

St Helens Borough Council

Supported Accommodation Provider Charter



ST HELENS
BOROUGH COUNCIL

St Helens Borough Council: Supported Accommodation Provider Charter

Who is the Charter for?

This Charter is for the tenants and providers of Supported Accommodation schemes.

What is Supported Accommodation?

Supported Accommodation refers to properties in which the tenant receives care, support or supervision for the purpose of enabling them to live or adjust to living independently within the community.

'Specified Accommodation' of which supported 'exempt' accommodation falls under this umbrella term, is a term used in Housing Benefit where some of the rules that normally limit the amount of rent covered by a housing benefit award do not apply. There are four types of specified accommodation. These are:

- Supported 'Exempt' Accommodation
- Managed Properties
- Domestic Violence Refuge
- Local Authority Hostel

Further information can be found at Appendix 1

Why has the Charter been written?

To identify and establish shared goals which will assist Supported Accommodation providers, the Council and partners to work together to achieve outcomes for some of the most disadvantaged and vulnerable residents in St Helens. To ensure that the provision of outstanding Supported Accommodation which meets local needs, is a shared ambition across all services in St Helens.

What will the Charter include?

The Charter will detail the level of service expected to ensure that Supported Accommodation provision within St Helens meets local needs, is being delivered to a high standard and represents value for money: based upon regulation, guidance, recognised good practice, and most importantly the views of tenants within supported accommodation services. The Charter will include a summary of what defines outstanding Supported Accommodation provision and will detail specific requirements for the three key areas:

1. The support provided to tenants
2. The Housing Benefit claim and value for money
3. Housing and property management standards

Through the collaborative work of the Supported Housing Improvement Programme (SHIP) the council will provide assistance, advice, and guidance to Supported Accommodation Providers in order to achieve the shared goal of meeting these standards.

Charter Development and Ongoing Review:

The Supported Accommodation Provider Charter has been produced taking into account the views of the Council, service partners, supported accommodation providers and supported tenants. This is a working document providing an opportunity for ongoing review and the updating of relevant legislation, regulations and recognised good practice.

Useful Contacts:

- St Helens SHIP Team
Email: supportedaccommodation@sthelens.gov.uk
- Programme Support & Monitoring Officer: Hayley Keough. Tel: 01744-675184
Email: hayleykeough@sthelens.gov.uk
- Housing Benefit Gateway Officer: Mark Wareing. Tel: 01744-674329
Email: markwareing@sthelens.gov.uk
- SHIP Co-ordinator: Jo-Anne Wells. Tel: 01744-676152
Email: jo-annewells@sthelens.gov.uk
- St Helens Housing Options & Advice. Tel: 01744 – 675150
Email: HousingOptionsandAdvice@sthelens.gov.uk
- Housing Benefit Customer Services. Tel: 01744 – 676789

Contents	Page
1. What Defines Outstanding Supported Accommodation Provision?	5
2. Tenancy Support	6
3. Supported Accommodation Gateway	8
4. Housing Standards and Property Management	10
Appendices	
Appendix 1: Specified Accommodation Categories	14
Appendix 2: Quality Standards	15
Appendix 3: Supported Accommodation Gateway	16
Appendix 4: Check List for Supported Accommodation	18
Appendix 5: Supported Accommodation Gateway Questionnaire	19

What Defines Outstanding Supported Accommodation Provision?

The following standards for outstanding Supported Accommodation provision summarise the detailed information provided in this Charter.

Tenants, Supported Accommodation providers, the Council and its partners should be working together towards meeting the following standards: for suitably located, safe, well managed and maintained accommodation.

1.1 Supported Accommodation is suitably located, well managed and maintained, to work towards an improved quality of the neighbourhood.

1.2 Supported Accommodation providers consider tenants needs and issues as a priority and ensure they match these appropriately to both the property, local environment, and other residents.

1.3 Supported Tenants are assisted to complete benefit applications in a timely manner that facilitates smooth transition into supported accommodation.

1.4 Tenancy Support, based upon the principals outlined in the Quality Standards formulated from the 'ASC Quality Matters' document.

1.5 The Support is person centred through strengths-based practice, is integrated and consistent.

1.6 All Supported Tenants should be given clear information about the requirement to actively engage with the support offered/ provided.

1.7 The journey towards independent living is encouraged, and transition into independent accommodation is actively facilitated.

1.8 The provision of Supported Accommodation does not adversely affect residents' satisfaction with their neighbourhood as a place to live.

