

# SPECIALISED SUPPORTED HOUSING SERVICES

Our mission is to provide specialised supported housing and advice to enable people to thrive in their lives



Encircle Housing is an expert in housing people with a wide range of needs across England, Wales, and Northern Ireland.

We offer a variety of supported living solutions for people with a learning disability, mental health, deaf and/or sight impairment, and physical disability. We also house the homeless and people leaving care homes.

We put our  
tenants needs  
at the centre  
of our service



Unlike general landlords Encircle Housing does not operate a choice based letting or waiting list system, nor do we outsource this service or have a separate allocations team carrying out this function.

Our specialised team work extensively to meet each tenant's housing wants, needs and aspirations. We use a joint approach with each tenant and their family, care provider, and other professionals to find the right housing, environment, and support.

Encircle Housing provides a specialist supported housing service that puts tenants at the centre of everything we do and helps them to maintain a successful tenancy.

We believe our tenants should have a voice and in the decision-making process, and have real ability to influence decisions taken by Encircle Housing. We do this by tailoring our approach to the diverse needs of our tenants and we use their feedback to continuously improve our services.

**Meeting  
housing  
needs**

# STEP 1

## GETTING TO KNOW THE APPLICANT

We get to know the applicant and work alongside their family and professionals. We work together to understand the housing, support needs and requirements to ensure that their personal care and property are suitable.

### INITIAL MEETINGS

#### Care provider

The care provider works with the applicant, and everyone involved to assess their personal support needs. From these early stages, we are fully involved providing advice and guidance on housing matters. If an applicant tenant is moving out of a hospital setting, we also attend Multi-Disciplinary Team meetings to ensure that there are plans in place to enable people to live independently in their home and community.

#### An applicant, their family and support team

We meet with the applicant, their family and support team to get to know each other. We work together to find out if this type of housing is suitable and whether they can maintain a tenancy.

### THE PROPERTY

#### Encircle Housing vacancy

An applicant can move into an Encircle Housing vacancy within a shared home or a vacant property. We would arrange several visits to the property to ensure it is suitable for the applicant and would include overnight stays. If the property is shared, they can spend time getting to know the tenants that already live there.

#### New property

We work with the applicant, and everyone involved to find the right property and environment that can be specially adapted to meet their needs. We follow our robust Development process that enables a tenant to live independently.

Some works required can include level access, ramps, wet rooms, an accessible kitchen, and specific fixtures and fittings to meet the person's needs.

## STEP 2 | HOUSING APPLICATION

The next step is applying for housing with us.

### Information and application form

Easy read information and application forms are provided and completed by an applicant and/or their appointee and social worker.

### Additional supporting information

We gather any additional supporting information from care managers, commissioners, or other members of the applicant's support network, such as their family.



## STEP 3 | HOUSING ASSESSMENT

We carry out different assessments to ensure we meet an applicant's housing needs and requirements.

### ASSESSMENTS

#### Housing requirements

Through our housing application process, we can assess an applicant's housing needs and requirements.

#### Specially adapting a property

Our team is involved in occupational therapist's assessments, which may include specially adapting a property to support a tenant's daily living such as level access for wheelchair users. Some people may require behaviour managing strategies, such as reinforced walls and floors, in addition to physical needs.

#### Our Risk Assessments

We carry out our own thorough risk assessments and work with the professionals to support the applicant in their home and life, to enable them to live independently.

#### Risk Assessments by other professionals

These are obtained and Mental Health Assessments Probation, MAPPA, MOSOVO,

forensic services, where appropriate, and attend case conferences.

#### Affordability Assessment

An assessment is carried out with the applicant to ensure that the tenancy is affordable and can be maintained by the applicant.

#### Capacity to sign a Tenancy Agreement

Liaison and coordination with social workers and support providers during the assessment and evaluation of the potential tenant's capacity to sign a Tenancy Agreement. This often is working alongside the tenant's family, appointees, deputy, solicitors, and client finances.



# STEP 4 | BECOMING AN ENCIRCLE HOUSING TENANT

Our skilled team works alongside the applicant and their support networks to provide tailored housing and ensure that they have personal care to help the person maintain their tenancy.

## MOVING IN

### Flexible approach

For some tenants, moving into their new home happens on one day, while others benefit from moving in over time. We can organise and facilitate phased moving into their new home to accommodate tenant's needs, if this is required.

