
The Bridge Trust Supported Accommodation Service Information Pack

July 2018



A BRIDGE FROM HOMELESSNESS

A LARGE PRINT VERSION OF THIS DOCUMENT
IS AVAILABLE UPON REQUEST

Service Aim

Our Service aims to enable people to develop and sustain appropriate lifeskills as a means to accessing and maintaining accommodation and independence through enabling clients to resolve housing and economic insecurity by promoting inclusion, health and well-being.

Service Objectives

- Establish and maintain a clear referrals process in liaison with other agencies, enabling the most appropriate clients to access our service and establish a support relationship with Bridge Trust staff
- Provide support for people, which will enable them to maintain their accommodation and avoid the risk of homelessness. To promote their ability to achieve their own potential and obtain a position of financial security, health and well-being
- Engage our service users in meaningful activities, which promote their health and well-being.
- Ensure the development of our Service as an example of good practice by linking front line experience with the development of policy and best practice, in creating sustainable housing options and decreasing dependency on support
- Ensure our Service is appropriately managed, monitored and evaluated in line with internal and external funding requirements

IF YOU WOULD LIKE TO KNOW MORE ABOUT THE BRIDGE TRUST AND OUR
WORK WE DO, PLEASE CALL OUR OFFICE ON 01732 368363 OR VISIT
www.thebridgetrust.org.uk

Introduction

We hope that this information pack clearly explains how our service works. You should have all the information you need to help you decide about using our service. Please feel free to contact us for further information.

If you wish, your family, support workers or friends may be involved in any of our discussions with you.

What is our supported accommodation service all about?

A safe and affordable place to live is an important goal for everyone. Financial and social issues can stop people from keeping a tenancy.

The aim of The Bridge Trust is to help homeless people make the journey from homelessness to independent living. We do this by helping you make decisions about your life, assisting you with any problems you have, perhaps reconciling you with family members. We will set goals together and support you in reaching these.

The Bridge Trust provides support around issues like budgeting, paying bills, accessing education and training, and sourcing affordable accommodation.

Ultimately we aim for you to feel confident about moving into your own accommodation, and this may either be via our move-on project which continues the support offered by The Bridge Trust, or via another suitable option.

The Bridge Trust understands this process is different for everyone and some are able to move on fairly quickly and some remain with us for a maximum of two years.

Charges/cost of service

The cost of the support we provide is paid for by a programme administered by Kent County Council. For most service users on benefits the majority of the accommodation charge can be paid for by Housing Benefit. Residents who are in employment may need to pay some or all of the accommodation charge depending on their level of income. All service users are required to pay an amenity charge which covers the cost of utilities, communal TV licence and so on.

For further information please read our leaflet 'If I Lived in a Bridge Trust Property, What Would I Have to Pay?'

Staff

Management and staff whose professional training and expertise allow them to meet your needs, provide your support. One of our Support Team will be allocated to you as your "Keyworker", who will work with you throughout your stay with us.

Our service operates in line with all applicable legal requirements and best-practice guidelines.

You can be assured that we have policies and procedures covering all legal requirements, including:

Harassment, Whistle-blowing, managing risk and confidentiality

Copies of policies are available on request.

You can be confident that staff know how to put these policies and procedures into practice. Our staff receive regular training to review these and to learn about new guidance measures.

You can be certain that the staff providing your housing support have the knowledge and skills gained from the experience of working with people whose needs are similar to yours. If they are new staff, they will be trained to acquire this experience as part of a planned training programme.

You can be assured that all staff use methods that reflect up –to-date knowledge and best practice guidance, and that the management is continuously striving to improve our practice.

All our staff and managers are recruited and selected through a process which includes taking up references and Criminal records checks where required. Our service has a staff development strategy and an effective yearly training plan for its entire staff.

Whenever our staff are involved in any financial transaction, it will be carefully recorded and you will be given a full receipt. You will also receive a statement of your rent account on a monthly basis though you may of course ask for and be given an up to date account at any time.

Your Support Plan

You will be fully involved in developing your support plan and in any reviews. You will receive copies of these, signed and dated by you and your keyworker. Your support plan will set out the way the service is shaped to meet your needs. Your support plan will contain information about the goals that you have agreed with your keyworker, what actions need to be taken and what you have achieved so far. Typical topics in a support plan are as follows, though of course each support plan reflects the particular support needs of the individual service user:

- Addressing debt and or budgeting issues
- Accessing paid work, training and education
- Tackling substance misuse issues
- Accessing physical and mental health services
- Sourcing independent sustainable accommodation

The Empowerment Programme

The Bridge Trust's purpose is to give support to its residents in moving from a situation of homelessness to one of having their own secure accommodation, from perhaps benefits dependency to paid employment, or from lacking control over their own lives to being able to take control.

We aim to empower our residents by a number of ways including our Support Planning programme, our Resident Participation strategy and our Empowerment Programme. The Empowerment Programme focuses on supporting residents in achieving the goals of enhanced wellbeing and aspirations, greater financial security and enhanced choice, control and independence.

To help you achieve your goals in this area we will support you in linking with appropriate external agencies and are also able to provide some financial support in accessing training or work; we won't fund 3 years of university education but we could buy you work boots for your new job or pay for essential books for a college course.

Your Move On

The Bridge Trust provides support to empower and enable its service users to live independently within two years, to provide appropriate support for ex-residents for a period of up to six months and/or enable its ex-residents to access appropriate support from external agencies whilst living independently.

To better aid its residents to become ex-residents living independently in the wider community we will inform you of the various avenues to and options for resettlement.

We recognise that there are a variety of resettlement options each of which will have greater or lesser appropriateness to the needs of the individual. We will work to achieve the best fit between the needs of each person and their avenue of resettlement.

At the point of leaving the Bridge Trust will provide assistance in getting basic household items and furniture and will support its ex-residents in setting up utilities accounts and sourcing help from external agencies if required.

Complaints Policy and Procedure

Statement of intent

The Bridge Trust is committed to a policy of protecting the rights of individuals, including their right to make comment on the work of the charity, to make complaints and to have a fair and honest hearing of any perceived injustice or malpractice. As a charity amongst whose aim is to promote social justice and a fair society, we place a premium on ensuring that we are not ourselves the cause of injustice or unfairness. Services users, stakeholders and members of the public will be made aware of their

right to make complaint and that procedures used will ensure that they can do so without prejudice and in a fair and honest manner.

We recognise that, for many people, making a complaint is not easy. We encourage staff and projects to create a culture where comments of all kinds – positive and negative – are welcomed and valued.

Complaints from service users are dealt with according to these important principles:

- Resolving any problems as close as possible to the point of service delivery
- A speedy response
- A personal, rather than a bureaucratic response. For example, listening and understanding about the complaint, rather than just asking the person to put it in writing (although, you may prefer to put your complaint in writing)
- Fairness to everyone involved
- Confidentiality
- Recording and learning from the complaint

Should you have a complaint regarding any aspect of the service you receive from The Bridge Trust you should contact the **Support Services Manager** at the following address.

**The Bridge Trust
17a Quarry Hill Road
Tonbridge
Kent
TN9 2RN**

01732 368363

If at this point you do not feel your complaint has been resolved, the complaint should be directed to **The Chief Executive**, at the same address as above.