1.9 Supported Accommodation providers commit to working with the Supported Housing Improvement Programme to deliver the best quality support, promote the best quality experience and outcomes for their tenants, be transparent about any failings, and be open to improvements.

Tenancy Support

Tenancy support provided should be targeted, personalised support to maximise independence and facilitate move on to independent living.

Allocation of a tenancy is conditional to there being an established need for the person to reside in a supported housing environment.

The provider will need to demonstrate their commitment to:

- Designing and providing support based on the quality standards as detailed at Appendix 3.
- Working with the SHIP Team, the Council and other Partners to share understand and deploy best practices.
- Ownership of the quality of their service and recognition of the importance of working with others across all services/voluntary sector to drive quality alongside co-operation with support staff and tenants.
- Providing support that is safe, effective, caring, responsive and well led.
- Committed leadership and excellent Management that guarantees the recruiting of suitable staff who are sufficiently trained and experienced to ensure best practice support for tenants.
- A culture of openness, being transparent about their quality and what they are doing to improve.
- An approach to resettlement that challenges tenants to make positive life changes, provide opportunity to inform, develop and fulfil tenants' potential, attain the necessary skills and levels of confidence to achieve independence and become contributing members of the local and wider community.

The Voice of the Tenant

Engaging with tenants and seeking their views and opinions is a vital part of the process in achieving our shared goal of providing quality Supported Accommodation.

Providers should offer tenants an accessible way of having their voice heard.

St Helens SHIP will consult with tenants as well as support providers to better understand their lived-experience and to monitor and review the support that they receive.

“Communication and information for residents [should be] appropriate to their needs. Residents [should be] consulted and involved in the service development and their preferences considered.”

(Government Guidance on Supported Accommodation: Standards of Expectations October 2020)

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/supported-housing-national-statement-of-expectations/supported-housing-national-statement-of-expectations>

The Supported Accommodation Provider will have in place the following areas of service delivery:

An Appropriate Service Match, Introduction & Induction Process.

Matching by the provider will consider the individual tenant needs and issues and ensure they match these appropriately to both the local environment and other residents before placing in either single or shared accommodation.

Providers should strive to establish clear referral pathways for tenants making sustained and positive links with other agencies in the authority. Referrals should be formally acknowledged and feedback provided to the referring agency.

Attention will be given to a successful introduction and Induction for all tenants. The tenant's entry to the service is fully informative, considerate to their current circumstances and responsive to their needs.

Person-Centred Assessment, Outcome-Focused Support and Review, Good Quality and Reliable Support.

The Provider is able to meet the tenant's needs, help them achieve their aspirations and enable them to make any necessary positive changes through the provision of a good quality, informed, flexible, consistent and reliable Support Service.

Safe and Nurturing Environment.

The service provides a suitable and safe accommodation where the support being delivered is suitable for the tenants needs.

Providers are expected to make reasonable adjustments to meet people's physical and emotional needs as described in the Equality Act 2010, therefore providing a service that meets the needs of the individual and is adaptive, for example: aids and adaptations/equipment to support the person if they have a disability.

Recovery

Supporting tenants who maybe recovering from illness or addiction etc. to be supported to re-learn skills, develop emotional resilience and confidence, to achieve sustained independent living.

Safeguarding and Positive Risk Management.

The tenant's support and environment is safe, appropriately managed and responsive to their changing needs and circumstances. The provider understands and is committed to their safeguarding requirements and responsibilities.

Community Participation and Integration.

Tenants are supported to engage and contribute to their chosen communities. This should be central to their support plan to maximise independence and achieve fully independent living.

Progression

Tenants are supported who may take longer to regain the skills and confidence for independence and who may require more ongoing intensive support over a longer period. Providers will assist tenants to engage with a range of support agencies, where appropriate, to deal with issues relating to mental health and recovery from addictions or any other needs.

Successful Move on, Service Exit and Contingency Planning.

Tenants are central to the process of moving on to independent living. Support is structured to meet their needs and progress at their pace, whilst ensuring they grow in confidence and competence to sustain independent living. Prolonging support creates dependency, disables people and traps them in the benefit system which prevents them from being able to access work, training etc.

Where there is confidence that tenants in Supported Accommodation are capable of sustaining independent living, additional support can be accessed within the **St Helens Housing Options & Advice Service** who can provide guidance on applying for accommodation. Email: HousingOptionsandAdvice@sthelens.gov.uk Tel: 01744 675150

Useful resources on performance quality and good practice for Supported Accommodation Providers including the Supported Housing (Regulatory Oversight) Act 2023:

<https://commonslibrary.parliament.uk/research-briefings/cbp-9668/>

<https://homeless.org.uk/knowledge-hub/trauma-informed-care-and-psychologically-informed-environments/>

www.gov.uk/government/publications/adult-social-care-quality-matters

Supported Accommodation Gateway

New Supported Accommodation Schemes.