## TENANCY AGREEMENT

### Flexible tenancy sign up

We offer a flexible tenancy sign up to meet the needs of our new tenant. Some people may require several visits and meetings over time. We keep in touch with the tenant, their family and others involved.

### Tenancy Agreement in easy read

Our easy read Tenancy Agreement guides our tenant throughout the sign up and ensures that they understand their rights and responsibilities.

### Terms of a Tenancy Agreement

We ensure that tenants understand and meet their obligations under the terms of the Tenancy Agreement. Working exclusively with people with a learning disability and mental health issues, requires specialist knowledge, understanding and communication with our tenants. All Encircle Housing staff have on-going training to ensure that they are fully equipped to provide this service

## If our tenant does not have capacity to sign a Tenancy Agreement

We will work with the applicant, family members, and key professionals to obtain a Best Interest decision to confirm the move to the new property is in the best interest of the individual. We will give advice on applying for Appointeeship through the Court of Protection. Once the Appointeeship has been awarded they have the legal right to sign a Tenancy Agreement and act on behalf of the tenant.

## SETTLING IN MEETINGS

### Tenant visits

We want to ensure that a tenant has settled into their new home. We carry out six-week and three-month visits to find out how they are doing and answer any questions or queries.

## BREACHING THE TERMS OF A TENANCY

### Working together

Where breaches of the tenancy arise, in the interest of sustaining tenancies, staff will work closely with tenants and their support network to provide specialist knowledge and materials and methods of communication to address matters. Staff will liaise and communicate with all stakeholders and participate in a multi-agency approach, such as, attend Case Review meetings and Multi-Disciplinary Team meetings with social workers, to review suitability of placements and/or accommodation.

## INSURANCE

### Contents insurance

We give advice and guidance to tenants on protecting their personal belongings by way of contents insurance.

# STEP 5 | RENT AND SERVICE CHARGES



Our tenants are responsible for paying for their rent and service charges. We support our tenants to claim their housing entitlements, find the best tariffs, deal with queries, and provide help and guidance.

## RENT

### Housing Benefit entitlement

Encircle Housing staff will complete claim forms, obtain supporting information, communicate with Housing Benefit, and communicate with tenants and their support network.

### Self-funders

We help our tenants set up a direct debit or their preferred method of payment. We make sure that the rents are affordable for self-funders, and sign post them to claim housing benefit, if they are entitled, and other housing related benefits.

### Rent top ups

Where the tenant is required to top up Housing Benefit to meet the rent in full, we liaise with the tenant, family, or appointees to ensure that payments are set up and monitored.

### Rent balance

We help tenants to view their rent balance and statements at any time.

## SERVICES AND BILLS

### Soft services

Management of soft services, such as cleaning in shared areas, gardening, window cleaning. We can help with setting up and monitoring this service.

### Utility bills

Administration of utility service charges – including sourcing the best tariffs, dealing with supplier queries, payment and administration of gas, water, and electricity bills.

### Smart meters

Installation of smart meters, retendering for competitive supply rates, to ensure that tenants are receiving value for money, and educate tenants and care providers on energy efficiency.

### Grants

We apply for grants or pass on information about government initiatives to reduce the cost of gas and electricity, and which is passed on to tenants.

## HANDLING CLAIM QUERIES

### Queries and requests

Encircle Housing will handle queries or requests for more information and liaise with the appropriate parties on what information is required.



## MONITORING

### Submitted claims

Once claims are submitted, we take responsibility for monitoring the progress of claims. This will often involve dealing with complex Housing Benefit regulations, requiring specialised knowledge, to ensure that our tenant receives full entitlement to Housing Benefit and SMI Council Tax reductions.

### Ongoing claims

Once Housing Benefit is in payment, we provide ongoing services i.e., receipt of Housing Benefit direct from the local authority.

We monitor payments and liaise with the tenant, family and/or appointee to deal with any queries and changes of circumstances, or requests for information on behalf of the tenant.

## APPEALS AND TRIBUNALS

### Advocating for tenants

Representing tenants at appeals and tribunals employing consultants, where necessary, to achieve the best outcome for tenants.

# STEP 6 | TENANCY RELATED SUPPORT

We build strong relationships with our tenants. From the start, we provide tenancy related support on the successful management of a tenancy.

