

Lettings Policy for Supported Housing

1.0 Principles

- 1.1.1 The purpose of CHS supported housing is to accommodate people who would otherwise be at risk of homelessness, or are homeless, and who are in need of and accepting of support in their transition to independent living; or to provide support and accommodation to young people who are in the care of the Local Authority.
- 1.1.2 To be accountable to our stakeholders and funders, including the local authorities and referral agents, and ensure that our community support services are provided to people meeting the eligibility criteria for the service and who are in the greatest need.
- 1.1.3 To make optimum use of the properties and minimise void losses, allowing that lettings may be deferred to allocate rooms/flats appropriately, taking into account the specific needs of applicants and existing service users.
- 1.1.4 Acceptance of an individual to live in CHS Community Support accommodation is taken to mean that should the service they are living in no longer meets their needs, and another CHS Community Support service would better meet their needs, they may transfer to the other service, and will generally be offered the first available vacancy.
- 1.1.4 Subject to the above, to ensure equality of opportunity in the selection and allocation of accommodation.
- 1.1.5 To assist the local housing authorities, and children's and adult services to fulfill their statutory duties towards homeless vulnerable people and to young people in care.

2.0 CHS supported housing covered by this policy

- 2.1 This lettings policy applies to these CHS owned and directly managed schemes for these designated groups:
 - 1 Wheatsheaf Close, Ely: Young single people aged 16 to 25
 - Railway House, Cambridge: Young single people aged 16-25
 - 120 Mill Road, Cambridge: Young single people who are in care and are aged 16-17
 - 204 Norwich Road, Wisbech: Young single people who are in care and are aged 16-17
 - 82 Russell Street, Cambridge: Single adults (18-64) with a learning disability, or who are on the autistic spectrum, or who have acquired brain injuries.
 - Young Parent Project 31-38 Peter Maitland Court, Cambridge: Single young parents, or expectant (at least 6 months pregnant) mothers, aged 16-25
 - 40 Norwich Street, Cambridge: Single adults (18-64) with a learning disability, or related difficulty or who are on the autistic spectrum.
 - Corona House: Single women with mental health difficulties (18-64)

3.0 Applications

- 3.1 In general referrals may be made by any statutory or voluntary agency, or individual, who has contact with these client groups. Individuals may also self-refer. The 'Looked After Children' services (120 and 204) only receive referrals from Cambridgeshire County Council Children's Resources Team.
- 3.2 Consideration for a place is based on the following criteria:
 - 3.2.1 Needs assessment which ascertains the applicant's need for support and housing;
 - 3.2.2 The degree to which he/she is likely to benefit from the opportunity and their motivation to use the support offered;
 - 3.2.3 Risk assessment to ascertain the degree to which he/she presents a significant risk to him/herself, other occupants or staff;
 - 3.2.4 The individual's ability to move to alternative accommodation following a period of supported living;
 - 3.2.5 Whether he/she faces one or more of the following situations:
 - (a) Is currently residing in a children's resource centre, or with foster parents, or is leaving hospital, care or residential education and feels unable for the time being to adapt to a fully independent lifestyle, or is unable to go back to his/her parental home or to relatives.
 - (b) Is believed to be at serious risk of harm if he/she remains where they currently are.
 - (c) Has been, or is about to be, evicted from the family home or wherever else he/she is currently staying, and has no appropriate alternative accommodation.
 - (d) Is failing to cope in their current accommodation due to lack of necessary life skills or sense of responsibility.
- 3.3 Those over the age limit may be considered in exceptional circumstances.
- 3.4 Young parents must be capable of taking full responsibility for the care of their baby.
- 3.5 Applicants to the Young Parent Project, 31-38 Peter Maitland Court, will only be considered where the applicant and baby are assured of move-on accommodation via the local authority at the end of the placement. The young parent may be male or female. Mothers are usually at least 6 months pregnant on admission.
- 3.6 Out-of-County placements may be taken though it is expected that the applicant will have local connections.

4.0 Equal Opportunities and Diversity

- 4.1 Subject to the age criteria, applications are welcomed from all in line with the Equality Act 2010.
- 4.2 The schemes are not intended for people with serious offending or criminal behaviour, or severe learning disability or mental health needs, unless our risk assessment deems them suitable.
- 4.3 Applications from people who would pose a serious risk to the safety and welfare of other tenants and staff will be refused.
- 4.4 People on release from a custodial environment, or subject to a Court Order, will be considered, subject to risk and needs assessment.
- 4.5 Applicants who have a recent history of significant substance misuse (Class A drugs/alcoholism) must be participating in a programme of rehabilitation.
- 4.6 Apart from Wheatsheaf Close and Corona House, which has rooms adapted to suit wheelchair users, the schemes are not suitable for wheelchair users – though reasonable aids and adaptations may be considered for non-wheelchair users, in line with our Aids and Adaptations Policy.
- 4.7 Applicants are asked to complete an equal opportunities monitoring form and this information is analysed to check that we are not discriminating against particular groups in the application and allocation process.
- 4.8 We routinely monitor enquiries to check equality of access to our supported housing.