Following the receipt of a proposal from a landlord looking to set up a supported accommodation scheme within St Helens, the Housing Benefit Department will determine the eligibility of the scheme in accordance with the Housing Benefit regulations, the Supported Accommodation Gateway Questionnaire and evidence provided by the landlord (Appendix 5). This will be known as the 'Supported Accommodation Gateway'.

Determining whether a new scheme can be classified as supported 'exempt' or specified accommodation can be a lengthy process and no Housing Benefit claim or payment will be accepted or made until a decision has been reached. It is important that prospective landlords therefore consult with the Housing Benefit Department at the earliest stage.

The Housing Benefit Department will issue a 'Checklist for Supported Housing' and a 'Supported Accommodation Provider Gateway Questionnaire' (Appendices 4 & 5).

The 'Supported Accommodation Gateway Questionnaire' will be used by the Housing Benefit Department to consider eligibility for 'supported or specified' accommodation status, and the 'Property Specific' part of questionnaire will be used by Housing Standards, in part, to determine client group needs suitability.

The Supported Accommodation Gateway process can be broken down into four stages:

- i. Confirming the landlord's status
- ii. Confirming the support provision
- iii. Considering the proposed rent and service charges
- iv. Accommodation suitability for client group needs.

The purpose of the assessments within this process is designed to ensure that the services and support provided is consistent with the stated provision, and to provide an opportunity for schemes which do not meet minimum standards to work with the Council and relevant partners to make appropriate improvements.

An assessment to ensure that a proposed scheme has the capacity to provide Supported Accommodation of an acceptable standard will be carried out. This will be conducted by multi-agency partners made up of colleagues from Housing Benefits, Housing Standards and will include visits in person to the proposed scheme offices, meeting the scheme management and key support personnel. A proactive approach will also be taken to assess the scheme's ability to

provide adequate support to tenants and visits to scheme accommodation to assess the condition of the property and to speak to the tenants regarding the support they receive.

Further information regarding the gateway process can be found at Appendix 3

Intensive Housing Management

Intensive Housing Management (IHM) is not defined in regulations, but case law has considered it as housing management tasks provided at a greater frequency or intensity than would ordinarily be provided to a general needs tenant. Examples of this include helping tenants maintain their accommodation, increased number of safety / inspection checks and arranging for minor repairs that a general needs tenant would be expected to carry out themselves.

The Housing Benefit Claim

The landlord should assist their tenants to complete their application for Housing Benefit (HB) and Council Tax Reduction (CTR) and forward this, with any additional original documentation available within the first benefit week of moving into the property. It is important the form is submitted at this stage as backdating of HB entitlement is limited to one month and conditional upon there being good reason for it not being completed on time.

Applications can be made online at www.sthelens.gov.uk/benefits

The Tenancy Agreement or Licence is required to establish rental liability and occupation. Where a tenant does not have capacity to sign such an agreement, evidence from the landlord confirming their rental liability and occupation, along with confirmation from the person's social worker with respect to their capacity can be accepted for HB purposes.

Changes in Circumstance

The landlord will make tenants aware that changes in circumstances may have an immediate effect on HB entitlement and they are expected to actively engage and encourage the tenant to inform them of any change in their circumstance that may affect the benefit they are receiving. The landlord must immediately report any changes in circumstances that they are made aware of.

Landlords will engage in regular communication with SHIP Officers to inform of current occupation and movement in and out of their accommodation and should contact SHIP prior to issuing the tenant with an eviction notice or proceeding with court action. Advice and training on New Claim and Change in Circumstance procedures can be received from the SHIP HB & Gateway Officer.

Supported Accommodation Review

A series of reviews on existing supported or specified accommodation will be carried out on properties to ensure that the details provided in the Housing Benefit claim submission are still correct.

Each month a number of supported accommodation properties will be selected for either a questionnaire review, visit or both. Where a face-to-face visit is required, this will be held at the property where the tenant lives and a discussion will take place regarding the support they are receiving and if this is meeting their needs. The review process will also require the landlord to provide evidence of what contact has taken place with the tenant. This should include:

- Details of how/ why the individual tenant was placed in the accommodation.
- Details of any support plans discussed with the tenant.
- Details of any support visits between the tenant and the landlord/Support provider
- Details of any emails/telephone calls made or received relating to the tenant.
- Details of any works carried out or scheduled on behalf of the tenant.