## ADVICE AND GUIDANCE

### Helping our tenants and their support networks

Tenants across the country have a dedicated Regional Housing Manager to support with tenancy related matters. Our well trained and knowledgeable team are on hand to provide advice and guidance to the care providers around complex management of behaviours.

## TENANCY MATTERS AND WELLBEING

### Wellbeing calls

We carry out weekly care provider calls, to discuss the tenants' health and wellbeing. This is also an opportunity to address any damage, maintenance, or repair requirements.

### Tenant meetings

We carry out tenant and care provider meetings, to work with our tenants to discuss any important housing matters, concerns and agree to deal with any breaches of house rules.

### Desktop review

Our desktop review ensures that we regularly update information held about our tenants and their housing needs and requirements.

### Review meetings

We implement case conference review meetings, organising, co-ordinating and chairing meetings to ensure that we are providing holistic services to our tenants.





## You Said, We Did poster

An interactive poster that shares a tenant's question and provides an update and decisions made.

## Complaints

In the interests of tenancy sustainment, we will deal with complaints and critical issues reported by tenants and neighbours. We will support, and act as an advocate in dealing with any complaints that a tenant may have in respect of their support.

## OUR TENANT'S SAFETY

### Safeguarding

We work closely with our tenants, often acting as an advocate on their behalf to raise safeguarding concerns and alerts with local authorities. We attend best interest meetings and help our tenants to achieve the best outcomes.

## ADVOCACY

### Acting on behalf of our tenant

We obtain written consent to act on behalf of the tenant in tenancy matters, such as making claims for Housing Benefit and Council Tax reductions.

## Raising concerns

Where concerns are raised, our staff will address them and liaise with commissioners and, where necessary, act as an advocate for tenants and complete any action plans holding all responsible parties accountable for service delivery.

## Working with professionals

We regularly work with health and local authorities, police and probation services, where they are involved in the lives of our tenants.

## Anti-social behaviour and Hate Crime

To ensure that the tenant has quiet enjoyment of their property, we work on behalf of the tenant to deal with any anti-social behaviour and/or Hate Crime directed at our tenants. Where necessary, we will engage with legal experts to seek appropriate legal remedies on behalf of the tenant.



# STEP 7 | REPAIRS AND SAFETY IN THE HOME

Our dedicated repair specialists have been employed, with a wide range of skills to assist with the delivery of these services to our tenants.

## UNDERSTANDING TENANTS REPAIR NEEDS

### Skilled employees

We employ two regional Maintenance and Compliance Surveyors, who are specifically (can we change this to industry qualified) trained with a wide range of skills. Our team manage a wide range of repair issues, from a simple repair helping to keep our tenant's homes safe, through to property compliance and more complex project specific improvements.

## REPAIRS SERVICE

### 24 Hour helpline

We have a dedicated repairs helpline, with trained staff, to understand and meet the needs of our tenants. Outside office hours our helpline deals with emergencies and provides an emergency repairs service.

### How to report a repair in easy read

Encircle Housing provides accessible material to show tenants how to report repairs.

## Urgent or emergency repairs

Many of our repairs are either an emergency or urgent due to the needs of our tenants. For example, a dripping tap can seem like a minor repair, but this may require fixing urgently to avoid compromising the mental health and wellbeing of our tenant.

## SAFETY AND SECURITY

### Safety and security

The safety and security of the property are a major aspect of tenant's wellbeing and we will prioritise repairs in these areas. Encircle Housing provides information on safety and security within the home.

### Fire Risk Assessments

Fire risk assessments are undertaken in all properties to ensure the tenants safety and remedial works are made in accordance with recommendations.

### Meeting our tenant's housing needs

In addition to ensuring full compliance of a housing association's statutory legal responsibilities, we aim to provide our tenants with a higher level of support, to meet their individual needs. We can install additional equipment to ensure their safety, undertake our compliance requirements, including fire safety, Houses in Multiple Occupation licensing regulations and, where risks are identified, water supply regulations.

## ACCOMMODATION

### Temporary accommodation

Where required, due to the needs of a tenant's wellbeing we will provide temporary accommodation, for tenants who may be unable to cope with any disruption whilst work is undertaken.



## STEP 8 | PLANNED WORKS

We have a full programme of planned works to maintain our properties across the country.