5.0 Application process

- 5.1 Applications are made on the CHS application/referral form, or in the case of Railway House, on the Cambridge Projects Joint Application (JAP) form and signed by the applicant and their referrer. Where agency needs and risk assessments and care plans exist these should accompany the application.
- 5.2 Referrals to 120 or 204 are made by the Children's Resources Team using their in house placement form. Additional information must also be provided within the young person's Pathway Plan and Safety Plan.
- 5.3 The CHS Support Team will assess the applicant's suitability for a place. The assessment, which includes both needs and risk assessments will be comprehensive and may include some or all of: obtaining further information from third parties, obtaining reports from other involved agencies, meeting/s with applicant; visit to the applicant at the applicant's current residence, visits for the applicant to the service.
- 5.4 The assessment process will be commenced within 14 days of receiving an application and will normally be complete within 4 weeks. Frequently the assessment process will take less time, and occasionally may take more time if further information is being sought. If it takes more time the applicant will be kept informed by the service of progress.

- 5.5 An Assessment Summary sheet, which includes a risk assessment, is compiled for presentation to the Allocation Panel for a decision. At 120 and 204, the decision to offer a place is made by the Service Manager.
- 5.6 Referrers are invited to give a commitment on the application form to provide on-going advocacy throughout the person's stay in our service. At 120 and 204, all young people will be supported throughout their stay by Social Care.

6.0 Transfers between CSS services

- 6.1 If a transfer for an individual between CSS services is sought, staff at the originating service alert the Manager of the proposed receiving service and provide them with full information (i.e. needs and risk assessments and support plan), which the relevant Service Managers discuss. If they agree the individual should be considered for a transfer, they arrange with the Manager of the receiving service for the resident to visit and meet staff and residents on one or more occasions as desired.
- 6.2 In general, if the individual continues to wish to move to the new service after visiting it, they will then do so when the next vacancy occurs. The Manager of the receiving service may delay the move in order to manage any identified risks.
- 6.3 If the Manager of the proposed receiving service feels that the transfer is not appropriate, then the matter will be discussed with the other Service Manager and the Community Support Manager so that an appropriate outcome can be reached.

7.0 Allocation Panel

- 7.1 We have an allocation panel for all services other than 120 and 204 - comprising CHS staff, representatives of the local housing authority, Social Care, other relevant professionals appropriate to the service e.g., Police, Learning Disability Partnership, Mental Health team, Inclusion, Lifecraft, Street Outreach team etc. Railway House also takes part in the City's multi agency Joint Allocation Panel (JAP).
- 7.2 The Allocation Panel will only meet when at least one non-CHS representative is present.
- 7.3 The Panel decides who will be accepted on to the waiting list on the basis of the criteria in 3.2 above and taking the CHS assessment of need and risk into account. CHS has the power to veto any decision. Vacancies are offered to people on the basis of assessed need who will benefit from a place, and whose risks are manageable. In the case of two applications with identical levels of need etc, the offer is made to the earliest applicant.
- 7.4 Applications on the waiting list are regularly reviewed to ensure accurate up to date information is available when a vacancy arises.
- 7.5 Applications will be refused if the person poses serious risk to the safety and welfare of other occupants or staff. The risk may be of direct harm - e.g. the risk of violence - or indirect - e.g. the risk of pulling others into criminal or seriously anti-social behavior. Individuals who do not need the level of support offered by the project for more than a few weeks will usually be refused unless there is merit in the short term stay. If

information is received after acceptance on the waiting list, regarding a change of circumstances or level of risk, then we may remove them from the waiting list. Such a decision will be taken by the Allocation Panel.

- 7.6 The decision to accept or refuse is conveyed in writing to the applicant and referrer within 5 working days of the Allocation Panel.

8.0 Right to appeal

- 8.1 An applicant may appeal against a decision to refuse a service, in writing to the Head of Community Support Services within 14 days of the date of the Allocation Panel's rejection letter.

- 8.2 The applicant has the right to be accompanied by an advocate when the appeal is being heard.

9.0 Offer of a Place

- 9.1 When a suitable vacancy arises, the applicant and their referrer will be contacted by the service and an offer made.

- 9.2 If the applicant accepts the offer, a move in date is agreed for any suitable day of the week, and a tenancy/license agreement (depending on which service) is completed. If necessary a claim for Housing Benefit is prepared and submitted.

10.0 Data protection

- 10.1 Information held by us about applicants is strictly confidential and only available within CHS on a need to know basis. Access by applicants to this information is made in accordance with our policy. Information supplied by third parties will only be made available with their agreement.

- 10.2 Refused applications will be destroyed 1 year after receipt.