

## Sandwell Mind Supported Housing: Eligibility criteria, fair access and fair exit

Sandwell Mind's supported housing service covers 56 properties situated in various locations across the borough. They include the following:

### Gharana

13 self contained clustered flats in Smethwick, targeted specifically at people from the Asian community. Gharana offers short term placements, with planned move on to more independent living within a 2 year timescale. The properties are owned by Jephson Housing Association with communal space and a staff office on site.

### Parkside

10 self contained flats owned by Jephson Housing Association. There is a staff office base on site. Parkside offers short term placements, with planned move on to more independent living within a 2 year timescale.

### Supported Flats

33 self contained flats dispersed throughout the borough. Placements are long term and support is offered for as long as is considered necessary and appropriate. The properties are owned by either Sandwell Homes or Jephson Housing Association.

Furnishing and decoration in all supported accommodation is provided by Sandwell Mind. A service charge for this is added to the rent.

## **ELIGIBILITY CRITERIA**

*Each service user:*

- Must be resident in Sandwell or have strong links to Sandwell
- Must have some form of mental health problem
- Must be over 18 and will usually be under 65
- Must be willing to engage with the service and with the support offered
- Must be eligible for local authority or housing association accommodation.
- Must be capable of living independently (providing appropriate support is made available).
- Must have needs consistent with the 5 high level outcomes for SP services (ie. Achieving economic well being, Enjoying and achieving, Being healthy, Staying safe, Making a positive contribution)
- For culturally specific services must have appropriate cultural needs

## **EXCLUSION CRITERIA**

*An individual **may** be refused a service if:*

- They have a history of violence, arson, drug or alcohol misuse and/or there is a perceived risk to the health and safety of support workers
- The type or degree of required intervention is assessed as being incompatible with the funding criteria, skills or capacity of the service.

## **FUNDING**

- In short term services the cost of support is covered by Supporting People funding

- In long term services, the cost of support is normally covered by Supporting People funding, provided the service user is entitled to Housing Benefit or Council Tax Benefit. Where this is not the case the user may be required to make some contribution to the cost of their support, following financial assessment.
- Accommodation charges and utility bills generally remain the responsibility of the service user.

## **ASSESSMENT AND ALLOCATION PROCESSES**

- There is a simple referral form to access the service. This can be downloaded from Sandwell Mind's website or supplied on request
- Referrals for supported accommodation can come from any source, including self-referral.
- When vacancies arise the Supported Housing Manager will ensure that the local CMHT's and other relevant parties are informed of the situation.
- A full assessment of need, circumstances and suitability will be undertaken and recorded by Sandwell Mind. This process will be co-ordinated by the service manager and/or senior staff. Initial assessment visits will usually be made by two staff and will be carried out jointly with the referring agent whenever possible. Copies of CPA documentation, psychiatric reports, TAG risk assessments etc., should accompany the completed referral form to speed the assessment process. In the case of self-referrals similar background information will need to be sourced before any judgement on suitability can be made. Service users will be offered a copy of their completed assessment form for reference and comment.
- The decision on whether or not to offer a service will be based on full consideration of all available information. The rationale for the decision will be recorded on the assessment form. If it is decided that the offer of a service is not appropriate then the reasons why will be clearly explained to the referring agent and to the individual concerned. The service user will be signposted to other more appropriate services wherever possible.
- Where more than one party is interested in a vacancy then the Supported Housing Manager will decide on which placement is most appropriate, based on a full consideration of circumstances and on the service's ability to best meet presenting needs. Sandwell Mind also reserves the right to prioritise existing users of its other services.
- There is a right of appeal if any party feels that the decision to refuse access to the service is unfair. The persons concerned will be informed of this right by the individual who has made the decision to withhold the service. The appeal procedure is available on Sandwell Mind's website at [www.sandwellmind.org.uk](http://www.sandwellmind.org.uk).
- New service users will be allocated a support worker. Allocation takes into account the service user's circumstances and preferences, but also considers support worker availability and capacity.
- A support plan will be drawn up in consultation with the service user. This will identify goals based in the first instance on the findings of the initial assessment and the estimated timescale for our involvement. The service user will be offered a copy of this plan for reference.
- A welcome pack is given to all new service users. This pack explains the way the service works, how to complain, how to respond to abuse, where to go for out of hours support, outlines health and safety responsibilities, and provides other relevant information. New users will be offered the chance to look

around the vacant property (or to bid for a suitable property through choice based lettings), and then given full assistance with the move in process.

## **FAIR EXIT**

- The ongoing need for support is discussed at team meetings, supervisions, support plan reviews and so on, in order to make a balanced judgement on the continuing appropriateness of the placement. This applies irrespective of whether the user is in short or long term accommodation.
- Discussion will focus on progress made, barriers to progress and ability to meet changing needs within the funding requirements and contractual obligations of the service.
- Wherever possible the service aims to work with users to achieve their goals and to then implement a planned and appropriate withdrawal of service and move on to alternative accommodation in full consultation with the service user.
- The Supported Housing service has signed up to, and works within, the borough's 'Move On' protocols.
- In cases where licenses or tenancies have to be terminated Sandwell Mind will work closely with, and will follow the procedures of, Jephson Housing Association or Sandwell Homes, as appropriate.
- A Quality Monitoring check will normally be undertaken at the end of our period of intervention, to pick up on any issues around fair and planned exit.
- There is a right of appeal if any party feels that the decision to terminate the service is unfair. The persons concerned will be informed of this right by the individual who has made the decision to terminate the service. The appeal procedure is available on Sandwell Mind's website at [www.sandwellmind.org.uk](http://www.sandwellmind.org.uk).