



# The Bridge Trust Homelessness Pathway

Your journey from homelessness to your own home



A LARGE PRINT VERSION OF THIS DOCUMENT IS AVAILABLE UPON REQUEST

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## **About The Bridge Trust Pathway**

The Bridge Trust Pathway is designed to help you develop the skills and confidence you need to move from being homeless to living independently in your own home.

The Pathway offers three groupings of accommodation with differing levels of support.

Your support worker will work with you to help you progress towards independence at a pace that suits you - we aim to move you through to the next stage of the Pathway as soon as you are ready. The journey is different for everyone - if your needs increase we may help you move to a stage with a higher level of support.

We will involve you in any decisions about the support you receive and your progress along the pathway.

## Where it starts: Your referral to the Pathway

You will need to complete an application form and submit it to The Bridge Trust.

You can get a copy of the application form from our office or via our website [www.thebridgetrust.org.uk](http://www.thebridgetrust.org.uk)

The Access Panel will look at your application and **decide if the Bridge Trust Pathway is right for you** at their next weekly meeting.

**If your homelessness can be prevented, or you clearly don't fulfil our criteria** the Panel will refer you to a more appropriate agency who may be able to help you.

You should complete the application form as fully and honestly as you can.

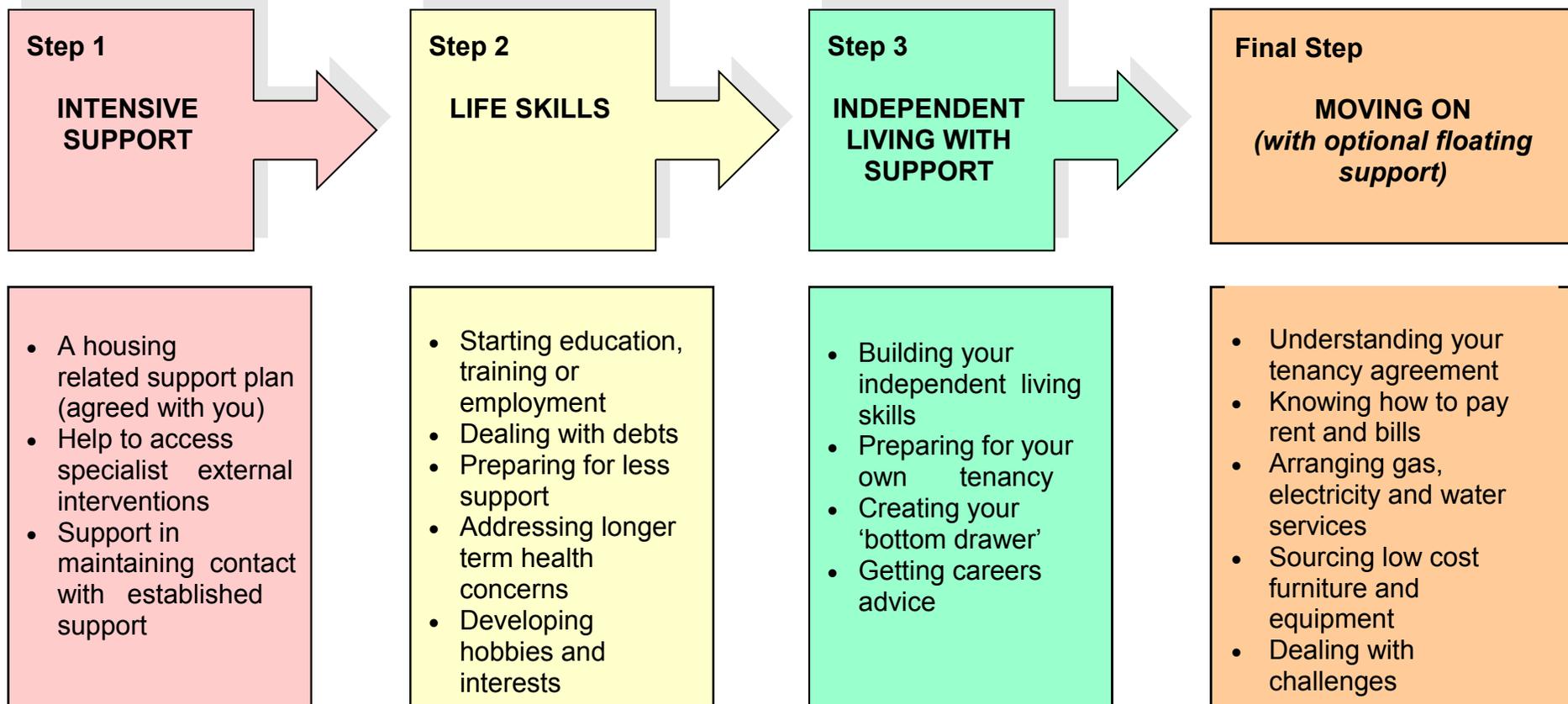
Also make sure you sign the form to give your consent for us to contact other agencies so we can get a better understanding of your support needs.

