

Housing Support Services

This leaflet tells you about the Housing Support Service - what the service is, who the service is for and how it is delivered.



Alternative formats

If you need information from Moray Council in a different language or format, such as Braille, audio tape or **large print**, please contact:

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What are Housing Support Services?

Moray Council's Housing Support Services includes housing support, sheltered housing and hostel accommodation. Housing support services help people aged 16 and over to live as independently as possible in the community, regardless of the type of accommodation they live in. The service helps people who are at risk of homelessness and vulnerable people, to keep their accommodation and maintain independence. The services can be provided in a person's home or in temporary accommodation or other forms of supported accommodation.

What do you mean by support?

The type of support that is offered will depend on a person's individual needs. Support may simply be advice and guidance or a more detailed person centred plan covering:

- accommodation;
- health;
- emotional support;
- finance;
- practical skills;
- social issues; and
- education, training and employment.

We can also help service users access other support services such as community care, addictions, mental health, debt advice services and Women's Aid.

Who is the service for?

A wide range of people get Housing Support Services. These include:

- people living in sheltered housing;
- homeless people;
- people experiencing domestic violence;
- people with a chronic illness;
- people with a physical impairment, mental health issues or learning disability;
- ex-armed services personnel (including merchant navy personnel who have served on operations) with vulnerabilities;
- ex-offenders;
- people with drug and alcohol related problems;
- young people leaving home; and
- others who need a small amount of support.

What are the objectives of Housing Support Services?

They are to:

- help service users keep accommodation and get and maintain their independence;
- give high quality housing support to service users who are vulnerable, homeless or who are threatened with homelessness; and
- help prevent and reduce homelessness.

How do you deliver your Housing Support Services?

We will make sure that:

- our service complies with legislation and good practice;
- our service is flexible and tailored to the individual needs of service users;
- service users get a high quality service that meets the Health and Social Care Standards. These are standards set out by the Scottish Government to make sure that everyone in Scotland gets the same high quality of care, no matter where they live;
- there is no discrimination in providing our service;
- information on our service is available and that all information is written in plain language;
- we ask for regular feedback from service users to continually improve our service; and
- we work in partnership with other agencies to deliver our service.

How can I access Housing Support Services?

You can access the Housing Support Service by a number of ways. These can include a referral to the Housing Support Team or an assessment for specialist accommodation. Referrals can be made through sections within Housing and Property Services, partner agencies and self referrals.

What are housing assessments and personal support plans?

A housing support plan tells you about the service that you will be given, as agreed by you and the housing support worker/warden. It is flexible and will change as your need for housing support changes. The information contained in the plan will be confidential to you and the staff who give support on a 'need to know' basis.

We will:

- give a housing support service that meets your needs. To help us do this, we encourage you to get involved in the assessment process.
- make sure that if you are a resident of specialist accommodation, you are aware of the cost implications and that a financial assessment of your ability to pay will be carried out.
- aim to have housing support assessments/support plans finished within seven days of you entering the service.
- give you a copy of your assessment, support plan and any amended housing support plan.
- review support plans in line with your needs. This will be done at a minimum period of every four weeks and no later than every 12 weeks.

What is a risk assessment?

We want to ensure staff and service user's safety by using a risk assessment and management process. This will assist service users to reduce or control risks and make sure that you live in a safe, secure environment and keep a high degree of independence within your home.

To help with this process, we will make sure that staff have the knowledge, skills, training and support needed to recognise hazards and identify risks. Staff, students and volunteers will work in line with Moray Council health and safety policies.

What are the emergency cover arrangements?

We will make sure that there is continued support for service users during any unexpected emergency. For example, staff sickness.

We will provide an uninterrupted service, even in the event of disruption or emergency. In some situations, this may involve supported accommodation for you. For example, this may be at a nearby bed and breakfast, hostel, residential home, or hospital. We will tell relatives and other services involved, of the temporary address as soon as possible (normally within 24 hours) and of the reasons for your move to that address.

What happens if I want to leave or stop using the Housing Support Service?

You have the right to end or leave the service at any time. We will try and make this process as simple as possible by agreeing a planned approach. However, if you are housed in specialist accommodation, for example, sheltered housing you might not have the right to leave the service due to the terms and conditions of your tenancy agreement.

We will make sure that:

- an assessment of your housing support needs is carried out before housing support is provided; and
- housing support is provided within 24 hours of a referral when required, for example in a crisis situation; and
- you understand that stopping housing support may affect your ability to keep your accommodation.

Requests to leave or end the service will be recorded. We will write and confirm receipt of the request within seven working days. This will include any arrangements that have been agreed on leaving the service. We will make sure that you understand the effects of leaving the service and that you know how to re-establish support in the future.

Confidentiality

Confidential information is defined as information given by and stored by the Housing Support Service, about service users and former service users, applicants for housing, tenants/residents, employees, prospective and former employees, contractors, suppliers and other agencies.

Confidential information will be requested, retained and managed, in accordance with data protection legislation and Moray Council's Information Management Strategy and Record Management Guidelines.

We often have to work in partnership with (and source support from) other services and agencies. Other agencies include Social Work, NHS services, the police and any other relevant voluntary agencies. Where we have to share information with other agencies, we will make sure that this is done within agreed guidelines or will follow information sharing protocols.

How can I access personal information that you have about me?

We will make sure that if you ask us, we will give you access to personal information that we hold about you. We will not give out information to third parties without your written consent, unless it would influence the prevention of crime, child protection, vulnerable adult protection etc.

Do you use volunteers to provide housing support?

