Supported accommodation. Accommodation Checklist

This is a general guide to be used in making sure that a care provider complies with Local Authority Guidance. It is the responsibility of the provider to make sure they comply with their own local authority requirements and this guide cannot be used to replace your legal responsibility. **GMT Networks Ltd** t/a Ultra HealthCare and Care Quality Support cannot be held responsible for how you use this guidance.

While the intended audience is primarily supported housing landlords and managing agents, all organisations involved in supported housing delivery will find the list beneficial and a useful reference point and would encourage:

- It should info referral agencies of standards when referring individuals into supported housing accommodation.
- It should inform housing enforcement strategies and approaches.
- It should be recognised that the supported housing sector is diverse and serves a wide range of customer groups with a variety of needs and requirements.

This checklist should be considered with this in mind, discretion and sound practical judgement should be exercised where a guideline does not apply to a certain group, situation or type of supported housing scheme.

Minimum legal requirements

- Accommodation is safe and well maintained, in relation to sections 9a to 11 of the Landlord and Tenant Act 1985
- Landlords must ensure that their property, including any common parts of the building, is fit for human habitation at the beginning of the tenancy and throughout.
- Landlords must ensure their property is free of hazards by which is meant any defect which poses a risk of harm to the health or safety of the occupiers.
- Landlords must keep the structure and exterior of the property in repair and must keep the installations which provide water, gas, electricity, sanitation, heating and hot water, in proper working order.
- For supported housing with commissioned support, the accommodation will need to comply with the accommodation standards

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set out by commissioners. This may be higher than the minimum statutory standards in some cases.

Minimum standards

- Housing is accessible, suitably located, appropriate and suitable to meet the needs of residents, including health, care and support needs.
- Procedures and measures are in place to minimise risk and provide the best possible support to people in supported living settings in the context of the COVID-19 pandemic and or any other future pandemic.
- Accommodation is assessed by referring bodies, and by providers and their partners, for example, providers of support services, for its suitability in meeting the needs of the specific vulnerable residents being accommodated. The individual's views and aspirations are sought and considered in the assessment.
- Accommodation needs are relevant to assessment and outcomes aspired, in line with the personalisation agenda.
- Housing staff demonstrate an understanding of supported housing services and should be provided with comprehensive training, with regular refreshers on key issues, and appropriate learning and development opportunities for their role. They develop competencies relating to safeguarding, equalities and building safety. Staff are supported to acquire appropriate qualifications, where relevant
- All staff are suitably qualified or trained appropriately for the role they are in and encouraged to acquire appropriate and relevant qualifications by housing providers.
- Staff are supplied with the appropriate personal protective equipment (PPE) and training in COVID-19 measures and follow the Public Health England guidance on PPE in residential care and support settings for appropriate infection prevention and control
- Staff and residents are considerate of neighbours, therefore external areas are kept clean and safe, and measures are in place to prevent and manage any anti-social behaviour.

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Best practice

- 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
- There are efforts to engage the local community voluntary and faith sector to offer a range of support and social connections, residents are empowered and supported to understand and take up this offer if they chose to.

Accommodation regulations and standards

Minimum legal requirements

The buildings comply with council standards or other statutory building and fire safety regulations and any other relevant wider applicable housing legislation.

The landlord must:

□ Check and maintain gas safety (Gas Safety (Installation and Use) Regulations 1998)

□ Ensure that furniture and furnishings comply with the regulations and are fire safe (Furniture and Furnishings (Fire) (Safety) Regulations 1988)

□ Fit smoke and carbon monoxide alarms (The Smoke and Carbon Monoxide Alarm (England) Regulations 2015)

 Provide an Energy Performance Certificate (Energy Performance of Buildings (England and Wales) Regulations 2012)

 Provide a copy of the How to rent: the checklist for renting in England guide

 Buildings comply with relevant accessibility regulations, including on accessible and adaptable dwellings (Access to and use of buildings: Approved Document M, vol. 1 and 2).

 Accommodation is free from serious hazards, as assessed by the Housing Health and Safety Rating System.

 Landlord complies with House in Multiple Occupation management duties and licences property if necessary.

 Meet the standards set out in the 'Decent Homes Standard' if registered with the Regulator for Social Housing (or work closely with the Regulator to do so within an agreed timeframe if non-compliant).

 Oblige the Local Authority Housing Strategy

Minimum standards

 Meet the standards set out in the 'Decent Homes Standard', even if not registered with the Regulator of Social Housing. If accommodation does not meet the standard, we would encourage the provider to instigate a plan to achieve compliance over a reasonable specified timeframe and to monitor, assess and report regularly against progress.

 Buildings are energy efficient – we recommend providers work towards a minimum target of Band C of the Energy Performance Certificate. Landlord provides an Electrical Installation Condition Report (EICR),

ensuring remedial works or further investigative works are carried out to remedy any 'C1', 'C2' or 'FI' classifications.

Going further –best practice

 Comply with House in Multiple Occupation management duties and licensing standards even where the property is formally exempt from licensing on the basis of being owned or managed by a housing association or other provider registered with the Regulator for Social Housing.