**If the Pathway may be right for you** the Panel will either ask you for further information or invite you to come for an interview

**If you are not invited to an interview or are not offered accommodation after interview** you can appeal against the decision. Information on how to do so will be included in the letter informing you that your application has been unsuccessful.

# Overview of The Bridge Trust Pathway to Independence

How long you spend at each stage will depend on how long it takes you to achieve the required goals at each stage



## Step 1: Intensive Support

### **SUPPORT:**

The support team will:

- Give you time to settle in
- Discuss your rights and responsibilities
- Work with you to develop a support plan focussing on the support you want and need - *you must be honest about your issues in order to get the right support*
- Meet with you regularly and review your progress
- Work closely with any other support services you may be involved with
- Help you resolve or reduce any offending behaviour

**HOUSING:** Your key worker will discuss your housing choices and options with you. Please be aware that social housing is not available to you as a right and you may need to explore other options.

### At the end of Step 1 you will have...

- Been informed of your responsibilities and rights within The Bridge Trust
- Opened a bank account or similar
- Been given help to maximise any benefit entitlements
- Learnt to budget and manage your money, and which bills must be paid first
- Made arrangements with creditors to settle your debts
- Registered with a GP
- Been supported in linking in and engaging with drug and alcohol agencies, if appropriate
- Been supported in maintaining links with previous support
- Been informed of what is available in the local area
- Had the chance to get involved in meaningful activities such as volunteering or education

You are now ready for Step 2

## Step 2 : Life Skills

### **SUPPORT:**

Your keyworker will:

- Meet with you regularly (at times agreed with you)
- Work with you to develop a support plan which focuses on developing the practical skills you will need to live on your own
- Supported you in addressing any issues eg an alcohol dependency ,which have prevented you achieving independence in the past
- Help you find training and education which could help you meet your goals

You will continue to receive any other community support services you need

At the end of Step 2 you will have...

- Registered to vote
- Developed hobbies and interests
- Had the chance to access training and/or education
- Dealt with any outstanding debts
- Developed the skills to budget and pay your rent
- Been stable in treatment and getting close to your recovery goals
- Addressed longer term health concerns
- Learnt to shop, cook and eat healthily
- Been referred for counselling (if you want it)
- Become more involved in the wider community
- Engaged in or actively be seeking employment

You are now ready for Step 3

## Step 3 : Approaching Independence

### **SUPPORT:**

By this stage, barring an unforeseen crisis, you should require minimal support. The support you receive will help you focus on:

- Developing the skills and knowledge you already have to get you completely ready to live independently
- Opportunities to take part in a variety of activities to develop your skills and confidence

### **HOUSING:**

At the end of this stage you will be able to evidence that you have the skills and knowledge to successfully manage a tenancy with any future prospective landlord.

At the end of Step 3 you will have...

- Completed a pre-tenancy training programme
- Built up a 'bottom drawer' of items for your new home
- The basic skills and knowledge of how to manage a tenancy
- A knowledge of who to turn to for help if challenges arise in your tenancy
- Built up your confidence to manage your own tenancy

You are now ready to move on to Independent Living

## The Final Step - Moving On

### **HOUSING:**

Your new home could be social housing, a private rented property or perhaps accommodation provided by an employer. Whatever the nature of your new home, The Bridge Trust will support you in moving in and making your new independence a success.

### **SOCIAL HOUSING:**

To move on into social housing through our Move On programme you will need to evidence:

- that you have a connection to the area (your support worker will have already explained to you how to achieve this)
- that you can afford the rent and other bills that go along with having your own home, which may mean that you have to be in meaningful employment
- that you will continue to engage with such support as you require to maintain your new tenancy
- that your current landlord (The Bridge Trust) recommends you as likely to be a good tenant. The Bridge Trust cannot recommend you until you have been with us for at least 6 months. We also cannot
- recommend you unless you have shown us during your stay that you are likely to make a success of independent living.

You will be offered support to help you set up as a tenant, complete your paperwork and sort out important services (e.g. gas, electricity and water)

## Floating Support

This service provides a support worker who will support you in your home during the sometimes stressful transitional period of moving from supported accommodation into your new home. They will work with you to help make sure you can manage your tenancy and develop (or continue to develop) the skills you need to live independently in the community.