Sometimes, we may use volunteers and students to deliver the service. We will make sure that all volunteers and students are suitably trained and have had background checks carried out before they start.

What if I want to complain?

There are various ways that a complaint can be made.

- If you are not satisfied with the service provided by the Housing Support worker/warden you should contact the Housing Needs Operations Manager/Supported Accommodation Manager.
- If you are still not satisfied you can use the Council's Complaints Procedure.
- Complaints can also be made to the Care Inspectorate at their headquarters.
- As a last resort, a complaint can be submitted either by the complainant or the Council to the Scottish Public Services Ombudsman. The complaint must be submitted to the Ombudsman within twelve months of the Council first having been informed of the complaint.

For contact details, please see pages 14 and 15.

How do you monitor your performance?

We will monitor the following areas to make sure that the service is being delivered, or to identify if there are areas where we need to improve.

- Number of service users receiving Housing Support Services, by service type;
- Number of service users leaving Housing Support Services, by service type; and
- Number of complaints received under the Council's Complaints procedure relating to Housing Support Services.

Charter of Rights

This Charter states our commitment to providing you with high quality Housing Support Services. Our services strive to make sure that you get a service, which will meet your needs.

What you can expect from us

You will have the right to have your needs assessed even if we cannot directly provide the services you need. We will strive to make sure that our services are focused on improving people's experience of care and are based on five outcomes:

- You experience high quality care and support that is right for you.
- You are fully involved in all decisions about your care and support.
- You have confidence in the people who support and care for you.
- You have confidence in the organisation providing your care and support.
- You experience a high quality environment if we provide the premises.

These outcomes are underpinned by the following five principles:

Dignity

- Your human rights are respected and promoted.
- You are respected and treated with dignity as an individual.
- You are treated fairly and do not experience discrimination.
- Your privacy is respected.

Compassion

- You experience warm, compassionate and nurturing care and support.
- Your care is provided by people who understand and are sensitive to my needs and my wishes.

Be included

- You receive the right information, at the right time and in a way that you can understand.
- You are supported to make informed choices, so that you can control your care and support.
- You are included in wider decisions about the way the service is provided, and your suggestions, feedback and concerns are considered.
- You are supported to participate fully and actively in your community.

Responsive care and support

- Your health and social care needs are assessed and reviewed to ensure you receive the right support and care at the right time.
- Your care and support adapts when your needs, choices and decisions change.
- You experience consistency in who provides your care and support and in how it is provided.
- If you make a complaint it is acted on.

Wellbeing

- You are asked about your lifestyle preferences and aspirations and you are supported to achieve these.
- You are encouraged and helped to achieve your full potential.
- You are supported to make informed choices, even if this means you might be taking personal risks.
- You feel safe and you are protected from neglect, abuse or avoidable harm.

You have the right to complain effectively using the Council's Complaints Procedure or directly to the Care Inspectorate without fear of victimisation.

What we expect from you

We expect you to:

- tell us your needs and preferences as clearly as possible, with active support if required;
- ask for help and/or advice as soon as you need it;
- be aware of the rights of other service users and to respect the opinions of others, regardless of differences in race, national or ethnic origin, colour, age, religion, gender, mental or physical disability;
- let us know quickly if we have not provided the service we promised, or if there are any other problems; and
- keep appointments which have been arranged or let your support worker know as soon as possible if you cannot attend.

How you should treat people who represent our service

We need to make sure that anyone representing our service – staff, volunteers or others – are not placed at risk by service users who act in an unacceptable manner. We expect you to treat representatives of our service with courtesy and respect and behave in a reasonable manner.

We know that people may act out of character at times of trouble and distress. There may have been upsetting or distressing circumstances leading up to a contact with our service, and we understand these pressures.

We do not view behaviour as unacceptable just because a service user is forceful or determined. If a service user is continually abusive or makes unreasonable demands or threats, they may be considered to be showing unacceptable behaviour towards representatives of our service. This behaviour will not be tolerated.

Examples of unacceptable behaviour include:

- aggressive or abusive behaviour (something that you do or say that may cause representatives to feel afraid, threatened or abused);
- physical violence; and
- personal verbal abuse.

This list is not exhaustive.

Repeated incidences of such behaviour can lead to support being withdrawn and may also lead to Police involvement and loss of accommodation. Each case will be assessed on its own merits and will be dealt with according to individual circumstances.

For all housing enquiries:

Housing and Property

Moray Council

PO Box 6760

Elgin

IV30 9BX

Phone: 0300 123 4566

email: housing.support@moray.gov.uk

Website: www.moray.gov.uk

Emergency out of hours: 03457 565656 (5pm-8.45am and weekends)

Care Inspectorate

Compass House

11 Riverside Drive

Dundee

DD1 4NY

Phone: 0845 600 9527

email: enquiries@careinspectorate.com

Website: www.careinspectorate.com

Scottish Public Services Ombudsman

4 Melville Street

Edinburgh

EH3 7NS

Phone: 0800 377 7330

Website: www.spsso.org.uk

Or visit any of our access points:

Buckie Access Point
13 Cluny Square
Buckie
AB56 1AJ

Forres Access Point
Auchernack
High Street
Forres
IV36 1DX

Elgin Access Point
Council Office
High Street
Elgin
IV30 1BY

Keith Access Point
The Resource Centre
26 Mid Street
Keith
AB55 5AH

We try to review our leaflets regularly to make sure you have the most up-to-date information, however the contents of this leaflet is only correct at the time the leaflet is published.

For more information or advice contact us on 0300 123 4566 or visit our website at www.moray.gov.uk.

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