Once this information has been received the evidence provided will be carefully considered to ascertain that the tenant still requires the services provided, that the services are being received and that the support provided is 'more than minimal'. Where the landlord is also providing an element of 'Intensive Housing Management' particular attention will be given to confirm that the tasks and frequency of those tasks is more than would be expected of a landlord of general needs accommodation.

Following the visit, advice and guidance may be provided to the landlord relating to the suitability of the support provision. This may be complemented by support from other teams within the Council who will work with partners to address environmental and neighbourhood issues.

If a landlord is unable to provide the details requested or make improvements in support provision, it may be assumed that suitable support is not being provided. Review findings relating to a single property / tenant may indicate that further investigation of other associated scheme properties is required. A report to the Housing Benefit Department will detail the recommendations if further action is required.

Housing Standards and Property Management.

The Council's objectives through its Private Housing Enforcement role is to improve the quality, choice and standards in housing, improving the quality of the street scene and improving residents' satisfaction with their neighbourhood as a place to live.

It goes further in that the aim of the service is to reduce the risks to health and safety of persons living in, and visitors to their homes. The Council will use all available legislation to ensure that Supported Accommodation within St Helens is safe, well managed, maintained in good repair, not overcrowded and does not pose a statutory nuisance.

The Private Housing Enforcement service supports the priorities in the overarching Housing Strategy for St Helens and details the way in which the Council will deal with statutory nuisance from property, hazards and amenity standards in the home which affect the health, safety, comfort and convenience of occupiers, visitors and the public. In developing this policy the Council has had regard to the Regulators' Compliance Code, which requires a risk-based approach and proportionality to regulatory enforcement.

General Housing Standards

Accommodation should be maintained in good repair and should be free from Category 1 Hazards and significant Category 2 Hazards as determined under the Housing Health and Safety Rating System (HHSRS) ³:

Factors that may be considered to assist in the determination of which hazards are deemed to be significant include:

- The likelihood of and severity of potential harm.
- Whether there are multiple hazards within the property.
- Whether there is a vulnerable individual or group in occupation or likely to be in occupation.
- Whether or not it is reasonable to assume the conditions are likely to deteriorate in the next 12 months.

In order to ensure provision of suitable and safe accommodation, the local authority must inspect a property before use, and ensure that Category 1 Hazards and significant Category 2 Hazards have been removed or reduced to a reasonable level. Regular inspections of occupied property will also be carried out.

Housing in Multiple Occupation (HMO) Standards

The four main definitions of a House in Multiple Occupation (HMO) under the Housing Act 2004 4 (the Act) can be found in sections 254 and 257. The "standard test" under section 254(2) defines

any building occupied by 3 or more persons, forming 2 or more households and not related by “blood” or by “marriage” as an HMO.

There are separate definitions within the Town & Country Planning Act 2007 amendment splitting HMOs into large (7+ persons) and small HMOs (3-6 persons). Planning and housing services are working collectively to ensure appropriate space standards and amenities are provided within newly consented HMOs.

Management Regulations

All managers of HMOs are bound by Management Regulations. Supported Accommodation providers operating HMOs must have adequate management arrangements in place to enable compliance with the Managers’ Duties. The name, address and telephone contact details for the Manager of a HMO must be displayed within the communal areas of the HMO. There are two sets of Management Regulations:

- The Management of House in Multiple Occupation (England) Regulations 2006 5. (Applies to any HMO other than a converted block of flats to which S257 Housing Act 2004 applies)
- The Licensing and Management of Houses in Multiple Occupation (Additional Provisions) (England) Regulations 2007 6. (Applies to any HMO to which S257 Housing Act 2004 applies)

The Management Regulations impose duties on a person managing an HMO in respect of:

- Providing the manager’s information to occupiers & permanently displaying this information in communal areas
- Taking safety measures, including fire safety measures
- Maintaining the water supply and drainage
- Supplying and maintaining gas and electricity, including having it regularly inspected & certified (Certificates must be provided within 7 days of receiving a request in writing from the Local Authority)
- Maintaining common parts, fixtures, fittings and appliances
- Maintaining living accommodation
- Providing adequate waste disposal facilities

The Management Regulations also impose duties on occupiers of an HMO for the purpose of ensuring that the person managing it can effectively carry out the duties imposed on them.

The Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005

The Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005 7 places duties on the person having control of an HMO to have fire precautions in place, to make sure the property is safe and to carry out fire risk assessments. The Council’s local Authority Building Control service can support landlords with the production of Fire Risk Assessments at a cost.

Fire Precautions

Landlords should make sure there are appropriate means of escape from fire, and fire detection systems according to the type of property and the way it is used. For example, a HMO containing individual bedsits each with cooking facilities will require a much higher level of protection than a cohesive group HMO with a single kitchen. The LACORS Fire Safety Guidance 8 enables fire precautions to be assessed or designed specific to the size / occupation of the House / HMO.

Provision of Amenities

There will be a requirement within HMOs for amenity standards which are higher than for a home occupied by a single family. This is because the amenities required increase when a home is occupied by a number of people who are not living as one family.

Amenities in properties not subject to Licensing are assessed under the Housing Health & Safety Rating System (HHSRS), however the details applicable to Licensed HMOs can be used to inform property specific hazard assessments under HHSRS complied with for all.

Mandatory Licensing

The definition of an HMO subject to licensing are contained within Part 2 of the Housing Act 2004 and The Licensing of Houses in Multiple Occupation (Prescribed Descriptions)(England) Order 2018. A property is classed as an HMO subject to licencing if it is occupied by 5 or more persons who form 2 or more households and they share a bathroom or kitchen. A property must meet all 3 criteria in order to require a licence.

If a Supported Accommodation provider purchases / leases or becomes responsible for the management of a property that has an existing Mandatory Licence, the Licence is not transferable and a new application in an individual's name or Company name must be submitted. However, with regard to supported / specified accommodation a licence may not be required. Further information about the applications process and amenity standards is available at <https://www.sthelens.gov.uk/article/5207/Mandatory-licensing-laws-for-HMOs>

Appendices

Appendix 1: Specified Accommodation Categories

Appendix 2: Quality Standards

Appendix 3: Supported Accommodation Gateway Process

Appendix 4: Check List for Supported Housing

Appendix 5: Supported Accommodation Gateway Questionnaire

Appendix 1: Specified Accommodation Categories.

To be classified as 'Exempt Accommodation':

- The landlord must be a Voluntary Organisation, a Registered Charity or Registered provider (Housing Association).
- The landlord must have a legal interest in the property concerned (ownership or lease).
- The tenant must need 'care, support or supervision'.
- The 'support' to meet these needs must be provided by the landlord or its behalf.

To be classified as a 'Managed property':

- The landlord must be a Voluntary Organisation, a Registered Charity or Registered provider (Housing Association).
- The landlord must have a legal interest in the property concerned (ownership or lease).
- The tenant must need 'care, support or supervision'.
- A third party provides the 'Care, Support or Supervision'.

To be classified as a Domestic Abuse refuge:

- The landlord can be the same providers as above, but can also be the Local Authority
- The accommodation must be used wholly or mainly for non-permanent accommodation for people who have left their homes as a result of domestic abuse.
- There is no requirement that the tenant receives care, support or supervision.

To be classified as a Local Authority Hostel:

- Hostel cannot be self-contained.
- Care, Support or Supervision must be provided (not necessarily by the landlord).

Appendix 2: Quality Standards

Standard 1: The provider treats people with compassion, dignity and respect.

Standard 2: The same standard of support is provided, irrespective of individual, family and support provider characteristics.

Standard 3: Where the provider controls the environment in which support is delivered, an environment is provided that is conducive to meeting the needs, preference and priorities of individuals being supported.

Standard 4: The provider proactively works with other agencies to ensure the holistic wellbeing of everyone being supported, actively seeking to obtain knowledge on best practice and deploying that in practice.

Standard 5: The provider actively works in partnership with the Council to share, understand and deploy best practices.

Standard 6: The provider understands individual peoples' needs, preferences and priorities and regularly communicates with individuals to understand how their needs, preferences and priorities are changing.

Standard 7: The provider ensures that individuals, their families and carers have the information they need at times when they need it.

Standard 8: The provider encourages individuals to consider the possibility of developing their life skills and building social support networks in order to live independently considering how volunteer sector assets may be used.

Standard 9: The provider clearly communicates to individuals receiving their support, and where appropriate their family/carers on what they can expect from the service, liaising with the Council.

Standard 10: The provider asks where appropriate family/carers of individuals being supported for their views on the service provided to that individual in an unscripted way.