### Our Planned Maintenance Programme

We have a produced, and will implement, a five year Planned Maintenance Programme. We will use competent Contractors, subject to a comprehensive vetting and approval procedure, and will only use high quality materials, to ensure that homes are completed to a high specification.

### Giving tenants choice

Our tenants are offered colour choices for the walls and fixtures and fittings within communal areas in a new property.

### Working with contractors

Works will be carried out by contractors who are able to accommodate and schedule work to meet the needs of the tenant. Work will be closely supervised on site by our staff.

## STEP 9 | AIDS AND ADAPTATIONS

Some of our tenants require specialist adaptations to enable them to live independently in their home.

### PARTNERSHIPS

#### Working with others

Staff will liaise extensively with the tenant's family, support providers and Occupational Therapists in both assessments and during works being carried out.

### EQUIPMENT AND ADAPTATIONS

#### Specialist equipment

We install specialist equipment into our properties to safeguard our tenants, such as anti-scoold controls, handrails, shower seats, and specialist fire detection systems for people who have a sensory impairment.

### Minor adaptations

We undertake a wide range of minor adaptations following an Occupational Therapist's assessment, and where necessary a Risk Assessment. The works are paid for via a grant, or at our own cost, to meet the tenants needs.

### Maintaining specialist equipment

We take direct responsibility for the maintenance of a large majority of the specialist equipment installed, including annual maintenance checks.

### FUNDING AND GRANTS

#### Disabled Facilities Grant

We can support tenants to help obtain funding or grants such as a Disabled Facilities Grant.

# STEP 10 | QUALITY ASSURANCE

Throughout the year we undertake quality checks on our services and within our properties. We can then use this information to help us to continue improving our services and their delivery.

## REVIEW AND MONITORING

### Tenant Review

Our Tenant Review includes visiting tenants in their home and a desk top review. We assess whether the tenant is still happy in their home and a property review to check that it still meets their needs.

### Care provider review

We check if tenants are happy with the personal care that they are receiving and, where required, help the tenants to find alternative provider.

### Regulatory compliance

We meet statutory requirements for gas and electrical certification on an annual basis in all properties.

### Tenant Satisfaction Survey

We review our services through Tenant Satisfaction Surveys, in line with the government's Tenant Satisfaction Measures on an annual basis. The results are featured in our tenant's newsletter, Our Voice and in a separate document published on our website.

### Repairs surveys

We request tenant feedback on work carried out on every day-to-day repair/s.



# STEP 11 | TENANT INVOLVEMENT

Encircle Housing is improving the services we offer to our tenants and their wellbeing, through meaningful involvement.

## TENANTS' HOME

### Tenant meetings

We hold regular Tenants' Meetings within our services and encourage our tenants to become involved to improve and shape our services.

### Interactive learning

We provide new skills learning on subjects chosen by them (for example, how to answer the door, what to do if being bullied, practical advice on maintaining your home, keeping safe, and advice on setting up a bank account etc). These sessions help to build confidence to enable our tenants to be comfortable in their home and wider community.

## CHOICE

### Giving tenants choice

We consult with our tenants on changes to our services, energy efficiency, soft services, and housing related matters to give our tenants a choice. We use accessible communication materials, a broad range of appropriate activities and specialised trained staff to work with tenants.

## VIEWS

### Gathering views

We gather tenants' views in our satisfaction surveys, including our annual Tenant Satisfaction Survey to measure and improve our services.

## OUR SERVICES

### Getting involved

Tenants can get involved to help us improve our services and the delivery of service to our tenants. There are opportunities through a tenant panel, focus group, help with interviews, support and/or attend events, people's stories, information, and social media.

## WELLBEING AND IMPROVING HOMES

### Making A Difference events

Our Making A Difference events support our tenants' wellbeing and help to improve their homes across the country. Tenants and their care staff get involved in our Paint Pot Days and Let It Grow events.



## INFORMATION

### Tenant newsletter, Our Voice

Tenants helped to develop their communications and content with matters of importance and interest. Information is also provided in an accessible format.

## COMMUNITY

### Local community activities

Supporting schemes to encourage our tenants to engage in local community activities, such as football, arts, and crafts sessions.

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**Encircle**  
HOUSING

## CONTACT US

### GENERAL ENQUIRIES

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