housing support

How we will involve you

It is really important that we all work together to achieve positive outcomes during the period of your support.

Therefore, we will:

- Listen to you, to establish your needs and expectations
- Answer any questions you may have
- Jointly develop a support plan with you to address your identified needs
- Involve you in planning and reviewing your support
- Hold a review with you at least every three months to check the progress of your support plan (or you can ask for a review at any time)
- Always keep you up to date with any changes to the Tenancy Support Service

Every time we visit you, we will

- Show you our identification, so you know who we are.
- Discuss your individual situation and record any actions identified.
- Answer any questions you may have
- Treat all information as confidential

Coming to the end of your support

When does the service stop?

Your engagement with the service is voluntary and you can end it at any time by notifying your Accommodation Support Officer. The support usually ends when:

- Your needs have been successfully met
- Your needs have been met by another agency
- You no longer want to receive support
- You no longer engage with the Accommodation Support Officer (if this is the case you will be notified in writing and given 28 days' notice that the support will be coming to an end).

Can I appeal this decision?

If you do not agree with our decision to end your support, or feel that there is further information we

should take into account then you will have the opportunity to ask us to review that decision

Alternatively, you may feel that you would like some independent advice when we are taking action to bring your support to an end. If that is the case here are some organisations that may be able to offer some advice:

Independent Advice Organisations

Citizens Advice Bureau
North East Doncaster CAB,
Thorne Office, Marriott House; 5A Browns Lane,
Thorne, Doncaster
DN8 5AF
Tel: 0844 499 4137
Opening times: Monday and Tuesday 10.00am-2.00pm
Wednesday 10.00am-12.00 noon

Mexborough CAB,
Adwick Road, Mexborough
S64 0DB
Tel: 01709 572400
Opening times: Monday, Tuesday and Wednesday 10.00am-1.00pm

Shelter
Civil Legal Advice on 0345 345 4345 for free legal advice, if you are eligible for legal aid.
Shelter's helpline on 0808 800 4444 if you have nowhere to stay right now

Shelter South Yorkshire (Sheffield)
Area served: Sheffield & Doncaster (Court Duty Scheme only)
Unit 28, Furnival House
Furnival Gate
Sheffield
S1 4QP
Telephone
0344 515 1515
Website <http://england.shelter.org.uk/home>

At the end of the service we will ask you to complete an exit interview. During this process we will review your progress and ensure you have details of any other agencies you may wish to use to continue your support from.

What if my circumstances change?

It is important that you make us aware of any changes to your circumstances or personal details to enable us to contact you and revise any assessments in relation to your support needs.

If you are unsuccessful in being accepted into the service

Dependent upon your circumstances it may not be possible to accept you into the service. If this is the case we will provide you with:

- A detailed letter informing you of the following
- The reason(s) why you have not been offered support
- What other options you have available to you
- What to do if your circumstances change
- Details of how to contact the Home Options Service
- Details on how to appeal against the decision
- The time frame in which you will receive a decision on your appeal

Confidentiality

We will respect the privacy and confidentiality of all our customers. The Home Options Service fully complies with this confidentiality pledge.

All personal information provided by you, our client (or third parties) to our staff is confidential to the organisation.

All our staff have a responsibility to maintain confidentiality.

This will include:

- Keeping all written records safe and secure
- Not disclosing information to third parties without your permission (other than where there are risk management issues)
- Exercising care and caution when discussing work both at work and out of work - for example ensuring comments about named clients are not made where they may be overheard.

if you would like to see a full copy of the Confidentiality Policy please ask your Accommodation Support Officer who will be pleased to make one available to you

Your health and wellbeing

Your health and wellbeing is important to us and that you and our staff are as safe as possible. We will help you with your health and safety and we will include action points in your support plan so that we can work together to resolve any health and safety worries that you have. This ranges from feeling and being safe in your home to protection from abuse. Below we have outlined our main roles but if you have any other concerns please raise them with your Accommodation Support Officer who can help you.

Health and Safety: How to stay safe in your home

Here are some top tips for your safety:

- Your Accommodation Support Officer will always make an appointment before visiting you
- Your Accommodation Support Officer will always have identification
- Be aware that bogus callers can be men, women and even children
- If you are not sure about a caller don't let them in your home
- Bogus callers may ask you for help, never let strangers asking for help into your home
- Never agree to have any work done by someone who knocks at your door
- Agree a password with your gas, water and electricity company
- Check identity badges clearly before letting anyone into your home
- Don't let strangers into your home

Please remember if anything happens that makes you concerned and you cannot speak to your Accommodation Support Officer here is a list of services that may be able to help:

- Police, fire brigade or ambulance 999 from a landline phone, 112 from a mobile phone
- Your local police station 101 (non-emergency calls)
- Advice on your health 111 (non-emergency calls)

St. Leger Homes is committed to managing Health & Safety in a way that is consistent with our values

If you would like to see a full copy of St Legers Health & Safety Policy please ask your Accommodation Support Officer who will be pleased to make one available to you

Professional boundaries

As housing professionals we are required to behave in a certain way and must not compromise that behaviour in any way. A breach of boundaries may be harmful to yourself or your family and will reduce how effective the support will be. The relationship with your Accommodation Support Officer must remain on a client/worker basis.

Your Accommodation Support Officer will not:

- Accept any money/gifts from you
- Give out your personal details, including telephone numbers and home address
- Invite you to their home or an event outside of work
- Act as your guarantor
- Subject you to/or accept any form of abuse

From your perspective you should not:

- Offer any money or gifts
- Ask for any personal details
- Invite them to see you or socialise outside of work
- Ask them to be a guarantor
- Subject the officer/or allow them to be subjected to any form of abuse.