Standard 11: The provider communicates in a transparent way as to how the views of individuals/families and carers have shaped their provision.

Standard 12: The provider actively seeks and can demonstrate that it has listened to the views of its staff regarding the support that staff need to undertake their role and has taken the necessary action to ensure that staff can competently undertake their roles.

Standard 13: The provider is able to identify potential or actual harm, neglect and or abuse (physical, emotional or financial) relating to individuals being supported and has a robust procedure for addressing those things.

Standard 14: Following cases of harm, neglect and/or abuse relating to individuals receiving support, the provider identifies any lessons learned and ensures that steps are taken to mitigate the risk of this happening again, liaising where appropriate with the authority.

Standard 15: The provider ensures that individuals receiving support/ families/carers are aware of the process of raising any concerns regarding the support received.

Standard 16: The provider has a culture that is open, transparent and committed to learning and improvement.

Appendix 3: Supported Accommodation Gateway

Determining the Landlord's Status

Using information from the questionnaires, the landlord's details will be checked against the Register of Providers of Social Housing and the Register of Charities to confirm that the landlord is an eligible provider. If the RSL/Charity is only managing the property on behalf of the landlord (i.e. not leaseholder or freeholder), then they are only managing agents and it is the owner's status that is used to determine the status. Further evidence - If the landlord is the owner of the property they will need to provide the relevant deeds of ownership. If they are the leaseholder, then a copy of the lease must be provided.

Confirming the Support Provision

The Supported Accommodation Provider Gateway questionnaire will be used to determine who is providing the support and what support is to be provided. Where a separate organisation is providing the support, the landlord must provide details of the arrangement with the support provider. Consideration will be given as to whether the support provided is more than minimal, and that the support is relevant to the provision of adequate accommodation. The assumption will be that tenants are only admitted to the scheme if they need the support, but the questionnaires will look to establish who will be making the referrals and whether an assessment is made of prospective tenants, and that the tenants need this support. As part of the process of confirming that the support provided is more than minimal the provider must demonstrate that the number of any support staff is sufficient for the number of residents. The Housing Benefit Department will consider the proposed number of staff and the proposed hours worked to determine how much time is available for each tenant. Using the information from these first two stages the Housing Benefit Department can confirm if the property can be classed as Specified Accommodation, and which category it would fall into. If the scheme cannot be classed as Specified Accommodation the landlord will be notified at the earliest opportunity with an explanation why this decision has been reached. If the landlord continues with the scheme any benefit claims would come under normal Housing Benefit/Universal Credit rules. It is important to note that whilst the Housing Benefit Department will make the supported accommodation assessment based on the property, under Benefit regulations it is the individual tenants to whom the 'Supported' status applies. As such, if an individual tenant does not need, receive, or take up the support provided then the 'Supported' status can be removed for that individual.

Considering the Proposed Rent and Service Charges

The landlord must provide the Gateway Officer/Housing Benefit Department with a breakdown of the full rental charge showing 'core rent' and service charges. The landlord must provide evidence of the lease costs/ purchase costs and the lease/ mortgage term for the property. The Gateway Officer/ Housing Benefit Department will be looking to confirm that the core rent relates to the cost of the lease/ purchase price for the property. Any additional charges included in the core rent should be clearly noted and evidenced. The Housing Benefit Department will consider the service charges to determine which are eligible for Housing Benefits. Details for all eligible service charges must be provided for the Benefit Department to consider. The landlord should be able to demonstrate that the weekly service charge relates to the cost for the provision of the service. If costs are forecasts only, then details should be provided what assumptions have been used in reaching the costs stated. The Local Authority has a duty to ensure that the rent and service charges proposed reflect current market rents. As such, all proposed charges will be compared with charges from other providers offering like services. If the Housing Benefit Department considers that rent or service charges are 'unreasonably high' they will liaise with the landlord and ask them to review the charges. If an agreement on the charges is not reached then the Housing Benefit Department can restrict the charge to what they consider to be the amount that would be paid for suitable alternative accommodation. Once the full proposal has been considered the Housing Benefit Department will make a decision 'in principle'. If the proposal has the potential to meet exempt status a referral will be made to the Supported Accommodation Review Team for a proposed scheme review.

Accommodation suitability for client group needs.

The purpose of the assessment is to ensure that sub-standard schemes are not given supported 'exempt' or specified accommodation status, and to provide an opportunity for schemes which do not meet minimum standards to make appropriate improvements. The Housing Standards team will therefore complete an assessment to ensure that a proposed scheme has the capacity to provide supported / specified accommodation of an acceptable standard. This will include visits in person to the proposed scheme offices, meeting the scheme management and key support personnel and an assessment of the scheme's ability to provide adequate support to tenants, and visits to scheme accommodation.