We may offer Floating Support:

- To prevent you from becoming homeless again—this could include negotiating with your landlord or your family, helping you pay your rent and managing guests
- To help you settle into your new home when you first move in (this could be for things like getting involved in the community).

### **Your Support Plan:**

We will work with you to develop a plan to set goals focusing on the things you currently need support with.

When you have completed your support plan you should have all the skills you need to maintain your tenancy

### **Your plan could include help with:**

- Maintaining your tenancy
- Completing forms
- Managing money and applying for benefits
- Finding other support services in the community
- Accessing education, training and/or work
- Taking part in leisure activities
- Getting involved with your local community
- Staying safe
- Staying healthy (physically and mentally)

## The Homelessness Pathway - Working Together in Partnership

### **What we expect from you**

The Homelessness Pathway is an opportunity for you to get the support you need to move towards getting your own home and living independently.

To be successful you **MUST** commit to working with the support we provide to you. If you cannot comply with this requirement, which forms part of your Licence Agreement, then you will no longer be able to stay in our accommodation

We can offer flexibility about how your support is provided - for example:

- We will give you some choice about where and when you meet with your key worker
- You can engage informally (not in set appointments) with team members at your accommodation through group activities.

### **Drugs**

Housing providers do not encourage the use of illegal drugs and will always work within the law.

If you use drugs your support worker will help you to access:

- community treatment services to help you reduce the amount you use and support you in your recovery

If you bring illegal drugs into your supported accommodation your housing provider will discuss this with you.

They may:

- take action if they receive complaints about any drug related anti social behaviour in and around your accommodation
- involve the Police if they suspect you of being involved with dealing drugs - this could put your accommodation at risk
- terminate your Licence Agreement if you are found to have brought drugs into any of our houses. This means that you will no longer have the right to live in our accommodation and will be evicted.

## **Rent and Service Charge**

You **MUST** pay rent wherever you live.

You may get Housing Benefit to help towards your rent - this is paid straight to The Bridge Trust.

Tell a staff member if you start work - your Housing Benefit may be reduced and you may need support to ensure you can pay your rent.

You will have to pay a Service Charge (to pay for gas, electricity, water) - if you are on benefits we will arrange for this to be deducted directly from your benefits.

If you get behind with your rent or service charges, your keyworker will work with you to:

- agree a repayment plan so that you can pay off a small amount of what you owe each week
- help you manage your money and set a budget so that you can reduce the risk of problems arising again

If you don't pay your rent or service charges you could lose your accommodation.

## **Your Licence Agreement**

The responsibilities and rights of both The Bridge Trust and yourself with regard to your accommodation are laid out in your Licence Agreement. If you breach any of the terms of your Licence Agreement The Bridge Trust will sanction you. Sanctions can range from a verbal warning to immediate eviction. Your keyworker will explain the process in more detail to you when you first move in.

### **What you can expect from us**

We will provide trained and knowledgeable staff who will:

- Treat you with respect
- Be non-judgemental
- Encourage you to get involved in decisions about how our service is run and the support you receive

### **Complaints and Appeals**

If you are unhappy with the services you receive from The Bridge Trust please let us know. We will inform you as to how you can use the complaints process.

If you are unhappy with any decision made by The Bridge Trust please let us know. We will inform you how you can use the appeals process.

## Frequently Asked Questions

**How soon can I move in?** This depends firstly on the decision of the Access Panel who will decide if our available resources are suitable for your support needs. If they are a good fit then there is still the matter of whether or not we have accommodation available. We usually have a waiting list so you should still look for other accommodation.

### **What should I do while I'm waiting?**

- Keep looking for alternative accommodation as we can't say for certain when a room is likely to become available (it could be tomorrow but it could be in many months time)
- Keep us informed if your circumstances change. A move from sleeping on a friends sofa to sleeping on the street may give you greater priority. If you no longer need our accommodation please let us know as soon as possible as we can then offer the room to someone who needs it. You can always reapply if things don't work out.
- Keep working with all the other services that support you

**What stage will I enter the Pathway?** That depends on your individual support needs—everyone is different.

**How long can I stay with The Bridge Trust?** This again depends on your individual support needs. Some people need a longer period of support than others. The maximum length of stay is typically 2 years but very few people need as long as that. Even at the end of 2 years we don't just put you onto the street. If you are working with us and need longer then we will continue to work with you for as long as it takes.

**What if I just want a room but don't have any support needs?** The supported accommodation The Bridge Trust provides is a limited resource and therefore is only appropriate for people who need the specialised support we provide. If you have no need for our specialised support services but do need a roof over your head then our staff will try to point you in the right direction.