When you have contact with your Accommodation Support Officer it is really important that meaningful and supportive discussions take place. Therefore we expect:

- No abusive or threatening language/behaviour from you
- That you do not consume alcohol or substance use during or before a visit
- That you will be in a coherent and fit state to receive support at the time of a visit

If you are not able to meet up on a pre-arranged appointment, please contact your Accommodation Support Officer as soon as you can.

If, on the other hand, you have any concerns about your Accommodation Support Officer you should report it immediately.

You can do this by contacting the Head of Service on (01302) 735804

Safeguarding

St. Leger Homes is committed to working with other agencies to ensure the safety and well-being of children and adults living in Doncaster. We have comprehensive policies, procedures and training so that all staff will know how to recognise acts, signs and symptoms of abuse, prevent actual or potential harm, reduce risk and know how to raise a concern.

Safeguarding is used to describe all work to help people at risk stay safe from significant harm and not experience abuse.

What is Safeguarding?

Safeguarding is:-

- Protecting vulnerable adults and children from abuse and neglect.
- Making sure people are supported to get good access to the support they need to make the most of out of their lives and to get full equal rights.

Safeguarding children and adults is everyone's responsibility and the mistreatment of any child or adult is not acceptable. Remember, doing nothing is not an option.

We work with many agencies to prevent, identify and respond to allegations of abuse or neglect. This includes domestic abuse and people who might have their liberty restricted because of a lack of ability to fully understand their situation.

If you suspect abuse or neglect report it by telephoning 01302 862862 or by using the report it forms. Anyone raising a concern that a child or adult is being abused or neglected will be taken seriously and we will act promptly and appropriately.

If there is an imminent threat to life or a crime being committed, you should telephone 999 and ask for the police.

Useful Contact details:-

Other concerns should be referred directly to Social Care Services:

For concerns about adults:

During office hours: Adult Contact Team – 01302 737391 adultcontactteam@doncaster.gov.uk

Out of office hours: Emergency Social Services Team – 01302 796000, or your nearest police station.

For concerns about children:

During office hours: 01302 737777

Out of office hours: 01302 796000, or your nearest police station.

Remember:

Look and listen, be aware, does it feel right? Doing nothing is not an option – REPORT IT.

If you would like to see a full copy of St. Leger Homes Safeguarding policy please ask your Accommodation Support Officer who will be more than pleased to make one available to you.

Equality and Diversity

Equality and diversity is extremely important to us. We take our responsibilities very seriously. We will make diversity part of our culture.

- We will make sure our offices are easy for everyone to get into and move about in.
- We will treat everyone as an individual, with respect and decency, regardless of sexual orientation, race, and religion/belief, gender, disability, and age or gender identity.
- We will respond to and investigate any complaints of bullying, harassment, discrimination or victimisation.
- We will provide the information you need in ways that you find easy to understand and in alternative formats.
- Whenever we can we will translate documents within 10 working days depending on the document type and length.
- We will take account of any particular needs you may have and try to accommodate them.
- We will only work with contractors and other agencies that share our commitment to be fair to all.
- We will help to create communities where all people are valued and can live in peaceful enjoyment of their home, free from fear of discrimination.

Involving People

- We will aim to reach and include everyone.
- We will involve people in decisions that matter to them.
- We will seek views early, well before important decisions are made and at all key stages.
- We will empower people to set standards, monitor them and challenge performance.
- We will offer a range of ways to get involved so that people can readily influence the things that matter to them in a way that suits them.
- We will actively promote opportunities for involvement and make sure people understand how to access them.

Improving our service

Complaints, Comments and Compliments

Has a member of staff impressed you? Can you suggest a way for us to improve our service? Are you unhappy with us? Whatever you think, we want to know, whether it's a compliment, a complaint or any other comment.

What you tell us can play an important part in improving and shaping our services and the way we do things. We are so very committed to listening to what you say in order that we can improve the tenancy support service.

We always want to hear from you at any time you want to speak to us, but on a more formal basis we will seek your views and experiences about accessing the service; your experience during the support; and your thoughts when you are about to leave the service.

You can let us know your views by telephone to our Customer Relations Team on 01302 862726, or by calling in person at any local St. Leger office

Making a complaint

What is a complaint? A complaint is dissatisfaction with any aspect of the services we provide, staff actions or actions of contractors who work on behalf of St. Leger Homes of Doncaster. Examples include:

- If we do something wrongly or badly
- If we do not do something at all, that we should
- If we are impolite or unhelpful
- If we do not provide a service in the time expected or the time specified
- If we fail to communicate as promised
- If we fail to meet legal duties

Who do I contact to make a complaint?

You can contact any member of St. Leger Homes with your complaint. They will arrange for your complaint to go to our centralised Customer Relations Team, who will arrange for it to be investigated and keep you informed of the progress.

How long will it take?

Complaints are acknowledged within three working days and we aim to resolve your complaint within 10 working days. We will then write to you informing you of the outcome of the investigation into your complaint. For further information please contact: The Customer Relations Team on 01302 862726.

Contact details

If you need more information please contact us

Your named Accommodation Support Officer is:

Mobile Telephone:

Email Address:

Senior Accommodation Support Manager Tel:

Home Options Service
St. Leger Homes of Doncaster
St Leger Court, White Rose Way, Doncaster
DN4 5ND

Telephone 01302 862050
Email Address: HOTS@doncaster.gov.uk
Office hours: 8.30am -5.00pm

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