Upon completion of the assessment a report will be provided to the proposed scheme indicating:

- that a recommendation will be made to the Housing Benefit Department that the scheme meets the required standards for supported 'exempt' or specified accommodation status, or alternatively,
- recommendations for improvements to enable the scheme to meet the required standards.

Upon receipt of the Housing Standards team report indicating that a proposed scheme meets the required standards the scheme will be given supported 'exempt' or specified accommodation status. Final decisions on the rent charges cannot be made until a property is occupied and a Housing Benefit claim is made

Appendix 4:

CHECK LIST FOR SUPPORTED ACCOMMODATION		
Please see Notes Section after table		
	Documentation	Provided
1	Housing Benefit (HB) Supported Accommodation Questionnaire <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Form to be completed by the landlord in respect of the accommodation / portfolio of accommodation in question Answers should be relevant to the individual client accommodated at a single property / all clients that are to be accommodated across a portfolio of properties Additional information may be requested 	
2	Client Information <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Client's accommodated at a property specifically sourced for their needs, for example arrangements that involve placement by a social worker or the NHS, background information from personnel within the claimants support network (social worker or an NHS representative) is required to demonstrate their need for a high level of care support and supervision 	
3	Property Questionnaire <ul style="list-style-type: none"> establishes that the property will be used for Supported Exempt / Specified accommodation only 	
4	Service Level Agreement - for arrangements where the tenant (s) received care and support from a resident care providing organisation. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> To demonstrate agreements between landlord and support provider If the landlord is contracted for support provision by a LA and they contract this to a Care Provider at the accommodation. <p>Confirmation of the arrangements are required to show:</p> <p>(a) What the landlord is responsible for and what they are paid by the LA for this</p> <p>(b) Detail and evidence of the funding recharged within the SLA for this</p>	
5	Lease where property not owned by housing provider <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Required to establish the landlord holds the proprietary right to let the accommodation and to contribute to decision making in relation to the reasonableness of the rent for HB purposes. Lease should be signed by all parties to the agreement 	
6	Floor Plans <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Detailed floor plans of the accommodation Confirmation of a planning application where structural alterations are required. 	
7	Rent breakdown. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Full service charge breakdown Elements of the breakdown may be queried to justify the cost 	
8	Individual Needs Questionnaire <ul style="list-style-type: none"> To confirm the tenant's need for care support and supervision that is linked to the accommodation. Copy of care assessment or referral from professional body. The tenant's needs may have been established from client information provided via a social worker or NHS representative (as listed under point 2 above). 	

Notes

Documentation from 1 to 6 would be required from a landlord of supported housing pre tenant move in. It is expected that that supported housing scheme arrangements will be in place before the tenant moves in for which the detail can be relayed in these documents. No claim for Housing Benefit will be entertained until such time as a decision in relation to supported accommodation status has been made. Early provision of documents will enable communications (a meeting can be arranged where this would be helpful)

The rent breakdown at point 7 would be a proposal of the rent to be charged.

Documentation at 8 is required to confirm the prospective tenant's need for care support or supervision and that need exists within St Helens for the specific intended client group.



This questionnaire is to be completed by the landlord of the supported housing scheme. Please give as much detail as possible with supporting evidence.

(1) Landlord name, address & contact details:

(2) Is your organisation a

Registered Provider Charity Not for profit organisation

(3) Support provider name, address & contact details if different to Landlord details:

(4) Please list property names & addresses:

(5) Are any alterations or enhancements required? Yes No

(6) Has an application to the Planning Department been submitted?

Yes No

Please give details

Please provide detailed floor plans of the accommodation

(7) Do you own the property(s), lease the property(s) or are you the managing agent for the owner?

Own Leased Managing Agent

If you lease the property a copy of the lease is required.

(8) Is there any relationship, professional or personal, between the property owner(s) / board of directors and the lessee or managing agent. If so, please give details here.

(9) Have you conducted an impact assessment on the local area when considering the property location and the support you intend to provide within the accommodation?

Yes Please provide a copy or details

No Please tell us the reason why no impact/needs assessment has been made

(10) Are the residents of this scheme / properties listed, provided with care, support or supervision to enable them to live independently (with help) in the community and sustain the tenancy / licence?

Care, support or supervision Intensive Housing Management None

(11) Under which category of 'specified' accommodation does the scheme fall?