 Comply with the Code for Sustainable Homes, a single national standard for the design and construction of sustainable new homes.

 Comply with Secured by Design, a police initiative that improves the security of buildings and their immediate surroundings.

 For older people's housing, schemes comply with the Housing our Ageing Population Panel for Innovation (HAPPI) design principles.

 Where appropriate for the client group, the scheme is designed and developed in line with Psychologically Informed Environment principles.

Housing facilities

Minimum legal requirements

 Properties are appropriate size for the number of occupiers (Housing Act 1985, Part X; Housing Act 2004, Part 1 and 2).

 Staff make reasonable adjustments to accommodation to meet residents' needs, for example if a resident is disabled (Equality Act 2010).

Minimum standards

 There are an adequate number of bedrooms. Except in emergency or short-term accommodation, unrelated adults are not expected to share bedrooms.

 Living space for daily activities is appropriate for the size of the household. There is common space such as community rooms.

 Accommodation provides residents with privacy and dignity, including private (as appropriate) space for dressing, showers, toileting, and accessible space for disabled users.

 Storage is provided to keep residents' personal belongings safe.

Going further –best practice

 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.

 Residents can add to or change décor (within reason) to make their home feel more personal to them.

 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 condition

Minimum legal requirements

 Buildings are fit for human habitation (Homes (Fitness for Human Habitation) Act 2018) with no hazards.

 Buildings comply with relevant legislation on building maintenance and condition.

 There are policies and procedures in place for risks related to fire, asbestos and Legionella (where appropriate).

Minimum standards

Buildings are well maintained, with all amenities in good working order. This includes:

 lifts

 appliances

 windows

 doors and locks

 lighting

 Room temperatures are adjustable with appropriate heating/cooling systems. Residents can control heating within their homes. There are clear procedures for residents to report issues.

 Maintenance problems are addressed and fixed in a timely and responsive manner.

 All repairs are followed up in a timely manner relevant to the type of repair required.

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 There are clear procedures and processes to address non-routine or emergency repairs.

 Grounds are maintained in all seasons, with timely removal of ice and snow.

 There are policies and procedures in place for risks including electrical safety and emergency planning.

 Housing providers follow the Public Health England guidance for supported living settings.

 Accommodation is built to high accessibility standards so appropriate additional adaptations are easy and affordable to install. This can include, as needed, functioning alarm points, e.g., call bells, which are tested and maintained regularly, grab rails in bathrooms, showers and toilets and anti-scalding controls, for example in accommodation for older people or people with learning difficulties.

 There are closed containers for disposal of sharp objects.

 Trip hazards are managed - all stairways and halls are lit adequately, with handrails and non-slip rugs where needed.

 Windows are fitted with plastic or safety glass (even where not required by building codes). Going further –best practice

 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-focused 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.

Tenancy and licence agreements

Minimum legal requirements

 All housing-related fees are listed, including tenancy fees, deposits, management fees and service charges (Landlord and Tenant Act 1985).

 Tenants are not evicted without proper procedure or legal proceedings.

 Residents are never to be charged for normal wear and tear. Residents may be charged where the tenant has caused extensive damage to a unit.

 Costs for rent and eligible services charges are transparent and reasonable Minimum standards

 Residents in supported housing have the most secure form of tenancy compatible with the purpose of the housing and the client's needs and circumstances. The tenancy agreement or license is provided quickly.

 The terms of tenancies and licences are fair and transparent and consider the housing needs and aspirations of residents. (Based on assessment).

 Residents' rights, choices and control over their homes are respected, while considering the needs of other residents and any access rights which may be required.

 Records are kept for each resident, relating to housing fees, their deposit, rent arrears, any accommodation issues, and notes on any proposed eviction or transfer.

 There are clear procedures which set out the circumstances when the person can be moved on, e.g., if their care needs change

 There are clear procedures for eviction, with a focus on working with the individual to avoid or prevent eviction where possible. Providers work to find solutions to sustain accommodation.

Going further –best practice

 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

Minimum legal requirements

 In HMOs, name and contact details of the landlord must be made available to residents and clearly displayed (The Management of Houses in Multiple Occupation (England) Regulations 2006). Minimum standards

 Communication and information are clear, easy to follow and appropriate to the needs of residents.

□ Name and contact details of the landlord are made available to residents and clearly displayed.

□ Clear information is provided to residents on how their rent and service charges are set.

□ House rules, which respect residents' rights and independence, are in place and clearly displayed. The rules are developed with input from residents where possible.

□ Protections are in place to protect residents from anti-social behaviour from other residents, as well as from abuse by staff or visitors.

□ Clear, simple and accessible complaints and redress procedures are in place. Going further –best practice

□ 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.

□ Resident feedback is used to make relevant or required changes/ developments to housing and or schemes.

□ 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 can help explain if needed.

□ All written material and signage are available in easy read.

□ There is assistance for residents whose first language is not English, who are nonverbal 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) can be appointed to assist with all accommodation issues.

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