Supported 'Exempt' Accommodation A Managed Property Neither

(12) Please identify the areas of need which you are able to provide support for

- | | |
|---|--------------------------|
| Homeless and in need of the support attached to this property | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Estranged from the parents/carers | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Evicted from previous accommodation | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Previous or current drug / substance / alcohol issues | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| People with learning disabilities and learning difficulties | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Someone who has offended, or there is a risk they may offend | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| People with mental health issues | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Victims of domestic abuse | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| People with refugee status | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Asylum seekers | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Care leavers | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| People who have recently been sleeping rough | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| People with physical disabilities and/or illnesses | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Other (please specify) | <input type="checkbox"/> |

(13) How are the responsibilities for the accommodation, care and support allocated? Which organisations are responsible for these different areas? Is there a Service Level Agreement in place?

If a Service Level Agreement exists please provide a copy

(14) Is this a short-term or long-term provision? Please provide details.

(15) Where are referrals received from? Please provide names of Organisations who complete referrals for this provision.

(16) Within this process, are any considerations made? For example, are any checks completed around tenants living together where there may be conflict?

(17) Please explain the assessment process for each resident including who completes the assessment and where the information is obtained from.

(18) Are checks completed to consider the links that an individual might have to St Helens? Please state yes or no and provide details.

(19) Please tell us about the qualifications and skills of staff completing the assessments.

(20) Will the assessment result in a Support Plan outlining the support required for each person? If Yes, please provide an example of a support plan. If No, please explain further.

(21) Do you have a review period to establish a resident's continuing need for the support attached to this accommodation?

YES NO

If 'Yes' please give details - is the review period determined on an individual basis or do you have a set period for review. If No please explain why not.

(22) Are there any rules or conditions linked to resident's continuing occupation of the property? **Please include a copy of the licence or tenancy agreement.**

YES NO

If YES, please explain.

(23) Would a person be granted a licence / tenancy if they were not in need of, and in agreement to the provision of care support or supervision.

(24) How is the support provided at this accommodation? Please tick the boxes that apply.

Staff on Site	24 hrs	<input type="checkbox"/>	Office Hrs Mon-Fri	<input type="checkbox"/>
Staff on call	24 hrs	<input type="checkbox"/>	Office Hrs Mon-Fri	<input type="checkbox"/>
Other				

What are the weekend arrangements?

(25) Please complete this table, giving the number of each type of room in the property.

	Living/ Dining Rooms	Bedroom	Bedsit	Kitchen	Bathroom	W.C	Other
How many of these rooms are there in total, in the whole property.							

(26) How is this property let? For example, rooms with shared facilities or as a house split into self-contained accommodation.

(27) Would there be any circumstances when this would alter?

YES NO

If YES, please explain what these circumstances may be:

(28) What documentation or advice is given to a resident regarding their occupation of this property when they move in?

Tenancy Licence Other

If Other, please clarify:

(29) Does the documentation you issue infer the rights of an assured tenancy?

YES NO

(30) If there is a vacant room within the property is this room locked so that other residents do not have access to it?

YES NO

(31) Please explain what factors you took account of when determining the level of rent, not including support, for this accommodation? For example, comparative accommodation of a similar standard at this level of rent, high standard of accommodation, adapted accommodation etc. **Please provide a copy of the proposed rent showing details and breakdown of any service charges.**

(32) What tasks are carried out in providing care support or supervision and by whom? Please provide details on how the support is completed, for example, individual, face-to-face, groupwork, etc.

(33) How much time does a resident receive care, support or supervision on a weekly basis? If this is given by both a landlord and care organisation time will need to be apportioned. **Please include details of staffing structure and how staff hours are allocated.**

(34) The support provided in exempt accommodation must be considered to be '*more than minimum*' compared to that which would expect from a landlord carrying out usual landlord functions? Please tell us how you meet this criteria:

(32) What is the actual cost of providing 'care, support or supervision' each week to each tenant living in this accommodation

£

(33) How is the cost of the supported accommodation funded? Please give details of all funding streams.

(34) Are there any other details you wish us to take into consideration?

Declaration:

I declare that the information I have given is true and complete.

I agree that the Council may make any enquiries it thinks necessary.

I am aware it is an offence to deliberately make a false statement or withhold material information.

I know I must advise the Council of any changes to the information given on this questionnaire by completing a new questionnaire.

Name/Signature:

Date:

Organisation:

Position:



ST HELENS
BOROUGH COUNCIL